Hidden Communities

<EXCAVATING> PLACELESS CULTURES in
POST-COLONIAL LONDON by
COMMENSALITY

Research Booklet

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Research Booklet

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Research Essay

Green, Sophie. 2019. A Father And His Baby Carried In A Modern Plastic Carrier In One Hand, Adidas Pool Sliders In The Other, Stands Against A Skyline Dotted With Cranes And Shiny New-Build Flats. Image. https://time.com/longform/african-churches-christianity-london/.

"home is no longer one place,it is locations"

Amin and Thrift 2002

Keywords   Sense of Belonging, Multiculturalism, Post-Colonial, Ethnicities, Enclaves, Cluster, Diaspora, Space, Place, Boundaries, Thresholds, Communality, Conviviality, Commensality

Introduction

This photograph taken by Sophie green[1] is an epitome of the foundation of this research, the feeling and being of out-of-place, "placeless-ness"[2]. The photograph is taken in London on a regular Sunday, after a traditional prayer of the Evangelical African church. An African man in his traditional prayer dress on an unkempt sports field in front of a skyscraper under construction. He is holding Adidas sliders and a baby in a modern plastic baby carrier, indicating his attempts to assimilate into the culture, but apart from his attire, there is no evidence of a place where his culture is particularly valued. Although his culture is located in the cartesian world, it is placeless in the hybridity (of the common and the other) of London. This does not mean he does not belong to the location that he is right now but shows that his belonging is merely represented or reflected in his environment. His sense of belonging is in the imaginary, with no reflection other than himself therefore, he is placeless in this picture. The root of this matter relies on the history of London and the way the city had developed.

When colonial Britain arrived to, to be colonized countries, they had the power to shift the urban built environment according to their needs. They adapted the local architecture depending on their requirements for their western way of living. Decades later when the people from the 'post-colonial' countries arrived in Britain they were not able to reshape their environment but had to adapt themselves to the urban fabric to survive. Today, even though a person in London may experience many different cultures in a day, it is still very difficult to see a manifest effect of these cultures on London's urban fabric. The problem of this situation is not a new occurrence but remains the same today. It is that the understanding of both urban and the diasporic in the development of the city "has largely remained circumscribed by reference to the model of the state as nation-state, supported by the idea of the nation as ideally ethnically homogeneous"[3].

This occidental thinking, reflected in the urban structure, creates the hybrid urban environment that hides the existence of different cultures in a complex mechanism of merging. As a result of this situation, it is possible to point towards placeless cultures in the city of London. People or locations that are culturally significant without any material or immaterial connection to their urban surroundings. They exist in the imaginary or mental view of the city, but they are placeless in the urban context of London.

[1] See page.6

[2] Place-less-ness; /noun/
A state of being unconnected. An environment that lacks the significant attachment to a place because of the homogenizing effect of the location.

[3] King, Anthony D. "Postcolonial Cities, Postcolonial Critiques". Negotiating Urban Conflicts: Interaction, Space and Control, edited by Helmuth Berking, Sybille Frank, Lars Frers, Martina Löw, Lars Meier, Silke Steets and Sergej Stoetzer, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015

This research aims to unravel the complicated structure of the diversity of cultures to locate and understand the placelessness in post-colonial London. To achieve this understanding and decipher the mental view of the city, the investigation focuses on the sense of belonging for ethnic communities and placeless cultures and their temporalities in the city of London. Concepts, space, and place and their juxtaposition on a nonlinear continuum will help in the process of defining placelessness and placesness. The understanding of these concepts with regard to temporality, exposes the existence of a threshold between the imaginary perception and the physical representation of sense of belonging.

This essay branches into two segments. While the written pages are the main research explaination/discussion, photographs on the right side are compiled to create a second visual essay. Read them separately but simultaneously.

The main framework of the research is understanding the concepts of space and place according to the interpretation from the sense of belonging point of view. Although they are used in the written words as separate concepts, they are umbilically connected and cannot be evaluated without each other. Space and place cannot be classified as different notions, but as interrelated concepts characterized by the absence or presence of each other on a scale of time and meaning as a continuum. According to geographer Yi-fu Tuan, the difference between space and place lies in the permanent or temporary assignment of meanings to a particular zone, an area. "So, space and place are dialectically structured in human environmental experience, since our understanding of space is related to the places we inhabit, which in turn derive meaning from their spatial context"[4]. Since space can be described as a place that has no social connections with the experiencer, no values added by the users, place becomes more than just a location with social connections, but a location created by the relation with the human subject which is limitless in time and meaning.

Concepts of place-ness and place-less also can be understood on a similar but different continuum. Concepts of place-ness and place-less bring back this subjective realm of mental understanding of the space place continuum toward objective reality by connecting location with visual appropriations of belonging. On the other hand, the visual appropriations appointed to the sense of belonging still include a subjectivity that fundamentally connects the two continuums.

Yi-Fu Tuan gives a great example of this dichotomy in his farewell lecture at the University of Wisconsin. He mentions, "since the human individual is both body and mind, he can also be said to be both "place" and "space." His body, tied by his senses to the environment, is place; his mind, freed from such sensory ties, is space."[5] If we try to understand the Sophie Greens Photograph from a sense of belonging point of view this time, his body, his appearance disconnected from his surroundings is 'space' while his mind tied to his culture and traditions after a Sunday prayer is 'place'. Therefore, he might be placeless and placeness at the same. This situation hints at a threshold in between the concepts. A threshold that is an occasion, a situation that is an actant for co-existence of concepts.

The concept of "non-place"[6] introduced by the French anthropologist Marc Auge refers to locations that are equally alienating to everyone. This concept challenges the individuality of the space place continuum as it includes everyone. It is important to understand the concepts of space and place deeply to interpret the existence of a threshold, a co-existence situation, or a sense of belonging in between and inside the concept of space and place. This paper uses the words space and place with meanings depending on this theoretical background.

[4] Seamon, David, and Jacob Sowers. 2021. "Key Texts in Human Geography." In , by pages 43-52. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446213742.

[5] Tuan, Y., 2014. Space, Place, and Nature: The Farewell Lecture.

[6] Augé, Marc. 1995. Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity London ; New York: Verso

People-(-Scape)

The main aim of the first part of the research is to understand the complex multicultural structure of London from a non-occidentally narrated point of view. The strong move of interpreting London, a "post-imperial"[7] city, as a "post-colonial"[8] city aims to untangle the convoluted structure of communities from the diasporic point of view to grasp London's diverse characteristics as a whole.

Multicultural diversity and post-colonial diversity in the cities like London should be interpreted separately. Even though cultural diversity is at the core of the city of London it is not an easy task to understand the hidden complexity of this multiculturality. While multiculturality can be seen as an umbrella term for diversity, the term post-colonial added to the term diversity signifies a much more rooted, deeply settled, and mixed understanding of people and cultures. Post-colonial diversity bottoms on the ties in between different cultures to history and memories. Colonial aspects of the diversity in a post-imperial city point towards a power relation that is not always oblivious but present in between different cultures. This relation is mostly ignored or taken as granted when London is specified as a multicultural city but when interpreted as a post-colonial the fundamentally connected cultures which exist in the city reveal the relation in between. It is this relation of power between different cultures in the post-colonial structure of the society and the city which forces the hiddenness of communities. This -sometimes hidden- relation between communities is what creates the uniqueness of London's diverse structure. It turns the city itself in to a complex mechanism of merging cultures if not interpreted correctly. It becomes exactly a melting pot of cultures as London is commonly referred to.

In pursuit of sense of belonging in such a homogenizing city, people tend to form clusters with their ethnic groups or choose to live in the areas where their ethnicity, history, community, and culture already live in. As a result, different ethnic groups choose and are sometimes even forced to live in enclaves to preserve their culture, their ideas, customs, and way of living as much as the environment can handle. When these community clusters are created by members of an ethnic group outside of their homeland, a "diasporic"[9] enclave is formed. It is not always easy to map these diasporic "enclaves"[10] as they are not bound within strict borders. They are more similar to mental images rather than governmental boundaries. It is not always possible to clearly identify a neighborhood, a place, or a region characterized by ethnic migration or diaspora communities, as they are mostly mental definitions, imaginaries for the locals, rather than physical representations. Their assemblages in the city can be seen as Ethnoscapes.

[7] Post-Imperial; /adj/
A state of a colonising nation or a city after the period of colonisation.

[8] Post-Colonial; /adj/
A state of a colonised nation or a city after the period of colonisation.

[9] Diaspor(a)ic; /(noun)/adj/
The spread, migration, movement of a group of people away from their established homeland. Hints of settled community after movement.

[10] Enclave; /noun/
(A territory)A group of people occupying a place which is completely surrounded by different other claimed territories.Each Diasporic community can be considered an enclave.
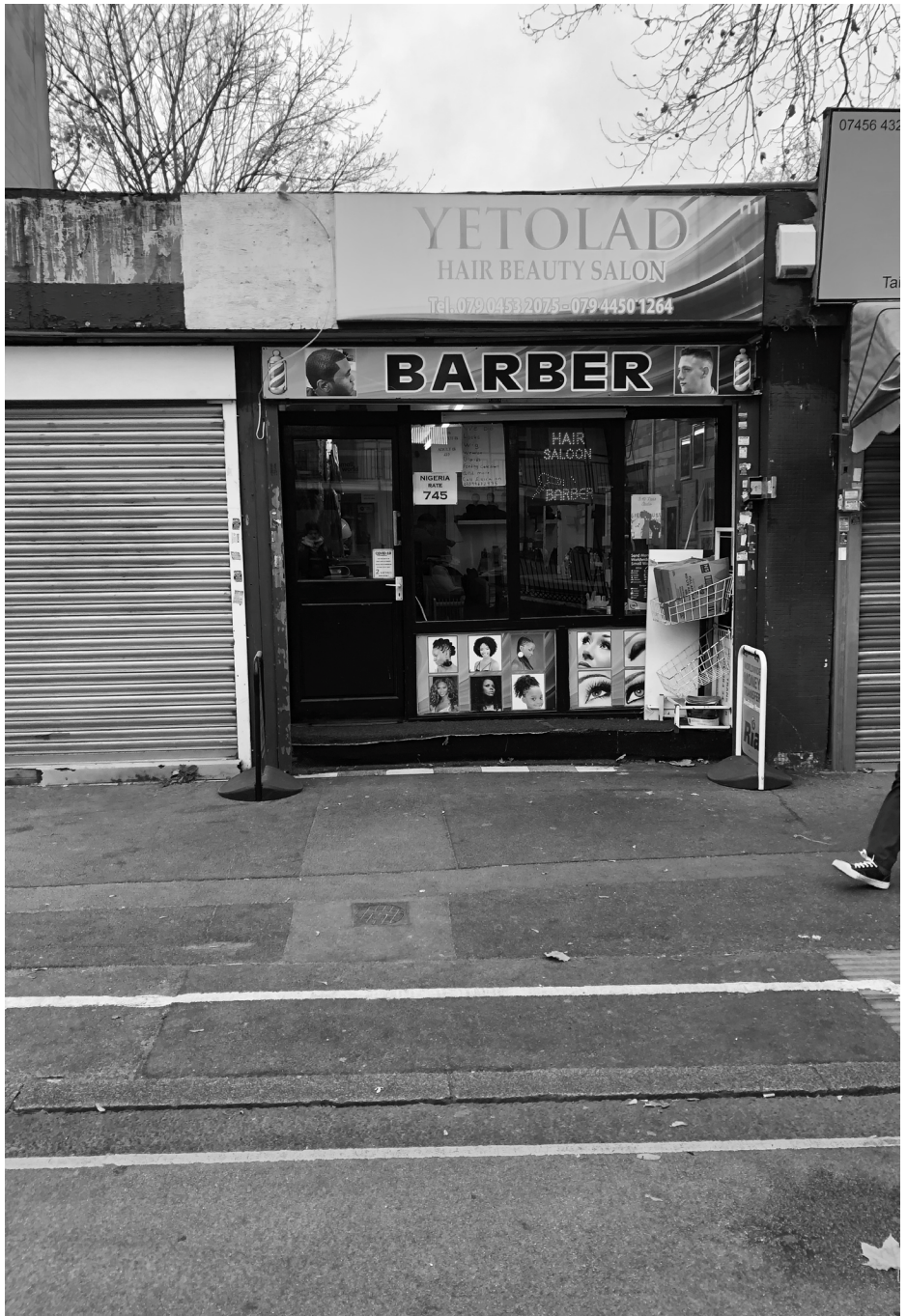
'Ethno-' in the word ethnoscapes refers to people rather than only ethnicity hence rather than interpreting Ethnoscapes as ethnic landscapes Salazar defines Ethnoscape as "landscapes of group identity, no longer bound to certain territorial location"[11]. Ethnoscapes are assemblages, ecologies of people. Ethnoscapes are networks of fluid localities. While locality may not follow a governmental or historical line as a border it is still possible to put a line on the map for localities borders as it is bound in locations. On the other hand, Ethnoscapes are also not borderless, but their interpretation of a boundary is a bit different than what we normally understand as borders. Borders are seen as strict lines dividing separate matters from each other but the borders of Ethnoscapes are fluid zones. They are transition matters that adapt and change. They are the situation of change and fluidity. This understanding of a border of Ethnoscapes enables the boundless understanding of the term as it is more of a representation rather than a limitation. Briefly, Ethnoscapes are landscapes of people "in a context where physical borders no longer necessarily sustain locality."[12]

To achieve a mapping that shows the Ethnoscapes, the understanding of borders as fluid thresholds is used to better capture the essence of the mental boundaries that encapsulate diasporic environments in London. The "pre-colonial African map"[13] shows how borders can be used just to show where different communities live rather than acting as a dividing mechanism for government. Although in graphic representation they are strict lines, in this mapping these lines are living organisms moving, changing, shrinking, or enlarging and even crossing over each other according to the movement in the population's temporality and imagines. This pre-colonial African mapping highly resembles the "1943 Abercrombie mapping"[14] of the London social and functional analysis map. In 1943 Patrick Abercrombie used similar organically shaped borders to map the inner London area into localities to determine a strict post-war development scheme. Although London has not ended up as strict as he imagined, his idea of localities still carries an important part for people living in London. So much that in 2018 a Centre for London research, "London Identities"[15] determined that there is no London effect but there are localities effects in London after having interviews with many people living in the city. Their interviews show that London as a whole is a huge mechanism to comprehend as one and consists of many smaller local identities or localities.People tend to identify themselves and others and their communities with the local area they live and spend their time in. This research tried to map London's Localities using a similar method to 1943 Abercrombie mapping. Adam Towle and Mark Brearley from a UCL research "Design for London"[16] divided the city into local areas depending on the localities with the interviews that were made.[17] This identification is merely an ethnic definition but just belonging to the neighborhood. It is an imaginary division of the city of London.

[11]Salazar, N. (2013). Scapes. In R. J. McGee, & R. L. Warms (Eds.), Theory in social and cultural anthropology: An encyclopedia (Vol. 1, pp. 754-754). SAGE Publications,

[12]^Ibid

[13]See Figure 1(Page 140)

[14]See Figure 2 (Page 141)

[15]Tom Colthorpe, N., 2018. London identities. 1st ed. London: Centre for London.

[16]"Design For London". 2020. The Bartlett School Of Architecture.

[17] See Figure 3(Page 142)

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In this research, the mapping of local belonging is layered with the governmental data sets of locations of ethnic groups to map out the localities of ethnicity in London.[18] The result points towards an ethnic understanding of the sense of belonging in the localities of London. Therefore, the post-colonial ethnic stain mapping of London is based on the localities maps layered with numeric data that was collected from the official website of the London Datastore by Mayor of London.[19] The result shows the ethnic stains of London that show the most prominent ethnoscapes in the city of London.[20] Although the map shows an overview of the city with ethnoscapes, places of communities are not continuous entities but are more similar to a living organism that is scattered within and sometimes even outside of the stain. There is an ambiguous link in-between the thresholds of communities' sense of belonging and the presence of ethnoscapes, they feed on each other. Thresholds as transitions zones of the body to mind, individual to communal, physical to imaginary, space to place. Therefore, the research focuses on the thresholds in-between spaces and places within the ethnoscapes to frame the research and to be able to link the emergence of diasporic enclaves with the thresholds that it holds for communities.

[18] See Chapter: Catalogue of Stains (Page 40)

[19] See figure 4 (Page 143)

[20] See Chapter: Catalogue of Stains (Page 40)

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A further investigation of the thresholds in-between spaces and places in the ethnoscapes is needed hence research on human activity on a smaller scale is the next step of the research. As the research is scaled down to the individual understanding of "Ethno-", people, the word "-scape" in Ethnoscape gains importance. According to Salazar -scapes "by analogy to landscapes, are given material shape and meaning by human action. They are the results of global processes at any given time but are not the processes themselves."[21] Research focuses on the process of production of Ethnoscapes with the anthropological theory of space and place as the anthropological theory of space and place is human-based, it also "needs to be process-oriented".[22]

Anthropology is the study of humans, societies, cultures, and their development and it focuses on human behavior to understand the human environment and history. Architecture and anthropology in the shortest term, both work on the identity of a location from different perspectives. Working in between the disciplines, anthropological theory of architecture highlights the role of the body in "The transformation of space into place (meaning), and the material and metaphorical importance of architecture and urban design (the built environment)"[23]. As Setha Low argues "the social construction of space is the actual transformation of space — through peoples' social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting"[24].

With this understanding, short-term observational anthropological research is conducted in London. Interpretative photography and open-ended interviews[25] are used as survey tools. I spent several full days in the locations that were shown as intersections of several different diasporic enclaves in the previous mapping. These locations which were further away from the touristic city center, contain more than one community hence it made it possible to observe different communities in comparison with each other. Interviews with randomly encountered and chosen people are used to interpret the imagination of thresholds for communities in London. I conducted open-ended interviews to create a boundless conversation environment. Some similar questions are asked to participants to initiate conversation, but the rest of the interview is conducted as a conversation session rather than a question-and-answer typology to broaden the information gathered from the participant.

[21]Salazar, N. (2013). Scapes. In R. J. McGee, & R. L. Warms (Eds.), Theory in social and cultural anthropology: An encyclopedia (Vol. 1, pp. 754-754). SAGE Publications,

[22]Low, Setha M.. "Towards an anthropological theory of space and place" 2009, no. 175 (2009): 21-37. https:// doi-org. tudelft.idm.oclc.org/10.1515/ semi.2009.041

[23]^Ibid

[24]^Ibid

[25]See Chapter: People_Talks

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Where does your community live?

-Places where Turkish people live are actually **predetermined**. It is mostly Dalston, Stoke Newington high street, Harringey or Essex

-Why do you think people choose these locations? Why did you choose this place?

-It is mostly **networking**. The first reason is the **language**. finding someone you can communicate with to overcome the language barrier. Secondly it is the **feeling of safety**. Since you are new, you first try to find your place in city where you can communicate and find your needs easily. For example, I found my house through these connections. I found my lawyer who is helping me through my asylum application through these **connections.** And since you have an instant connection through language, and you need safety normally you **trust** people you can communicate more.

Talk 1: A section of the interview conducted on 02/12/21 in Harringey with a Turkish person living in London for over 15 years.

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During the interview a couple walked by us and the lady I was having the interviewing said hello to the couple. Later when I asked if she knew the couple she said no. She said «they looked like they were Filipino so I just wanted to say hi and ask them if they need anything and they actually asked me the same question. We always like to great each other everytime when we encounter eventhough we do not know one and other. That is just the way it is»

-Do you belong to a community in London? Ethnic or another that give you a sense of belonging?

Yes. There is an **organisation** called Filipino Women's Association UK. It was formed in 1988 and still going strong. For the first decades of the organisation our aim was to change the **perception of Filipino** Women in London. We were identified with prostitution and mail order bride. We wanted to change this wrong public perception. I think we succeed. Now we are working with underprivilaged children in Philippines. We also have a **Philippine chappelence** in the church but it is controlled by the **church** itself.

-Does a lot of Filipino people visit your shop?

No. We love to cook. Filipino people loves to cook food so Filipino People do not come here very often. **Cooking and eating together is such a big part of our culture**. When my daughters first went one of their friends house after school they came to and ask me to cook a meal for them cook them later that day. I learned later that their friends mother got ready made food from the supermarket and as they do not like they did not eat much. It is this important that event from the young age we prefer food that we cook ourselves.

Talk 2: A section of the interview conducted on 01/12/21 in Tooting with a Filipino person living in London for over 30 years.

As discussed before London consists of many different ethnic communities and these communities mostly choose and are sometimes forced to live together, forming various intertwined ethnoscapes of various sizes and temporalities. The reason behind the locations of these communities on the city scale mostly depends on the historical events, governmental decisions, or economic reasons that happened within the power relations between communities. For example, when the first ship bringing labour force, HMT Windrush, arrived from the Caribbean in 1948, after the world war, when Britain was facing a labour shortage, the British government decided to locate people coming with the ships to today's Brixton. This decision of the government led to the identification of Brixton with Caribbean immigration which to this day is still visible and viable. Another example is when the Chinese first arrived in London, they arrived with ships bringing goods from their homeland. They used the docks in Limehouse London to unload goods which consequently led to a Chinese population and a Chinese neighbourhood in the Limehouse district.

Although there might be solid reasons behind the first emergence of the diasporic enclaves, the reason behind their continued existence today is different. Today the reason for many ethnically minor people to settle in diasporic enclaves is for security and accessibility. This is provided through the network that the diasporic enclaves contain which consequently forms cultural ecologies, ethnoscapes. Because of the hidden characteristic of most ethnoscapes in London due to colonial power relations, ethnic shops, and restaurants or diners, visual appropriations in the city fabric, play an indispensable role in the dispersion of the groups in London creating the diasporic enclaves in the city while acting as the incubators of the network that forms the ecology. The ethnic shops and similar entities that are mentioned in this explanation differ from the ones that are created by the fashion of ethnicity. This research focuses on the shops that are more ethnic population oriented rather than ones that try to fulfill the touristic hunger for hipsterfied understanding of ethnicity. That is why I am focused on the areas in London that are further away from the city centre to understand the function of these "third places"[26], network points, for communities. These migrant-run eateries or shops can be considered ethnic third places. Just like the barbershops these shops also tend to have a small group of people, a sometimes religious, sometimes non-religious congregation. They create a visual sense of security and provide fresh job opportunities for the ethnic groups located in these parts of the city while working as a part of the ecology. They become places where people meet and gather. These shops in spatial temporality become places of the community.

Currently, the ethnic-minority and speciality food market in the UK is estimated to be worth £1.86bn a year. Traditionally, supermarkets have aimed these foods at the non-ethnic-minority consumer; with the advent of TV cookery shows, celebrity chefs, restaurants and recipe books and food magazines, the public's love of global cuisines has grown enormously in the past 10 years
<Hussain, Humayun 2007>

[26] Third Place; /(noun)
A place of togetherness other than the two usual social places of home and workplace.

These places act as a threshold of a sense of belonging to the community for people, to get to know and meet their community and join activities that are discussed or shared in these places. Most of these sentimental thresholds sit on the architectural thresholds of the buildings by adaptation. Most London buildings have an entrance threshold in front of the door. These thresholds vary in size and function from building to building. When the ground floor of the building is being converted into a shop (or even when the building is being built with a shop on the ground floor) these thresholds are utilized to use as much floor as possible. It is possible to see the previous setback distance of the buildings if you compare the façade of the shops and the façade of the higher floors. It is interesting to note that the utilization of threshold space (architectural threshold) due to earning more floor area for shops sometimes ends up creating thresholds for societies (mental threshold). This need for more and more floor areas due to lack of space and due to the most deprived situation of ethnic minority neighbourhoods in London also results in juxtapositions of very different functions in one shop area.[27] Some shops are divided into a couple of pieces to accommodate more people and offer more services. One can see butchers with a phone repair corner or restaurants with massage chairs or a cloth store with a bookshelf and a stationary store inside. Although this is mostly due to economic reasons it would be foolish to ignore the shop owners' hope to give back and help their community by sharing the economic pressures.

[27]See Figure 5 (Page 144)

The existence of these kinds of places helps form the ethnoscapes and the network it suggests but they are not the sole incubators of forming communities. When they are closed, they are mostly unimportant pieces of architecture to the community. It is the people who make the shops important and effective. They contribute to the sense of belonging in the community in the neighbourhood by creating opportunities for sudden encounters, and intimate urban narratives. It is very likely that a person to encounter someone from his or her ethnic community in a shop. These sudden encounters, unplanned gatherings, with people you don't know but have an instant connection with increase the sense of belonging, forming a community and a neighbourhood. Although the shops, ethnic third places, act as an actant for urban narratives, gatherings of communities, this does not always happen in the ethnic shops, sometimes this situation might happen on the street, but the mental and sensual existence of these shops is one of the factors that hold the thresholds. When these encounters, and gatherings, become more and more often people interpret their environment to promote or create conversations. They start to shift their surroundings according to their needs even sometimes in ad hoc ways. It is this situation of gatherings that creates the thresholds of a sense of belonging for a community.

Understanding the temporality of a sense of belonging I believe a deep mapping of the network of relations and connections of ethno-s and, ethnoscapes is needed. This relation-based mapping, freed from the bounds of geographies and locations can show the full overview of the sense of belonging for communities as well as individuals. For example, a meeting with a lawyer might sound like a regular business meeting but if it is known that the lawyer of that person is a connection of the Ethnoscape network, the meeting might be considered as the existence of sense of belonging, a moment of inclusion. Deep mapping of sense of belonging requires a lot of input data from the user to understand the temporality of the matter. Unfortunately, my interviews were not resourceful enough to provide data to create a map of an individual. To move forward I decided to focus on the interpretation of time to understand and have an inferential result for the temporality of sense of belonging.

Time can be understood as a linear progressing concept but the question "when does the threshold between spaces and places of communities becomes visible?" does not necessarily bring this understanding of time. Similar to the dichotomy of space and place in a continuum of scales, time can be expressed with the existence of a situation and maybe even on a continuum of the existence of a situation and the feeling of the situation. To answer the question, we should focus on the situation that brings up the existence of sense of belonging. Peter Block defines the sense of belonging, "as a condition that occurs in the existence of others or in a situation that notifies the lack of others"[28]. It occurs in the presence of others. (It is just funny to think about that communing depends on the others while othering depends on the situation of lacking the others) That is why gatherings are crucial for communities and building a sense of belonging in these communities. Either in small group meetings or by unexpected encounters. With the existence of others, knowledge of the other's existence creates a sense of safety and belonging.

The community is the opposite of individuality hence in the presence of others we become common. "Communal transformation is best initiated through those times when we gather. It's when groups of people are in a room together that a shift in context is noticed, felt, and reinforced. This means that each gathering takes on a special importance as a leading indicator of the future."[29] Although gathering and encounters are crucial for communities we cannot think about every encounter in the temporality of sense of belonging. It requires a binding agent, an actant to create sense of belonging. It can be intangible as the network of the ethnoscape or as tangible as matters that create the community.

[28] Block, Peter. 2018. Community: The Structure of Belonging. Second Edition Revised and Updated. Oakland: Berrett- Koehler Publishers Inc. a BK Business book.

[29] ^Ibid

Commensality

Ash Amin argues that the "interaction between people in urban contexts requires the active intermediation by third parties"[30]. This quote highlights the need for a mediating actor, a function, and an environment should be present for different people to gather. This does not have to be an intercultural gathering but even for community gatherings there needs to be an actant for social conduct. It acts as the fuel for starting the communing. Encounters happening with these third-party actors demolishes the individual loneliness and produces collective urban narratives Even though these kinds of actors and incubators can be found in many urban locations, to fully capture the essence of the diasporic communities we should look at the production of culture. A lot of cultures and communities use foodways as an actant. It includes attitudes, customs, traditions, and rituals around food and togetherness. It is the part of belonging. When asked an immigrant from Zambia in England, Chikumo Fiseko about her transition and adaptation she answered that she realized "there is one constant in every culture that is foundational to family and communion: food."[31] It is one of the most important sub-categories of culture and cultural production in the globalized flow of cultures. Food is more than what we consume. It evolves around the traditions of communities that define them. Food is what we eat, what we are. It is how we communicate, how we share. Its absence or existence creates different rituals. It is the tangible matter which identifies cultures, and communities. It is the actant for intimacy.

For most diasporic communities of London, other than ethnic shops and some street gatherings, most cultural production is imprisoned in the domestic quarters because of the power relations and hiddenness of communities mentioned before. I call this the colonization of culture in the postcolonial city. Domestic environments become the place for communities and even, in smaller gatherings, families to create a communing ground hence the non-individualistic functions of the house with an incubator act as a place of cultural production. "The idea of home is ultimately a cultural construction whose malleable limits go beyond its physicality."[32] They carry more meaning than it represents for the community. The kitchen and the table are the epitome functions for such a mission when collective preparation and consumption of food becomes the actant of the gathering it becomes more than a tradition but an experiment and research.

[30]Amin, A., 2010. Cities and the ethic of care for the stranger. Jt. Joseph Rowntree Found. York Annu. Lect. York Joseph Rowntree Found.

[31]Lyons, S., 2021. For these Black women in the diaspora, holding on to family recipes is a means of preserving culture. [online] Thelily.com. Available at: <https://www.thelily.com/for-these-black-women-in-the-diaspora-holding-on-to-family-recipes-is-a-means-of-preserving-culture/?

[32]Puigjaner, Anna. 2017. «Kitchen Stories». E-Flux. Com.https://www.e-flux.com/ architecture/future-public/151948/kitchen-stories/

The space is mostly designed to accommodate the function of cooking but if we look at the kitchen as a ground of communal experimentation and cultural production, it becomes more than what it is designed for. The act of cooking together becomes an experiment of communality, and the production of food becomes the ground for commensality. "The dining table is as much a site for a practice of ecological care, as for building social connections"[33] in commensality as "shared meal is able to determine, at least for its duration, a sense of 'we-ness' in difference thanks to its order, ritual and hospitality. When the communal agency of food links houses to markets, restaurants and cafés, the boundaries of public and private blur and merge into new hybrid typologies."[34] Bringing this hybrid typology into the urban fabric would be an act of protest to make a manifest effect on the urban texture connecting the dots of sense of belonging on the urban scale for the ethnic diasporic groups. These places can in some way become an extension of everyone's house, expanding the domestic sphere while blurring the boundaries of public and private, space and place. In the urban context, the kitchen becomes the place of manifestation, a stage for representation, and not the location for the production of food but the production of commensality becomes the manifestation itself. This shift in bringing a hidden, colonised function of culture into the public, the urban texture itself is a manifestation of decolonisation in post-colonial London.

[33]Zegarra, Gabriela Aquije. 2021. «Kitchen Aid: Care Through Collective Cookery». Www-Architectural-Review-Com.Tudelft. Idm.Oclc.Org. https://www-architectural-review-com.tudelft.idm.oclc.org/essays/ kitchen-aid-care-through-collective-cookery.

[34]^Ibid

Conviviality

The research from the beginning tries to interpret a very occidentalized matter, in a very neutral way to understand the foundation of the situation of "placeless-ness" in London. As I mentioned before I believe it makes a brave move to reframe London, a city that was once the capital of imperialism as a post-colonial city. I believe the inferential transitions of the research to design carries on the same characteristic. It proposes a place of togetherness, co-cooking, and co-eating in the urban surrounding, bringing the domesticated functions of togetherness on the street, almost acting as an activist engagement. It continues to challenge the multicultural perception of the city with other programs as well, by challenging the settled arrangements of ways of living. Even though the program of the design has been chosen as a challenge to the perception of the city the design agenda exceeds the limitations of a functionalist interpretation. It aims to create places that encourage social interaction by creating the feeling of intimacy. Although it brings the functions out of domestic spheres into the urban narratives they are not interpreted as spectacles of togetherness. It refrains itself from showcasing togetherness to make sure the participant is not the spectator but the user of the outcome of the space. I believe by making spaces like this we can create togetherness; we can start or reinforce the bonds of communities. This way we can talk about the reality of place and placeless-ness in London. This way we can de-colonize the city. Not a city of co-existence but a city for co-Vivere.

Excavating Placeless Cultures in
Post-Colonial London by
Commensality

*Figure 2:*Freedom of Kitchen
*Source:*Image on by the author

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CS

Hidden Communities

EXCAVATING PLACELESS CULTURES in POST-COLONIAL LONDON by COMMENSALITY

Catalogue of Stains

This catalogue contains the pieces that combined from the London ethnic stain map. To achieve this catalogue and mapping, ethnic population data from the London datastore was collected for each ward*. This data is then layered with the London localities map by Adam Towle and Mark Brearley. This layering combines the locals' perception of the boundaries of their local area and ethnic population hence pointing towards a perception of division in London from a diasporic point of view. Giving us an understanding of the situation, locations and reciprocation of ethnoscapes in London. Catalogue and the London ethnic stain map contains the most dominantly existing 37 ethnic groups in London.

*Data collected is a part of the 2011 census research done by the Greater London Authority(GLA). As GLA conducts this research and collects data every ten years, 2011 is the most updated dataset that is available in the archive. Although the 2021 data has already been collected according to GLA, it is not yet publicly published.

**London localities map by Adam Towle and Mark Brearley is a representation of London with the local identities. The map is a result of "Design For London"[1] research that concludes as the city of London is too big of a mechanism for someone to identify themselves hence Londoners prefer to use local identities. Their mapping aims to locate the boundaries of different local identities(localities) that is present in the city of London

*London Datastore(2011) *Detailed Ethnicity by Age & Sex Ward Tools* (2011 Census), Mayor of London,CT0222

[1]"*Design For London*". 2020. The Bartlett School Of Architecture.
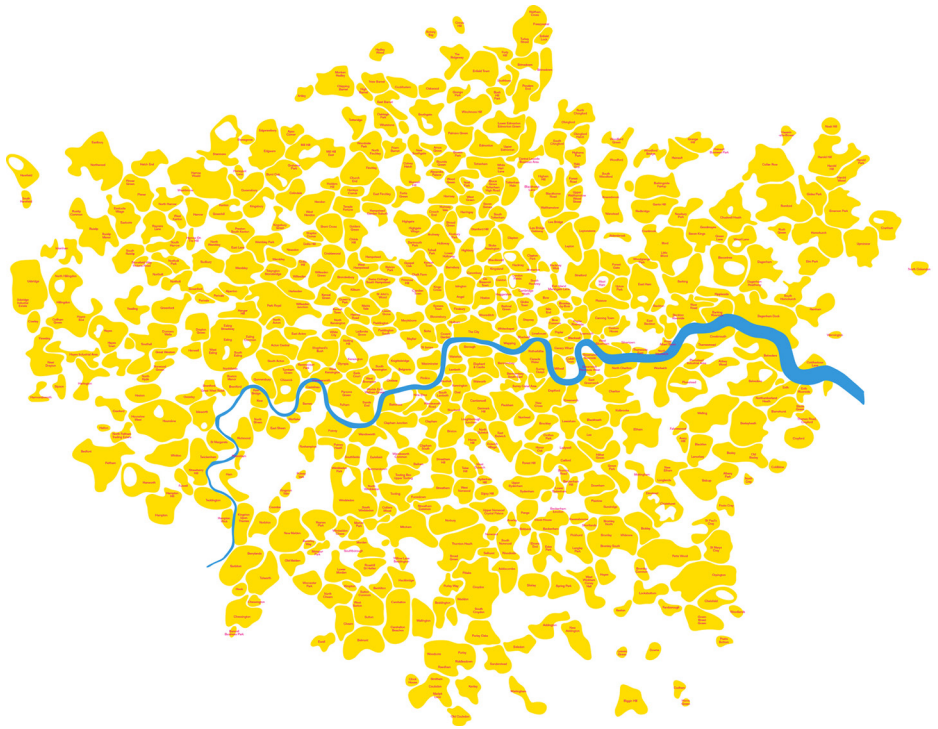
Image: London Localities Map,
by Mark Brearley and Adam
Towle

Source: "*Design For London*".
2020. The Bartlett School Of
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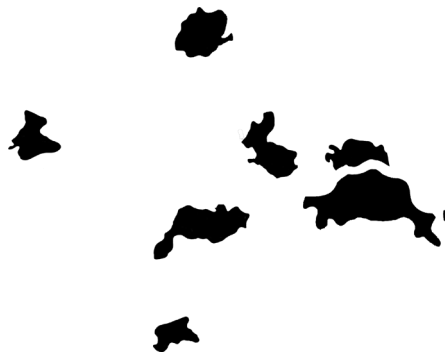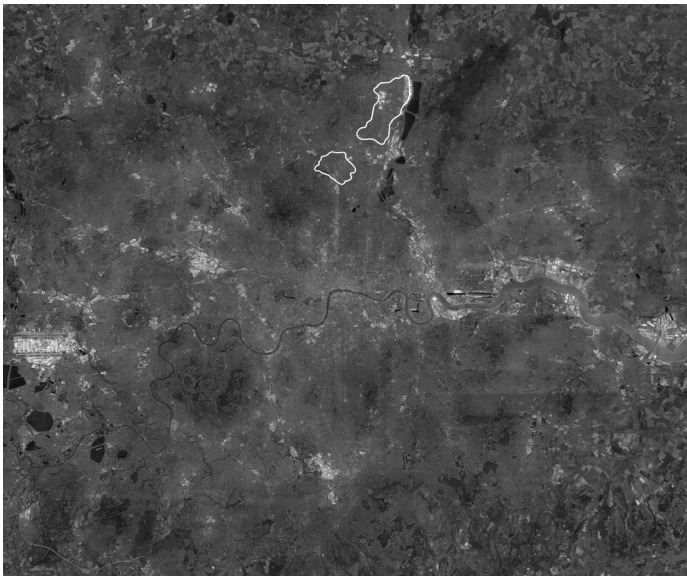001-AFGHAN
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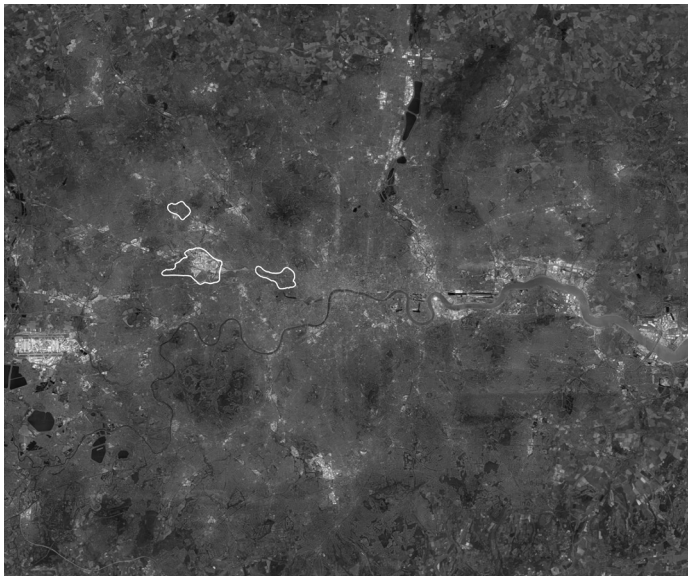WARD AVERAGE-71.21

002-AFRICAN
TOTAL-607,441
WARD AVERAGE-971.9

003-ALBANIAN
TOTAL-8,932
WARD AVERAGE-14,29

004-ARAB
TOTAL-110,207
WARD AVERAGE-176.3

009-BRAZILIAN
TOTAL-13,161
WARD AVERAGE-21.06

010-BRITISH
TOTAL-3,691,371
WARD AVERAGE-5.906

010-CARRIBBEAN
TOTAL-475,347
WARD AVERAGE-760.6

011-CHILEAN
TOTAL-636
WARD AVERAGE-1.018

017-FILIPINO
TOTAL-52,216
WARD AVERAGE-83.55

018-GREEK
TOTAL-25,552
WARD AVERAGE-40.88

019-INDIAN
TOTAL-546,016
WARD AVERAGE-873.6

020-INDONESIAN
TOTAL-1,981
WARD AVERAGE-3.170

025-JAPANESE
TOTAL-21,441
WARD AVERAGE-34.31

026-KOREAN
TOTAL-12,612
WARD AVERAGE-20.18

027-KURDISH
TOTAL-20,988
WARD AVERAGE-33.58

028-LATIN AMERICAN
TOTAL-48,065
WARD AVERAGE-76.90

033-POLISH
TOTAL-136,598
WARD AVERAGE-218.6

034-VIETNAMESE
TOTAL-16,499
WARD AVERAGE-26.40

035-TURKISH
TOTAL-87,910
WARD AVERAGE-140.7
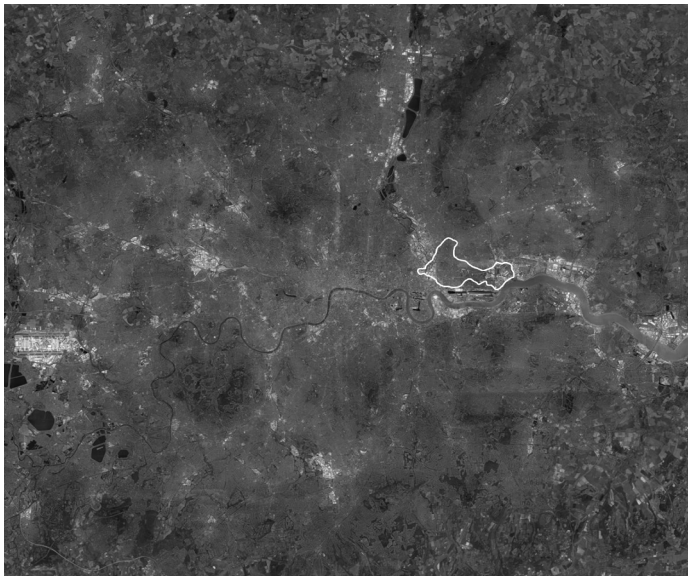
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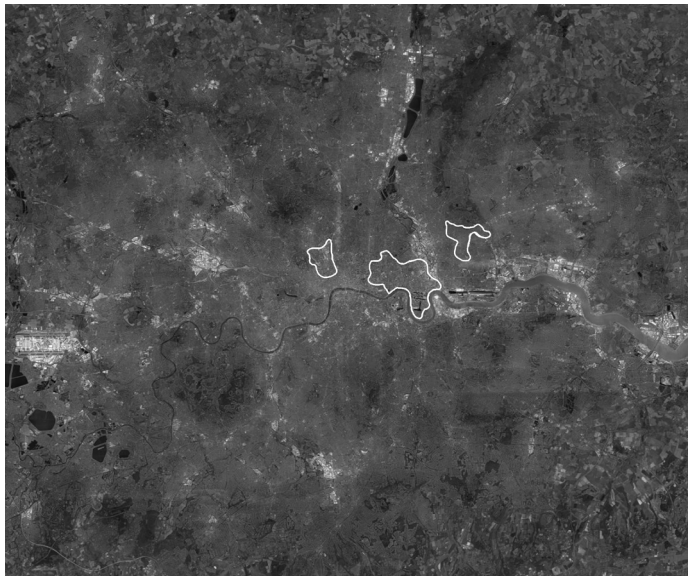TOTAL-47,758
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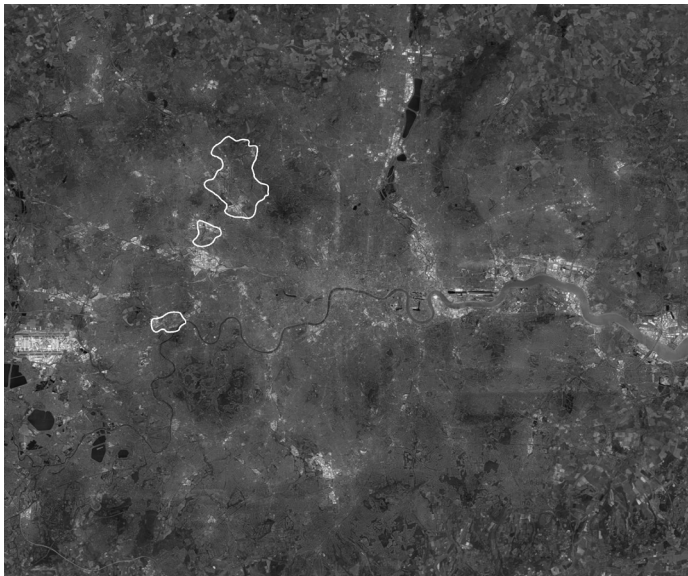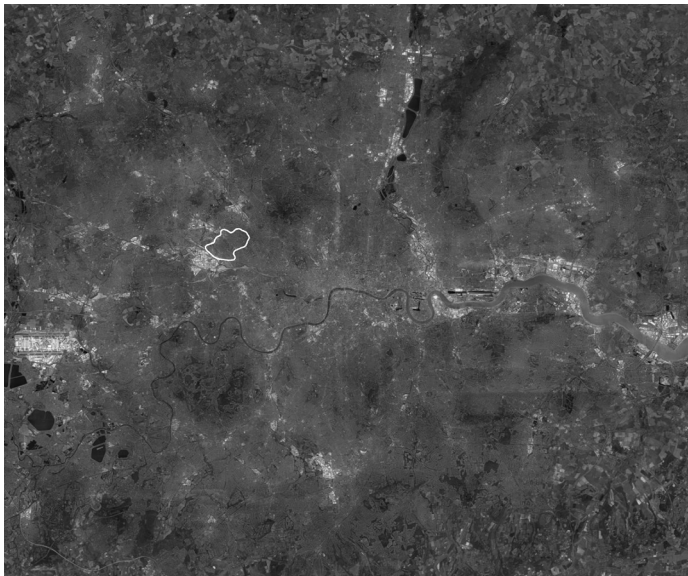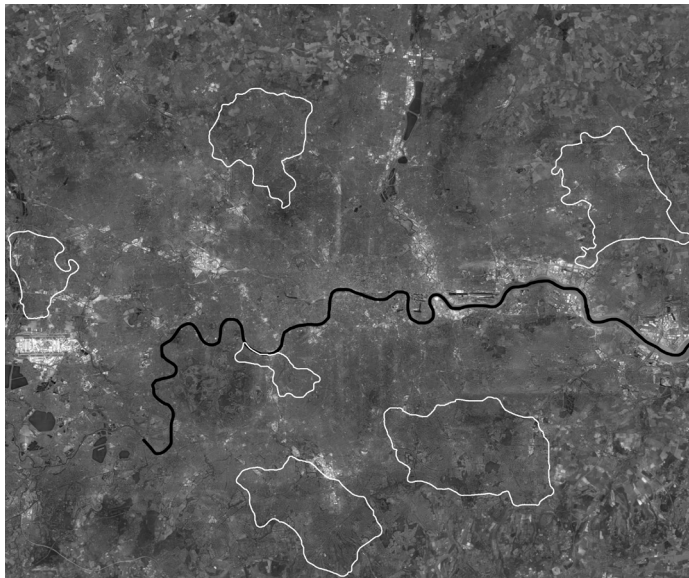

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WARD AVERAGE-356.1

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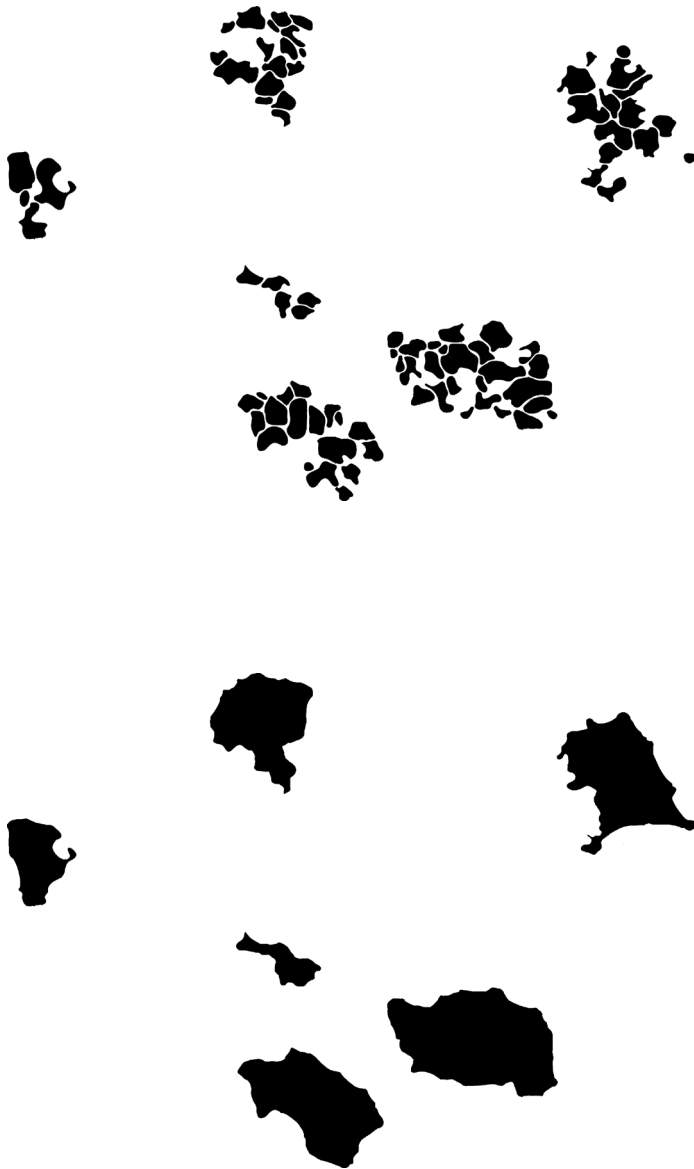WARD AVERAGE-2.210

012-CHINESE
TOTAL-126,346
WARD AVERAGE-202.2

013-COLOMBIAN
TOTAL-3,425
WARD AVERAGE-5.840

015-CYPRIOT
TOTAL-33,281
WARD AVERAGE-53.25

016-ECUADORIAN
TOTAL-848
WARD AVERAGE-1.357

021-IRANIAN
TOTAL-36,250
WARD AVERAGE-58.00

022-IRISH
TOTAL-177,903
WARD AVERAGE-284.6

023-ISRAELI
TOTAL-2,947
WARD AVERAGE-4.715

024-ITALIAN
TOTAL-13,161
WARD AVERAGE-21.06

029-NEPALESE
TOTAL-22,067
WARD AVERAGE-35.31

030-NIGERIA
TOTAL-1.501
WARD AVERAGE-2.402

031-NORTH AMERICAN
TOTAL-37,409
WARD AVERAGE-59.85

032-PAKISTANI
TOTAL-224,569
WARD AVERAGE-359.3

037-SRI LANKAN
TOTAL-101,061
WARD AVERAGE-161.7

001-AFGHAN
TOTAL-44,505
WARD AVERAGE-71.21
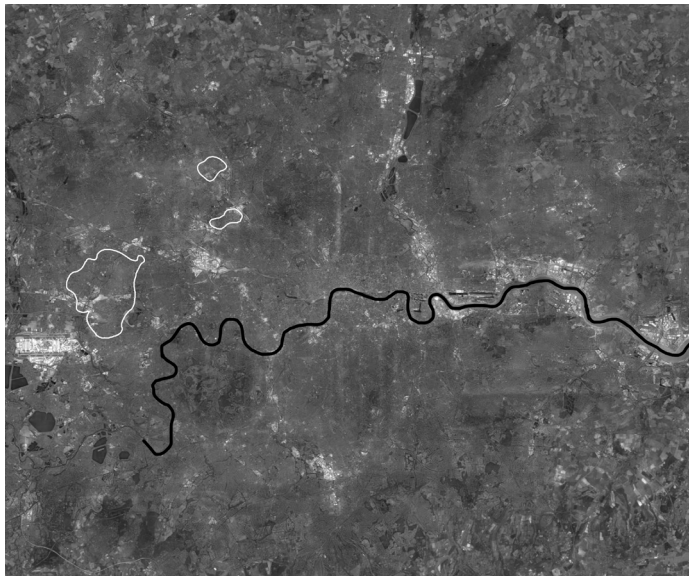
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TOTAL-607,441
WARD AVERAGE-971.9

Excavating Placeless Cultures in
Post-Colonial London by
Commensality   Research Booklet
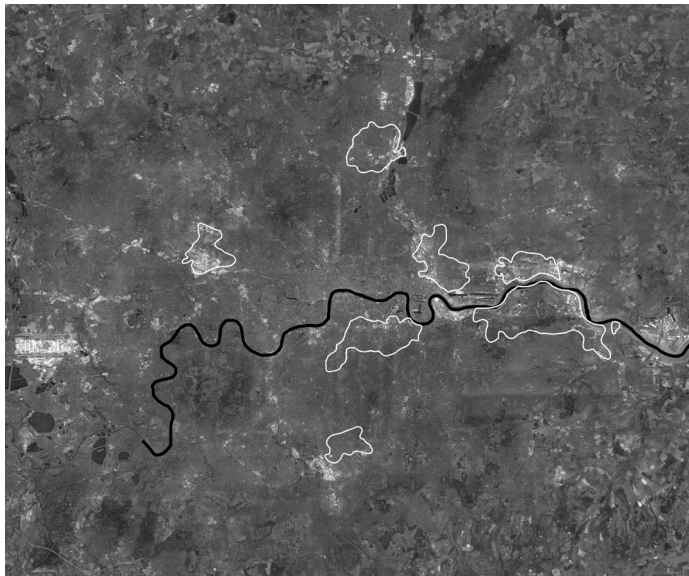
003-ALBANIAN
TOTAL-8,932
WARD AVERAGE-14,29

004-ARAB
TOTAL-110,207vW
WARD AVERAGE-176.3

005-AUSTRALIAN
TOTAL-47,758
WARD AVERAGE-76.41

Excavating Placeless Cultures in
Post-Colonial London by
Commensality

006-BALTIC STATES
TOTAL-35,303
WARD AVERAGE-56.48

Excavating Placeless Cultures in
Post-Colonial London by
Commensality

007-BANGLADESHI
TOTAL-222,5454
WARD AVERAGE-356.1

008-BOSNIAN
TOTAL-1,381
WARD AVERAGE-2.210

009-BRAZILIAN
TOTAL-13,161
WARD AVERAGE-21.06

010-BRITISH
TOTAL-3,691,371
WARD AVERAGE-5.906

Excavating Placeless Cultures in
Post-Colonial London by
Commensality

011-CARRIBBEAN
TOTAL-475,347
WARD AVERAGE-760.6
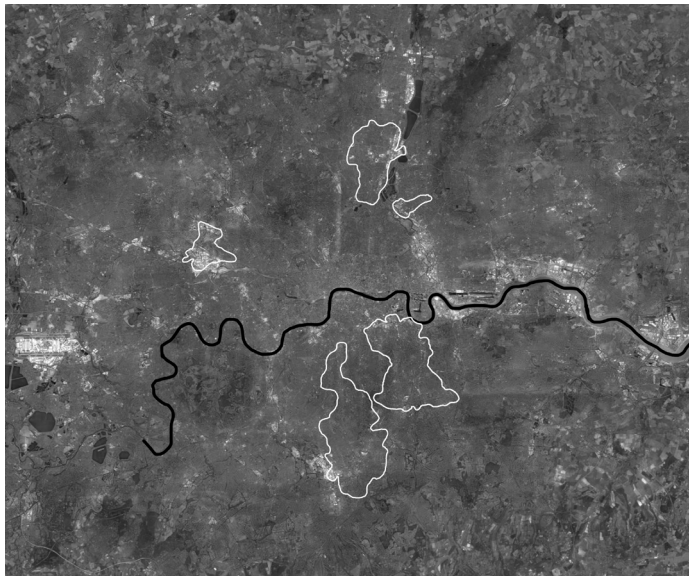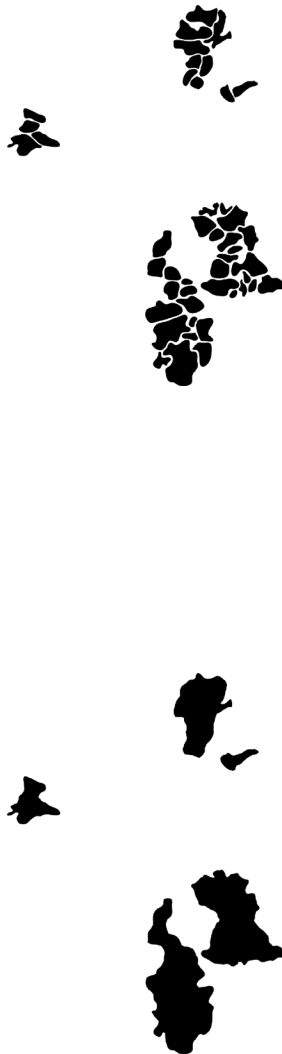
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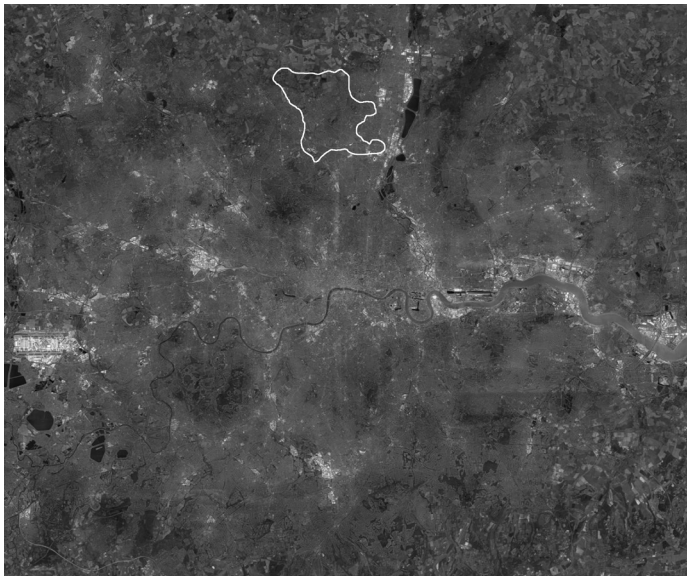WARD AVERAGE-1.018
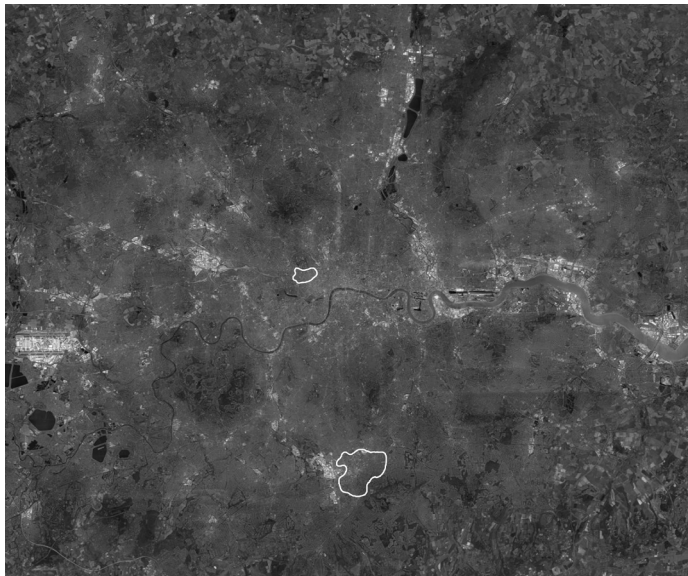
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WARD AVERAGE-202.2
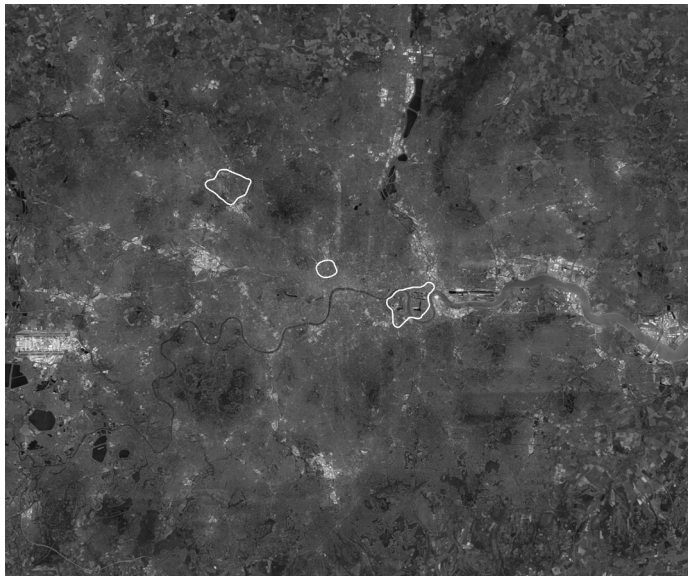
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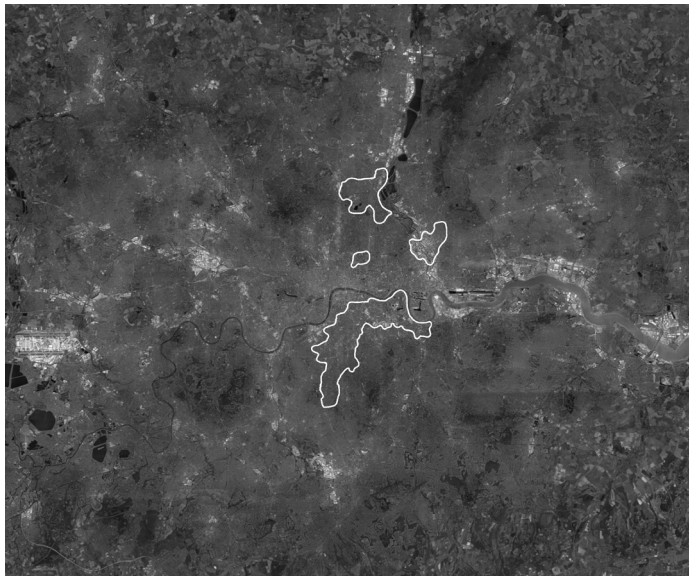
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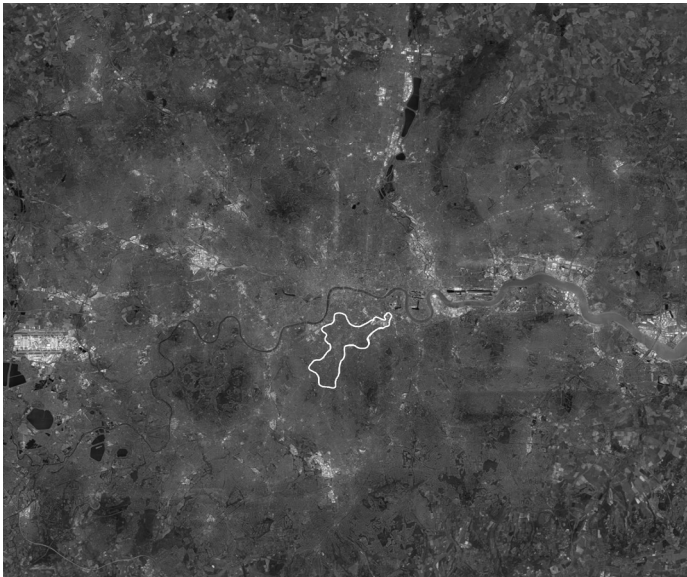TOTAL-33,281
WARD AVERAGE-53.25

016-ECUADORIAN
TOTAL-848
WARD AVERAGE-1.357

Excavating Placeless Cultures in
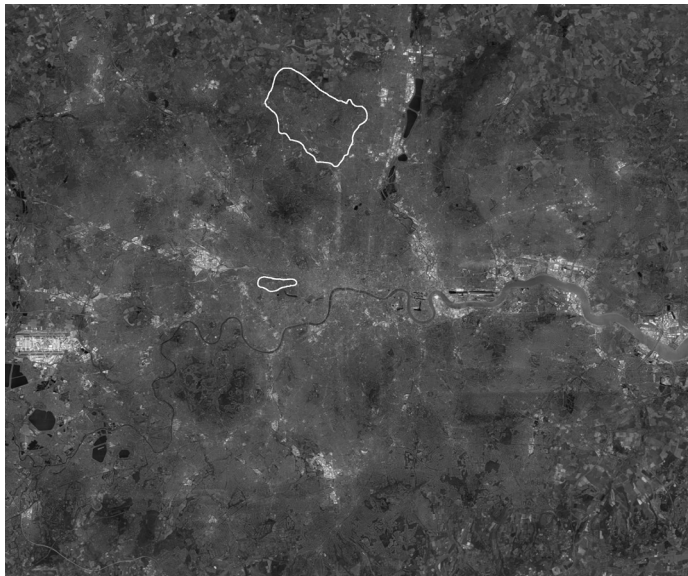Post-Colonial London by
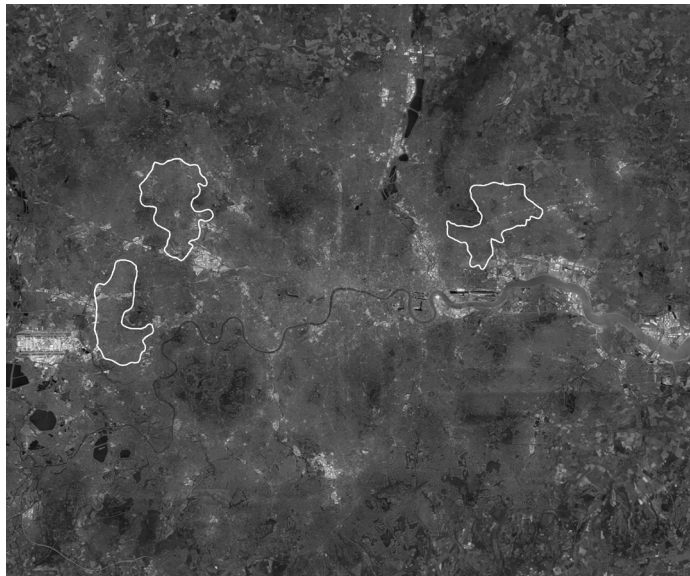Commensality

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TOTAL-52,216
WARD AVERAGE-83.55
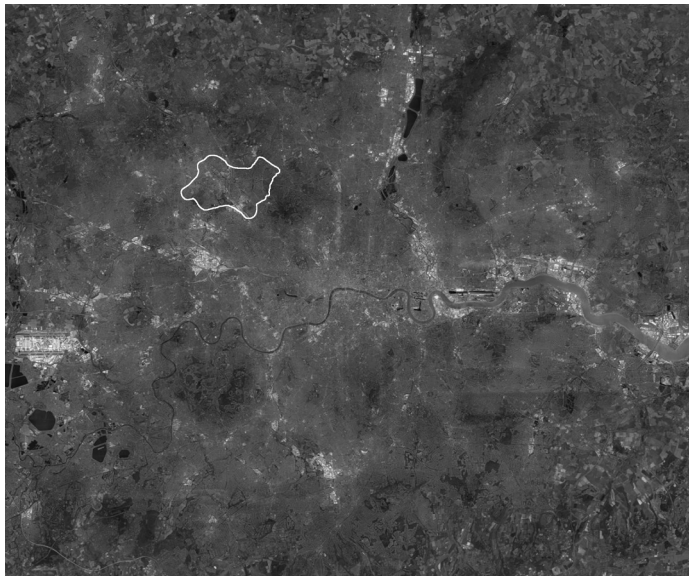
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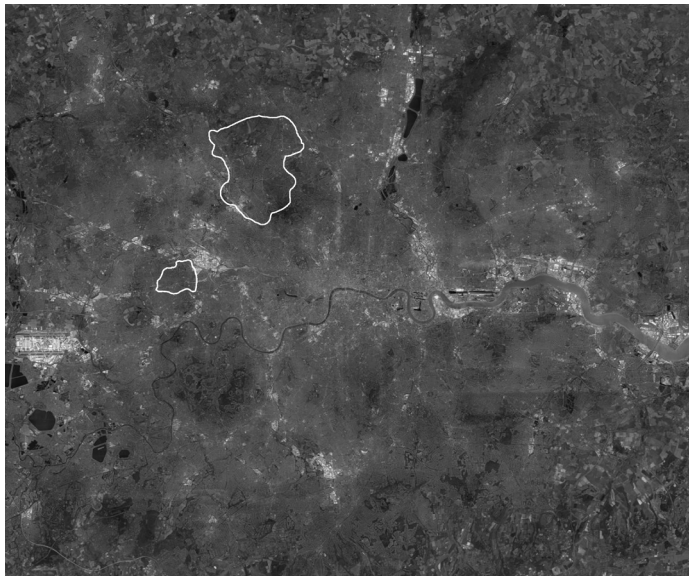TOTAL-546,016
WARD AVERAGE-873.6

020-INDONESIAN
TOTAL-1,981
WARD AVERAGE-3.170

021-IRANIAN
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WARD AVERAGE-58.00

022-IRISH
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WARD AVERAGE-284.6
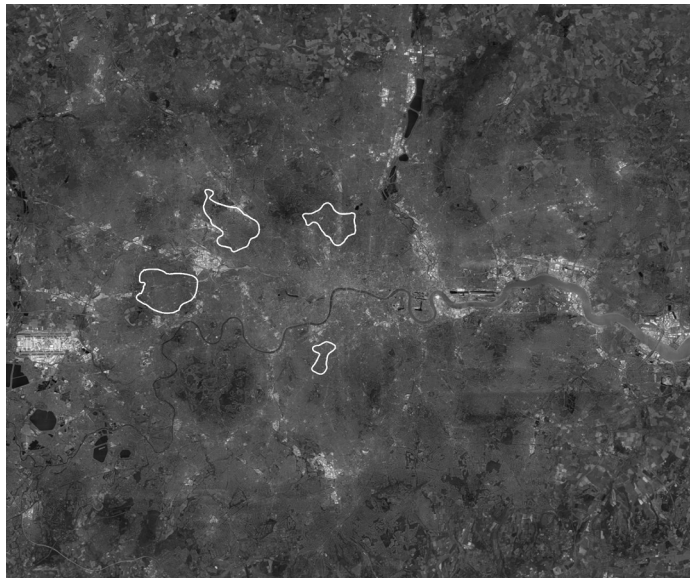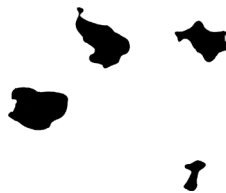
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WARD AVERAGE-4.715
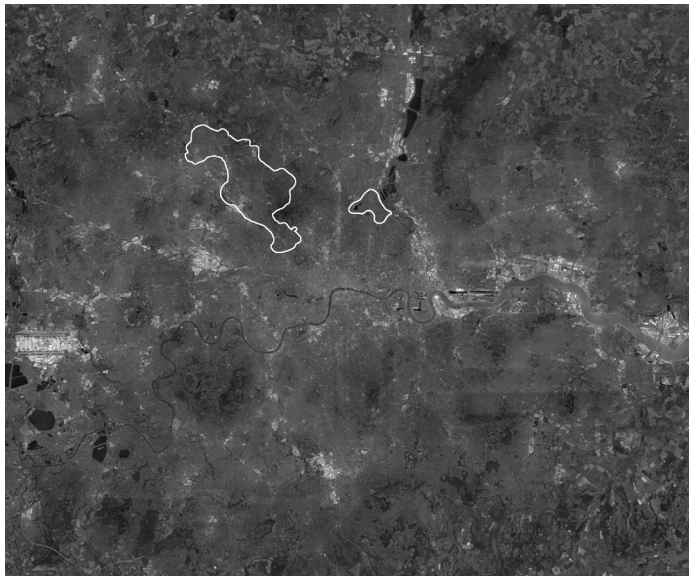
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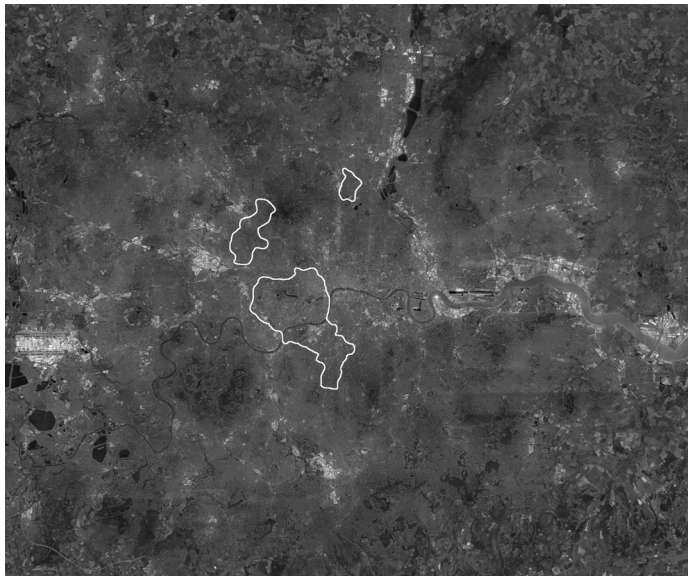
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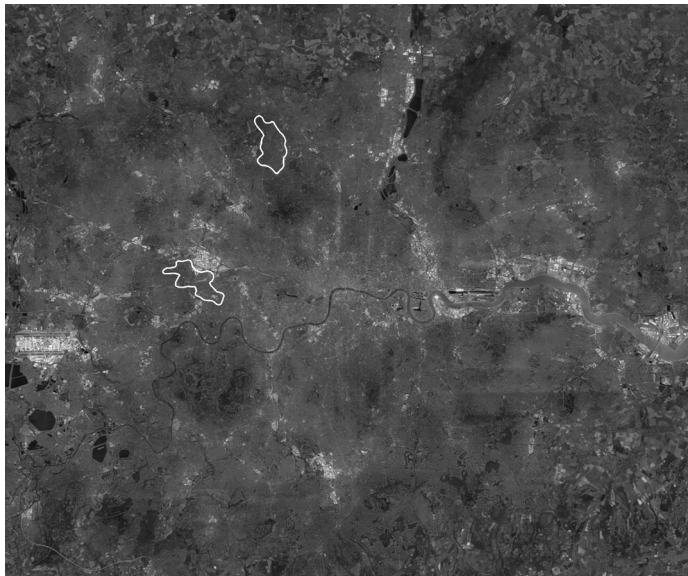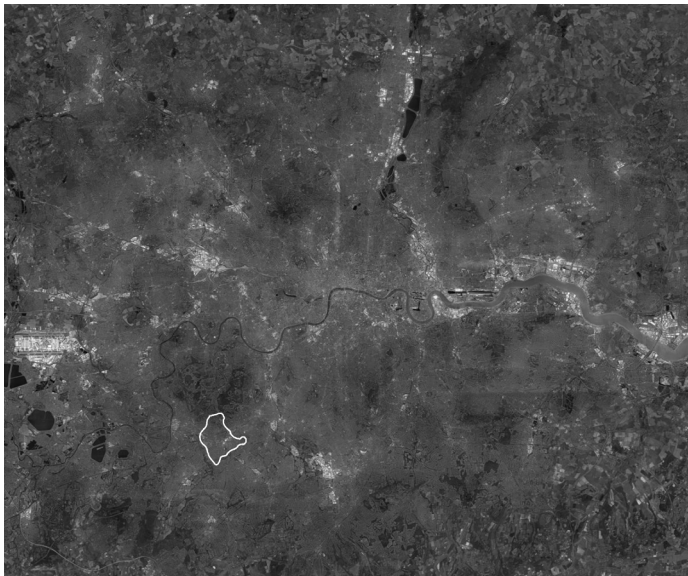
026-KOREAN
TOTAL-12,612
WARD AVERAGE-20.18

027-KURDISH
TOTAL-20,988
WARD AVERAGE-33.58
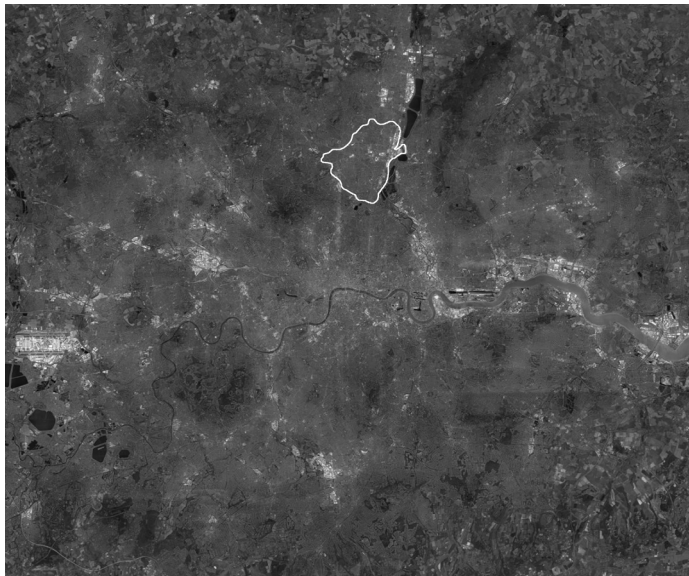
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TOTAL-48,065
WARD AVERAGE-76.90
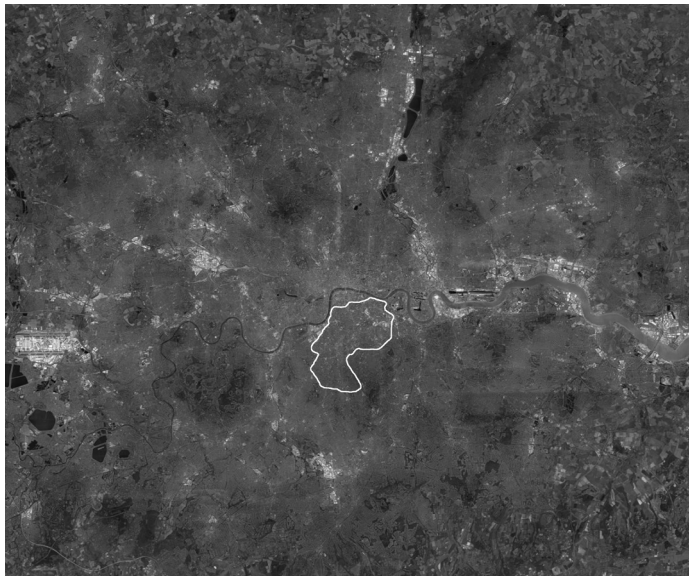
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WARD AVERAGE-35.31
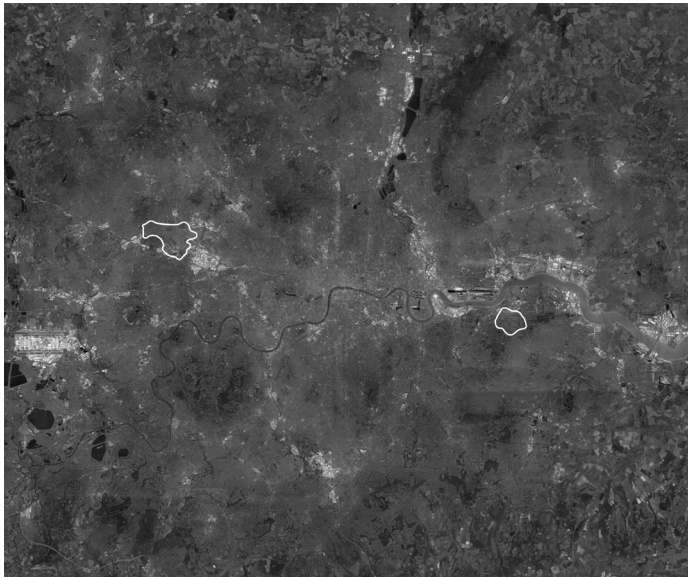
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TOTAL-1.501
WARD AVERAGE-2.402
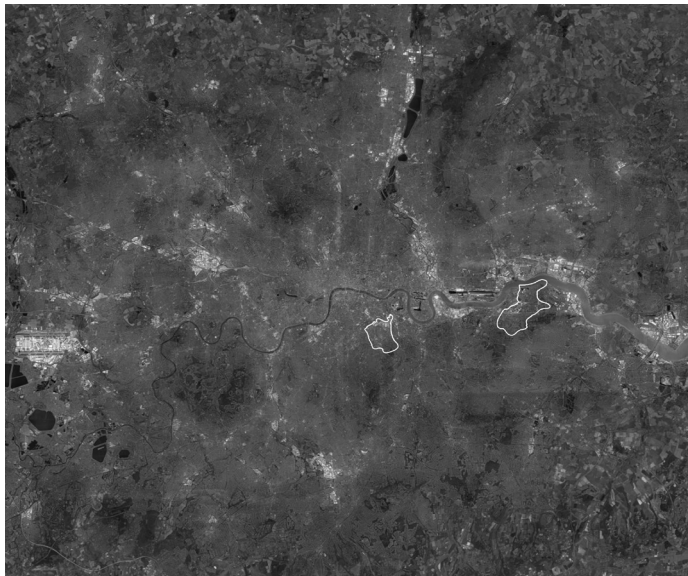
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TOTAL-37,409
WARD AVERAGE-59.85
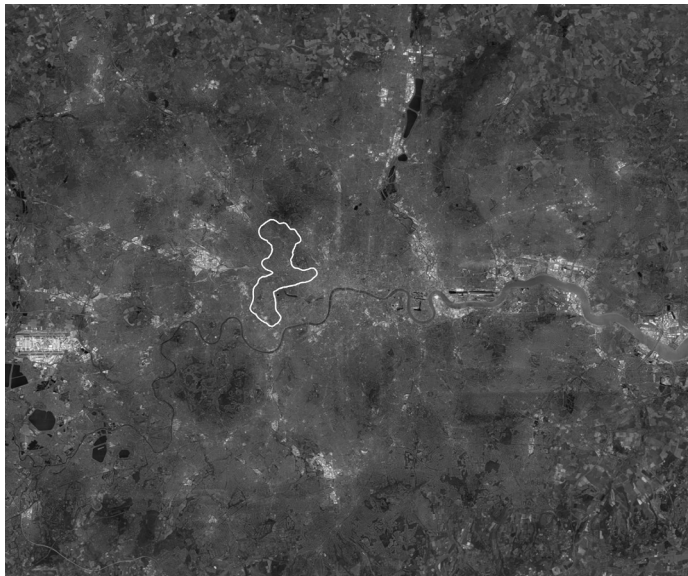
032-PAKISTANI
TOTAL-224,569
WARD AVERAGE-359.3

033-POLISH
TOTAL-136,598
WARD AVERAGE-218.6

034-VIETNAMESE
TOTAL-16,499
WARD AVERAGE-26.40

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Post-Colonial London by
Commensality
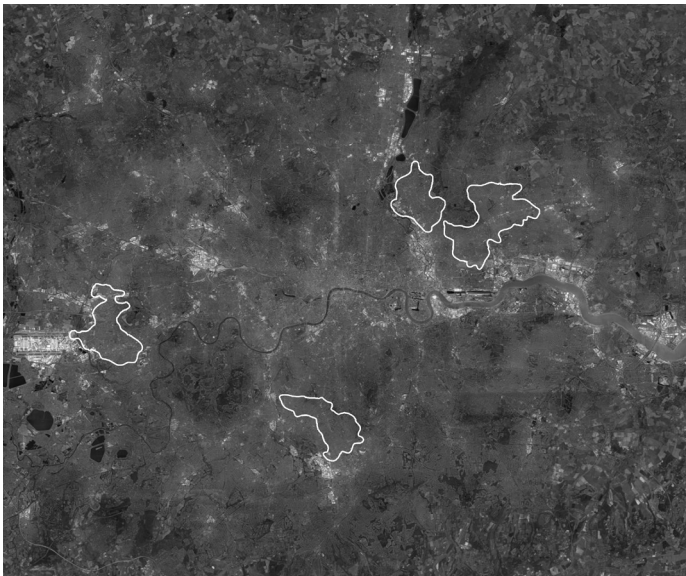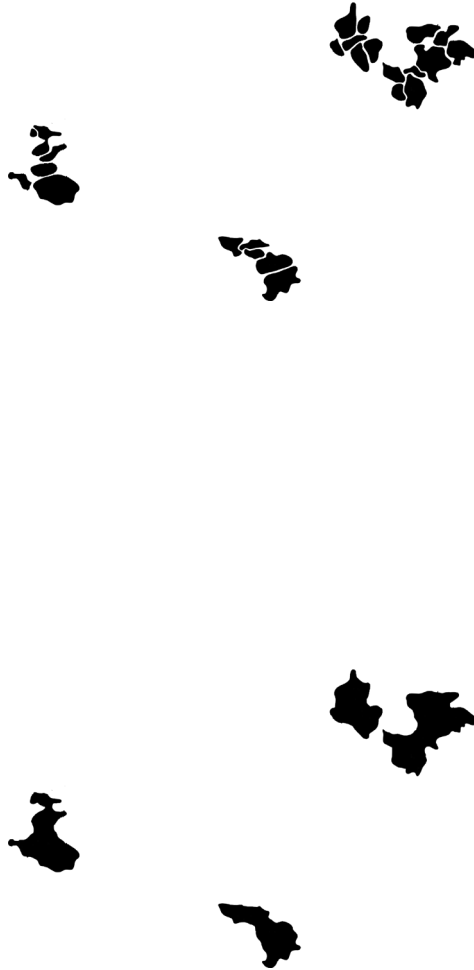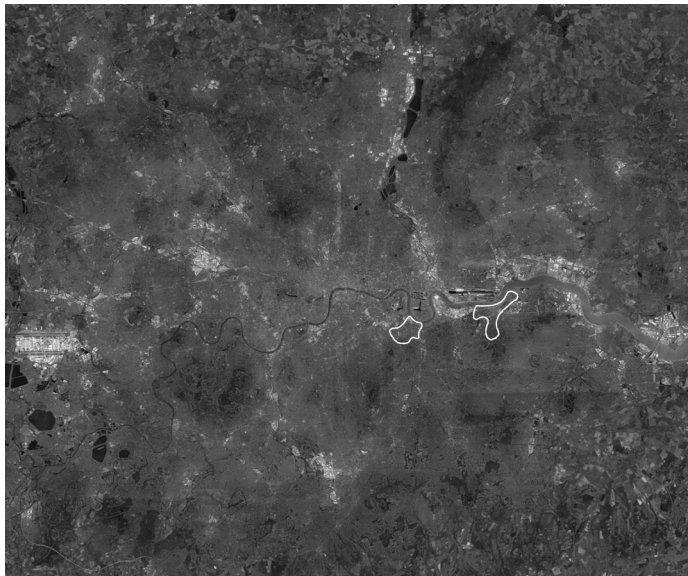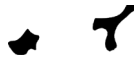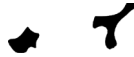
035-TURKISH
TOTAL-87,910
WARD AVERAGE-140.7
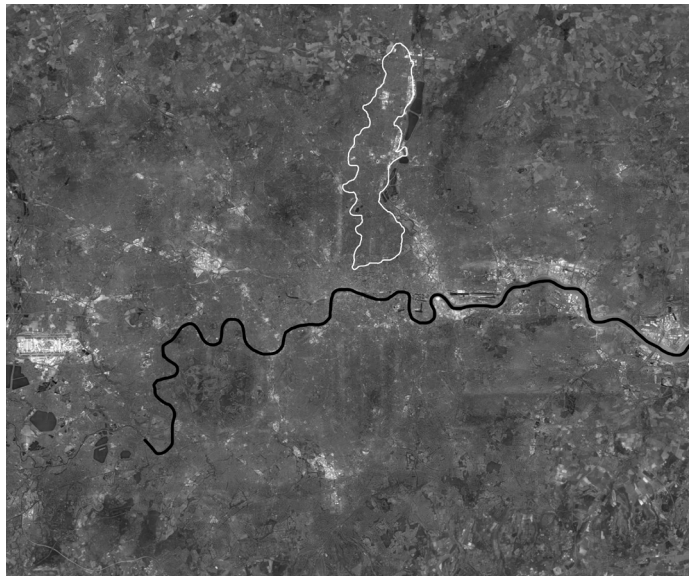
036-THAI
TOTAL-9,475
WARD AVERAGE-15.16

037-SRI LANKAN
TOTAL-101,061
WARD AVERAGE-161.7

Excavating Placeless Cultures in
Post-Colonial London by
Commensality
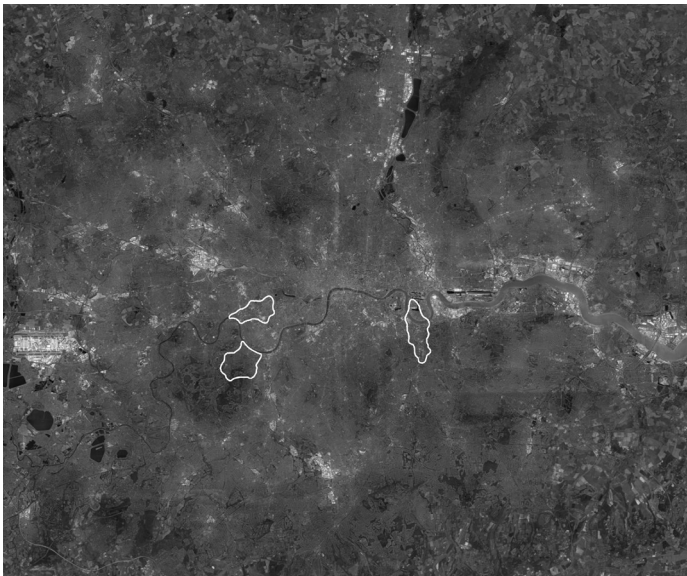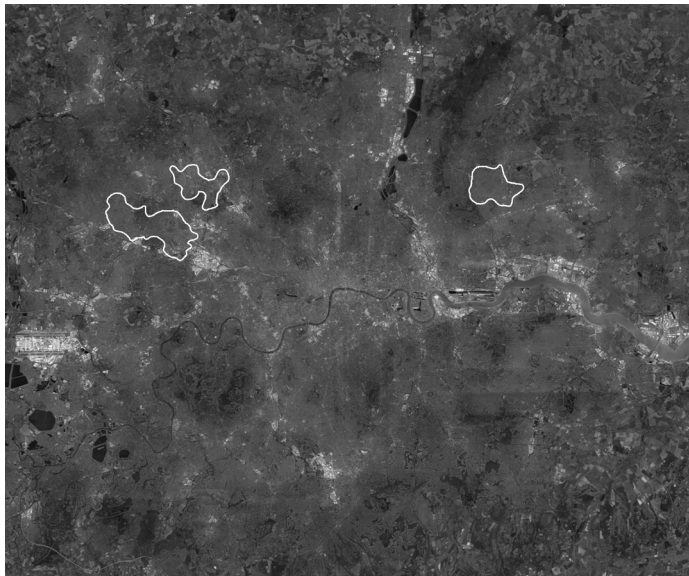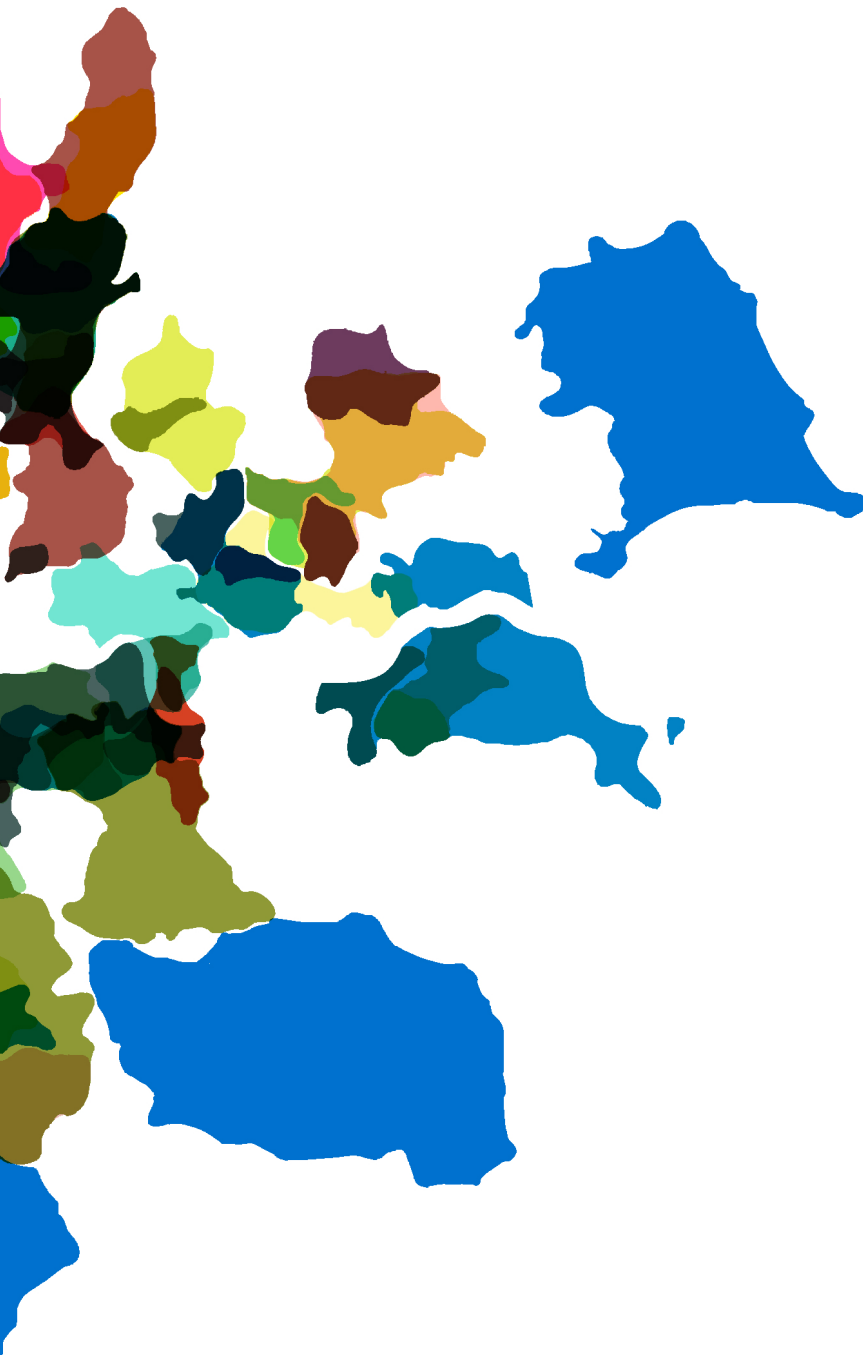
PD

Hidden Communities

EXCAVATING PLACELESS CULTURES in POST-COLONIAL LONDON by COMMENSALITY

Project Discussion

Introduction

The research and design project, Hidden Communities, focuses on the phenomenological aspect of architecture in an urban setting from the sense of belonging point of view of different communities in the diverse cultural environment of London. The research, originated from the concepts, placelessness <the feeling, the situation of being out of place> and placeness <the situation of absolute belonging>. The research is based in London as a requirement of the selected studio but benefits the research topic as it is a city of many different backgrounds and cultures. It is an epitome to investigate these concepts and their correspondence in the architectural settings of the city to explore the possible interventions.

When the British arrived in the colonial countries, they had the opportunity to adapt the architecture of the local culture to their needs, but centuries later, when the ethnic groups arrived in "postcolonial" London, they did not have the opportunity to have a manifest effect on the built environment and neither the development of the city consider this situation as a problem to tackle. Today, years into the process of decolonization, the situation is still not much different. This occidental acceptance of people separated from their way of living, their culture reflected in the urban structure, creates the hybrid urban environment that hides the existence of different cultures. This oxymoronic thinking concerning diversity creates the complex mechanism of merging cultures, backgrounds, and customs and hides everything different or other. As a result of this situation, it is possible to point toward placeless cultures in the city of London. People or locations that are culturally significant without any material or immaterial connection to their urban surroundings. They maybe are located in the cartesian urban space of London, but they are placeless in the imaginary and mental view of the city. We need to abandon the occidental approach in architecture as we develop our neighborhoods to create a city that belongs to everybody and nobody, to create a city where everything is placeless and placeness.

With this interpretation of the city the research aims to understand the point of view of ethnic groups, or in a wider sense, other's, perception of the city to understand their feeling of belonging in the city and how architecture can help to increase the inclusivity of London for different groups of people. The research doesn't specifically focus on one single ethnic group as the situation isn't specific to one group but a general understanding of our cities. As a result, I divided my research into two parts. In the first part of the research, I aimed to find sites of investigation by exploring the whole city as one mechanism and narrowing down the research focus.

Research

In this first part, as it was an investigation of the whole city, I layered numerical data collected from the Municipality of London with results of different studies that had been done on London about the local identities with interviews. This layering pointed the research towards locations where many different local identities clashed and overlapped. As the feeling of belonging can be very individualistic and mostly domesticated, these sites of overlapping identities were chosen as sites of investigation as they accompany and reflect the results of placelessness and placeness for groups of people. The findings of the first part of the research were not only used for the second part but also contributed to the site selection for the architectural intervention. A site that hosts many different localities hence belonging to different ethnic groups was chosen as the aim of the project is to increase the inclusivity of the city for all.

The site is located in the commercial center of Brixton, London, in one of the most iconic neighborhoods that is defined by diasporic and ethnic identities. The history of the area contains hints of the colonial past of London. It is now becoming a very trendy neighborhood that is bound to lose its connection with settled diasporic communities. The project sits on the ground which belongs to the council. The site used to accommodate a public car park, but the council demolished the building and opened the site for development. Due to bureaucratic issues, the development projects for the sites have been canceled and it was rented to private investors. The temporary building that is sitting on the site will be removed in 2024. The project proposes to be the development of the site with a combination of commercial and residential functions, all connected in different ways. This connection pushes towards togetherness and creates opportunities for unexpected gatherings, and intimate urban narratives.

On the second part of the research, I focused on the sites of investigation which can be seen as interim results of the research. As the research scaled down the investigation site, I adapted an anthropological approach to narrow down the research to human scale. I used open ended personal interviews, critical photography and personal observations on the people and their interaction with each other and the environment. This anthropological approach was used in order to capture the essence of the feeling of belonging on both personal and communal level. The initial interpretations of the research, transformed into the general ideology of the program as a place of gathering to create communality in the city. The we-ness in being more than one, in a gathering, pushes people to change their environment for their needs and create their own place in the city. While these placs are mostly in imaginary, some might be reflected on the urban fabric.

The research and the design parts of this project are intrinsically connected. Design is not the complete result of the research but a continuation and even criticism of the interim results. The design aims to increase the gatherings that are happening in a neighbourhood to create what can be called we-ness or togetherness which will strengthen the community and hence the sense of belonging in the community. Encounters happening along with the programs that the design offers, aims to diminish individual loneliness, and produce collective urban narratives.

Urban gatherings require a mediating actant. With the interviews and the observations which came from the second part of the research, I realized that the foodways are significant factors in each gathering. It is not only a way of communication within a group of people but also creates a connection between communities. The project proposes foodways, <the rituals of food> as the actant for gathering as foodways are one of the most important shared factors for every culture and community. It can be found in every gathering, from the very domestic togetherness to the biggest communal groups and the sharing of a foodway creates the intimacy that is needed for community building.

The project aims to belong to everybody and nobody. It does not aim to serve a specific group of people or an ethnicity. It does not aim to create significant attachments for communities themselves through the tectonics of architecture nor the cultural connection of foodways. It aims to provide people with a place to gather and be together by using the shared aspect of foodways such as eating or cooking collectively. It aims to provide a chance to people to create or join communities. It aims to strengthen the bonds of existing communities. And with these toolkits, the project aims that in the end, people with a high sense of belonging will reflect their attachment to the city.

Design

The design is composed of 3 connected layers of togetherness with different levels of publicness which I categorize as communality, commensality, and conviviality. While communality of the project is completely public, the publicness of the building decreases with commensality and conviviality but still keeps the aspect of togetherness. They are not completely separated, on the contrary, they feed on each other. The layers of the project bridge with each other in different ways. This connection happens, either by the literal circulation of people and goods or by other means such as the visual connection or change in temporality. Hence the design pushes people to gather not only through planned encounters with the program it offers but also through incidental encounters that happen along the connections of different functions. In design, 3 layers of togetherness translate into different everyday functions in the building. They carry out different space settings and different functions revolving around the concept of foodway as the actant of the gathering.

As said before the building is not designed for a specific group of people but it serves a close circle of accessibility in the city, to the neighborhood. Hence the design in this project intends to be a prototype for a new kind of public building which pushes towards togetherness rather than a unique solution for one specific location. While the archi-tectonics may change from site to site but the idea of the connected layers of togetherness will be reapplied in other locations in London which requires stronger ethnic communal bounds for the sense of belonging in the community. As a result, the project creates a network of buildings within London creating one big stain of belonging for everybody and nobody. Although the building itself does not aim to be a stain itself, it can be considered as a network point for the stain. On the city scale, the "stain" defines a network that brings sense of belonging. On the other hand, on a small scale, I define the "stain" as bounds of sense of belonging created with each person becoming a network point in gatherings. Hence every function that pushes for togetherness creates small temporary stains. Consequently, each layer in the design and even each different function within each layer carries their own temporality and stain. They work and change according to these temporalities and create different connections. This allows the project to be a living organism having different stains in different temporalities.

The layer communality is transformed into a market for people to shop for and within different cultures. Although markets are commercial buildings, they are one of the most important melting points for cultures. They accommodate different layers of intimacy and culture. Markets are the places for communities to be represented with their culture hence they play the role of communality in the design. The market in this project holds different types of shops in the long-term and short-term temporality. While the part of the ground floor of the building accommodates permanent and long-term temporary shops, the open space in front of the building aims to host a daily street market that would change each day of the year. The façade of the building on the ground floor can be fully opened when the conditions allow, to diminish the border in between different temporalities of the layer of communality and encourages the sprawl of the market from outside to inside and the other way around.

Conviviality is the mere opposite of communality on the line of togetherness and publicness in this project. While communality offers publicness in individuality, conviviality offers privacy in togetherness. The layer of conviviality is interpreted in this project as living together which transformed into co-living residential units with shared living rooms and kitchens. Although the kitchens are not public entities in these residential units, they create a housing typology that promotes and pushes toward social contact. On the other hand, the living units in the residential part of the building offer individuality and privacy. This individuality is reflected on the facade of the building with moveable solar shading elements for each room. As they can be adjusted as wanted, they offer a degree of privacy to one's wishes. The change of the solar panels also reflects the temporality of the residential units to the outside which creates an indirect connection between layers.

The word commensality can be broken down into "com-", meaning "together" and "mensa", meaning "table or a meal". Combined, commensality means being at the same table, being and eating together. Commensality lies in between the two other layers, and it is the focus point of the project. It transforms into a program of places for eating together and different functions that feed the act of eating together, like the community garden and the community kitchen. It is the threshold between the intimacy of the shared domestic interiors of conviviality and the unrealized togetherness of communality. It is the part of the project which detaches itself from the norm of being public but keeps the promise of communal togetherness. It is not a place open to everyone like the market, but it also does not exclude anyone. It hides in plain sight and creates an intimate place for people who are familiar with the space. It achieves this character by not being accessible from the street directly. This merely aims for excluding people but aims to create the intimacy of a community that is open to everybody. Hence while it preserves its location in the building its connection with other functions such as the community gardens located on the ground floors encourages people who wish to explore. While the community gardens and togetherness in their existence create the visuality for commensality the pathway on the second level and the main staircase creates the necessary circulatory paths for the connection of different functions and layers.

This interpretation of the post-colonial situation of the cultures being hidden in a multicultural city pushes the project to be an engagement with the community leading towards activism. It brings the hiddenness of different cultures into the urban fabric, not through the tectonics of architecture but through the ways of creating urban narratives in the city. It achieves these urban narratives by the program that is carried out within the design and the connection it offers within the layers of the programme with different temporalities and the city itself.

AF

Hidden Communities

EXCAVATING PLACELESS CULTURES in POST-COLONIAL LONDON by COMMENSALITY

Appendix_Figures
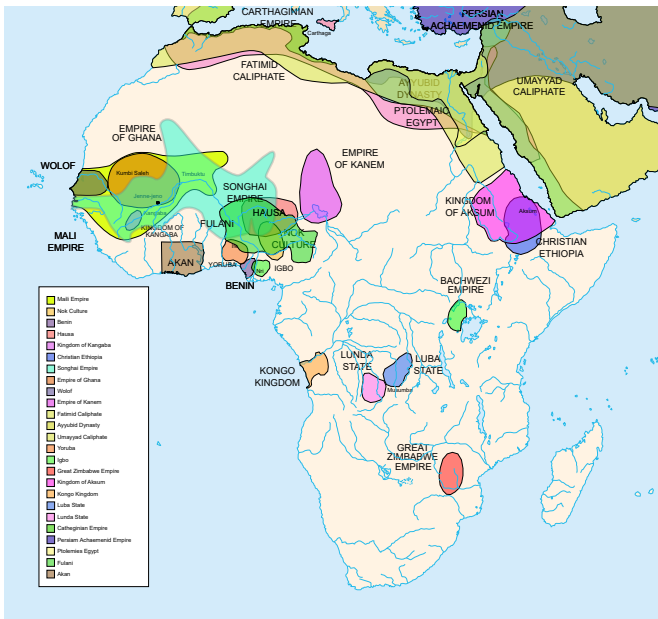
*Figure 1:*Pre-colonial African Kingdoms, (The Empires of Pre-colonial Africa, 2014)

Source: Ollimo, Mabel & Hall, Sarah. (2018). 'The role of institutions, ethnic fractionalization and colonization and their impact on economic growth and development in Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Kenya.'.

*Figure 2:*London, a city
of neighbourhoods, by
Abercrombie, 1943.

Source: Patrick Abercrombie
and John Forshaw, Greater
London Plan,1944.

*Figure 3:*London Localities
Map, by Mark Brearley and
Adam Towle

Source: "*Design For London*".
2020. The Bartlett School Of
Architecture.

001-AFGHAN
002-AFRICAN
003-ALBANIAN
004-ARAB
005-AUSTRALIAN

006-BALTIC STATES
007-BANGLADESHI
008-BOSNIAN
009-BRAZILIAN
010-BRITISH

011-CARRIBBEAN
012-CHILEAN
013-CHINESE
014-COLOMBIAN
015-CYPRIOT

016-ECUADORIAN
017-FILIPINO
018-GREEK
019-INDIAN
020-INDONESIAN

021-IRANIAN
022-IRISH
023-ISRAELI
024-ITALIAN
025-JAPANESE

026-KOREAN
027-KURDISH
028-LATIN
029-NEPALESE
030-NIGERIAN

031-NORTH AMERICAN
032-PAKISTANI
033-POLISH
034-VIETNAMESE
035-TURKISH

036-THAI
037-SRI LANKAN

Figure 4: Image by the author

Data Source: London Datastore(2011)*Detailed Ethnicity by Age & Sex Ward Tools* (2011 Census), Mayor of London,CT0222
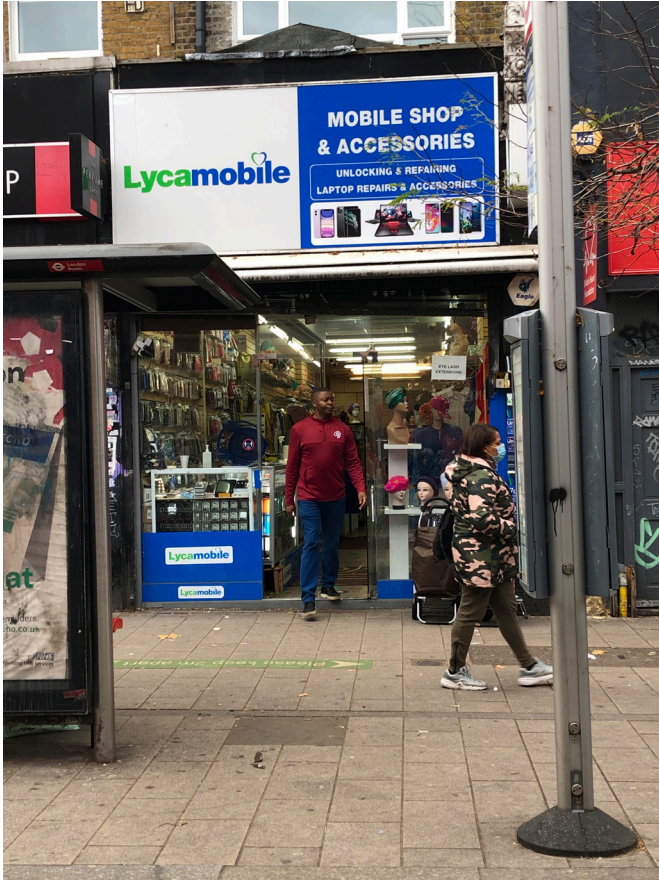
Figure 5: Shared floor space

Source: Photograph by the author

RP

Hidden Communities
EXCAVATING PLACELESS CULTURES in POST-COLONIAL LONDON by COMMENSALITY

Research Plan

Green, Sophie. 2019. A Father And His Baby Carried In A Modern Plastic Carrier In One Hand, Adidas Pool Sliders In The Other, Stands Against A Skyline Dotted With Cranes And Shiny New-Build Flats. Image. https://time.com/longform/african-churches-christianity-london/.

"home is no longer one place,it is locations"

Amin and Thrift 2002

Keywords	Sense of belonging, Multiculturalism, Diversity, Colonial, Post-Colonial, De-Colonial, Ethnicities, Segregation-Integration-Exclusion, Enclaves, Cluster, Communities, Diaspora,Space, Place, Non-Place, Boundaries, Thresholds, Otherness

Introduction

The photograph[1] taken by Sophie Green is the perfect summary of my fascination with London. A black African man in his traditional Sunday prayer dress on an unkempt sports field in front of a skyscraper under construction. He wears Adidas sliders and a modern plastic baby carrier, indicating his attempts to assimilate into the culture, but apart from his attire, there is no evidence of a place where his culture is particularly valued. Although his culture is located in the cartesian world, it is placeless in the hybridity (of the common and the other) of London. This very complex mechanism of merging cultures and identities has always been an important part of the description of London.

When the British arrived in the colonial countries, they had the opportunity to adapt the architecture of the local culture to their needs, but centuries later, when the ethnic groups arrived in "postcolonial "[2] London, they did not have the opportunity to have a manifest effect on the built environment and neither the development of the city consider this situation as a problem to tackle. Today, years in to the process of decolonisation, the situation is still not much different. The problem is that the "imagination of both the urban and the diasporic,..., has largely remained circumscribed by reference to the model of the state as nation-state, supported by the idea of the nation as ideally ethnically homogeneous. "[3] This occidental[4] thinking, reflected in the urban structure, creates the hybrid urban environment that hides the existence of different cultures in the mechanism of amalgamation, even though multiculturalism is at the heart of London. This cultural diversity can be easily seen by taking a closer look at the city's residents and their daily lives, but when people are taken out of the equation, there is not much left to point out London's cultural diversity. In this sense, London can still be classified as an ethnically multicultural and heterogeneous but morphologically monocultural and homogeneous city.

[1] See page 148

Place-less-ness; /noun/
A state of being unconnected. An environment that lacks the significant attachment to a place because of the homogenizing effect of the location

[2] "Not only are the 'colonial city' and the 'imperial city' umbilically connected in terms of economic linkages as well as cultural hybridization, but their 'post-equivalents' cannot be disentangled one from the other and need to be analyzed within a single 'postcolonial' framework of intertwining histories and relations"
<Yeoh 2001>

[3] King, Anthony D.. *"Postcolonial Cities, Postcolonial Critiques". Negotiating Urban Conflicts: Interaction, Space and Control*, edited by Helmuth Berking, Sybille Frank, Lars Frers, Martina Löw, Lars Meier, Silke Steets and Sergej Stoetzer, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015, pp. 15-28

Diaspor(a)ic; /(noun)/adj/
The dispersal, migration, movement of a group of people away from their ancestral home. The word suggests settled communities.

[4] Occidental; /adj/
Something that is related or originated of wester counteries.

Research Statement

⁵Enclave; /noun/ (A territory).A group of people occupying a place which is completely surrounded by different claimed territories. Each diasporic community can be considered an enclave

⁶Space and place cannot be evaluated as different notions, but as interrelated concepts characterised by the absence or presence of each other on a scale of time and meaning. According to philosopher Yi-fu Tuan, the difference between space and place lies in the permanent or temporary assignment of meanings to a particular zone, an area. "So space and place are dialectically structured in human environmental experience, since our understanding of space is related to the places we inhabit, which in turn derive meaning from their spatial context"⁷. Since space can be described as a place that has no social connections with the experiencer, no values added by the users, place becomes more than just a location with social connections, but a location created by the relation with the human subject which is limitless in time and meaning. In this sense, places for diasporic communities can be considered as locations with a sense of belonging and spaces without this connection. This notion is crucial for understanding the locations of minority groups in complex cities such as London, where different cultures live in heterogeneous ways.

⁷Seamon, David, and Jacob Sowers. 2021. "Key Texts in Human Geography." In , by pages 43-52. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446213742.

In this situation, different ethnic groups had chosen and were sometimes even forced to live in clusters in order to preserve their culture. These enclaves, cultural ecologies, create a sense of belonging to the community environment through daily encounters with people with the same cultural habits and needs. In this research, the notion of enclaves5 of ethnic groups gains importance as their boundaries can be considered as boundaries in between the sense of community and alienation in the process of decolonization of a diverse city. These boundaries can be spatialized if they are analysed as transition zones, thresholds, between the concepts of "space and place "⁶ . This research aims to understand the spatial possibilities for reducing feeling of otherness and exclusion for ethnic minority groups in the city by examining these thresholds, transitional spaces for different communities and by that, seeks to answer the research question posed in order to equip the final design with a tool to address the problem.

Research Questions:

Main question

-What are the spatial outcomes and uses of thresholds between "places" and "spaces" of belonging for diverse ethnic groups in post-colonial London?

Sub-questions

-How does the built environment influence the behavioral patterns of different ethnic communities in London?

-Does social conduct of segregated communities have a visible shaping effect on the urban morphological layer of the city of London?

-When does the threshold between spaces and places of communities becomes visible?

-What are the material and intangible qualities of transitions of space to place as sense of belonging to a community reflected as thresholds in the city?

-How can architecture redefine itself for tackling the issue of otherness by understanding the thresholds of ethnic minorities in London?

Methodology

This research aims to discover the spatial qualities of the thresholds of belonging for ethnic communities of London. London has a morphologically homogeneous fabric and it is difficult to uncover the sometimes invisible thresholds. Therefore, this research will use a range of methods to tackle this complicated issue simultaneously with historical analysis and case studies. This research looks at London as a postcolonial city to understand the diverse environment and will first map the diversity in the city. As local identities are more prominent in London compared to London as a city, the map of localities will be overlaid with the locations of different ethnic groups to create a new map of London's ethnicities, which is seperated from the colonial understanding of borders but similar to the pre-colonial understanding of borders of the African continent. In this topic, due to lack of resources and accessibility, it is not possible to analyse the domestic interiors of different ethnicities so the results of the first mapping phase will be used to determine the sites of investigation. The high streets crossing different ethnic territories will be analysed, as these streets carry different functions for different ethnic groups in different time periods and are examples of how different communities live together in the postcolonial city. Since the theoretical framework of the research defines the thresholds of the sense of belonging as transitional zones between spaces and places of communities, the entry strategies and the use of space in the entrances on high streets will be analysed through dissections in various temporalities. Finally, a visual essay will be conducted as a compendium of entrances. Through these steps, I aim to understand the thresholds of belonging of different communities to answer my research question.

Border; /noun/
A rigid line that seperates different

Boundary; /noun/
A rigid transition zone that seperates different sides while cohabiting parts of both sides.

Threshold; /noun/
An interstice, void. A flexible, non-rigid transitional area that is defined by spatial temporality

Simultaneously I will try to interview members of communities for mental mappings of their environment in high streets if I can manage to go to London.

Spatial temporality; /noun/
Condition of existence of place depending on the period of time

Mapping
Lesley Williams
Peter Bishop

Layering
Arie Graafland

Dissect
Kevin Lynch
Aldo Rossi

Categorise
Henri Lefebvre
Edward Soja

Theoretical Framework
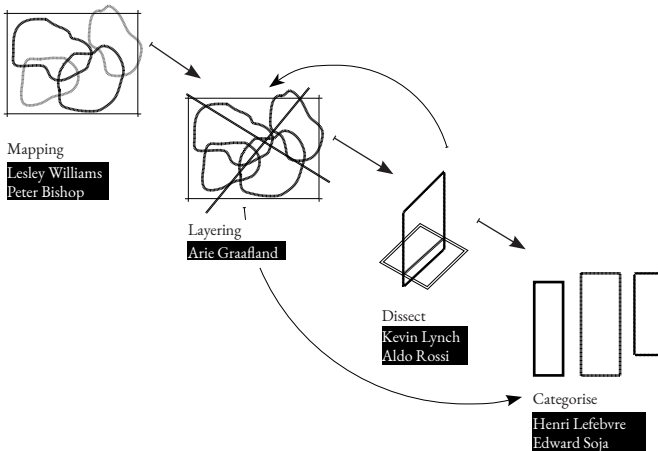
The main framework of this research is to understand London as a postcolonial city rather than a postimperial city from a non-occidental point of view. In order to do this in such a westernised practise, I question every step I will take in this research to expose my bias

[8]Ethno(scape); / noun/<Interpretation> A place, a region, characterised by ethnic migration or diaspora. A mental definition for the inhabitant rather than a representation.

Phenomenology; /noun/ The sensual understanding of a space that comes with consciousness

It is important to materialize this phenomenological view of the thresholds of sense of belonging in order to understand the problem at hand at the level of urban structure. Lefebvre›s idea of «production of space in conjunction with Soja›s categorization as firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace will be used to materialize the phenomenological part of the research as well as dissecting and categorising parts of the research.

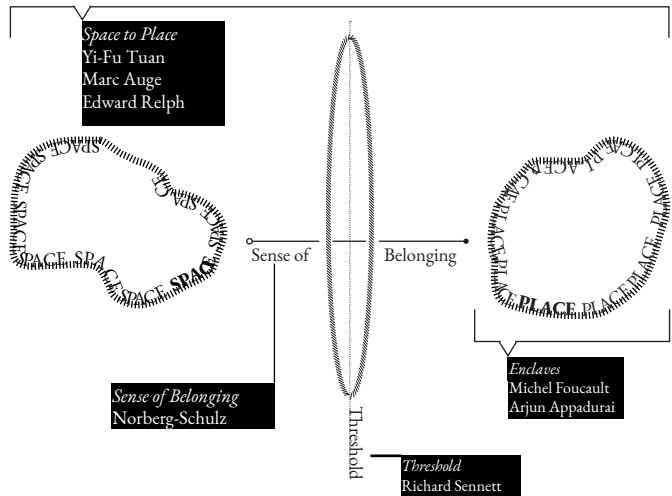[9]Foucault, Michel, and Jay Miskowiec. 1986. "*Of Other Spaces.*" Diacritics 16 (1): 22–27,

[10]Appadurai, Arjun. 1990. "*Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy.*" Theory, Culture & Society 7 (2–3): 295–310.

[11]Norberg-Schulz, Christian. 1980. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* New York: Rizzoli.

[12]Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience.* 1. publ. in Great Britain. London: Arnold.

The research focuses on a very complex mechanism as a problem in a very complex city and therefore needs to be framed from different angles. The theory in this research is based on the understanding of sense of belonging in combination with crossing the thresholds between the concepts, space and place. Different theoretical approaches will be used to cover various concepts and provide a general framework.

To understand how ethnic communities function as co-dependent systems of the city, Foucault's[9] understanding of heterotopias are interpreted as systems (of life, traditions) in systems (city). Arjun Appadurai's[10] idea of "ethnoscapes "[8] frames the system interpreted from Foucault's work as systems of communities. This is the first step in understanding the diversity of ethnic backgrounds in London, as these communities tend to form enclaves in the city, as argued earlier. To understand the boundaries of such subjective enclaves, the phenomenological understanding of space as a sense of belonging comes into play. At this point, Norberg-Schulz's[11] view on the phenomenology of place can be linked to the sense of belonging by drawing on Yi-Fu Tuan's[12] understanding of the difference between place and space. Tuan argues that a place (space) can become a place when a connection is established between the user and the environment. The linear juxtaposition of space and place hints a transition in between that can be redefined through a spatial threshold. I base this final part of the research on Sennet's notion of boundaries as thresholds of transition to a new place.

Space to Place
Yi-Fu Tuan
Marc Auge
Edward Relph

Sense of   Belonging

SPACE

PLACE

Sense of Belonging
Norberg-Schulz

Enclaves
Michel Foucault
Arjun Appadurai

Threshold

Threshold
Richard Sennett

"Attributes that distinguish postcolonial populations—a language in common with the host society, a shared, if contested, history, some familiarity with the culture, norms, and social practices of the metropolitan society, the presence of long-established communities, are features among others which distinguish postcolonial communities and migrants from those of non-postcolonial origin. In this way, "multicultural" Berlin differs from multicultural London..." [9]

[9] King 2015

I argue that London is a multicultural city where multiculturalism is not approached as it should be in the urban layer to create inclusivity, but where the reality of the existence of different ethnicities is neglected. This oxymoronic thinking in relation to diversity creates the complex mechanism of merging of cultures, backgrounds and customs and hides or highlights everything that is different as other. We need to abandon the occidental approach in architecture as we develop our neighborhoods to create a city that belongs to everyone and nobody, to create a city where everything is placeless and placeness. In this sense, London can be historically examined for the developments of its diverse environment and the creation of a sense of belonging over time for different communities with their current reflection on the urban layer to conclude with a manifest for development in a postcolonial city.

Otherness; /noun/
Feeling of being other, different. Western way of categorisation of people.

FASCINATION

The life of diverse minorty cultures in a
multicultural city like London. Complex
mechanisim of merging of cultures, lifes, habits

Problematization

Needs

Literature review

Redefining London as a Post-Colonial city/ A city in the process of decolonization

— Sunand Prasad (Architectural Hints of a Postcolonial London)
— Anthony King (Postcolonial Cities, Postcolonial Critiques)
— Brenda Yeoh (Postcolonial Cities)
— Mohsen Mostafavi (London: Postcolonial City)

Definition

Explanation

Theoretical Frame

Framing Sense of belonging for communities
as a transition between "space" and "place"
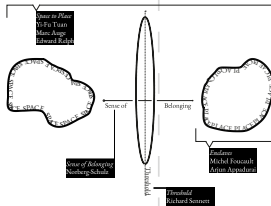
Historical-Situational Analysis

Study of historical change and case studies

— Sunand Prasad (Architectural Hints of a Postcolonial London)
— Davison, Gethin, Kim Dovey, Ian Woodcock(Keeping Dalston Different)

Space to Place
Yi-Fu Tuan
Marc Auge
Edward Ralph

Sense of   Belonging

THE SPACE

Sense of Belonging
Norberg-Schulz

Threshold
Richard Sennett

Enclaves
Michel Foucault
Arjun Appadurai

PLACE IS R...

Exploration

Solution

In-tangible Site exploration

Tangible Site exploration

Design Tools

Mapping
Lesley Williams
Peter Bishop

Layering
Arie Graafland

Dissect
Kevin Lynch
Aldo Rossi

Categorise
Henri Lefebvre
Edward Soja

Annotated Bibliography

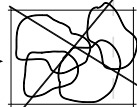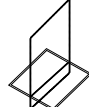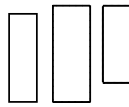Foucault, Michel, and Jay Miskowiec. 1986. "*Of Other Spaces.*" Diacritics 16 (1): 22–27,

This research examines the diaspora communities as a social system within the city of systems hence I believe Foucault's arguments on heterotopia can be related to the topic if it is thought of as a systematic heterotopia rather than a spatial one. Heterotopias can be very briefly explained as Worlds within worlds. Even though it is spatial thinking the idea can be brought to a non-spatial as social interwovenness for example as systems in systems, communities in communities or identities in identities. Anthropologist [13]Appadurai's explanation of "ethnoscapes" in his essay (which I interpret as ethnic "land" scapes) helps the research frame the system to be thought with the understanding of heterotopias. He explains the term ethnoscape as places that are shaped and identified by migration and hence migrant communities which eventually shapes the group identity.

[13]Appadurai, Arjun. 1990. "*Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy.*" Theory, Culture & Society 7 (2–3): 295–310.

Graafland, Arie. 2010. *Understanding The Socius Through Creative Mapping Techniques:*. 1st ed. Delft:Delft School of Design (DSD)

Arie Graafland is a former professor at the TU Delft School of Design and his book was a part of the MSc Research and Design project "Future Cities". In this book he discusses 4 different contemporary techniques of mapping; drifting, gameboard, layering and rhizome. This will be particularly important in defining different mapping techniques at different stages of the research, as the research defines London as a melting pot of different cultures, similar to the gameboard technique, and in further stages aims to define some sites as heterogeneous layers, similar to the layering technique.

King, Anthony D.. "*Postcolonial Cities, Postcolonial Critiques*". *Negotiating Urban Conflicts: Interaction, Space and Control*, edited by Helmuth Berking, Sybille Frank, Lars Frers, Martina Löw, Lars Meier, Silke Steets and Sergej Stoetzer, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015, pp. 15-28

The sociologist King discusses the postcolonial perceptions of the city. He addresses the crossovers between notions of the post-imperial and post-colonial city. He explores the postcolonial existence in previously imperial cities as a tension point, which creates a multi-layered understanding of the city. This article will be used in the research to deepen the understanding of the concept of "post-colonial London" and its translation to build environment and representation. While King uses London as an example, [14]Mostafavi in his text discusses the meaning of Post-coloniality in London with a photographic competition "London: Postcolonial City" that had been exhibited at Architectural Association in 1999. [15]Venn's text combines both paper of post-coloniality in London form a cultural point of view and explains the co-existence of community enclave in the city

[14]Mostafavi, Mohsen. 2003. "London: Postcolonial City." AA Files, no. 49: 2–3.

[15]Venn, Couze. 2015. "*The City as Assemblage. Diasporic Cultures, Postmodern Spaces,and Biopolitics.*" In *Negotiating Urban Conflicts: Interaction, Space and Control*, edited by Helmuth Berking, Sybille Frank, Lars Frers, Martina Löw, Lars Meier, Silke Steets, and Sergej Stoetzer, 41–52. transcript Verlag.

Annotated Bibliography

Dissect

Lynch, Kevin. 2008. *The Image of the City*. 33. print. Publication of the Joint Center for Urban Studies. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.

In the book The Image of the City, Lynch discusses the subjective perception of the city depends on how one perceives the environment. He argues that every being appoints some meaning to different elements of the city which characterizes the environment and helps orientation. He divides the cognitive mapping into five elements of the city to understand the subjective human experience in the city. This compartmentalizing of a cognitive mapping will frame the second part of the research which is the interview part. I will base my mental mapping interviews(if applicable) on Lynch's categorization of the city.

Categorise

Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford, OX, UK ; Cambridge, Mass.,USA: Blackwell.

[16]Soja, Edward W. 1996. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell.

Lefebvre focuses on the production of space. As a Marxist theorist, the word "production" in the title is not a coincidence but he discusses how space is shaped through three complementary concepts as lived conceived as perceived. His segmentation for the production of space as a social outcome can be linked the Soja's idea of first, second and third space as [16]Soja's work is an interpretation of Lefebvre's take on the concept. This idea of layered understanding of space will be used in the research to analyse the sites of investigations and to extract the threshold zones between spaces.

Sense of Belonging

Norberg-Schulz, Christian. 1980. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli.

In this article, Norberg-Schulz discusses the phenomenological understanding of space and its connection with the user. He discusses the space and the sense of space disconnected from the cartesian understanding but places on a subjective realm. His understanding of this subjective meaning of space will be used to determine the hiddenness of the cultural belonging on the cognitive and communal perceiving of space. In other words, Norberg-Schulz's take on phenomenology can be a method to understand and dissect the elements to be used in the mapping periods of the research

Dissect

Rossi, Aldo. 2007. *The Architecture of the City*. 16. print. Oppositions Books. Cambridge, Mass,; MIT Press.

Rossi's architecture of the city is one of the key readings in the architectural theory to understand the city. In the book The Architecture of the City Rossi critics the modern understanding of the city as a stable object. He reads the city as a moving and ever-changing organism. He argues that through time city grows and changes and creates conciseness and memory. He discusses the definitions and differences of typology and morphology within the architecture of the city, but he is mostly interested in the form of the city. Rossi's take will help to frame the research using the differentiation of typology and morphology while analysing London from a typological point of view and creating a morphological visual essay of spatial temporality.

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Space and PLace

Bishop, Peter, Lara Kinneir, and Mark Brearley. 2020. "*London, the Unique City*:" In Design for London, edited by Peter Bishop and Lesley Williams, 13–42. Experiments in Urban Thinking. UCL Press. http:// www.jstor.org.tudelft.idm.oclc.org/ stable/j.ctv13xps62.9.

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Mapping

**Germanà, Monica. 2011. "*From Hijab to Sweatshops.*" In *Postcolonial Spaces:The Politics of Place in Contemporary Culture*, edited by Andrew Teverson and Sara Upstone, 67–82. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi. org/10.1057/9780230342514_6.

**Keiller, Patrick. 2003. "*London in the Early 1990s.*" AA Files, no. 49: 20–24.

Knowles, Caroline. 2013. "*Nigerian London: Re-Mapping Space and Ethnicity in Superdiverse Cities.*" Ethnic and Racial Studies 36 (4): 651–69. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/01419870.2012.678874.

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**Meier, Lars. 2015. "*On the Road to Being White: The Construction of Whiteness in the Everyday Life of Expatriate German High Flyers in Singapore and London.*" In edited by Helmuth Berking, Sybille Frank, Lars Frers, Martina Löw, Lars Meier, Silke Steets, and Sergej Stoetzer, 125–38. transcript Verlag.

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CaseStudy

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Space and Place

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**Stoetzer, Sergej. 2015. "*Picturing Urban Identities.*" In *Negotiating Urban Conflicts: Interaction, Space and Control*, edited by Helmuth Berking, Sybille Frank, Lars Frers, Martina Löw, Lars Meier, Silke Steets, and Sergej Stoetzer, 177–94. transcript Verlag. https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839404638- 013.

**Further readings

Space and Place   Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience.* 1. publ. in Great Britain. London: Arnold.

**Ungers, Oswald Mathias. 2013. *"Cities Within The City"*. In Urban Design Ecologies, 1st ed. NewYork: John Wiley & Sons

**Vis, Benjamin N. 2018. *Cities Made of Boundaries*: Mapping Social Life in Urban Form. London: UCL Press.

Mapping   Williams, Lesley, and Peter Bishop. 2020. *Design for London: Experiments in Urban Thinking*.

Yeoh, Brenda S.A. 2001. "Postcolonial Cities." Progress in Human Geography 25 (3): 456–68. https://doi.org/10.1191/030913201680191781.

**Further readings

GP

Hidden Communities
EXCAVATING PLACELESS CULTURES in POST-COLONIAL LONDON by COMMENSALITY

Graduation Plan

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

Graduation Plan: All tracks

> Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Ali Fatih Cebeci
Student number	5047161

Studio		
Name / Theme	Architectural Design Crossovers Heterogeneous City London	
Main mentor	Agnes Van Der Meij	Bouwkunde/Architecture
Second mentor	Jelke Fokkinga	Bouwkunde/Architectural Engineering+Technology
Third mentor	Alper Semih Alkan	Bouwkunde/Architecture
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I chose the Architectural Design Crossovers, Heterogeneous city London studio because of the interdisciplinary research structure it offers. I believe the design of the idea for a project lay in between crossovers of disciplines with architecture.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Hidden Communities *Excavating Placeless Cultures in Post-Colonial London by Commensality*
Goal	
Location:	London
The posed problem,	The development of the city being planned accordingly to the ideology that the city is ethnically homogeneous
research questions and	When does the threshold between spaces and places of communities becomes visible?
design assignment in which these result.	An Urban Farm and a Communal Kitchen accompanied by a self-constructed Market for increasing the sense of belonging in the ethnic neighborhood and decreasing the speed of pushing out locals due to gentrification processes by providing locals with ownership of land possibilities.

My fascination with London started with a photograph of an African-British man carrying a modern baby carrier and an adidas slippers while he is dressed in his Sunday prayer attire in an under-maintained sports field in front of newly built skyscrapers and apartment buildings by photographer Sophie Green(see figure 1). Apart from his attire, there is no evidence of a place where his culture is particularly valued. Although his culture is located in the cartesian world, it is placeless in the hybridity (of the common and the other) of London. The project focuses on the development of the city of London from the diasporic communities understanding of sense of belonging. It argues that Although London is known for being multicultural, the development of the city remained circumscribed to the idea that the city is ethnically homogenously populated. This ignorance of the diversity in the population in city development, decreases the sense of belonging for different communities in the city hence they became placeless. This project aims to investigate the thresholds in between concepts of space (a location with no sense of belonging) and place (a location with sense of belonging) to extract the possibilities of changing the ideology behind the city development schema by proposing a new communing practice.

The main question of the project is:

-When does the threshold between spaces and places of communities becomes visible?

Followed by the questions below:

-What are the spatial outcomes and uses of thresholds between "places" and "spaces" of belonging for diverse ethnic groups in post-colonial London?

-How does the built environment influence the behavioral patterns of different ethnic communities in London?

-Does social conduct of segregated communities have a visible shaping effect on the urban morphological layer of the city of London?

-What are the material and intangible qualities of transitions of space to place as sense of belonging to a community reflected as thresholds in the city?

-How can architecture redefine itself for tackling the issue of otherness by understanding the thresholds of ethnic minorities in London?

Answering these provided questions, the project aims to create a place for communities to form and increase the sense of belonging in the neighbourhood and the community

Process

Method description

The project depends on many different methods of research together. On the theoretical part of the research, historical and contemporary case studies and community/public space theories are being used and interpreted. On the other hand, the project required a field trip to the site of investigation which took place in 2021, Q2. Personal observations and interviews made on site are used within the frame of architectural anthropology to analyse the use of space by diasporic communities and the needs of community which can be later addressed by architecture. Some data collected from governmental, institutional websites and archives are used as well to create a ground to some of the research questions and to be able to have a comparison of historical and current situation.

Literature and general practical preference

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-Venn, Couze. 2015. "The City as Assemblage. Diasporic Cultures, Postmodern Spaces, and Biopolitics." In *Negotiating Urban Conflicts: Interaction, Space and Control*, edited by Helmuth

Berking, Sybille Frank, Lars Frers, Martina Löw, Lars Meier, Silke Steets, and Sergej Stoetzer, 41–52. transcript Verlag.

-Williams, Lesley, and Peter Bishop. 2020. *Design for London: Experiments in Urban Thinking*.

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?
2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

This graduation project argues that London is a multicultural city where multiculturalism is not approached as it should be in the urban layer to create inclusivity, but where the reality of the existence of different ethnicities is neglected. The neglected side of the diversity is what creates the heterogeneity of London from social point of view. This oxymoronic thinking in relation to diversity creates the complex mechanism of merging of cultures, backgrounds and customs and hides or highlights everything that is different as other. We need to abandon the occidental approach in architecture as we develop our neighbourhoods to create a city that belongs to everyone and nobody, to create a city where everything and everyone is accounted in the process of the city development. I believe architecture as a discipline can offer some new approaches and ideas to the situation from small scale details to large scale interventions. Understanding the hidden societal situation of diversity as an architecture student, Heterogeneous City-London's structure of research in the crossover of different disciplines with architecture creates the perfect base for this project.

This project offers a new approach on city development in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods. It does not neglect the economic and political situation of the city development agencies but offers a new way of understanding the city while proposing a different structure of communing to increase the sense of belonging in the diverse neighbourhood. This project in this relate to societal issue's on a bigger scale and a framework by providing a different approach to social neighbourhood structure.

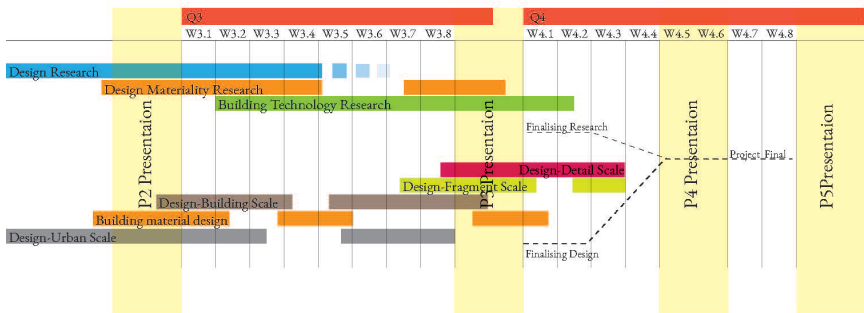Figure 2: MSc4-Q3 and Q4 Design and Research Proposed Timetable

Figure 1: Green, Sophie. 2019. *A Father And His Baby Carried In A Modern Plastic Carrier In One Hand, Adidas Pool Sliders In The Other, Stands Against A Skyline Dotted With Cranes And Shiny New-Build Flats.* Image. https://time.com/longform/african-churches-christianity-london/.

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