Chapter One: Themes and Issues

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Summary of Chapters

Chapter Two: History of Muslim Presence in Britain from Early Times until the Present

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Earliest Period of Muslim Migration to Britain

2.2.1 Muslim Settlement up to the First World War

2.2.2 Muslim Migration to Britain after the Second World War

2.3 Muslim Arab Settlement in Manchester

2.4 Patterns of Muslim Migration

2.5 Muslim Migration Factors

2.6 Statistical Summary of Muslims in Britain

2.6.1 Muslim Population Estimates via Census

2.6.2 Christianity as the Main Religion in Britain

2.6.3 Ethnic Groups, England and Wales 2011

2.6.4 Changing Picture of Ethnicity Over Time

2.6.5 Changing Picture of Religious Affiliation
2.6.6 Geographical Distribution of Muslims in Britain ........................................44
2.7 Manchester Demographical Study................................................................46
2.7.1 Ethnic Group, 2011 Area: Manchester .......................................................46
2.7.2 Religion, 2011 Area: Manchester ...............................................................48
2.7.3 Population Estimates by Broad Age Band over the Last Decade ...............49
2.8 Conclusion.......................................................................................................49

Chapter Three: Literature Review - Religious Identity.......................................50
3.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................50
3.2 Immigrants’ Identity ....................................................................................52
3.3 Immigrants’ Religions Identity .................................................................55
3.4 Muslim Immigrants’ Religious Identity ......................................................58
3.5 Transmitting Religious Identity .................................................................65
3.6 Conclusion ....................................................................................................68

Chapter Four: Method and Methodology............................................................70
4.1 Introduction....................................................................................................70
4.2 Background of Current Research ...............................................................71
4.3 Research Questions ......................................................................................72
4.4 Research Methods and its Implementation ...............................................73
  4.4.1 Participant Observation ...........................................................................74
  4.4.2 Interviews ................................................................................................75
    4.4.2 a. Negotiating Interviews and Using The Interview Schedule ...............75
    4.4.2 b Finding Interviewees - the Subject of the Study .................................77
A) Sampling .......................................................................................................77
Chapter Five: Establishing Religious Institutions: Muslim Institutions (Mosques) in Britain

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Legislation and Numbers

5.3 The History of Establishing Mosques in Britain

5.3.1 The First Mosque in Manchester

5.4 Manchester Islamic Centre: Background

5.5 MIC Affiliation, Ethnicity, Gender

5.5.1 Attendees’ Sects in the MIC

5.5.2 The MIC Qur’an School Students’ Sects

5.5.3 The MIC Trustees

5.5.3.1 Age and Gender of the MIC Trustees

A) Why Women are Excluded from the Mosque’s Committees?

B) What Positions do Women Hold on the MIC Committee?

C) What Positions do Women Hold on the MIC Activities?
C.1) Women’s Prayer Hall ................................................................. 123
C.2) Manchester New Muslim Women ........................................... 124
5.5.3.2 MIC Trustees’ Role ............................................................. 125
5.6 The MIC Finances .................................................................... 127
5.6.1 Mosque Finances ................................................................. 127
5.6.2 The MIC Qur’an School Finance .......................................... 130
5.7 Conclusion ................................................................................ 133

Chapter Six: How Mosques Reflect The Religion and Culture of Muslim Minorities .................................................. 135
6.1 Introduction ............................................................................. 135
6.2 Mosques as a Place of Prayer Place ....................................... 136
6.3 Mosques as a Religio-Cultural Place ....................................... 140
6.4 Similarity, Solidarity and Islamic Environment ....................... 146
6.5 Cultural Clash and Clash of Identity ...................................... 151
6.6 Mosques and Social Problems ................................................. 156
6.7 Conclusion ................................................................................ 158

Chapter Seven: British Schools and Islamic Identity ...................... 160
7.1 Introduction ............................................................................. 160
7.2 The Role of Education in Constructing Islamic Identity ......... 162
7.3 The Challenge of Islamic Identity in British Schools ........... 165
7.3.1 Hijab in British Schools ...................................................... 166
7.3.2 Praying in British Schools .................................................. 171
7.3.3 Friendships in British Schools ........................................... 173
7.3.4 Religious Celebrations in British Schools ......................... 175
Abstract

The University of Manchester
Ghalia Sarmani
PhD in Sociology

The Role of Religious Institutions in Constructing Minorities’ Religious Identity, Muslim Minorities in non-Muslim, Society Case Study of The Manchester Islamic Centre.

27/09/2013

The presence of a significant number of Muslim communities and the way members of those communities construct their religious identity in a non-Muslim society needs to be evaluated via different types of researches. The issue of identity formation and the process of identity construction have become increasingly significant in a world as globalized yet diversified as it is today. Caught in the contradictory flux of homogenization and increasing diversity and heterogeneity whether or not Muslim minorities make a conscious effort to understand and manage their situation, the process of identity construction and maintenance goes on vigorously within those communities. Therefore the present study tries to examine the role of Islamic religious institutions - mosque in constructing the religious identity of Muslim minorities in Britain. Several studies have previously sought to examine the religious institutions and its reproduction role in constructing religious identity, typically by looking at the shaping and negotiation of sub generation religious identities in hybrid or multicultural spaces. This thesis has added to this literature by examining one of the famous Sunni mosques in Manchester to draw attention to the ways in which, this institution negotiates, and responds to Muslim minority requirements in constructing Islamic identity. Simultaneously mosques reproduce and protect culture and ethnicity. Furthermore, the thesis moves away from that culture and ethnicity approach, to focus on British mainstream schools that are more often than not, overlooked. Students are at a stage of expanding their knowledge about their own religion. However; Muslim parents’ and students’ anxieties towards religious identity are still worth examining. This thesis has therefore explored the MIC Qur’an School. This has been important for understanding the various ways of bringing up new Muslim generations and how the MIC Qur’an School has managed to transmit this identity via teaching the Qur’an and Islamic studies.
Declaration of Authenticity

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of any application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Signed: Ghalia Sarmani

Date: 09/04/2014
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And my guidance (success) cannot come except from Allah, in Him I trust and unto Him I repent. (Quran, Surat Hud:88).

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Chapter One

Themes and Issues of the Research

1.1 Introduction

The early stages of Muslim settlement has been concerned with gaining access to mosques, places of religious instruction, *halal* meat provision and similar practical issues, but in more recent times we have seen the Muslim community campaigning for political representation, and Muslim schools, have attempted to alleviate socio-economic disadvantage and generally Muslims establishing themselves as a group of citizens with specific needs. Developing and maintaining a distinct Muslim or Islamic identity has also been a crucial element for today’s British Muslim communities. Until now British South Asian Muslims (Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani) have now reached the third generation (Abbas, 2005: 13). Provision for Islamic dress, food and places for worship at work as well as in schools, universities and similar institutions were established or campaigned for. Although provisions vary according to local authorities and individual (Ahmed, 2003: 80) organisations, for example for burial or religious worship in schools with a high proportion of Muslim pupils, negotiations normally take place between authorities and institutions and Muslim community representatives to try to reach a solution or compromise. Numerous mosques and organisations have been set up by British Muslims (Ahmed, 2003: 81). Typically the primary praying space of teaching Qur’an and Islamic studies, social and welfare advice, legal advice, employment and training facilities and other services. Some of these organisations have been set up along ethnic minority more than religious ones due to the dynamics of the communities themselves but also because of funding.
The major sectarian divisions of Muslims within Britain are the Sunni and the Shi’a. These groupings often overlap with the ethnicity or regions of the Indian subcontinent. This diversity can be seen as a microcosm of the global umma (Geaves, 1995: 5, Hamid, 2011: 248). So to clarify, Muslims in Britain are not a monolithic community, since they reflect the linguistic, cultural and racial diversity of their origins.

The case study of Manchester Islamic Centre and its Quran School explains the role of Islamic religious institutions in constructing religious identities for Muslim minorities in a non-Muslim society, and passing Islamic identity on to subsequent Muslim generations. The study specifically focuses on the transmitting Islamic identities of subsequent Muslim generations depending on teaching and learning the Qur’an from an early age. Manchester Islamic Centre represents one of the most active Sunni mosques in Manchester. MIC that managed by Arab Sunni minority reflects the middle class Muslims community. However, the attendances are still ethnically mixed by all Muslim minorities. Clearly this is unusual case comparing with to other ethnic mosques, and may well mark the emergence of a British/European type of liberal mosque.

The purpose of this opening chapter is to set the context of the research project before moving into the core of the thesis. The context of the research is outlined in the following sections. Each section gives a brief summary of the chapters. Chapter Two and Three lay out the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Chapter Four deals principally with the methodological issues and Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight are drawn from the empirical data. These chapters work sequentially to explore the role of the religious

---

The Sunni and Shi’a groups that are already recognised are the Deobandis and Barelvis, the latter of which tend to contain elements of Sufism. Many groups which take their ideological basis from Wahhabism also exist, such as Ahl-e-Hadith, Salafi and Jamaat-e-Islami. In addition to this Raza (1991) adds the Modernists and the Revivalists. Certain more marginalised sects such as the Ahmediya and Ismaili Muslims also have established communities in Britain. CLG 2009. The Pakistani Muslim Community in England Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities. London: The Change Institute Department for Communities and Local Government. (P.7)
institutions in constructing and preserving religious identity for Muslims in a predominantly non-Muslim society as Britain. Chapter Nine then draws together the issues raised throughout the thesis with some suggestions for future research.

1.2 Summary of Chapters

*Chapter Two: History of Muslim Presence in Britain*

This chapter provides a brief historical survey of the growing Muslim presence in Britain from early history until the present time. It explores how the immigrant Muslim population in Britain experiences their lives as a minority within a non-Muslim society. The chapter analyses some of the reasons behind the increasing numbers of Muslims who settled during the First World War and the Second World War. The chapter also outlines brief information about Muslim Arab\(^2\), covering their history and settlement in Manchester. Chapter Two explores the pattern of Muslim migration and some factors concerning their migration to the UK. Finally, the chapter gives a general background about Muslims in the UK including statistical information about the demography and geographical distribution of the population, with more focus on Manchester as a location for this field work.

*Chapter Three: Religious Identity*

Chapter Three provides the conceptual framework with which to approach the thesis. It takes, as a starting point, elements of the general understanding within sociology of immigrant identity. Then the chapter explores the existence of religious identity in the social fabric of the contemporary era. In particular, it considers the Islamic identity for Muslims in a non-Muslim country with reference to Tariq Ramadan’s views. This allows

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\(^2\)Muslim Arab: using this term is important because of the diversity of Arab religious identity (e.g. Arab Christians and Arab Jews).
an analysis of how Islamic identity is constructed and how Muslim minorities pass it on through the generations and as to whether this is the parents’ duty only.

The chapter also, engages with the existing literature and studies what is broadly referred to as Muslims’ religious identity based upon the sociological approaches to religious identity construction. It considers how it has been more important for immigrants to identify themselves according to their religion rather than according to their ethnicity.

Chapter Four: Method and Methodology

The research methods used in the preparation of this thesis will be outlined in this chapter, with a discussion around some of the practical and theoretical issues that arise. Reference will be made to some of the literature that was consulted for understanding, developing and using these methods.

This chapter details the rationale for adopting semi-structured interview methods. It picks up on some of the themes from the conceptual chapter to argue some important issues about Islamic identity. The chapter engages with literature on the use of narratives in research and contemplates some of the limitations of this approach. It takes account of concerns around studies interested in religious identity that do not sufficiently account for the role of the religious institutions in constructing religious identity and mainly the role of Qur’an schools in a non-Muslim society in constructing and passing on religious identity.

The chapter also outlines the practical elements involved in planning and carrying out the research. It explains the process of narrowing the field and the recruitment of respondents and also discusses some of the problems that have emerged in the interview process. Finally, the chapter explores the role of power and privilege in research. It emphasises the importance of taking my position as an Arab Sunni Muslim researcher and as a Qur’an
teacher in the Manchester Islamic Centre for more than five years, into consideration at each stage of the research process.

Chapter Five: Establishing Religious Institutions: Muslim Institutions (Mosques) in Britain

Chapter Five examines the history of mosques in Britain generally, with more focus, to begin with on establishing religious institutions, the legal framework and the numbers of mosques in the UK. Then it narrows the discussion down to explore the history of the Manchester Islamic Centre (MIC) that is known more generally as the Didsbury Mosque - in Manchester among its Muslim minorities. In particular, the chapter pays attention to the building of mosques in a non-Muslim society as a consequence of new Muslim generations learning to live in a diverse and multicultural society.

The chapter also explores the politics of the MIC by examining the religious affiliation, ethnicity and the gender of the MIC attendees, the MIC Qur’an School students and the MIC trustees. The chapter covers who the trustees are and what their management role is. Chapter Five also presents some of the financial issues of the MIC and its Qur’an school. The chapter generally tries to analyse with more detail the power of the MIC as one of the active religious institutions in Manchester and in terms of its function amongst Sunni Muslims in contemporary Britain.

Chapter Six: How Mosques Reflect the Religion and Culture of Muslim Minorities

Chapter Six focuses on the ways in which respondents talk about their relationship to the mosque or masjed and how they emphasise its role in passing on the Islamic religious identity to subsequent generations, and further, how Muslim families living in a non-Muslim society are significant - providing the first environment for the child in its on-
going development. The chapter explores the interviewees—mainly members of the educated middle class—views on the main tasks and the basic services that the mosque, which is as a place of prayer, should offer. Then the examination will focus on the role of the mosque as a Religio-Cultural place to protect Islamic identity and ethnic culture. Then, the chapter considers how sharing religious identity can create feelings of solidarity for different groups. Importantly, the chapter explores the clash of cultures between British culture and the homeland culture, and the resultant hybrid identity. The chapter also reflects on the role of the mosque with regard to some of the social problems experienced by the Muslim community and considers the participants’ suggestions for improvements.

Chapter Seven: British Schools and Islamic Identity

This chapter explains how education works to create feelings of belonging to a specific religion. Then it looks at different types of challenges and anxieties faced by participants; either parents or students because of attending British schools. Chapter Seven examines different examples of these challenges like: the wearing of head scarves for girls in British schools; praying in British schools; the impact of friendships between Muslims and non-Muslim pupils in British schools and then the religious celebrations during Christmas and Easter. The chapter explores participants’ views about some of the issues raised about RE lessons. Discussing these issues helps religious institutions and their policy makers to understand the impact of the British school system on Muslim students, and what mosques can do to bridge this gap.

Chapter Eight: Quran Schools construct Islamic Identity

The main concern and the focus of attention of Muslim populations and principally mosque leaders are to guarantee that the next generation is not about to lose their religious identity, essentially in non-Muslim societies due to attending state schools there. Therefore; whilst
the previous chapter addresses British schools from the perspective of Muslim participants of the mosque, this chapter, importantly, explores the value of Muslim supplementary education for both individuals and their belonging to Muslim minority communities. It examines the MIC Qur’an School in detail in order to discover the extent of the gap in resources experienced by Muslim supplementary classes and Qur’an schools. The chapter focuses on the importance of the Qur’an school in constructing religious identities for subsequent generations. The chapter explains the term madrassa, its roots, and how it is used in the British context, followed by their different types. The chapter highlights the differences between Qur’an schools, Arabic supplementary schools and Islamic private schools. Then the discussion centres on the Qur’an school in British mosques: timetables, gender and curriculum. Chapter Eight examines the Qur’an schools in Manchester and the educational materials used by all British Muslim mosques, such schools operate during the weekend or the weekdays after British school hours. It explores how such kind of teaching facilitates the continuity of Islamic identity in the UK. This chapter adds new contributions to the research field by discussing the issues of native Arabic teachers shedding light on the MIC, providing an exception to the rule in this sector.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

The thesis concludes by drawing together the central issues raised in the thesis. It reflects on the methodological approaches and the usefulness of exploring the role of religious institutions in constructing religious identity for the Muslim minority. It suggests some ideas for making mosques more appealing to Muslims living and growing up in a predominantly non-Muslim society. The chapter ends with some suggestions for future research.
Chapter Two

History of Muslim Presence in Britain from Early Times to the Present

2.1 Introduction

Muslims in Britain and all over the world have interacted in a myriad different ways down the centuries. But invariably they have been described variously as a: ‘Military and ideological threat, political allies, trading partners, objects of intellectual curiosity, ripe for imperial conquest and, latterly, as fellow citizens’ (Lewis, 1994: 10). However, scholars today possess the resources and linguistic potential to explore more rigorously than ever before, the nature of the Muslim belief system, their history, traditions and practices. Consequently writings on Islam have become more contradictory, reflecting the fragmented views held by non-Muslims on Muslim issues, influenced by political thinkers such as Descartes and Spinoza (Ansari, 2010: 6).

Throughout this thesis, the phrase “Muslim Community” is used as a kind of shorthand for Muslim minorities in Britain, or British Muslim community whether at local or national level. Islam in Britain represents a wide diversity of ethnic, religious, linguistic and social backgrounds as the examples in this study shows. Since Islam is a matrix of national, ethnic, doctrinal and economic diversities, where variables like age, gender, education, class, ethno-regional background and attitudes towards religion and the non-Muslim society determine an entire plethora of responses (see in Gent, 2006b: 10). Indisputably, the basic belief system and practices remain the same, yet sectarian and other such diversities characterise the Muslim diaspora in the UK (Malik, 2004: 93). Ansari (2004) reports: ‘[C]aution needs to be exercised in relation to invoking religion as an important feature of Muslim communities in Britain since it conceals a great deal of diversity and interlocks with other secular forms of identity’ (see in Gent, 2006b: 10). The present study focuses on the Sunni Muslim minority in Manchester as one of the many communities
living in a predominantly non-Muslim society like Britain. Thus, the research takes place in one of the central Sunni religious institutions in this city, the Manchester Islamic Centre (MIC), or the Didsbury Mosque as it is known among Muslim minorities. The current case study examines the attendees of the MIC irrespective of their ethnicity or their nationality or even their level of religious belief. The main aspect of the participants is to be part of the Sunni minority in Manchester, and to have a link with this centre as the methodology chapter demonstrates.

Muslims in Britain have been part of the British social and cultural landscape for almost a century and a half (Buryová, 2005: 3). With reference to the Muslim community in the UK many questions can be asked for example: when did Muslims first start arriving in this country? Did they come with their sword? Is it the only way they spread their religion in the same way all over the world? And many other enquiries related to Muslims in Britain. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to discover how the migrant Muslims in Britain experienced their first encounter of living as a minority within a non-Muslim society by examining the earliest history of their presence in the UK. Followed by Muslim settlement

3See Appendix 8 …

4Muslims in Britain represent a microcosm of Islam’s global variety. Behind the appearance of religious homogeneity, Muslims in Britain are distributed into ethnically distinct communities upholding a broad range of sectarian allegiances. Sunni Muslims are numerically predominant in Britain, but organizations representing minority Muslim traditions such as Shi’a of the Ithna ‘Ashariyyah and Ismaili variety, and a range of contemplative, “mystical” Sufi orders are also to be found. To this list must be added groups such as the Ahmadi and, more recently, the Nation of Islam, who believe themselves to be Muslim but are considered by many Muslim communities as outside the fold. The latter movement, imported from the USA, preaches self-reliance for black people within an “Islamic” framework and probably consists of a few thousand “members”. ‘It has been particularly influential among urban, black working-class men, giving many who have converted increased self-esteem and a sense of positive belonging’. ANSARI, H. 2002. Muslims in Britain. Minority Rights Group International (6).

5Research on Muslim’s history in the UK is quite an interesting issue for me. It comes contrary to all expectations, since what I found in the literature was different from what I expected. For example, Muslim migration to the UK was not the first and foremost reason for Muslims’ presence, as I thought according to my primary reading in this field in the early stage of my research. Most of the books and articles that I have read focus on the idea of Muslim migration to Western Europe after the Second World War for economic or political reasons. SHADID, W. A. & KONINGSVELD, P. S. V. 1995. Religious Freedom and the Position of Islam in Western Europe: Opportunities and Obstacles in the Acquisition of Equal Rights, Kok Pharos 1).
up until the First World War. Then, how their numbers were affected by the Second World War. The diverse patterns of Muslim migration and some other factors of migration will be explored. Finally, the demography and geographical distribution will be discussed shedding more light on their ethnicity.

2.2 Earliest Period of Muslim Migration to Britain

The presence of Muslims generally in Europe probably goes back in history to traders and diplomats. However, the establishment of the Muslim community in Europe occurs during three separate periods. Islam is one of the three streams of Middle Eastern religions that have affected Europe since the seventh century. The three main waves of Islamic conquest were known as the Arab, the Balkan (the Ottoman Turkish) and the Northern European (the Mongol) and their dates fall roughly around the eighth, the fourteenth and again the fourteenth century (Goody, 2004: 12). The first period reached as far as Spain and included Muslim rule over Sicily and southern Italy. That phase affected many aspects of European culture for centuries to come. The second wave came as a result of Mongol armies rampaging across the region during the thirteenth century. Their successor states just after a few generations became Muslim. The last period was the Ottoman expansion into the Balkans and central Europe. During this time, the majority of Ottoman subjects became Muslim. Indeed the establishment of Muslim communities in Western Europe is generally regarded as an outcome of migration after the Second World War, but reading further back in history it can be seen that the ground was laid long before this period (Matar, 2010).

Of all the countries of Western Europe, Britain has always had a “special relationship” with the Muslim world. In the beginning, Muslims landed on these isles as explorers and traders. Trade was so important to King Offa of Mercia, a powerful Anglo-Saxon King of
the 8th century, famous for building Offa’s Dyke, that his coins had the inscription declaring the faith of Islam (There is no God but Allah) in Arabic (Benson, 2011: 5).

Later the relationship was dominated by the Crusades and the British played their part. For instance, the sacking of the Muslim city of Lisbon in 1147 during which perhaps 150,000 Muslims were massacred, was largely the work of soldiers from Norfolk and Suffolk (Nolan, 2006: 200). By the 14th century following the crusades and the introduction of several Muslim cultural traditions into British life, from the paisley design to the architectural arch, to spices and the very concept of chivalry, the Muslim world was admired and respected for its scholarship and advances in all fields of knowledge. Muslim scholarship such as that of Al-Razi, Avicenna Ibn Sina and Averroes Ibn Rushd formed the backbone of intellectual and scholarly life in Britain (Esposito, 1992: 55).

The Muslim world was related to the Western world in many different ways. The first reference to Muslims in Europe were written in the 8th century by an Anglo-Saxon monk, St Bede. In his Ecclesiastical History of the English People, he reported on Saracens and presented Muslims in an unfavourable way, namely as a military threat. Roland Count of Brittany fifty years later mentioned Charlemagne's army, who were killed fighting the Arabs in Spain. This influenced the Christian epic: the Song of Roland which presents Islam as evil and as part of an unknown world (Buryová, 2005: 3).

In addition to that, there are some references to Islamic scholars in the prologue to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (1386). Following the Crusades against Islam, Britain became friendly with some Islamic countries. Queen Elizabeth I asked the Ottoman Sultan Murad for naval assistance against the Spanish Armada (Matar, 1998: 123, Gilliat-Ray, 2010b: 13). The first Englishman to become a Muslim was John Nelson, who converted to Islam at some point in the 16th century. In 1641 a document refers to "A sect of Mahomatens"
discovered in London. There were also a few conversions to Islam during this period, and a few years later, as will discussed later in more detail. Then in 1649, the first English version of the Qur'an came to Britain, delivered by Alexander Ross (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a: 19, Hewer, 2006: 188, Matar, 1998: 82).

2.2.1 Muslim Settlement up to the First World War

The historical settlement of Muslims in Britain goes back to the 16th and 17th century (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a: 42, Din, 2006: 19), when travellers from the Ottoman Empire and Moorish Spain visited the British Isles. Like sailors and servants who came from India, some of them joined the merchant army of the East India Company. While other sailors settled in British ports. The East India Company also gained interest from among professional and wealthy Muslims from India (Buryová, 2005: 3). Like Sake Dean Mahomed, the author of the first work published in England by a Muslim: *The Travels of Dean Mahomed*, who came to Britain in 1784 and settled in Britain permanently. Later on in the 1840s, Indian students came to Britain. The first mosque in Britain is recorded as having been at 2 Glyn Rhondda Street, Cardiff, in 1860 (Spellman, 2006: 6, Cavendish, 2010: 114). Chapter Four has more detail about the first mosque in Britain. There were only four Indians involved at that time, then by 1931 their number had reached 1,800 (Visram, 2002: 88). Muhammad Iqbal, was one of them who studied at Cambridge in 1905 to become a barrister. He is a famous Muslim scholar and writer (Hewer, 2006: 189).

Generally, Muslim migration to Britain started in the mid-nineteenth century. However, the greatest opportunity for Muslim migration was in 1869 by the opening of the Suez Canal. This made the trade between Britain and its colonies easier, and a contingent force of labourers was needed to work on the ships and in the ports. Yemenis were the first group of Muslim migrants who arrived at the British ports. They settled in Cardiff, Liverpool,
From 1890 until 1903, nearly forty thousand seamen arrived on British shores and about thirty thousand of them, according to one report, spent some part of their lives in Britain (Halliday, 2010: 168, Siddiqui: 1995). Moreover, some Somali seamen and Ottoman Turks came to Britain at the same time. The Yemeni workers worked in the steel industry. However, during the reign of Sultan Abdulmecit of the Ottoman Empire saw the first arrival of Turkish political refugees, such as Namik Kemal, Ziya Pasha and Ali Suavi, where they published broadsheets like *Hurriyet* directed against the Sultan's tyranny. Those migrants established the earliest permanent Muslim communities in the UK in the cities of London, Cardiff, Liverpool, South Shields, Hull and Sheffield (Lewis, 1994: 13). London and Liverpool were centres for a wide mix of Muslim backgrounds.

During the First World War, a high demand for cheap labour accelerated, especially for the shipping industry. Therefore, Muslim seamen increased in number in the British ports such as Cardiff, Newport, Barry, Liverpool, Tyneside, London and Glasgow (Ansari, 2004: 41). However, following the war economic stagnation and unemployment numbers increased leaving many demobilized soldiers out of work. As a result of this, tension and anti-racial protests occurred, especially in 1919, some started demanding the “deportation of aliens” to create more opportunities for soldiers to have work. Many white workers refused to work together with Arabs and other minority communities. The Aliens Restriction Bill in 1920 ordered the deportation of hundreds of Arabs. Those who entered Britain illegally were deported; the increase of unemployment among Arabs in British ports left many of them starving. They were prevented from receiving help from public funds by the 1935 Maritime Assistance Act. However, the demand for shipping in the late 1930s again increased the Muslim population in Britain (Buryová, 2005: 5).
Another important source of migration of this period was from Cyprus, then under British control; they were students, professionals and seamen (Kirby et al., 2000: 737). They settled in London, Liverpool and Cardiff. By 1939 there were around 8,000 Cypriots living in London itself. Another significant group of Muslims continuing to arrive were Indian students, studying mostly medicine and engineering. By 1931 there were around 1,700 Indian students in Britain; another 1,000 Indians worked as medical doctors (Adams, 2007: 279, Buryová, 2005: 5).

2.2.2 Muslim Migration to Britain after the Second World War

Before the Second World War the Muslim presence in UK was invisible (Fetzer and Soper, 2004: 26), many Muslim migrants found work in Britain, since there was a growth of war industries producing wartime products in factories in Bradford, Leeds, Birmingham and Coventry. Aircraft factories also offered jobs to a small number of Indians, Arabs and Somali seamen at the same time. By the end of Second World War, the number of Indian Muslims had probably risen above 30,000 (Minahan, 2012: 254). In the 1950s, the largest influx of Muslim migrants came to Britain, mostly from the rural areas of Pakistan and Bangladesh, parts of the Middle East, Africa and Cyprus (Buryová, 2005).

Muslim migration in the post-war period can be divided into two key phases: the first era of Muslim migration was from 1945 to the early 1970s and the second one was from the 1970s to the present time. The first phase was caused by expansion of production which created job opportunities for a large number of new immigrants (Hammar, 1985: 97, Buryová, 2005: 5-6). Therefore, Muslim workers arrived in Britain in response to the demand for cheap labour as mass unemployment disappeared and migrant labour was needed because of the labour shortage that had developed with the enlargement of industries such as garment manufacturing and shoemaking (Hammar, 1985: 97, Siddiqui: 1995). Moreover, these immigrants were needed for the declining industries, which were
being rejected by local workers because of the low pay and poor conditions that often required working at unsocial hours. They mostly worked in the cleaning industries and transport, and restaurants were a perfect source of work for immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, Cyprus and Morocco. In 1971, 25% of all restaurant workers in Britain were born abroad as well as 14% of all hotel workers. These earlier Muslim migrants were motivated by their material circumstances not by their religious affiliation (Ansari, 2004: 147). The expansion in medical services after the Second World War created the need for a wide range of health professionals and workers, who came from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco and the Middle East, including doctors, nurses, porters, attendants, cleaners, laundry and canteen workers, drivers and maintenance staff (Ansari, 2004: 147, Buryová, 2005: 7).

The second era started in 1973 with the oil crisis when the dramatic rise in the oil price precipitated the arrival of an elite group of Arabs in Britain. They mostly came from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. They invested their capital in Britain and acquired businesses, banks and hospitals or invested in property. However, other Arabs, especially Syrians, Lebanese, Egyptians, Palestinians and Jordanians fled to Britain because of continual political instability in their home countries and they established their businesses in Britain. Although economic motivation was the most common motivation for migration between 1945 and 1973, there were also many Muslims who came to Britain for political reasons, especially Asians expelled from East Africa in the early 1970s (Gilliat-Ray, 2010b: 51, Ansari, 2004: 145). The next paragraph discusses Arab settlement in Manchester especially since it is the place of study.

**2.3 Muslim Arab Settlement in Manchester**

The growth of Manchester from the mid-18th century onwards went hand in hand with the arrival of people of many nationalities and ethnic groups (Manchester City Council). Some
of the earliest evidence of Muslim life in Britain comes from artefacts from the time of King Offa of Mercia. (‘A coin issued by the king in approximately the year 794 - known as a mancus - bears in Arabic the Shahadah, or, Islamic declaration of faith. This, alongside the Ballycottin Cross of Ireland, leads academics to speculate about the early connections between the British Isles and Islam (Manchester City Council). For this part of the discussion about Muslim settlement, the debate goes back to the history of the Syrian community in Manchester, primarily since the two main mosques in this city were bought and established by Syrian traders.

Directories show that by 1798 there were four Arab trading houses in Manchester - drawn to the city by the cotton trade⁶. In the 1850s, there was enough trade between Manchester and the Middle East to warrant a Consul from the Ottoman Empire. (Like Abdullah Idilbi and Absalom Ben Abdallah who lived in Manchester during 1852. By 1890 the number of Arab trading houses in Manchester had grown a hundred-fold to over 400 (Manchester City Council ). Syrians in Manchester came as Ottoman subjects and were a mixture of Muslims, Jews and Christians. The Manchester Syrian Association was established at the outbreak of the First World War (Manchester City Council). The Arabs included Syrians, Lebanese and a smaller distinct group of merchants from Morocco. At that time they were looking to preserve their language, customs, religion and in some cases their dress (Halliday, 1992: 161). Reading these historical documents reveals that there were two main mosques in Manchester: the former in a detached house, which stood on the site of the now purpose-built Central Mosque in Victoria Park bought in the late 1940s. The second is the Burton Road Mosque established in 1962 in a Methodist church (Manchester City Council). This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

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⁶By 1838, the BaltaLiman commercial treaty was signed between Britain and Turkey and it was reported that the Ottoman Sultan was importing more “piece goods” from Manchester than from the rest of Europe.
2.4 Patterns of Muslim Migration

There was a four-phase pattern of migration to Britain. Unskilled workers were usually most common at the beginning. The second phase saw migrants recruited in response to specific demands from employers who saw that utilizing people of the same origin had certain advantages. They sent their agents to search for workers in their own villages. They provided transport to the new migrants' destination and lodging. In addition to that, useful knowledge of the new environment was provided by the early pioneers who were part of the first phase of migration. These Muslims headed for some of the main industrial areas - Greater London, the South-East, the West Midlands, Yorkshire and Lancashire, central Clydeside in Scotland and the ports of South Wales and Belfast. The third phase, was the migration of wives and children. Then the fourth phase was marked by the emergence of a British-born Muslim generation (Buryová, 2005: 8).

Whilst there are different patterns of migration they mostly share the same religious identity. They were people from the Indian subcontinent, Turkish Cypriots, Moroccans and Yemenis. Ninety-five per cent of the Bangladeshi migrants were from the Sylhet district in the north-east of the country, most Pakistanis came from the Mirpur and Cambellpur districts and in India most pioneers who were later joined by their friends and relatives came from the districts of Jalandhar and Ludhiana in East Punjab (Ansari, 2004: 156). By the early 1960’s, there seems to have been a considerable determination by Muslim countries to send their students for higher education in Britain. These overseas students started to form Islamic Societies in various British universities (Martyn, 1996 : 43, Siddiqui: 1995).

2.5 Muslim Migration Factors

Muslim migrants came to Britain mainly because they could earn more than in their home country. In the early 1960s wages for the jobs occupied by Muslims were over 30 times
those offered for similar jobs in Pakistan or in other Muslim countries. Most of them were single men or they had left their wives at home. The 1961 Census data shows there were only 81 women out of the 3,376 Pakistanis in Bradford, 95 per cent of whom were from rural areas. In Britain, they saved money to send it back home to support their extended families. In addition to that, the events that happened in the countries of these migrants also encouraged their migration, like the partition of India in 1947, and the building of the Mangla Dam near Mirpur in Pakistan in 1960. This affected the Mirpuris in particular, whilst some of them settled in other parts of Pakistan; others, however, looked for the sponsorship of their relatives in Britain and subsequently settled here in large numbers. The dam had submerged 250 villages and displaced around 100,000 people. The Pakistani government encouraged migration by issuing 5,000 passports to prospective people from the area (Siddiqui, 1995). Their initial intent was to earn enough money to buy a plot of land and build houses for their families and settle in Pakistan. The rapid increase in demand for unskilled labour in British industries also occasioned large-scale migration.

In 1974, the partition of Cyprus led to an influx of 3,000 Turkish Cypriots to Britain. Then after Bangladeshi independence in 1971, the political instability and economic crises together with natural disasters such as floods and cyclones were disastrous, especially for the rural population thus playing an important part in the increase of migrant numbers. The largest number of Bangladeshis arrived between 1980 and 1988 when unemployment in Britain was at its highest (Ansari, 2004: 155; Tozun 2004: 6).

Most Muslim migrants were home-oriented and thought that after earning money by working in Britain and collecting enough savings, they would be able to return home with prestige and would retire in comfort. From another point of view, some of the migrants wanted their children to have access to a better education. However, many Muslims had political reasons to escape to Britain or personal motives for breaking away from the
obligations of their families and communities (Buryová, 2005: 10). Palestinians who could not live under the Israeli rule after the creation of Israel in 1948 were also given British citizenship. ‘From the mid-1960s Britain saw the arrival of East African Asians with British passports, a quarter of whom were estimated to be Muslims, who were forced to leave some of the newly independent states in East Africa. The migration of Turkish Cypriots and East African Asians, who had been forced to leave Kenya and Uganda in the late 1960s and in the early 1970s, were different in one significant way, in that unlike South Asian males, who were joined by their families some years later, Turkish Cypriots and East African Asians did not usually leave their families behind in order to support them by remittance’ (Buryová, 2005: 10).

The ports and the shipping services after the Second World War which had provided work for Yemeni sailors and Arab communities, had now declined. Therefore, some found jobs in the service sectors and others opened shops, which marked the foundation of Yemeni communities in Birmingham, Sheffield and South Shields. From the 1960s, some Yemenis moved to industrial cities like Liverpool where a Yemeni community had emerged by the mid-1970s, that grew after the arrival of more out-of-work Yemenis leaving the ports of Cardiff, South Shields, Hull and Glasgow. By 1992, Liverpool's Yemeni community had about 3,500 members. Another large Yemeni community was in Sheffield where Yemenis worked in British Steel. By the late 1970s, the size of Sheffield's Yemeni community was about 2,000. Altogether there were estimated to be about 12,000 Yemenis in the early 1960s (Ansari, 2004: 156).

Until 1962 entry to Britain by citizens of British colonies and member countries of the Commonwealth was unrestricted (Nielsen, 1995: 39). In 1961, the forthcoming Commonwealth Immigrants Act was announced hence a large number came from India, Pakistan, and Cyprus to settle in Great Britain. Compared with the years between 1955 and
1960 when over 17,000 Pakistanis entered Britain, more than 50,000 Pakistanis migrated within a year and a half before the Act was passed in 1962. After the Act, the Commonwealth citizens could no longer enter Britain automatically (Nielsen, 1995: 39). An important aspect of this legislation was the introduction of limiting labour migration.

In the 1970s, involuntary migration affected a large number of people. Their numbers rose rapidly from the mid-1970s as a result of crises like religious or ethnic conflicts, famines and natural disasters or political oppression. Like the case of Somali refugees in the 1980s and 1990s, who tried to escape the civil war, famine and economic crises in their home country. From the mid-1980s, over 15,000 Somalis arrived in Britain as refugees. Although, Muslims were not forced to leave their countries for purely socio-political or economic reasons, in many cases it was a combination of many factors including personal reasons on the part of highly educated professionals in Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia and Iraq who strove for material and intellectual fulfilment. Some Lebanese, too, chose to migrate not only because of the breakdown of civil life in their country but also because their skills in professions, commerce and the media could be used more efficiently in Britain. Egyptians, too, started arriving in Britain in large numbers and by the end of 1970s they formed the largest Arab community in Britain. By 1991, their number was estimated to be around 23,000. Arabs were no longer mostly unskilled workers however; they came from more varied regional and class backgrounds like writers, poets and journalists who escaped from censorship in their countries. For most Arabs since the 1970s the reasons for leaving their countries were mostly influenced by political conflicts or because of religious and political persecution in their countries. Only a small number of them left for economic reasons.

Kurds who had been subject to persecution in Iran as well as in Iraq and Turkey fled to Britain in the 1980s and 1990s (Buryová, 2005: 12). A wave of Iraqi refugees arrived in Britain in the 1960s, as political freedom was again limited in Iraq. In the 1970s and 1980s,
many more refugees, including a large number of Kurds, arrived in Britain as political repression in Iraq intensified. During the Iran-Iraq war, thousands of Shi’a Muslims were forced to leave Iraq moving to Iran and from there many tried to seek asylum in Britain. The number of Iraqi refugees in Britain in the late 1990s was estimated to be between 70,000 and 80,000, half of whom lived in London. Those in London mostly belonged to higher classes and professions such as doctors, teachers, engineers, journalists, writers and the business community. In Afghanistan in the early 1970s, many people found the conditions insecure and unstable. Therefore, about 3,000 Afghans came to Britain mostly to escape the Russian invasion in 1979 and the civil war that followed (Ansari, 2004: 160-163). In the 1990s, there was another influx of about 9,000 Iraqis as political refugees, most of them Kurds. Kurds from Turkey also tried to escape human rights violations and between the 1980s and 1990s, about 15,000 of them arrived in Britain. Later they were joined by another minority group, the Alavis, an Islamic sect who were under pressure to leave their homes (Buryová, 2005: 13).

Once their families arrived, the immediate concern of the parents was for their children. They wanted to impart religious education by teaching the Qur’an, the basic beliefs and practices of Islam to their children. This meant allocating a house for their children’s education in the neighbourhood and using the same house for the five daily prayers. Muslim dietary laws saw the development of halal butcher shops and the import of Asian spices. This also gave birth to the Asian corner shops in Britain. In this way, the growth of the Muslim neighbourhood had begun (Siddiqui, 1995).

The growth of Muslims in Britain has created in some ways a generation gap. In the early days of migration and settlement, Muslims imported imams to run their local mosques and teach their children basic Islamic education. Furthermore, the children’s language of communication has increasingly become English, and now for the third and fourth
generation of Muslims, English is their first language. However, in a large number of Qur’an schools the imams still teach students in Urdu, or in other Asian languages. It is not surprising that there is an increasing frustration amongst the youth about such methods of teaching (Siddiqui: 1995) (see in Chapter 5 and 7).

Muslim youth who became actively involved in Islamic activities during their college and university lives, discover a sense of attachment as well as pride in their religion. Usually their new found faith in Islam questions their parents’ beliefs and practices in religion (Martyn, 1996: 48). At times, the youth seem to become born again Muslims, with zeal to change their families’ and friends’ way of practising Islam. Their missionary zeal convinces them to see themselves as right, and others as wrong (Siddiqui, 1995).

In 1962, the Islamic Societies felt the need to form a Federation of Islamic Societies in order to provide basic guidance to new students arriving in Britain, and facilities for Friday prayers in university campuses. They also held annual “Islamic Weeks”, consisting of lectures, exhibitions and video shows and in general, they helped Muslim students by supporting their needs. Gradually, a number of students decided to stay and came to play a leading role within their community. A number of organizations also came into existence including: The UK Islamic Mission (1962), The Muslim Student's Society (1962), The Union of Muslim Organizations (1970), The Islamic Council of Europe (1973), Young Muslims (1984), The Islamic Party (1989), The Islamic Society of Britain (1990), and, more recently, The Muslim Parliament, The UK Action Committee of Islamic Affairs and many others (Aslan, 2009: 186, Rosseau, 1985: 83). Muslims are a faith community and do not fit into a strict racial definition (see in Chapter 3). Their needs and priorities are different, and are more to do with their religion rather than their race. Muslims, in the eyes of the Race Relations Act, do not constitute an ethnic group and, therefore, in order to
To prove religious discrimination, Muslims have to prove that they have been discriminated against as a racial group in which their religion is a dominant fact (Siddiqui; 1995).

The growing number of Muslims in the UK, generally, produced a network of mosques attracting larger and more committed congregations. Life-cycle rituals requiring religious ceremonies further reinforced the role of mosques as religious institutions in a non-Muslim society, requiring social and political activity. From the mid-1980s, British Muslims became more effectively organized, as they gained confidence and experience. They broadened their agendas to address issues ranging from gaining recognition of Muslim family law to political representation. That gave them the opportunity to deal with local government and other areas of public life (Ansari, 2002: 6). Chapter Five discusses in more detail the history of mosques in Britain as it explores establishing mosques in the UK that represents the major investment of Islamic communities and reflects on their increasing numbers. Chapters Six and Eight of the study discusses some of the roles mosques play in constructing Islamic identity in a non-Muslim society.

2.6 Statistical Summary of Muslims in Britain

2.6.1 Muslim Population Estimates via Census

Joly (1988) asserts that no statistical data can be gleaned on Muslims per se from censuses, and other sources are incomplete or unreliable. Census 1981 identifies 398,624 residents were born in countries where Islam is the main religion. Table (1) shows Muslim distribution in Britain by country of origin.
The England and Wales Census of 2001 and 2011 asked: ‘What is your religion?’ Even though the question is voluntary, this question explores only religious affiliation or whether a person connects or identifies with a religion, irrespective of actual practise or belief. Religion is a many sided concept and has different aspects such as religious belief, religious practice or belonging, which are not covered by this question. Religion is an important defining characteristic of people’s identity. Collecting information on religious affiliation complements other questions on people’s ethnic group, national identity and language to provide a detailed picture of the society we live in, and how it is changing (ONS, 2012b: 1-2) over time, see table (2).
The main problem here is, how to define Muslims officially. For statistical purposes, family background has been thought to be most relevant. For Kettani, Muslims are those who: ‘Affirm Muhammad to be the last messenger of Allah and hold his teachings to be true, irrespective of the extent to which they know about his teachings, or the extent to which they are able to live according to them’ (Kettani, 1986: 2).

For Nielsen, the term Muslim has been applied to those for whom Islam is considered to have some significance in the ordering of their daily lives – for whom Islam continues to be the “master signifier”. But: ‘It is necessary to be aware of the differing factors (social, economic, cultural and generational) which may contribute to vary the application of ideas of Islam… at both the individual and the collective level’ (Nielsen, 1987: 386).

Iqbal identifies himself as a Muslim because he was “born in a Muslim home”. He says: ‘I am not religious in belief or practice but I am a Muslim, just as a lot of non-church-going whites describe themselves as belonging to the Church of England.’ (Ansari, 2002: 12).

Thus, there are different ways of being Muslim in Britain; but all have to engage with the realities of living as a minority in a non-Muslim society. This justifies why this research did not study the level of religiosity among the research participants and which type of Muslims are they; the study places them in the context of their working out strategies to
ensure the survival of their religious identity and its transmission to the new generations and which depend upon religious institutions like mosques. This process of constructing and transmuting has involved processes of negotiation with the wider society (Ansari, 2002: 12). This argument shapes the core of the present study by discussing religious identity in the literature review and then reflects upon some aspects of this identity in the empirical chapters that follow.

2.6.2 Christianity as the Main Religion in Britain

The largest religion recorded in the 2011 Census for England and Wales was Christianity with 33.2 million people (59.3 per cent of the population). Muslims were the next largest religious group with 2.7 million people (4.8 per cent of the population). 14.1 million people in England and Wales said they had no religion, around a quarter (25.1 per cent) of the population. Of the other main religious groups: 817,000 people identified themselves as Hindu (1.5 per cent of population); 423,000 people identified as Sikh (0.8 per cent); 263,000 people as Jewish (0.5 per cent) and 248,000 people as Buddhist (0.4 per cent) 240,000 people (0.4 per cent) identified with religions that did not fall into any of the main religious categories. The most common groups were Pagan and Spiritualist, accounting for 57,000 people and 39,000 people respectively. Some of the other higher reporting groups included Mixed Religion with 24,000 people, Jain with 20,000 people and Ravidassia with 11,000 people. The religion question was the only voluntary question on the 2011 census and 7.2 per cent of people did not answer the question (policyResearchCentre, 2012: 2).
Figure 1: Religious Affiliation, England and Wales 2011

Source: Census - Office for National Statistics

Figure 2: Minority Religious Groups, England and Wales 2011

Source: Census - Office for National Statistics
2.6.3 Ethnic Groups, England and Wales 2011

The majority of the resident population, 48.2 million people (86.0 per cent of the population), reported their ethnic group as White in the 2011 Census. Within this ethnic group, White British was the largest, with 45.1 million people (80.5 per cent), followed by any other Whites with 2.5 million people (4.4 per cent). Indian was the next largest ethnic group with 1.4 million people (2.5 per cent) followed by Pakistani (2.0 per cent). This is consistent with census findings on international migration, which found that South Asian countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) continued to rank highly within the most common non-UK countries of birth. The remaining ethnic groups each accounted for up to 2 per cent of the population in 2011. There were two new tick boxes in the 2011 Census: Gypsy or Irish Traveller and Arab. Arab accounted for 240,000 usual residents (0.4 per cent of the population). Gypsy or Irish Traveller accounted for 58,000 usual residents (0.1 per cent of the population), making it the smallest ethnic category (with a tick box) in 2011 (ONS, 2012a: 2).

Figure 3: Final Recommended Ethnic Group Question for England in 2011

Source: Census - Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2009)
2.6.4 Changing Picture of Ethnicity over Time

Over the last two decades, England and Wales became more ethnically diverse. Caution is needed when comparing census ethnic data over the years due to changes and increases in tick boxes and changes to how the question was worded (change from cultural to ethnic background) (ONS, 2012a: 4-5).
2.6. 5 Changing Picture of Religious Affiliation

Compared with 2001, the Census of 2011 the most significant trends were:

• An increase in the population reporting no religion – from 14.8 per cent of the population in 2001 to 25.1 per cent in 2011
• A drop in the population reporting to be Christian - from 71.7 per cent in 2001 to 59.3 per cent in 2011, and
• An increase in all other main religions. The number of Muslims increased the most from 3.0 per cent in 2001 to 4.8 per cent in 2011 (ONS, 2012b: 4).
These trends are consistent with data from other sources that show a decline in religious affiliation. The Annual Population Survey data in 2011 show 27.9 per cent of the population in England and Wales have no religion, 63.1 per cent are Christian, 4.8 per cent are Muslim, 1.5 per cent are Hindu while Buddhist, Jewish and Sikh each account for less than 1.0 per cent. However, comparisons between the census and social survey data should be treated with caution due to methodological differences. There are many factors driving changes in religious affiliation including natural growth (for example, some minority religious groups have a younger demographic profile), migration, changes in willingness to report and awareness of the question. The ONS will explore these factors further as part of its analysis programme of the census.

However, accurate figures are notoriously difficult to determine. It is probable that, by the end of the twentieth century, the Muslim community in Britain had grown to about 2,000,000. As such, it is frequently referred to in the media as the largest minority religious group living in Britain. The 2001 census did indeed show that the largest faith group after
Christians (71%) were Muslims (just under 3%). It also showed that nearly 46% of Muslims living in England and Wales were born in the UK and that there are Muslims in every local authority except the Isles of Scilly (Hussain and Bagguley, 2005: 214). The census also showed the age imbalance of the British Muslim community with over half of British Muslims being under the age of 25 (Gent, 2006b: 10). Generally, looking at table (3) shows the growth of the Muslim population was by 1.2m 2001-2011. An increase in share of population from 3% to 4.8% (Jivraj, 2013: 16). That shows Islam is the most common faith group in Britain with nearly more than four per cent of the population being Muslim. While the number of converts is estimated at around 10,000 people (Samad and Sen, 2007: 43).

Table 3: Increase in Muslim Population 2001-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious affiliation</th>
<th>2001 N</th>
<th>2001 %</th>
<th>2011 N</th>
<th>2011 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>37,338,486</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>33,243,175</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religion</td>
<td>7,709,267</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>14,097,229</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion not stated</td>
<td>4,010,658</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>4,038,032</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>1,546,626</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2,706,066</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>552,420</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>816,633</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>329,360</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>423,158</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>259,928</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>263,346</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>144,453</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>247,743</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other religion</td>
<td>150,720</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>240,530</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52,041,918</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>56,075,912</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Census (Crown Copyright) Table KS209EW

2.6.6 Geographical Distribution of Muslims in UK

Settlement in the UK is really uneven. The biggest numbers settle in the large cities and towns. Around half of the total population of Muslims live in London. In the West Midlands, Yorkshire, and the area around Manchester almost two thirds of Muslims reside. Of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi population, three quarters of them stay in Birmingham.
(Nielsen, 1995: 42, Samad and Sen, 2007: 44). The ethnic distribution is also uneven. Turkish Cypriots live mostly in east London, where more (than half-Bangladeshi) are. Most of the Arab and Iranian population stay in London, with the exception of the Yemenis, who live in Cardiff, Liverpool, Birmingham, and in some north-eastern ports (Nielsen, 1995: 43, Abbas, 2005: 19). Around (two fifths of Muslims) (38 per cent) live in London. After London, the regions with the next biggest share of the Muslim population are the West Midlands (14 per cent), the North West (13 per cent), and Yorkshire and the Humber (12 per cent). Even within these regions, Muslims are highly concentrated spatially. Muslims made up 8 per cent of London's population overall but 36 per cent of the Tower Hamlets and 24 per cent of the Newham populations. Christians were spread across Britain. London had the lowest proportion of Christians, around 58 per cent of the London population. Map (1) shows the growth of the Muslim population in settlement areas that had a faster rate of growth than the surrounding areas (Jivraj, 2013: 16). See map 1:
2.7 Manchester Demographical Study

The following discussion focuses on Manchester and how Muslims fit in with this national demographical picture. The population and growth figures from the 2011 Census for Greater Manchester shows Manchester's growth was the highest for any major provincial city at a staggering 19%. According to the census much of the national growth figure of 7% is accounted for by immigration - 55% of this figure.

Manchester 503,100 +19%
Salford 233,900 +7.8%
Bolton 276,800 +5.9%
Bury 185,100 +2.4%
Rochdale 211,700 +2.6%
Oldham 224,900 +2.9%
Tameside 219,300 +2.6%
Stockport 283,300 -0.5%
Trafford 226,600 +7.8%
Wigan 317,800 +5.4%

Total for Greater Manchester: 2,682,500
Total at 2001 census: 2,516,200 (Welcome to Manchester Confidential)

2.7.1 Ethnic Group, 2011 Area: Manchester (Local Authority)
## Table 4 Ethnic Groups in the Manchester Area 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measure Manchester</th>
<th>North West</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Usual Residents (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>503,127</td>
<td>7,052,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White; English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>298,237</td>
<td>6,141,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White; Irish (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>11,843</td>
<td>64,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White; Gypsy or Irish Traveller (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>4,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White; Other White (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>24,520</td>
<td>151,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Black Caribbean (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>8,877</td>
<td>39,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Black African (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>4,397</td>
<td>18,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; White and Asian (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>4,791</td>
<td>30,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; Other Mixed (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>5,096</td>
<td>22,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British; Indian (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>11,417</td>
<td>107,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British; Pakistani (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>42,904</td>
<td>189,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British; Bangladeshi (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>6,437</td>
<td>45,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British; Chinese (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>13,539</td>
<td>48,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British; Other Asian (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>11,689</td>
<td>46,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; African (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>25,718</td>
<td>59,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Caribbean (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>9,642</td>
<td>23,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; Other Black (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>8,124</td>
<td>15,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnic Group; Arab (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>9,503</td>
<td>24,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnic Group; Any Other Ethnic Group (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>5,884</td>
<td>19,688</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Last Updated: 30 January 2013

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2011a)
Table 5 Religious Groups in Manchester 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
<th>North West</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Usual Residents (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>503,127</td>
<td>7,052,177</td>
<td>53,012,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>245,247</td>
<td>4,742,860</td>
<td>31,479,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3,879</td>
<td>20,695</td>
<td>238,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>5,452</td>
<td>38,259</td>
<td>806,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2,613</td>
<td>30,417</td>
<td>261,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>79,496</td>
<td>356,458</td>
<td>2,660,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2,292</td>
<td>8,857</td>
<td>420,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Religion (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1,889</td>
<td>19,166</td>
<td>227,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Religion (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>127,485</td>
<td>1,397,916</td>
<td>13,114,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion Not Stated (Persons)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>34,774</td>
<td>437,549</td>
<td>3,804,104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Last Updated: 30 January 2013

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2011b).
2.7.3 Population Estimates by Broad Age Band over the Last Decade

In mid-2010, Manchester had an estimated population of 498,800. Between mid-2001 and mid-2010, Manchester had an overall rising population, with 9 out of the 9 years seeing an increase (policy Research Centre, 2012).

*Figure 8: Population of Manchester between 2001-2010*

![Population for all persons, mid-2001 to mid-2010](source: Mid-Year Estimates, Office for National Statistics)

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the history of Muslim migration to the UK, with more focus on the Arab history in Manchester in order to stage the ground for the following chapters. The chapter included some facts about the growing Muslim population. Then it provided some statistical and demographical information about Muslims by analysing data from different UK Census. This helps to set the scene for the current study by understanding the background of the Muslim community in the UK. I now turn to examine the literature about religious identity that helps to provide a theoretical framework for the rest of the research.
Chapter Three

Literature Review: Religious Identity

3.1 Introduction

This review deals with the theoretical frameworks that focus on religious identity in relation to the study’s research questions. The chief concern is the construction of Islamic identity in a predominantly non-Muslim society. How is Islamic identity transmitted to subsequent generations? This review addresses the complex issues that frame religious identity for Muslim minorities. There is a particular focus on the role of the Muslim family and the mosque in non-Muslim societies in transferring this identity. The theoretical work offers practical concepts that will help in structuring empirical chapters for the current study.

To fully understand the identity dynamics of minority Muslim communities in predominantly non-Muslim societies, the dialectic between migration and identity construction and transition in new migrant religious minority communities residing in the West requires some explanation. This is because the impact of immigration on identity construction has only recently been given attention. Moving from being part of a religious majority to being in a religious minority position is a central factor in understanding the construction of new migrants’ religious and ethnic identities (Duderija, 2007: 142). This is a key point to bear in mind in relation to the case of Sunni Muslim minorities in Manchester because they were the majority in their home country and then the minority in the host non-Muslim societies.

In this research, the term “Islamic identity” is used instead of Muslim identity. The former is more consistent with this study because it is the construction and transmission of identity

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7 Despite the fact that there are different categories within the Sunni sect, or different “mazaheb”, the research will deal with them as one group. See chapter 5 for more details.
amongst Muslim migrants who practise Islam that is being investigated. Since religious identity is important to minorities in the new society, not only to Muslim ones, research on other religious and ethnic groups has been included for example Jews and Indians. This research is also drawn on as a result of the lack of information about Islamic identity and its construction and transmission. In particular, research on construction and transmission of minorities’ religious identity supports the arguments in the present review of the Islamic identity of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim societies.

To better understand Muslim minorities, this review explores the published literature in relation to religious identity without tracking or studying the historical development of Muslims consciousness and the construction of their religious identity in migrant societies. The main target is to study the current case of the Sunni Muslim minority in Manchester in relation to how they preserve their religious identity and how they transmit it to new Muslim generations. Firstly, the broad argument will centre on the migrants’ identity in general. Then the discussion will explore the migrants’ religious identity that still has a place in the social fabric of the contemporary era. Subsequently the debate will explain what it means to hold an Islamic identity with reference to the important work of Tariq Ramadan and his view of its construction. After that, I will present an overview of the existing studies on Muslims’ religious identity based upon the sociological approach to religious identity construction (Duderija, 2008: 374). Consideration will be given to the key factors that play a vital role as an identity maker and (re)producer for Muslim migrants and subsequent generations, namely the Muslim family in the early age period and in mosques later on, most significantly through the activities of Qur’an schools. Even though there are many Muslims who do not send their children to mosques or Qur’an schools they still retain an Islamic identity. Those children will not be accounted for in the current
research. Ultimately, there is concern amongst Muslim families about passing on an Islamic identity to their children. Significantly, this struggle to maintain an Islamic identity has faced unique challenges and pressures in a predominately non-Muslim society, as Chapter Seven shows.

3.2 Immigrants’ Identity

One of the most inevitable aspects of human life is migration. Individual or group displacements have occurred since the origin of humanity. Over recent decades, political and economic factors have pushed people from Eastern countries to look for security or work in the West (Ramadan, 2005: 40). Moreover, over the last three or four decades, migration has emerged as a major trend throughout the world. The migrant population has increased over the years to the extent that it is estimated that 3% of the world’s population live outside of their home country (Kuşükcan, 2004: 1, Koslowski, 2000: 22). Furthermore, there are a great many people whose recent ancestors can be traced to another part of the world than where they currently live.

The issue of identity is perhaps not as intriguing if the individuals live in their own territory since they will most likely have the same culture, language, history, memory, and religion as those who surround them. However, when people move, a new distinction emerges between themselves and others, hence they may reinforce their own identity to produce a new group of people who have trans-located their native traditions and way of life (Appadurai, 1998: 2-3). The change in context in which migrant communities undergo a transition from a more homogenous majority in the socio-cultural setting of their country of birth to that of minority in the secular and pluralist societies of the West results in identity modifications (Duderija, 2007: 142). Ammerman maintains that: ‘Circumstances and demands in a new culture inevitably shape the beliefs and practices that were taken for

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8It deserves a future study which could reveal the family’s role in constructing Islamic identity.
granted in a home country.’ (Ammermann, 2003: 208). One reason for this is the fact that in the majority context, religious community and society stand in a complementary relationship whilst in the minority context they stand in opposition to each other (Duderija, 2007: 142) (see in Chapter 5.3). Can religious institutions that are transferred to the new host society support the different way of life that are both ethnic and religious for religious minorities?

Religion can be the predominant aspect that minorities try to transmit to subsequent generations as a ‘Preferred idiom to public self-identification’ (Warner, 1998: 208). Religious identity is particularly important for the majority of Muslims, as Islam is a holistic way of life that is viewed as taking precedence over other forms of identity (e.g. lingual, cultural and national). As Mirdal claims, ‘Religious and ethnic identity especially play an important role for persons belonging to minority groups, often to the point that they predominate above all other aspects of identity.’ (Mirdal, 2000: 39-40). Furthermore, Smith argues that the process of immigration itself is often a “theologizing experience” because immigrants often respond to the challenges of resettlement by turning to religion (Smith, 1978: 1175). Not only is the sacred called upon in the migration process but the act of migration alone can result in increased religiosity for the migrant (Connor, 2006: 8). Indeed, religious association may be more salient for both individuals and the group after immigration than it had been before immigration. For example, Muslim women are more visible in American mosques than in Middle Eastern ones (Warner, 1993: 1062 - 1063). In addition, the role of religious institutions might be different or stronger in immigrant communities than they were in the society of origin as a result of the increased religiosity of immigrants. Williams maintains that:

Immigrants are religious - by all counts more religious than they were before they left home - because religion is one of the important identity markers that helps them preserve individual self-awareness and cohesion in a group ... In the United States, religion is the social category with
clearest meaning and acceptance in the host society, so the emphasis on religious affiliation and identity is one of the strategies that allows the immigrant to maintain self-identity while simultaneously acquiring community acceptance (Warn er, 1998: 208).

Smith asserts that, ‘The process of uprooting, migration and resettlement produce intensification of religious commitment on the part of immigrants.’ (Duderija, 2007: 143). Whilst immigrants may regard themselves as unable to pass on other aspects of identity to subsequent generations like language, transmitting religious identity often becomes a key priority. This has been the case for non-Muslim immigrants, as well. Thus, as Warner points out with a study of Iranian Jews who have settled in a host society conducted by Shoshanah Feher (see in Warner, 1998), they have ‘Decided that they cannot pass their 2500-year-old Persian heritage onto their children, but will do their best to raise the children as Jews.’ (209). This privileging of religious identity over other aspects of ethnic identity has, according to some authors, led to a process described as the “transmutation of ethnicity into religion” (Herberg, 1955: 34). Immigrant groups know that they cannot take the religious identity of their children for granted. They have to make a considerable effort to reproduce it (Warner, 1998: 209). However, some significant questions might be asked here; How do they achieve this? What helps them with this task? What is the role of religious institutions in this process of transmuting religious identity to subsequent generations of minorities? In addition, what is the position of families in the transmitting process? The analysis chapters of this thesis (see in Chapters 5, 6, and 7) are devoted to answering these questions with reference to Muslims in the UK based on the case of Sunni Muslims in Manchester. These empirical chapters of the current study try to argue that the MIC helps to transmit different ethnicities into one religious identity through an open door policy to all ethnic minorities in Manchester. In other words, they are attempting to foster a shared “Islamic Identity” amongst all Muslim ethnic minorities in Manchester. This could be the unconscious birth of a British Muslim mosque.
3.3 Immigrants’ Religious Identity

“Who are we?” is a central question that occupies the minds of many immigrants who live in a foreign landscape, particularly because identity is a product of one’s social context, and the political, economic, historical and cultural milieu where individuals or groups are born and live out their lives (Peek, 2005: 4). Therefore, much of the literature focuses on minorities and their religious identity, and how religion can emerge as an important factor for identifying themselves in the host society. According to Tajfel, religious identity can be conceptualized as an aspect of a minority person’s social identity. On the other hand, religious identity may be important to individuals, regardless of their status as a minority or a majority. Either way, the religious affiliation of minority individuals may play an important role in their daily lives (Sturman, 2003: 164).  

Duderija asserts (2007) that research on ethnicity has been critiqued on the grounds that it too easily ties together ethnic and religious identity in respect of some communities. However, I think this risk can be exaggerated, as numerous sociological studies on religion and new migrants highlight the central role religion plays in ethnic identity and the difficulty of separating the two (143). Other studies are interested in the way in which a variety of actors use religion in different ways, such as ethnicity and culture. In the words of Robert Orsi, ‘People appropriate religious idioms as they need them, in response to particular circumstances.’ (Kopelowitz and Israel-Shamsian, 2005: 20).

The role of religion in religious identity construction from a sociological perspective is two-fold. Firstly, religion acts as a social binder. That is, religion contributes towards group solidarity among members of a certain ethno-religious community (see in chapter

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9Therefore, how minorities use or understand their religion can be completely different from the way majorities use or understand their religious identity.
Secondly, religion is an important factor in the way members of a certain religious community construct various social and cultural relationships in which they are embedded (Duderija, 2008: 384) (see in chapter 6.3). Recently, scholars researching diaspora communities have been calling attention to the dynamic quality of immigrants’ identities, and to the aspects of their life experiences that involve the complex negotiation of religion, nationality, ethnicity, class and gender. Such studies are valuable especially in understanding how the multiple intersections of these categories structure and constrain the ability of immigrants to construct identities. For instance, Stuart Hall argues that assuming strict bipolar categories of identity (e.g., British or Pakistani, British or Muslim, Hindu or Muslim, religion or ethnicity) renders traditional approaches to ethnic and religious identity flawed (Jain and Forest, 2004: 5). For Hall and others, the immigration process and the challenges it brings to ethnic and cultural identity have resulted in a unique hybrid of identities amongst second and third generation immigrants.

In the literature, regarding the impact of immigration on Muslim identity, scholars have argued that Muslim identity that engages with mainstream non-Muslim society can remain “genuinely” Muslim without any major contradictions (Kabir, 2010: 38). Gilliat refers to this category of Muslim thus:

There is an important minority of young Muslims in Britain who are not only devoted Muslims, but also fully participating in the wider society when it comes to general social life . . . [T]hey appear to be confident in their religious identity, and they do not rely on outward signs of this identity to bolster their inner sense of being Muslim. As a consequence they can mix freely with non-Muslims in the wider society, without feeling threatened, or compromising their Islam. They are perhaps the one’s who most aspire to being recognised as “British Muslims” (Gillia, 1994: 236).

As discussed in Chapter Five, a few participants in the current study address how their faithfulness to their Islamic religion is a key factor in their mixture of identity, and that it shows how they feel comfortable with the fluidity of British culture and the democratic institutions of non-Muslim society. Additionally, the MIC itself does not firmly represent a specific ethnicity or language heritage that reflects a specific Muslim minority in
Manchester. Thus, its inclusive nature might help to create a distinctive British Islamic identity in the future for Muslims who live in the UK.

Hashmi demonstrates that ‘We cannot talk about identity without referring to the society in which the individual exists and to which s/he relates.’ (Duderija, 2008: 383). Therefore, recent Diaspora studies have emphasised the hybrid nature of identity. When populations move across boundaries, they bring their own culture with them. In particular, Appadurai emphasises the unstable nature of transnational ethnic identity (Jain and Forest, 2004: 3-4). For instance, Indian migrants to American society did not assimilate completely, but modified their roles to fit the American milieu. Their new identity is a kind of construction between the material landscape of the immigrant community and the imaginary landscape of the Indian Diaspora (Jain and Forest, 2004: 3-4). It is important to note that in passing their cultural heritage onto their children, many immigrant parents consider religion to be the key to cultural reproduction (Duderija, 2007: 25). The emphasis on religion can create a contradiction between home and mainstream life outside the home (see in Chapter 6.5) which requires that children understand their religion and deal with it differently than their parents because of the different demands placed on them by the host society.

According to Penning (2009) and Russett (1979), Americans express more positive assessments of countries with whom they share common religious, racial, or ethnic characteristics, or even similar political or economic structures (9). Waardenburg (2003) observes that, ‘In immigrant or minority situations religion may play an important role in reaffirming and integrating identity on a communal level.’ (485). Smith’s study of religion and ethnicity in America indicates that in the immigrant context, ethnicity is determined frequently by identification with a particular religious tradition more than any other factor such as language or feelings of nationalism. He further maintains that traditional religious beliefs ‘Have been decisive determinants of ethnic affiliation in America’ and that the
religious factor in ethnic identity is strengthened by the migration experience (Duderija, 2007: 143). Gilliat notices the same trend among British Muslims by stating that for them the crucial dimension of their ethnic identity is religious identity. For many immigrant religious minority groups, the religious component of their identity in particular seems to be highly salient (Gillia, 1994: 26).

3.4 Muslim Immigrants’ Religious Identity
The desire to be recognized in their own specificity and diversity is perhaps most apparent among Muslim minorities in the West. Presently, roughly a quarter of the 1.5 billion Muslims in a world population of over seven billion are living as minorities in non-Muslim societies, where Muslims often tend to have a significant presence in their host societies (Mahmood, 2008: 325-328). Moreover, no other minorities have such unified and universally recognized markers that are attributed to them on the basis of their (allegedly) “common” religious beliefs and practices including dietary and dress codes, matters of personal and commercial finance, and issues of gender and family relations, et cetera that all make Muslim immigrants distinctive and recognizable in a minority setting. Thus, whether or not Muslim communities make a conscious effort to preserve this situation, the process of identity construction and maintenance goes on vigorously within these communities (Mahmood, 2008: 325-328).

Before moving on to discuss how the central term in this study “Islamic identity” constitutes a sociologically significant religious identity, it is crucial to explain what we mean by Islamic identity. I will do this primarily with reference to the important work of Tariq Ramadan who has attempted to make this identity understandable for both Muslims and non-Muslims around the world. According to Ramadan (2005), Islamic identity is a faith, which is the intimate sign that one believes in the creator without associating anything with Him (Allah) (51-52). This is the central concept of tawheed, “oneness of
God”, to which the shahada affirms and testifies beyond time and space. It is embodied in other religious practices, such as prayer, zakat, fasting and pilgrimage. Moreover, a Muslim has to understand the “text and the context” (the Qur’an and the sunnah). All practices prescribed by Islam are means of recollection. By using this meaning one can extrapolate the core of the identity from its actualization in a particular time and place (Ramadan, 2005: 50). To clarify this concept in more detail Ramadan uses this figure (see figure 9).

**Figure 9 Muslim Identity (Ramadan, 2005: 55)**

The diagram in Figure 1 which begins with faith at the central position and moves on through engaging with people and participation, demonstrates the definition of Islamic identity (Ramadan, 2005: 55).

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10 In Islam, the Arabic word sunnah has come to denote the way Prophet Muhammad PBUH the Messenger of Allah, lived his life. The sunnah is the second source of Islamic jurisprudence, one cannot practice Islam without consulting both the Qur’an and the sunnah. The Arabic word hadith (pl. a hadith) is very similar to sunnah, but not identical [NIQAB, UMMI 2006]. Quran and sunnah forum [Online]. Available at: http://www.IslamiCity.com/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=7907 [Accessed 13/06 2012]. The Hadith is a record of the Prophet Mohammed's life, actions, and deeds. A saying in the Hadith is called a sunnah. HTTP://CARM.ORG/HADITH.

11 Islam means “submission” to God.
The first and the most important factor in Islamic identity is faith *tawheed*, faith in the oneness of God, ‘To which the *shahada* affirms and testifies. The *shahada* is the purest expression of the essence of Muslim identity beyond time and space. Spirituality is remembrance, recollection and intimate energy involved in the struggle against the natural human tendency to forget God, the significance of life and the other world.’ (Ramadan, 2005: 51). This part of the identity will not be discussed via empirical chapters because faith in the oneness of God counts as an innate issue for Muslims who attend mosque regularly or even occasionally. As the case study takes place in the MIC, this element of identity was assumed for all participants to have this kind of belief about God.

Secondly, within the Islamic tradition, there is no faith without understanding, which is why understanding the texts that make up the Qur’an, and the context, or the *sunnah* is a vital constitutive component of faith. Understanding each of the texts and the context means Islamic identity is not closed, confined and rigid, but rather it is based on dialectical and dynamic movement between the sources and the environment. This is why development of intellectual abilities is so vital in Islam (Ramadan, 2005: 52). It helps to keep Islam as a progressive religion. Its intellectual nature is a crucial element of both Islam from a theological perspective and also as a cultural aspect in the making of the Islamic identity. However, it is important to note that the present project is not designed to examine how Muslims in non-Muslims society understand the texts and the context of their religion or how they put their knowledge into practice, due to limitation of time and funding. Moreover, such an undertaking would be considerable and would require access to different types of knowledge. Most scholars typically study one or two key texts, and/or limit themselves to one of the following modes of analysing the Qur’an:

- *Tafseer Al Qur’an*: explanation of the Qur’an, and here numerous historical and contemporary explanations exist;
• Explicating the language of the Qur’an: this mode of analysis focuses on the Arabic language and its distinctive way of expression and grammar;

• Science of Tajweed: this area of investigation concerns itself with the ten ways of reading the Qur’an, as set out by the Prophet.\(^\text{12}\)

• Scientific study of the miracle of the Qur’an: this applied to food and fasts, marriage and relationships, creation, and embryology, upbringing, and aerospace, etc.

In the study of sunnah, there are:

• Science of Hadith\(^\text{13}\): ‘After the Qur’an itself, the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad form the most important foundations of Islamic thought. The hadith were accounts—usually brief—of the words and actions of the Prophet. As such, they were subjected to intense scrutiny by generations of Muslim scholars.’ (al-Shahrazuri, 2006: book description)

• Fiqh\(^\text{14}\) Al Seera: Understanding the life of Prophet Muhammad.

In addition to the above, there are many other kinds of sunnah studies. This research is not direct towards any of the above topics, which are more theological in nature than sociological. However, some interviewees share some incidents about their understanding or misunderstanding of the Qur’an and sunnah, according to their situation as minorities in a non-Muslim society\(^\text{15}\).

Thirdly, in relation to education and transition, these aspects of Islamic identity are more central to this research. Religious identity is a pledge amaana, according to Ramadan; so that a practicing Muslim family plays a role in passing on this amaana to subsequent generations. Therefore, Ramadan asserts that, faith iman is a pledge amaana. All Muslims

\(^{12}\)It is worth noting that most Muslims (Arab or non-Arab) are not familiar with any of these ways of reading but rather read the Qur’an as they read any other Arabic text.

\(^{13}\)Dar al-Hadith al-Ashrafiya in Damascus, is one of the most prestigious institutions for the study of hadith in the Islamic world.

\(^{14}\)Jurisprudence

\(^{15}\)In Islam there is Fiqh called “Jurisprudence of minorities”.
are required to pass this *amaana* to their children and relatives (Ramadan, 2005: 53). For parents, this requires educating one’s children to make it possible for them to receive the pledge and then to make the free choice to accept it. This choice is an important part of the Islamic identity. As a lot of work is required of Muslim parents in order to bring up a Muslim child and to foster his or her Islamic identity from an early age, which is a key parental responsibility in Islam. This task might be harder or easier in non-Muslim societies\(^\text{16}\) (see in Chapter 7 and 8). The Prophet says: ‘Every child is born with an instinct and his parents make him Jew, Christian or Magus\(^\text{17}\).’ What is meant by instinct is “Islam”, or a belief in the oneness of Allah. This is illustrated in the following verse of the Quran:

\[
 \text{So set your face towards the religion (of pure Islamic Monotheism) Allah’s Fitrah (human nature that is implanted with an instinctive monotheism), worship none but Allah alone, with which He has created humankind. No change let there be in Allah’s creation (Islamic Monotheism), that is the true religion, but most people know not. (TafsirAt-Tabarî) verse (30) Surat Al Rum (Qur’an, 2013).}
\]

Ramadan emphasizes that:

One of the most important functions of parents, part of their *being*, is to offer to their children the idea and substance of *what they are* so that the children can choose, as responsible beings before God, *what they want to be*, for, as the Qur’an says, ‘No one can bear the burden of another’ (Ramadan, 2005: 53).

Therefore, based on “being a Muslim” it is the action of education and transmission. Ramadan clarifies that in the case of immigrants the first generation of migrants were more successful at transmitting the faith without having much religious knowledge. They transmitted an intuitive understanding and a respect for faith. They all came from countries where God is everywhere; they were able to keep the connection so that the “sense of God” passed into their children’s consciousness (Ramadan, 2005: 96). Then the second generation expressed their need to have real knowledge, to be able to pass Islamic identity to their

\^\text{16} It could be easier in so far as it could be more focused on Islam. By contrast, Muslims who live in Muslim society start to lose their religiosity without consciousness. Parents leave this task to society, institutions like schools, and mosques. However, because of the westernization and secular education these institutions like schools might not perform this role of creating religious identity. In addition, because of political issues the religious institutions in Muslim countries like mosques are not able to.

\^\text{17} http://library.islamweb.net/newlibrary/display_book.php?idfrom=7783&idto=7797&bk_no=53&ID=1243
children. This is why they had to create institutions like mosques (see in Chapter 5) for “Islamic education”, as they did not get the chance to live in countries where the Qur’an, Hadith and much more about Islam is taught everywhere. Arabic and Islamic religion classes began to be organised through mosques (Ramadan, 2005: 96).

The last element in Ramadan’s diagram is action and participation. According to Ramadan, being Muslim does not justify exiling oneself from living in society:

The outward expression of Muslim identity is the articulation and demonstration of the faith through consistent behaviour. Faith, understanding, education, and transmission together constitute the substrata of Islamic ethics and should therefore guide the actions of the believer. To be a Muslim is to act according to the teachings of Islam, no matter what the surrounding environment, and there is nothing in Islam that commands a Muslim to withdraw from the society in order to be closer to God (Ramadan, 2005: 54).

As mentioned above, these are universal principles applicable to all Muslims, which they must hold if they want to remain faithful to their religion. A Muslim is a Muslim in the North and in the South, in the West as well as in the East. They all have to understand these significant dimensions (Ramadan, 2005: 54). At the middle point between being Muslim without Islam (a Muslim who identifies as a Muslim but does not put Islamic religion into practice, even such person can be either in a Muslim country or a non-Muslim one), and being Muslim in the West but outside the West (a Muslim who applies Islam in his daily life even he does not live in a Muslim country, and the West does not have a big influence on his identity as a Muslim), between both there is the reality of Muslims being aware of the four dimensions of their identity (Ramadan, 2005: 55-56) (see in Chapter 5).

However, Ramadan asserts that (2005) Muslims in non-Muslim societies have a great responsibility to address these elements of their religious identity (55). From Ramadan’s points of view, immigrant Muslims have suffered from different experiences including feelings of stigmatization and continuous pressure. “They feel these criticisms and this obsession with “the problem of Islam and Muslims”
as aggression, denial of their rights, and sometimes clearly racist and Islamophobic expressions.’ (Ramadan, 2010: 28)(see in Chapter 5.5) In the post 9/11 and 7/7 period, Islamophobia created a ravine between Muslims and non-Muslims in the West. Indeed, fuelling the fires of Islamophobia resulted in making the life of Muslims really difficult in a non-Muslim country. In an attempt to cope with such a situation, some Muslims have changed their names and adopted Western names, some women took off their scarves, while others pretended not to be Muslim at all.

Ramadan asserts that:

The crisis of confidence is predictable as some have decided to isolate themselves, believing that there is nothing to hope for in a society that rejects them; others have decided to become invisible by disappearing into the crowd; lastly, others have committed themselves to facing the problem and opening spaces for encounter and dialogue (Ramadan, 2010: 28) (see in Chapter 6).

Consequently, public interest goes towards Muslim males, in the aftermath of urban disturbances in a number of UK towns and cities in recent years. British Muslim males have been subject to negative profiling at a media level, variously being labelled militant, aggressive, rebellious, and fundamentalist (Dwyer et al., 2008: 118-125, Meer et al., 2010: 90, Hopkins, 2007: 172). Muslim men are, according to the words of Louise Archer, not only “dangerous individuals” possessing the ability for acts violence and terrorism, but also “culturally dangerous” working religiously to undermine “the British way of life/civilization” (Rehman, 2007: 112). This shows how transmitting and holding Islamic identity in a non-Muslim society faces many challenges. Chapter Six and Seven address some of the different types of challenges, like culture clash (see in Chapter 6.5), identity clash (see in Chapter 6.5) and educational challenges (see in Chapter 7). However, the research does not deal with any political challenges towards Muslims in non-Muslim society like the global one that is called Islamophobia, as it does not relate directly towards the current study, but further study can be done later.
To sum up, for the current research, the four dimensions of Islamic identity will not all be covered in depth through the empirical study. Therefore, the investigation concentrates on the previous part of understanding Islamic identity and then the following chapters will focus on educational and religious formation. The focus is on how Muslim parents who are alert and conscious about their Islamic identity and who are practicing Islam in non-Muslim countries are more worried about passing their religious identity on to their children via institutional sites like mosques, Qur’an schools and even providing private tuition sometimes. However, from birth until four years old it is unlikely any religious institutions will open any sessions for teaching children about religion. As a consequence, a Muslim family holds the first position when planting this identity in their children according to the Prophet as mentioned earlier. However, the role the family will not be discussed in detail in this study because of the limitation of time and funding. The present study only refers to some family narratives (see in Chapters 7 and 8) when it is required.

3.5 Transmitting Religious Identity

As discussed earlier, Ramadan regards the transmission of religious identity as a crucial part of Islamic identity itself and it is the parents’ duty to raise their children as Muslims in a non-Muslim society. In addition to Ramadan, Duderija discusses Muslim identity in a non-Muslim society. He puts forward the view that studies on Muslim identity in non-Muslim countries have mentioned many factors that influence their formation, preservation and transmission like secularisation, modernisation and global trans-nationalism (Duderija, 2010: 1). Other influencing factors include the impact of geopolitics, the state of international affairs, the broader socio-economic, political and legal contexts of the “host societies” and the diversity within the Muslim communities themselves, such as ethnicity, family and socio-economic background, the length of immigration experience, age or
gender (Duderija, 2010: 1-2). Although all of these factors are significant for understanding the various constructions of Muslim identity in a non-Muslim country, the present study focuses mainly on the importance of religion outside of the homeland, and in particular how Muslims maintain it and transfer it to subsequent generations depending on mosques and Qur’an schools.

The process of religious transmission in minority ethnic communities may be a quite different phenomenon to transmuting (or transmitting) the religious identity of the ethnic majority population, so in order to understand this process a more distinctive theoretical framework may well be required. Martin, for example, notes that globalization and the increasing diversity of cultures and ethnicities may potentially lead to the reactive re-assertion of religious identity amongst majority populations in a way that may come to parallel the experience of being in a minority in terms of a religious affirmation of difference (Scourfield et al., 2012: 93). Bruce (1996) vigorously promotes the secularization thesis, but nonetheless acknowledges that when ethnic identity is threatened in the context of migration, for example, religion may be able to supply a resource for helping people to navigate this challenging situation (Scourfield et al., 2012: 93) (see in Chapter 5). Will Herberg (1955) cites Hansen’s “principle of third-generation interest”. This is the idea that religion is capable of providing important answers to important questions about identity and belonging for those twice removed from the migration experience:

   What the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember. But what he can remember is obviously not his grandfather’s foreign culture; it is rather his grandfather’s religion’ (64).

When considering religious affiliation in contemporary Britain, Crockett and Voas observe that minority ethnic people are more religious than the white population (Scourfield et al., 2012: 93). In the past, Muslim immigrants were more determined to acknowledge themselves as ‘Arab, Pakistani and Bangladeshi’ rather than being Western Muslims, vice
versa their children who these days start to identify themselves as British Muslims or European Muslims. Therefore, the study takes place in the city of Manchester\textsuperscript{18} and amongst Sunni Muslim minorities to shed light on their religious identity and its transmission to the next generation through firstly, their religious institutions which are known as mosques in a non-Muslim society.

There is a rich theoretical literature on social identity theory. I have used a small element of this literature to explore linkages between religion and identity. Especially that which deals with Muslim minorities and their religious identity in a non-Islamic country. Verba and his colleagues, ‘Find that both religious affiliation and church attendance are important explanatory factors in understanding participation levels’ in their religious institution and its reflection on their religious practices. Most sociologists of religion in the west have studied Christian Churches (Kelly, 2005: 88) up to this point. However given the significant presence of a Muslim population it is now important to study Mosques as equally important religious institutions especially in the context of rising levels of stereotyping and islamaphobia because it is one of the minorities’ key institutions. It is divided into different types Sunni and Shia and under each other sub-categories. To achieve more understanding about the mosque I am going to discuss it referring to its position and its role amongst Sunni Muslim immigrants through empirical Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight. As mentioned earlier religious identity is \textit{amaana} according to Ramadan and not only a practicing Muslim family plays a role in passing it on to subsequent generations; Islamic religious institutions as well provide a good environment and a breeding ground to help Muslim parents to pass their religious identity on to new generations in a non-Muslim society. Each of these two key factors of religious identity

\textsuperscript{18}As an example about Muslim minority life in non-Muslim society.
transmission is important but the discussion centres more on the mosques’ role more than the family one as mentioned before.

Muslims are becoming more vocal and assertive about being Muslim in all aspects of their lives mainly as immigrants. British social structures, institutions and individuals have made provision for religious practice to a certain degree and this is something that Muslims appreciate. However, they feel further steps need to be taken for Muslims to be fully included and accepted into British society as equal citizens (Ahmed, 2003: 17). To be a Muslim means to act according to Islamic teachings at any time and place. After this broad discussion about religious identity and the position of religion for immigrants, I have focused on the Muslim case as and the family’s task to raise children up as Muslims in a non-Muslim country. The argument is more focused through the following chapters on different challenges Muslims might face holding on to their Islamic identity outside an Islamic environment (see in Chapters 6 and 7).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter addressed the literature on religious identity, and the processes of its construction. It considered the discursive construction of religious identity for immigrants and how it is more important for immigrants to identify themselves according to their religion more than identifying themselves according to their ethnicity. Moreover, how minorities may more attentive than the majority in passing their religious identity to new generations. However, when the number of different ethnic and religious minorities increases in any society the majority may start to be attentive to the issue as well. I have argued how each ethnicity; culture and religion interact to construct a person’s identity. However, what is needed is a deconstruction of the religious identity and its practices at a more profound level than the cultural or ethical practices. This chapter has argued for the
The concept of “Islamic identity” to be fundamentally questioned in a predominantly non-Muslim country. We need to interpret the actual construction of Islamic identity outside Islamic lands, which will help us to understand the way that Islam continues to exist through new generations.

The chapter argued that practicing Islamic faith lies at the heart of the construction of Islamic identity, which is what a practicing Muslim family tries to raise its children to do. Even in some cases non-practicing families do pass this identity on to their children. Islamic identity discourse is dependent on the visible differences in some cases, and on perceptual practices in others. The challenge raised in this review is to acknowledge the “salience of Islamic identity” in people’s lives after 9/11 and 7/7. I have examined in which way Islamic identity might be more seriously troublesome for Muslims in non-Muslim countries.

Having highlighted the problem with the literature that shapes the Islamic identity of Muslims in a non-Muslim society, I now want to look at how it is constructed and how Sunni Muslims work to pass it on to the next Muslim generation in the context of being immigrant Muslim minorities. I now turn to consider the research methods that have been used to generate information on Islamic Identity in a non-Muslim country and the analytical framework that has been used to understand it. I also give an idea about the context of the current case study and how the process of analysis will be taken forward.
Chapter Four
Method and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Books cannot teach you how to swim. Thus, you have to get into the water and then try to float. When you do that many times, and think deeply/hard about swimming, you should achieve progress. This case is pretty similar to doing research (Seal, 2004: 9).

Sociology emphasises the patterns and the regularities of social life, which are usually predictable. Collecting evidence from social life requires empirical research to be done. The word empirical means “based on evidence from real life” but this leads to questioning what counts as sound evidence, or ‘How do we collect sound evidence about the social world that can be used to increase our understanding of that world?’ (Mcneill and Chapman, 2005: 1). In the discipline of social science, usually, both subjective and objective research are very important. According to Stephens et al., ‘To be objective means to produce findings that are knowable through empirical evidence. On the other hand, to be subjective, means to make assertions that might or might not become knowable through empirical evidence’ (Stephens et al., 1998: 63).

The previous chapter examined and reviewed the religious identity theory, which is focused on immigrants’ religious identities. However, what research methods have been used to generate accounts of Sunni Muslims’ religious identity in a non-Muslim society? This study presents findings from research conducted in one of the Sunni mosques in Manchester; the Manchester Islamic Centre (MIC). The MIC is also referred to as the Didsbury Mosque by the Muslim community. Accordingly, this chapter explains and justifies the research design and the methods used in the enquiry. This small-scale study is based on narratives generated through qualitative methods to explain and analyse issues related to Islamic identity from participant observation sessions in the MIC. Mainly semi-
structured interviews with 43 participants were used to shed light on how Muslims preserve religious identity in a non-Muslim country. The interview data also addresses how religious institutions help to transmit Islamic identity to new generations. The study aims to analyse participants’ behaviour/practices in respect of their religion, and how they act to transfer their Islamic identity to their children in spite of the influences and challenges of a new and a different culture and society, described here as the non-Muslim society.

The chapter is ordered as follows: Firstly, it provides a general overview of the research; and an explanation of why the MIC mosque was chosen for the present case study; it then explains how interviews were conducted, and why mothers were selected to take part in the interviews. Lastly, the chapter addresses how the interviews were analysed, and considers the power relationships involved in the present research.

4.2 Background of Current Research

We need to be aware of who we are, understand our biases as much as we can, and understand and interpret our interactions with the people we study. Once we have done that, we can strive to determine whether there are regularities in human behaviour (DeWalt and DeWalt, 1998: 290).

The background of the current research in general is derived from my position as a Qur’an and Arabic teacher at the Didsbury Mosque where I teach children and teenagers. Indeed, this teaching process has created many questions in my mind as an academic person and as a researcher interested in questions of religious identity. These questions in turn motivated me to undertake this research. I have observed many activities at the mosque. Whilst working at the mosque for more than six years up to now. That gave me ample opportunity to conduct participant observation on an informal basis. This shows how teaching Arabic and the Qur’an takes an active place more than any other activity according to time, space and the number of people who attend regularly. For example, I observed that there are not enough places for new students so their names are put on the waiting list until the mosque
can offer a place for them. Another issue I observed is that the teaching areas of the mosque can become very crowded with the students because the hall, which is mainly a prayer hall, is divided by removable walls to cater for the community requirements and to meet the demands of opening new classes. This hall also has an echo sound that has a negative affect on the teaching process. In addition to that, lessons either take place during the weekends or during weekdays for afternoon sessions only, whereas students come to the MIC mosque from 5:00 pm until 7:00 or 7:30 pm. Moreover, it seems difficult for children and for their Muslim parents to pick them up from school, then to drop them off at the mosque on the same day. Under such conditions it is reasonable to ask why Muslim children bother to come to the mosque. What motivates their parents to bring them? And why the MIC, and not any of the other local mosques? What are the teachers’ duties in this situation? Prior to and during the research process the above questions have been given considerable time and attention.

All these factors join together to shape the basic background of the current research, which aims to investigate the connection between the learning and teaching of the Qur’an as one aspect of constructing Islamic identity through religious institutions. The main discussion will be on the role of the mosque in protecting and constructing religious identity in a non-Muslim setting like Manchester.

4.3 Research Questions

All research should start with a clear research puzzle (Mason, 1996: 18 – 21, 32) that gives focus to a study. The overarching puzzle concerns Islamic identity in non-Muslim society; why and how Muslims try to pass it on to the next and subsequent generations. Therefore, the present research mainly examines the role of religious institutions in constructing and protecting religious identity (Islamic identity mainly) in a non-Muslim society. The project is with an Islamic institution that is usually referred to as mosque, juma’h or masjid. The
case study centres on the Manchester Islamic Centre (MIC), which is referred to as the Didsbury Mosque by the Muslim communities in Manchester.

The present project will examine the following practical questions, emanating from the research puzzle:

1) How/why Muslims establish religious institutions in a non-Muslim society? Case study of the MIC (Chapter Five and Six)

2) What are the challenges facing the Islamic identity of Muslim minorities in British schools? (Chapter Seven)

3) What is the role of the Qur’an school in bringing up a new generation of Muslims in a non-Muslim society? (Chapter Eight)

4.4 Research Methods and its Implementation

A research method is a kind of special technique for collecting data; it might involve a particular instrument, like self-completion questionnaire or a structured interview schedule where the researcher watches and listens to the subject (Bryman, 2008: 31). To investigate any feature of social life, the researcher has to decide carefully which method s/he will follow. However, such an assumption must be based on the topic (Mcneill and Chapman, 2005: 14, Hughes and Sharrock, 2007: 97) and the phenomenon under investigation (Ekanem, 2007: 106). Each of the in-depth interviews, and participant observation is central to the study’s design (Simpson, 2011: 60). To elicit the detail, dynamism and ambiguities of personal narratives and social practices, usually qualitative methods are best suited (Brewer, 2000: 162) since they provide a more detailed, in-depth understanding of social phenomena (Ekanem, 2007: 106). Qualitative methods are suited to generating “data” for examination of social processes rather than (factual) outcomes (Maxwell, 1996: 20). Each method might yield different kinds of data. It was also considered that each method
could compensate theoretically and practically for limitations of the other (Simpson, 2011: 60). This approach has also facilitated comparison and contrast between different kinds of narratives and orders of data. The salience of religious events might be enhanced if data from both methods point in a similar direction or support each other (Mason, 1996: 150). This was evidenced in the stories that research participants articulated through talk or embodied interaction that indicate the orientations of Muslims towards mosques in a non-Muslim society.

4.4.1 Participant Observation

Whilst participant observation was used even though it is an ethnographic technique, the present study was not an actual ethnography. It involved close contact with the MIC attendees but in contexts where prolonged conversation is difficult in the MIC because of the regulations of the Qur’an school. As I am one of the Qur’an teachers in this mosque I have to be in my class on time with the students. In addition to that it is a place of worship where people come to pray or attend the Islamic lectures. Thus they do not have time for in-depth conversations. Participant observation was only used to identify:

- MIC activities that take place on a daily basis, for instance men’s activities, women’s activities, children’s activities (see appendix 9) Dress code and ethnicity of the MIC.
- The language used by the MIC staff themselves, the interactions with one another and amongst attendees and the MIC staff.
- Which language is used in teaching activities or study circles.
- How the mosque could be used out of prayer time, on a daily basis.

Establishing the above points helped me as a researcher understand the mosque’s daily life, and provided me with useful background information on the MIC.
4.4.2 Interviews

The research interview can be regarded as daily conversations, or a professional conversation (Kvale, 1996: 5). It seems “we live in an interviewing society” (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004: 140). The interview is thought to be the most widely used method in qualitative research (Bryman, 2008: 436). Benney and Hughes claim that: ‘Sociology has become the science of the interview’ (Hughes and Sharrock, 2007: 93) and semi-structured interview can be regarded as “conversations with a purpose” (Mason, 1996: 38).

4.4.2.a Negotiating Interviews and Using the Interview Schedule

The interview provides a way of generating empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives and to access the meanings which make up human actions (Ekanem, 2007: 106). Interviews yield rich insights into people’s experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes, feelings, and relationships (Hughes and Sharrock, 2007: 93, Ekanem, 2007: 106), as they offer a good means of exploring how social actors understand the world and their place within it. It would not be easy to gain this interpretation via other means (Lawler, 2002: 242). Given its strengths, then, the interview was chosen as the most appropriate method for meeting the study’s research aims. After deciding upon interviews as the chosen method, the relevant ethical issues concerning the rights and protection of the

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19If we go back to find out the roots of this term we discover that the term interview was originally borrowed from journalism. The interview constitutes what can be called a one-sided conversation, speech, or dialogue. In the German the etymology of the interview is ‘a conversation between a (newspaper) journalist and a figure from public life about a current event or another topic that is of particular interest because of the person interviewed.’ BOUTOUX, T. & OBRIST, H.-U. 2003. Hans Ulrich Obrist Interviews. Charta.17). However, the word itself is an English-American word, which was appropriated from journalistic classification in the late 1800s. This usage originally derives from the French term ‘entrevue’, which means ‘arranged encounter.’ ‘Entreroir’ is a French verb that means ‘to see each other at close distance,’ ‘to meet each other,’ and ‘to encounter,’ and this term itself a neologism of the French word ‘voir’ which means ‘to see’ ibid.18).

20In 1969, it was calculated that 91.7 per cent of research articles in the American sociological journals were based on interviews or questionnaires HUGHES, J. A. & SHARROCK, W. W. 2007. Theory and Methods in Sociology An introduction to sociological thinking and practice Palgrave Macmillan. 93)
research participants (Dicicco-Bloom and Carbtree, 2006:314) were considered, and the research was approved by The University of Manchester (see Appendix 1-7).

Interviews did not start straight away when the first question was asked. Preparation is important for understanding the situation, clarifying any ambiguities interviewees might have about the research, eliciting their co-operation and being sensitive to ethical, political and theoretical considerations in the interview process (Edwards and Pojeto, 1997: 119). The interview guide consists of questions that will be discussed through the interview process, to ensure that each interviewee responds to the same list of enquiries (Patton, 2002: 343). However, the interviewer is free to probe beyond the answers (Hughes and Sharrock, 2007: 98, Bryman, 2008: 438) in order to build a conversation with a focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined (Patton, 2002: 343). Using semi-structured interviews allows people to use their own terms in answers and it provides a greater structure for comparability (Edwards and Pojeto, 1997: 111). The interview schedule combines order with flexibility; its structure lends a sense of coherence to the interview process whilst allowing for exploration of unexpected thematic issues (Simpson, 201: 80). The more open-ended nature of the interview yields accounts of experience that had not been anticipated (Gillham, 2002: 110). During interview processes interviewees put up and create narrative visions of the social world (Miller and Glassner, 2004: 126, Patton, 2002: 342).

However, the interview guide used in this study followed the technique of “non-directive” more than “directive” questions, to allow more freedom in the reply (Edwards and Pojeto, 1997: 116). Generally it was a “conversation with a purpose” whereas the subject is the main speaker; that gave access to spoken narratives (Patton, 2002: 342). Moreover, it is important to give participants enough time during the interview process that they can

21For example: metaphor the word *halal* that is used for food (mainly meat) and for marriage, saying *halal* marriage.
produce narratives about their lives. The reactivity and body language of the interviewee was observed during and after interviews, notes were taken after each interview that addressed such issues as relax and anxiety.

4.4.2.b Finding Interviewees: the Subject of the Study

a) Sampling

The sampling strategy was also theoretically informed (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Moreover, the study’s design bears in mind the fact that selection, ‘Does not just concern people but applies equally to place and the time of sampling’ (Brewer, 2000: 81). Being a teacher in the MIC’s Qur’an School helped me to select my sample through this centre only, which is regarded as the case study for the current research. Thus, after I selected the place, I had to select the time for the study. Accordingly, it was better to avoid British school holidays, such as summer, Christmas, and Easter holidays, because most students and their families visit their home country during this time, or spend their holiday with their relatives out of Manchester, thus there would be fewer students at the MIC during these times. In contrast, after the summer holidays the number of students increases, and numbers are higher than the months immediately preceding the summer holidays when many students don’t attend the Qur’an School mainly because of British school exams. Therefore, this meant that the autumn term was the ideal time to conduct the research.

According to the research aims, this study will not focus on a specific ethnic group, age or gender. Instead, the main criteria for participation were that an individual is a Sunni Muslim and secondly that she or he has a link with the MIC, either its Qur’an School,

Lawler mentions that when interviewees are given sufficient space during interviews, it is likely that they will produce narratives if asked about their lives. ‘And these narratives may be fragmentary and partial but can nevertheless tell us a great deal about the person and the social world she or he inhabits, the question is less what happened than what is the significance of this event’ LAWLER, S. 2002. Narrative in Social Research In: MAY, T. (ed.) Qualitative Research in Action. London: Sage Publications. 243).
Friday Prayers, or *Dawa* Preaching Department. However, the sample from the Qur’an School only focused on female students and female teachers because many times I approached male students and their teachers but did not receive a response. Therefore, I focussed on female attendees and staff at the MIC. It is worth mentioning that the school has the same policy for both genders, thus focussing on women will not have a negative effect on my analysis. That is why mostly all the Friday Prayer attendees were male in order to balance the interview sampling. Generally, the interviews were conducted with people from different age groups, ethnic backgrounds, social classes and with varying levels of education and result in a wide range of responses. However, the interviews have been held at two different times; in the main period of the fieldwork I interviewed nineteen participants over the period of time November 2008 to January 2009, as shown in Table 6.

**Table (6) Participants in the First Period of Fieldwork**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head teacher of MIC Qur’an School</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers of Students in MIC Qur’an School</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in MIC Qur’an School</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**b) Recruiting Interviewees**

These interviewees were contacted through a variety of means. Initially, I contacted the Head teacher of the Qur’an School in the MIC with an official letter signed by both my supervisors explaining the research and its aims. After I received permission from the MIC trustees, I delivered the same message to the parents of the students at the MIC Qur’an

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23 This department works on encouraging non-Muslims to attend the mosque.
I spoke with the parents as I had the first time during the fieldwork. Additionally, I spoke directly with mothers with whom I am friends, as I knew already that they had a high level of education, like a university degree. In both periods of the research the participants were...
middle class Muslims, however in the second phase of research the participants had a rather higher educational level\textsuperscript{24}.

This multi-pronged approach to recruitment proved to be a productive way of contacting interviewees and, as a result, I ended up in the second period of fieldwork with twenty four interviews, as shown in Table 7:

\textit{Table (7) Participants in the Second Period of Fieldwork}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trustee of MIC</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Victoria Mosque\textsuperscript{25}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(2) MIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIC Manager</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIC Ex-Imam</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{Dawa} Department in MIC\textsuperscript{26}</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday Prayers in MIC</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers in MIC Qur’an School</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother of the students in MIC Qur’an School</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) Why the Mothers

There were a number of important factors for choosing to talk with mothers in this research. Religious identity is one aspect of identity for many minorities. Passing on religious identity is a complex matter since the family environment and socialisation in the home

\textsuperscript{24} See appendix 8
\textsuperscript{25} To investigate some information I have received from the MIC trustees about the first mosque in Manchester.
\textsuperscript{26} To know more about the MIC and its different activities.
country play central roles in preserving and transferring Islamic identity to new generations, as was discussed in Chapter Three.

Mothers have a particular relationship with the processes of identification (Byrne, 2006: 28). Muslim mothers are conscious that Islam is just one identity among others that are more important to them. Thus, motherhood offers an avenue into discussions of the ambivalent processes of identity construction and performativity. Furthermore, mothers are usually involved in identity work with their children. They provide the material and introduce practices that shape their children’s identity (Byrne, 2006: 28). It is clear from an early age that children seek to be like the significant others in their lives (Erikson, 1994: 220) especially their mothers, because children usually spend more time with their mothers. Children start to copy the performance of prayers or start reading the holy book. And that identification often provides the first potential, religious identity element in various domains of identity concern (Schwartz et al., 2011: 369 - 370). Families seeks to encourage this type of act.

Muslim children in the UK grow up in a society that is different from their parents’ childhood society or that of their grandparents. Talking to the parents who came from an Islamic country and who are aware that their children live a very different experience to them was particularly valuable because it offered an opportunity to compare the mothers’ experience towards their religious identity in a Muslim society with their children’s religious identity in a non-Muslim society.

4.5 Interview Process

The structure of the interview was not the same for all interviewees/participants because the study selected different kinds of participants, as shown in Tables 2 and 3. For example the mothers’ interview was different from the trustees, and these two were different from
the students or the attendants of the Friday Prayers (see Appendix 3, 4, 5 and 6). However, the main focus for all of the interviews was to explore the following issue:

- Muslims’ responses to the signs of their identity (mainly religious identity) in a non-Muslim country;
- The challenges they faced in terms of their religious identity;
- For minorities the priority given to the religious identity over their ethnicity and their language;
- The role of the mosque in keeping Islamic identity and transferring it to subsequent generations
- The potential privileges of the MIC Qur’an School compared with other Qur’an schools in Manchester.

Most of the interviews lasted between one hour and two hours, (averaging about one and a half hours) and were audio-recorded, with consent, for both recording and transcription.

Interviews were conducted in different places:

- Participants’ offices: These interviews took on a very formal quality and did not result in a rich discussion because participants’ time was limited (Trustees and the MIC’s Manager);
- In the MIC: the interview was conducted in a small room in the MIC. Access to this room was facilitated by the Head teacher of the Qur’an School. This room was mainly used to interview students and some mothers who are students in the same Qur’an School as they found difficulties with transportation, or who did not have
free time during weekdays because of studies\textsuperscript{27}. These interviews also had a formal “feel”, however that did not affect the quality of the data and its analyses overall. A few interviews took place in my home and the majority in interviewees’ homes. And that did not have any consequences for data quality.

Children sometimes were in the same home but the interviews were conducted when they were not in the same place (living room, kitchen, garden) or were occupied (eating, playing or watching TV). All the interviews were relatively relaxed and friendly affairs (Byrne, 2006: 33). I showed an interest in hearing their own narratives during the interviews and sometimes I shared my own experiences with them but they were still the main speakers in the interview. Many participants appeared to enjoy the conversations and some said it raised many issues that they had not thought about before. For example, the MIC’s manager showed a great interest and wanted to know all about the research and asked to read the results when the research was done. During the interview (or following it, via personal communication) he stated:

"Your research is really good and valuable, and you have even raised many important issues that we have to think about it in this centre, let’s discuss the research findings when you finish your PhD Insha’Allah if God wishes."

(Interview with MIC’s manager\textsuperscript{28})

Informal conversations about the research and the ideas behind it came with a cup of tea or coffee when the interviews took place in my home or at the participant’s home. The conversations revealed that none of the interviewees had participated in interviews before. Moreover, this confirmed my understanding that it that this is the first study of its kind in this Islamic Centre. Quite often the interviewees were eager to ask about my background and my experience as a Muslim mother in a non-Muslim country. For example, most of the

\textsuperscript{27} This was only in the first period of the research fieldwork.

\textsuperscript{28} A Professor of Mechanical Engineering, he has published books about Islam.
mothers asked me, off the record several questions, which were, in many cases, similar to these:

Where did you learn the Qur’an?
Do you read the Qur’an in the Arabic language?
When did you start to teach your son Arabic and the Qur’an?
How many hours do you spend with him every day, teaching him the Qur’an?
Does your son go to the MIC Qur’an School and which Arabic school?

I tried to answer all their questions in an open way without rushing or summarising. In some cases, I shared my own story with them even if it related to my religious identity as a Muslim woman living in a non-Muslim society, or if it related to my child’s religious identity. These conversations often ended with participants seeking advice. For example:

Mother number 9: Do you think Harris will be able to memorize the whole Qur’an?
GS: Yes, he can, he has a good memory Mash’Allah God protects him.

Mother number 9: How long it will take, 10 years to finish it all?
GS: This depends on how many hours he spends every day in memorising the Qur’an and how often he revises what he has memorised already.

Mother number 9: Shall I teach him the Arabic language to make him understand the Qur’an properly?
GS: Of course, it is good to learn Arabic, but learning any new language needs effort and time. As the Qur’an’s language is an old language, I sometimes have to search for the meaning of some words when my child asks me, that is why even I have the Tafsir App – the Qur’an’s meaning/interpretation, on my phone. I think anyone needs more than an advanced level to understand the language of the Qur’an.

(Interview with Mother Number 9)

Such discussions yielded important and new ideas and data, and some important stories were told off the record29. When the interviews finished and after turning the recorder off some interviewees took a deep breath, and they said Alhamdo’llillah30 Thanks be to God, which suggests that they found the interviews to be stressful. One of the mothers who is

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29 One about racism in the UK, and the other identifying Islamic identity.
30 Arabic words used by all Muslims to thanks God.
studying in the MIC Qur’an School with two of her daughters said to her colleagues at the Qur’an School class after she had finished her interview in the mosque’s room:

Really I was shaking, I wanted the interview to finish quickly, it was something very similar to what you see on the TV.

(off the record Mother Number 5)

Mostly, the informal conversations that took place after the interviews provided important narratives off the record. I draw on these narratives only if it is required for the analysis chapters, and I clearly mention that they were provided off the record. For example, the same mother number 5 mentioned her painful story about 9/11 off the record when she said:

My life changed after 9/11 being a Muslim in this country. This injury on my face was done by a black person after 9/11, when I was walking in the street alone. Do you know that until now, I do not know how he injured me, whether he did it with his ring or with a small knife in his hand. The police arrested him and the court made a judgment for him to spend five years in prison. I spent time in the hospital.

(off the record Mother Number 5)

In other cases, the conversation ends up with an emotional moment and the participants’ in tears, like mother number 8 who cried, regretted her life before turning to Islam. Off the record, she told her story about finding her religion because of one of her female Christian friends, whom she described as a deeply religious person. She finished her story by apologising for the emotional outbursts. She says:

I was in the USA at that time and my next-door neighbour came one day to me and asked: ‘Tell me about the Prophet Muhammad.’ So I said: ‘Who is that?’ Surprisingly she said: ‘Your Prophet, I have a book about him, if you like I will give it to you and you can read it.’ Mother 8 said: ‘I started to read it and I could not put it down, I cried a lot. I finished it in three days. That was the first thing that changed me. Then I started my research in order to know more about my religion, my deen.

Before that I did not have any idea about Islam and its educational value as a religion, I do know I am Muslim now and that is the main thing.

(Interview with Mother Number 8)

31 Arabic word means religion.
Taking notes after each interview helped me because I wrote up all these stories in order to use them, when required. Dependence on memory is not sufficient when considering the number of interviews and the volume of data.

As the study is the first of its kind on the MIC and it is intimated that Muslims might be more alert to the role of the mosque in constructing and preserving religious identity in a non-Muslim society than in the Muslim societies. This suggests that the interview could be an “empowering” experience, offering opportunities to help the Muslim community, and to promote the validity of the mosque’s role and its Qur’an School.

4.6 Interview Problems

The interview process faced various difficulties, such as language. The questions were designed in a single form, using plain English (Kvale, 1996: 131) because the MIC is a multi-lingual mosque. Using the English language was preferred in order to avoid complications that could have arisen if Arabic had been used. I had noticed that not all of the Arab students were fluent enough in Arabic, especially academic Arabic, particularly those students I had observed during my teaching experience. On the other hand, it is difficult using the informal Arabic language as there are many different accents and dialectics. For example, the Libyan dialect is different from the Syrian or Algerian dialect. Additionally, interviews were conducted with students and their mothers who were not native Arabic speakers or even not of Arabic origin. For example: the British, Somali, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or European students, so using the English language avoided these language barriers and helped to establish a rapport for both sides. For Friday prayer members, teachers, trustees and the manager I used the same strategy of using English, in spite of the fact that both of us were native Arabic speakers. Using English saved time and extra work, since the translation from Arabic into English would have required extra time.
Despite this, the sample includes participants who could not speak English fluently, including Arabs, Somalis, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Mother number 4 expresses her feelings towards using the English language for the interview questions:

It is an academic language; different from what we are learning at college now.

GS: Do not worry, I am not going to test your English language level; I want to hear your story as a Muslim living in this country.

(Interview with Mother Number 4)

Therefore, they asked if they could get help. Help was provided in two instances: first if the mother spoke Arabic I assisted as an interpreter. I translated the interview questions into Arabic and asked the mother if she could respond in English, no matter how basic. The second case involved the mothers who were not proficient in Arabic or English. In this instance, their daughters provided the translation. Daughters can be regarded as native English speakers since they have been studying at British schools for a long time and they may have been born in this country. They are also learning their mother-tongue language at home. Thus either the student translated the questions from English to Brava and the mother answered in English, or the student translated both questions and answers. In this case, we can regard the students as bilingual/multilingual. This was only for two or three interviews. Not being a native English speaker myself meant that my English was simple, easy, and clear to understand and I would endeavour not to speak too fast. In addition to the above, there was only one interview conducted in the Arabic Language and this was with the Head teacher of the Qur’an School.

It is worth noting that a few of the interviewees refused to answer some questions, which were related to Islam and its relation with terrorism. Mother number 5 refused to answer one of the interview questions about racism towards Muslims:

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32 MIC has an open door for minority ethnic communities.
33 Mothers often use their children as translators at the airport or police station.
I am sorry I cannot answer this question. I cannot speak about this issue. We are not allowed to speak about it.

(Interview with Mother Number 5)

In addition to this, the Qur’an School’s students showed respect in their interview towards me, as a teacher in the same school and in some cases I was their own teacher. Sometimes potential interviewees were worried and suspicions about the research; the trustees were concerned about the research, what its aims were, why the MIC had been chosen and how the data would be used and interpreted. Thus, it took a long time to arrange their interviews and to win their trust. Often, their trust was secured via a third party.

Generally, there was a level of anxiety amongst all the participants about how I was going to use their thoughts and opinions. They expressed concerns about being named and repeatedly asked me to confirm their anonymity.

Could you please not mention our names

(of the record Member of Dawa Department)

4.7 Analysing Data

Different qualitative methods can produce different kinds of data (Silverman, 2006: 57 - 8). The differences in the kind of data yielded presented little impediment to practical analysis. At times, these data pointed in similar directions and at other times they usefully picked up different dimensions (Simpson, 2011: 77) such as paying more attention to the Islamic institutions and developing its role in solving social problems. And the influence of the British schools on Muslim generations. Then the importance of the Qur’an school in constructing religious identity.

Most interviews were transcribed using the software “Express Scribe”. Therefore, contextualised transcripts of significant parts of interviews, which explain how the subject
will be portrayed, can serve as a basis for feedback and respondent validation, which helps
minimise power asymmetries relating to “representation, authority and voice” (Appel-
Silbaugh, 2007: 34). Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software is a relatively
recent addition. Using such software saves time, makes procedures more systematic,
reinforces completeness and permits flexibility with the revision of analysis processes.
Although software programmes do not analyse data, they can be a tremendous aid in data
management and in the analysis process (Dicicco-Bloom and Carbtree, 2006: 316).
Therefore, to organise research data and to analyse it, a computer assisted data analysis
software was used. NVivo9 was used in a “light touch” way rather than for more directive
“theory building”, that could risk sacrificing insights from intuition or “feel” for the data. I
wanted the analysis to be driven by theory rather than technique (Simpson, 2011: 77). The
software was used to organise stories into meaningful categories and identify themes. The
coding frame was developed inductively through engagement with narratives involving
several “passes” through the “data” and made use of “nodes” - codes designated by the
researcher (Simpson, 2011: 78). Narrative episodes were multiple coded sometimes, which
allowed interrogation of stories from various thematic angles and these re-readings were
used to identify recurring, idiographic and contradictory stories (Alvesson and Skoldberg,
2001: 87 - 95). However, the process of interpreting and analysing interviews is
necessarily subjective. As Parker and Burman argue ‘To offer a reading of a text is, in
some manner or other, to reproduce or transform it’ (Byrne, 2006: 38).

4.8 Politics

Many sorts of social factors affect the relationship between interviewee and interviewer,
such as social class, ethnicity, gender, age, language, and sexuality (May, 1999: 115,
Simpson, 2011: 80). Moreover, sharing the same religion can be helpful to establish
rapport between interviewee and interviewer, and for getting access to different levels of interviewees’ narratives. Prior to the encounter, it is difficult to predict which characteristics will be most important to the dynamics of the interview. For example, in the case of the current study, sharing the same religious identity was a key factor in the interview for both genders, and being of the same gender with the female participants and especially mothers was really helpful when we discussed some sensitive issues of social problems like teenager pregnancy and same sex relationships. This was discussed openly opposite male participants. Mainly during the second stage of collecting data, having a shared cultural background with some Arab interviewees and similar levels of education resulted in richer interview data because


I am aware of both advantages and disadvantages of being a Muslim researcher and being a native Arabic speaker, as well as a teacher in the school where the research was conducted. In general I think there are more advantages being an insider than an outsider. “Native” researchers have the benefit of being able to disentangle meanings and patterns much faster than those who are unfamiliar with a particular culture. ‘It is the role of the researcher to evaluate the distinctive advantages and limitations of each perspective in relation to the problem of research at hand’ (Kikumura, 1986: 3). As a native researcher, I am familiar with the mosque and its role in the Muslim community. I can understand what the Qur’an means for a Muslim family, why they want their children to learn it and to read it in the original Arabic language more than in English or their own language. I know how it is important for the Muslim family to make their child memorise all of it or some of it from an early age. Moreover, I am a mother who has spent her childhood in an Islamic country which is different from my children’s childhood. Therefore, I have experience of the concerns of some of the mothers I interviewed who had also been living in an Islamic
country before migrating to a non-Muslim society. Moreover, being a native researcher makes me able to use and to understand Islamic terminology used during the informal parts of the interview process. For example; *Mash’Allah, Alhamdo’lillah* and *Insha’Allah*. This made the conversation more relaxed for the participants. The main limitations and restrictions during interviews occurred whilst discussing the role of the mosque in relation to various social problems that have emerged as being particularly significant for Muslim minorities in a non-Muslim society, such as family honour, teenage pregnancy among Muslim girls and young women, and same sex relationships amongst Muslim men. The latter emerged as an area of concern for the male participants, for example: the MIC’s Ex-Imam, trustees and Friday Prayer members.

Simply put, the ethical and political concerns of the study, in particular how people are viewed and treated within the dynamic power relations inherent to the research process, including how they are written about. This puts the research process into a position whereby it must face issues of reflexivity in respect of what claims it makes and about the participants’ knowledge and the researcher’s transformation of these into different ways of knowing (Simpson, 2011: 80). The chapter now turns to a consideration of the power relations in the present study.

### 4.9 Reflexivity

The politics of research involves power relations, which basically concerns how the researcher’s and participants’ ways of knowing their social experiences are structured. Interviewees discursively draw on well-established narratives but the meanings and functions of such narratives have to be unpacked. Whilst participants’ narratives have been analysed for content, I have also looked at how they are constructed (Simpson, 2011: 80). Participants can challenge the researcher’s perceptions and ‘It is mistaken to imagine
subjects as in the grip of “common sense” understandings’ (Simpson 2011: 80). It is also the case that academics are not immune to the first order constructs and the discursive and structural conditions that affect the people they study (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 4-69 - 70, Simpson, 2011: 80). However, learning is a two-way street and research participants can influence the direction of the research. I learnt many things from the participants’ narratives. By ‘Learning about the other we learn about the self, as we treat the other as a human being, we can no longer remain objective, faceless interviewers, but become human beings and must disclose ourselves, learning about ourselves as we try to learn about the other’ (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002: 47)


In practice, power relations with those interviewed are contextual (Lee, 1993: 110). As they were achieved interactionally between both sides of the interview in particular discursive conditions shaped by their experience (Gubrium and Holstein, 2009: 95). The interviewees largely complied with the discussion. However, I have tried to paraphrase the interviewee’s point in order to draw out the informant’s meaning or if the interviewee did not agree with the premise of a question. Indeed, such encounters required me to examine and reframe the questions asked (Simpson, 2011: 83).

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has given details of the research design that has informed this small-scale, qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews, the results of which are discussed in the empirical chapters. The overall research questions were designed to produce stories relating to everyday practices that illuminate how Muslims preserve their religious identity in a non-Muslim society like Manchester. The research explores how the mosque works to construct this identity through generations. The theoretically informed sampling strategy
defines who counts as participants. Practical analysis of narratives has involved a simple coding frame developed using computer software that was designed to develop research themes for further interrogation. The management of power relations between researcher and participants has involved dialogue between different ways of knowing (Simpson, 2011: 83).

Having explained the method, I now turn to examine the MIC and its history as one of the central Sunni mosques in Manchester, as a tool to understand this religious institution and its position among Muslim minorities.
Chapter Five
Establishing Religious Institutions:
Muslim Institutions (Mosques) in Britain

5.1 Introduction

Establishing minority institutions addresses the welfare, cultural and religious needs of minority ethnic communities. They were introduced during a period when the population of minority ethnic communities started to expand as a result of family reunion and the growth of the new generation (Küçükcan, 2004:19-20). The arrival of these communities brought different social customs and cultural characteristics to Britain principally their own languages and religions. Minorities, moreover, built their own religious organizations such as mosques, temples, synagogues and gurdwaras. Appadurai demonstrates how imagination and nostalgia provide new avenues for creating alternatives to the modern nation-state (Appadurai, 1998: 1073).

In Britain the term “Muslim British” or “British Muslim” has been coined to indicate the dual focus of identities among immigrant Muslims (Brown, 2008: 474). However, this identity is contingent and self-conscious, and does not necessarily coincide with increased piety among Muslim minorities (Lewis, 1994: 176–178). Despite the absence of a simple correlation between piety and increased assertion of “Islamic” identities, the construction of these identities is symbolised and played out in mosques (Brown, 2008: 474). This chapter and the following one will show in detail how mosques have played a large part in Muslims’ social, (McLoughlin, 2005: 1049) religious and cultural life.

The overall aim of this chapter is to show the role of religious institutions in constructing, protecting and reproducing the religious identity of Muslim minorities in a non-Muslim
society. For that reason, this part of the research shows a detailed case study of the Manchester Islamic Centre (MIC) that is known among Muslim minorities in Manchester as the Didsbury Mosque. The chapter provides general background information about the MIC, as one of the Sunni religious institutions in Manchester. Thus the discussion is introduced by way of an overview of the legislation covering the building of mosques in Britain and mosque numbers. Then I will deliberate about the history of mosques in Britain and their establishment in a non-Muslim society. I will begin by describing the history of the first mosque in Britain, and then the first mosque in Manchester. I will then concentrate on the MIC as the second Sunni mosque in Manchester by presenting the changing usage of the building. Then the chapter will analyse in more detail the influence of the MIC as one of the active Sunni religious institutions in Manchester in terms of its function in contemporary British society. After presenting general information about the MIC the chapter discusses the main sects and ethnicities of the MIC and the Qur’an School of the MIC because the present research focuses on this school. The chapter ends by looking at the mosque’s finances and its Qur’an School’s finances to understand the main sources of income for such religious institutions. These empirical illustrations help us to understand the role of mosques in providing Muslims with the tools to help them as a minority community to keep their religious identity in a non-Muslim society.

5.2. Legislation and Numbers

In the British context some migrant Muslims felt that keeping hold of their religion in their new environment, hence the survival of their religious identity was a priority for them. Therefore they established a simple place to pray, and then little by little a legal framework was established (Ramadan, 2005: 26) to set up their places of worship in a non-Muslim society like Britain. Although the establishment of mosques is regarded as indicative of a
growing Muslim population in an area, increasing their organizational and their financial capacity and power, it also reflects an emergent sense of “belonging” with an anticipation of long-term residency (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a: 181). Sophie Gilliat-Ray emphasises: ‘The wish to register a mosque with local authorities is of further practical and symbolic significance since it indicates a desire for “official” recognition of Muslim presence and identity’ (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a: 181). Mosques are subject to several key pieces of legislation: the Places of Worship Registration Act 1855, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and the Charities Act 1993. Muslims who wish to establish a mosque must normally apply for planning permission from local authorities, which can be accepted, rejected and have proposed amendments added to the application. Although there is no legal requirement to register the premises under the Places of Worship Registration Act 1855 there are advantages in doing so, most notably in terms of exemption from local chargeable rates and taxes, and exemption from separate or additional registration under the Charities Act. As of December 2001, 635 buildings were certified for Muslim worship in England and Wales under the 1855 Act, although at the time there will have been other additional mosques only registered under the Charities Act 1993 (Gilliat and Birt, 2010: 136).

Generally, building or establishing mosques in Britain represents a major investment by Islamic communities and reflects increases in their population. Britain has no applicable legal framework for establishing religious communities (Nielsen, 1995: 43). Therefore, building a new mosque demands planning permission from local authorities. However, applications to set up mosques sometimes meets with opposition. Eade (see in McLoughlin, 1998) shows that ‘objections to the construction of Muslim buildings are routinely represented in terms of the nuisance of extra noise and traffic. However, he also demonstrates that when issues of “heritage” are at stake Muslim buildings are routinely placed outside hegemonic representations of what does, and does not, constitute
“Britishness”. For example, in the accounts of some London residents at least, Eade (1996) reports that church bells are included in, and azan (the call to prayer) is excluded from, the canon of what can be regarded as “English culture” (214).

Although Britain is not a Muslim society, the public sphere is very open to the spreading of prayer halls and to the construction of mosques, including high visibility projects on some occasions. For example, there are a few mosques have been constructed in Longsight; there is one called *Makki Masjid* and others behind Stockport Road. There is one in Cheetham Hill called *Masjid Khizr* and one in Old Trafford called *Masjid Noor*. McLoughlin (2005) in his study about the Bradford York Road Mosque cites Nielsen’s observation, ‘Britain has no generally applicable legal framework for religious communities’ (see in Nielsen, 1995: 43). Therefore, whereas both Anglicans and Presbyterians have established status in England and Scotland correspondingly, the majority of mosques in Britain usually function under the provisions of the law that legalizes charitable organisations (McLoughlin, 2005: 1047). The Manchester Islamic Centre, the place of the current case study is a British charity organisation registered under charity number 327235. Trustee Number 2 declares that:

> We are registered as a charitable organisation and therefore we have responsibility towards the regulations and the laws of the charity commission in Britain.

(I Interview with trustee number 2)

Although, in Britain there is no requirement under British law for mosques to register with the Charity Commission, most mosques have done so, because of material benefits like company tax exemption and reduced local property taxation. The state demands only that planning permission for all proposed mosques is forthcoming from local authorities (McLoughlin, 2005: 1047).
McLoughlin (2005) declares that, during the 1950s and 1960s there were thirteen mosques listed with the Registrar General (see Nielsen 1995: 44). The number of mosques in Britain today is estimated to be more than one thousand. However, establishing the precise number is a complex matter, because not all of them are registered as a place of worship with local authorities (Gilliat and Birt, 2010: 138). Gilliat-Ray and Birt assert that perhaps the most recent comprehensive quantitative study of mosques in Britain has been undertaken by the British Charity Commission (Coleman, 2009: 5). However, there is contradictory information concerning the exact number of British Muslim mosques in Britain. Nonetheless, the Charity Commission indicates only 331 registered charities that have been identified as mosques (Coleman 2009: 5). Clearly, defining a mosque, and establishing what counts as a mosque is complex, and it is probable that informal places of prayer in many maritime ports and major commercial cities (such as London or Manchester) were established prior to 1891 (Gilliat-Ray 2010: 189). One of the difficulties that researchers in this field face is the absence of a definitive list of mosques in Britain and their classification as Sunni or Shi’a, and which sect they follow under each of these categories.

Andrew Rudd, Public Affairs Manager in the Charity Commission states in his email to me when I asked him about mosques in Britain:

I am by no means an expert on this topic, but other academics who have contacted me have suggested that there is very little existing research on mosques in England and Wales - so the secondary literature might be quite small.

(Andrew Rudd by email 2011)

In Britain many mosques have been purpose-built, especially where large ethnic communities reside. Generally, there are 116 mosques in Birmingham, of which 10 are purpose-built, for a total of 140,033 Muslims; 44 in Bradford, of which six are purpose-built, for the city’s 75,188 Muslims; 31 in Manchester, of which five are purpose-built, for 125,219 Muslims; 25 in Leicester, of which five (20 per cent) are purpose-built, for 30,885
Muslims; and ten in Cardiff, two purpose-built (also 20 per cent), for the city’s 11,000 Muslims (Gilliat and Birt, 2010: 139, Allievi, 2009: 29). See table (8):

Table (8) Purpose-built Mosques in Britain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Muslims in 2001</th>
<th>Total Mosques</th>
<th>Purpose-built</th>
<th>Percentage Purpose-built</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>140,033</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>75,188</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td>11,261</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>30,885</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>125,219</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Gilliat and Birt, 2010: 139)

The precise number of Britain’s mosques is unknown, the estimates of them vary between 1,500 to 3,000 (Brown, 2008: 474). This number of mosques is significant when we take into account that 2.4 million Muslims have over 1,500 mosques in Britain. This makes any claims about mosques and their influence subject to scrutiny. Nevertheless, the dynamics and the role of mosques in Britain have undergone a number of transformations (MCB, 2006: 1-7). From the 1950s through to the early 1970s, mosques simply accommodated the religious needs like praying of migrant labourers (see in Chapter 6.2). It is argued that following the abandonment of the “myth of return” and reunification of families (Brown, 2008: 474), mosques have been transformed into sites of socialisation, providing cohesion and continuity for younger generations (Wardak, 2002: 208) (see in Chapter 6.3 and 6.4).

Brown (2008) states that establishing mosques in the host society shows how Muslim

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34 The number of mosques in different European countries. It is very clear that the number of the UK’s mosques is twice the European average, with almost one mosque for every 1,000 Muslims ALLIEVI, S. 2009. Conflicts over Mosques in Europe Policy Issues and Trends NEF Initiative on Religion and Democracy in Europe, Alliance Publishing Trust. (ibid).
communities move away from marginalisation—from “prayer rugs to minarets” (Brown 2008: 474). Mosques are not simple rooms in the corner of a working place; they are developed to be purpose-built mosques with specific building permission.

However the mosques that have sprung up are not only places of worship for Muslim minorities in a non-Muslim society. One can also frequently find Muslim prayer rooms and other religious facilities in a wide range of places. For example: in airports, shopping centres, meeting places of various kinds (notably the Millennium Dome in Greenwich, now the O2), football stadiums (the first was Ewood Park, the home of Blackburn Rovers), and even motorway service stations (the first was on the M6) (Allievi, 2009: 29, Gilliat and Birt, 2010: 139). The growth of prayer rooms reflects the strength of multiculturalism of British society35 (see in Chapter 6.4).

Within the category of mosque, a number of differences are discernible. The main element is that an “Islamic Centre” means a centre of significant size. Which has, in addition to the function of prayer and worship (see in Chapter 6.2), a number of social and cultural (see in Chapter 6.3) functions through various forms of teaching like Qur’an schools (see in Chapter 8) and other educational courses or conferences; meeting opportunities for adults, women and converts; and cultural activities usually organized in separate rooms from the prayer hall itself. Moreover, such centres also carry out the activities of institutional and symbolic representations of Muslims (Allievi, 2009: 17-18). I will illustrate these later in more depth in relation to the current case study of the Manchester Islamic Centre (MIC). In major cities, there might be more than one Islamic centre or it could be that there are none

35 In terms of the visibility and institutionalization of Islam, including the issue of places of worship, the United Kingdom may be the most advanced nation in Europe (ibid).

However, a further study can be done to discover if these small rooms are only used by Muslims or not, as the interview with the Friday prayer number 4 asserts, other religious minorities can use them: “It says multi-faith room, but really which religion uses it five times a day. You rarely see a Christian sitting there or a Jew or a Hindu, perhaps they pray somewhere else”.

100
at all. For example, in Manchester there are two Islamic centres: the Manchester Islamic Centre (MIC) in the Didsbury area, and the Central Mosque known as the Victoria Mosque\textsuperscript{36} in Longsight.

The existence of a strong spatial concentration of Muslims in the host society has attracted the attention of urban geographers and social scientists (sociologists and anthropologists) who are more frequently involved in these types of study (Allievi, 2009: 29). Therefore, knowing how Muslims established their own religious institutions in Britain as a non-Muslim society is quite a controversial topic. The long and complex historical process of establishing mosques has prevented the research from going into much detail, since it will be far from linear. The discussion will only be an attempt to summarize the key stages in this process in Britain generally, to highlight current trends using the Manchester Islamic Centre as a case study for the current research project.

5.3 The History of Establishing Mosques in Britain

Muslims in Britain have dedicated more resources and energy to the creation of mosques than perhaps any other type of institution in order to bring them together as minorities. Research shows that the most significant period of mosque establishment in Britain occurred from the 1950s onwards (Gilliat and Birt 2010: 140). The various stages of mosque construction, in fact, reflect the growth, evolution, fortunes, and aspirations of Muslims in Britain. The first mosques established in the 1950s and 1960s were not purpose-built mosques, they were nearly always what can be called “house mosques” (Gilliat and Birt, 2010: 140). Most of the Muslims’ religious institutions were prayer rooms during this time period (Castles and Davidson, 2000: 134). In other cases some

\textsuperscript{36} In Greater Manchester there is a central mosque for each area itself like the CMA in Cheadle, and the AMA, Altrincham Muslim Association in Altrincham.
mosques were semi-detached houses (Ansari, 2004: 342) like the case of the Victoria Mosque in Manchester before Muslims re-built the current building.

Mosques at that time were converted houses, churches or pubs. Later on as you know, the number of Muslims increased, thus they established more mosques.

(Interview with MIC Manager)

Sometimes mosques were converted from churches, synagogues, cinemas, factories, or warehouses (Gilliat-Ray, 2010b: 189, Gilliat and Birt, 2010: 142). The process of building mosques in Britain generally reflects the character, history, and evolution of British Muslim communities. Therefore, going back to the history of these old mosques shows that early mosques, particularly those established in the nineteenth century, were established by Muslim traders (often associated with the shipping industry, as will be discuss later) (Gilliat and Birt 2010: 140).

When the first mosque was built would require extensive study which is beyond the scope of my research of the creation of the first mosque in each city. This is not going to be done at this stage of the research because of time and funds. But I am going to provide examples of establishing the first mosques in Cardiff, Bradford and Manchester. These cities have a high number of Muslims and a long history of settlement.

There is much dispute about where the first mosque in Britain was founded. Some authors argue it was Cardiff, others argue it was Liverpool. I will briefly summarise the main history of both mosques. Sophie Gilliat-Ray investigated the research into the “first mosque in Britain”. Its multiple repetition and embellishment satisfied a growing need to articulate ideas about the long life and legitimacy of Muslim settlement in Britain (see in Chapter 2). She discovered a transcription error that rests upon a straightforward human misunderstanding, which “created” what can be called the first recorded mosque in Britain. Analysing mosque registration data she revealed the origin of the factual inaccuracy.
However, a number of academic and non-academic sources cite the first registered mosque in Britain as having been established in Cardiff in 1860\(^37\) (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a: 180). In the light of Gilliat-Ray’s evidence; the claim is made for the Liverpool Mosque and Institute as the first mosque in England. Nevertheless, the activities of Abdullah Quilliam\(^38\) in Liverpool mark a particularly significant starting point in British Muslim institution building (Gilliat-Ray, 2010a: 189).

In addition to Sophie Gilliat-Ray’s study, Stephen Barton (1986) recalls the establishment of the first mosque in Bradford. In 1960 the first mosque was in a terraced house on Howard Street. It was used by both Pakistanis and Bengalis, by the major Sunni *Hanafi*

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\(^37\) Some of the earliest mosques in the UK were established in Cardiff (see in Ansari 2004; Nielsen 2004: 45–6), and there is a long and largely unknown history that warrants dissemination Gilliat-Ray, S. 2010a. The First Registered Mosque in the UK, Cardiff, 1860': the Evolution of a Myth. Cont Islam, 4, 179–193.

These are two examples: “Yemeni sailors settling in Cardiff’s Tiger Bay registered a house for use as a mosque as early as 1860”. “1860: Existence of a mosque at 2 Glyn Rhondda Street, Cardiff, recorded in the Register of Religious Sites (now maintained by the Office of National Statistics)” ibid.

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NIELSEN, J. S. 1995. *Muslims In Wester Europe* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press Ltd. There he was attracted to Islam and he soon converted. Then he came back to Liverpool and spread ideas about Islam. Abdullah Quilliam converts included his sons, prominent scientists and professionals. He claimed 150 adherents to Islam since he was an active writer and essayist and was appointed the Persian Consul in Liverpool by the Ottoman Shah. William H. Quilliam was called by the sultan Sheikh Al-Islam of the United Kingdom.Ibid., LEWIS, P. 1994. *Islamic Britain: religion, politics and identity among British Muslims*, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.11-12 (5). The Shah of Persia made him consul in Liverpool.NIELSEN, J. S. 1995. *Muslims In Wester Europe* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press Ltd.5). He published three editions of the Faith of Islam, which was subsequently translated into thirteen languages. He became famous throughout the Islamic world.

Sheikh Al-Islam, William H. Quilliam founded the Liverpool Mosque and the Muslim Institute. He organized regular prayers, festivals, weddings and funerals as well as boys’ dayschools, evening classes; a hostel, a library and printing press. (ibid, He edited The Islamic World which started in 1890. The Crescent, a weekly publication in which he wrote widely about Islam and Muslims. A number of tracts were also published. Quilliam established Madina House, which was a house for orphans in Liverpool. Generally, his works attracted both Muslim and non-Muslim. Siddiqui, A. 1995. *Muslims In Britain: Past And Present* [Online]. Hyderabad, India: Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies. [Accessed 24/08/2010. http://www.islamfortoday.com/britain.htm

His mother was a Methodist activist until 1893 when at the age of 63 she converted.
School of the Indian Sub-Continent. By 1969, a separate Bengali mosque had been established, and this was a “house mosque”. It was located within a predominately Bengali area of settlement on Cornwall Road. Muslim worshippers began to exert their own distinctive ethnic and linguistic identity, or theological preferences. This process is often contentious, as particular factions break away to establish a new congregation that conforms to their particular interpretation of Islamic practice. “House mosques” remain the prototypical mosque in Britain today (Gilliat and Birt, 2010: 141). Then later on terraced houses were converted into mosques in the late twentieth-century (McLoughlin, 2005: 3).

5.3.1 The First Mosque in Manchester

Following the discussion in Chapter Two, Manchester is a large multicultural city. Around 503,100 Muslims live in Manchester according to the first release of data of the 2011 Census, the majority of them are Punjabi Pakistanis. In Manchester there are 29 mosques, within walking distance of each other. Each mosque represents a stream, sect and nationality. However, the vast majority of Punjabi Pakistanis in Britain tend to identify with the Barelvi movement. They emphasise the love of the Prophet and his continued active existence and the veneration of his “friends”, saints or auliya (Werbner, 2004: 904). In this research, the word Sunni is going to be used instead of Barelvi; because this better reflects the congregation of the MIC. The current study only mentions the main two groups Sunni and Shia. Sunni means “one who follows the sunnah” (what the Prophet said, did, agreed to or condemned). Shi’a is a contraction of the phrase Shi’at Ali, meaning partisans of Ali (Brown, 2011: 9-10), in addition to there being practical differences between the two sects. However, it is not one of the chapter’s aims to develop the arguments about the categories and the differences of each sect; the research focuses mainly on the MIC that is classified as a Sunni mosque.
The first mosque in Manchester was the Central Mosque, which is known among Muslims as the Victoria Mosque because it is situated in the Victoria Park area. Werbner (2002) indicates that the Central Mosque was controlled by the management committee *Jamiṭ el Muslemin*. The current property initially was bought by Syrian traders and run by the Syrian community, (Werbner, 2002b: 37). In contrast Seddon (2012) argues that the first mosque was established in the late 1940s by a group of seventy Levantine Muslim businessmen and students from a number of countries including, Pakistan, Iraq, Egypt and India (84). Moreover, Halliday (1992) in his paper *The Millet of Manchester: Arab Merchants and Cotton Trades* states that few of the Syrians were Muslims compared to the larger numbers of Syrian Christians and Syrian Jews. He did not refer to the two central mosques as having been established by the Manchester Syrian Arab Muslim community (see in Seddon, 2012: 83) (see in Chapter 2.3).

The Pakistani trustee of the Victoria Mosque whom I interviewed explains how and why the Muslim community in Manchester decided to buy a mosque and who contributed to buying the first house of Allah. He says:

It is interesting to know that the Muslim students in Manchester who used to celebrate Eid at the Britannia Restaurant, opposite the BBC television building every year, had a meeting at Manchester University to discuss buying a property for the mosque. In 1948, a semi-detached house at 22 Upper Brook Road, Victoria Park, in Manchester was bought. The mosque was bought for £2,250 pounds. *Jamiatul Muslimeen* was already in existence and had £550 in its account. A sum of £1,000 was donated by Mr Ahmad Dawood the owner of Dawood Textile Pak. Mr M Hanif and Mr M Ismail, both from religious families contributed £750 and the rest, £500 was collected from the rest of the Muslim community. A sum of £550 was spent to make a room for prayers, a room for meeting and a room for sports. 50 Muslims celebrated the first Eid. Some friends from the Hindu and Sikh community in the mosque attended Eid celebrations, food was served. Indoor sports competitions were held every year.

(Interview with trustee number 3)

However, the Arab Syrian trustee of the Didsbury Mosque gave a different interpretation of about who bought the first mosque in Manchester. He declares:

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39 The trustee in the Victoria Mosque says, ‘The record shows the first trustees of the Jamiat el Muslimeen, are: Mr Nazir Aldin, Mr A M Hilli, Mr Jan Muhammad and Mr R Ukin el Din’.

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The first mosque in Manchester was a house-mosque in Victoria Park. It was also bought by some Syrian merchants, it was a semi-detached house. They opened it to the whole Muslim community irrespective of nationality. Then the Asian community came and bought the other semi-detached house and over the years the Asian community decided to build a proper mosque thus, they knocked the houses down and built the current building of Victoria Mosque now. From the mid-1950s until the early 1960s, Abdullah Qassas, a cotton merchant from a religious family in Damascus was the acting imam. He worked in the Didsbury Mosque later on. When each community grew bigger, the Syrians left their part for the Asian community and went to look for another space, then they found this church.

(Interview with trustee number 1)

Werbner (2002) in her book *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts and Offerings among British Pakistanis* says however: ‘A separate Pakistani mosque of grand proportions was set among terraced houses in the cheap area of Rusholme, built with funds raised mainly by prosperous Bengali restaurants, but as the West Pakistani community grew in number and spread into Victoria Park and West Longsight, its members came to dominate the Manchester Central Mosque … officially the Victoria Park Mosque remains the central mosque of the wider Muslim community in Manchester41, whose representatives sit on the mosque committee and have contributed towards the construction of a new mosque building. The bulk of the contributions, however, were raised by the West Pakistani community, and they are its effective proprietors’ (Werbner, 2002b: 35). The aged trustee of Victoria Park Mosque mentions how the Muslim community decided to rebuild the mosque again to be similar to mosques in Muslim countries. He said:

It was decided to build a new mosque in 1968 and to appoint an architect to give advice. When the collection was started, the next-door semi-detached house that belonged to the Syrian community was donated towards the new project in 1970.

(Interview with trustee number 3)

‘Changing migration patterns in the 1960s meant that the ethnographic composition of the mosque congregation became predominantly South Asian with the Pakistani migrants emerging as the numerically dominant sub-group’ (Seddon, 2012: 85) (see in Chapter 2.6.3 – 2.6.4). Alongside the ethnographic change, the conflict over ruling the Central Mosque

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40 Capital of Syria
41 It might be mostly for Pakistanis not for all Muslims minorities.
led as Werbner asserts (1998: 30) the Syrian merchants (see in Chapter 2.3) in 1962, to purchase a disused Methodist Church on Burton Road, East Didsbury. The Syrian imam Abdullah Qassas continued to function as the main imam in the newly established mosque until another Syrian Sheikh from Halab (Aleppo), Muhammad Saeed al-Badinjky, became the full-time imam in 1973 (Seddon, 2012: 86) for the Didsbury Mosque. Now the current imam is Libyan. Over the years, the congregation of the Burton Road Mosque has evolved from its original Syrian-Lebanese merchant class to a large contingent of political refugees mainly of Iraqi, Palestinian and North African origin (Seddon, 2012: 16).

A further feature of Islam in Britain is that it remains nationally and ethnically divided as the statistical and demographical data illustrates. Despite wishful talk of the emergence of a “British Islam” as the discussion will show later, today there has been a proliferation of many smaller mosques (Werbner, 2002b: 37). For example: Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Arab, Turkish, Ahmadia and Shi’a mosques which reproduce the inevitable dynamics of intra-Muslim conflict between the two main sects within the Islamic world the Sunni and Shi’a.

In addition to the dynamics of this conflict, the various ethnic, linguistic, religious and political groups as well as the specific characteristics of transnational Islamic movements, all affect the trend to establish independent mosques (Allievi, 2009: 52). In many respects, mosques generally represent the highest locus of value and communal involvement since they are the centre of religious debate and learning.

5. 4 Manchester Islamic Centre: Background

42 He passed away in 2013.
43 This claim needs more investigation by researchers who have interest in this field to know more about Muslim sects, their diversity; why they aimed to build their separated mosques, and what is their role in the community? And if they see themselves as being different from the rest of the Muslim community.
The importance of the Manchester Islamic Centre comes from being among the oldest Islamic centres in Britain and of its location in one of the busiest cities in the country where the population of the Muslim community from various origins is over 250,000. The building was originally called the Albert Park Methodist Chapel which was built early nineteenth century and opened for worship in 1883. In 1962 the church was closed and around 1967 it was bought by some donors from the Syrian Arab community (see in Chapter 2.2.1) and used as a mosque (MIC, 2012). MIC trustee number 2 explains how the Syrian merchants gathered to buy the church, to change it into a mosque to offer services for this Muslim minority.

The building of the MIC was actually a former church. It was going to be sold by auction and one of the Syrian merchants *Allah Yrhamoh (mercy upon him from Allah)* saw the advert and he spoke to the rest of the Syrian merchants here in Manchester. There were maybe about seven of them, they got together and they decide to buy it. … The building was on the market, then the Syrian merchant who had been in Britain for a long time decided to buy it and converted it into a mosque.

(Interview with trustee number 2)

Another trustee from the MIC gives the following details as to why the Syrian merchants bought it and tells the story of their bid.
They wanted to have it as a place of prayer and they wanted to have a meeting place beside that too. They were thinking about the new generation because they had come in their thirties and forties and by that time their children were growing up. They needed to bring them up as Muslims and they needed to be taught in a qur'anic school. There was an interesting story about this church. It was offered for sale and one of the bidders was Tesco. Their planning permission was to turn it into flats for rent. Then the Syrian community came along but their offer was less than Tesco’s. However, when the trustees of the church discovered that it was going to be a house of God they accepted less money and gave it to the Syrian community. It was less than £10,000 around 1967.

(Interview with trustee number 1)

Then the church was converted to be a place of worship for Muslims to accommodate their needs such as for a big prayer hall, and a separate hall for women with a separate entrance and separate ablution facilities *wudhu* as well. Each of these extracts gives information about changing the church’s structure to become a mosque.

Thank God that when the church was bought, the position of the building was pointing directly towards the *Qibla* so it was easier to convert into a mosque, all sets and crosses were removed, they did a lot of improvements to the building, and then they built the *mehrab*.

(Interview with trustee number 2)

The main shape and the structure of the building is still the same. It used to be two separate buildings, the bigger building is the main prayer hall now and the other building is the hall where women pray. Where the social activities hall and offices are now, on the second floor used to be in a separate building. There was a small street between them, but this road or this alley was closed and then it was used to join the two buildings together to gain more space. Of course, the *wudhu* area was made special and now it has been renewed again in a modern style. We aim to provide more facilities to satisfy community demand, hence we are planning the extension. The mosque opened to prayers almost immediately and then the people who used to come to pray started helping out as volunteers. Prof Salim, was one of them. He told me one day how he was digging and working with his hands, it was not only the workers who worked on it at that time.

(Interview with trustee number 1)

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44 *Wudhu* is a practice of washing which should be performed before doing prayers, Cleanliness is one of the requirements for Muslim prayers, therefore these facilities are normally provided in all mosques, for both genders.

45 He means that the church was already positioned towards the *Kaaba* in *Makkah (Mecca)*.

46 A place where the Imam stands and leads the congregational prayer.

47 See picture 2
Mehrab in the MIC

Prayer Hall in MIC for Men
The MIC now consists of two large buildings: the first one is used as a mosque and library, while the second is used as a prayer hall for women, a lecture and event room, classrooms, a kitchen, ablution area for men and another one for women (MIC, 2012). However, since the Muslim community is increasing in size, the MIC is experiencing shortages in terms of space and facilities. Therefore, it has been decided to extend the building in order to accommodate the increased.

After discussing the history of the current building, the next few paragraphs will shed more light on the issues of the committees and governors, sects and ethnicity of the attendees and finances, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the Manchester Islamic Centre. The establishment of a new mosque is usually a continuous phenomenon following ethnic and religious lines. Immigrants within new communities begin to establish their own ethnically specific places of worship, including in a few cases white English Muslim converts (ICoCo, 2008: 26)\(^{48}\). However, the establishment of a new mosque requires organisation, funding and a level of consolidated community support. All these factors will be discussed in more detail referring to the data revealed by this case study.

\(^{48}\) Community Cohesion and Local Government
5.5 MIC Affiliation, Ethnicity and Gender

Mosques have played a primary role in community development over the years. Mosques and religious leaders have historically been seen as a key influence, but there is a growing feeling among Muslim minorities that mosques are no longer able to maintain this leadership role. Many management committees are seen by the research participants to be stuck in the old and traditional approaches that are incompatible with the needs of the younger generation. Moreover, discussing the trustees’ role and applying a gender perspective to any British mosque is helpful for understanding the policy and strategy of the mosque. As this also helps us understand the role of mosques in transmitting religious identity. This issue has not received much interest by scholars. The MIC case aims to filling part of this gap. In light of this I will focus on the MIC community and their particular Islamic sect, who its participants are, who are in management positions and then explore the degree of harmony or conflict in such an institution.

5.5.1 Attendees’ Sect in MIC

Mosques in Britain supposedly serve all Muslims irrespective of their nationality or sectarian affiliation. Officially, mosques are open to the whole Muslim community. Although, it has become very common in recent years for some of them to be completely controlled by a specific ethnicity, or have been built to represent only one Islamic sect (Werbner, 2002a: 29) (see in Chapter 5.5 and 6.3). This part of the research focuses on the MIC and its community and attendees.

In Manchester during the 1980s some of the Sunni (Barelwi) followers focused around the religious cleric or maulvi of the Central Mosque who adopted the most radicalized public discourses (Werbner, 1996: 110). Indeed Muslims of various ethnicities and practices can
often be seen worshipping together in the same mosque *masjid*. However, we found Muslims were more often likely to worship in a *masjid* with others of similar ethnic backgrounds and cultural practices (see in Chapter 6.3). Accordingly, most *masjid* and likewise *madrassas* (schools) are established and administered along theological and most often correspond ethnic lines (ICoCo, 2008: 25). Maqsood for example, in her study argues that some British mosques are very sectarian. They have strong feelings and emotions towards one of the Islamic sects, for instance *Salafi*, *Sufi*, *Deobandi*, *Barelvi*, *Ahl-il-hadith* (Maqsood, 2005: 3). Moreover *Naqshbandi* also asserts that British mosques are often highly sectarian (Dyke, 2009: 30). While most of the first immigrant generation continue to cling to their distinctive ethnic identities and practices, Ebaugh and Chafez maintain that the ‘Second and subsequent generation-dominated religious institutions will likely be more pan-religious and/or more pan-ethnic in their practices, identities, and memberships’ (Duderija, 2007: 28). The MIC is less ethnic or post ethnic (see in Chapter 3) compared to other mosques in Manchester according to the data and research showing that participants have differing ethnicities. The Friday Prayer Leader, number 1 asserts in his interview that the MIC benefits from being multi-ethnic.

> The advantage is that it is more welcoming, it is more diverse than other mosques. You can see Pakistanis there, Somalis, Sudanese, Arabs, and many more.

(Interview with Friday Prayer Number 1)

Therefore, whilst the MIC is one of the central Sunni Muslim mosques in Manchester, it has an open door policy for other Islamic sects (see in Chapter 6.3 and 6.4). That could be regarded as one of its main advantages for the Muslim community as a whole (see in Chapter 3). As attendees are mostly Sunni, there are some Shi’a. The main speakers and leaders are however Sunni, and well known to the Sunni community.

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49 That could be one of the reasons that pushed the Syrians to buy the MIC.
The MIC’s audience comes from different backgrounds and ethnicities and some of them come from different sects like Shi’a. According to the Institute of Community Cohesion (2008) there are many Muslims who use a Sunni mosque for prayer whereas Shi’a and mainly Ismaili Muslims have a restricted entry policy at their place of worship (27). The head teacher of the MIC Qur’an School mentioned when he asked about who comes to the MIC, whether Sunnis or Shias. Replied:

The majority of the audience in the Manchester Islamic Centre are Sunni Muslims, only a small portion of them are Shi’a. Attendees of the Didsbury Mosque come from different backgrounds; Arabs like Libyans, Syrians, Palestinians, Iraqis and Egyptians, and many people are from Pakistan, Bengal and India. In addition to that the mosque’s door is open to everyone whether Sunni or Shi’a, Muslim or non-Muslim.

(Interview with the Head teacher of the MIC Qur’an School)

5.5.2 MIC Qur’an School Students’ Sect

By Islamic sect, over 80 per cent of Qur’an Schools serve Muslims from the Sunni denomination and 14 per cent serve children from the Shi’a denomination (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 28). These findings broadly reflect the overall diversity among British Muslims in the UK. It has been discussed before (see in Chapter 2) that the majority denomination in the MIC is Sunni and that applies to the Qur’an school as well.

As you know our mosque and our Qur’an School is open to everyone, and this school serves all Muslims regardless of their ethnicity or religious affiliation. We have mainly Sunni students as well as some Shi’a. In addition, in terms of ethnicity we really have a mix of Muslim students. We have Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somalia, Arab, and Kurdish. I think it represents Manchester’s diversity.

(Head Teacher, translated from Arabic)

The Qur’an school system has survived, in part, due to the efforts of pious Muslims hundreds of years ago and now the Qur’an School helps its current and future students to acquire the skills and insights they need to face the modern and complex world surrounding
them. Due to lack of information about how these institutions work and what impact they have on children and communities. Qur’an schools are not well understood outside of Muslim communities. Thus the lack of evidence about what Qur’an schools do and how they work results in the main source of public information being from indirect sources such as the media, which is often dominated by negative representations of such schools (Cherti et al., 2011: 3). Most of these complementary schools are voluntary schools: they serve specific linguistic or religious and cultural needs (Coles, 2004: 4-8).

5.5.3 MIC Trustees

According to the Institute of Community Cohesion (2008) Sunni mosques are mostly run by elderly male management committees of the dominant ethnic group and Maslak\(^{50}\) upon which the mosque was established. These elders are often the founding members of the mosque and remain members for life until they move away from the area, or become too old or infirm to carry out their duties of representing the predominant ethnic group (ICoCo, 2008:25 - 27). However, in some cases the management committees have members from different ethnic backgrounds (Dyke, 2009: 28).

The MIC as one of British Muslim mosques and one of the central Sunni mosques has two sets of trustees. The owner trustees who are all Syrian and the management trustees who are from different nationalities but currently are all Arab Sunni. As the following quotation

\[\text{HTTP://WWW.ISLAMHELPLINE.COM/NODE/866.}\]

\(^{50}\text{Maslak is an Arabic term derived from the root word “salaka”, which means to walk or to walk along a way. Maslak is a synonym for the term “mażhab” or way, or school of thought. Thus if someone claims to follow the teachings or ways of Imam Abu Hanifa, his maslak or mażhab would be termed “Hanafi”. The true maslak of every believer, who sincerely believes in Allah and the Last Day, is to follow the maslak of Al-Islam; that is, the guidance, teachings, and commands of Allah and His Messenger (Saws). Other than this one maslak, the believers are not obliged to follow any specific maslak.}\]
explains the importance of representing the local Muslim community in the management trustee, which also means representing their ethnicity.

In the MIC, there are two sets of trustees, the owner trustees and then the management trustees… The owner trustees are all Syrians obviously because it is the wishes of the owners to be of the same nationality. Apart from me, I am half Syrian - half Lebanese and I am with both trustees. On the management committee, we have one Iraqi, one Lebanese, two Syrians and one Libyan. There was one Pakistani but he left. We are always looking for good representation from the community… I think this mosque is open to everyone. We are always inviting people to join the management structure in order to achieve a good representation of Muslims in Manchester.

(Interview with trustee number 1)

Trustee number 2 in his interview mentions the names of the Syrian merchants who bought the Didsbury Mosque. They are the owner trustees or those who have handed over their places to some of their relatives or close friends. Citing this kind of documentation of the history of the MIC illustrates who were the owner trustees.

Some of them are still alive but they are no longer trustees. Mr Easam Kabani is still around. Mr Adnan Al Hosami and Mr Najate Asaman are the ones who passed away. My great uncle Hajj Salah Al Hafar, Naswh Kabani, Abdallah Kasas, Ahmaed Hajar. One of the gentleman who is still alive is Hajj Maki Attian he contributed a lot towards both the Didsbury and Victoria mosques.

(Interview with trustee number 2)

Dyke argues, theoretically, it is possible for different ethnic groups to sit on the management committees which seek to reflect and represent all the Muslim communities they serve (Dyke, 2009: 29). While the management committees try to preserve the dominance of their denomination, the Muslim community may prefer to residing in an area where the local mosque allows them to worship, and become members of that mosque (Dyke, 2009: 30) without considering their affiliations and traditions. This citation explains how membership of different ethnicities could be a problematic in some cases. In the

51 An Arabic term used as a kind of respect for someone who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. HTTP://WWW.AUDIOENGLISH.NET/DICTIONARY/HAJI.HTM.
Bolton Mosque for example, membership reflects mainly one ethnicity, Indian Gujarati, and this could be the case for most of the mosques:

I had been going to a local mosque to pray for many years, called Masjid-e-Noor-ul-Islam (mainly Indian Gujarati) in Bolton. The mosque decided to do an extension and made an announcement for people that pray at the mosque, to come forward and become members of the mosque by paying a fee. I asked a senior committee member whether I could become a member. He replied saying that the mosque does not accept members of Pakistani origin. The mosque, is registered as a Place of Worship but is operating like a charity, has a Constitution which states that membership is open to all Muslims over the age of 18 who share the same views as the mosque. Members have priority access to the madrasa [supplementary Islamic school] and services (e.g. funerals, weddings) for half price. I have now been banned from the mosque for raising the issue with the management...This mosque is a member of the Bolton Council of Mosques (BCOM), and some members of the BCOM’s Executive Committee also uphold this policy of discrimination. Male, Bolton, 1st February 2009. (cited in Dyke, 2009: 30).

The MIC management trustees committee does not focus on one nationality, by contrast to the owner trustees who have to be Syrian, according to the wishes of the owners as mentioned earlier. However, every member of the committee has to be Sunni Muslim, irrespective of their religious affiliation or Islamic mazhab.

We are related to Sunna. It is not a Shi’a mosque. We are Ahel Al Sunna Wal Jamah. So the majority of attendees are Sunni, although we have some people who are Shi’a. Our doors are open to all Muslims but still our teaching, our communication with the community depends on Ahel Al Sunna Wal Jamah which includes all four mazaheb.

(Interview with trustee number 1)

According to this statement, the management trustee of the MIC is not open to all the community. It focuses more on selection than election. Trustee number 2 says:

This position depends on selection mainly, but I think it will be better if we change this policy, so that we can have new blood in our committee.

(Interview with trustee number 2)

In contrast to the MIC, the Manchester Central Mosque (Victoria Mosque) is subject to regular democratic elections since the membership of the centre is open to all members of the Pakistani community in Manchester and to interested non-Pakistanis. These elections are supposed to be held annually. During the 1970s while the mosque was being re-
established no elections were held, but now they are held every three years. Although these
elections have been sporadic and fraught with conflict, such conflicts at the Manchester
Central Mosque have led over the years to the establishment of a separate mosque in
Manchester (Werbner, 2002a: 30). This indicates why the Arab community now has their
own mosque, (Werbner, 2002b: 37) the Didsbury Mosque.

It has been discussed that the community of the MIC and its management are related to the
Sunni group, nevertheless, there are four categories or traditions of maslak or mazhab
within this group. Each of the MIC trustees describes themselves and their management
committee, as Sunni in general without any regard to mazhab. In addition to this, their
policy tries to be more neutral towards all of these traditions, which may help them cater
for all Muslims, since Muslims know there is not a lot of difference between these
mazaheb or traditions.

Because we all come from different schools of thought so the four mazaheb are reflected there [in
the MIC]. Our policy tries to cater for all mazaheb; not to follow one and alienate the others. So the
policy of the MIC tries as much as possible to apply what is agreed upon by all these mazaheb to
encourage all Muslims to keep link up with us. By the way all the four mazahab are similar, as you
know about 95% of our worship is same. That is why we do not follow a certain mazhab so as to
cater for everyone.

(Interview with trustee number 1)

Iftikhar Awan (see in Dyke, 2009) from the Islamic Cultural Centre in Altrincham, Greater
Manchester, said: ‘Indeed, there’s a real benefit in having imams from a variety of
professional backgrounds since this shapes the perspectives of day-to-day living. Based on
their contact with a range of different people in a range of capacities’ (Dyke, 2009: 23).
The Head teacher in the MIC Qur’an School was asked in the interview if the MIC has any
kind of affiliation to any Islamic traditional thought or Islamic schools, like Salafi, or
Sufism. He says:
The main concern in this mosque is to represent Sunni Muslims more than any other, and if the imam or speaker follows any of these schools it does not matter since all of these schools are related and follow the Prophet’s *sunna* or tradition. Anyway, it is more useful for the audience to know more than one school of thought or *mazhab* so they can choose what is convenient.

(Interview with the Head teacher of the MIC Qur’an School)

Thus the MIC represents the Sunni community in Manchester, but it has an open door policy to all other Islamic sects like the Shi’a. Moreover it is a multi-ethnic mosque although the trustees are mainly Arab, the attendees are really a mix of all Muslim ethnicities in Manchester.

**5.5.3.1 Age and Gender of the MIC Trustees**

The Institute of Community Cohesion (2008) asserts Sunni mosques are mostly run by elderly male management committees of the dominant ethnic group. Both trustee number 1 and the MIC manager agreed with this and tried to illustrate their view about the MIC trustees’ age and why there is no young blood on their committee:

Being a trustee, needs commitment and young people usually are very busy…you will see the older people are almost all self-employed or retired, and they have to attend when it is required and they do so.

(Interview with trustee number 1)

The trustees in most situations are elderly because they have spare time, the experience, the knowledge and they have something to contribute. The trustees are the main contributors not only with their time, but also with funds, wisdom… and they have to do this as volunteers.

(Interview with MIC Manager)

Most of the British Muslim mosques usually tend to be male-oriented and controlled by the elderly males, women are rarely included at the management level. Since mosques in Britain have to perform a useful function for the community they will have to open their
committee doors to gain more young people and also to represent the women’s voice in their community (MPB).52

According to a Muslim community activist, the British Muslim Mosques survey asserts that 31 per cent of the British Muslim mosques have women’s committees (Coleman, 2009: 18). However, the Charity Commission asserts that only 1 per cent of trustees of Muslim mosques are women (ICoCo, 2008: 27). Generally women’s involvement in management or trustees committees of British mosques seems to be limited.

A) Why Women are Excluded from the Mosque's Committees?

Dyke (2009) conducted an interview with Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra, where he justifies some why women are not on mosque committees:

Many of them [mostly committees] will simply not entertain the idea. For a few others it is a struggle to recruit women. Some women have cited the difficulty of meeting the demands of such volunteering whilst trying to carry out their domestic duties. Others just about cope with their family commitments whilst holding a paid full-time or part-time job.

(Interview with Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra) (see in Dyke, 2009: 29)

B) What Positions do Women Hold on the MIC Committee?

Trustee number 1 shares Sheikh Ibrahim’s view. He adds that women could achieve more in other activities such as involvement with the Qur’an School. However, in the MIC most of the activities carried out done by women are for women themselves. He claims that the position of women on the MIC is satisfactory even if they are not on the committee. He declares:

Women were not available at that moment [he means when they chose the MIC committee] as far as I know. Then meeting with people all the time, staying late, it is a little bit difficult for women to do so, it is a big responsibility. They can play a better role with other activities and the school. We have only one sister on the management committee and she is responsible for women’s activities. But if any sister came

52 The Muslim Parliament of Great Britain
along and showed interest then why not, if she has time. In Didsbury as you know maybe 70 or 80 per cent of the activities are run by women, plus most of the Qur’an School teachers are women as you know.

(Interview with trustee number 1)

However, there are examples of some mosques that have endeavoured to include women, different ethnic groups and young people into their structures of governance. Such as the Bradford Madni Jamia Masjid (Dyke, 2009: 28). Regarding the Altrincham Muslim Association case in Greater Manchester, Iftikhar Awan comments:

We prescribe neither which branch of Islam you should come from, nor which country... We have a Board of ten trustees, and our Constitution stipulates that a minimum of three must be women, but there is no maximum limit. The Executive Committee is made up of eighteen individuals; eight out of eighteen are women, including converts and individuals from different schools of thought. Iftikhar Awan, Altrincham Muslim Association Manchester, 15th October 2008 (see in Dyke, 2009).

By contrast, another woman explaining her view about working on a mosque committee, said: ‘The running of a mosque is a man’s job’ (see in Dyke, 2009: 29). Therefore, it may also be quite daunting for a Muslim woman to sit on an all-male committee. However, women working as governors believe that it will not affect their honour believing it to be a privilege for her gender.

C) What Positions do Women Hold on the MIC Activities?

Stephen Barton (1986) provided a detailed study about Bengali mosque in Bradford during 1980s, his descriptive study sheds the light only on the Imam with more focus on his role (Barton 1986). In contrast to Barton’s (1986) study of the Bengali Muslims of Bradford, Barton notes that Bengali women were never even allowed to enter the mosque, however in Didsbury mosque the case was not like that. A separate area was set aside for women to pray in any time. Indeed, what agreed amongst Muslim scholars is that; it is not
compulsory for Muslim women to attend prayers at mosque like men in daily basis, *juma* and *Eid* as it discussed earlier. Women should be free to come and learn something about their religion at the mosque. Since, they will teach their children about Islam and they are the main key to transfer Islamic identity, especially when they live in non-Muslim country their responsibility towards their religion harder than if they live in Muslim country, usually this depends on the family itself, if it is religious or not. Whereas, shared Islamic Identity in an Islamic country will help more to make children attached to their religion more. The second *khalifa* Muslim president ‘Umar only stopped women from coming to the mosque because the mosques were so full [presumably of men]... In the time of the Prophet himself (peace be upon him) women were allowed to come to the mosque with men (McLoughlin 1998:220).

Unlike other mosques like York Road mosque (McLoughlin 1998) and Bengali mosque in Bradford during 1980s, Muslim girls in Didsbury mosque can attend Arabic and Quran class even if they are over than twelve years old or even more. Hence there are more than one class for women during the weekends and weekdays Quran School in addition to *Al manhal* Quran School.

One of the most aspects of MIC is that, women have their own area with a separate entrance. Women can access mosque any time to do their congregational prayers every day for five daily prayers not only to perform Friday congregational prayer. In addition to that, they can use it for their own activities Study, party, celebration, and *Eftar* in Ramadan.

MIC like most of Mosques all over the world has a separate hall for women where they can access mosque any time. This door leads them straight a way to women *wudhu* services and. In MIC women’s hall and *wudhu* facilities are still small comparing with men’s facility. Therefore, the extension project will take place in women side and in the backyard.
area near women’s prayer hall. These will be explained later in the project discussion. Women prayer hall use for different and many activities. It used at any time by women to perform daily five time prayers every day, Friday and *taraweeh* in Ramadan which called *Qyam* prayers. Usually it is a special prayer done only in the holy month of Ramadan at night.

Didsbury mosque is the place where not only most of the neighbourhood’s Muslim males come to pray, but also Muslims who live far away most often come on *Eid* prayer and on *juma* Friday prayer as well for the communal prayer

* C.1) Women’s Prayer Hall

It is not a big hall that is why the new extension will take place there, as it will be explained later.

Women’s prayer hall is used by Quran School On Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 am till 3:00 pm except for Sunday afternoons when it is used by new Muslim women’s group. This started over ten years ago and is still used for their Islamic study circle. The same hall is used during week days from 5pm till 7pm for Quran memorising classes for girls.

Since the ladies hall should be made free Sunday afternoons for women converts study circle which is run by *Dawa* department, students are then moved to the library which is used as an office at the same time for the school coordinator. MIC library contains hundreds of books covering a wide range of Islamic subjects, history and culture (http://didsburymosque.com/Page.aspx?id=22&type=5). The Women’s hall is not big enough for all their activities therefore; women use another hall which is next to women’s prayer hall. That hall is bigger and is used by men or women depending on who booked the hall and why. Sometimes it is booked by
women to do *Aqeqa* (which is scarifying sheep few days after a child is born) where women can gather to celebrate and after that they can have dinner. The same hall is used by *Al-manhal* Quran School on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00am until 12:00pm. In addition MIC Quran School uses the same hall for teaching children.

**C.2) Manchester New Muslim Women**

For Women new to or interested in Islam MIC runs a study circle every Sunday from 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm, this activity in English language. The Group consists of a talk on a different aspect of Islam every week. Whilst the talks are geared towards those with little or no knowledge of Islam, they are also beneficial to women who may have been Muslim for some time. Talk usually delivered by many sisters. That depends on the topic. Sometimes a specialist might do the talk like a women solicitor when they talk about women’s right in Islam.

The atmosphere is very informal and relaxed and there time for tea and coffee and some refreshments, at the end of the talk there is some used or new stuff for sale like charity for orphan or human appeal. Usually there is no price for anything you can take whatever you want and contribute with what do think it worth. There is no specific dress code for the Group; women are free to wear whatever they feel comfortable in, it is not compulsory to wear scarf as well to attend this circle. However, a sufficient number of women they wear scarf only as a kind of respect when they visit mosque.

However, all Muslim know that; clothing should be modest for both men and women. For women this means an ankle length skirt or trousers, which should not be tight or transparent together with a long sleeved and high necked top. A headscarf is usually essential for women. Therefore, many Muslim women wear a headscarf when they dropped their children to MIC Quran School.

124
No need to book since it is running every Sunday for all Muslim groups basically who able
to understand English language. Being this class takes place at the same time with the
children classes, many mothers bring their children to Quran School and attending the
women study circle, or sometimes other case when women attend weekly women study
circle, saw the Quran School and they enrolled their children as well most of them they do
not know about Quran School in MIC. Every week there are new people interested.
According to information that I had from sister who is in charge for the women study
group; most talk focus on women in Islam and their rights. Concerning the spiritual status
of women, the Quran makes it clear that men and women who practice the principles of
Islam will receive equal rewards got their effort. With regards to rights and obligations the
Quran says: ‘men are maintainers of women with bounties which God has bestowed more
abundantly on some of them than on others; and with what they may spend out of their
possessions’ Quran 49.13

For instance: their right to study, to work, to marriage who they want not as their parents
desire, to get divorce in some cases and ownership. All these right all so significant and all
women should know about it in more details where they can ask for their rights if some try
to go over them or their rights.

Generally, Women converts activities are multi-ethnic and they consist of Pakistani,
Somalia, Bangladesh, Arab, and Muslim British who born Muslim or converts, British who
wants to know about Islam. That makes women study group unusual in MIC comparing
with other mosques in Manchester. For more information see Appendix 9.

5.5.3.2 MIC Trustees’ Role

After discussing the MIC trustees from the angle of their nationality, religious affiliation,
age, and gender, the argument is going to focus on the trustees’ role in the MIC from the
trustees’ point of view to understand the general policy of the MIC, without discussing the attendees’ expectations of the trustees. Trustee number 2 explains the main task of the MIC committee is to make sure everything in the MIC is running according to British law. That is why they registered the MIC with the Charity Commission. In addition to that, they have overall control of the teaching process. The main task is to ensure that maintenance services and financial support continues for the house of Allah.

We are registered as a charitable organisation so our role is to make sure that the centre is being run legally and with no extremisms. It is also to be a learning centre for Islam where we teach old Muslims and young Muslims about Islam. We have to make sure that the money that comes in and goes out is monitored, and we are all volunteers. Traditionally, the trustees who bought the building always wanted the mosque to be in the hands of the Syrian community, to make sure the building does not run out of maintenance money, and up to now most of them are still very generous with their donations.

(Interview with trustee number 2)

Trustee number 1 distinguishes between the two types of trustee and their different roles in the MIC:

Trustees set the general policy of the centre, they employ the manager and they follow the general running of the centre. They are also involved in future planning...The trustees do not play a role in the day-to-day running of the centre. The management has more to do with the day-to-day life of the masjid and with the people who are active. We meet with them and communicate with them regularly and this part of our responsibility is to check the materials they are providing.

(Interview with trustee number 1)

Holding the position of a mosque’s trusteeship offers prestige for people and for their families, although it is a voluntary position. (McLoughlin, 2005: 1048). In the case of the MIC, the owners trustees handed on their positions to their children or relatives to keep this prestige in the family, especially since this committee plays a vital role in the mosque’s management and its policy. Some of the MIC trustees are also trustees in the Cheadle

53 Both of these MIC trustees are trustees in the Cheadle Mosque (CMA) as well. Trustee number 2 is one of the trustees in a famous Arabic Supplementary School in Manchester as well, this reflects their economic power.
Mosque (CMA) and with the Arabic Supplementary School (see in Chapter 8). This increases their prestige and gives them more privilege with their surrounding community.

5.6 MIC Finance

5.6.1 Mosque Finance

Mosques in Britain are centres of communal affairs, drawing labour migrants/immigrants towards communal activities. The mosque is the base for organizational, and internal fund-raising (Werbner, 1996: 115). Mosques frequently require funding, which is usually mobilized by the laymembers of local communities (Werbner, 1996: 106). Nevertheless, given the extent of the services they provide as well as the importance of their religious functions in the Muslim Diaspora community, mosques are involved in cooperation with the state, particularly in terms of securing funding (McLoughlin, 2005: 1049). British Muslim mosques, therefore, mainly exist on a self-sufficient basis. However, there has been increased pressure on Muslim institutions to provide for all the demands and services for their growing communities.

Studying the finance reports of any mosque is not any easy task, Colman (2009) in his study on British mosques asked about the annual income of these religious organisations in his study. 25 per cent reported they do not know and 6 per cent refused to provide any information about financial issues. However, the refusal is not unusual for this type of question (7). In the case of the MIC, the empirical study carried out for the Charity Commission’s Annual Report shows that the MIC is funded by donations from their members. In this study it was not possible to retrieve any financial information from the trustees or mangers except via general conversations with the Head teacher of the Qur’an
School. The Charity Commission Annual Report shows that the MIC is mainly funded by the Muslim community. However, the head teacher confirmed that along with the donations by Muslims, a small income is received from the letting of two properties that the owner of the mosque had bought previously. The rent is used by the mosque to cover the staff’s monthly income and other expenses. He explains:

The Didsbury Mosque does not have any guaranteed funding except from the two properties near the mosque. The owners bought them when they bought the mosque to ensure some monthly income comes to the mosque by renting them out. This is the main income plus the sadaqa (donations).

(Interview with the Head teacher of the MIC Qur’an School)

Donations and collections sadaqat\textsuperscript{54} is a non-compulsory form of charity-giving in Islam; it is one of the significant sources of income for the MIC. However, sadaqat are not

\textsuperscript{54}Arabic word for donations.
guaranteed since they vary from one year to another. In 2007, the MIC was at its lowest income level and in 2010 it received its highest level of income\textsuperscript{55} as is shown in chart (2).

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart2.png}
\caption{Chart (2) Donations and Collections}
\end{figure}

From the table it is clear that the MIC has not received any help from the public purse during the last few years. Except for 2011 when they received £400 which was not directly for the mosque itself but for the Qur’an School for their activities, in the 2011 academic year and this was not from the council but from another committee which has a special interest in children. The head teacher says:

\begin{quote}
The British government doesn’t pay anything for the mosque, we only received £400 last year because of our children’s activities in the Qur’an School, and it was from another committee which encouraged children’s activities.
\end{quote}

(\textit{Interview with the head teacher of the MIC Qur’an School})

\textsuperscript{55} Because of the extension project, people donated generously. In the month of Ramadan, donations reach the highest level mainly during the holy night called \textit{Lailat Al Kader}. Usually Muslims when they donate remember one of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh) who said: Whosoever builds a masjid for the sake of Allah, even though it is as small as a bird’s nest, in return, Allah SWT builds for him a house in paradise. Narrated by Ahmad, this encourages them to pay more. 

Although the MIC does not receive any help from government agencies, MIC has a full time imam, teachers who are paid when they teach and some other staff members. In addition, other expenses include paying bills (phone, gas and electricity, water and cleaning products). As shown in chart (3) wages and salaries, constituted the greatest part of expenses between 2005 and 2010.

![Direct Charitable Expenditure](chart)

**Chart (3) MIC Expenses**

The MIC is a self-sufficient mosque since it only depends on Muslim donations and contributions, in addition the rent of the mosque’s properties act as a more secure income. All this money is used to pay for the mosque’s expenses.

**5.6.2 MIC Quran School Finance**

Qur’an schools are often well-established institutions and are in high demand. This demand is not always met, with a quarter being oversubscribed. They rely heavily on parental fees
and tend to operate on low levels of turnover. Current funding levels may limit the extent to which Qur’an schools are able to meet the demand and to provide quality teaching. Mosques are closely connected to the Qur’an school sector, with many being based within a mosque. Most are registered charities. As a result, their governance is often based on these affiliations (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 28).

Qur’an schools are generally operating with a small annual turnover, with 38 per cent of Qur’an schools saying they receive less than £10,000 a year from all sources and a further 55 per cent receive between £10,000 and £50,000. This is particularly low when considering that many Qur’an schools are quite large, with 69 per cent seeing more than 50 pupils a week. Over 70 per cent of Qur’an schools subsidise the fees because parents are having difficulty paying. With just 2 per cent stating that grants from local authorities were their primary source of funding. This highlights the independence of most Qur’an schools and strengthens their identity as being community-based (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 22).

![Chart (4) Qur’an School Source of Funding](image)

**Chart (4) Qur’an School Source of Funding**

Source: (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 22-23)

Cherti and Bradley (2011) have carried out interviews with Qur’an school representatives. They reveal that inadequate funding is a common challenge across the sector and often limits the ability of Qur’an schools to provide educational resources and pay qualified
teachers. ‘The funding is not adequate at all…we are struggling, we are hand to mouth, we are asking parents to pay literally a nominal fee to be able to run very much on a volunteer basis.’ Chair of Madrassa Trust (London) in (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 23).

In the case of the MIC, the finances of the Qur’an School was a sensitive issue. That is why the current researcher did not discuss the MIC finances or the Qur’an School finances with the trustees, the management or the head teacher. What has been done in the last chapter is to study the financial information through the Charity Commission’s website that does not show any information about school fees.

At the time of this fieldwork, there were approximately 350 students, between the ages of four and seventeen, attending classes each weekday evening except Friday. Most attended for a two-hour session (5:00 – 7:00 pm), for boys and girls. Students are expected to wear appropriate dress whilst attending Qur’an School in the MIC. For girls, this takes the form of long clothes (ankle-length tunic) and hijab (headscarf): for boys, a long tunic. From the youngest to the oldest, pupils are divided into single-sex classes, each with its own teacher; females teach the girls and male teachers for the boys. The separation of boys and girls is emphasized by the physical location of the classes. The classes are arranged according to age group, though there is some flexibility in this, particularly in the case of students who are learning either more quickly or slowly than their peers in a particular group. The methods of teaching and learning used in this school are traditional in a number of significant ways. This is most obvious in the physical arrangement of the classes. In the main prayer hall, for example, four “classes” - that is, single lines of male students arranged in semi-circles each facing a male teacher - can be seen.

There were some sixteen or seventeen teachers at the beginning of 2009, both male and female. Most of them were part-time, teaching during weekend sessions. The three other teachers were full-time, teaching weekend and weekday evening sessions. The teachers
represented a variety of ages and backgrounds. Although all of them have to be Arabic speakers. Two or three were born in England of immigrant parents and had attended both English state schools and Arabic supplementary schools. One male teacher who works full time, for example - the one who taught the Hafiz class - was born in Libya, and had lived for some time in Italy before coming to England. The different background of the teachers is significant, not only for the Qur’an School, but also for the MIC as one of the main British mosques.

5.7 Conclusion

In the United Kingdom, there are significant “ethnic neighbourhoods” especially in big cities, where Muslims are obviously welcomed by a local population and enjoy full civil and political rights. Therefore, the growth phase of mosques seems to have passed, as facilities are now present in university campuses, airports and train stations, sports stadiums, and even motorway service stations. It is largely in smaller and less ethnically uniform towns that organized dissent may appear (Allievi, 2009: 88). Moreover, identifying the mosque affiliation by location can provide a good illustration of Muslim diversity specific to city areas and in some cases on a neighbourhood level. This can help gauge levels of representation and potential gaps in terms of engagement (ICoCo, 2008: 27) or segregation channels among Muslims along lines of diversity, ethnicity and religious affiliation or sects. As we have seen, the proliferation of mosques in Britain reflects differences in nationality, language and religious tendency. The main theological divide was between the Shi’a and Sunni followers.

As mentioned earlier, the local Muslim community in Manchester is increasing, and due to the centre’s good reputation, it has become a popular destination for a vast number of community members who attend its activities and use its facilities on a regular basis. This
chapter discussed the notion that mosques in Britain are generally associated with specific communities such as Pakistani, Indian Muslim and Bangladeshi. However, they stress that mosques do not bar or discourage any Muslims on account of their sect or ethnic origin (2009: 40). The Manchester Islamic Centre was analysed as one of the significant Sunni Muslim mosques in Manchester, by looking at its history, sect of the attendees, students and committees that are run by elderly male representatives, and why women are not part of their management structure. In terms of representation, the MIC committee reflects the predominant ethnic group and their Sunni way of life or *maslak*. The chapter covered some of the financial issues affecting the MIC and its Qur’an School referring to the research data available. In the next chapter, the argument will focus on the position of the mosque in the community with more focus on the MIC and its role in preserving and reproducing ethnicity, culture and language.
Chapter Six

How Mosques Reflect the Religion and Culture of Muslim Minorities

6.1 Introduction

By choosing to live in Britain, Muslims to some extent, lose out on aspects of their value system and culture and in some measure have to yield to cultural, social and political dominance by a non-Muslim majority (Al-Refai, 2007: 4). But the arrival of a second and third generation, now as in the past (Niebuhr, 1929: 15), suggests to many believers that some old country ways, in particular, language, must be sacrificed in order to maintain the religious commitment of the children (Warner, 2005: 33). Conducting worship in the English language is one of the classic paths by which America transmutes ethnicity into religion, where what gives the group its identity is no longer Urdu, for example, but Islam (Warner 2005: 33; see in Williams 1988, pp. 282-83), not Japanese but Buddhism not Yiddish but Judaism (Herberg, 1955: 31, Warner, 1993).

The reality of a large number of migrants with their own cultures, religious affiliations and languages, in European societies, have been raising many questions on the subject of belonging and identity (Küçükcan, 2004: 244) Muslims are the most significant and visible of these groups in recent times for several reasons. Islam is of considerable cultural importance for them in contemporary Britain (Scourfield et al., 2012: 94). Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world. In the West, nowadays, there are numerous Muslim Diaspora communities. However, after 9/11, Islamic and Muslim communities were put under the spotlight and public gaze (Küçükcan, 2004: 243). I have shown in the literature review how Muslims in non-Muslim societies tried to hide their religious identity after 9/11. For this reason the current research will narrow the focus down to discuss the Muslim religious institution known as the mosque or masjid and its coordinating role together with
the Muslim family, for passing on Islamic religious identity to new generations of Muslim. As we have highlighted in the previous chapter on the history of mosques in Britain, the discussion here will centre on the MIC, one of the central mosques or Islamic centres in Manchester for Sunni Muslim minorities. It will address one of the research questions; what is the role of the MIC in transmitting and constructing Islamic identity? Therefore, the discussion will initially cover the main task that any mosque should offer as one of the principal services, that is as a place of worship. Firstly, the discussion will present different opinions about mosques and whether they have only to be a place for prayers. Secondly, the chapter will focus on the role of the mosque as a religio-cultural place, not only to protect Islamic identity, but also to protect the ethnic culture of Muslim minorities in a non-Muslim society. It will indicate the tension between holding Islamic identity and living in a non-Muslim society. I will begin the discussion by using some examples of how British culture has values different from Islamic values according to the participants’ point of view. Next, I will argue that from a sociological point of view sharing the same religious identity reduces in some cases other communication barriers such as ethnicity and that this can result in Muslims who are not of the same ethnicity, having a feeling of solidarity and similarity when visiting the mosque. In general then it can be said that my research points, in the case of MIC, to there being clear signs of the emergence of a distinctive post-ethnic form of Islamic identity that could be characterised as a British/European Islam this seems to be partly assisted by the fact that many key participants have professional or higher education. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of the social problems faced by Muslims and examines whether the MIC is able to help or deal with these problems.

6.2 Mosque as a Place of Prayer

Since the earliest days of Islam, the mosque was not only a central place for the Muslim community to perform their daily prayers, but also a place of meditation, religious
instruction, political discussion, and a school for all ages (Zaimeche, 2002: 3). McLoughlin (1998) points out that although Muslims do not need any special place for prayer, since any clean surface will suffice, praying in a congregation is highly recommended (214) not only for Friday prayers but for daily prayers as well. Nevertheless from a historical perspective, mosques were established where Islam developed and they have mostly been multi-functional institutions. Mosques were the place where Muslims started their religious rituals (see Chapter 6.2) and tried to preserve their culture (see Chapter 6.3). In a British context mosques serve as places for educational instruction as well as where Muslims teach themselves and new Muslim generations about the Islamic religion (see Chapter 8). Central mosques also spread Islam around the non-Muslim communities as in the case of MIC case.

A place for praying is one of the very basic services mosques provide for the Muslim community. However, some Muslims believe in the notion that mosques only exist to perform salah (prayer), and that any other activities are not permitted. Conversely, Islamic Shari’ah (Law) has determined that it is expected that mosques play many important roles within the Muslim community. Furthermore, classical scholars have devoted considerable sections in books on Islamic Fiqh (Jurisprudence) highlighting the different roles of mosques (Muhammad: 7). Through asking congregation members whether the mosque is strictly a place of prayer or also a community space, their different expectations can be shown. A female Friday prayer member who is doing her PhD in psychology asserts that the mosque could be a learning, teaching and meeting centre. The mosque can be also a location for weddings. Mosques offer various uses as required by the local community.

A mosque is a place for learning and teaching, not only a place for prayer. Over the last two weeks I have been to a wedding in the mosque. I was also able to use one of the rooms in the Didsbury Mosque for my research. I held my focus group sessions there and they were very welcoming. So the mosque is more than a prayer place.

(Interview with a Friday Prayer number 4)
Another participant of Friday prayers, who has a Ph.D. in Sociology, looks at the mosque as a centre of activism for Muslims and non-Muslims. Perhaps by asserting that mosques are for non-Muslim as well, he meant that individuals have the opportunity to learn more about Islam from an authentic source or to use its space if they request it. He thinks that as the mosque is situated in a place where Islam is the minority religion, there could be considerable expectation that the mosque would be more than a place of worship. For example, he thinks that mosques could be a leading place for Muslims not just a place for prostration:

As you know, I think that the mosque is really important as an institution in any society for the benefit of Muslims and of non-Muslims as well. I do not know too much about Islam and I do not know about the Prophet peace be upon him and his life. But what I do know is that the prophet was an activist. He was not like a spiritual person always praying. He was an activist, he was concerned about society, and he cared about other people. Just as the present day leadership of Muslims should be. They should be activists in the same way and it should stem from the mosque in my opinion. So the mosque should be the centre for all the community…it should not only be a place for their five daily prayers. Although the masjid (mosque) is not just a place for prostration, it also should be a place of activism. where people should gather, exchange knowledge, and where they should support one another. It should also embrace Muslims in the local neighbourhood who need some encouragement, and should include non-Muslims who deserve to know about Islam and who perhaps have a lot of questions about Islam. So the mosque is essential for assisting with this, I think.

(Interview with a Friday Prayer number 1)

Mosques in Britain have always been more than just a place of worship. Indisputably, the central task is to provide daily congregational prayers led by the imams. However, the structure and the community surrounding the mosque lends them to a wider range of activities such as Qur’an classes, advice and counselling for families, marriage registration and funeral services, and separate arrangements for women’s classes in religious instruction (Dyke, 2009: 4). One of the Friday Prayer members of the MIC summarises the tasks of the mosque as follows (For the Qur’an School see Chapter 8).

The role of the mosque in a Western country is on the one hand to provide the basic services for the Muslim community such as the five daily prayers, Friday prayers, Ramadan prayers, Eid prayers as well as for providing marriage certificates. On the other hand, the mosque should provide a platform where Islam is communicated and presented to the wider community, I mean the non-Muslim community. We are very pleased to see some of our mosques recently providing Open Days as well as training courses to explain Islam to non-Muslims. We are also pleased to see mosques moving
gradually into the process of giving the Khutbah (Friday sermon) in English. Furthermore, mosques are very important avenues for looking after the Muslim youth in terms of providing them with their identity as British Muslims. This kind of investment will protect the youth and help them to live in harmony with their local environment. One of the main activities that mosques in the West provide is the Qur’an school. This school is normally held at the weekend. The Qur’an school is an important part of the Muslim community structure. It teaches children the basics of the Arabic language so that they can read the Qur’an and have a basic understanding of it. Muslim parents are therefore very keen to send their children to the local Qur’an school.

(Interview with a Friday Prayer number 6)

Usually, mosques in Britain offer a variety of services and activities and are not just a place of worship. However, each mosque’s role will vary depending on its size, history, aims, and location. Some mosques are situated in small towns, others in large cities. In Manchester for instance where a big proportion of Muslims live, the role of the central mosque will be different than that of other mosques in small towns, in the workplace, or in other public settings such as universities, football stadiums, airports, service stations and prisons (Gilliat and Birt, 2010: 139). They are usually called prayer rooms, in terms of size and location, where their main purpose is offering prayer rooms with wudhu facilities to worshippers from any faith. One of the Friday Prayer members was excited and surprised to see a prayer room in a shopping centre like the Trafford Centre in Manchester. She described the prayer room as a clean and small room facing a specific direction, which Muslims use for prayer.

When the Trafford Centre opened thirteen years ago, I found they had a masjid or mosque room inside. I could not believe it, and now even the airport has a prayer room. Even though it is labelled multi-faith room, it is obvious who really uses it five times a day. You can hardly see a Christian sitting there or Jew or Hindu they might pray somewhere else but we are the only ones who specifically need a clean place to perform our prayers. It is designed facing the right direction and they provided wudhu facilities especially for our needs.

(Interview with a Friday Prayer Member number 4)

Therefore, the Muslim community in Manchester does not expect a mosque to only be a place of prayer, they want the mosque to be more engaged with their community by offering different services. For example, a mosque may be used as a social and communal place, an activity place that might support their cultural needs primarily (see Chapter 6.3),
then their learning and teaching needs (see Chapter 8), and also a place that offers funeral facilities. Mosques can be a safe place where Muslims feel there are no contradictions or conflicts between themselves as Muslims and their environment (see Chapter 6.4). By contrast, most of the interviewees mentioned the contradiction between the role of the mosque in a non-Muslim society and the wider Muslim society which cannot be discussed in this research. However mosques in non-Muslim communities are active according to the experience of the research participants.

6.3 Mosques as a Religio-Cultural Place

Maqsood (2005) in her study argues that some British mosques are very nationalistic be it Bengali, Arab, or Turkish run (see Chapter 5.5.1). The issue of language should be accounted for and some even carry far too much cultural baggage (3) as this section shows. According to Ramadan’s perspective it is relevant to distinguish between Islamic identity, that depends on religious principles and allows believers to live in any environment, as the literature review shows (Chapter Three, 3.5), and cultural identity that specify a way of living out these principles (Ramadan, 2005: 50). The question of culture is central to the debates on Islam today. Although Islam is primarily “a religion” and not “a culture”, Ramadan asserts that: ‘Religion never finds expression outside a culture and that, conversely, a culture never takes shape without deferring to the majority values and religious practices of the social group that constitutes it’ (Ramadan, 2010: 147). Hence, there are no religiously neutral cultures or even any culture-free religions as the discussion in this part of the study shows. According to Ramadan’s view religion is always born then interpreted within a given culture. It follows that the religion should keep nurturing and fashioning that culture. Therefore, sometimes, the complex link between religion and culture makes it difficult to define what belongs to religion proper and what instead
pertains to the cultural dimension. So, from Ramada’s point of view: ‘The nature of contemporary challenges and the re-examination of the rich Islamic legal tradition (its fundamentals—usûl—as well as its implementation—fiqh) require us to investigate the issue more closely and try to determine a theoretical framework and clearer principles regarding the relationship between religion and culture’ (Ramadan, 2009: 183).

Indeed, religion cannot find expression without culture, but not all religion can be reduced to culture. Ramadan provides the example of language, stating that it is well known that Arabic is the only reference language of the Qur’an and Islam, but Arab culture is not the particular culture of Islam. Therefore, reducing one to the other is completely incorrect and has consequences for the understanding and practice of religion across time and societies (Ramadan 2009: 183). In the same way the traditional Pakistani dress is not the only reference to Islamic dress; for example British converts do not apply the Islamic rules of dress when they wear sharwal kameez (tunic and loose trousers) since that would reduce religious dress to a cultural dress. Like the converts in the MIC, they do not make a distinction between culture and religion. However, this is different to wearing the hijab which is a clear sign of an identity as a Muslim female (see Chapter 7.3.1). Therefore, mosques in a non-Muslim society could be a place for representing Islamic identity whilst also protecting the key elements of a specific culture. Thus, some mosques can be seen reflecting Pakistani culture, Arab culture, Somali culture, Turkish culture or more recently, Kurdish culture. From the minority ethnic perspective it can be an advantage to reproduce the culture of the homeland within the microcosm of the mosque. Basically, migrants’ parents account for this type of representation as one of the main advantages for new a generation that is not familiar with the homeland culture or culture of their ancestors. Religion, ethnicity and culture all come together in places like the mosque. Therefore, Arab children in the MIC for example, by mixing with other Arabic people can see what
Arabic culture is like, even if they have never lived in an Arab society. Thus, mosques in a non-Muslim society can provide Muslim minorities and their subsequent generations with their cultural requirements. Mosques can support the family by protecting and reproducing culture which may well not be available in the wider community. The concern expressed in the following quote by the Friday Prayer member shows how the surrounding society is not able to provide the Arab community, for example with their cultural needs. Thus, from the participants’ point of view, attending the mosques and mixing with others who share the same culture and language can help Muslims maintain their culture and through this their identity.

The Mosque should be a community centre reflecting a person’s culture so that whatever your cultural needs are, the mosque can represent it. The mosque acts as a culture protector because when you go to the mosque you will find people from the same culture and when mixing with others from the same culture your origins and your culture is maintained there. The mosque reproduces your culture, which is a good thing because your culture is your identity. For example if you have not been raised in an Arab culture and then you go to the mosque and spend time mixing with other Arab people, you will become part of this culture. We could not find all that we need from British society so we look for it in our small micro-society within the mosque.

(Interview with Friday Prayer Number 4)

The relationship between religion, ethnicity and culture is complex and complicated; I am not going to discuss it in much more detail. The essential point is that there is an interaction among them as figure (10) shows. Therefore, the effort to which migrants and their families go to maintain their religious practices leads to the creation of an ethnic identity that is based on an imaginary and symbolic connection to one’s homeland (Jain and Forest, 2004: 279). It represents their cultural identity that could also be called their religious identity. Since Islam is practiced all over the world, Muslims apply Islam according to their specific culture, which is not necessarily similar to Arab culture. Muslims dress according to their own culture and in accordance with their interpretation of Islamic rules.
Figure (10) Relationship among Religion, Culture and Ethnicity

It is essential to clarify the nature of the relationship that the Islamic religion developed, from the outset, and has maintained with the culture in which it was born and took shape. This determines the nature of the relationships Muslims must maintain with “others,” and “non-Arab” cultures. Since Muslims lived in Africa and Asia very early on, they had to determine how they could relate their universal religion with their “original culture”: which were made almost in terms of respecting the principles of religious practice that integrated with the surrounding cultures. Islam's universality, which was also termed “Islamic civilization,” was achieved through the unity of principles and the diversity of cultures. It is only one religion, one Islam, with various interpretations and several cultures (Ramadan, 2010: 42) that all can be represented in mosques.

The annual Eid Celebration for example, is celebrated in different ways among Britain’s minority communities, whether they be Pakistani, Somali or Arab. Therefore, mosques could work as a type of cultural club that helps Muslims keep and share their cultural practices in non-Muslim societies. This mainly helps to give the new generation a sample of what is going on in their homeland during religious occasions like Eid. Some of the interviewees’ assert that one of the mosque’s primary tasks is to provide the new generation with an avenue to their homeland’s culture. This link would help Muslims feel comfortable when visiting their country of origin.
I think the mosque supports the family by keeping hold of the cultural traditions, because our children living in this country have not seen how Eid is celebrated and what Muslims do during Eid. So the mosque can give them a little of what we have back home...I feel sorry for them, they go to British schools and many have non-Muslim friends. I believe the mosque has to keep the same celebrations and the same culture in order to fill this gap.

(Interview with Friday Prayer number 3)

However, another interviewee thinks that whilst knowing the traditional way of celebrating Eid in his home country is important, he still identifies himself as a British Muslim more than a Syrian Muslim. Even though he was not even born in, he came to Britain because of his family trade. This kind of thinking gives an indication as to what can be called a British Islamic Culture more than any other national cultures (6.5). He declares:

Culture sometimes comes into Islam and gives the wrong impression. As an Arab, originally from Syria, even though I have never lived in Syria, neither was my father born in Syria, I know of the traditional Eid Celebrations in Syria. I am a British Muslim, of course we all descend from certain countries and we all have traditional ways of celebrating. We like to celebrate in ways that remind us of our country of origin. Today we are more British Muslim, than Syrian.

(Interview with trustee number 2)

By contrast, if the religious institution represents the culture of one ethnicity, the other ethnicities may feel excluded even though a mosque is a house of Allah that has to be open to all the participants. A Friday Prayer member describes his feelings towards mosques in Manchester as ethnic mosques. Some worshipers from different ethnicities might feel excluded from the predominant group, because s/he cannot understand the language of the majority in such mosques. He explains that minorities can gather because they share the same language. However, Muslim minorities sharing the same religion is more important than sharing the same ethnicity, culture or language. Thus from the Friday Prayer members’ perspective, religious institutions have to be non-ethnic and less culturally specific. The signifiers of the same religion are interesting in the following extract:

Many mosques in Britain have become Somali mosques, Arab mosques, Pakistani mosques. I do not like that idea because I believe that as Muslims we should be united around our religion rather than around our ethnic identity. And I sometimes witnessed a non-Pakistani go to a Pakistani mosque and
a non-Arab go to an Arab mosque facing exclusion or discrimination. The fact is that if I go to the mosque and I cannot understand Urdu or Bengali then I will not understand how they function. That is why I said that when I went to Canada I liked to be with the British people, because we have something in common. So I do understand if you are Somali, it is nice for you to go to a Somali mosque, where everyone shares the same culture and language. I do understand that, but the reality is that mosques should focus on being a religious institution and should be operating fully with Islam rather than being associated with one particular function [as a cultural protector or reproducer]. I think that as one ethnic group they should make their own cultural club separate from the masjid and the masjid should be open to everyone and should operate in a way where no single ethnic minority dominates. I want British mosques for British people where all ethnicities are welcomed. (Interview with Friday Prayer number 1)

Conversely, mosques help Muslims maintain their Islamic identity in Britain through their function as a cultural protector rather than just a religious institution. This is why the Friday Prayer member wished to see British/European liberal mosques operating without regard to ethnicity or culture. He thinks members of an ethnic group prevent those Muslims who do not belong to any ethnic minority from attending many mosques. Even though he is Iranian he claims that he is not because he counts himself as a part of the Muslim community of the world, or what can be called the Islamic umma.

Islam is spread across different countries, and as such has been adopted as a normal part of life in those countries. So nowadays we can say Islam is a Turkish religion, a Pakistani religion, a Sudanese religion and is an Asian religion. And this is because they practice Islam within that culture. That is why Islam in Britain will not grow and will not spread until a British Islam or a British way of doing Islam emerges which is not different from the original Islam and is compatible with British culture or the British way of life. I really want to see this in the future and it will happen because it is a natural process, it is going to be a natural part of the society. I believe mosques are less religious institutions as they are cultural institutions. I believe most mosques are cultural clubs and because I am British I can say there are no British mosques. I am not Iranian, I am not Arab I cannot go to a mosque and say that I feel my community is there. There is a barrier there because of these ethnic cultures. This is only for me because I feel I am not part of any ethnic community - I am part of a Muslim community…this is what I feel, personally. (Interview with Friday Prayer number 1)

As discussed before, the MIC generally has an open door policy and as part of its role in representing the home culture as for example Eid celebrations; the MIC has a large hall and any community can book it to hold their own celebrations or cultural activities. This all helps to merge the different generations; parents, grandparents, children and where children can learn to become more familiar with their heritage.
6.4. Similarity, Solidarity and Islamic Environment

Appadurai draws on Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined community” to argue that individuals who do not (indeed, who cannot) have direct experience of each other come to feel a strong sense of similarity, solidarity and mutual obligation. For Anderson this sense of collectivity is fundamental to feelings of nationalism (Jain and Forest, 2004: 279). Appadurai extends this concept by arguing that this kind of imagined community does not need to be nationally based; “‘Imagined worlds’ are created by transnational communities composed of individuals who migrate between different countries’ (Jain and Forest, 2004: 279). Institutional frameworks usually enable young immigrants in the new land to “practice” their religious identity directly in the way that they might not be able to “practice” their own ethnicity (Jain and Forest, 2004: 280). An Egyptian student in the Qur’an School describes how she practices her religion in the MIC with all her female Muslim friends irrespective of their ethnicity or nationality since all of them share the same religious identity.

I come to the Didsbury Mosque to see other Muslim friends over the weekends. We all learn *tajweed* and memorise the Qur’an; we all are similar.

Gh: What do you mean by saying similar, do you mean equal, or is it like all of you are Arab students?

No, here as you know we are all different nationalities, but we are all similar in that we wear hijab, we perform the *jama’h* (congregational prayers), we all fast during the same month of Ramadan, and we are all equal in front of this religion; it does not matter if I am black or white, Arab or non-Arab we are all here sharing the same religion and same values.

(Interview with Student number 3)

Moreover, some groups offer an excellent case study on the connections between religious identity and geographic context. Indeed, social and cultural geographers draw attention to the compound relationship between religious practice and the material environment, or what can be called the geography of religion. ‘The ways in which places, landscapes, and religious experience are being conceived are not isolated from other aspects of social and
material relations…’ therefore, ‘the formation of religious identity within a particular social context is structured by the material resources and context of the group in question. The experiences a person has within the material world, through the practice of certain rituals or traditions in a particular place or with the people of a particular organisation create a sense of social solidarity’ (Jain and Forest, 2004: 279). Therefore, Muslims who practice Islam, according to the Sunni way (see Chapter 5.5.1) and who apply the same rituals, feel more comfortable in the MIC and more integrated with the others who practice the same maslak. That puts mosques in the position of operating as a place of social solidarity among this Muslim minority. For example, the Pakistani Friday Prayer member number 5 says that she forgets she is living in Britain when she visits the mosque because she has a pleasant feeling of belonging to the Muslim community in the MIC irrespective of its diversity.

I think people do mix in the mosque. It is my little Muslim country; it is our little Egypt, our little Pakistan, it is our territory…so when you go to the masjid you feel nice but then when you go out, you realise oh no, we are in England.

(Interview with a Friday Prayer number 5)

One of the Qur’an School teachers enjoys her interaction with different types of people in the MIC because of its diversity, (see Chapter Five, 5.5.1) including converts and indicated the birth of a post-ethnic or post-national feeling in this centre:

I think they [mosques] are the main source of community integration; you meet people from different places, of different ethnicities. You meet new people, you see converts, those people who have come recently to Islam and you speak to them all in this mosque…the social interaction with Muslims in the mosque is a good thing, yes I enjoy it, as I enjoy teaching their children.

(Interview with MIC Qur’an Teacher number 1)

Formal religious institutions play an important role for minority migrants when they are able to socialise with first and second generations ‘Because the identities of such communities are not reinforced by the host society’ (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007: 141). In the case of the MIC, the interaction between different generations irrespective of their
ethnicity is clear, through the MIC activities like breaking the fast in the month of Ramadan *Iftar* and Eid celebrations. Moreover, the Qur’an School (see Chapter 8) helps to maintain the interaction between the new and the older generations in an Islamic environment. This is why this participant mother wants her children to be surrounded by other Muslim children, either in the mosque or in the Arabic or Qur’an Schools which all help her children realise their religious identities. However, this mother, similar to other mothers that I have met during the fieldwork, is worried about her children interacting with non-Muslim friends in British state schools. (More details in the school chapter).

Yes I am a Muslim, I am happy here, but I think I am more happy to practice my religion surrounded by other Muslims. I was raised here, so I am aware of the big differences between me and others…I would like my children to have more Muslims around them as it may be easier for them to realise their identity as a Muslim. We try to make sure of that here. So we hang around Muslim friends in the mosque, the Qur’an School and the Arabic School. But there is still the whole day that they spend with their English non-Muslim friends. This is not a bad thing per se, but they are not with the kind of friends you would like them to be with. In a Muslim country, it is much easier. They are surrounded by the same religion and culture.

(Interview with Friday Prayer number 4)

A similar problem can be identified among Indian migrants. ‘A Hindu Indian religious group in Los Angeles organised *satsangs* (congregations) where participants perform their *puja* (worship), sing *bhajans* (devotional songs) and attend *balavihars* (child development meetings)’. These kinds of activities give children the basic practices, philosophy and values of Hinduism, and also pass on Indian culture and identity (Jain and Forest 2004: 281). In non-Muslim societies mosques help Muslims to practice their rituals while at the same time these practices are regarded as reformulating and reproducing the religious identity for new Muslim generations. Attending the Eid celebration, for example, enables children to gain a clear idea about Islamic values. However, many other activities run by the MIC also help Muslim minorities to keep their religion.

The mosque helps us create a form of social solidarity among us as Muslims, because we are all mixed together in a large and complex society; Westerners, Arabs, Muslims, and others from different religions so it [mosque] does protect us and it brings our religion together and keeps it going.
Among Indian-Americans despite the absence of the residential concentration characteristic of many immigrant groups, each the *satsangs and balavihars* of are often regarded as the only place where they can meet other members of their community. During parents’ activities, second generation children can be socialised into their Indian-American identity and meet other young people whom the parents hope will provide a source of support. ‘In a context where direct experience with Indian cultures and customs are very limited’, like these programmes in the United States which allow the transmission of beliefs and behaviour that are both religious and ethnic (Jain and Forest 2004: 281).

Temple sites, as a religious institution, are often the centre of identity production and reproduction for the next generation. Temples could be, for example: ‘Cultural centres as much as strictly ritual centres, preserving languages, arts and practices from the ethnic past. The temples were adaptive mechanisms, supporting the religious expansionism of these new Americans by enabling them to bring their past into the present’ (Burke 1991; Jain and Forest 2004:281). Similarly, the following extract shows how the mosque is a social gathering place where Muslims can meet after prayer, to seek help or advice, making their relations stronger and creating social solidarity within Muslim communities:

Mosques do create social solidarity for both genders in different periods of life, as they are not only places of worship but also a point of social meeting for the British Muslim community. The Muslims who attend to their daily prayers in the mosque(s) are close to one another. They will develop a social bond that will enable them to support each other socially and financially whenever necessary. On the other hand, those Muslims who are not regular in visiting their mosques will remain socially attached to the mosque especially in the case of a service related to their children (such as a Qur’an school) as well as services like bereavements and/or marriages.

One student expressed her feelings about coming to the Qur’an school over the weekend (Chapter 8) in addition to going to school during the weekdays. I asked her if attending weekend schools makes her feel tired. She replied that she felt good about coming to the
mosque because everyone is similar and friendly towards her in contrast to the outside society:

I feel very happy; I think it is the best thing in the world for me, the best choice. I feel being inside is nice; you don’t feel tired and everybody likes you. We say hi to each other and are more friendly – this is much better than being outside.

(Interview with Student number 3)

Moreover, religious institutions provide a safe environment for discussing and practicing beliefs and ultimately, constructing religious identities (Ammermann, 2003: 53). For Muslims in non-Muslim countries mosques play an important role, allowing for the Muslim community to construct Islamic identity and to reproduce it through new generations. A mother I interviewed wants her children to be surrounded with more Muslim friends; therefore, she thinks mosques and events that take place there are necessary and important where migrants do not have distinctive residential clusters. Thus, mosques help Muslim minorities to provide an Islamic environment to support the Muslim’s family atmosphere (see in Chapter 3). The subsequent generation can see Islam not only at home but even in the external institutions. This mother wants to pass her Islamic identity to her children that is why she is so keen to attend Islamic events in the mosque. Moreover, she performs other rituals at home in order to further create an Islamic environment. Therefore, mosque and family should support each other with maintaining an Islamic environment for their children.

I have tried my best to keep them in an Islamic environment but when they do go to school, obviously they do meet other non-Muslim children but Insha’Allah (God Willing) my children will be able to tell them their own way is Islam. They frequently go to the mosque and I take them to any Islamic events in the mosque when I can. So I try my best to keep them as much as possible in the Islamic environment and I do not like them to go out to any parties and things like that. I keep them close to me as much as I possibly can. I think we live in an Islamic environment just when I come to the mosque or at home, because we are practicing Islam.

(Interview with Mother Number 2)
6.5 Culture Clash and Clash of Identities

Even though mosques are places that provide Muslim minorities with a feeling of similarity and solidarity, as I mentioned in Chapter Six, 6.4, Muslims outside the mosque still suffer a clash in terms of their different cultures and different religious identities in a non-Muslim society. Thus, for this part of the research I will discuss the Culture Clash and the Clash of Identities. In the following chapter, (Chapter 7), I will discuss the challenges that Muslims face in mainstream schools because of their different religious identity.

Associated religious organizations have played a full part in passing on moral and human rights. However, religious identity usually influences cultural identity (Haron and Jensen, 2008: 186) as argued before (see in Chapter 6.3). In the case of migrant groups, ethnic or a religious basis of identity is favoured above the other. One set of sociologists suggest that ‘Immigrant communities and subsequent generations experienced a clash of cultures that has been reinforced if not defined by a clash of religions and religious traditions’ (Haron and Jensen, 2008: 279) with the new culture mostly on the individual level. The following quote illustrates this case clearly showing the contradiction between the participants’ religion and British culture from the one side and from the other side, between religious rituals carried out to please Muslim families rather than for religious purposes or to please God. Thus, she prefers the British culture and the free will that she experienced being brought up in this society more than following strict Islamic commands in a non-Muslim country:

I think being Muslim in Britain is very hard, and is sometimes difficult. We know that by being Muslim there are certain rules you have to follow, but in England they teach us that we have freedom to do whatever we want to do, and looking at both of them together is always a kind of contradiction.

GS: How do you think it is a contradiction?

Well, we have to please our family more than our religion, this is a cultural thing. We are more concerned about what our parents would think or say; not about what our God commands. If I want to wear a short skirt for instance, I do not care so much about the consequences of Allah. I would
care more about Dad, if he saw me, he would shout at me or might throw me out of the house. That is the fear, it is not a lie. But what we have to do is to understand how Islam teaches you this and that…but at the end of the day; it is your choice what you want to do. But it is never the case that we are always forced to do what Islam says, and never given free will. But what British society teaches us is that we have free will and we are able to speak up and behave the way that we want to; so it can be a quite difficult to live in this society as a Muslim.

(Interview with Mother Number 13)

Ammermann, additionally, emphasizes that a “clash of cultures” takes place across generations of immigrants resulting in the second and third generations deriving their own relationships between ethnic and religious traditions (Duderija, 2007: 27). A Syrian French mother interpreted her feelings to me preferring to stay in France to practice her Islam in the country where she was born. She felt a clash of feelings towards French society where she was raised and of being Muslim woman who wanted to practice her religion freely in a non-Muslim society whilst wearing the *hijab*. Thus, she left France because she could not cope with the French reaction towards the *hijab*, although she could not go back to her original country Syria, because she did not feel part of it either. She looked to find her religious freedom in another European country. She came with her husband to live in Manchester as she expected a better future for her daughter in Britain.

A Muslim person can have a rich experience in Europe. We have rights here and most people respect us in Manchester. I cannot go back to my home country and live there now; I will be like a fish out of water. I found that I could not stay in France. I could not practice my religion and wear my hijab. I wanted both, to live in a European country and to practice my religion at the same time. That is why I came here. I miss France but it is really hard to live in a society that you don’t feel part of. I even feel French; I am French if the French people want it or not. I laugh with them when they laugh because I know why they are laughing; I understand what they mean; I have the same culture as them, however just because I am a Muslim they isolated me.

(Interview with the a Mother number 10)

Eid and Waardenburg argue that immigrant children focus on identity strategies which differ from the host society and their parents’ pre-fabricated boundaries (Duderija, 2007: 27). In the United Kingdom, for example, a study of second generation Pakistanis found that religion was a considerable source of identity and more so than ethnicity. ‘[T]he social boundaries defining the young people’s religious identities have a clarity and
pervasiveness that protects and enhances the minority religion, whereas the boundaries delineating their ethnic identities are far less clear-cut, reflecting and contributing to a decline in the distinctiveness of the minority community’ (Jain and Forest, 2004: 280). While ethnicity is linked only to a particular country, Islam has universal relevance. Moreover, religion was more essential than ethnicity for young British Pakistanis who identify more with their religion than with their ethnicity. Jacobsen suggests religious practice can become a vehicle for ethnic identity (Jain and Forest, 2004: 280). This participant woman identifies herself as a Muslim Arab Syrian. However, she is aware of the differences between herself and her cousins who were raised in the homeland in terms of culture, language, education and the way each of them practice and understand Islam. The advantage of her living in a non-Muslim society is the challenge to her always preserving her religious identity. This gives her a strong religious identity. The following extract supports the literature review’s argument that being different can give a person a strong sense of identity:

I would like to say firstly before saying anything, I am Muslim Syrian but of course there is no doubt about being British also, since I have lived here all my life and I am not the same as my cousin who was raised in Syria. In England it is always a challenge or an adventure, to see how my practice makes me stronger. It is a nice challenge because it shows you have more faith.

(Interview with Friday Prayer number 4)

By contrast, a Palestinian Muslim woman regarded herself as British during most of her life until she realised that British people did not perceive her as British, even though she has white skin and green eyes. At that time, she started to consider Islam as the best way for her self-identification.

For a few years of my life, maybe before I entered university, I thought I was British…and my brother always told me that they would never accept me like them or consider me British. And always I said to him: No I am exactly like them! [her voice became raised and she became angry] even my colour is a bit different [she pulled up her sleeve and showed me her skin colour] look; they regard me as black, and you as well. I am sorry to say but that is the reality for most of us. I started to wear the hijab. Then a few things happened as well, and I started to grow up and away from the people around me. I thought: Oh My God they just do not see me as British. Sometimes
when we are at university they talk with everyone in a certain way. Just because I am muhajaba (wearing the hijab) they assumed I could not speak English or understand it. They started using “the body language” you know this and that...these things put me off...then things started to be different. It did not happen quickly...I feel I do not have one identity. It is a division, but I am a Muslim Palestinian then maybe I am British also and I do not want to deny this at all. Sometimes I wish that I was raised in one country then it would be easy to have one identity...I was lost for a few years and my brothers are now lost, but I do not want my Maryam and Aisha to be lost.

(Interview with Mother Number 11)

The Iranian Friday Prayer member, with a Ph.D. in Sociology, explained the feeling of hybridity through his identification of being a Muslim and a British person. He does this by discussing each case in detail and declaring that he follows all the rules of being a good British citizen, however, he avoids customs that are in opposition to his religion and beliefs. Then he extrapolates further to argue how British culture conflicts with his identity as a Muslim. He confirms Ramadan’s view that after the age of eighteen it is a personal choice whether to practice one’s religion. The participant says:

I think there is a mistake that Muslims and non-Muslims make. The mistake is that some people ask if are you a Muslim, or a British person...I am British and I am Muslim. I am Muslim in my beliefs, rituals and in my practices. But my culture is British, I am British in my mentality, in the way that I say thank you, in the way I drive, in the programmes I am watching on the television, and in the way I queue, in the way I speak. I do not speak another language; English is my language, and when you speak the language then it affects your whole mentality. So I would not make a distinction between being a Muslim or a British person. I am British as much as any other British person. But, there are some things that are common in Britain that contradict with my Islam. For example, alcohol is a massive part of the British culture a really, really big part - you could not imagine, and I think Muslims who live in their own or closed community do not realise how it occupies their time. On one occasion we helped out with the charity called Muslim Aid, we went to Asda in Oldham. We were packing people’s shopping and we were getting donations for Somalia. What really surprised me was that every person who came to the till had alcohol; wine, beer or something. There are a lot of alcohol shops and pubs...so alcohol is one of the main aspects of British culture. I do not participate in this aspect of British culture, because it clashes with my religion. And there are other things like dating with the opposite sex. You can hear British families asking whether their children have a girlfriend yet.

Gh: Is that the case then, usually?

Yes, sister it is right for example: Oh Mum, this is my girlfriend, I am bringing her home, and the mum replies: Hi how are you? Nice to meet you...

Gh: Laughs

Really, believe me. See this dating is another thing with British culture that is incompatible with Islam. But there are many things in British culture that are incompatible with Islam and restrict many Muslims from participating. But I would not really blame British culture and say that these things only come from non-Muslim communities, this can occur in any community. So some Muslims drink because they used to drink...or go dating. Maybe it is easier for them here, there are more shops selling it or maybe the temptation is too much, but at the end of the day from the Islamic perspective they are responsible for their actions.
Culture clash may affect Muslims living in Britain in two different ways. Firstly, Muslims who are assimilated within British culture and who enjoy the privileges associated with living in Britain, may cope with their religion without contradiction as in the case of Friday Prayer member, number 1. Secondly, Muslims who adapt to the British culture in their earlier life may start to see their religion to be in contradiction with their free will, as in the case of mother number 13. Indeed, the clash of cultures and other issues of identification are more centred around personal issues, and religious institutions do not have the capacity to help all Muslims apart from general Islamic activities and the Qur’an School (see Chapter 8) providing support for the new generations and for Muslim youth of both genders from an early age to maintain and construct their religious identity in a non-Muslim society. Nevertheless, children and youth cannot spend their entire day in a mosque to preserve their religious identity, and they have to interact with others of different religions in the wider society. Therefore, Muslims have to understand the core beliefs of their religion, its principles and their level of freedom in practice. Islamic identity, and *amana* according to Ramadan’s view (see Chapter 3), asserts that above the age of eighteen years the Muslim child has free choice (Ramadan, 2005: 53) to follow their own path. This mother does not see she has free will in Islam even though she is happy with her religious identity and she describes herself as not a good Muslim who nonetheless practices Islamic rituals, except for fasting, says:

*I am glad that I am Muslim but I would rather have that through free will and be able to decide what I want to do.*

(Interview with Mother Number 13)

In non-Muslim societies today, Muslims must find their Islamic way of life. For example, when exposed to activities which are forbidden in Islam but permitted in Western countries,
like alcohol consumption, extramarital sex and same sex relationships, (see Chapter 6.3) Muslims have to understand the consequence of their actions within both cultures. On the side they have to respect the common doctrine of Western society. Ramadan asserts what we are observing now is an emergence of Western Islamic culture where Muslims stay faithful to fundamental religious principles whilst at the same time they are owning up to their own Western cultures. They are fully Muslim according to their religion, and fully Western according to their culture. This does not mean they are giving birth to a new Islam from his point of view ‘But to reconnect Islam with its original dynamism, creativity, and confidence, which enabled the faithful to observe and integrate positively all that was good and positive in the cultures they encountered’ (Ramadan, 2010: 42-43).

Therefore, Islam is not a culture as it is not related to one ethnicity but rather Islam is a universal religion; for example, Muslims who migrated from Pakistan, Morocco, and Turkey brought with them not only the memory of their religion (Islam) but also their way of life (homeland culture). Nevertheless, they recognised later that their children could lose their link to their original country and its culture by the second and third generation. They have to settle on the spiritual and ethical modalities of a harmonious life through a real integration of what might be termed ‘the deep things’ of life. This process gave unconscious birth to what we could call a European, American and British Islamic culture.

6.6 Mosques and Social Problems

A religious institution is a place to seek advice. However, do mosques appeal to teenagers? And do mosques provide advice given by qualified people?

One of the mosque’s tasks is to deal with teenagers and help them avoid the social pitfalls in the community or help them when they have problems. Mother number 11 suggests some implications for how mosques can deal with Muslim teenagers of both sexes and how
to make mosques more appealing to them. Since Muslims expect some social problems, mosques have to be ready to offer a confidential counselling service for people in need, and this could also help to bridge the gap between the community and mosque services. She recommends that:

> We want the mosque to be appealing to the youth. I think to make it more appealing for teenagers... look at the imams, we look at them as our fathers, but not everyone will go to them and speak about their problems. So perhaps it would be better if they were represented by a group of the same age. In Dundee for example, there was a group of young people aged between sixteen and twenty-five. They knew what their friends were going through. Lots of people came to them and told them their problems and they helped them a lot. So for the Didsbury Mosque; you need to have youth workers for boys and girls. Teenage pregnancy occurs whether we like it or not in the Muslim community... for British people there are counselling services, family support agencies, as Muslims we do not have these. Mosques are all about prayer and a few Qur’an schools and that is it. They do not provide any other services but they should. If you look at the time of the prophet, the mosque used to be the centre of everything. You came to the mosque... if you had any problem, you could go the prophet in the mosque and he would council you. We brought our children up in a non-Muslim country we expect the issues of boyfriends and girlfriends to come up in their schools; so we need to provide services to them to help them deal with this. This age group may turn around and challenge their parents saying: why am I not allowed this relationship? Why I am not allowed a boyfriend? On the other hand, many of them do not even dare speak to their parents. So mosques have to provide confidential councillors who would be able to understand them. Then teenagers would say that they do provide good services and they would come and join in with more activities.

(Interview with Mother Number 11)

Fountain (2007) asserts religious institutions and their leaders would not accept the faithful to use illicit drugs and that they are ‘absent in the current debates’ around illicit drug as several studies have reported. Muslims were more likely to report this than those of other faiths, ‘The mosque doesn’t discuss any social problems, including drugs’ (19).

One of the Friday Prayer members, number 2, sheds some light on the imam’s views towards social problems faced by Muslim teenagers in the UK:

> Unfortunately, some imams or people who are involved in mosques do not want to listen to these kinds of problems. But these problems are real for our Muslim community. I have seen it with people coming to the hospital. Teenagers who have overdosed with heroin or cocaine and they have almost died, and a disproportion of them are Muslim. But even some mosque organizers turn a blind eye on these issues. Mosques need to tackle these issues very well. I think it is not just about telling the teenagers that what they are doing is haram (prohibited in Islam) no, we need to go to the root of the problem; it might be the parents’ problem or the local environment. Sitting with the teenager and their parents might help to solve the problem or point them in the right direction.

(Interview with Friday prayer member2)
The woman in the *Dawa* Department tackles social problems in a different way. In her interview she argues that it is not only the imam’s task to deal with teenage problems. The imam is only one person and these kinds of problems need to be more organized by special agencies with a qualified counsellor. This work might can be arranged through the mosque.

Now we are trying to set something up in the CMA (Cheadle Mosque) to help families before these children are taken to a foster home by social services. Muslim children are too often taken away when they start having any of these problems, as they might face problems at home. We need to intervene, before they reach this stage. This is usually due to the ignorance of the parents and family, and perhaps the community did not play a good role either. In some cases they broached the mosque, but the mosque had no one qualified for the job. The Imam Sheikh Salim of the Didsbury Mosque was inundated by the MIC, to help. Many girls run away from home and he helped some of them to come back. But he is only one, he cannot do everything, we need a group a psychologists and counsellors. Now the community also needs a helpline: we need to deal with parents more than the girls themselves. When I did a talk for the girls I was describing some of the issues about being pregnant before getting married; and one of them said: ‘Oh well, I was pregnant and after all, I kept my baby’, and another one said: ‘Oh yeh, enjoy yourself, and do what you want’ The midwife said to them: ‘I know one girl who does not know who the father of her child is, she had broken up with her boyfriend and started with another. She added at the end: ‘It is not worth it’. I felt these poor girls were misguided and were pushing for something that they did not even know the consequence of. If they think deeply enough they might not do it. Everyone enjoys the freedom of this country but we do not know how the future will be for this minority.

(Interview with a member of *Dawa* Department)

Generally there is an increasingly widespread perception in Muslim communities that such imams are not equipped by their own training to help young British Muslims cope with the distractions of Western youth culture like drugs and drug-dealing (Richardson and Wood, 2004: 3). However, many institutions in the UK are seeking to cater for the training of imams, including: the Muslim College in Ealing, which offers a Diploma in Islamic Studies as well as a Masters’s Degree for imams (Halstead, 2005: 134).

### 6.7 Conclusion

This chapter started by discussing the main role of Islamic religious institutions *vis-a-vis* the Muslim community in any society. Then it illustrated with respondents describing themselves and how they represent their religious identity in a non-Muslim society. The
significance of religious identity is demonstrated for some interviewees. While the chapter discusses the challenges and the clashes some participants have between their Islamic religion and British culture, the chapter highlights how mosques can help protect cultural identity and the ethnic identity of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim societies. This chapter shows how the religious institutions work to provide minorities with a complex structure of identities. This is important, because it helps to reveal how mosques reproduce cultural identity and ethnic identity in non-Muslim societies and whether the mosque deals with social problems in a positive or harmful way.

The chapter has also drawn attention to the power and privilege implicit in the research process. It has been particularly important to reflect on my own position as a practicing Muslim migrant in a non-Muslim country. Furthermore, of great importance is the negotiation of the relationship between myself and the respondents and the ever changing interpretations of each other. Keeping this in mind, the following chapters turn to the empirical focus of the thesis. The next chapter will continue, to reflect on the challenges that Muslims face, in holding on to their religion in British state schools.
Chapter Seven

British Schools and Islamic Identity

7.1 Introduction

‘Education represents for British Muslims a major area of struggle for equality of opportunity and assertion of identity. It was over education that Muslims became increasingly vocal in raising their demands in the early 1980s, and it is where they have succeeded best in having many of their needs recognised in the face of controversy and opposition from broad sections of British society’ (Ansari, 2004:298).

For integration and to achieve social cohesion in a diverse multicultural and multi-faith society, education is essential. Schools provide an opportunity to develop students’ understanding of their community and its culture and religion. In Britain, schools offer bonds and friendships across different ethnic and faith groups. The education curriculum is a mechanism by which pupils are able to develop and understand different groups within the surrounding community. However, it seems there is substantial diversity in what Muslim parents want. While some would like to send their children to Islamic ethos schools, others merely want single-sex schooling; others are happy to send their children to state or church schools so long as these are respectful of their faith and supportive of their distinctive identity as Muslims (Halstead, 2005: 103-104). Debates around the construction of young Muslims’ identity and their educational experiences in British schools have even been more contested. Some scholars and policymakers argue that the failure of mainstream state schools in meeting the needs of Muslim pupils has posed problems for integration. On the other hand, some researchers envisage a strong role for Muslim faith-based schools in “socializing” young Muslims and constructing their “British Muslim” identity (Rizvi, 2012). Although, the majority of Muslims in Britain attend community schools, many Muslim parents feel that community schools are not meeting the needs of Muslim children
at present. There are approximately half a million Muslim children and young people currently receiving education in British schools and colleges (Halstead, 2005: 103-104).

In the previous chapter I discussed the institutional role of the mosque in preserving culture and ethnic identity while at the same time, constructing and reproducing religious identity. This chapter highlights some of the anxieties Muslim parents currently have about the British system of educational provision. I will argue the different challenges Muslim parents or students might face in terms of education in British schools and its influences on their religious identity. I will suggest why some Muslim parents are motivated to teach their children in private Islamic schools if they can afford to, especially girls. Different narratives will be tested to shed light on the teaching processes of new Muslim generations about Islam via British mainstream schools. The lack of support for Muslim children’s Islamic identity; and parental perception of the inadequacy of the spiritual and moral education that the schools provide, will also be covered.

In order to maintain clarity and coherence for the current chapter, it was decided to give an overview about the importance of learning and education in Islam in general and how teaching can work to create a feeling of belonging to a specific religion. Then the chapter looks at the some challenges faced by some Muslim parents and students in British schools, with more focus on issues in RE lessons, and religious celebrations during Christmas and Easter. This is followed by discussing the impact of friendships between Muslims and non-Muslims in British schools on Muslim students. This chapter helps to understand the current situation of Muslim families in Manchester and their needs and expectations of mainstream schools. Chapter Eight will then examine religious institutions and Qur’an schools, in terms of how they help new Muslim generations to construct their religious identity and to pass it on to subsequent generations in a non-Muslim society. In this chapter and the next the real name of the respondents will not be used so as not to identify the child
or their family, though different names are utilised to make reading the narratives more interesting.

### 7.2 The Role of Education in Constructing Islamic Identity

Knowledge, learning and education are most important for both genders in Islam. Surah 96 of the Qur'an, specify both the theological and epistemological base of Islam: ‘That the divine (Allah) desires to impart knowledge to human beings so that they might learn, understand, and follow the right path.’(Gent, 2006a: 28) In addition to the Qur’an, a substantial amount of the hadith literature in Islam also throws light on Muslim approaches to knowledge:

‘To seek knowledge is the duty of every Muslim man and Muslim woman.’ (Gent, 2006: 29)

‘An hour’s contemplation and study of God’s creation is better than a year of adoration.’(Gent, 2006: 29)

‘Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.’(Abley et al., 2004: 5, Bouhdiba and Dawālībī, 1998: 149).

Giving this idea about value of education in Islam is essential, since it helps to understand how/why education from the point of Muslims can be regarded as a vital approach in following the right path and to believe in God. Belief in the “oneness of God” tawheed is the core aspect of a Muslim’s religious identity as mentioned in the literature review, according to Ramadan (3.5). One of the key functions in the field of education is to transmit traditional values to the young generation and to generate a sense of community belonging. ‘It is a widely held view among the first generation that their children are exposed to the cultural influences of the larger society. Schooling and peer-group relations
constantly exerting cultural influences on young people and presenting new identity choices in conflict with the home culture and Islamic values’ (Küçükcan, 2004: 252). In Chapter Eight I will look at the role of the Qur’an School in order to examine this aspect of education.

In this section, I will look at the difference between education in Muslim societies and non-Muslim societies, drawing on my interview material and the literature review discussion about the significance of teaching in transmitting religious identity as in Chapter Three, 3.4, 3.5. Halstead says of the Muslim approach to education: ‘Education is...not to be seen as an end in itself, but as a way of bringing children more into line with God's purpose. Faith in God is axiomatic and is a major factor in determining who is to do the teaching, how and where the teaching is to be carried out and what is to be taught’ (Halstead, 2005: 31, Gent, 2006b: 29). Therefore, Muslims, who live in Muslim societies, do not find it is hard to implant religious identity and of belonging to an Islamic community in their children; because the teaching system in Muslim societies carries religious dimensions. For example: teaching and learning the Qur’an and Islamic studies is part of the school curriculum in Muslim countries. The following quote illustrates:

I have to go back to my home country as soon as possible. Because this county is a different society, Even though, here it is free - we have freedom, but in my country - Somalia we only have one rule, (she said Somalia in a very sensitive and weak voice) a kind of Islamic rule. We wear the scarf. We use the hijab and we read the Qur'an. Our children learn the Qur'an and Islam in schools like any other subjects. In my country, for example we do not have boyfriends or girlfriends among the school students. My country has halal marriage only.

(Interview with Mother number 5)

By contrast a Syrian Friday Prayer member, number 4 even though born in London and was brought up in a non-Muslim Country, found herself practicing her religion and wearing her hijab more zealously than other female Muslims students for example, in Saudi Arabia, where she went during her high school years. People in Saudi Arabia or other Muslim societies may prefer to follow the Western way of life and its fashions, as
new generations may think the hijab is a sign of backwardness. This explains the contradiction between Westernization in Muslim countries and preserving Islamic identity amongst Muslim migrants. The participant in her interview justifies why she had been practicing her hijab since a young age in a non-Muslim society, and why she was surprised when she moved to an Islamic country to find the opposite of what she expected.

Because I come from a practicing family, I was raised with very religious values, which I used to put into practice myself. For example, when I became eleven, I wore the hijab even though nobody asked me to, I thought it was the right thing to do, when I went to high school. But when I moved to Saudi Arabia with my family, I was shocked…in my class in I was the only girl who was observing mohajaba (wearing the headscarf). It was the opposite of what I expected. I thought they would be practicing more because they study Islam and the sharia (Islamic way of life) there in their schools. I also found that my family held onto their religious beliefs more so than they had in Syria.

(Interview with a Friday Prayer number 4)

The teaching process is completely different for Muslims who live in a non-Muslim country, because it does not carry a clear religious dimension, or more specifically it does not carry an Islamic dimension. The following extract shows that the educational system does not own any religious dimensions towards believe in God. This makes the task of Qur’an teachers in non-Muslim societies harder, because the teacher has to build the aspect of believing in God in the student who may have been taught the secular way practised in some British schools.

There is always a clash between what we teach them in the mosque, and what they teach them in British schools. Because what we want them to be foremost is, Muslim,- to believe in God, but they want them to be outstanding human beings - brilliant in science, maths etc… they are not concerned if they are atheists.

(Interview with MIC Qur’a’n teacher number 4)

It is not only the lack of faith, it is also how religion may feature in their beliefs, their practices and their relationships. Thus, some of these challenges will be examined through the current chapter in detail. The next few paragraphs shed light on some of the family narratives, to give an idea of some of the challenges that Muslim parents or Muslim students face.
7.3 The Challenge of Islamic Identity in British Schools

In Britain for example, Muslims succeeded in ‘having many of their needs recognised in the face of controversy and opposition from broad sections of British society’ (Halstead, 2005: 106). Education is a crucial element of integration and for gaining social cohesion, since half a million Muslims currently receive their education in British schools, the British organisations and individuals delivering and participating in the education system have a critical role in engaging with the new generation of British Muslims (Halstead, 2005: 106).

It is not easy for Muslim families to make their children practice their religion. Muslim students spend a long time, every day mixing with other pupils who have different religions and different backgrounds. A Muslims’ group in Britain had made lists of improvements they hoped to see in state schools, mainly because the students’ roll, in some schools, was predominantly Muslim (Parker-Jenkins 1992: 363). For example Muslim requests include: ‘Withdrawal from Christian worship in British schools; absence from school on two Eid holidays: Eidal-Fitr and Eidal-Adha; facilities for ablutions wudhu and prayer; absence from school on Friday afternoons for Jum’a Prayers or alternatively for the organization of collective worship at the school; uniforms which respect Muslim standards of modesty for girls, headscarves and trousers rather than short skirts, and clothes which ensures the students’ modesty in physical education classes, including suitable uniforms and private facilities for showering and changing; availability of halal food; withdrawal from sex education, music, or even dance classes according to the parents’ request; and right of entry to single-sex schools, as a part of the British state system’. Although such schools, since the early 1970s, have been systematically phased out in favour of co-education (Kelly, 1999: 179). ‘Muslim’s requests (e.g. for a prayer room) reflected the local Muslim community’s need to receive formal recognition and accommodation from the state through its schools, particularly in areas where Muslim students predominate.
Thus, in some instances, once the concession was won, students lost interest and few took advantage of it. While some British schools did respond to demands for such things as halal or vegetarian meals, adapted uniforms and withdrawal from Christian daily worship, other demands, such as more places in single-sex schools, were not accommodated’ (Kelly, 1999: 198). Such a situation, posed various problems in Bradford, for example, which witnessed a demonstration by non-Muslim parents against the board’s decision to supply halal meals for Muslim students. The researcher’s fieldwork discovered various points of view about British schools. Each of the female students and their mothers had different narratives regarding some of the problems they faced in British schools. For example: hijab, prayers during school time, friendships and religious celebrations during Christmas and Easter, and the school textbooks. The following sections will discuss each of these challenges separately.

7.3.1. Hijab in British Schools

The wearing of the headscarf in British schools was previously prohibited for female Muslims students. Mother number two, who was born in the UK, is around 38 years old, and shares her memory of wearing hijab in a British school during her childhood and how the case has been changed in a positive way towards Muslim female students, who now enjoy the right to wear a headscarf in mainstream British schools.

In the UK, they respect your religion more than anywhere else does. They respect your belief now more than before. Before they never used to let you wear your headscarf at school or anything... children could not wear the headscarf at school. When I was born, you would never see a headscarf at school. I used to wear it to school then take it off in school, then coming outside; I would put it back on again. You were not allowed to wear it in the school in my time, but now it is allowed and my children wear it at school. A lot has changed over the years.

(Interview with Mother number 2)

Even though, it is permitted to wear headscarf nowadays, issues still remain. In Derby, for instance, the right of Muslim girls to wear Islamic clothes in the school colours, was faced
with a non-Muslim demonstration against the Muslims attempts to modify the uniform (Kelly, 1999: 198). Some of the young participants still experience restrictions against the headscarf in school. For example its colour, shape, size and school logo, the following exhortation explains the student’s feeling towards wearing hijab in a British school. This student worried about others, what they might think about her when she is wearing her headscarf in school as a Muslim student.

When I go to school wearing the hijab I feel out of place, because you feel that they are judging you for wearing it. Even though, when we wear it we have to follow the school requirements like size, colour and school logo.

(Interview with Student number 4)

Although the wearing of headscarves is authorised now, in British state schools, some students still experience a form of bullying from teachers or non-Muslim friends, because hijab reflects their Islamic religious identity. The next extract explains the narrative of one student in high school. She suffered from bullying in her school that resulted in health problems for her. Her mother joined both her daughters in the MIC Qur’an School to make up for the lack of community belonging with the outside environment.

My daughter says that she does not want to wear her headscarf, this is just because of her experiences at school. I want her to wear the hijab but I know it was really difficult for her. Sometimes her teacher was asking her: “Are you happy with your headscarf, Safeia? Do you want to take it off?” Children as you know, often say they do not want the headscarf but say their mummy makes them wear it. That is why I come here to the mosque, we are all similar here. Also many non-Muslim friends used to say: “Oh Safeia, she is a Muslim, she is wearing a headscarf and she cannot take it off!”, They were interfering a lot. She was so unhappy; she had to go to the hospital because of the stress.

(Interview with Mother number 5)

By contrast, whilst it is allowed for those that wish, to wear a headscarf in British schools there are some restrictions like its colour and shape, that pose problems for those students who wish to follow the latest fashion and modern designs. This quote explains how each of the students have a wish to wear hijab according to their own design and how others view this:
But here [mosque and Qur’an school] is a little bit different, everyone has hijab, they all respect it more than there [mainstream school]. When I go to school I have to wear hijab up to my neck only. I cannot wear any other kind of modern headscarf. We have school hijab, it is a triangle piece of cloth with the school logo at the corner. It is obvious I am a Muslim. Some students ask why I wear it, you have to tell them it is part of my religion, some people respond in a bad way but you have to ignore them.

(Interview with Student 1)

Mother number 10 explains how stressful it was for her in France, wearing her headscarf in school. In her interview, she tries to express how difficult it was for her and how the French had reacted badly towards the hijab by adding some incidents involving herself and her mother. Nevertheless, she still sees a good future for her daughter in Britain since she sees the British are more cooperative and open minded towards Muslim needs.

In France, I encountered many problems because of my hijab, sometimes I suffer here but it is not the same as in France. In France, you have to have blond hair, blue eyes and you have to be Christian. When they saw me wearing the hijab they said: “Oh, wow! She speaks French; she has the same accent, it is strange, she is at university, she is driving.”

Gh: Do you think they have a negative image about Muslim women especially those wearing the hijab?

I think so, do you know that one of the reasons I came here was to practice my religion in a free country.

Gh: How?

French people said to my Mum, that because she was wearing the hijab, and she was driving a Ferrari that she should to be working in the kitchen. They threw eggs at her car sometimes.

For me, whilst I was doing my Master’s Degree I had to teach French to foreign students, for six months but I had difficulties with my headscarf. They said to me; “We really need a proper teacher so come without a headscarf”. Up until now, I have not been granted my Masters, because of this. Sometimes there was a trip organised by her school for my daughter to go to a museum. I would say to them that I could come to help. But but they would say that I could not go if I was wearing a headscarf. My daughter was so sad, because I could not go with her on her school trips Sometimes she cried. She could not understand it. Actually, I do not want my daughter to have the same life like me or like my own mother. In France I often cried. I could not get a job. But in Manchester I found everything there. I even found halal meals in the schools, I could not believe it. My daughter Insha’ Allah (God willing) will have a better experience than me wearing her headscarf in British schools.

(Interview with Mother number 10)

Generally, according to the participants of this study, the issue of the hijab is still a controversial one, as it depends on the location of the school. If the school is in a multi-ethnic neighbourhood then there are major contrasts with areas where Muslims are in a minority. The following extract summarises this:
I think it depends on which school you go to. If you go to a mostly white British area then they look at you oddly and ask you why wear the hijab, but if you live in an Asian or mixed area they do not question it. There is a huge difference between a majority white English area and a non-white area.

(Interview with a Mother number 2)

Statistics show that British Muslims generally prefer to send their children to state-funded schools and specifically single-sex schools for their daughters, at least for financial reasons (Kelly, 1999: 198). Public funding has approved just two Muslim primary schools up until January 1998. Thus, drawing on the research data some Muslim families prefer to enrol their children in Islamic schools, mainly for girls. This may be because it helps them to protect their modesty as it would be easier for them to practice their hijab among other Muslim pupils, since hijab is one of the most important signs of morality and modesty in Muslim communities. Some Muslims struggle with their life expenses but they still insist on teaching their daughters in Islamic schools, as mother number 3 illustrates. She could not conceive of her daughter studying in British state schools. Maybe due to the lack of Islamic values or maybe because she was worried about her modesty, the family honour and of the need to practice Islamic rituals:

I do know Islamic schools are really expensive. But for me it is important, and many other mothers like me…but believe me it is worth it. I cannot afford it sometimes, but I could not imagine my daughter studying in a state school.

(Interview with a Mother number 3)

In Islamic schools, hijab is part of the Islamic school uniform. It is required even if the student does not wear her hijab out of school time. Nevertheless, this kind of action does not have positive outcomes, all the time with all Muslim students. According to the narrative of mother number 13, even though she got the chance to study in an Islamic private school for girls, it did not have so much effect and impact on her as a Muslim. She Says:
I went to a private Muslim school. We were taught never to talk to boys, never to do this and never to do that. You would have to be covered from head to toe, and when we left, we did whatever we wanted to do, even more so because we were not allowed to do it. Actually, in the school, we talked to them about hijab, and we said it should not be compulsory; but they said it was compulsory. Actually it should be up to us to decide, if we feel we want to wear it or not. Because, we know the consequences if we do not wear it...but they said no you have to wear it - there is no choice...I used to put it on in the car when my mother dropped me off at school. When my mum picked me up after school I would whip it off straight away, because we used to feel embarrassed. I was thinking what would people think about me wearing such a thing. I used to put the scarf on two minutes before I arrived at school and then take it off when I left. Nowadays my dad says to me: “Oh no! now I have lost all of my investment!” Because he spent a lot of money paying for my private Islamic school.

(Interview with a mother number 13)

By contrast, some Muslim families register their children in private schools which are non-Islamic ones. They aim to achieve a high level of education for their children since they think the house is the first place where children must learn to be Muslim and the mosque can be the second. This is what is discussed in the literature review (3.5). The woman in the *Dawah* Department of the MIC says in her narrative:

*There is always a good and a bad side to sending them to a Christian school. If I did not go there how would they know about Islam; who would give them the Qur’an?*

GH: How did that happen?

When I started to do *dawah* (preaching) in the church, at the same time, I started to do talks in my son’s school. It is a Christian private school. We were approached by his teacher; she asked me one day whether I could give a talk about Islam. I gave a talk, then we did another one...Even though it is a very Christian school I gave them the Qur’an, and some Islamic books for the school library.

GH: What about your children’s identity as Muslims in such a school?

A Muslim child is created in the home, in my opinion. As long as you are attached to the mosque, you can maintain your identity. Visiting the mosque regularly is important for everyone in the family. *Alhamdo’lillah* (thanks be to God) I visit more than one mosque in one day.

(Interview with a member of *Dawah* Department)

Marie Parker-Jenkins and Kaye Haw have examined ‘The experience of Muslim girls in a Muslim school in Britain’. Their study is based on participant observation over two years at a Muslim girls’ school. They held interviews with 80% of the students. The result of the study shows that many of the students felt happy at their school, because it is an Islamic one and because the school has a good academic reputation. Most of the girls at this school wear headscarves, and share a common religious and cultural background, there is a strong
sense of conformability. On the other hand, different issues have troubled the students, like the lack of close relationships with the staff, only two of them are Muslim women, and a lack of a voice in the school’s day-to-day affairs (Kelly, 1999: 208).

### 7.3.2 Praying in British Schools

As mentioned before, Muslims in Britain attempted to get permission for Muslim students to have a prayer room in their state schools (see section 6.3). Although in some cases, Muslim students cannot perform their prayers, due to bulling from other students. Mother number 4 uses the expression “safe” to refer to the prayer room in the school. She says:

> We have a problem; our children do not perform their Al thuher (noon prayer). When I asked them to find a place to pray at school, they complained and said: “Mum, when we pray the girls laugh and do bad things”. I have experienced these things as well; when we go for prayers at college, some women come to the door where we pray, they shout and laugh. We do not say anything in the school as they are children but in our case, they are adults? When our children feel safe to pray they do, and when they do not feel safe, they pray at home.

*(Interview with a Mother number 4)*

Student 5 adds that in her school there is a prayer room but it is not available all the time. It is not easy for Muslim students to ask the Head teacher to open it. The following quote shows what Muslim students might face in mainstream schools:

> In my school sometimes, there is a prayer room but sometimes it is not open so therefore you cannot pray at certain times in the school. Generally, at school you cannot pray, even if you have an argument with the Head teacher they still will not let you pray. Some of the Head teachers are racist. They will not let you worship your God in school.

*(Interview with a Student number 5)*

While another student explains in her interview, the misconceptions about Islam and its rituals. Some think Muslims only pray on Friday afternoons. That is why these Muslim students are only allowed to perform their prayers at Friday lunchtime. She compares her case with her friend who has a prayer room open all the time.
During lunch time in my school, the teacher gives us time to go and pray but she only allows this on certain days like Fridays, that is the only day, we cannot pray on the other days – we are not allowed to pray on other days. You know my friend told me that in her school in Whalley Range, they have room 16 as a prayer room and their teachers are very kind with them. Some of them are Muslim teachers, so they know we pray five times a day, not only on Fridays.

(Interview with a Student number 6)

Student number 10 observes the difference between the Arabic supplementary school and the British state school in Manchester; in terms of racism and bulling towards Muslim students. However, she is still able to perform her prayers at school, perhaps because she goes to an all-girls school and because her teacher is Muslim, a situation that is not very common.

Well in Arabic school everybody feels equal but in English school some people bully you and they can be very nasty...it is like a form of racism in British schools. Yes, I perform Al thuher (noon prayer) and Al aser (afternoon prayers) every day at school, because we have a Muslim teacher in our school, and it is all girls. We do not go to a mixed school. We pray there and take our lunch break prayers Al thuher and Al aser and talk about Islamic stuff.

(Interview with a Student number 10)

Muslim students who want to practice their religion face different challenges within the British state school system in terms of praying or hijab and experience a kind of bulling from the staff and students. Therefore, sending children to weekend Qur’an schools that are predominantly situated in the local mosque, comes as a priority for Muslim parents, who aim to save their religious identity as the next chapter discusses. However, British schools whether state schools or private, might be a good field for further investigation and study about how they are treating Muslim students and what facilities are available to the Muslim minority in British schools. In addition to that, new research could discuss the clash Muslim students may face in such schools. The current research does not cover any of these issues in more detail, because the main aim is not to compare the British school with the Qur’an school. The current research examines only some of these challenges. For example, the hijab and the prayer room facilities in British schools as has been discussed
earlier. Now the focus will be on friendships in British schools and school textbooks and how they represent Islam, according to the Muslims students via the interview process.

7.3.3 Friendships in British Schools

Religious identification, furthermore, might be contributed to by new friends and peer groups as they play a significant role in constructing and reinforcing the emerging religious identity among students (Peek, 2005: 5). This is why a Muslim mother who works as a Qur’an teacher in the MIC thinks it is important in high school to have Muslim friends, because at that age non-Muslim friends may do something prohibited in Islam which could then start a conflict between the Islamic rules and the outside environment. This is similar to the case of mother 13, who suffers from culture clash and wishes to exercise the free will as an individual as British society provides. The Qur’an teacher says:

“It is a very important for Muslim children to have Muslim friends otherwise if they only have non-Muslim friends then they will become more like non-Muslims. They need people like themselves. My children had white friends in primary school, which did not bother me much at that time. But when they grew older and went to high school, they found their white friends were doing things against their own beliefs. I found that all my boys distanced themselves from the non-Muslim friends and became closer to Muslim ones, as they have something in common with them, which they did not have with non-Muslims.”

(Interview with a MIC Qur’an Teacher number 3)

Alternatively, in other cases, parents have been keen to select a local community school where the majority of the students are Muslim. Mother number 2 preferred her son’s school because they perform Friday prayers there.

*Insha’Allah* (God willing) my daughter and sons all have Islamic friends, they have very few non-Muslim friends. My daughter goes to a girls’ school where there are mostly Muslim girls. And my son, he goes to grammar school, and they *Mash’Allah* (may God protect him) do *Juma* prayers in the school. So that’s why I looked out for these schools and chose it for my children... They read *Jum’a* in school and so I thought that this school was perfect because it is encouraging the children to turn towards their religion.

(Interview with Mother Number 2)
This mother, although she is one of the staff at the MIC Qur’an School still sends her children to a Christian private school. Islamic identity does not matter because her children can practice Islam at home. However, the challenge for her is still the friendships with non-Muslims.

No, I do not feel I am worried about my children’s identity because religious identity starts at home. Alcohol is available everywhere. The only thing that makes our job more difficult is friends’ influence at school. At the end of the day I have to explain to my children what is right and what is wrong, and why.

(Interview with MIC Qur’an Teacher number 4)

By contrast, in some cases problems may occur between students in the same school due to belonging to different religions. The following example about an argument that took place amongst students in one of the British schools, resulting in the mother referring to her children’s school as an unsafe place for them, because they are a Muslim minority in this school.

Now we have a new problem; this problem happened with a Palestinian student in my children’s school. All the time the students are fighting. This time the argument was about the Palestinians and the Jews; a group of girls defended the Jewish cause and our children defended the Palestinians. Anything that happens between the girls results in them fighting about religion. Now we do not feel it is safe for our children to be there. One day my daughter came back from school and told me one girl said: “I hate Muslims, all Muslims are terrorists!” Do you think that kids are safe, when every time Muslim’s are called terrorists? Many girls cause trouble in the school.

(Interview with Mother number 4)

Mother number 8 thinks friends have an impact on the students whether they share the same religious identity or not.

Friendships with other children who have the same or different set of morals makes a difference for me, it is an important issue because they learn from them; because the friends that you keep might either pull you towards the right path or take you down with them.

(Interview with Mother number 8)
7.3.4 Religious Celebrations in British Schools

Sending Muslim children to British schools entails further responsibilities for parents in many ways because religious celebrations in schools could be a significant issue for some Muslim parents. Christmas songs and stories have an enormous effect on children. Religious celebrations in non-Muslim schools might be equal in impact to friendship influences (see in Chapter 6.3.3) and school textbooks (see in Chapter 6.3.5). Although Christianity is one of the Abrahamic religions, some Muslim parents still see it as different from Islam, as the following extracts will show.

Father Christmas songs, Easter celebrations, and all other stories are always stamped on the children’s minds, Muslim or non-Muslim. But for young Muslim children the case may be different, because it makes little Muslim students aware of the Christian religious occasions more than the Islamic ones and their sense of loyalty towards EidAl-Fitr and EidAl-Adha, may be less.

(Interview with MIC Qur’an Teacher number 1)

Thus, some Muslim parents who have a strong religious identity think that their children will be vulnerable to the Christian culture. Nearly all the Muslim mothers who participated in the research have young children in the primary school or even nursery. However, they all have different narratives about their children in terms of non-Muslim religious celebrations and different religious information that they received from British Schools during that time.

The argument about the influence of religious celebrations on Muslim pupils is going to focus on just two stories due to limited space and time. Moreover, because these two narratives show the contradiction between basic Islamic information like the belief in one God (see Chapter 2), and what the students learn in British schools during religious occasions like Christmas and Easter. Each of the narratives helps to justify why some Muslims think there is a difference between Islam and Christianity even though both are Abrahamic religions. The first narrative is about a young boy. He is five years old and
called Salah. Salah thinks there is more than one God in the world. His mother understands his situation of being confused may be because of the school teachers and what he had been taught or had heard from them during Easter or Christmas celebrations, and what he knows or starts to learn from his home and the Qur’an School at the mosque (see in Chapter 8.4.1).

I think we struggle sometimes when children come home with different information that they have received at British schools. For instance Salah came and told me about the Gods he had been reading about. Maybe it was because it was Easter, and they had been reading many stories about Jesus. I think he got confused between the school and the mosque, as he needs time to understand the difference.

(Interview with Mother number 6)

Here is a different story about another Muslim child; he is around four years old. He thought he would teach his mother something that she does not know about religion. He told her that in the beginning, “Jesus is God”, the mother then tried to explain to her child what God means in Islam. Moreover, she asked his Muslim teacher to explain it for him. In fact, the issue is that those children usually trust their teachers more than they trust their parents. Then after two years, the same child came to his mother with a different idea about God: “Jesus is the son of God” he said. Then the mother tried to explain and linked the concept that he had used to parts of the Qur’an which the child was already familiar with, she explained the meaning according to his understanding. Examining this incident, shows the same child coming with two different ideas within a short period of time. The first one where Jesus is God, and the second one where Jesus is the son of God. This reflects the teachers’ belief system as the next section will discuss (see in Chapter 6.3.5). The first teacher believes Jesus is God in contrast with the second teacher who believes that Jesus is the son of God. As mentioned earlier one of the educational functions is to help transmit religious values to the young generation and to generate a sense of community belonging. Therefore, analysing this narrative declares the lack of this educational function for
Muslim minorities. However, Muslim students learn later on about Islam in mainstream schools through RE lessons (see in Chapter 6.3.5), in some cases a Muslim child might see a conflict between home, the British school and the Qur’an School, if they study in the mosque. Because both the home and the Qur’an School might infuse the same religious values, while the British school may not be on the same parallel. Many of these incidents may be unknown because some Muslim parents may not hear about it, either because the child does not tell the parents what they learn in school, or because the parents do not mind what their children learn at school. Therefore, the educational system could have a marked effect on the religious identity of Muslim students. The mother says:

What happened with my child during the school Christmas celebrations is living proof. One day he said to me in the voice he uses when he wants to inform me of something new and important, or that I might not know about: “Mum, Jesus is God.” I asked him who told you that? and he replied, “The teacher in my class” I said who is she? Mrs Ahmed I know is a Muslim and she would not teach children something like that. He said no, that it was Mrs Russell, I tried to explain to him about our belief that Muslims believe in one God. He seemed to me that he was not satisfied with my answer. So the next day when I went to the school, I told Mrs Ahmed the full story and that he was not happy with my answer. She explained to him. Then in year one or two, I am not sure, he came to me during the time of Easter celebrations. He said to me this time: “Jesus is the son of God”. I asked him how he could say that as he already knew what was written in the Qur’an in Surat Al-Ikhlas [she read the full surah in Arabic]. I said: “Have you forgotten this verse?” Again, it took a long time to discuss this with him and to explain to him the whole story according to the Qur’an and the Islamic interpretation of Mary and Jesus’ story. After that, we searched online about Jesus’ story in the Qur’an and we printed it off for him, he took the copy of this story to his teacher in the school and he read parts of it to his class of Muslim and non-Muslim friends.

(Interview with Qur’an Teacher Number 3)

British schools are places where Muslim students spend a long time every day and where they get along with others of differing religions and backgrounds. Mother number 12 even though she reverted to Islam nine years ago, still sees British schools as a place where Muslim students can be confused about their religious identity because of the many things they are bombarded with. For instance, when British schools celebrate Christmas and Easter it makes Muslim students unsure of their religious identity, and who they belong to.

Is it a Muslim community or a Christian community?

I am worried about their identity in school as they may have the wrong influence sometimes. Now they are going to celebrate Easter, and all children will be eating Easter eggs. We buy them, they
can have them - it is just a chocolate at the end of the day. But we are not going to do any celebrations, and at Christmas time they have the party and Christmas presents in school and they take part but I think these events confuse them as Muslims.

(Interview with Mother number 12)

Thus, it could be part of the parents’ responsibility to supervise the education of their children in British schools and some of them might prefer to stop some classes or activities during school celebrations. Mother number 11 saw how her parents still struggle with her younger brother. Therefore, she does not want to have the same experience with both of her daughters. She heard the Christmas songs being sung by the school students during Christmas celebrations and her daughter was one of them who performed in the play. To begin with she said it was only a song and that it was not a big deal if her daughter sang it. However, after that she found the words conflicted with the Islamic image of Mary. Thus, she made her decision to stop her daughter taking part in the school Christmas show over the following years.

Muslims here struggle every day to raise their children as Muslims. I saw how my parents have struggled up to now with the youngest one. I do not want to have the same, I will tell you why; just recently I talked to Mariam’s teacher that we do not want our daughter to participant in the Christmas show. Because she participated last year and they were singing songs about Jesus, initially we did not have a problem with it, it was OK but then we listened to the words. We said oh no, this is haram (forbidden) Jesus is the Lord and Joseph and Mary. Now it is Easter and they do things that we do not believe in. I feel as a Muslim you have to be aware of everything around you, and what your children learn in school. It is not part of your normal life here. That is why I do not want her to attend the musical class and sex education lessons when she grows up.

(Interview with Mother number 11)

In addition to that, the non-Islamic British school environment plays a vital role - even consciously or not - putting Muslim students in the position of having to make a comparison between Islam and other religions. This extract shows how living in a secular country, such as Britain is hard for Muslims if they want to follow their religious instructions. This opinion might have arisen as a result of going to non-Muslim schools,
having friendships, and assimilating with the British lifestyle and culture (see in Chapter 6.5).

I think being Muslim in the UK is very hard as I said, and it could be more difficult because we know that by being Muslim there are certain rules you have to follow, but England teaches us that we have freedom to do whatever we want to do. There is a contradiction here, a big contradiction between both.

(Interview with Mother number 13)

Therefore, some of the Muslims students see that Islam is full of obligations compared with the other religions. Life would be easier and there would be more fun without us applying Islamic restrictions. That is why on some occasions, Muslim students do not practice their religion and try to adapt to the British way of life (see in Chapter 6.5). The next quote illustrates how some Muslim female students adapt to the boyfriend relationship idea instead of Islamic marriage or “halal” marriage, as most of the participants in the research call it. Moreover, this might be happening either because of school friendships or perhaps because parents were unable to teach Islam to their children in a clear way, according to mother number 8.

I have seen it many times, more than three or four of my friends have run away from home during secondary school, with their boyfriends… I have a lot of experience with people who have not taken the right path. I think teenage pregnancies are very, very common in the Muslim community because of dating. In Islam, we do not have dating, we only have “halal” marriage. I think this is mainly because of schooling and non-Muslim friendships or sometimes because Muslims do not practice Islam. May be the problem is how the parents have brought their children up, they might teach them to read the Qur’an but they did not give them the Islamic knowledge. That means they do not understand their religion.

(Interview with Mother number 8)

7.3.5 Teaching Islam in British Schools

What does the school textbook teach about Islam?

What is the Muslim students’ attitude towards their religion after learning about Islam from non-Islamic resources?
The current research did not study the school textbook itself and has only covered parts of it based on asking Muslim parents, students who are more than twelve years old attending the MIC, and Qur’an school teachers, to share their stories and experience about RE lessons in order to investigate Muslim students’ opinion about RE lessons and the education they received about Islam in British schools.

The most tendentious issue, for some of the Muslim community leaders and intellectuals, is the teaching of Islam which is given within the religious education curriculum in British schools by inadequately trained ‘Non-Muslims using texts whose inquiry into Islam is not intended to nurture faith’ (Ahsan, 1988: 6-14, Hewer, 1992: 131, Shadid and Koningsveld, 1995). The demands of Muslims in the domain of education have been political, social, and religious in character. It is very clear from the interviews that RE lessons in British school do not focus on any one religion. They try to teach different religions, Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic. This may be a good point from the perspective of some Muslims.

In school here, they cover other religions as well, it is not only about Islam, which it is not a bad thing, so students can know and compare their religion with other religions.

(Interview with Teacher Number 3)

While the others think the main priority is to learn more about Islam first, more than any other religion, because they do not have scientific knowledge about their religion, then when they gain enough education about Islam they might learn about other religions.

It is a good thing to know about other religions, but first of all I have to study my religion, I need to understand its principles and foundations to know what are my duties as a Muslim, then it might be interesting to know about others and their beliefs. But if I learnt about Christianity, Sikhism…etc, and I do not know about my religion, what is the point for me, I do not think I will gain any benefit from the school curriculum.

(Interview with Student number 7)

In addition to that, student number 5 shares her narrative that during religious education in high school she did not study about Islam very much. Although, she thinks that the RE
teacher does not have enough knowledge about Islam. Sometimes RE teachers know more about their own religion, and if they are not Muslim they push the Muslim students to correct their information if they get it wrong.

To be honest with you, we did not do that much about Islam, it was mainly about Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism and it carried on like that. We did not do Islam that much, and when we did Islam the teacher asked a Muslim student to stand up and do a little talk about Islam. That makes you wonder whether the teacher knows about Islam or not, or that she only knows the basics and hence she wanted a Muslim student to explain it instead of herself. So I think the teacher should know more of what they are talking about. The RE teacher knows I am Muslim and keeps saying: “Please if I do a mistake, please correct me”. In my school, especially when I was in primary school, my teacher was just a Christian and did not know about other religions as much as his religion.

(Interview with Student number 5)

In addition to that, student number 8 infuses the same idea that the RE teachers are not knowledgeable about Islam or any other religions they teach except their own religion, in some cases, that is why they might deliver the wrong information to students. Thus, what could the situation be if there are not any students from that religion to correct the teacher’s information. On the other hand, what if the Muslim students do not know about their religion, because their family does not practice religion at home or if they do, they might not have enough knowledge. As the following extract shows:

Teachers have a planning sheet from the RE coordinator and they read from it, so sometimes you can say they are not at all clever, sometimes, they do not know themselves what they teach. Sometimes, teachers have no understanding of what they are teaching. It is like reading this feature but you have got no actual meaning to the speech. I think they should know more what they are talking about, and if some students ask big questions, they do not know how to answer. Maybe it is obviously not their religion, and they do not have much knowledge about other religions like Islam. The RE teachers always ask: “Is this right or wrong; correct me if I am wrong”. That does prove they do not know anything. If their paper is wrong; as I said earlier they have a planning sheet which is prepared by the RE coordinator for them, so if this is wrong they cannot do anything about it. On the other hand, say if there is not a Muslim student in the class or Jewish person then they might teaching something wrong to the rest of the students about this religion. It is not her/his fault but that can be a bit annoying.

(Interview with Student number 8)

Mostafa (2007) asserts that school textbooks in the West are distorting the image of Islam and Muslims in the West. In his article he quotes Frager: “The Western school curricula generally ignored the rich Islamic cultural heritage. Religion in general and Islam in
particular, were treated as outmoded, backward assumptions’ (34). Students generally learn very basic information in RE lessons about Islam in British schools. Nevertheless, the misconception or misunderstanding is not only in the RE lesson. The following extract explains one of the incidents in another classroom situation.

We cover different religions in our school. What I can say it that they teach Islam very briefly. It is about the history of Islam, what Muslims believe, and some of the basic things that Muslims do in everyday life. But in a different lesson, not an RE one, we were learning about stereotypes. They showed us a picture of a Muslim man with a beard and someone said: “Terrorist”. At that time I felt quite shy, I could not say anything, but looking back on it, I wish I had said he looks like a Muslim person, a normal person, he did not look like a “terrorist” I wish I could have spoken up but I did not.

(Interview with a Student number 4)

In addition to that, there are two studies about the image of the Arabs and Muslims in Western countries’ school textbooks – one analyses the content and discourse of eighteen American school textbooks and the other tackles the image of Arabs and Muslims in thirty British school textbooks – their results are illustrated in table (9) below (Mostafa, 2007: 35).

Table (9) Islam, Arabs, and Muslims in Western School Textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Natural</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lack of information or misinformation about the Islamic religion by British schoolteachers might lead students both Muslim and non-Muslim to take a negative attitude towards Islam, therefore, student number 8 would prefer more of an explanation being made and more of the students’ assumptions about Islam being challenged, which would help to reduce these misconceptions about Islam.
Normally, the teacher does not make any assumptions about Islam. We could say that it is usually the students who do that [do the bad assumption], but the teacher tends not to respond. Maybe she does not know what she has to say to the students. But if the teacher ignores it, then the students think they are right. [She means students themselves think their assumptions about Islam or Muslims are right because the teacher did not correct them] I think the teacher has to make it easier for students to understand, because saying yes or no does not make much sense to others who are not Muslim or those Muslims who do not practice Islam in their family.

(Interview with a Student number 8)

Therefore, the communities of Muslim minorities require the educational system in Britain to show some consonance towards their religious and moral values. Since as discussed earlier, there is also a lack of interest to supply culturally and religiously inclusive education at primary and higher educational levels, even British universities are not renowned for promoting the education of Islamic history, traditions, or Arabic language. Amongst the United Kingdom law schools, teaching aspects of the Sharia, Islamic jurisprudence, or even South-Asian laws remains a rare phenomenon (Rehman, 2007: 856).

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has, of necessity, focused on the institutional aspects of Muslim minorities’ experience in British schools. It has addressed how education is important to challenge religious assumptions amongst students. Then I argued how British schools could foster Muslim religious identity through various forms of action, according to some participants. In the first and second instance; the hijab and praying facilities. In the third instance, I have specifically demonstrated how friendships and British school religious celebrations might impact on Muslim students and their religious identity. The majority of the new Muslim generation go to non-Muslim state schools because the private Islamic ones are too expensive for the majority of the research participants in Manchester, not everyone is able to send his/her children to a private Islamic school. Most Islamic schools are private and it is not easy for Muslims to access them. Then finally, RE lessons were discussed from a
Muslim students’ perspective. Muslims require the educational system in Britain to show some consonance towards Islamic moral values.

This chapter helps us to understand what motivates Muslim families or students to attend Qur’an school classes and what they expect and what their experiences are. Thus, the next empirical chapter draws on interviews to understand more about how Muslims preserve their religious identity in a non-Muslim country via the Qur’an School.
Chapter Eight

How Qur’an Schools Construct Islamic Identity

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I looked at British schools and the anxiety Muslims felt regarding their religious identity due to attending such schools. In this chapter I will discuss the Qur’an School in a non-Muslim society and its role in constructing Islamic identity. Both Khan Cheema (1996) and Halstead (2005) assert that many researchers have found that the major reason for the establishment of Muslim schools in Western countries is the failure of state schools to provide adequate spiritual and moral education, (cited in Mogra, 2007:2) (see in Chapter 7). As well as reviewing the wide range and types of literature that were consulted during the course of the research, this chapter has two further aims: first, to provide further contextual material that underpins the fieldwork (see in Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8); second, to indicate how this thesis builds on and extends previous research. There is little material available on the life and work of Muslim supplementary classes (Gent, 2006b: 26) whether they are, mosque Qur’an schools, Arabic supplementary schools, private Islamic ones or private home tutoring. Within this study, there is frequent use of such terms as “Muslim supplementary school” and “Qur’an schools”. This chapter will give substance to such terms through exploring the case of MIC Qur’an School.

The chapter will start with the importance of the Qur’an school, which works to reinforce the students’ religious identity. Then we clarify some narratives related to Qur’an schools that are run by local mosques in Britain. I will discuss the term madrassa and its roots in the Arabic language and how it is used in the British context. I will then outline the different types of madrassa in Manchester. Thus, the discussion will focus on the differences between Qur’an schools and Arabic supplementary schools that hire state
school buildings during weekends, evenings or both. Islamic private schools will be discussed separately with a focus on the MIC case. Followed by the Qur’an schools, which are mostly held in British mosques, with a focus on the MIC Qur’an School’s timetable, gender of pupils, curriculum, and how the Qur’an school works to preserve and formulate Islamic identity for Muslim students. This chapter sheds light on the value of Muslim supplementary education for both individuals and the communities to which they belong. Subsequently; this part of the research is based on semi-structured interviews like all previous empirical chapters (Four, Five, and Six) with parents; MIC Qur’an schoolteachers, and Qur’an school pupils, interviews with other stakeholders such as Friday Prayer members, the MIC manager, the Qur’an school’s Head teacher and MIC trustees. Thus, the current study seeks to give a case study of the MIC Qur’an School to see how this kind of teaching enables the continuity of Islamic identity in the UK.

8.2 Qur’an School: Identity Development and Community Cohesion

Quran schools can be seen as a potentially positive feature of British society. They can offer a vehicle through which stronger community relationships can be developed. Qur’an schools can reinforce the cultural, linguistic and religious identities of pupils. This is supported by the content of teaching for many Qur’an schools, with over 70 per cent of those included in the IPPR\textsuperscript{56} survey teaching about the values and culture of Islam. IPPR’s qualitative research suggests that Qur’an schools are providing children with a deeper understanding of Islam and are likely to strengthen children’s religious identities. In many cases, this deeper knowledge and understanding can also give children confidence in explaining their religious practices and beliefs to non-Muslims (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 6).

\textsuperscript{56}Institute for Public Policy Research
Qur’an schools contribute to the preservation and promotion of Islamic values, Islamic epistemology and Islamic spirituality and they have an important role to play in the nurturing of Muslim children in a society that operates on the basis of a different set of values. They are thus the means whereby Muslim traditions are passed on to the next generation (Barton, 1986: 163) and Muslims’ religious, cultural and linguistic identity are preserved (Parker-Jenkins, 1995: 131) (see in Chapter 6.3). On a more practical level, the Qur’an schools play an important role not only in educating Muslim children, but also in occupying them in activities where they have good role models (Mogra, 2007: 9).

Many narratives could be explored about the starting of Qur’an schools in British mosques. One of these narratives could be that: Qur’an schools in mosques have been established by Muslim migrants because the mosques have free space. This space is not in use all of the time, so Qur’an schools found they could invest in the empty spaces by teaching Muslim children about their religion. Alternatively, other narratives could be related to the anxieties of Muslim parents about the British system of educational provision, taking place in the past and up to the present time. These anxieties focus on interlinked narratives like the inadequacy of the spiritual and moral education that the British schools provide (Halstead, 2005: 106) as Chapter Seven discussed in detail. Therefore, new Muslim migrants started to establish mosques in their local area to support and to help Muslim parents in raising their children as Muslims in Britain as a non-Muslim country. This structures the core theme of this chapter.

In the mosque, Muslim children can learn how to read the Qur’an perfectly. Moreover, they can develop their basic knowledge about Islam. Muslim children attend local Qur’an schools in British mosques, usually up to the age of fourteen\textsuperscript{57}. In the absence of firm data

\textsuperscript{57}This indicates the importance of studying Quran in Quran school throughout childhood (research findings suggest that parents’ sense of duty and community expectations seem to be contributing to this)
on either the number of Qur’an schools in Britain or the number of young Muslims who attend them, various reports have tried to estimate these figures. A 2006 report stated that there are around 700 Qur’an schools in Britain, providing lessons about basic Islam to pupils of school-going age during after-school hours (MPGB, 2006: 3)\textsuperscript{58}. A more recent estimate suggested that there were approximately 2,000 Qur’an schools in the UK (Hayer, 2009) (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 19) which are attended by around 250,000 Muslim children. Qur’an schools are a significant feature of many British communities and it is important that their practices and impact be understood by policymakers and researchers (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 3). Moreover, there is also little if any detailed study of the life and work of the British madrassas (elementary schools). As we have already noted, the same applies to institutions of higher Islamic studies in Britain. Given this situation, although this chapter only focuses on one Qur’an school operating in a British mosque today, the outline will contribute to the general pool of knowledge in the fieldwork carried out between 2009 and January 2012. The difference amongst Qur’an schools whether run in mosques, Arabic supplementary schools hiring state school buildings for weekends or evenings, and Islamic private schools will be covered in the next few paragraphs. In this part of the research, the term Qur’an school will be used when referring to the madrassa, which are usually attached to the mosque, as with the Qur’an School of the MIC. Moreover, the term supplementary school will refer to schools that deliver the national curriculum in the mother-tongue language. Thus, the discussion will firstly focus on the term madrassa before moving on to explain the different types.

\textsuperscript{58} Muslim Parliament of Great Britain
8.3 Madrassas in Britain

8.3.1 Defining Madrassa

Madrassa is an Arabic word (Warraich and Feroze, 2007: 52), the plural is: madaris. Generally, there is no single definition of madrassa. However going back to its Arabic roots, the term madrassa refers to any kind of school, whether secular or religious school (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 18). By contrast, in the UK context madrassa is most often used to refer to schools that have an Islamic frame of reference and that operate outside of the mainstream educational system. However, some sources have described them as “unofficial Islamic schools” (Hayer, 2009) or “mosque schools” (MPGB, 2006: 6)59 ‘Evening and weekend classes intended to provide Muslim children with additional teaching in the Qur’an and related Islamic topics, including some instruction in Arabic’ (Cherti et al., 2011: 1).

A more comprehensive definition from Rashid, Latif and Begum (2006) characterises madrassas as ‘Supplementary schools for the Muslim community…set up to deliver Islamic education in order to preserve religious, cultural and linguistic identities. They particularly deal with learning the Qur’an. Muslim supplementary schools operate either from local mosques or are set up independently for the sole purpose of teaching the Qur’an and Islam…Financial income for the schools is mainly generated through fees, funding and, mostly, donations from the local community’60 (Cherti et al., 2011: 1).

The madrassa, historically, was distinguished as an institution of higher studies; in contrast to more rudimentary schools which were called kuttab61 (Cherti and Bradley, 2011) or makātib (Mogra, 2007), kuttabs taught only the Qur’an (Cherti and Bradley, 2011). Recently, the term madrassa has been used by many Western observers as a catchall to

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59 Muslim Parliament of Great Britain
60 Finances of MIC are discussed in Chapter Five.
61 Kuttab is an Arabic word very common in the Muslim world, used to refer to a place of Qur’an teaching only for the younger age group.
denote any school – primary, secondary, or advanced – that promotes an Islamic-based curriculum. However; in many countries, and principally Arab countries, including Egypt and Lebanon, the word *madrassa* refers to any educational institution (state-sponsored, private, secular or religious) (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 18). In Pakistan and Bangladesh, in contrast, *madrassa* refers to Islamic religious schools only. In the UK context, the expression is most often used to refer to schools that have an Islamic frame mainly, and operate outside of the mainstream educational system (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 18). Schools or *madrassas* that are located in local mosques are called Qur’an schools in this research. The main teaching activities of these schools vary from one mosque to another, which depends on the local authority and ethnic background of the local community. For instance, classes in the faith and practice of Islam; mother-tongue classes, especially in Urdu or Bengali, which are not necessarily Islamic in character; moreover, some classes run by mosques or community groups, help Muslim children with their homework: English, maths and with basic skills. In addition, some organisations run what is effectively a kind of youth club (Halstead, 2005: 132). This part of the discussion will shed light on different kinds of Quran schools in Britain and the service they provide to Muslim minorities. This helps to understand the position of the MIC Qur’an School.

### 8.3.2 The Main Types of Madrassa in Britain

After reviewing the term *madrassa* it is useful to clarify the different types. The Muslim Council of Britain has suggested that three main types of madrassa currently exist in Britain. The first and the largest group comprise *madrassas* attached to mosques. The Charity Commission (2009) survey suggests that as many as 94 per cent of mosques in England and

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62 Mainly because Asian emigration to the UK started earlier than the Arab one, thus in the UK context *madrassa* refers to Islamic religious schools like in Pakistan and Bangladesh, but in Arab countries it means any school, mainly state schools.

63 Arabic word, but living in Manchester and teaching Pakistani people shows that they use the same term to refer to the Qur’an school in the mosque.
Wales are currently providing some kind of education for young people (2009: 2). The second kind are run by volunteers who teach Islamic classes in hired out community centres, church halls or school halls, available for use outside of school hours (Halstead, 2005: 133). The third type are informal classes held in people’s homes (Cherti et al., 2011: 2) where an individual takes in a small group of students (Joly, 1990: 44).

Cherti and Bradley declare that some Qur’an schools provide a broader educational curriculum. Table (7) shows those schools providing lessons in mainstream subjects, maths, and science. Nearly two-thirds also taught languages other than English, including Arabic, Urdu and Bengali. However, a significant minority of Qur’an schools teach traditional school subjects, with 28 per cent providing support for national curriculum subjects (2011: 5). These Qur’an schools could be called supplementary schools rather than Qur’an schools since they do not teach Qur’an primarily. Attendance figures are rarely available, and it is impossible to state with confidence what percentage of Muslim children are attending supplementary schools (Halstead, 2005: 133). Indeed up to now, little research has been carried out into Muslim supplementary schools, and such information as is available draws on local experiences rather than providing a national overview (Halstead, 2005: 133).

Muslim schools may be either full- or part-time. The former is recognised as an Islamic school which is regarded as a private Islamic School; it allows students to study in a school with an Islamic ethos while at the same time providing a balanced curriculum that offers a broad education and trains them to compete for jobs in the broader multicultural society (7.3.1). The latter one is recognised as a supplementary school, it seeks to supplement the education of Muslim children who attend state schools regularly, by providing lessons in the evenings and at weekends in the faith and practice of Islam, Qur’an recitation, the basic
requirements of the *Shari‘ah* (Islamic law), and in some cases language classes (Mogra, 2007: 2). The teaching could be in Urdu, Bengali, Arabic, Turkish or Kurdish.

Therefore, the supplementary school is a part-time school. It could be held in hired community places and its curriculum mostly supports children with their mother-tongue language and the national curriculum. Alternatively, it could be a supplementary school that is attached to the mosque and these mainly focus on prioritising spiritual and moral development to help parents more with religious childrearing and these types of schools are referred to in this research project, Qur’an schools.

At the time of the 2001 census, Britain had 371,000 Muslim children aged 5 to 16. Some 20,000 of these were in the 130-odd schools maintained by Muslim charitable trusts (5.2). Today, five of these schools receive state aid. Muslim children who attend a private Islamic school are taught Islamic Studies, Arabic and the Qur’an, alongside the national curriculum. Girls wear the hijab, though most schools regard this as part of the uniform, and not a requirement of Islamic law as mentioned in section (7.3.1). Muslim pupils are also encouraged to ask questions, to debate, analyse and to disagree as they would in any other British school. The Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) was established in 1992 to support those developing full-time schooling for Muslim children (Masood, 2006: 17). As with the best schools of any faith, Muslim schools are popular with parents because they shine in academic league tables and because they offer a good environment of faith, morality and ethics (Masood, 2006: 17).

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64 Arab community in Manchester call it Arabic school not Qur’an school because it provides the full Arabic curriculum up to A level.

65 By contrast, 99 per cent of Britain’s 7,000 state-funded faith schools are Anglican or Catholic. For comparison, in 2001, there were 33,000 Jewish children of school age who were entitled to 13,000 places in state-maintained Jewish schools. The first state-aided Muslim school was Islamia Primary; a mixed school founded 22 years ago by Yusuf Islam, formerly known as the pop singer Cat Stevens. It has over 200 pupils enrolled, aged between four and 11 and is based in north London. After several refusals, it won state support in 1998.
8.3.3 The Main Types of Madrassa in Manchester

In Manchester for instance, Muslims who speak Arabic as a mother-tongue language send their children to supplementary schools. There are three of these schools in Manchester. Al-Manaar Arabic School, Al-Nour Arabic School, both of them are based in Burnage, they rent Burnage High School, and Al-Hegra Arabic School that is located in Whalley Range and rents the Kadey Grammar School. These schools are used by Arabs irrespective of their nationalities, for instance: Syrians, Iraqis, Libyans and Palestinians. Moreover, a few of the students attending the Arabic supplementary schools are Asian people, and some are children of British converts. Studying in such school helps parents and mainly Arab parents, to teach their children the Arabic language from a young age up to an academic standard. As it gives, Arab and non-Arab students a chance to read the Qur’an, not only as an abstract text, but to understand it without translation. However, fieldwork shows that some parents register their children in the Arabic supplementary school and in the mosque’s Qur’an school at the same time. The reason behind this can be clear by referring to some of the narratives like Ahmad’s story. Ahmad is a Lebanese Muslim student; he is around nine years old. He started to attend Qur’an School in the MIC in September 2011. Ahmad’s mother had already registered him in one of these Arabic schools. Ahmad tried to cope, attending both the MIC Qur’an School and his Arabic supplementary school; he was attending two hours for the morning session every Saturday, but on Sundays, he was spending a full day at the Arabic supplementary school, plus Tuesday and Thursday evenings. When his mother was asked why she was doing that she said:

I want him to love the mosque and to build a relationship with it. I want him to know more about his religion and to be part of the Muslim community. It is important to have Muslims friends from the mosque, and even his teacher at the Arabic School said to me that his Arabic reading had improved a lot after attending the mosque, I am really happy to keep both.

(Interview with Mother number 3)
In addition to that, as mentioned before not only Arab students attend Arabic supplementary school, some Asians students also do. The parents’ aim is to teach their children the Arabic language as one of the academic languages and to help them pass their GCSEs and A Levels. Moreover, to make them able to understand the Qur’an in the original text. By contrast, the MIC teaches Arabic just to read the Qur’an without understanding the meaning. Like Ryan’s narrative, his mother sent him to the MIC when he was nearly five; then when he started reading the Qur’an independently his mother sent him to Al-Hegra Arabic School to study the Arabic language with Arab students. Ryan now has to study the entire Arabic curriculum in Arabic school including maths, history, science, geography and Islamic studies. However, his mother knows the difference between the mosque and Arabic supplementary school, his mother still refers to the Arabic school as a mosque during her interview. She said:

My aim is to make him a Hafiz\(^{66}\) Insh’Allah (God willing), Mash’Allah (may Allah be pleased), he was able to read and write in Arabic when he was attending the Didsbury Mosque, but he could not understand the meaning of the Arabic words he was reading; that is why I also took him to the Al-Hegrah Mosque. I wanted him to understand and to speak Arabic like you and your children, with a proper Arabic accent.

(Interview with Mother number 1)

Parents always wish for their children to have a better education than they themselves had. That is why mother number 10 sends her daughter to Arabic school to be able to read, write, and understand the Arabic language. By contrast this mother uses French if she needs to know about some *fatwa* in Islam. The following extract explains her narrative:

When I was young, we had only three hours for Arabic, Qur’an and Islamic studies as well as during the weekends. The teachers in the mosque were not native Arabic speakers and had not learnt the tajweed either. They did not have experience and we did not have time to attend Arabic or Qur’an school in the evening; because we were going to school from 8:30 till 11:30 then from 1:00 pm till 5:30 which is a long day. It was too long and we were too tired as young children to learn the Qur’an in the evening. That was when I was young in France. My daughter here in Manchester has three days of Arabic school; one full day and two days in the week after school. My daughter has 15 hours of Arabic school a week which is more than enough for me.

\footnote{A person who has memorised the whole Qur’an.}

Gh: Why do you send her to Arabic school and not to the mosque?

194
I send her to Arabic school because I am not proud of my own situation. I could not read and write Arabic properly, even though I am an Arab Muslim. Many times I have had to search online for some fatwa and I have had to use the French language because it is my mother-tongue, but I could not find anything. However, when I searched in Arabic I found everything but I could not understand it. I feel upset about myself, I wish I could properly understand the Qur’an but I can’t, therefore I do not want my children to be like me. 

(Interview with Mother number 10)

The importance of the Arabic supplementary school is such that it helps families to teach children the national curriculum in Arabic, so it is not just about reading the Arabic language without understand the meaning of it like some of the Qur’an schools. That is what the Arabic Friday prayer member number 2 asserts:

If there was no Arabic school, I think it would be very hard for me and my family to cope because of work commitments. We do not have enough time to teach them our academic language and our school curriculum at home, so they go to Arabic school three times a week, they can do all the subjects in Arabic, and maths as well - it is more than just Arabic.

(Interview with Friday Prayer Member Number 2)

All the previous extracts explain the importance of the Arabic supplementary school in Manchester for the Muslim community and mainly for Arabs to help them preserve the Arabic language and to teach their children the national curriculum. But there is a significant difference between the role of the supplementary school and the role of the Qur’an school. However, it is clear that many mosques and other Muslim organisations are very active in teaching children the principal beliefs and practices of Islam.67

8.4 The MIC Qur’an School: Case Study

The MIC Qur’an School has a good reputation among Muslim communities in Manchester that is why the number of students has increased in the last two years from 350 pupils to 575 in September 2012.68 The Palestinian mother thinks this school is one of the advantages of living in Manchester. The following extract expresses her feelings towards this school, and how it is very important for her to teach her daughter Arabic and to be able

67In Bradford, for example, there are 63 Muslim supplementary schools registered with the LEA. In Bristol the Taleem-ul-Islam Trust organises religious lessons on Sunday mornings, with an attendance of about 400 boys and girls HALSTEAD, M. J. 2005. British Muslims and Education. In: CHAUDHURY, T. (ed.) Muslim in The UK: Policies for Engaged Citizens. Gyoma, Hungary: OP EN SOCI ETY INSTITUTE

68Chat with the Head teacher in September 2012.
to read the Qur’an later on, when she grows up.

I feel she is really lucky and I feel so happy, and I told my whole family one of the best things about moving to Manchester was this Qur’an school. It is exactly what I want. My mum cannot believe it, and my family-in-law cannot believe that she actually reads in Arabic or even that we speak Arabic at home. They think we live in a Western country which could mean that we would forget our religion and our language. It is a huge investment but honestly, as a mum I am concerned that besides my daughter going swimming and horse riding, she also goes to the Qur’an school as a priority as well. She sees students like herself and they all follow the same rituals.

(Interview with Mother number 11)

The MIC Qur’an School like most of the mosque Qur’an schools in the UK needs further research to assess the different styles of teaching. However, according to the current data about the MIC, most of the families are happy with the way the Qur’an School teaches their children. Mother number 11 shares her view about her daughter’s class in the MIC Qur’an School.

I like the way you teach children and young people here. There are lots of activities, flash cards and some interesting games, which is really good. My daughter does the letter song at home, and she told me the Islamic story about Allah and that He is the only creator. He is all seeing, all hearing…kids like it, as they understand the basic Islamic principles through stories, which is good. Children here are allowed to ask questions, they even ask big questions sometimes and they feel that they have the opportunity to ask. Recently you started the Islamic stories. Which is really a good idea as they can learn Islamic values.

(Interview with Mother number 11)

By contrast this Bangladeshi mother and her daughter who is a student in the high school share the same views about some teachers at the MIC and their way of teaching. They think it would be better if they had training though, to improve their proficiency as teachers.

I think it is really good that we have native Arab teachers at this mosque, but at the same time whilst some of them know what they have to teach, they do not know how to teach it. For instance, at my age we still need encouragement like certificates or small prizes when we tackle memorising or when we finish a chapter of the holy Qur’an, this would encourage us more. It would be better if the mosque provided training for the Qur’an teachers to know how to teach or to deal with students of different age groups.

(Interview with Student number 8)

Building a relationship with the mosque could be one of the main aims of families when taking their children to the Qur’an School. Palestinian mother number 11 thinks it is a good idea to maintain a relationship with the mosque because it has the same environment as
home. This also supports their religious identity, because the MIC Qur’an School represents the same identity as home (see Chapter 6.3 and 6.4) and is different from the British school environment (see in Chapter 7). In addition to this, the mother sees other advantages like learning the Qur’an from native speakers (see in Chapter 8.5).

I am taking her to the mosque and its Qur’an School because I want her to build a relationship with the mosque and I want her to be in the same environment which is closer to home. I am always teaching her things, but when she goes to the state school, she learns something different. My main concern is Arabic and the Qur’an and that is why I found the Didsbury Mosque. She is learning from a native speaker in a mosque environment. She keeps her grandparents informed that she is going to the mosque. I want her to keep this relationship.

(Interview with Mother number 11)

8.4.1 Teaching at the Qur’an School

The increasing number of Qur’an schools may indicate a greater degree of integration and growing confidence of Muslim communities to use spaces in the wider community. It may also be as a result of the significant demand for Qur’an school places. Both Cherti and Bradley (2011) reveal that most classes in Qur’an schools are of a moderate size. The largest proportion has between 10 and 20 pupils per class, which suggests that teachers are potentially able to give high levels of personal support to the pupils in many Qur’an schools (20). Qur’an schools feature strongly in the lives of most British Muslim children. Muslim children attend Qur’an school for most of their young lives, for up to two hours in the evenings after school or at weekends. Cherti and Bradley (2011) report that 81.5% of their sample study held classes during weekdays after school, and 54.9% run the classes on Saturdays and only 39.3% on Sundays (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 21). The next quote explains the importance of the Qur’an school and its teaching for Muslim communities in a non-Muslim society.

One of the main activities that mosques in the West provide is the Qur’an school. This school is normally held at the weekend or during weekdays. The Qur’an school is an important part of the Muslim community structure. It teaches children the basics of the Arabic language so that they can read the Qur’an and have a basic understanding of it. Muslim parents are therefore, very keen to send their children to the local mosque’s Qur’an school.
In general, the Muslim youth who attend Qur’an schools are aged from about 4 or 5 to 13 or 14. Most of these students go to community or church primary and secondary schools during the daytime and then attend Qur’an school for up to two hours every night in order to learn more about their religion. The Head teacher of the MIC Qur’an School confirms that the number of male students decreases after the age of fourteen.

Regarding the age of the students, we have students from 4 years of age up to those in their 20s or more; these are mainly in the memorisation classes. In the women’s classes we even have students who are more than 50 years old. But I think for boys over 15, their numbers start to drop and are less than the number of girls of the same age.

In the case of the MIC, the teaching process includes instruction in Arabic for the purpose of learning how to recite the Qur’an, as well as teaching about the principles and practices of Islam. Indeed, the types of classes offered in Qur’an schools varies widely, from information on the Islamic faith to mother-tongue language instruction (in Urdu or Bengali for example) to assistance with homework or other basic skills. Some organisations act more like youth clubs and provide structured opportunities for Muslim children to socialise together (Cherti et al., 2011: 1). Some mosques in the UK operate Qur’an schools during the weekdays, some at the weekends and a few run Qur’an schools throughout the whole week like the MIC Qur’an School. The Head teacher says in his interview:

We know about other mosques around us, for example; Victoria Mosque has their Qur’an school, Monday to Friday from 5:00 pm until 6:30 pm. The Cheadle Mosque, only teach at weekends from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm. But in Didsbury as you know already, we have two sessions at weekends from 10:30 am until 12:30 pm then teachers get a rest for half an hour then have another session with different students from 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm these two sessions occupy nearly all the space in the mosque and we have a long waiting list. Nevertheless, our school during the weekdays starts from Monday until Thursday, from 5:00 pm until 7:30 pm sometimes.

Gh: Why do you teach weekdays and weekends and why do you not teach on Fridays?

Because there is huge demand in the Muslim community for the Qur’an school, as I said we have a long waiting list; that is why we try to open our school for the whole week to cater for all the requirements. As well, some parents are busy at the weekends and are not able to bring their children to Qur’an school, so weekday sessions can help. But the number of students during the weekdays is less than at weekends. And the reason why we do not teach on Fridays is because we do not have the attendance tends to drop off after this due to the increased pressures created by schoolwork and exams.

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69 Attendance tends to drop off after this due to the increased pressures created by schoolwork and exams.
space. There are so many activities already, and it should be a holiday for the students and teachers. We have different teachers for weekday lessons, whilst the teachers of the memorisation classes are the same. A few students might attend all the days.

(Interview with the Head Teacher of MIC Quran School)

This is the case for both female and male Muslim children, although classes are often divided according to gender over the age of 10 years.

We always think it is better to divide the Qur’an classes in terms of gender, especially for children who are over 8 years old. But sometimes the number of students for each gender is not enough, so that is why we run a mixed class sometimes.

(Interview with the Head Teacher of MIC Quran School)

Many Muslim families place great importance on providing their children with an opportunity to expand their religious knowledge. This is reflected in the high demand for places within Qur’an schools (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 3). The institution of the Qur’an school has played a key part in continuing the faith of Islam, especially for the younger generation. It has developed countless scholars and teachers who have helped to nurture the spirit of Islam. Muslim children from as young as 5 start to learn how to read the Qur’an, and learn about different aspects of their religion like: Islamic History, *Adab and Akhlaaq* (Manners and Etiquettes), Hadith (Traditions of the Holy Prophet Mohammad pbuh), *Fiqh* (Basic Islamic Rulings) and much more as the discussion in Chapter Three showed. In many cases this is where children complete the *Hafiz* (the memorisation of 30 chapters (Warraich and Feroze, 2007:53). However, this curriculum varies from one Qur’an school to another.

In Qur’an schools Muslim children and their parents are expected to:

● read and recite the Qur’an in Arabic
● perform *wudhu*, the ritual washing in preparation for prayer
● learn prayers that are recited during *salah*
● learn the important duties and beliefs of the Muslim faith (Abley et al., 2004: 2).
The IPPR’s survey found that most teaching within the Qur’an school mainly focuses on the Qur’an and Islamic education. 97 per cent reported that teaching the Qur’an is a central part of the Qur’an school experience. Over 70 per cent of Qur’an schools also provide teaching about “culture and heritage”. As shown in table (10). Of the Qur’an schools that said they taught culture and heritage, nearly 95 per cent said this involved Islamic teaching and over 70 per cent said they taught about the values and culture of the community.

**Table (10) Qur’an School Curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic teaching</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values and culture of the community</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political culture</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary culture</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 24)

These findings reinforce the religious basis of Qur’an school teaching but also highlights the less-widely-known fact that many offer a broader curriculum than just the study of the Qur’an.

We focused more on teaching basic Arabic reading rules for reading the Qur’an, mainly at the beginning. Then when the student numbers increased, the school management added Islamic studies as part of the curriculum because Muslim parents were always asking us to teach their children how they should perform their *wudhu* (ablutions) and *salah* (prayers) the right way. In addition to that, children have to memorise the short *suras* (verses) of the last chapters of the Qur’an. They have to be familiar with the important *dua* (supplications) of daily life for example before having food and after, before going to bed and when they wake up, this all helps them to understand their religious practice more. Moreover, all children are really encouraged to ask questions about Islam to develop their understanding of the religion they belong to. It is not an abstract religion; there is an answer to every question.

(Interview with the Head Teacher of MIC Quran School)

Nearly two-thirds of Qur’an schools (64 per cent) teach community or mother-tongue languages other than English. These show clearly that language and culture are strongly linked to the work of most Qur’an schools. In the Qur’an school, of the community languages, Arabic is the most common language taught (39 per cent). This may be related to
the cultural background of those involved in the Qur’an school but is also likely to be linked to the religious role of a Qur’an school, as learning Arabic supports the teaching of the Qur’an. Children typically learn Arabic for the purposes of Qur’an recitations. Halstead (2005) says: ‘It is worth noting that children do not learn Arabic as a modern language, although their study in the mosque can be useful preparation for doing so if the subject were to be offered at their regular school’ (133). There are significant numbers of other languages taught in Qur’an schools in particular, Punjabi and Bengali. This is likely to be related to the ethnic background of those attending the Qur’an school. The 13 year old Bangladeshi student who has ambition to be a Qur’an teacher aims to learn Arabic and that will help her to understand the Qur’an and to memorise it.

My motivation is to learn Arabic and the Qur’an at the same time; I wish to know Arabic in order to know the meaning of the Qur’an. I can memorize it much easier when I know the meaning. Then I will be able to teach it to others.

(Interview with Student number 1)

Learning the language of the Qur’an is important for most of the interviewees because it helps them to understand the Qur’an directly. This helps avoid any misconceptions when they read the English translation, or any other language interpretations. Mother number 2 prefers her children to understand the Qur’an directly without the need for translation.

I would love for them to learn Arabic because their dad can speak Arabic, but I cannot. I cannot speak it or understand it at all. So this is why I wish for them to speak it. It would be perfect if they could learn Arabic and be able to speak it as a language, because the Qur’an is in Arabic. I know they can read the Qur’an in English, but it would be easier for them at the moment if they could understand it directly. Not all translations are one hundred per cent right. Therefore, if they know Arabic they can get its meaning and understand it properly.

(Interview with Mother number 2)

The Friday Prayer member, number 1 who came from a non-practicing father and a non-Muslim mother wishes his father had taught him his mother-tongue language, the Qur’an’s language and that he had taken him to a mosque from an early age. As the following extract shows:
If I could speak like Jesus could when I was a child I could say: “Oh, my dad taught me Arabic and Farsi and took me to the masjid to teach me the Qur’an” but it did not happen like that…but I am happy now that I have a closer relationship with Islam.

Teaching Arabic as a second language is not available in the MIC Qur’an School. In the MIC Qur’an School, students learn Arabic reading only, that enables them to read the Qur’an or any Arabic text but not able to understand it fully. In order to do so would require an advanced level of grammar and vocabulary courses. All MIC Qur’an School students know how to copy the Arabic texts that they read. It would take a very long time to teach the Arabic language as an academic language and it would require extra management and effort. Moreover, the main aim of the MIC Qur’an School is to teach students Qur’an reading. However, the MIC usually provides Arabic courses for all the community, Muslim and non-Muslim.

In the MIC Qur’an School, we teach children Arabic but the teachers communicate with students only in English, our aim is to help young people to read the Qur’an via our native Arabic speakers. However, for those parents who want Arabic taught as an academic language for their children; we refer them to the Arabic supplementary schools, as there are many in Manchester, or to Arabic courses that take place in our centre. It is for all the community, Muslim and non-Muslim.

(Interview with Trustee number 1)

However, sometimes the parents’ and students’ aims and outcomes are different from the MIC Qur’an School’s but they still come to the mosque because the main and most important aim for all, is reading the Qur’an. Understanding the Qur’an comes later. They can apply for Arabic Courses at the MIC or other centres.

8.4.2 MIC: Different Ways of Teaching

Teaching methods are an issue for the different types of mosques. Generally, most of the Qur’an schools are registered charities (see in Chapter 5.2) and are often organised through local mosques (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 4). Many smaller mosques adopt a traditional teaching approach, especially if the teacher is not familiar with the English environment and language. Like Boyle (2004), Halstead provides some significant insight into Muslim
education. In discussing why modern Islamic educationalists still find much that is of value in traditional Muslim education, for example, he states that:

‘There is a natural integration of the curriculum, there is a close personal relationship between the teachers and the taught, elitism is discouraged, undue attention is not paid to examinations, pupil grouping is less rigid and students are comparatively free to pursue their own interests. Above all, traditional Muslim education is not an activity separated from other aspects of society; it is rooted in the community it serves, responding to its needs and aspirations and preserving its values and beliefs’ (Halstead; 1995: 32).

The pedagogical style of the Qur’an school is different from the mainstream school style, since their emphasis is mainly on reading the Qur’an in the Arabic language, taught by the imams or other teachers at the mosque who principally received their secular or religious education outside Britain (Richardson and Wood, 2004: 3), they may be unfamiliar with current educational thinking abroad. Therefore, the growth of the Muslim community in Britain has created a generation gap in some ways. In the early days of migration, imams were imported to run local mosques and to teach Muslim children the Qur’an and basic Islamic education. Nevertheless, the children’s communication language has increasingly become English more than their mother-tongue, and now for the third generation of Muslims, English is their first language. However; some Qur’an schools still teach Muslim students in Urdu (Richardson and Wood, 2004) or any other home language. Some of these imams do not have the correct Arabic pronunciation, the original language of the Quran. In the MIC Qur’an School, teachers are all native Arabic speakers but they lack proper training as qualified teachers as I discussed before (student 8). Teachers need training to learn how to teach and to be able to put across what they know. Qur’an schools also have the potential to create or to increase the division between a child’s religious identity and their British identity. Although some provide a forum for discussing and reconciling these differences, overwhelmingly, Qur’an school teachers are seen as the main factor influencing this. Non-British-born imams who were trained abroad are recognised as being less able to

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70In local mosques most of the imams are not Arabic native speakers thus some are not able to pronounce Arabic letters properly. The term Qur’an teacher will be used instead of imam because imams have different tasks besides teaching the Qur’an, except when the participants use the term imam, themselves.
support children with understanding their dual British-Muslim identity (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 6). The Friday Prayer member, number 2 highlights the importance of building up an Islamic foundation from childhood for a British Muslim child, because the child will integrate into the British society later on. S/he has to be positive and productive in British society, while keeping their Islamic identity. To achieve this it is important to have trained imams to help British Muslim children understand their identity.

The development of a Muslim person starts from childhood, through the Qur’an school or Arabic school and through the other activities that teach Islamic morals. This is the main aspect of their personality, and if this personality is not built up in the right way, then integration with the Western community could be negative in some respect. Parents and the mosque have to play a major role in creating this positive personality in order for them to become productive within this community.

(Interview with Friday Prayer number 2)

Friday Prayer member, number 2 has held special memories of the MIC, since his childhood. He still remembers his teachers who delivered Islamic teaching to students in the MIC Quran School. In addition to that, he attends many study circles that serve the Muslim community in Manchester.

What I have gained from the mosque is really valuable. If you go to a mosque where you have a good teacher who provides the correct Islamic teaching you will gain a lot of benefit. At the Didsbury Mosque where I used to pray when I was young, there are now a lot of study circles where you can learn about the basics of Islam; prayers, reading the Qur’an and how to deal with others. It has been a very special place for me since my childhood.

(Interview with Friday Prayer number 2)

In some cases the imams presume that the children they are teaching in British mosques are the same as the children who have been raised in Pakistan, the Punjab or Bengal (Richardson and Wood, 2004). However, the reality is different because in Britain, children in schools are encouraged to question and reason but the same children, in the Qur’an school, are discouraged from questioning and reasoning. Friday Prayer member, number 5 shares her experience about the Qur’an lessons in one of the British mosques during her childhood, where no one explained about the Qur’an; what it is, and why the Qur’an is meant to be everything, what a sunnah is. No explanations were provided, even in the Urdu
language. As students, they were not allowed to ask questions at that time, which contrasts with the situation now.

Imams never explained what things meant, for example: what is the Qur’an? How many chapters are in the Qur’an? What is a sunnah? We were taught that the Qur’an is everything…but they did not even explain things to us in Urdu – the language we speak at home. We could not ask any questions of the imam, because he was so often asleep. The same imam taught my niece and my son, but now the situation is different, they can approach the imam and they can ask questions.

(Interview with Friday Prayer Number 5)

According to the experience of mother number 8 the madrassa did not have any influence over her Islamic identity or faith as a Muslim during her childhood. Maybe because of the traditional way of teaching she did not achieve any strong beliefs. Thus, she started to discover her religion by herself when she was twenty.

I am very honest when I was younger I was sent to a madrassa in the Victoria masjid five days a week from a very young age for my deen (religion) to learn the Qur’an. But they used very traditional methods – in a very, very traditional way. I felt I could not learn anything there during my Qur’an studies or develop my beliefs or knowledge because there was no information about Islam. Then, when I was twenty I wanted to look into Islam myself. I was curious and I was interested, that is how I found my religion.

(Interview with Mother number 8)

By contrast, mother number 12 thinks teaching the Qur’an is beneficial from a young age, for their future, and their life in the hereafter, as she believes. This can be useful for Muslim children when it is delivered using a good educational approach, because they might learn better, like mother number 8.

I think teaching them the Qur’an is a good investment. It is an investment for the rest of their lives, for the hereafter as well.

(Interview with Mother number 12)

According to a Cherti and Bradley (2011) study; Muslim students frequently attend Qur’an school for a sustained period of time, with 95 per cent of Qur’an schools stating that pupils typically attend their school for more than two years and 45 per cent stating that pupils attend for more than five years. This indicates the importance placed on studying at a
Qur’an school throughout childhood \(^{71}\) (Cherti and Bradley, 2011: 21) and the importance of recognition of their religious identity from an early age. Moreover, it is not surprising that there is increasing frustration amongst the youth about such methods of teaching (Richardson and Wood, 2004: 3). Thus, most Muslim children leave the mosque after the age of 13 when they start to be more independent with their thoughts and decisions. Therefore, British mosques need imams who are trained in the UK, and are able to communicate and interact with young British Muslims in the English language, and this has become a more prominent issue. The imams need to be familiar more with the British culture to be able to help Muslims understand their dual identity.

While discussing the issues of Qur’an teaching, some people think the imam is the Qur’an teacher and also the mosque sheikh; a sheikh in Islam can be a Qur’an teacher and prayer leader at the same time, but in the case of the MIC, the imam is not the teacher since there is a difference between imam, sheikh and Qur’an teacher. Each one has different tasks. According to the MIC case, the imam and the teacher do not have the same responsibilities towards the Muslim community like the sheikh does. The Sheikh holds the Friday sermons, as he has to be more qualified in religious issues and *fatwa*, and he has a direct communication with the Muslim community, while the imam is mainly a prayer leader.

This is what one of the MIC trustees tries to clarify in his interview:

> In the MIC, we have an imam and a sheikh. In most mosques, the imam is the sheikh. But we have different responsibilities for the sheikh who is also a consultant for the Sharia (Islamic Law) and religious issues, and he reads the Friday *khutba* sermon sometimes, whilst the imam holds the daily prayers. The Qur’an teacher, is only a teacher who has knowledge of the *tajweed* (science).

    (Interview with Trustee number 1)

\(^{71}\) The research findings suggesting that parents’ sense of duty and community expectations seem to be contributing to this.
8.5 Narratives of the Native Arabic Teachers and their Importance

It is more than essential for the researcher in this field to understand how Muslims engage with their holy book, the Qur’an. It is as an experience consisting of both words and sounds at the same time (Gent, 2006b: 34, Gent, 2006a). Hence, the Qur’an is less a text than an oral and aural experience. The transmission of the Qur’an and its social existence are essentially oral. ‘The significance of the revelation is carried as much by the sound as by its semantic information. The familiar sound of recitation is the Muslim’s predominant and immediate means of contact with the word of God’ (Nelson, 2001: pxiv). For that reason, the transmission of the Qur’an remains in essence a personal speaking and listening encounter between Qur’an teacher\textsuperscript{72} and student (Gent, 2006b: 35). As learning the Qur’an means learning the correct sound of the Qur’an (Nelson 2001: 15) as it was revealed. For that reason, students need to hear recitation from someone who is a faithful transmitter and who must, then, hear the students themselves recite in order to correct them (Gent, 2006b: 39, Gent, 2006a: 41).

The science of \textit{tajweed}\textsuperscript{73} preserves the meaning of the revealed words of Allah in sound and expression. Protects the Qur’an from any alteration and retains the unique method of Qur’an recitation. The emergence of this science of recitation is from the Prophet

\textsuperscript{72} Not everyone can teach the Qur’an. Teaching the Qur’an depends on learning the science of the tajweed. The tajweed is important as it ensures that the recitation of the Qur’an is as the Prophet intended. It also ensures the following: rules about mixing between Arabs and non-Arabs; preserves the Arabic language; preserves the recitation of the Qur’an from mistakes; guarantees the reader of the Qur’an integrity of pronunciation; tajweed is an important element in reciting the Quran in a nice way. http://www.freewebs.com/montrealtajweed/tajweed-intro-slides.pdf

\textsuperscript{73} Linguistic definition: betterment; improvement.
Applied definition: Articulating every letter from its articulation point and giving the letter its right (its required characteristics that never leave it) and due characteristics (its presented characteristics that are present in it some of the time, and not present at other times i.e. the madd, idgham).
The knowledge of Tajweed is contingent on four matters:
– Knowledge of the articulation points of the letters
– Knowledge of the characteristics of the letters
– Knowledge of what rules change in the letters due to the order of letters
Muhammad Peace Be upon Him; who taught this science practically and like other Islamic disciplines it is protected both in theory and practice by the zealous and dedicated faithful. Throughout the fourteen centuries since the Qur’an’s revelation hardly a generation has passed which has not witnessed or celebrated qurra\textsuperscript{74} - the undisputed authorities during their times in this science. The third century of hijrah marks the beginning of the codification of Islamic sciences. Since that period, Muslim scholars have contributed hundreds of books on the science of tajweed. The available literature is extremely rich and comprehensive and reflects not only the meticulous zeal of the scholars but also manifests the popularity of this science among the Muslim ummah (nation or community) throughout the ages (krajinic, 2008).

The research field work shows that teachers who are able to teach the Qur’an as it was revealed are not always available in British mosques. As the interviews will show. Thus the native Arabic speaking teachers should have helped to sort this problem out, but this was so rare in Manchester mosques at that time. Maybe at that time there were not many Arab migrants around (Chapter 2). In addition to this, some mosques might have preferred to have a Qur’an teacher from their own ethnic community to be able to teach students the Qur’an using their own mother-tongue (Chapter 5). Nevertheless not all of the Qur’an teachers were able to teach the correct pronunciation of the original language of the Qur’an, either they were not qualified to be Qur’an teachers having not studied the science of tajweed or they were not native Arabic speakers\textsuperscript{75}. Mother number 11 has this narrative with a Qur’an teacher in one of the British mosques who could not pronounce Arabic letters correctly. When she arrived from Palestine she was around eight years old and had a pure Arabic accent. Her family wanted her to carry on her Qur’an lessons that she had started in

\textsuperscript{74}Reciters

\textsuperscript{75}Even native Arabic teachers need specific training to be Qur’an teachers.
her home country, so they sent her to the local mosque. But finding that the accent of the imam was not correct they decided to stop her lessons, as she explains:

When we came here to the UK it was totally different for us. The mosque was organised for the Pakistani community, which was a problem for us. They could not even pronounce the letters correctly, so my mum and dad stopped sending us to the Qur’an school. Then we moved to a big city near Dublin, however the imam there could not even speak English and the *khutba* was in Urdu. My dad, had a problem every Friday. Thus, they stopped us from going to the Qur’an school there as well.

(Interview with Mother Number 11)

Another mother learnt the Qur’an through different people, including imams and family friends but none of them had the *tajweed* qualifications. She did not realise that she had learnt it the incorrect way. However, from her point of view that was the only choice she had at the time.

I know it is important and sunnat to read it [Qur’an] in its original form. And it is much better to be taught by a native Arabic speaker. A non-native speaker can teach, if they have taken exams and become qualified. I was taught by numerous different imams and friends of my mother, none of whom were native Arabic speakers. All were Pakistani. It was only as an adult that I realised my pronunciation was completely wrong. No one that taught me had any teaching qualifications either. I therefore, had a terrible experience. But at that time, there was no other option.

(Interview with Mother number 6)

Mother number 8 had a similar experience of learning the Qur’an to the other mothers, interviewed during the fieldwork. However, she thinks the situation is better nowadays. She spoke about her childhood and how she had to go to the mosque five days a week; the aim was to read the Qur’an and finish it as fast as she could without any concern over the correct reading. The students at that time did not show respect for the Qur’an teacher. Mother number 8 started her *tajweed* class recently because she realised that she had to learn the science of *tajweed*.

The Qur’an school is a lot better today; when we were young, it was very regimental we were doing it five times a day after school every single day, five days a week. And from what it is now and what it was then, is completely different. First of all we were taught incorrectly. The teacher was Pakistani not Arabic, and I think the focus was more on completing the Qur’an and reading it as fast as you could. I was not taught the proper *tajweed*; instead of tha’s we were all taught fa’s. The whole of Manchester was taught the same way. Then I went to the biggest madrassa, in Victoria Park...there

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76 Arabic letter ‘tha’
77 Arabic letter ‘fa’
was a hundred people there. We were so naughty, running up and down in front of the hafiz\textsuperscript{78}. We never took it seriously; we use to talk during salah prayers. I never heard about madd (lengthening), or anything until a few years ago when I started my \textit{tajweed} lessons.

(Interview with a Mother number 8)

By telling these different narratives, we try to tackle some of the problems Muslims faced either when they learnt the Qur’an from non-qualified teachers, or basically from non-native speakers. The next extract reveals the narrative of a mother who is around 50 years old. This mother started to learn the Qur’an in an academic way, late on in life. Then she realised that she had been reading the wrong way throughout her life because she was not able to distinguish the difference between some Arabic letters. Moreover, she had only learnt some of the more basic reading rules of the Arabic language as no one had taught her the scientific way of reading the Qur’an.

In my time, there was only one mosque, the Victoria Mosque but I did not go there. My father taught me the Qur’an, and another man who came to our house, taught me Qur’an memorization. It was the Pakistani way, without \textit{tajweed}. We did not know about madd (lengthening) and the \textit{haraka}. (Shortening of the vowel). More importantly, we did not know the difference between similar sounding letters like kaf\textsuperscript{79} and qaf\textsuperscript{80}, dhad\textsuperscript{81} and zah\textsuperscript{82}…we pronounced them the same way. When we read it, we read it as it was written. It is like somebody saying: give me a knife and he says k-nife, they do not know k is a silent letter in English, which you do not pronounce, similarly with Arabic. I only became aware of Arabic pronunciation when I start my \textit{tajweed} class, 8 or 9 years ago.

(Interview with Mother number 5)

8.5.1 The MIC: The story of a Native Arabic Teacher

The MIC has had native Arabic speaking Qur’an teachers since it was established, probably because the Syrian merchants who had bought the building (see Chapter Five)\textsuperscript{83} were aware of the importance of the native Arabic teacher. Friday Prayer

\textsuperscript{78}The person who has memorized the whole Qur’an, or in some case who teaches the Qur’an to others.
\textsuperscript{79}ک Arabic letter ‘kaf’
\textsuperscript{80}ق Arabic letter ‘qaf’
\textsuperscript{81}ض Arabic letter ‘dhad’
\textsuperscript{82}ظ Arabic letter ‘tha’
\textsuperscript{83}That gives the impact between Muslim minorities in Manchester about the Didsbury Mosque as an Arab mosque (see in Chapter 3).
member, number 2 shared his memories about the MIC and its Qur’an classes that were provided by the imam of the mosque during his childhood.

The Didsbury Mosque holds really nice memories for me, I used to go to that mosque for various activities and study circles. The Qur’an School was very basic at that time, once a week led by the imam of the mosque84, and we used to learn the small Ayahs (Qur’an verses) using very basic Arabic. It was only for one hour, then we played outside. We were all Arabs of different ages, from 5 to 11. There were only ten of us.

(Interview with Friday Prayer Number 2)

The following extract illustrates how this mother learnt the Qur’an in the past, and how her children learn it now in the MIC, and what the advantage of the MIC is compared with other mosques, that she had used. She explains how the mosque does a good job that parents alone can’t do.

I feel very happy because there are a lot more mosques now Mash’ Allah (may Allah protect this achievement) and a lot more teachers around. In my day, there were not many mosques around. So you had to learn it at home with your dad and then get it! [laughs]

Gh: Get what?

Get a slap from your dad when you did it wrong! [laughs]. But nowadays I know my children are learning the best way by going to the mosque. I am not having to amend them, I am not slapping them. They are learning much better than I did and my lahjah my accent is not good either.

Gh: Do you think your father taught you the correct pronunciation of the Qur’an?

My dad read and learnt the Qur’an in Pakistan. So his tajweed is different from the Didsbury teachers. For example, they teach it the proper way and that is why I wish to learn it all over again. It is the proper way of al tajweed. But my dad’s tajweed is Pakistani in style, and like his accent is not an Arabic one, even though he reads all the time. I can only say that they learnt the right way from the Didsbury Mosque, because I tried sending my children to other mosques but everyone is a little bit different. At the moment I am happy with the Didsbury Mosque because they have native Arabic teachers, so I am very happy there. Generally, it is very important to have a Qur’an school in the mosque because if there isn’t then your children will have nowhere to learn, and it is better to learn from a proper teacher, an alem (Islamic scholar). Parents can teach but it is better to learn from a proper teacher. I take my children there and the teachers in the mosque teach my children rules that I cannot teach them.

(Interview with Mother number 2)

Mother number 8 even though she is a convert, was concerned to have her children learn the Qur’an from a native Arabic teacher, hence she looked in different places to achieve her aim. Although she lives far away, she chose the MIC for her children to learn the Qur’an, and she even tried private tutoring in addition, to help her children more.

84 Chapter 3, the imam was Arab.
Mosques should be more organised…and they should definitely have native Arabic speaking imams and teachers. We found it very difficult in Heald Green, or Cheadle to get a place for our children, because the main mosque in Cheadle was full. So we had to take our children somewhere else. We tried Gatley as someone had just set one up, but it was a Pakistani lady. She had one or two native Arabic speakers, but it was mixed. So then we chose the MIC as we preferred the native Arabic speakers…and we also found a private tutor. We prefer the madrassa to have a private tutor as well because they will be with the other children.

(Interview with Mother number 8)

Mother number 9 sends her children to the MIC Qur’an School. She compares the different accents between her children and other children in their family.

Some of my family send their children to a Pakistani mosque and I can see how they read with a different accent, to my children.

(Interview with Mother number 9)

Generally, it could be said that there are three different ways of teaching the Qur’an when there are no mosques for the Muslim minority in Britain. The following extract explains. The first way is for the parents, if they already know how to read the Qur’an, and if they have an Arabic guide book to help them. Then, the imam, who comes to teach as a private teacher in the students’ house, and finally, when a group of students gather in an imam’s house. However, in all these cases the imam is a non-native speaker.

When my parents came here in the 60s they did not have the mosque like we have now. If your father and mother knew the Qur’an and had the right Arabic textbooks to use, they could teach you. If not, then no one could teach you. It was very rare to find the right person; we used to have the imam who came to the house to teach us when we were aged 7. We learnt the Qur’an in Arabic and Urdu as well. The man was a Pakistani imam. But now I realise that the pronunciation and the accent was different. Yes, I can read Qur’an in Arabic but my pronunciation is not perfect. We were literally taught in Arabic and in our language. Some people used to go to the imam’s house as a group, to have classes there. It was always a Pakistani imam; no one knew any Arab people at that time.

(Interview with Friday Prayer number 5)

8.6 Conclusion

Every Qur’an school has to achieve the following mission: ‘To make every pupil emerge as a pious, well-mannered individual, knowledgeable in Al-Quran and As-Sunnah, literate, healthy, creative and a thinking individual who loves his religion, family, society and
country’ (Warraich and Feroze, 2007: 53). Muslim children who attend community or
church schools typically also attend Qur’an schools or other supplementary schools outside
normal school hours in order to receive education in Islamic beliefs and practices. This
places an additional burden on Muslim children, in terms of both time and intellectual
effort. Many Muslim parents would appreciate the option for their children to study Arabic
in school, and also for them to receive a form of religious education that gave them more
opportunities to enrich their understanding of their own faith (Halstead, 2005: 105). Thus
this chapter shows how Qur’an schools work to help Muslim families to protect and to
preserve their religious identity in a non-Muslim society without clear or direct
consciousness of the significance of their task towards new Muslim generations, and
towards preserving their religious identity in the future for a British Muslim society. It is
difficult for outsiders to gain a clear understanding of the internal politics of local Muslim
communities and their Qur’an schools.

‘[T]here is remarkably little detailed information about complementary schools and their
educational agendas and, specifically, on qualitative and ethnographic aspects of these
schools’ (Martin et al., 2003: 14, Gent, 2006a: 44). Sociologically oriented studies of
Qur’an schools look at their function, both explicit and implicit in Muslim communities
(Boyle, 2004: 18) in the non-Muslim society; however these studies are few in number.
Much needs to be done in order to explore the broader cultural and educational or
specifically religious educational role that Qur’an schools play in contemporary Muslims’
lines in a non-Muslim society, and how it constructs Islamic identity. However, the same
study could be done in a Muslim society to compare the results. It is important to
understand the mission of contemporary Qur’an schools in British mosques for the
subsequent Muslim generations and all Muslim minorities. Although, Arab students have
the advantage of the language that is already embedded in their daily lives, it is incumbent
for Muslims worldwide to study the Qur’an in Arabic, not in translation, since the Arabic Qur’an is believed to be the direct word of God (Boyle, 2004: 20).

Muslim families face different challenges when they send their children to British state schools as discussed in Chapter Seven. Because this system continues to expose Muslim children to secular and un-Islamic values for most of their school day. Moreover, sending children to Qur’an school or any of Islamic school in a non-Muslim society can result in new types of challenges and contradictions as Chapter Six discussed in full. Halstead (2005) asserts: ‘This exposure to diverse and incompatible values may create tensions in Muslim children, particularly in relation to their civic identity and loyalties. Second, the additional demands the system places on Muslim children in terms of both time and effort have proven unacceptable to some Muslim parents, and this is another reason why a growing number of parents are coming to support the principle of separate Muslim schooling. Third, the quality of education provided in mosques or other Islamic schools has often been considered significantly inferior to that of community or church schools. The premises and resources are often inadequate, the teachers often unqualified and the methods, which include rote-learning and strict discipline, are often out of tune with contemporary educational thinking and practice’ (133). Some of these claims were assessed throughout this chapter.

Qur’an schools are generally regarded as a positive feature of British society as a non-Muslim country. Qur’an schools can help to make the relationships strong among Muslim students. Qur’an schools can reinforce the cultural, linguistic and religious identities of pupils. They make up for the inadequacies of the British state school education system.
Chapter Nine
Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction
This research aims to contribute to the understanding of the role of religious institutions like mosques in constructing religious identities for Muslim minorities in a non-Muslim society. The study considers the functions of mosques in passing Islamic identity onto subsequent Muslim generations, more specifically the construction of their identities with regards to teaching and learning the Qur’an from an early age. I have done this research using the Manchester Islamic Centre, which represents one of the most active mosques among the Sunni community in Manchester, as a case study. The objective of this final chapter, through presenting an overview, is to draw a number of conclusions, some of which represent the development of ideas that have already been introduced. The study ends with a message to the mosque’s trustees and management committee, as well as recommendations for further research.

9.2 Overview
This thesis has added a unique perspective to the discussions on minorities’ religious institutions by exploring the role of the mosque in constructing and reproducing Islamic identity. The first chapter explored the themes and issues of the study. The second chapter gave an overview of Muslim migration to Britain from the time period to the present time, highlighting the key stages of each era of migration. The chapter also importantly draws attention to demographical and statistical facts from the 2011 Census, which are crucial to understand the community under investigation.

The third chapter laid out the groundwork for making sense of the relationship between the institutional role of the mosque and the family’s role in bringing up a Muslim child. It
explored the different conceptualisations of religious identity and examined the context of Islamic identity from Ramadan’s perspective. This included engaging with ideas of post-ethnic religious identity, the post-ethnic mosque and notions of British Islamic identity.

The research design of the fourth chapter was formulated to reflect the distinctiveness of the MIC as a British/European liberal mosque open to all Muslim minorities irrespective of their ethnicities. Each method used helped to compensate for the limitations of other methods, and yielded different orders of narrative and information. Participant observation enabled examination of daily activity at the MIC, mainly the Qur’an School. Interviews were used to generate data that was used in the empirical chapters later on. A “situation ethics” form was completed for the research, and power relations between the researcher and participants were discussed in the chapter. As stated in the empirical chapter, it was found that doing a case study was the best way to understand the role of the mosque in constructing religious identity through the generations.

The fifth chapter refocused on the history that was mentioned in the second chapter, and examined, in detail, the history of establishing religious institutions within Britain, with a greater focus on the MIC as Manchester’s central mosque. The chapter also researched British legislation for establishing a mosque and mosque numbers. The politics of the MIC was revealed by examining the trustees' religious affiliations, ethnicity, gender and management roles, and by discussing the MIC and Qur'an School’s financial issues. The chapter considered the power of the MIC as one of the most active religious institutions amongst Muslim Sunnis in Manchester.

The sixth chapter emphasised respondents’ conversations about their relationship with the mosque, or masjid. The chapter explored interviewees’ views towards the main task of the mosque as a place of prayer, and whether that is the only service that the mosque has to offer to the Muslim community. The examination then focused on the mosque as a religio-
cultural place to protect Islamic identity and ethnic culture. Significantly, the chapter discussed questions over hybrid identity and the clash of British and homeland cultures. It also explored how sharing religious identity can create feelings of solidarity between different ethnic groups of Muslim minorities. Here it was suggested that at MIC the conditions were good for creating a post-ethnic British/European Islamic identity partly based on the shared professional/higher educational background of many key participants. The chapter ends by considering participants’ suggestions of improvements for the mosque’s role, mainly regarding anti-social behaviour and social problems that take place within the Muslim community.

The seventh chapter clarified how teaching can generate feelings of belonging to a specific religion. The chapter depended on participants’ narratives as either parents or students as well as on the different challenges that faced them when attending British schools. It focused on such issues as the hijab, prayer, impact of friendships between Muslim and non-Muslim pupils in British schools and British school religious celebrations during Christmas, Easter and RE lessons. These might help policymakers of religious institutions pay more attention to the impact of British schools on Muslim students, and what mosques have to do to bridge this gap.

The eighth chapter evaluated the value of the Muslim supplementary school and its role in creating a sense of belonging for Muslim minority communities. It examined the Qur’an schools in Manchester, focusing on the MIC Qur’an School, and their importance in constructing religious identities for subsequent generations. The chapter clarified the meaning of the root of the term madrassa, its usage in the British context and the different types of madrassas in Manchester. The discussion continued by looking at the timetables, gender composition and curriculum of Qur’an schools in British mosques. The chapter then clarified the differences between Qur’an schools, Arabic supplementary schools and
Islamic private schools, And ended with a discussion Chapter Eight discussed the MIC Qur’an School in Manchester and its educational materials that are mostly used by all Qur’an schools in British Muslim mosques on how Qur’an teaching promotes the continuity of Islamic identity in the UK.

9.3 Vision and Mission

Here, I want to summarise and offer suggestions to make mosques in non-Muslim societies more appealing to Muslim minorities and to adopt the British/European liberal mosque’s style. The role of the mosque has to evolve to focus on the needs of the diverse Muslim identities whilst ensuring that services are open to all without regards to ethnicity or nationality. For example, mosques need to meet the needs of the local community by promoting health, fitness, education and employment opportunities. They also need to provide Muslims and non-Muslims an opportunity to learn and understand Islam through dialogue, discussion and social interaction, and to develop interfaith relations with the neighbouring religious institutions like synagogues and churches on religious tolerance. Mosques must also work actively to promote tolerance and a better understanding of the non-Muslim society in which they exist to their congregations. Doing this with other local mosques will bind together Muslims from different backgrounds and strands of Islam.

Muslims have one of the youngest populations in Britain, which means that mosques need to increase the number of youth actively engaged in programmes of learning and recreation, and to deal with issues of anti-social behaviour, drugs, extremism, gang culture, teenage pregnancy and same sex relationships. These issues affect the Muslim family honour, highlighting why Muslim youth and/or families need a confidential service offered by specialists (sociologists, psychologists, midwives and doctors) to be located within the mosque. Moreover, women should have access to relevant services in a culturally sensitive environment, including counselling services, social support and training; some of these
activities can be offered in partnership with local community organisations. Muslim centres have to provide choice and to empower sections of the Muslim community who may feel isolated from mainstream services.

It is vital that founders and trustees of mosques realise that the role of the mosque is to evolve and keep pace with changes within the Muslim community. Already, more than half the British Muslim population consists of people born within the country. Largely, the trustees belong to a generation with a different background. It is time for trustees to include members of the younger generation as partners in the management of the mosques. The first step may be the creation or appointment of management committees comprising of members of the younger generation. The mosques need to begin to move in the directions desired by the new generation, guided and advised by their elders. Unless this transition can be conscientiously undertaken and sensitively managed, mosques run the risk of becoming obsolete monuments to the religious practices of first-generation migrants. Were this to take place, future generations might sell the mosques to the highest bidders in much the same way as lapsed Christians have sold their churches to Muslims. The disused churches were fortunate to become mosques; the disused mosques of the future may be less fortunate. The founders and trustees of mosques labour under a greater obligation to future generations than they did to the first generation of migrants. The mosques were built to secure the future of new generations, not to stand as monuments to past piety.

There are undoubtedly many issues that need addressing in Qur’an schools that take place in British Muslim mosques, including the development of the methods of Qur’an teaching in the mosque, and the training of Qur’an teachers, since the form of education in Qur’an schools has been affected profoundly by traditional patterns of education. As the British Muslim community has grown in size, and an increasing number within the community are British-born, training has to be provided for teachers to employ the same teaching methods
that are found in mainstream British schools. Moreover, Qur'an schools much provide all Qur'an teachers, whether they are native or non-native Arabic speakers, with full and comprehensive courses on *tajweed* to be able to transmit the correct pronunciation of the Qur'an to the students. In order to counteract the tendency to treat the Qur'an as a written text, classroom practice in religious education should include imaginative ways of presenting the Qur'an as an oral-aural experience in the lives of Muslims. This would certainly include providing all teachers with the opportunity to study the Qur'an as an oral text.

**9.4 Further Research Recommendations**

As this study examined the role of the mosque in constructing religious identity, future study can focus instead on the role of the Muslim family in constructing children’s religious identity in the non-Muslim society, both before school age and after the child starts school, to test the difference between the two stages.

Further research can focus on the impact of the mosque and Qur’an schools on the lives of Muslim children in general, and how it impacts their learning potential in mainstream schooling. This could be achieved through a variety of ethnographic methods such as observation of Muslim students, and the carrying out of semi-structured interviews with students, family members, trustees and teachers of both schools. Another unexplored area pertains to the challenges that the Qur’an school students might face due to attending a mosque that represents a different identity, culture, and religion from the dominant British culture. Yet another possibility for further research is to explore the RE and other curriculums to see how they teach Islam to students, to test how it addresses the Islamic religion in mainstream British schools and its influence particularly on the Muslim students. This may be conducted through participant observation during RE lessons and focus group
or semi-structured interviews with the Muslim students who attend these lessons. It could also be approached by analysing textbooks and assessing if they are neutral, positive or negative. An investigation of RE teachers’ knowledge about Islam would also shed light on the teaching of Islam in British schools.

Another area of research is to concentrate on the role of Arabic supplementary schools (as opposed to Qur'an schools) and their role in protecting the language, culture and religion of subsequent Arab generations. Through this, a focus on other Arab minorities, like Christians and Jews, can shed light as to how they are protecting the language, culture and religion of Arab subsequent generations.

Research into the nature of different Muslim mosques in Britain can help identify the diverse practices and different styles within followers of the faith. This can focus on the two major sects of Islam (Sunni and Shi’a), and look into curriculum innovation and experimentation, as well as collaborative work within the wider educational and social community.

Research into the role of British imams is also crucial to identify their changing cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds; their involvement in Muslim education in a non-Muslim society; their role within the wider community (Muslim and non-Muslim); and their participation in solving social issues (drugs, teenage pregnancy, same sex relationships and gang culture) within the Muslim community. Analysing their Friday sermons can also help to determine how the choice of language impacts worshipers, and therefore which language they are better to be addressed in. Finally, an investigation on imams' discussions and reflections on the current situation within the ummah (community) can reveal whether traditional talk is evolving to keep up with changes in the demographics of their following.
Appendix 1. Ethical Approval and Safety Guidelines

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ETHICAL PRACTICE IN CONDUCTING RESEARCH

If there are any ethical implications in your research for your thesis, you must provide a brief statement (form attached if required) explaining how these issues will be addressed.

Name: Ghalia Sarmani
Programme: PhD (PhD/MPhil)
Discipline Area: Sociology

Declaration: I have read and understood the guidelines on ethical procedures in research (see Faculty of Humanities Postgraduate Research Student Handbook 2007/8 p43-45 at http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/intranet/pg/handbooks/documents/PGR%20Student %20Handbook%202007-08%20-%20WEB.doc

Please tick one box:
☐ The proposed research raises NO ethical issues.
☐ There ARE ethical issues involved in the proposed research. I have attached a Statement which indicates how I intend to approach these issues in my thesis.

Student Signature: 
Print Name: Ghalia Sarmani
Date: 5/1/ Dec 2008

Signature of Main Supervisor:
Print Name: 
Date: 

The following section will be completed after you have submitted the declaration form

Director of Graduate Studies: Professor Maia Green
Action: 
Date: 

Please return this declaration form as follows:
Programme: Date to be returned by: Required length of statement: Return a paper copy of this declaration form to Research Programmes: See timetable below Up to 1,000 words Ann Cronley, SoSS Postgraduate Office, 2.003
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MPhil/PhD Full-time Students</th>
<th>Arthur Lewis Building. If a statement is required attach it to this form.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Registration Date</td>
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<td>September 2008</td>
<td>11 February 2009</td>
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<td>April 2009</td>
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**Ethical Issues in Social Science Research Projects – Notes for Completing the Statement Form**

If there are ethical issues involved in your research, you must complete the statement form (attached) and return it with the Ethical Practice in Conducting Research form.

When completing the statement form you should consider the following four main issues and address them accordingly:

- **Safety**
  It must be made clear that the project involves no likelihood of danger to the researcher or the subjects, and that any precautions that need to be taken will be taken.

- **Consent**
  Normally, consent of all those taking part, e.g. being interviewed, should be obtained in writing, after the nature of the research has been explained to them; and copies of the information sheet and consent form must be provided. But if the research is on a cultural group who dislike signing and prefer to give verbal consent, verbal consent should be substituted.

- **Distress**
  a) A list of the questions to be asked must be provided
  b) An assurance must be given that the interviews will be conducted sensitively
  c) Information on what will be done if any interviewee becomes distressed must be provided

- **Confidentiality**
  Information must be provided on how confidentiality will be maintained, including how tapes or other confidential material will be stored, and whether they will be destroyed when the research is completed.
The University of Manchester
Graduate Office, School of Social Sciences

Ethical Practice in Conducting Research - Statement

Name: Ghadila Sarmani
Programme: PhD
Department: Sociology

Title (Dissertation/Thesis):
Why/how Muslims Minority keeps their religious identity in the UK? Case Study Disbury Mosque: Learning/Teaching Quran

You may find the following headings useful when explaining how you will address any ethical issues arising from your dissertation/research project. They are taken from the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth, "Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice" (http://www.theasa.org/ethics.htm) which provides more explanation of ethical issues that can arise when dealing with human subjects. The Department of Health: Research Governance Framework document can be found at http://www.dh.gov.uk/dr_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4108965.pdf

Do not feel constrained by following list of headings. There is no need to provide a statement under each heading, except heading 2 where you must address the ethical issues that will arise from involving human subjects in your research. Note that any research which involves the interviewing of any NHS staff, for whatever reason, requires ethical approval from the NHS Local Research Ethics Committee (LREC) - see Department of Health: Research Governance Framework.

1. Brief description of project.
2. Relations with and responsibilities towards research participants.
3. Relations with and responsibilities towards sponsors, funders and employers.
4. Relations with and responsibilities towards colleagues and the discipline.
5. Relations with own and host Governments.
6. Responsibilities to the Wider Society
The Ethical Statement

Safety

This project, as far as I think, involves no likelihood of danger to me as a researcher or to the subjects/interviewees, and that any precautions that need to be taken will be taken.

For instance, when I have a meeting with an interviewee, I have to tell someone about that.

Thus, I will write all the information of the interviewee (like the address, contact number either Mobil or landline, and the specific time for going and returning) on a sheet of paper and it will be given to this person. Or I will send it as a short message to his mobile phone.

As well as, according to the interviewees, they will know who I am via the letter which I have given to the Mosque’s students. This letter confirms my ID as my PhD at the University of Manchester, as well as a teacher in the Mosque, that they can trust to visit them at their home for around one hour and a half as it is anticipated, and also to speak trustfully and clearly about their experience and their thoughts as Muslim Minority in the UK.

During the interview, I will try to protect research participants as far as possible against the potentially harmful effects of research: Therefore, anonymity of research participants will be regarded during writing up.

The names of the students, which are asked in the letter, are just chosen to account the number of the students, and who they will be the participants of the interview, but the names of the mothers will not be asked for in any questions in the list of the interview questions. In addition to that, the student’s name also will be deleted during writing up of the research.

Confidentiality

As far as I know, it is very necessary to record all the information which the interviewee will provide. For the storage and security of records; the tapes record, during and after fieldwork, will be kept in a safe place at home in a high place to keep it away from my child or any visitor. Moreover, the Mp3 can be used to record the interview to get it as a computer file that also can be safer and more confidential to store the information. Then, it can be saved in my personal computer and in P drive as a student in university.

Protecting research participants and honouring trust:

I will make my best efforts to protect the physical, social and psychological well-being of the subjects of the study and to respect their rights, interests, sensitivities and privacy:

- If any conflict happens, the interests and rights of those studied should come first;

- Under some research circumstances, it may not be possible to fully guarantee research participants’ interests. In such cases, the consideration in advance whether participants should pursue that particular piece of
research will be taken. That will be done by asking all participants (students, parents, and teachers) directly (question number 15 and 16 for student and their parent):

1. Would you be interested in taking part in an interview with me?
2. Would your mother be interested in taking part in an interview with me?

The consent of all participants who are taking part in this study via an interviewing method will be obtained in writing, by offering a letter which explains shortly the nature of the research to teachers, students, and student’s parents. A copy of this letter is provided.

Student and student’s parent letter

Al Salam Aliakom

Hope you and your family are well Insha’Allah.

My name is Ghalia Sarmani, I am a teacher in the Disbury mosque, and I teach Quran to intermediate level. I am also a PhD student at the University of Manchester, with the sociology department. My interest is sociology of religion. Of course, because I am a Muslim woman, I chose my topic within the sociology of Islam. During my teaching, many questions came up, which need to be answered. Most of them are to do with Islamic religious identity in the UK. Therefore, I would be very grateful if you and your parents would be willing to be part in this study, by answering the questions below, and, possibly (this is still something to be decided) by taking part in an interview which I will conduct. Of course, I will not collect any personal details, but rather I will seek to understand your experience as a Muslim family in the UK. Therefore, I will not ask about family name or even personal name, and the name of the student will be deleted during the writing up of this project.

Please can you show this letter and the questions to your parents and then answer the questions below. Please provide your answers on this sheet and give it back to your teacher as soon as possible.

Questions

1. The student’s name:
2. The date of birth (student):
3. The parent’s original country: The father:
   The mother:
4. The parent’s native language: The father:
   The mother:
5. How many languages does your mother speak?
6. What is your mother’s mother tongue?
7. How many languages does your father speak?
8. What is your father’s mother tongue?
9. How many languages do you speak?
10. Which languages do you prefer as a daily language?
11. When did your mother first enter the UK?
12. When did your father first enter the UK?
13. Why did your mother come to the UK?
14. Why did your father come to the UK?
15. Would you be interested in taking part in an interview with me?
16. Would your mother be interested in taking part in an interview with me?
17. If yes, what are you and your mother’s preferred days of the week and times (I would wish to see both of you on the same day, although in separate interviews)?
18. Your address: Post Code:
19. Telephone No: Mobile: Landline:

Thank you very much

Ghalia Sarmani

Teachers’ letter

Al Salam Aliakom

Hope you and your family are well Insha’Allah.

My name is Ghalia Sarmani, I am a teacher in the Disbury mosque, and I teach Quran to intermediate level. I am also a PhD student at the University of Manchester, with
the sociology department. My interest is sociology of religion. Of course, because I am a Muslim girl, I chose my topic within the sociology of Islam. During my teaching, many questions came up, which need to be answered. Most of them are to do with Islamic religious identity in the UK. Therefore, I would be very grateful if you accept to be part in this study, by taking part in an interview which I will conduct. Of course, I will not collect any personal details, but rather I will seek to understand your experience and your sight as a Muslim teacher in the UK. Therefore, I will not ask about family name or even personal name. These just some questions hope to get your answer on the same paper please. Then can you return it back to me.

Thank very much

Where do you come from?
What is your mother tongue?
How many languages can you speak?
Would you be interested in taking part in an interview with me?

Your address: Post Code:

Telephone No: Mobile:

Landline:

Avoiding undue intrusion:

In such case the guide of the interview will be the main director for the conversation.
As well as, the interviewee will know during the introduction of talk that the data may be shared (in some form) with other colleagues or be made available to other interested parties, as well as both of my supervisors.

Distress
This is a list of the questions which will be asked during the interview is provided
Appendix 2: Letter to MIC

24th February 2012

Dear Sir/ Madam,

RE: Ghalia Sarmani

Ghalia Sarmani is a PhD student at the University of Manchester and is doing research into the history of Mosques in Manchester and their importance for the Muslim community. She is working with myself and other colleagues at the department of Sociology at the University. Ghalia needs to do some interviews with MIC committees to finish her data collection, If you have any questions or queries about her research please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Virinder S Kalra
Sociology
01612752275
01612754453
kalra@manchester.ac.uk
Appendix 3: Trustees’ Interview Questions

History of mosque

1. When did the Muslims buy this mosque?
2. Is it the first Mosque in Manchester city?
3. Who many people bought it (number)?
4. What are their nationalities, and what was their plan?
5. Are they still alive and involved in the mosque in anyway?
6. Is there any link between them and the present trustees?
7. What was the price tag of the building at that time?
8. Was the choice of Location contemplated beforehand? Is there any significance for the area?
   Were there other favourable locations?
9. Why did they buy the premises? What were their intentions?
10. Did the trustees foresee the Mosque becoming an Islamic Centre or were they just looking
    for a mosque to get Muslims together for prayers?
11. What changes were done to the original Church building to turn it to a Mosque like Woduo
    places, Mehrab and Menber….? How long did these changes take?
12. Did the change take place before starting to officially hold any Muslim prayers there?

Management of staff and premises

13. How many trustees are there right now,

   • Age,
   • Nationality,
   • Responsibilities
14. Why are all the trustees of an Arab descent?
15. Why isn’t there any youth amongst them?
16. How did you all try to set up the mosque?
17. Do you think all of trustees should be sunni?

18. Has there ever been a woman among the trustees throughout the Mosque’s history up to the present? If not, why?

19. Are there any women managers at the mosque? If not, why?

20. Has it ever been difficult to find a good manager for the mosque? Why?

21. Who were the old managers, their nationalities, and qualifications?

22. Does the manager play any role in the development of the Mosque?

23. Do you think a more dynamic and charismatic manager would attract more students, families or even worshipers to the mosque?

24. Would you say The Didsbury Mosque is more attractive to people of certain ethnicities? Or certain Mazhab? Why is that?

25. What is the role of the imam in MIC as a mosque in western society?

26. Does the Imam have to have any affiliations like sufi, salafi? Why?

27. In terms of some social problems, where do you think Muslims should go?(Drug, teenager pregnancy, same sex-relationship).

**Development of School in Mosque**

28. How did the idea of a Quran School come about in MIC? Please explain in details. Did you support the idea and why?

29. How is the school developed over time?

30. Do you feel the premises would be able to handle the ever increasing Quran School in the years to come?

31. How do you see the role of a Quran School in a western country?

32. What do you think are the reasons for the unusual comparison of MIC mosque with other mosques in Manchester or in the UK?

- Size and Activities
- Sharia department
• *Dawa* department
• Quran school (teachers and curriculum)

**Role of Mosque in Western Society,**

33. How do you see the role of the Mosque in a western country?

34. Do you feel that mosques create social solidarity?

35. What could mosques do to transfer religion to new generations?

36. Why do you think a good number of Muslim communities come to MIC instead of any other mosque? Like for Jumma prayers?

37. Is there any link between MIC and other mosques in Manchester like National Advisory Board?

38. Is there any link between MIC and other mosques in West?

39. Regarding the present extension of the building, is it the first extension of the mosque?

   Why is it being done now? Why has it not been done before?

40. Is there anything else that you would like to add regarding this research?
Appendix 4: Parents’ Interview Questions

Parent’s Background and Attitudes towards The UK

1. Where do you come from originally?
2. Do you feel that your life in the UK has brought you closer or pulled you further away from your religion?
3. What is about the UK that you are happy with or not happy with regarding your religious identity?
4. Do you think you need make your life different or distinguished from the British lifestyle? If so; how can this be done?
5. What makes you different from a non-Muslim person in the UK?
6. Do you have more than one identity?
7. What is the importance of religion in your daily life?
8. What is the importance of Quran in your daily life now?
9. How do you express your religious identity in the UK?

Mosques-Their role

10. What is the role of the Mosque in a western country?
11. What is your attitude towards mosques in the UK:
12. Do mosques help you in Britain? How?
13. Do you feel that mosques create social solidarity?
14. What could mosques do to transfer religion to new generations?
15. How would you describe the role of the mosque towards Muslims in a western country?
16. How would you describe the role of mosque towards non-Muslims in a western country?
Islam in people’s lives

17. Do you worry about your religious identity in the UK, especially after the negative views of Islam now?

18. What is your reaction when Islam is described as a ‘terrorist religion’?

19. What is your responsibility towards your religion in this case?

20. Do you find it very difficult to cope with this situation in the UK?

21. What is the difference between Manchester and a Muslim country that you know in regard to your religious identity and culture?

Parent’s attitude towards their children in non-Muslim countries like the UK

22. How many children do you have?

23. What is your responsibility as a Muslim towards them in a non-Muslim country like the UK?

24. Do you or your children feel that religion is an inherited thing?

25. What is the difference between your responsibility towards them in the UK and your responsibility in your home country?

26. Why do you teach your children Quran?

27. Why do you teach them Quran in Arabic?

28. Do you think this is wasting your time or money since you offer Quran and Arabic tuition?

29. What is your feeling towards their learning Quran in the UK?

30. What is the difference between their learning Quran in the UK and doing so in a Muslim country like your home country?

31. What do you think when Quran is taught by non-native speakers?( tell me your full story how did you learn the Quran when you was young)

32. Do you feel you are bringing up your children in an Islamic environment in the UK? How?

33. What makes your children different from non-Muslim ones?

34. How do feel about your children’s relations with non-Muslim students in British school?
35. Do you fear that they will lose their religious identity or faith in British schools because of RS lessons?

36. Do you ever have arguments or difficulties with your children about their religion because of ‘RS’ lessons or their friends in the state school?

37. What is your aim in bringing them up as Muslims in a non-Islamic country?

38. What is your role now towards your children in the UK if you want to pass your religious identity to them?

39. Do you worry about your children’s religious identity in the UK?

40. How do you see the future of Muslim identity in the UK?

41. If you faced any social problems ‘drug, teenager pregnancy, or same sex-relationships where do think you would go? or if any one asked you where do you advise them to go?
Appendix 5: Teachers’ Interview Questions

Background and Attitudes towards The UK

1. Where do you come from originally?
2. What is your mother tongue?
3. What were your first impressions when you first came to the UK?
4. What were other people’s attitudes toward you?
5. Do you feel you are a Muslim in the UK? How?
6. Do you feel that your life in the UK has brought you closer or pulled you further away from your religion?
7. What is about the UK that you are happy with or not happy with regarding your religious identity?
8. Do you think you need make your life different or distinguished from the British life style? If so; how can this be done?
9. What makes you different from a non-Muslim person in the UK?
10. Do you think religion has become more important to you after your migrated to UK?
11. What is the importance of religion in your daily life?
12. What is the importance of Quran in your daily life now?
13. How do you express your religious identity in the UK?

Mosques-Their role

14. What is the role of the Mosque in a western country?
15. Do you feel that mosques create social solidarity?
16. What could mosques do to transfer religion to new generations?
17. Do you think it is part of the mosque responsibility to offer this kind of teaching in non-Muslim countries? Should this be their task in Muslim countries only?
18. What is the main source of your knowledge about Islam?
19. How do you implement Islam in your life? Do you: Prays, fast, read Quran, tolerate and help others even if they are non-Muslims, give charity?

20. Are there any obstacles that prevent you from doing any of the above in the UK?

21. Describe your implementation of Islam in your daily life in your country of origin?

22. Do you worry about your religious identity in the UK, especially after the negative views of Islam now?

23. What is your reaction when Islam is described as a ‘terrorist religion’?

24. What is your responsibility towards your religion in this case?

25. What is the difference between Manchester and a Muslim country that you know in regard to your religious identity and culture?

**Quran School**

26. How many years you have been teaching in the mosque?

27. What is your feeling as an Arabic and Quran teacher (native speaker) in a non-Muslim country?

28. What is your responsibility towards Muslim students in a non-Muslim country like the UK?

29. What is the difference between your task towards them in the UK and your task in your home?

30. What is your motivation and purpose of teaching Arabic and Quran?

31. Do you think parents tend to be more worry about their religious identity and their children religious identity more than students themselves?

32. As an employer in MIC do you think Mosque has to develop any of its teaching activities to format and transfer Islamic identity?
Appendix 6: Friday Prayers’ Interview Questions

**Background and Attitudes towards The UK**

1. Where do you come from originally?
2. What were your first impressions when you first came to the UK?
3. What were other people’s attitudes toward you?
4. Do you feel you are a Muslim in the UK? How?
5. Do you feel that your life in the UK has brought you closer or pulled you further away from your religion?
6. What is about the UK that you are happy with or not happy with regarding your religious identity?
7. Do you think you need make your life different or distinguished from the British lifestyle? If so; how can this be done?
8. What makes you different from a non-Muslim person in the UK?
9. Do you think you have more than one identity?
10. How would you describe the new identity?
11. Do you think religion has become more important to you after your migrated to UK?
12. What is the importance of religion in your daily life?
13. What is the importance of Quran in your daily life now?
14. How do you express your religious identity in the UK?

**Islam in people’s lives**

15. What is the main source of your knowledge about Islam?
16. How do you implement Islam in your life? Do you: Prays, fast, read Quran, tolerate and help others even if they are non-Muslims, give charity?
17. Are there any obstacles that prevent you from doing any of the above in the UK?
18. Describe your implementation of Islam in your daily life in your country of origin?

19. Do you worry about your religious identity in the UK, especially after the negative views of Islam now?

20. What is your reaction when Islam is described as a ‘terrorist religion’?

21. What is your responsibility towards your religion in this case?

22. What is the difference between Manchester and a Muslim country that you know in regard to your religious identity and culture?

**Mosques-Their role**

23. What is the role of the Mosque in a western country?
   - Prayer place
   - men space only
   - Dawa
   - Culture protector and reproducer
   - Language protector and reproducer

24. Does the same role applied for the Mosque in a Muslim country?

25. What is your attitude towards mosques in the UK:
   a) Do mosques help you in Britain? How?
   b) Do you feel that mosques create social solidarity?

26. What could mosques do to transfer religion to new generations?

27. How would you describe the role of the mosque towards Muslims in a western country?

28. How would you describe the role of mosque towards non-Muslims in a western country?
29. Do you think it is part of the mosque responsibility to offer this kind of teaching in non-Muslim countries? Should this be their task in Muslim countries only?

30. Why do you come to MIC?

31. What is the difference between MIC and other mosques you have been in Manchester?
Appendix 7: Ethical Practice in Conducting Research

22nd January 2009

Mrs. Ghalia Sarmani
30 Roberts Avenue
Manchester
M14 4DA

Dear Ghalia

Re: ETHICAL PRACTICE IN CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Title of research: Why/How Muslims Minority keeps their Religious Identity in the UK? Case Study Didsbury Mosque: Learning/Teaching Quran

Thank you for submitting your Ethical Declaration form in line with the Graduate School's guidelines. Your declaration has now been considered by the School of Social Sciences' Ethics Panel and has been approved.

Yours sincerely

Ann Croley
Postgraduate Administrator
School of Social Sciences

The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL Royal Charter Number: RC000797
Appendix 8: Interview Respondents Information

Friday Prayer

1. Friday Prayer (1) He is a University lecturer, has a PhD in Sociology. He was born in Manchester, to an Iranian father (not a practicing Muslim) and an Irish mother, but she was born in Manchester and she is not a Muslim. He is 26 years old.

2. Friday Prayer (2) He is a physician. He came to the UK from Syria when he was 2 years old with his parents. He spent his between Syria and the UK. He is around 37 years old. He is a father of two.

3. Friday Prayer (3) He is working as a branch manager at Subway takeaway. He came from Egypt 7 years ago. He has a Master degree in Tourism. He is around 30 years old.

4. Friday Prayer (4) She is a PhD student in Psychology department at Manchester University. She was born in London to Syrian Parents. She moved to Saudi Arabia during her teenage years. She is 29 years. She is a mother of 2 (9 and 7 year olds).

5. Friday Prayer (5) Shewas born in Manchester to Pakistani parents. She has a degree in Law. She is around 39 years old.
6. **Friday Prayer (6)** He is a Syrian business man. He has a PhD in Computer Science. He is a member in many Muslims committees like Cheadle Mosque and *Al-Nour* Arabic School in Manchester. He is around 56 years old. He is a father

5.

**Mosques’ Trustees**

7. **MIC Trustee number (1)** He is half Syrian half Lebanese. He is working as a trader. He is in his late fifties.

8. **MIC Trustee number (2)** He is Syrian, but he was not born in Syria. He is carrying on his father’s business as a trader. He is in early fifties.

9. **Victoria mosque trustee (3)** He is a Pakistani man he came to the UK to carry on his studies. He is a business man. He is in his late sixties.

10. **A woman from Dawa department in MIC:** She is originally from Syria but she lived her life in Lebanon. She preferred to spend her life as a volunteer in *dawa* instead of paid work. She is in her late forties.

11. **The MIC Manager:** He is an Iraqi person. He has been in the UK for more than 40 years. He lives in Leeds. He has a PhD in Engineering. He is around 60 years old.

12. **MIC x-Iman:** He is from Jordan. He has a PhD degree in Theology from The University of Edinburgh.
MIC Teachers

13. Head teacher of MIC Quran School: He is Libyan; he has a degree in Sharia (Islamic Studies). He is around 38 years old.

14. Teacher number (1): she was born in the UK. Parents are originally from Libya. She is a PhD student in Psychology at Salford University. She is holding a certificate in the science of *tajweed*. She is 28 years old.

15. Teacher number (2): she is Syrian. She is a PhD student in Politics. She is an overseas student. She is 32 years old.

16. Teacher number (3): she is a Syrian, grew up in Dubai Where she met her husband, a British convert to Islam. She has a Master degree in English Education from Manchester University. She has been living in Manchester for the past 5 years. She has 5 children. She is around 50 years old.

17. Teacher number (4): she is Algerian. She studied the science of *tajweed*. She has 3 children (boys). She is around 40 years old.

Mothers of the MIC Quran students

18. Mother number (1): she is Bangladeshi; she is working as a child minder. She is
33 years old. She has 4 daughters. She does not think the Mosque is not enough for her children, that is why she provides private tuition for them.

19. **Mother number (2):** she was born in England; her parents are originally from Pakistan both of them. She has 4 children. She is 40 years old.

20. **Mother number (3):** she is Pakistani. She is around 40. She has 4 children.

21. **Mother number (4):** she is from Somalia. She has 5 children. She is studying with her daughters in MIC Qur’an School in memorization class. She is around 40 years old.

22. **Mother number (5):** she is from South Africa. She has been in the UK for 18 years. She has 4 children. She is studying with her daughters at MIC Qur’an School in memorization class. She is around 45 years old.

23. **Mother number (6):** she was born in the UK. Originally her parents came from Pakistan. She has a PhD in Pharmacology. She is 33 years old. She has 2 children.

24. **Mother number (7):** she came from Somalia. She speaks Brava language.

25. **Mother number (8):** she was born in the UK. Her parents originally came from Pakistan. She has a university degree in Science. She is around 37 years old. She has 3 children.
26. **Mother number (9):** she is a Pakistani. She has a degree in sociology. She has 3 boys. She is around 33 years old.

27. **Mother number (10):** she was born in France to Syrian parents. She has a degree in teaching French. She moved to Manchester 5 years ago. She has 3 children. She is 29 years old.

28. **Mother number (11):** she born in Palestine. Her family came to the UK when she was 8 years old. She has a degree in politics. She is 28 years old. She is a mother of 2 daughters.

29. **Mother number (12):** she was born in the UK but her family from India; she reverted to Islam nine years ago. She is a mother of 2. She is around 33 years old.

30. **Mother number (13):** she was born in the UK to Pakistani parents. She is working as a chemical engineer. She is a single Mother of 2. She is 33 years old.

31. **Mother number (14):** She is from Somalia, a mother to 5 child.

32. **Mother number (15):** She came from South Africa she has been in the UK for 18 years. She is 42 years old.

33. **Mother number (16):** She was born in the UK, to Bangladeshi parents. She has a degree in economics. She is a Mother of 2. She is 40 years old.
MIC Quran School students

34. **Student (1):** Thirteen years old from Somalia.

35. **Student (2):** She is born in the UK to Pakistani parents, fourteen years old.

36. **Student (3):** Seventeen years old from Egypt she has been in the UK 6 years.

37. **Student (4):** Twelve years old from Libya, He has been in the UK for more than 7 years. His mother tongue is Arabic.

38. **Student (5):** Fifteen years old born in UK from Malaysia.

39. **Student (6):** Fifteen years old Somali. She lived in Egypt for a long time.

40. **Student (7):** Fourteen years old Yamani. Her mother tongue is Arabic.

41. **Student (8):** Thirteen years old from Bangladesh doesn’t speak Arabic.

42. **Student (9):** Seventeen years old from Kenya, She has been in the UK for 6 years.

43. **Student (10):** Fourteen years old from Libya, has been in the UK for more than 7 years, the mother tongue is Arabic.
Appendix 9: Manchester Islamic Centre’s Activities

The five years participant observation in MIC shown that; this Mosque is the central Mosque for Sunni sect in Manchester city. MIC runs many activities for Muslim community in UK. According to participant observation I will point out all MIC’s activities, to demonstrate it I checked Mosque web page.

1. MIC Activities

1.1 Manchester new Muslims is group for women who have converted to Islam or have an interest in Islam. You do not have to be Muslim to be a member or to attend. They aim to provide help and support to anyone in Manchester (UK) and surrounding areas. They offer the following:

- Information and advice regarding Islam
- Weekly study group and get together
- Help with becoming a Muslim (*Shahadah*).
- Guidance on how to perform the prayer, Access to a small library free of charge and Social events and activities. This is one of the most important activities running by MIC

S (the first letter of her name) a woman her Mather a British convert and her father a Libyan, she is working with *Dawa* Department and is one of the women who is leading and organising this group said

‘I have enjoyed everything in this group everything we have done, I think it is not only useful for me as I am Muslim since I born, it is beneficial to everyone here it is altered and correct our views of our religion and our believes’
However, confirming if MIC is the only mosque which holds these activities for converts needs more time and different type of research. Even Coleman’s mosques survey did consist any questions about special activities for converts.

1.2 Sisters *Shari’a* sessions by Sheikh Salem every Thursday from 10:30 am till 12:30 pm. This was every week for women who able to understand Arabic language mainly all of them were native. However this class has been stopped last four month nearly due to Sheikh Salem traveling to Libya to help there.

1.3 Men circle Qur’an *tajweed*, reading and *fiqh* jurisprudence in Arabic by Sheikh Mustafa Graf (Imam Abu Omar). Every Friday after *Ishaa* night prayer.

1.4 Men circle Qur’an *tajweed*, reading and *fiqh* jurisprudence in English by Sheikh Mustafa Graf (Imam Abu Omar). Every Wednesday from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The same class runs by the same person in Arabic and in English that makes MIC unusual mosque does not focus only in on one language like Arabic language since the participant observation in MIC shows that most staff in MIC are using Arabic langue during their daily work if they deal with Arab applicants. Hence staffs only use English language with people who do not know Arabic. The attendance in English class are from different ethnic like (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, British Muslim and Somali) mainly second or third generation who able to understand English language. Some attendance do not understand Arabic and English that is why MIC offered some study circle in Urdu; like

1.5 Sisters study circle for Qur’an reading, *tafseer* explanation in Urdu language (translation), and other Islamic knowledge in Urdu. Every Wednesday from 10:00
a.m. to 12:30 p.m. this done by sister Rubiena she is a Pakistani teacher, who does the GCSC Islamic studies in MIC as well but in English language since she is bilingual.

1.6 Sisters circle for Qur’an reading, *tafseer*, and general Islamic knowledge in Arabic, every Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

1.7 Sisters circle in English, every Saturday from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

1.8 Sisters social gathering every Saturday from 6:60 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. during that time every one come with a snake where they share their experience and discuss their own difficulties or problems in their life not only Islamic issue. For example; their work, child minding, and as well they advertise their political and social activities like raising money.

1.9 Math’s club during weekend after school: It is two sections the first one for year 7, 8 and 9 every Saturday from 3:00pm till 4.30pm. The second section is for Year 10 and 11 every Saturday from 4:30 till 6.00 pm. In addition to all that the centre held a numerous daily educational, social and sports activities catering for both, children and adults.

    Head teacher said about these activities which are catering children and youth, Muslim and non-Muslims:

    *‘Math’s club and all other activities in Didsbury mosque organized not only for Muslims, anyone can participant and neighbourhood most welcomed’*

1.10 GCSC Islamic studies. From my participant observation this session for boys and girls at the same, and all of them share the workshop discussion in free educational environment. The time for Islamic study different every year to cater all the family requirements. In 2011 it was Tuesday from 5:00pm till 7:30pm.
1.11 In MIC they do practical courses for Haj pilgrimage before they travel to Macka.

1.12 Some other activities: In the first week of every month the local MP visit the mosque to listen to his community if they need any advice or help. He sits in the entrance hall with his reviewers in MIC where tea, coffee and biscuits offered. During my participant observation I wondered about that, it was a bit strange for me since he seemed British (unconverted). Thus I asked head teacher who is he? Why he is coming to this mosque regularly? Then he told me

‘he is very friendly he is very kind with Muslims that is why he chose MIC to be a place for him to see his reviewer who might be not Muslim as you see’.

He comes around 10:30 am until 1:00 pm.

1.13 Sunday events from 4:00pm till 6:00 pm for non-Muslim English speaker only: This activity is running by Dawa Department, which is particularly directed to non-Muslims. Mosques are largely misunderstood by mainstream society. How many non-Muslims have set foot in a mosque and how many more than once (Dyke 2009) 4. it includes two presentations as follows:

The first one starts at 4:00pm till 4:45pm and it will be an introduction to Islam, and this will be followed by coffee break, questions and answers for 15 minutes. The second one starts at 5:00 pm till 5:45pm and it will be one of the 6 articles of faith of Islam as follows:

1. Belief in Allah on.

2. Belief in angels.

3. Belief in messengers.
4. Belief in books.

5. Belief in Judgement Day.

6. Belief in God’s Decree.

Then the audience has a tour inside the mosque for 15 minutes. The same program usually repeats every 6 weeks, and then it is followed by an open long day with lunch and drinks, well known speakers and feedback questionnaires.

1.14 MIC In every year there are new visitors from British state school. Students’ visitor usually arrange a tour in the Mosque where they can see the main prayers hall and how Muslim perform prayer, and see the Minbar and Mihrab where they can learn more about them like Mihrab Arch and the Qibla wall ‘the direction of prayer’ is indicated within mosque by Qibla wall when facing towards the holy Ka’aba in Makkah which is centre of the Muslim world. The Imam faces into the Mihrab when leading congregational prayers. The special shape of the Mihrab helps to reflect the sound of Imam’s voice backwards to the congregation. In MIC and in all Mosques Mihrab decorated beautifully may be with patterns and Islamic calligraphy traditionally written in Arabic. The Minber the stepped platform to one side of the Minber is a pulpit and is called the Minbar. Minber is used by the Imam to address the congregation before Jumm’a Friday prayers and on other special occasions.

2. Sharia Department

The Sharia Department in MIC is supervised by Sheikh Salem Sheikhi, who is assisted by his deputy Sheikh Mohammed Saeed. There are many important services for Muslim community provided by the Sharia department include:
1. Issues related to the Muslim Families affairs in Britain. Such as marriage Contracts, divorce certificates and certificates for new Muslims.

2. Solving family disputes: Issuing divorce resolutions in the following cases

   1. Domestic abuse from the husband.
   2. Irreconcilable disputes between husband and wife.
   3. Abandonment of the wife by the husband.

      In addition to that, Issuing Khul’ resolutions can be done by the head of The Sharia Department in cases of the husband’s refusal.

3. Advice and consultations:
   
   i. Providing Sharia consultations regarding family disputes.
   
   ii. Providing courses in family relations in Islam.

4. Other issues regarding general personal affairs:
   
   a. Providing assistance writing Sharia compliant wills.
   
   b. Distribution of inheritance according to Sharia.

5. The calculation of Zakat. (explain what this is)

6. Financial Transactions:
   
   a. Providing consultation and advice in financial dispute.
   
   b. Devising commercial contracts compliant with Sharia.
   
   c. Sharia adjudication in financial disputes.
7. Mediation between the different sections of the Muslim community in Great Britain. Intervention to solve and assist with problems regarding child abscon dados (http://www.isb.org.uk/pages06/branch.asp?id=13).

3. Women Study Circles

MIC one of the most important mosques in Manchester since it focuses in not only on men but women as well have their own activities like study circles which run in different languages like in English language for British and new British Muslims who known as converts. Another study circle in Arabic language runs by Sheikh Salm Al sheikhi for women only, related to different Islamic issues with more focus on woman’s Fiqh. Some women study circle in Urdu language run by sister Rubina for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women as well the same lady as well do GCSC level Islamic study.

4. Al Manhal Qur’an School

The big hall which is allocated in the middle area between women and men prayer hall is usually used in the day time for Al Manhal Qur’an School. The same hall is used most of the time Saturday and Sunday by Quran School as it was mentioned before; and during week days used by women for tajweed class ‘Al Manhal’ Qur’an School for women.

Al Manhal Quran School for women is actually a different and separate school with its management and its teacher and curriculum. Its management mainly linked to Jordan, and they only renting the hall. Thus MIC offered prepared place for the classes and a small room for child care during the class time. Almanhal Quran school rents many areas in Manchester to accommodate applicants need to have their Tajweed course in their living area.
Al Manhal Quran School very organised women’s school, it runs classes in two languages, Arabic language for Arabs and in English language for others like British, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis. Basically all students should be familiar with Arabic reading rules as they aim to be skilled in Tajweed when they read Quran. In this school there are two levels; the primary one: which develops the general pronunciations of Quran Reading that called in Arabic Mahkareg ‘exit’ of each letter exactly as original Arab. In addition to the features of each letters with more focuses on the similarities and differences amongst all Arabic letters. What they need in this level as well memorising the thirty chapter of the Quran. This stage takes one full year of study two hours a week. The contribution is only five pound a month including childcare services. In the second level which is known advance level; they learn all the Tajweed rules like Mad ‘stretch’ (this could do with explaining but not before your panel) and all of its types and how long should be in each one. In contrast to the primary level they have to attend twice a week every time for two hours thus the contribution in this level is ten pound including child care. Indeed the quiet cheap fees and the childcare advantage encouraged many women to enrol in this school. (I am not sure if there is any other Quran school for women like Almanhal in Manchester this needs different kind of research).

To be a student in this school attendance is compulsory otherwise the penalty will be not legitimate to take the test at the end each level. The attendance roster should shows more than 80 prestige in the whole year. The exam for each level is into two parts one theoretical ‘written’ exam and the other practical ‘reading in front of a women committee’ to assist reading level. Failed in one of them doesn’t mean the student have to do the whole course again but only they have to do the failed one again. Teachers who work in this school are completely volunteers since they believe being a servant for All’s book is a big honour for them in this life and in the hereafter.
3. **Quran School**

   See chapter 8.
Appendix 10: Manchester Islamic Centre’s Activities (2013)

257


Appendix 11: Registered Mosques in Manchester

1. **HADAYAT UL MUSLIMEEN SOCIETY & MASJID-E-HIDAYA**
   1 Seymour place, Old Trafford, Manchester, Greater Manchester M16 9BW
   Tel: 0161 877 6034

2. **SHAIR-E-RABBANI ISLAMIC CENTRE & MOSQUE**
   4 Tariff Street, Manchester, Greater Manchester M1 2HF
   Tel: 0161 236 9155

3. **SHERE RABBANI MOSQUE**
   11a Bedford Avenue, Whalley Range, Manchester, Greater Manchester M16 8JS
   Tel: 0161 861 9778

4. **DAR AL-ISLAM FOUNDATION**
   2a Higher Ardwick, Manchester, Lancashire M12 6BZ
   Tel: 0161 274 4534

5. **FAIZAN-E-ISLAM CENTRE**
   235 Ayers Road, Old Trafford, Manchester, Greater Manchester M16 9NR
   Tel: 0161 877 4827

6. **MASJEED BILLAL & ISLAMIC CENTRE**
   52 Bury Old Road, Prestwich, Manchester, Greater Manchester M25 0ER
   Tel: 0161 740 2125

7. **AL-MARKAZ AL-NAJMI**
   5-9 Woodfold Avenue, Levenshulme, Manchester, Lancashire M19 3AP
   Tel: 0161 225 5307

8. **MASJID-E-IMDADIAH**
26 Blackburn Street, Old Trafford, Manchester, Greater Manchester M16 9LJ
Tel: 0161 232 9851

9. **ISLAMIC ACADEMY OF MANCHESTER**
   19 Chorlton Terrace, Brunswick, Manchester, Greater Manchester M13 9TD
   Tel: 0161 273 1145

10. **AL-QUBA MOSQUE & SHAHPORAN ISLAMIC CENTRE**
    109 Beresford Road, Longsight, Manchester, Lancashire M13 0TA
    Tel: 0161 249 0307

11. **DARUS SALAM MOSQUE & ISLAMIC CENTRE**
    47 Slade Lane, Longsight, Manchester, Lancashire M13 0QL
    Tel: 0161 225 7129

12. **MAKKI MOSQUE & MADRASSA SALAFIA**
    125 Beresford Road, Longsight, Manchester, Greater Manchester M13 0TA
    Tel: 0161 257 2491

13. **SHAH JALAL MOSQUE & ISLAMIC CENTRE**
    1a Eileen Grove, Rusholme, Manchester, Greater Manchester M14 5WE
    Tel: 0161 224 2165

14. **MANCHESTER ISLAMIC CENTRE**
    271 Burton Road, West Didsbury, Manchester, Greater Manchester M20 2WA
    Tel: 0161 434 2254

15. **UKIM - JAMIA MASJID KHIZRA**
    421-425 Cheetham Hill Road, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, Greater Manchester M8 0PF
    Tel: 0161 205 6662

16. **ECCLES & SALFORD ISLAMIC MOSQUE**
    5 Liverpool Road, Eccles, Manchester, Lancashire M30 0WB
17. ZAKARIA MASJID & TABLIGH CENTERS TRUST
22-24 Clarendon Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, Greater Manchester M16 8LD
Tel: 0161 881 9860

18. MANCHESTER CENTRAL MOSQUE & ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTRE
20 Upper Park Road, Victoria Park, Manchester, Greater Manchester M14 5RU
Tel: 0161 224 4119

19. MASJID-E-NOOR
87 Stamford Street, Old Trafford, Manchester, Greater Manchester M16 9LT
Tel: 0161 226 3163

20. JAFFARIA ISLAMIC CENTRE
404 Moss Lane East, Rusholme, Manchester, Greater Manchester M14 4PX

21. MINHAJ-UL-QURAN MOSQUE & INSTITUTE OF CLASSICAL ISLAMIC SCIENCES
Madina Hall 122 Withington Road, Manchester, Greater Manchester M16 8FB
Tel: 0161 226 7172

22. DAR-UL-ULOOM ISLAMIA EDUCATION & CULTURAL CENTRE
1 Hawkhurst Road, Longsight, Manchester, Lancashire M13 0SJ
Tel: 0161 256 2812

23. JAMIA RASOOLIA ISLAMIC CENTRE
250 Upper Chorlton Road, Old Trafford, Manchester, Greater Manchester M16 0BP

24. JAMIA ISLAMIA OF MANCHESTER - CENTRAL MOSQUE
118 South Street, Manchester, Greater Manchester M12 4DT
Tel: 0116 273 2422

25. AL FALAH ISLAMIC CENTRE
26. **UKIM - MADINA MASJID & LEVENSHEULME ISLAMIC CENTRE**

2 Barlow Road, Levenshulme, Manchester, Greater Manchester M19 3DJ
Tel: 0161 224 5143

27. **ITHAD UL MUSLIMEEN**

92 Duncan Road, Longsight, Manchester, Greater Manchester M13 0GU
Tel: 0161 248 5817

28. **AL JAMIA-AL-KARIMIA TRUST**

200 Platt Lane, Rusholme, Manchester, Lancashire M14 7DE
Tel: 0161 225 1378
Appendix 12: MIC Leaflet

The Muslim Centre in Manchester

Project Extension and Rehabilitation
Committee for Women and Men
The Need in the Centre

The project is a result of the efforts of the
Muslim community in Manchester to provide
a space for worship, education, and community
activities. It aims to create a welcoming
environment for Muslims of all backgrounds
and to promote the values of Islamic culture
and education.

The new building includes a prayer hall,
library, administrative offices, and
community rooms.

The project has been made possible
through the generous contributions of
individuals, organizations, and mosques
across the country.

The MIC is committed to providing
a space for all Muslims to come together
and celebrate their faith.

For more information, please visit
www.mic.org.uk

Manchester Islamic Centre
أهمية مشروع التوسع والتجديد

لا شك أن التوسع الموجها في المركز
عربي إلى تغذير مصادر ونافذة
للأنشطة الثقافية والفنية في المنطقة.
فالأثير الذي يضع زيتنا في دوامة الإسلام
فمهم في مبادرات الهوية وعصر
واجلنا إلى جهود قريتنا إضافةً إلى
كل المفر ونافذة، مما أن نحن نحن، في
وجبة أجر المسلمين من موارد وعمر وما نحن
وهي كركبات الحياة لا يمكن أن يغطي كل
لا إذا فإننا نعمل أن نجد الأيدي الكريمة على ممّا نحن
صلى الله عليه وسلم: "أن نحن نحن، ولا ملك، فلما تلبس
أي يجدر الموت الذي يصبح فيه مشارقة الأمل، أن الله له بريق في
الجنة، روأ أحمد.

مكونات المركز

الطابع الأردني، وعند ما يأتي:
- مدخل وشق طريق مرافق المدرسة.
- المسجد (ملحق الجامع).
- مكتب الادارة والإدارة.
- مكاتب الإدارية والإدارة.
- متابعة المدارس (تشمل المدارس في أوقاف
الإدارة، بالإضافة إلى المدارس والمهنوجات).
- المكتبة.
- المكتبة، مكتبة، مكتبة، مكتبة، مكتبة، مكتبة.
- مكتبة في مدرسة القرآن الكريم.

هذا يشر إلى موكب مرافق أطرأ في الدور
الأردني، ومنها ينطلق إلى عواطف مفتوحة
وتحتوي على الأسلوبية، تشتمل على تشمل
الأنشطة الثقافية وعضوية المعاهد البدنية.
لقد كتب، وقد تطلب، أن نحن، في
ضمن هذه النشاطات من دور قناع في زيادة
الإثراء في فرائد الحياة الالمانية وتعزز
الشجاعة.

ذا كان ويشير المركز الإسلامي بعرض
منار من حيث ينظر ويوضع، ومن بين المسلمين من
وولاء، ويشير إلى العناصر، على معرفة رواد.
والذي يتيمة، يشاعر.
تفاصيل مشروع التوسعة

1. توسع مصلى النساء ليصبح قريبا ثلاث مرات أكبر من سابقتها الحالية.
2. تضمن مدخل قسم النساء المالي.
3. تضمن دورة ماء للنساء.

- إضافة دورات ماء للنساء والمسنن.
- زيادة عدد دورات المياه.
- عزل منطقة الوضوء عن دورات المياه.
- وقائع وظائف معدات التكنولوجيا.

- تحسين منطقة الوضوء في قسم الرجال.

- تحسين منطقة الوضوء في قسم الرجال.

- إضافة دورات ماء للمسنن والمسنن.
- زيادة عدد دورات المياه.

- عزل منطقة الوضوء عن دورات المياه.
- وقائع وظائف معدات التكنولوجيا.

5. زيادة المكاتب الوقفية في الطابق الأول بكل تعلمات الإضاءة وعرض القرآن الكريم.

تفاصيل التفاصيل

قامت دائرة المركز بالاتصال مع شركة STUDIO NG للمعارضة الألوية للتوسعية، بعد أن تم سحب الله الجسر على الرحمن القانوني اللازمة من الشريعة والمصطلحات، وتşiهي مساحة مساحة المشرفة، لما كانت مساحة مساحة المشرفة، فأصبح المشرفة ما هو مماثل للمساحة والوضعية المشرفة.

العامة

400,000 - أرخص أنظمة إلخ جنبه استخدامه تشيري، كما هو ميزة على الخرائط والوثيقة المشرفة.

264
Details of the (ER) project

1. Extend the women’s prayer hall to almost three times its present size.
2. Refurbish the women's entrance that leads to their prayer hall, including new front doors, lobby and hallway.
3. Renovate to the women’s ablution area and toilets to include:
   - Additional toilets for the disabled and elderly, as well as for others.
   - Build an ablution area isolated from the toilets and install a ventilation system.
4. Improve the men’s ablution area to include:
   - Additional ablution facilities for the disabled, the elderly and other users.
   - Build an ablution area isolated from the toilets and install a ventilation system.
5. Add new rooms to the first floor to be used as offices for educational and others.

The Cost

The Centre’s management has appointed STUDIO NG Engineering Company to draw up plans for the proposed project and to obtain the necessary planning permission. The estimated cost of this project is about £400,000 (Four hundred thousand pounds).

The Centre
Consists of two floors

The ground floor, includes of:
- Entrance and lobby
- Mosque
  (Main prayer hall for men)
- Reception / Secretary’s office
- Women prayer hall.
- Community hall
  (used also for Fridays, Eids, and Taraweeh prayers)
- Kitchen.
- Library.
- Storage.
- Classroom.

The First floor, includes the offices of:
- The Manager.
- The Imam.
- The Jurisprudence Department
- The Finance Department
- The Quran School.

In addition, there are other facilities that need maintenance and renovation to be used for other important activities such as indoor sports activities for the youth.

Address of MIC

Manchester Islamic Centre
271 Burton Road, West Didsbury
Manchester, M20 2WA
United Kingdom
Tel: 0161 434 1254 / 434 4544
Fax: 0161 448 8324
www.didsburymosque.com
info@didsburymosque.com

Bank account details for the (ER) project

Bank Name: Natwest
Account Name: The Islamic Centre in Manchester
Account Number: 25585525
Branch Sort Code: 01-02-69
BIC: NWBK GB 2L
IBAN: GB80 NWBK 0102 6925 585525
Branch Address: 699 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 6NW, UK

An activity held at MIC
Importance of the (ER) Project

The desired (ER) is necessary for creating extra space for the MIC’s current activities as well as those planned for the future.

We are proud to note that the sisters exert exceptional efforts in introducing Islam to non-Muslim women, and encourage them to inquire about Islam and its teachings. In addition, the sisters carry out numerous activities such as Qur’an studies and provide guidance and help to the new Muslims alongside other social activities. Therefore, it has become imperative to expand the existing facilities required by Muslim and non-Muslim women.

The MIC is mainly funded by donations from members of the Muslim community, along with a small income from letting two properties. The funds are however insufficient to cover existing expenses. Therefore, the Centre falls into deficit in most months of the year. Obviously, there are no reserves which can be used to fund the proposed (ER) project.

To secure such funds, we turn in the first instance to Allah SWT for help and support. But, it is inevitable that we should depend on the generosity of Muslim brothers and sisters.

As mentioned earlier, the local Muslim community is on the increase, and due to the Centre’s good reputation, it has become a popular destination for a vast number of the community members who attend its activities and use its facilities on a regular basis.

We urge you to give generosity in support of the house of Allah SWT, and would like to remind you of the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) Who said: (Whosoever builds a Masjid for the sake of Allah, even though it is as small as a bird’s nest, in return, Allah SWT builds for him a house in paradise) narrated by Ahmad.

Introduction

Praise and thanks be to Allah, prayers and peace be upon His Messenger Muhammad, his family and companions.

The Manchester Islamic Centre (MIC) gives highest priority to providing the best facilities and services to Muslims who come for their daily prayers, and to non-Muslims who visit the Centre frequently to learn about Islam.

The MIC has become the first destination for all Muslims of all nationalities who wish to practice their faith in an appropriate atmosphere.

However, since the Muslim community is on the increase, the MIC is experiencing shortage in space and facilities. Therefore, it has been decided to extend the building in order to accommodate the increased
الكتيب التعريفي عن المركز الإسلامي في مانشستر

MANCHESTER ISLAMIC CENTRE

المركز الإسلامي في مانشستر

www.didsburymosque.com
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

اهدمن لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين.

وعلماً:

الإخوان الكرام/

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

يسعدنا أن نقدم إليكم هذا الكتاب التعرفي عن المركز الإسلامي في مدينة مانشستر. حيث أردنا فيه تقدم صورة مجملة عن نشاطات وخدمات المركز المختلفة والتنوعة للجالية المسلمة في مانشستر وما حولها وكذلك نبض دور المركز في الدعوة للإسلام والتعرف عليه في بلاد الغرب.

سائرين الله تعالى أن يوفقنا جميعا لما يحبه ويرضاه.

أ/ حسین محمد رمضان
مدير المركز
المركز الإسلامي في مانشستر

صفحة

3

تعريف

3

أهمية المركز للمسلمين في مانشستر وضواحيها

4

إدارة المركز

5

أقسام المركز الإسلامي ونشاطاته

5

المسجد

5

الفسم التعليمي والثقافي

6

مدرسة القرآن الكريم بالمركز

7

الفسم الشرعي

7

قسم الدعوة

9

النشاط الاجتماعي والتكافل مع المسلمين

9

المكتبة

9

بيانات الحساب المصرفي للمركز

10

صور من المركز
تعريف:

يعتبر المركز الإسلامي في مدينة مانشستر (مسجد باركر) أحد أكبر المركز الإسلامي في بريطانيا. وقع في منطقة تعد من أكثر المناطق والمدن ازدهاراً في البلاد.

ويزور المركز أسبوعياً حوالي 3000 شخص. حيث يقوم بتقديم خدماته الشاملة للجالية الإسلامية في مدينة مانشستر وما حولها. كما يقوم بالدعوة والتعريف بالإسلام واستضافة غير المسلمين من خلال العديد من الأنشطة.

ويمكن مقر المركز من مباني كبير، تم بناؤها في مطلع القرن الماضي للكنيسة من كنائس طاقة tịch (ليثوسيست). وعندما عرضت الكنيسة هيئة بنيان للبيع عام 1867 تم شراءها من قبل بعض الأشخاص من الجالية العربية السعودية والصينية في مدينة مانشستر.

وبمجرد استلامها إلى مسجد ومكتبة، وجدت الجالية LOC (مجتمعات) مسرح ممنوع وقاعة مواصلات ومناسبات وعديدة فرص ذاتية مثالية. ومع ذلك، أمكّن وضوء للمرأة والنساء ورسم أيضاً مكاناً إدارياً للمركز.

ومنذ ذلك الحين، كما قام المركز الإسلامي الخامن الأعلى أولاً كنيسة في بريطانيا بتحويلها إلى مسجد، وقد دفع الله، كما يعتبر المركز الإسلامي من أهم وأكبر المراكز الإسلامية في بريطانيا.
إدارة المركز

أولاً: مجلس أمناء المركز:
وبنوه وضع السياسات العامة للمركز، وتألف من 7 أعضاء:
والأساتذة الخاليون هم:
1. الدكتور هيثم الهكاف.
2. الاستاذ محمد اشبات.
3. الدكتور طارق طهوب.
4. الاستاذ فوزي الهكاف.
5. الدكتور عبد الرزاق عز الدين.
6. الدكتور معين شبيب.
7. الاستاذ حسن محمود.

ثانيا: إدارة المركز:
وتولى تنفيذ السياسات التي بضعها مجلس الأئمة وهم:
مدير المركز الاستاذ حسن محمد
رمضان
إمام ومرشد المركز الشيخ مصطفى
عبد الله فراح

الخطيب والمستشار الشرعي في المركز: الشيخ سالم عبد السلام
الشيخ، وهو عضو في المجلس الأوروبي
للإفتاء والبحوث.
أقسام المركز ونشاطاته:

أولاً: المسجد:

يقوم المركز بإقامة الصلاوات الخمس جماعة. ويقام الصلاة داخل المركز وهو محدث مستمر ومركب للقرآن والفقه. يتغير متوسط عدد المسلمين في الصلاوات في أيام الأسبوع العادية من 70 إلى 100 شخص، بينما يصل عدد المسلمين في صلاة الجمعة إلى أكثر من 1500 شخص.

ويقام صلاة العيدين ثلاث مرات، ويشهدون حوالي 3000 شخص من الرجال والنساء والأطفال، كما تقوم بالمركز أيضاً صلاة الجنازة على أموات المسلمين.

يزداد المركز الكثير من المسلمين تحت إدارة المسجد، وهو متجدد وإدارته تزوده وتعززه وتعززه وتعززه.

ثانياً: القسم التعليمي والثقافي:

يقوم المركز التعليمي والثقافي بتعليم وتفعيل إعداد المسجد، ويعزز وميزة إعداد المسلمين، حيث يتزود ويتم بنخيلهم في العديد من الأمور. يتزود ويتم بنخيلهم في العديد من الأمور.

1. محاضرة أسبوعية باللغة العربية.
2. درس في الفقه والعقيدة للنساء.
3. درس في الفقه والعقيدة للنساء.
4. درس في الفقه والعقيدة للنساء.
5. درس في الفقه والعقيدة للنساء.
6. درس تعليم اللغة العربية للمسلمين، وكذلك...
ثالثاً: مدرسة القرآن الكريم:

سعى المركز الإسلامي في مانشستر لتأسيس عمل متدير يخدم كتاب الله تعالى. وذلك قياماً بواجبه الشرعي وتخريج جيل من حفاظ كتاب الله للسماحة المسلمين في هذه المدينة. وتعليم الواجب من أحكام الدين مستوعباً للجالية الإسلامية عامةً عريحاً وعمقاً وإشراف أساند من أهل القرآن الكريم، فأنشئت بالله تعالى مدرسة لتعليم القرآن الكريم واللغة العربية في المركز يتم الدوام فيها.

على قسمين:

- مدرسة القرآن الكريم في عطلة نهاية الأسبوع، بدأوا فيها التلاميذ يومي السبت والأحد على فترة تثنين عشرة صبحية من الساعة 11 إلى الساعة 1، وفترة ظهرية من الساعة 2 إلى الساعة 3.

- مدرسة القرآن الكريم اليوهية المسائية، حيث بدأوا فيها التلاميذ أيام الأسبوع العادية (من الاثنين إلى الخميس) من الساعة الخامسة مساءً إلى الساعة الثالثة مساءً.

وتضم الدراسة حالياً 18 صفًا دراسيًا، ويبلغ عدد التلاميذ 250 طالبًا وطالبة. مع وجود قائمة انتظار طويلة للتلاميذ راغبين في الالتحاق بالدارس، وبحول دون ذلك قلة الأساتذة وضعف الإمكانيات في المركز.
المرأة الإسلامية في لبنان

رابعة: القسم الشريعي:

يقوم هذا القسم بعمل جليل في إиноج وتعزيز الإسلام. يضع قضيحة القضاء في القضايا المتعلقة بالمساجد، ويساعد المسلمین في هذا الدور.

وأهم نشاطات هذا القسم:

1. إعداد عقود الزواج.
2. إعداد إجراءات الطلاق الشرعي.
3. فتح النزاعات وإصلاح ذات الصلة للمساجد.
4. إعداد العقود التجارية على الأسس الشرعية.

5. حساب زكاة الأموال.
6. تتبع التجارة.
7. الإجابة على أسئلة المسلمين في الجريمة من خلال خدمات القضايا.

خاتمة: قسم الدعوة:

إن الدعوة الإسلامية هي دار القرآن الكريم، ويجب على المسلم أن يحمل الدعوة إلى الله على عقله والاعتماد على الله برفق.

وعن هذا النخلق أنشد قسم الدعوة بالمركز الإسلامي لضمان ثلاث:

1. التعرف بالإسلام في مختلف الأدبيات الإسلامية والاجتماعية والتاريخية:
2. تنظيم المعارض والندوات والمؤتمرات حيث يقوم قسم الدعوة بتقديم ندوات ودورات سياسية.
3. الصياغة من خلال聚餐 والمؤتمرات.

وعن هذا النخلق أنشد قسم الدعوة بالمركز الإسلامي لضمان ثلاث:

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3. الصياغة من خلال聚餐 والمؤتمرات.
من وجهة نظر إسلامية ويفتتح ياب الاستفسار والنقاش. في الدعوة إلى دين الله العظيم وعرض الإسلام بصورة جميلة وختام اللغة بذكر الخلفين حيث يتم تقديم الطعام والرطبات.

الدعوة إلى الإسلام والإهتمام بالمسلمين اجده:

لا يكاد يمر أسبوع حتى يكرمنا الله سبحانه وتعالى بالشهادات ويعتني الدين الإسلامي الخير. ولا يمر يوم إلا ويتصل بنا من يسأل عن الإسلام ويرغب في التعرف عليه. ويقوم المقسم الدعوي بالأمور التالية:

- دعوة غير المسلمين للإسلام وإجادةهم بالكتب والأنشطة التي تعينهم على التعرف على الإسلام.
- تعليم المسلمين الجدد تعاليم الإسلام الخفيفة من خلال حلقات أسبوعية للرجال والنساء.
- توفير جو اجتماعي للمسلمين الجدد من خلال اللقاءات الأسبوعية.
- الدعم المالي والنفسي للمسلمين الجدد حيث يتعرضون للتعذيب من قبل أهلهم وأصدقائهم.

المفاعل عن الإسلام:

يقوم القسم الدعوي في المركز بالدفاع عن الإسلام وتغيير الشهادات التي ندار حولها من خلال الإعلام المحلي والمحلي ووقف تذكرتهم لزيارة المركز والتحاور معهم.
النشاط الاجتماعي:
يحتوي المركز على صالات للمناسبات ومطاحن حيث يُنادى بأعمال رمزية وأحياناً صنحاً لبناء الجالية تقوم فيها بمساهماته الاجتماعية مثل الأدغال والعفائف ومجلس الدعوة وغيرها. ويتم المركز أيضاً بإقامة الحفل الترفيهي للأمن المسرحية كحالالف بالأيدي الإسلامية والإفطار الجماعي في شهر رمضان المبارك. واقامة برامج للناس. ويتم ذلك أحياناً بالتعاون مع جهات إسلامية أخرى.

التكافل مع المسلمين:
يقوم المركز بتجميع تبرعات لصالح قضاء المسلمين في العالم خصوصاً الأماكن النكبية منها مثل فلسطين وأفغانستان والصومال والسودان واليمن وعبر عن بلاء المسلمين أغناها إلى دعم وإعانة من إخوانهم.

معلومات المركز:

Bank Name: Natwest
Branch Address: 699 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 6NW, UK
Account Name: The Islamic Centre in Manchester
Account Number: 08167567
Branch Sort Code: 01-02-69
IBAN: GB00 NWBK 0102 6925 585525 SWIFT/BIC: NWBK GB 2L

والمحصول على مزيد من المعلومات والتفاصيل يرجى الاتصال بمدير المركز.

والله تعالى نسأل أن يوفقنا جميعاً خدمة بينه العظيم. إنه ولي ذلك والقادر عليه وصلى الله وسلم وبارك على نبينا محمد وعلى أهله وصحبه أجمعين.

وآخر دعومنا أن الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

277
Manchester Islamic Centre
271 Burton Road
Manchester
M20 2WA - UK

Registered Charity No: 327235
Rear view of the proposed Extension Project of MIC

Front
Facing Burton Road

The existing Building of MIC will be attached with the new Extension to the left of the picture

The existing entrance of MIC facing Barlow Moor Road
The Muslim community in Manchester is one of the largest Muslim communities in UK, and the Manchester Islamic Centre (MIC) has become the focal point for all Muslims of all nationalities who wish to practice their faith in an appropriate atmosphere. Furthermore, the Centre provides information and assistance to non-Muslims who are interested to discover and know more about Islam.

Bank account details for Manchester Islamic Centre

Bank Name: Natwest
Bank Address: 699 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 6NW, UK
Account Name: The Islamic Centre in Manchester
Sort Code: 01 - 02 - 69 Account Number: 081675
IBAN: GB80 NWBK 0102 6925 585525
SWIFT/BIC: NWBK GB 2L

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WWW.DIDSBURYMOSQUE.COM

Tel: 00 (44) 161 434 2254/4544

Bank account details for the Extension Project

Bank Name: Natwest
Bank Address: 699 Wilmslow Road, Manchester M20 6NW
Account Name: The Islamic Centre in Manchester
Sort Code: 01-02-69 Account Number: 25585525

Cheques payable to the account name or to:
“Manchester Islamic Centre”

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290


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300