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Chapter:

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Writing Religion in British Asian Diasporas

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With vignettes from our five community-based events as starting points, the aim of this chapter is to better map and illuminate the changing roles of religion and its cognates such as faith, spirituality and the secular in the writing of British Asian diasporas. In particular, we are interested in the location and evident mobility of the category of religion in terms of the social relations and spatial scales that configure the relevant cityscapes. At the Peepul Centre in Leicester, for instance, the public visibility of neighbourhood institutions and places of worship came to the fore amidst discussion of the struggles to remake home abroad. Exchanges at Bradford's Mumtaz restaurant, by extension, demonstrated the impact of high profile arguments about the public recognition of religious belief and practice by the local state, with the Manchester event at the Indus 5 restaurant also underlining the growing national importance of a discourse of faith in education and the governance of community relations. At the Nishkam Civic Centre in Birmingham there was a reminder that transnational networks of religious activists imagine connections and unities beyond both locality and the nation, while like exchanges at the Kobi Nazrul Centre in London's East End, it also drew attention to sacred spaces of popular culture and individual spirituality that are often considered non-religious. Thus, while religion in diaspora is routinely constructed as a public and organized phenomenon, as we shall see, such

dominant discourses and practices are contested by alternatives in more demotic spaces (cf. Baumann 1996).

Interestingly, this mobility of religion in British Asian diaspora spaces has suffered a rather surprising elision in the scholarly literature. From the 1960s until the 1980s, accounts of migration from South Asia to Britain were dominated by sociologists, anthropologists and others working largely within paradigms of race and ethnicity. Each of these approaches had their own respective (and often antagonistic) emphases on the significance of social structure and cultural agency, the political economy of immigration and urban ethnicity (e.g. Rex and Moore 1967; Watson 1977). With the conceptual turn towards the study of diaspora and hybridity in cultural studies (e.g. Hall 1992; Gilroy 1993; Bhabha 2004; Clifford 1997; Brah 1996), the last two decades has witnessed new accounts of South Asian popular and youth cultures especially (e.g. Sharma *et al.* 1996; Alexander 2000). However, for all the continuing world-wide significance of diasporic appeals to ‘tradition’ in the face of cultural ‘translation’, on the whole, neither the race/ethnicity nor the more recent diaspora/hybridity literature has viewed religion as an object worthy of sophisticated theorization. Indeed, this appears to be the case even where religion bears forcefully upon the studies in question, as in so much of the most recent writing on Islam and Muslims (e.g. Abbas 2005; 2007). Constructions of religion are very much present in this literature but the conceptual framing of the category is insufficiently problematized, an issue we seek to address here.

If scholars of diaspora have not had much time for thinking deeply about religion, scholars of religion have had only a marginal interest in contemporary diasporas (Baumann 2000; McLoughlin 2005a). Surveys of the literature routinely trace the first contemporary discussion of religion and diaspora to the late Ninian Smart, once the doyen of Religious Studies (Baumann 2000; Vertovec 2000, 2004; Hinnells 2005). Smart (1987) emphasized that, rather than assimilate or liberalize, religious traditions generally emphasize ‘universalizing’ tendencies in a globalizing world. Self-conscious of their difference in interactions with ‘others’ – the state, wider society and a broader range of co-religionists – diasporas in the West produce increasingly rationalized and homogenizing accounts of their religious traditions (McLoughlin 2005a). Yet, Smart’s observations remained fairly generalized and made little distinction between diaspora and globalization. Indeed, it was the Community Religions Project (CRP), founded in 1976 at the University of Leeds, which pioneered the writing of post-war migrant religion in Britain.ⁱ Its first wave of publications included detailed ethnographic descriptions of how the empirical content of Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism was changing in the context of urban localities (Knott 1986a; Barton 1986; Bowen 1988; Kalsi 1992). However, given a tendency to emphasize objective description over critical explanation in Religious Studies at the time, the CRP’s theoretical discussions were comparatively limited.ⁱⁱ

Indeed, it is only in the last decade or so that scholars in Religious Studies and Anthropology have earnestly sought to deconstruct the idea of 'religion' as a cross-cultural and trans-historical phenomenon. Influenced by the same post-modernist and post-colonial concerns with power and cultural reproduction apparent in theorizations of diaspora/hybridity, Asad (1993), McCutcheon (1997) and others have all urged vigilance in analyzing just how, by whom and for what purposes religious regimes of truth are deployed. Yet, while Fitzgerald (2001) questions the very viability of the category as a modern, Western construct that has been exported world-wide, Flood argues that 'religion' can still be employed cross-culturally in a taxonomic sense, although its analysis should be grounded in 'utterance in the social world' (1999: 233). Given the new 'fervour' for meta-theory, it has been for others to tease out the implications of a more theoretically informed approach to qualitative empirical research on religion in context. Sutcliffe (2004), for instance, supports a grounded, critical realist and 'worldly' model of religion which does not already assume its data, and moves back and forth from the particular to the general, deconstructing any idealized norms associated with the idea of 'World Religions'.ⁱⁱⁱ

Amongst those who have worked on religion in British Asian diasporas, Knott's (2005) more recent work has drawn upon spatial theorists such as Lefebvre, De Certeau, Massey and Foucault. She argues that the study of religion must always begin inductively with particular locations (be they physical, social, textual, or virtual). An interpretative analysis rather than a systematic model, Knott's spatial

analysis of religion underlines that distinctive yet dynamically interconnected dimensions of space can be discerned – the physical (i.e. material and embodied), mental (i.e. symbolic and imagined), and social (i.e. relational). Space also possesses certain properties: distinctive localized configurations; simultaneous production by multi-local and trans-local forces elsewhere; extension back and forth beyond a single moment in time; and reproduction and contest of uneven and unstable power relations. Thus locating religion in these terms represents a:

movement away from the modernist regime of collecting, classifying, comparing, and typologising data on religion towards seeing religion as a dynamic and engaged part of a complex social environment or habitat, which is itself criss-crossed with wider communications and power relations. (Knott 2005: 119)

Seeing a new opportunity, then, for theoretical reflection on at least three decades of writing about British Asian cities, this chapter pursues the idea that spatial dynamics are frequently configured in such a way that they re-inscribe dominant institutional formations of religion in specific locations and across different scales. Recalling our remarks at the outset of this chapter, a spatial approach also allows for the recognition of demotic discourse and practice or what Knott calls ‘new geographies of religion ... which look beyond the officially religious, and are sensitive to differences in context, aesthetics, scale, constituency, dialectics and morality’ (2005: 122). Thus, we aim to reveal more clearly the particular sorts of

work that the category of religion and its cognates do in the hands of differently positioned constituencies, as well as assessing its potential to analyse changing patterns of diasporic consciousness and practice. Moving between vignettes from the five city events and reflections based on selected texts, we schematize the location of religion in terms of four characteristic spatial scales / socio-cultural processes of British Asian identification: i) urban settlement and the dynamics of religio-ethnic fusion-fission-fusion in the formation of neighbourhood congregations and communities; ii) public regulation and recognition by the local/national state in multicultural politics and policy-making; iii) multi-local and trans-local religious networks and activism which sustains diasporic and more cosmopolitan circuits of religious connection and imagination; and iv) less organized syncretic and hybridizing formations, both collective and more individualized, which resist dominant relations of power and constructions of religion.

Urban Settlement, Social Divisions and Re-Traditionalizing Religious Community

At the Bradford event a participant spoke about an oral history project based at Howard Street mosque, the first in Bradford (1959). Opened in a terraced house, the mosque was attended by both East and West Pakistanis from different *biradaris* (patri-lineal kinship groups), regions and sectarian traditions. After prayers on Sunday afternoon, English speakers amongst the gathering would translate official documentation for their peers and address

their letters home. However, in 1968, Pathans and Panjabis from Chhachh took control of the mosque and installed a Deobandi as their first full-time imam, a development which catalysed the foundation of several alternative Muslim institutions in the city.^{iv}

At the Leicester event a participant spoke about how, in contrast to the Gujarati Hindu temples of cities such as Leeds and Coventry, those in Leicester – the home of Britain’s first *mandir* - have been much larger, supporting more elaborate ritual activities. Diwali celebrations in the city are also said to be the biggest in the UK, and at Navratri (‘nine nights’ of worship) large public venues such as the De Montfort Hall host *Garba* (dance, ‘play’) in the Vaishnavite tradition. However, despite corporate sponsorship from Sony Asia and their attractiveness to young people who weave in their own Bollywood-inspired improvisations, such events are also *jati* (caste) exclusive affairs. Another participant reported that in Uganda going to Hindu festivals was the norm for him as a Muslim, a convivial practice lost in the English East Midlands.

The increasingly elaborate domes and minarets of mosques, *mandirs* and *gurdwaras* remain amongst the most tangible symbols of the physical presence of South Asians in postcolonial Britain (Peach and Gale 2003). Alongside restaurants, grocers, cloth houses and movie rental stores, they form part of the ‘institutional completeness’ so often described as characteristic of the UK inner-

city neighbourhoods successively colonized and transformed for centuries by different waves of immigrants. Whereas in the early years of settlement Victorian terraces were appropriated for the remaking of sacred space, some institutions are now purpose-built and cathedral-like. While such institutions conspicuously re-map the landscapes (and sometimes the soundscapes) of UK cities, their iconic signage and scripts only hint at the complex reconfigurations and struggles involved in the public remaking of religious dwelling places that so often make diasporas feel at home abroad.

The Bradford vignette hints at why the idea of a congregation has become more significant for all traditions in diaspora, with public meetings for worship imagining continuity with home as well as providing access to ‘safe’ multi-functional spaces that serve a wide range of social needs. Amongst the highest centres of communal value, huge voluntary investments have been made both in terms of financial and human capital. Such investments were often accelerated by the desire to transmit homeland traditions to young people born and schooled in what earlier generations often regarded as the permissive culture of Britain. However, as the Leicester vignette suggests, in late modernity, ritual practices labelled ‘traditional’ have also been elaborated in novel ways. Events in both cities raised important questions, too, about how religious discourse is deployed for the purposes of inclusion/ exclusion by more or less dominant constituencies. The vignettes from Bradford and Leicester illuminate the dynamic shift from religio-ethnic fusion to fission which has shaped residential patterns and

community formation amongst South Asian settlers regardless of their migration histories and cultural capital. Indeed, where configurations of local populations allowed, the initial suspension (or negotiation) of regional, caste and sectarian differences soon gave way to struggles between different factions. This making and remaking of the boundaries of 'community' often invoked religiously sanctified hierarchies and relations of power, ultimately leading to the formation of multiple, new institutions.^v

As suggested in the introduction, the most detailed and sustained documentation of the early stages of such processes in Britain is contained in the first monographs published as part of the CRP at the University of Leeds. Such was the secularity of thinking in the academy per se and, moreover, the predominance of disciplinary agendas in terms of race and ethnicity, that sociologists, and even anthropologists, writing on South Asian migrants in Britain were not much interested in religion. Following fieldwork from the mid to late 1970s into the 1980s, four CRP accounts were published documenting the migration and settlement of Gujaratis, Panjabis, Bengalis and East Africans settled in Leeds and Bradford (Knott 1986a; Barton 1986; Bowen 1988; Kalsi 1992). Working explicitly within modernist paradigms of phenomenology and the history of religions, yet built upon long periods of participation and observation, insider accounts of newly transplanted religious formations were recorded and described in great detail. Some studies also began to problematize the relationship between religion, ethnicity and identity, while Knott proposed a much cited and elaborated

framework (Vertovec 2000: 21-3; Hinnells 1997; 2005) mapping the various factors contributing to 'new patterns and forms' (1986a: 10) of transplanted religion.^{vi}

Drawing attention to the significance of locality for institutionalisation, Knott's (1986a) *Hinduism in Leeds* describes the compromise and fusion that takes place in diaspora when that space is shared with ethnic 'Others' from the same broad tradition. As in anthropological and some sociological accounts of the time, ethnic affiliation is clearly the determining frame in all the CRP monographs studies, suggesting the importance of religion in reinforcing the construction of ethnic boundaries. Hindus in Leeds were divided in terms of the general attitudes to religiosity amongst Panjabis and East African Gujaratis respectively. The former saw themselves - and were seen by others - as 'less religious', for example, in terms of attitudes to drinking, smoking and generally 'having fun'. Cross-cutting religious community, Panjabi Hindus were also happy to marry Panjabi Sikhs. However, while the Hindu temple that they shared became an important expression of, and vehicle for, competing ethnicities, circumstances in Leeds forced the two groupings to compromise in producing a temple ritual that was subject to a process of selective 'standardisation' (1986: 231; cf. Smart 1987).

While such standardization was partly an attempt to accommodate particular regional traditions, it was also a simple adaptation to the restrictions and compartmentalization imposed in terms of new concepts of time and space,

climate and calendar, work and leisure, in the Leeds environment. Overall, Knott demonstrates that standardization meant more of an emphasis on high caste practices and universal tropes of *sanatanadharmā* (eternal religion). Hindu nationalist organizations are mentioned as playing a role in these processes but this is not explored in special depth. However, Knott does explore diverse Hindu trends, citing activities associated with local vernacular traditions outside the temple. Moreover, she concludes that developments at the institution were driven by a new self-consciousness of minority status and the need to present a united front to the outside world: ‘temple religion in Leeds, or *sanatandharma*, is a form of retraditionalization in which common religious beliefs and practices rather than ethnic elements are employed in the process of group presentation’ (1986: 237).

Highlighting how, in closely related but differently configured locations, institutional religion can also become a vehicle for ethnic fission and exclusion as well as resistance to such processes, Kalsi’s (1992) *The Evolution of a Sikh Community in Britain* provides an account of the Chamars of Bradford, who like significant numbers of Panjabi ‘Sikhs’ and ‘Hindus’ in Britain are a Dalit caste. While the Chamars raised funds for the original Sikh *gurdwara* (established 1964), by 1968 an argument had broken out with the dominant Jat caste grouping. The Chamars were discouraged from preparing food in the *langar* (communal kitchen) and eventually told to remove their pans. Visiting Chamar speakers were also refused the right to address the congregation. This prompted the formation of a Chamar caste association in Bradford, the Ravidas Sabha, and eventually, the

establishment of a Ravidasi *bhawan* (religious institution), emulating the first Ravidasi *gurdwara* in Britain, established in Wolverhampton in 1968.^{vii}

As Leslie (2003: 64) argues in *Authority and Meaning in Indian Religions*, a study of a 'religious' furore which began with a caste-based slight in Birmingham,^{viii} the categories 'Sikh' and 'Hindu' are routinely associated with higher castes in Panjab while Dalits' membership of such groups is qualified by others as 'Mazhabi' ('converted' Sikhs) or 'Achut' ('untouchable' Hindus). Thus caste based solidarities routinely supersede those of religion although Dalits' public identification as such remains a sensitive matter and tends to be avoided (Leslie 2003: 72-3). Indeed, against this context of prejudice and marginalisation, caste labels have generally been replaced by religious labels such as 'Ravidasi' or 'Valmiki'. Dalits rarely describe themselves as part of the established traditions but have long since employed syncretic religious beliefs and practices to resist exclusion (cf. Jurgensmeyer 1982; Nesbitt 1994; Searle-Chatterjee 2008). Indeed, while rupturing the bounded systems suggested by the idea of 'World Religions', across the generations religion has remained perhaps their most powerful mythic, ritual and symbolic resource to narrate and imagine alternative moral orders. However, it is unclear whether the Ravidasis and Valmikis will eventually decide - or feel compelled - to opt for the more universalized labels of 'Sikh' and 'Hindu' which 'make sense' to the British state and wider society,^{ix} as well as to a growing number of the British-born and educated in their own constituencies.

As noted in the introduction, theoretical discussions were comparatively limited in early CRP publications (McLoughlin 2005a). Highlighting a consonance between religion as a reified scholarly construct and its articulation in right-wing religious nationalism, Searle-Chatterjee (2000) subsequently went so far as to argue that ethnography in both Anthropology and Religious Studies uncritically reproduced religious traditions as essentialized categories, isolating them from wider social and political forces. However, a close reading of the CRP texts suggests that while raising a number of important issues, Searle-Chatterjee's critique does not always do justice to the fact that the political reach of the religious right was much less in the 1980s than in the 1990s, not least in diaspora contexts where the coherence achieved in the subcontinent was rarely replicated (cf. McLoughlin 2005c; Zavos 2010). Moreover, while they do not reflect a postcolonial analysis, CRP texts do begin to provide important evidence as to why universalizing constructions of religion have become so salient in contexts of migration, as well as considering conflict and division in terms of region, caste and sect, and the fact of shared practices. Certainly, the CRP began to take Religious Studies beyond the dominant World Religions paradigm, arguing that the shape of Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism in Britain could not simply be deduced from normative histories (Barton 1986). Moreover, as Baumann (1996; 1999) suggests in his study of Asian Southall, *Contesting Culture: Discourses of identity in multi-ethnic London*, it is problematic simply to dismiss essentializing dominant discourses, as Searle-Chatterjee seems to, because, along with more demotic discourses, they form part of people's multiple discursive competencies.

The State, Multiculturalism and Public Recognition of Religious Identities

A speaker at Birmingham provided an architectural reading of the city's mosques in which a narrative emerged about Islam and Muslims moving from the margins to the centre of civic life, as large, purpose-built mosques had become part of the multicultural façade of public space.

Various contributors in Bradford identified a shift in the ethnic politics of the city: from the Black radicalism of the mid to late 1970s and early 1980s, as characterized by the Asian Youth Movement (AYM), to the predominance of religious organizations and issues from the early 1980s and into the 1990s, as characterized by the formation of the Bradford Council for Mosques (1981) and similar organizations amongst Hindus and Sikhs (1984/5). The role of the local state in this shift was emphasized as a significant factor.

A session at Manchester on the way in which religious communities had been 'written' in the city through the work of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and the development of the Religious Education (RE) syllabus provided the context for a presentation by a representative of the Local Education Authority. The role of 'faith' in the development of community relations was strongly emphasized. This theme was supported by the presentation of a former member of the

SACRE, also a member of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), in which the contribution of Hinduism as a tolerant and all-encompassing tradition was developed.^x

Set against the maturation of multi-generational British Asian communities during the 1980s, the vignettes above tell a story of the growing public significance of ‘religion’ and ‘faith’ in terms of local and national debates about the politics of multiculturalism. Across the five workshops this idea has been expressed so ubiquitously that we might see the discursive move from ‘race to religion’ as a definite trend, a key narrative in the construction of British Asian city spaces. Historically, it is clear from Lewis’s (1994a), CRP-related, account that with Muslim calls for *halal* (ritually slaughtered) meat in schools, religion began to gain greater prominence in the community relations of cities like Bradford during the 1980s, while at the same time Sikhs in Birmingham were fighting a turban campaign (*Mandla versus Dowell Lee*, 1983; one of a number since the 1960s) on the grounds of indirect ethnic (if not religious) discrimination (Singh and Tatla 2006: 132-3). While the Bradford vignette also calls attention to the formation of localized Muslim, Hindu and Sikh umbrella organizations, more recently organizations such as the Muslim Council of Britain, the Hindu Council UK and the Network of Sikh Organizations have emerged on the national level (McLoughlin 2005c; Zavos 2008, 2009; Singh and Tatla 2006). Indeed, into the early 2000s, a ‘faith relations industry’ emerged under New Labour, extending a discourse on ‘faith’ hitherto confined mainly to interfaith dialogue and RE. As

Nye (2000) and Mandair (2006) suggest of postcolonial Britain just as much as colonial India, then, a key force in constructions of religion as the main site for legitimate identity is the state.^{xi}

Even in the early 1980s, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1982) was critical of the ways in which ethnography was insufficiently attentive to the role of the state in shaping the realities of race and ethnic relations. While Werbner and Anwar's (1991) *Black and Ethnic Leaderships* represents an important response to such critiques in Anthropology, nothing similar exists in the CRP tradition of Religious Studies (hence Searle-Chatterjee's 2000 critique). Indeed, it was only the Rushdie Affair and the subsequent challenges of a Muslim identity politics in 1990s Britain that revealed the complex relationship between a largely secular nation-state and civil society, the established church and ethnic minorities organizing primarily in terms of religion. In *Multicultural Politics* (2005), a follow up to *Not Easy Being British* (1992), Tariq Modood, a key commentator on such matters for two decades, argues that attempts to reconcile a discourse of racial equality with the emergence of a politics of cultural difference, created a 'double demand' for both equality and difference in Britain (2005: 29-30). However, his body of work has highlighted the significance of religion as a marker in the struggle to authenticate South Asian identifications distinct from the silences of political blackness. This has made Modood's work unpopular in some scholarly/ political circles. Elsewhere, he also reports that representatives of South Asian religious traditions in the UK have tended to support the continuing

establishment of the Church of England, if only as a relatively safe means of maintaining an official space for religion in public life (Modood 1997). However, with the Race Relations Act of 1976 offering legal protection from racial and ethnic but not religious discrimination (a situation remedied by new if rather weak legislation in 2006/7), Modood shows that whereas religion may primarily be a question of individual choice for the (post)Christian, white majority, this is not true for most British Asians, for whom it is still most often an aspect of group descent. This exposes the limits of liberal claims about the neutrality of secularism; the perceived shift from race to faith must be qualified by an acknowledgement that some constructions of religion remain a kind of proxy for race, or suggest the ‘racialization of religion’ (cf. Anthias and Yuval Davis 1993).

One way in which British Asian diasporas have long encountered the state is in terms of planning, a set of processes which have inscribed religious institutions in the archives of local government. As a session on urban aesthetics at Birmingham demonstrated, the apparent public recognition of British Asian religion in urban localities is also a story of bitter objections to planning applications (Eade 1996; Gale 2005). Objections have either been overtly expressed in racist terms, or more subliminally in terms of ‘fit’ with cultural heritage or through mundane concerns such as traffic congestion (Nye 2001; Gale and Naylor 2002). As Nye’s (2001) account of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness’s mobilization concerning Bhaktivedanta Manor in a Hertfordshire country house illustrates, such objections have been increasingly met with a sophisticated and sometimes

highly co-ordinated response from religious organizations. Moreover, for at least a couple of decades, religious buildings have also been incorporated into the state's own (exoticized) writing of urban space as 'multicultural' in marketing projects (Gale and Naylor 2002: 405). However, Gale's work on recent planning applications in Birmingham (2008) demonstrates a significant twist here. Applications for purpose-built places of worship are now received more sympathetically than those which continue to seek change of use for smaller, neighbourhood buildings such as terraces or de-consecrated churches. In effect, this mitigates against highly localized provision, particularly for Muslims who might visit a place of worship a number of times in a day.

More generally, Baumann's (1998) work on 'encorporation' demonstrates how the local state in Britain provides opportunities for culturally-defined organizations to compete with each other for resources in order to deliver micro-services such as advice centres and child-care provision. Indeed, social and educational services and Community Relations Councils have produced a range of policy documents which effectively incorporate South Asian heritage communities as 'religious communities'. Baumann argues that the local state has consistently supported religious groups, both as a conservative and domesticated bulwark against radical movements such as the AYM, and on the basis of a colonially inspired emphasis on South Asian culture as fundamentally religious (cf. Knott 1986a: 53). Whereas Baumann draws on his aforementioned ethnography of Southall (1996), the Bradford vignette is indicative of a similar

process there. The Local Authority was not only an active agent in the formation of the BCM, but materially supported this organization and its powerful community leaders, pushing the more youthful and secular AYM to the margins (Samad 1997: 247-8; cf. Lewis 1994a).

Critiques of the state's incorporation of religion take many forms. In the wake of the Rushdie Affair, the Women Against Fundamentalism collective's *Refusing Holy Orders* challenged the way in which multiculturalism sanctified the versions of religion advanced by patriarchal leaders and movements, so reinforcing power relations within ethnicized communities (Sahgal and Yuval-Davis 1992; see also Tomalin this volume).^{xiii} A decade later, as New Labour's attack on multiculturalism gathered pace in the wake of the 'Northern' riots and '9/11', Ouseley's (2001) report, *Community Pride not Prejudice*, suggests that 'self-segregation' and low levels of integration are also, in part, an outcome of such processes: 'Political leadership has been weak in kowtowing to community leadership and operating within a 'doing deals' culture to avoid 'disturbances' and to 'keep the peace'' (2001: 10). Minority [that is, Muslim] religious leaders are targeted obliquely, too, as being 'responsible' for perpetuating: 'the belief that it [self-segregation] is the only way to promote, retain and protect faith and cultural identity and affiliation' (2001: 10).

Despite Muslim communities seemingly exhibiting the 'wrong' sorts of 'bonding' capital in towns like Bradford, Oldham and Burnley, and even while Preventing

Violent Extremism initiatives focus on ‘radical’ Islam after ‘7/7’, under New Labour especially British social and political life has been marked by a new and sustained interest in the ‘bridging’ and ‘linking’ capital of ‘faith’ (cf. Putnam 2000). Driven by elements within both national government and the civic-minded Anglican Church since the late 1980s (Taylor 2002), and in addition to a new religion question in the national census since 2001, there has been a steady stream of documentation emphasizing that ‘relations between faith communities – and in turn between faith communities and local government – can make a significant contribution to promoting community cohesion’ (Local Government Association 2002: Foreword). Here faith is perceived by the state as a resource for developing converging values and shared civility in the service of the nation, values said to be enshrined in the ‘core teaching’ of the major religions of the UK: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism. It is this regularized idea of religion, rooted in a World Religions discourse and ‘established’ models of church-state relations, which was expressed so strongly in the Manchester session on RE, and it points us towards another key force in the writing of religion in British Asian localities: transnational organizations.

Resisting Globalized Modernity? Transnational Religious Organizations and Imaginaries

The Birmingham workshop took place at the imposing Nishkam Civic Association on Soho Road, the UK headquarters of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ). A representative of the GNNSJ hosted the

event, speaking eloquently about the role of the Centre in providing a local resource for holistic physical and spiritual regeneration in the tradition of Sikh spirituality and service. He also emphasized connections between the Soho Road Centre and those in other parts of Britain, as well as the Panjab, East Africa and North America.

In a panel on local politics ‘in and beyond the local state’, also at Birmingham, one contributor described his involvement in neighbourhood gangs resisting racial assaults in the 1970s and early 1980s. From this position of local ‘big man’, the contributor described how an Islamic consciousness inspired during the Bosnian conflict of the 1990s saw him become committed to actively resisting the persecution of Muslim brothers and sisters worldwide.

In the late modern age of accelerated globalization, where time and space are increasingly compressed by communications technology, British Asian cities represent key nodes in the construction of a wide range of networks and religioscapes which extend beyond the scales of both the local and the national (Appadurai 1996; cf. Knott 2005). New consciousness of the world as ‘a single place’ has increasingly enabled religious organizations to operate internationally amongst dispersed co-ethnics and co-religionists. While for many decades religious teachers in all traditions have toured Britain, preaching to followers, gathering funds and initiating projects, and while UK based devotees made

pilgrimages overseas during the same period (James 1974; McLoughlin 2009b), since the 1980s especially the more or less instant magnification of distant events by the global media has seen diasporic religious constituencies mobilize in support of causes in the homeland and beyond. From the storming of the Golden Temple at Amritsar in 1984 (Tatla 1999; Singh and Tatla 2006), through the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992 (Kundu 1994; Burlet and Reid 1998; Bhatt 1997), to the more recent wars in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 (Abbas 2005, 2007), what Anderson (1992) described as ‘long distance nationalism’ has taken a number of (often highly factionalized) forms including fundraising and charitable giving, lobbying governments and international human rights organizations, exploiting the media (new and old), as well as more directly militant activities. In this section, then, we are interested in how complex exchanges and flows, set against uneven global relations of power, constitute what we see as distinctive circuits and imaginaries of multi-locality and trans-locality (cf. Vertovec 2000, 2004), thus revealing the ‘writing’ of religion in quite contradictory ways.

The first vignette reflects upon the Nishkam Centre and the global religious *sant* or saint-led organization behind it, the GNNSJ, first formed in Leeds during the 1970s by Baba Puran Singh from Kericho in Kenya (Kalsi 1992: 79-81; Singh and Tatla 2006: 75). Articulating a particular kind of spiritual resistance to contemporary problems, the Centre representative explained that whereas in the 1970s and 1980s British Asians confronted a ‘clear enemy’ in the form of overt and institutional

racism, he saw current threats in terms of the alienating impact on identity of permissive global capitalist culture. The Nishkam Centre consequently focuses on making Sikh tradition accessible as a resource for spiritual regeneration, with the associated gurdwaras of the GNNSJ having a reputation as ‘models of good practice’ in this regard (cf. Singh and Tatla 2006: 92). Articulated in the familiar register of World Religions - ‘Eastern religions’ being particularly identified with spirituality - and directed against a non-specific ‘enemy’, this kind of resistance resonates with some dominant discourses of the UK nation-state. As with the VHP’s projection of tolerant universal religion at the Manchester workshop (see also Zavos 2010), the emphasis of the GNNSJ on global spirituality can quite readily accommodate itself to the project of community cohesion, multiculturalism and good faith relations including the hosting of interfaith events.^{xiii}

The multi-local dimensions of such agendas for spiritual resistance were dramatically expressed at the Nishkam Centre through its connectedness to GNNSJ centres worldwide. Video-conference facilities in Birmingham and localities in Kenya, India and beyond enable real-time meetings of the organization and its members. There is also an online TV channel (www.gnnsj.tv/). The heart of this network was represented as a large and technologically sophisticated building in the Sikh homeland of Amritsar. In and through this network, then, a vision of the Sikh community is imagined which is at once a part of, and yet providing a dissenting alternative to, the trajectories of contemporary globalization. Notably, however, this vision maps very clearly onto the diasporic networks created by migration from

Panjab and settlement in places like Kericho and Birmingham. It suggests a particular kind of global religious imaginary, configured through the resonant certainties of known multi-local spaces: networks of language, place and kin, the visibility of familiar cultural signs and symbols, and a distinctive historical consciousness (cf. Cohen 1997/2008).

While these certainties, interwoven with the ideas of global spirituality and moral resistance noted above, sit comfortably with the concerns of the state, other forms of religious resistance to globalized modernity are far less readily accommodated. These tend to transgress some of the certainties of both multiculturalism and the discourse of religion or faith as a cohesive and integrative force. Like the Rushdie Affair and the more recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the second vignette suggests how the Bosnian war catalyzed a new consciousness of global Islamic identity for one participant who had previously been preoccupied with ethno-national horizons.^{xiv} The former Guantanamo detainee, Moazzam Begg (2006), who was raised in Birmingham of Pakistani parentage, has told a very similar story in his autobiography, *Enemy Combatant*. In this regard, McLoughlin notes that ‘the power of a localized politics that speaks in the name of the *ummah* [trans-local community of Islam] is precisely in its construction of a community that goes beyond the local and the national to the global...’ providing a source of authority to ‘say something about the world today from a position that is not centred on the West’ (1996: 223).

This glocalized self-positioning of certain British Asian subjectivities as avowedly ‘Muslim’ is explored in McLoughlin’s (1996) ethnography of a charity dinner in Bradford during 1994. Intended to raise funds for Muslim communities suffering the effects of the conflict in Kashmir as well as Bosnia, the dinner was arranged by a committee of local businessmen, frustrated by the West’s seeming lack of interest in these crises. While the businessmen simply appealed to self-help as a religious duty, most of the speeches at the dinner – delivered by representatives of various internationally-networked Islamist organizations based in the UK^{xv} - were marked by a more radicalizing agenda. The *ummah* was consistently invoked as the principle arena of responsibility for all Muslims everywhere, a site of necessary and active resistance both to particular, explicit persecution and a more generalized sense of victimization of, and conspiracy against, Islam.

McLoughlin interprets the appeal of such radicalizing rhetoric as grounded in resistance to localized forms of exclusion: ‘the continued disenfranchisement of Muslims [in Britain] can be seen as contributing to their desire to invite speakers who could “turn the world inside out” (Gilsenan: 1982) by imagining an empowering alternative ... to that of Muslims’ excluders’ (1996: 221). In this representation of Muslim identity in Bradford, then, the idea of a trans-locality is articulated as an alternative (and utopian) moral space exceeding the limits of their exclusionary context - the experience of migrant / minority status. The dinner temporarily and rhetorically writes Bradford Muslims as part of an amorphous global imaginary of the *ummah* (cf. McLoughlin 2010). Familiar

multi-local diasporic circuits were partly visible in the emphasis on Kashmir, but greatly overlaid and extended by the trans-local focus on Bosnia, an unfamiliar land- and ethno-scape for most South Asian Muslims. Moreover, the limits of religion as 'faith' were also transgressed, with constructions of a self-sufficient and activist Islamic identity cutting across the idea of religion as a site of passive compassion or underlying spiritual values.

Between Religion and non-Religion: Demotic Traditions and Utterances

In Tower Hamlets, an elderly male participant spoke in Bangla (with translation) about his passion for Baul singing and composing. Inspired by the Sufi Muslim-Vaishnavite Hindu popular religious culture of the wandering *fakirs* of rural Bengal, he emphasized the pleasure he still gains from its moving mystical and humanistic poetry – 'Singing is the best prayer to God [and] serving humanity is the best sort of spirituality'.

However, he also complained that in Tower Hamlets there was no recognition of - or investment in supporting - this tradition, although others added that the music and song of the Bauls was at the root of many new forms of urban music that have become popular in diaspora.

At Birmingham a representative of the Nishkam centre explained why it was not appropriate to perform Bhangra in the spiritual space of the centre. As discussion continued, he contrasted the 'questionable' morality of Bhangra with the devotional tradition of singing *Kirtan* (hymns). Nevertheless, the

relationship between Bhangra's folk origins and more overtly religious / spiritual musical and dance forms in Panjab was an important part of the discussion. A participant spoke about the way in which Bhangra had created semi-autonomous spaces for Asian youth, both men and women, to express themselves as individuals away from the gaze of disapproving elders. He himself perceived Bhangra in part as a form of spiritual release cross-cutting different traditions.

Rooted in the criss-crossing regional traditions of Bengal and Panjab, both these accounts call attention to the embodied practice of religiosities and spiritualities in shared popular cultural forms. The vignettes also suggest how, when routed through the epistemological frames of globalized modernity, the religious dimensions of music and dance, as well as poetry and folk cosmologies, often struggle to come into representation. Recalling our introductory remarks, this section, then, brings us finally to what Mandair calls 'religion-without-religion' (2006: 106) and the way that hybrid cultural forms and individualized subjectivities resist their marginalization and disciplining by secular nation-states, neo-orthodox movements and consumer capitalism. In contrast to the 'in-between' religious traditions of the Ravidasis and Valmikis who, as discussed earlier, eventually established their own institutions in response to exclusion and fission, consideration is given here to some of the less formally organized and readily institutionalized guises of religion. If the Baul tradition represents a more established syncretic tradition, we are also interested in more fleeting, fragmented

and individualized acts of ‘utterance’ (cf. Hall 1997: 33) which defy easy categorization.

The two vignettes provide momentary insight into this demotic British Asian mosaic of ‘religioning’ (Nye 2000), that is, the embedded cultural practice of ‘doing’ religion in particular locations. In Tower Hamlets, Bengalis opposed to institutional ‘fundamentalism’ (which they associated with the East London Mosque) nostalgically valorized a syncretic, socially and spiritually radical tradition as the heart of spirituality in rural Bengal.^{xvi} However, the Baul singer’s complaints about a lack of public recognition and resources suggested a stark contrast between this valorization of the spiritual and the present-day experience of this traditional exponent of the art form. The singing of Bauls, in this sense, had a double location, constructed both as an iconic and yet now marginalized religious formation – caught, as it were, in the act of transmission. In Birmingham, while trying to defend against any suspicion of fundamentalism, a representative of the GNNSJ drew the religion/non-religion boundary very clearly between the devotions of *Kirtan* and what he and some others saw as the decadence of contemporary MTV-style ‘gangsta’ Bhangra. Enquiring whether the two were inevitably in tension, others at the event sought – again, somewhat nostalgically - to excavate a common Panjabi folk origin which drew less of a distinction between religion and non-religion. At the same time, the assertion of a Bhangra-based spirituality of the self by some participants was evidence of new and highly individualized translations of this tradition in the very ‘fabric of the

secular’ (cf. Knott 2005), something unrecognizable in the institutional context of the Nishkam Centre.

Elaborating the ‘TranslAsian’ (Kaur and Kalra 1996: 233) journeys of the musical forms identified in such ‘utterances’, Ashwani Sharma describes a music shop not far from the Nishkam Centre along Birmingham’s Soho Road. There he describes ‘Apache Indian being drowned out by the frenzied poetry of the great Qawwal Aziz Mian’ (1996: 15). Sharma highlights the processes of erasure intrinsic to the packaging and marketing of the world music scene, through which the Sufi roots of Qawwali are lost in hybridizing and commoditizing processes which ‘reduce the music to an aesthetic form’ (1996: 24). At the same time, he sees ‘potential subversion’ in Aziz Mian’s performance with post-punk, post-Bhangra, rappers Fun-Da-Mental (1996b: 29). This entangled intersection of ‘ecstatic poetics ... with ... militant rhetorics ... disrupts any easy exegesis’ (1996: 30), while at the same time finding an activist convergence between the subversive socio-critical spirituality of Panjab’s Sufi-Sant tradition and Aki Nawaz’s Islamist-influenced lyrics.

Sharma’s identification is a rare indication of the kind of utterance that needs to be analysed in the context of re-thinking British Asian ‘religioning’. Elsewhere Ballard (2006) documents the presence of popular Islamic traditions in Britain, explaining that the more spiritual and occult dimensions of Panjabi popular belief and practice have been translocated alongside more formal aspects of religiosity

associated with the mosque. While it was often the poetry and music of the Sufi-Sant tradition that provided psychological and spiritual succour to early migrants (2006: 176), most settlers who find themselves facing intractable personal difficulties – in particular women - continue to turn to folk practices grounded in vernacular cosmologies for support. ‘Slowly but surely’, Ballard notes, ‘the whole panoply of popular practice in rural Panjab is steadily being recreated in Britain’ (2006: 180). In the same way, Knott’s CRP account of Hinduism in Leeds flags ‘unorganised religion’ in the private / domestic space especially (1986a: 157f, 168).^{xvii} Such demotic, embodied practices are also described, for example, in Nadeem Aslam’s (2004) novel, *Maps for Lost Lovers*, set in the untranslatable English town of *Dasht-e-Tanhai*. Amongst his characters is the indefatigable Kaukab whose religiosity is bound up with regional oral traditions, vernacular rituals and vows seeking relief from *kismet* (matters concerning fate).

Academic work, however, tends to focus on what Ballard (2006: 180) describes as the ‘recreation’ of Panjabi religiosity in Britain – the overwhelming emphasis on continuity in the face of change amongst first generation migrants. Against such a context, second and third generation British Asians are generally portrayed as resisting such processes. The present chapter, however, begins to point the way towards a greater recognition of collective and individual British Asian experience in spaces not normally associated with the discourse of ‘religion’ such as the Bhangra gig or music shop. Another key site is the ubiquitous multicultural *mela* (fair). Although this space has been analyzed from the point of view of its

projection as ‘heritage multiculturalism’ (Bhattacharyya 1998), the mela may also be viewed as a multi-layered ‘fun’ space in which a variety of dominant and demotic discourses and practices intersect, become entangled and sometimes clash, as the following field-notes from Bradford suggest:

The Aissawa Sufi brotherhood from Morocco were performing on stage and producing a rather different version of Islam than the representatives of Hizb ut-Tahrir, who had set up a small public address system and were lecturing Muslims on ‘not dancing to the Sikh Bhangra music’ of XLNC. As with the Qawwalis that weekend, the Moroccans entertained and were appreciated by an audience that was both Muslim and non-Muslim. Elderly Sikhs waddled forward and offered £5 and £10 notes as the *dhikr* (remembrance, repetition of the name of God) bellowed out ‘*Allah, Allah*’. As some people danced at the front, encouraged by the musicians on stage, a young black-African Muslim woman dressed in *hijab* caught the eye of one of the men dancing. After a moment’s hesitation, she decided to join them. (McLoughlin 1995)

Werbner (2004) contrasts hybrid ‘fun’ spaces based on a shared South Asian popular culture of music, dance, film, celebrity, fashion and food with the focus on purity in spaces of institutionalized religion. Giving expression to the agency and autonomy of young people in particular, the former can be deeply critical of the parochialism and conservatism of the male leaderships associated with the latter. While Werbner’s analysis is not concerned with the non-institutionalized

guises of religion, our focus on demotic traditions and utterances here suggests that there may be ways of analysing more ludic vehicles for 'religioning' in British Asian cities.

Conclusions: Rethinking Religion in the British Asian City

This chapter began by noting the comparative lack of theorization on religion in writing about South Asians in Britain. Our intention has been both to reflect on this lacuna and to explore the potential of theoretical advances in the study of religion during the last decade or so. Thus, we have examined the way in which the category of 'religion' has been deployed in terms of four characteristic spaces/scales/ processes of British Asian identity construction: i) urban settlement and the formation of congregations and communities; ii) interaction with the state and wider society as part of a politics of regulation/recognition; iii) globalization, differentiated transnational networks and their associated imaginaries; iv) the everyday hybridization of demotic traditions and popular culture. The analysis has pointed up the significance of location and scale in situating religion within such a matrix and, to recall Knott (2005), has demonstrated its changing physical, mental and social configuration in time as well as space, its production by multi-local and trans-local forces, as well as its use and abuse by various embodied constituencies operating on terrain characterized by uneven relations of power.

CRP research in the 1970s and 1980s exemplifies the idea that religion is a key resource for the recreation of homeland traditions amongst British Asians in the

alien landscapes of migration. It posits religion as the most effective 'marker' of minority identity vis-à-vis wider society, even as insider accounts of 'community' develop contextually through stages of fusion-fission-fusion. What Knott (1986: 237) calls 'retraditionalisation' is not simply a process of cultural reproduction or 'refusal to change', as sometimes suggested, but rather 'a dynamic adaptation strategy' which deploys the powerful symbolic continuity of religious tradition to reinvent home 'in the undeniable face of change' (McLoughlin, 2005a: 539). As McLoughlin also remarks, 'Backed by 'sacred' authority, religious boundaries would seem to provide ... less readily negotiable, vehicles for the articulation of distinctiveness than those associated with the customs of particular peoples and places' (2005a: 538-9). Interestingly, with reference to the Ravidasis as well as Hindus and Sikhs, the CRP material provides examples of this strategic essentialism occurring in ways which both affirm and challenge the World Religions paradigm. This points towards a consideration of the developing role of religion in the construction of achieved British Asian 'modes of being' (Modood 2005), beyond that of a simple marker of ethnicity or caste.

This dynamism is also evident in the growing but ambivalent location of religion in the postcolonial state's imaginings of British Asian identities. Both scholarship and social policy reflect on the state's active incorporation of dominant and conservative religious forces as part of the multicultural recognition of ethnic 'communities' from the 1980s. More recently, however, the rash of government-commissioned reports which followed the unrest in northern towns in 2001

(Denham 2002; Cattle 2001; Ritchie 2001), identified the ‘bonding’ capital of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage Muslims in particular as having a sizeable role in fostering segregation. Yet, as we have noted, an emerging narrative of religion as a language of community cohesion is also evident in government documentation related to the ‘faith relations industry’. Signalling a general shift from ‘race to religion’ as arguably the primary marker of difference in late modern British society, faith is projected here as ‘bridging’ capital – a universal signifier and common denominator based upon ideas such as respect for difference and pan-cultural spirituality. The tension between separatism and cohesion, bonding and bridging capital, is aptly represented in a statement recorded at a conference held by the Department of Environment’s Inner Cities Religious Council during the mid-1990s: ‘religions are divisive, but faith and ideals unite, by sharing values’ (Taylor 2002: 268).

In the literature on globalization, there has been a tendency to represent all religious movements as particularistic and sterile, a fundamentalist and right-wing reaction to the homogenizing and relativizing effects of (post)modernity (Hall 1992; Beyer 1994). From a different perspective, however, the mass media, travel and consumer capitalism have all become the very means by which the ‘extraterritorial’ dimensions of religion as ‘the original globaliser’ really flourish (Lehmann 2001; Cohen 1997/2008: 188; Vasquez and Marquardt 2003: 17). Moreover, while multi-local organisations such as the GNNSJ appropriate the means of globalized modernity to enable networking across the continents, their

emphasis on universal spirituality actually converges in many ways with the UK's encouragement of good faith relations. By contrast, and set against the uneven geometry of postcolonial power relations from the Middle East to the Balkans, the idea of the *ummah* appears at present to be a powerful resource for some Asian Muslims to narrate an alternative moral and political order, mapping a trans-locality to rival the hegemonic universality of the West (cf. Sayyid 1997).

The glocalized dialectic of such universal rhetoric and everyday life in rooted locations is always ongoing. Settled normative traditions have very successfully overshadowed the 'composite origins' (Stewart and Shaw 1994: 18) of religions as hybrid, vernacular translations 'all the way down' (Vasquez and Marquardt 2003: 49, 226). In globalized modernity especially, ideas and practices associated with folk cosmologies such as Baul singing have also been subjected to re-categorization (and dismissal) as 'local custom'. However, the efficacy of transnational neo-orthodoxy has been shown to have many unintended consequences (Levitt 2001). At the same time, trends towards the de-centring of religious authority in new public spheres open up possibilities for the freedom and resistance both of emerging community identities and 'global individualisation' (Vasquez and Marquardt 2003: 39). So, while South Asian expressive cultures such as Bhangra have typically been commercialized in ways that are routinely marked as secular, challenging the religion-secular dichotomy enables a re-thinking of the spiritual potential of such cultural forms as a resource for self-identification.

Our examination of religion in narratives of British Asian identity formation emphasizes that religion is ‘a location for understanding a regime of knowledge-power’ (Carrette in Knott, 2005: 83) and that religious identity is ‘situational, based on syncretic and hybrid processes of construction and innovation’ (Nye 2001: 277). A focus on locality and location can also be particularly fruitful in developing a critical perspective ‘to those approaches which take ‘World Religions’ and generic religious categories and dimensions as their objects of study’ (Knott 2005: 123). Of course, the idea of World Religions and generic religious categories are plainly evident in the spaces we have examined. We have also noted the need to explore what Mandair (2006) identifies as the ‘unrecognisable’ dimensions of religion. Thus, in the same way that breaking through the category of ‘British Asian-ness’ produces ‘not a fusion but a confusion of the possibility of both terms’ (Sayyid 2006: 7), so, too, reflection on the writing of British Asian (or ‘BrAsian’) cities has provided us with an opportunity to ‘confuse’ the very categories of ‘religion’ and ‘non-religion’. Attention to the demotic recognizes the vitality of narratives, practices and identities which, in one way or another, exceed the powerful boundaries of what is understood, or ‘written’, as religion in late modern, postcolonial Britain

ⁱ See Knott (2009) on the CRP. Other early studies of South Asian religions in Britain include James (1974), Burghardt (1987) and Gerholm and Lithman (1988).

ⁱⁱ In many ways it shared a problem in common with the urban ethnicity paradigm in functionalist anthropology (Watson, 1977; Ballard, 1994), which for too long remained isolated from developments in neo-Marxist theory (CCCS, 1982; Eade 1996).

ⁱⁱⁱ This paradigm ‘conceptualizes religious ideas and practice as being configured by a series of major religious systems that can be clearly identified as having discrete characteristics... [and] their own historical agency’ (Suthren-Hirst and Zavos 2005: 5)

^{iv} Deobandism is a Sunni ‘*ulama*’ led reform movement of British India which emphasizes the importance of a self-disciplined responsibility for moral purification and ritual practice (Metcalf 1982).

^v Nevertheless, as we shall see in the next section, fusion was reasserted as local and national coalitions sought to present a common public front to the state and wider society.

^{vi} This can be summarised thus: i) home traditions; ii) host traditions; iii) nature of migration process; iv) nature of migrant group; v) nature of host response.

^{vii} (Guru) Ravi Das was a fourteenth-fifteenth century *sant* (saint) from a Chamar family in Uttar Pradesh. Critical of caste, his compositions are included in the Guru Granth Sahib.

^{viii} During February 2000, on Birmingham-based Radio XL, a presenter referred to Valmiki, author of the Sanskrit epic poem, the Ramayana, as a ‘dacoit’. This caused a furore amongst the Chuhras who worship Valmiki as God.

^{ix} Kalsi (1992: 137-8) reports a council officer asking why, if the community he was visiting was ‘Sikh’, did they have ‘Hindu’ names and why did their organisation have a caste basis when ‘Sikhs’ do not believe in caste.

^{ix} For an account of the VHP networks in the UK and beyond, see Zavos (2010).

^x On VHP networks in the UK and beyond, see Zavos (2010).

^{xi} In invoking the state, we refer not just to a particular set of governmental institutions or practices, but a more open field of power relations bound up with complex processes of regulation,

recognition and legitimation, being located in multiple sites and at various levels that overlap with civil society and everyday life (Trouillot 2001).

^{xii} See <http://www.womenagainstofundamentalism.org.uk/> (accessed 30 May 2010).

^{xiii} Organizations that are not dominant in terms of numbers can target and gain access to legitimation and power via multi- and inter-faith spaces (cf. Bhatt 1997).

^{xiv} Werbner (1994, 2002) has described how Manchester Pakistanis supported Saddam Hussain in what seemed like an ‘anti-local’ sentiment during the 1990-1 Gulf War.

^{xv} For instance, there were two speakers from the so-called ‘Muslim Parliament’. For a revealing account of the Muslim Institute – the UK-based organisation behind the Parliament – and its international backers, see Sardar’s (2003) autobiography, *Desperately Seeking Paradise*.

^{xvi} See Openshaw (2004) on Baul singers and Gardner (1995) on Islam in Sylhet. N.B. Kobi Nazrul (d.1976) was also a twentieth century poet in this ‘rebel’ mould.

^{xvii} See also Nesbitt (1991) on children’s constructions of their syncretic Ravidasi identities.