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Abstract

Islam manifests itself in various forms and contexts. It is not merely to be understood as a static religion of theology, beliefs and practices but also as dynamic religion, implemented daily by Muslims in different contexts and frames. Since the rise of Islam in 610 C.E., Muslims have moved from the Arabic Peninsula throughout the world.

On British soil, early settlements and the presence of Muslims has been evident since the 18th century. A gradual increase has since then taken place. Today the populations have become an integrated and visible part of British Society. Each Muslim community has its own traditions, ethnicity and conceptual thoughts; its own way of living and way of communicating religion.

Hijaz College which is an Islamic institution situated in the suburb of Coventry, Nuneaton, is an example of such a community or Islamic institution that follows and communicates a tradition of religious living and comprehension. It is governed by well-educated Muslims that have a secular and Islamic-theological education. They strive to improve and communicate the potentials for Muslims in Western Europe through the medium of education and Islamic moral development. Consequently, this paper will analyse Hijaz College, one of the Islamic institutions in Great Britain, and the Muslim youth that study Islamic Religious Sciences along with secular studies at the college. As far as I am aware this paper is the first to examine Hijaz College independently. However, various generic researches on Islamic institutions have been carried out. This study concentrates primarily and comprehensively on Hijaz College and the viewpoints of four students that will be graduating as Islamic religious scholars within 1-3 years. They are all born in Europe and follow the Barelwi tradition of theology established on the Indian subcontinent.

A Note on Transliteration

An uncomplicated transliteration - adhering to the spelling in the prospectus of Hijaz (catalogue 1998-99 and Internet prospectus) has been applied in this research material. The applied terms and phrases of transliteration stem from a Pakistani tradition of terminology, as used by Hijaz College, in which all diacritical signs are omitted, like the word *Ilme Deen*, “knowledge of the religion”. The prevalent indication of 'ain showed by an apostrophe (') for example, as before *ilm* is not applied, neither in Urdu nor Arabic terms. Signs on long vowels have also been omitted, besides specific terms applied on the material of Hijaz which are transcribed with a double vowel, as in *deen*, meaning “religion”, and *aalim*, meaning “scholar”.

The word: *dar ul ulum*, “house of knowledge” does not appear in the material of Hijaz College, hence I choose not to spell it with the double vowel of O; instead it is spelled with the single vowel U without diacritical signs. However, quotations from texts of other authors that include Arabic or Urdu terms follow the transliteration applied by these authors.

The Urdu language is quite close to the Arabic language. The main difference in the two languages is in the pronunciation. In Urdu the words have a slightly softer pronunciation exemplified in the word *aalim* where the initial letter 'ayn is not pronounced from the throat. It is not a strenuous pronunciation. Urdu transliterations often omit diacritical signs, as for example by the indication of 'ayn in contrary to Arabic transliterations. The terms applied in this paper are both Urdu and Arabic, however the pattern of transliteration stems from the Urdu transliteration as applied by Hijaz College in their Internet and prospectus material.

1. Introduction

The primary aim of this paper is to introduce its reader to Hijaz College which is an Islamic institution of religious sciences located south of Birmingham in a suburb called Nuneaton. It will examine Hijaz College and initially raises the simple question: “What is Hijaz College?”

The paper attempts to explore this question through an anthropological approach by applying qualitative and quantitative research methods, observations, and Internet information available on the website of Hijaz College. Through reflective answers and viewpoints of four interviewed students, who study at the institution this paper presents an Islamic institutional environment from within its own students, their opinions and conceptualisation. Their conceptualisation of Islam is based on their Islamic education and development within the sphere and disciplines of Hijaz College. The students define the sphere as “purely Islamic” and express their identity - as Muslims scholars, through symbols of dress code and patterns of behaviour. Signs and symbols used by members of any social group convey shared values that regulate social or individual behaviour based on a religious and spiritual comprehension - also defined as a “semiological” system.¹

There are several reasons for Muslims to study Islamic theology and some of these reasons are depicted in this paper. Ideas of communication are expressed and ambitions are reflected. The ambitions and interpretative thoughts on Islam express the individuality and the variety of Muslims manifested in the community of Hijaz College.

Thus, the purpose of this academic research is also to depict Muslims characterised as Islamic scholars of Hijaz College and individuals with different viewpoints. A presentation of symbols, rituals and “the sacred” will be given and analysed through the course of this paper contextualised in theoretical and conceptual constellations. The symbols and rituals that are implemented seek to maintain “invented traditions” and manifest the continuity of previous Islamic history.²

Consequently, this paper contributes to Islamic research with recent knowledge in two standards. Firstly, contribution with knowledge on Muslims as the institution Hijaz College is described and defined and secondly empirical and qualitative data that has been gathered and framed in a theoretical and conceptual constellation. Hence, the qualitative research is essential and contributes to fundamental information on Hijaz College.

¹Arkoun 1994: 268-272.

²Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:4.

In the following chapter I will make an account of my interest in Hijaz College, why I chose the subject and how I was led to the place. Secondly, I build up to the methodological structure of the paper by describing the essentials of each chapter. Finally, the theoretical constellations that substantiate the analysis are set out. The selectivity of the theories is affiliated to some key concepts incorporating the theological position that will be presented.

1.1 Why Hijaz College? – Coincidence and interest

My interest in undertaking Hijaz College as my theme of research actually developed with my coincidental acquaintance with an article written by the British Professor Ron Geaves in the anthology: *Islam Outside the Arab World* (1999) where the founder of Hijaz College Abdul Wahab Siddiqi was mentioned.³ His mausoleum was illustrated as a part of an Islamic institution he initiated: *Jamia Islamia*. He was depicted as a Sufi master of Pakistani origin. The idea of writing about the mausoleum eventually captured my mind, as I thought: “A Sufi mausoleum in the UK is an interesting phenomenon; a manifested (sacred) symbol⁴ of existing and established Sufism in contemporary West-Europe”. I wondered whether his mausoleum was the first of its kind in Western Europe and what importance it had for the Muslims that visit it. With this particular notion in mind, I thought of writing an Islamological-anthropological or Islamological-ethnographical research paper - observing the culture, behaviour and rituals performed at the mausoleum. My ideas were further inspired and developed by *The Pure and the Powerful* (1997) by the Egyptian anthropologist, Nadia Abu Zahra where she describes the mausoleum of al-Sayyida Zeynab in Cairo.⁵

Thus out of curiosity I started a desktop search on the Internet, on the explanation and rationale behind Sufism; a preliminary start to my enthusiastic phase of research.⁶ My searches led me to a string of further coincidences, including the Internet site of Wahab Siddiqi. Finally I was directed to the homepage of Hijaz College – a school of Islamic Religious Sciences.

After reading the prospectus represented on the Internet, I now saw the potential of researching an incalculable variety of Islam; an Islamic-theologian-institution-related-to-Sufism-and-a-Sufi-mausoleum located in the midst of the United Kingdom – a certain challenge of persuasion in my academic progress. Consequently, the discovery and exploration of an institution that trained and

³Westerlund and Svanberg 1999:365.

⁴My proportional perspective of symbolic comparison take its position in the Algerian philosopher Muhammad Arkoun and his aspect of semiological system and anthropological approach, see Arkoun 1994:268-272.

⁵Abu-Zahra:1997.

⁶Kvale1997:98.

educated Muslim youths to become *Ulema*, “religious scholars”, seemed relevant in the debate of Muslims in Europe and the variety of Muslims. Various questions arose in my mind: Who are these Muslims? Who study at the institution and what is studied at the institution? What are their aims? How do they conceptualise Islamic theology - as they simultaneously are taught Islamic sciences as well as secular ones? What is the function of Hijaz College? Currently this is an unfamiliar educational structure in Scandinavia however examples are seen in the Middle East.⁷ I became curious and changed my focus from the tomb and navigated my course towards the institution and its students.

Almost immediately, I contacted and later corresponded with the principal of the college via e-mail in which I presented my research idea and interest in Hijaz. I explained that I wanted to examine the college and the students. I was interested in the ideas of the students, their views, concerns and experiences of Islam. Through their views I wanted to find out:

- why they wish to become *Ulema*; their motives, motivation and ambitions
- the relationship between the students and teachers: students and the college
- the students’ interpretation and conceptualisation of Islam
- and the importance and function of the mausoleum – in relation to the students

These are the main and categorically defined questions that I intend to investigate and answer through this paper in order to present the institution from within its micro-level: the students.

After some discussion the principal agreed to meet with me and I was invited to visit the institution. I also approached a couple of senior academic researchers in Britain, to find out whether any research had already been or was currently being carried out in respect of Hijaz College.⁸ I was struck by the absence of literature and published research on Hijaz College. I found only one article namely *The Pattern of Islamic Reform in Britain: The Deobandis between intra-Muslim sectarianism and engagement with wider society*, written by the British convert Jonathan Birt and Philip Lewis, the former works at the Islamic Foundation in Leicester and the later is a lecturer at Bradford University and an Inter-Faith adviser. They mention Hijaz College as an Islamic

⁷One example is the deceased Ahmad Kuftaro a well known grand *Mufti*, “legal advisor” (a *Mufti* is a competent Islamic religious scholar who gives *fatwa*, “legal opinion” on questions) and Sufi Shaykh of the Kuftariyya Naqshbandiyya order in Damascus, Syria. He has established a private education institution, under the Ahmad Kuftaro Foundation, at the Mosque of Abu Nur. This Islamic Institution hosts several youths with various national backgrounds who participate in education programmes in different subjects – also the opportunity of undertaking a two-fold education programme consisting of secular and Islamic studies is possible (Stenberg 2005:68-91).

⁸Respectively, Professor Jørgen Nielsen from Birmingham University and Sophie Gillat-Ray from Cardiff University.

institution located in Britain in a list of other Islamic institutions. Their article appears in the anthology of Martin van Bruinessen and Stefano Allievis: *Producing Islamic Knowledge in Western Europe* (2004). Hence the source of literature applied for this research on Hijaz College constitutes of qualitative research and therefore appear as interpretative writings. It was a deliberate choice to integrate and apply qualitative research since no beforehand research material conducted on Hijaz exists. Thus the qualitative data and research is a contribution to recent knowledge on Muslims in the Great Britain in the field of Islamology.

1.2 Methodological structure

I have structured the paper in five keynote chapters. The second chapter starts with a preliminary and concise historic account of early Muslim presence in Britain. This chapter is divided between an early and a recent account on Muslims in Britain.

In the third chapter I describe Hijaz College in various aspects. I accentuate the background of the founder, his philosophy and some key elements in the Islamic course: *Ilme Deen*. The third chapter is descriptive however the segment of the mausoleum contains analytical dimensions in its symbolic description. The second and the third chapter substantiate the analysis that will be presented in the fourth chapter.

In the fourth and, in my view, the most important chapter I analyse and interpret the qualitative research by presenting transcriptions of interviews with four students of Hijaz which are documented in appendix II. I have chosen to place the methodological description of the interviews and analysis in this chapter in order to give a detailed description of my methodology. Thus, a detailed description of methodology will be presented in this chapter of analysis. The transcriptions in appendix II are divided into three topics related to the students' viewpoints, ambitions after graduation, concept of knowledge, and relationship with Hijaz. Consequently, I apply the transcribed material as a source of information on equal terms with the quantitative sources. The fifth and concluding chapter discusses my analytical perspective on the complex terms of *deen*, "religion" and *dunya*, "worldly life". *Deen* and *dunya* are two religious key concepts applied by Hijaz. Consequently, the terms are applied to promote Hijaz as a modern institution that integrates secular education and Islamic theology.

In particular I draw attention to the parallel background information that is given on Hijaz in this paper. The background information appear as preliminary introductions in some sections and are crucial for better understanding of Hijaz since no previous scientific descriptions of the college exist. Hence, this background information has the purpose of providing the reader with parallel and

basic understanding of the college.

1.3 Theoretical constellation

In order to substantiate the analysis of this empirical paper, various theoretical concepts of relevance have been applied. My idea is to enlarge the line of thought in order to interpret an Islamic institution and to discuss the students' interpretation of Islam. The theories are chosen and applied independently, however they complement each other as they substantiate the analysis. I have not considered the personal backgrounds or views of the researchers respectively. They are irrelevant to the paper and the analysis. Hence, the secularist standpoint of the researcher Muhammad Arkoun does not have any influence on the analysis or my reasoning for choosing his theory. It is merely the theories and their substantial position that engage my interest. The chosen theories underpin different aspects of the analysis and are interrelated with two key concepts of significance. These concepts are:

- I) *Dawah* which I translate as “communication”, “dissemination” and “invitation”, depending on its analytical contextual use. The terms are reflected both within an emic and etic perspective in order to define and comprehend the terms in its totality. I do not explore the term describing its different aspects of social and theological implementations. However I hold the notion presented by Torsten Janson in *Your Cradle Is Green* (2003) as he refers to a re-emerged relevance in intellectual and social endeavour. *Dawah* and its intellectual endeavour in connection to Hijaz are inevitably related to communication, education, knowledge and degree of ambition reflected in the students.

- II) *Authority* which I understand as a sacred and religious symbol is also depicted within an emic and etic perspective in order to obtain a broad and vast comprehension of the term and its applicability. Hence an *Aalim* can be seen as a religious authority that embodies cherished values and represents the symbolic reference point of a religious community; such as the principal or founder of Hijaz College. The key-concept of *authority* is applied in the light of Eickelman and Piscatori in *Muslim Politics* (1996).

- **Hobsbawm in the framework of Eickelman & Piscatori**

The theoretical concept of “The Invention of Tradition” originally introduced by the English Professor Eric Hobsbawm states that traditions are often invented either in a single moment or a short time period in continuity with the past. He defines it as follows:

Invented Tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of rituals or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with suitable historic past (...) However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of invented traditions is that the continuity with it is largely fictitious. In short, they are response to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition.⁹

Thus, the ground understanding of “invented tradition” implies that contemporary practices of rules, rituals or symbolic acts are connected to history or the past. It is conceivable to apply this theory extensively, thus I intend to apply it in reference to the following notions:

(A) authority (B) communication and (C) objectification of the consciousness within the framework of two key concepts introduced by Eickelman and Piscatori in *Muslim Politics* (1996). These concepts are: (1) “The ‘Call’ to Islam” and (2) “The Objectification of Muslim Consciousness”.¹⁰ In order to analyse Hijaz College I will also use the concept of “Sacred Authority” presented by Eickelman and Piscatori.¹¹ My application of these theoretical concepts incorporates patterns of behaviour, cultural code of dress, moral correctness and representation of cherished values that the principal of the college embodies. He is the authoritarian figure of Hijaz and symbolically personifies Islamic values. Symbols and the defined institutional environment of Hijaz College are also set into perspective with two thinkers. These thinkers view Islam from two different angles respectively secular and Islamic.

The following is a constellation of two different thinkers with different theoretical stances. The first thinker is Muhammad Arkoun (born 1928) who is a secularist. He focuses on modernity and Islam within a secular framework. I use his “analysis of mosque” that includes different aspects. The second thinker is Seyyid Qutb (1906-1966) who was an Islamic intellectual and ideologist

⁹Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:4.

¹⁰Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:35-45.

¹¹ibid 1996:47-79.

reformist. He sought to re-establish Islamic thought and the social and political system in Muslim societies. However, I apply his notion of *Jahiliyya*, “ignorance”, and *Hijra*, “migration”, for interpretation and analysis.

I apply the theoretical stances of these two thinkers separately in relation to different analytical topics. However they constitute a cohesive framework for the analysis. Hence, the theory of Arkoun supplements the understanding of the symbolical importance of the tomb of Hijaz. The theological stance of Qutb is interpreted in relation to the physical and institutional importance of Hijaz in order to preserve Islamic morals.

- **Arkoun and the sacred**

The comprehensive analysis of the mosque by the Algerian-French philosopher Muhammad Arkoun¹² is applied as a proportional comparison in the perspective of symbolism and “the sacred”. Arkoun suggests four interrelated aspects of the mosque – as a sacred place – considered as an abstract phenomenon that he categorises in two comprehensions: one based on reason and the other emotions. I have applied two of the suggested aspects in my study of the symbolical and sacred importance of the mausoleum of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi - in connection to the students of Hijaz and the college in general. One of Arkoun’s aspects suggests an anthropological approach to “the sacred” reflected in “mythical knowledge” (knowledge based on narratives) versus “demythologized knowledge” (knowledge based on rationale). The other aspect concentrates on the analysis of the “semiological system” (signs and symbols used by members of any social group to convey shared values). My curiosity focuses on the visitors of the tomb; how they act in the presence of the (sacred) grave of Siddiqi. Tombs of saints just as mosques can be interpreted as a manifestation of God’s presence on Earth. In this sphere the consciousness, acts and deeds of Muslims can increase and intensify. The tomb is a symbolic expression that represents Sufism, its practices and establishment.¹³ Thus I apply the theory of Arkoun to substantiate the importance of the tomb of Siddiqi in terms of its sacred quality for the students and Hijaz College. Blessings are believed to be poured to the area and the visitors. This is an example of a “mythical knowledge” the students believe in and it is imperative in the imaginary creation of the sacred.

¹²Arkoun 1994.

¹³Arkoun 1994:268-272.

- **Qutb and his position of *Jahiliyya* and *Hijra***

The theological and ideological positions of Seyyid Qutb are often applied within a social or political analytical frame of fundamentalism or Islamism. However, I intend to apply Qutb out of this context in order to explicate his notions of *Jahiliyya* and *Hijra* of personal moral struggle within the believing Muslim individual. *Jahiliyya* is the cosmic existence of ignorance and ever-present condition rather than a pre-Islamic historical era of paganism.¹⁴ It can be reflected as a mental struggle within the individual stressing the eternal battle against sins, evils and temptations as well as the personal struggle against infiltrated influences from contemporary non-Islamic British society. Hence the term *Jahiliyya* denotes a binary meaning in the sense of a personal internal struggle and personal external defence against non-Islamic influences.

Hijra is the act of separation or migration and indicates to the believing and self-reflecting Muslim who consciously leaves behind the conducts and thinking of *Jahiliyya* as he spiritually and morally separates himself from the existence and dominations of ignorance. He or she takes a step into the moral and ethical boundaries of Islam by spiritually migrating. *Jahiliyya* and *Hijra* can be understood as a process of purification where the first step is to acknowledge the existence of *Jahiliyya*, secondly to exit from this condition by spiritually separating from its influences, and thirdly to disseminate or communicate pure Islam from a pure state of mind and spiritual being.

My application of this stance is related to the depiction of Hijaz College as a place of purity and security to which the students have retreated or “immigrated”. Some students associate Hijaz with a “safe place” where the “worldly life” does not intrude their religious life inasmuch as Hijaz preserves and protects the mental state of religious tranquillity.

Thus, the two theoretical stances of the thinkers frame the analysis of the students and the mausoleum. They represent two different aspects and interpretations of Hijaz reflected in the students and their relation to Islam and society. The theory of Arkoun is applied in relation to the sacred and symbolism and the stance of Qutb in relation to religious-mental and cosmic “migration”.

¹⁴Zeidan 2001:40.

2. Muslims in Britain – a concise overview

2.1 Historical background

Many research presentations in the academic field have described and discussed the growth and visibility of Muslim communities in Western Europe - also in terms of globalisation.¹⁵ In general one might conclude that a marked increase in the formation of Muslims has occurred. Thus, focus on Muslims and their presences, settlements and establishments in Britain, is concisely elaborated in two main periods of Muslim influxes. The first period falls before the Second World War, and the second period after it. The intention with the following review is to draw a short historical attention to Muslims and their gradual settlement within the European British society.¹⁶

The early presence of Muslims in Britain can be traced back to the 18th century under the imperial or colonial era of Britain. The enormous interests of labour and trade which Britain held in East India, the Middle East and Africa not only brought home oriental cultures, spices, exotic material and coffee, but also workers, labours and seamen. Thus, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 increased the recruitment of labours including people from Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The early examples of predecessors of Muslim settlement brought to Britain such as Somalis and Yemenis established foothold. However, it was a small influx of Muslims, approximately 20,000 people who were concentrated in particular regions such as Liverpool, Cardiff and South Shields, where they naturally convened in small communities. In contrast to Somalis, the Yemenis focused on communal development. It was a small evolving minority that was conscious about its religious roots and identity. They stemmed from a Sufi background and therefore attached importance to Sufi sheikhs and their religious guidance. The Yemenis spread into areas such as Birmingham and Sheffield and established local religious affiliation centres; the so called *zawiya*s.¹⁷ Hence, the Yemenis not only exemplify early Muslim existence in Britain, they exemplify organisation of the religion Islam in the 19th century.¹⁸

The colonial bond between Asia and Britain brought a second category of Muslim group influx into the country. It was mainly the elite groups, students and traders from India that immigrated to

¹⁵Roy, Oliver 2004.

¹⁶Westerlund and Svanberg 1999, Nielsen 2004.

¹⁷The literally meaning of *zawiya* is: “corner” referring to the Sufi philosophy and practise. *Zawiya* is the term that designates to a centre or a religious communal house for Sufis. A Sufi is a Muslim that practises Sufism. Sufism is amongst other thing spiritual teachings of Islam. It encompasses mystical dimensions and experiences of the Islamic religion. The frequent but merely vague translation of the term *Wali/Sufi* is “friend of God”: Trimingham 1998:314.

¹⁸Westerlund and Svanberg 1999:357.

Britain. We also see examples of religious leaders and movements who found their way into the Occident in order to disseminate the message of Islam, in contrast to a small amount of British intellectuals who travelled to the Orient exploring the Muslim World and later converted to Islam. One prominent example of this is Henry William Quilliam (1856-1932), a local solicitor who converted to Islam in 1887 after which he was known as Sheikh Abdullah. He began to lead prayers and other religious festivities and rituals. Later, he was instrumental in establishing an Islamic Institute in Liverpool; a milestone for the local Muslim community. Today the institute is called “Abdullah Quilliam Society”. Similarly the first purpose-built mosque in Great Britain situated in Woking took its form in 1889.¹⁹

After the Second World War and the decline of British foreign rules, imperialism and colonialism many immigrants from former British colonies entered Great Britain. Just after the end of the Second World War there was an immense surge of people from various pre-colonial regions. The largest group came from the Indian subcontinent. The core motivation of migration was employment and many immigrants ended up in the labour market. However we still see examples of intellectuals, academics and religious leaders who made their way into Britain.

The acclimatisation of the Muslims into the new and non-Islamic environments not only made them a part of a secular evolved society, but also categorised them into a significant minority position and made them reflect on their own identity as Muslim fellow citizens adhering to their own cultural codes – just like their fellow Muslim predecessors, however on a larger scale.

As mentioned above most Muslim immigrants originally came from former British colonies from all over the world - a consequence of its colonial past. Britain had its ties to Muslim countries and societies, thus the history of Islam being older in Britain than in any other country in Western Europe. The main interest of Muslim immigrants was to better their financial conditions, save money and return to their home countries. The stay in Britain was seen as a “temporary phenomenon” supported by the Muslim immigrants’ perception of returning home. However, their financial achievements made slow progress and their dream of returning to their home countries distanced from actuality. Consequently, many brought their wives and children to Britain. The reunion of families marked the beginning of settlement of homes and stable lives within the British realm.

Though many Muslims have acclimatised, they still hold on to their religious beliefs and have organised themselves into even larger religious communities, mosques, organisations and

¹⁹ibid 1999:357-359, www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/feature_print.php?ann_id=139 - 9k.

institutions. This is not a new tendency, but a reiteration of a pattern previously seen in the 19th century with the early presence of Muslims in Britain. The difference is now the visibility and multi-faceted ethnicity that characterises Muslim groups.

The majority of Muslims living in Great Britain are second, third and fourth generation descendants of Muslim immigrants. The visibility of Muslims manifests itself as an integrated part of contemporary British society; in streets, educational institutions, places of work etc. Yet another visibility of Muslims can be seen in communities, established, organised or authorised institutions.²⁰ The Islamic institutions/mosques alone have increased to over 1,000 in number and a growth in Muslim institutions is evident.²¹

Islam in Britain has and is still taking different shapes and forms, coloured by both ethnical and British cultural influences and social impacts. The invariable expressions of Islam manifested in the behaviour and religious living of Muslims owes itself to different religious comprehensions, interpretations and understandings of the Islamic principles in Muslims communities.²² The enormous formation and yet fragmentation of a sizeable Muslim community represents new reflected tendencies and attitudes towards religion and society. Islam is now being interpreted from within its own theological tradition²³ and examined from the outside in academic disciplines.²⁴

2.2 Muslims in Today's Britain

Presenting the Muslim community in Britain today one should not be misled by the concept of it being a homogeneous group that shares mutual interest and the same code of life. Muslims differ - thus they have the grounding for religious identity: The Holy Scripture of the Koran and the *hadith* collections²⁵ as fundamental religious books of guidance, the five pillars of Islam, the doctrinal belief and the bound of communion reflected in the *Ummah*. Muslims are like any other religious group and are therefore influenced by culture and ethnicity.

The different ideologies, philosophies and movements that developed in Muslim countries have been brought into Britain as a consequence result of migration and globalisation. In connection to this paper there are two major subcontinental movements of relevance; the Deobandi²⁶ and

²⁰Nielsen 2004:45-53.

²¹Nielsen 2002:40-42.

²²Westerlund and Svanberg 1999:362-373.

²³Ramadan 2002.

²⁴Schmidt 1998.

²⁵Writings on the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad.

²⁶Originally a reformist movement found in 1867 by religious scholars, *Ulema*, that introduced institutional Islamic knowledge based on British schooling principles. Characteristically, this movement is in opposition to Sufi traditions

Barelwi.²⁷ Hijaz College shares its ideological roots in the latter - the Barelwi tradition. Hence, Muslim immigrants from the subcontinent are often affiliated to one of these movements or tend to develop their religious awareness and affiliations accordingly. Other Islamic movements that dominate the subcontinent and which are not to be excluded nor minimised in importance are: Jamaat-i-Islami²⁸ and Tablighi Jamaat²⁹ (for more detailed categorisation see Nielsen 2004).³⁰

In comparison to the Muslim immigrants, after the Second World War, Muslims born in Britain have undergone a crucial change of self-identity. They minimise ethnical values in contrast to their parents. Most British born Muslims have as a natural consequence adapted contemporary British culture, mentality and language - on the basis of an Islamic comprehension - through the medium of education and social engagement. Characteristically, most Muslims reject assimilation into the mainstream indigenous culture of their parents that might contradict Islamic principles. The focal point for Muslims that are aware of their religion is to regulate and develop their lives in accordance with Islamic values and ethics.³¹ The rising extent of religious awareness and Islamic egalitarianism amongst Muslims reshapes the idea of universality and brotherhood leaving the concept of an ethnic based communion and solidarity in decline.³²

especially the Barelwi tradition, *per se*. Since its foundation it has been one of the most efficient and rapid growing movements within the Indo-Pakistani community: Metcalf 1995:362-363.

²⁷Religious movement of *Ulema* developed in 1880 in North India encompassing the Sufi philosophy with traditional Islamic knowledge based on *shariah*, Islamic law and ethics. The movement aroused to defend the veneration of Sufis and their tombs. Barelwis also foster adoration to the Prophet Muhammad and advocate his spiritual importance, Sanyal 1995:200-202, Werbner 2005:44-45.

²⁸Islamic revivalist movement founded by Mawdudi in 1941, Pakistan. Exoteric dimensions of religion was emphasised along with rational comprehension of Islam, Nasr 2005:356-360.

²⁹Grassroots movement developed in Indo-Pakistan in 1926 by Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944). The Islamic viewpoint was influence by orthodox Sufism and Islamic orthodoxy. Missionary work, *dawah*, was the prime method of knowledge dissemination and recruitment, Ahmad 1995:165-169.

³⁰Westerlund and Svanberg 1990:364, Nielsen 2004:47-49.

³¹Appendix II, student B: Question 12.

³²Westerlund and Svanberg 1999:368, appendix II, student D: Question 6.

3. Hijaz, an Islamic institution and boarding school for the Muslim youth



Faiz ul-Aqtab Siddiqi,

Principal of Hijaz College and Sufi Sheikh

The first day I entered into the institution I met a female secretary who was sitting in the company of male teachers and another female – they were all talking. She came to the door and said: “Can I help you sister?” I replied: “Yes, I have a meeting with Faiz ul-Aqtab Sahib³³ at 11.00 o’clock”. She replied: “oh, that is strange, because normally he comes in the evening”. I was sure she had mistaken, since he personally gave me the time of appointment. But I was wrong – he turned up in the evening giving me a waiting period of

9 hours, explaining that his car broke down. However, I used this time as an opportunity to walk around the school and grounds which led me to the mausoleum of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi, the *Mizar Sharif*³⁴ - as it is called. Hijaz College and the mausoleum are located in a green and peaceful area remote from town.

When I observantly walked around, not knowing my boundaries nor room for manoeuvre, I met *Hijazi*³⁵ students with curious eyes. They seemed reserved but were very easy to come into contact with. They were polite and easy-going.

The acquaintance that I made with the students has therefore been unexpectedly positive. Although Hijaz College is an institution and boarding school for Muslim youths I have refrained from going into depth in this regard. It may be considered a relevant factor in my situation as a female



A picture of the surrounding green area of Hijaz College

³³In Indo-Pakistan it is common courtesy to address a respectful person politely with the word *Sahib* which means Mr. or Sir. All the students and disciples address Faiz ul-Aqtab Siddiqi as *Sahib*. The designation *Sahib* is applied and added to the name of the founder Abdul Wahab Siddiqi on the Internet site of Hijaz College.

³⁴The term is Urdu, and is designated for a tomb of an honoured pious Muslim – often Sufis. *Mizar Sharif* means an honoured place to visit.

³⁵*Hijazi* designates to individuals affiliated to Hijaz, the institution, the Mausoleum of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi and his philosophy in general. It is common thing among Muslims to let oneself known through a particular Muslim communion.

researcher in the field of Muslim masculine genders but never generated an atmosphere of marginalisation. On the contrary, I was met with exceeding curiosity and respect, from both students and teachers. I mention the openness of Hijaz since I experienced a very closed and suspicious attitude towards me and my research in the attempt I made to observe and investigate a Muslim girls' academy in London. It was very difficult to get into contact and dialogue with the female students at this academy named *Azhar Academy*. This academy is an Islamic institution and secondary school for young Muslim girls. For example, I was not allowed to walk around and observe the academy and its students. Eventually, I engaged with a group of girls that were all hand-picked and recently enrolled students. Thus, the corporation and hospitality shown by *Hijaz* made me acclimatise into the field easily. However, the surprising lack in organisation and administration contrasted to the positive experience and openness of the institution. I was amazed by the fact that the institution could not provide me with a copy of a detailed curriculum or a list of literature – basic material that ought to be available at any college.

3.1 Background and history of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi - an insight into the founder of Hijaz College



The founder of Hijaz College, Abdul Wahab Siddiqi (1942-1994) originates from South Asia, Pakistan in a city called Sheikhpora. He was the third son of 12 siblings who already at an early age showed accomplishments in religious sciences. He learned to recite the Koran and read it completely for the first time at the age of four. His quick learning laid his foundation for further education

Abdul Wahab Siddiqi acting by the principles taught by his father “that ignorant and illiterate sons had no historical place in the historical accomplishment of the families’ service to Allah’s way”.³⁶ Thus, he began his career for education in the field of Islamic studies with the aim of becoming an *Aalim*, “religious scholar”, and a leading Naqshbandi sheykh.³⁷ He graduated from the University of Punjab and Valpur University in Semitic philology nevertheless achieving

³⁶www.aqeedah.co.uk/tareeqa/AWS%20STORY%20INTRO.HTM.

³⁷During the evolution of Sufi thought in the 12th century various directions or paths of Sufi masters and their formulated (spiritual) guidance developed and laid foundation for various systematised and disciplined orders of practice and spiritual comprehension. The Naqshbandiyya path or order (Arabic: *tariqa*) is an example of one out of many Sufi paths existing within Sufism today. From a philosophic-emic perspective the Naqshbandiyya order is derived from the first caliph Abu Bakr Siddiq. Several hundred years later Muhammad Bahauddin Naqshband (d.1389), of whom the order has taken its name, regenerated the thought of pietism and inner spiritual development focusing on a “silent type of religious invocation”, *zikr al-khafi* “silently meditation of God”, Algar 1995:226-229.

education in the Islamic theological curriculum *Dars-e-Nizami*³⁸, and Islamic law by private means from recognised Islamic scholars. Before coming to Britain Siddiqi was much engaged in the social and religious matters of Pakistan. He participated in political matters and also had good relations with famous Islamic scholar, such as Mawdudi. He held debates and disputed with Wahhabis³⁹ on the matter of doctrinal and dogmatic belief (Arabic: *aqidah*). He also discussed core issues related to the spiritual relevance of the Prophet Muhammad, as comprehended by Sufi oriented Muslims who see themselves a part of *Ahle Sunna* the “people who follow the customary practice of Prophet Muhammad”.⁴⁰

On the death of his father, Mawlana⁴¹ Muhammad Umar Ichirvi (1903-1974), who was known as a progressive Sufi scholar under the title: “Munazare Azam” (Urdu: “greatest debater”) that like Siddiqi held theological and doctrinal debates with orthodox Muslims, Wahhabis and Ahmadis or Qadiyanis.⁴² Wahab Siddiqi left Pakistan and came to Britain in 1972. Accordingly he did this in order to give his children a better education. He is quoted on the official website of Hijaz College:

Unfortunately the centres of learning have changed from Baghdad, Cairo and Andalusia and other great centres of learning in the Muslim World to Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale, etc.⁴³

The above quotation not only indicates the view on a “shift of educational centres” but also expresses regret about the gradual demolition of prestigious educational centres in Muslim societies. Siddiqi explains that “Western” scientific institutions in principle are “modelled on the Islamic framework” both in educational and dynamical teaching methods. From a historical perspective he cites the notion that Westerners in Europe and North America built their educational centres by adapting Islamic methodology and progress of scientific evolution. Thus stated he never

³⁸The content of this will be elaborated in a later appearing segment.

³⁹The Wahhabis strictly emphasise the concept of unity of God, (Arabic: *tawhid*). *Tawhid* is the core subject in the movement’s formulated doctrines. Among other subject are: intercession, (Arabic: *tawassul*), visitation of graves, (Arabic: *zijarat al qubur*), innovation (Arabic: *bida’*) that Wahhabis in apposition to Sufis disapprove of. The movement has its roots in the Arabic Peninsula founded by Muhammad Abdul Wahhab (1703-1791) in the middle of the 18th century, Al-Yassini 1995:307.

⁴⁰In a broad sense it encompasses all those Muslims who follow the customary practice of Prophet Muhammad. However some Muslims – in particular the Barelwis - define it in relation to those who consider the spiritual relevance of the Prophet Muhammad of importance also in regards to intercession.

⁴¹The title “mawlana” encompasses a vast meaning among others “master, or our master ” and is frequently used in a subcontinental and Middle Eastern *sunni* context. The title of *mawlana* also designates to a religious learned leader as at Hijaz.

⁴²Ahmadis or Qadiyanis are followers of the messianic movement: Ahmadiya deriving from the subcontinent. They are neither regarded nor respected as Muslims by many *sunni* Islamic scholars. Since the outset of the movement has been in continuous dispute with Islamic scholars and legalists. They are declared non-Muslims because of their religious belief and concept of prophetology, Friedmann 1995:54-57.

⁴³www.aqedah.co.uk/tareeqa/AWS%20STORY%HIJAZ%20COLLEGE.HTM.

distinguished between Islamic sciences and modern sciences nor saw any contradiction between the two educational disciplines. He was convinced that a combination of the two educational forms would prepare Muslims for scientific challenges and develop an understanding for the importance of knowledge; one ordained by God (understanding of Koran and *hadith*) and the other man-made discoveries and interpretations of conceptualisation of creation.⁴⁴

Thus, the purpose of migration for Abdul Wahab Siddiqi differed from the common perception of subcontinental immigrants based on financial reasons.⁴⁵ Siddiqi gained footing in the British realm; Coventry in the Midlands. Gradually he attracted a cluster of devoted followers. Wahab Siddiqi who had a strong religious background and derived from a Sufi oriented family, he was used to participating in public debates related to Islamic issues. He carried a drive of servitude towards his religion and engaged himself in international as well as national concerns for religious representation of Islam - within a Western framework. Consequently, he established the International Muslim Organisation in 1980 in Coventry, by which his main objective was to strengthen and support Muslims in their religious belief by providing them with social, cultural and primarily religious needs through the establishments of Islamic institutions and centres. The unity, spirituality, morals and education were central themes of enlightenment for Muslims. He arranged conferences and religious gatherings in order to communicate religious belief to the communal Muslims.⁴⁶

Portraying the political and socio-religious engagement and activity of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi he also had a spiritual charismatic side, mentoring disciples, students, followers and in general the people that approached him. Abdul Wahab Siddiqi belonged to the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order following the “spiritual chain”, *silsila*, of Sheykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d.1624) also entitled: “The Renewer of the Second Millennium”, *Mujaddidi Alf-i Thani*, from the 17th century. He himself had submitted “spiritual alliance”, *beya*, to Pir⁴⁷ Karama Walah Ismaeel Shah Bukhari by whom he was closely guided. In connection with Siddiqi’s spiritual endorsement, the title *Mujaddid*, “Renewer or Reformer”, plays a particular importance both for him, his achievements and within the Naqshbandi Sufi tradition. The title was originally designated to Sirhindi because of the impetus he gave to the expansion of the Sufi order. Particularly, the subcontinent has been under the influence of the Naqshbandi Sufi tradition and became a centre for intellectual and organised Naqshbandi

⁴⁴ibid.

⁴⁵Janson 2003:117.

⁴⁶www.aqeedah.co.uk/tareeqa/AWS%20STORY%HIJAZ%20IMO.HTM.

⁴⁷The title *Pir* means Sufi master and is the common word used in the subcontinent for Sufi masters.

Sufism. The successor of Sirhindi, Shah Abdullah Dihlavi (d.1824) had established a *khanqah*, “hospice”, that attracted Muslims from different regions of the world. Abdul Wahab Siddiqi was meant to have a similar impetus not only to the Naqshbandiyya *mujjaddidi* tradition, but also to the expansion of Islam in general. His engagement in core issues related to Islam in society resulted in several achievements where Hijaz College is the primary example. Hijaz College was a realisation of his dream originally founded on an already established *dar ul ulum*⁴⁸, “Islamic institution” called Jamia Islamia.

On the demise of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi he was given the title *mujaddid* of the 20th century”. He is described as an ambitious leader, establisher and disseminator of Islamic sciences and morals. However, it is yet not clear by which religious authority he was given the title *mujaddid*– or whether there exists a so called “Muslim (authoritative) consensus” that delegates titles to prominent Muslim personalities.⁴⁹

Siddiqi has shown particular results of personal monitoring through Sufism. He has attracted non-Muslims as well as Muslims who lack religious practice mainly from South America, Suriname. He is the central figure and role model that is being paid even more tribute to after his demise. Abdul Wahab Siddiqi is an ideal for the students of Hijaz and other Muslims represented in the stories of his virtues, miracles and incidents affectionately described on their website.⁵⁰ He personifies three institutional and symbolic capitals as described by the sociologist Kamel Ghazzi in his article: *Resilience and Decay in Ulema Groups*’ in *Sociology of Religion* (2002). These capitals are “doctrinal consensus, institutional autonomy and leadership charisma” and they forward the success of a religious leader.⁵¹ Doctrinal consensus within a group or a society is important and the first step towards recognition. Institutional autonomy is the second step and provides recognition on a mass scale. The third capital which is leadership charisma is an influential resource that makes people adhere to the leader's opinion. All three capitals are characterised as essential by Ghazzi who emphasises that “their success in securing a working combination of all three capitals is in turn highly shaped by the possibilities of history, the potentialities of environment, and imaginative capabilities”.⁵²

⁴⁸The verbally meaning of the term *dar ul ulum* is: “house of knowledge/sciences” and designates for a place where Islamic knowledge systematically is disseminated and thought.

⁴⁹www.aqeedah.co.uk/tareeqa/AWS%20STORY%20DEMISE.HTM.

⁵⁰ibid.

⁵¹Ghazzi 2002:317.

⁵²ibid. These characteristics substantiate the description of the “sacred authority” and its *ideological* and *functional* aspects that will be presented in the forthcoming section 3.7 *The aims and objectives of Hijaz College*.

3.2 The making of Hijaz College: philosophy and dual educational disciplines

The ideological aim of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi was to educate and teach Islamic ethics and moral philosophy in particular to young Muslim men alluding to his traditionalist view on segregation between men and women. In many years – before establishing Hijaz College – he disseminated Islamic values through speeches, missionary work and religious activity consequently developing the notion of an institution that should offer structured Islamic education with a curriculum of central Islamic subjects such as theology, law and ethics. The creative idea was an alternative and dual methodological education that should integrate higher Islamic knowledge and secular knowledge. An experiment that presented an alternative and new formula for educational achievements, for British Muslim men, taking its disciplinary foundation in the idea: “that there is no such distinction between Islamic and secular sciences”.⁵³ The students should simultaneously with Islamic studies follow normal British schooling, College or even University curriculum that would qualify them in a two-fold community the Muslim and non-Muslim in contemporary Britain society. Not only would the young Muslim men qualify as Islamic theologians and thus obtain an insight into Islamic thought, dogma and doctrines but alongside they would also be given the opportunity to obtain qualification in field law, medicine or trade for example. They would, in his opinion, become modern Muslims with a vast knowledge, maximised opportunities and competences who might make their way for better provision.

Nevertheless, before implementing a combined educational prospectus, Siddiqi took his first step by educating his own sons and later five young male students, whose parents were *murids*, “disciples”, of him. He reminded them “that this was only an experiment and there were possibilities that it could fail”.⁵⁴ He began his experiment which turned out to be a success. Consequently, in 1982 “he decided to institutionalise the ideology by acquiring premises so that there could be more children who could be housed and given the same disciplines of education”.⁵⁵ In a more open manner he now applied to several institutions for assistance and help to realise his ambitions to acquire a building for educational purposes – but did not succeed. However, his passion for the project led him to approach his disciples for financial aid. Eventually he was able to acquire a building to realise the foundation of Jamia Islamia.

In 1988 Abdul Wahab Siddiqi started to expand Jamia Islamia not only in terms of ideology but also its physical location. Jamia Islamia had graduated a number of students and sought to graduate

⁵³www.aqeedah.co.uk/tareeqa/AWS%20STORY%20HIJAZ%20COLLEGE.HTM.

⁵⁴ibid.

⁵⁵ibid.

even more students on a larger and international scale. He did come under fire during his search for potential locations, as the increasing hostility and lack of awareness regarding Islam was accelerating. In his preliminary search for properties he faced direct refusals or the imposition of very high prices because the building would be used for Islamic purposes.⁵⁶ However, “in 1993 negotiations took place for the acquisition of the Higham Grange Rehabilitation Centre”⁵⁷ that shortly after became the foundation for the institution, Hijaz College.⁵⁸

3.3 The Mausoleum of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi and its symbolical importance



The mausoleum of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi

The mausoleum of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi looks like a small mosque from the outside with a green dome on the top. The dome associates itself to the mosque of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina. It is without doubt an intentional choice of symbolic imitation which dedicates love, endeavour of nearness and affiliation to the Prophet Muhammad. It also symbolises subordinated sacredness. Above the door is transcribed *Mizar Sharif* of Hazrat Mujaddid Pir⁵⁹ Muhammad Abdul Wahab Siddiqi (ra).⁶⁰

I entered the mausoleum and sat inside to study the place. The interior design was influenced by an Indo-Pakistani tradition, with the grave in the middle covered with a green cloth and a big turban placed at one end of the grave on the top. The turban indicated the place of the head. I saw flowers on and beside the grave. The marble on all walls made the room cold but gave a quite exclusive look. In the mausoleum were three marble boards placed on the wall. Each of them illustrated the spiritual and genealogical lineage of Siddiqi. The upper part of the walls was a string of ceramic tiles ornamented with the 99 attributes of Allah and three wood ornamentations of religious dogmas and salutations on the Prophet Muhammad were also hanging on the walls. The religious and Koranic calligraphies coloured the tomb where a shelf next to a donation box containing several

⁵⁶ibid.

⁵⁷ibid.

⁵⁸www.aqeedah.co.uk/tareeqa/AWS%20STORY%20HIJAZ%20COLLEGE.HTM.

⁵⁹*Hazrat, Mujaddid* and *Pir* are three separate titles of designation that can be put together. *Hazrat* is often applied as an addressing of courtesy when speaking of *Ulema* or Sufis and means “elderly, or master”. *Mujaddid* on the other hand means “renewer” and is a title given to an *Aalim* or Sufi who has achieved success in setting forward renewed methods of dissemination to attract people to Islam.

⁶⁰*Ra* is an abbreviation for *radiyallahu anhu* and is an expression applied after the names of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad or supposed pious people.

strings of beads and litanies for recitation could be found. A grilled door lead down to a cellar room – supposedly leading to the real grave of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi - reserved for the family visitors. Whilst I was sitting observing the tomb, two young boys entered. They said to me: “Salaamu alaykum auntie”.⁶¹ “Wa alaykum as salaam” I replied, and started conversing with them. “This is my grandfather” one of them said proudly, whereto he in a melodious and innocent tone started reciting salutations on the Prophet Muhammad. I asked for their purpose of visit and they said: “We pay our respect to his grave and come here everyday”. Saying this they both kissed the grave and rushed off since they had a noon-assembly to attend.

Reflected in an emic view on an idealistic and spiritual level of religious comprehension heavenly and divine spiritual blessings are believed to be poured to the visitors of the tomb including the circle of disciples and students of Hijaz. It is a core belief that penetrates the motivation of the visitors and students. The Algerian-French philosopher Muhammad Arkoun defines this in terms of “mythical knowledge”. Mythical knowledge is based on interpreted “truths” or “realities” and they come out of religious imagination in contradiction to critical religious reason or logic also called “demythologized knowledge”. Myth in this relation is narratives (Arabic: *qasas*, a term that often occurs in the Koran) and appeals to emotions and idealistic religious imaginations that are engendered by elaborations on the supernatural. Arkoun explains this as being a “metamorphosis of the sacred”. The phenomenon: “sacred” is an abstraction comprehended in ambiguity: one based on reason and the other on emotions. Arkoun exemplifies the “mythical knowledge” in the religious meaning and purpose of Prophet Ibrahim:

Thus, when the Qur’an states that Abraham – a prophetic figure from the distant past – visited the Ka’ba in Mecca, nobody bothers to ask why, when or how. The original purpose of such an account was to create in the minds of the early followers of Muhammad the idea of a symbolic religious figure whose direct connection with the Ka’ba would reinforce its sacred quality for Muslims, replacing its earlier pagan associations with a new “true” religious meaning.⁶²

The purpose of narratives, symbols, religious figures or buildings are, according to Arkoun, imperative in the imaginary creation of a sacred quality for the Muslims or any religious community. Symbols and rituals that are implemented seek to maintain values and traditions. They manifest and legitimise the status of the mausoleum and the institution. By acting upon norms

⁶¹It is a Pakistani tradition to approach adults with politeness, either by uncle and auntie or brother (Urdu: Bhai) and sister (Urdu: Baji). I was met with the same politeness when two young boys entered the mausoleum.

⁶²Arkoun 1994:268-272.

students replicate patterns of behaviour and traditions. Arkoun calls it a “semiological system” that implies to signs and symbols used by members of any social group to convey shared values. The “semiological system” regulates social and individual behaviour based on a religious and spiritual comprehension. Not only the tomb, but also blessings of the founder Abdul Wahab Siddiqi is emphasised in the manifestation of his tomb. He was and is still believed to be a sacred religious figure that extends his sacredness beyond his tomb itself. Thus, the college partakes of the sacred atmosphere associated with the place of the *Mizar Sharif*.⁶³

The tradition to bury a religious founder or leader within an institutional complex or a mosque is not an unknown phenomenon. On the contrary many examples of mausoleums in the area of an education centre are seen in Middle Eastern cities like Qom, Cairo and Damascus - cities that once constituted the kernel of Islamic culture and tradition.⁶⁴ Hijaz College seems to follow the same tradition and according to the principal, in particular the students of the institution are blessed as he describes:

You see when the *Wali*⁶⁵ is sitting in *Jannat*,⁶⁶ (...) and he develops his students (...) he gives them a taste of that so the students get a first hand experience of what it is like to be in *Jannat*, close to *awliya* - and you know it helps them in their spiritual development.⁶⁷

The principal indicates the continuous ability of the founder to develop and inspire the students, even after his death. It is a common belief shared by many Sufis that whenever a Sufi passes away the soul leaves the body but continues to live and inspire for good deeds. Thus, Siddiqi, his mausoleum, is depicted to have an extraordinary significance. Some students never met him in person but feel affection and pay him respect by visiting his grave.⁶⁸ They enter the mausoleum with utmost respect and recite verses from the Koran.

3.4 The institution: Hijaz College

The name “Hijaz” carries a symbolic and metaphorical meaning in the sense of recreating the idea of the geographical area “Hijaz” which is the region along the western seaboard of the Arabic Peninsula. The two holy cities of Mecca and Medina are situated in the region of Hijaz.⁶⁹ Hijaz College is an Islamic institution, *dar ul ulum*, and boarding school for Muslim youths from the age

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Interview with principal Faiz ul-Aqtab Siddiqi: Date 07.03.2005.

⁶⁵Arabic Singular, Plural: *Awliya* - term that designates to a Sufi.

⁶⁶Urdu and Arabic term for Paradise – also mentioned in the Koran.

⁶⁷Interview with principal Faiz ul-Aqtab Siddiqi: Date: 07.03.2005.

⁶⁸Appendix II, student A: Question 8, student C: Question 8.

⁶⁹Interview with the chief-executive of Hijaz College Tauqir Ishaq: Date: 07.03.2005.

of 11. It is situated in Nuneaton, Coventry - south of Birmingham and founded in 1994 by the Islamic Sufi scholar; Abdul Wahab Siddiqi who shortly after the purchase of the building of Hijaz passed away. The main building and its total area consists of 97.000 Sq. feet bought for more than £5 million. As the amount of purchase shows, the cost and expenses of Hijaz are enormous. Hijaz is not in any way financed by the government, nor does it receive any governmental funds and donations.⁷⁰ It is my assumption that Hijaz might be financed or be receiving *sadaqa*, “donations”, from “capital sources” supposedly from abroad. This is my immediate assumption of the economical situation of the institution. Since it has been purchased, it has been extended and renovated. The boarding school provides basic facilities of living together with sports facilities, classrooms, and prayer hall. It is one of the ambitions of Hijaz to reach a total of 750 students. However potential students that wish to enrol at Hijaz have to sit tests whereby their standards are evaluated. If they fulfil the requirements and pass the admission test they may begin to undertake the education at the institution. The tests taken are standard tests and a fundamental requirement of Hijaz.⁷¹

It is the Board of Trustees that administrates the internal and external affairs and decisions of Hijaz. They have the task of remedying “the centuries old mistakes in education and realising the vision at Hijaz”.⁷² The information on their recently updated website on the Internet and the prospectus since 1998 shows that the same individuals have been on the board, except one female member that no longer is a member of the board. The Board of Trustees of Hijaz consists of nine members of which four of the members are from the “Siddiqi family”. The rest of the members are supposedly affiliated to the Naqshbandi Sufi order. There has not been any replacements of the members in minimum six years and characteristically, all members are educated and to some extent wealthy people in the enterprising business.⁷³

Facts according to the newspaper *Muslim News* report show that the total number of students in 2004 at Hijaz College constituted of 66 male students.⁷⁴ The figure has decreased within the last 6-7 years⁷⁵ from approximately 125 students alluding to a decrease of nearly 50% students or potential graduates. One might assume that Hijaz has been facing a pitfall or that other obstacles have prevented Hijaz from being a success or catalyst for providing the Muslim community with

⁷⁰Interview with principal Faiz ul Aqtab Siddiqi: Date: 07.03.2005, www.hijaz.ndirect.co.uk/forward.htm.

⁷¹www.hijaz.ndirect.co.uk/entrance%20requirement%20&%20application%20procedure.htm.

⁷²ibid.

⁷³ibid.

⁷⁴Buaras, Elham 2005: *The Muslims News, Friday 25 February – 16 Muharram 1426 – No 190:5*.

⁷⁵Information provided by a teacher: Date: 07.03.2005.

qualified *Ulema*. In comparison with other *dar ul ulum* students, 33 % of the students of Hijaz obtained the grades A – C in 5 GCSEs subjects⁷⁶ leading Hijaz approximately 24% under the average percentage of Muslims Schools - listed to be 57. On the other hand Hijaz is 21% under the average percentage of obtained grades in British Schools. These facts are supposed figures from the newspaper *Muslim News*, I do not use the figures to conclude anything nor to define a certain standard of grades: I only intend to depict an objective view on Hijaz College in comparison with the general standard.

3.5 The Degree of Ilme Deen: Nominal 6 years of Islamic studies at Hijaz

In the following segment a description of the degree: *Ilme Deen* is given. It is the degree of Islamic theology and literally means “Science of Religion”.

All the students at Hijaz study to obtain the degree of *Ilme Deen*. It is the most important degree to be obtained at the college. *Dars-e-Nizami* is the feature element that characterises the content of the degree. An *Ilme Deen* course is of *nominal 6 years* of Islamic studies however it is averagely undertaken within 7 – 8 years. During these years the students go through a range of classical Islamic and selected modern literature in the curriculum.⁷⁷ There are three levels in the education, each of which consists of two years:

1. Level 1 is a *basic certificate level* (2 years) in which a fundamental understanding and translation of the Koran is sought. Techniques of recitation of Koran (Arabic: *Tajweed*), basic Arabic grammar, Islamic history along with insight into Islamic law of rituals are taught.
2. Level 2 is an *advanced certificate level* (2 years) classical Arabic with grammar (Arabic: *nahv*) and morphology (Arabic: *sarf*), modern Arabic, *hadith*-studies, jurisprudence (Arabic: *usul al fiqh*) and law in-depth are taught.
3. Level 3 is a *diploma level* (2 years) in this level studies in Koran and *hadith* interpretations (Arabic: *tafsir*) are taught. The diploma level preludes to a more advanced study in the field of Islamic studies either developed in the field of law, theology or Arabic language - the three existing departments at Hijaz. Thus, the department of law is preferred by many

⁷⁶GCSE is the abbreviation of The General Certificate of Secondary Education. At the last level of secondary education in the British education system. Students can study up till 12 GSCE subjects lasting a period of 2 years. In Britain full time education is obligatory from the age of 4-16. Most students study a core of statutory subjects and choose some additional subjects out of interest. After completing compulsory education at the age of 16 students may study A levels or equivalent qualifications as college.

⁷⁷Unfortunately I never got a copy of the curriculum at Hijaz (they did not have any) however I have noted the essential literature documented in appendix I.

students.⁷⁸

3.5.6 *Dars-e-Nizami - the feature element in the Ilme Deen course*

Originally, the term *Dars-e-Nizami* derives from the Deobandi school of thought established in the late 19th century in the north of Delhi, India. It is a formulated curriculum of chosen and systematised literature and books of Islamic sciences in the field of Koran, *hadith*, *fiqh*, and *tafsir* studies. *Dars-e-Nizami* is a structured Islamic programme of nominal 6-8 years:

Especially the *Dars al Nizami* identified with the Lucknow based *Ulema* of Farangī Mahall, by utilizing institutional forms derived from the British Schools.⁷⁹

Dars-e-Nizami has made pioneer strivings to convey the knowledge of religious sciences. The formula of *Dars-e-Nizami* has its origin in the subcontinent connected to the evolution of the *dar ul ulum* of Deoband. However talking to one of the teachers of Hijaz, a different delineation to origin of the title was given:

Dars means to educate children, and *Nizami*, the name comes from *Nizamīya...Nizamuddin awliya* – from his name they made this institution of *Dars-e-Nizamīya* in Pakistan. Now, the meaning of *Nizami* itself is a plan, a level – a method of getting education.⁸⁰

He explains that *Dars-e-Nizami* is a structural-education that systematically introduces to Islamic studies the subjects of Koran, *hadith*, *fiqh*, and *tafsir*. He explains:

Nizam means structure, structure of education (that also encompasses themes of theology) it goes back, lets say a thousand years, but some modifications have been made. A lot of the books were written in Farsi (Persian) they have been modified and been translated in Urdu 100 – 200 years ago.⁸¹

⁷⁸Prospectus Hijaz College 1998-99.

⁷⁹Zaman 1994:258-261.

⁸⁰Interview with a teacher: Date 08.03. 2005.

⁸¹ibid.

He explains that the origin of the word *Nizam* derives from a well known Sufi, *Nizamuddin awliya*, from Indo-Pakistan. His name laid the foundation for an institution where Islamic knowledge entered a process of systematisation based on theology.⁸² This reflects *Dars-e-Nizami* as a part of the subcontinental tradition of learning Islamic sciences, but in essence the literature applied in the *Dars-e-Nizami* does not differ from other traditional theological *dar ul ulums* also in the Arabic world. Accordingly, the principal Faiz ul Aqtab Siddiqi explains that the literature applied by Hijaz is not restricted to a subcontinental tradition:

It is in a very broad Arabic context, we have a lot of emphasise on the Arabic language, and in fact a lot of our curriculum is taught in the Arabic language.⁸³

Dars-e-Nizami as a title applied for Islamic sciences have been developed in an Indo-Pakistani context, but in content of study it does not differ from other prevalent teachings or institutions, *dar ul ulum*, of Islamic studies.⁸⁴

3.5.7 Studies in Islamic Law and jurisprudence

The department of Law is very popular amongst many students, as British law is studied simultaneously with Islamic Law. The studies in Islamic law and jurisprudence are also integrated in the degree of *Ilme Deen*. Subjects within the field of law comprise of legal principles and fundamental pillars of Islam (certificate level). Through the textbooks: *Noorul Eizah*, *Qudoori*, *Sharah Waqayah*, *Hedayah* and *Usool Shashi*⁸⁵ more in-depth law issues are discussed, analysed and taught (diploma level). However, all the Islamic subjects in the field of theology, history, Arabic, law, jurisprudence are recognised under the study and course of *Ilme Deen*. It is written in the prospectus of Hijaz that “Parallel with the *Ilme-Deen* degree from the age of 11, is the National Curriculum, which is set out accord to the British standards for the young Hijazi students. Students then go on to do A levels (...)”⁸⁶ The *Ilme Deen* degree “includes 2 years study comprising of 4 levels of achievement, starting from certificate level, diploma, Bachelor and then 2 years of Master equivalent degree level study”⁸⁷

Hijaz also has external affiliations to the North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, where

⁸²Interview with a teacher: Date 08.03. 2005.

⁸³Interview with principal Faiz ul-Aqtab Siddiqi: Date: 07.03.2005.

⁸⁴Interview with a teacher: Date: 08.03.2005.

⁸⁵Prospectus 1998-99: 2, these books are all mentioned and described in appendix I.

⁸⁶www.hijaz.ndirect.co.uk/choice%20and%20flexibility.htm.

⁸⁷ibid.

students are able to take their GCSEs and A levels.⁸⁸ Thus, students leave the college with degrees validated by North Warwickshire and Hinckley College.

3.6 Pamphlets of Hijaz

In total, two pamphlets on Hijaz, one prospectus 1998-99 and the Internet site of Hijaz College⁸⁹ and the founder Abdul Wahab Siddiqi consisted of my first hand material on Hijaz College. The two pamphlets were provided at the reception of the college. I obtained the prospectus from a teacher that I interviewed, and the Internet material I found myself. In this section I will concentrate on the two pamphlets of Hijaz College.⁹⁰

One of the two pamphlets of Hijaz has a pale blue colour. The existing building of Hijaz and the future expected buildings - part of the expansion project – are depicted on the front page. This pamphlet is targeted to both parents of potential young students and more mature students. The pamphlet presents itself by describing that it offers “simultaneous provision of religious studies and secular sciences (...)”.⁹¹ The main objective of Hijaz is to educate and develop Muslim men into Islamic scholars that might be able to lead a Muslim community, the Muslim *Ummah*.

This pamphlet contains practical information on what Hijaz offer and details on their expansion project. Hijaz seem to promote their success through their expansion projects informing on capacity and figures. Hijaz have high ambitions and confirm, in this pamphlet, that one third of the initiative projects have been completed. Once again they emphasise that no governmental funds are obtained – a message that proves their independence. However they are dependent on *sadaqah*, “donations” and personal contributions. On the backside of the pamphlet one may find a slip for donation.

On the contrary the other pamphlet that is pale green has a more humorous outlook. It is clearly directed to the youth in the sense that it tends to depict Hijaz using famous cartoon figures such as Bart Simpson and the uncle and nephews of Donald Duck who deliver the messages of Hijaz. The pamphlet gives a “cool” and quite modern impression of Hijaz. The “humoristic” outlook is balanced with serious and ambitious information and pictures of the Islamic institution. On the front page two old “wise” men are sitting at a desk. One of them expresses his regrets since he missed the opportunity of not being able to study at the college, while the other describes Hijaz as the city of

⁸⁸A level is a post-sixteen education. After the final year at secondary education (passing one year of GCSEs subjects) students can precede taking subjects at A levels qualifying themselves for university studies.

⁸⁹The first official website of Hijaz has the following address: www.hijaz.ndirect.co.uk, however the website has recently been supplemented with another website: www.hijaz.biz which now constitute the official website containing other links related to the college.

⁹⁰These two pamphlets are provided in appendix III.

⁹¹Appendix III: Blue pamphlet.

knowledge, followed by the future illustration of the complex of Hijaz. Also on the front page is a description of Hijaz being a centre for religion (*deen*), worldly life (*dunya*) and spirituality (*ruhaniyya*) – three existential perceptions of Islamic life formulated by Hijaz College. In the left corner of the front page of the pamphlet there is an illustration of a little ogre, supposedly the devil. He furiously says:

Don't go to Hijaz College! Because you will become good Muslims and become Scholars in *Deen* and *Dunya*. And this will put me out of job.⁹²

The ogre is the personification of “negative” influences, inspirations and the whispering Satan that might seem to prevent a potential student to choose to study at Hijaz. In the middle of the pamphlet there are facts and information about the college. Again the bright colour continues and a humoristic attitude is utilised. The cartoons here are used symbolically i.e. the tree nephews of Donald Duck that express three different views on how “cool” it could be to study at Hijaz – one of the nephews however has a rather negative attitude as he prefers discos and sleeping rather than study. On the last page an example of “a successful” student is given. He has obtained exemplary good results and at an early age has accomplished a great deal educationally. At the bottom of the page Hijaz appeals for contact and provides its address and phone number.

There is no doubt that Hijaz has marketed its institution according to its target groups - Muslim youth. From the two pamphlets, Hijaz seems professional, well organised and industrious. It substantiates its success by illustrating its achievements, mainly through the building extension projects – the expansions are representative of prosperity and success. The location and property owned by Hijaz clearly points to its progress and development. Taking a two-fold education stance seems attractive, “cool” and goal-oriented. The humoristic outlook is a strategic way of keeping the reader interested in the pamphlet.

⁹²Appendix III: Green pamphlet.

3.7 The aims and objectives of Hijaz College

Reading the material provided and written by the *Hijazis* themselves there can be no doubt in recognising their central aims and objectives. Hijaz has three main aims:

- 1) To develop the students in accordance with Islamic values that they may exemplify the character of the Prophet Muhammad.
- 2) To provide the Muslim *Ummah* with “qualified *Ulema* (Scholars in Islam) and at the same time professionals such as Lawyers, Engineers, Accountants and Teachers”.⁹³
- 3) To serve the Muslims by inviting them to religion through communication and education.

(1) Developing students in accordance with Islamic values

Much emphasis is laid upon *tarbiyya*, “the development and upbringing”, of the students at Hijaz. They are taught moral standards, behaviour and it is expected of them to act in accordance with these ideals as well as the *sunna*, “customary practice of the Prophet Muhammad”, and *shariah*. Their “Intellectual and physical exercise is supplemented by spiritual awareness. This takes the form in *Mehfil-e-Zikr* and *Fikr* every Friday which is “spiritual assemblies where the names of God is mentioned and brought in mind”.⁹⁴

The teachers, chief-executive and principal set out to be role models and authoritarian symbols for the students. Eickelman and Piscatori (1996) discuss authority and interpretation of symbols analysing sacred authority in three interconnected levels.⁹⁵ Thus, authority concern *ideology*, *location* and *function*, according to their analysis. They state that:

Authority is invested in individuals and institutions because they thought to incorporate and exemplify the moral order.⁹⁶

Further more they argue that:

Authorities are given authority because they appear to embody cherished values and represent the symbolic reference points of society (Muslims community) including sacred texts.⁹⁷

⁹³Blue pamphlet provided in appendix III: “Hijaz College”.

⁹⁴www.hijaz.ndirect.co.uk.

⁹⁵Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:58-59.

⁹⁶Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:58.

⁹⁷Ibid 1996.

The principal, his family and teachers are the superior elite of the institution and represent the personification of all those Islamic ideals, values and symbols they want the students to possess. Values that carry external symbols, in the shape of appearance and clothing, but also values of “invented traditions” manifested through acts and behaviour. They demonstrate an implemented ideological comprehension of religion – through their practice. They demonstrate that they follow the prescribed Islamic guidelines from Koran and the *sunna*. It is imperative that a scholar demonstrates “purity of character” in order to obtain recognition of moral reputation from the community. A scholar has to be a living example of the personification of “customary good practices” – as supposed by the founder Abdul Wahab Siddiqi.

A second way of manifesting authority is through the medium of functionalities that is related to ideology.⁹⁸ Since “Authorities also derive their prestige and influence from the performance of a number of functions. Endowed with symbolic capital, they are looked to for guidance and thus are expected to delimit and defend the proper place of Islamic place and practice.”⁹⁹ The principal, Faiz ul Aqtab Siddiqi, who also provides personal monitoring and guidance to the students, takes his position as a *Pir* “Sufi master”. He consults students and encourages them among other things to recite daily litanies, and helps to solve problems or conflicts by exemplifying with religious narratives or “mythical knowledge” as considered by Arkoun - previously elaborated.¹⁰⁰ His role as a Sufi master evokes an atmosphere of respect and admiration - a space where “the sacred” becomes more evident. This is not only reflected in the attitudes and behaviours of the students when in his presence, but also in the circle of disciples who come to visit him at the college on Monday evenings. The visitors are very respectful and show humility, whereas Faiz ul Aqtab Siddiqi is very gentle and polite representing a calm and harmonious character.

Thus, one of the main aims of Hijaz is to teach and influence the students to improve their personality through behaviour and clothing. A long white dress in Arabic called, *jubbah* or *jallabiyya*, that the Prophet Muhammad supposedly used in his life time, an *amama* “cap” and to preserve the beard when it starts growing is required wearing for the students. The *ideological* and *functional* aspects and the “sacred authority” are interrelated in the sense that they all emphasise certain values and practices of symbolic reference points of the collective community. The three above mentioned characteristics of appearance are examples hereof and have developed religious

⁹⁸ibid 1996.

⁹⁹ibid & Ghazzi 2002:317.

¹⁰⁰Arkoun 1994.

symbolic importance to represent an *Aalim* - as an authoritarian, a notion of importance in particular at Hijaz. This point may also be seen in the light of Hobsbawm's "invention of tradition", as the tradition of wearing a particular outfit "attempts to establish continuity with a suitable past".¹⁰¹ In early times the Prophet Muhammad supposedly used to wear the clothes that is the obligatory school uniform at Hijaz. These three characteristics are fundamental symbols of dress codes that an Islamic scholar has to show - though not always the prevailed custom in Muslim countries since cultural influences have an impact on scholars and their dress. Nonetheless it is the appearing dress promoted by Hijaz and it was applied by the founder Abdul Wahab Siddiqi, his early students and family.

(2) *To qualify Ulema*

The fundamental aim and purpose of Hijaz is to qualify *Ulema*¹⁰² – within a *sunni* Barelwi tradition, to be "future torch bearers of the Muslim *Ummah*". "It is the pioneer institution, instrumental after many centuries in bringing together the Theological and Professional Sciences".¹⁰³ A dual qualification and ambitious "training programme" is set forward for students at the college. The sons of Siddiqi are set forward as examples and role models attaining double degrees themselves: an Islamic and a secular in order to show that - in fact - it is possible to obtain a dual degree.¹⁰⁴ Through the notion of: "future torch bearers of the Muslim *Ummah*" Hijaz not only promotes its religious authority it also suggests its importance as an autonomous institution that serves the Muslims. The aim of qualifying Islamic scholars is inevitably related to the notion of serving Islam.¹⁰⁵

(3) *To serve Muslims*

The deed of serving the Muslim community and Islam, in general, is emphasised at Hijaz that represents itself as catalyst "to create *Ulema* who are also professionals and therefore independent through their occupations and at the same time broad in their dimensions of thought, so that they can equip to effectively manage the Islamic leadership for the 21st century".¹⁰⁶ Qualifying *Ulema* and serving the Muslims are two interrelated notions of Islamic servitude promoted by Hijaz. This

¹⁰¹Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:4.

¹⁰²Islamic scholars in the *sunni* and *shia* tradition of Islam have played an important an authoritarian role - and to a certain extent sacred - in Muslim societies ever since the development of Islamic theology.

¹⁰³www.hijaz.ndirect.co.uk.

¹⁰⁴However there are examples seen in the Middle East where Islamic institutions offer double degrees.

¹⁰⁵ See section 3.1 *Background and history of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi – an insight into the founder of Hijaz College*.

¹⁰⁶Blue pamphlet provided in appendix III.

means that the *Ulema* have to be aware of how the society evolves and how Muslims in the society comprehend and affiliate to religion.¹⁰⁷ The theory of “invention of tradition” put in perspective the concept of “objectification of Muslim consciousness”, as elaborated by Eickelman and Piscatori. Aspects of religious life becomes “subject to conscious reflection, discussion and debate”¹⁰⁸ that goes through processes of objective and universal questions as: “what is my religion?” and “what makes my religion of prevailing importance in my life?”¹⁰⁹ The growing awareness among many Muslims has developed even on a mass scale. Modern Muslims are considered thinkers that not only questions religion the way Eickelman and Piscatori define as a self contained system, but also set forward existential questions. Some students of Hijaz have experienced the above mentioned process of objectification in which religious, societal and individual aspects of life become subjects of conscious reflection, and therefore may relate to modern Muslims in Britain. One of the interviewed students is an example of a modern Muslim that has access to “global communication devices” (i.e. Internet, TV etc.). He mentions the process of reflective objectification of the consciousness as imperative for self-development as he himself has experienced a period in his life in which he questioned numeral things. He says:

When I first started pondering on things I was 16, I asked a lot of questions why this, why that and asked myself the purpose of things in my life, some were related to religion some to my life – then slowly slowly I started to understand things, I discovered things, it came with age and maturity - I think it is important to question things and find answers for them. It develops you and changes you, when you find answers – otherwise you just become confused. I have an eager to know things.¹¹⁰

He explains that through his “process” he discovered and affirmed his religious knowledge and belief. The constructive questions developed his personality and widened his perspective on life and other people.

The “tradition” of “objectifying” set forth a mode of changing tendencies within the Muslim tradition of thought and communication, according to Eickelman and Piscatori. Consequently it has an influence on the religious tradition of serving and disseminating Islam in various channels of communication, *dawah*. The term and tradition of *dawah* has been used in missionary activity through the history of Islam. But important today is the reformulation and regenerated meaning of

¹⁰⁷Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 38.

¹⁰⁸Eickelman and Piscatori 1996: 37.

¹⁰⁹ibid:38.

¹¹⁰Appendix II: student D: Question 8.

the term, especially in regards to education. Hijaz uses the medium of education as a channel for *dawah*. It describes itself as “The Centre for Deen, Dunya and Spirituality” three cohesive elements in the development of Muslims. They are paramount of importance in relation to the process for objectification of tradition - comprehended within a religious system that characterises and identifies believers distinguishing themselves from other believers and their belief systems. Here too, the authoritative religious discourses have an immense role to play. Authoritative are able to affect – also through the medium of *dawah*, “communication”- the mass scale by producing literature and other informative material.¹¹¹ *Ulema* and the importance of *Ulema* have had the authoritarian and sacred role of function in Muslim societies. Their knowledge in Islam (Koran and *hadith*) has always given them the power of control and influence – also in regards to politics, through the politicization of Islam. However, in non-Muslim countries and communities their functionalities have more been graded to the level of mentoring (both mass and individual) than a direct authoritative instrument, even though *Ulema* consider themselves to represent the consensus (Arabic: *ijma*) of the community of Muslims and scholars.¹¹²

¹¹¹Janson 2003.

¹¹²Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:35-39.

4. Interviews with students of Hijaz

Out of the nearly 60 students I interviewed 7 students where 5 of them were senior students and at the verge of graduation. I met the students coincidentally and asked them for an interview hence the 7-digit is arbitrary. Four of the interviewees gave well considered replies that now constitute the foundation for this analysis. They were all on the verge of graduation. Two students were in secondary level and both 12 years old. Interviewing them was a pleasant experience that gave me an impression of their relation to religion and Hijaz in general; their answers however are not applied.

For the sake of anonymity I have chosen not to mention the interviewees by name; instead I apply alphabetic initials respectively; A, B, C and D and give a general presentation of them, their background and levels of education.¹¹³ The selection of these students was arbitrary. It was not a criterion that particular students were going to be given priority for the analysis. Only one thing was essential; that the students should be senior students since students on this stage reflect upon their ambitions in relation to reality and through self-reflective processes define their identity as Muslims. I contacted with the students myself in order to undertake my qualitative research. It was easy since none of them hesitated.

4.1 Methodology

The methodology of the qualitative research is interrelated to Steinar Kvale's: *Interview – an introduction to the qualitative research interview* that encompasses relevant and conductive ways for shape and formulation.¹¹⁴ The materials of analysis are based on transcription of the taped interviews and are therefore interpretative constructions of the interviewees' statements. This of course affects and questions the reliability and validity of the written transcribed material that might throw suspicion on the ethical foundation of the researcher. However, I have transcribed as coherently as possible in order to reach the comprehensive meanings of the students, consequently by including words such as: *uhm* or daily life expressions like: *yea* (instead of yes) or *you know* (indicating act of interaction between the interviewer and interviewee).

I have chosen to apply and integrate the qualitative method to this research as no beforehand material exists on Hijaz College, thus it appeared natural. However I also intend to understand the reflective processes of the students by getting a first hand experience with the students – through dialogue - as they elaborate their views. The level of an emic comprehension of a research implies

¹¹³In section 3.7 *The aims and objectives of Hijaz College under the segment student D* is quoted.

¹¹⁴Kvale1997:95.

greater interaction and dialogue with “the researched field” in the sense that the researcher attempts to penetrate into the field. Thus, I include an emic perspective to the research as an effective tool to penetrate into “the researched field”. The interactive and dynamic conversations processed constructive knowledge and information where my appearance as a researcher shaped the professional frame of the produced knowledge.

The interview analysis, interpretations and comprehensions are based on the methodology of the six-step-analysis of Kvale¹¹⁵ taking its starting point in step four; analysis of transcribed interviews in order to generate the substance of the statements of the students.¹¹⁶ I also give new perspectives on phenomena and topics of these statements. Thus, I apply the *ad hoc* method for structure of analysis I also follow methodological approaches of (1) *condense of meaning*, (2) *categorization of meaning*, and (3) *interpretation of meaning* developing guidelines for qualitative criteria and making a framework.¹¹⁷ In particular the interpretations of the replies of the students may be coloured by my own considerations and dimensional subjective views - a consequence of cohesive discoveries and reflections. Naturally, it is an eternal dilemma of “subjective” infiltrations versus “objective” presentations a researcher face during fieldwork.

4.1.1 Topics

The semi-structured interview-questions asked to the students are a combination just from: *preliminary questions, followed-up questions, distinguishing questions, specifying questions to direct and interpreting questions* depending on the course of conversation taken and the respectively dialogue developed.¹¹⁸ Three overall topics for the interviews have been selected and are documented in appendix II. From these topics I have chosen to focus on the following topics reflected in the answers of the interviewees. They are as follows:

- I. Topics related to Hijaz, studies and education.
- II. Topics related to interpretation, communication (*dawah*) of Islam and the ambitions of the interviewed students.

The topics reflect my interest in the relationship between the students and Hijaz, including the Sufi mausoleum, their existing ambitions and expectations after graduation. I substantiate my

¹¹⁵Kvale 1997:187.

¹¹⁶Kvale 1997:187-188.

¹¹⁷Kvale 1997:149.

¹¹⁸Kvale 1997:137-138.

empiricism, analysis and interpretation in the light of Seyyid Qutb's theological position on *Jahiliyya* and *Hijra*.

In my analysis I also try to demonstrate that these students do not purely explicate Islam from a formal and incontestable notion, they are also coloured in their understanding of Islam by their social and cultural realities. Ordinary understandings of anthropological stances claim to be more objective in contrary to the theological tradition. They are prescribed to be more reflective and systematic – in relation to social and cultural circumstances – and therefore not only secure their validity on particular assumptions but also epistemological criteria of scientific rationality. The theological stances establish truth on the basis of faith, a *universal Islam*: a coherent ideological complex and tradition “*less bound to common sense experience and social action*”.¹¹⁹ Hence, I hold the perspective of understanding “Islam” as a theological and juridical entity formulated in dogma, faith and jurisprudence where religion is theologically defined. However, I do not merely understand “Islam” as a static monolithic structure since a remarkable diversity is displayed in the practices and implementations of Muslims reflecting itself in the incorporative term “Islams”. Hence, “Islams” as an anthropological approach to Muslim communities and their practices (variation of Muslim practices and religious lives affected by cultural, regional and linguistic influences). “Islams” is a fragmented reality of (the theological) religion that daily is performed and lived by Muslims. In order to further our understanding of Muslims, it is imperative that fieldwork and data on common Muslims as well as religious scholars that understand the Islamic tradition are gathered.¹²⁰

Notwithstanding that religion can function as a conscious reflection for conduct and as a way of life. Their Islam (both the theological and anthropological) is more reflective and ordered in systems of meanings consequently resulting in symbolic devices, mythology, idealism and utopian expectations. They have chosen, or in some cases it has been chosen for them to live in accordance with particular notions of Islam conforming to their patterns of daily life. Therefore I intend to elucidate selective views of the students as I describe and interpret their statements and their perspectives of Islam. In as much as the views of the students have gone through a process of transcription, interpretation and analysis they have been coloured by my subjective considerations – a natural consequence of an ongoing and intimate research process. Thus, the analysis is a continuum between my description and interpretation of the qualitative research – supported by

¹¹⁹El-Zein 1977:240, 242, 249.

¹²⁰Schmidt 1998.

relevant theoretical aspects.¹²¹

4.2 Time, place and space

All the interviews, including those with the principal, chief-executive, teachers and students were conducted individually in classrooms or offices without the presence or influence of others. It was important for me to create a “professional atmosphere” in order not to let the process of produced knowledge be effected by distractions and interruptions. I consider the reliability of qualitative research and its applicability important in relation to substance as well as form or physical environment. Hence in the interview with the principal two other persons were present; one of which was the chief-executive and the other an employee. With regards to the interviews undertaken with the students; one student was interviewed in the presence of another student. Two students in the presence of each other however interviewed individually. Their replies were independently given. All the students were interviewed in their free time and the average time of conversation was 30 minutes. I also got the opportunity to video record an internal vivid debate which was held by the students. The debate was held in a classroom. Four students participated in the debate. Three of the students were previously interviewed and one student, also senior, only participated in this particular debate. The purpose of the debate was to observe what views they held and how they discussed different current affairs related to Muslims, particularly in the media. As a consequence, the debate was rather defensive to Islam whereas the individual conversation was self-reflective and concrete in relation to the single student and his views – also in relation to Islam.

4.3 The interviewed students: background and level of education

The four interviewed students are going to qualify as Islamic *Ulema* within a period of one to three years. They are between 16 to 27 years old. The two youngest students were of Pakistani origin and came from Ireland and Belgium. The two oldest students respectively have Surinami and American origin, one living in Holland and the other in UK. The oldest student is a 7th year student, two students are in the 6th year, and the last one is a 5th year student. The students were open, extrovert and were in general contempt with Hijaz however they expressed lack in facilities which will be elaborated later. All the students are born in Europe. Their families are settled and established. However the (national) affiliation or the feeling of *being home* in the sense of affinity with non-Muslim Europeans around them is vague.

¹²¹Kvale 1997:188.

4.4 I. Interview related to Hijaz, studies and education

Why Muslim men chose to study at an Islamic institution as Hijaz depends on various things. Some students have chosen to undertake and continue the course of *Ilme Deen* (Sciences of religion); these students are often the mature and adult ones. Other students were sent by their parents notably at a young age, averagely 11-14. The majority of the students are between 12-20 years old. The parents of such students intended to provide them a safe and Islamic environment in order to protect them from “unethical” Islamic influences predominant in contemporary British society. Other parents simply wished that their sons should become Islamic scholars. It is very few students that study at Hijaz because of Sufism yet there are examples of students who study there because their families are affiliated to the Naqshbandi Sufi order. In general one might assess that most students have either been invited or recruited to the institution while others have been recommended by family or friends to undertake studies, at the institution. One of the students expresses:

When I came here my intention was not to become an *Aalim* that is the truth. I was brought here by Mawlana Munir; I came here to make my parents happy. It was not really by force; I came here with my own will, but just to make them happy. Years went by and I thought I have done so much I might as well finish now.¹²²

The same student explains:

It (Hijaz) has prevented me from a lot of things that I might have done back home. Like, the society is really bad.¹²³

It is a general notion held by Muslims and not only expressed by *Hijazis* that British society represents immodest and immoral values contradicting Islamic values such as the clothing or social gatherings where alcohol is present. The British immodesty has an impact on Muslims and their concept on Islamic modesty pulling them away from the Islamic notion of modesty and morals. These different and contradicting values of modesty not only forces Muslims to flee from an immodest environment it forces them to seek a safe place with predominant Islamic values.¹²⁴ The above two quotations not only describe Hijaz for the reason of safety that develops Muslim youths in an Islamic atmosphere with better ideals of morals and ethics. They also prevail over “the name

¹²²Interview student C, appendix II: Question 16. I assume that this person is one of the teachers at Hijaz or a person in some way affiliated to the institution. However he does not have relevance as a character in my example as such. He is merely an example that illustrates my point of recruitment in the analysis.

¹²³Interview student C, appendix II: Question 2.

¹²⁴Interview with principal Faiz ul-Aqtab Siddiqi: Date: 07.03.2005.

Hijaz and the symbolic and metaphorical meaning it carries in the sense of recreating the idea of the area Hijaz that incorporates the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina”¹²⁵

Thus, the geographical designation of Hijaz (Mecca and Medina) takes a symbolic transition into a cosmic-religious comprehension with the intention of regenerating the same values promoted by the Prophet Muhammad in the early dissemination of the message of Islam; morals, ethics, monotheism and divine guidance. The institution Hijaz acquires synonymous values of the geographical area Hijaz in order to give “the same spiritual qualities in its students and to develop them to be the future torch bearers of the Muslim *Ummah*”¹²⁶ Supposedly, the Prophet Muhammad aimed for a reform in pre-Islamic society to develop a just Islamic civilised society build on the commands of Allah.¹²⁷ Hijaz seems to profile itself as a reflection of this notion – only within the Muslim community, Muslim *Ummah*, not having any political or tactic universal mission of taking over the British society. Hijaz aims for educational Islamization focusing on communication and dissemination of Islamic knowledge:

(...) What we have done is to try to revive the original initiation the Islamic movement which is the pure movement of people who are knowledgeable of *deen* and *dunya* in the area of Hijaz. The Prophet (SAW) (...) you know (...) indoctrinated and developed them and spread the word of Islam throughout the world. This is where the concept of the institution Hijaz started from.¹²⁸

“The pure movement of people who are knowledgeable of *deen*”, (“religion”) designates the Islamic scholars (and Sufis) of Islam – the “torch bearers of the Muslim *Ummah*”. The importance of the religiously learned men is here being emphasised on the reason of Islamic history, religion and sources.¹²⁹ As mentioned earlier the Prophet Muhammad also declared his prophecy in the geographical area of Hijaz giving it a religious importance. Therefore Hijaz also:

Implies the place where Islam was first founded and established, where the greatest of the Muslims were the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), his companions, his family and Islam and the whole Islamic empire started. We wanted to bring that term back into existence. It has been lost through years of neglect, suppression, depression, etc. We wanted to try to revive the memory of that time and also to try to give Muslims a fresh

¹²⁵Interview with chief-executive Tauqir Ishaq: Date: 07.03.2005.

¹²⁶Prospectus Hijaz 1998-99:7.

¹²⁷ibid.

¹²⁸Interview with principal Faiz ul-Aqtab Siddiqi: Date: 07.03 2005. SAW are initials that abbreviate the salutation of peace in Arabic, often translated as: “peace and blessings be upon him”.

¹²⁹(Koran: 35:27-28).

start. To most people it actually does not mean so much it is just a name itself of the area they have all become familiar with - a name that probably just would have been lost.¹³⁰

The implications of “the revival of Islamic values” aim to implement idealistic concepts of moral standards and educate the students at Hijaz. They are developed with confidence and consideration of responsibility they hold as scholars once they graduate. With their Islamic knowledge they should guide the Muslim *Ummah*. As student C also explains: “Like, the society is really bad” by which he refers to all non-Islamic acts; like drinking alcohol, acts of immodesty and so forth. He, in particular, shows gratitude because he feels protected from the negative impacts, earlier symbolised in the ogre present in the pale green pamphlet, prevailed in society that might have navigated him to “do things”, as he says.¹³¹

The fact that Hijaz is a boarding school also intensifies the Islamic environment that may encourage the students to implement what they learn and as student A implies:

Outside the *jihad an nafs*; “the struggle of the soul for survival” and the worldly desires are greater and has a greater impact - but here it is restricted. Like me, I have a Christian background. When I go home for holidays to my friends and relatives I participate in Christian things like parties, though I do not drink or anything. Being at Hijaz which is a purely Islamic place I feel protected from worldly desires – and it is not because I am weak, but being here helps me and gives support and I refrain from worldly desires.¹³²

Student A indicates that outside in the society the struggle against sins in order to preserve the soul's survival is greater. This idea of comprehending Hijaz as a “purely Islamic place” and the society outside Hijaz as filled with worldly desires generates the theological and ideological position of *Jahiliyya* and *Hijra* by Seyyid Qutb (1906-1966).¹³³ Qutb proposes the idea of society and human mind being in the cosmic state of *jahiliyya*, “ignorance”, because the importance of divine laws and ethics, *shariah*, has diminished. Human made laws have infiltrated society; categorised in the symbol of *shirk*, “polytheism”. Hence Qutb divides society in two fragments: (1) God versus (2) Satan. “Man faces a moral choice he cannot evade, and must voluntarily submit to God’s moral laws in *Sharia*”.¹³⁴ In accordance with Qutb, Islam should be practiced in a pure environment or

¹³⁰Interview with chief-executive Tauqir Ishaq: Date 07.03 2005.

¹³¹Interview student C, appendix II: Question 2.

¹³²Interview student A, appendix II: Question 6.

¹³³Rahnema 1994:136-144.

¹³⁴Zaidan 2001:29.

society that distinguishes itself from a non-Islamic contaminated environment. “For Qutb (...) it is not sufficient simply to “be” and to follow Muslim practices. One must reflect upon Islam and articulate it”.¹³⁵ Therefore Muslims have to separate or emigrate (Arabic: *hijra*) from the cosmic existence of ignorance and build up an upright Islamic condition of health and society – just as the Prophet Muhammad was supposed to have done in his life time, according to Qutb. He migrated from Mecca to Medina in order to separate himself from predominant ignorance prevailing in the Meccan society. Qutb emphasises the necessity of separating oneself from ignorance either physically but in particular spiritually. It is a conscious distance from impurity and ignorance. The essential in this respect is to struggle (Arabic: *jihad*) inwardly and outwardly against the unethical and non-Islamic influences in the form of a battle against sins, evils and temptations. Only through such process of “Hijra” the existence of *shariah*, can be recreated in its pure form. Hence, Qutb frames the term *jahiliyya* in a cosmic existence of ignorance and ever-present condition rather than a pre-Islamic historical era of paganism. He interprets the historical event of *hijra* as a cosmic and ever-present phenomenon that repeats itself in new societies, minds and situations. Thus, Muslims have to immigrate and separate themselves from the ignorance in order to obtain success in religious life.¹³⁶

Student A comprehends the borders of Hijaz as a place of “safety” he describes it as a place where impacts of “worldly desires” have a marginalised channel of influence as he defines Hijaz as a place that is “purely Islamic”. Also student C shares this view, as student A, with regard to society. He describes society as “really bad” in the sense of being non-Islamic. In relation to Qutb's theory of *Jahiliyya* and *Hijra* both students are in a process or stage of conscious separation of what can be considered *jahiliyya*, “ignorance” – the outside society. They have physically separated from negative societal influences which also is symbolised in the little ogre in the green pamphlet presented in appendix III.¹³⁷ Through conscious reflection and Islamic education of the original pure sources Koran and *hadith* the students will communicate the pure knowledge from *Ilme Deen*. Student A has the ambition of communicating Islam in mosques primarily to youths and student C has the ambition to restore the faith of Muslims within his local community.

Hijaz College is a preliminary step or starting point that these students have taken in order to serve Islam and the Muslim community. Collectively, all four students are happy for studying at the

¹³⁵Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:42.

¹³⁶ibid.

¹³⁷Appendix III.

institution however they show dissatisfaction with subjects offered in the curriculum.¹³⁸ A mutual consensus shared by the students is the fact that the evolving society makes demands of competence and quantity of knowledge – also general knowledge. The students seek additional innovative subjects. In particular one student feels “behind” because methodological subjects of communication, *dawah*, are marginalised and because numerous secular subjects are not offered at Hijaz but instead in colleges outside Hijaz. This is quite a stressful factor and forces the student to leave the Islamic environment:

Instead of going to Warwickshire to do my A levels I would have liked to do them here at Hijaz. At the moment I am doing French by myself, Law at Hijaz, psychology and sociology I am doing at Warwickshire. So it is quite difficult. I have my evening classes at Warwickshire and from 9 to 6 I am at Hijaz which only leaves me 30 minutes to reach my classes at Warwickshire. This is more related to the secular curriculum that I wished I could take here. Concerning the Islamic curriculum I would like more literature and subjects added. (...) But subjects on “method of research” and “methods of debate” and cross religious studies where essentials from Christianity, Judaism are taught – these are subjects I would like were added on the Islamic curriculum, subjects that will help us in debates (...) I think workshops like these are very important and we do not have this. (...) The aim of Hijaz is to make Muslim leaders of tomorrow, and I think the Islamic side needs a lot of improvement in terms of curriculum.¹³⁹

The student argues: “Because the aim of Hijaz is to make Muslim leaders of tomorrow”, Hijaz needs to educate more in methodology. In particular this student has very considered views. He is well aware of his expected position and responsibility as a “leader” or authoritative for a Muslim community in the future, and this motivates him in his studies. Neither he nor the other students find all their needs for a complete educational development fulfilled. Some of the things they mentioned were; vague training, lack in practice and persuading skills in preaching religious dogma (Arabic: *aqidah*).

Student B distinguishes from the view of seeing the institution as complete Islamic as he thinks much influence from Western societies have penetrated the relationship between teachers and students:

¹³⁸On my repetitive requests to the chief-executive to get the curriculum I never received it. This is why I tend to give an overall description without going into details of the curriculum.

¹³⁹Interview student C, appendix II: Question 1.

I think it has too much influence from Western society. It is not what it used to be in Islamic institutions in relation to the respect. I think the teacher should be given respect, he deserves that. Imam Abu Hanifa¹⁴⁰ has said: “that the teacher should take the student as his son” so the respect should come from the teacher as well. I think it is the best way to develop a relationship between the teacher and the student – in this time of age.¹⁴¹

Two viewpoints are important in the answer of student B. One is the influence by Western society contrary to student A who thinks that Hijaz is a place of “safety”. Student B obviously has an idealistic perception on how an Islamic institution and a relationship between teacher and student should be as he exemplifies with the theologian early Imam Abu Hanifa (d. 855). Student B says: “it is not what it used to be (...)”.¹⁴² Student B emphasises the importance of respect in retrospective to Islamic nostalgia and relationship between students and teachers. However the three other students consider the relationship between the students and teachers built on a mutual respect. The students do not express a submissive attitude towards their teachers. However the respect assigned to the principal and chief-executive is more prevalent. In particular the sons of the founder are seen as role models exemplified in their qualifications, competence, leadership and the efforts they show in the communication of Islam.

4.5 II. Interview related to the concept of *dawah* and the ambitions of the students

This section introduces the views of the four students, their ambitions and how they depict themselves as future scholars communicating Islam (Arabic: *dawah*). Previously mentioned, *dawah* is translated, comprehended and reflected in three interrelated key concept. These are: (1) Communication, (2) Dissemination and (3) Invitation. I understand *dawah* in these three interrelated concepts and apply it in context of educational Islamization - not as a process, but as a tradition of communicating Islam to Muslim communities. Notably, this segment analyses the answers of the students in relation to the concept of “The “Call” of Islam” as presented by Eickelman and Piscatori in *Muslim Politics* (1996). The attitudes of Islamization – as a method of disseminating Islam educationally – may be seen as an “invented tradition”, a tradition that can be traced back to 1867 in the Deobandi thought. The tradition of educating and developing Muslim men of Hijaz also mentally prepares them to communicate Islam once they graduate. With this tradition the students develop their own personal ambitions reflected and expressed differently. There was consensus

¹⁴⁰One of the four scholars of the *sunni* schools, (Arabic: *madhahib*) for jurisprudence (Arabic: *usul al fiqh*)

¹⁴¹Interview student B, appendix II: Question 5.

¹⁴²Ibid.

amongst the four students that education is a central element for better understanding of religion. *Dawah* in connection to Hijaz is therefore inevitably related to education, spiritual values and religious knowledge disseminated by confident and self-assured scholars and theologians. The essence in their concept of *dawah* is guidance towards the right Islamic path and principles in Islam. Eickelman and Piscatori explain that “the term (*dawah*) has developed over the centuries into an explicit ideology of proselytism”.¹⁴³ Insofar it is a term that is mentioned in the Koran (14:46). They explain that “Muslims as well as non Muslims acquired through missionary work and understanding of the living faith – how to recite the Qur’an, apply the shari’a, and conduct the affairs of everyday life in an Islamic spirit”.¹⁴⁴ However, with time the tradition of *dawah* has faced a reformulation reflected in education supplemented with different aspects of societal activities, i.e. social work, organisation work etc. The tradition of disseminating, *dawah*, is not always a structured way of progress, but rather a way of strategic approach. For example *dawah* in relation to concepts of Islamization may be orchestrated through the channel of institutionalisation/institutionalised ideas proposed by authoritative religious figures. In to the context of Hijaz the institutionalised ideas appear themselves in the teachings of *Dars-e-Nizami*. In order to qualify, it is essential for potential scholars to be able to communicate Islam: the best scholars know how to balance *deen* “religion” and *dunya* “society”, hence a dual education - Islamic and secular - is important. Islamization as a tradition is related to education the development of intellectual skills and research. One of the students says in relation to this:

Hijaz teaches us the art, the art of learning. There is a saying: “give a man fish, feed him for a day -teach a man to fish, feed him for life”. They teach us how to gain knowledge from the books. They give us books, show us how to read, how to extract knowledge from the books. This is the art they give us; this is what we need from Hijaz, in order to gain our own personal knowledge which in Arabic is called *mutalea* - searching for knowledge in different books.¹⁴⁵

According to Student D, Hijaz teaches the students to apply Islamic literature in order to be able to research in Islamic studies - a tradition that has been going on within their education and institution. Each student expresses his ambitions or suggests methods of approach and communication in Muslim communities. Student A would like to integrate his two educations; the secular and the religious in order to promote Islam. He “will follow the example of Hazrat Faiz Sahib who works as

¹⁴³Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:35.

¹⁴⁴ibid 1996.

¹⁴⁵Student D, appendix II: Question 1.

a lawyer and simultaneously works to promote Islam by giving speeches and helping Muslims around the world”.¹⁴⁶ Student A would like to disseminate Islam supposedly as a Muslim speaker applying an intellectual approach. He does not want to disseminate Islam in the traditional way as an *imam* in a mosque that serves the Muslims within a religious space only. He comprehends the function of an *imam* in two ways as he says:

It depends on how you describe an *imam* (*Aalim*); there is one who serves the mosque 24/7 and then there is one who serves the mosque part time. Who comes when he is called, leads *jumma* (“ritual Friday prayer”) for example – that is the difference between the two *imams*.¹⁴⁷

He explains that there is a fulltime *imam* who (only) works for and within a particular mosque and then there is an *imam* who carries out the essential duties, like leading the Friday congregation prayers. Thus, student A expresses his ambitions by fulfilling the obligations as a religious leader along with his dreams of becoming a lawyer. He considers it a corollary of his education at Hijaz, and wants to utilise his training as an *Aalim* potentially part-time in a mosque as he works as a lawyer. Student A actually reflects the ideas of Hijaz as he strives to implement them. He wants to balance *deen*, “religion” with *dunya*, “worldly life” whereas student B, C and D have different or in some way undefined goals.

Student B would like to disseminate Islam through writings and active participation in society also in the media. He has been approached by young Muslims who have questioned him with regards to the killing of the Dutch artist Theo Van Gogh¹⁴⁸, suicide bombings and *jihad*, “struggle”. He says that he was able to answer some of the questions directed to him as he explains:

But not on the basis of the knowledge begotten here only. I do a lot of self studies after class and try to increase my knowledge. I read other books on different topics out of interest. Not only class books.¹⁴⁹

This student finds it important to develop different skills and knowledge in order to response to the increasing demands from Muslims. He is an *Aalim*; a knowledgeable Muslim that has to satisfy his audience with answers that may enlarge their comprehension of religion. This is his call, his *dawah* and therefore student B has ambitions to undertake further studies in Islamic Studies at University

¹⁴⁶Interview student A, appendix II: Question 19.

¹⁴⁷ibid.

¹⁴⁸Theo Van Gogh was a radical Dutch artist and filmmaker killed by a Muslim the 2nd November 2004 because of his film *Submission*.

¹⁴⁹Student B, appendix II: Question 24.

level in order to accomplish a MA degree and enlarge his capacity of knowledge.

Student C who is quite young, still in his teens, will finish his studies within 3 years in *Dars-e-Nizami*. He sees himself working for the local Muslim community as he says:

I will use it (the knowledge) when I go back in favour of my family, friends and people around me. (...) The nearest mosque is 30 minutes away from my home – that shows that the Islamic knowledge is far away. My intention is to change that basically by preaching more. Another thing is that the majority of the Muslims are Wahhabis and Salafis, so my intention is to change that and preach my *aqidah*.¹⁵⁰

He focuses on the term *aqidah* (dogmatic foundation of belief) in response to the increase of Wahhabis and Salafis in his local area. Student C contextualises the purpose of his study within the framework of his local community and the effort of *dawah* within *aqidah*. He “is planning to go around – in mosques – (...) to introduce them to opportunities they do not see (...) also to promote Hijaz” since some of his family members have given Hijaz a bad name. His “intention is to change that” when he returns home. He seeks changes within the theological dogmatic comprehension of religion foremost through *aqidah* and is not hesitant to use the “door to door” method of approach to the Muslims. His ambitions in terms of *dawah*, is to invite within the Muslim sphere and is therefore reserved to Muslims in order to restore their faith and *aqidah* in accordance to *Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat*, “Muslims of the *sunni* tradition”. Thus, views of student C differentiate from the other students because of his concrete focus on *aqidah* and that he already is affiliated to the local community in his home town.¹⁵¹

Student D is also quite young though very mature and considered in his answers. He does not explicitly argue for his idea of *dawah* and the way he intends disseminate Islam. In general he talks about how it is possible to do *dawah* taking his starting point in the scholar and his abilities to advertise himself through recognition. He mentions the importance of acting on the words or ideas one wishes to implement in practice as he quotes Bruce Lee, a deceased master of marshal arts. Bruce Lee has influenced him with his words: “Knowing is not enough - you have to apply, willing is not enough - you must do”.¹⁵² He explains the quotation in relation to Hijaz and the necessity of practising what one preaches, and he says:

¹⁵⁰Student C, appendix II: Question 16.

¹⁵¹Student C, appendix II: Question 15.

¹⁵²Student D, appendix II: Question 13.

(...) What I understand of this in the relation to Hijaz; no matter how much you know, it is not enough you must apply and do it – this is what builds up confidence. If I speak with confidence people will believe in me, but if am nervous they will not pay attention to me and doubt in what I say.¹⁵³

He relates *dawah* to numerous things, first of all the abilities of the scholar to deliver his message. According to student D *dawah* is connected to: (1) the qualification, (2) the ability/confidence and (3) the degree of practice and implementation of knowledge. He personifies the term of *dawah* in the scholar – he himself is the call to Islam. It is the scholar who is the key resource, his qualities determine whether the message reaches the audience or not. Student C considers the “purity of character” as an essential element of representation in Muslim communities and the society at large. Through education and implementation a scholar must represent Islamic character, notably by following the ideal of the Prophet Muhammad.

Another topic student D discusses is the necessity of interaction and open-mindedness within the Muslim *Ummah*. Muslims have to feel the bond of brotherhood that may strengthen the relationship of faith and religion between them. They need to exclude cultural influences. He speaks of problems related to culture that penetrates Muslims and their comprehension of Islam. He himself is planning to travel around in the Middle East because of its richness in Islamic culture and history:

I am expecting to gain knowledge, experience and better insight into societies and discover how Muslims varies – though Islam has one root it shows itself differently.¹⁵⁴

His last sentence is an implicit acceptance and utterance that shows his approval of the fact that Islam is manifested in Muslim behaviour, mentality and their social context – though it has one root. The root of Islam is theologically defined as a static monolithic structure where as “Islams” (as an anthropological approach to Muslim communities and their practices) is a variation of Muslim practices and religious lives affected by cultural, regional and linguistic influences. “Islams” is a fragmented reality of (the theological) religion that daily is performed and lived by Muslims.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³Student D, appendix II: Question 13.

¹⁵⁴Student D, appendix II: Question 12.

¹⁵⁵Schmidt 1998: The Danish Islamologist researcher Garbi Schmidt discusses the subject of “Islam” versus “Islams” in her Ph.D. dissertation: *American Medina* (1998) taking her starting point from an anthropological and sociological point of view. She argues that the notion of presenting Islam in various forms manifested in the expression of “localised Islams” has been actualised and is substantiated theoretically as well as empirically. Further on she explains that a manifested and practiced “variety of Islam” shows visibility in a specific locality that fragmentally affects

Hijaz College symbolically represents Islamic morals and religious values that are affiliated to the geographical area of the Arabic Peninsula where Prophet Muhammad supposedly disseminated Islamic values. The four students affiliate Hijaz College as a place of security and purity. Living in Hijaz they feel protected from non-Islamic influences and immorality in the British society. Reflected in the Islamic thinker Seyyid Qutb the immorality may be seen as *Jahiliyya* or “ignorance” prevalent and destructive to Muslims and their communities. Hence Muslims have to separate themselves physically and spiritually in order to preserve their pure knowledge and values.

The four students are in general satisfied with having started their education at Hijaz College however identify several flaws within the curriculum either in relation to the Islamic or secular subjects. Since they all are very conscious about their role as future scholars they set high ambitions for themselves which they strive to implement. They proportion their ambitions of communicating Islam in different spectra. Respectively, student A intends to follow the tradition of Hijaz integrating his dual qualifications as lawyer and an Islamic scholar. Student B has a more intellectual and Islamic academic ambition as he pictures himself writing Islamic books. Student C is however more focused on disseminating the pure and theologically correct dogmatic foundation of belief, within his own local community, whereas student D emphasises the abilities of the scholar who should implement what he teaches that he may have success.

Islam may be considered in two representations; one that manifests itself through Muslims, culture and regional influences designating to the term “Islams” represented within an anthropological discipline. Secondly, a theological definition that designates to the term “Islam” that in principle may be understood as a universal comprehension of the fundamental substance of the religion with Muslims at large.

5. Conclusive remarks

5.1 *Depicting Deen and Dunya within a analytic framework*

The notions of *deen* and *dunya* have taken a gradual development through Islamic history represented through the ideas and definitions of learned scholars and mystics, particularly in the 12th century. The well known Islamic theologian, Imam Ghazali (d.1111), also thoroughly elaborates on the idea of “renouncing the world” in order to find peace and satisfaction in life - notably through a pious, resolute and ascetic perspective on religion, prayers and God nearness. Thus he sees “the way of (religiously) life” in a pietistic perspective that may develop and complete Muslims he opposes to the politicization of religion.¹⁵⁶

Also the Koranic concept of *deen* presents itself through the notion of “pietism” (10:105) and has a synonymous meaning with the term “Islam” (Arabic: devotion or submission) and therefore there is no difference between the two. However, the importance of *deen* in context of Hijaz College represents itself through teachings that improve your “way of practising life” that is seen as a system, a code of ethics and law based on divinely ordained Islamic universal values. A theological conceptualisation of religion is thrown in relief to idealistic and moral standards and Islamic religious symbols. Some relevant particulars of religious symbols are for example the clothing; cap, beard and long dress (*jubba*) that are made compulsory to wear at the college since it signifies and expresses a visible implementation of religion (*deen*) as an expression. Supposedly because the Prophet Muhammad as well as the founder of Hijaz used to wear the dress – also the sons of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi and family male members wear the same dress code at the college. Seen in the light of Eickelman and Piscatori the above mentioned religious symbols can be related to *ideological* and *functional* aspects and the “sacred authority” in the sense that they all emphasise certain values and practises of symbolic reference points of a Muslim community. The symbols represent an *Aalim* – as an authoritarian.¹⁵⁷ Also Hobsbawm and Ranger suggest that the tradition of wearing a particular outfit “attempts to establish continuity with a suitable past”.¹⁵⁸

Some other particulars of conduct are the priority of strivings in education and morals; manners, behaviour and politeness – the so-called substantial and universal human priorities. Not only are the students taught their religion through (religious) knowledge and behaviour, the students

¹⁵⁶Ghazali 1993:167-194.

¹⁵⁷Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:58.

¹⁵⁸Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:4.

compulsorily have to express their *deen* in order to show comprehension of it. The students are brought up or developed in a religious atmosphere that builds up and generates religious ideals and religious guidelines that withhold them within a fixed mentality. For example every morning the students assemble to recite a famous hymn called *burda sharif* praising the Prophet Muhammad, so that the love to the Prophet maintains in their heart, as one student underpins: “Hijaz is a purely Islamic place”. It is easier for the students to practice their religion at Hijaz as some ground rules are laid out before them whereas difficulties are faced when graduated since the boundaries of safety dissolve and influences from *dunya* emerge. In relation to Qutb who thinks that Islam should be practised in a pure environment or society that distinguishes itself from non-Islamic contaminated environment Muslims have to reflect, articulate and be/live righteously in a pure state of mind and a pure Islamic atmosphere. “It is not sufficient simply to “be” and follow Muslim practices”.¹⁵⁹

Deen is also one of the essential Islamic terms that the students applied to define their ambitions and careers after graduation – also in relation to *dawah*. The term is integrated in their daily language interrelated with the term of *dunya* which means world or worldly life, as mentioned earlier. These two terms are interconnected in a two-fold polarised relationship reflected in a contradictory notion of importance: one that dichotomises *deen* and *dunya* and the other that homogenises *deen* and *dunya*. Consequently, resulting in two depictions: a positive depiction of *dunya* proportioned through good (religious) deeds, acts and decisions that help an individual or a group to live in accordance with Islam and the commands of God – potentially disseminating Islam, through communication: *dawah*. Conversely, a negative depiction of *dunya* that characterises evil and non-religious phenomena in the world as negative and destructive influences on *deen* – the preserved way of religious practice on fragile human ground. The depiction of *dunya* may be elaborated in two divisional fragmentations - as comprehended within Hijaz College:

1. One that positively integrates “worldly life” with “religious life” exemplified in undertaking a secular education or having a job. Here *dunya* is seen as a resource for improvement of living in terms of better standards and progressive or enthusiastic engagement in society. This depiction frames the world/society positively representing *dunya* an advantage for a religious life.

¹⁵⁹Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:42.

2. Secondly *dunya* is seen as a demonic and non-religious part of life that prevents Muslims to fulfil their religious obligations. It sets forward obstacles that navigate you away from religion. It gives a more negative and demonised picture of the worldly life/society. Hence *dunya*, takes a synonym of non-Islamic and unethical conduct in which religiously Islamic ordained rules are not applied and the worldly life pulls Muslims away from God – as defined by Ghazali.¹⁶⁰ In the world Islamic perceptions may be interpreted as degrading values and not seen as essential pillars for improvement and betterment. *Dunya* is defined as society where Islamic religious awareness is neglected and not expressed. In this way *dunya* is seen as negative influences to religious conviction that withdraws the Muslims and *Hijazis* from their religiously ordained practices and God – most of all the awareness of being a Muslim and the responsibility of Islamic practice that comes with it.

In relation to Qutb and his previous mentioned theoretical stance of *Jahiliyya* and *Hijra* the demonic *dunya* is in proportion to *Jahiliyya* ignorance and a contemporary system that is deviated from pure worship and divinely ordained way of life. Thus a *Jahil* system may be contemporary and particular the existence of *Jahiliyya* is permanent and view history in dialectical terms as a permanent battle against evils and sins - a part of a cosmic-spiritual and physical confrontation. Therefore Muslims have to purify their thinking and environment from non-Islamic influences and knowledge.¹⁶¹

The devotion and dedication to religion as expressed by the students is to improve their own level of education, knowledge and communication skills in order to improve Muslims and their understanding of religion. During my conversations, I discovered that they depict *their reality* on idealistic notions of religious comprehension defined within the reference frame of *deen*. In reference to Arkoun *this reality* may be considered to be based on “mythical knowledge” constructs in contradiction to “demythical knowledge”. The former is indicating to interpreted “truths” or “realities” that come out of religious imagination and the later to critical religious reason or logic.¹⁶² Through the replies of the students, it sometimes seemed as if they were blurred from reality. The world outside appeared to be reconstructed in the minds of the students depicted and presented through constructed and religious knowledge. For example, I attended a class in which the students were taught how agnostics think. How they neglect the existence of God. When the teacher started

¹⁶⁰Ghazali 1993:167-194.

¹⁶¹Zeidan 2001.

¹⁶²Arkoun 1994:269.

the class he asked how the students were able to argue for the existence of God – with reference to the Koran. Then he described how Muslims and non-Muslims appear or tend to think “outside” and what they believe in as he affiliated their belief with materialism and science. He started a discussion in which he presented standard formulations and concepts to argue against an agnostic stance. Consequently they were taught methods to argue for the existence of God.¹⁶³

In their period of education and “*imam* training” the students may be seen as distanced from the “actual world” - the world we live in – that may result in insecurity in some students. One student expresses insecurity in for example communicative strategies in terms of method of approach to people. The society outside Hijaz has a lot of qualified and competent individuals that may be better in disseminating their message.¹⁶⁴ The student explains:

We need to build up our experience, knowledge and power of speech - a lot. Experience is the main thing actually, if a graduate student go out in society straight after Hijaz and try to make a difference without speaking properly for example to an audience in a full mosque - and cannot speak properly and gets nervous, they will laugh at him and not take him seriously and think he is useless. This will not motivate him and give him a bad name and his reputation is then gone. And what he is trying to build up, his mission or ambitions will fade away. They say the first impression is the last. If you give people a good impression you have a good starting point and the people will know that you are able to challenge the society (...).¹⁶⁵

This student is putting emphasis on experience which he lacks. Accordingly, knowledge and dedication is not enough to make *Ulema* successful in society. The above cited quotation shows that the responsibility to communicate religion becomes an expression of ambition that each student have. It is a vision the student wish and feels obliged to carry out. In this case the student seeks to challenge the society.

The presented notion that dichotomises *deen* and *dunya* in contradiction to each other is used as a strategic method of dissemination by Hijaz. *Deen* is comprehended as a term that reflects religious idealism and *dunya* worldly realism. *Deen* is thus a reflection of the world of the students that to some extent is based on religious utopia. In the conversation I had with the principal, I was told that the students were given a certain dose of utopian delineation of life – in relation to Islam - to strengthen their foundation of morals and values. Their, to an extent, sheltered life at Hijaz

¹⁶³Notes from a class on *tarbiyya* that I attended: Date: 08.03.2005.

¹⁶⁴Student A, appendix II: Question 6 and student D: Question 2.

¹⁶⁵Student C, appendix II: Question 9.

strengthens their capability to improve their level of Islamic moral and ethics: the good inspiration to life. The form of utopia given to them will eventually be brought to a level of realism in time with their involvement, development and active mental processes with society. In relief to the concept of “objectification of the Muslim consciousness” - within the theoretical frame of “invented tradition”, as elaborated by Eickelman and Piscatori aspects of religious life becomes “subject to conscious reflection, discussion and debate”¹⁶⁶ that goes through processes of objective and universal questions as: “what is my religion?” and “what makes my religion of prevailing importance in my life?”.¹⁶⁷ Some students of Hijaz have already experienced the above mentioned process of objectification in which religious, societal and individual aspects of life become subjects of conscious reflection. However their lack of interaction with society, while going through their reflective processes, seems vague. Consequently this tendency creates a resolute and Islamic traditional thinking that might not keep pace with the ongoing society. The principal did agree that some students might be met with disappointment, resistance or lack of motivation, because the students have been secluded, however he also pointed towards these experiences of disappointments as a part of life. One of the functions of the *Ulema* is to lift “the level of community” “to risen the standard of society – to better moral standards”.¹⁶⁸

The students of Hijaz are taught - through education and idealistic presentations - how the world supposedly should be according to Islamic principles. The idealistic presentations and Islamic conducts withhold the students in a “semioloigal system”¹⁶⁹ as the institution educates and develops the students in accordance with an “invented tradition” of Islamic learning.¹⁷⁰ Very little focus is given to dynamics of the evolving world or society, and how Islamic theology should be implemented and interpreted in proportion to the evolving contemporary British society. Somehow it seems that Hijaz College is restrained to the study of Islamic theology taught in the discipline of *Dars-e-Nizami*. On the contrary one may say that Hijaz College is doing what it is supposed to do; to teach Islamic theology no matter how the world or society of today operates – to follow the religious tradition. However, I see a disharmony and a risk of failure of ability in the way Hijaz College attempts to prepare their students to stabilise Muslims, and their religion as an immanent part in the contemporary society they live in. As expressed by the students the evolving society makes demands of competence and quantity of knowledge, however they feel left “behind” because

¹⁶⁶Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:37.

¹⁶⁷ibid:38.

¹⁶⁸Interview with principal Faiz ul-Aqtab Siddiqi: Date: 07.03. 2005.

¹⁶⁹Arkoun 1994:268-272.

¹⁷⁰ Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983.

relevant and innovative subjects are missed out in the curriculum. Hence the curriculum may be considered to be revised where relevant and alternative subjects are added, such as methodological subjects of communication.¹⁷¹ Secondly, I consider social and societal awareness to non-Muslims in terms of better interrelationship is important. An established institution like Hijaz College can make a difference and nuance if they take initiatives to dialogue and to promote better understanding between the Muslim community and non-Muslim community. Such an exemplified initiative with substantial elements of strategic approach not only promotes the institution it also manifests the qualified *Ulema* as visible and knowledgeable resources that actively contribute to the British and European society.

5.2 Conclusion

This paper has examined Hijaz College and four views of students undertaking an Islamic theologian education. The simple question raised in the introduction was: “What is Hijaz College”?

Hijaz College is an Islamic institution for education that integrates Islamic traditional teachings and secular sciences in contemporary Britain. It is an institution that represents itself in a Barelwi tradition of *sunni Ulema* who venerate the status and emphasise the spiritual importance of the Prophet Muhammad and other Sufi saints. Consequently, Hijaz College is an institution that includes the founder’s tomb as he is considered a saint.

Some students show affection and affiliation to the tomb whereas others do not. Thus, some students feel a bond or connection to the founder through the initiation of the Sufi Naqshbandi order they have confessed to - others pay their respect to his tomb since he is the founder of the college. Through an emic perspective on a spiritual level of religious comprehension divine blessings are believed to be poured to the visitors of the tomb. The Algerian-French philosopher Muhammad Arkoun defines this religious comprehension in terms of “mythical knowledge” that appeals to emotions and idealistic imaginations that are engendered by elaborations on “metamorphosis of the sacred”.¹⁷²

Hijaz College is just one example of an established institution and represents a Muslim community living in contemporary British society. The variability of Muslim communities, their religious practices and thoughts initially manifested its presence since the 18th century in Britain. The communities have not only increased in quantity and formation, but they also manifest themselves in different ways and cannot be categorised as a homogeneous religious minority group

¹⁷¹Interview student C, appendix II: Question 1.

¹⁷²Arkoun 1994:269.

and consequently put the notion of “Islams” into consideration as illustrated by Garbi Schmidt.¹⁷³

Hijaz College defines its aims and objectives in three dimensions:

- 1) To develop the students in accordance with Islamic values that they may exemplify the character of Prophet Muhammad.
- 2) To provide the Muslim *Ummah* with “qualified *Ulema* and professionals such as Lawyers, Engineers, Accountants and Teachers”.
- 3) To serve the Muslims by inviting them to *deen*, “religion” through communication (Arabic: *Dawah*) and education.

Hijaz College sees its overriding principle to strengthen Muslim identity through the medium of education, moral and ethical development. Hence, the institution is built on the philosophy of the founder Abdul Wahab Siddiqi, a Sufi scholar, who integrated a two-fold educational discipline: Islamic religious sciences and secular studies.

Hijaz College successfully promotes itself as an institution that integrates *deen*, “religion”, and *dunya*, “worldly life” and spirituality – three universal elements of religious comprehension and identification in the contemporary modern society. Thus the sons of the founder take a prominent position represented as role models since they themselves hold two degrees; an Islamic and a secular one. The institution does not put effort into integration topics however represents Islam on an “everyday level” being an Islamic institution located in contemporary Britain. Notably, the principal feels at home in Britain as he keeps the notion of being a part of the society.

The roles of Islamic scholars - the so called *Ulema* - have always had an essential and authoritarian place throughout Islamic history and theology. They are characterised as the heirs of religion. Hijaz also makes use of an expression that elevates the position of *Ulema* among Muslims declaring that they are the “future torch bearers of the Muslim *Ummah*”.¹⁷⁴ Substantiated in perspective to the concepts of “sacred authority” presented by Eickelman and Piscatori an authoritarian implement certain values and practises emphasised in religious traditions and cherished in the community.¹⁷⁵

The interesting dimension in this research was the interviewing carried out with the students.

¹⁷³Schmidt 1998.

¹⁷⁴Prospectus Hijaz 1998-99:7.

¹⁷⁵Eickelman and Piscatori 1996:58.

The four students have different ethnic backgrounds. It was clear from the interviews that all students have different ambitions as scholars. One of the students tends to follow the footsteps of the founder. He wants to become a lawyer and simultaneously work as a scholar. Another student would like to promote his *aqidah*, “dogmatic doctrinal religious belief”, in his local community. A third student has ambitions to continue his studies further at University level. Whereas the last student wants to travel in the Middle East in order to explore Arabic Islamic culture. All four students are very confident and considered in their answers and reflections. However they do not feel prepared to communicate Islam to larger audiences primarily because of lack in practical experience. All of them have, on a small scale, talked to (young) Muslims either giving speeches or answered questions – a preliminary step in their scholarly career. Conclusively, the four students have a very remote national affiliation to their country of birth. British society demonises Islam through politics and the media. The students express a lack of understanding and dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims - a lack that worsens the misunderstanding and misconceptions towards Muslims. In particular, the students feel targeted because of their religion.

The students are not “actively” engaged in society. They give speeches and participate in religious festivities. Hijaz on the other hand organises funerals and other religious festivities – recently they have introduced the project of “Garden of Peace” which is a Muslim cemetery.

The theological concept of Hijaz is represented in the Islamic curriculum, characterised as *Dars-e-Nizami*; a structured system of Islamic Religious Sciences. In substance the elements of the curriculum do not differ from other Islamic theology *sunni* schools. Thus, Hijaz follows the tradition of preserving the classical literature teaching it to the students. However the students have expressed a wish for more modern subjects in the Islamic curriculum.

Hijaz College as a Muslim community and Islamic institution does not actively promote co-existence between Muslims and non-Muslims however a multi-ethnic environment at the college is represented insofar as the students have different ethnic backgrounds the majority having a Pakistani background. It is not the case that the institution opposes to co-existence – this is simply not an element of emphasis in the development of the students or a primary element in their aims and objectives.

Thus, co-existence is a natural consequence of growing up in a non-Muslim society. Hijaz College does not compromise on its Islamic principles in favour of co-existence, perhaps therefore the notion of co-existence is minimised – not excluded. It is an institution that seeks to maximise the potential of Muslim men in British society offering them an opportunity to take a two-fold

education integrating Islamic and secular sciences. The medium and Islamization process is through Islamic moral development and education. These ideals might balance the *Hijazi* Muslims in society giving them an insight into their own religious background - a self-identification process that raises their confidence.

Conclusively, the idea of establishing an Islamic institution that integrates Islamic studies with secular studies shows a visible establishment of conscious Muslim communities in European societies that now constitute an integrated part of society. For the present there are many Islamic institutions prevailing in the British society, however Hijaz caught my special attention because of the existence of the Sufi tomb of Abdul Wahab Siddiqi that is affiliated to the institution and incorporated in the grounds of its complex. The manifestation of such a tomb which apparently seems to be the first of its kind in Western Europe not only symbolises, but also proclaims the establishment of a Sufi tradition, a Sufi practice and Sufi interest in contemporary Britain. The tendency and increasing visible establishment of Sufism in a modern society such as Britain mark a different Muslim solidarity that also approaches Islam from a spiritual and mystical angle. Referring back to my interest in Hijaz College it was the Sufi tomb that captured my attention. The interest to research the institution Hijaz College developed after discovering the link it had to the tomb. Hence, it is not the institutionalised proportion or form of Islam or Muslims that has my core interest it is the tendency and the manifestation of new and in particular Sufi related thoughts, practises or establishments that attract my attention. Consequently, I intend to take my second step of research in a tendency or perhaps a phenomenon that demonstrates an arising variability in Islam and Muslims.

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Taped interviews

Student A, B, C and D of Hijaz College

Principal of Hijaz College: Faiz ul Aqtab Siddiqi

Chief-executive of Hijaz College: Tauqir Ishaq

A teacher of Hijaz College

Appendix I: List of literature

The books listed below are from the list of the literature at Hijaz College. Since Hijaz among other things could not provide me with a list of literature, I had to note down titles given to me and search for their contents of teachings. However, I discovered in the prospectus 1998-99 of Hijaz that some of the books are mentioned and briefly described.

The following books are being taught in the field of *fiqh* (Islamic Conduct, Ethics)

Fiqh:

1. ***Noorul-Eizah, Sheikh Hassan bin Ali*** – 1 vol.: preliminary introduction of Islamic *fiqh* related to themes on ablution (Arabic: *wudu*), prayers (Arabic: *salah*) fasting (Arabic: *sawm*) etc.(certificate level)
2. ***Qudoori, Sh. Quduri***, consists of one volume. This book gives a deeper insight into *fiqh* it is more advanced than the former, and uses directly references documented from the Koran to illustrate the point clearly. The issues of law are more complex. (diploma level)
3. ***Sharah Waqayah***, consists of two volumes that present the arguments primarily between Abu Hanifa (and his students: Imam Muhammad and Qadi Abu Yousuf also called *sahibayn* in the terminology of *fiqh*) and Imam Shafi. It clarifies the argument of the *Hanafi fiqh* in the light of the *Shafi fiqh*. (Bachelors level)
4. ***Hedaya, Khalil bin abi Bakr*** consists of two volumes and presents in detail themes in *fiqh*: from ablution to marriage and so forth – unlimited topics are presented by him, not only does he explain the “way of doing so and so” or how to perform a given act but he also explains the reason of “doing so and so”. He refers to the Koran and *hadith* by quoting relevant verses. This book is popular and simple book referred to. (Masters level)

The following books are taught in the field of *Usool al fiqh* (Jurisprudence)

Usool al-fiqh

1. ***Usool Shashi***: Divided in four segments: the first being “the rule of God” (Arabic:*kitabul Allah*) the second being “the customs of the messenger” (Arabic: *sunnate Rasul*) the third, consensus of Islamic scholars (Arabic: *ijma*) the fourth and final segment is reason (Arabic: *qiyas*).
2. ***Noorul Anwar***: Is gives more details than *Usool ash shashi* and clarified arguments between the four major scholars and their thought of *fiqh*. Consists of one volume and is divided in 4 chapters. Applied in the final year.

3. *Siraji*: Concentrates on themes of property and is applied in the final year.

The following books are taught in the in the field of interpretation of Koran and *hadith*

Tafsir

1. *Ibn Kathir*: Applied in Year 5/6
2. *Munir*: Modern Koranic interpretation from the 1980s
3. *Jalalayn*: Interpretation and exegesis of Koran. Applied in Year 6
4. *Baydawi*: Applied in the final Year 7

Hadith

1. *Mishqat masabih*: Various *hadith* are thought it is a preliminary introduction to the study of *hadith*, applied in the preliminary years.
2. *Bukhari*
3. *Muslim*
4. *Rijatul shahein*

In the field of Arabic, grammar (Arabic: *navh*) and morphology (Arabic: *sarf*) modern and classical Arabic and the Moroccan dialect is taught in accordance with the standards of National British curriculum

Appendix II: Transcription of taped interviews with four students of Hijaz

Profile: Student A

Age 23 – 5th year student

From England, Origin: Half American & Half South American

Date of interview: 2005/03/08 (27 minutes)

I: Topics related to Hijaz, studies, Sufism and the mausoleum of Wahab Siddiqi

1. Do you know why your college is called Hijaz?

Hijaz College is called Hijaz because of the founder; *Hazrat rahmatulla alayhi*¹⁷⁶ who is the *Pir Sahib* of many *murids* that come here to the college and he is the father of Faiz Sahib and the other brothers; Noor Sahib, Zain Sahib and Qamar Sahib. I cannot actually say why the name was given, but Hijaz was the place that in old times was a part of Mecca – that is all I know so ...for him to choose the name might derive from the idea of Mecca being a part of Hijaz.

2. Do you think it has a symbolic meaning?

It depends on how you interpret it, but yes I think it has a symbolic meaning, maybe a historical, it depends on how you understand the meaning.

3. Can you cope and catch up with the goal-oriented education of Hijaz?

Hijaz College challenges your knowledge, whether it is Islamic or secular, but you cover step by step, day by day, year by year – like in subjects of *fiqh*, *tafsir*, *navh* – you cover it by reading different books. It does get harder but the level you cover helps you understand the next level that is going to come, so if you cannot cope with the first level you might not cope with the rest of the levels at all. I started at Hijaz when I was 14, back in 1998.

4. Do you regret undertaking your studies at this boarding school?

When I think about it ...uhm...no, I mean study-wise. But regarding my freedom I could have been outside, having more friends getting a driving licence and a lot of money. I think of that sometimes and regret sometimes. But looking at the aspect of Islam, I do not do it at all, there is nothing that I regret, I have travelled all around the world and have seen Islamic schools, but I would rather be at Hijaz, not because I

¹⁷⁶ *Rahmatulla Alayhi* is an Arabic-Islamic expression which means “May God’s mercy be upon him”.

understand the language¹⁷⁷, but because I can understand Islam better here than in any other place.

5. Why is that?

Because Hijaz is the only place where you can knock on the door (after lessons after 6 o'clock) of a staff member and he will be willing to help you, like a tutor – I have not seen it at any other school, *madrassa* or university. They will help you and make you understand if you do not understand – that is quite good.

6. Is it a benefit that Hijaz is a boarding school?

If I would have been at home I would not have chosen to take Islamic studies simultaneously with my secular studies. Being at Hijaz you actually practise and implement the things you learn – I would not have been able to do that at home. For example the *namaz*¹⁷⁸, you learn it is fundamental in Islam and you practice it five times a day. Outside the *jihad an nafs*; struggle of your soul and worldly desires are greater and it has a greater impact but here it is restricted. Like me, I have a Christian background when I go home for holidays to my friends and relatives I participate in Christian things like parities, though I do not drink or anything. Being at Hijaz which is a purely Islamic place I feel protected from worldly desires – and it is not because I am weak, but being here helps me and gives support and I refrain from worldly desires.

7. What celebrations are held at Hijaz?

All the Islamic celebrations, gatherings or holidays; the month of Ramadan, *laylatul qadr*, *Shaban*, *Eid*, *Milad an Nabi* etc. Hijaz have just made a “garden of Peace”, a Muslim cemetery, - it is not a celebration but we do activities and celebrations outside Hijaz as well, in the homes of Muslim families for example. We offer *jinaza* (Urdu: funeral service) and do all the ritual things connected to an Islamic burial. At *Ramadan* all the students go home for holidays

8. What relevance does the Mizar Sharif have to you?

Not anybody can have a *Mizar*, can they..? A *Mizar sharif* is a place where a great person is buried, like a *Wali Allah*, a friend of God, or a great sheikh, or a great *imam*. When I go to the *Mizar Sharif* I make *wuzu*¹⁷⁹, take on nice clothes, smell nice, I recite the Koran and *darood*¹⁸⁰ on the Prophet, *sallal la ho alayhi wa sallam*, may *Allah* send His blessings upon him – and ask *Allah* to bless *Hazrat rahmatulla alayhi*, forgive his sins and that *Allah* may bless his family – that is it.

¹⁷⁷ He refers to the Urdu language since the majority of the students have Pakistani origin including the founder and his family.

¹⁷⁸ Urdu word for obligatory prayers (Arabic: *salah*)

¹⁷⁹ Urdu word for the ritual ablution (Arabic: *wudu*)

¹⁸⁰ Urdu word for Salutations on the Prophet Muhammad (Arabic: *salawat*)

9. Do you go there every day?

No, I do not go there everyday. You cannot pop up one day saying I want to go the *Mizar*, you have to make the intention.... “*inna amal bil niyyat*” which means: “every deed depends on the intention” - so if you want to go to the *Mizar* you plan to go there freshly.

It really depends on my mood and my condition actually. I might go there once a week or even more - in a week. It depends on my soul if it is happy or not... it depends on my condition, I would never go there in an angry mood – I want to be ready before I go.

10. Do you feel any affiliation or connection to him?

Hazrat Sahib was a man who gave his love to everybody, whether Muslim or Christian – me being a Muslim, hearing stories about him; that he was a great man - and even being a student of Hijaz - has made me feel that he was not just a *Pir* or my sheikhs father - he was somebody I knew, somebody that could be there when ever I had a situation, support me like a father ... yes, in that case I do have a connection, I am also the *murid* of *Hazrat Faiz Sahib*.

II: Topics related to integration, society and participation

11. Who are your role models?

Role models... I consider the brothers: *Hazrat Zain Sahib*, *Noor Sahib* and *Faiz Sahib* as my biggest role models, what *Faiz Sahib* does for Islam is beyond belief; he would rather work for *deen*, which is religion than *dunya* which is worldly matters. He creating Hijaz is quite a vision to some people to understand, how a man of his standards can take on a job, take on other peoples matters – and make Hijaz College what it is today. After seeing how he works for Islam and the things he does for Islam, and the people around the world, I do think he is a role model. But except him, it is of cause the Prophet Muhammad *sallal laho alayhi wa sallam*, not only was he a man of mystery, he was a man that suffered so much for us Muslims – in his own time of prophecy and before that, so... yes, definitely these are the two role models, one in reality and one as an universal ideal.

12. What is the difference in having a role model in reality and an idealistic or universal role model?

It depends on how you look at it, but the attributes plays a great role. What you got to understand is that everything is different with the Prophet *sallal laho alayhi wa sallam*, every action of him became a *sunna*, and everything he said became a *hadith*. But I see similarities in the Prophet *sallal laho alayhi wa sallam*, and *Faiz Sahib*, because both of them do not worry about money, the Prophet *sallal laho alayhi wa sallam*, just worried about the *Ummah* and it is the same thing with *Hazrat Faiz Sahib*. I see it in practise that he is a man who worries about the *Ummah* instead of running after the *kafirs*, “non-believers” or *munafiqs*, “hypocrites” trying to please them.

13. Do you feel like a fellow citizen in England, is England your home?

Actually, I do not feel that I have a home in the world. Home is a place of birth and a temporary location of stay. The realhome for Muslims is in Mecca. The world is a temporary place it is not going to be forever – treat the world like a temporary home, one day it will all come to an end, we will all come to death, so it is just a place. I do not treat this place as home I just take it as a place of stay, a place of being.

14. What about the cultural impacts on your way of life, interpretations, social context etc.? I think you have a very universal point of view of being a Muslim, is that correct?

In England they say that everybody is allowed to “freedom of speech” and say anything – but you got to understand that disrespecting and disgracing another person’s religion over and over again is very heartbreaking. I remember a case of a man (cannot remember his name) but he accused the Prophet *sallal laho alayhi wa sallam*, of being a paedophile, *naudhu billah*, “God forgive me” – because he married Aisha *radiallahu anha* in the age of nine, and a lot of Muslims get frustrated in particular this matter. It is true he married her in a young age, but he did not touch her until the age of 19. This aspect is neglected do you understand my point? The accusations of the non-Muslims are that the Prophet Muhammad *sallal laho alayhi wa sallam*, was just an ordinary man, he was a liar that just showed himself before the Christians in his “human form”, but what they do not know is he showed the Muslims his spiritual form, in the form of *noor*, “light”. He was made of light this is something they do not understand. They never saw or will see this reflection of him – Muslims have the ability to see this reflection of the Prophet Muhammad *sallal laho alayhi wa sallam*.

So, disrespecting other people’s religion is disrespecting their faith, their way of peaceful guidance. That is why I think that being in Saudi Arabia I would not meet accusations from society – Saudi Arabia is supposed to be our homeland.

15. What about shariah in Britain?

Shariah is the Islamic law... (...) but the sunni Muslims or the sheikhs say that the best way to serve Allah is by doing *dhikr* of your Lord, being in a country where you are mixed you just have to understand what your path is, you have to take your knowledge and your belief and keep on going, do not ever fall across or be defeated.

16. Do you participate in debates or forums?

Any function for Muslims. I just came home from Bradford yesterday, where I delivered a speech for Muslims. There was a *jalsa*, “religious function” there. If I know about the topic of debate I do not mind. But

I would never jump into a debate if I do not have knowledge of the field – there is no point in participating in a debate if you do it for the sake of having a debate – I consider it more damageable for the knowledge just to argue, and you might also get defeated or presented wrongly.

17. So you do explore your knowledge?

Yes, that is the whole point of being an *Aalim*, to read books and understand that you are ready for a debate and explain what you believe in? People in the society do not understand Islam and will try to accuse you if you do explain the essentials of Islam. If you do not explain them you will always be defeated.

III: Topics related to dawah and the ambitions of the four students

18. Are your topics of speech only related to religion or do you have topics on society and integration – that play an important role for Muslims and their lives in UK?

When I did my speech in Bradford I did it on the topic of: “The oneness of Allah” – because it was a topic everybody there needed to have a clear concept about. My audience was young and they will not blindly worship God as they say: “Because I am Muslim, because my parents or friends say I am Muslim, I should do this and this”. So when you give a speech you must understand the level of the people, their background; what is their struggle, what is their problem, what is their need – once you understand their needs, know their age you can direct your speech in their interest. That is one of the things, to understand the audience, their area, their culture and what they require from you to explain for them. Sometimes I even get feedback or response from the audience, they ask me questions, so there is also a communication or dialog.

19. What are your ambitions?

I have 2 years left at Hijaz, *insha Allah*, and I am doing LLB Law but once I finish I would like to follow the example of Hazrat Faiz Sahib, work as a lawyer and simultaneously work to promote Islam, giving speeches and helping Muslims around the world, etc. – like his brothers they all work as lawyers and serve the *deen*, religion. Unlike any other *madrassa* they support and offer their help.

20. Will you not work as an imam?

It depends on how you describe an *imam*, there is one who serves the mosques 24/7 and then there is the one who serves the mosque part time, who comes when he is called, leads the *jumma*, “Friday prayer” for example - that is the difference between the two *imams*.

Profile: Student B

Age 27 - 7th year student

From Holland, (Surinami Origin)

Date of interview: 2005/03/08 (30. minutes)

I: Topics related to Hijaz, studies, Sufism and the mausoleum of Wahab Siddiqi

1. Were you told of Hijaz before coming here?

I heard it was a college that taught *Dars-e-Nizami* so my aim was to study the *Dars-e-Nizami* – only.

2. Are you satisfied with the college?

In knowledge I am not satisfied, because the more you learn the less knowledgeable you feel. My aim is to study further.

3. Where will you go then?

To Holland in Rotterdam where I live, I will do my B.A and M.A and I have already applied for next year.

4. Have you studied in any other jamia?

Before coming to Hijaz, I studied in another *jamia*, but it was only Koran-studies.

5. How is the relationship between the students and teachers?

It is all right but I think it has too much influence from the western society. It is not what it used to be in Islamic institutions in relation to the respect. I think the teacher should be given respect, he deserves that. Imam Abu Hanifa has said: “That the teacher should take the student as his son” so the respect should come from the teacher as well. I think it is the best way to develop a relationship between the teacher and the student – in this time of age.

6. Do you think the curriculum is goal-oriented?

I think more Islamic subjects and books should be added to the curriculum – it will benefit the students more. I know other colleges provide more books. So I think Hijaz should do the same.

7. What philosophers have you studied?

I studied Imam Ghazali in my spare time, not in class. He was good in dividing things. I was reading one *bahath*, “discussion”, it was on hatred. I was amazed. I have not studied any modern philosophers.

8. Are you satisfied with the facilities Hijaz provide?

I do not care about the facilities, only the knowledge. Before I came to Hijaz I met a scholar in Holland who said to me: “the more you suffer while gaining your knowledge and achieving your goal, the bigger you will become”. I still think it could be better here at Hijaz.

9. Do you have excursions? To museums, countries?

No there have not been anything in the period of my study – I have been here 7 years.

10. Do you visit the Mizar Sharif?

Sometimes - not everyday. The thing is I never knew him when he was alive and I do not feel any affiliation to him. I am not a *murid* of him either. I want to be *murid* but not from this *silsila*, “spiritual chain”.

11. Do you approve of Sufism?

I do believe in Sufism but I do not want to get involved in it while studying. But when I graduate from Hijaz I will practice it. I think as an *Aalim* you should go into Sufism. It teaches you the Islamic way of life in a different way. Secondly Sufism is to practice. Thirdly it is spiritual. Sufism can help me and the people that I will guide I can help them as well. It was also one of the reasons to come to Hijaz.

II: Topics related to integration, society and participation

12. Living in a European society and undertaking an Islamic education, what is your view on integration?

I would advise Muslims to integrate into the society – but with a limit. Islam is not only a religion it is also a way of life, so if a Muslim integrates fully on the premises laid by the governments and their political strategies then he will lose his Islamic way of life. For example if one says: “*come let us go to the pub*” - the Muslim would go, in the name of integration. The Muslim should know this is a place forbidden to go, because the main objective is to drink alcohol which is forbidden for Muslims. You can integrate but with a limit. You have to learn the language, the laws, and things about the society; what you can and cannot say and do. Actually you are living in two worlds: and Islamic and non-Islamic so you have to adjust. But at the same time do not cross the limit.

13. How will you define the society we are living in – which dar, “abode”, is it?

It is definitely not *dar al Islam*, “abode of Islam” – so it is *dar al kufr*, “abode of infidels”. There is a lot of *fitna*, “problems” to distract people: alcohol that is easy to get, for instance.

14. How are Muslims ordained to live in “dar ul kufr”?

In *dar ul kufr*, Muslims should be aware of their limits and know about the principles of their religion. You

cannot forget your religion, because to live by the religion is the purpose of life.

15. Do you approve of the term “European Islam”?

Actually I do not see any difference between the so called European Islam and Islam. The only difference I can see is in *fiqh*, the laws related to *hudud* the punishments, for example fornication. In that sense, yes you could say that Islam in Europe is different and you may apply the term European Islam.

16. Do you like the term?

No I do not like the term actually, Islam is Islam. You take it as Islam that is it.

17. What about the cultural influences (the social context) do they not have an impact on the Islamic way of life and conceptualization?

You know I was asked about the culture in Holland. The problem is that people follow the culture first and then Islam it should be the other way around: first Islam then the culture. There was a discussion on marriage in Holland regarding the distinction between arranged and forced marriages. Someone asked me about this. I said to him that both men and women should marry the one they like. If it is arranged, the woman must be asked for her opinion of marriage. In this case culture turns against the teachings of Islam. Because what we hear are coincidences where the woman or man are forced into marriage. You see, culture is man made, it is not Islamic. Islam is *Hakim*, “rule” and culture is *Mahkum*, “being ruled”.

III: Topics related to dawah and the ambitions of the four students

18. What are your ambitions with the Islamic education you are undertaking?

Mainly to discuss with people about Islam and the current situation, what is going on now in Europe or in the world. Because last summer when I went to Holland, there was an event, and people asked me questions - the young generation asked about terrorism and the killing of Theo Van Gogh the Dutch filmmaker who was killed in 2004. What Islam says about this and that. I like to be in more direct contact with people and not only to deliver speeches.

19. So you would like to work in society with Muslims and non-Muslims, simultaneously?

It does not matter to me, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims – whoever comes to me I will answer the questions directed to me.

20. Who have you been approached by so far?

Mainly Muslims

21. And have you been able to answer the questions posed to you?

Some of them - yes.

22. What sort of questions were you asked?

Mostly about current issues, things that are going on and conspicuous in the media. And then questions related to *shariah*.

23. What kind of a question was asked to you recently?

It was about the killing of Van Gogh, on the matter of *Jihad* and suicide bombings, whether it is allowed or not.

24. And were you capable of answering - on the basis of the knowledge you have gained from Hijaz?

Yes I did answer. But not on the basis of the knowledge begotten here only. I do a lot of self studies after class and try to increase my knowledge. I read other books on different topics out of interest. Not only class books.

25. How should Islam be advocated?

Through books, exemplification of oneself and thirdly through education.

26. How will you do dawah

I want to write Islamic books and go into the media: radio TV and so on, through these channels I think I can reach more people because by reaching people you make them think about it. (The message you deliver.) Islam can be explained in a soft or a hard way. Islam should always be explained in a calm way.

27. Do you approve of the non-confessional way of approach to the study of Islam?

The knowledge of Islam is wide. One person cannot study whole Islam that is not possible. So I think it is good that different views on Islam are portrayed – as long as it does not turn away from the essentials of Islam. I think it is okay.

Profile: Student C

Age 16 – 6th year student

From Ireland, (Pakistani origin)

Date of interview: 2005/03/08 (18 minutes)

I: Topics related to Hijaz, studies, Sufism and the mausoleum of Wahab Siddiqi

1. What subjects are you taking outside Hijaz?

I am doing my GCSEs here, I am doing law (...) here, and in Warwickshire College I am taking sociology.

2. Do you regret coming here?

Not at all, it has prevented me from a lot of things that I might have done back home. Like the society, it is really bad.

3. Do you mean, unethical and non-Islamic?

Yea, definitely, you know when I came here I did not know who Allah is, and that we had a prophet called Muhammad, *sallal la ho alayhi wa sallam*, I did not know anything, I did not know how to pray *namaz*. When I came here I learned all that. This place may not be the best institutional wise, but educational wise it is quite good it has improved and is still improving, it might take a while, but it will get better *insha Allah*. The level of education has been improved year by year basically, I mean when I first came it was peachier, but the level of education has jumped up massively. I have been here six years I was 10 years old when I came here.

4. How do you find the curriculum?

On the Islamic side I think they should add more on the *aqidah*, belief. It is really important. People do not know much about their own *aqidah* and a lot of criticism comes from Wahhabis and Salafis towards sunnis. In Islam there are 72 sects all Muslims derive from one of these.

5. Is it the *aqidah* that is taught in Hijaz that you find important?

Not only the *aqidah*, I think the main reason for people to come here is because of the combination of secular and Islamic education provided here. *Deen* is important but it is *dunya* that is going to take us across this world. People consider *deen* and *dunya* both important. And Hijaz do *deen* and *dunya* both simultaneously. And I think the majority of the people come to this place because of this. Institutional wise it might not be the best, but it offers other good things and surely it will get better.

6. Are you a follower of the Naqshbandiyya tariqa?

No. I am not a *murid* of Hazrat Sahib, the reason is that I do not know so much about it and I do not feel comfortable about it yet, and I do not want to go into something I do not know about, so I would like to know more about it and then find a sheykh. I would like to know what I am going into and not be a blind believer, know about the topic.

7. What do you know about Sufism?

Not so much actually, but I would like to know more about it. One thing I do know is that dying without a sheikh makes *shaytan*, “satan” your sheikh, so I would like to have a sheikh before I die.

8. Do you go to the Mizar Sharif?

Yea, but not every day, I pass by it every day, but do not visit it, and maybe it is not right, disrespectful, I should go in there and visit but... I was told he was a very pious man and the founder of the school. For example, the Wahhabis attack us sunnis and say, we go to the *Mizar* and worship it. Now that is wrong, the thing is we go there, pay our respect. I do *dua*, “prayer” for him *not to him* and ask through him, help from Allah.

9. Do you think you are able to use the knowledge you gain from Hijaz?

The quantity of knowledge is never enough – even the one we gain from Hijaz. You can basically study your whole life till the day you die and it will never be enough. Knowledge is an endless field. What we learn at Hijaz is just a grain in that field, there is much more beyond Hijaz. Challenging society does not refer to the knowledge only, but the experience you have. These are one of the points I Hijaz lacking in, we should practice more, do more speeches. Even *mahfils*, “gatherings” I mean how many *mahfils* do we do have in a year here at Hijaz, it is not a lot, you see! Three or four, on a regular basis three or four is not enough for students to practice speeches, neither to build up self confidence nor to understand how to change and attract people. We need to build up our experience, knowledge and power of speech - *a lot*. Experience is the main thing actually. If a graduated student go out in society straight after Hijaz and try to make a difference without speaking properly, for example, to an audience in a full mosque and is not able to speak properly and gets nervous, they will laugh at him and not take him serious and think he is useless. This will not motivate him and give him a bad name and his reputation is then gone. And what he is trying to build up, his mission or ambitions will fade away. They say the first impression is the last. If you give people a good impression you have a good starting point and the people will know that you are able to challenge the society.

10. You were talking about the lack of experience?

Yes, it is lacking a lot really.

11. Aren't the students able to make an effort or take initiatives themselves?

It is so different from student to student; the opinion of lack in experience is my view. I mean I cannot go down to the staff and say I want this and this – but I definitely think there should be made an initiative by the superiors.

II: Topics related to integration, society and participation

12. In terms of integration – do you consider Ireland your home or country?

Umm... not really, I think of it as my home, my house is there my relatives are there, I was brought up there – that is my home. And my intention is also to go back there and change things.

13. How is your view on integration?

I think lack of understanding creates distances and misconceptions. I think there should be more respect for other people and their religions. Example given, in the case of the *hijab* in France. I think it is totally wrong. No religious symbols can be worn, and they want to make everyone equal. I think the rights of the people should be given to them – respect should be given. I do not think there is anything wrong in standing for the things you believe in and show your religion.

14. Have you participated in any debate forums or other similar activities?

No, not really, I did deliver one speech once in Hijaz, but that is it.

15. Would you like to?

Definitely, I am planning to go around - in mosques - in Ireland this summer, to introduce them to opportunities they have but they do not see – and thereby also promote Hijaz, because there are so many opportunities out there. You see when I came, I came with my cousins, and my cousins left for the wrong reasons, they left because of the facilities, not the education. Back then the facilities were really bad; sometimes we had to sleep on the floor. But things have changed now. They left and gave a bad name to Hijaz. You know there is a small community of Muslims around Dublin, and they have given a really bad name to Hijaz. My intention is to change that when I come back in the summer.

III: Topics related to dawah and the ambitions of the four students

16. What are your ambitions after Hijaz, how will you use the knowledge you get from here?

I will use it when I go back in favour of my family, friends and people around me. Because where I come from there is no Muslim community at all. The nearest mosque is 30 minutes away from my home – that

shows that the Islamic knowledge is far away. My intention is to change that basically by preaching more. Another thing is that the majority of the Muslims are Wahhabis and Salafis, so my intention is to change that and preach my *aqidah*. When I came here my intention was not to become an *Aalim* that is the truth. I was brought here by Mawlana Munir; I came here to make my parents happy. It was not really by force; I came here with my own will, but just to make them happy. Years went by and I thought I have done so much I might as well finish now.

17. How do you think Islam should be advocated?

The knowledge comes first, and the spiritual side can be developed afterwards. You can make speeches and maybe go door to door – it depends.

Profile: Student D

Age 18 – 4th year student

From Belgium (Pakistani origin)

Date of interview: 2005/03/08 (32 minutes)

I: Topics related to Hijaz, studies, Sufism and the mausoleum of Wahab Siddiqi

1. Are you satisfied with the curriculum?

Not really, but I am that kind of a person who is never satisfied with what I have got. I am always looking for more. Instead of going to Warwickshire to do my A levels I would have liked to do them here at Hijaz. At the moment I am doing French by myself, law at Hijaz, psychology and sociology I am doing at Warwickshire. So it is quite difficult, I have my evening classes at Warwickshire and from 9 to 6 I am at Hijaz which only leaves me 30 minutes to reach my classes at Warwickshire. This is more related to the secular curriculum that I wished I could take here. Concerning the Islamic curriculum I would like more literature and subjects added. Hijaz teaches us the art, the art of learning. There is a saying: “give a man fish, feed him for a day - teach a man to fish, feed him for life”. They teach us how to gain knowledge from the books. They give us books, show us how to read, how to extract knowledge from the books. This is the art they give us; this is what we need from Hijaz, in order to gain our own personal knowledge which in Arabic is called *mutalea* “searching for knowledge in different books”. But subjects on “method of research” and “methods of debate” and cross religious studies where essentials from Christianity, Judaism are taught – these are the subjects I would like was added on the Islamic curriculum, subjects that will help us in debates, for example with Christians - so that I might understand their background and mentality before entering a conversation with them. I think workshops like these are very important and we do not have this. Because the aim of Hijaz is to make Muslim leaders of tomorrow I think the Islamic side needs a lot of improvement in terms of curriculum.

2. So you would like more “subjects of methods” to help you apply your knowledge in real life?

Yes, more cross studies if we had that it would be more political. Not just how to know your knowledge, and say my religion says this, my religion says that, this is not the way one can attract people nor preach to people. People will say this is a preacher who only knows what he has been taught. He does not know what we know. And I want to be such a person that knows what I believe in and what the other person believes in - this is the way I can deal with a person by knowing what he knows. If I do not know what the other person believes I have 50 % chance of saying something that offends him which will give him a stereotype view on Muslims and maybe think we are to extreme. In today’s society many Muslims have been called extremists, and that is exactly because of individuals that have been given their own views on things and then forcing these views on others that is one reason why Hijaz teaches us to learn to read books independently and then

judge for ourselves. So we are able to go by our own opinion and not listen to seniors that impose a religious opinion on us.

3. *Is it like this some times at Hijaz – that a religious opinion is imposed on the students?*

No, no to be honest, if we do not agree we have a complete right to express our view.

4. *So you have healthy discussions?*

Yes, we do. It is also important to have such a relation with the teacher that you can argue. If you are a student who just like a parrot wants to be taught, you will not go far and will not be able to develop your own view and do your own research skills.

II: Topics related to integration, society and participation

5. *Have you participated in public forums?*

Yes I have in Belgium I have delivered speeches in the local mosque, every year in four years. I have done it in French, second time I did it in three languages: English, French and Urdu, third time in English and then last time in Urdu. The local community is expecting a lot from me, which of cause puts me into pressure. But I will never let things be imposed on me; I will always do what I want. And maybe I would face people turning against me because I do not want to do what people want me to do. To be honest I would love to change a lot of things in my community, because there are so many things that I do not like, the way they think, precede things and mix religion with culture. I mean it is not because I take bias against Pakistanis, but they mix culture so much with religion.

6. *But this is normal - all religious groups tend to penetrate culture into religion, is it not?*

Yes, but Pakistanis are not the only Muslims in the world, if they had more interaction to other Muslims, for example Moroccans – through the bond of brotherhood, a greater understanding towards other Muslims and people would arise - not only be in one culture – isolated in it, this is what I mean by restricting to one culture only. Our religion is about being brothers and sisters – it is really important. To be united. And apropos culture – Muslims were the predecessors of culture through social life, fashion and so on. And Muslims today are getting attacked by being backwards and so on – I think it is a shame things have taken this course. One of the things the Prophet Muhammad *sallal ho alayhi wa sallam* did was to unite the people from different tribes. We have to take this into consideration. He taught us how to live in a society how to socialize – in family and in society. Our religion teaches us everything. Sometimes we say we do not understand – but it does not mean that Islam does not have anything. I think it is important to have a wide view on things Islam teaches us everything.

7. Is there anything you think Muslim countries lack in?

Yes – successful educational systems. To be honest, but then again I cannot generalise. It varies from country to country.

8. Is Belgium your home?

Belgium is my adopted country. I am 18 years old I have been living there for 18 years. I have not made a home anywhere. This country adopted me. I was born, brought up there. Some cultural influences are natural influences of the environment you live in: the way I speak, my accent, body language, I mean things I just do that are natural. When I first started pondering on things I was 16, I asked a lot of questions why this, why that and asked myself the purpose of things in my life, some were related to religion some to my life – then slowly slowly I started to understand things, I discovered things, it came with age and maturity - I think it is important to question things and find answers for them it develops you and changes you, when you find answers – otherwise you just become confused. I have an eager to know things.

III: Topics related to dawah and the ambitions of the four students

9. How will you promote or advocate Islam?

In order to promote Islam you have to be someone who is recognised by society – first of all. You cannot just go out and say: “I want to do this and this”. Some might say it’s right some might say it’s wrong. I think one has to advertise oneself, because in today’s society it is not about what you know - but who you know. Interact with people in such a way that interest them. Talk about today’s matters, it could be divorce, marriage, something that people need advice on - our Muslim children need to learn about today’s matters – it is important I mean all matters are important, but some matters play a bigger role and can change lives like; marriage and change someone’s life, divorce can change someone’s life, etc.

10. Do you mean current affairs?

Current affairs, yes that is it what I mean, and educational affairs, rather than spiritual affairs. I do not think someone can teach you spiritualism. If I should teach Islam it should be about Koran about *hadith* - a person can read and think and while thinking he will have *fikr*, “consideration” inside him and eventually start pondering and develop his spirituality. Every person has a mysterious part in him that he keeps to himself - this is what spirituality is, a mysterious side inside you. I mean even though our religion has taught us that we people have the ability to do extraordinary things that Allah can grant us – but this is not my priority. Education is my priority – not spiritual development. For example when mentioning the name: Allah, doing *dhikr*, “to mention the name of God: Allah”, it is necessary to know about the bounties given by God when you do *dhikr*. How can someone be able to see so much through God without knowledge of Him – that is something I do not believe in! I cannot sit down say Allahu all night long if I do not know what my God has

done for me. Me as a Muslim, as a student in Islam know that Allah *taala*, “God the Mighty” has given me a tongue as a bounty - so every time I say Allah’s name, gratefulness will come to me automatically I will think of all the provision provided to me by my God. And this is what spirituality brings (gratefulness) to one. Once you know what your Lord does for you and you say Allahu - gratefulness and blessings comes to you and you *know* what He has done. Knowledge leads you to spirituality.

11. *What are your ambitions after graduation?*

I would like to travel in the Middle East. I have always wanted to go to Arab countries that are so rich in Islamic culture, there are so many great sheikhs. I have not been there yet – but I consider the language very important. I want to polish my Arabic and improve it. If I know Arabic I can pick up any Islamic book and read and understand it - like I do in English. Then I can study the Koran in depth in Arabic.

I do not want to go there to study in an institution, like Azhar, I want to go there to gain knowledge, to travel around, to go to different mosques and get acquainted with their mentality..... I would like to... you know be like a Bedouin (and he smiles). I intend to travel around for one year. I will be away from every thing and be all by my self. This is my quest! Because I am sure that the Prophet Muhammad *sallal laho alayhi wa sallam* left a lot of secrets behind him.

12. *Is it not an idealistic picture you have of gaining knowledge?*

Now, do not forget great people travelled in search of knowledge and became of great calibre. There are many examples of sheikhs from the 11th and 12th century – they made history and became a part of it. We still know their names. Of course I am not expecting the same to happen to me, but I am expecting to gain knowledge, experience and better insight into societies. To discover how Muslims vary – though Islam has one root it shows itself differently.

There was a time, you know, where students used to wait for their teacher, students searched for their teachers – but now it is opposite. Today teachers search for their students to give them their knowledge. People used to travel in deserts, to far far distances to gain knowledge: three things are important in a student’s character; humbleness, respect and eager for knowledge. The importance of knowledge is a big priority to me.

13. *Do you not think studying so intensely for so many years gives you an idealistic view on how things are – and should be out in the Muslim community?*

If this is the case, it is my fault – and I will be met with slaps on my face. But psychologically I am not prepared to apply my knowledge in society yet. There is a good quotation from Bruce Lee: “knowing is not enough you have to apply, willing is not enough you must do” what I understand of this in relation to Hijaz is: no matter how much you know, it is not enough you must apply and do it - this is what build’s up

confidence. If I speak with confidence people will believe in me, but if am nervous they will not pay attention to me and doubt in the things I say.

Appendix III: Green pamphlet of Hijaz

Hijaz College

"Have you seen the new buildings. When they are finished, Hijaz will become a City of Knowledge".

"Aghh... If only Hijaz was made when I was young".

The Extension Programme Hijaz Main Building

"Don't go to Hijaz College! Because you will become good Muslims and become Scholars in Deen & Dunya. And this will put me out of a job."

The Centre for Deen, Dunya and Spirituality

Page 1

Hijaz is a one stop to...

GCSE's & A'Levels

Physics	CDT	Urdu
Biology	Arabic	Maths
Modern History	Chemistry	English Law
Islamic Studies	Politics	Economics
English Lang/ Lit.	Information Technology	

Listen kids, do you think you can take the Hijazi challenge, which shall separate the men from the boys.

It sounds cool! I will make friends from 22 countries around the world.

Degrees in:

LL.B Law Degree

Diploma in Business & Finance

Diploma in Computers

and at the same time

I don't want to go to Hijaz because I want to sleep 12 hours a day, go to the disco and I don't care about the Muslims.

It sounds challenging! I always wanted to be a Lawyer and a Scholar in Islam.

Ilme-Deen Course

This means you can become

a Doctor

a lawyer

an Engineer

and an Aalim

Page 2

Facilities & Sports available at the campus.

Science Lab

Dormitory

CDT Lab

Gym

Computer Lab

Swimming Pool

Basketball

Volleyball

Pool

also

Football and Table Tennis

The cost of being at Hijaz is only £7.53 per day. This includes: food, teaching, full boarding, sports and everything else.

SMALL PRICE FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

Page 3

A Hijazi Student

I sacrificed admission into a Grammar School and came to Hijaz, and I have never regretted it.

How can I become like Sajid Munir. I want to go to Hijaz. I would need to speak to my mum and dad.

Sajid Munir has been at Hijaz for 4 years. He did 8 GCSE's at the age of 13 years. He has completed in August 1999, 3 A-Levels, grades A, C, C, at the age of 15 years. He is also studying Sharah Waqayah in Fiqh, Noorul Anwar in Usoolul Fiqh and has completed Sarf & Nahv as part of the Ilme Deen course.

Phone or write to receive a copy of our prospectus or come and visit us at the College with prior arrangement.

Please contact:



HIJAZ COLLEGE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
Watling Street, Nuneaton CV11 6BE.

Tel: 01203 641 333 Fax: 01203 353345 Website: www.Hijaz.org

Hijaz is working for the next generations in the next millennium

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Appendix III: Blue pamphlet of Hijaz

Hijaz College

is a centre of excellence that offers Muslims worldwide an opportunity to acquire the highest level of education within the intellectual dynamic and spiritual framework of Islam

Page 1

For 16 years Jamia Islamia, Coventry has continued to produce innumerable graduates who are fully qualified Ulema (Scholar in Islam) and at the same time professionals such as Lawyers, Engineers, Accountants and Teachers.

Hijaz College offers:

- * A high standard of education to Muslims boys around the globe by an effective departmental structure, resourced by staff trained to the highest level;
- * The simultaneous provision of religious and secular sciences in its curriculum, and;
- * The opportunity to create Ulema who are also professionals and therefore independent through their occupations and at the same time broad in their dimensions of thought, so that they are equipped to effectively manage the Islamic leadership for the 21st Century
- * An Islamic culture and identity within the contemporary framework of society

So why don't you...study comprehensive Ilm -e- Deen together with:

1. A range of GCSE's in the National Curriculum
2. To choose from A' Levels in English, Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Law, Computing, Information Technology, Urdu, Islamic Studies and Business Studies.
3. The LL.B Law Degree examined by the University of London (external)
4. B.A. in Islamic Studies

Or apply for our distance learning Ilm -e- Deen Degree from Hijaz Open University

Page 2

Hijaz has grown in leaps since its inception.

The new expansion project includes...

- * A total extended area of 145,000 sq.ft costing over £6.5 million
- * An increase of students to 650
- * Extended teaching facilities for over 45 classrooms.
- * A library big enough to display 700,000 books
- * Dining hall for over 800 students
- * Main lecture theatre for 1,200 persons
- * Mosque for congregation of 2,500 persons
- * Indoor leisure complex incorporating sports, games, TV rooms, common room
- * New Physics, Biology, Chemistry, CDT and Computing Laboratories
- * Doctor's, Dentists and Optician's surgeries
- * New outdoor sports complex to include tarmac surface for 3 football pitches, 2 basketball, 2 volleyball and 3 cricket practice lines.

Project Update.

Blocks B and D have been completed and Block C will be completed by September 2000.

1/3 of the extension project has already been completed

Hijaz is independent from any government organisation and relies upon the quality of its graduates for its success and reputation; they are the real adverts for Hijaz. This in turn provides us with total flexibility, allowing us to control our own future and plan a better future for the Ummah.

With the assurance of economic budgeting, Hijaz is providing the best levels of teaching and a high quality of education at extremely modest prices.

The roadway leading to Hijaz is the roadway to our future.

Page 3

Please fill in the form below

Please donate generously to invest for the future of the Muslim Ummah

Name
 Address
 Tel Post Code

(Please tick as appropriate)
 Please send me a copy of the prospectus
 I wish to donate:

For the expansion project at Hijaz £
 For the books in the library £
 For maintenance of student(s) £
 My Zakat/Sadaqah of £

Donation made by... **by Post**

Please send cheques/postal orders or bankers draft, made payable to "Hijaz College" and send them to Hijaz College, Watling Street, Nuneaton CV11 6BE. Tel. 01203 641333, fax: 01203 353345, website: www.Hijaz.org.

or by Direct Debit

1

Bank
 Address
 Post Code

3

Bank account number

2

Name of account holder

4

Bank Sort Code

Please pay to Midland Bank Plc, 104 High Street, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 4TS, (sort code 40-43-44, credit for Hijaz College, A/c no. 01183184. Direct Debit from the account detailed above the total sum of £.....

5

Signature Date / /

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