Sacred vernacular, a look into the storefront mosques of Seattle

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Abstract

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Storefront mosques are a unique, emerging type of vernacular architecture that has been adapted into sacred space. A typical commercial storefront is a first-floor space facing on the street, its entrance typically flanked by glass windows for merchandise display. Muslim immigrants, however, are transforming many old commercial buildings into storefront mosques across the city and planners and scholars know almost nothing about them. Buildings such as warehouses, pool halls, defunct industrial structures, and former churches are adapted and staged into storefront mosques. Tucked into commercial corridors, storefront mosques are places of real meaning, mundane spaces transformed into places of peace, refuge and prayer.

This study identifies the types of commercial structures that are being transformed into storefront mosques. Multiple methods are used to describe these Muslim spaces: field observation, a photo essay, annotated diagrams and archival data. These descriptions illustrate how these structures are being adapted. More generally, through interviews and story telling, the societal tensions that Muslim immigrants and refugees experience living in diaspora are revealed. These tensions are reflected and negotiated through the process of storefront mosque building. Three themes arise that exhibit dual tensions. These themes are: sacred vs. profane, temporary vs. permanent and insider vs. outsider. The storefront mosque becomes a place where larger social issues are revealed and worked through.

Three case studies in Seattle are presented: the Oromo Cultural Center, the Al-Noor Islamic Center and the Mahmood mosque. By looking at the particular, this study reveals observations that are generally applicable to the phenomenon of storefront mosques. The case study approach provides an opportunity for a deep investigation and development of an explanation for dynamic interaction. It also allows us to understand a particular phenomenon in relation to its context. This dynamic interaction is the process of immigrants and refugees combining secular and sacred uses to create enclaves in the neighborhoods that they reside in to help ease and mitigate the experience of learning to become Americans.

The study concludes with recommendations for urban planners that can help better facilitate the incorporation of storefront mosques into the fabric of the city. Recommendations include combining secular and sacred uses by understanding lived religion, re-framing ideas of highest and best use, and the role of improvisation in the planning process.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1. Preface and Inspiration

I have always been drawn to neighborhood change. As a 20+ year resident of Seattle's Rainier Beach neighborhood, I have witnessed many waves of immigrant and refugee transition over the years. My curiosity about neighborhood change led me to a career in affordable housing and community development in Seattle's immigrant and refugee neighborhoods, particularly the Rainier Valley and White Center. My love of Islamic architecture and trips abroad to Muslim countries serve as the foundation for this study and my most recent work with graduate students in urban planning at Mekelle University in northern Ethiopia provided me with valuable insight and the confidence to complete my work. Sharing my research with my Ethiopian colleagues elicited both wonder and amusement in the types of buildings that were selected by Muslims living in diaspora for sacred use, buildings that are universally mundane across the globe, but whose uses are transformed through an organic approach to grassroots community building in the Western world.

Back in Seattle, I wondered where Muslims were praying, as there were no domes or minarets visible in my neighborhood, though there is a large community of Muslim immigrants and refugees residing there. With the absence of the architectural cues characteristic of the Islamic world, my curiosity and interest grew. I then, discovered that Muslims were praying in storefront mosques, a unique type of vernacular architecture that has been adapted into sacred space. This discovery led to the identification of many of these buildings, tucked into commercial corridors, many buildings, which I've passed by multiple times without ever knowing. Muslim immigrants are transforming many old commercial buildings into storefront mosques across the city and planners and scholars know almost nothing about them.

This study is an investigation of how Muslims transform, adapt and stage mundane buildings into places of prayer. These sacred spaces no longer require the grand domes and minarets and the intricate calligraphy and tilework, found in Muslim dominated countries today. Muslims in Seattle have the ability to transform vernacular buildings into places of real meaning, inclusive spaces for peace, refuge and prayer. These spaces are particularly needed in the Muslim-American immigrant experience. Creating the environment that allows peace an opportunity to connect with Allah (God), refuge, a safe space where Muslims can feel connected with each other amidst the chaos of learning to assimilate in an unknown country, and prayer, the ability to practice in a specific manner all help to ease the transition to a non-Muslim dominated country.

The approach that guides my study is based on Sen (2012) "…A researcher has to go beyond the traditional analysis of building type and form that is common in material culture and architecture scholarship. Instead we will need to look at the built site as a complex theater stage where meaning and use of space depends on the event, activities, and actors." Following this recommendation, I have had to abandon preconceived notions of "catalogued" spaces. My definition of a catalogued space is a space in which by merely looking at it, most people are able to discern the particular use for that space or building. Specific features add symbolism to these types of structures and people widely recognize them, subsequently connecting them to a particular use. An example of a catalogued space in a religious context is a building with a façade of stained glass windows depicting scenes from the bible. Therefore, the storefront mosque can be interpreted as a transgression against a catalogued space, particularly for non-Muslims, outsiders and the larger Western environment.

Plenty has been written about purpose-built mosques in the United States, what kinds of styles and shape mosques take. Purpose-built mosques are those that are designed and constructed from the ground up and does not typically involve re-use of existing buildings. Examples of modern day mosques in the American

built environment, including mosques that contain community building and gathering spaces, such as Islamic schools for children and youth and counseling services for newly arrived immigrants have been catalogued. Purpose-built mosques are ones in which financing has been secured to design, plan and build a mosque from the ground up. A majority of these mosques contain architectural features that are found in the Islamic world, such as domes, minarets, arched doors and windows, and there are those purpose-built mosques that fall under the “modern” category, which don’t exhibit any of the elements found in the Islamic world. Haider comes to mind, a Pakistani architect of modern, non-traditional style mosques in the U.S. (Metcalf, 1996).

Figure 1: Islamic Society of North America, Headquarters, designed by architect Gulzar Haider in 1981 in Plainfield, Indiana
(U.S. Embassy Germany, 2006).

Storefront mosques fall under a unique category of an emerging phenomenon in Muslim building using vernacular architecture, including former Buddhist temples or Christian churches. Vernacular architecture is a category of architecture based on localized needs and construction materials, and reflecting local traditions (Rudofsky, 1964). Vernacular architecture tends to evolve over time to reflect the environmental, cultural, technological, and historical context in which it exists.

Studying the vernacular landscape can be challenging. It is impossible to identify an unmarked storefront mosque without the help of an insider. Many times in my research, I was surprised to learn that a particular profane commercial or retail space was a mosque because there were no exterior indications of "mosqueness," such as the domes and minarets that I saw abroad.

Buildings such as warehouses, pool halls, large office complexes in suburban cities, casinos, and former church buildings are selected, adapted and staged into storefront mosques. These types of secular buildings are desired because of the open floor plan and Muslim requirement for congregational prayer space. In fact, in this study, I investigated three cases that demonstrate this. The Oromo Cultural Center was a neighborhood bar called the "Terrace," while the Mahmood mosque was a Christian church and the Al-Noor Islamic Center a warehouse space for a motorcycle shop.

Researchers, such as Bagby (2001) found that there were 1,209 mosques in the U.S., 10% of which were rented spaces and possibly storefront mosques (Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2001). Based on Bagby's study, storefront mosques are not the norm, however, my research of Seattle has found that storefront mosques are abundant and are important places for Muslim immigrants and refugees. Of the total 21 mosques in the Greater Seattle area, only 3 were purpose-built, while the remaining 18 are storefront mosques. These facts compel the urban planner to study this subject more in depth to understand the contributions that storefront mosques are making to the built environment and to Muslim communities.

2. Research questions and methodology

As an urban planner, I'm interested in how buildings are used for activities they were not originally designed for, and I'm particularly interested in how secular spaces, like storefronts, are transformed and staged into religious and communal spaces. This is a qualitative study that uses multiple methods to get an insider's

look at this phenomenon. One highlight of this study is the use of case studies. I selected three storefront mosques in Seattle for a deeper investigation. This study asks three questions:

- **How are common, non-Islamic spaces being adapted into storefront mosques?**
- **What do storefront mosques tell us about tensions in the Muslim-American immigrant experience? Both as individuals and as a community?**
- **What can we learn from this study to help us be better urban planners?**

The first question addresses the physical structure. Through observations, a photo essay, annotated diagrams and archival data, I describe the typical exterior and interior elements of storefront mosques and highlight those Seattle elements that add a unique contribution to the existing literature on storefront mosques.

Interview instruments are used to answer the second question. Using a story-telling approach, I uncover some of the social and personal tensions that Muslim immigrants and refugees experience, with the storefront mosque acting as the stage for these imbalances. This section of the study probes into three themes: sacred vs. profane, temporary vs. permanent and insider vs. outsider. The themes illustrate a variety of tensions that Muslims undergo living in diaspora.

Lastly, I provide recommendations on how planners can use this information on storefront mosques to work with Muslim community members to plan better environments that are more culturally sensitive, inclusive to the Western world and responsive to Muslims' needs. Muslim spaces are very particular, yet inclusive. Religion, culture, nationality, and ethnicity all play into day-to-day Muslim spaces, and if urban planners have a greater understanding of these

interactions, the greater the opportunity to plan and develop spaces that harmoniously integrate both Muslim and Western worlds.

Demographics of informants

I interviewed a total of 14 adults, eight males and six females, and two of which are imams at two storefront mosques highlighted in this study. Seven of my informants were from East African countries, Ethiopia and Somalia (five from Somalia, two Oromos from Ethiopia). Of the remaining seven, two were from Iraq, two from Vietnam, and one each from Turkey, Algeria and Pakistan. I did not interview any American Muslim converts. Age ranges varied with two informants in the 18 – 25 age range, three in the 35 – 44 age range, and nine in the 45 – 54 age range. I interviewed two imams, both from Somalia, and both educated in Qu'ranic studies in Saudi Arabia.

Fifty percent of the interviewees have large families of 5+ persons and all family members reside in the U.S., with the exception of the Vietnamese couple that I interviewed, whose children remain in Vietnam. Half of the informants immigrated to the U.S. in the last three years. The bulk of the other half immigrated to the U.S. in the late 1990s. Eight of the informants moved to the U.S. through a refugee program. Eight percent of the informants live in large subsidized housing communities, typically within the same neighborhood as the storefront mosque. Distances from the mosque to housing are close at under half a mile. The economic status of the informants varies. Two hold executive director roles for local non-profit organizations, two are small business owners, and one holds an administrative office position. I have kept the names of interview participants confidential.

3. Outline of study

Chapter 2 provides a brief description of the types of Muslim buildings and a summary and analysis of the collective knowledge about storefront mosques is provided. It describes how the literature either affirms or departs from storefront

mosques in Seattle. Chapter 3 is a black and white photo essay that provides a visual tour of twelve Seattle storefront mosques. In this chapter, we uncover what these buildings look like. Chapter 4 puts Chapter 3 in writing. It is a textual tour. General characteristics of storefront mosques, physical descriptions, layouts, minimum requirements and unique elements are described. Next, a closer look at how these descriptions and elements present themselves are described in three, real-life case studies in Seattle. Commonalities and variations will be illustrated in the case studies, followed by an analysis. Chapter 5 describes the storefront mosque as a social stage and begins with definitions of mosques by my key informants. A deeper look at the social significance of storefront mosques is explained next using a story-telling approach and the results of my informant interviews. Three themes arise through the stories that exhibit dual tensions. These themes are: sacred vs. profane, temporary vs. permanent and insider vs. outsider. Through the discussion of the themes, we look at how Muslims balance or negotiate their daily religious needs and new life in the diaspora. Finally, in Chapter 6, I offer some concluding remarks along with several recommendations for urban planners that can help better facilitate the incorporation of storefront mosques into the fabric of the city.

4. Scope and Limitations of study

This researcher has concluded that all buildings surveyed in this study fall under the definition of a storefront mosque based on an outsider's observation and interpretation. This conclusion can certainly be debated given additional time and resources. The storefront mosques in this study are that of the Sunni Muslims and Sunni Islam is sometimes referred to as the orthodox version of the religion. I did not include mosques that serve Shi'ite Muslims or Muslims belonging to the Nation of Islam, whose congregants are generally African-Americans. It was necessary to exclude these particular mosques because my research goals are to uncover a certain level of detail about the interaction between a particular group of mosque attendees and their buildings. By adding a

additional mosques and different religious sects, I was concerned about losing the level of detail needed to interpret my observations and findings with just one Muslim sect, the Sunnis. By selecting a single sect to observe, this allowed greater ease in the interpretation of such a dynamic phenomenon in grassroots community building: the relationship between the storefront mosque, the individual and the larger Muslim-American immigrant and refugee community. My study also focuses on commercial spaces and does not include prayer houses, though one of the 12 total mosques documented in this study is a residential, single-family home. This mosque is owned by the Cham Muslims who are primarily from Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia and Vietnam. Lastly, purpose-built mosques in the city of Seattle, such as the Idriss Mosque in the Northgate neighborhood, are not included. Nor have I included purpose-built and storefront mosques outside Seattle city limits.

5. Muslims in the U.S. and Seattle

The U.S. Census does not collect information about religions, however the Pew Research Center on religion and Public Life (2011) found that the Americas have the lowest population of Muslims globally, "…estimates of the number of Muslims in the United States range from fewer than two million people to as many as seven million." The same study also states that the Muslim population in the United States is expected to double by 2030 because of immigration and higher birth rates. Estimated the Muslim population is challenging.

In their book, *Muslims in the United States (2006)*, Illyas Ba-Yunus and Kassim Kone designed what they described as a "snowball" method to estimate the Muslim American population and in the end, state that "We do not know how accurate our findings are." The authors began with making a listing of the Islamic institutions in the United States and then enlisted the help of approximately 1,550 informants, a great number of them taxi owners/drivers who lent help in locating the Muslim institutions and collecting data. The data were collected from mailing lists, not membership lists. It is unclear whether these mailing lists were kept

current and or were continually updated over the long-term. Mailing lists are kept primarily for event announcements and fundraising drives. “Because the U.S. Census Bureau does not touch anything remotely resembling religion, estimations of the Muslim population are left to non-governmental organizations and other interested groups whose studies, for understandable reasons, lack reliability in varying degrees. Some of these studies are extremely sketchy and speculative. They belie the difficulties involved in estimating a population not covered by the U.S. census” (Ba-Yunus and Kone, 2006).

Similar to Ba-Yunus and Kone’s argument, it is exceedingly difficult to get a good count of the Muslim population in the city of Seattle as the Census doesn’t collect data on religions. To arrive at my estimate of 10,365, I obtained the guidance of Diana Canzoneri, the city’s demographer and staff member for the Seattle Planning Commission. I reviewed the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year dataset focusing on the question “Place of Birth” and from those results, identified the countries that had over 90% Muslim population in the Pew Research Center’s report titled “The Future of Global Muslim Population: Projections for 2010 - 2030,” published in January 2011. From my interviews, I learned the top countries of origin of the Muslim community in Seattle, Somalia being the first, Ethiopia, the second. I then cross-referenced the list of 90% Muslim countries with that of the ACS numbers, which resulted in my estimate. Other countries represented are Indonesia and Iraq. I made one exception to my approach by incorporating ACS numbers that point to Ethiopia as the country is largely Christian, however, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, the Oromo, are Muslim and they own their own Oromo Cultural Center in Seattle. Thus, I added the ACS Ethiopian numbers to my estimate. I believe that my approximate total number of Muslims in the city is grossly underestimated and is driven only by city residents who actually responded to the Census.

Another proposed approach considered counting the number of refugees each year and cross-referencing countries of origin in Muslim dominated countries. I

did an initial scan of the annual Washington State report, provided by the Refugee Processing Center (RPC), which is operated by the U.S Department of State and found those numbers to too low, less than 50 per year in 2012 and 2011. Thus, I ruled out this approach.

Additionally, a review of the Association of Religious Data Archives on Social Explorer found few little Muslim congregations counted and what few results were listed, were grossly underestimated at approximately 700 for King County. Congregants in Christian and Jewish congregations tend to belong to one specific church or synagogue and typically have membership lists that allow ease in tracking numbers of worshippers. In contrast, Muslim worshippers do not tend to belong to just one mosque. In this way, the mosque is a more inclusive institution. Nearly all the informants in my interviews were reluctant to identify one particular mosque that was "theirs," rather it is the proximity of the mosque to worshippers' location at the time of prayer that determines which mosque worshippers' attend at that particular moment in time. The storefront mosques studied in this research either did not maintain mailing lists or would not share information of those lists with me.

Well-established, long-time Muslim institutions do maintain mailing lists, but this is atypical. This is beginning to change, however. Realizing that they are an important community gathering place, mosques are beginning to develop membership lists to mobilize their congregants in civic affairs, such as voter registration, and to educate congregants on their civil rights in an unknown new country.

The number of mosques continues to grow in the United States. The annual mosque study is part of a larger study of American congregations called Faith Communities Today (FACT), which is a project of Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership, a multi-faith coalition of denominations and faith groups. The study found that "The American mosque is a remarkably young institution:

over three-fourths (76%) of all existing mosques were established since 1980" (Bagby, 2012). However, mosques and mosque participants continue to increase significantly. Bagby found a total of 2,106 mosques as compared to 1,209 in 2000, representing a 74% increase.

Jafrey (2010) writes about Muslims in Seattle in an article published in the Islamic Society of North America's bi-monthly magazine *Islamic Horizons*. A past president of the University of Washington's Muslim Student Association, Jafrey provides a comprehensive overview of the Muslim community in the greater Seattle area as well as the community organizations that support them.

> "The metropolis is home to major refugee populations: the shah's fall brought Iranian refugees; genocide in Cambodia brought Cham refugees, who settled in a mobile home park in south Puget Sound; and chaos in Somalia and war in Iraq led to thousands of their citizens ending up in the area. Most of the Middle Eastern engineers came in the 1970s to work for Boeing; they were followed in the 1980s by South Asian Muslims looking for high-tech jobs and, during the early 1990s, Bosnian Muslims. Such demographic variety has created a unique Muslim experience. A community formerly comprised of a few technology experts, it now includes taxi drivers, cashiers, and other workers."

Jafrey writes that there are 10,000 Muslims in Seattle and 80,000 in the greater Seattle area, which includes Bellevue and Redmond where high-tech workers live, as well as White Center and Renton, where poorer immigrants and refugees live.

The Pacific Northwest has been conducive to grassroots mosque building. This is support by an abundance of existing storefront mosques, based on the research that illustrates the location of a storefront mosque every 0.97 miles, on average, over a 7.5 mile area, from the Rainier Valley to the Central District. Adeney and DeMaster (1994) tell the story of the origins of the Muslim community, which provide the foundation for the occurrence of storefront mosques in Seattle.

“The oldest center currently in use is the SeaTac Islamic Center, the Masjid As-Salam. During the early 1960s, two Muslim men working for Boeing noticed each other skipping lunch during the Fast of Ramadan. One was a Pakistani, the other an Iraqi. They introduced themselves to each other and began to exchange social visits in their homes. Gradually other Muslim families were included.”

“In time, this group decided that they needed a mosque. A number of families began to save money, wanting to put down a payment on a building without having to pay interest on a loan. For about a year, they each saved $100 monthly, and finally bought a two-story house on a half-acre of land in south Seattle. This became a place of prayer, worship, and community life for Muslims of various ethnic backgrounds.” In 2013, the Masjid As-Salam celebrated its 40th anniversary. This story illustrates that Seattle has been a place for Muslims to come together to realize a collective desire for congregational worship and where grassroots mosque building is the norm.

Another story provides additional evidence to this Seattle phenomenon, “A unique presence that distinguishes the Muslim community in Seattle is that of the Chams, Muslims from Vietnam and Cambodia. They first arrived in Seattle in 1978, fleeing the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese Communist regimes. Out of 1,000 Chams accepted by the United States in the first influx, about 400 came to Seattle, with more arriving from 1979 to 1982” (Adeney and DeMaster, 1994). This group purchased a single-family home in South Seattle and renamed it the Cham Refugee Community, which includes a mosque and support services.

The story of the Somali community is a significant addition. Somalis are the largest Muslim group in Seattle according to the Executive Director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. The Somali immigrant community began as a small group of college students and engineers in the 1970s and 1980s. It has grown exponentially in the past 20 years as thousands of refugees of Somalia's

civil war, which began in 1991, arrived in Seattle. Estimates of the number of Somali immigrants in Seattle vary widely, from just several thousand to more than 30,000. This is because some Somalis avoided the 2000 census out of fear of the government or because they could not read the English form. They have settled mainly in the Rainier Valley and extending south into Tukwila and SeaTac. Somali students are the second largest bilingual group in the Seattle Public Schools. Through interviews with members of the Muslim Leadership Council, the Somalis hold the largest number of storefront mosques in the area, due to their ability to organize community and pool funding through an informal system of community donations, much like the small group of Somalis in the 1970s.

In the next chapter, I review the literature on storefront mosques and provide a summary and analysis of the collective knowledge researchers have gathered about them thus far.

CHAPTER 2: The Function and Architecture of Mosques

Muslim spaces present themselves in a variety of forms. This chapter provides a brief description of the types of Muslim buildings, concluding with the focus of this study, storefront mosques. A summary and analysis of the collective knowledge about storefront mosques is provided. It begins with what we already know about storefront mosques, then describes how the literature either affirms or departs from storefront mosques in Seattle.

Types of Muslim spaces

Any place where prayer is said by Muslims is technically speaking, a mosque (Bender and Smith 2004). However, there are several types of Islamic institutions: prayer halls, Islamic centers, Muslim Student Associations, Islamic schools and neighborhood mosques. Ba-Yunus and Kone (2006) provide descriptions of each type below.

Islamic center

An Islamic center is a Muslim community center defined as a place in which its activity goes beyond the five times daily prayers and the Jum'ah prayers on Friday afternoons. Most Islamic centers hold weekly Qu'ranic study sessions, regular community dinners, women's programs, weekend classes for children, in addition to cooperating with local churches and temples of differing faiths, universities, and colleges. These centers, especially in large cities, can be old community homes, churches, or school buildings bought by Muslims. Or, they can be newly built multi-purpose mosques in the suburbs.

Musalla or prayer hall

In large cities, there are facilities established for the express purpose of holding Jum'ah prayers, Friday afternoon congregation. These are described as part-time places of worship. Usually such facilities, although they might remain open for five daily prayers, come to life on Friday afternoons (usually between 12:30pm

and 2pm) when a large number of Muslims working in the neighboring district come for the weekly congregational prayer.

Muslim Student Associations (MSAs)

Some of the largest MSAs, like the one at University of Michigan at Ann Arbor or the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, may have a few thousand Muslim students each (Smith and Bender, 2004). These local MSA organizations establish and maintain a place in which to perform the weekly Jum'ah congregation on Fridays. Because there are no mosques on most campuses, Muslim students conduct their activity in houses that they rent or purchase near the campus. Or they conduct their programs in interfaith chapels in churches nearby or reserved rooms in campus student unions.

Neighborhood mosque or *masjid*

These hold five times daily prayers in addition to the Jum'ah congregation on Fridays. There are numerous neighborhood mosques, especially in large cities. These small grassroots institutions generally serve those who because of age, local business ownership or employment, new arrival, part-time jobs, or sickness stay home or in the neighborhood a majority of the time and are not always able to go to a major Islamic center far from home. Such mosques are difficult to locate because they generally are not registered and do not have any published address or a telephone number, much less exterior signage.

In addition, those who also attend neighborhood mosques are generally mobile during the day, due to employment status, such as taxi drivers or day laborers or doctors in neighborhood clinics making home visits. These worshippers need and want to have a convenient place to pray. Often times, convenience comes in the form of vernacular spaces, such as basements of apartment buildings, vacant commercial or office spaces and other unclaimed spaces that owners are willing to lease cheaply. These are storefront mosques. Most researchers have little

knowledge of the growing number of storefront mosques and the significant purpose they serve for the Muslim community on a weekly basis.

Storefront mosques: the archetype

One of the leading books on Muslim spaces, *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*, (Daly, 1996) offers several essays on the integration of mosques into American and European neighborhoods. In Daly's book, Slyomovics, writes about storefront mosques in New York City as she begins to chart "..interior space gutted, transformed, and even acoustically reconfigured to Muslim sacred space…" This study of storefront mosques in Seattle follows Slyomovics' approach and confirms what Slyomovics found in that Muslims in Seattle, much like in New York City, are gutting interior spaces to transform and stage them into the primary activity of prayer.

Haider, an architect of modern, non-traditional style mosques in the U.S., explains that in the makeshift mosque, what matters is the practice of prayer, intended to be fostered by the design within the building instead of the building's exterior (Daly, 1996). Haider explains that the priority of making Muslim sacred space is transformation of the interior over the exterior. My research also confirms Haider's findings, however, I've found that some Muslim congregations select specific buildings based on prior use of the space. For example, in four out of the 12 Seattle storefront mosques, past uses were of the congregational nature, either prior worship spaces of a different religion, secular community gathering space or other large open spaces, such as a warehouse. These uses are already primed for staging congregations and the need for interior gutting is far less laborious.

In the case of the storefront mosque, Rudofsky (1964) connects the storefront mosque archetype to the theme of the vernacular explaining that "The storefront mosque comes under the rubric of 'non-pedigreed architecture, a label designating the 'vernacular, anonymous, spontaneous, indigenous' constructions

of the informal, undocumented sector." Rudofsky is accurate in making this connection. The act of prioritizing interior adaptations over exterior adds to Rudofsky's argument. Based on the research, one can place storefront mosques in Seattle under the category of non-pedigreed buildings. In the 12 storefront mosques identified in this study, exterior transformations are limited to installation of signage or canvas signs (33%). Because the exteriors do not illustrate or describe the interior use, the desire to document these uncategorized buildings goes unwarranted.

While Rudofsky explains that storefront mosques fall under vernacular architecture, Slyomovics (1996) argues that storefront mosques can be categorized under a very specific type:

> "...numerous 'storefront' mosques (parallel to 'storefront' churches and temples) constitute a specifically Muslim re-usage and makeover of the quintessential urban venue, the commercial storefront: a first-floor space facing on the street, its entrance flanked by glass windows for merchandise display, that is generally owned or rented by a business for use as a shop."

My research also affirms Slyomovics argument to some extent in that 50% of the storefront mosques in Seattle demonstrate the markers of a commercial storefront: ground-floor location along an urban corridor, flanked by commercial and retail uses, and a façade full of glass windows for merchandise, though with storefront mosques, these glass windows are often covered by curtains or blinds, all hours of the day and night.

Commercial storefronts are a type of use that people identify easily with based on Slyomovics description. However, when storefront mosques occupy non-commercial storefront spaces, such as warehouses, the invisibility becomes more marked and Rudofsky's definition of storefront mosques under the un-pedigreed category is more applicable.

Focusing on the building interior in the staging of Muslim spaces in commercial buildings, Hester (2008) argues that “'Sacred places' do not need to be imageable to have a strong identity. In fact, they may be humble laundromats, cafes, post offices, boardwalks, a park bench, or even one's workplace environment.” In addition, Kuo (1998) agrees with this view that the sacred can emanate from the commonplace, saying, "Rather it is with the question of the quality and interpretation of the space itself: finding a way to use tangible space to evoke the unknown from what we know.” Based on Hester and Kuo, one can be convinced that the types of sacred spaces goes well beyond the purpose-built building, mired in outward religious associations or elements such as a cross or minaret. Taking the approach of using tangible space to invoke the unknown is a lesson in preserving religious practice while cultivating solidarity, shielded from the influences of the outside world.

Biondo further describes invisibility of purpose, meaning a desire to keep the purpose of a site invisible to the surrounding community and categorizes types of storefront mosques based on congregation and overall approach to prayer. He says,

> "As for the house and storefront mosques, their under representation intentionally does not reveal the Islam practiced within. A storefront mosque can be inclusive or exclusive, international or regional, scriptural or devotional. In any case, they are underexposed, whether this is due to a lack of financial support in urban locations or a direct result of persecution and prejudice by Christians in peripheral locations.”

While it is true that storefront mosques are largely underexposed, my research indicates that a good deal of non-Muslims, can generally identify that a storefront mosque is in proximity based on the activity that occurs around the building, and not based solely on observation of signs on the building exterior. Indicators such as an over flood of parked cars on Friday afternoons in the neighborhood, particularly taxi cabs, and men in groups walking towards a building wearing skull caps or long white, ankle-length gallabiyyas, are markers of those that practice Islam. These tell non-Muslims that a storefront mosque is nearby. Under this

context, mosques are exposed based on the observations that non-Muslims make about the activity that occurs immediately surrounding the storefront mosque.

Figure 2: Newark Community Masjid. Photo by Akel Ismail Kahera

Figure 3: Interior of Sunnat-Ul-Jamaat mosque. The Imam points to masking tape lines that orient worshippers to Mecca. Photo by Susan Slymonvics.

Figure 4: A basement mosque with “masjid” painted on lower left corner, the Bronx. Photo by Susan Slyomovics.

Smith and Bender (2004) write about prayer spaces in the secular environment in New York City, and in addition, describe the context of immigrant life and the assimilation process involved.

> "They have to find alternative spaces to perform their rituals and prayers. As a result, prayer spaces have appeared across the secular domain allowing Muslim immigrants to integrate their religious and spiritual needs within the public and semi-public regions of urban life and to carry out their religious practices even while participating in the mainstream public realm."

They argue that these spaces represent "an organizational innovation within the existing field of American mosques and complicate the analysis of immigrant religious life that focuses solely on congregational participation." The importance of studying non-traditional congregational spaces is significant as immigrants think creatively about how to meet their obligatory prayers, daily and weekly, in a new environment that has not and does not accommodate for these particular Muslim needs. Investigating the non-traditional prayer spaces, such as storefront mosques, then becomes an important addition to describing behavior within the assimilation process.

Replication of mosques in the home country and their impact on the larger neighborhood

Assimilation is a complex experience that prompts immigrants to build communities that replicate their home countries. Gupta and Ferguson (1997), observe "With global flows and transnational communications pulverizing space in postmodern society, recent migrants 're-territorialize' urban spaces by inscribing remembered or imagined communities in new physical settings, producing new concepts of community, solidarity, identity and cultural difference." Again, the storefront mosque provides recent immigrants with an opportunity to maintain traditions in ways that work in their new lives.

Given the urban mosque's central role in American Muslim communities, as Kahera (2002) has noted, "There is a sound reason to discuss the urban mosque as a regional building type, since it has not received attention and especially

since it is a new civic nucleus and neighborhood center." Kahera describes Branford Place in Newark, NJ, a formerly disinvested neighborhood ripe with drug and alcohol addicts, and the impact of a storefront mosque in an office complex in the urban corridor. The mosque provided much needed prayer space for Muslims in proximity to jobs and also added to the revitalization of the neighborhood as a whole. More people congregating on the street attracted vendors, especially on Friday afternoons. Reinforced growth of commercial activity prompted City officials to provide special designation of extended parking hours along certain streets, particularly for the Friday congregational prayer. The storefront mosque at Branford Place then became an important element to positively activating the surrounding neighborhood.

Abdo (2006) tells the story of the Dix mosque and its renovation by the Yemeni community. The Lebanese community, after having acquired an existing pool hall in 1937, made renovations in 1957 and doubled the size of the mosque from 12,000 square feet to 24,000 square feet. She writes:

> "Hidden in the bowels of the manufacturing district in south Dearborn, the mosque's green minaret with a crescent atop stands out along the horizon. Five times a day, the melodic muezzin's call to prayer breaks the silence of the neighborhood. Bearded men in gallabiyyas, white, ankle-length tunics, and white skullcaps leave their houses nearby and walk to prayer. Such scenes are commonplace in the Islamic world, where the mosque, often located near a bazaar, forms the centerpiece of the neighborhood. But in America, Muslims tend to live miles away from their mosques and attend communal prayers only on Fridays."

Abdo further describes, "Worshippers at Dix enjoy a rare privilege. They can hear the muezzin's call. Local governments have banned the call in nearly every other American city. It's considered too disruptive to the majority of non-Muslims living nearby. In Manhattan, it is common to see a muezzin, cloaked in a long white tunic, stepping out of the mosque onto the pavement and raising a megaphone to his mouth to call the faithful, hoping to be heard above the street noise. But in Dearborn the Yemenis bought all the houses, some wood-frame, others brick,

within a few miles of the mosque. The only people living around the mosque are Muslims."

Many Muslim communities across the nation don't have the opportunity, access or resources of replicating the Dix storefront mosque. Of the twelve storefront mosques that were identified in Seattle, the Muslim community owns only one mosque outright. At this particular mosque location, there is a cluster of small businesses that offer Muslim goods or services, a restaurant and a Somali community organization, however, most worshippers live outside of the immediate neighborhood and there is no muezzin or sound of the call to prayer. Friday afternoon prayers attract the largest weekly number of attendants at 300 each week. The community ownership of this mosque is significant because it allows the community to gain larger control of shaping the replication of this commercial node into an enclave similar to home.

Replication is a critical part of the assimilation experience. Nimer (2002) supports the need for Muslim replication by writing in *Muslims in the West: from Sojourners to Citizens*, "They emphasize the need to preserve the individual Muslim character and the unity of the Muslim ummah (community of believers). Thus, they find a natural place in the functions of mosques, schools, youth groups, and other community activities." The need for replication is important for preservation of culture, however, Nimer does not address constraints in the diaspora where barriers to replication make it difficult to build purpose-built mosques and adaptation of commercial spaces into storefront mosques is prioritized instead for a variety of reasons, such as lack of funds or regulatory processes that are unknown and complex for newly arrived immigrants to understand.

Building or reconstructing Muslim enclaves with the storefront mosque as the focal point is out of reach for many communities. Reverting back to the act of adapting interior spaces as a feasible starting point, Dodds (2002) tells the story

of adapting a theater in her *New York Masjid: The Mosques of New York City*. She describes the Fatih Cami mosque in New York City:

> "From Fatih Cami's neat, ample lobby one passes, today, beneath a tiled sign into a voluminous space beneath a shallow stucco dome. This is the prayer hall, a gathering place that had once been the auditorium of the old converted theater, its seats and screen long removed, but its plaster dome-shaped ceiling surviving. Susan Slyomovics has observed how the reorientation of the original theater building becomes a kind of repossession of its American Orientalist decoration. Those entering at first find themselves facing the theater's former stage, which has become a gallery for the women of the congregation, but they must turn their backs on the stage to face the qibla, the direction of prayer."

The original use of the theater ceases to exist based on the users' experience and purpose for gathering, congregating, and socializing. Re-orienting the original focus of the stage to the current focus of the qibla would appear to be unusual to a non-Muslim walking into an old theater, expecting to sit in seats facing the stage. For Muslims, entering the building evokes a different expectation based on the primary purpose of prayer. The sacredness of the space is driven by the purpose of the congregation and subsequently, the interior space is adapted for that particular purpose, leaving behind the original use and intent. Buildings outlive uses and particular groups shape new uses based on, in this case, the preservation of Muslim religious practice.

Inclusivity

The storefront mosque is an inclusive institution. One asset of the storefront mosque is its accessibility to Muslims on the move during the day, whether it be working at a 9-5 job, running a small business or sitting in classroom, Muslims must balance daily secular and sacred responsibilities. Making time and space for the five daily saleh prayers alone is challenging in the Western world.

The need for the storefront mosque to be inclusive is based on an immigrant and refugee community that is attempting to create stability and identity in a non-

Islamic, mundane space within the context of a new environment that is largely different and at times hostile. It can be said that Muslims are connected through their religion first rather than their nationality or ethnicity and because of this, storefront mosques are inclusive spaces.

Inclusiveness is related to the social tension found in the insider vs. outsider theme, further described in this study in Chapter 5. The desire to live near a mosque is based on mimicking the home country, developing an inscribed or remembered community where there is a mosque on every street in the Muslim world. Thus, the birth of storefront mosques began. Mosques that are neighborhood based, easily accessible day or night and in close proximity to large enclaves of Muslim residents.

However, storefront mosque membership is loose and unspecified because in Muslim countries, there is no need for communities to take up the role of mosque buildings. In a new country where the state does not take an active role in the care of building mosques and making mosques accessible for its population, individuals must come together to take on this task. In Muslim countries, the state funds the construction of mosques, making them available without burdening Muslims with this task. In the Western world, Muslims must be responsible for this task alone, without state help.

The need to gain further control of membership is slowing becoming popular and is related to this lack of state assistance in mosque building. Greater control of the membership base opens up possibilities for fundraising for new mosques or renovation of existing ones, advocacy for civil rights as it relates to the ability to temporarily leave work or school for religious holidays, not recognized in the Western world, and networking and community building for Muslims living in diaspora.

Storefront mosques are open to people on the go, however these spaces have well-defined spatial communities surrounding them. Some are largely residential, where mosques are surrounded by Muslim households, and others are surrounded by small businesses that cater to Muslims by offering goods and services that keep them connected to their home countries. Storefront mosques provide space for all Muslims, yet have clearly defined spatial boundaries to build stability, identity and preserve community cohesion while keeping the influence of outsiders at bay.

Visibility

The literature has focused on invisibility as a component of the storefront mosque, however, the issue of visibility is also a complex one and typically follows the level of comfort and success in the assimilation process. One New York Muslim explains the transition best, “When we first acquired the building, we wanted the exterior to remain unimposing, we did not want to become a target. But now we are like old tenants in the neighborhood. People trust us, so now I believe it is time to start thinking about a sign for the mosque” (Dodds, 2002). Social confidence, large membership base and contribution to the larger neighborhood all help cultivate ownership and declaration of Muslim space in the larger, non-Muslim built environment.

The next chapter uncovers the invisible storefront mosques through a photo essay of twelve Seattle storefront mosques.

CHAPTER 3: Searching for the Invisible: Photo documentation

This chapter is a photo essay of twelve storefront mosques in Seattle. A photo essay is critical for this study because it illustrates the challenge of finding these storefront mosques, it conforms that storefront mosques follow no theme or pattern in their exterior expression, and it shows that storefront mosques take the form of a variety of building types, from commercial, retail, and office spaces to warehouse and industrial buildings.

Searching for storefront mosques was not an easy task. There are no signs or the typical physical expressions of mosque buildings – domes, minarets, or arches – with which Westerners easily identify. I went online to search websites such as Islamicfinder.com. This website provides Muslims with a list of mosques in any U.S. city. I found that some of the information was outdated for Seattle. Some mosques come and go. For example, I had heard that one mosque listed on the website closed shortly after an FBI raid. Another closed due to the 2001 earthquake. It was then that I realized that I needed to approach members of the Muslim community to get an accurate list of the mosques and to find the exact location of each. Out of the 12 mosques, only four contain exterior signs indicating that the building is a mosque.

I also began watching the city more closely to identify potential mosque buildings. Indicators included groups of parked taxicabs on Friday afternoons, and groups of men walking towards a specific building, wearing long gellabiyas or skullcaps. I also spoke to nearby businesses inquiring about mosque locations. I found that many businesses shared the same indicators that were guiding me to mosques.

The method I used for the photo essay is black and white film photography, using a 35-mm film, single-lens reflex (SLR) camera. I printed and developed the photographs in an independent study, Architecture 600. John Stamets, my advisor for the independent study, provided oversight and guidance on the development of the photos.

Figure 5: Oromo Cultural Center mosque. Built in 1950, this was a former neighborhood bar called “The Terrace.” The men’s entrance is in the foreground. The women’s entrance is located on the opposite side, at the back of the building, to the right.

Figure 6: This mixed-use building was built in 1904, which at that time contained the residential house in the background. 76 years later, surprisingly, the exterior has not changed significantly. During 1938, property records indicate that the storefront served as a fuel, coal, and wood store and in 1959, one of the storefronts served Chinese food. In the late 1990s, this researcher bought cheese steaks from this storefront.

The mosque is located in the storefront area, and the entrance is located off the alleyway to the left. The residential building contains three apartment units that are rented to Muslim households. The women's entrance is unknown.

Figure 7: Built in 1936, a building plan drawing from 1940 indicates the existence of a hall and stage. In 1957, the building was the Empire Way Community Club. During the 1970s, the building was a Japanese Baptist church.

Figure 8: Built in 1960, the Afrique masjid is located at the ground level with its primary entrance off the parking lot in the back, to the left of the building. In the 1960s, the first floor contained a wholesale store. The second floor contained offices and two apartment units.

Figure 9: Built in 1961, this was a storage building used for motorcycles for an adjacent motorcycle shop. Very little of the exterior has changed from 1961.

Figure 10: Built in 1958 as the Regional Christian Church Center, the second floor (foreground) contained a chapel, alter and choir. The first floor, located towards the back of the building, served as a classroom and auditorium. The storefront mosque occupies the second floor, the first floor is an administrative office. The men's entrance to the mosque is on the right in front of the shoe shelves. The women's entrance is on the left. The windows in the façade contain ablution areas (on the right) and a bathroom (on the left) for use by men exclusively. The signage on the awning advertises "New homes for rent."

Figure 11: Built in 1946, the original building was limited to the left hand side of the façade, containing an awning sign “We spray trees.” In 1957, the space became a furniture store, “Skilled hand shop,” and a second addition was constructed on the right, which became a plumbing store in 1970.

Today, the storefront mosque encompasses the rear of the building, spanning both left and right storefronts, and a tax accounting business on the left, operated by Khmers. A Muslim owned tax business is found on the right hand side of the façade. The entrance of the mosque is in the rear of the building, off an alleyway. This researcher has observed many times of the year that only men and male youth attend this mosque.

Figure 12: Built in 1951, the original building was a 14,143 square foot shopping mall called Wigwam Stores. Today, this shopping mall contains a variety of goods, services, and businesses, primarily serving Southeast Asians. The mosque is located on the 2nd story, above the Seafood Market, occupying two storefronts, one beneath the “Patrick Phan, M.D.” sign, and the other towards the left, adjacent to State Farm.

Figure 13: Built in 1952, this storefront mosque shares the building with office and warehouse uses, including a light industrial company that makes uniforms.

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Figure 14: Built in 1958, the storefront mosque is located on the left hand side, with its entrance located at the rear of the building. In 1971, Beacon Chiropractic Center occupied the space, prior to this time, property records indicate that the space was used for storage or was a miscellaneous office.

Figure 15: Built in 1919, this building was formerly the Hillman City Garage, then an ice cream plant in the late 1940s. In 1963, the building contained a glass and upholstery shop, paint spray store on the right side and a photo lab spanning the rear.

Today, the storefront mosque is located to the right hand side of the building. It shares the space with a halal restaurant and a store serving West African goods. The women's entrance is the same as the men's however, women primarily attend the mosque for women's teachings versus congregational prayer and at different times of the day.

Figure 16: Built in 1964, this mosque is the only single-family residential structure in the photo essay. It initially served the Cham refugees of Southeast Asia in the late 1970s, fleeing the Khmer Rouge and Vietnamese communist regimes, as evidenced by the sign “Cham Refugee Community.” It is open to Muslims of all ethnicities today. The mosque entrance is to the left of the structure, under the patio.

CHAPTER 4: Storefront mosques as physical spaces: 3 Seattle case studies

Chapter 3 provided a visual tour of storefront mosques. This chapter provides a textual tour of these Muslim spaces. General characteristics of storefront mosques, physical descriptions, layouts, minimum requirements and unique elements are described. Next, a closer look at how these descriptions and elements present themselves are described in three, real-life case studies in Seattle. Commonalities and variations will be illustrated in the case studies, followed by an analysis. The analysis is intended to provide a greater understanding of what planners can learn about these spaces and how these real-life examples either support, contradict or add a new element to the literature on storefront mosques.

The case study approach provides an opportunity for a deep investigation and development of an explanation for dynamic interaction. It also allows us to understand a particular phenomenon in relation to its context. For these reasons, utilizing the case study approach is most appropriate in understanding the complex interactions that occur in storefront mosques (Yin, 1994 and Stake, 2006).

Working through several grassroots non-profit organizations and ad-hoc community groups: NW Refugee and Immigrant Services, Ethiopian-Somalia Community Organization, Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Muslim Leadership Council, I obtained interior access to these mosques. Thus, these mosques were selected for further investigation. Interior access to the mosques is important, as the storefront mosque story would not be complete without a view into the staging of the interior.

The method used for the case study was multi-fold. Field observation combined with exterior photographs provided a look into the context of the mosque, the surrounding neighborhood and the façade. Interviews with mosque leaders or worshippers provided information on the human interaction. Interior photographs

explain the staging of the mosque's primary activity, prayer, as well as provided the annotated diagrams. Lastly, I visited the Washington State Archives to gather descriptive historic information of the exterior of each mosque. I then used this archival information to compare the exterior of each building - what had changed from the past to the present.

Part 1: Characteristics of storefront mosques

Minimum interior requirements: qibla and musallah

At bare minimum, storefront mosques require two elements: the qibla and a prayer hall or *musallah*. These elements are the most common and important. The qibla indicates the direction of Mecca, to which worshippers must pray. It is represented in various ways in storefront mosques, from an elaborate carving of a one-dimensional dome, out of wood, to the most simplest method, a paper with a handwritten identifier in Arabic. In Seattle, the qibla faces northwest. The prayer hall contains minimal furniture, Persian style rugs in dark colors or track lines drawn in a single color on neutral colored carpets to guide the alignment of worshippers' bodies and prostrations towards Mecca. Shoes must be taken off prior to entering the prayer hall.

Figure 17: *Musallah* in Rustem Pasha mosque, Istanbul. Photo by author.

Typical interior "accessories"

Donation boxes, saleh clocks, instructional prayer posters, bookshelves, and shoe shelves make up the accessories that can be found in storefront mosques, typically cluttering up the prayer hall. Donations are encouraged to support rent and common area maintenance expenses, saleh clocks indicate the times for the 5 daily prayers throughout the day since there is no call to prayer. Laminated posters providing prayer instructions are taped to the walls and bookshelves of varying types and sizes contain teachings. Shoe shelves can be found at the entrance to the mosque, either outside the building or immediately after the entrance. These shelves tend to be makeshift and not uniform in design or material. Together, these accessories create a haphazard look to the storefront mosque where in comparison, in purpose-built mosques, these elements have been built in, i.e. the bookshelves and shoe shelves. Call to prayer substitutes the saleh clocks and instructional posters and donation boxes can be found in other areas of the building, such as classrooms. In storefront mosques, there are very little programmatic spaces to contain these accessories, thus they must all be placed in the prayer hall.

Additional interior staging: mihrab, minbar and separation of the sexes

The mihrab and minbar vary greatly and there is no distinct design in storefront mosques, like there are in purpose-built mosques, except for the location of the minbar to the right of the mihrab. The minbar is a pulpit from which the imam leads the congregational prayer and a weekly *khutba* or sermon. In purpose-built mosques, it is typically made of wood, marble or stone and has stairs that lead up to the pulpit or chair, covered by a three-dimensional small dome of the same material. In purpose-built mosques, the mihrab is an indentation in the mosque wall, shaped like a half-moon. It is a prayer niche, and represents a doorway to the direction of Mecca. Both are elaborately designed with colorful tiles and Arabic calligraphy.

Figure 18 (above): Mihrab (left) and minbar (right), Sultan Hassan Mosque and Madrasa, Cairo. Photo by Bloom (2012).

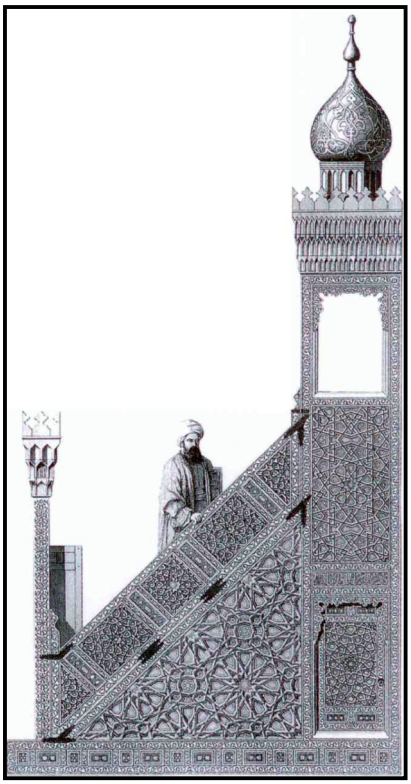


Figure 19 (right): Minbar of the Qaitbai Mosque in Cairo, 1472/73, engraving from a drawing of 1877. Taken from Bloom (2012).

In storefront mosques, the mihrab is made of wood. A board of approximately 1-2 inches in width, between five to six feet in height and eight to ten feet in length is used, particularly in the Oromo Cultural Center. This board has a carved out doorway, topped with a one-dimensional cut out of a dome. Natural wood, untreated, and unpainted, is propped up by wood supports from behind and stands alone. In the Al-Noor mosque, the mihrab is denoted by a 90-degree indentation in the wall, made by a carpenter who added an additional wall about half a foot in front of the existing commercial wall, creating the right-angle indentation. One office chair is placed underneath the carved doorway and in the 90-degree indentation for the imam to sit and lead prayer.

Women and men are prohibited from sitting together in the mosque and separation of the sexes must be followed. In purpose-built mosques, a dedicated space for women is provided with a permanent separator. Typically this

separator can be made of elaborately carved wood, or tile wall. In storefront mosques, makeshift separators are the norm. These could be office cubicle walls, as in the Mahmood mosque, or a multiple wood boards nailed together, as in the Oromo Cultural Center.

Preferred component: place for ablution

Ablution space or space for Muslims for the ritual washing of their face, hands and feet is a preferred component to a storefront mosque, but cannot always be incorporated due to the expense. In purpose-built mosques, lowered fountains or sinks are typically made of stone, marble or tile and are accompanied by permanent stools of the same material for men and women to sit and wash, separately. Toilets are not typically allowed in the mosque. At the very least, toilets must be located away from the prayer hall and far from the qibla, primarily in storefront mosques.

If a congregation has the funds, existing bathrooms are renovated to remove toilets and include ablution spaces. In the Mahmood mosque, for example, a $10,000 renovation of the existing bathroom resulted in half a dozen lowered sinks for ablution. Lowered sinks are required to allow for ease of lifting one's leg over the counter and washing feet in the sink basin. In those storefront mosques where existing toilets are preserved, doors from ceiling to floor are added, to provide greater separation of the toilet and sink if the toilet and ablution space is confined to one room. There are no mirrors in ablution areas. This is prohibited as some believe it causes vanity in a sacred space.

Figure 20: Prefabricated ablution sinks for indoor use. Photo taken from www.alibaba.com, an e-commerce corporation of manufacturers, buyers, and sellers.

Figure 21: Outdoor ablution area with men washing their feet below the balcony. Blue Mosque, Istanbul. Photo by author.

Minimum exterior characteristics: shielded windows and separate entrances for the sexes

Shielded windows and separate entrances for women and men are the minimum exterior characteristics of storefront mosques. Windows are covered in a variety of ways. Closed curtains, often times not matching, horizontal vertical blinds, bed sheets of varying color and design or newspaper hanging from curtain rods or taped to the windows all shield the view looking in and out of the mosque. The window treatments are never opened and this is uniform in all storefront mosques.

Separate entrances for women and men are required. In addition, entrances at the front of the building are typically not common in Seattle storefront mosques, though the front entrances do exist. Entrances are typically off an alleyway at the rear of the building. Men's and women's entrances can be found opposite of each other, on opposite sides of the building so that they cannot see each other when entering or leaving the mosque.

Additional façade element: signs

One could argue that the primary theme of the storefront mosque façade is not having a theme at all because the focus of the adaptation of the building is the interior space. The priority is on adapting the space quickly for the practice of prayer, not on adapting the façade to express the use of the building. Facades vary greatly in exterior expression. Seventy-five percent of the commercial or non-Islamic building facades photographed for this study have not changed significantly in the span of 40-50 years, however their uses have and most recently have been adapted for Muslim prayer.

Some facades may contain signage, whether a canvas sign or a more durable sign structure installed flush with the façade. Four out of the 12 storefront mosques had signage. Two of the signs had the word "mosque" or the Arabic

word for mosque, “masjid” on them. Two others contained “cultural center” or “Islamic center,” which denotes programmatic activity in addition to prayer, however, through this researchers detailed knowledge of the interiors of these particular buildings, there is no additional programmatic space, other than the prayer hall.

Some exceptions to signage are: one of the storefront mosque had a sign that indicated the location of the women’s or “sister’s” entrance and at another mosque, community members posted flyers on the wood board alongside the exterior façade of the primary entrance. Most entrances are unmarked and it is difficult to know which are for men and which are for women by merely looking at the building, however Muslim attendees of that mosque do know the difference.

Preferred element: dedicated parking

In Muslim dominated countries, there are mosques on nearly every neighborhood street. Worshippers walk to mosques when they hear the *adhan* or call to prayer. In the U.S., mosques are further spread out, however, storefront mosques arise to provide greater accessibility to residential Muslim enclaves. Some mosques have dedicated parking spaces on-site, but it is hardly enough when Friday afternoon prayers attract 300-400 weekly. Many park on neighborhood side streets causing tension among neighboring residents for parking space. In one neighborhood, the tension got so high that the City erected a sign that provides 3 parking spaces for taxi drivers, prohibiting others to park in those dedicated spaces directly outside the mosque. Taxi drivers were prioritized because this mosque is the closest mosque to downtown Seattle, where an abundance of Muslim taxi drivers are employed.

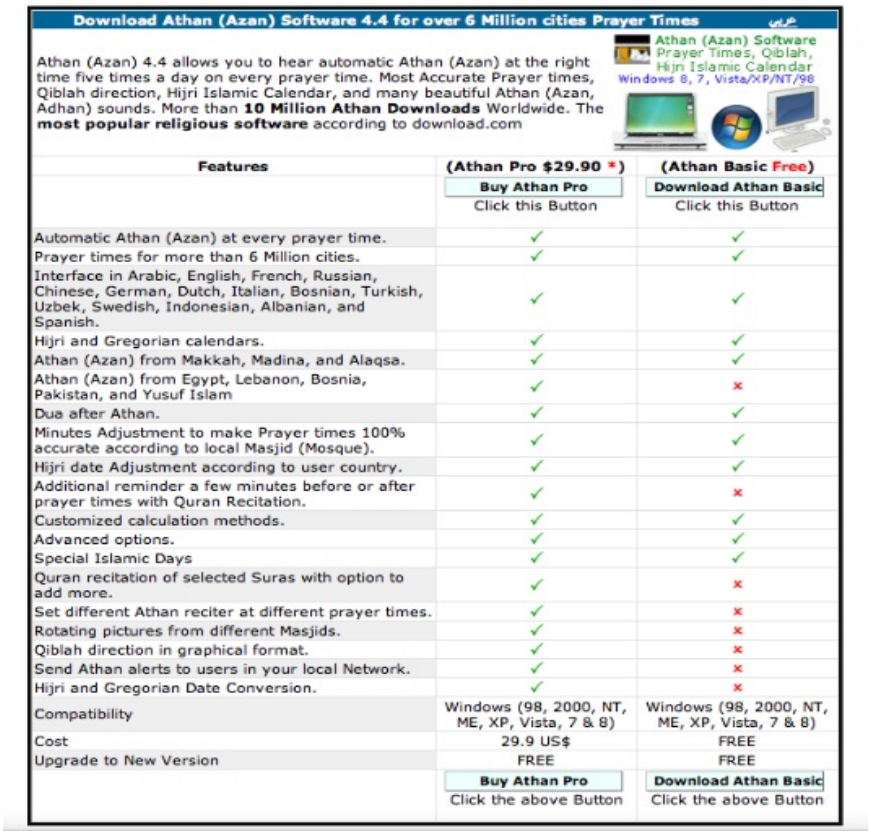
Preferred element: adhan or call to prayer

Mosques in the United States are prohibited from sounding the call to prayer because it is considered a noise nuisance. The call is typically sounded over a microphone, sung by the *muezzin*, at the top of a minaret where it can be heard

over several blocks. All mosques have this function in Muslim dominated countries.

Some Muslim congregations have improvised the call to prayer, however. In Brooklyn, I observed the *muezzin* of the Masjid Al-Farouq mosque stand on the sidewalk outside the entrance sing the call to prayer, without a microphone. Mostly a ritual activity versus a functional activity, the muezzin cannot be heard over the traffic in the four-lane street along which the mosque is located, much less the rumble of the subway station half a block away. In this scene, the muezzin fulfills his duty, though the primary function is lost.

Muslims find other ways to remind themselves of the call to prayer through technology. Websites such as Islamic Finder.com or MyMasjid.com list the five saleh prayer times by U.S. city and installation of adhan software allows Muslims to hear the call of prayer through their computers. The software syncs itself to the geographic location of the device and provides accurate prayer times each day.



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Athan (Azan) 4.4 allows you to hear automatic Athan (Azan) at the right time five times a day on every prayer time. Most Accurate Prayer times, Qiblah direction, Hijri Islamic Calendar, and many beautiful Athan (Azan, Adhan) sounds. More than **10 Million Athan Downloads** Worldwide. The **most popular religious software** according to download.com

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Features	(Athan Pro $29.90 *)	(Athan Basic Free)
	Buy Athan Pro Click this Button	Download Athan Basic Click this Button
Automatic Athan (Azan) at every prayer time.	✓	✓
Prayer times for more than 6 Million cities.	✓	✓
Interface in Arabic, English, French, Russian, Chinese, German, Dutch, Italian, Bosnian, Turkish, Uzbek, Swedish, Indonesian, Albanian, and Spanish.	✓	✓
Hijri and Gregorian calendars.	✓	✓
Athan (Azan) from Makkah, Madina, and Alaqsa.	✓	✓
Athan (Azan) from Egypt, Lebanon, Bosnia, Pakistan, and Yusuf Islam	✓	×
Dua after Athan.	✓	✓
Minutes Adjustment to make Prayer times 100% accurate according to local Masjid (Mosque).	✓	✓
Hijri date Adjustment according to user country.	✓	✓
Additional reminder a few minutes before or after prayer times with Quran Recitation.	✓	×
Customized calculation methods.	✓	✓
Advanced options.	✓	✓
Special Islamic Days	✓	✓
Quran recitation of selected Suras with option to add more.	✓	×
Set different Athan reciter at different prayer times.	✓	×
Rotating pictures from different Masjids.	✓	×
Qiblah direction in graphical format.	✓	×
Send Athan alerts to users in your local Network.	✓	×
Hijri and Gregorian Date Conversion.	✓	×
Compatibility	Windows (98, 2000, NT, ME, XP, Vista, 7 & 8)	Windows (98, 2000, NT, ME, XP, Vista, 7 & 8)
Cost	29.9 US$	FREE
Upgrade to New Version	FREE	FREE
	Buy Athan Pro Click the above Button	Download Athan Basic Click the above Button

Figure 22: Azan software available for download via www.Islamicfinder.com

Summary

Storefront mosques in Seattle share the same improvised feel to the spaces. Minimum requirements are met through minimal staging of the space based on the prior use in some mosques that contain existing large open spaces for congregational prayer. The imams that I spoke with had many future plans for their storefront mosques. Some of these plans include renovating existing bathrooms to incorporate ablution areas for *wudu* or adding a proper minbar (i.e. pulpit) from which the imam can lead the congregation in prayer. Adding ablution space and bathrooms for women was also mentioned in one mosque, though not a priority in all, as only men are required to pray weekly in a congregational format. These particular plans indicate a desire towards creating permanency in the neighborhood however the focus again is on the interior and not the exterior building. This willingness to create more permanency of the interior space speaks to a continued desire for invisibility in the neighborhood as exterior expressions of use are of no or low priority.

With respect to the exterior of the building and site, dedicated parking, is a key issue because it causes tensions between neighbors. In fact, office complexes or existing casinos are targeted for mosque adaptation due to the abundance of existing parking that comes with these buildings. Lastly, signs were of a lesser priority, confirming the need for continued invisibility. In the next section, Part 2 illustrates how these characteristics in the physical environment vary in three storefront mosques in Seattle and provides an introduction to the implications for social science in each case study analysis.

Figure 23: Women's entrance sign

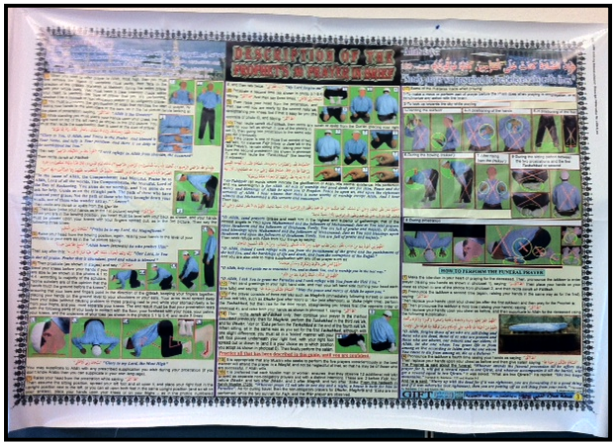

Figure 24: Poster prayer instructions

Figure 25: Donation box for mosque rent

Figure 26: Sign prohibiting cell phone use in mosque

Figure 27: *Saleh* (daily prayer) clock

Figure 28: Instructions for masjid entrance

Part 2: Case studies

Oromo Cultural Center[1]

The Oromo is an ethnic group found in Ethiopia, northern Kenya and parts of Somalia. With 30 million members worldwide, they constitute the single largest ethnicity in Ethiopia and approximately 34% of the population according to the 2007 census. This group makes up the primary Muslim population in the largely Orthodox Christian country (Central Statistical Agency, Addis Ababa, 2008).

Built in 1950, the building is a contiguous commercial building strip with four storefronts and a parking lot. The Cultural Center purchased this 10,858 square foot property in 2010 for $1,075,000. This storefront mosque is owned by the Cultural Center, a registered Washington non-profit organization.

Formerly a neighborhood watering hole called the Tavern, the storefront mosque occupies the largest storefront space in the building strip, at nearly 5,000 square feet. There is dedicated parking in the form of a 140 x 70 square foot lot that has been untouched since the 1950s. The parking lot is currently not adequate for the cars and taxis that arrive every Friday for jum'mah prayers. Gus, the operator of the corner grocery store across the street, guesses that 300 people attend the mosque each Friday afternoon. Spillover parking occurs in the side streets of the surrounding neighborhood.

This space follows Slyomvics' definition of a storefront mosque in the literature review. It is located in a traditional, one-story, street facing commercial storefront with large glass windows. One can assume that this particular storefront space was selected because of the open area floor plan that this former neighborhood bar contained. The interior has been completely gutted, except for the toilets and lowered sinks, which are consistent with Slyomvics' findings of storefront mosques in New York City.

[1] All names of storefront mosques have been changed unless there is an exterior sign on the building

Figure 29: Façade of mosque and adjacent Oromo Cultural Center office

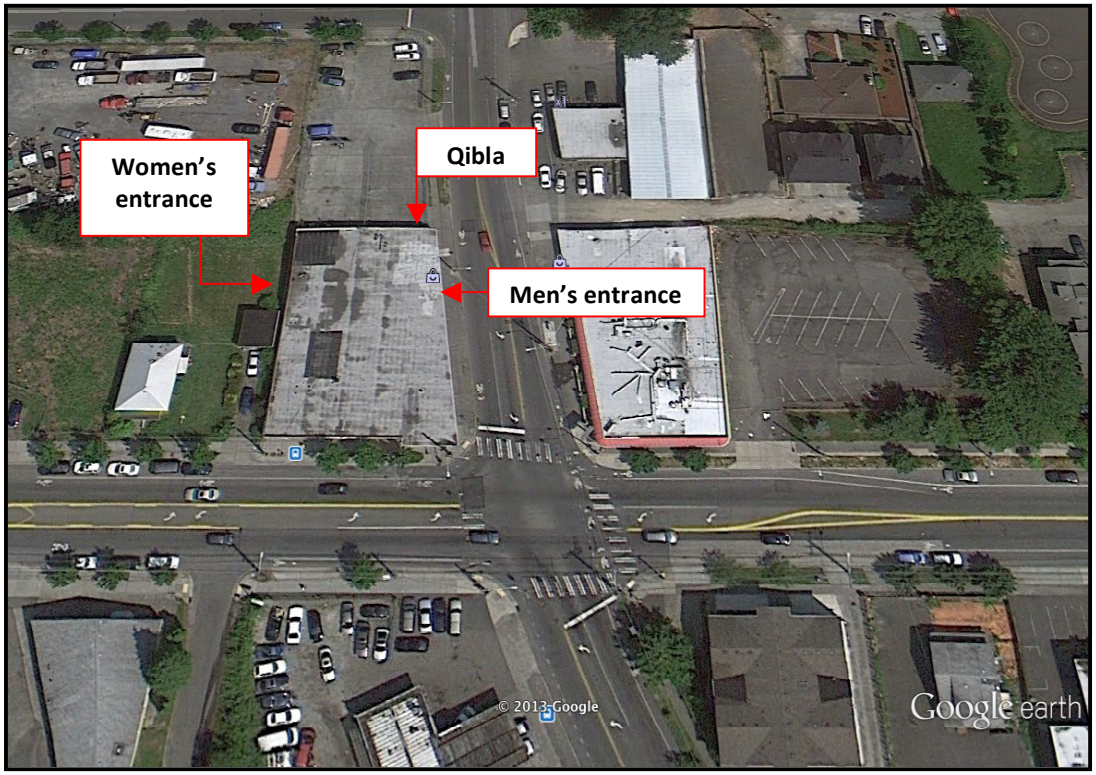

Figure 30: Entrances into the mosque and location of qibla in the building

An anonymous façade

The building façade next door to the storefront mosque contains a sign “Oromo Cultural Center,” though there isn’t a weekly schedule of activities or events that would be implied by the title “cultural center,” other than daily prayer. The scene on the sidewalk on Friday afternoons is lively with groups of men chatting. As Kahera mentioned in his description of the Branford Place storefront mosque in NJ, the Oromo Cultural Center seems to be an emerging, new civic nucleus in the neighborhood that adds eyes and vibrancy on the street.

Another sign can be seen from the adjacent parking lot. This sign denotes the location of the women’s entrance. This is a departure from the other storefront mosques studied in this thesis. This particular mosque provides a clear distinction and location for the women’s entrance. To access the sister’s entrance, one must walk into the parking lot and follow the direction of a red sign with white letters. Walking down a narrow dirt pathway, in between the rear of the building and a chain link fence with barbed wire atop, a door with a security camera installed on top marks the sister’s entrance. The entryway to the sister’s entrance feels narrow, secluded, and invisible as compared to the men’s entrance, which faces the street on the opposite side of the building. Vertical blinds shield the windows flanking either side of the men’s entrance. A free-standing wood screen is placed in front of the door, on the sidewalk, to shield the view into the interior.

Inside - hidden from view

Walking into the women’s entrance, one steps on a wood ramp, about three feet long, arching down to the ground floor, to ease women’s steps into the small lobby area. This lobby area is approximately 7”x 10,” and directly along the wall across from the entrance, are two mismatched racks for shoes. To the right of the entrance door, is the bathroom, where there are four sinks, lowered for

ablution. There are also three toilets with doors from floor to ceiling, consistent with separating the toilet from the ablution area.

Muslims must take off their shoes to walk into the prayer hall. Laminated signs in Arabic and Oromo instruct worshippers on how to enter the prayer hall, right foot first. The hall is dim and silent, a refuge. Bare white walls characterize all prayer halls, with the exception of an electronic saleh clock, with Arabic writing and a lighted image of the Prophet Mohammed's mosque.

Persian style carpeting blankets the floor and planks of wood nailed together formed the separator between the women's and men's prayer halls. A small bookshelf holds books in Arabic. At the southern end of the divider, there is a cut out door, which opens to the men's prayer space. In the men's prayer hall, a mihrab, built of wood, stands. More elaborate than the improvised mihrabs seen in the literature review, this one contains built in bookshelves and a microphone. The qibla can be found along the northern wall. Black track lines drawn by marker line the carpet. Men also use free standing candelabra like instruments to mark their personal prayer space from intrusion by others.

The elements described in this section are consistent with this researcher's findings of similar spaces.

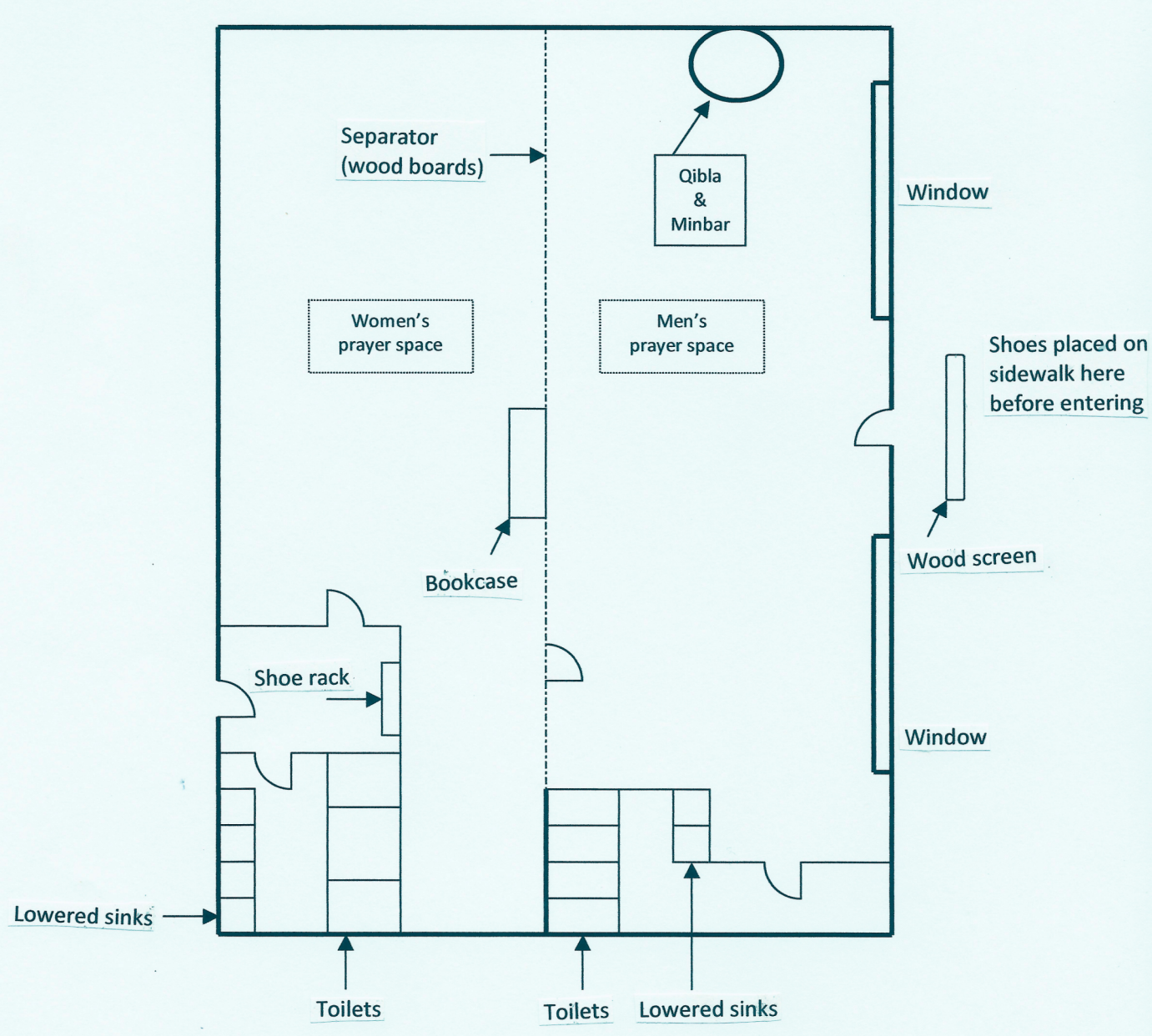

Figure 31: Floor plan of Oromo Cultural Center

Figure 32: Oromo Cultural Center, looking southwest. The façade has not changed substantially over the years in comparison to the historic photograph in Figure 27, though some of the large commercial windows are partially covered now. Note the exterior sign placement on the sidewall, on the right of this photo is the same, 63 years later.

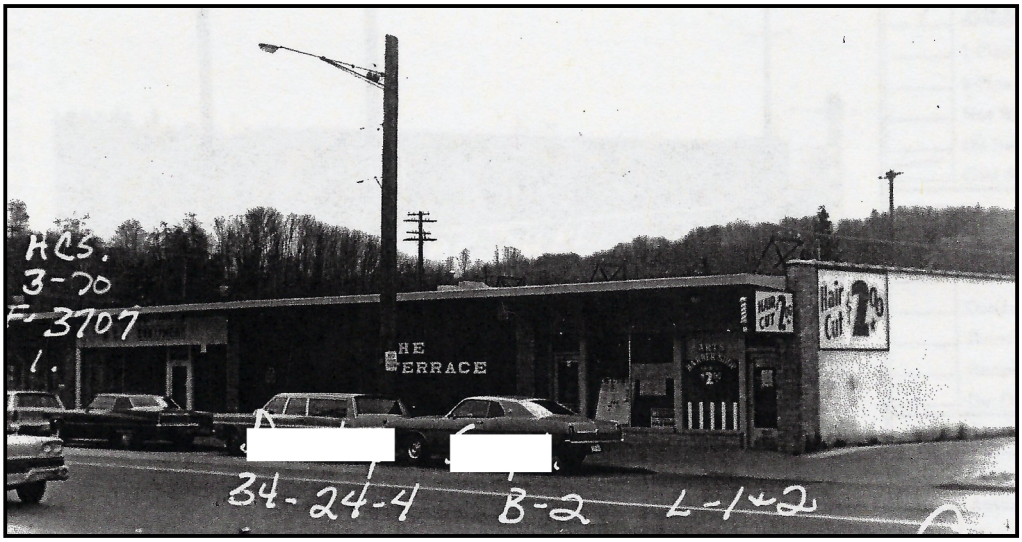

Figure 33: Historic photo of the building taken in 1950. Photo from King County Assessor record.

Figure 34: Men's prayer space

Figure 35: Mihrab with imam's podium

Figure 36: Women's prayer space with built in bookshelves

Figure 37: Separator wall for men and women

Figure 38: Curtains, screen for men's entrance & shoe shelves

Figure 39: Electronic clock with the Prophet's mosque displaying daily prayer times in lieu of call to prayer

Contingent spaces

The sidewalk along the façade and men's entrance to the mosque has become an important community gathering space. As mentioned earlier, the area comes alive before and after Friday afternoon prayer. Women haul out card tables and serve refreshments after prayer. The sidewalk acts as a gathering place before and after prayer, a place to network, get job leads, and advice. There is no other space for community gathering in the building.

Across the street is the Oromo Service Center, a small commercial storefront that appears closed during the bulk of the day. A Somali service organization is found next door in a small warehouse building that is further setback from the sidewalk and cannot be readily seen from the street. The newly opened Al-Urba Restaurant, having replaced a long-time, neighborhood Italian staple, now serves Somali cuisine and many congregants gather at this establishment before and after prayer.

Legacy

Buildings outlive their original uses. When one compares today's photos of the building versus photos taken in 1950, the entire structure as a whole has changed very little. A multitude of cars used to line the neighborhood street when the space was a bar and similarly, 64 years later, the space serves just many people, albeit for a much different purpose.

About half of the existing windows of the 1950s building have been covered over by plywood. Moreover, current windows have closed blinds, a quarter of the storefront spaces are vacant and additional commercial signage and interior security bars clutter the remaining storefronts. It is interesting to note that the Oromo Cultural Center sign is installed in the exact place as a 1950s "$2.00 Hair Cut" sign, on the northern building wall, perpendicular to the street.

Analysis

The Oromo Cultural Center provides significant insight into the need for improvisation in urban planning, highlights the importance of ownership structure in the Muslim-American immigrant experience and sets the stage for future development of “inscribed or remembered” communities. This storefront mosque raises several questions about the need for permanency in a non-descript building whose use is largely unrecognized by the Western world. It also questions the need to build community stability and identity while keeping outsiders and their influence at bay. And lastly, the topic of authenticity is raised in the adaptation of these structures: long-lived, mundane buildings being converted into real places of meaning.

This building has not changed significantly in 60 years and this seemingly mundane building however, comes alive with activity every Friday. Storefront mosques that encompass these types of commercial spaces “…represent an organizational innovation within the existing field of American mosques and complicate the analysis of immigrant religious life…” (Smith and Bender, 2004).

The use of the word “complicate” in Smith and Bender’s quote speaks to the dynamism of the Muslim-American immigrant experience. My research has raised many questions related to what the organic approach in neighborhood change looks like and how the Muslim-American community is creating conditions that support the fluidity of non-Islamic, vernacular and mundane buildings. This organic approach cannot be easily categorized and interpreted, as it does not follow the traditional, Western approach to participatory community planning, which tends to focus on isolating and separating uses through land use codes, process and control. Furthermore, the process of building storefront mosques highlights a variety of tensions in the assimilation process. For example, the storefront mosque re-defines the traditional community center

space by expressing an integration of secular and sacred uses due to limited space and resources. As illustrated above, some of these community center activities occur on the sidewalk outside of the storefront mosque or in the women's prayer area.

What is significant about the Oromo Cultural Center is the ownership structure. This is the only commercial storefront mosque in the study that is owned by the community. It is not clear how the newly arrived immigrants and refugees, who presumably have limited resources to acquire a building and purchase it, though unconfirmed rumors allude to financial help from the Middle East.

Another significant element of this storefront mosque is its location. It is in a key commercial node, one block from a light rail station, in a targeted transit-oriented development zone. With the construction of light rail, the City is envisioning these commercial nodes in proximity to rail stations as targeted re-development areas. The Oromo Cultural Center is now a major property holder in this new zone and the property will be targeted for future revitalization and higher density development. The juxtaposition between hiding behind a cultural center title, keeping activity private, and becoming an important stakeholder in a targeted future development zone is interesting. The Center will have a role in shaping the future development or lack of development of this node. There are some development pressures that already exist: adequately maintained existing multi-family buildings, multi-family units converted into condominium units, a recently constructed mixed-use building and existing zoning to build up to four floors.

The literature review on storefront mosques says little about how these spaces are impacted by future development. One case, provided by Abdo, tells the story of the Dix mosque in Michigan and how the Yemni community took the lead in re-developing the area themselves to create an inscribed or remembered community (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997) and provided multiple blocks of residential homes for Muslim members and implemented the micro-phoned call

to prayer each day. The creation of inscribed or remembered communities is critical in initiating the process of building community stability and identity, as the Dix mosque example highlights. The Yemni community successfully created a community that mimics those in their home country by becoming their own real estate developers taking examples from Yemen to successfully create an all-inclusive environment in which all residents feel accepted, a refuge from the Western world. It will be interesting to see how the Cultural Center plays its role as a stakeholder in the future development of the area. Will it follow the Dix mosque example?

Al-Noor Islamic Center

The Al-Noor Islamic Center is located on a major north-south city arterial and on the light rail line. An old warehouse and storage building, built in 1961, the building's façade has not changed significantly in 53 years. This storefront mosque falls under Rudofsky's category of non-pedigreed vernacular architecture in contrast to Slyovmics traditional commercial storefront space.

This Center is a rare variety in that it is the only site that consists of two separate buildings, one for men and the other for women. Rather than standing flush against the sidewalk like many of the storefront mosques in this study, Al-Noor is set back approximately 80 feet and a sixteen space parking lot acts as a buffer between the busy arterial and light rail trains. Because of this, the mosque feels less accessible and more secluded to the public on the sidewalk. The women's building is parallel to the men's, approximately 30 feet west of the men's building, shielded from the street.

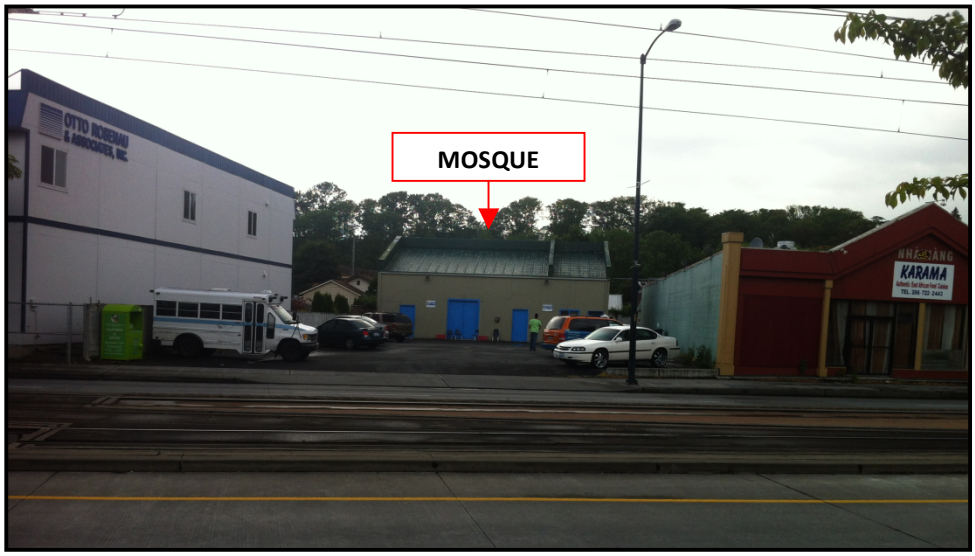

Figure 40: Looking west towards Al-Noor Islamic Center

Walking towards the mosque, there are nine adjacent small businesses to the north, situated in a small business enclave, operated by East Africans. A “little East Africa,” one definitely feels as if he or she has walked into that part of the world, with signage depicting African names and services, such as the Assabr Mini Mart, Iftin Express Hashi Money & Wiring, Mogo’s Market Halal Grocery & Clothing and Quba for Hajj and Umrah, a small business specializing in travel planning for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. An old barbershop, housed in an adjacent former storage building, acts as an informal community meeting room and is the location of my interviews.

These small business enclaves tend to develop around storefront mosques, especially if the mosque is located in a dense urban commercial corridor, however, what is unclear is whether the storefront mosque follows the small business enclave or if the enclave follows the storefront mosque and this raises a question about planning for integration of sacred and secular uses in neighborhoods. What is very clear, is that these are areas that feel less and less public as you venture in. There is a strong sense of boundaries that an outsider immediately experiences in the business enclave adjacent to the Al-Noor Islamic Center. Signs for businesses are in different languages and there is no English translation provided. Services offered depart from those found in mainstream Western society, such as hajj travel planning. Small stores carry items and goods that are typically found in the “international cuisine” aisles in mainstream grocery stores. These small businesses open up to a small parking lot, perpendicular to the sidewalk and set back about 15 feet from the street. Walking into the parking lot with the small businesses on either side, it’s clear that this space is semi-public and enclosed. All customers are of African background and no English is spoken in the stores.

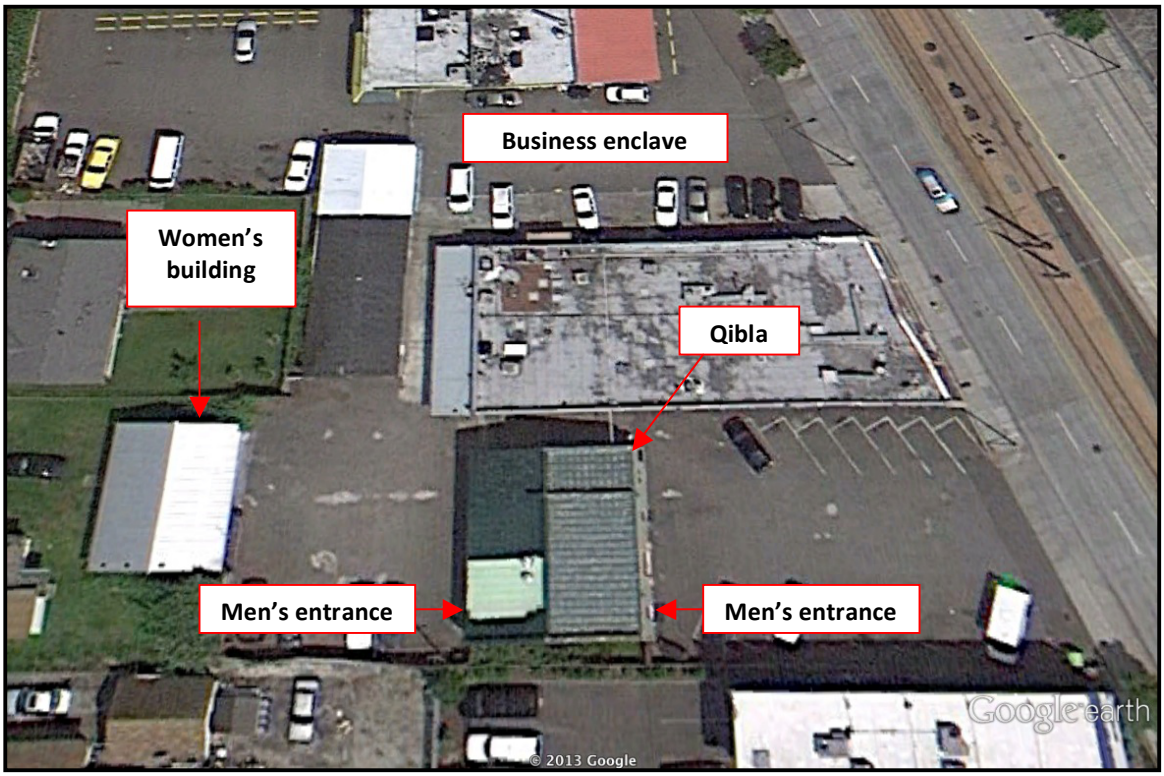

Figure 41: Site plan of Al-Noor Islamic Center

Figure 42: Women's prayer building

An anonymous façade

There is one exterior sign along the southern façade, “Al-Noor Islamic Center,” and the two small windows are permanent shielded by curtains. Overall, there are five entrances to this building, however, only three are utilized on a regular basis. The entrance at the northwest corner opens up to the ablution area and toilet. The other two entrances are located on the southwest and southeast. At these entrances, two metal shoe shelves are propped along the interior wall. The two doors on the northeast corner, closest to the minbar where the imam leads the congregational prayer, are permanently closed.

The women’s building is smaller, appears to be a former storage space and is completely shielded from the street by the men’s building. This building has one entrance and windows that flank either side of the door are curtained. The separate building provides complete separateness and privacy between the sexes and departs from typical storefront mosques that provide a cordoned off women’s space adjacent to the men’s prayer hall. When asked why there was a separate building for women, the imam replied, for “so much separate.”

Inside – hidden from view

Walking into the women’s building, the interior includes more than the typical combination of makeshift bookcases and mismatched shoe shelves. There’s also a small kitchen space, with a stove and refrigerator, and two single-toilet bathrooms, though without the lowered sinks for ablution. Pillow cushions line the walls and floor for comfortable seating and Persian style rugs cover the prayer space. Along the north wall, a shallow crudely made wood shelf holds a closed circuit T.V. screen, framed Arabic writing and a donation box for monthly rent and maintenance expenses. The space looks like an all- purpose interior, a combination of a community gathering and prayer hall. On some evenings, women gather for a sisters’ *halaqa*, a knowledge sharing and teaching on Islam. Snacks and refreshments are often provided for the *halaqa*, thus the kitchen

provides immediate access without causing interruption to the teaching. The building is separate and secluded, from both Muslim men and the outside world, a refuge that no other storefront mosque investigated in this study provides. One interesting adaptation to the women's building is the ability to participate in congregational prayer in real-time. The closed circuit T.V., loudspeaker and microphone system are connected to the men's prayer hall, allowing the women to watch and listen to the imam during prayer.

The men's building is three times as large as the women's. With only two 2" x 4" windows facing the street and situated in the northeast corner of the building, there is very little natural sunlight penetrating the interior. It is dark, dim, silent. Walking into the prayer hall, one feels small in a grandiose former warehouse space. Two columns, mid-building, support the ceiling and could be reminiscent of the marble or stone columns found in Ottoman mosques, however, the columns are made of plain wood.

A six-inch wide wood beam runs along the ceiling in the east-west direction. At the center of the beam, a video camera has been installed that is hooked up to the women's building where women can listen and watch the imam simultaneously. And although this is the largest storefront mosque in the study group, mosque attendees comment on how small the interior is. With nearly 500 attending on Fridays, men line up close together to pray and prostrate.

Mosque attendees note the location of the toilet as a nuisance. Approximately fifteen feet left of the minbar along the same wall, is the toilet and ablution area. The imam and attendees complain of the close proximity of the toilet to the qibla. Prayer halls are intended to be clean spaces and the location of the toilet causes concern. The congregation is currently raising funds to re-configure this space.

An interesting element of the mosque is the crudely constructed niche for the mihrab, which signifies the direction of Mecca or the qibla. The niche is typically

a semicircular shape, some decorated with elaborate tile or Arabic calligraphy, cut into the qibla wall. In Al-Noor, the mihrab consists of wood planks, painted white similar to the mosque walls, nailed together to form a rectangle, connected by a single wood plank 6” wide, resulting in a sharp 90 degree angle, instead of the traditional semi-circle. A simple wood podium and microphone stand in front of this mihrab for the imam. This set up is much more simple than the other two case studies which have carpentried structures. Along the east wall, a community board has been erected, a large poster showing the latest building to be acquired for adaptation into a new mosque in White Center, a former 100+ year-old Lutheran Church.

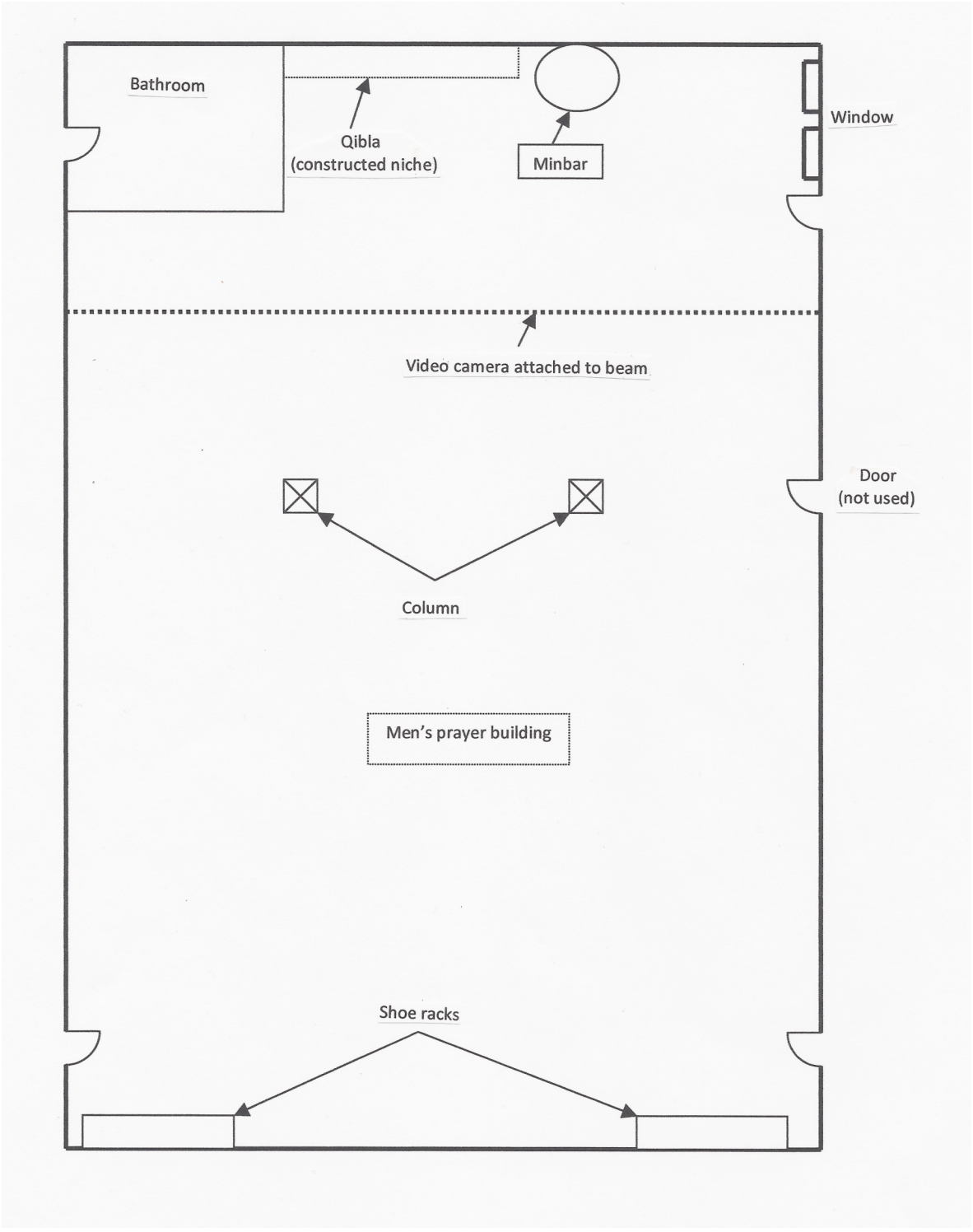

Figure 43: Floor plan of men's prayer hall

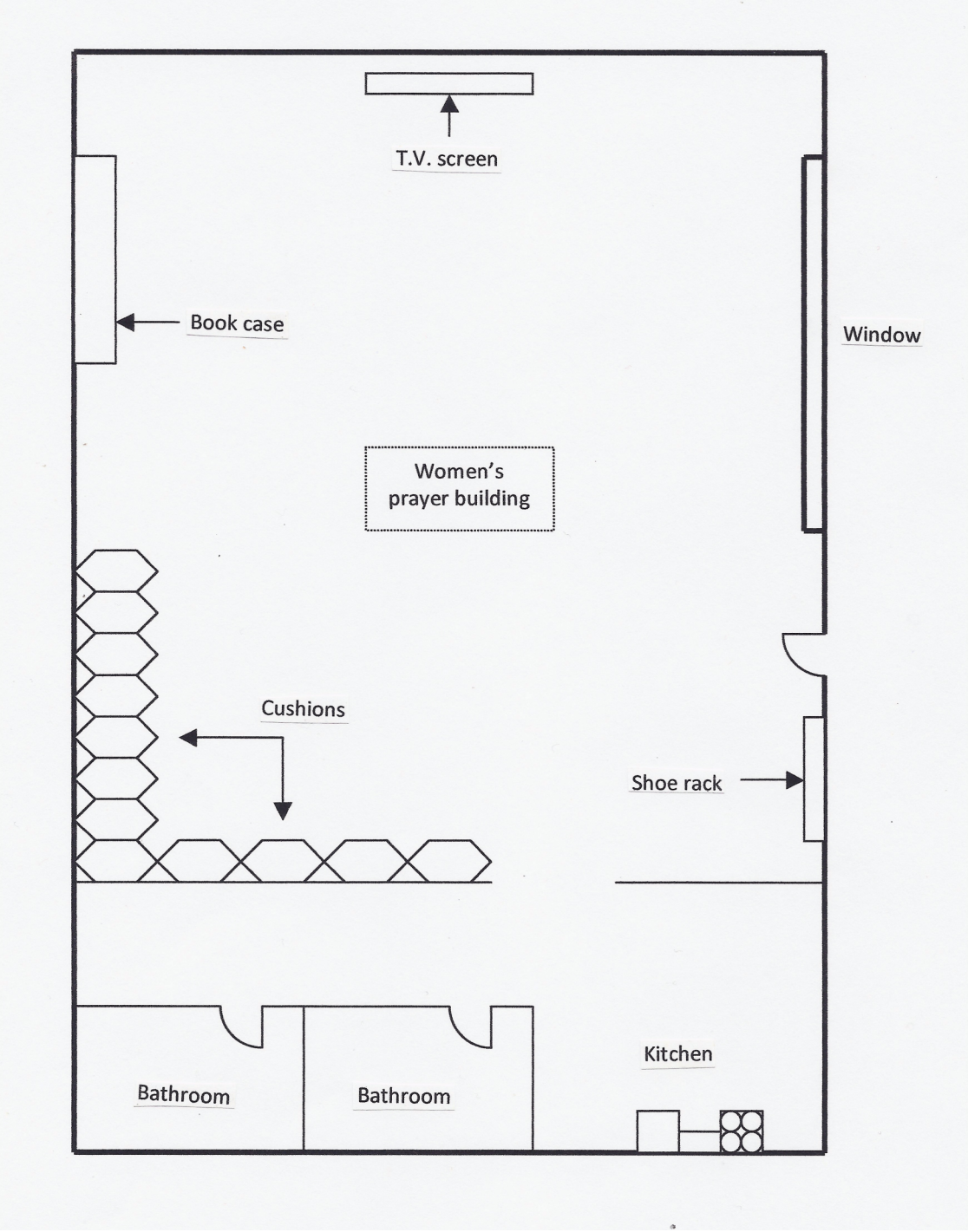

Figure 44: Floor plan of women's building

Contingent spaces

The mosque is the primary attraction in the small East African business enclave. One finds people chatting, buying specialty goods from the home country, Africa phone cards, wiring money to the home country or gathering in the old barbershop. Businesses are primarily run by men, however one woman, Moga, runs her own small grocery, clothing and furniture store. These businesses act as gathering places, informal meeting spaces, places that complement the mosque where people can run errands and network with others before and after prayer time. This is important because there is no community gathering space in the mosque. This small business enclave acts as the community center for the mosque, provides the opportunity to interact with others is an added point of reference and connection to home. These spaces are about much more than commerce. They provide a sense of identity, help create community cohesion through the built environment and provide an important source of news and information. These attributes help ease the process of assimilation.

Legacy

Built in the early 1960s, the original use for the building appeared to be storage or warehouse. The building is one of three separate buildings on one parcel. An adjacent building to the north was a motorcycle shop, thus, the storefront mosque could have stored motorcycles, tools and bike parts. In the early 2000s, King County Assessor records note that the building was a Chinese restaurant. Interestingly, there are three buildings due north of the storefront mosque that also have Chinese lettering on their façades. One can assume that this storefront mosque belonged to the cluster of Chinese buildings. Today, East African small businesses dominate the area, signaling neighborhood transition and mirroring various waves of different immigrant groups over time. The important question for urban planners then becomes, “How can these spaces be better built and regulated for ease of grassroots transition?” Based on my observations, the Muslim community is indeed creating at a grassroots level.

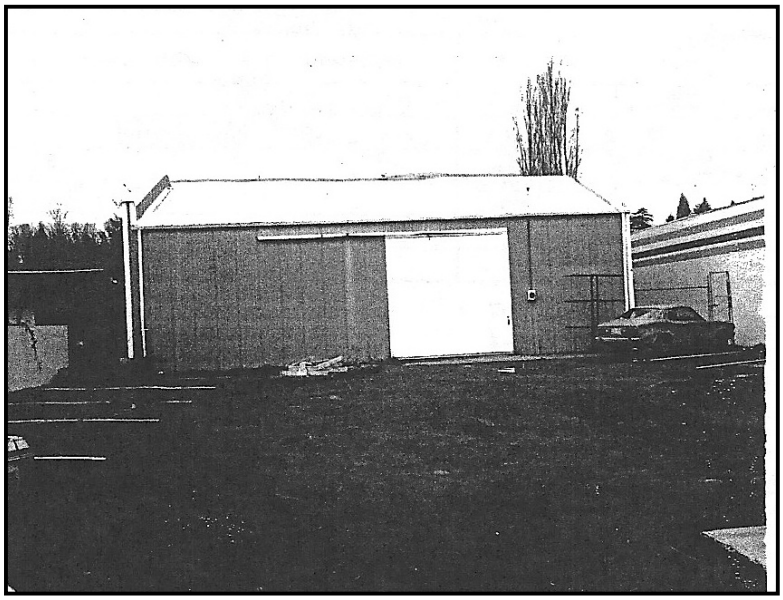

Figure 45: Built in 1961, this historic photo from that year shows the original façade of the building which was a warehouse for an adjacent motorcycle shop. Photo from King County Assessor.

Figure 46: Photo taken by King County Assessor's Office in 2000. Note exterior Chinese lettering and ornamentation.

Figure 47: Today's façade has greatly changed and very little indicates what occurs in this building from the outside.

Analysis

This case study provides an example of organizational innovation through the orderly separation of the mosque buildings for men and women. This case study also lends valuable lessons in the relationship between social confidence and visibility. Questions that arise from this storefront mosque are related to permanency, social acceptance and flexibility. How do immigrants and refugees demonstrate permanency with a mundane building and presumably limited resources? Typically, creating permanency in the physical environment involves a great deal of money for acquisition, design and construction. Another question is related to acceptance. Can you gain acceptance in the community without permanency? What kind of flexibility and visibility is needed to gain acceptance among both insiders and outsiders?

Smith and Bender (2004) describe Muslims' approach to transforming mundane spaces into prayer spaces as organizational innovation. The Al-Noor mosque exemplifies this. The fact that there is a separate building for women to pray in real-time with the men's congregation, a private space to hold *halaquas,* and to intimately gather is quite rare. It provides an opportunity to build and strengthen the sisters' community without interruption. A great deal of the literature questions the requirement of the addition of a women's prayer hall alongside the men's prayer hall, and there are many advocates that support equal space provisions for both sexes. However, the Al-Noor mosque goes beyond what is typically described in the literature and illustrates this organizational innovative approach to providing equal space. This speaks to an orderly structure of separation and prioritizing this value for the congregation as well as increasing flexibility through the separate buildings in order to be inclusive of both sexes, a transgression against the traditional separation of the sexes through a separator wall within one building. There is no mistake in entering the wrong entrance or losing focus in a crowded space for both sexes. In this example, the community is leading the act of process and control.

During the investigation period for this study, the storefront mosque erected a sign on the façade, “Al-Noor Islamic Center.” When quickly asking a Muslim attendant walking by why this sign got installed, the response was “we have a large group here, people need to know where we are.” Social confidence, a growing membership and contribution to the larger neighborhood, via the adjacent small business enclave, all help cultivate ownership and declaration of Muslim space in the built environment. When Biondo (2006) interviewed Syed Raza Associates Architects, designers of the Islamic Society of Orange County in Garden Grove, CA, he found that “Everywhere we see churches and synagogues, now we can say that we have our own building too. That was the reason the community insisted on a dome, to make a bolder statement. They feel they’ve been accepted…if they have their own space, then they have been accepted in this country. It is very important.” Through this quote, Biondo raises important questions for urban planners. “How should we address the relationship between space and the need for Western acceptance in diaspora?” Spaces have multiple meanings and serve diverse purposes. “How do planners create places that are flexible for many different uses over time?” Specific to storefront mosques, “How do we create a process that is adaptable and flexible enough to include, instead of exclude non-Western grassroots community building?” However, in Biondo’s interview, he uses the building of a purpose-built mosque as an example to demonstrate the connection between permanency and social confidence.

Although, on a much smaller and humbler scale, the Al-Noor mosque installed a sign and from the title of the sign (“Al-Noor Islamic Center”), it is clear that this space is Islamic space. The sign has images of a minaret and dome, images that represent purpose-built mosques in the Islamic world. The installation of this sign makes a bolder statement driven by a need to become more visible as a result of growing social confidence and perhaps acceptability in the neighborhood. The use of the minaret and dome images provide a stronger connection to the prayer use as these are recognized features of mosques as

compared to the Islamic center name which signals a community center type use.

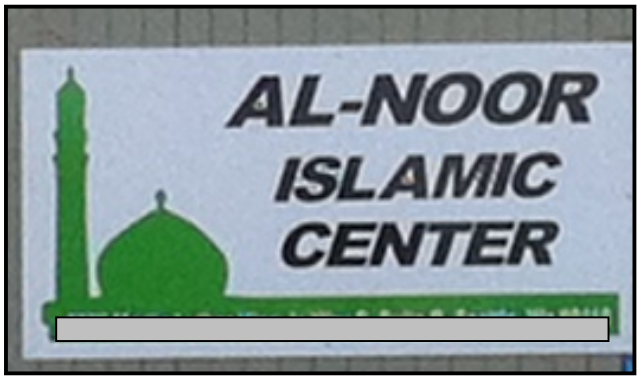

Figure 48: Exterior sign on Al-Noor mosque with images of a minaret and dome. Photo by author.

The Al-Noor mosque is a rental property and as described earlier with the Oromo Cultural Center, ownership is a key element to permanency. However, the installation of the exterior sign and the extreme flexibility and inclusiveness created by offering two separate buildings for the sexes creates a high level of permanency only second to ownership among insiders or Muslim attendees. For outsiders or non-Muslims, the installation of the exterior sign and the images of the minaret and dome provide a level of permanency as these signal a declaration of an Islamic use, though it may be unclear that the primary activity at this site is prayer instead of community activities, typically denoted by the use of the word “center.”

Mahmood Mosque

The Mahmood mosque is located in West Seattle and is on the 2nd floor of a two-story building. Originally built in 1958, as the Regional Christian Church, one can assume that the Muslim community selected this building to rent due to its large open space plan, typically of church layouts and requires minimal interior gutting. This storefront mosque is the only mosque that shares space with a non-Muslim tenant. This building is neither a traditional commercial storefront nor a non-pedigreed vernacular building, but a purpose-built structure. Fifty-six years later, the use continues as a religious one. Can this mosque then be considered a storefront mosque or minimally adapted space consistent with historic uses?

Opened in 2010, the mosque sits in a largely residential area, surrounded by single-family homes and multi-family buildings of less than 25 units. The nearest commercial corridor is approximately 2 miles away. Built on a gentle east-west slope, the mosque occupies the second floor, running parallel to the major north-south arterial located at the top of the slope.

Figure 49: Mahmood mosque looking east. Photo by author.

The Muslim community rents the second floor of the building. In the past, the community rented the entire building, however, in December 2012, they could not keep up with the total monthly rent payments, so they relinquished the first floor and kept the second floor only.

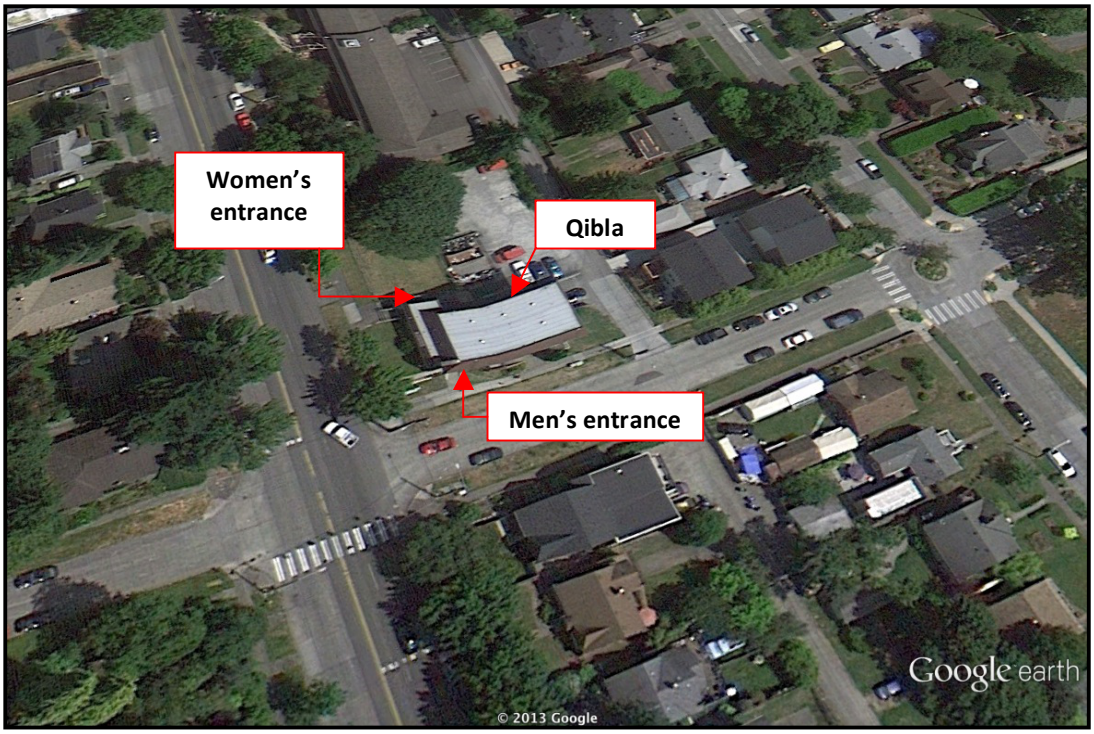

Figure 50: Site plan of Mahood mosque

An anonymous façade

Since it was built, the façade has changed over time, yet the mosque remains underexposed, per Biondo's definition of storefront mosques. The most significant change is the addition of the dark wood shake roof and deep overhang over the original windows. This roof darkens the façade of the building overall and shields the windows from public view. It provides additional privacy for the mosque and curtains aren't necessary for covering the windows, unlike most storefront mosques.

There are no exterior signs that denote the use of the building, other than a free standing sign that indicates the use of the first floor, a public housing organization's management office, on the front lawn. A banner also hangs from the overhang of the façade that advertises "New Homes for Rent" and lists the phone number for the management office in the first floor.

The men's entrance is located at the southern end of the façade while the women's entrance is located on the northern end, directly opposite the men's. There is no separation of the sexes in the lobby area, prior to walking into the prayer hall, thus, it is assumed that men and women may meet each other in the lobby. This is a departure from the typical storefront mosque configuration.

Unlike the Oromo Cultural Center and the Al-Noor Islamic Center, metal shoe racks are located outside of the building, propped up against the buildings' railings, at both men's and women's entrances and thus become part of the overall façade. The deep overhang of the building allows protection of the shoe racks from being exposed to weather and also acts as a barrier from the sidewalk. The shoe racks are an extension of the building.

Inside – hidden from view

The King County Assessor Record on page 60 shows that the former Regional Christian Church Center chapel and altar space were located on the second floor, where the current prayer hall for the mosque is located. The second floor is a rectangular, 73 feet (length) by 35 feet (width) for a total of 2,555 total square feet. Historically, the altar was built parallel to the east wall of the chapel area and presumably pews faced east towards the altar. The first floor used to contain a "glass room area" and an exposed deck facing east, alongside the alleyway.

Similar to Dodds story that describes the re-orientation of a Brooklyn theater into a Turkish prayer hall, the re-orientation forces people to face the back of the theater versus the existing stage. In the prayer hall at Mahmood mosque,

congregants diagonally face the northeastern corner, perpendicular and away from the historic Christian alter (see Figure 52), though all remnants of the alter have been removed. It is easy to get disoriented when one walks into the prayer space, as the carpet lines run diagonal to the rectangular lines of the room.

The men's entrance is directly opposite the women's, on a north-south axis, with no separator, so both sexes see each other as they walk in. There is only one entrance into the prayer space, both men and women use the same entrance and thus see each other walking into the prayer space. Once inside the prayer space, women walk to the south end of the space, where cubicle walls, donated by the office on the first floor, have been lined up to act as a separator between the men and the women.

The lobby area contains two separate bathrooms. A third room is the ablution area, a $10,000 renovation of 5 lowered sinks. There are no women's toilets or ablution areas available for women. Women need to take care of these needs at home or elsewhere, prior to walking into the mosque. The women's bathrooms and sinks were relinquished when the mosque could no longer afford the rent on the first floor.

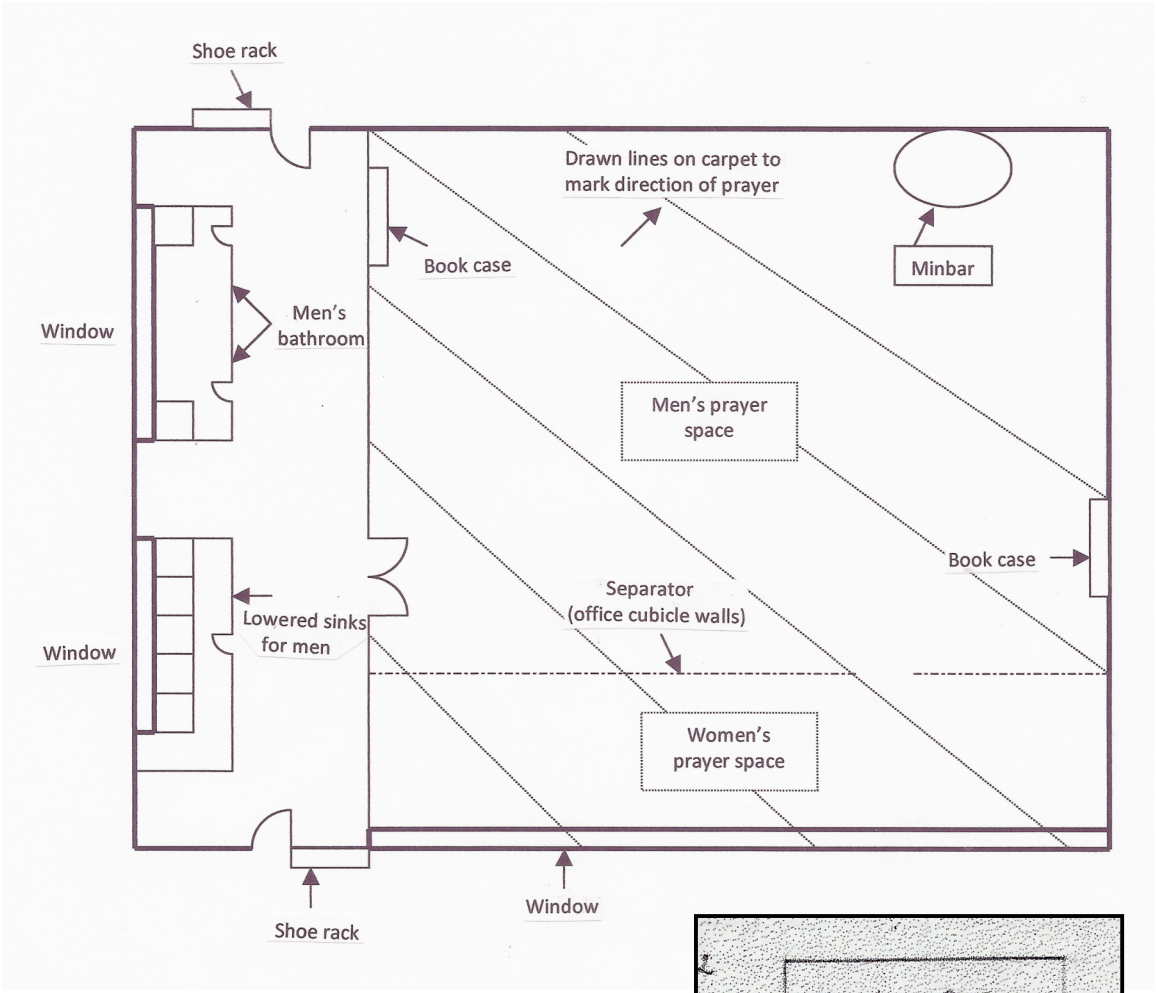

Figure 51: Current floor plan of Mahmood mosque

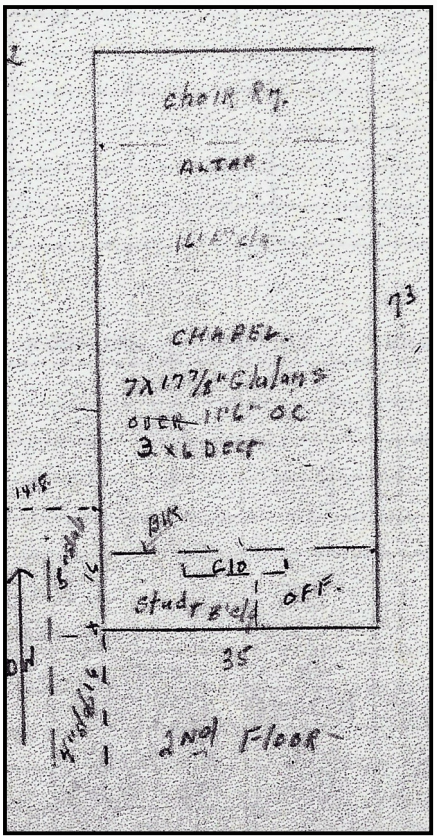

Figure 52: 1957 floor plan of the Regional Christian Church Center. The historic location of the choir and alter faces due east, while in the current floor plan of the Mahmood mosque above aligns the congregation diagonally to face northeast towards Mecca. Photo from King County Assessor.

Sacred and ordered

Walking into the prayer hall, the former chapel provides an open floor plan, one big room where major renovation or gutting is not necessary to create the hall. The room holds approximately 150 men in 2,550 square feet. Similar to the Oromo Cultural Center, the minbar, is carved out of wood, a thin sheet of wood that is ornately carved into a dome shape at the top with space for the imam to sit below.

When the Muslim community was able to afford to rent the entire building, the bulk of the first floor was used as a community center, a place for youth tutoring, Islamic teaching, and interpretation help. The space also provided women's toilets and sinks for ablution.

Now, after giving up the first floor, the women's prayer space doubles as the drop in in youth tutoring program as well as a space for the aforementioned services. These programmatic functions of the mosque are staffed by volunteers and are typically scheduled via cell phone a few hours in advance. There are no set hours for the programmatic activity and the tight word of mouth network allows for these services to be provided, albeit in a seemingly unorganized manner as compared to a fully operational community center with set hours and scheduled events. This system, however, currently works.

Contingent spaces

The mosque is located in a residential neighborhood, on a busy north-south arterial. There is a large contingent of approximately 150 Muslim families living in the surrounding neighborhood. There are little formal gathering spaces in and around the building, outside of the prayer hall. Thus, the sidewalk, lobby area of the first floor office and a gravel alleyway between the building and single-family homes, become informal gathering spaces where men talk and gather before and after Friday prayers.

There is no dedicated parking space for the mosque. Attendees park on neighborhood streets, quickly, for 10-15 minutes at a time for daily *saleh* prayers, and on Friday afternoons, fill all adjacent small streets in the surrounding neighborhood. Some park eight to ten blocks away for Friday prayers. Presumably, former church parking spaces were developed over for the construction of residential homes and small apartment buildings that surround the storefront mosque now.

Legacy

Similar to many historic conversions of religious buildings across the world, a former Christian church is transformed into a different kind religious space, aided by the original outlines of the large open plan.

As of 1991, King County assessor records indicate that the building was still owned by the Regional Christian Church Center. In October 2005, the administrative office purchased the property for $950,000 and in May 2006, a remodel allowed for a change in use, described as “Change of use of existing religious facility to community center & administrative office & addition of parking spaces.” This is an example of re-defining the community center to include a combination of secular and sacred uses and the need for further flexibility to encourage inclusive uses instead of the isolation of uses.

Analysis

The Mahmood mosque is a good example of permanency through the preservation of the original use of the building by adapting the space into another type of a religious facility. Moreover, the $10,000 investment to renovate the existing bathrooms to incorporate ablution areas also signals permanency. Lastly, the location of the storefront mosque in close proximity (approximately two blocks) to a large number of Muslim immigrants and refugees also speaks to permanency. However, on the other hand, improper separation of space between

women and men, lack of women's ablution areas, lack of order demonstrated by the need to combine community center activities with the women's prayer space and the need to share the building with a non-Muslim tenant speaks to the temporary or transient nature of this storefront mosque. Questions that arise from this particular case study are related to accessibility and permanency and level of monetary investment and ability to create permanency with limited square footage.

Following Slyomvics' definition of storefront mosques, this space is completely gutted of prior remnants of the Christian church. Only the walls of the rectangular space remain. It is assumed that the Muslim community selected this particular building due to the layout of the church and the minimal need for interior gutting. The façade remains underexposed (Biondo, 2006) and one can no longer connect the prior Christian use, much less the current Islamic space from the facade. In a way, the Muslim community continues to preserve the original use of the space by maintaining the chapel space as a prayer hall. This is an interesting observation in that it challenges the existing literature on storefront mosques which largely focuses on commercial spaces that are adapted into mosques. Furthermore, the use of the word "storefront" is imposed by researchers in order to attempt to categorize these transgressive structures, however the act of mosque building at the grassroots level is much more organic, less formulaic and prompts re-thinking the way researchers approach transition in the built environment.

Initially, the community sought to transform the entire building into a community center with the mosque on the 2nd floor and a programmed space on the first floor. Perhaps, this drove the decision to incorporate a non-profit organization under the name of High Reach Youth Center. When the congregation could no longer afford the monthly rent payments, the programmatic portion of the building got scaled down to a very small contingent, being combined with the women's prayer hall (approximately 30' x 5' space) in the larger prayer hall on one floor.

This combining of spaces decreases the overall space available for women to pray or hold knowledge-sharing activities among themselves. Unlike the Al-Noor mosque's separate women's building, the women at the Mahmood mosque have limited opportunity to build community.

The location of the mosque in a largely residential neighborhood departs from the typically geographic boundaries of storefront mosques, primarily being sited in commercial corridors. In fact, eleven out of the twelve mosques identified in this study are found on commercial corridors, busy arterial streets, adjacent to commercial, retail uses. The reasons for the location of this mosque vary. One primary reason is the near 150 Muslim families that live in the surrounding mixed-income rental community. Another reason is to provide an accessible space for Muslims on the west side of the city, where most storefront mosques are located on the east side of the city. Similar to the Cham mosque, a single-family home in a residential setting, the Mahmood mosque is completely underexposed in this residential surrounding.

The location of the Mahmood mosque is interesting in that it mimics the Dix mosque and the Yemni community's re-development of the area surrounding the mosque in Michigan by incorporating all Muslim households in close proximity to the mosque. Although, this storefront mosque is underexposed or not highly visible as a mosque to non-Muslims, this mosque is highly accessible and therefore, a permanent institution for the 150 Muslim households living near the mosque. The level of accessibility provides a significant indicator of permanency for this particular storefront mosque.

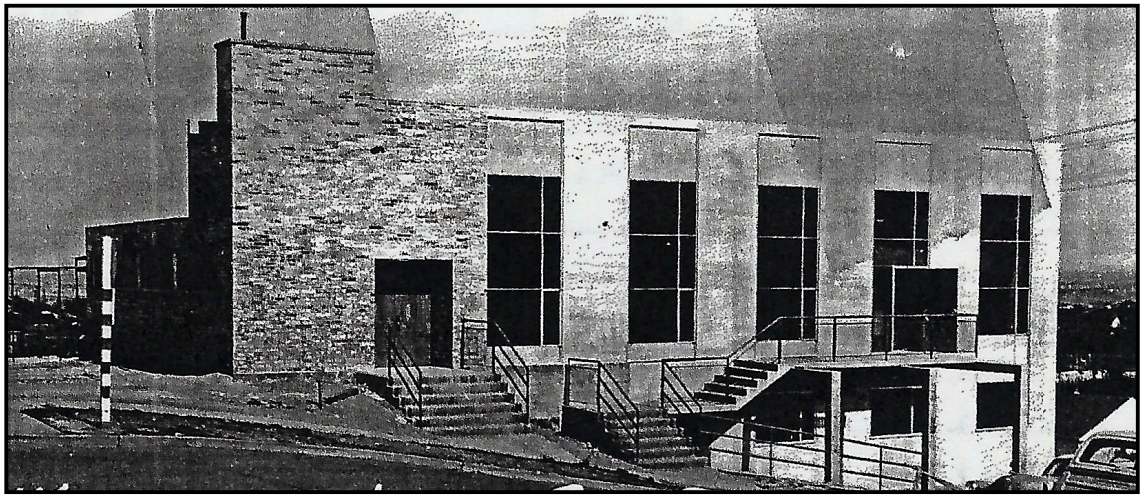

Figure 53: 1957 photo of the building, built that same year, specifically constructed for the Regional Christian Church Center. Photo from King County Assessor.

Figure 54: Today's façade of Mahood mosque, looking northeast. Deep awnings cover the windows and create a feeling of seclusion as compared to the 1957 photo above in which the windows are fully open to the street. Photo by author.

Summary

The three case studies largely follow what researchers have found about storefront mosques. Seattle storefront mosques are found in both traditional commercial storefronts and non-pedigreed vernacular architecture, such as warehouses. In Seattle, groups select buildings based on past prior uses that provide large, open area plans, for minimal re-configuration. Many of the storefront mosques in Seattle are also the focal point for the birth of Muslim enclaves, with adjacent businesses providing specialty food stuffs, goods and services that support the community.

However Seattle storefront mosques illustrate some new components that could add to the literature on the subject. Namely, the discussion on the non-profit incorporation of these congregations as centers: youth centers, cultural centers, Islamic centers. The current literature lacks investigation on ownership or organizational structure (for renting purposes) of storefront mosques.

This emerging theme signifies a desire to provide a more comprehensive service to the Muslim community living in diaspora. Prayer is the priority, the focus of the interior gut and re-configuration once a building is secured, however, the community desires programs that are a combination of “traditional” services provided by an imam, such as conflict resolution, and new services, such as interpretation help. Thus, these spaces are becoming multi-purpose centers with not only sacred meaning ascribed to them, but also a means for survival.

The next chapter describes how Seattle storefront mosques are contributing to the social fabric of the community.

CHAPTER 5: Social significance of storefront mosques in Seattle

Storefront mosques have real place meaning. This chapter describes the mosque as a social stage and begins with definitions of mosques by my key informants. Beginning this chapter in this way allows us to understand that mosque spaces are seen from a variety of viewpoints in the Muslim eyes. Next, a deeper look at the social significance of storefront mosques is explained by using a story-telling approach and the results of my informant interviews. Three themes arise through the stories that exhibit dual tensions. These themes are: sacred vs. profane, temporary vs. permanent and insider vs. outsider. I imposed an analytic structure in this chapter and categorized the information that I collected into specific themes in order to create a clear platform on which to make my interpretations. However, it should be noted that the dynamism of these spaces can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. In this chapter, I categorize the themes by contrasting them or using a binary approach, but these themes can be further bisected in multiple layers, across each other. For example, can a storefront mosque be sacred if it is temporary? Or, can an insider be an authentic Muslim if he prays in a profane building? Through the discussion of the themes, we look at how Muslims balance or negotiate their daily religious needs and new life in the diaspora.

I asked several informants, who are both immigrants and storefront mosque attendees, what constitutes a mosque for him or her. These are what some of my informants had to say about their definition of a mosque:

> "A mosque is not a mosque if it is not owned by community. Ownership means that the use will continue on forever. If a building is rented, it is called a place of prayer because the use can change at any time. Mosques are open all times of day, during the night, especially for the early morning prayers, called *tarawih"* [which typically occur between 2 and 3am].
>
> "Where at least 40 people come to pray, that is a mosque. The building doesn't matter, it's a matter of congregation and regular congregation during the week."

> "A mosque is a large, beautiful building with calligraphy, the names of Allah and the Prophet are inscribed. There is tile, doors with woodcarvings, light streaming through windows. It is a quiet place, carpets are cleaned once or twice a year. You feel God in this kind of place."
>
> "An ideal mosque is an interchangeable space for prayer and community building and community mobilization. If a mosque is only used 10 minutes during the day five times a day (for daily *saleh* prayers), there could be an additional 23 hours that can be used for other purposes either by Muslims exclusively, for Islam school, and or for both Muslims and the greater neighborhood, be they non-Muslims. Building Muslim community through a variety of support programs similar to a community center is important and building community with the greater neighborhood to gain support, understanding, and foster education of Muslim life is also important."

There are varying viewpoints on constitutes a mosque. The ability to provide free and unencumbered congregational space for a minimum amount of persons is one opinion. Another informant is clearly moved by artistic elements that are typically found in purpose-built mosques, which mimic walking into the Islamic world. The third informant focuses on the ownership structure of the building and the significance in maintaining the mosque use in perpetuity, without fear of an outside party affecting it. Lastly, the ability to connect with and move in and out of the surrounding non-Muslim environment is a key factor for this informant who envisions a multi-use space, programmed for a variety of services, not only serving non-Muslims, but also building community through other means of activity, such as family support programs.

Taking a closer look at these definitions of mosques reveals social tensions that Muslims are negotiating on a daily basis. For example, the informant who is drawn to the elaborate tile and Arabic calligraphy is reminded of a place where this artistry is dominant and is the norm, where traditional design invokes the sacredness of prayer. Without it, the feeling is not the same. This tension speaks to the sacred vs. profane. Can prayer truly be sacred without the artistry of the

Islamic world? In another scene, the informant who stresses the congregational aspect of prayer focuses on the preservation of the *ummah* or community of believers. Regular congregational prayer brings comfort to this individual, maintaining the connection to both religious practice and community, regardless of the environment in which this occurs. In this case, tension occurs between the temporary vs. permanent, permanent being the preservation of the community of believers and the willingness to make this visible to the outside world and temporary pointing to the act of keeping prayer behind closed doors.

The next section describes a more thorough analysis of these three themes. The sacred vs. profane theme is related to the physical structure of the storefront mosque and it's ability or inability to invoke the sacred, to serve as a place of spiritual refuge and connection. The temporary vs. permanent theme address the degree of visibility that Muslims are willing to create in the built environment as a result of social confidence. Lastly, the insider vs. outsider theme deals with the tensions between living in the diaspora and living among the diversity of Muslims and restructuring storefront mosques to build uniformity in Western world.

Theme 1: Sacred vs. profane

Stories

Jamila is a Mediterranean African from Algeria and moved to Seattle seeking asylum from the country's civil war. She describes herself as Muslim and modern. She doesn't wear a hijab and currently works as an office manager, staffing the front desk of a large multi-cultural community center facility. She is engaged to a Christian man, and envisions a world where mosques and Christian churches are built next to each other. She cites Egypt as an example, because "God creates all religions, [people] can know each other and talk about the religions, no violence, talk about relations."

When we meet for our interview, Jamila brings computer printouts of grand mosques in Algeria, two of which she fondly remembers from when she lived there. The Masjid Jamal-Kabir has one minaret and high concrete white washed walls. The Masjid Jamal-Casbah, Jamila explains, built by the Turkish in the 1600s, has two minarets and is surrounded by homes built by the Turks. She proudly points out the details of the minarets, the wooden doors and arches of the Ottoman style mosque. Of these mosques, she further states, "Like the oldest mosque in Algeria, these mosques never change from the 1600s or 1700s. Mosques don't change over time. They are there forever, you can always go there when you need Allah."

Jamila primarily prays at home, attends the Idriss Mosque in the Northgate neighborhood during the special season of Ramadan and attends the Mahmood Mosque "every once in awhile." When asked how she feels when praying at the Idriss mosque, she responds, "Very spiritual, everything is taken out from you, you are another person, you are clean, feel God present in mosque, you feel presence of the Prophet [Mohammed]."

She labels the Mahmood Mosque as a temporary space and doesn't refer to it as a "real" mosque, "If it's just a room, it's not a mosque. Nothing designed in temporary mosques, they are not Arabic." She further explains that temporary mosques don't have a place for the imam to sit and that "Temporary mosques don't feel spiritual, there are no minarets, no call to prayer. Better to stay at home and pray. It's more harder to build [mosques] here. Commercial space transfer to mosque just for prayer is not a real mosque. In home country, there is a mosque in every street." When asked about exterior signs on the mosque, Jamila comments, "There are no signs on temporary mosques, no reason to put signs, it's just a commercial space. You put sign only to mark to the outside world, to others." Jamila's comments reveal interesting questions related to the naming and existence of the storefront mosque. Are storefront mosques the result of a lack of space, conditions and process for the creation of much needed Islamic spaces in neighborhoods? Are outsiders imposing the term "storefront" mosque on Muslim immigrants to describe those particular spaces that the Western world has not fully embraced as "Western" spaces as well?

Jamila does acknowledge that mosques are important community institutions, however. She refers to recent immigrants from Arab countries, Vietnam and Somalia. "They need place for them, need to connect with community, they are homesick. When you are at the mosque, you forget you are away." She also describes that mosques are small in Seattle, and that secular spaces, such as the Washington State Convention Center and the conference room at the neighborhood Boys & Girls Club are used for annual Eid holidays, at which hundreds of Muslims attend. She describes that "some [non-Muslims] don't know about mosques," elaborating on the fact that most people don't realize that these large spaces accommodate the Muslim population for religious purposes, although the current and daily use is for secular activities.

When asked about her ideal mosque, Jamila states that she would take from both modern and old styles and combine them. She makes a list of her preferred

components, from modern ablution areas with marble sinks, tiles, and woodcarvings to minarets of white marble, names of the prophets in Arabic calligraphy, and arches with very high ceilings. Her face beams when she explains that in her mosque, the sun would shine into the prayer hall from every corner of the building. She'll keep the current tradition of separation of the sexes, but with newer carpets.

Imam Mahad talks about leading prayers each week. Mahad reached Seattle two years ago and presides over the Al-Noor Islamic Center. He is Somali and through an interpreter, he explains, that many Somalis feel disconnected and seek out the mosque as a place for connection. He currently lives in the Lake Apartments, a low-income 200+ unit apartment complex, where many East African families live. He lives about three miles from the mosque. He is reluctant to respond to my list of interview questions, instead we have a conversation about the story of the mosque and his experience leading prayers in the United States.

Mahad doesn't like the existing layout of the Al-Noor Islamic Center because of the location of the bathroom. In general, there are no toilets in mosques, only ablution areas for ritual washing. However, the layout of the prior warehouse building has the toilet twenty feet from the minbar, from where he leads prayer from a simple wood podium. "It's not good to have the bathroom so close, the masjid is supposed to be a clean space." He mentions that when the community has the funds, they will re-design the space to address the toilet issue.

Mahad does note that the there are advantages to the building and site. The men's prayer space is very large and open such that it can provide room for up to 500, considering that the men stand in straight lines to pray and prostrate. Additionally, this is the only site that has a separate and dedicated building for the women to pray and hold khutba, women's and girl's teachings. This is good "because Allah wants that men and women be separated during prayer." I am

allowed to take photos of the two buildings, however, he doesn't allow photos to be taken of the interior space. "The inside of the mosque is sacred, we don't allow photos back home, so why here? Allah is greater than photos, no need to take photos, there is nothing in here."

Leading Friday prayers in the United States is a unique experience for imam Mahad. He explains that he's happy to see many different people from different countries pray in the building, but he says that many people ask for help and there is no space to counsel them, although the men's prayer building has ample space when worshippers aren't praying. Instead, he meets with people in the small business enclave next to the mosque. A defunct barbershop doubles as a travel office for *hajj* trips as well as counseling space for the imam. "The mosque is for prayer only, but people want for other things. This is not acceptable [for people to meet in the mosque for activity other than prayer]." Thus, the large space is vacant for the bulk of each day. He is not concerned about using the mosque for other activities, as "it is not done back home."

Addis, from Ethiopia, attends the Oromo Cultural Center, and explains when asked about the difference among the mosques in her country and the mosques in Seattle, explains, "It's the same, it doesn't make a difference, in this kind [mosques in Seattle] or using this kind [mosques in Ethiopia], it doesn't make a difference in the use or in the religion, but yes, when you see from the outside, yes, it's different. For us, to use is the same place."

Addis arrived in Seattle through a refugee program three years ago. Through an Eritrean interpreter, Addis explains in Amharic the mosques back in Ethiopia, "some has the tower, some has the dome. These are the mosque ones," as she points to an image of the Great Mosque in Sfax, a Tunsian mosque in the book titled *Islam: Art and Architecture*. I used this book with interview participants to point out elements of purpose-built mosques from countries across the globe. "Here in Seattle, they use like a house or an apartment [for a mosque]. Even the

one in Tukwila [referring to the Al-Bakr mosque converted from an old casino], looks like businesses next door, so it's a simple building."

Addis prefers to focus on the functional differences of mosques between Ethiopia and Seattle.

> "The way it's done [in Ethiopia] is like, there's sections where you put the Koran, there's sections where praying, it has those sections, but here, it doesn't have sections, so we go as we can, use the space as possible. Separate sections they have back home. A section that's built for them like a section for shoes. To compare with the ones here [in Seattle], we put the shoes on a shelf, made of regular shelves, not nice ones back home. Like the sections inside, where women pray is separate. We even do it here [in Seattle] too."

> "But some of the bathrooms, the way they are done are different here. The sink is lower, it's done appropriately to the way they have to use it [in Ethiopia]. But here, it's like regular [tall]. For example, in this mosque [pointing to the image of the Great Mosque in Sfax], the *wudu* [ablution] is done the way it should be. People can sit in line and wash together. One bathroom, one person at a time here [in Seattle], so that's a big difference."

Although Addis explains the differences between mosques in Ethiopia and in Seattle, she explains that the absence of elements from her home country don't impact the sacredness of the Seattle space. She describes,

> "With respect to the peacefulness inside, it's mostly, pretty much comparably the same, except some people bring their small kids, back home, small kids are not allowed in the prayers, no kids back home. The other thing good about this one here [pointing to the image of the Great Mosque in Sfax], when there is a mosque, there is a beginning of prayer, they have a big microphone, back home, the whole area can hear [the call to prayer], here [in Seattle] you don't hear. Only inside, people that are inside, you can hear [the call to prayer], but you can't even hear next door."

When asked about how she found the storefront mosque, Addis replies, "Only one place I saw with a sign, otherwise unless somebody take you, you wouldn't recognize as a mosque. For the users, they have to have a sign, now there should be a sign, so the users can know there's a mosque here, otherwise

unless somebody take you, you wouldn't know. For outsiders, it's up to them, if they want to know, its good, but it's mostly to the users, they need to know that a mosque is here."

Discussion

Jamila's story represents the tension between spiritual refuge and refuge for homesick immigrants and refugees. For her, the storefront mosque provides a significant contribution to community by offering a space for Muslims living in diaspora, but the same space does not provide the spiritual connection to God. Invoking the sacred also requires architectural elements found in the Islamic world. These elements act as a trigger, a prompt for the desired experience to come. Without them, the experience doesn't occur.

Women are not required to pray in a congregation. Most pray at home and as Jamila does, attend a mosque during holy times or special events. It is interesting to note that Jamila goes to the Idriss mosque during Ramadan, which is at least a thirty-minute drive from her job. For this annual holy time, Jamila, joins many Muslim women in attending a mosque. It should be noted that the Idriss mosque is a purpose-built mosque, Seattle's first, constructed in the 1980s with funding support from Kuwait. This is an interesting note because the Mahmood mosque is within walking distance from her job, yet, she does not frequent this mosque because it is a "commercial space transfer," and she cannot call upon the sacred there.

Highly architectural exteriors make a statement, a declaration of "otherness" to both Muslims and non-Mulsims. It's a reference point in the built landscape. Muslims will be able to identify with the building, others may not, but they may experience a feeling that this building is not for them, it's not their space.

The service is provided for in the interior, but making a statement, an announcement, a declaration of Muslim space meets a larger goal of learning how to balance lived religion in a new country with different norms. It's a cultural product and a reference point in a new environment. "Numerous studies have confirmed that new immigrants forming religious communities in the American context effectively fashion mosques, temples and gurdwaras into structures that exhibit cultural and structural elements similar to those constituting Christian and Jewish congregations" (Warner 1994; Warner and Wittner 1998; Edbaugh and Chafetz 2000a; Yang and Ebaugh 2001a).

Jamila's note about the Washington State Convention Center and the conference room at the local Boys & Girls Club acting as spaces for religious events is revealing. These spaces are merely providing adequate space for the masses, but for her, are not sacred places. For these certain days, these spaces become transformed into sacred places. Storefront mosques meet the masses at a neighborhood level, but do not provide the level of sacredness needed for spiritual refuge. Space is needed for the growing number of believers, and we adapt secular spaces, but ultimately, these places are not permanent places of prayer. Profane spaces help to bring the masses together to meet religious needs, spiritual goals for big events. For Jamila, the place meaning of storefront mosques serves the process of assimilation, not sacred needs. It's not a sacred place, but she does acknowledge that storefront mosques are needed for national or ethnic connection, social networking, easing homesickness, and are critical places for joining community in an unknown country.

Mahad's story describes how a profane building is transformed into a highly sacred space with place meaning. At this storefront mosque, there's a strict following of the mosque norms of the home country. One norm is the prohibition of multiple uses in the mosque, prayer is the only allowable activity. However, Muslims are seeking more from the mosque than what the mosque currently wants to provide. Similar to Jamila's story, Muslims are seeking out the

storefront mosque not only for religious needs, but for community support and connection. Storefront mosques become a destination for both needs. In the neighborhood environment, storefront mosques can become the nexus for additional services, business and support.

Another interesting element to Mahad's story is the extreme separation of the sexes. By providing a separate building for women, not just a separate space, cordoned off from the men's prayer space, this storefront mosque is going beyond the norm. The fact that there is a separate building for women is telling. This supersedes the minimum requirement for the separation of the sexes and illustrates a determination to keep outside influences, whether Muslim or non-Muslim from the primary prayer space. It's performing a sacred extreme in an unfamiliar land where norms are entirely different. Whereas, storefront mosques provide the minimal requirements for prayer, and in some, leave out women's prayer space, for a variety of reasons, this particular storefront mosque allows for women's complete autonomy.

The prior interior layout of the warehouse building poses threats to the level of sacredness due to the proximity of the toilet to the minbar, however. Lack of funds prohibits the imam from re-configuring the space to meet this particular norm. In this case, the building does not work in creating the ultimate sacred space. This existing nuisance is something that until funds are raised, will have to remain and blight the mosque.

Similar to Jamila's statement about large spaces accommodating the masses, Mahad is pleased with the ability for this storefront mosque to do the same. Minimal staging on the inside allows for a maximum number of believers to connect with each other and the sacred. Congregation is the key for maximum connection and sacredness, not the architectural elements that Jamila desires.

Men are required to pray in a congregational setting, and the interior of the mosque building must be designed in a way that guides the congregation's prayer. The exterior is of no importance in the improvisation of the building so long as the service and opportunity for congregational prayer is available and is well used by the users.

Addis focuses on the functionality of the storefront mosque. These preparations for the act of prayer could put a Muslim off balance when norms can't be followed due to the limitations of the current space or when norms, such as the call to prayer, are seen as a nuisance to the non-Muslim dominant neighborhood. She affirms that it is peaceful inside a storefront mosque, that a profane building as compared to a highly architectural building doesn't impact the act of prayer or faith. The tension lies in the preparations to prayer, and the approach to the mosque can be difficult at first, as well.

Balancing life in a new country, Muslims must learn to navigate their own buildings and spaces. Muslims can't even find their own mosques at first, as storefront mosques do not have exterior signage. It's even difficult for Muslims to know what door they can enter – male or female – because of the lack of signage. Muslims must help each other navigate these new customs. Back home, such navigation is not needed.

Addis believes that storefront mosques don't impact the act of prayer, however the preparations for prayer must be revised. These preparations depart from the usual, ritual, scripted activities that Muslims perform to get ready, to get clean, for prayer. Does this then impact the prayer act itself when the preparations are off balance? Addis doesn't believe so when she states that the space is just as peaceful, except for the small kids allowed inside, which is not a norm. The storefront mosque is an emerging environment that incorporates the minimum requirements and which prompts Muslims to revise rituals. Storefront mosques are an available resource in a country where Islamic resources are scarce.

Theme 2: Temporary vs. permanent

Stories

Abdul is the director of a non-profit civic organization for Muslim community. Having immigrated from Pakistan, Abdul works with the Muslim community to register people to vote, inform them of their civil rights to request time off of work or school in advance for Islamic holidays and advocates for more positive portrayal of Muslims in media. “I didn’t go to Friday prayers until college, legally, you can request time off for prayer and congregate. People have the right to have a day off of work. I missed many, many Eids.”

Having visited many mosques across Washington State to register Muslims to vote and educate people about their rights as Muslims, Abdul is familiar with many of the storefront mosques included in this study as well as the purpose-built mosques that are typically found in Seattle’s suburban cities. “I lost this ‘my mosque’ thing. I don’t have one place that I go, I go to every single one [mosque].”

When asked, about using the word “temporary” to describe storefront mosques, as Jamila labeled them, Abdul replies, “I don’t know how temporary they are. Unless they’re renting them, unless something outstanding happens, they’re not quite temporary. If they own the property, I imagine, they are going to expand, they’ve been there for as long. Refugees come in different waves. The Cham, Southeast Asians, came in the 1980s, they built two major mosques and they’re still there. They look temporary, but they are quite there.”

Regarding exterior signage, there is controversy over the installation of signage, which for some, convey a willingness to be seen and recognized in the neighborhood, otherwise signaling a desire for stability versus instability by maintaining invisible in the landscape. Abdul notes, “I wish they had signage,

name, website, phone number and e-mail address. They need to have more visibility because that creates normalcy and an image that this [the mosque] is part of the neighborhood and part of the community." Abdul further recommends:

> "Signs are the most cost effective. 3 ft x 6 ft, should be good enough. It's important for the larger neighborhood to know about the prayer space, what happens there, who the people are that go there, how they can contribute and get involved. For people to know who their neighbors are, so when things happen to them, at the very least, stand with them, see them as your neighbors, and whenever your neighbors go through something, you help them. Sometimes they don't put marks, because they don't want to invite any attacks or anything, you want to be just a neighbor next door, so they see you, they see a name, and it protects you from attacks."

Abdul explains that there is no specific membership function of a mosque. "There is no form of membership of mosques, they go to a prayer space, wherever they find themselves [at prayer time]. There's no proper membership, there's no membership dues, their funding just comes from fundraising events, they don't belong to certain mosques." While having no membership structure is contrary to the format of American Christian or Jewish congregations, there is a need to build a membership structure to engage Muslims at a civic level. However, it is difficult to develop this structure when worshippers attend mosques in a scattered manner.

Though storefront mosques are managed through volunteers, Abdul recalls that "I was introduced to the idea of a women's section in a mosque and community center feel of a mosque when I came to the U.S. It [mosques in Pakistan] was a men's prayer space and prayer space only, they had discussions, lectures, teachings, of course, Koran classes, not like a potluck center or community gathering, or elections. It's really just prayer and learning, educational space. That was one difference."

While Abdul advocates for installation of signage on storefront mosques, Yasser disagrees. Yasser is in his early twenties and traveled to Seattle from Somalia through a refugee program. He works near the Mahmood mosque for a property management company and took time out of his workday to meet me in the afternoon, specifically when no prayers were scheduled in the mosque.

Yasser believes that the Mahmood mosque isn't a mosque because it is a rented space. "This building has no relation to a mosque. If you buy it [property], own it, then it's a real mosque." In fact, he becomes agitated when I refer to the building as a mosque, which is registered as a non-profit organization called the High Reach Youth Center, asking me to refer to the building as a place of prayer instead. An African-American Muslim convert explains further, "The Muslim community doesn't like to name their mosques as mosque buildings. The fear of attack is still very real and Muslims typically call their buildings community centers to ward off any problems." Abdul confirms, "If you're seeing mosques being burned to the ground…when you see that happening, let's take all the precautions we can and don't put up signs."

Yasser does feel that the mosque serves a particular purpose in helping newly arrived immigrants and refugees. "Those who recently came to the U.S. need interpretation to fill out paperwork. The mosque's purpose is to retain cultural values while assimilating to new community. It's a culture shock for people, for families, the mosque is here to help. Many Muslim families live nearby."

When asked about the mosque exterior, Yasser states that "Domes, minarets, tiles are not required for a mosque. It's not important to look like a mosque on the outside. It's better to retain the structure, but not add to it. We need a space for praying, that's all. This building doesn't signify Muslims only. We share it with an office downstairs. They support our prayer space, donating cubicle walls to us. We use the cubicle walls to create the women's prayer space. The prayer

experience doesn't change, Muslims can pray everywhere. We don't need a sign for the mosque."

Yasser doesn't allow me to take photos of the lowered sinks used for ablution. Nor does he allow taking photos of the carved wood minbar. He says that "No one needs to see what we are doing here. It's for prayer only, no need to take photos."

When asked what Yasser would want in an ideal mosque, he states, that he would add a women's bathroom (for comfort) and ablution spaces for women as none currently exist. In the past, the Muslim community rented both floors the building. The first floor provided classroom space and the women's bathroom. When the community could no longer afford the rent on both floors, and opted to rent just one floor for the mosque, they lost access to separate women's bathrooms and the much need classroom space. Today, the women's prayer section doubles as the youth tutoring space and Islamic prayer teaching. Yasser also desired a more structured drop in center program for youth tutoring. "Everyone is a volunteer, people come and go for prayer and people connect through cell phone to meet for tutoring. They sit on the carpeted floor in the women's prayer section. They lost the space to have separate tables and chairs on the first floor."

Discussion

In Christian or Jewish congregations, it is typically to belong to specific church or synagogue, to be a member of a specific place. In the Muslim diaspora, as Abdul explains, there is no membership structure and no "my mosque thing." Thus, one can argue that place meaning of a specific storefront mosque does not exist and that the absence of a membership structure or dedication to one particular mosque implies impermanence with storefront mosques. In this way, the act of prayer becomes permanent, but the place of prayer can be very fluid.

However, when talking about the Cham mosques, these mosques may look temporary, indeed, one is a single-family residence that hasn't changed in over 40 years, but Abdul argues that this storefront mosque is quite permanent and that the Cham have been here for a long time. Permanency is presented in a different way, not by an elaborate constructed purpose-built building, but through the simple fact that they haven't moved their location since arriving to the city. Their long-term presence in one spot ties them to the community rather than their building, which looks "temporary, but is quite there."

Yasser asserts the right to pray everywhere, yet he maintains the invisibility of such activity. There is no desire to highlight to the outside world the primary activity occurring inside a storefront mosque, and in doing so, there is no desire to create a sense of "otherness," that something unique, unusual or out of the ordinary or ordinary is occurring behind closed doors. Halpern (1998) best describes this weaving in of invisible interactions not tied to place, "Community is not just a place, although place is very important, but a series of day-to-day, ongoing, often invisible practices. The practices are connected but not connected to place."

He affirms that it is not important for the current building to look like a mosque, rather ownership and single purpose use of the entire building takes priority over exterior re-configuration or added decoration. Like Jamila, Yasser finds that the storefront mosque is a place of refuge for those immigrants and refugees needing critical services, such as interpretation and youth tutoring. As it stands now, the storefront mosque is a multi-purpose space with multiple tenants, some non-Muslims, sharing the building. Thus, reaching permanency is currently out of reach. Muslims can pray in this space, but they do not have an official say over or right to dictate the uses of the rest of the building.

The question that arises around ownership is this: if ownership is achieved, does social confidence of the Muslim community increase? Earlier arguments contend

that ownership can drive the growth of social confidence and once this occurs, interacting with the larger neighborhood becomes the next step to increase visibility. This is the strategy that Abdul was encouraging by advocating for sign installation. Becoming a member of the larger neighborhood provides protection. Which strategy provides the greater protection? Keeping to themselves or declaring otherness? Creating normalcy by being visible, joining the neighborhood in a public way could be a strategy for protection. Once seen, visibility becomes permanent.

Choosing to use the words “youth center,” as the name of your registered organization as compared to selecting the word “mosque” or “masjid” to reflect the primary activity of prayer that occurs in the space is telling. Reasons for this are varied. Earlier it was mentioned that protection was the key driver, to protect the building from attack by the outside world. Others argue that emerging community groups intimately understand their community’s needs and desires and are creating grassroots initiatives to address these issues. Others still state that the separation of religion and social issues allows for greater inclusion across nationalities and ethnicities. Lastly, the fact that the organization does not own the building outright, also points to the inability to label the building as a mosque. Practically speaking, the social service themed registration enables the community to fundraise under a non-profit organizational structure.

Muslims prioritize privacy and refuge around prayer, yet they mobilize themselves in a public manner in order to navigate unknown processes and systems in a non-Muslim environment. Folding in a sacred use under a secular process is a strategy to balance tensions between long-standing religious, cultural, ethnic, and national identities in the process of assimilation while practicing in a temporary place.

Theme 3: Insider vs. outsider

Stories

Aisha runs her own small business, Aisha's Café, one door down from a small storefront mosque, which occupies a single-family home and attached garage that was built in the early 190ss. Having arrived to Seattle through a refugee program from Somalia, Aisha refers to the small storefront mosque as a "house prayer" and not a mosque. She prays daily in her café, among the tables and chairs. Prayer time occurs during our conversation, so Aisha excuses herself while I wait to continue the interview.

To pray in her café, Aisha first creates a private prayer space for herself by pulling down a curtain that she has wound up around a rod attached to the café ceiling. After turning down the curtain, Aisha rolls out an individual Persian style rug on which she stands and prostrates. It only takes her a few minutes to pray and afterwards, she wounds the curtain back up and we continue the interview.

Figure 55: Prayer curtain in Aisha's Cafe

Aisha says it's easier for her to pray in the café while she is keeping watch over her business instead of walking the thirty steps to the mosque. She's owned her business for nearly 12 years. In 2007, the storefront mosque appeared. "No women come during the day to this masjid. At the masjid, you see people come to pray regularly like home. There used to be a mosque building on 23rd Avenue. The 2001 earthquake happened and the building broke. So, the community decided on the house prayer, near the old mosque, a block away. For Somalis, this is the only masjid close to downtown." She mentions the proximity to downtown to add that many Muslim taxi drivers frequent this storefront mosque because it is a convenient location for them.

When asked, is the storefront mosque a real mosque, Aisha replies, "No, it's a house. People just put down rugs and pray. Here you need to buy something to mark qibla, at home [in Somalia], you know where you are praying. Mosque back home has dome and minarets. There are no house prayer like on this street. Mosque is very big, the building is same with tiles and lights. Dome and four minarets back home, it's the same as in Saudi Arabia." In this quote, Aisha debates about the authenticity of the "house prayer" in contrast to those in Muslim dominated countries. For Aisha, when the traditional Islamic elements of the mosque, such as the dome and minaret, are missing, the ability to connect with Allah or seek refuge or peace through congregational prayer is compromised.

When asked what her ideal mosque would be, Aisha talks about buying a place, "make it a regular masjid, Ottoman style with minarets, many Koranic writing, more parking, more charity, a dome." She plans have a big space for women to pray and a microphone so that women can hear the lectures that the men are listening to in the men's prayer area. She'd also plan a space for children. "Men pray in front, women behind, make separate. No pictures, just calligraphy with the names of Allah and [Prophet] Mohammed."

The storefront mosque next to her café is primarily used for daily prayers, five times a day, ten to fifteen minutes each time. During Ramadan, the *tarawih* prayers are also conducted here, during the early morning hours of 2 or 3am after breaking the fast at dinnertime. This storefront mosque is a 24-hour building. Like Jamila, Aisha only goes to the Idriss mosque at Northgate during the special time of Ramadan. However, the daily saleh is on her café floor. When running errands, Aisha will stop at the SeaTac mosque, if she is near that location for the saleh prayer. She says that she doesn't have any favorite mosques in Seattle. Aisha reminisces about Ramadan in her home country:

> "…During Ramadan time, when you are little girl, you bring food, praying, be with family and friends. Big masjid, see many people you don't see before. It's a good day. Eid prayer, special time. At home [in Somalia], you see the same people around, use the same language, see many people here that are different. Lots of difference here. Miss everything back home [in Somalia], places, buildings, you relax at home, a lot of pressure is gone. There is discrimination here [in Seattle] and people treat you differently here. At home everyone is the same. Most beautiful at Ramadan, waiting to eat, make food, order food from her café and make money for Ramadan for charity. Food as donation and charity for utility for building, community place."

When asked if the surrounding neighbors know about the storefront mosque, Aisha replies, "They [non-Muslims] know already, they know without sign or go into Aisha Café [to ask about the mosque]. People know, see taxi drivers around. Long-time with mosque, no problem. Some neighbors didn't like taxis parked in the neighborhood, took away parking. I offered my spaces for taxis. Many complaints about parking."

"At the masjid, you see people come to pray regularly like home. People pray, then go. People are working, so they stay only 10-15 minutes, mostly taxi and limo drivers. This mosque is perfect for my life." Next door to her business, she

remembers the saleh times when she sees men drive up to the mosque. “People doing what I’m doing. It is good.”

Aisha states that the community supports the mosque. The City of Seattle erected a sign ‘taxi cabs only’ dedicating specific spaces on the street for parking in front of the mosque. This provides a convenient place to park, though for 2-3 drivers at a time. There are no additional programmatic or social activities that are scheduled at this storefront mosque. The space is used saleh, Ramadan and night prayers (or tarawih). When asked if the mosque is peaceful, Aisha responds, “Yes, peaceful. Where you worship is a different place, but you are closer to God there, wherever it is, feel welcome.”

Hassan is also from Somalia and lives in an apartment building about a mile from his small nonprofit organization whose primary mission is to address the needs of East African immigrants and refugees, particularly the youth. His non-profit organization is one year old. He was a former United Nations staffer working in refugee camps in Africa. He arrived in Seattle over ten years ago and during the interview, he proudly tells me stories of his youth over a lunch of oxtail stew.

When asked how important is this mosque in your life? Hassan replies, “Many people want to build the mosque like the Prophet Mohammed’s. This is the Sunni method to be followed. Everyone wants the mosque to be like the Prophet’s, but architecture is different in many countries, different designs everywhere. [There is a] financial barrier to create space for the people. No [member] dues are required, just donations only. Give charity to cover common maintenance expenses only. Mosques in this country [America], not many available. Back home, there is one on every street. We need an advocate for our needs.”

Hassan explains this tension between internal needs and external practice best, “Though, you can act like a Muslim without the building, it’s the faith that

determines how you act. To pray in a mosque, to pray with other men, feels like community, connection to home. Inside, you are part of a larger community, united. Outside, you are part of a community as well, but they don't know, they don't understand our needs."

During our interview in the restaurant, I am surprised to learn that in the basement, there is a small prayer hall. Hassan tells me that having this prayer space works best for him as his office is next door. He doesn't allow me to see the space, but he describes it as a small open room with rugs on the floor, with a piece of paper marking the qibla on the wall, nothing else. When I ask if this prayer hall is considered a storefront mosque, Hassan says no. It is only for the men along this street. He prefers to discuss storefront mosques instead of the space downstairs.

"People are using mosque. People are happy with it. They may not like the space, it may not be enough space, no parking, but the service is there. Prayer is five times a day, at 6am cars start coming. The main functions are prayer, conflict resolution, marriage facilitation, teach Koran, counseling. Not enough space, not culturally built, but the people are happy with the place. It is about interaction, not the building. You can conduct the act of ablution without water. Somalis have eight mosques, the most of anyone."

Discussion

Aisha successfully interweaves her religious felt needs and her day-to-day business by having the ability to quickly adapt her café space for prayer. She maintains her privacy for prayer, yet, she conducts prayer out in the open as well in the cafe. Aisha's practice affirms Yasser's and Hassan's contention that Muslims can pray everywhere. It is an interesting juxtaposition to pray in public as Aisha does, though it can be assumed that a majority of her customers are Muslims attending the nearby mosque or living in the neighborhood, thus her daily practice may not be so unusual to others. She's comfortable with non-

Muslims coming into her café to inquire about the storefront mosque. Her café acts as a bridge to the non-Muslim world.

The ability to see Muslims approach the storefront mosque through her café window is an important cue for Aisha with the absence of the call to prayer. The activity on the sidewalk becomes a trigger for prayer time, an important reminder if she's especially busy in the café cooking meals. The sidewalk activity provides normalcy to her life, reminds her to pray at the required time. "People doing what I'm doing" and seeing this in an environment where her actions are in the minority comforts and builds her confidence in sharing with those from the outside.

Aisha describes how Muslims create cues to help them adhere to practice. Marking the direction of the qibla in a storefront mosque is necessary as the space was not initially designed for prayer, like the mosques back home, which orient believers automatically towards the qibla upon entry. Incorporating traditional mosque elements, such as domes and minarets, yet wanting more parking, illustrates Aisha's understanding that storefront mosques can be far from jobs requiring worshippers to drive instead of walk as compared to back home where there is a mosque on every street. She understands the need to negotiate with the outside, non-Muslim world.

The City parking sign also acts as a bridge between the inside and outside. This should be encouraged more, jurisdictions taking the lead in trying to understand how the built environment impacts particular groups and being the facilitator between what one group needs (dedicated parking for ease of entry/exit into the storefront mosque) and what one group automatically assumes is theirs by being part of the dominant group (open neighborhood street parking).

These attempts to bridge the inside Muslim world and the outside Western world don't convince all Muslims to continue to practice their faith in a new country.

Hadadd (2011) explains that many Muslims choose to relieve themselves from the burden of juggling the internal and external, "The majority of Muslims in the United States (estimated at 80%), however, are unmosqued: they have embraced the fact that they are part of American society and operate with little concern for what the compromise might cost. Many look with disdain at organized mosque centers and believe that non-practicing Muslims are on the right path just as much as those who attend regular mosque services."

Aisha has been able to remain "mosqued," though as a woman, she is not required to attend congregational prayers as men are. Hassan has a convenient place to pray in the restaurant basement next door to his office with other Muslims. This is another example of Muslims invoking the sacred while balancing daily living in the diaspora. Although, he is praying in a basement room where the only sign of Islam is the paper marker for the qibla, Hassan believes that all communities aspire to build a mosque like the Prophet Mohammed's in Saudi Arabia. Domes, minarets, archways, marble, stone, tile work galore, the Prophet Mohammed's mosque is a difficult endeavor to match. Hassan does acknowledge that different countries drive variations in design. United in religion, mosques are made unique by locality. This is true of storefront mosques. The storefront mosque is made unique by its location in a non-Muslim world where there is no prominent entity responsible for mosque building and Muslims are improvising with the limited funds they have by adapting commercial spaces.

Hassan encourages advocacy for Muslim needs through the community of believers or *ummah*. Hassan focuses on the interaction, not the building that houses the interaction. But being part of the Muslim community requires negotiation on two fronts.

First, practicing Islam in the U.S. offers many opportunities for Muslims to connect with others of different culture, ethnicity and nationality. "An August 2011 Pew Research Center survey finds the U.S. Muslim community ethnically and

racially diverse, representing an estimated seventy-seven countries" (Johnson, 2011). Given this, it is important to acknowledge the diversity amongst Muslims, in order to address the complexity of practicing Islam in America.

The Islamic Cultural Center in New York City tries to address this. "The Islamic Cultural Center uses English in all activities except for those that are conducted in Arabic. Even those mosques that are built and maintained by one national group can find themselves visited, or even overwhelmed by, newer immigrant groups from other nationalities. Many mosque communities, it appears, find themselves required to contend with issues of the relation of religion to national cultures, and insider and outsider status of various Muslim groups, in very close proximity" (Ferris 1994; Abusharaf 1998 in Smith and Bender, 2004).

Seattle storefront mosques experience this tension between religion and nationality as well. While no membership structures exist, storefront mosques are delineated by ethnicity and nationality. The Oromo Cultural Center is one where the majority of congregants are from the Oromia region of southern Ethiopia. Moreover, Hassan describes that the Somalis have eight mosques of the total twelve photographed in Chapter 3. Moving outward in the Greater Seattle area, many Middle Eastern Muslims attend mosques in the northern suburbs, specific nationalities have their own mosques, such as the Bosnians, and East African immigrants and refugees primarily attend mosques in Southeast Seattle. Lastly, West Africans have a mosque in the cluster of West African businesses found along Rainier Avenue to which many drive from the fringes of the city to attend.

While Muslims are dealing with the diversity within their religious community, a second front presents itself that is worth discussion. Haddad (2011) describes that "Immigrants had no experience of being a minority, of living in diaspora, or of creating institutions or organizing religious communities. They had no imams or religious leaders to provide instruction in the foundations of the faith. In the

nations they left behind, religious affairs were the domain of governments. They had to figure out whether their living in a non-Muslim state or eating the meat sold in its stores owned by non-Muslims was religiously sanctioned. They sought judicial justification for their choices and counsel on what institutional forms to create."

It is true that Muslims find it difficult to negotiate these issues in a Western world, which for some, becomes a hardship that prompts them to unmosque themselves. In order to keep the community of believers in tact during assimilation, there is a move towards creating uniformity.

"One response within some mosques has been to work toward establishing distinctions between 'authentic' Muslim and cultural practices. In other words, Muslims in the United States have taken up the work of separating 'what is religious from what is cultural.' Not surprisingly, however, any attempt to establish a true, authentic Islam inevitably creates a contentious arena wherein different groups lay claim to their own national and cultural practice as 'legitimate'" (Haddad and Lummis, 1987). Haddad and Lummis raise an interesting question behind building a "true and authentic Islam" as some of the informants in this study believe that storefront mosques are not valid worship spaces due to their seemingly temporary condition created by the adaptation of a non-Islamic space versus a purpose-built mosque.

The Idriss mosque at Northgate is one, which strives to delineate between the authentic and the cultural. In my conversation with the Communications Director of the Idriss mosque, "All Muslims are welcome here, we have a very diverse group from many countries around the globe. We are united in the practice of Islam, it doesn't matter what background you are or what culture you come from."

Lastly, the need to create uniformity prompts integration into the non-Muslim world, demonstrating this newfound solidarity and raising social confidence in the

diaspora. Muslims seek out models from neighboring churches and synagogues. Badr (2000) explains,

> "Groups wishing to establish successful mosques look to their American neighbors (both other mosques and other 'religious' organizations) to see what works-that is, to see how a mosque is created where public prayers are not publicly announced and where the government does not fund congregational activities. Mosque leaders thus hire clergy (imams), formalize membership rosters and a weekly 'schedule' of activities, place more emphasis on the Friday khutba (sermon), and offer social services and education."

The insider vs. outsider theme opens up a myriad of tensions, both between Muslims and the Western world and within the Muslim world. Standardizing the organizations of storefront mosques may unify the Muslim community, however, raising visibility in this way may be opposed by those who want to maintain behind closed doors. A delicate balance between building unity, integrating into the Western world and honoring differences in culture, ethnicity and nationality will be a difficult task.

Summary

Mosques are inclusive spaces that illustrate a variety of tensions. Whether a profane storefront mosque invokes the sacred is a matter of individual preference, however, nostalgia and the desire to replicate the architectural details of mosques in the home country is strong. It's an extension of the faith in a visual sense, but not a requirement. Increasing visibility to join the larger non-Muslim world is a point of contention. There are advantages to becoming visible from gaining support of non-Muslims to advocating for bridge building initiatives, such as the City parking sign. There are also strong arguments for maintaining invisibility. Protection from attack and preservation of culture from outside influence are a few. And lastly, within the Muslim community itself, there are new customs to negotiate. Separating the religious from the cultural, needing final judgment on daily Muslim practice, i.e. halal eating, being wholly responsible for

the needs of storefront mosques, these customs are the new norms that must be learned.

These tensions encompass many components of society, from an individual creating and building a life in a new social and economic environment, to a community, whose members are of different cultures, ethnicities and nationalities and as immigrants living in diaspora, and as people trying to navigate unknown processes and systems to achieve ownership of lived religion. Muslims have a variety of scenarios to navigate and manage in the U.S. The storefront mosque is one stage that tells this story of navigation.

Table 1: Comparison of three case study mosques

	OROMO CULTURAL CENTER	AL-NOOR ISLAMIC CENTER	MAHMOOD MOSQUE
MOSQUE CHARACTERISTICS			
Salah (daily prayer) attendance	60	50	40
Jum'mah (Friday prayer) attendance	300	300	150
No.of years in building	4	6	3
Own/lease	Own	Lease	Lease
Approximate square feet	2,500	3,500	2,555
Exterior expression	Oromo Cultural Center sign, "Sisters Entrance" sign, red & white arrow pointing towards women's entrance	“Al-Noor Islamic Center” 2X4 foot sign with image of a dome & minaret	Office sign of first floor tenant
INTERIORS			
Spaces	Former tavern/bar	Former warehouse/storage	Two-story, combined with non-Muslim office use, former Christian church, mosque located on 2nd floor
Traditional elements	Separate prayer space & entrances for women/men, lowered sinks for ablution, minbar/qibla, Persian style rugs, shoe racks inside building, bookcase	Separate buildings for women/men, shared outdoor foyer, non-lowered sinks, constructed niche for minbar/qibla, Persian style rugs, shoe racks inside building, bookcase	Separate prayer space for women/men, shared foyer, lowered-sinks for men only, minbar/qibla, low-cut pile carpet, carpet direction markers, shoe racks outside building, bookcase

	OROMO CULTURAL CENTER	AL-NOOR ISLAMIC CENTER	MAHMOOD MOSQUE
MOSQUE CHARACTERISTICS			
Instructional	Wood carved minbar with cut out dome	Plain podium	Wood carved minbar with cut out dome
Acoustical	No microphone	Closed circuit T.V. and microphone connected to women's building	No microphone
Enclosure	Half-enclosed, no windows on women's side, closed blinds & curtains on men's side	Windows not covered on men's side open. Completely enclosed curtained windows on women's side	Half-enclosed, windows on women's side, closed blinds
Site advantages	Open floor plan, separate entrances & foyer for women/men so that they cannot see each other, dedicated small parking lot	Separate buildings for women/men, open floor plan buildings set back from sidewalk resulting in more privacy, dedicated small parking lot, adjacent Muslim businesses act as community gathering spaces	Open floor plan, 9-5pm tenant on first floor provides additional "eyes" on the building, residential surroundings provides 24 hour "eyes" on the street
Site disadvantages	Building flush along the sidewalk, resulting in decreased privacy. No separate covered space for gathering. Uses sidewalk as community gathering space for refreshments, inadequate parking	Inadequate parking	No dedicated parking space, inadequate parking, non-Muslim tenant in building decreases privacy

CHAPTER 6: Conclusions and implications for urban planners

Highlighting the importance of time in the creation, development and change of a city, old buildings are replaced by new ones or new uses, such as the storefront mosque. What was once a warehouse, a Christian church, a pool hall, a casino or a neighborhood tavern, over time becomes something else. Once triggered by local in and out migration, but more increasingly the global influx of immigrants and refugees in neighborhoods described as low-income, historically marginalized or at the brink of gentrification, neighborhood re-uses of older buildings will undoubtedly occur. As described through the adaptation of older, profane commercial building stock, storefront mosques illustrate new guidelines for the observation and engagement of change, specifically as it relates to immigrant and refugee emerging communities.

These new guidelines can be summarized by the following observations:

- Immigrants and refugees combine the sacred and secular in everyday life. This is critical to the growth of increasingly dense, multi-ethnic, urban neighborhoods.
- Change occurs under regulatory radars as immigrant and refugee communities face challenging barriers in time, effort, navigation of foreign processes, finances, language, culture and Western systems.
- Change is planned within the community and differences in culture, ethnicity and nationality not only prohibit engagement of other Muslims, but also engagement of non-Muslims and Westerners.
- Emerging communities construct enclaves that are improvised over time to mirror neighborhoods in home countries. These enclaves maintain close connection to home countries through the specific goods and services provided.
- Improvisation and boundaries are intertwined and prompt urban planners to depart from the standard or traditional methods of observation.
- Improvisation requires critical collaboration. In order to employ the right balance of collaboration between a minority group (Muslims) and the

larger non-Muslim, Western society, planners must gain a deep understanding of Muslim needs and Muslim mosque building to be incorporated in secular processes and systems.

In the next section, we will look deeper into the observations listed above and discuss implications for urban planning and provide recommendations for planners.

1. Lived religion

There is a spectrum of Muslim spaces that need support. The focus of this study is on storefront mosques. These mosques are integral to those particular emerging communities of immigrants and refugees that do not have a long history of living in diaspora. In this study, these emerging communities are primarily East African, as compared to the long-standing communities of the Arab world, having immigrated widely in the 1960s and 1970s.

We've also learned that lived religion encompasses complex layers that illustrate the diversity among Muslims. These delineations include culture, ethnicity, nationality, and immigration patter, specifically new immigrants vs. long-established immigrants with multiple U.S. born generations. These complex layers also extend to the spectrum of Muslim spaces. From purpose-built mosques in suburban cities, to the multi-purpose community center and mosque combination, to mundane neighborhood mosques and prayer spaces in airports, interfaith churches and university campuses. The importance of acknowledging the complexities and analyzing the differences is key to understanding the patterns of emerging communities and their enclaves.

In Akel Ismail Kahera's book, *Deconstructing the American Mosque: Space, Gender and Aesthetics*, Kahera describes the American Muslim architect Latif Khalid Abdulmalik's work, "His theory must be discussed because it is an attempt to distinguish the various thematic modes of reading a space….there are two

formative stages of design: embryonic and mature space" (Kahera 2002). This distinction between the embryonic and mature space is an interesting one that raises questions related to old buildings (mature) with new or embryonic uses that depart from the original use and have adapted over time into a mature space for a particular community of users, namely the storefront mosque. Storefront mosques represent this complex cycle of reuse in a grassroots context fired by the critical need to meet a resource that is required daily need that forges connection to culture, ethnicity and nationality. This reuse cycle does not occur under planned designs, outside sources that fund construction, or even follow regulatory guidelines, in fact, most interior renovations and uses occur under the radar of current land use and zoning codes.

Therefore, urban planners must begin to acknowledge and recognize that the cycle of change, reuse, and adaptation of buildings occurs in a grassroots context, led by specific immigrant and refugee groups with an ultimate goal of providing for their community members adequate prayer space and refuge from the non-Western world. Change is not driven by organized visioning events, facilitated discussions, funder and grantor meetings, or even by the development of design or construction documents. If planners are to engage emerging immigrant and refugee communities, they must let go of the standardized processes and abandon the separation of church and state thinking in order to bridge the emerging community with the larger non-Muslim society.

2. Integrating secular and sacred uses

Within the urban neighborhood, sacred and secular uses are increasingly blended in the landscape, and the distinctions between sacred and secular uses are no longer easily defined or recognized just by looking at the building from the exterior. Though, these uses are differentiated in the city of Seattle's land use code under 'Chapter 23.47A –COMMERCIAL,' the city recognizes religious facilities and community clubs or centers as two distinct uses.

The story of the storefront mosque exhibits an integration of the secular and sacred, rooted in immigrant and refugee led advocacy among their emerging communities with no plans to engage with others on outside of the congregation. Within the urban planning context, one of the goals that planners work to achieve is to build community, particularly across one or more of the following layers: cultural, ethnic, national, racial, generational, economic class and U.S. residency status. In the case of the storefront mosque, the community goal focuses inward.

Akel further explains in his description of Masjid al-Taqwa, "The diversity of Newark's neighborhoods has changed since the turn of the century, resulting in new opportunities for social intervention. For example, in poverty-stricken neighborhoods the urban mosque is seen by many as an alternative shelter, one of its primary accomplishments is the manner in which it has dealt with social displacement, neighborhood isolation and political neglect. In poverty-stricken neighborhoods the urban mosque combines orthodox religious practice and social activism. Social activism is vital to the community at large because it sustains hope; furthermore, the urban mosque also symbolizes stability" (Akel 2002).

As Akel describes, the urban mosque, which includes storefront mosques, are signs of stability and places of advocacy. Although invisible to non-Muslims and Westerners, these profane buildings build community through seemingly humble methods, aligned with a shared experience living in diaspora and moreover the experience of living in neighborhoods that have been historically marginalized, lacking neighborhood amenities and undergoing tensions as a result of gentrification. Storefront mosques serve the immediate community, where in the case of the Rainier Valley, emerging immigrant and refugee groups without a long-term history of immigration, seek out the storefront mosque for refuge and close access to their own peoples. Because of this intense need for refuge, storefront mosques are located in close proximity to their worshippers as well as in close proximity to each other, but only based on similar alliances across

nations, such as the East African communities of Somalia and Ethiopia. Per my informants, these two countries' citizens are concentrated in the Rainier Valley. Refer to Table 2 which illustrates the proximity of ten (out of the total twelve) storefront mosques in the Rainier Valley. Starting with the northern most storefront mosque, I traced the miles between the mosques towards the southern most mosque. The majority of the mosques are less than one mile apart from each other. From the northern most (mosque A) and southern most mosque (mosque J), the distance is just over six miles. Similar to neighborhood coffee shops, the close location of each mosque mirrors the location of neighborhood mosques per my informants, "on every street."

Table 2: Distance between Seattle storefront mosques[2]

Driving from mosque to mosque	Distance in miles
Mosque A to Mosque B	4.29
Mosque B to Mosque C	0.94
Mosque C to Mosque D	1.13
Mosque D to Mosque E	1.26
Mosque E to Mosque F	0.75
Mosque F to Mosque G	0.55
Mosque G to Mosque H	0.18
Mosque H to Mosque I	0.98
Mosque I to Mosque J	1.97
Mosque A to Mosque J	6.57

Integration of sacred and secular uses in the case of the storefront mosque illustrates social and spatial patterns of immigrant and refugee Muslims. These patterns are intertwined and some mirror that of the home countries. The social pattern is focused inwardly. Askel explained it best by describing Muslims living in a world where they feel displaced, isolated and politically neglected. The storefront mosque seeks to provide a respite from these constant feelings, thereby shutting out the Western world, and consequently, providing an invisible

[2] I have not inserted the location of each mosque in the table in order to protect privacy of the attendees.

alternate of home life. Spatially, the locations of the storefront mosque mimic daily life back home, where mosques are easily accessible any time of the day, as needed and required for prayer. With knowledge of these patterns provides urban planners a distinct understanding of why storefront mosques exist and acknowledge the ways in which storefront mosques shut out the larger society as a way to preserve their own. As storefront mosques are increasingly becoming an important institution for immigrants and refugees in the urban neighborhood realm, urban planners need become more open to these mundane structures in their use in fortifying emerging communities.

3. A new concept: highest and best use

Urban planners with expertise in real estate development are trained in several methods to analyze and recommend future development following the highest and best use model. Planners look at elements such as valuing structures and land based on income generated, criteria such as the ability to acquire adjacent properties for expansion or build upward are favorable, calculating returns on investment based on Class A commercial or office space, and recommending designs that construct to the maximum density allowed. There are many more elements that contribute to the valuation of land and property, such as location and proximity to mass transit and or a business district, however, the social benefits that we've learned result in mundane, older and adapted buildings such as storefront mosques, are seldom considered in the development valuation. It is necessary for urban planners to re-frame the highest and best use model based on what we have learned in this study. By re-framing the discussion on highest and best use, urban planners can work to advocate for and preserve the building of emerging communities among the new immigrants and refugees in Seattle.

As previously discussed, storefront mosques are an important community institution, albeit their minimal adaptation and renovation efforts. What storefront mosques contribute to Muslims, particularly the newly arrived Muslims, is community stability, both in the physical sphere as well as the social sphere. The

process of building community stability among Muslim-American immigrants and refugees through the building of storefront mosques is a critical component that contributes to the ease and success of the assimilation process. However, the value of this seemingly makeshift approach to adapting buildings outside of the traditional urban planning, Western-led participatory process, is rarely recognized in the urban planning literature or daily practice. Storefront mosques help catalyze enclave development, multiple commercial storefronts sprout up next to storefront mosques and increase the influx of people and customers to the area, particularly during the Friday jum'ah prayers where several hundred worshippers descend on the storefront mosque and adjacent small businesses to engage in positive community activities such as networking, exchanging social capital, buying goods and services, providing eyes on the street thereby increasing public safety, to name a few. These are significant community benefits that fortify and stabilize urban neighborhoods.

Given this reasoning, what criteria could be applied to measure the social and community benefit of storefront mosques? As explained before, ownership is a key indicator of stability and storefront mosques tend to be located in older properties with deferred maintenance issues in low-income urban neighborhoods. These conditions may make it more affordable for acquisition vs. construction of a new building. If the Muslim community owns the property, it is very likely that they will invest in the property over time and possibly acquire adjacent parcels as enclave development is also a critical component to social stability in a foreign and at times, hostile Western society.

Another indicator of stability is the weekly congregation. Growth in worshippers over time indicates that the storefront mosque provides a significant service in Muslims' everyday lives. Storefront mosques serve several hundred people on a weekly basis on Friday midday prayers alone. During the *saleh* prayers, approximate numbers of attendees in the three mosques detailed in this study

range from 40-70 daily. This is also a significant contribution to weekly attendance.

Because of the large numbers that storefront mosques surprisingly serve, advocacy efforts related to improving the safety of the neighborhood rise and Muslims lead these campaigns with neighbors and local government. Infrastructure gaps arise buildings serve large numbers of people. For example, items such as installation of additional crosswalks, sidewalk lighting, sidewalk repairs, increased signage for small businesses, paint out of graffiti, and negotiated parking allowances in the larger neighborhood benefit both worshippers and the larger neighborhood. Thus, it is appropriate to add a third indicator related to neighborhood advocacy efforts for infrastructure and safety. Urban planning theories related to increased “eyes on the street” (Jacobs, 1961) and the “broken windows” theory (Kelling and Wilson, 1982) can be used to frame this particular indicator, which would easily be embraced in the urban planning field.

Fyfe (1998) explains the role of advocacy, "To emphasize and maintain their status, some social groups have in the past demanded deference from members of other groups that they encountered on public sidewalks, and these norms were backed by city ordinances.” This quote is particularly poignant in the example of the Central District storefront mosque whereby after experiencing parking tensions with adjacent residential neighbors, the mosque worked with local government to install dedicated parking spaces in front of the mosque for taxi drivers to utilize for prayer.

The fourth indicator that should be incorporated in the highest and best use model is one that can be seen as controversial, yet, illustrates the need to understand the Islamic building. In some of my field observations, I noted that worshippers would utilize the sidewalk in front of the mosque men’s entrance, in particular, to provide snacks and refreshments after the Friday jum’ah prayer. As mentioned, because storefront mosques are adapted spaces and limited financial

resources prohibit interior renovations beyond the bare minimum ones described earlier, Muslims are prompted to adapt public space to meet their particular needs and when this occurs, it typically is a result of community growth. For example, at the Oromo Cultural Center, I observed women on the sidewalk setting out tables and chairs on which refreshments were provided for worshippers after the Friday prayer. Upon the start of the prayer, I also observed that men removed their shoes outside of the building, leaving a pile of shoes on the sidewalk for all to see. A 4 x 5 thin wood screen was propped up in front of the men's entrance to shield visibility of the interior from the sidewalk. Although, the shoes on the sidewalk triggers curiosity or annoyance to non-Muslims on the sidewalk, the use of the public sidewalk is particularly significant. Now, they are placed outside which indicates a growth in worshippers and a spill over of Muslim space into the public right of way. This denotes ownership and increased confidence rooted in a stable neighborhood institution. It is important to note that the Oromo Cultural Center is one of the very few in this study that owns their property outright.

Figure 56: Tables on the sidewalk in front of the mosque to provide drinks and snacks after Friday jum'ah.

Figure 57: Shoes & screen placed in front of men's entrance to shield interior view from the sidewalk.

Figure 58: "Taxi cabs only" sign erected to provide dedicated parking for mosque attendees.

The seemingly small takeover of the sidewalk at the Oromo Cultural Center signifies a greater phenomenon in Muslim communities. Fyfe explains when tensions arise, “Some of these exclusions produced reactions, and when they have been discriminatory or oppressive, people have asserted their equality and right to the city” (Fyfe, 1998). In addition to Fyfe, in Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Renia Ehrenfeucht’s elaborate on this more strongly in their book, *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space:*

> "As shared spaces that people traverse by necessity, sidewalks have provided arenas for negotiating exclusion and inequality. As Dailey (1997) has argued, sidewalk altercations have served as 'a metaphor for broader questions of racial domination and subordination.' Because public encounters both reflect and reproduce social hierarchies, transgressions were and continue to be disruptive. When disruptions occur on public sidewalks, one group's interests may appear appropriate or normal, while another group may appear to violate those interests. As some urban observers have noted, however, definition of 'normality' are often 'privileging the lifestyles of white, middle-class, heterosexual adults over 'others'" (Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht, 2009).

Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht draw distinct conclusions between sidewalk activity and oppressed groups. These conclusions speak strongly of the Muslim experience and clearly illustrate the bubbling up of a myriad of negative experiences and feelings as a result of the barriers, hardships, discrimination and oppression experienced by immigrants and refugees.

Urban planners can utilize the storefront mosque to develop an added set of indicators that contribute to the idea of highest and best use. These indicators focus on the feasibility of building community within the new set of immigrant and refugee Muslims as well as focus on advocacy efforts to improve the larger neighborhood. An increase in social confidence also indicates ownership of public spaces that combat the negative experience of living in diaspora, including social and political isolation, and racism and discrimination in the assimilation process.

5. Significance of improvisation

Improvisation has been highlighted as the primary method in the birth of the storefront mosque. As previously highlighted, the term improvisation explains the method in which storefront mosques are created. Improvisation involves hastily adapted spaces, minimal renovations, and focus on the inward, both in exclusivity of the interior use of the adapted space as well as the ways in which the Muslim communities in storefront mosques shield themselves from the larger non-Muslim society.

However, a deeper look into improvisation is needed to provide urban planners with a clear process into this grassroots phenomenon. Walter Hood describes the improvisation within the context of the design arena in his book chapter, “Urban Diaries: Improvisation in West Oakalnd, California,” which can be found in Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski’s *Everyday Urbanism* (2008).

> "Although it proposes an alternative design process, improvisation still operates within the tradition of environmental design. The principles of improvisation span the polarities of spontaneous change and formal composition. Alterations and transpositions are guided by individual expression in conjunction with social, environmental, and political analysis, traditional design strategies, and most, important, an understanding of common, everyday objects and practices (I refer to these as 'the familiar')” (Hood, 2008).

Hood’s link between improvisation and environmental design provides important guidelines for urban planners when working with the profane storefront mosque. Under Hood’s explanation, the common, everyday practices could be attributed to Muslim’s daily ritual congregational prayer. It is a collective understanding among a distinct group and is guided by the need to express not only religious, but cultural, ethnic and national identity. The daily prayer is a formal element that roots Muslims amidst a spontaneous unknown, and sometimes hostile, environment. Therefore, Hood’s explanation of improvisation provides a significant new series of goals for the urban planner:

A. Make room. Planners understand that cities and communities are in constant flux and must let go of the traditional ways in which communities express themselves through the built environment. Activities such as planning, design development, construction documents, permitting processes, zoning applications do not exist in the world of immigrants and refugees living in diaspora. Accommodations for spontaneous change need to be incorporated into the urban planning process.

B. Play multiple roles. Planners must not be confined to the role of facilitator or designer, but offer formal interpretations, if feasible and welcomed, in the improvisation process. In this way, planners can bridge the gap between grassroots, community-led adaptations and the regulatory environment.

C. Reinforce the image of the community. If the storefront mosque desires to blend in and practice the familiar ritual prayers in an invisible manner, planners must validate the existence of a lifestyle that stands out from the traditional or normal discussion.

D. Uncover the familiar. Improvisation primary tenet is on the collective and the familiar. The familiar has a "dialogue with each design component." This can be seen in the elements of the storefront mosque. Each familiar component of the mosque has a strong connection with the familiar, which in turn combine and restructure elements and spaces in a search for familiarity of place and culture (Hood, 2008).

Summary

This concluding chapter describes the implications in urban planning when addressing the storefront mosque and raises important questions related to neighborhood transition: How can mundane spaces be better built and regulated for ease of neighborhood transition? How should urban planners address the relationship between space and the need for Western acceptance by immigrants and refugees living in diaspora? How do we create places that are flexible for a variety of different uses over time? How do urban planners create a process that

is adaptable and flexible enough to include, versus exclude grassroots community building? How do we create participatory planning processes in neighborhoods that build the capacity of immigrants and refugees in a non-Western context?

A critical institution for emerging communities of new generations of immigrants and refugees, storefront mosques uncover their complex and prompt new ideas on how to plan within this type of seemingly ordinary environment. The success in planning with these groups is rooted in the ability to let go and depart from traditional modes of urban planning theory and practice. Combining secular and sacred by understanding lived religion, re-framing the ideas of highest and best use, understanding the Islamic building and prioritizing it as an American institution, recognizing the important role of sidewalks in building societal confidence as a minority, and lastly marrying improvisation to the planning process are recommendations that will allow for an increased cultural competency and sensitivity to the urban planning field.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

My name is Patricia B. Julio, and I am a graduate student at the UW studying urban planning. Urban planners are interested in how cities and neighborhoods change. As an urban planner, I'm interested in how buildings are used for things they were not originally designed for, and I'm particularly interested in how secular spaces – like storefronts – are transformed into religious and communal spaces, like this mosque. I'm studying mosques in Seattle and in particular, learning about the community's activities at this storefront mosque; a mosque that does not look like the traditional mosques in other areas of the world. I'm curious to know how different the experience is from being a member of this mosque in Seattle as compared to the mosque in your home country or other mosques you have visited. I will ask you some questions about your experiences in this mosque. This interview will probably take about an hour. If there are any questions that you don't want to answer, we will skip them. During the interview, with your permission, I'd like to walk with you around the mosque, so that we can talk about certain aspects of this mosque, like where you typically like to pray or where the Imam gives his lecture or where special events are celebrated. I may photograph things that you like and don't like about this mosque. I'm photographing these things to document how this building, how this space, helps or hinders the community activities here. Does this sound OK to you?

With your permission, I will audiotape this interview so that I can ensure accuracy in recording your responses when I don't write quickly enough. I will be the only person with access to the audiotape and I will transcribe these interviews at the earliest opportunity (for example, that evening or day after each interview) and then delete the audio files.

Your responses will remain confidential. I really appreciate you meeting with me.

Do you have any questions for me before we start?

Background Information
First, let's talk a little about yourself.

1. Where were you born?

2. What ethnicity are you?

3. When did you move to the U.S.?

4. Why did you come to Seattle?

"Home or other" mosque experiences

I'd like to learn about mosques that you went to in your home country or other places prior to coming to Seattle, and your experience in being a member of other mosque communities.

5. What does your home country mosque or other mosques look like and what are the differences from the mosque here in Seattle?

    a. What are the things in this space that remind you of your favorite mosque?

6. What parts of the mosque in your home country were most special to you and why?

7. What traditional elements of your home country mosque were most important to you and why? For example, things like minarets, call to prayer, Koranic calligraphy?

8. Tell me what it was like to pray in the mosque in your home country or other places you visited.

9. Tell me about how holy days and special occasions are celebrated in your home country mosque.

10. If the participant is female, tell me about the women's prayer space and your experience praying in your home country or other places.

Social networks in Seattle

Now, let's talk a little about how you found out about this mosque in Seattle and your experience with this particular mosque building.

11. Tell me about this place and what it means to you.

12. How did you learn about this mosque and why did you choose to come here?

13. Tell me about the Muslim community here – how did the community at this mosque come to be?

14. Please tell me what it's like being a Muslim in Seattle. Have you ever gone to other mosques in Seattle? Do you like them more or less than this one? Why?

Activities, place meaning and future vision

I'm interested in learning more about the prayer experience in this mosque. I'm also interested in how people experience this Seattle mosque in comparison to mosques they know from their home countries or elsewhere before coming to Seattle.

15. What sorts of things do you do in this mosque? What is this mosque used for?

16. What role does this mosque play in your life?

17. Are there any other activities that you or your family members participate in at this mosque? i.e. Koranic school, special events?

18. What parts of this mosque are special to you and why?

    a. Is this space a peaceful place? What makes this space feel sacred to you?

19. Are there any things you do not like about this mosque? What are they?

    a. Are there things that you would change about it?
    b. Are there things that are missing, or that you miss from other mosques you've attended?

20. How is this mosque different from other mosques you've attended?

    a. Do you have to do things differently here because of the way this building and space is? What kinds of things?

21. Does the larger neighborhood know what is happening here?

22. Is it important for the larger neighborhood to know about the prayer and community activities going on in this space? Why or why not?

    a. What would you add to the building to help non-Muslims understand what is happening here?

    Look for:
    - Signage
    - Art
    - Architectural elements
    - Community building among existing congregation
    - New member recruitment
    - Education of non-Muslims about Islam

23. How has the Muslim community at this mosque grown over the past 3 years?

    Look for:
    - Attendance
    - Diversity in ethnicity of attendees
    - Recent immigrants vs. long-time Seattle residents or converts
    - Women attendees
    - Programming, if any

Conclusion of interview
And finally,

24. Is there anything you think I should know about that you haven't had the chance to mention?

Thank you kindly for your time and participation.

Additional questions, if the participant is female

25. Please tell me about the women's prayer space.

    a. Is there enough space for women to pray?
    b. Is the space comfortable?
    c. Is the space accessible at all times?
    d. Do you bring your children with you?
    e. Is the screen that is used to separate the women's space from the men's adequate? If the screen has words on it, is it centered to women or men?
    f. Do men ever use this space?
    g. What are the differences from this prayer space compared to your home country mosque or other places?
    h. What did you find special in your home country mosque or others you visited?
    i. What would like to change about this particular space?
    j. Do you believe that the women's area is equal in space, comfort and care as compared to the men's space?

Additional questions if participant is the Imam or leader of the mosque

26. How long have you been the Imam here?

27. Please tell me about your experience leading this mosque community as Imam here.

28. Do you know how this site became a mosque? Can you tell me the story?

    a. How was this site selected?
    b. How long has it been here?
    c. How was the community engaged in the design of this mosque, if any?
    d. Is this a self-sustaining place?
    e. Tell me about any plans to expand.
    f. How would you re-orient the building to create the ideal prayer space?

29. What is your future vision of building community at this mosque?

Your rights as an interview participant
April & May 2013

Thank you for participating in this conversation with me today. My name is Patricia B. Julio, and I am a student at the University of Washington studying urban planning. Urban planners are interested in how cities and neighborhoods change. As an urban planner, I'm interested in how buildings are used for things they were not originally designed for, and I'm particularly interested in how commercial or rental spaces – like storefronts – are transformed into religious and communal spaces, like this mosque. I'm studying mosques in Seattle and in particular, a mosque that does not look like the traditional mosques in other areas of the world. I'm curious to know how different the experience is from being a member of this mosque in Seattle as compared to the mosque in your home country or other mosques you have visited.

With your permission, I will audiotape this interview so that I can ensure accuracy in recording your responses when I don't write quickly enough. I will be the only person with access to the audiotape and I will transcribe these interviews in the evening, and then delete the audio files.

These are your rights as a participant in this interview:

- You may decline to answer any question I ask or skip any question I ask;
- You may decline to audiotape the interview;
- You can stop this interview at any time, we can re-schedule or not;
- If I have permission, I may take photographs of the mosque inside. I will not take any photographs of you or other people praying inside the mosque.

To protect your privacy:

- I will not use your name or take your photograph;
- I will not tell anyone which mosque you attend;

If you have any questions:

- If you have any questions about my research, please feel free to call me at (206) 856-6263 or email me at pjulio703@gmail.com
- Christopher Campbell is supervising my research work. He is a faculty member and senior lecturer in the Urban Planning program at the University of Washington. Please feel free to call him with any questions or concerns you have at (206) 543-6063 or email him at ccamp1@uw.edu

Somali translation of participant rights

Xuquuqdaada ee ka qeyb qaadashada wareysi
April iyo May 2013

Aad ayaad u mahadsantahay in aad igala qeybgashay wadahadalkan maanta. Magaceyga waxaa la yiraahdaa Patricia Julio, waxaana ahay arday dhigta Jaamacada Washington oo baranaya qorsheynta magaaleyn. Qorsheeyaha magaalo waxey tixgeliyaan sida magaalooyinka iyo deegaanka isu bedelaan. Magaalo qorsheeye ahaan, waxaan ahmiyad siinayaa sida dhismayaasha loogu isticmaalo waxyaabo aan markii horeba aan loo dhisin, waxaana si qaas ahaan ahmiyad u siinayaa sida meelaha wax lagu iibiyo iyo meelaha la ijaaro-sida dukaamada hore-loogu bedelo meelo diimeyd iyo beel, sida masaajidka. Waxaan baranayaa masaajidadka Seattle, qaasatan masaajidka aan u ekeen dhaqan ahaan masaajidadka kale ee adduunka. Waxaan aad u dabagalayaa in aan ogaado isbedelka fikradeed ee ka mid ahaanshaha masaajidkan Seattle marka lala barbar dhigo masaajidka wadankii aad ka timid ama masaajidadka kale ee aad booqatay.

Ogolaanshahaaaga, waan duubi doonaa wareysigan si aan u hubiyo xaqiiqda jawaabahaaga aan duubay marka aanan u qorin si deg deg ah. Waxaan ahaan doonaa qofka keliya ee haya duubidan waxaana qori doonaa wareysigani galabtaas, ka dibna waan tir tiri wixii la duubay.

Waxakani waxaa weeye xuquuqdaada ee ka qeyb qaadashada wareesigan:

- Waad diidi kartaa in aad ka jawaabto su'aal kasta oo aan ku weydiiyo ama waad ka boodi kartaa su'aal kasta oo aan ku weydiiyo;

- Waad diidi kartaa in aan kaa duubo wareysigan;

- Waad joojin kartaa wareysigan goorta aad doonto, dib ayaan u sameyn karnaa ama uma sameyn doono;

- Hadii aan heysto ogolaansho, waxaan ka qaadi karaa sawiro masaajidka gudihiisa. Ma ka qaadi doono wax sawiro ah adiga iyo dadka kale ee ku tukanaya masaajidka.

Si loo ilaaliyo wixii qaas kuu ah:

- Ma isticmaalaya magacaaga mana qaadayo sawirkaaga:

- Mana u sheegayo qofna masaajidka aad tagto;

Haddii aad qabto wax su'aalo ah:

- Haddii aad ka qabto wax su'aalo ah baaritaankan, fadlan iga soo wac numbarkan (206) 856-6263 ama email iigu soo dir pjulio703@gmail.com

- Christopher Campbell ayaa kormeere ka ah shaqada baaritaankeyga. Wuxuu ka tirsan yahay isla markaana yahay macalin sare ee bara barnaamijka qorsheynta magaaleyn ee Jaamacada Washington. Fadlan ka soo wac isaga wax allaale iyo wixii su'aalo ah ama shaki ah oo aad qabto (206) 543-6063 ama email ugu dir ccamp1@uw.edu

Tigrinya translation of participant rights

ነዚ ቃል መሕትት ብምስታፍኩም ዘለኩም መሰል
ኣብ ወርሒ ሚያዝያን ጉንበትን

ኣብዚ ቃለ መሕትት ንሎሚ ምሳይ ክትሳተፉ ፍቃደኛ ብምኻንኩም ብቀዳምነት የመስግን። ሽመይ ፓትሪስያ ሁልዮ ይበሃል፡ ናይ ዩኒቨርስቲ ዋሽንግቶን ናይ ፕላን ከተማታት ተማሃሪት እየ። ኣብ ከተማታትን ከባቢታትን ዝረእ ለውጢ ንናይ ፕላን ከተማታት ከኢላታት ኣገዳሲ ስለዝኾነ፡ ኣነውን ከም ናይ ፕላን ከተማ ከኢላ መጠን ኣብ ኣጠቓቕማ ሀንጻታት ካብቲ መጀመርታ ከስርሑ ከለው ዝነበሮም ፕላን ወጻኢ ኽንጥቀመሎም ከለና ዘሎ ለውጢ ከጽንዕ እግደስ ኣለኩ። ብፍላይ ከኣ ንንግድን ወይ ከኣ ንመንበሪ ዝተሰርሑ ገዛውቲ ወይ ንዱካናት ዝግብኡ ሀንጻታት ንከም ቤተክርስቲያን ወይ ከኣ መስጊድ ተቀይሮም ይስርሓሎም ኣሎ ዝብል እዩ። ኣነ ዘጽንዕ ዘለኩ መሳኒድ ኣብ ከተማ ስያትልን ከባቢኣ ዘሎ ብፍላይ ከኣ ገሊኡ ፈጺሙ ከምቲ ኣብ ካልእ ቦታታት ዓለም ዝርከብ መሳኒድ ዘይ መስል ቅርጺ ዝሓዘ እዩ። ብዝያዳ ዘገድሰኒ ከኣ ንስኩም ከም ተጠቃሚ ናይ ዚ መስጊድ'ዚ መጠን ዝስምዓኩም ለውጢ ምስ እቲ ንቡር ዓይነት መስጊድ ኣብ ዓድኩም ወይ ኣብ ካልእ ቦታታት ዝረእኹሞ ወይ ትፈልጥዎ ኣወዳዲርኩም ኽትገልጹለይ እዩ።

ፍቃድኩም እንተ ኮይኑ ነዚ ቃል መሕትት ብቴፕ ክመልእ ይደሊ መልሲ ክጽሕፍ ከለኩ መታን ኪይጋገ ነዚ ድምጺ ከኣ ብዘይካይ ካልእ ሓደ እኻ ዝሰምዖ ኣይክህሉን እዩ ኣብ ጽሑፍ ምስ ኣስፈርክዎ ሎሚ ምሸት ኽኣ ክድምስሶ ምኻነይ ከረጋግጸልኩም ይፈቱ።

እብዚ ቃል መሕትት ምስታፍኩም እዞም ዝስዕቡ መሰላት ኣለውኩም።

- ንዝሓተትኩም ሕቶታት እንተዘይ ደሊኹም ክትምልሱ ኣይትግደዱን ኢኹም
- ብቴፕ ድምጽኩም ምምላእ እውን እንድሕር ፍቃደኛ ዘይ ኾንኩም ክትኣብዩ ትኽእሉ ኢኹም
- ነዚ ቃል መሕተት እውን ኣብ ዝደለኩሞ ግዜ ክተቋርጹ ትክእሉ ኢኹም፡ ፍቃደኛ እንተኮንኩም ኽኣ ኣብ ካልእ ግዜ ኽንቕጽሉ ንኽእል ኢና
- ፍቃድ እንተረኺበ ነዚ መስጊድ ኣብ ውሽጢ ስእሊ ክስእሎ ይደሊ እየ፡ ንዓኹም ወይ ንካልኦት ሰባት እንዳ ጸለዩ ግና ኣይ ክስእልን እየ።

ንድሕንነትኩም መታን ኽሕሉ ፡

- ሽምኩም ወይ ስእልኩም ኣይ ኽጥቀምን እየ
- ኣበየናይ መስጊድ ከምትከዱ ንዝኮነ ሰብ ኣይክሕብርን እየ

ዝኮነ ሕቶታት ምስ ዝህልወኩም፡

- ብዛዕባ እዚ ዘካይዶ ዘለኹ መጽናዕቲ ዝኮነ ሕቶታት ምስ ዝህልወኹም ፡ በዚ ቴሌፎን ደዊልኩም ክትሓቱኒ ትኽእሉ (206) 856-6263 ወይ ብኢመይል ኣብ pjulio703@gmail.com
- ከሪስቶፈር ካምፐቤል ነዚ ዘካይዶ ዘለኹ መጽናዕቲ ዝኸታተል ሰብ እዩ። ንሱ ኣብ ዩኒቨርስቲ ዋሺንግተን መምህር ኣብ ክፍሊ ፕላን ከተማታት እዩ። ዝኮነ ሕቶታትን ስክፍታታትን ምስ ዝህልወኩም ብቁጽሪ ተሌፎን (206) 543-6063 ደዊልኩም ወይ ድማ ብኢመይል ccamp1@uw.edu ክትሓትዎ ትክእሉ

Amharic translation of participant rights

በዚህ ቃለመጠይቅ በመሳተፋቹ ያላቹ መብቶች
በሚያዝያ እና ግንቦት ወር

በዚህ ቃለ ምልልስ ከኔ ጋር መሳተፍዎ በቅድሚያ ለማመስገን እወዳለው፡፡ ስሜ ፓትሪስያ ሁልዮ እባላለሁ፡ በዩኒቨርስቲ ዋሽንግተን የከተማ ፕላን ሞያ ተማሪ ነኝ፡፡ በከተሞች የሚታይ የእድገት ለውጥ ለከተማ ፕላን ባለሞያዎች በጣም አስፈላጊ በመሆኑ፡ እኔ ደግሞ የዚህ ባለሞያ እንደ መሆኔ በከተሞች የሚታዩት የፕላን ለውጦች በተለይ በህንጻዎች የሚታዩ የ አሰራር ጉዳይ ላይ ማጥናት እወዳለሁ፡፡ አንዳንድ ህንጻዎች መጀመሪያ ሲሰሩ ከነበራቸው ፕላን ውጪ ስንጠቅምባቸው ያለው የአገልግሎት ለውጥ ለማጥናት በጣም እፈልጋለው፡፡ በተለይ ደግሞ ለንግድና ነመኖርያ ቤቶች ተብለው የተሰሩት ቤቶች፡ ወደ ቤተክርስቲያንና መስጊድ ተቀይረዋል፡፡ በተለይ እኔ የማጠናው በስያትልና አከባቢያው ያሉትን መስጊዶች ሆኖ በተለይ አንዳንዶቹ በሌላ አለም ካሉት ወስጊዶት የማይመሳሰሉ እና ተራ መኖርያ ወይ የንግድ ቤት የሚመስሉ ናቸው፡፡ እኔ የማካሂደው ጥናት በተለይ እርስዎ የዚህ ዓይነት መስጊድ ተጠቃሚ በመሆንዎ የሚሰማዎትን ለውጥ ከሌላ ቦታ ካዩት ወይ ካገርዎ ካሉት መስጊዶች አንጻር የሚሰማዎትን ለውጥና ስሜት ምን እንደሆነ እንዲገልጽሉኝ ነው፡፡

የእርሶ ፈቃድ ከሆነ ደግሞ ድምጽዎን በቴፕ ሞምላት እፈልጋለሁ ምክንያቱም እኔ መልስ ስጽፍ ልቸኩል ስለማልችል መልስ እንዳያመልጠኝ በማሉት ነው፡ እና ድምጽዎ ማን ከኔ ሌላ የሚሰማው ሰው እንደሌለ ለማረጋገጥ እወዳለው፡፡ ዛሬ ማታ በወረቀት ላስፍሬ ድምጹን እደመስሰዋለው፡፡

በዜ ቃለመጠይቅ መሳተፍዎ የሚከተሉትን መብቶች ኣሎት፡

- ለምጠይቆትን ጥያቄዎች ፍቃደኛ ካልሆኑ መመለስ ኣይገደዱም
- ድምጽዎን ቴፕ ሞምላት ካልፈለጉ መቅረጽ የለብኝም
- ቃለመጠይቁ ማቃረጥ ከፈለጉ በፈለጉት ግዜ ማቃረጥ ይችላሉ፡ ፍቃደኛ ከሆኑ ደግሞ በሌላ ግዜ መቀጠል እንችላለን፡
- ፍቃድ ካገኘው መስጊዱን ከውስጥ ፎቶግራፍ ኣነሳዋለው፡ ሆኖ ግን እርስዎ ወይም ሌሎች ሰዎች እየጸለዩ ማንሳት ኣልፈልግን፡፡

ደህንነትዎን ለመጠበቅ፡

- ስምዎ ወይም ስእልዎን ኣልጠቀምም
- በየተኛው መስጊድ እንደያሉትሄዱ ለማንኛው ሰው ኣልናገርም

የሆነ ጥያቄ ሲኖርብዎ/ ለመጠየቅ ሲፈልጉ፡

- እኔ በማካሂደው የትምህርት ጥናት የሆነ ጥያቄ ሲኖርብዎ፡ በዚህ ስልክ ቁጥር (206) 856-6263 ወይም በኢመይል pjulio703@gmail.com መጠየቅ ይችላሉ፡
- ከሪስቶፈር ካምፕቤል ለዚህ የማደርገው የትምህርት ጥናት የሚቆጣጠር ሰው ስለሆነ በዩኒቨርስቲ ዋሺንግተን የከተማ ፕላን ድጋርትመንት ኣስተማሪም ነው፡፡ እሱን ማነጋገር ከፈለጉ ደግሞ በስልክ ቁጥር (206) 543-6063 በመደወል ወይም በኢመይል ccamp1@uw.edu በመጻፍ ለመጠየቅ ይችላሉ፡፡

Arabic translation of participant rights

شكرا لك للمشاركة في هذه المحادثة مع لي اليوم. اسمي خوليو باتريشيا، وأنا طالب في جامعة واشنطن تدرس التخطيط الحضري. المخططين الحضريين مهتمون في كيفية تغيير المدن والأحياء. حضري، أنا مهتم في كيفية استخدام المباني لأنها لم تصمم أصلاً للأمور، وأنا مهتم خصوصا في المساحات التجارية– مثل واجهات المحلات – تتحول إلى الأماكن الدينية. أنا ادرس مساجد في سياتل وعلى الأخص مسجد لا تبدو المساجد التقليدية في مناطق أخرى من العالم لمعرفة كيف مختلفة الخبرة من كونها عضوا في هذا المسجد في سياتل بالمقارنة بالمسجد في بلدك أو المساجد الأخرى التي قمت بزيارتها.
سوف أكون الشخص الوحيد الوصول إلى شريط صوتي وسيتم نسخ هذه المقابلات في المساء، وقم بحذف الملفات الصوتية.

هذه هي الحقوق الخاصة بك كمشارك في هذه المقابلة:

يمكنك رفض الإجابة على أي سؤال أو تخطي أي سؤال اسأل؛

- يمكنك رفض تسجل المقابلة؛
- يمكنك التوقف عن هذه المقابلة في أي وقت ويمكنون اعادة المقبلة في وقاتن آخري ؛
- هل من ممكن التقاط صور فوتوغرافية من داخل المسجد. لن يتم التقاط صور لك أو أشخاص يقمون الصلاة داخل المسجد.

لحماية خصوصيتك:

- أنا لن استخدم اسم الخاص بك أو التقاط الصورة الخاصة بك؛
- أنا لن أقول أي شخص اسم المسجد التي تقوم فهي الصلاة ؛

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة:

- إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول بحثي، لا تتردد في الاتصال بي علي رقم الهاتف (206) 856-6263 أو البريد الإلكتروني لي في pjulio703@gmail.com
- كريستوفر كامبل يشرف علي البحثي. وهو عضو في هيئة التدريس وأستاذ محاضر في برنامج "التخطيط الحضري" في جامعة واشنطن، لا تتردد في الاتصال بكريستوفر كامبل علي رقم الهاتف (206) 6063-543 أو البريد الإلكتروني له في ccamp1@uw.edu

APPENDIX B: OBSERVATION GUIDE

This observation guide is written to guide the observation of space, both outside the mosque while standing or sitting in a public right of way, and inside the mosque, upon obtaining oral permission by the mosque leader or his appointee via in person conversation or telephone call. This guide does not include observation of people inside the mosque, nor does this guide recommend recording any identifying features of people, other than gender and approximate age.

The observation methods described below are intended to protect people's sense of privacy as well as their identities. I am referencing John Zeisel in the development of this observation guide.

Zeisel, John. (1984). *Inquiry by Design: Tools for Environment-Behavior Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Observation – Exterior building/mosque

- Observation stance: Record activities of people from public right of ways only.
- Data to be collected: Note male and female entrances of the building, note male and female buildings (if there are separate free standing buildings for each population group), note areas where people park, note where people gather outside of the mosque on the sidewalks, parking lots, etc. to mark informal community gathering spots outside of the mosque.
- Permission needed: None as I will be observing from public right of ways and will not intrude on people's activities to do so.

Observation – Interior building/mosque

- Observation stance: Interior of the mosque.
- Terms for entry: Enter the mosque only when no one is inside, engaged in prayer or other community activity. Enter the mosque only when accompanied by the mosque leader or his appointee. Spend no more than 15 minutes inside the mosque at any one time.
- Data to be collected: My intent to view the interior of the mosque is to note how the original functions of commercial or office spaces have been adapted for new functions such as community gatherings, including prayer. Identify architectural elements that help or hinder the community activities and prayer experience. For example, the location of the bathrooms is important. They need to be as far away as possible from the *mihrab*, which indicates where to face and prostrate towards Mecca. In addition, look at how the space has been adapted to fit the needs of the community. For example, construction of a divider wall in the

middle of the prayer hall to separate male and female prayer space. Also, collected, will be identification of furniture types, location of furniture and ephemeral items and location inside the mosque.

- Permission needed: Obtain oral permission from the mosque leader or his appointee via in person or telephone conversations. I will not post an observation announcement.

Photographs – Exterior building/mosque

- Data to be collected: Whole building photographs, primary facades, sidewalks surrounding the building as well as parking spaces/lots adjacent to the building, male and female entrances, informal outdoor community gathering spaces, these may include sidewalks and other types of public rights of way.
- Terms for photographs: Do not take any photographs of people directly outside of the mosque and/or engaged in community activity outside the building.
- Permission needed: Not applicable as I will photograph the building will standing in the public right of way.

Photographs – Interior building/mosque

- Data to be collected: See "Observation – interior building/mosque" section above.
- Alternative to taking photographs: Annotated diagram. If permission to photograph inside the mosque is not granted, I will draw an annotated diagram, immediately after spending no more than 15 minutes inside the mosque. I will not draw this diagram while inside the mosque, rather when I am outside the mosque. This diagram will help me remember the architectural features that I see inside the mosque.
- Terms for photographs: Do not take any photographs of people inside the mosque.
- Permission needed: Oral permission from the mosque leader or his appointee to take photographs inside the mosque. Take photographs only when accompanied by the mosque leader or his appointee.

Known constraints imposed by mosque leaders

- I am prohibited from entering the mosque when people are praying or engaged in any other kind of community activity. I will seek permission from the mosque leader, or his appointee, as to when the mosque is empty.
- I am prohibited from entering the mosque during daily prayer times and not on Fridays.
- I will only enter the mosque when accompanied by the mosque leader or his appointee.

- I will not enter into the male-only side of the mosque without permission of the mosque leader or his appointee. I will enter the male-only side of the mosque when permitted and accompanied by the mosque leader or his appointee.
- I am limited to 15 minutes maximum inside the mosque to view the interior.
- I will not take any photographs of people inside the mosque or directly outside the mosque.
- I will not record any identifying features of people, only gender and approximate age.
- Interviews will take place outside the mosque, in an adjacent office or commercial space, to be selected by the interview participant. Interviews will not take place inside the mosques.

APPENDIX C: DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is necessary to define the terms that are referenced in this study to provide greater understanding of the subject matter. Some of these definitions are taken directly from researchers others are taken from interviews with Muslim community members. All terms are in the Arabic language. Muslims across the world use different words based on nationality and ethnic background, but the meaning is the same.

Vernacular: A category of architecture based on localized needs and construction materials, and reflecting local traditions. Vernacular architecture tends to evolve over time to reflect the environmental, cultural, technological, and historical context in which it exists. It has often been dismissed as crude and unrefined, but also has proponents who highlight its importance in current design

Mosque: per interviews, some Muslims believe that if at least 40 people, primarily men, attend a building weekly for Ju'mah, the building is considered a mosque.

Masjid: Arabic word for mosque

Imam: mosque leader. The Imam, always a male Muslim, leads the congregation in daily prayers and also provides a teaching. Imams are held in high regard as experts of the teachings in the Koran.

Ummah: a community connected through collective devotion of the teachings in the Koran.

Ju'mah: weekly Friday noon congregational prayer, required attendance by male Muslims

Salah: daily prayers that occur five times per day

Qibla: denotes the direction of Mecca. Muslims pray towards Mecca and in Seattle, the qibla faces northeast.

Wudu: is the Islamic procedure for washing parts of the body using water, typically in preparation for formal prayers (*salah*) as well as prior to holding and reading the Koran.

APPENDIX D: HISTORIC PHOTOS OF STOREFRONT MOSQUES FOUND IN CHAPTER 3

Figure 59: 1950 photo of The Terrace bar. Today this is the Oromo Cultural Center. Photo from King County Assessor record.

Figure 60: 1959 photo of what is today's Seattle storefront mosque #1 in Chapter 3. Photo from King County Assessor. The façade has not changed significantly in 76 years.

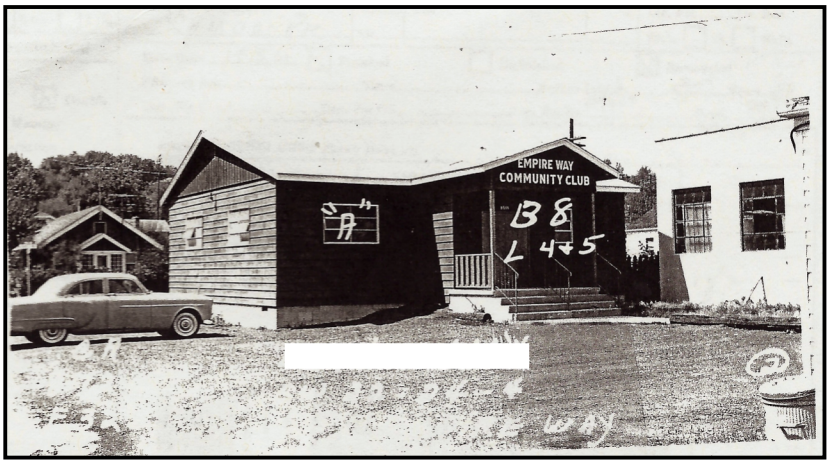

Figure 61: 1957 photo of the Empire Way Community Club. Today this is the Abu-Bakr mosque. Photo from King County Assessor record.

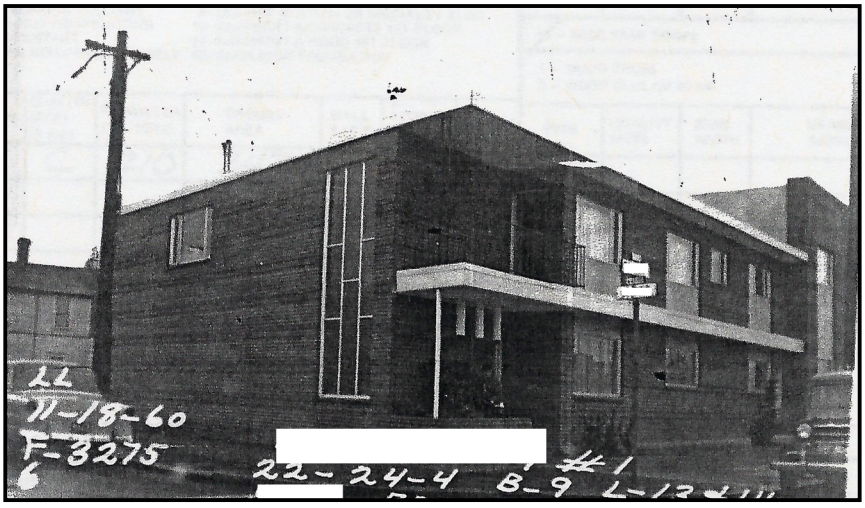

Figure 62: 1960 photo of a mixed-use building with two apartment units and a wholesale business. Today, this is the Afrique masjid. Photo from King County Assessor record.

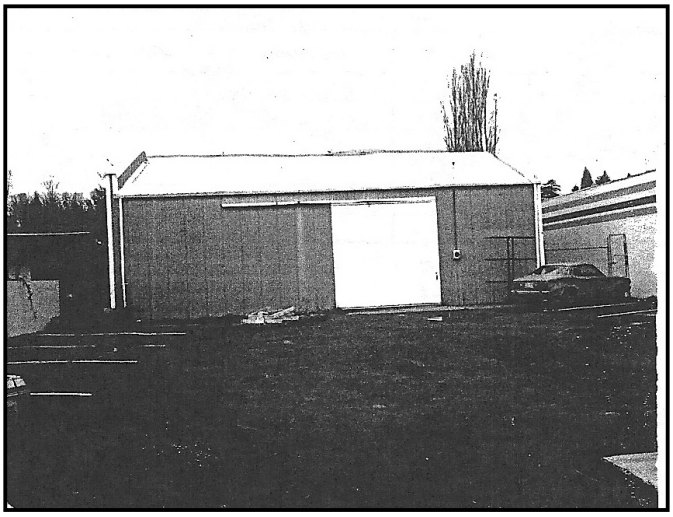

Figure 63: 1961 photo of a warehouse building that is now the Al-Noor Islamic Center. Photo from King County Assessor record.

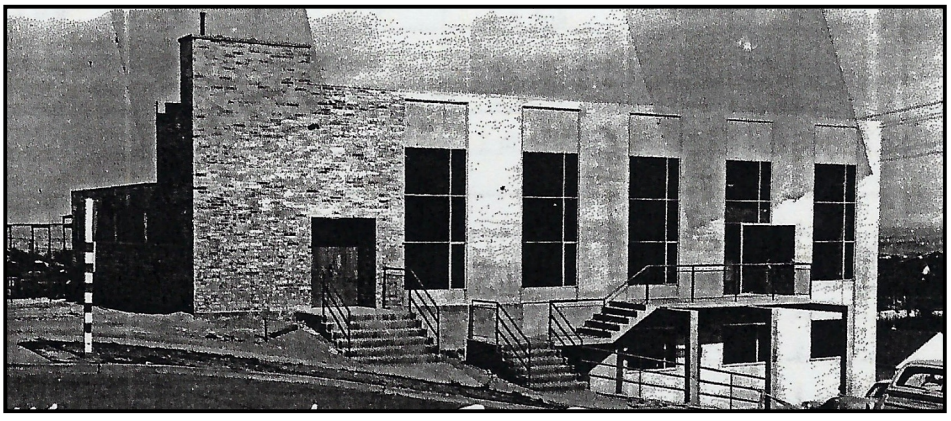

Figure 64: 1958 photo of the Regional Christian Church Center. Today, this is Seattle storefront #2 in Chapter 3. Photo from King County Assessor record.

Figure 65: 1947 photo of a “We Spray Trees” commercial business. Today, this is Storefront mosque #4. Photo from King County Assessor record.

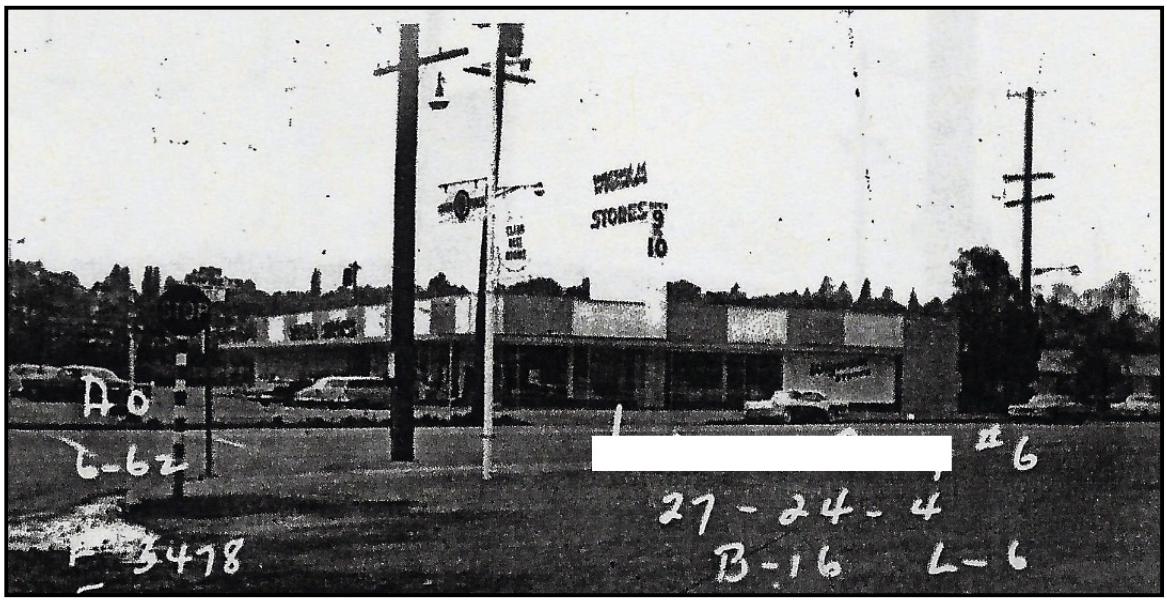

Figure 66: 1962 photo of Wigwam Stores commercial complex. This building was demolished. Today, this is Storefront mosque #5, incorporated on the 2nd floor of a shopping complex. Photo from King County Assessor record.

Figure 67: 1958 photo of shopping complex. Today, on the left hand side of the photo, is Storefront mosque #6. Photo from King County Assessor.

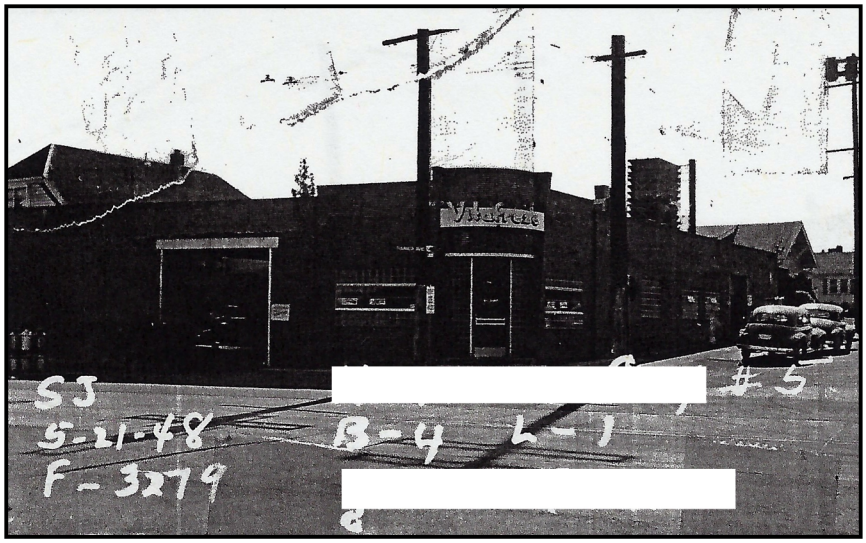

Figure 68: 1948 photo of a commercial building. Today, this is Storefront mosque #7. Photo from King County Assessor record.