

Routes of identity: Malay Liverpool and the limits of transnationalism

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Abstract:

Rather than focusing on either bounded conceptions of migrant assimilation or unbounded transnational linkages, this paper situates migrant experiences in broader "routes of identity." In the case of Malay ex-seamen in Liverpool, UK, all of whom are now in their seventies or eighties, this has meant tracing life geographies extending back well over half a century. During the middle decades of the twentieth century when these men arrived in Liverpool, the city was a major seaport with longstanding maritime connections to Southeast Asia and across the Pacific. Drawing upon fieldwork carried out in Liverpool and Southeast Asia between 2003 and 2008, the paper gives attention to four geographical dimensions of the shifting identities of Liverpool-based Malay ex-seamen: (1) the always-already fluid and mobile nature of their identifications which preceded long-distance migration; (2) shifting political geographies of identity (re)formation, particularly the establishment of post-colonial national boundaries which cut across prior modes of identification; (3) historically variable constitutive geographies of long-distance interconnection, most notably the transition from maritime socioeconomic networks to a post-maritime period; and (4) social sites through which individual and collective identities are emplaced. The intention is to sketch these four different dimensions in such a way as to allow them to speak critically to issues of transnationalism and migrant identity beyond the specific case of Malays in Liverpool.

Keywords: Malay seafarers, oral histories, life geographies, identity, transnationalism, Southeast Asia

Introduction

The rise to prominence of transnationalism in the social sciences has been associated with new geographical framings of migrant identity. Out have gone bounded geographies which see migrants as assimilating--to greater or lesser degrees--within the milieu of their destination. (1) In their place have come geographies of networks and border crossings which are understood not only to keep migrants connected to their homeland but also to contribute to the (re)shaping of their identities at a distance. In part, this shift has to do with the extension of possibilities for regular and sustained long-distance social connections enabled by historically relatively recent developments in technologies of communication and transportation. Yet the existence of historical antecedents--such as trade diasporas or commercial and administrative elites--mean that transnationalism denotes new ways of seeing the geography of migrant identity change as much as it diagnoses historically novel empirical realities. This "geography of knowing" (2) became so pervasive so quickly that by 1999, influential scholars were warning against the danger of an overextension of transnationalism to cover almost all aspects of migrants' lives and experiences. (3) It was thus argued that transnationalism needed to be delimited as a subset of migrant experiences, allowing space for consideration of the possible continued relevance of "old models," even in a border-crossing world on the move. (4) This paper is concerned with geographical dimensions of migrant identity that are not transfixed by transnationalism. The intention is not to try to bring back old models and framings but to examine a range of constitutive geographies of identity over the course of migrants' life routes.

The migrants whose lives form the basis for identification and examination of geographies of identity in what follows are a small group of men from Southeast Asia living in Liverpool, UK. (5) In the middle decades of the twentieth century, men from what are today the nation-states of Singapore and Malaysia, and also smaller numbers from Indonesia, worked as seafarers on British-owned and other ocean-going merchant ships. Some of these men settled in port cities such as London, Cardiff and New York as well as Liverpool. (6) Maritime connections between those cities mean that at one level the men whose lives I have studied may be understood in terms of a Malay Atlantic rather than as speaking to Pacific affairs. However, their seafaring life stages came during a period during which Liverpool shipping

companies had more than half a century of extensive Pacific Ocean services. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the Ocean Steamship Company, for example, equipped itself with "a new fleet of cargo liners capable of extending the range of Liverpool's carrying trade throughout the whole of the Pacific Ocean." (7) In addition, at least until the 1970s, Liverpool's maritime linkages with the "Far East" (8) also meant that even Malays who had taken shore jobs in the city remained plugged into social and political developments in Southeast Asia. Recent work in Southeast Asian studies has shown how the regional unit of analysis for this field (Southeast Asia) is conceptually unbounded by network and flow geographies in an era of globalization. (9) The same argument may reasonably be extended to other areal or cartographic units, including "the Pacific." The lives of the Malay ex-seamen with whom I have worked in Liverpool map social and economic networks which include Pacific localities while clearly exceeding the conventional spatial limits of that region. Given that these men are all upwards of 70 years of age, their transcontinental life geographies precede the last two decades of the twentieth century when transnationalism and globalization rose to prominence. (10) In fact, long-distance maritime social networks between the northwest of England and Southeast Asia had largely been severed by the 1980s, given Liverpool's decline as a seaport and changes in the global seafaring labour market. (11)

The material drawn upon in this paper emerges from a larger research project on maritime and post-maritime links between Liverpool and the Malay world in Southeast Asia.

Methodologically, the intended focus at the outset of the project was to track down and conduct life history interviews with remaining first-generation ex-seafarers in Liverpool. An initial two-month period of fieldwork in 2004 quickly served to reveal the infeasibility or at least inadequacy of such a methodological strategy. Not only were the numbers of men concerned very small (only around 20 in 2004), but the majority of those living in and around the city were unwilling or too frail to be interviewed. This necessitated two main forms of methodological diversification. One was to afford greater prominence to sources beyond first-generation migrants, including interviews with their descendents and other family members as well as various archival sources. A second strategy was to attend social events and gatherings which afforded opportunities to join conversations with ex-seafarers and other community members (in much less formal ways than I had originally envisaged

that life history interviews would be conducted). As a result of the latter, in particular, my fieldwork practices came to take on two distinct spatialities, both of which depart from those of traditional anthropological fieldwork. First, although my research did involve extended periods of research and data collection in Liverpool--six months based in the city in 2008 in addition to the initial two-month period in 2004, plus a series of shorter trips between those years--it also involved planned encounters with Liverpool-based ex-seafarers (and their family members) in a range of other locations, including in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. As James Clifford has shown, patterns of "dwelling and travelling"--both those of the researcher and researched--unsettle spatial imaginings of the field as somewhere one can be either "inside" or "outside." (12) Ex-seafarers whom I met up with in Malacca or Singapore were in some senses both leaving the site of my fieldwork and returning "home." Similarly, as a Singapore-based academic with roots in the northwest of England, my research travels to Liverpool invoked feelings of going home as well as of venturing into an exotic field site. As Clifford points out, however, such respatializations of fieldwork should not be taken to mean that the field is everywhere, and this connects to a second differentiation between my work and conventional conceptualizations of the field in anthropology. Much of my research in Liverpool came to revolve around a specific site or place--a terraced house in the Toxteth part of the city which had been bought as a club for seafarers in the 1960s. During fieldwork in Liverpool in 2004 and several shorter visits over the subsequent three years, this was the main site for my ethnographic encounters. (13) In sum, my research involved practices which both unbound "the field" and located it more precisely in a specific site than has conventionally been the case in anthropological fieldwork.

It is out of my research practice-driven patterns of dwelling and travelling that I have amassed fragments of knowledge with which to map life geographies of "Malays" in Liverpool. The use of scare marks here denotes, in part, historical and spatial variability in definitions of Malay identity or Malay-ness which will be examined in more detail later in the paper. However, following insights from diverse post-structuralist theorizations of subject formation, there is also a wider point to be made about the unstable and constructed nature of all identities. It has also been recognized that identity itself has "long been one of the slipperiest concepts in the social scientist's lexicon." (14) Writing about

Malay identity in Malaysia, Shamsul A.B. distinguished between "authority-defined" and "everyday-defined" social realities: the former "defined by people who are part of the dominant power structure"; the latter "experienced by the people in the course of their everyday life." (15) As Shamsul recognizes, the two are "intricately linked and constantly influencing and shaping each other," though he gives more attention to the way in which race categories consolidated by colonial authorities filtered down to "the mind and practical life of the populace." (16) In my own research, efforts to develop a critical understanding of this relationship emerge out of a shuttle between diverse archival and human subject sources. In keeping with Shamsul's work, this shuttle can, of course, reveal the constructed or invented nature of many lived forms of identification. Yet it is equally important not to arrogate awareness of identity construction or invention to the academic critic alone. (17) Many Liverpool-based ex-seafarers in my research were aware of historical and spatial diversity in definitions of Malay identity and that the ways and extent to which they themselves perform Malay-ness is highly contextually variable. If the same individual self-identifies differently according to spatial location then space itself may be said to play a constitutive role in the performance and ongoing reconstruction of identities. (18) In this way, life geographies are not merely about tracing where ex-seafarers have been (or are going to) but also provide clues to understanding the active role of geography and space in routes of identity over time.

In what follows, I highlight four constitutive geographical dimensions of the shifting identities of Liverpool-based Malay ex-seamen over the course of their lives. The first concerns pre-migration spatial mobilities and associated diversity in the identities of any given migrant group. Rather than assuming that the men I have interviewed all identified in the same way as Malays on arrival in Liverpool, I show how it is important to consider the always-already fluid and mobile identifications of pre-migrant subjects. The second dimension concerns shifting political geographies of migrant identity (re)formation. Rather than forming an inert backdrop for the border-crossing mobilities of Malay seafarers, nation-state boundaries have been (re)drawn during their lifetimes--especially during the period of decolonization--with important implications for senses of individual and collective identification. The third dimension has to do with variable geographies of connection between Liverpool and Southeast Asia. While there is evidence of a (trans)nationalization of

the self-understandings of Malays in Liverpool, the process and forms of mobility with which this has been associated shifted markedly as Liverpool and the Malays who live there entered post-maritime periods. The fourth dimension gives attention to sites or places of collective identification. The community meeting place at number 7 Jermyn Street is one of a series of specific sites that have played a role in the relational reconstruction of Malay-ness in Liverpool. Word constraints preclude sustained empirical treatment of any of these four dimensions. The intention is to sketch them in such a way as to allow them to speak to issues of transnationalism and migrant identity beyond the specific case of Malays in Liverpool.

Animating Pre-migration Identities

In work which is concerned with the relationship between migration and identity, it would seem reasonable enough to begin by attempting to characterize the pre-migration identities of the individuals or group concerned. What were they like before they moved? How did they think, feel and identify when they first arrived at their destination? These seemingly simple questions are, in fact, very difficult to answer, particularly when the group concerned moved as much as half a century ago and consists of men in their seventies and eighties, many of whom claim to have problems with their memory. (19) In addition, to what extent did they--diverse members of the group concerned--identify or see the world in shared ways prior to migrating? There is a danger, even in qualitative work which foregrounds a wide range of identities and experiences among members of any migrant group, of overlooking pre-migration subject variegation (and so of essentializing the migrant collectivity). (20) In the case of my own research, merely to speak of "the migration of Malay seamen" may be said to afford primacy to ethnoracial categorization (seeing the individuals concerned first and foremost as "Malays" rather than in terms of other facets of their complex subjectivities) and to presume an originally shared relation to Malay (Melayu) identity or Malay-ness. My experience of tracing geographical biographies back prior to migration life stages has reinforced the importance of avoiding any such presumptions of ethnic homogeneity. In part, this has to do with the particularly slippery and contested nature of Malay-ness which is considered below, but it also raises two points which are of wider applicability. First, and most simply, even people of broadly similar geographical origins,

moving to similar destinations and involved in similar occupations may identify in diverse ways (including, but not only, in ethnic terms). Second, the shifting identities of migrants neither begin with nor are reducible to their experiences as migrants. Rather, migrant life stages need to be understood in terms of the wider fluidity of identities, including the influence of premigration socio-economic and spatial mobilities.

All of the ex-seamen with whom I have worked in Liverpool were born and grew up in Alam Melayu (or the "Malay world" region in Southeast Asia) and would be officially classified as Malays in the nation-states of Malaysia or Singapore today. Yet they surely had highly variegated relations with Malay-ness on arrival in Liverpool in the decade or so after the Pacific War/ World War II. As alluded to already above, this is in part to do with the slippery nature of the term Malay (and Melayu) itself. This is not the place for extended discussion of the history of the term/category or its usage. Suffice it to note that in the important collection of papers entitled *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, edited by Timothy P. Barnard, Malay identity is shown to have varied greatly over time and space. (21) In their introduction to the volume, for example, Barnard and Hendrik Maier note of the Malays that "theirs is a contested and wandering identity." (22) Even in the British colonial territories which today comprise the nation-state of Malaysia--where "Malay" is constitutionally defined (23)--official definitions varied from state to state until well into the twentieth century. (24) Definitional differences were even more marked between British Malaya and Dutch territories (which today comprise Indonesia) in Southeast Asia. This regional spatial variability meant that mobile individuals and groups could effectively move into (and out of) Malay-ness at the level of both the administrative imagination and lived identification.

Malays--or people who were classified and/or identified as such at some point(s) in their geographical biographies--did move around. (25) While this may sound like a statement of the obvious, it is worth specifying, given the tendency, especially in the popular and political imagination in Malaysia, to cast Malays as historically settled folks. Colonial era conceptions of the Peninsula as Tanah Melayu (literally, the "land of the Malays") form the foundation of postcolonial Malay political claims to territorial indigeneity. (26) A powerful side effect of this has been the imaginative historical confinement of the Malay to rural kampung

(villages) extending back to time immemorial. The putatively settled, indigenous Malay is contrasted with--indeed, is conventionally defined in opposition to--the historically more mobile, immigrant "Chinese" and "Indians" (at least in former British colonial territories). Recent critical research has sought to unsettle such ingrained imaginings, unbounding the kampung, mobilizing Malay-ness, (27) and I see my own work as contributing to this literature. As sailors, of course, the men who form the focus of my study had highly mobile pre-migration working lives. Yet it is also important to note that many of these men--and they were all male (28)--had significant histories of mobility before becoming seafarers. Inevitably, such mobilities contributed to shaping their senses of identity, including their relationship with Malay-ness. The broader point is that while it is tempting to consider identity shifts associated with migration in terms of the effects of having moved from A to B, this movement in fact forms part of the ongoing flow or wandering of individual and collective identities, something which, of course, is not unique to Malays.

Both the multiplicity and fluidity of pre-migration ethnic identities is evident from the life stories of men I have interviewed in Liverpool. The clearest cases emerge from situations in which men or their ancestors had moved to British colonial territories in Southeast Asia from islands in the Dutch East Indies (today Indonesia). The move meant the possibility of becoming Malay, though one geographer writing in the 1930s noted a tendency among certain immigrant "Malay" groups--he cites the Javanese, Boyanese and Bugis--to "retain their racial individuality longer." (29) Part of the point here is that becoming Malay was not necessarily a zero-sum game, implying becoming less something else. Singapore-born Hashim Malik, for example, whose grandfather had moved to Singapore from Ambon (in what is today eastern Indonesia), told me in Liverpool, "My blood is Ambonese. Oh yes, when you come to Singapore they call you 'Malay,' okay Malay. But the genuine is Ambonese." (30) Singapore, as the "great gathering ground" (31) for British colonial plunder and the nexus of regional and worldwide shipping routes attracted migrants from an extended Dutch Malay world--from Sumatra and Java, Borneo and Sulawesi, Ambon and Bawean (32) --as well as from more proximate parts of British Malaya. (33) While all of these people may have identified during some life stages as "Singapore Malays," this was only one component of the diverse and shifting pre-migration identities of the so-called Malays I went to study in Liverpool.

Political Geographies of Migrant Identity

Both the pre-migration identities of Liverpool Malays and their subsequent transformation demand consideration of historically changing political geographies in ways which speak critically to the default national scale framing of much social science work on migration. As has been suggested already, during the first half of the twentieth century, definitions of Malayness varied between Dutch- and British-administered territories as well as within British Malaya. The latter is worthy of some further elaboration, since there were important political commonalities among, as well as differences between, the states (negeri) and other administrative territories which today comprise the nation-states of Malaysia and Singapore. A cartographic space which would all have been marked in pink in British geography textbooks was in fact administered in three different ways. (34) British Malaya was divided into the Federated Malay States, the Unfederated Malay States and the Straits Settlements (SS). The SS collectively formed a Crown Colony headed by a governor (in Singapore), and people born there were British subjects. Given that other parts of British Malaya were at least nominally headed by Malay sultans, it is reasonable to expect that ruler and territorial state inflected Malay subjectivities (even while recalling the point made in the previous section that many more subjects moved between states than is conventionally acknowledged). (35) Such regional variation not only contributed to the differentiation of identities prior to migration to Britain but also determined legal status on arrival. While men born in the SS were British subjects, those from other parts of British Malaya were not, although in practice there were periods during which all were officially treated as "aliens." (36) At one level, of course, this is a unique case. Nonetheless, it raises broader questions about possibilities for regional variation which are often overlooked given the tendency to reduce issues of political geography and identity to national scale concerns. (37)

It is worth recalling that the contemporary political map of Southeast Asia in particular--and with it associated facets of individual and collective identities--is historically a very recent formation. (38) The men with whom I have worked in Liverpool were born before the political independence of (what became) Malaysia in 1957. To what extent did these diverse and dispersed individuals imagine themselves as forming part of a collective, territorialized

community prior to formal establishment of modern nationstates in Southeast Asia? (39) What does "Malaysia" (or "Singapore" or "Indonesia") mean to people born in territories that now form part of these nation-states but who reached adulthood before these "homelands" became independent political territories? And, more specifically to the case of my research, how meaningful are national scale modes of identification to people who migrated from Southeast Asia before the current mosaic of independent nation-states was assembled? Again, although the latter question emerges from work on a small and fast-diminishing group of mid-twentieth century migrants, the issues it raises have much wider applicability, including to ongoing migration trends and experiences. To what extent, for example, do national scale identifications trump--and how, more generally, do they relate to--other territorializations of identity? Clearly there are cases where senses of national identity are heightened while "away" but, equally, there are other cases where the same may be true of regional (both sub-national and cross-national) identities. The overall point here is one of the need to resist the "territorial trap" of methodological nationalism (40) and so to allow for at least the possibility of non-national territorial identifications (and consideration of how these relate to national identity).

In conversations with each other or with younger generations of Malaysian citizens sojourning in Liverpool, the ex-seafarers identify in terms of the state, town or even the specific village where they grew up. (41) When I first heard such conversations, there seemed to be nothing particularly remarkable about this. Malaysians studying or working in the UK also frequently identify "home" in multiscale terms, the level of descriptive specificity depending to a large degree upon the depth of geographical knowledge of other people in the conversation. However, an important distinction between the ex-seafarers and Malaysian citizens is precisely how these scales of identity are not necessarily nested or contained within the nation-state (Malaysia). Sailors born in Kampung Serkam or Tanjong Keling in the state of Malacca in the 1920s or 1930s, for example, would often identify as strongly with Singapore (now a separate nation-state, of course) as with Malaysia. (42) In part, this is a matter of their having left Southeast Asia prior to the formation of Malaysia (and Singapore's political separation from it). Yet it also has to do with legacies of the British colonial administrative demarcations alluded to above and associated commercial and labour market linkages. Not only was Malacca governed together with Singapore (and

Penang) but these Straits Settlements were administrative centres from where the tentacles of British commerce wriggled into the Malay hinterland. Not surprisingly, the SS were well connected in terms of transport and communications--mostly maritime until the interwar period when rail and road networks began to be able to compete (43)--and it was very common for young men to travel to the regional commercial hub of Singapore for work. Almost all of the Malay seamen in Liverpool, including the ones who were born in parts of what is today the separate nation-state of Malaysia, got their ocean-going seafaring opportunities in Singapore. Some, like Mohamed Nor Hamid from Tanjong Keling would have identified as both "orang Melaka" and "orang Singapore." (44) Other Malacca men who did not become seafarers and who were still working in Singapore when this became a separate nation-state adopted Singapore citizenship. One of them was Mr. Mokhtar whom I met when I visited Kampung Serkam in February 2008. He complained to me how quiet the village was on that Sunday morning--so many people from Serkam work and have houses in the national capital, Kuala Lumpur (KL), and they don't even bother to come back at weekends. When he was a young man, Mokhtar recalled, Serkam men went to Singapore for work, not KL. Mokhtar himself had worked in the marine police in Singapore. During the time when I met him, Mr. Mokhtar, then aged 82, was still travelling back to Singapore by bus every month to collect his pension. (45)

None of this, of course, is to suggest that national framings and national scale imaginings are somehow unimportant. The point is that it is important to be careful in attending to how, when and why these matter rather than adopting the nation-state as the default unit of analysis in migration studies. While it may sound paradoxical, the point may be extended to work on transnationalism. (46) At one level, the very emergence of transnationalism as a field of study was based on recognition of the ways in which specifically national scale political spaces are criss-crossed by migrant mobilities and associated long-distance social relations. (47) Yet it is an already existing and settled world of nation-states that is understood to form the spatial and political backcloth for border-crossing human mobilities. (48) Not all long-distance linkages transcend national boundaries, and transnationalization can occur as a result of new boundary formation rather than from the crossing of existing boundaries. In the case of my own work, for example, men who were born in the Straits Settlements before the Pacific War/World War II were officially British subjects such that

settlement in Liverpool involved movement within British imperial space rather than across a nation-state boundary. It was only when British colonial territories in Southeast Asia gained independence and new nation-state boundaries were formed that existing long-distance social relations back to what had become Malaysia and Singapore became transnational. Related processes of what might be understood as transnationalization-through-boundary-formation have been noted in relation to the breakup of other imperial territories, not least the former Soviet Union where the connections of ethnic Russian groups to Russia have been transnationalized through the formation of various new independent states. (49) In Southeast Asia, one might consider the position of East Timorese in Indonesia following the formation of Timor Leste as an independent nation-state. In sum, shifting political geographies, including the formation of new nation-states as well as the salience of other territorializations, are a much more active part of migrant identity formation and reworking than has conventionally been acknowledged.

Reconstitutive Connections

While they may not always be best conceptualized in national scale terms nor even involve crossing nation-state boundaries, long-distance social linkages played an important (re)constitutive role in the shifting identities of Malays in Liverpool. One of the key aims of the wider "Malay Routes" project from which this paper emerges was to consider the extent to which the maritime routes plied by these men enabled regular and sustained social linkages back to Southeast Asia in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Theorists of transnationalism have acknowledged the possibility of historical antecedents to the globally interconnected last two decades of the twentieth century, such as various trade diasporas. (50) Until well into the century, regular long-distance travel and communications were limited largely to commercial and/or administrative elites. Sailors are potentially an important exception. As part of maritime networks which map out in ways reminiscent of today's world or global city connections (51) sailors were able to sustain long-distance social linkages prior to the era of globalization that gave rise to work on transnationalism. In particular, this meant linkages between Singapore (as the ocean-going maritime hub of mid-twentieth century Southeast Asia) and Liverpool. There were in fact very few Liverpool-based Malay men who regularly worked on this route. But many of the boats employing

Malay crew that came to or through Liverpool had also passed through Singapore at some point in their voyages. Men working on the docks in Liverpool looked out for Malay crew who were thus quickly enrolled in local ethnic networks and became sources of news and updates about "home" (although some of these men, in turn, ended up staying in Liverpool). Just as the Malay language that became Indonesian facilitated what James Siegel termed, an "overhearing" of worlds beyond national boundaries through translation, so maritime communication in Singapore Malay enabled Liverpool-based men to "overhear" transformations in Alam Melayu. (52) It is, of course, very difficult to ascertain the extent to which these mobile intermediaries plugged Liverpool-based Malays into social and political transformations in Southeast Asia--let alone the effects of this for the shifting identities of Liverpool Malays--but clearly they constituted regular connections in a maritime era prior to the popular use of jet travel or long-distance telephony. Until as late as the 1960s, these connections were founded largely on the commercial networks of British-owned merchant ships. The subsequent decade saw the arrival of the Malaysian state-owned "Bunga" ships (53) such that the fruits of post-colonial economic nationalism became visible in Liverpool.

Although Liverpool's decline as a seaport severed longstanding maritime linkages, this did not spell the end of mobilities connecting Malay Liverpool with Alam Melayu. During the 1970s and 1980s, Malays coming to or through the city were increasingly likely to be students rather than sailors. Liverpool was one of the cities that attracted a growing number of Malay students sent to study overseas on Malaysian government scholarships as part of wider ethnic-based affirmative action policies. It is important to note that while having been born in the same parts of the world as the pakcik-pakcik ("elders") that they encountered in Liverpool, students' identities were based upon very different understandings of the political partitioning of this territory. Having been born and schooled in the independent and separate nationstates of Malaysia and Singapore (relations between which have long been quite geopolitically fractious), these students would ask "Pakcik orang Malaysia atau orang Singapore'?" ("Are you Malaysian or Singaporean Pakcik'?"). As I have noted in the previous section, for men such as Mohamed Nor Hamid, who identified with both Malacca and Singapore, this was an either/or choice which ran against personal imaginings of the geography of home. To the extent that nationally partitioned imaginings of the world which students from Malaysia (and Singapore for that matter) carried with them to Liverpool

translated into the shifting (self-)understandings of pakcik-pakcik, it may be possible to speak of long-distance nationalization.

The national scale reimagining of Malay world space--and, with it, self-identity--has not only occurred at a distance. Many of the seamen who settled in Liverpool in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, and who thus did not get the chance to set foot in independent Malaysia or Singapore as seafarers, returned to these nation-states in later life. This, in part, had to do with the increasing affordability of commercial air travel and with retired men having the time to travel. Malaysian students who hung out at the club were able to advise and assist with travel itineraries. The fact that Malaysia and Singapore have become popular and commercially visible tourist destinations also spurred some descendents of seafarers in particular to combine a vacation with efforts to trace their "roots." A good deal of the life story material collected as part of the Malay Routes project concerns recollections of ex-seamen (and, in some cases, their families) "returning" to Southeast Asia after many years away (in one case, almost half a century). (54) For the first generation ex-seamen, the extent of material landscape transformation alone effected reconsideration of their understandings of the world and their place in it. Especially since the 1990s when countries in Southeast Asia were glossed as part of a wider regional economic "miracle," (55) while Liverpool was blighted with post-maritime and post-industrial decay, (56) colonial era regional imaginings of "backward" and "developed" regions have been turned on their heads with trips to high-rise Kuala Lumpur or Singapore. (57) Associated re-imaginings (and perhaps re-identifications) were not limited to men who made return journeys but were also experienced by other pakcik-pakcik through the effects of stories, souvenirs, photographs, postcards and other memorabilia brought back to Liverpool.

Especially in Malaysia, "Malay diaspora" groups around the world have gained visibility in political as well as popular cultural domains, though there are important (geo)political limits to the extent to which Liverpool Malays may be incorporated into a Malaysian trans-nation. On the one hand, in relation to longstanding Malay elite anxieties about the community's economic underachievement, histories of Malay settlement outside Alam Melayu constituted important resources for the imaginative construction of a "global" Malay subject (Melayu Global), one suited to a border-crossing world on the move. (58) In addition to

stories of "homecomings" being picked up in the media in Malaysia, therefore, representatives were sent from the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) to visit the "community" in Liverpool. (59) On the other hand, as has been noted, many of the remaining pakcik-pakcik identify more strongly with Singapore than Malaysia. In addition, their community organization is called the "Malaysia and Singapore Community Association," while they are all British citizens. (60)

Both limits to and possibilities for new modes of long-distance identification extend beyond issues of formal citizenship. Men who no longer practice Islam, or whose wives and children are not Muslims, are not considered to be properly Malay in contemporary Malaysia. (61) Yet many Liverpool-based ex-seamen and even their (non-Muslim) spouses and descendents have been welcomed "back" into Malay families and local communities in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. (62) There is again a point to be made here about the non-national scale nature of many such constitutive (re)connections, which are trans-local as much as transnational. (63) Finally--and also in contradistinction to much of the transnationalism literature--it is worth specifying that the translocal/transnational linkages which have emerged from my work in Liverpool are often the result of post-maritime reconnections, rather than evidence of enduring connections with national homelands. While Malay identities have been shaped through connections with Alam Melayu, these have varied considerably across the period in which the pakcik-pakcik have been based in the city.

Sites of Identity

Since the mid-1960s, Malay Liverpool has revolved around a specific building or site. It was during that time that number 7 Jermyn Street in the Granby-Toxteth area of the city was purchased by a group of seafarers from Southeast Asia. Initially the place was used as a clubhouse for visiting and Liverpool-based (ex-)seamen to "hang out" and for family events during special occasions. (64) However, in the post-maritime phase of the lives of Malay seamen (and of Liverpool more broadly), "Number 7" became frequented by a more diverse community, including students from Singapore and Malaysia as well as locally born relatives of ex-seamen. It was to this site that representatives of Malay political organizations came in search of Liverpool's Malay diaspora and to which journalists--and this academic

researcher--came to collect stories and memories. (65) When I started fieldwork in 2004, Number 7 Jermyn Street was the key public (or at least quasi-public) site where Malay folks hung out. Following my earlier discussion of the multiplicity as well as fluidity of identities, of course, it is important to emphasize that the ex-seamen, like anyone else, identified in ways that greatly exceed the ethnic label, "Malay." (66) Aside from other ethnic (Ambonese, Boyanese, Javanese, etc.), national (Malayan, Singaporean, British, etc.) and regional (Malacca, Riau, Liverpoolian, etc.) markers, these included designations such as "dad," "granddad," "husband," "mate"/kawan, "Muslim," among countless others. The key issue is that Number 7 Jermyn Street was the site in and through which diverse people came together as Malays. This raises wider questions about the role of specific sites or places in shifting migrant identities.

It is through Number 7 and other sites before it that Liverpool Malays plugged into social networks extending to Alam Melayu during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Even before World War II/the Pacific War, Malays based or living in the south docks area of the city took on lodgers. By word of mouth, new arrivals soon found their way to the houses of men such as Ben Youp from Malacca. At one level, his house at 144 Upper Huskisson Street was a place to stay and where men just off the boat were able to meet other Malays. Yet as a site of ongoing arrivals and departures, this house and others like it also saw the circulation of Malay world stories, gifts and gossip. (67) Another Malacca-man, Johan Awang, who arrived in Liverpool from New York after the war took lodgers at his house in Greenland Street before opening a clubhouse on St James Place. This was in many ways the precursor to Number 7 and, in the context of the postwar boom in British merchant shipping, St James Place is remembered as having been bustling with visiting seamen. (68) Just as during my fieldwork between 2004 and 2008, pakcik-pakcik learned about Malaysia and Singapore from students in the city who visit the club on Jermyn Street, Malays living in Liverpool in the two decades after the war would have heard about the changing political landscape of Southeast Asia in an era of decolonization from the seamen who passed through Upper Huskisson St, Greenland St and especially St James Place. (69)

The geographically extensive connections of Number 7 Jermyn Street and other historically significant Malay sites in Liverpool may be fed into the development of work which takes

seriously the role of place in (trans) migration studies. Michael Peter Smith's widely read research on transnational urbanism located transnational social relations in translocally connected places. (70) Building in part upon insights from Smith's work, Reuben Gielis has recently argued that "we need a 'placial turn' in transmigration studies." (71) According to Gielis, network studies of migration often fail to see the complex and multiple strands of social relations that shape migrant identities. It is through place-based studies, he argues, that such complexity is brought into view, overcoming the problem of "methodological networkism." (72) It seems to me there is a danger that Gielis's argument could be (mis-)read as counterposing place and network. But part of the point is that "place" here is understood as being constituted through and forming part of translocal networks. (73) As Gielis puts it, "the translocal character of migrant places points to the ability of transmigrants to reach out to other places without corporeally changing location." (74) Or, to relate this to my own empirical investigations, elderly ex-seafarers in Liverpool were able to plug into long-distance social networks extending to varied Malay world localities through their presence in places such as Number 7 Jermyn Street.

In keeping with my earlier argument about the need to situate issues of migration and identity in wider life histories (and geographies) of people who at some stage in their lives experience migration, it is worth extending relational understandings of place to pre-migration sites of origin. Today the possibility of people in villages in Malaysia or Indonesia sustaining regular communication via text and/or voice with folks in Liverpool is so taken for granted as to be scarcely worth mentioning. Part of the intended contribution of my research is to show how such long-distance social relations have important antecedents at least half a century before the ubiquity of mobile telephony. This is particularly important given the previously noted tendency to narrate the kampung ("village") as the historical locus of a once pure and settled Malay-ness, largely untouched by the outside world. My research shows how a diversity of Malay men--some from what might be considered rural parts of Alam Melayu--found work on British merchant ships connecting their kampungs, via Singapore, to port towns across the world. And so that wider world filtered back in the form of letters, stories, remittances, presents and postcards. (75) While such evidence is clearly not equivalent to the kind of real time communication which is possible today, it does show how bits and pieces of "out there" have long formed part of the imaginings, world views and

identities of kampung folk. Even the mid-twentieth century Malay kampung, therefore, may be conceptualized in non-bounded, networked terms. What more for places in Singapore or Liverpool, key maritime centres in an era when much long-distance transportation and communication was conducted through shipping? My point here is that it is important to identify and specify the sites and places concerned rather than speaking in less grounded terms of connections between port cities and/or across national boundaries. It is through specific social sites or places that the identities of Malay men in Liverpool have been (re)constituted in relation to a Malay world region which has itself undergone dramatic transformation over the last half century.

Conclusion

Transnationalism has proven to be an enormously productive and influential way of seeing migrant identities. (76) These are no longer understood as being bounded by and shaped within contexts of origin or destination. Rather, transnationalism gives attention to border-crossing geographies of connection which allow identities to be reshaped in relation to distant homelands. The rise to prominence of unbounded geographies of knowing, as well as transnational practices themselves, has profoundly unsettling implications for conventional regional or areal framings. Given possibilities today for sustained and regular long distance social linkages, for example, Malay migrants in Liverpool are not so much "outside" the Malay world or Southeast Asia as part of these regions' constitutive network geographies. (77) Part of the rationale for my historical work in Liverpool was to examine the extent to which such "transnational" social relations extend back prior to advances in technologies of transportation and communications in the late twentieth century. In seeking to do so, I traced the life geographies of ex-seafarers back to the immediate post-war period when Liverpool was a major seaport with maritime connections to many parts of the world, including Southeast Asia. While this historical-geographical investigation revealed some evidence of maritime transnationalism, it also revealed geographies of identity that are not fully captured by work on transnationalism.

The four geographies of identity which I have detailed in the paper each suggest ways in which work on migrant identities may be productively extended beyond the conventional scope of transnationalism research. The first concerns the importance of situating border-

crossing mobilities and linkages in the context of broader life routes. As Conradson and Latham have put it, migrants' current patterns of life "must be understood in relation to a wider personal biography." (78) In the case of "Malays" in Liverpool, this meant, in particular, consideration of the variability of pre-migration identities; but, more generally, there is a need to consider transnational identity shifts in terms of the ongoing fluidity and multiplicity of all subjectivities. The second way in which Malay ex-seafarers' identity shifts exceed transnationalism concerns the constitutive role of political geographies.

Transnational research has contributed much in terms of unbounding nation-states as "containers" of political identity, but the presumption has tended to be that transnational processes cross-cut previously fixed and settled state boundaries. Long-distance connections between Liverpool and territories in Southeast Asia show how boundary drawing and nation-state formation can have important implications for migrants, not only in terms of their formal legal or citizenship status but also in terms of their lived identification with home/homeland.

Third, while efforts to resist the overextension of transnationalism have led to renewed emphasis on sustained and enduring connections with homelands, these may vary dramatically over the course of migrants' lives. Malays in Liverpool, for example, may have experienced forms of transnationalism through maritime connections in the 1960s, been "disconnected" as a result of the decline of the port in the 1970s, and reconnected in subsequent decades through social interaction with students and/or the increased affordability of long-distance travel and communications. Importantly, identity shifts associated with transnational or translocal (re)connections do not mean that the men concerned are any less assimilated into life in the northwest of England. A fourth and final point concerns the importance of locating and specifying sites through which collective migrant identities are performed and long-distance social relations are sustained.

Transnationalism has been important in unbounding national scale framings but carries a risk of deterritorializing identity altogether. (79) This has resulted in a failure to attend to the role of sites or places such as Number 7 Jermyn Street in (re)shaping identities translocally as well as locally. The identities of Malay ex-seafarers in Liverpool--and many other much more prominent and numerically significant migrant groups with Pacific

connections--have been shaped along diverse life routes which exceed the scenarios that have been highlighted by theorists of transnationalism.

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(1) See, for example, Stephen Castles and Alistair Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

(2) Willem van Schendel, "Geographies of knowing, geographies of ignorance: jumping scale in Southeast Asia," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 20, no. 6 (2002) pp. 647-668.

(3) Alejandro Portes, Luis E. Guarnizo and Patricia Landolt, "Introduction," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (special issue, *Transnational Communities*), vol. 22, no. (1999) p. 219.

(4) Caroline Nagel and Lynn Staeheli, "Citizenship, identity and transnational migration: Arab immigrants to the US," *Space and Polity*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2004) p. 4.

(5) While I certainly saw all of the men concerned as "Malays" at the outset of my study, the use of scare marks here denotes the importance of unsettling any such a priori categorization (for reasons that will be elaborated in subsequent sections of the paper).

(6) Some estimates have suggested that there were as many as 500 Malays in Liverpool after World War II but even if this is correct, it would have included men with highly varied degrees of attachment to the city. It is unlikely that the number based or settled in Liverpool

was ever more than 100. When I first visited Liverpool in December 2003 there were only around twenty Malay ex-seafarers living in or around the city.

(7) Francis E. Hyde, "The expansion of Liverpool's carrying trade with the Far East and Australia 1860-1914," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 6 (1956) p. 154.

(8) R. Lawton, "Liverpool and the tropics," in R. W. Steel and R. Mansell Prothero, eds., *Geographers and the Tropics: Liverpool Essays* (London: Longmans, 1964) pp. 349-375.

(9) Paul H. Kratoska, Remco Raben and Henk Schulte Nordholt, "Locating Southeast Asia," in P. H. Kratoska, R. Raben, and H. Schulte Nordholt, eds., *Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005) pp. 1-19.

(10) While "globalization" and "transnationalism" clearly should not be used interchangeably, the emergence of the latter as a field of study was at least in part a result of the intersection of work on migration and globalization. See Peter Kivisto, "Theorizing transnational immigration: a critical review of current efforts," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 24, no. 4 (2001) pp. 549-577.

(11) On Liverpool's decline as a seaport, see Tony Lane, *Liverpool: City of the Sea* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997).

(12) James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) pp. 89-90. In this way, for Clifford, fieldwork becomes "less a matter of localized dwelling and more a series of travel encounters" (p. 2).

(13) By 2008, when I spent six months in Liverpool, the club was closed and boarded up.

(14) Steven Vertovec, "Transnationalism and identity," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 27, no. 4 (2001) p. 573.

(15) Shamsul A.B., "Debating about identity in Malaysia: A discourse analysis," *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 34, no. 3 (1996) p. 477.

(16) Shamsul, "Debating about identity," p. 478.

(17) A similar point is made by James Clifford who asks, "Is the 'taking apart' of identities all on the side of anthropological interpretation?" (Routes, p. 182).

(18) The constitutive role of space in the (re)construction of identities and subjectivities has long been recognized in human geography. See, for example, Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Oxford: Polity, 1994).

(19) This is not to suggest that memories are ever unproblematic as objective reconstructions of the past. At the same time, however, the elderly and often quite frail men who form the focus of my research in Liverpool do present additional methodological--and ethical--challenges to wider issues about the utility and reliability of memory. I have dealt with some of these issues in an earlier journal article, "Post-maritime transnationalization: Malay seafarers in Liverpool," *Global Networks*, vol. 7, no. 4 (2007) pp. 412-29.

(20) On ethnic essentialism in migrant studies, see: Michael E. Samers, "Diaspora unbound: Muslim identity and the erratic regulation of Islam in France," *International Journal of Population Geography*, vol. 9 (2003) pp. 351-364.

(21) Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004.

(22) "Melayu, Malay, Maleis: Journeys through the identity of a collection," in Barnard, *Contesting Malayness*, pp. ix-xii. See also: Anthony Reid, "Understanding Melayu (Malay) as a source of diverse modern identities," in Barnard, *Contesting Malayness*.

(23) Reid, "Understanding Melayu"

(24) Joel S. Kahn, *Other Malays: Nationalism and cosmopolitanism in the modern Malay world* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006).

(25) Their ability to do so, of course, differentiated across various lines not least gender.

(26) See, for example, Alice M. Nah, "Negotiating indigenous identity in postcolonial Malaysia: beyond being 'not quite/not Malay,'" *Social Identities*, vol. 9, no. 4 (2003) pp. 511-534. The modern politics of indigeneity necessitated attempts at definitional clarity as to what and who counted as Malay, the boundaries of which were of course defined in opposition to ethno-racial others.

(27) See Kahn, *Other Malays*; Eric C. Thompson, *Unsettling Absences: Urbanism in Rural Malaysia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007). For a much earlier article which makes similar conceptual points about rural spaces in Southeast Asia, see Jonathan Rigg, "Redefining the village and rural life: Lessons from Southeast Asia," *Geographical Journal*, vol. 160, no. 2 (2004) pp. 123-134.

(28) It is important to note the gendered nature of the mobilities and associated identity shifts of the seamen who form the focus of the larger study from which this paper emerges.

(29) C. A. Vlieland, "The population of the Malay peninsula: A study in human migration," *Geographical Review* vol. 24, no. 1 (1934) p. 65.

(30) Interview at 7 Jermyn Street, Liverpool, 1 August 2006.

(31) Malcolm Falkus, *The Blue Funnel Legend* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1990) p. 31.

(32) Research on the migration of people from the "Boyanese" people, from the island of Bawean, has attracted particular attention. See, for example, Jacob Vredembregt, "Bawean Migrations," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, vol. 120, no. 1 (1964) pp. 109-139.

(33) Iskandar Mydin, "City lights: Pre-war Singapore's allure for rural migrants," *The Heritage* (annual journal of the National Museum, Singapore), vol. 10 (1989) pp. 5-12.

(34) It should also be noted that cartographic representations themselves can give rise to collective territorial imaginings. See, for example, Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

(35) Historically, Malay rule and political identification worked through forms of allegiance that were not based upon clearly demarcated territorial boundaries (Anthony C. Milner, *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*, Tuscon AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1982).

(36) National Archives, CO 273/559/22. For a brilliant examination of this issue more broadly, see Laura Tabili, *"We Ask For British Justice": Workers and Racial Difference in Late Imperial Britain* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

(37) Nagel and Staeheli have made a similar point recently in their work on the linkages and associated identities of Arab immigrants in the US. Noting often highly localized long-distance connections, they "caution against assuming that migrants share a uniform attachment to homeland" ("*Citizenship, identity and transnational migration*," p. 20). An example here may be cited from another, less historical, strand of my research related to migration. To consider migrants from Aceh in Malaysia as simply "Indonesians" is to ignore the often very different ways in which people from that region of Indonesia, with its history of separatist struggle, relate to Indonesian national identity as compared to fellow citizens from, say, Java. See Alice M. Nah and Tim Bunnell, "Ripples of hope: Acehese refugees in post-tsunami Malaysia," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* vol. 26, no. 2 (2005), pp. 249-256.

(38) Donald Emmerson, "Southeast Asia: what's in a name?" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1 (1984) pp. 1-21; Benedict Anderson, *The Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (London: Verso, 1998); Kratoska, Raben and Schulte Nordholt, "Locating Southeast Asia."

(39) Benedict Anderson has famously examined the way in which modern technologies, such as the novel and newspapers, made possible a collective conception of "meanwhile" (*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1991).

(40) John Agnew, "The territorial trap: the geographical assumptions of international relations theory" *Review of International Political Economy*, vol. 1 (1994) pp. 53-80; Neil

Brenner, "Beyond state-centrism? Space, territoriality, and geographical scale in globalization studies," *Theory and Society*, vol. 28 (1999) pp. 39-78. In the context of migration studies, see Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick-Schiller, "Methodological nationalism, the social sciences, and the study of migration: an essay in historical epistemology," *International Migration Review*, vol. 37, no. 3 (2003) pp. 576-610.

(41) Fieldwork notes at 7 Jermyn Street, Liverpool, 29 September 2004.

(42) Mohamed Nor Hamid, for example, who was born in Tanjong Keling, requested in an interview in Liverpool that I bring a Singapore flag during my next research trip so as to counterbalance the dominance of Malaysian national imagery at the clubhouse (interview by author, Liverpool, 10 September 2004).

(43) K. G. Tregonning, *Home Port Singapore: A History of Straits Steamship Company Limited, 1960-1965* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1967).

(44) Mohamed Nor Hamid, interview by author, Liverpool, 10 September 2004.

(45) Mr. Mokhtar, interview by author, Kampung Serkam, Malacca, 17 February 2008.

(46) Bunnell, "Post-maritime transnationalization."

(47) Linda G. Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Basel: Gordon and Breach Science, 1994).

(48) Or, as Francis Collins has put it recently, this "adds up to nothing less than methodological nationalism across borders" ("Transnationalism unbound: Detailing new subjects, registers and spatialities of cross-border lives," *Geography Compass*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2009, p. 437).

(49) Graham Smith, "Transnational politics and the politics of the Russian diaspora," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3 (1999) pp. 500-523.

(50) Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt, "Introduction."

(51) Jon Beaverstock, Richard Smith and Peter Taylor, "World city network: a new metageography?" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 90, no. 1 (2000) pp. 123-134.

(52) *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997). As one of the referees for this paper insightfully pointed out, Siegel's notion of "overhearing" may be said to deterritorialize nationalism while avoiding methodological nationalism. It is worth clarifying, however, that in contrast to Siegel (and Anderson, *Imagined Communities*), overhearing among Liverpool Malays appears to have been based much more upon oral communication than through the circulation of print media, such as newspapers.

(53) Bunga is the Malay word for flower. All of the ships of the Malaysian International Shipping Corporation (MISC) were named after flowers indigenous to Malaysia.

(54) This will form part of the book which I am writing from the Malay Routes project: *World City Routes: Mapping Malay Liverpool*.

(55) World Bank, *The East Asian Economic Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

(56) Lane, Liverpool.

(57) Fadzil Mohamed, who visited Kuala Lumpur in 2003, not having been there since 1946, for example, was wowed by the tall buildings on the city's skyline. His main concern before returning was were modern toilets (tandas) not only in Kuala Lumpur but even in his home village, Tanjong Keling, Malacca. Malaysia had become "just like Europe" and, as far as household facilities were concerned, even surpassed Liverpool. Mr. Fadzil told me with some pride that his family's house in Tanjong Keling had five bedrooms, all with ensuite bathrooms (interview by author, Liverpool, 11 October 2004). Mr. Fadzil's son, Paul, noted that his father's view of Malaysia as "modern" after his trip had made him noticeably prouder to be associated with Malaysia (interview by author, Liverpool, 18 December 2005).

(58) See also Bunnell, "Post-maritime transnationalization."

(59) Mohamed Nor Hamid, interview by author, Liverpool, 29 September 2004.

(60) Tim Bunnell, "Multiculturalism's regeneration: celebrating Merdeka (Malaysian independence) in a European Capital of Culture," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 33 (2008) pp. 251-267. This paper also considers the way in which long-distance identity-constituting connections exist alongside and in relation to different scales of identification within Britain. Feelings of not belonging or fully belonging in a given locality or to Liverpool or Britain, including those generated by instances of racism, may reasonably be expected to heighten a desire to reinvigorate or forge long-distance social connections.

(61) For coverage of the rise of Islam in postcolonial Malaysia, see Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993). On the way in which Islam has become part of practices and performances of Malay-ness, see Patricia Sloane Islam, *Modernity and Entrepreneurship among the Malays* (Houndmills UK: MacMillan, 1999).

(62) This includes Mr. Jaafar Mohamed who returned to Singapore in 2000 after having been out of contact with his family for almost four decades. He did not recognize his son and daughter at the airport (Jaafar Mohamed, interview by author, Liverpool, 10 October 2004).

(63) Michael Peter Smith, *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001). Smith's work and the term "translocal" are considered in more detail in the next section.

(64) Jaafar Mohamed's daughter, Rosita, recalls annual Christmas parties and that it was during those times that she felt like she belonged to a "community" (interview by author, Liverpool, 25 April 2008).

(65) See also Bunnell, "Post-maritime transnationalization."

(66) In ethnic terms, in addition to Hashim Malik who identified as both Ambonese and Malay (see note 30), Jaafar Mohamed identified as both Boyanese and "Singapore Malay" (Jaafar Mohamed, interview by author, Liverpool, 9 May 2008).

(67) Based on the recollections of the daughter of Ben Youp, Joan Higgins, who grew up at 144 Huskisson Street (interview by author, Liverpool, 12 September 2004).

(68) Farida Chapman visited Number 7 with her siblings when her father, Fadzil Mohamed, was home from sea (interview by author, Liverpool, 2 August 2008).

(69) The issue of how these interactions--and associated stories, gifts and gossip--changed over time is complex and defies brief summary here. However, one important point to note is the rising prominence of Islamic imagery and practices including in the decor of Number 7 Jermyn Street from 2004. While seafarers in the postwar period saw being modern primarily in terms of the acquisition or possession of things, such as certain brands of American t-shirts, Islam is today central to what it means to be modern and Malay (Sloane, Islam, Modernity and Entrepreneurship).

(70) Smith, Transnational Urbanism.

(71) "A global sense of migrant places: towards a place perspective in the study of migrant transnationalism," *Global Networks*, vol. 9, no. 2 (2009) p. 273. Italics in the original.

(72) Gielis, "A global sense of migrant places," p. 283.

(73) Here he draws upon the work of Doreen Massey on relational senses of place and Arjun Appadurai's conception of place as "translocality" (Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994); Arjun Appadurai, "The right to participate in the work of the imagination," Joke Brouwer, Philip Brookman and Arjen Mulder, eds., *TransUrbanism* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2002, pp. 32-47).

(74) "A global sense of migrant places," p. 280.

(75) Many of the ex-seamen whom I interviewed said that they had remitted money to their families in Southeast Asia over the years. Hashim Malik sent money monthly to his mother in Singapore and paid for her to perform the Haj (interview with author, Liverpool, 1 August 2006). Hashim had no contact with his brother in Singapore but recalls receiving a big pack

of dodol (a toffee-like snack) by airmail from his "half brother" (interview with author, Liverpool, 10 October 2004).

(76) For examples published recently in this journal, see the special issue introduced by Apichai W. Shipper, "Introduction: Politics of citizenship and transnational gendered migration in East and Southeast Asia," *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 83, no. 1 (2010) pp. 11-29.

(77) Clearly, this has implications for what and where counts as "Pacific affairs".

(78) "Friendship, networks and transnationality in a World City: Antipodean transmigrants in London," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2005) pp. 287-305.

(79) This point has long been recognized by geographers. See, for example, Katherine Mitchell, "Transnational discourse: bringing the geography back in," *Antipode*, vol. 29, no. 2 (1997) pp. 101-114.