



UNIVERSITY OF AGDER

Defining Community and Expressing Identity: A Case Study of The Transplantation, Development and Adaption of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in Kristiansand.

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Abstract

The overall aim of this study is to explore and analyze the South Asian Ahmadiyya community who settled in Kristiansand in 1987. The study aims to identify the extent to which changes occur in religious practices and community identity after migration to a new host country. This will include an analysis of the history of the community, the current context, and how new media shapes and reinforces the community's religious and cultural identities.

This master's thesis is carried out as a part of the education at the University of Agder and is therefore approved as a part of this education. However, this does not imply that the University answers for the methods that are used or the conclusions that are drawn.

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*Omnis cum in tenebris praesertim vita laboret.
Life is one long struggle in the dark.*

This thesis is dedicated to my grandparents who made the long and arduous migration from Russia to the UK during the Second World War in order to escape persecution.

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“Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun” (Geertz, 1975a: 5).

Introduction

This study will look at the transplantation, development and adaption of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in Kristiansand. First, I will outline my research topic with the accompanied research questions, which will provide a brief background of my research area, and the questions that have been formulated in order to address the research title. Second, I will provide a brief outline for my research objectives and justifications in order to demonstrate why this research area is important, and what contributions can be made as a result. Third, an explanation of how I arrived at my hypothesis will be discussed, by drawing on the research literature I have addressed. Fourth, the context will be framed by giving a general overview of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at and the community living in Kristiansand in particular. Fifth, I will address and outline the theories that have been used for the purpose of understanding how the Jama'at constructs its idea of community and expresses its identity in the host context of Kristiansand. Sixth, the methods and methodology that are applied in this study will be discussed. And finally, the data that I have collected over the past year will be shown and discussed in light of the theories I have explored earlier.

The Research Topic and Research Questions.

The primary focus of this research is the role of the transplantation process of religion. This study aims to identify the extent to which changes occur in religious practices and community identity after migration to a new host country. This study will focus on the South Asian Ahmadiyya community who settled in Kristiansand in 1987 (Tønnessen, 1987: 19). The process of migration can be traumatic, dangerous, and uncertain for those individuals and communities who have left their home countries and established themselves in a new host country. During this process, the community goes through a reassessment of the meaning and nature of religious practices and ideas, and a new self-consciousness develops. Rituals performed in their home country have to be reassessed and made to function as best as possible in the host environment. Places of worship in the migrants' home country would have been a normal part of their surroundings; however, the host country may have nothing to offer, and thus new places of worship have to be established. Furthermore, the philosophical and social ideas that were once held in common will be set in tension with the local established traditions of the host country (Knott, 1997: 757). An equally important area is the process involved in the constructions of identity for members of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at; I will seek to determine what processes are involved in how the community and its members negotiate different spaces in order to define themselves in the Norwegian, and more specifically, the Kristiansand context. Furthermore, entwined within this thesis, notions of social capital will be explored and illustrated during the analyses of my findings. This research will address and examine how the Ahmadiyya community define and express their identity in Kristiansand. This will involve A Case Study of The Transplantation, Development and Adaption of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in Kristiansand.

The research questions that will be addressed in this thesis are outlined as follows:

What is the history of the religion in establishing a presence in Kristiansand?

How does the Norwegian system, in regulating and identifying religions, affect the migrant religion?

- Has the Ahmadiyya movement become religious in a Norwegian way?

What role does media take in shaping and sustaining Ahmadi identity?

- How does the history and religious tradition of the Ahmadiyya influence its current interaction with new media today?
- What processes drive integration into Norwegian society and at the same time help preserve religious identity?
- How did the Ahmadiyya maintain trans-national links before the advent of web-based media?
- Are the processes or the community exclusivist or inclusivist as a result?
- Alternatively, does the community balance and take on both exclusivist and inclusivist tendencies?

How does religious identity intersect with other identities to shape the individuals' way of and social life?

- Who do they relate to?
- Who do they socialize with?
- Who do they perceive to be different from?

What is the host response to the Ahmadiyya community?

- Problems in obtaining a religious building
- Keeping migrant groups hidden from social space

Who funds the establishment of religious space?

What are the key features of the development of minority religions in Europe, and what are the important areas for future research in this area?

- In what ways are the experiences of the Ahmadi community the same as or different from other Ahmadis living in other countries?

Research Objectives and Research Justifications

There is a genuine lack of literature regarding the minorities in Kristiansand and their religions. Thus, research on this is principal in mapping the changing context of Kristiansand, and how minority religions are influencing that change. Most studies in Kristiansand have focused on the dominant and native religious tradition: Protestant Christianity. An example of this is the work carried out by P. Repstad and J.O Henriksen (2005), which focused on the changes in Christianity in Kristiansand and the surrounding region. Considering the influx of new communities with different traditions of Christianity, and even different religious affiliations entirely, it is vital to see how the host tradition interacts, influences, and impacts on minority communities and vice versa. This is because community and identity provide individuals with a sense of belonging, stability and meaning. However, tension can also arise when individuals try to balance their religious and cultural heritage with the secular, humanistic and Protestant values of Norway. Hence, it is relevant to analyze the dynamics of community and identity constructions for minorities living in a new host country. This is to understand what it is like for the Ahmadiyya to live in an alien context, and how they develop, adapt and define their community in Kristiansand.

Hypothesis

To address the research topic, I have developed a hypothesis that predicts that Ahmadi Muslims in Kristiansand adapt quite adeptly into the local environment, whilst preserving a strict religious identity through harnessing old and new mediums, which connect the small community to the Ahmadiyya worldwide. The transplantation of religion will produce subtle changes that need to be made in order to become an officially accepted religion in the Norwegian political-sphere. Unlike other forms of Islam, which have a strong politically sanctioned religious identity in places such as Pakistan, the Ahmadiyya are forced to conform to being labeled as a non-Muslim minority. This means that an Ahmadi Muslim cannot be a 'Muslim' in Pakistan. Thus, I believe that through the transplantation process, the Ahmadiyya can fully express themselves as Muslims who adhere to the teachings of their Promised Messiah in the host context.

At the same time I expect that there is a pressure to conform to liberal attitudes within the host environment, as new converts enter the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. This points to how a migrant community has to adjust to certain ways of associational life, which differs from ways of life in Pakistan, for instance. In terms of integrating into the local cultural context, I will aim to show that the community will go through a process of compartmentalization, or a term which will be used in this study: alternating their internal self. In this view, an Ahmadi Muslim keeps the religio-cultural identity intact, whilst he/she also has an alternate self that is separate. The alternate self takes on cultural attributes from the host environment, and arises in situations where an Ahmadi Muslim interacts with a member of society outside of the community. The process of cultural integration is an important aspect to the Ahmadiyya faith, which is utilized in order to pursue mission-based outcomes and provide an Ahmadi the opportunity to live a fulfilling life in the new host context. The host context of Norway provides fertile grounds for the freedom of expression; yet at the same time, it can still hinder minorities from having a visible presence. I will now outline the context, proceed onto the methods and theory, outline my findings, and then critically analyse my data in the discussion section.

Norway is a secular country with a long cultural tradition of Lutheran Christianity. This is the first identifiable, cultural, social and political difference for migrants coming to this country. The first Ahmadi immigrants who came to Norway were of Pakistani origin, and arrived at the end of the 1950's, which at that time had no visible or functional places of worship open to them. The first migrants were classed as 'guest' workers, who like other economic migrants, decided to stay¹ (Stærk, 2013: 92). The Ahmadiyya Jama'at *trossamfunn* (belief society) was registered in 1974; however, they claim to have been unofficially founded in 1957 (Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, 2014; Steenberg, 1974). It was not until 1980-81 that the first functional mosque (*Nor Moské*) was developed, by renovating the old villa on Frognerveien in Oslo ([Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at](#), 2014).

Even to this day, it is still difficult to identify physical places and spaces that are connected to the identity of Muslim immigrants. There is only one official mosque in Kristiansand, which is located in the historical district Posebyen. The Posebyen mosque is owned by the Muslim Union in Agder, and is not affiliated to the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. The building was officially granted permission for use as a mosque in 2011, despite the fact that the Muslim community has been living in the city for over 17 years (Ja til moské, 2014). It is interesting to look at this particular building, as there are no external features to suggest that it is in fact a mosque. This is unlike many other mosques in Europe, or even in Oslo for that matter, where the visible features of a mosque such as a dome and minaret can easily be identified. The resistance to religious freedom of expression is unexpected, given Norway's international recognition as an upholder of human rights and development, and questions arise as to why this is the case. However, this will be looked at in further detail later.

¹ Bjørn Stærk refers here to the Turkish guest workers who settled in Germany during the 1960's.

Ahmadi Muslims have a long history of being persecuted by other Muslims. This is due to the Ahmadiyya's statement of faith in their founding father Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908). Ahmad is believed by all Ahmadi Muslims to be the *Imam Mahdi*, the promised *Messiah* awaited by both Christians and Muslims alike, the *Krishan* of the Hindu faith, and the *Musio dar Bahmi* of the Zoroastrians. The Ahmadis believe that Islamic Scripture contains the prophecies of the arrival of the *Messiah* and the *Imam Madhi*. Moreover, Ahmadis claim that Ahmad is the perfect spiritual reflection of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and that the true faith is to be revived by his works (Ahmad, 2008: 6). The Prophet Muhammad foretold that there would arise seventy-three different sects within Islam, and only one of these sects would be the pure faith, whilst the other seventy-two would go to hell. The Ahmadiyya believe that their movement is the one predicted by Muhammad, to restore Islam back to its pure and pristine state.

Furthermore, Ahmadis uphold a belief in prophecy after the Prophet, which for other Muslims is a clear breach in the teaching of the finality of the Prophet. This teaching is known as the Prophets Seal, which decrees Muhammad as the final and greatest of the prophets (Ayoub, 2004: 40). The Ahmadis believe, like all Muslims, in the Five Pillars of Islam, which obliges them to pronounce *shahadah* (statement of faith), perform *salat* (prayers) five times a day, practice *sawm* (fasting), pay *zakat* (percentage of their earnings to charity), and when permitted perform *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) (Valentine, 2014: 102). Thus, for Ahmadi Muslims, the notions of *iman* (belief) and *amal* (deeds and practice) are greatly identical to that of Sunni Muslims; however, as noted, many Muslims identify the Ahmadi beliefs in prophethood and the notion of the Messiah as highly controversial, offensive, and blasphemous.

As a result, mainstream Muslims have deemed the Ahmadiyya sect as *kafir* (unbelievers) and *murtad* (apostates). The Ahmadiyya are consequently branded as 'non-Muslim' and heterodox; in Pakistan, the Ahmadiyya are identified as a non-Muslim minority, which under Pakistani law are treated as second-class citizens alongside other minorities such as Christians. The law prohibits them from calling themselves Muslims and using mainstream Islamic

burial sites and Islamic symbols on their buildings. Ahmadis are also denied the right to vote if they do not register themselves as non-Muslim. Moreover, they are not entitled to a passport if they do not register as non-Muslim; if they register themselves as Muslim they have to sign a statement of faith which decrees Muhammad as the 'Seal of the prophets', and their denunciation of the Ahmadiyya movement. The repercussions for breaching any of these prohibitions are severe, and can result in imprisonment, an unlimited fine, or even death under the states blasphemous laws. These laws target all religious minorities in Pakistan, and are a real threat. The extent of the persecution and marginalization of Ahmadis in Pakistan lead to the removal of their Khalifa from Rabwah to his new residence in London, which now serves as the HQ for the Ahmadiyya worldwide. Despite protests from NGOs such as Amnesty International and other Human Rights groups, the state remains firm in its stance toward Ahmadi Muslims (Valentine, 2014: 107). The level of persecution toward Ahmadi Muslims, especially in Pakistan, certainly echoes the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany during the mid 1930's, with its blasphemous laws and lack of security to help protect minorities. Despite every effort of the Ahmadiyya to be accepted by the *Ummah* worldwide, they still remain a marginalized and persecuted people (Valentine, 2008: 241-42).

The extent of the persecution toward Ahmadi Muslims is clearly documented on the Human Rights Watch website ([Human Rights Watch](#), 2014). To briefly illustrate, over 100 Ahmadiyya in Indonesia were evicted from their homes by a violent mob in 2005: many of them still remain as internally displaced persons in a shelter in Lombok. In 2008, Indonesia enacted a Joint Ministerial decree that ordered for all Ahmadi Muslims to cease all public religious activities or face up to five years imprisonment ([Human Rights Watch 2005/2008](#), 2014). Moreover, on May 28th 2010, extremist Islamist militants attacked two Ahmadiyya mosques in central Pakistan, with guns, grenades, and suicide bombs. They killed 94 people, and over a hundred people were injured as a result ([Human Rights Watch 2010](#), 2014). Many have tried to escape persecution by migrating to new countries such as the United Kingdom; however, they only find further incidents of anti-Ahmadi activity. In Simon Ross Valentine (2008: 73), in his study of Ahmadis living in Bradford,

highlights an incident when Ahmadi Muslims organized a 'Religions Founders Day', with a large meeting organized at the Central Library. Religious leaders from all faiths had been invited to speak on 'religious understanding. Local Muslims were angered by this event, as Ahmadi Muslims were identifying themselves as Muslim, and also using the 'peace be upon him', a blessing reserved for Islamic prophets on historic figures such as Guru Nanak. The Bradford Council for mosques held a large demonstration outside the Library, with protestors even entering the event itself, which led to the event being cancelled, and police escorting the Ahmadiyyas out the back door in an attempt to prevent violent clashes. Furthermore, it is believed that a chemical attack was made on the Leamington Spa Mission House in September 2003. Emergency services were called in after community members found a suspicious yellow substance, which appeared to have been blasted through the letterbox of the community centre. A total of 15 people had to be decontaminated and quarantined as a result (Docherty, 2003).

Sadly, persecution of Ahmadi Muslims happens every day; they are denied the right to perform Hajj, and their mosques are vandalized. Their graves are destroyed, and it has even been documented that bodies of the deceased have been exhumed and removed from Islamic graveyards (Rashid, 2013: xx) From my discussions with the local imam in Kristiansand, the extent of the persecution is horrifying; however, he is keen to remind me that the Ahmadiyya community perceive the persecution as a sign that they are working hard; if there was no persecution, he stated, then the community had fallen into laziness. Moreover, Valentine (2014: 112) also found the same response from one of his respondents who stated; "No one likes persecution, especially us. But our founder predicted it. It is a sign that we are living as we should and that our beliefs are true, Insha'Allah". The stand the Ahmadiyya take on persecution is certainly reminiscent of the early Christian movement, and echoes Tertullian's remarks of the Christian martyrs; "*Semen est sanguis Christianorum*"². This is similar to the Ahmadiyya's view of suffering; the death

² English trans. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.

and suffering of countless Ahmadis has in effect shown the world that the movement is a reputable and peace-loving community, as it takes a strong stand for pacifism and non-aggression. The Ahmadiyya continue to take a *jihad* of not the sword but by pen, which can be identified at the numerous events hosted by the Ahmadiyya who stress the notion of non-violence.

There are over 10 million Ahmadis worldwide. 1000 members live in Norway, and the majority of them reside in the eastern district of Oslo ([Ahmadiyya SNL, 2014](#)). In Kristiansand, there are around 50 members, all of whom take a very active part in proclaiming their religious message to people living in the area. The Ahmadiyya are known for their proselytizing work, which takes on a myriad of different forms ranging from dropping leaflets, knocking on doors, and holding information stands in the town centre and libraries. The history of the religion in establishing a presence in Kristiansand is immediately faced with the challenge of maintaining a religious identity, whilst adapting and absorbing into the local milieu. Spaces to meet need to be organized and networks with the wider community must be developed. In terms of institutions, the Ahmadiyya, as already stated, have a big presence online in order to help the community settle into their new home.

At present, the community has no official mosque. They have purchased a house in Hellemyr, which is currently used as a mission house, a place of prayer and as the residence of the imam. The first floor consists of a large living room, which is used for the women during prayer times. On the second floor, there is a loft conversion, which the men use to carry out their prayers, and a sound system that relays the prayers back down to the women's room. The loft is a small and cramped space. A chimneystack is located in the centre of the room, and the angulation of the roof means that people praying at the ends of either side hit their heads on the ceiling. Yasir commented on this; he said that the bumping of heads serves as an important reminder that the community needs to find and develop a mosque. At present, they are still in the process of finding a place for a mosque, despite the fact that the community has been active in Kristiansand since 1987 (Tønnessen, 1987: 19). Initially, they looked for a plot of land on which they could build a new

mosque. Architectural plans have been made; yet, these have been rejected on the grounds that the minaret would be used for calls to prayer. The local politician Stian Storbukås, who is a member of the *Fremskrittspartiet*, stated to the local newspaper *Fædrelandsvennen* (2013: 3) that;

“I wish that a mosque does not look like a mosque from the outside. I do not wish to help in the Islamification of society”.

Interestingly, however, Yasir pointed out to me that they are there on purely decorative grounds and not for the application of the call to prayer. The community has to negotiate often-discriminatory grounds, which can be identified in the quote by Stian Storbukås, in order to develop a physical presence in Kristiansand. As a result, the group is challenged to seek new means to obtain a presence, which, as will be shown, has to conform to the local context. At present, this means the mosque must not look like a mosque from the outside, which, based on my experience, seems to mean that migrant religious traditions need to be hidden away from view. This has huge implications on how a community then defines itself within the local context, as a mosque is a physical marker that signifies that other religious traditions do in fact exist and operate in the area. Having a visible presence in the town is a very important factor to the identity of a community. Without a visible presence, the community is confined to the outskirts of the local area, in what would appear to be a deliberate move to keep other religious groups out of the local Christian milieu.

I have also found that the local Buddhist group is hidden from view. They have a small temple outside of Vågsbygd, which has no external symbols or markers to show that it is a temple. I would argue that this clearly represents the power relations between the majority-minority communities, which are represented in how the local political milieu aims to maintain an image of a harmonious ‘Christian’ culture. If migrants do not have the opportunity to define and express themselves fully in a Norwegian context, the Norwegian stance on human rights, equality and development is in serious question (Human rights, 2014). The Ahmadiyya, however, see this as a challenge,

which they can take up by means of educating the local area by organizing events, having information stands, and generally keeping a visible appearance by other means. Moreover, the Jama'at has a long history of being persecuted and denied the opportunity to physically represent themselves as Muslims. The Norwegian context does allow the Ahmadiyya to express themselves as Muslims. At the same time, the process of obtaining a mosque has been difficult, and the lack of a religious centre has hindered the community to fully express themselves in the local society.

The Norwegian system of registering religions is closely entwined within this notion of Christianizing, or Protestantizing for a more accurate term. The system of public funding for religious organizations operates on the premise that all religious bodies should register as a national *trossamfunn*. The local mosques or temples under the umbrella of *trossamfunn* are then registered as congregations (*menigheter*). Funding is allocated on a membership basis; the more members a congregation has the more funding is allocated to that group. Thus, there is a strong emphasis on religious bodies to have their members officially register as a member of that specific congregation. A closer look at this area will be discussed in more detail later, in order to understand the problems that arise as a result from being hidden from view, and what implications this has for the wider society.

The Ahmadiyya hierarchy promotes a strong duty to integrate into the society of the host environment, which all Ahmadis must uphold. Simon R. Valentine (2008: 158) highlights a message given by the fourth Khalifa, Mirza Tahir Ahmad (1997) in his speech to students in Bradford, where he stated “It is imperative that we assimilate ourselves in the society that is our host”. The assimilation spoken of by the Khalifa is seen as a two-way process, whereby a mutual exchange of the best attributes of the two societies are negotiated and accepted. The Khalifa highlights this also in another statement to Ahmadiyya Muslims in the North East of England (2001-2003); “I speak of an assimilation of values, not absorption brought about by blindly following each other. Thus, the thing to watch out for is that the exchange is of exquisiteness and not of unsightliness” (Valentine, 2008: 158). This view is in contrast to

simply abandoning the cultural and religious identities in favour of the Norwegian context, which can be termed as a cultural conversion to the new host context (Kwok-Bun, 2002: 193-94). The interesting question that must be asked here is how the community deems what social values in society are the “best” and what are the worst. I would argue that there are interesting forces at work here through the course of transplantation. The community goes through a process of re-evaluation, and through this, they re-construct boundaries to certain values that are unfit for their way of life. This inevitably means that whilst the community faces certain prejudices and forces that work against them, they too in turn build up generalizations about Western society. More of this will be looked at in detail; however, it is sufficient to say here that through the migration process, the community develops a way to compartmentalize certain cultural aspects of the host environment, whilst maintaining the religious values of the Ahmadiyya faith.

The portability of Islam, which can also be applied to the Ahmadiyya sect as well, means that the faith can be taken to any part of the world and made to fit into the host environment. This is achieved by how they carry their rituals, relationships, and symbols with them. Since the Ahmadiyya faith emerged out of the Indian sub-continent, and still is home to a large number of Ahmadi Muslims, there are strong cultural values from the region that still inform the faith. Belonging to the Ahmadiyya movement involves keeping the cultural traditions alive, which is usually done at home through the mother, who teaches the children about the religious and cultural values of the Ahmadiyya Jama’at. These values include tenets such as welfare of all kin, respect and care of the elders, selfless devotion to husband and child, a strong sense of community (religion and region based), and control over women’s sexuality. For mothers in the Ahmadiyya movement, transmission of these cultural and religious values are imperative in ensuring subsequent generations do not forget their duties such as serving their families and community (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004: 75-79; Metcalf, 1996). However, given the size of the community in Kristiansand, the preservation of certain cultural values such as speaking Urdu will become harder to maintain, as the children will have more non-Ahmadi friends and networks in the local environment. Returning to the

portability of Islam, it is essential to note that the activity of the community defines their cultural and religious space. A physical mosque or imam is not necessarily required, although these are important in maintaining a physical presence in the host environment. If there is no imam available, the community can elect a leader for the community who will address the spiritual needs of the group (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004: 75).

The sect has established a strong presence online in old and new mediums to aid the preservation of religious and cultural values of the Ahmadiyya. Through the intersections of religious identity, the Ahmadiyya maintain a trans-national identity. Their aim is to integrate aspects of Western society, whilst also strengthening and passing on cultural and religious norms. A wide variety of mediums have been harnessed in order to achieve this aim. First, the community has developed a strong online presence, which enables Ahmadi Muslims to transcend nations and live as a community worldwide. The people they relate to live in many different contexts, which means that each member has a unique experience that is grounded in the local milieu. Yet, through the Internet and satellite-TV, the community transcends all cultural, social, and political boundaries, and provides a strong presence that keeps the Ahmadi way of life sustainable in foreign lands. This would be very difficult without the aid of modern technology, and shows how the Ahmadiyya have effectively harnessed modern technologies in order to resist the fluidity of networked relations and solidify their own unique identity (Campbell, Fulton, 2013: 1).

The Ahmadiyya movement has a strong leadership to hold the community together, with the Khalifa as a spiritual head. As Arif Ahmad (2014), the imam of the community in the Spenn Valley area of the UK stated to me in an email; "We are all one community with our spiritual head – His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad". The presence on the Internet serves to provide purpose and meaning to Ahmadi communities and helps them cope with life as immigrants. This provides the community a strong sense of identity, despite discriminating forces within the local milieu. The people Ahmadis socialize with are generally within the community itself, whether at home or abroad; however, as noted

earlier, this entirely depends on the context. For instance, Bradford has a large Ahmadi community, and the members there tend to exhibit exclusive tendencies. Kristiansand, however, has a small community, with members that are more open to building relationships outside the bonds of their faith. The engagement of missionary activity puts the group in an extensive dialogue with the wider community, which is achieved through information stands, and an eagerness to inform social, professional, and political networks of their faith.

The Ahmadiyya movement has been referred to as a 'Western-based' or a 'Western-inspired' faith in an ironic or oppositional sense. This is based on the founder's vision who saw the West as a godless society, which needed to be 'saved'. Therefore, Ahmadi Muslims harden their religious identity in order to shelter themselves from the corrupt part of Western society, whilst also integrating certain aspects of their cultural identity to fit into the local area and proselytize. To this end, the movement aims to survive, penetrate, and convert people in the West (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2006: 39).

In this sense, integrating with the local context is aimed at through, though only to a certain extent, adapting to cultural norms, obeying the laws of the land, acquiring an education which is promoted to both genders, and learning the language of the land. The Ahmadiyya movement has a strong patriarchal structure, which is maintained through the segregation of the sexes and the practice of *purdah*. *Purdah* obliges all women to cover their heads with a hijab and maintain limited contact with members of the other sex. This practice has been met with stark criticism in the West, and has been seen as oppressive and contradictory to modern forms of living. However, for many Ahmadi women, the dress codes associated with Islam are regarded as a liberating and self-affirming practice, which helps them maintain a strong identity (Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 231). Also, contradictory ways of associational life do occur, as integration entails mixing with the wider community; this results in the individual relaxing certain religious rules. For instance, shaking hands with the other gender is a practice prohibited in *purdah*; however, one British Ahmadi

woman shook the hand of Simon Ross Valentine (2008: 152) in a local mosque. She stated;

“Yes, we pray, we have a strict moral code, our religion is our life... but I believe we have integrated well with non-Muslims in this city”

What can be identified here is a form of ‘relational positioning’. Identity and ethnic positioning in the diaspora are constantly making and re-making. The two-way intersection of the diasporic member and that of the native impacts Ahmadi women’s diasporic agency in being perceived as the Other by the native, whilst also being seen by their community as important role models in passing on their cultural and religious norms (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2006: 39). Thus, there is a complex negotiation between two dimensions that at some level are at odds with their religious and cultural values. Nevertheless, the Ahmadi find a balance through compartmentalizing their identities in order to fulfill their roles as members in a Western society and also as religious members of the Ahmadiyya Jama’at. Now it is important to detail the theory that will be used to analyze this topic further.

Theory

Culture and Community

The meaning of ‘culture’ and ‘community’, in this study, closely follows the powerful principles outlined in Geertz’s quote above. The webs of significance relates to the notion of culture, which is created and continually recreated through social interaction. Thus, culture is arguably a social process that has neither a deterministic power nor objectively identifiable laws (Cohen, 1985: 17). Moreover, in following Mcloughlin (2005) and Clifford (1999), culture is something practiced, and is continuously in the process of making and remaking. This is in contrast to traditional notions that uphold culture as

something unified and undivided, a concrete block of essentially unchanging traits and customs that are contained by social structures and boundaries. The notions of 'trans-nationalism', compartmentalization, in-between spaces, are important terms, which have been touched on slightly in the discussion so far. The significance of these terms is embedded in the diasporic experience, as one culture departs from their country of origin and arrives at the new host country. Inevitably, cultural differences will be played against the self and the other. Moreover, new boundaries will need to be made and the notions of community will have to be established in a new and 'foreign' land. The paths by which a community can head down in establishing a communal identity have been explored and illustrated by Chan Kwok-Bun (2002: 193-94) who list five different ways of establishing the on-going processes of cultural contact;

1. *Essentializing* - $A \leftrightarrow B = A/B$: $A \leftrightarrow B$ signifies the departure from one place to the arrival to another. They both characterize the notion of essentializing, which can be described as a process of ethnic hardening against the encounters of difference and strangeness. A community that essentializes effectively creates an 'un-changed self', a hardening of boundaries, which is usually a result of receiving prejudice, discrimination, and racism from the inhabitants of the host country.
2. *Alternating*: $A \leftrightarrow = A+B$: This process signals B as an internalization of identity by the person in the new host environment. Moreover, A is also active as an alternate self within the mind of the person. Both A and B are compartmentalized, divided, and kept separate. The identities of both A and B are utilized in specific situations. B will be active when the person is in communication with a member of B's society, whilst A will be active when the person is in his/her own community. This process has been termed by sociologists as 'passing', which basically equates to a person putting on a different 'mask' to suit each situation at hand. This Kwok-Bun argues, is a process whereby a person becomes an identity juggler, whereby identity is a matter of positioning.

3. *Converting*: $A \leftrightarrow B = B$: This path is one which leads a person or community into full cultural assimilation. It is the replacement of the old cultural identity with the new. A new self-identity emerges and the old becomes buried. Arguably, this process is never fully realized; a previous study, which predicted that fifth generation Chinese living in Thailand would be fully assimilated into Thai culture, is strongly contested in Tong and Chan (2001).
4. *Hybridizing*: $A \leftrightarrow B = Ab$ or Ba : The continuing path toward Ab/Ba is signaled by the loosening of boundaries between 'cultures of origin' and the culture of the host environment. It is a mutual entanglement between the immigrant community and that of the host community. The collision of cultures is an inevitable occurrence in multi-cultural societies. However, hybridization is a process whereby boundaries are softened and new forms of identity emerge as a result of the mixing of both the immigrant and host cultural identities.
5. *Innovating*: $A \leftrightarrow B = AB$ or Ab or $Ba \rightarrow C$: The innovating of a new cultural identity of a person or community, which has been the result of a bad experience through the processes of entanglement and cultural collision. C represents the cultural identity of the cosmopolitan, which has been reached through the process of embedding of A into B . Humans are territorial beings, who often feel threatened as new humans migrate and share in the host country's resources. A becomes the competitor for resources in B 's market place. A is expected to submit to the host environments way of life; however, A can be stubborn and not willing to submit. The conflict and competition that arises between A and B creates contradictions and paradoxes, as a result of this collision of culture and mutual entanglement. The solution to the on-going conflict, Kwok-Bun argues, is through a synthesis called impact-integration, or as Femminella (1980) states: emergent culture. Whilst human beings are territorial, history shows that humans are also migratory. Moreover, whilst tension arises from migration, there are also forces that seek to reduce tension between different groups, which then

creates the knock-on effect of new social forms. Empirically, Kwok-Bun shows that the modern day global city is in fact a combined result of the entanglements, and triangulation, of industrialism, modernism, and migration.

Whilst all of these points are interesting in the discussion of cultural identities, the concept of *Alternating* will be the focus for this study, as it provides an interesting insight into how cultural and religious identities operate within cultural contexts that are often contradictory to a religious way of life. The need to alternate is required in order to function as members of a society, and as members of a religious affiliation. This is especially important for members of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at, as there is a firm emphasis on integration, which, as discussed, is based on taking the 'best' parts of the lived culture and not 'blindly' assimilating all values to the given context. In line with Kwok-Bun's (2002: 193-94) framework, the idea of blindly assimilating would be akin to the notion of cultural conversion, where all forms of a migrant's cultural and religious identity are buried, with a new converted 'self' based on the new. From my observations, I have seen how Ahmadi Muslims value cultural integration as a way to 'give' something back to the country that has given them the freedom to practice their religion. This is also a vital aspect for missionary activity. Yet, the need to preserve and continue their South East Asian cultural identity is also important. The religious identity is tightly knitted to this cultural identity, and can be seen clearly in how the Khalifa continues to give sermons in Urdu. Moreover, the religious dress also serves as key indicators to its South Asian roots. Thus, in line with what has been discussed, I would argue that there is a clear correlation in how Ahmadi Muslims can on the one hand integrate and develop a 'Norwegian' self, whilst also keeping their religious and South East Asian self intact, through the process of alternating.

'Diaspora'

The notion of 'diaspora' is an important factor throughout the body of this

study. Therefore, it is important to now outline a brief sketch of the meaning of 'diaspora' and how this relates to the Ahmadiyya community specifically. The word 'diaspora' is a complex term, which is contested over its usage and meaning. Historically, it is a word derived from Greek, which consists of the verb '*speiro*' (to sow) and the preposition '*dia*' (over). The meaning of the term for the ancient Greeks was understood as migration and colonization. On the other hand, for groups such as ethnic Jews, Africans, Armenians, the term is comprehended in a much more brutal and sinister way. The meaning of diaspora for these groups is anchored in the collective trauma of banishment, slavery, and exile. More recently, other groups have settled in new host countries, which also define themselves as 'diasporas' as a result of persecution, natural disasters, economic, and political pressures. The notion of diaspora is thus complex and varies greatly from one group to another.

What all groups share, however, is a general vision of their homeland – real or imagined, that is usually embedded in their language, religion, customs, and folk lore. The claim to this idea can be strong, weak, and expressed either boldly or quietly, yet, the member of a diaspora is exhibited by their link with their past migration history and the sense of co-ethnicity with others who share a similar background (Cohen, 1997: ix). The idea of 'home' serves as the inner core to the concept of diaspora. This notion is positioned both temporally and spatially, and can serve as a focus of a continued 'ideology of return'; it could be perceived as a 'home' in the present, or in the distant past. This location of 'home' could have been recently left or the point of departure could have happened generations ago. Moreover, home may not even exist any more, or it could be a place that is regularly re-visited; it could feel welcoming or strange upon a return visit or it may not have been 'homey' to begin with. The vision of home may harbor feelings of nostalgia, or worse, a reservoir of nightmares. The important part to all this is that the ideas of 'home' are imagined, re-created, longed for, remembered in the present through the diasporic imaginary (Stock, 2010: 24).

A diasporic identity is not static; it is in a continuous process of conservation and re-creation of the inherited culture. The experience of a new context forces migrant groups to change and adapt; this can be identified in how

Muslims must figure out a new way to observe Ramadan whilst living in areas that experience the Midnight sun. Thus, whilst diasporas may show resilience to change outwardly, change is inevitable, as identities are constantly in flux. There is a simultaneous process of a sense rootedness and change (Eriksen, 2002: 153). For members of the Ahmadiyya, the intensity of the persecution has resulted in members of the community forming a deeper and firmer commitment with their faith, especially amongst members of the diaspora. The driving force behind the movement can be seen in their energy to preserve their identity, religion, culture, and shared history. As most Ahmadis now reside in new host countries, Huma Ahmed-Ghosh (2004:74) highlights how the Ahmadis’;

“perpetual “homelessness” transcends boundaries and it is only their faith that they believe they can locate themselves globally as a community with a history and continuity”

Thus, the Ahmadiyya community does show visible characteristics of a community in diaspora. The common framework for identifying such traits, outlined by Robin Cohen (1997: 26), help in understanding this link:

- A dispersal of a particular group from their original homeland, makes a move, for most cases traumatically, to two or more different host countries, or, a move/expansion from the homeland in search of work, trade, or colonial ambitions;
- A group in diaspora generally has a collective memory and myth about their homeland, which includes narratives on its location, history, and achievements;
- The homeland of a diasporic group is commonly idealized, which in turn spurs a collective commitment to the maintenance, restoration, safety and success, and even to its creation into a partitioned/new nation state;
- Diasporic groups can work towards a ‘return’ movement;

- There can also be a strong ethnic group consciousness, which maintains a sense of distinctiveness through notions of a common history and the belief in a common fate;
- Groups in diaspora can experience a 'troubled' relationship with the host society, which can be due to a lack of acceptance, or a rising possibility of further persecution;
- Diasporas maintain a strong sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnics in other countries of settlement and the home country;
- There may be a possibility of a distinctive, creative, and enriching life in host countries, which have a high level of tolerance for pluralism.

Ahmed-Ghosh's observation of the Ahmadiyya's 'perpetual homelessness' is an interesting insight. In my discussions with the imam, he stated that being a Norwegian citizen does not provide him with a sense of belonging, as he is always keen to point out that they do not belong anywhere. This implies that the Ahmadiyya inhabit the in-between spaces of cultures. The Ahmadiyya transcend nation states, and inhabit their own trans-national space. This trans-national space is aided through the online presence of the movement through mediums such as websites, social media, and their dedicated TV satellite channel, which runs 24 hours a day and 365 days a year, and is available on mobile devices through their own free 'App'. Web-based media creates a direct link back through the movement's history, and has an important role in creating a distinctive notion of a common history. This can be identified in how sermons given by the different Khalifas throughout the history of the movement can be easily accessed online. The earliest sermon that can be accessed online is claimed to be from the year 1899. Thus, by providing services such as the above, a direct link to the movement's founder is created (Scholz *et al.* 2008: 495) Moreover, the Ahmadiyya can identify with 3 different locations that are, or have been the spiritual centre of their faith, which shows the dynamic nature of the movement in its history of migration because of persecution. The Internet serves to maintain the dynamic nature of the geographical shifts experienced by the movement since it was founded.

The original home was located in Qadian, Punjab, India; however, after the partition many Ahmadiyyas left to settle in Pakistan. The majority then moved to Rabwah, Pakistan, whilst a remainder stayed behind to care for the sites associated with their founding father. However, after much persecution at the hands of other Muslims and the Pakistani government, a new world-centre was established in London, where it remains to this day (Valentine, 2008: 40). Because of the inherent lack of spiritual meaning surrounding the new centre of Ahmadi belief, the online presence has created online and satellite networks that connect back to the old spiritual centers. Thereby, news flows from the old into the new, which creates the central role of the new holy city. This is also where the Khalifa now resides and conducts most of his sermons from. The link between old and new transforms the *former* spiritual centers into a periphery attached to London (Scholz *et al*, 2008: 496). The significance of this is that it highlights how adept the Ahmadiyya are at adapting to new situations. The group maintains a diasporic identity, which is in many ways conservative, but at the same time fluid and constantly involved in the processes of conservation and re-creation. More of this will be looked at in more detail later, during the discussion of my evidence obtained through interviews, text and web-based materials.

Transplantation of Religion

The theory of the transplantation of religion is based on the early work of E. M. Pye (1969: 235). In the transplantation process, Pye (1969: 236) identified a complex relationship between tradition and interpretation. Tradition refers to the teachings, beliefs, and rituals of a religion, whilst interpretation indicates what happens to tradition once there is a change in the context (Kollantai, 2007: 59). The extent to which change occurs is dependent upon several elements: the size and cultural character of the community, its expectations and intentions, and the host's cultural, political, social, and legal context (Knott, 1997: 757). There are three principal aspects that Pye identified in the transplantation process: contact, ambiguity, and recoupment. Pauline Kollantai (2007: 59) states that these aspects do not always occur in sequence. For example, these aspects may appear chronologically in the

Hellenization of Christianity; however, for Nichiren Buddhism these aspects occur in a different order. Pye (1969: 236) also argues that transplantation can be geographical or chronological, in view of it being chronological. Pye (1969:236) describes it as how “religion may find itself running on the spot to reassert itself in changing cultural circumstances”. Kollontai (2007: 59) argues that the view of transplantation as geographical or chronological is important; although a religion may be seen as ethnic, migrant, or diasporic, the longer the religion remains in a new geographical location, the more prominent the chronological element may become after successive generations. As well as the identified aspects, transplantation can also include the ‘conscious’ and ‘unconscious’ activity on the part of a religious member (Pye, 1969: 238). To understand the transplantation process more fully, it is now prudent to illustrate the three aspects identified by Pye (1969: 237-8).

1. *Contact*: Is the first principal aspect of transplantation, and is identified in the way people present their religion through a variety of ways of communication and activity in relation to the given context. These ways of communication can be simply seen in how a religion will present itself through writings, ideas, buildings, and rituals. A simple example of this is how a religion may translate religious texts or liturgy into the vernacular of the host context.
2. *Ambiguity*: This second principal aspect relates to the factors involved in a present situation that raises questions of orthodoxy or heresy. Elements from the host context that are not in line with beliefs and practices may influence the transplanted religion. This could also relate to the unresolved co-existence of elements belonging to the transplanting religion and the situation that is being entered. An example Pye uses here, in relation to the co-existence of unresolved elements, is the Christian and pagan elements found in the English epic *Beowulf*. Moreover, Kollontai (2007: 60) highlights how the Western Kadampa tradition, which is a branch of Tibetan Buddhism, has taken a model of community living that resembles Christian retreat

centers, where both lay and monastic members live together over extended periods of time, which would not be the case for Tibetan Buddhist orders in Tibet or Nepal, for instance.

3. *Recouplement*: This third principal aspect is related to how transplanting religions will go through a process of re-assertion or re-clarification. This aspect means that at some point a transplanting religion may attempt to re-assert its essential characteristics back to the point when it first came into contact with the host context. This may be due to certain elements from the host context that syncretize with the religion, and may or may not be desirable for the religious world-view. Pye (1969: 239) argues that for a successful transplantation, there has to be conscious acceptance of a tolerable amount of ambiguity. For Kollontai (2007: 61), the Hasidic tradition of Judaism reflects an extreme example of recouplement, whereby Hasidism has minimized the ambiguity principal and amplified the recouplement aspect. This is seen in how Hasidic communities have not been influenced by dominant host-traditions such as Christianity, nor have they adopted key secular values such as equality for women. Hasidic communities live in a particularly bounded lifestyle according to their interpretation of the *Halakah*.

The transplantation process of religion can impact community and identity in a myriad of different ways, as identified in some of the examples provided above. There are interesting connections here between these examples and the work by Kwok-Bun. First, Kwok Bun's *essentializing* aspect relates well with Pye's notion of *recouplement*. Hasidic Jews maintain a strict *unchanged-self* that seeks to preserve its cultural and religious identity by living in strictly bounded communities in order to prevent change. Second, Pye's idea of *ambiguity* impacts migrant cultural and religious identities in ways that may push them toward *alternating*, *converting*, *hybridizing*, or *innovating*. The way in which a migrant religious community responds to the host context is entirely dependent on how much *ambiguity* a community is willing to accommodate, which will be grounded in the religion's traditions and theology.

Moreover, the size and demographics of the community will also play a key role in how they negotiate the areas discussed. For instance, when Christianity penetrated Hellenistic culture through conversion, the boundaries between Christianity and pagan philosophies were softened, which resulted in a hybridization effect, whereby Hellenic philosophies such as Platonism were incorporated into theological discourses (MacCulloch, 2010: 143). Likewise, as the Ahmadiyya Jama'at continues to convert new members from Western societies, there is a greater chance that cultural boundaries such as the separation of sexes in mosques, or moral dress codes, will be softened. A great example of this happened when Truls Bølstad Sahib converted in 1957. Truls gave his account at the *dialogsmøte*, which was held at the library in Kristiansand on January the 21st, 2015. The *dialogsmøte* (dialogue meeting) was an event organized by the inter-religious Forum for *Tro og Livssyn* and



³the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. The main focus of the dialogue meeting was to provide an introduction on who the Ahmadiyya are and what they stand for

³ This picture was taken at the dialogue meeting in Kristiansand ('Forum for Tro og Livssyn Krisitansand, 2015).

(Trooglivssyn, 2015). At the meeting, Truls talked about how he was elected as the president of the community in Oslo. The only mosque at that time was located in Denmark, and was an open hall where women and men prayed together: the men in the front rows and women at the back. When the community obtained their own building, in Oslo, Truls thought that a screen would be unnecessary and promoted the same setup as the mosque in Denmark. However, the women decided to set up a makeshift screen in order to block any view into the women's partition. Truls, at first, was quite annoyed by this, thinking that some of the men had instructed it; however, he later found out that it was the choice of the women, and thus respected their wishes.



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I have talked to Yasir about this particular event, and he was keen to inform me that there has never been a requirement in Islam which states that women must be in a separate room, only that they are behind the men during prayers.

⁴This picture of Truls Noor Ahmad-Bølstad and Faisal Sohail was taken at the dialogue meeting in Kristiansand ('Forum for Tro og Livssyn Kristiansand', 2015).

I personally think this episode indicates conflicting cultural views between Western converts and South Asian members. Yasir disagrees with this and is of the opinion that Truls might have feared questions and reactions from non-Muslims. In addition, Truls also stated that his Norwegian wife, who is also a Muslim, wears Western clothes and is much more relaxed toward Islamic moral dress codes, which further demonstrates how Western converts can interpret religious codes and practices in light of their own cultural backgrounds.

Similar attitudes were also expressed from a question I posted in a Christian-Muslim forum on Facebook, on the topic of shaking hands with the other sex. I gathered that people of a South Asian background were firmly against any such notion. Converts from a Western background, however, regarded this practice as more cultural in nature, and not as a religious requirement, as one Western convert names Krista stated;

“As a westerner and Muslim I believe that I and many others in the West practice a purer form of Islam than those born in ‘Muslim’ countries, simply for the fact that I am not yet corrupted by traditions that have seeped so far into the religion that people swear it is a part of it. The fact of the matter is it is not in the Quran; men banned it 100’s of years later. Men cannot prohibit something that is not prohibited by Allah (swt)” (Shaking Hands, 2015).

The debate about what is religious law and what is not is not relevant to this study; however, what can be gleaned from this is how converts apply their meaning based on their cultural background. South Asian Muslims who live in a Western context can also make a conscious acceptance of a tolerable amount of *ambiguity*, in relation to Pye’s (1969: 237-8) framework, and function in a Western context through Kwok-Bun’s (2002: 193-94) notion of *alternating*. This is reflected in an experience from a member of the forum, named Jules (Shaking Hands, 2015), who stated that;

“I spoke to a Muslim guy who was giving away Islamic leaflets in the centre of a busy city. As I left, I went to shake his hand and he refused because I was

female, and it made me feel quite horrible... After this I went around asking every Muslim man if this was Islam and they answered me by shaking my hand."

Some Islamic scholars have also sanctioned the tolerable amount of ambiguity in order to avoid undue embarrassment. Moreover, due to negative portrayals of Muslims in the media, and the recent upsurge in Islamist terrorist activity, the act of alternating is viewed as a way of becoming less conspicuous in a hostile world, which can be identified in how some Muslim women have started removing their headscarf in public spaces (Haleem, 2015). Thus, in this case, the success of transplantation does depend on accepting some form of ambiguity. The compartmentalization of religious and cultural identities also becomes an important part in everyday life.

Going back to the example of Truls and the Ahmadiyya in Oslo, Yasir highlighted another key feature in relation to the process of transplantation. He stated that it is only recently that women have begun to be more active in the mosque, as they do not just come for prayers. Therefore, the screen allows the women to take off their outer garments to feel more comfortable. This change in the function of a mosque has also been highlighted by Line Nyhagen Predelli (2008: 256), who found that immigrants who come to Norway bring their religious beliefs and practices from their countries of origin; however, the Norwegian context provides the opportunity to choose alternative forms of associational life, which differ from the forms found in their home country. What Predelli demonstrates is that Muslim women in Norway both preserve their religious beliefs and practices, but also create novel practices that are unlike those from their countries of origin. For instance, some Muslim women start attending the Mosque, something that they would not do, or would be considered unusual in their home countries. The Mosque has become a congregation where the local community of migrants can meet and interact with other people who share a common faith. These novel practices can also be linked in with Kwok-Bun's (2002: 193-94) idea of hybridization, which shows how an Islamic religious space can take on forms similar to that of a Christian congregation.

Still, a further addition to the transplantation theory is needed here, which looks to how modern technologies impact on communities and religion that go through the transplanting process. The degree to which people express their community and identity must be looked at through a double focused lens that allows issues of globalization and locality to be considered (Kollontai, 2007: 66-7). For communities living in areas that provide access to modern technologies such as telecommunications, satellite TV, or the Internet, the locality is no longer the sole signifier in how communities are influenced in new host contexts. New mediums can be harnessed and used to reach out to religious adherents despite their geographical location, on the premise that the location provides access to new media. One of the main purposes for MTA TV, a free network of TV channels provided by the Jama'at, is to reach out to inaccessible regions, such as the Middle East, to fortify Ahmadis living around the world. In particular, the channel targets those living in countries where their religion is suppressed such as Pakistan (Black, 2009).

Thus, a combined theory of transplantation, technology, media, and identity is imperative. Such a theory can identify key areas that either influence change, or provide a platform whereby religions can transcend national borders to provide a stable platform that can serve to minimize the ambiguity aspect of transplanting. Community and identity are important aspects to how an individual can gain a sense of belonging, stability, and meaning. These aspects can also cause the individual to struggle with balancing his/her religious tradition with the secular and humanistic values of a host context, such as Norway. Studying community and identity provides a way to understand the Ahmadiyya define themselves in a given context, and what it means to be Ahmadi Muslims in Norway (Kollontai, 2007: 67). By outlining the transplantation theory, I have shown that it is important to identify how new media can impact on this process. Thus, it is now prudent to outline the theory of technology, media, and identity, and how religions go through a complex negotiation of assessing and deciding on how to use new media and technology.

Technology, Media, and Identity

The use of media and technology by the Ahmadiyya Jama'at has already been touched on lightly above. An analysis of the theory of religion and media will be conducted in order to understand the complicated negotiations religions make in shaping technology for the benefit of the movement. The relationship between religions and new media can take on a complex process of assessment, as new technology can pose potential challenges to traditional religious hierarchy, ritual structures, and communal beliefs (Campbell, 2010: 41). Yet, whilst there is a challenge to traditional forms of religious practice and identity, the Internet can serve as a platform from which a religion can engage with the world in ways never achieved before. A good example of this is how religions can use the Internet to transcend all notions of space and time. This creates an opportunity for the religion to become omnipresent, as it can be accessed at any time in the day, from any area in the world that provides Internet access. A chronological database of the religions' history is available in one place 24 hours a day 365 days a year. This poses possible insights into how technology can be manipulated to the needs of a religious movement in creating a unique platform within the sphere of new media.

Moreover, new media challenges traditional notions of technology as being a deterministic force that is driven by its own set of values, and whereby users can only submit to values programmed into the technology itself. This has led much research to argue that media use within religious movements brings with it predetermined paths and outcomes that are contradictory to most religious bodies. Thus, in line with this chain of thought, religious communities must observe, identify, and resist media use. The problem with this argument is that it portrays religious media users as passive and unable to think for themselves. Such a view completely misses the complex negotiation religious members and communities make when choosing how they use new forms of media. The Religious-Social Shaping of Technology (RSST) looks to consider and understand the active participation of religious users with modern technology, to identify the choices about their relationship with technology in

light of their faith, community history, and contemporary way of life (Campbell, 2010: 6).

Before continuing with this discussion, it is now important to provide a concise explanation of what 'new' media is, how 'new' is contrasted with 'old' forms of medium, and how media can provide an insight into the shifts in culture and society. Len Manovich (2001: 27-48) lists five key points in his definition of new media;

1. *Numerical Representation* is the format whereby all forms of new media are constituted on digital code, which are numerical representations. In this case, images or shapes can be explained using a mathematical function. New media is subject to algorithmic manipulation, which can be identified in how images can be edited through the application of appropriate algorithms. Thus, new media becomes programmable. All forms of old media such as analog, which uses electrical signals as opposed to numerical values, can be 'digitized' into new forms of media.
2. *Modularity* is the principle that all new media objects are represented as collections of discrete samples (pixels, polygons, characters, scripts). This means that although each element may form a larger-scale object, each is independent separate identity within the whole. An example of this can be identified in the program Photoshop, where one image may consist of separate editable layers, which then are stored together within the whole image. Therefore, each identity can be manipulated separately.
3. *Automation* is the numerical coding of media, and the modular structure of a media object can thus allow for the automation of many operations, which means that, in part, human intentionality can be removed from the creative process. This means that

certain causal features can be programmed into the main structure of new media.

4. *Variability* is the consequence of principles of 1 and 2, which means that a new media object is not something fixed in a permanent state, but something that can exist in a myriad of different and infinite versions. Manovich contrasts the operation of old media, which was manually assembled by a human creator into a specific sequence of textual, visual, and audio elements. Once this sequence was stored, its order was determined permanently. In contrast, new media is characterized by variability. Instead of producing identical copies, which can be done through old media sources, new media allows for many different versions of the same source, which can be termed as a process of *versionizing*. Moreover, a human author to the source of new media is only needed in part, as a computer can automatically put these versions together. Therefore, variability and automation are closely linked here. The principle of variability is important, as it represents how changes in media technology are connected to the shifts in social change. This Manovich argues is based on the logic of old media, which relates to the logic of an industrial mass society. The logic of new media is related to the post-industrial world that emphasises individuality over conformity. An example of this is how old media objects, such as film or print mediums, were formed, and identical copies were produced and distributed to all. These identical copies did not allow any form of manipulation. In contrast, new media focuses on the individual, which reflects the post-industrial logic of how a person is able to customize their lifestyle and ideology from a number of choices. Thus, there is a symbiotic relationship between culture and technology. Cultural and computer layers form and influence each other, which provide new forms of media use and expectations.

Heidi A. Campbell (2010: 10) states that new forms of media continue to materialize. Not only new, but also old forms of media become topics for debate as a result. New media refers to the Internet, computers, and smart phones that allows for novel forms of interaction, and how the interaction in turn empowers users to influence social and cultural engagement, as well as technical use and appropriation. A good example of this can be identified in how social media played a significant, but not ultimate, role in the Arab Spring of 2011 (Khondker, 2011: 678). In understanding these key principles of new media, a new and unique approach to religion and new media can be engaged in, which looks to consider the social connections and cultural practices that play prominent roles in influencing each other (Campbell, 2010: 10).

In light of the principle of *variability*, the role in which new media functions for religions such as the Ahmadiyya Jama'at are quite astonishing. The organization's website www.alislam.org evidently shows the way the Ahmadiyya have adopted new media by harnessing the Internet's 'impartiality'; the Internet provides for even the smallest minorities the opportunity to portray themselves as major currents of a heterogeneous spectrum. The contents of the website provides insights into how the Ahmadiyya can effectively depict itself as the 'true' Islam and as the exclusive mandate for all other Ahmadi based groups, such as the Lahori sect. By digitalizing its extensive video and sound archive, the alislam website also serves as an important legitimatizing function in making a visible link to the current Khalifa with the original founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The Ahmadi leader makes a conscious choice in using new media, as he recognizes the high potential for the homogenization and not only de-, but also re-localization of the community worldwide. Thus, new media becomes an effective tool in which the construction, strengthening and legitimization of the Kahlifa's authority inside and outside of the community.

New media also provides a strong platform by which the construction and safeguarding of Ahmadi beliefs and practices can be maintained (Sholz *et al*,

2008: 494-498). Media in view of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at can thus be identified as a conduit to help the community spread its message and strengthen its authority. Campbell (2010: 45) notes how many religious Internet advocates have an idealistic view of the technology as an equalizing medium, which can be shaped for religious purpose. This can certainly be identified in the Ahmadiyya's position on adopting new media for the benefit of the organization. From the birth of the movement in 1889, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad used all forms of traditional media in order to spread his religious message. The Ahmad authored over 90 books, wrote tens of thousands of letters, conducted hundreds of lectures, and engaged in a multitude of public religious debates (Overview, 2014). As noted by Campbell (2010: 6), the history and tradition of the community is a key aspect to understand how future Ahmadiyya will negotiate its use of future mediums. Clearly, the Ahmadiyya have a long tradition whereby media has been used in order to spread its message. The movement also takes a rational approach in understanding different world religions in order to counter religious claims with its own inspired 'truth'. This is embellished in Ahmad's quest to wage a bloodless and intellectual *jihad* of the pen in order to defend Islam and show, in what Ahmad believed, the errancy of mainstream Islam and Christianity. Therefore, members are encouraged to read up and become acquainted with other religious teachings, counter-arguments against the Ahmadiyya, and validate their own beliefs by cross-referencing them with the messages of their founder and subsequent teachings from the Khalifas. The abundance of information stored online, at alislam.org, is evidence of how the history and tradition of the community continue in its quest to 'prove' the validity of its teaching by harnessing new media in order to pursue their mission. This view is also identified in the *khutbah* (sermon) of May 2008 (*Friday Sermon May 30th 2008*, 2014);

"Huzur [Mirza Masroor Ahmad] said while triumph is destined Allah brings it about through worldly means. In his time the Promised Messiah (on who be peace) wrote books and thus gave us a treasure house. This was a great source and now in this age through MTA [TV Channel] this treasure house is

being relayed to the world. For the advancement of the community the blessings of the Khilafat are also circulated through MTA.”

MTA is a dedicated Satellite and Internet network, known as Muslim TV Ahmadiyya International, which operates 365 days a year and 24 hours a day. MTA can be accessed through a variety of technology and mediums such as Satellite dishes, the website www.alislam.org/mta/, Samsung smart TV, Roku, Windows Phone, Apple’s iOS, or as an own App. The variety of options to interact with MTA TV is a visible sign of the organizations mission to spread the message of its version of Islam. This links back to the ideological roots of the movement’s decision about appropriating media as a conduit to preach its message to the world and serve as a virtual ‘home’, where members can interact and gain valuable information that helps them integrate in their country of abode. Endorsing a new form of media is not simply based on how useful it is, but also grounded on centuries of tradition and theology (Campbell, 2010: 64). Yet, it is important to note that simply identifying the history and traditions of the Ahmadiyya is only the point of entry in RSST.

Religions are dynamic entities that are informed by the culture in which they exist. Thus, the contemporary context must be considered and looked at in detail. Community decision-making is not just informed by the past, but is also filtered through the current social life of the community (Campbell 2010: 88-5). This means that traditional religious values are used to help guide users of new media to make ethical decisions of how to interact with mediums such as the Internet. New media provides Ahmadi Muslims the opportunity to reach out to its members across the world, and also aids with the Ahmadi’s responsibility to bear witness and speak the truth about its message to every nation. Such a responsibility implies the need to be moral and pious in a contemporary world, by acting in a modest, chaste, tolerant and responsible way in their daily lives. Thus, media use must reflect the ethical standards of an Ahmadi Muslim’s faith.

There are many pitfalls for Ahmadis who engage with new media. A major area that is discouraged is what the fifth Khalifa Mirza Masoor Ahmad termed as 'wasting time'. Wasting time is seen as a potential danger in affecting Ahmadis from performing the obligatory *salat* (prayers) (Internet in the modern world, 2014). Another major concern among the Jama'at is that young people can be especially vulnerable to 'traps' such as pop-ups. An interview with Dr. Naseem R Sahib, the chairman of alislam.org, quotes a message from the Quran 7:17-18⁵, where Satan tells God that he will come from all angles in order to snare God's followers. The responsibilities of being an Ahmadi Muslim is emphasised, in the communal discourse of the Jama'at, in order to develop boundaries within media use, and aid in the negotiation process of highlighting the good and bad uses of new media. Thus, the use of technology by religious communities provides benefits and also costs.

This is evident in how religions can present themselves as the dominant and 'true' sect in a specific religious tradition, or, it can act as a challenge to the religious hierarchy and tradition as a whole. A good example of this is the Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS), which is a Christian sect founded in America in 1830 by Joseph Smith (Givens, 2005: 800). The LDS church, like the Ahmadiyya, maintains a strong presence on new media such as the Internet. They issue podcasts, have an online library (www.lds.org), and much more in order to serve the interests of its members, and gain new prospective members. One marketing technique of the LDS church involves utilizing Search Engine Optimization (SEO). This has proved to be an effective marketing tool to promote the church's web ranking on search engine websites such as Google. At a conference in 2010, a Google analytics expert, Avinash Kaushik, highlighted just how effective the LDS church is in using technology to manipulate Web results in order to promote its image and interests (Chen, 2011: 185-6). By simply typing 'Jesus Christ' in Google, LDS

⁵ "He said, 'Now, since Thou hast adjudged me to be erring, I will assuredly lie in wait for them on Thy straight path; Then will I surley come upon them from before them and from behind them and from their right and from their left, and Thou wilt not find most of them to be grateful'".

orientated websites rank 2nd and 3rd out of 192,000,000 web-search results, Wikipedia being the first.

The Internet has a detrimental effect on the church's membership, as many websites aim to debase the teachings and traditions of the church. The membership rate declines despite the church's efforts to maintain a strong image, effectively utilize technology to reach out to its members trans-nationally, and open an avenue for prospect members. The decline has been prominent in Sweden, where there has been a 'mass apostasy' from the church, as members have found much information that criticizes and challenges LDS taught doctrines and traditions (Goodstein, 2013). It became so severe that the HQ in Utah had to send official church historians to conduct a Q&A session. However, the session was severely criticized, as questions from the disaffected members were waived off at the excuse of there not being enough time to divulge in the matter (Mormon-think, 2014).

So far the discussion has focused on how media technology is used to develop and maintain an online presence. I have discussed the history of the tradition, and looked at how this influences future media use. The study has also touched on the way the Ahmadiyya negotiate in coming to accept new media. What has surfaced is how the Jama'at aims to guide its members into using new media ethically. This is achieved through communal discourse, which is set in light of contemporary context, and is interpreted through the Ahmadiyyas' religious tradition. The Jama'at regards new media as a neutral tool that can be used for religious purposes, and for improving the life of the community worldwide.

The impartiality and freedom for users to surf different websites and gauge a wide array of different opinions, shows how the Internet can on one hand serve for the benefit of a religious community, whilst on the other hand can become a negative counter-force that challenges the community in ways never envisaged before. This example provides a clear window into how a religion seeks to represent and promote itself in a modern and networked world. Moreover, it shows how the benefits of embracing new technologies

enable religions to serve as an important tool in the religious life of its community. Nevertheless, it is also evident that the Internet can pose new and serious challenges, as it allows members of a religion to interact outside the sphere of official websites and forums, and their use cannot be regulated. Because the Internet provides access to a multitude of other websites, individuals are able to receive information from a wide array of other religious groups, which can 'dilute' the message and influence of any single group (Mandaville, 2010: 11). Yet, there are ways in which a religion can form clear boundaries such as encouraging use of its official websites in order to maintain the desired continuity of the community, and discouraging, even to the extent of being dis-fellowshipped from the community, interaction with websites that are contradictory to a communities ethos (Campbell, 2013: 6).

Religious Space

A religious building serves as the central structure in an adherent's life, and provides security, meaning, and social networks. This applies to most people who belong to a religious group⁶. For the Ahmadi, or any other Muslim for that matter, the mosque is a key structure that acts as a sanctuary away from the pluralistic, competing, and often-contradictory worlds of Western society. Diasporas are faced with a host of 'others', the majority of who will present completely different designs of identity (Kokot, Tölölyan, Alfonso, 2004: 7). The mosque provides everything from religious and ritual practices, to a sense of identity, and the feeling of belonging to a community, which the adherent engages with (Valentine, 2008: 102-103). This real and imagined space provides diasporas with a 'third' space of enunciation, a resistance to the dominant order, which can work both complementarily and contradictorily with the Ahmadi world-view. As Valentine has pointed out, the mosque offers many aspects in maintaining the cultural and religious identity of the Ahmadiyya. Not only is it beneficial for the community itself, the mosque also serves as a physical marker of a multi-cultural milieu; the building can act as a

⁶ However, it is important to note that not all religions require a 'physical' building. New Religious Movements, such as Wicca, can create both physical and imagined spaces, which permeate in the lived and transcended world.

bridge into the wider community by hosting events that inform members of Kristiansand about the Ahmadiyya faith and culture. Moreover, the mosque also serves as a 'home away from home' function, as members of the Ahmadiyya can celebrate together; watch the Khalifa's sermons whilst being served tea and snacks, and plan charity and social events that can benefit the wider community.

Without a physical mosque, the community can feel isolated and keeps the community hidden from the public sphere. A visible mosque represents the evolution of Islam from the private to public spheres. Without a fully functioning mosque a Muslim community is usually restricted to a cellar or apartment, which prohibits many activities from taking place due to a lack of space. Prayer rooms, apartments, or cellars are usually go unnoticed by the local society, however, a mosque cannot. The project of building a mosque involves time, effort, and resources in order to negotiate with the local and regional authorities. Moreover, during this process, setbacks and rejection makes an invisible Islam become an 'unwanted' Islam (Cesari, 2008: 1018). This can in no way help in social cohesion if the local politics and feeling of a place is prohibiting a minority from fully establishing their presence in the local context. A mosque, as shown, does not just operate on a religious basis; it also acts as a place to serve people's needs in a fundamental social sense such as helping people to find shelter, to defend people's legal rights or simply to survive (Fridolfsson, Elander, 2012: 321).

In terms of understanding this within a *spatial* analysis, Lefebvre's three aspects of 'perceived, conceived and lived moments' form a conceptual triad, which are equated with spatial practice, representations of space, and spaces of representation. This triad has been used in relation to a city; however, it can also be used when discussing a mosque. Through the conceptual lens of Lefebvre's triad, a mosque is a physical building that serves as a space where Muslims practice Islam, hold ceremonies such as weddings, and interact with each other, which equates to the notion of spatial practice. The mosque as a representation of space is the meaning given to the building by religious leaders and their interpretation of the Qur'an. Spaces of representation are

understood as the 'lived space', which equates to how mosques are experienced by Muslim citizens and migrants in everyday life and could be imaginatively constructed or produced. The spatial triad can only be separated in theory, as each aspect are intimately related and operate at the same time in real life (Lefebvre 1991, based on Fridolfsson, Elander, 2012: 323-4).

Social Capital

The terms 'social bridging', 'social bonding', and 'social cohesion' are important aspects to this thesis. The discussion of these terms is closely connected to the notion of social capital. Thus, it is now prudent to outline this concept in order to fully understand the above terms. Social capital has been conceived of in different ways in the works of James Coleman, Pierre Bourdieu and Robert Putnam. First, Coleman (1997) understands social capital as a resource for people in the community. Putnam (2000) clarifies it as forms of association linked by people's norms and values that can lead to better citizenship and political involvement (Annette, 2011: 389). Thus, through norms and networks, the values and resources are both a result and product of socially negotiated ties and relationships (Cheong, 2006: 369). Bridging and bonding social capital have been recognized as a beneficial way for civic engagement and community building. The notion of bridging social capital can be explained as a process whereby voluntary associations can transcend differences such as ethnicity and religion. Bridging social capital has proven to be an effective process whereby different ethnic groups can engage in formal and informal interactions (Cheong, 2006: 370). Moreover, work carried out by Warren and Wood (2001) demonstrates how religion can act as an effective medium in bridging social capital by initiating faith-based community action (Annette, 2011: 390).

Faith-based community action can take on a myriad of different forms such as creating inter-faith social and political networks, aid in developing economic and political culture that is fundamentally democratic, and also aim to reach

broader social, economic and political development goals. Bonding social capital, however, operates within tightly knit social ties that people build around homogenous groups. Social bonding can be especially effective for oppressed and socially marginalized groups in society, and is achieved by forming collective groups that can attend their needs (Panth, 2010). Religion, in this sense, can take a primary role in civic engagement that can work to contribute to a civic culture that can either link between particular religious and cultural identities through bridging, or aid in forming collective groups that benefit the smaller, and/or marginalized people of a community.

Methods and Methodology

The methodology that is applied in this thesis is centered on a Post-positivist approach, as empirical evidence has been obtained in order to identify the reality of the processes of transplantation, development, and adaption of the Ahmadiyya in Kristiansand. The method of this study is qualitative, and applies both a Post-positivist and Interpretivist approach, as I have conducted interviews, carried out field work observations, as well as the analyzed texts and discourses. These are then brought together in order to understand meaning within the community (Della Porta, Keating, 2008: 32). The interviews have all been carried out on religious and community leaders, adherents, and members from outside of the community that attended the Eid party, which was held at the Samsen Kultur Senter in Kristiansand. All interviews carried out by myself were conducted in English; the members I interviewed all had a good grasp of both English and Norwegian, which posed no problems in terms of trying to understand one another. My wife was invited to the Eid party, which was an event for women only. She personally carried out the interviews at the event in Norwegian, which we both then went through and translated whilst inputting the data into the program Nvivo. There have been a total of 16 interviews with people aged 18 years and over. This is because I have wanted to gauge the differences between the first settlers to

that of their children who have been born and raised in Kristiansand. Both my wife and I proposed if the respected interviewees would like to remain anonymous in this thesis. However, all of the members interviewed during this research were quite happy to be quoted under their real names.

The interview questions have been loosely constructed in order to provide freedom within the interview to gain further insight, which a tightly constructed interview could have missed. With the interviews, I have aimed to provide a comparison of the practices and customs of Ahmadi Muslims' country of origin, with that of the new host context, Kristiansand. This has been important in gauging the degree of change that occurs during the transplantation process. Moreover, I have discussed at length with my interviewees how they interact with new media, how often, and what role it plays in their religious, political, and cultural life. I have also touched on other areas such as how the host context has responded to the community, the challenges they face in establishing a visible presence in Kristiansand, and personal feelings about Norwegian society in general.

Another area that this thesis has explored is the extent to which the community uses new media. My initial aim was that the members would keep a media diary for a duration of 4 weeks. However, this proved to be quite difficult to obtain, and as a result I have acquired information on this through the interviews. The purpose of this exercise was to obtain a wide overview of the significance new media plays in constructing and maintaining the Ahmadi identity. To complement the information on media usage from the interviews, I created a small online web survey, which was posted in various Ahmadiyya related virtual community pages on Facebook.

Texts and sermons have been obtained from both old and new media types such as leaflets, TV, gazettes, websites, podcasts, videocasts, and literature. These have proven to be useful in analysing how the Jama'at aides its members to integrate into new host countries, maintain a religious and cultural identity, and provide initiatives in bridging Ahmadi communities out into the wider society.

My role as a researcher in this study is as an outsider to the Ahmadiyya community. At the same time, I do share in some experiences as a British immigrant, which has encompassed having to learn the Norwegian language and relating to a new culture. Initially, I had no formal connections to the Ahmadiyya community, and as a result, I have had to make efforts in order to become acquainted with the community. I initially made contact with the imam via email. From our first initial contact in the student cafeteria, I have spent time with members of the community at Friday prayers, in their own homes, at organized meetings, and over dinner at my own home with the imam and his wife. It is important to say here that I have been made to feel very welcome by the community, and I am extremely grateful for their help and for the relationships that have been forged as a result of this study.

Findings & Discussion

History of the Ahmadiyya in Kristiansand

First of all, it is important to outline a brief history concerning the first families who arrived in Kristiansand, because the past experiences of migrants will reflect in how they interact with the new host context. Their experience as migrants may also determine how they react to discriminatory forces within the local society, how they perceive the new cultural context through the eyes of their own cultural background, and how they aim to build networks out into the wider community.

As already noted, the first Ahmadi migrants came to Kristiansand during 1987 (Tønnessen, 1987: 19). The Mateen family was one of the first to settle here after being granted asylum by the Norwegian government. Mr. and Mrs. Mateen escaped Pakistan with their baby son in 1987. They left their home, family, friends and careers due to the persecution Ahmadis in Pakistan faced

at that time. Persecution is still a serious problem for those still living there today. Mrs. Mateen told her distressing account of how they;

“left everything there. Because I was married in 1984 and I had a little son, he was two and a half years old. We had a house. We had everything: jobs, everything. But when the situation came up we had to leave everything.”

The situation the Mateen family experienced is the same one that all Ahmadis and other religious minorities, like Christians, living in Pakistan face. The anti-blasphemy laws provide little protection for minorities. The situation can be so difficult that an Ahmadi can be locked up in prison for simply saying the *Shahada* (Mateen, A. interviewed by: Appleyard, 2014). Moreover, in this particular family, a cousin to Mrs. Mateen worked as a doctor and opened a hospital in Pakistan. Five years later, two people came into the hospital, attacked him with weapons and killed him on the grounds of him being an Ahmadi Muslim. Mr. A. Mateen worked in the naval sector of the Pakistani armed forces. Fellow colleagues would bring to light that he was an Ahmadi, and he was treated unfairly as a result. Mrs. Mateen stated, “He was just feeling like he was standing out.” Whilst the persecution was not as severe as what her cousin experienced, the levels of discrimination came to be too much for this family to tolerate. The family came to find out about Scandinavia from some friends who had previously migrated on economic grounds, to Sweden. Mr. and Mrs. Mateen did not have much of an idea about Norway, only that they had heard that Scandinavian people were very kind and good, the country was very cold, and that it was a very rich nation. They heard from their friends that they could also apply for a visa, so they took the chance and travelled to Norway in order to apply on the grounds of asylum. The settlement process was very humiliating for the family, as they had arrived with nothing and depended on the state for help. Mrs. Mateen recounted how;

They asked us to come get money from the office, the social office. So they told us to come to receive money and clothes. It was very shameful for me. We had never before asked anybody to give us money for survival. We were very independent. It was the system for asylum seekers that they had to go to

social office and receive money for living. I will not go, I said to my husband. You should go. I will not go. I don't like to ask, or beg. I never want to beg. It was very strange for us. Different. But we had to do because we had a son. So we needed the money. We needed clothes, everything. Food. But the state was very good. The Norwegian government helped us to set us up here.

Despite having feelings of shame in regard to claiming money from the state, the family was now safe and deeply grateful to the government and the Norwegian people for allowing them to stay. Coming to Norway provided the family the freedom to practice their religion. In their home country their religious identity had been suppressed and they did not have any security.

Yasir, the current imam, and the son to Rafiq Ahmad Fawzi, who was the first acting imam of the community in Kristiansand, also arrived in 1987. Their account of their migration to Norway was quite different to that of the Mateen family. Rafiq worked in a school for Ahmadi Muslims living in Nigeria; Yasir was born in 1986 in the city of Jos. Yasir told me how Nigeria was quite a corrupt place to live at the time; his father went without pay for several months, which left the family starving. They obtained visas for both Norway and Canada, but they decided on Norway, as they had an aunt living in Sweden. However, upon arriving in Norway their application for asylum status was rejected. Luckily, their lawyer informed them that they needed to leave the house they had been living in over the past 15 months immediately. They escaped to Oslo the same night, which if not, they would have been deported as the police arrived the next day. Their defense lawyer knew of a law, which had recently been passed: this law would grant any migrant that had lived in the country for more than 15 months the permission to stay. Thus, they moved back to Kristiansand, and Rafiq began working hard to build up the religious community living there.

Zeeshan Ahmed was a 10-year-old boy when his family moved to Norway from Pakistan, in 1989. His father was the first to make the move in 1987. The grounds for their migration was to seek for asylum due to the deteriorating situation in their village called Ahmadiyya court. Zeshan stated that at that

time only Ahmadi Muslims lived there. After a while, other people moved in and then the problems began to arise. His father was a bus driver for that area. The job was a privatized consortium, and therefore, each driver had to 'fight' for the times his or her bus would be put into service. Because they were an Ahmadi family it was becoming extremely difficult to make a living from the job, as they had many enemies. So his father escaped with his cousin. During this time Zeshan's uncle was also incarcerated for simply calling himself an Ahmadi 'Muslim'. Zeshan's father was granted asylum and also provided the opportunity to invite his family to live in Norway. Zeeshan had no idea about where he was going or what was happening. All he knew was that he was going to his father, nothing else.

During 1987 there was a total of 15 Ahmadi Muslims living in Kristiansand. As a result, the different families were able to start working together in order to build networks, preach, and ask the council to find them a place where they could pray and organize cultural activities. Once the community started to build up its presence in the local society, it was not long for the local newspaper *Nye Sørlandet* to provide a full-page article on them, which outlined who they are and what the Ahmadiyya believe (Tønnessen, 1987: 19). Moreover, another article was published in 1989, by the same newspaper, and is titled "*Ikke frykt oss!*"⁷. The interesting title offers some suggestion to how people were feeling about migrants and Muslims in general, at the time. It came out for publication shortly after the Salman Rushdie affair, and provides the view of the Ahmadiyya community on the *Satanic Verses* book. Rafiq Fawzi stated that no Norwegian should be fearful over their community. In response to Salman Rushdie, the Ahmadiyya would respond by the pen and not through violence. The newspaper article also lays out information on when the community was organizing an exhibition at the local library (Altmann, 1989: 4). The first meeting place for the community, in Kristiansand, was established above an asylum seeker refuge in Dronningens gate, then they moved to a cellar in the Samsen centre, and eventually bought

⁷ English trans. "Don't fear us!"

a house in Hellemyr, which they now use as their mission house and prayer centre.

Bridging out into the wider community

Despite not having a visible mosque, the Ahmadiyya take every possible opportunity to inform the local community about their religion. When arranged, an information stand is erected in local libraries across West Agder. This is usually tied in with a theme such as Muhammad's birthday, Eid celebrations, or terrorism and Islam. The stand consists of banners, which sometimes outline the Jam'at's main emphasis of "love for all, hatred for none", freedom of speech, or a history of their founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. A table is also allocated to place free brochures that touch on a myriad of different topics such as the death of Jesus, their basic beliefs and practices, and current issues such as terrorism. Furthermore, different translations of the Quran with Ahmadi commentaries on the different passages are available to read. The eye-catching banners and contemporary themes provide a good opportunity for people to stop and read up on the Ahmadi version of Islam, and their position on issues surrounding Islam today. In addition to the library displays, they also organize a weekly information stand in Markens gate every Saturday. Members of the Ahmadi community attend and provide answers to any questions members of the public have. I have asked the imam about the success of the information stands. He said that the stands have proved to be very good in getting people to enquire more about their beliefs.

The Jama'at are proving to be quite successful in informing people about their faith through various mediums. Their success ties in with their drive to proselytize and counter the negative images of Islam portrayed in the media. Valentine's (2008: 220) research also found how the Eid Milan Party is regarded as an opportunity to build bridges out into the local community in order to get Ahmadi views and beliefs more widely known. In addition, members of the Ahmadiyyat are actively encouraged to invite local members of the community into their homes, to show videos and other forms of media

which provide the message of their religion; if such meetings are held, members of the Ahmadiyyat should keep a note of who they had invited, and what their future plans are in trying to win over converts. Valentine was invited into a member's home for this specific purpose. His account shows how the family was friendly, but at the same time strained in providing carefully orchestrated conversations, which were orientated in conveying the message of the Ahmadiyyat. In relation to my research, however, there was never an instance in which I felt the community tried to convert me through carefully orchestrated situations. This is probably because of the size of the community in Kristiansand, which has meant that they focus on different objectives such as building a mosque, before they begin with more fervent missionary activity as experienced by Valentine. More of this will be looked at later.

The Eid celebration was organized by the women's group in the Ahmadiyya community, and was for women only. As I am male, I could unfortunately not attend this event. My wife, Åshild Appleyard, however, was invited to attend and was granted permission to hold interviews on my behalf. I later interviewed my wife in order to get an insider view of what the event was like, and how it was organized. The event started at 2pm at which time Zakia (the imam's wife) delivered an opening speech, which provided a brief outline about the Ahmadiyya community in Kristiansand, and the large mosque they have in Furuset, Oslo. After the speech, the guests, of whom Åshild said were a 50-50 mix of ethnic Norwegians and other minorities, were invited to sit down and eat a free meal made by the members of the Ahmadiyya. All the food provided was made in the style of their South Asian heritage. In another room, there were stalls, which sold hand made gifts created by the women in the community. As well as selling gifts, the women in the community also offered beauty treatments such as manicures, Henna tattoos, and eyebrow treatment. When Åshild asked some of the women from the community about the Eid celebration, they explained that was the first time the Ahmadiyya had ever organized an event such as this, where people from outside of the community were invited to join in the festivities. I then questioned Åshild if she ever felt that the Ahmadiyya were trying to use the event as an opportunity to proselytize. Åshild stated that she personally felt that there was not an

overarching theme to convert people. There were no identifiable banners, like the Ahmadiyya use for the information stands in the libraries, but there was a table that had various forms of literature free to take home, which ranged from brochures to booklets. Åshild described the event as being more orientated toward getting to know each other, not about promoting a single set of beliefs; it was a relaxing event that had a mixture of South Asian and Norwegian cultures. The cultures were brought together through celebrating Eid, but at the same time people were able to buy gifts for the Christmas festivities that would shortly follow the event.

At the celebration, interviews were conducted on some of the native Norwegians who attended the event. Three girls, all of whom were aged 18, had heard about the community through the media and their stand in Markens. One of the girls interviewed named Tale (2014) stated that;

“What I learn the most from is seeing with my own eyes how they practice their religion, instead of reading about this in books or in the media. Media provides a very unrealistic point of view towards this religion.”

Moreover, Tale thought it was ‘bold’ of the community to have a stand in Markens and promote that they are a people of peace. Tale’s impression is that they try to change the negative image of Islam portrayed in the media, and the wrong ideas/opinions about Islam that is discussed in the wider community. She argued that people only have these opinions due to what they have read in the media, and that the majority of Muslims are different to what is portrayed. Therefore, she felt it was important to show her full support to them by attending the event. The negative image of Muslims was also identified at the event, through the words of a woman named Gudrun, who stated;

“once a Muslim, always a Muslim. I do not think they are different to other Muslims, even though this community claims to be the good one”.

Gudrun went on to further state that she has a good impression of the community, “but they are still Muslims.” The interesting statement here reflects how people can generally feel positive to the other when in dialogue, however, the negative stereotype is difficult to change and creates contradictory feelings. Gudrun had found out about the community from living in Hellemyr, and through the media, as the imam’s wife Zakia was featured on the TV-program ‘Fem på tolv’.

The struggle for building a mosque

The Ahmadiyya are making successful efforts to bridge out into the community, through the hosting of various events and information stands. The lack of a visible religious centre is not only a great hindrance for the Ahmadiyya community itself; this also acts as a screen to betray the reality of the multi-cultural and religious environment of Kristiansand. The community is limited to what it can do in terms of religious and cultural activity when it only has access to the mission house in Hellemyr. As discussed above, the Ahmadi ascribe the mosque as being a ‘home away from home’; thus, it is very important for the community living in foreign lands. Like it was shown earlier, women have been using the mosque to a larger extent for activities other than prayers; they meet up with people of a common faith and even culture, and this provides respite from an environment that often is discriminatory.

The role and function of a mosque has changed quite drastically, not only in Norway, but also in other countries such as the UK. Initially, mosques were solely for the purpose for the practice of the 5 daily prayers: the *Jum’a* prayer on Fridays, and the celebration of religious holidays. However, the mosque has now become a space that Muslims use for learning, social functions, training, missionary work, and *Shari’ah* Council services. Mosques have also recently become centers of trans-national networks, and are also platforms for Muslims to connect to the wider Muslim world; this is seen in how mosques now invite international scholars and preachers to visit. The mosque has also

become a place for organizing local and national campaigns, which have enabled a religious building to become a place of community, belonging and identity (Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 194-5). One of my interviewees, Qudoos Mateen, related his experience of living in London, the new spiritual centre of the Ahmadiyya world. He discussed the importance of a mosque by saying how;

“It is very important to have a mosque for our community. It’s like your own house. So the mosque we have in London... We go there to pray, play, organize events, and sometimes we go there to just meet friends and sit down and talk. It creates a sense of community.

Qudoos also stated how the mosque is a place of bonding. The local community built the mosque that he visits, and on that premise they can call it their own community house. He argued that not having a mosque in Kristiansand is a big issue for Ahmadis living here, based on the fact that people cannot be at one place, or sit down together and organize events. Nor can they really invite people to a ‘mission house’ due to its location and lack of space. The mosque, he states, creates a sense of brotherhood, where Ahmadis can pray as brothers or sisters. Qudoos personally feels that the reasons why the Ahmadi message has not had much of an impact in Kristiansand is due to the lack of a visible building. He equates a mosque as being a ‘centre piece of the community’. In this instance, Qudoos’ description of the functionality of a mosque fits well with Lefebvre’s triad. A developed mosque is a place for religious practice; the representation of space is developed in light of the Ahmadiyya message, and as a lived space, which is both imagined and physically produced. In this space, social and cultural activities bind the community together in common fellowship (Fridolfsson, Elander, 2012: 323-4).

The financial resources needed to build a mosque are entirely dependent on the monies donated by individual members in the community, and money has not been a major obstacle. It is the process of trying to obtain land and permission to build a mosque that has been the biggest struggle for the community. The process has also sparked fierce debates both in the real

world and online. For instance, the local paper *Fædrelandsvennen* opened a debate on Facebook, which focused on the proposal for an Ahmadiyya mosque. The comments on the debate became so offensive that *Fædrelandsvennen* had to close the debate, and delete it from their Facebook page, as people could not moderate their language. This episode shows how there can be a clear development within social media that may encourage social engagement, but at the same time cause alienation and fragmentation (Lövheim, et al. 2013: 30). The ease of typing emotionally fuelled responses shows how online discourse can spiral out of control. Online debates can be typed and posted immediately. In contrast, the days prior to social media, a person would have to write or type a letter in response to a news article, which would take time and reflection (Andersen, 2013).

Moreover, the resistance against minorities building a visible presence in the area also reflects how the wider community responds to immigration. Yasir told me about how he has experienced different forms of discrimination in the area; he stated that he has;

“faced it many times, in different ways, for example when we wanted to build our mosque. Everybody thought we were like all the others, or like all the crazy types of Muslims. And I think it was a lack of knowledge that was the cause of this discrimination... The same thing happens whenever I am standing at the stall; people come and give weird remarks, and start associating me with whatever is happening in Syria and Iraq. So this is very normal. And in a way, most Ahmadi Muslims are quite used to it, and we don't really get offended by it, because this is just minor stuff compared to what we have to face in countries like Pakistan... We are happy that at least the government supports us and gives us religious freedom. So it is very good to be an Ahmadi Muslim, or part of any religious community here in Kristiansand.”

The recurrent theme in the discussion on granting permission for building a mosque is one replete with media based stereotypes, a fear for the 'Islamification' of urban space, and a genuine lack of basic knowledge about the Ahmadiyya movement. For example, Yasir (2014) relayed an instance

during the first application for the mosque, where one of the arguments presented was formulated on the basis that;

“If we had gone to Saudi Arabia to build a church, people would have laughed at us.”

This was a complete lack of regard for the fact that if the Ahmadiyya had applied for an ‘Islamic’ mosque in Saudi Arabia, then they would have more than likely been arrested, or even killed. In this part of the interview, Yasir felt that it was sad that people categorized them in the same light as terrorists and Islamic fundamentalists operating in Syria and Iraq. Moreover, it was disheartening for him and the community to face the sort of discrimination outlined above, given their history of being persecuted in Muslims countries and escaping to Norway, which they believed to be a place of religious freedom. However, there have not only been problems for the Ahmadiyya community. In relation to the Posebyen mosque, Yasir told me of a private conversation he had with the local Frp⁸ leader, who stated that he had placed bids on the disused building in order to purposefully inflate its value, which was in the process of being sought after by the Muslim Union in Agder. This form of institutional level discrimination is partly due to the point that immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon to Norway, in contrast to other countries such as the Netherlands, France, and the UK. Moreover, the demographic concentration of Muslims in Kristiansand is very low compared to cities such as Bradford in the UK.

J. Cesari (2008: 1019) highlights how the cities Deventer and Diebringen in the Netherlands resisted the building of a mosque for months; yet, in the city of Utrecht, the process went much smoother. Likewise, in Bradford, Sean

⁸ It must be noted here, however, that members of the Frp party do not represent the majority. As it has been shown earlier, the younger generation tends to be more open to minorities, and is quite happy to see the Ahmadiyya standing on the streets promoting their faith. Moreover, as Tale highlighted, there appears to be a general skepticism toward media portrayals of Islam. On the other hand, the older generation can be more reserved about minorities as shown in Gudrun’s generalization about Muslims. A further quantitative study would be useful here in order to fully understand these implications, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Mcloughlin, as cited by Cesari (2008: 1019), found little conflict in the construction of mosques in the city. His observations found that the spatial concentration of Muslims living in the city provided easier planning approvals. The main concerns from local communities that object to the plans for a mosque usually focus on the same areas such as traffic, noise, incompatibility with existing urban planning, and non-conformity with current security standards (Cesari, 2008: 1019). These concerns were highlighted in a news article produced by NRK, which discussed the approval of the new Posebyen mosque. Over 200 locals argued that their properties would lose value, and that parking would become a problem, especially during times of prayer. One local resident stated that she was afraid of the traffic nuisance, and that there would be a lot of unrest in the local area (Ja til ny moské, 2011).

Another important example is the development of the Jame Masjid mosque in Birmingham. Richard Gale (2009: 122-23) found how the local council approved the building of a mosque with a dome and minaret, on the grounds that it would be a solution to the many illegally used dwellings that were made into makeshift mosques. Yet, another favorable factor for the location of the new mosque was its close proximity to a major road, which should be taken into consideration for those complaining of 'noise' and 'traffic nuisance'. The planning report also cited that it would be a 'traditional mosque design', and that there is a traffic flyover immediately opposite the proposed site, which would effectively screen the building from the opposite side of the road.

These examples show how architecture can embody the interactions between individuals and groups in a local community, especially when these interactions happen under continued relations of power and resistance (Gale, 2009: 125). Moreover, urban planners have the power to represent, and oversee the configuration of urban space; however, this power is only relational, and depends on the size and capability of social groups that can resist the representations of space created by local planners and councils. Due to its size, the Ahmadiyya community here in Kristiansand does not really have enough social capital to challenge Kristiansand's representations of space, like in cities such as Bradford (Cesari, 2008: 1019). The visible

existence of a mosque is not just about bricks and mortar. As it has been noted, the mosque is a place of religious, social, and cultural activity for those that attend the building. Moreover, the nature of a visible mosque is not only to reinforce Muslim identity; the mosque also involves social and political interests that are related to Islam in a given country.

The traditional features of a mosque such as the dome and minaret (which is not only a decorative feature, but used in the call for prayer) have become symbolically charged across Europe, and particularly in Norway (Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 183). The contestations for space become a battle between those who search for sites to build a mosque against urban planning politics, the local populous, and those who are in favour of creating a visible multi-cultural milieu. A good example of this is identified on the *Stopp Islamiseringen Av Norge* (SIAN) website, which aims to document proposed plans for mosques in order to gain public support in stopping what they term the 'Islamification of Norway' (Tumyr, 2013).

One page documented on the plans for the Ahmadiyya mosque aims to discredit the local SV politician Alf Holmelid, who is in full support of the mosque, and quotes how Norwegian law enables all to be entitled to religious freedom. The article's author, Arne Tumyr (2013) aims to argue that Islam is in contradiction to Norwegian law, which he shows through cross-referencing Quranic passages that appear to undermine religious freedom. One example Arne uses is how Islam supports the death penalty and stoning. Another example shows how Islam permits devout Muslims to participate in 'ruthless' war against all who refuse to submit to Islamic teaching. The ignorance of the author fails him to engage in simple reading about the Ahmadiyya Jama'at and their profound stance against all forms of violence. However, there are extremes to every side; the important part to this is that there can be meaningful dialogue between the communities in order to reach some compromise. The bishop of Agder, Stein Reinertsen, has given his full support for a mosque in an NRK article, and argues that people should not be so afraid of the new migrant communities in Kristiansand (Andersen, 2013).

At this point, it becomes clear that the maturity and history of a migrant religious community plays a key role in the determinative factors for mosque building. The Muslim community in the UK can look back to the 19th century when the first mosque was built in Liverpool. The first mosque in Norway was built in 1974 in Oslo (Riaz, 2014). As the community grows, it will be very difficult to continue with the way local urban planning dictates its representation of space. This clearly shows that there needs to be a wider debate on the freedoms of religious expression, which would entail local politicians and council members to do prior research on religious minorities before putting forward arguments as to why they are against the issue of mosque building.

A look at how mosques in other countries impact local areas would also serve as a beneficial factor in the decision making process. This could be done, for instance, by looking at the city council in Birmingham, which has a shared interest with Muslim organizations in building a multi-cultural city. The city council has effectively worked in approving mosque applications. However, it is important not to overstate the success of other cities, as the approval of mosque applications may not determine the success of other religious building applications such as madrasas. Moreover, the celebration of multiculturalism through architecture does not change patterns of marginalization, as was noted in the example of the mosque that was screened by a flyover (Gale, 2009: 129). Dialogue is an imperative part of understanding the changing context of Kristiansand. As more migrants settle in the area, the current representations of urban space need to come under review in order to accommodate the freedoms of religious expression afforded to all citizens living in Norway. Failure to address the problem will cause further alienation of migrants living in Kristiansand, and consequently calls Norway's international recognition as an upholder of human rights, equality and development into question.

As it has been stated, the community is comparatively small with just 50 members living in the area. Most of the 1500 Ahmadi Muslims in Norway reside in the Oslo district (Ahmadiyya i Norge, 2015). The size and function of

a community proves to have many implications on how a community interacts with the wider community; this has been noted in how demographic concentrations can provide Muslims with enough social capital to challenge and change urban representations of space. Moreover, the size of a community also impacts how social, cultural, and religious identities are shaped within a specific environment; national and trans-national forces are also key processes that form these identities, which show the complex ways in which local, national and global scales intersect (Kong, 2009: 181). Smaller communities that have limited access to wider networks may exhibit exclusivist trends, which allow little influence from the local environment in order to protect their identities from an often discriminatory and isolating context. At the same time, larger communities may also follow the same trajectory; and it is the smaller communities that bridge out into the wider community in order to resist isolation.

Religious and cultural identities

Like members of other religious groups, Ahmadis hold to their faith because it gives them meaning, resolves problems, and provides solutions to their concerns. The construction of an Ahmadi identity is embedded in lived experience, which is based on their ethnicity (South Asian) and religious affiliation (Ahmadiyya Jama'at). Of course lived experience is entirely subjective to each member, and ethnicities will be subject to where members were born. An example of this was shown earlier with the Norwegian member Truls Bølstad Sahib. However, it is easy to identify the strong South Asian identity that the Jama'at reinforces through its extensive use of different mediums. Through media, the Jama'at can reach and link to its members globally. For many, this is experienced through watching the Kahlifa's weekly sermon, or even watch programs on the free MTA network everyday. The programs touch on a number of different themes; however, it is easy to identify the continuing threads such as current international issues and how peace and patience can help resolve them, maintaining harmonious

relationships within the family and community, and inter-faith dialogue (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004: 78).

The way the community builds their ethnic identity is based on their codes of conduct and practice; however, there has been a degree of 'Westernization', as many Ahmadis adopt Western fashion, attend the cinema, and follow local football teams. Still, they maintain a hard stance against the host society, as they perceive their beliefs and world-view as being largely superior to that of the host country. Valentine (2008: 159) argues that their willingness to assimilate is based on a missiological imperative, which aims to spiritually redeem a 'misled' people from a corrupt and godless society, rather than a desire to co-exist with others as equals. Thus, from Valentines observations, the Ahmadi are less inclined to become 'British', but to convert the majority to their world-view. This, he argues, is not criticism, as there are many other religions and social groups that have the same aim such as Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, and most Evangelical Christians. Yet, it is important to note that Valentine also found that the Ahmadis were very loyal to their place of residence, and had genuine desire to present their faith in the best possible light. They also showed a strong desire for acceptance and support in the face of persecution. Thus, they present themselves as being loyal and obedient subjects to the Crown and to the governing authorities.

For Ahmadis living in Kristiansand, it can be quite difficult to maintain a strong religious and cultural identity, due to the size of the community. Valentine (2008: 156) identified how Ahmadis, as well as other ethnic groups living in Britain, experience an internal dissent, and cultural adjustment, as tensions arise between older forms of life and new forms of social behavior. As a result, Valentine found that this has led to the clarifying and hardening of boundaries between religious communities and the larger society. However, many members of the community have undergone a cognitive bargaining and a partial compromise with British society, which has resulted in a degree of conformity to Western values. These findings are important, as they show the different negotiations people must take in constructing community and identity. The community Valentine studied was the Ahmadiyya in Bradford,

which has a high concentration of Muslims living in the area; a 2001 census showed that Muslims made up 16% of Bradford's population compared with the UK's overall figure of 2.78% (Valentine, 2006: 9). The community in Kristiansand has to, in many ways, make partial compromises with Norwegian society, as it simply lacks the social capital to live in a tightly bounded community. Moreover, everyone in the community is involved in bridging out into the wider society in order to spread their message, and build enough social capital that will enable them to challenge representations of space, as discussed above. Mrs. Mateen spoke to me of the importance in meeting with other people for the Ahmadi community, and stated that;

“Meeting with people is very important... Everybody is trying to accommodate other people, to inform him or her of our faith. We are trying to communicate with other people to build a social circle and social contacts... We are trying our best to mix up with people here and become very friendly. To finish the hate or fear about Islam... We do not believe that all Norway will become Muslim one day. But the aim is to show that Islam is a peaceful religion... By our actions and by our behavior and our social activities.”

There are a couple of interesting points made by Mrs. Mateen, which indicate to the way her religious and cultural identities are shaped by the local and global forces she interacts with. First, she is keen to accommodate other people in order to inform them about her faith. This links in with Valentine's (2008: 159) analysis which shows how Ahmadi 'mix' with any social group on different levels of engagement such as on business or educational grounds; however, the main point for mixing with other communities was based on evangelistic factors. Valentine argues that whilst this is commendable, it is a limited integration, mainly motivated by soteriological and proselytizing reasons. He highlights how one Ahmadi stated, “We are here to bring everyone to accept the truth”. The second point, however, highlights an issue with this statement, as it points to how a person's religious and cultural identity is formed contextually. Mrs. Mateen highlights her purpose is to end the negative portrayal of Islam in the media and bring to light the peaceful aspect of her religion. Moreover, because there are relatively low

concentrations of South Asian communities living in Kristiansand, most of the Jama'at members have many friends outside of the community. This is in stark contrast with the Ahmadiyya community Valentine (2008: 159) studied, because Ahmadi Muslims living in Bradford were more likely to stay within the bounds of the community itself; only a few had non-Muslim and mainstream Muslim friends at social institutions such as university, as this was frowned upon by the parents and elders of the community.

The Ahmadi, Valentine argues, is still a community within a community, who are clinging together for support, legitimation, and the common purpose of evangelism. Moreover, Valentine suggests that this form of social bonding, which has a limited bridge for proselytizing, is largely due to the opposition from other Muslims who do not accept their faith as 'Islamic', and also, as a result of the communities monopolistic claims of their own faith. The faith claims that Muslims are not true Muslims unless they accept the teachings of their founding father Mirza Ghulam Ahmad; this stance will hardly allow the community to bridge out into a reciprocal relationship with other Muslims.

I agree that the Jama'at's monopolistic claims do restrict the movement from bridging out into the wider Muslim community, and that many other instances of social bridging usually are grounded on evangelistic goals. However, where migrant communities are relatively small and live in a largely homogenous context, such as Kristiansand, it would be very difficult to live in tightly bounded communities that build a limited bridge for evangelization. Moreover, there are clear signs that the South Asian cultural identity of the community is gradually becoming less prominent compared to Ahmadi communities such as Bradford. This can be identified in how the children of the families living in Kristiansand do not speak Urdu. Zeshan Ahmed related how his son finds it difficult to understand the sermons given in Urdu, so Zeshan has to explain the sermon to his son in Norwegian. Furthermore, Yasir stated that he has found that most of the children in his community can hardly communicate with their parents in Urdu, so he was asked to translate the sermons provided by the Khalifa, and later stated that he has become very 'lazy' in this respect. The interesting question this raises is how the community will develop in the

future. I suspect that the community will need to organize lessons for children in Urdu in order to preserve their South Asian identity. However, there are real possibilities that much of their South Asian heritage will be lost as they integrate and become more established in Norwegian society. Yet, the role of new media, which will be looked at in more detail later, may prove to be a vital component in reinforcing their South Asian heritage, as the children of the community grow and interact more with the online services provided by the Jama'at.

The social networks of Ahmadi Muslims in Kristiansand are mostly with people outside of the Ahmadiyya community. Mrs. Mateen told me of how she has a very good network of Norwegian friends, whom she meets on a regular basis to engage in knitting activities, and go on skiing trips and summer holidays together. She stated that "I have contacts inside and outside of the community, it is very fun!" and that "it is very important to have both friends inside and outside of the community". Mrs. Mateen always attended Christmas programs put on by the school her children went to, and likewise invited her friends to activities hosted by the Jama'at. When I asked her if she regards these friendships as an opportunity to talk about her faith, she responded that if her friends ask then of course she will discuss matters of Ahmadi beliefs and practice; however, she emphasized that it was more important to inform them that Islam is a peaceful religion, and that the Islam portrayed in the media is political, which are, in her eyes, two completely different things. Therefore, she sees it as her duty to explain to people about these differences, rather as an opportunity to convert.

The question that arises from this then, is if the community were much larger, would they still feel the need to have a network of friends outside of the community? I would argue that there would be similar patterns as seen in the Bradford case study, although this must not be overstated without empirical evidence to support the notion. I base my argument on the interviews I held with Aisha and Qudoos Mateen, who both now live in London, and on another study conducted by Levi G. Eidhamar (2002), which focused on Muslims living in the *Sørlandet* region. When I asked Aisha if she had many friends outside

of the community, her response was that she mainly associated with people inside the community; however, she did have some non-Ahmadi friends from the university she attends. On the question of evangelizing, she stated that she did have one Christian friend who she enjoys debating with about differences of faith. Aisha felt that it was important to open opportunities to discuss aspects of her faith, but only felt comfortable doing so within the social ties she had already established. Her husband Qudoos, who lived in Kristiansand before he went to study and work in London, implied that he tries to balance the people he mixes with. However, when he compared Kristiansand with London, the communities were drastically different in size and maturity.

Qudoos stated how he has many Ahmadi friends in London, as he is the sports secretary there, which means that he organizes sports events at the regional level, and attends a lot of the Ahmadiyya-related events. However, in Norway, he mostly has ethnic Norwegian friends, as there are only a few Ahmadi living in the area. Another study carried out by Eidhamar (2002: 176), which looked at the different Muslim communities in Kristiansand, also found similar trends identified in this thesis. Eidhamar explains how Agder has relatively small Muslim communities, which consequently means that the youth have many friends who are non-Muslim. He then shows how some of the youth he interviewed had moved to Oslo, which they described as being a total 'culture shock' in retrospect. The 'culture shock' they described was grounded on the highly conservative nature and the significant internal peer-pressure of the Muslims living in Oslo. In contrast, the Muslims they had associated with back home in the Agder region were much more tolerant and integrated into the Norwegian culture. Eidhamar goes on to argue that this is not a unique situation bounded to the *Sørlandet* region, as similar patterns can be identified where concentrations of Muslims in a given area are relatively small.

The full implications cannot be covered here; a comparative study with Oslo would be beneficial in finding out more on how Ahmadi engage with people outside of their community. At the same time, there is enough evidence to

show how different contexts provide dissimilar experiences, which then has an effect on how people conduct their daily associational life.

The Jama'at strongly emphasizes that proselytization is a duty for all Ahmadi members. The local imam, Yasir, explained that it his duty to inform people about coming onto the 'right' path, as his religious beliefs inform him that people who are not following the Ahmadiyya message are on the 'wrong' path. In terms of integration, the imam said that it was important to integrate to a certain degree without abandoning an Ahmadi's religious beliefs. This pertains to learning the language, rules and customs of the host context, as by doing so, a person can function and contribute to a given society. Valentine (2008: 159) would argue here that integration of the Ahmadiyya is imagined through conversion and not absorption. For the community living in Kristiansand, I would suggest that the imam has to maintain and promote the evangelistic vision of the Jama'at. Yet, the people I have spoken to tend to take a more relaxed approach compared to those interviewed by Valentine. The Mateen family identifies the importance in building friendships and sharing their religio-cultural traditions, whilst Zeshan stated that;

“The important work we have now is to try to get more members to attend the Friday sermons. Might be five or ten people here, we are actually fifty members here. Our duty right now is to try to get them to attend. These people don't listen to Khalifa's message. If they come here they listen to Yasir's message once a week, it will really help to get them on the right path. It is important to just try to hold them together. That is our most important duty right now.”

Thus, the major objectives for the community at this moment in time, are to try and get its current members to be more active, develop a mosque, and establish further networks out into the wider society. These areas are the trajectory the Ahmadiyya are taking, and proselytizing is a minor imperative. Moreover, for Zeshan, missionary activity can be achieved more subtly by example. He discussed how people become curious about his religion when he is invited to parties and abstains from drinking alcohol.

Zeshan's account provides another insight, which shows some of the stark contrasts with other Ahmadi communities living in the UK. For instance, Valentine stated that the second Khalifa announced the New Scheme in 1934, which was orientated at helping Ahmadis develop their spirituality. Various demands were made, such as the prohibition on going to the cinema, theatres, circuses, and any place associated with amusement. There were other prohibitions that aimed at wedding celebrations. Dancing at a wedding was seen as an evil habit, and was bound to lead to moral bankruptcy. Moreover, in 1991 the Khalifa stated that all Ahmadis had to give notice that they will not participate in any marriage functions, which do not strictly follow the tenets of Islam and the discipline of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. Disciplinary action within the Jama'at can be quite strict. Valentine found that some of the expulsions were due to reasons such as staying on in England to seek asylum, marrying outside of the community, or even for selling items that were Haram in a shop. The point here is that the community in Kristiansand cannot really function under such strict guidelines, as by doing so, the community would be isolated from the wider community. Therefore, what can be identified here is how the community, in a Norwegian context, must allow for much more ambiguity in the transplantation process compared to other Ahmadis living in more established communities such as Bradford. Moreover, the context demands that Ahmadis must go through the process of alternating their religious identity with a new social identity. This is achieved by compartmentalizing each identity, which are then activated in specific social interactions; the religio-cultural identity will be active with members inside the community, whilst the new social identity, which is constructed to operate in the new host context, will become active when in communication with people outside the fold of their faith (Kwok-Bun, 2002: 193-94).

The process of the compartmentalization of social and religious identities, however, does not imply that once the social identity is active, the morals of their religious faith are deactivated along with the religious identity. The new social identity works on a level that allows Ahmadis to accept more ambiguity than the religious identity can. The shaking of hands with the opposite sex is a

good indication of this. Moreover, Mrs. Mateen conveyed how she constructs certain parameters when meeting with people outside of the community. She stated that she has many male friends; however, they would never invite her alone to a social gathering, as the whole family must be invited. Mrs. Mateen also highlighted how, when her family goes swimming with friends, they frequently ask why she does not go naked (naked implying swimming in a bikini or one piece). Mrs. Mateen stated that this was one of the big differences in their perspective cultures, as her beliefs prohibit her from swimming in Western style swimsuits.

The view that Western style swimming wear relates to nakedness may suggest Mrs. Mateen's view of Western society as a whole. Ahmed-Ghosh (2006: 40) highlights, like Valentine, how Ahmadi view the Western world as being ridden with loose morals, crime, dysfunctional and fragmented families, a high level of materialism, and a heightened sense of self-centeredness. The following bullet points outline the Jama'at critiques on Western society:

- Notions of Western society degrading after 2nd World War
- Objections to Western fashion styles
- Excessive materialism
- Irreligious immoral society
- Co-habitation
- Alcohol
- Open display of kissing

Loose morals, in an Ahmadi sense, are viewed as 'indecent' dress codes, particularly for women, early dating, and pre and post marital sex (outside of marriage). Ahmed-Ghosh found that as a result of these associations with Western culture, American Ahmadi women had developed a 'besieged' mentality, which was expressed in their distrust of the host cultural environment. Consequently, the women felt a need to protect themselves against it. He enquired whether they were living in the United States only for economic reasons, and if they would live somewhere else if they had a

choice. The responses to his question showed how diasporic Ahmadis had no choice to live in Islamic countries because of the persecution they face. Moreover, after the events of 9/11 many Muslim men and women experienced harassment as a backlash to the terror attacks. This harassment took different forms, such as youths shouting obscenities toward women wearing the hijab. Young Muslim men also found it difficult to get work because of their Muslim names. The reply from one of Ahmed-Gosh's interviewees stated that despite the harassment, the U.S. was only one of a limited number of countries that has laws in place to protect them (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2006: 41). There is a recurrent response to discrimination experienced by Ahmadis, as it was shown earlier. Yasir also stated how it is quite normal for his community to experience prejudice on a regular basis. However; his experience is nowhere near the severity found in Pakistan; the freedoms and protections of religious expression afforded by the West provides Ahmadis with a sense of security.

The contradictions between Islamic and Western laws have lead to a system whereby the Jama'at advises members to follow the laws of their adopted country over Islamic laws. An example of this is if a country prohibits polygamy, the Jama'at will not challenge that law and will insist their members to practice monogamy. The compliance of Ahmadis to the state occurs because of the stark sense of homelessness that encompasses their daily lives. The Ahmadi identity is not only shaped by religious beliefs and practices, but also by perceptions of western culture that are alien, but an essential part of reality nevertheless. (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2006: 42). Ahmed-Gosh (2006: 42) argues Ahmadi Muslims construct a diasporic space, which acts as a way to live in the West due to their perpetual homelessness. The creation of a diasporic space indicates to the complex negotiations Ahmadis make in order to fully address their situation and function in a host society. Ahmed-Ghosh (2006: 49) identifies this process as hybridity; however, there are issues with the notion of hybridity, as hybridization suggests that new forms of identity emerge as a result of the incorporation of both the immigrant and host cultural identities (Kwok-Bun, 2002: 193-94). My research shows that there is a clear indication to the alternating/compartmentalization of identities, which enables an Ahmadi to function best in a society that is contradictory to their

religious and cultural way of life. This allows for certain parameters to be made in order to accept a certain amount of ambiguity, which does not surmount to cultural conversion or hybridization, and thus the Ahmadi identity is kept intact (Kwok-Bun, 2002: 193-94; Pye, 1969: 237-8).

What can be drawn from this is how different contexts shape Ahmadi community and identity. The community Valentine studied in Bradford, highlighted clear signs of exclusivity, with members frowning upon ideas of relationships with people outside of the community. On the other hand, members here in Kristiansand have to engage with people outside of the community because of its demographic size. The key features of the development of minority religions in Europe are wholly dependent on a number of factors such as the extent of citizenship rights, immigration legislation, the levels of protection from discrimination, the levels of employment, educational patterns, attitudes to cultural pluralism, and the numbers of co-ethnics and people practicing the same religion in the settled area (Mcloughlin 2005: 544-45). The area that does have a significant impact on the Ahmadiyya community relates to the number of co-ethnics and people practicing the same faith. This shows how it is important to look and identify the key forces at play that shape community and identity. The experiences of Ahmadi living in Kristiansand are substantially different to those in Bradford, which has shown how members living here are much more open to maintaining a wider network of relationships. Moreover, the transplantation process shows that Ahmadi living in Kristiansand allow for much more ambiguity than those living in cities such as Bradford. However, through new media the religious and cultural identities of Ahmadiyya in Kristiansand are reinforced.

The Ahmadiyya and new media

The religio-cultural traditions and practices are passed down through the mother, and reinforced through the daily practices of *salat*. At the same time, there are other trans-national dynamics at play, which strengthen and

homogenize Ahmadi identities, in an age where most of the Jama'at's members are in diaspora. This has been achieved through effectively harnessing digital technology and new media available today. The effectiveness of building a permanent digital platform provides the necessary tools to reinforce Ahmadi identity, and solidify the Khalifa's authority as the official successor of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. The factors involved in community and identity are numerous, and shaped by a spectrum of different elements. The study will now focus on how Ahmadi identities are shaped by forces at the local, national, and trans-national levels, and question what role media plays in the shaping and sustaining of Ahmadi identity.

“For me it's very important to be active and do something all the time for the community, because if I am not doing something in the community I feel very isolated. I also feel that I am missing something. So I always have to go on the Internet or go on my phone to find out what's going on everywhere else...I think it's an important part of the faith to just stay connected.”

The above quote is a reply from my interviewee Qudoos Mateen. What the quote illustrates is just how important the Internet and digital technology is for his faith and community life. Moreover, it also raises questions about how new media and technology has impacted, and is continually changing, the way people interact and communicate in their daily life. The communication and interaction between 'online' (Internet) and 'offline' (real life) modes have become increasingly unclear. These modes of 'being' have almost no distinct separation; it is even argued that we are now living in an age where media is increasingly shaping the way we act and create meaning in the environments we inhabit, even when a digital device is not being intentionally used (Lövheim, et al. 2013: 26).

The acceptance of new media by the Jama'at has been based on its long tradition of using print and digital media to preach its message to the world, and also, to limit fragmentation and unify the global community. The current Khalifa has recognized the high potential in using new media, for the homogenization and not only de-, but also re-localization of the movement.

The online presence of the Jama'at is extensive, and covers every aspect of the movement's history, beliefs, mission, and involvement in social and humanitarian work. I have compiled a short list of the different websites and social networking platforms the Jama'at has developed in order to illustrate this point; however, this list does not cover all areas, as there are too many to list for this particular study:

Website	Summary
Alislam.org	The official Ahmadiyya portal.
Khalifaofislam.com	A website dedicated to the current Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at, with a library providing his publications, sermons and speeches.
Askislam.org	Provides a 'vast' library of the question and answer sessions held by the previous Khalifa Mirza T. Ahmad.
Muslimsforpeace.org	A website dedicated to teaching how Islam promotes peace within oneself and with other people.
Reviewofreligions.org	A website related to the magazine on Comparative Religious Thought. The review was founded by Mirza G. Ahmad, and shows how the Ahmadiyya places a strong emphasis on learning about other religions in order to reinforce its own claims.
Loveforallhatredfornone.org	This website is orientated on the Jama'at's public awareness campaign, which draws upon Islamic teachings of loyalty, freedom, equality, respect and peace.
Islamicfaq.org	A website that allows a user to submit a question on Islam, which the Ahmadiyya then tries to answer, dependent on the volume of questions received.
Free-islamic-course.org	A website that provides free courses

	on Islamic (Ahmadiyya interpreted) teaching.
Whyahmadi.org	A website built for helping Ahmadis understand why they are 'Ahmadi', and what claims were made by their Promised Messiah.
Fazleumarfoundation.org	An honorary website dedicated to the second Khalifa and the legacy of his services for the Muslim world.
Islamahmadiyya.net	An Arabic version of alislam.org
Muslimsunrise.com	A website orientated on a Muslim publication in America.
Mta.tv	The official broadcasting channel homepage.
Paama.org.uk	A website dedicated for uniting Ahmadi Muslims of African decent in the diaspora.
Persecutionofahmadis.org	Provides up-to-date-information and detailed analysis of the facts and historical persecution of Ahmadis around the world.
Askahmadiyyat.org	A website built for answering questions/allegations about/against the Jama'at
Ahoban.org	A social media-platform built for the American Bengali community, which aims to foster discussion of 'true Islam' and ways to establish a living relationship with God.

With this brief sketch, common threads can easily be identified in how the Jama'at utilizes new media to portray its image as the 'true' Islam, as well as its vision for world peace, and its services in aiding Ahmadis living across the globe. I will now look to analyze Mta.tv and alislam.org in particular, in order to show how the Jama'at aides its members to integrate into their host countries, reinforce their religious and cultural identities, and provide initiatives for Ahmadi communities to bridge out into their particular societies.

MTA TV is a huge project that requires not only substantial financial resources, but also human resources in order to run and maintain the channel 24 hours a day. The TV channel first emerged in 1994 under the direction of the 4th Khalifa Mirza T. Ahmed. Maulana Khan (Tariq UK, No Date, 141) started working at MTA TV in 1997, after being called from France by the Khalifa. Khan was interviewed in the Tariq UK publication, in which he described his experience in working for MTA TV. Khan stated how the project was the biggest one to date for the Jama'at, and required a lot of money in order to buy the technical equipment and rent the satellite services. He stated how the Khalifa had told him not to worry over the financial burden because he was certain that Allah would provide the money, as God had never let the Jama'at down. The acquisition of new media has been a massive undertaking, and has required both financial and social resources in order to build and maintain media outlets. The interesting way the Jama'at understands this undertaking is always related to supernatural events, which aims to show the divine fulfillment of the project. This shows the complex negotiations that takes place when religions decide on using new technology, which always entails considering the movement's theological, historical, and social ethos, and how these can inform the decisions for affirming the use of new media.

Mirza M. Ahmad (the current Khalifa) delivered a special message on the 27th of May 2014. The address was broadcasted through the Arabic MTA channel on the Ahmadiyya's 'Khilafat Day'. The area of interest from this message is seen in the Khalifa's statement on MTA TV; the message highlighted how it is through the grace of Allah that MTA has been established. The broadcasts are available worldwide, which the Khalifa states, has united and advanced Ahmadi together in one direction. The unity of the Ahmadiyya, according to the Khalifa, has become a unique aspect of their identity (Message to Arab World; 2014). Thus, not only are there theological implications to the acceptance and implementation of new media; there are also social meanings attributed to it, as new media acts as a homogenizing tool for the worldwide community. Moreover, through new media the Khalifa can reinforce his position as the spiritual head of the movement.

The alislam.org (2015) website is the official portal to all things related to the Jama'at. The website provides everything from its digitalized collection of historic sermons, to numerous articles on its beliefs and practices, and on Islam in general. The wealth of resources the website provides shows the dedication and priority the Jama'at places on digital and new media. What is important in relation to this essay is the website's function for Ahmadis living in Kristiansand. I asked Yasir how important it is for him to visit the website alislam.org, and his response was;

"I really like the webpage alislam.org. I think it is one of the best web pages of its kind. I can get every sort of information I need; all the books of the community are on that page, uploaded videos, podcasts, and the Friday sermons of the Khalifa, which is the most important thing for us. And we try to listen to it every week. Every member has to listen to it. Because it is mentioned in the Quran that you have to obey God and His messenger and those who have authority among you."

The website is not only a source of information for Yasir and the community, but also becomes an authoritative and integral part of their daily religious life. The Top-Level-Domain of the website (.org) communicates directly to the strict organizational structure of the Jama'at, which shows one of the major objectives of the Ahmadiyya to reinforce its existing organizational bonds in today's media landscape (Sholz, *et al*, 2008: 490). The younger people I interviewed use the website on a daily basis. Zakia claimed that alislam.org is like the 'Ahmadiyya's Google', because every time there is something she would like to find out about her religion, she can find it in there in a wide range of formats such as audio, video, and text. The older generation, on the other hand, tend to watch MTA TV.

One of the most important aspects of media use for the Ahmadiyya in Kristiansand is to watch the Khalifa's sermon every Friday. The sermon can be watched live, or at a later time through online streaming services such as MTA.tv, YouTube, and alislam.org. Zeshan told me how he would like to hear

the broadcasts live; however, it is difficult for him to hear with his young children, and so he has to watch it during the evening. The issue for him listening to a repeat is that he finds it too easy to press pause and come back to the sermon later, at which time, he may have forgotten what was initially said. He also stated that he could receive the sermon in text format; however; it is just not the same as hearing it there and then. He described how the live broadcast 'touches his heart.' He went on further to state how the Khalifa's message is very important to the community. Zeshan went through a process of reflecting on the hierarchical nature of the Jama'at, which highlighted the power relations within the movement, and how ordinary members interpret the words of their leaders. He affirmed how;

"The imam has much knowledge of course. I am leader of the community here, but I have no knowledge. I have knowledge but not as much as the imam has. So it is very important to have an imam who has regular contact with the Khalifa – he writes letters to Khalifa maybe every day... So he represents the Khalifa here. The community needs guidance all the time. And the Khalifa's message through MTA its very important for us. It's much easier with an imam, as when I talk to the community, it does not have that power. But when Yasir talks it gets a bit heavier. When the Khalifa talks then it is done."

The level of loyalty to the Khalifa shows how important his role is in guiding the Jama'at from its new spiritual centre in London. Mr. Mateen stated how the Khalifa controls everything; they obey what he says and do the same things he requests. Ahmadi Muslims firmly believe that the Khalifa is nothing less than the successor to the Prophet Muhammad. As well as being the spiritual head of the Jama'at, Ahmadis identify his position as being the patron and guardian of the true *Khilafat*, which is historically connected to the 'rightly guided' Caliphs of the seventh century (Valentine, 2008: 81). This view is bolstered further through digital technology and new media; the way the sermons are broadcasted, recorded, and uploaded onto the world-wide-web creates the illusion of a leader who is omnipresent and always accessible. The production of the Friday sermon provides insights into how the Jama'at

constructs a reality that transcends space and time. The production aims to make the members feel as if they have physically attended the Khalifa's sermons. This is achieved by providing unfiltered recordings, where the Khalifa speaks in Urdu and the translation is overlapped. All the background noise can be heard simultaneously, which creates a live atmosphere, and a high degree of immediacy and intimacy for the intended viewers. The camera only provides 3 different angles, which almost focus directly on the Khalifa himself. Occasionally, the camera shows glimpses of the attendees (Scholz, *et al*, 2008: 489).

The general themes of the sermons usually cover the same areas, such as portraying Western society as being "constantly contaminated by spiritual diseases". Thus, Ahmadis must protect themselves by fearing Allah, constantly monitor their actions, and actively interact with MTA TV and the Ahmadiyya website alislam.org (Sermon Feb-2015, 2015). Other areas also cover patience, the belief in *jihad* by the pen, the Ahmadiyya's 'liberal' attitude towards women's rights, and the duty of Ahmadis to live simply in a world of rampant materialism. Masroor Nisar, an Ahmadi living in Pakistan, told me in a conversation on Facebook that the sermons by the Khalifa are the top priority for every Ahmadi; if people miss the sermon and do not have access to digital technology, the local imams in Pakistan provide a summarized version on the following Friday.

The level of commitment to the Khalifa is continually renewed by interacting with the Jama'at's media channels, and clearly shows how effective new media can be in reinforcing religious identity. There are a multitude of other programs that continue to strengthen the worldwide community both religiously and culturally. A good example here is the children's program 'Story Time', which is orientated on teaching children 'important moral and religious lessons through memorable stories' (Story Time, 2015). Almost all of the Story Time programs are in Urdu, with occasional episodes in both Urdu and English (Kids Time P1, 2012). This series not only shapes children's' religious identity, but serves to reinforce their South Asian identity through language. It should be noted, however, that new media could not

serve as a single point of interaction that reinforces religious and cultural identity; it must work alongside already established structures in the real world. This can be seen in how children living in Kristiansand are increasingly finding it difficult to communicate and understand Urdu. Thus, I would argue that new media amplifies these effects, when working in conjunction with already established real world structures.

The Mateen family watch MTA TV daily, as it serves an important part of their daily religious and cultural life. Mrs. Mateen described some of the programs she watches;

“For example, peace conferences, Friday sermons, and question and answer sessions. Many different people are invited to the question and answer sessions. They are asked to provide answers concerning the religious and social problems affecting the community, and on other occasions, they are asked about different books and general information on the Jama’at. There are many different programs. But the Khalifa has a Friday sermon every week. So we watch it on TV.”

Because of the situation with the mosque, Ahmadis living in Kristiansand usually watch MTA related programs on the TV with their families. If there is anything interesting that they feel they need to share with family and friends who live in different countries, then they send messages and photos through the What’s App application. Qudoos related how in order for him and his wife to stay in touch with the worldwide community, the first thing they do is always to watch the MTA international channel. The normally use Twitter, email and Skype to communicate with family and friends. As Qudoos is the sports secretary for the local mosque in London, he will Skype with the people he needs to talk to and get a brief on what is happening in London. Moreover, he stated how when he encounters somebody who is interested in the Ahmadiyya Jama’at, he always refers them to alislam.org; even when he has questions himself, he will go online to read the wealth of material available on the website. He described how important it is to interact with new media for his faith and social life;

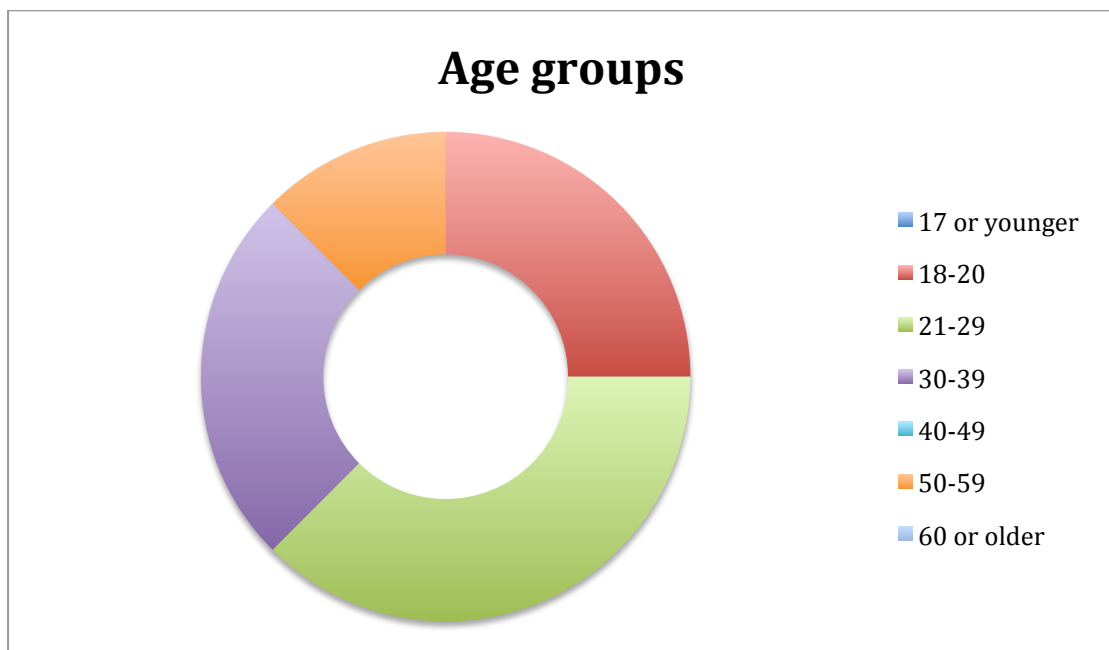
“The Internet is so useful, I mean you have all the apps on your phone, and you can just tweet and just message, or Viber or text, or whatever you want to do, to stay in touch.”

Ahmadiyya media usage survey

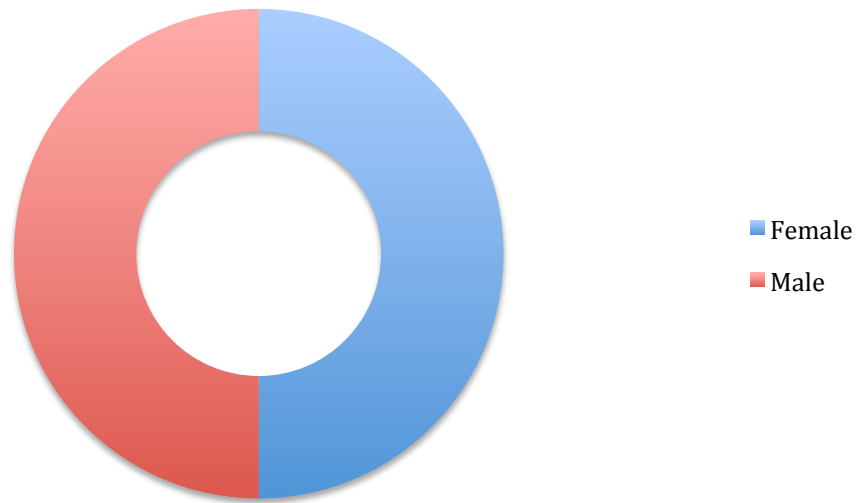
Qudoos’ remarks on the ‘usefulness’ of the Internet inspired me to try and further understand the importance of new media for the Ahmadiyya in their daily religious and social life. I conducted an online survey (Ahmadiyya Media Usage, 2015), which looked to gather data on how Ahmadi Muslims use media and what extent media plays in their daily life. I had a total of 10 respondents, however; some of these had skipped some of the questions, which are for reasons unknown. I have thought at length about why I did not receive as many respondents, or why some skipped questions that relate to personal information such as age and gender. I believe that it was due to the fact that the Ahmadiyya are quite private about their ‘online’ identities. The Khalifa has issued warnings about using Facebook, which was the platform I used for the survey, by posting in several Ahmadi orientated virtual communities. Therefore, I believe that this was probably one major factor as for the reasons of ‘hopping’ over, and for not receiving as many respondents as I had initially hoped for. I was actually forbidden from posting the survey in one group, until the moderator had received confirmation from the Ahmadiyya head office in London. I have yet to hear from the respective person. But, what it does show is reluctance on the part of ‘online’ Ahmadiyya’s to participate in surveys. Most of the people active in the virtual communities I engaged with were from South Asia and the Middle East. Therefore, it is understandable why they are cautious about providing sensitive information.

Before commencing it will be useful to outline what social media is, and what ways are best for describing this new social phenomenon. Social media is a fairly new term, which becomes problematic to precisely define (Lovnik, 2012, Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Nevertheless, it has become an integral term in the language of everyday life. The term ‘social media’ generally indicates to the

social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Social networking platforms allow Internet users to create, consume, and share ideas between other users, which is a key feature of social media. The interactive nature of social media and smart phones shows how social interaction is becoming more immediate and responsive, in contrast to older forms of media. Effectively, this changes the way people interact with each other in modern societies today (Lövheim, et al. 2013: 26). Social networking platforms such as Facebook build community through dialogue and interaction. Online users interact with each other on a basis of selectively making sense of past and present experiences through dialogue. Therefore, people's understanding of the world develops from a shared construction of the world through daily social interactions and relationships, which are the source to what is true for a person (Gunawardena, *et al.* 2009: 7). Thus, I have provided the results, and these have been quite useful in relating it to the qualitative data I collected in Kristiansand. The results will show the levels of social and new media interaction of Ahmadis, who responded to the survey. Below are some of these findings, which I will now aim to discuss and relate with the main focus of this study.

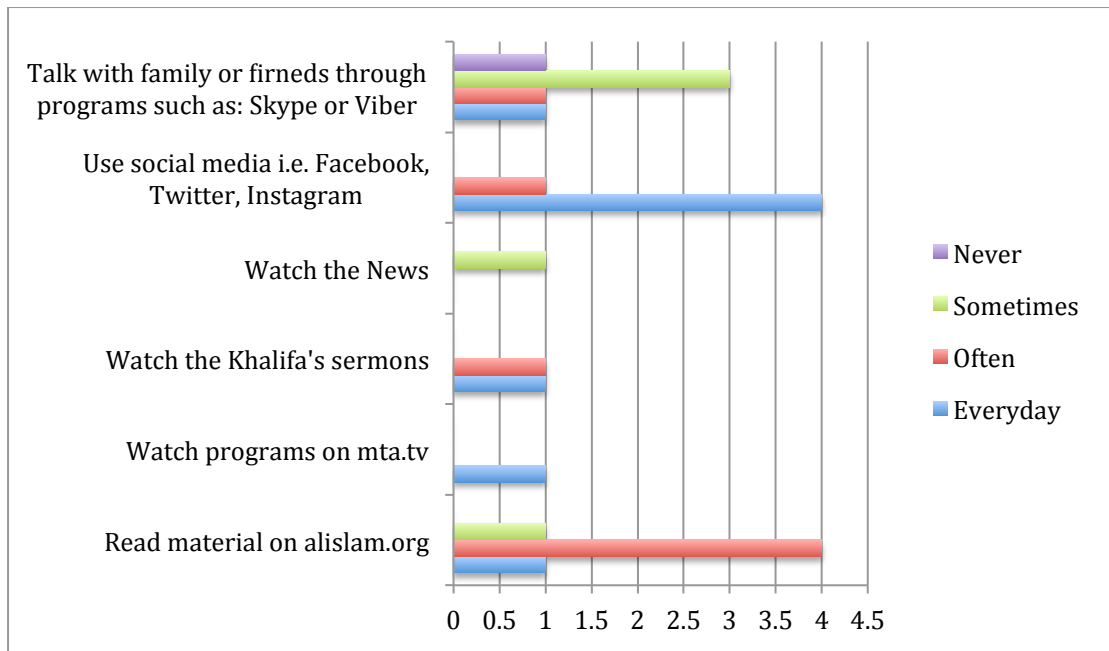


Gender

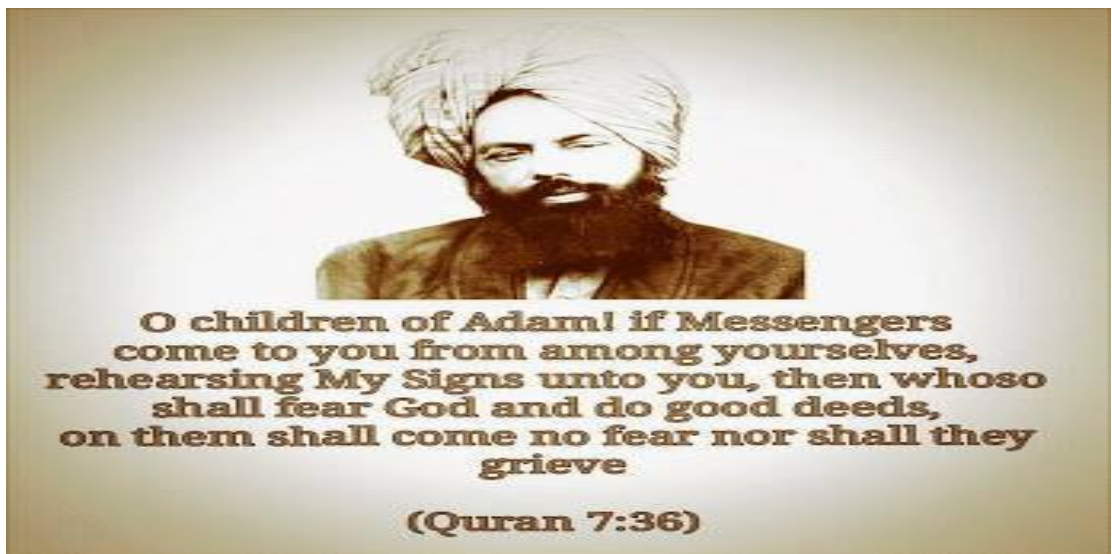
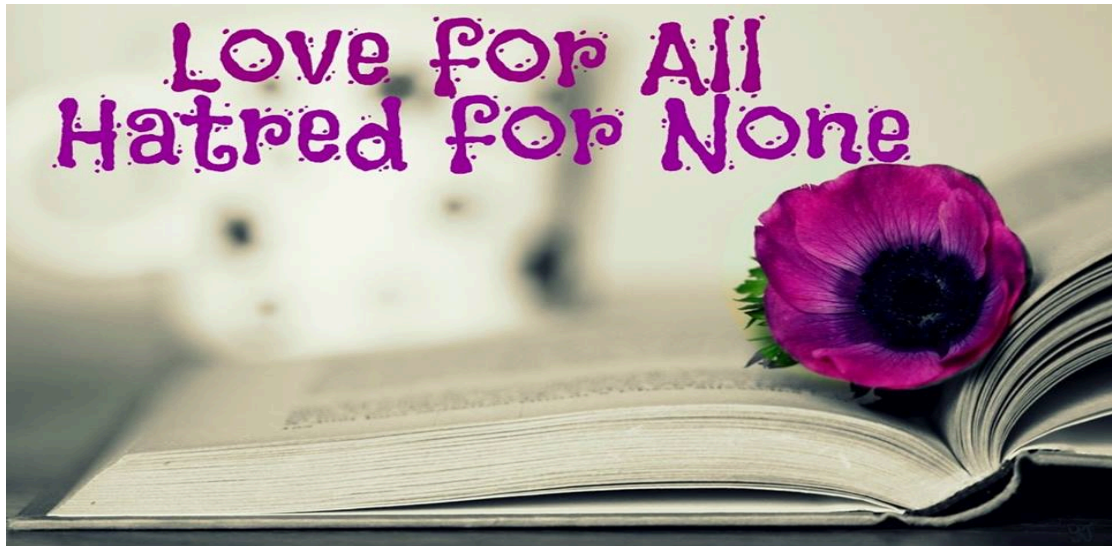


Country of Abode





The data collected about how often Ahmadis interact with specific websites or programs, shows how the majority use their time on an everyday/often basis, on social media sites and the Ahmadiyya's main website alislam.org. From an interview conducted on Facebook, Masroor Nisar stated that social networking platforms are great for interacting with other Ahmadiyyas. The ability to create virtual communities enables him to post the teachings of the Promised Messiah. He stated that he is not a missionary, but that he started his Ahmadi virtual community because he firmly believes in the Ahmadiyyat as the 'true' version of Islam. The community posts regularly on topics about the Jama'at, such as quotes from the Khalifa, verses from the Quran, issues affecting Ahmadis living in countries where they face persecution, and conversion stories (Rah e Huda, 2015). Moreover, there are a multitude of other Ahmadiyya-orientated virtual communities; the majority of them post in Urdu and are all engaged in sharing edited pictures and videos that depict their religious beliefs. I have provided two examples of edited pictures below, which feature the virtual communities described above (Ahmadiyyat Zindabad, 2015; Ahmadi Friends Intl. 2015).



The creation of virtual groups, and the activity of editing raw images, videos, and texts show how digital technology and new media are now at a stage where both areas are integrally interconnected. The ability for individual users to 'versionize' images they find on the Internet links back to the logic of variability, which was discussed earlier. It is interesting to see how online users can take raw images, which are then edited in order to reflect their own religious and social world views. Arguably, the examples provided above

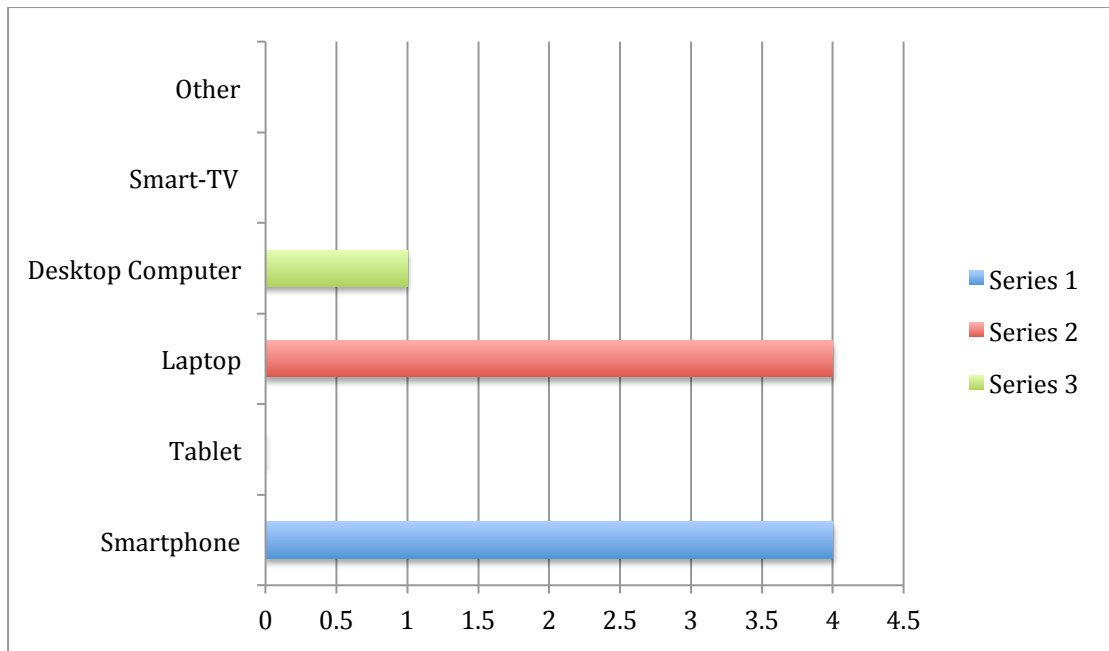
show how new media is reflecting the post-industrial logic of individual lifestyles from a number of choices. This can be seen in a number of pictures I searched on the Internet, one which (Prophecy, 2015) showed the popular image of the Earth taken from space that was then edited to incorporate the prophecy of the Promised Messiah.

These novel forms of social interaction show how quickly technology has become an integral part of daily life, and how it has affected the social, religious, cultural, and political spheres. The mobile phone, for example, is no longer just a 'phone' that is used to make and receive calls or text messages;



it has become a smart device, and can be used in the same ways as before, but now houses a multitude of other applications that allow its user to connect to the social web, consume content, and simultaneously repost it in light of his/her own interpretation.

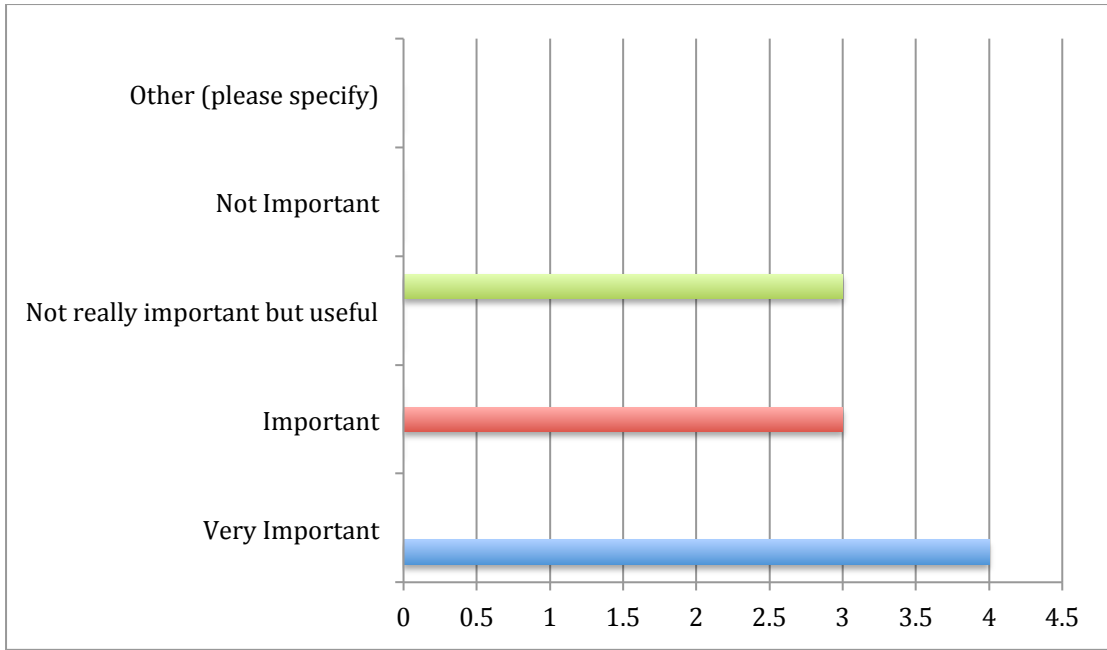
From the survey I, I asked which technological devices are used the most in daily online activity.



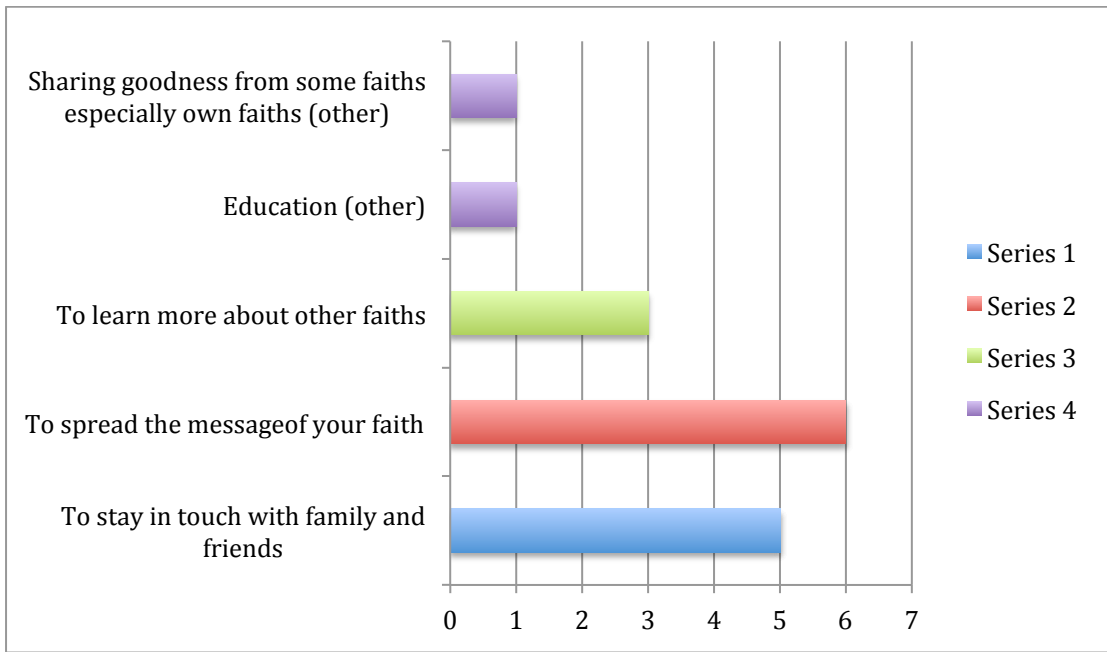
The Smartphone and Laptop were the most popular devices used for online interaction, which again raises the point of how media is progressively changing the way people act and create meaning in life. The proliferation of social networking platforms is related to the new generation of web content, which has been titled 'Web 2.0'. The web, from its outset, has been about connecting people. Terms such as 'Web 1.0' and 'Web 2.0' are ambiguous, as both keep the same logic of connecting users through web-based interfaces. However, Web 2.0 allows content that can easily be produced and published by interacting users, which, in turn, encourages wider participation in the use and generation of web content (Gunawardena, et al. 2009: 4). Whereas Web 1.0 content created by large-scale producers such as AOL or Yahoo provided little opportunity for user interaction, Web 2.0 has become an online platform for the 'prosumer'.

Prosumption on the Internet can be identified in the many user-based platforms that have emerged over the last 10 years such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, and YouTube. The term 'prosumption' indicates to how users can consume and produce online content. Prosumption has made it increasingly difficult to identify any form of separation between the producer

and the consumer; the clearest indicator is the hegemony of the prosumer (Ritzer, et al. 2012: 385). This can be identified in the proliferation of bloggers, tweeters, and grammers, who are consuming information such as news articles, and then simultaneously producing a tweet or blog post that reflects their opinion or interpretation of the current headlines. The content is then posted directly onto the web, and effectively reaches out to a global audience. Connected users subsequently consume the proposed tweet and produce a response. Thus, there is never a sole distinction of producer (News corporation) and a passive consumer (intended audience); there is always a prosumer in the background watching, editing, and producing his or her own digital content (Ritzer, et al. 2012: 386). The output of prosumption is in effect limitless, and can be observed on countless social media platforms where material can be shared, which has been identified in the virtual communities I engaged with above. The ability to create new content, share it, and discuss it has proved to be an important part of the Ahmadiyya way of life, as they connect with family, friends, and people of the same religion. Masroor Nisar stated that many of his members on his virtual community site post 'adorable' content, which makes him happy, and provides him with new information, which adds to his knowledge. The examples of the edited pictures above clearly show the way users interact and 'prosume' online material, edit it, and then repost it in a way that reflects their own beliefs and orientations. From the online survey I conducted (Ahmadiyya Media Usage, 2015), I asked the question of how important the Internet is for religious activities. From the chart below, four respondents identified the Internet as being very important for their religious activities, whilst three felt it as 'important'. The final three respondents felt that the Internet was not so important, but that it was useful for their religious life.



The next question I asked was how they use social media in their daily life.



The Jama'at's approach to new media is seen as a vital component in daily religious and social life. New media works in an effective way to proselytize, strengthen the hierarchy of the Jama'at, and provide families and friends the possibility to keep in regular contact. The results of the survey and the responses I received from the interviews indicate this point. The acceptance

of new media has had a positive impact on how the Jama'at keeps its members together despite being dispersed across the globe. This is evident in how members interact daily with the community's web-based services in order to reinforce their religious and cultural values. The ability to create user based content such as edited images, which can then be shared in virtual communities, has meant that those who live in isolated and discriminating areas can gain inspiration and meaning from the communities they interact with online, and thus reinforces their Ahmadi Muslim identity. The way the Jama'at has come to accept and incorporate new media has been addressed in different ways, which will now be looked at in more detail.

Communal discourse on using new media

Ahmadi Muslims firmly identify new media as a prophetic fulfillment, which was foretold by their Messiah. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad foresaw that his message would reach every corner of the Earth (Prophecy NM, 2015). Zeshan also discussed this prophecy, and stated that;

“The messiah got the message from God – that I will spread your message through the world... starting with the newspapers that were sent to different countries, and now with MTA the channel, it is actually fulfilled. You have MTA in every possible house. Totally free. Not one or two but three channels. One is more Arabic. Three channels broadcasting free on satellite, on all the time 24 hours. Its everywhere all the time.”

The interesting theme that can be identified is the communal discourse that relates to using new media. Campbell (2010: 13-7) highlights three distinctive communal discourses, which are used by Christian communities to justify their use of the Internet. First, Campbell discusses the idea of 'prescriptive discourse', which entails religious individuals and groups praising digital technology and new media for its capacity to achieve a specific practice or goal. Second, there is the notion of 'officializing discourse' that are especially used by religious leaders, who present digital technology as a tool, which can aid in solidifying established communal structures, policies, or theological

goals. Third, validation discourse deals with how religious communities address areas of technology, and how technology can be used to validate communal goals, and serve as a way to affirm communal identity.

In relation to the Ahmadiyya Jama'at, it becomes clear that all three dialogues are in use. For instance, prescriptive discourse can be identified in how the Jama'at does not endorse all aspects of the Internet, as it was shown earlier in relation to Facebook. At the same time, it does recognize the beneficial aspects new media can provide for proselytizing purposes. An example here can be found in Valentine's (2008: 221) experience with a family he visited; the television was switched on in order to show the MTA TV program '*sawala-jawah*', in which the Khalifa, or other leading figures carefully staged a questions and answers session. The female members of the family, during this process, would carefully perform *namaz*, whilst Valentine and the male members of the room discussed various points of the Ahmadi religious world-view. I never had the privilege of such an encounter, which implies the different objectives communities take that are dependent upon the context in which the community resides. To come back to the discussion on perspective discourse, it is also important to see how the Jama'at emphasizes the need to use the Internet for specific tasks, whilst providing boundaries for users so that they do not succumb to idle practice (Internet in the modern world, 2014; Campbell, 2010: 143-4).

Officializing discourse performs an important part in the hierarchical structure of the Jama'at, as it provides dialogue on building a system whereby the Khalifa can sanction new media, and encourage its use, both in mosques and by individual users (Campbell, 2010: 150). In my conversations with Qudoos on new media use, he outlined what the Khalifa had instructed on 'proper' media use, and he detailed how;

“There are instructions in terms of use, in the sense that the Khalifa did talk about the negative and positive effects of Facebook and other mediums as well. And he emphasises that if you use it in the wrong way then you will have a negative effect on people. But what he was trying to say, was how mediums

such as Facebook, can be harmful for the youth, and affect their relationships with their families, and what they believe in. Eventually when they start using these kinds of mediums they do not know when to stop and who is who on any of these, especially Facebook. So he gave an example in terms of identity; he said that somebody had created his profile on Facebook, without his authorization.”

The official policy on using new media such as the Internet was outlined by Dr. Nasim R. Sahib (2011), who is the chairman of the Ahmadiyya web portal alislam.org. Sahib advises how there are many ‘pitfalls’ and ‘red flags’ that come with using the Internet. Some of the ‘innocent’ themes he touches on are using technology and the Internet too much, to the extent that people are losing touch with real world interactions. There are three factors he lists;

1. Management of time
2. Restraint
3. Smart and safe use of the Internet

The moral teaching of the Quran serves as the basis of how Ahmadis should conduct ‘smart’ and ‘safe’ use of the Internet. The talk given by Sahib shows how the Jama’at sanctions the use of the Internet as an acceptable technology in relation to their religious beliefs and social values. Moreover, the acceptance of new media has been interpreted through its prophetic tradition, which portrays new media as a God-given benefit in preaching its religious message. Thus, officializing discourse is more concerned with instructing users on proper use, in order to safeguard them from the ‘pitfalls’ that are a part of daily media use.

Validation discourse is identified in how the Jama’at affirms digital technology in relation to its social affordances, and touches on how the technology can benefit the ethos and mission of the Ahmadiyya community. The emphasis, in this sense, is not on how the technology is utilized, but on what modes of community practice it empowers and facilitates. Thus, affirming digital technology is in one sense an affirmation of the community’s identity

(Campbell, 2010: 157). The validation discourse is a continuous process for the Jama'at, which is evident in how new media is continually upheld as a tool that can unite the international community and reinforce the Ahmadi religious identity. Ahmadis always apply a theological significance to new media; ancient texts such as the Quran, and later, speeches from their founding leader help the Jama'at realize its mission in the world through the acquisition of digital technology.

Trans-national networks

The use of new media not only serves to unite Ahmadis; it also serves to be a useful tool in bringing about social action against the persecution affecting Ahmadis who still live in Pakistan. The MTA streaming channel provides videos and images of persecution on a regular basis. In addition, news on the latest spurts of violence and discrimination against Ahmadis are also told during the sermon at Friday prayers. Yasir stated that he finds it important to tell the community here about the troubles affecting Ahmadis because he feels that people can get too involved with work and study here in Norway. As a result, they may forget, or feel indifferent, to the horrors that are affecting the Jama'at in places such as Pakistan. Zeshan discussed how painful it is for him personally to hear of the continuing persecution. He accounted how it is;

“always sad news, when anything happens in Pakistan or in other countries. When other people are killed in the name of Islam. It hurts actually when they do this in Islam's name. It does hurt. Pakistan – I have given that country up. I think there is no hope until they believe in messiah and Ahmadiyyat. There is no hope for Pakistan.

I asked about some of the initiatives the community here takes in order to try and bring about international attention and action against the ongoing persecution. Mr. and Mrs. Mateen said that when they watch TV and see the persecution, it becomes very painful for them. The only thing that they can do is write letters to the Human Rights Commission, which, Mrs. Mateen was keen to point out, is in line with their ethos of *jihad* by the pen. As well as

writing letters they have also signed petitions in order to try and bring about change for those who are suffering. Mrs. Mateen said;

“This is the way we can help them. Tell the world, tell the people, tell the high commissions that it’s going very wrong there. Now most people know about the Ahmadi Muslim problems. Mostly people come out of Pakistan after the persecution, after the problems. They got a visa easily, and were able to settle down outside of Pakistan. This is very good. We pray for all these people and all these governments who respect Ahmadi Muslims as human beings”.

Yasir told me about two specific instances where he has coordinated and engaged the community to write letters to governments and authorities in order to bring about change for those who are being persecuted. The first was concerning Ahmadi asylum seekers who had fled Pakistan for Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government is well known for its human rights abuses. The area of concern for this study is the way Sri Lanka has treated Ahmadi refugees. The Human Rights Watch (Refugees, 2015) website highlights how the government has forcibly returned Ahmadi refugees back to Pakistan, which is a clear breach of international law. The Sri Lankan government argues that Pakistani asylum seekers are posing a threat to the island’s security and public health, which they say is evident in the rise in crime, and diseases such as malaria (Deporting Pakistanis, 2014). The government unfairly detains many refugees before the court issues its deportation order. There are serious concerns and allegations that the Sri Lankan authorities are torturing and subjecting detainees to cruel and inhumane treatment. The UNHCR has not been permitted access to detained asylum seekers. The community in Kristiansand sent 25 letters to the Sri Lankan government in order to plead for the release of the detainees and to stop the deportation of Ahmadi Muslims back to Pakistan. Sadly, the asylum seekers were forcibly deported, despite increased pressure from not only the community here, but also from the UNHCR and the Sri Lankan civil society (SLCS, 2014).

The second instance concerned an online petition against the hate speech of Aamir Liaquat, who is a well-known TV-host for the channel GEO in Pakistan. In 2008, Liaquat described the Ahmadi Muslims as '*Wajibul Qatl*', which basically means that it is a duty for Muslims to murder them. In 2014, the talk show invited different Islamic scholars to discuss specific issues, one of which focused on describing Ahmadiyyas as enemies of Islam and Pakistan. Pakistanis were urged to put aside differences and unite against the Ahmadiyya Jama'at. There were other baseless allegations made against the community; they were accused for the Peshawar school attack on the 16th of December 2014, and for insulting the holy prophet Muhammad (Hate Speech, 2014). The petition was signed on the change.org petition platform, which is a website that allows users to create campaigns and mobilize people in order to put pressure on governments, authorities and corporations. The particular petition signed by the community in Kristiansand managed to gain 9,040 signatories against GEO TV and Aamir Liaquat. GEO TV provided an apology, which stated that the show had 'violated' its code of conduct and that a committee had been formed in order to ensure the implementation of policy in the breach of conduct. The apology stated that it was the guests on the live show that had incited the hate speech, and that it is difficult to control live transmissions. However, the talk show host Liaquat did nothing to try and steer the debate away from the attack on Ahmadi Muslims. Rather, he was seen nodding in agreement and encouraging the audience to join in applause (An apology is not enough, 2015).

Although these two instances provided no cause to celebrate, they do show how diasporic identities are not confined to the local sphere, but also operate in the global sphere. This has been greatly amplified and accelerated with the age of digital technology, as it has enabled people to connect directly with others and engage with issues at hand instantaneously. People no longer need to wait for the next morning's newspaper; events can be recorded and uploaded only seconds after they have happened. People, and in this context, migrants are building and maintaining trans-national contacts. Trans-national contacts are maintained between diasporas and their homelands, through pilgrimages, Internet, satellite television, visits from religious and political

leaders, and collaboration with international movements and organizations. As a result of the trans-national nature of some diasporas like the Ahmadiyya, there is a much bigger interplay in how the diaspora is affected by, and in turn, affects its homeland. This is evident in how diasporas have played a significant role in supporting homeland movements, religious nationalism, and even trans-national terrorism. Therefore, diasporic identities can be described as both local and global, as complex networks of trans-national associations, which comprise of 'imagined' and 'encountered' communities (Brah, 1996: 196). In relation to the Ahmadiyya Jama'at, the interplay between the diaspora and the homeland is quite ambiguous. On the one hand, many have left Pakistan on grounds of persecution, and many no longer identify Pakistan as a 'homeland'. The response I received from Zeshan above indicates to this; Zeshan stated that he had effectively cut all ties with Pakistan, despite being born and raised there until he was 10 years of age. This view is universal to the Jama'at who have no desire to return to Pakistan, but rather focus on maintaining and developing their new spiritual centre in London. Thus, the Ahmadiyya can only take a limited role in supporting homeland movements. Currently, there is no such home movement, nor do I believe there ever will be. The Jama'at has created a diasporic space, which enables Ahmadis to live in their host societies and helps in dealing with their real and imagined notions of perpetual homelessness. New media greatly facilitates the transition of migration, as it creates a new trans-national space from which Ahmadis can connect and feel a sense of belonging.

Conclusion

As it has been shown throughout the discussion of this thesis, the Ahmadiyya Jama'at in Kristiansand is a small community that is struggling to become a visible and active community in the city. Despite the fact that the community has lived in Kristiansand since 1987, relatively little has changed. The community has not really grown in size, and they still have difficulties in trying to become a visible community in the local milieu. Still, the Ahmadiyya have developed several ways to bridge out into the wider community, which range

from information stands, culturally orientated parties, and dialogue meetings. The purpose of these activities is to inform the local society about who they are and what they stand for. Thus, the main objectives for the community are to become 'visible' in the local area, to combat negative stereotypes about Islam, and to open up possibilities for conversions. I have shown how the first two objectives are the main priorities for the community at the moment. This is because the community lacks the resources and visibility to make a significant impact on prospect converts. The development of the mosque is a major obstacle for the Ahmadiyya, as an obscure mission house located in Hellemyr keeps them largely sidelined and hidden from view. Moreover, without a visible and functioning mosque, most Ahmadi immigrants will be probably more inclined to move to areas such as Oslo, which has a large visible mosque, and a high concentration of co-ethnics. These issues strongly indicate as to why the community has not grown or made a substantial impact on the locality.

I have shown how Lefebvre's three dimensions of space helps us understand how the mosque is a physical building, a mental construct, and a space for social interaction. These three dimensions also extend out into the wider community, as local politics dictate the urban representations of space. Moreover, the examples in this study have shown how architecture is not only about bricks and mortar; the planning and development of a mosque entails complex social interactions, which embodies the relations of power and resistance in the local society. Because of the community's demographical size, the Ahmadiyya currently lacks the capacity to resist the urban representations of space, like other minority groups have achieved in cities such as Bradford. The continued struggle for the Ahmadiyya in this respect has shown the fragmentation of the local milieu, as people have voiced their support for a mosque against a backdrop of other hostile voices that are resisting the very idea of a visible multi-cultural space. The implications of these findings demonstrate that there is a need for deeper dialogue between the different communities and those in positions of power. I have argued that the local council would benefit from looking at how other European cities work with different communities in relation to the development of mosques.

Furthermore, an enquiry into how mosques in other cities impact local areas would also prove to be a constructive factor in the decision-making process.

The size of the Ahmadiyya community has also had a direct impact on how they maintain their religious and cultural identity. As I have demonstrated, the Ahmadiyya has adapted adeptly into the local environment, whilst preserving a strict religious identity through harnessing old and new mediums, which connect the small community with the Jama'at worldwide. I have found that the community goes through a process of compartmentalization, which has been shown in how an Ahmadi Muslim keeps their religious and cultural identities intact, whilst having an alternate self that is separate. This has allowed for much more ambiguity than the religious identity can accept. The new social self takes on cultural attributes from the host environment, and arises in situations where an Ahmadi Muslim interacts with a member of society outside of the community. The Ahmadi Muslims in Kristiansand lack the internal networks afforded by much bigger communities like those living in Oslo or Bradford. These communities have proved to be much more conservative and exclusive in their religious and social interactions. However, as I have noted, it would be beneficial to conduct a wider study, which compares the two cities in order to further expose these contrasts.

The transplantation of religion has produced subtle changes that need to be made in order to become an officially accepted religion in the Norwegian political sphere. Moreover, there have been signs that the nature and function of the mosque is changing to become a place not only for prayers, but also for communal activities. In the case of the Ahmadiyya in Kristiansand, the mosque is a mission house and cultural centre. This shows how the Ahmadiyya take on board elements that are loosely influenced by Christian congregations. Through the transplantation process, the Ahmadiyya movement can then express itself in the way it intends to be in the new host context. There are laws in place that protect the Ahmadiyya Muslims, and provide them with the freedoms to openly express themselves as Muslims. As it has been shown, these freedoms are denied to them in places such as Pakistan. However, there are still problems that hinder the Jama'at in

Kristiansand from fully expressing its religious and cultural identity, as identified above in relation to the mosque. It would be interesting to look at this case again in the future to identify if there have been any changes related to the development of a mosque, and if so, also research how the new mosque has changed community life and impacted the locality.

Throughout my time in the field, I have found how new media has played a significant role in shaping community and identity. Through the lens of RSST, I have identified how the Ahmadiyya Muslims understand their relationship with technology in light of their faith, community history, and contemporary way of life. New media has been interpreted as being a gift from God, which is to be used to not only spread the message of their founder, but also to guide members who are scattered across the globe due to persecution. In aiding the preservation of religious and cultural values of the Ahmadiyya, the sect has established a strong presence online in old and new mediums. The people the members relate to live in many different contexts, which means that each member has a unique experience that is grounded in the local milieu; yet, through the Internet and satellite-TV, the community transcends all cultural, social, and political boundaries, and provides a strong presence that keeps the Ahmadi way of life sustainable in host contexts. Digital technology has become an integral part for day-to-day religious life, as Ahmadiyya Muslims engage with it consistently to hear their leader's words every Friday. Thus, their leader's authority is reinforced through new media. Also, through new media, the religious values and practices can be reasserted as minorities can connect and inhabit the trans-national diasporic space. What this study has shown is how localities are no longer isolated to each given context; they are intrinsically linked to the global through telecommunications. In this respect, media communication is changing the way people carry out their day-to-day lives, and consequently, the way people construct meaning around them.

The focus of solely looking at the Ahmadiyya in Kristiansand has provided a limited view of Ahmadis living in Norway. As the community is relatively small, I have had to cross-reference my research with other studies focused on cities such as Oslo and Bradford. This could have been greatly improved if I had

conducted fieldwork in Oslo, for example, in order to show the greater contrasts with communities that live in areas with higher concentrations of co-ethnics. The limitation of working with a small community has meant that certain objectives like the media diary was largely unsuccessful. Looking at this research retrospectively, a wider field area would have enabled me to draw more on the similarities and contrasts with other Ahmadiyya living in the Norwegian context. Such research could have reinforced my argument about how demographic concentrations can impact the way a community interacts with the wider society. However, what this study has shown is how small communities do take different trajectories in social interaction, which are usually more liberal and inclusive. As a contrast, larger communities exhibit more exclusive tendencies, as was the case with the city of Bradford. Further research can draw on these results in order to show a deeper understanding at the national level. This thesis has created a foundation from which future studies can be developed in order to understand how community and identity is defined in a Norwegian or European context, and how media and trans-national connections impact communities in the locality.

The long and arduous journey of migration does not end after settlement. Rather, a new chapter begins, which opens up new tensions and problems to confront. The Ahmadiyya, in particular, have had to create new networks, find places to practice their religion, and re-assess their philosophical and social ideas in an environment that is often contradictory to their way of life. There have been complex negotiations between different spaces of social interaction, which have had to be made in order to integrate, interact, and live as Ahmadi Muslims in a milieu that provides little for their religious and cultural requirements. However, through new media they can continue to gain meaning and inspiration from their religious leaders and the experiences of other family members and friends who live in different host contexts. What this study has shown is how the Ahmadiyya Muslims define and express their identity in Kristiansand, and how local and global forces shape, maintain, and impact the processes of transplantation, development and adaptation.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

Demographics - (Gender, age, and profession.)

Where have you come from and under what circumstances i.e. economic migrants, asylum seekers, refugees?

When did you migrate?

Who did you migrate with? (i.e as part of an extended family, as part of a chain of migration, or alone.)

What was your educational and working background before you migrated?

What were your initial perceptions of Norway before settling? (How do those perceptions affect attitudes to settlement?)

What are your perceptions of Norwegian society? Do you feel that it is morally corrupt?

What do you do for work/education now?

How does living in Kristiansand impact on your religious beliefs and practices?

Has anything changed in the community during your life in Kristiansand?

If so, what caused those changes?

Who do you associate with in everyday life? Do you have friends outside of the community for instance?

If yes, do you see the friendship as an opportunity to teach them about your religious faith?

If not, what are the reasons for not maintaining a wider network of relationships outside the community?

Have you experienced forms of prejudice from other members of the local community?

If yes, who and what forms of prejudice was this?

If not, do you feel Kristiansand is a relatively good place for practicing your way of life?

How do problems affecting your home country impact on your life here in Kristiansand?

How do you maintain contacts with family and friends around the world?

Do you use computers or social media (Facebook, Twitter etc) to keep in touch with Ahmadiyya in other parts of the world?

If so, can you tell me a bit about it?

How important is it for you to stay connected to other Ahmadi worldwide?

Does it help new members to the community settle into an Ahmadi way of life by being connected to Ahmadi web-based media?

How often do you communicate?

Is this individual contact or in shared contexts (e.g. Khalif's webcast)?

Do you chat in groups or share photos?

Who creates the content? e.g. on local websites, other platforms etc.

Do you keep in regular contact with any individuals from Ahmadiyya communities in other parts of the world?

[for older interviewees, or childhood memories]

How did you keep in touch with other Ahmadiyya before [the Khalif's webcasts, the internet etc.]

How did your family keep in-touch with other Ahmadiyya before web-based media?

How did you listen to the Kalifa's sermons before the age of podcasts?

Do you feel the Internet serves as an important aspect in your religious life?

How does the community help in building bridges into the wider Kristiansand community?

What services are available in aiding you, and other members of the community, settle down in Kristiansand?

How do you feel about the present situation concerning the building of a mosque?

Do you feel the situation is unfair? If so, why?

Media Diary

Hvordan for å bruker dette media dagbok. Vennligst kan du skrive hver dag om hvordan du bruker medier som internett, TV, Radio, Avis, Podcasts, Videocasts, Apps, osv. Dokumentere om dine daglige aktivitet på noen av de mediene du har tilgang til slik som "Khalifa's Podcast" eller "NRK Nyheter" for

eksempel. Gir informasjon om hvem du var med, eller om du var alene, og en personlig refleksjon over dine bruk av mediene.

Note on how to use this media diary. Please can you document each day, and the time, at which you interact with a specific medium such as: TV, Internet, Radio, Newspaper, Podcasts, Videocasts, Apps, etc. Please document your activity on a specific medium such as “The Khalifa’s Podcast” or “NRK Nyheter”, for instance. Also provide information on, who you were with, or if you were alone, and a personal reflection about your interaction with the specific medium. This can include how important it is for you to stay connected or engaged with different forms of media. If you do not interact with media on a regular basis, please write down the reasons why this is the case.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this media diary. It is much appreciated.

Day	Time	Activity	Where	Who with	Reflection

Online Survey Questions

1. What is your age?

- What is your age? 17 or younger
- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

2. Are you male or female?

- Are you male or female? Female
- Male

3. In what country do you currently reside?

- In what country do you currently reside? United Kingdom
- Other (please specify)

4. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?
Employed, working full-time
- Employed, working part-time
- Not employed, looking for work
- Not employed, NOT looking for work
- Retired
- Disabled, not able to work

5. How long do you interact with the Internet per day?

- How long do you interact with the Internet per day? Up to one hour
- 1-3 hours
- More than 5 hours

6. How often do you use the Internet for the following activities?

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Read material on alislam.org | <input type="radio"/> |
| Watch programs on mta.tv | <input type="radio"/> |
| Watch the Khalifa's sermons | <input type="radio"/> |
| Read material from anti-Ahmadiyya sources | <input type="radio"/> |
| Watch the News | <input type="radio"/> |
| Use social media i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. | <input type="radio"/> |

Talk with family or friends through programs such as: Skype, Viber, Facebook chat



7. How important do you feel the Internet is for your religious activities?

- How important do you feel the Internet is for your religious activities? Very important
- Important
- Not really important but useful
- Not important
- Other (please specify)

8. How do you use social media?

- How do you use social media? To stay in touch with family and friends
- To spread the message of your faith
- To learn more about other faiths
- Other (please specify)

9. When you watch the Khalifa's sermon online do you...

- When you watch the Khalifa's sermon online do you...
Watch alone
- Watch with family or friends
- Watch in a mosque or community setting
- Other (please specify)

10. Which of the following technologies do you use the most in your daily online activity?

- Which of the following technologies do you use the most in your daily online activity?
Smartphone
- Tablet

- Laptop
- Desktop computer
- Smart-TV
- Other (please specify)