RACE, FAITH & COMMUNITY IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN

ESSAYS ON BLACK, AFRICAN, AND AFRICAN CARIBBEAN MUSLIMS IN THE UK

PROUDLY MUSLIM & BLACK REPORT 2022

FACILITATED BY

MCB The Muslim Council of Britain

Everyday Muslim
Documenting Muslim Heritage in the UK

ABOUT PROUDLY MUSLIM & BLACK (PM&B)

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is the UK's largest and most diverse national Muslim umbrella organisation with over 500 members including mosques, schools, charitable associations and professional networks. Our mission is empowering Muslim communities to achieve a just, cohesive and successful British society.

Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative (EMHAI) was established in 2013 to create an archive to document and preserve the UK's lived Muslim experiences. The organisation was established to address the noticeable absence of the historical and contemporary Muslim narrative from the archives, museums and history books in Britain. The archive collection consists of documents, photographs and oral history interviews. At present, there are three collections that are archived in heritage institutes across the UK, placing Muslim history and heritage directly in the context of wider British history.

Proudly Muslim and Black (PM&B) is an initiative based at the MCB that was established in 2019 to tackle the inequality and lack of representation of Black Muslims in society and especially in Muslim communities in the UK. It is a workgroup that brings together MCB staff, office bearers, affiliates such as Black Muslim Forum, Everyday Muslim, MAN and Peckham High Street Mosque.

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PO Box 57330
London
E1 2WJ
United Kingdom

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FOREWORD

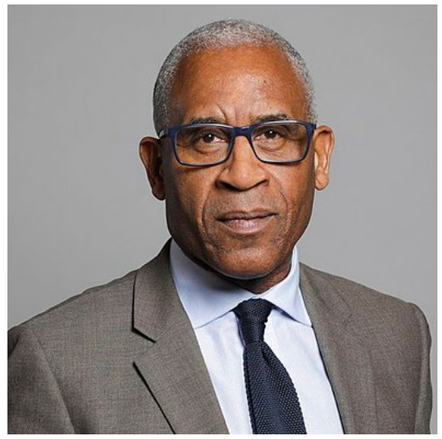
It is honest, and both deeply informative and moving. At its core it seeks to bring a greater understanding, empathy, and connectedness to the wider society from a kaleidoscope of African and Caribbean Muslims communities living here in the UK. It is a moving tribute to the resilience of these communities who too often face discrimination from non-Muslims and from even within the Muslim community.

In this report there are stories of everyday experiences; hopes, fears, and challenges that beautifully speak for themselves. They are juxtaposed with copious amounts of data that help paint the picture of a people that are too often ignored. A people that fall between the political cracks when it comes to Black communities who are mainly seen through the prism of a Christian background, and a similar occurrence with Islam which is seen mainly through an Arab and South Asian lens.

This report however, could not have come at a more timely moment. Our societies are coming to terms with three monumental challenges: Covid-19, Black Lives Matters, and Brexit. One of these challenges on their own would be enough to send societal shock waves that would last for decades but we are subject to three. Moreover, they all have to varying degrees elements that impact our connectedness, and about who we are, and how we adjust to these shifting tectonic societal plates.

And let's be clear as we are forced to adjust to this ever changing world; there is no given that 'it'll be alright on the night.' On the contrary the warning signs are already there: 'divide and rule,' 'blame Muslims, Black people,' and 'them and us' are all narratives that are easily sold, because society wants simple answers. Who better to blame than a community that has the least resources to defend itself?

What I love most about this report is its optimism. It tells its readers, 'here we have a dynamic Black British Muslim community; creative and resourceful.' Imagine how we'd all be if these communities were served with greater equality and afford greater opportunity. But it also states unequivocally through its Black Lives Matters lens: being affordrd better equality, opportunity and dignity are non-negotiable. They are our right, and we demand them.' The upside is when that occurs everyone wins.



LORD SIMON WOOLLEY
Political and Equalities Activist, Director of Operation Black Vote

Lord Simon Woolley is the director of Operation Black Vote. He has been a crossbench member of the House of Lords since October 2019 and was Chair of the Government's Race Disparity Unit Advisory Group until July 2020. In 2021, he was appointed as Principal of Homerton College, Cambridge, the first Black man to head an Oxbridge college.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY

Black British Muslims play an important role in British society but are poorly represented in public discourse, policy, and indeed across a range of sectors. To overcome structural disadvantages and racism in society and in Muslim communities, we aim to create a platform for interventions in discourse and representation as well as in power relations. Our effort is collaborative and aimed at exploring the diversity, contributions, heritage, as well as the history of Black British Muslims. Our objective in this report is to create a platform to review and consider the current state of race and power relations, while creating networks and partnerships.

In short, bringing Black British Muslim voices to the forefront is to work towards inclusion and belonging in British society and importantly, in British Muslim communities.

Our goal in this detailed study is to highlight the perspectives and contributions of Black Muslims from a wide range of fields and backgrounds; youth, teachers, leaders, artists, lawyers, and more. We aim to bring them into dialogue and raise key issues to be tackled in Britain.

Collaborations and new relationships have been central to bringing this together. This piece reflects several years of work between MCB, Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative (EMHAI), Black Muslim Forum and other Black Muslim-led organisations or those working within the sector.

Throughout the collaboration, it was clear that African and Black Caribbean communities have been marginalised and disadvantaged through lack of representation and discrimination in both the Muslim community and wider society. However, as contributing authors show, it was not a new or an unexpected finding for those from within the community.

In presenting deeply insightful experiences and perspectives, essays in this report employ a variety of approaches from academic research to personal reflections. They each represent a combination of challenges, achievements, and analyses in reference to what it means to be Black, Muslim, and British. Each essay speaks to the social and cultural dimensions of Black Muslim British lives, raising important questions in doing so.

Acknowledging and respecting the diversity that constitutes our communities, we employ ‘Black,’ ‘Black Caribbean,’ and ‘African’ by way of using inclusive categories. Each author’s use of terms have been maintained to retain the originality of their piece.

ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT

We provide an overview of collaborations between the MCB's PMB project and Muslim organisations, with an account of how this project came about. We then provide a synopsis of available demographic data on Black Muslims in the UK. A brief thematic overview of some of the central issues and challenges in Black Muslim communities precedes a set of forty essays, which consist of experiences of Black Muslims including youth and health workers, lawyers, civic and business leaders highlighting important and crosscutting contemporary issues in the Black Muslim community.

Authors describe achievements of individuals who tackle difficult challenges of social mobility, health, and environment, who have found ways to contribute to their communities and society at large. They also describe challenges faced by Black Muslim professionals who document their experiences and offer insight into the ways inequality and racism affect their work.

Finally, we present recommendations of Black Muslims from different fields and backgrounds on policy and on community leadership.

Proudly Muslim and Black Report Editorial Team

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SECTION 2

HOW THE PROJECT CAME ABOUT & IT'S IMPORTANCE

HOW THE PROJECT CAME ABOUT

The Holy Quran contains the oft-repeated verse “Oh mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honourable of you with Allah is that (believer) who has at-taqwa (God consciousness),” (49:13).

Principles in our faith are ideals to work towards and the MCB and PMB have endeavoured to bring them into practice. In the context of stark inequality and racism, such principles guide us towards equality, respect and recognition.

Britain’s Muslim community reflects our society’s diversity, including Muslims from the Caribbean, from Somalia, West Africa among many others. Their contributions and presence however, do not receive the acknowledgement they deserve. Research has shown that they face anti-Black racism from within Muslim communities, as well as anti-Black racism and Islamophobia from wider society.

The MCB first began directly addressing the issues of Black Muslim inclusion, representation, and equality in February 2019 with a day-long symposium in collaboration with over 10 partner organizations under the campaign name Proudly Muslim and Black. The event was many years overdue and was an attempt to explore the issues facing Black Muslims in Britain, as well as highlighting the important contributions made to Islamic civilization and British society by prominent Black Muslims.

Dozens of academics, scholars, leaders, and lay community members convened to discuss important issues around the way Black Muslims are perceived and treated. It included short talks, spoken word, and poetry presentations from Muslims of Ghanaian, Ivorian, Jamaican, Nigerian, Somali, Tanzanian and Trinidadian heritage. Themes included Black Muslims and their role in Muslim institutions, identity formation, and the role of Muslim women in African and Black Caribbean communities.

Subsequently, the Proudly Muslim and Black campaign continued to engage with and listen to a wide range of stakeholders on this issue through numerous working groups and public events. In Octoer 2019 a session at the Houses of Parliament was organised entitled, “Being Black, British and Muslim Today.” The following year saw the horrific killing of George Floyd in the United States and the prominence of the global #BlackLivesMatter movement.

A two-part “Islam and Racial Justice” online conference in October 2020 was jointly organised with partner organisations, exploring the impact of the movement and exploring practical solutions. The second part of the conference focused on youth, with participants as young as 10 years old sharing their lived experiences and aspirations for change. These listening exercises over the last two years have culminated in the publication of “Essays on African and Black Caribbean Muslims in the UK.”

The report brings together contributions from 40 community members, leaders, entrepreneurs on the lived experience of British Muslims of African and Black Caribbean heritage. Topics covered include Criminal Justice, Media, Education, Arts & Heritage, Sport, Religion, Politics, Employment, and reflections on #BlackLivesMatter.

The report aims to challenge stereotypes, accelerate introspection and initiate more serious debate on why anti-Black attitudes still exist – and often go unchallenged – within our communities. The report’s purpose is to educate, inform, and engage British society including the diversity of British Muslim communities.

The report is designed to foster mutual understanding between British Muslim communities of diverse ethnic heritage, reminding us of the Quranic imperative to understand one another.

It is intended to reinforce calls for stronger and fairer representation of Black Muslims in the leadership of Muslim-led community institutions like mosques and charities, as well as in our media outlets, school curricula, arts & culture and research areas. Above all it is an urge for greater unity.

The MCB’s Constitution opens with the verse “Hold fast, all together, to the bond with Allah and be not divided” (3:103) and losing sight of this will be losing sight of an essential raison d’être.

The journey does not stop with this report; there will be a series of public education workshops on racial justice and an online resource portal to engage even more sections of the community is in development. The struggle for a more just, cohesive community must continue.

The following partner organisations including groups and individuals that will be listed later in the report must be acknowledged for their contribution in making this report possible; Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative; Centre of African Studies, Centre of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law, SOAS, University of London; Council for Nigerian Muslim Organisations; Muslim Association of Nigeria UK/Old Kent Road Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre; Civil Service Muslim Network; Black Lives Matter Redbridge; The Salaam Project; Peckham High Street Islamic & Cultural Centre; Black Muslim Forum; Being a Muslim Black Girl; Federation of Muslim Women Association (FOMWA UK); Barakah Cultural and Educational Association; Al-Ikhlas Islamic Society; Southwark Muslim Forum and Save Our Boys.

ZARA MOHAMMED
Secretary General
Muslim Council Of Britain

SECTION 2.1

EVERYDAY MUSLIM: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative (EMHAI) was established in 2013 to create an archive to document and preserve the UK's lived Muslim experiences. The organisation was established to address the noticeable absence of the historical and contemporary Muslim narrative from the archives, museums and history books in Britain.

The archive collection consists of documents, photographs and oral history interviews. At present, there are three collections that are archived in heritage institutes across the UK, placing Muslim history and heritage directly in the context of wider British history. Archive partners to date include; Bishopsgate Institute, Vestry House Museum, George Padmore Institute, Surrey History Centre, Brent Museums and Archives.

EMHAI first began to consult with the Muslim, African and Black Caribbean community in 2015 to frame the documenting and archiving heritage project 'An Exploration of Black Muslims in British History and Heritage.' Very early on, it became apparent that there was a real need to explore ways to continue a more focussed approach in bringing about the inclusion of Black Muslim heritage in national archives and discourse.

By the end of the project in 2018, thirty oral history interviews were recorded, and hundreds of photographs digitised to create the first archive collection to focus entirely on the Muslim section of the African and Black Caribbean Muslim community. The archive collection has also been used to develop an exhibition, Key Stage 3/4 curriculum-related education resources, a booklet, and a website to provide a historical insight into its diverse experiences and memories of everyday life.

Around the same time, a number of efforts from within the African and Black Caribbean community were published or launched. They include Black and Muslim in Britain which was a series of videos based on stories and dialogue from influential Black Muslim in the UK. Mustafa Briggs began Beyond Bilal lecture series to document heritage and explore Black and African history in the UK and Islamic context while also creating Black Muslim spaces.

This phase also simultaneously coincided with a proposal to collaborate from the MCB. At the time, the MCB sought to enhance the representation and engagement with African and Black Caribbean Muslims in their own organisation. The stakeholders partnership sought to amplify and build bridges. It developed several engagement events with their experiences, as Muslims in the African and Black Caribbean communities and the wider Muslim community. It was based on these interactions, which led to our organisations and more importantly, the community deciding that to develop a report would be the most effective approach.

This opportunity collectively enabled us to widen and strengthen our engagement and representation objectives in documenting and preserving the communities' history and heritage in the UK and a more integrated approach to effecting broader positive changes, including better relations in the wider Muslim community.

This report is a step in the right direction of ensuring adequate representation and preservation of the experience, history and heritage of our diverse communities without overlooking or undermining any particular segment.

SADIYA AHMED
Founder/Director
Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative

SECTION 2.2

BLACK HISTORY MONTH: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

The observation of the Black History month started in the UK in October 1987 and it has become a popular event that different stakeholders look forward to annually over the past 34 years. The primary objective of the event every year is to acknowledge and highlight the positive contributions and achievements that people of African and Caribbean heritage have made to society in the UK and other places where the event is held. However, the event also signifies the important need to address the evil of racism and to campaign against its continued spread in the UK and globally.

The importance of addressing the is reflected in the fact that the non-acknowledgement of the important contributions that Black people make to society in the UK and elsewhere, which Black History month is aimed at correcting, is actually a consequence of racism. It is racism that creates the barrier of non-recognition and non-acknowledgement of the efforts and achievements of Black people in most societies of the world today.

While it is appreciated that acknowledging and celebrating the positive contributions and achievements that Black people make to society can certainly inspire Black youth to aspire to make positive contributions to society in their different fields of endeavour, the prevalence of racial inequalities in society can be an impediment that denies them the opportunity or platform to perform in the first place. For example, in the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)'s 2019/2020 report on Higher Education Staff Statistics issued in January 2021 showed that of about 23,000 professors in UK universities, only 155 are Black, which is less that one per cent. In such a situation the opportunities for Black academics to make noticeable contributions at senior academic levels in the UK educational sector, in comparison to their 18,770 white counterparts, is literally infinitesimal. The Secretary General of the University and College Union (UCU), Dr Jo Grady, has rightly stated that "universities must do more to ensure a more representative mix of staff at a senior level and stop this terrible waste of talent." The situation is likely similar in other sectors too and needs to be corrected to ensure equal opportunities for people of Black heritage.

Although the observation of Black History Month was initially restricted to educational institutions, it is pleasing to see that it has now extended to other important sectors of society. It is therefore important to advocate that every sector of society should endeavour to use Black History Month as a medium for promoting an end to racism and advocating equality of opportunities for all peoples of colour, but particularly people of Black heritage as statistics always show that they are the most disadvantaged in terms of equality of opportunities in almost every sector of society in the UK, the US and other parts of the Western world despite developmental advancements. The rise in Islamophobia makes the case of Black Muslims more severe with regard to encountering racial cum religious discrimination and enjoying equal opportunities in different sectors of society in the UK today. It was therefore a very significant and commendable effort in the right direction for SOAS, University of London to partner with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) and other stakeholders to hold the very successful Proudly Muslim and Black Conference with the theme "Exploring Black Muslim Heritage and History in the UK" in February 2019 on the SOAS Campus at Russell Square in London, attended by over 300 participants. The outcome of the conference was a call for more research and

documentation of the Black Muslim experience in the UK to facilitate a better understanding and appreciation of diversity in the UK. In my role as Professor of Laws at SOAS, University of London, a world leading institution for research and study of the Middle East, Asia and Africa, I believe it will enhance our partnership with the MCB in the effort to contribute to eradicating racism in the UK, and in giving brief Islamic perspective to boost the advocacy to use the Black History Month as medium for ending racism globally.

Islamic sources acknowledge race and ethnicity as natural phenomena that should be positively appreciated and accommodated, and not negatively exploited to discriminate against or despise any human being anywhere. Prior to the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH)[1] and the revelation of the Qur'an, racism was rife in Arabia and other parts of the world then, with racial and tribal wars being a common occurrence everywhere. Those who could not boast of worthy tribal ancestry were despised, even if they had lived in Arabia for a long period and spoke the Arabic language fluently, similar to what many people of Black heritage face today in the UK and the Western world. To confront that racist and ethnocentric social order at the time, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) gave Bilal ibn Rabah, a liberated Black African slave of Ethiopian heritage, the honour and privilege of being appointed as the first main caller to prayer (mu'adhin) in Islam at that very early stage of the religion. Some of the Arab nobles at the time were displeased about this and they made sarcastic racial comments about Bilal ibn Rabah. Consequently, a Qur'anic verse, which has toady become the Islamic mantra against racism globally, was revealed rebuking the Arab nobles for their sarcastic racial comments about Bilal, and unambiguously prohibited racial, ethnic and tribal derision and discrimination amongst humanity generally as follows: "O Mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. The most honoured of you in the sight of God is he who is most righteous amongst you. And God has full knowledge and is well-acquainted with all things" (Qur'an, Chapter 49, verse 13). After the revelation, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is reported to have given a sermon in which he addressed the people as follows: "Oh people! God has removed the evils and arrogance of the pre-Islamic period (jahiliyyah) from you" and then referred to the above-mentioned verse.

Thus, in the words of the Hungarian scholar of Islam, Ignaz Goldziher, who is considered as the founder of Islamic studies in Europe, through the revelation of that verse "a profound breach was made in the ideas of the Arab people about the relationship of tribes to another." There is consensus amongst both classical and contemporary Muslim exegetes of the Qur'an that this verse established the prohibition of racial or ethnic discrimination and derision under Islamic law as early as the 7th century. For example, the 13th century exegete, al-Baydawi, stated in his Qur'anic exegesis, Anwar al-tanzil wa-asrar al-ta'wil, that the verse establishes the fact that all human beings are equal and there is no basis for superiority on grounds of lineage or race. Also in explaining this verse, Sayyid Qutb stated in his Qur'anic exegesis, Fiz zilal al-Qur'an, that God's purpose of creating humanity into nations, races, and tribes is not to "stir up conflict and enmity [but] for the purpose of getting to know one another and living peacefully together." Similarly, Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdud observed in his Qur'anic exegesis, The Meaning of the Qur'an, that in this verse "the whole of mankind has been addressed to reform it of the great evil that has been causing universal disruption in the world, that is, the prejudices due to race, colour, language, country and nationality." And finally, according to Mufti Muhammad Shafi' in his Qur'anic exegesis, Ma'ăriful Qur'an, this verse "proceeds to set down the basis of an all-comprehensive and all-pervading principle of human equality [and] has firmly laid the axe at the false and foolish notions of superiority, born of racial arrogance or national conceit."

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is reported to have re-emphasized the prohibition of racial or ethnic discrimination and enmity in his last sermon before his death. He is reported to have stated, inter alia, "O People! Be aware that your God is One. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab and a non-Arab has no superiority over an Arab, and no white person has any superiority over a Black person, and no Black person has any superiority over a white person, except on the basis of righteousness. The most honourable among you in the sight of God is the most righteous [...] Let those who are present convey this to those who are absent."
Based on these injunctions, Islam clearly prohibits any legal distinctions based on race or ethnicity. It is submitted that the above Islamic precept against racism can contribute positively to the suppression of racism globally and complement international efforts at eradicating racism in modern times, if the world can take counsel from it.

The launching of this report again at the SOAS Campus where the initial conference on "Exploring Black Muslim Heritage and History in the UK" was held in 2019, signifies the productive partnership between SOAS and MCB and the other stakeholders in the celebration of the annual Black History Month to showcase the great contributions that Black Muslims are making to society in the UK, but more importantly as a medium for advocating an end to racism in the UK and globally.

PROF. MASHOOD A. BADERIN
Professor of Law, School of Law, SOAS
University of London

[6] Peace be upon him. Honorific, denoting respect.

SECTION 2.3

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Everyday Muslim Documenting Muslim heritage in the UK	**EVERYDAY MUSLIM** Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative is a long-term project to create a central archive of Muslim lives, arts, education and cultures from across the UK. Our aim is to collect and document the presence and contribution of Muslim life in Britain through images, interviews and documents. www.everydaymuslim.org
SOAS University of London	**SOAS UNIVERSITY OF LONDON** Founded in 1916, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London is a public research university based in the heart of Bloomsbury in central London, and is the world's leading institution for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. www.soas.ac.uk
CENTRE OF AFRICAN STUDIES University of London	**CENTRE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES (CAS)** The University of London's Centre of African Studies is the largest centre of expertise on Africa outside Africa. Founded in 1965, the Centre engages un co-ordinating, stimulating and promoting interdisciplinary study, re-search and discussion on Africa within the University; and promoting a wider awareness of African issues. www.soas.ac.uk/cas
MAN|UK OLD KENT ROAD MOSQUE	**MUSLIM ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (UK)** MAN UK is religious charity promoting the understanding of Islam, community cohesion and mutual understanding among people of all faiths and none. It was established in 1961 having started as an informal group of Nigerian students, and continues to build on relationships with partners in Muslim communities and wider society. www.manuk.org
CNMO	**CNMO** Council of Nigerian Muslim Organisations - is an umbrella body for Nigerian British Muslim Organisations across the United Kingdom (UK). The organisation was formed out of necessity to forge a united front in addressing challenges faced by first, second and third generation of Nigerian Muslims in UK with over 50 leaders from different organisation. The organisation represent member organisations externally, by being member of various organisations such as MCB.
Peckham High Street Islamic & Cultural Centre	**PECKHAM HIGH STREET ISLAMIC & CULTURAL CENTRE** Peckham High Street Islamic and Cultural Centre (PHSICC) is a thriving centre in Southwark, South-East London, supporting the welfare of Muslim communities through weekly, monthly and annual events and cultural exchange. It is formerly known as the African Ivorian Islamic Trust (AIIT). www.phsicc.org

	FEDERATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN ASSOCIATION (FOMWA UK) FOMWAUK is a not for profit Muslim Women's Charity organization serving Muslim women from different Islamic organisations, providing support and guidance on healthy living, parenting, and female and family empowerment and providing guidance on religious, social and family needs. www.fomwauk.org
	THE SALAM PROJECT The Salam Project have been actively working in the community for over 10 years, delivering workshops and seminars, urban poetry events and more! We are Youth and Revert / Convert focused and our projects consistently promote Every Child Matters and FRED (Freedom Respect Equality & Dignity). www.thesalamproject.org.uk
	BARAKAH CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION (BECA) is a Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre in Southwark delivering services to the local Muslim communities and promoting unity, community cohesion and development
	AL-IKHLAS ISLAMIC SOCIETY Al-Ikhlas Islamic Society is a family and community religious building group. Aim to promote community development, coexisting and cohesion.
	BLACK MUSLIM FORUM Black Muslim Forum is committed to fostering black unity, black empowerment and combating anti-blackness and structural disadvantage for Black Africans and diasporic Africans within Muslim society. We aim to be a global umbrella body representing Black Muslims across the world. Our vision is black dignity, racial harmony and the elimination of oppression against black people especially across the Muslim world. We promote the unity, empowerment and racial equality of black people particularly in Muslim society, rooted in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him).
	HENLEY HOMES Henley is an efficient, progressive and design-led property development company, with a reputation for creating outstanding and award-winning homes, in and around the capital, since 1999. www.henley-homes.co.uk

SECTION 2.4

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

A DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

Statistics indicate that the Muslim population in Britain stands at 3.3 million, according to the 2018 Annual Population Survey (Office for National Satistics, 2018). Statistics also indicate 10% of the Muslim demographic could be categorised as 'Black Caribbean' or 'Black African.' British Muslims in Numbers (Ali, 2014), a study published by the MCB notes that the ethnic diversity is increasing. While the proportion of Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims is falling, the proportion of Muslims who identify as 'Black African, Black other' and 'Asian other' is rising. The 'Black Muslim' demographic is constituted by a great diversity including Muslims from Somalia, Jamaica, Nigeria, Trinidad, as well as Mandinka speakers whose heritage cuts across West Africa (including the Ivory Coast, Gambia and Senegal). The biggest group of Black Muslims describe themselves as Black African (7.7% of the total Muslim population in the UK); a substantial proportion of these are Somali, but no definitive number is available (Balagan et al, 2018).

Further context on inequality is evident through a comparison of household wealth. The median household wealth in the UK was £205,000; for Muslim households, the median was £42,000. This seems to be closely related to differences in wealth between different ethnic groups (the median for Bangladeshis is £15,000 and for Black Africans £21,000, while for Pakistanis it is £97,000 and for Indians £204,000) (Balagan et al, 2018).

An important study in 2019 reveals some of the experiences of Black Muslims; the Black Muslim Forum (2019) conducted a study in which it found a majority of respondents experienced racism (79%, and a nearly 50% of respondents said that they also experienced racism from within Muslim communities). Worryingly, a majority felt they did not belong to the mosque, and 84% expressed that they felt they did not belong to their university's Islamic society (Black Muslim Forum, 2020).

CENTRAL CONCEPTS AND THEMES

This report was inspired by a gathering of scholars, practitioners, and members of Muslim communities. The conference in 2019 raised important questions that shape the themes and topics of this collection of essays. Identity, community, heritage, and inequality are prominent themes throughout the essays presented in this report.

Several speakers raised the issue of identity. Professor Kamil Omoteso argued that "in the UK it is an umbrella for anybody who is not a Caucasian mainly." Omoteso argues that Black is an identity, a form of recognition.

Dr. Mohammad Zakariya, an academic and educator, took the question further, provoking an important question about unity. In his presentation, he asked, what does it mean to be 'African?' He referred to the different ways Black Caribbean British and African British are seen, and linked the two. He challenged narrow conceptual terminology and presented a broad term that encompasses Black British Muslims. "If it is continued to identify only one group as African and another group as Black, then there won't be any true unity amongst us."
Connecting a number of seemingly disparate communities in a discursive and historical space,

Shiekh Danjuma Bihari linked the current status of British Black Muslims with cross-Atlantic connections. "There is a connection with North America and the United Kingdom, there is a connection with the United Kingdom and Africa, principally West Africa and there is a connection, of course, with the Caribbean." Importantly, he links disparate communities bound together by race, history, and faith.

In his presentation, Ismael Lea South grounded Black Muslim communities in Britain's history. He reminded the audience that Black Muslims have travelled to, worked in, and contributed to British society for hundreds of years, not least during the Tudor period. "The Black British Muslim legacy is vibrant and unique." He celebrates the combined British, Black (African and Black Caribbean) and Muslim identities. Black Muslims have lived, worked, and contributed to British society in different ways for centuries. The case was made for recognising and highlighting the work of Black Muslim pioneers and the documenting and archiving that has recently started. There are implications of this work for 'belonging' as well as for youth.

Thinking through the central themes of identity, community, heritage, several sub-themes emerged around identity and 'difference.' Speakers argued that differences should be identified, understood, and tolerated rather than suppressed as was the case in the 1980s and 1990s. Equality and inclusion are similarly highlighted to remedy a history of what one speaker called 'cultural supremacy.' Thus, structural inequality and racism were key themes. A recommendation put forward is to foster collaboration, communication and building networks across communities.

Hudda Khaireh, an independent researcher and artist, links an historical analysis with a contemporary critique of race relations. She argued that the colour of one's skin remains the basis for social hierarchy. Importantly, she brings seemingly disparate communities into dialogue, linked not only by faith as well as by their historical relationship to European imperialism. "It's the creation of the Caribbean, it's the creation of the Americas that we know today. And many of our Muslim brothers and sisters who come from the Caribbean, come with that history.'' For Hudda, being Black and the story of slavery are intertwined, and looking forward, argues that our challenge is acceptance and recognition.

Further, a possible need for a 'third-space' or 'African and Black Caribbean only spaces' was also an underlying recourse in all of the discussions at the conference. In response to exclusion from Black Caribbean spaces and Muslim spaces, artist and presenter Sakinah Le Noir recounts how her parents' generation were "forced to create and find their own communities and spaces that celebrated and acknowledged our rich Caribbean culture and history, but at the same time had a space where we were able to practise our Islam in its entirety." Inculcating a Muslim identity that was grounded in Britain and inclusive of cultural traditions led to the formation of identity. Acknowledging this cultural intervention is the focus of The Black and Muslim in Britain Project. Le Noir produced and curated a series of published videos that explore religion, culture, and identity. "One of the many reasons why we were inspired to do this was to provide a platform that would contribute to the preservation of our stories. As a Black community we don't just have one voice. We all come from different cultures, different races, and that's something that we should definitely celebrate."

Looking ahead and anticipating debates and questions unique to Black Muslim women in Britain, Khadija Kuku, an entrepreneur, presents her attempt to create that space online through podcasting and social media. “I basically just wanted to create a space where I felt like we would be able to voice our opinions and talk about situations and experiences that aren’t often spoken about.” Her effort is the creation of discursive space and an opportunity for the development of community for women. Khadija explains that it is an effort of Black Muslim women to “mark our territory and let them know that we are here to stay.”

Two community organisers, Railu Ladidi Tiamiyu and Mujida Mebude representing Federation of Muslim Women in UK, respond to questions and challenges of the development of community institutions. Railu spoke about serious challenges for families, women, and youth in Britain and the challenge of involving the active participation and collaboration of women and men.

In her presentation, Mujida Mebude, the Secretary General of the Federation of Muslim Women in UK (FOMWA UK) noted the importance of the mosque in helping the family to develop within the Black Muslim community. She shared her experience working with women across the Nigerian Muslim community as well as her experience raising her children as a young mother and the impact the Old Kent Road Mosque played as a support system within the community. “The mosque supported me in nurturing my children through the madrassa and the different engagement activities.’’

Conference speakers introduced critical themes that each author in this report responds to from the perspective of their unique experience. The essays presented in this report present a nuanced picture of the contributions Black British Muslims are making to society, the barriers they face, and the ways they are overcoming them. Each essay serves as an important account and analysis into a specific area by professionals and community leaders who speak to these issues with depth of expertise and knowledge.

Established categories shape how we understand aspects of our society but they also limit our understanding. This collection of essays serves to create new linkages and categories, providing new ideas and valuable insight. The perspectives of those who have conducted research and provided accounts shed new light on entrenched issues and barriers we face in Britain.

DR MUNTASIR SATTAR
Lead Editor
Proudly Muslim & Black Report
Editorial Team

SECTION 3

PERSPECTIVES - THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MUSLIMS IN THE UK

This report on the African and Black Caribbean Muslim experience in the UK has been long overdue given their historical presence in the UK. Many will agree that research and insight about the lived experience of African and Black Caribbean people, particularly Muslims, in the UK is not easy to come by. The importance of this collaborative effort, 'Race, Faith, and Community: Essays on African and Black Caribbean Muslims in Britain,' cannot be overemphasised, considering the recent spotlight on the community and on longstanding racial inequalities. The events of 2020 made them more urgent.

First, Covid 19's impact put a spotlight on inequality experienced by Black and ethnic minority groups. African and Black Caribbean communities were disproportionately affected, with no small part played by socio-economic and political factors. Second, the #BlackLivesMatter movement was an impetus to work for justice and equality. The agitation of the Black Lives Matter campaigns across the world, articulated with a silent agitation that has always been there within our everyday lives but ignored and marginalised.

The experiences of African and Black Caribbean Muslims require appropriate contextualisation. Some would argue that to put this together in a report might be a difficult task given the vast nature of what would be necessary to cover. Therefore, the decision about the structure, content, approach to engaging contributors, was by no means an easy one to make given the scale, importance and potential consequences of the endeavour. Readers will find within this section of the report contributions from different stakeholders, community leaders and workers within the Black African and African Caribbean Muslim communities in the UK. The contributors have personal and professional experiences which cut across different sectors; the brief to contributors highlighted the need for fact based, retrospective and introspective analysis of this segment of our diverse and multicultural society in the UK.

Whilst every attempt has been made to make sure that a wide spectrum of issues are covered within the report, it is important to note that the issues and sectors covered in this report are by no means exhaustive. The possibilities of areas that could be covered to provide an understanding of the Black African and Black Caribbean Muslim communities is extensive, however, we believe this is a step in the right direction. The contributions give an overview of what it feels like to be a minority within a minority. Some of the contributions take an analytical approach, some are reflections on the experience of the contributors as stakeholders within the community, either as a community leader, workers and/or campaigner. Many of the contributions present data and information available to contributors based on their engagement with their communities as authors were encouraged to provide empirical data and researched information to support their contributions. However, some of the authors chose to present personal experiences that are equally powerful.

It is our hope that putting this together will provide a better insight into the lived experience of the African and Black Caribbean Muslims, thereby helping the process of achieving better community engagement, service provision and development which seeks to eradicate problems of discrimination, disproportional poverty, social and racial injustices.

RASHIDAT ADEYINKA HASSAN
ASG, Muslim Council of Britain
Project Lead; Proudly Muslim and Black

Rashidat Adeyinka Hassan is an Assistant Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain since 2018. She led the formation of the Proudly Muslim And Black Initiative of the MCB.

Rashidat is a community and youth worker involved in a number of community engagement projects as an independent service provider and/or volunteer in local organisations, mosques and charity organisations. She is the Managing Director of Deen4Reel Communications CIC, a community organisation with the vision of supporting Black and Ethnic Minority Groups to achieve their aspirations and develop proportionately within the wider UK society.

Rashidat holds a B.Sc and M.Sc in Mass Communication and has interest in media representation and inclusion. She is a broadcast professional with over 2 decades of experience in both Nigeria and the UK. She is passionate about using the media for social goods and interested in working with women and young people. Rashidat works with people to harness opportunities around them using both their latent and manifest talents.She has created, helped to develop and facilitate several programmes and projects aimed at engaging the youths, women and the generality of people towards self-actualisation and community development.

SECTION 3.1

ARTS & HERITAGE

This section explores how the African and Black Caribbean Muslim diaspora in the UK, is and has historically resisted the erasure of their history and heritage. It will illustrate how in the face of discrimination and marginalisation they have sought to maintain and frame their identities from inside and outside of the arts and heritage sector as well as in community life.

MAINTAINING HISTORY AND HERITAGE THROUGH THE ARTS IN THE UK: AN OVERVIEW

BY SADIYA AHMED

History is not only the study of the past, but it is also about exploring and learning to create new ideas and perspectives in our lives in the present day. Whereas, heritage refers to traditions; what we live with, what survives, what has been shaped and changed over time from buildings, artefacts, arts, and culture.

Knowledge of our respective history and heritage supports us as individuals and communities to shape our identities and root a sense of belonging in the place we call home. Yet, when the representation of one's self and community is absent, the results can be damaging. These can range from a lack of sense of belonging, to the erasure of the knowledge of past social, political interactions and contributions.

This short piece will provide an overview of how the African and Black Caribbean Muslim diaspora in the UK resists and has historically resisted the erasure of their history and heritage; they have sought to maintain and frame their identities through arts and heritage organisations within the communities.

Whilst Muslims in the UK represent very diverse ethnic communities, the term 'Muslim' in the mainstream vernacular has become synonymous with South Asian communities. African and Black Muslims are often overlooked within the Muslim and broader society in general, and their voices and histories are marginsalised and lost within the broader, albeit limited, narrative of British Muslim histories. They are also almost entirely absent from that of wider 'Black British' history even when there is much historical evidence that most of the earliest African and African Caribbean migration to Britain came from predominately Muslim countries and can be traced back to the first century (National Archives and BASA n.d).

Furthermore, framing of phenotypically Black people in British history books, archives, museums, literature and fine art leads us to believe their presence was limited to slavery and servitude. Similarly, the post-colonial description of post-war migration from Commonwealth countries including the 'Windrush' generation was to fill the labour shortage in factories and mills in Britain which, over time has become the prevailing narrative (Anitha and Pearson 2013).

Nevertheless, for many decades individuals and grassroots-led initiatives representing the arts, academia, community, museums and archives such as The African Centre, The Black and Asian Studies Association, (BASA), The Centre of Pan African Thought, Black History Month, Target Oxbridge, the Black Cultural Archive, George Padmore and the Ahmed Ullah Race Relations Resource Centre, to name but a few have actively challenged the visibility and accessibility of Black history in their respective domain. Although sadly, some of the mainstream organisations have failed to provide a voice to those who are Black and Muslim, leaving the community facing discrimination and erasure based on both race and faith. However, individuals and organisations including Abira Hussain, Numbi Arts and Everyday Muslim Heritage & Archive are working with museums and archives to ensure African and Black Caribbean and where appropriate, Muslim representation is considered in curatorial decisions and interpreting archive material and artefacts.

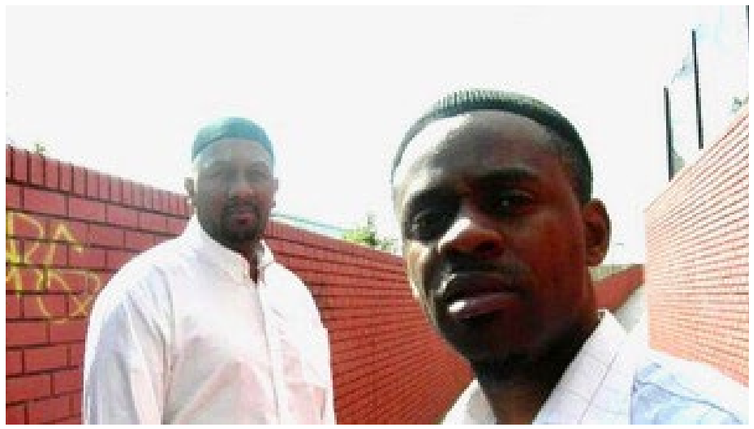
Despite the overt institutional exclusion, the Black Muslim community in Britain has actively sought to maintain and express their history, heritage and faith through many artforms. In the UK, various forms of music and poetry have been a popular way to communicate and preserve not only customs, religion and culture but also express social and political discontentment.

Whilst, vocal artists such as Pearls of Islam, Sukina Douglas, Mohammed Yahya, and Ahmed Ikhlas choose the combination of music, instruments and poetry to convey a message of spirituality and faith, it has been the genre of rap and hip-hop music that has really been at the fore of connecting the African and Black Caribbean Islamic identity with that of their British identity (South, 2017). The relationship is explained by a founding member of the hip-hop group Mecca2Medina which was established in 1996 by Rakin Fetuga.

> *Where other people were just talking random stuff at the time, we were dealing with [Islamic] knowledge because we had that as our background. And Mecca2Medina was great because it helped and inspired lots of people, lots of women were happy, and mothers were happy because we were talking about women's rights in those days. And we wasn't scared to tackle the issues. Female circumcision, they're just talking about that now, honour killing, all these kind of issues. We talked about those years ago. These were just the issues that we picked up. These were the issues, anything that we saw that were wrong with the community, the racism, we used to talk about it (Fetuga, 2018).*

However, as much as music is an intrinsic part of the community in terms of expression of faith, history and heritage, it is also at the fore for criticism from within the wider Muslim community. According to Muneera Pilgrim, Cultural Producer and one-half of the hip-hop duo Poetic Pilgrimage:

> *Hip-hop is intrinsically Black music. When you look at its genesis, it goes back to West Africa and the tradition of storytellers. But, there's this idea within some non-Black Muslim communities that anything that comes from Black culture is inherently bad or evil, almost like our particular form of music is not acceptable among Muslims. For some people, it's not that music is haram (prohibited) - although I can understand people who think that, it's that they don't like the culture it comes from (Khan, 2018).*



Mecca2Medina

Muneera Pilgrim

In recent years, Warsan Shire, Rakaya Fetuga, Momtaza Mehri, and the professional basketball player Asma Elbadwi have brought the diverse lived experience of the community into the mainstream using poetry while gaining national recognition through various high-profile awards. The poems are explicit and detailed stories, of migration, racism, discrimination and politics. They celebrate race and characteristics of unique heritage, with the trajectory and intersection of their history with British politics and social constructs, which once past generations would hide in fear of seeming ungrateful for their place in their new homeland.

As a consequence of migration and adaptation of storytelling, diasporic communities in Britain have continued the tradition of using many forms of artistic expression to convey and preserve their history and heritage. For more than twenty years, the Khayaal Theatre based in Luton, has used the theatrical stage to perform and share the wisdom in stories of Muslim heritage from across the world to audiences from school children to politicians and heads of state. More recently, performers such as Wale Hassan and Alim Kamara are using storytelling to communicate traditional stories from Africa and the Caribbean to connect the diaspora to the heritage of their ancestral homelands in school workshops.

Also, artists of a traditional nature, photographers and filmmakers such as Sheila Nortley, Ejatu Shaw, Amaal Said, Latifat Obanigba and Wasi Daniju, although still poorly represented in mainstream galleries (Larbi, 2020), are using their artistic talent to highlight and document history and heritage through traditional fine art, photography, film and mixed media to produce works that reflect the artists' personal interpretation of their heritage and their place in the world.

The future of documenting Black Muslim history in Britain now, more than ever, is one of self-empowerment. Social media has removed barriers and constraints found within traditional organisations and has enabled individuals, Black-led organisations and community groups to take charge of telling their own narrative. Since 2017, Black Muslim-led initiatives such as Black and Muslim in Britain, Mustafa Briggs, See My Dunya, Black Muslim Forum, Black Muslim Awards, Mostly-Lit, Black Muslim Girl and Black Muslim Festival have developed projects and platforms that are connecting and exploring the ethnic diversity of the community and documenting the everyday experiences of Black Muslims in Britain. Even more importantly, they are able to create diverse 'Black-only' spaces, connecting usually disparate Black communities and

Nonetheless, whilst the community have undertaken the responsibility of maintaining and framing their history and heritage through the arts in the UK, we must acknowledge that their endeavours have not been without tremendous adversities. These include institutional and community racial discrimination and marginalisation, barriers to access funding, anti-Blackness and social inequalities. The discrimination within heritage and arts institutions have shifted the responsibility on artists and historians from ethnic communities to document and preserve their heritage often in less traditional forms outside of the central institutions. Although, as members and contributors to British society, all ethnic histories deserve comparable and unbiased representation by the arts and heritage organisations in Britain. There needs to be a greater effort on the part of national art, film and heritage institutes and funders, to understand and address the complex needs of each community. Direct action is required that will challenge inequalities evidenced throughout this report in order to bring with them formative changes. However, until this is achieved, the community will continue in its creative endeavours to preserve and document their history and heritage for future generations.

SADIYA AHMED
Founder/Director
Everyday Muslim Heritage
and Archive Initiative

Sadiya Ahmed is Director and Founder of the Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative first established in 2013. She has been instrumental in fundraising, project planning and managing heritage and archive projects on the subject of British Muslim history and heritage. She has also initiated and brokered collaborations and partnerships with museums and archives, academics, artists, media professionals and community groups across Britain.

She also established the Khizra Foundation in 2010 as a community group to tackle the lack of representation of the Muslim community across the heritage sector. Subsequently, the Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative was established as an umbrella project that has formally begun to archive Muslim life in the UK.

'HER STORY'

BY LATIFAT OBANIGBA

There are only 2,000 artworks in the UK's permanent art collection, which are by Black artists (Larbi, 2020). This number is very low when considering that the UK's permanent collection is made up of millions of art pieces and objects. Most of the paintings and portraits hanging on the walls of British galleries were created by white men and feature prominent white figures in British and European history. Artists of African descent are absent from historical art collections in some of the world's largest museums, galleries and major auctions (Bishara, 2019).

The art world can be quite isolating for Black female artists and there is a stigma against artists that are self-taught. I think this stems from those that have studied and dedicated their life to art now competing with new and emerging artists.

I am Latifat, an IT Project Manager by profession and a self-taught visual artist. I have always loved art from a very young age but due to my upbringing and culture I was always deterred and influenced to focus on my academics. My parents, being first generation Nigerians in the UK, believed the only route to success was to study hard to become a doctor, a lawyer or an engineer. They did not perceive any form of art as a respectable or sustainable career to pursue. I think today art within African culture is now increasingly being given the credit and honour it deserves.

I have found inspiration for my art from my daily life as a Black woman in western society growing and adapting to an ever changing and challenging world. Some examples of artists that have inspired me are Damola Ayegbayo, Mellissa Falconer and Toyin Odutola. I love their use of colours and expression in their paintings which I felt I could identify with. Toyin's work for me tells a story of Black ancient history and a journey into her imagination of what power dynamics and women having ultimate power would look like.

My art represents the different stages of life from childhood to motherhood and aims to provoke emotions around being a Black Muslim woman in modern society. My paintings are a fusion of African culture, Muslim religion and British upbringing, all incorporating the challenges faced along the journey of life.

I created a virtual art exhibition for Black History Month entitled 'Her Story' to elevate, motivate and appreciate the richness of my heritage, religion, upbringing and culture. Each piece was created to provide a sense of empowerment, self-love, representation, community and culture. Each piece focuses on celebrating and paying tribute to Black women breaking barriers and creating history, telling their story of strength, resilience and growth. I felt this year more than ever was important to educate and promote a positive image of the Black community, especially women during such a prominent month.

As a Black artist I have identified with the underrepresentation of people of Black artists in the art industry. My aim is to raise awareness around invisible and silenced topics that affect Black women. An example is creating awareness and understanding of why Black women are 5 times more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth than women of any other race according to MBRRACE-UK (2018) - a study that looks into maternal mortality of Black women in Britain. Every piece I have created has a story and is dedicated to all Black women that are motivating and inspiring others to be their best and strive for positivity.

LATIFAT OBANIGBA
Visual Artist

Latifat Obanigba is a British-Nigerian self taught freelance visual artist living in London. She creates art using multiple different mediums. Her art aims to elevate, motivate and appreciate the richness of her heritage, religion, upbringing and culture enabling her to showcase the beauty of life through her love of art. Her work is dedicated to the beauty and strength of Black women as she believes Allah makes no mistakes and we are all uniquely and beautifully made.

DEALING WITH ANTI-BLACKNESS IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND THE CELEBRATING AFRICAN MUSLIM CULTURE AT THE AFRO-SALAMAT FESTIVAL

BY ABDEL KARIM 'MANNI' IBRAHIM

Meaningful engagement, at a time of heightened consciousness about confronting anti-Blackness and showing allyship with Black people within the Muslim community, requires that we embark with nuance and clarity. Below, I outline current discourse, and set out what sort of interventions will be required for meaningful engagement.

The current discourse and mode of reference towards Black Muslims in the current light of Black Lives Matter (BLM) imagines them as a peripheral entity, and when they are spoken of, it is usually for rhetorical purposes that neglect a meaningful engagement with how they served to shape Muslim history. The diverse Black experience is either disregarded or looked upon with disdain. The peripheral existence is exemplified by the responses to the discursive intervention recently by the Shia cleric Sheikh Nuru Muhammad on social media. When Sheikh Nuru, who is based in Birmingham, addressed racism that he has experienced and observed in Muslim communities, it was met with denial.

The matter of race cannot be ignored in our communities. Ironically, many Muslims have a racialised view of faith, assuming their particular ethnic group to be vanguards of the "true" Islam. As a result of race being intertwined with faith, "Blackness" is often invisible. This intertwining manifests in invisibility of Black Muslims in positions of seniority, as a source of influence within mainstream Muslim media, and in general within Muslim communities.

Putting this in context, I am fighting a 'war' on two fronts if I have to contend with anti-Muslim bigotry outside of the Muslim community, and anti-Black racism within my own community. It actually becomes a third front when I have to deal with Islamophobia from non-Muslim Blacks as well which is present in the background, as quiet as it is kept.

Identity for some Black Muslims is rooted in their tribal language and culture rather than by skin colour. However, that self-perception differs from the perception of non-Blacks who through social constructs associate a phenotype as characteristic of a particular 'race'. This unfortunately leads to a generalised stereotype which a lot of 'Black' people object to. The use of the term 'Black' is an ongoing debate within the various 'Black' communities.

Given the complexities of identity and discourse, how can 'anti-Blackness' be addressed within the context of the Muslim community in the UK?

One way is to train Muslim leaders in anti-racism, multi-culturalism and diversity. Such training or awareness is essential for anyone on the board of mosques or Islamic centres. Further, I advocate during Black History month programmes and workshops which focus on the diversity of Islam, which should be initiated with emphasis on Muslims of African Heritage.

One way is to train Muslim leaders in anti-racism, multi-culturalism and diversity. Such training or awareness is essential for anyone on the board of mosques or Islamic centres. Further, I advocate during Black History month programmes and workshops which focus on the diversity of Islam, which should be initiated with emphasis on Muslims of African Heritage.

Though I do not subscribe to a broad universal construct of “Black Muslims” – nor is there a monolithic ‘Black Culture’, we have to respect the diversity that exists all over the Muslim world and it is not only the skin colour that factors in this diversity.

The African Salamat Festival 2019 was an example of highlighting the diversity of ‘Black’ cultures on a public stage. At the festival we saw mainly Muslims of African origin performing traditional dance and folklore, a wedding ceremony, Sufi drumming, poetry, art, visual artifacts as well as the variations of traditional Muslim clothing. Each nation showcasing their own.

This was an important public event because it not only gave non-Africans the opportunity to learn and discover more about the ‘dark continent’ but even the British Africans themselves to learn about other regions. One of the attendees, former North Kensington MP Emma Dent Coad, sent out a tweet in which she wrote: “Over 1000 visitors from Somalia Sudan and Eritrea….Music Singing and Dancing….Just Heaven.”[2]

It was well received and well attended by the local community of Kensington and Chelsea and there have been calls to see this repeated. It was an educational event as well as entertaining. The purpose behind the event was to counter the negative stereotype around Muslims and African people in general.

This festival was important for another reason. It not only makes prominent Black and African cultures, but brings out the diversity of Black Muslim communities, and served as an example of how race, faith and culture are intertwined. There were some who objected to Black Africa being the central theme of the festival. The criticism was directed at the festival despite the fact that throughout the year events and festivals are held that highlight culture, art, and heritage from all over the Muslim world.

Afro Salamat Festival 2019, Ladbroke Grove

There were numerous positive outcomes of the Afro-Salamat Festival. First, African Muslims were at the forefront of the event from start to finish. Secondly, African history and culture was seen in a positive light. The objective was to inculcate a mutual respect for diversity. Further, the Council recognised the contribution of the Muslim community. It also brought out commonality between Muslim cultures and communities. It was a multi-generational gathering as there were children as young as 5 years old and adults as mature as 60+ and all in between in the same place, all enjoying themselves.

Of course, it does not have to be one month. It could be anytime of the year but because Black history month is now a part of the UK calendar, as such there should be collaboration on the part of Muslims to participate and contribute as best as we can. I am confident that if all those concerned make a concentrated effort, we can successfully achieve our ultimate goal of a multi-cultural diverse Muslim community in reality and not just lip service.

ABDEL KARIM ‘MANNI’ IBRAHIM

Organizer

Abdel Karim ‘Manni’ Ibrahim has several years’ experience as a Primary School Teacher Mentor for Young people Youth Family and Community engagement. He has worked for a number of Local Authorities across London as well as Community groups Organisations and Charities.

He has a passion for facilitating motivational as well as educational workshops/conferences/speeches covering a variety of contemporary issues in regards to young people’s family’s interfaith groups and Afro-Heritage History and Culture. His main ethos is to promote and facilitate Community cohesion through dialogue engagement and knowledge.

He is the principle organiser of annual The Salamat Festival (a showcase of Afro-Islamic Culture/ Folklore/Tradition) one of his proudest achievements to date.

[2]Coad, Emma Dent. [@emmadentcoad]. (2019, 20 July). Oops All Saints! [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/emmadentcoad/status/1152642500445855744?s=20

EXPLORING WHAT IS POSSIBLE

BY NA'IMA B. ROBERT

Below I will examine the origins of the first online Black Muslim Festival, a historic collaboration between Black Muslims on either side of the Atlantic and the African continent. Held during Black History Month 2020, it was dubbed 'Black Muslim Renaissance.' I will look at what made this event groundbreaking and what we hope the implications of the success of the festival will be.

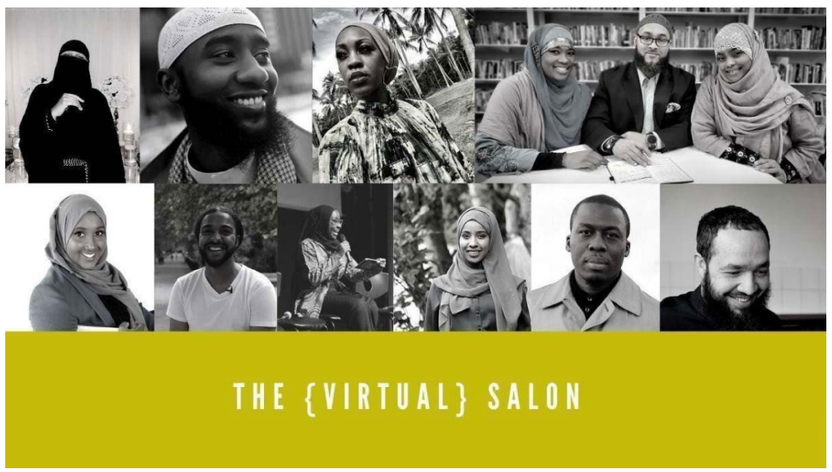
A PROACTIVE RESPONSE

In the months following the Black Lives Matter protests that swept the world, several important conversations started happening in the Muslim community. On TV shows, webinars, online discussion forums and conferences, discussion about the issue of racism and anti-Blackness increased, even on stages and in places where such topics would not have been entertained before the culmination of events before and after the killing of George Floyd in America in the summer of 2020.

After several years of activism behind the scenes, in curated spaces like Hafsa Dabiri's Discovery Show, the seminal documentary series 'Black + Muslim in Britain' and created spaces within institutions, such as the Proudly Muslim and Black Symposium, the issue of racism and anti-Blackness within the Muslim community had gone mainstream.

Everyone was talking about it.

It was in this climate that the first {VIRTUAL} Salon discussion show was born, hosted and curated by myself. We kicked off with the topic of the day: 'Black Lives Matter? At the Intersection of Race and Religion.' The panel discussion featured a vast array of community leaders, scholars, activists and creatives, including Boonaa Mohammed, Hafsah Dabiri, Michael Mumisa, Habeeb Akande and others and became a weekly event. It was this discussion format that led to the creation of the first online Black Muslim Festival in October 2020.



The line-up for the first {VIRTUAL} Salon discussion..jpg

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

The Black Muslim Festival was billed as 'a celebration of the Black Muslim heritage, culture and experience and served to not only uplift Muslims of African descent worldwide, but to offer an intriguing cultural experience for non-Black audiences.'

Set to run throughout October, it represented an essential contribution to the narrative of Black history and Black identity in the UK, one that often excludes the voices of Black Muslims. Indeed, The Voice, a Black British newspaper, was one of the first media outlets to cover the festival, a rare recognition of Black Muslims as part of the wider Black British community.

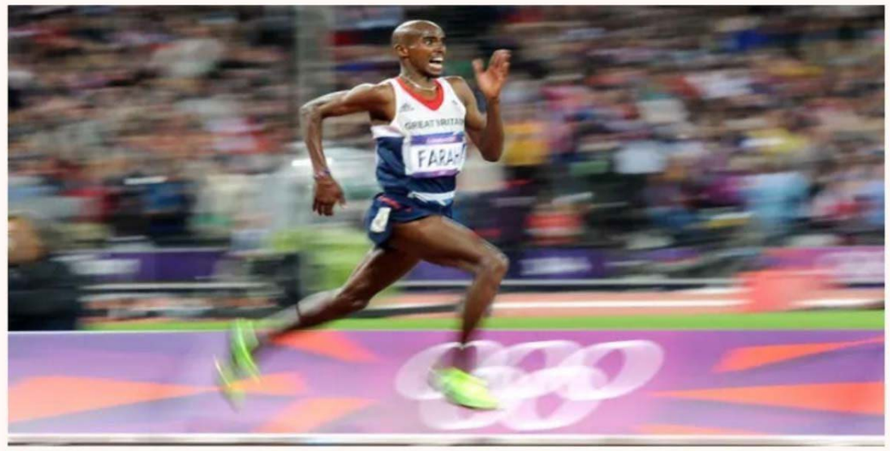
Indeed, the Black Muslim Festival is notable because it has garnered the support, not only of Black Muslims from the UK, USA, Canada and the African continent but also non-Black Muslim and mainstream media. Apart from The Voice, articles and interviews about the festival appeared in The Guardian, Metro, Al Jazeera, TRT World and the Indonesian newspaper, Republika, as well as some of the most popular Islamic media sites: The Muslim Vibe, Islam Channel, British Muslim Magazine and mvslim.com.

The main poster for the Black Muslim Festival.jpg

Black Muslims are almost invisible in Britain, but now we're carving out a space

Na'ima B Robert

As a minority within a minority, we often feel like we don't belong – but that is beginning to change



▲ Mo Farah on his way to winning the Men's 10,000m gold medal at the 2012 Olympics. Photograph: Owen Humphreys/PA

Ask most people to visualise a Muslim and they will likely picture someone of Asian or Arab descent, with a beard, perhaps, or some sort of head covering. Certainly, this is typically the image that is portrayed across our social media feeds, front pages and TV screens.

Feature in The Guardian.jpg

In the wake of a concerted public relations campaign, in which the organisers reached out via personal and professional networks, several Muslim charities were quick to offer support and sponsorship, including the Muslim Council of Britain, Muslim Hands, Mercy Mission and My Adoption Family, allowing speakers to be compensated and staff hours paid for. This is an important and crucial development in the Black African and African Carribean Muslims (BAACBM) journey towards inclusion in the wider Muslim community: securing moral and financial support from non-Black members of the Muslim community shows that our contributions are seen as valuable.

THE GLOBAL BLACK MUSLIM IDENTITY

Another notable difference between the Black Muslim Festival and other similar events is the international nature of the line-up. Scholars, academics, activists, creatives and experts, in a diverse range of disciplines, from the UK, US, Canada, and the African continent, were all featured on the programme. The audience was similarly diverse, with the UK boasting the highest numbers of registrants, followed by Nigeria, the United States, Canada, then South

> ***The Muslim world is waking up to the need to support and celebrate those so often sidelined or confined to the nasheed stage. Also, with Black Muslims reclaiming their identity and history, and with links being made across continents, finally the world is starting to take notice. Therefore, it is reasonable to hope that this festival is only the first of many such events.***

Africa. In addition, the audience included many non-Black participants from all over the world, many of whom took part in the healthy and healing discussions in the Facebook group. Well over 3,000 people registered for the free festival pass and hundreds of tickets were purchased.

BLACK MUSLIM RENAISSANCE: OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

Black Muslims in the diaspora have different histories and realities and rarely if ever, get the opportunity to 'compare notes' and share experiences, leading to a lack of familiarity with areas of connection and areas of difference.

It emerged that BAACBM speakers from the West espouse the notion of a socio-political form of Blackness that is defined by the racism it encounters as well as the oppression it has endured, and insist that this form of racial identity is not in conflict with one's identity as a Muslim.

Many speakers, both from the diaspora and from the continent, express the desirability of a Pan-African approach to facilitate dialogue and cooperation although Black Muslims in the diaspora have a very different definition of Blackness to Africans on the continent. However, African Muslims, particularly in countries where they are a majority or, at least a powerful minority, they experience a particular type of privilege which sets them apart from Black Muslims abroad.

Issues such as the distortion of African history and the erasure of Africans from Islamic history, in particular, affect all groups, whether from the continent or abroad. The globalised world we now live in means that racist structures, ideas and stereotypes affect all people of African descent, mainly once they set foot outside of Africa and become a 'minority,' and therefore, must be tackled as one body. Collaboration and cooperation between Black Muslims abroad and on the continent can lead to a greater sense of connection and unity, leading to the upliftment of the collective and a sense of pride and confidence in BAACBM.

CONCLUSION

Although not the first Black Muslim event by any means, the Black Muslim Festival has opened up new possibilities as far as the development of the BAACBM community is concerned.

With the post-lockdown world now comfortable with online events and the increased accessibility that they offer; The Muslim world is waking up to the need to support and celebrate those so often sidelined or confined to the nasheed stage. Also, with Black Muslims reclaiming their identity and history, and with links being made across continents, finally the world is starting to take notice. Therefore, it is reasonable to hope that this festival is only the first of many such events.

Will this festival become an annual fixture? Will it get bigger and better? Will smaller events continue to be held throughout the year? Will books, magazines, podcasts and documentaries follow in its wake? The answer to all these questions is, of course: Insha Allah (God Willing). We certainly hope so.

NA'IMA B. ROBERT
Author/Founder
Muslimah Writers

Na'ima B. Robert is an award-winning author of diverse children's literature and founder of Muslimah Writers, a project dedicated to helping Muslim women to write and publish their work. The Black Muslim Festival is her first major event.

THE SOMALI MUSEUM UK: HERITAGE AND DIVERSITY

BY SALMA KEIZE BIHI

Numbi Arts team in action

Numbi Arts is an arts and heritage organisation. Founded by a multi-disciplinary Somali artist, Kinsi Abdulleh, Numbi provides opportunities for local communities to engage with Somali histories, to better understand how British Somali experiences have been collected, stored and disseminated by cultural institutions. It is in this spirit that Numbi launched the first Somali Museum in Europe.[3]

HISTORY OF SOMALI COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

The presence of the Somali community in the UK stretches back well over 100 years, beginning with the arrival of seamen who worked for the Royal Merchant Navy. They settled, creating small but lively communities in port cities, most notably Liverpool, Cardiff and London.[4] The British-Somali community has since grown, with a large influx of Somalis arriving in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Ahmed, 2014). Unofficial estimates suggest that there are almost half a million Somalis in the UK and yet there has been very little in the way of recognition. The community faces a myriad of issues, simultaneously underserved and overly-scrutinised by policy-makers.

Somalis exist within an interesting intersection of identities, between Blackness and Muslimness, with unfortunate stereotypes and prejudicial treatment becoming par for the course. The last decade or so, however, has seen the rise of British-Somalis coming into their own, creating brilliant cultural projects that explore what it means to be Black and Muslim in modern British society. It is in this spirit that Numbi Arts, an arts and heritage organisation, has begun the very necessary task of creating a space to explore Somali histories, working with local communities to establish the first Somali Museum in Europe. This space is not only necessary, but frankly overdue, especially when considering the long history of Somalis in the UK.

[3] The Museum will be based at Rich Mix in east London with a planned opening date of 2022
[4] See Gillat-Ray, S and Mellor, J (2012)

Walk through Brick Lane, in the East End of London, and you'll quickly notice street signs in both English and Bengali. Stroll through Soho, and once again, bilingual signs, this time in English and Chinese. London has been the refuge and home for millions of people from across the world for centuries, and we see traces of that in every nook and cranny. And yet, one group is curiously absent in public spaces, a community that has been part of British life for over a century, a sizable group, unofficially numbering more than a quarter of million. I'm talking about the Somali community, one of the oldest and most distinct Black communities in the UK. This lack of visibility goes beyond the surface however, highlighting the very real struggles faced by the community.

This community has faced many difficulties integrating into wider British society. Whilst Somalis fall under the category of 'Black Africans,' within the purview of the wider Black British community, there are unique challenges faced by the group, whether religious, or because of the refugee status held by many. The challenges they face are many and varied, from under-employment to health and social care. In addition, Somalis suffer from negative stereotyping and press attention, similar to the wider Muslim community, with Somali women often-times facing verbal and even physical abuse for both their skin-colour and *hijabs*.

THE CASE FOR A MUSEUM

There are a number of community spaces where being Somali is celebrated, but for the community to truly explore their experiences with identity and belonging in a safe and welcoming environment, a larger, multi-purpose space is needed. Museums provide space for educational exploration, a place where knowledge can be presented in a myriad of ways, allowing for a broader cultural understanding. For Somalis to integrate comfortably into wider British society, the history of Somalis in the UK needs to be taught, and the best way for as many people to access that knowledge is through the creation of a Somali museum and archive.

The functionality and various ways in which a museum can present a large amount of information, perfectly moulded to suit the needs of a particular audience makes it best suited for a large scale project like documenting and archiving the history of a community. An archive would play a necessary part in collecting and documenting the Somali presence. The Museum would work with the local community, providing necessary resources, but would also be part of the global conversation around what it means to be Somali in the modern world.

The Somali Museum will be a multi-disciplinary space, utilising art as a tool to engage people in understanding and studying Somali history. The Museum will be an educational space first and foremost, but will also be the home of cutting-edge culture and arts through a variety of mediums, inviting in those who would like to understand this community better. The Somali Museum will seek to promote awareness and appreciation of Somali material heritage within the Somali community and the wider British public.

Museums and other heritage spaces have needed to change in order to remain relevant, and part of the wider conversation. Historically, museums have been rather dry places, offering nothing more than objects with placards and a tour around the space. Nowadays, museums have become multi-disciplinary spaces, creating immersive experiences while also remaining informative. Certain institutions like the British Library and the Museum of London have been making efforts to recognise the importance of documenting British Somali stories, and have collaborated with Numbi to provide workshops and exhibitions centred on the British Somali experience.[5] These events mark a transient community now laying roots, the migratory story seemingly coming to an end.

The Somali Museum would itself reflect that changing museum environment, taking cues from the more radical approaches introduced in the last few years. Coming from an art background, Numbi would be able to create a space that utilises art as a medium to educate and explore the historic presence of Somalis in the UK. Given that Somali culture is largely oral, with poetry and dance at the heart of Somali culture, the Museum would need a unique approach to facilitate the personal narratives of those whose stories need to be documented.

The Museum would provide the opportunity to implement cultural educational programs, perfectly tailored to the needs of the community, whilst also working collaboratively with the local communities and artists to develop Numbi's heritage programme. Community engagement is essential in order for cultural institutions that hold Somali collections to continue to develop, and become more representative and relevant to Somali communities.

LOOKING FORWARD

In her assessment of the 'knowledge centred approach' to cultural heritage in Somalia, well-known archaeologist Dr Sada Mire, argues that if a material collection does not offer a cultural representation that is identifiable and relatable to the Somali community, there will be no incentives to preserve it (2011). Representations of Somali culture have long been in the hands of those who were endowed with the institutional and financial power to document their people and survey their identity. Therefore, to facilitate engagement with the Somali community and their existing material heritage, they must be given the agency and voice to participate in the conversation through actively contributing to representations of their collective identity.

The varied sources accumulated and preserved by Numbi offer fertile ground for interaction with the Somali community. Through engagement with these written, audio and photographic archives, Numbi aims to reach out to creative individuals and groups in the local Somali community in London to ask them to contribute to responses to these archives, and to create contemporary artistic expressions of their cultural identity, in forms such as; photography, poetry, written/oral statements and artworks. Somali cultural heritage is transmitted orally between generations, and expressed through storytelling, art and poetry. Without proactive archiving the dynamic evolution of Somali cultural heritage through this generational transmission process, we cannot attempt to wholly document the culture. Archiving today is as imperative as archiving yesteryears.

[5] See Ali (2018)

Most recently, we managed to raise more than £22,000 for the Somali Museum, smashing our target by more than £5000. It was an astonishing show of support from not only the Somali community, but also from fellow Britons and we even received donations internationally. It has become increasingly clear that this is a project that must happen, with more than enough support and interest surpassing our expectations. The potential for this project is incredible, offering a Somali-led museum and archive space, in which we can exchange cultural heritage with the London Somali community whilst pioneering a unique and innovative strategy of proactive archiving, and platform their success through exhibiting their output from engagement activities, in order to promote awareness and appreciation of Somali material heritage within the Somali community and the wider British public.

SALMA KEIZE BIHI
Numbi Arts

Salma Keize Bihi works with Numbi Arts (numbi.org), a non-profit production organisation based in London that produces cross-art projects and works in partnership with artists, educators and peer organisations locally, nationally and internationally. She tweets at @salmabihi_. Numbi Arts tweets at @numbiarts and Numbi's Somali Museum project at @SomalimuseumUK.
Photo credit: Nadyah Issa

EVERYDAY MUSLIM: FRAMING AND DOCUMENTING BLACK MUSLIM HISTORY IN BRITAIN

BY SADIYA AHMED

This piece discusses the importance of documenting and preserving the history and heritage of Muslims in Britain through archiving. It explores why this is a necessary undertaking for Muslim communities from grassroots to professional levels as a means of ensuring not just representation but, an authentic representation, within the archives and the heritage sector as a whole. Not doing so, it argues, causes a social disconnect between Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) British communities, wider British society, and their associated histories.

WHAT IS THE EVERYDAY MUSLIM ARCHIVE AND HERITAGE INITIATIVE?

The Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative (EMHAI) was established in 2013. It is a voluntary-led community group set up to address misrepresentation, the lack of representation, and constant assertion of stereotypes of Muslims in both mainstream and minority (e.g. Black or Asian) archive collections. In doing so, it endeavours to provide an alternative narrative to the limited framing of Muslims within the context of British social, political, and economic history.

EMHAI also works closely with community groups, schools, academics, researchers, mosques, madrassas, museums and archives to produce educational teaching resources that inform a broader perspective of British history. To encourage sustainability and provide a context from a Muslim perspective, we are also working towards forging partnerships with universities to provide guidance, research opportunities and encouragement for more people from a Muslim background to enter the heritage sector and become trained archivists, researchers and historians.

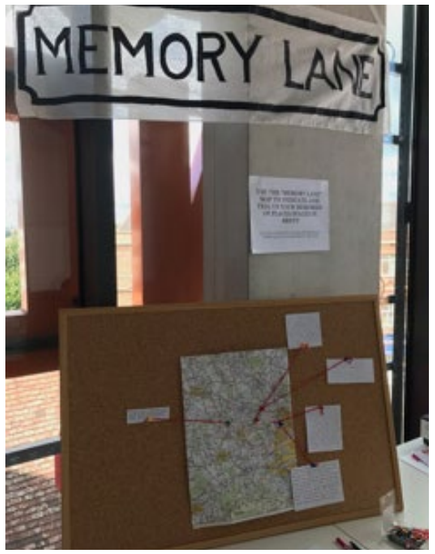
The EMHAI archive collection is an ever-expanding collection of video and audio recordings and oral history interviews from Muslims of diverse ethnic backgrounds across the UK. There is also, a wide-ranging depository of approximately 2000 digitised documents and photographs, that provide both a historical and contemporary narrative of the everyday lives and diversity of the Muslim communities living in Britain. The collections are available online, partially catalogued and archived at archival institutions across the UK; an intrinsic aim of the initiative is to place Muslim history and heritage directly within the context of broader British history.

WHAT ARE ARCHIVES?

An archive is a collection usually consisting of documents or records that provide information about a place, institution, person or group of people. These can include letters, photographs, film or audio recordings, minutes of meetings, publications, leaflets, newsletters and many other examples relevant to a family or an organisation. Over time these records can become of historical significance.

WHY ARCHIVES?

Although archives can be seen as quite dull, often consisting of documents such as; shipping registers, minutes of meetings, birth and death records, they are essential in establishing a historical narrative. From the perspective of within the Muslim community, collecting community archival material helps us to reflect the complex and varying nature of the collective 'Muslim community.' Recording accounts of our lives help us to provide a self-authored statement of activities and experiences either at the grassroots level or in a professional capacity.



Mapping history, Willesden Library, 2018

The current lack of documentation of these and preceding testimonies and the noticeable absence of the efforts by organisations and individuals to better represent and serve our communities in both the archives and social history means future generations are starting from the beginning. Often unaware and unable to benefit from what went on before them and thus, negating the existence of individuals, whole communities and their achievements.

MORE THAN JUST REPRESENTATION

When archives and the history that is derived from them are from a singular subjective viewpoint, the narrative that emerges becomes biased and narrow. The consequences can cause a lack of a sense of belonging and a disconnect within broader society. This point is very well articulated by the poet Benjamin Zephaniah (2020):

> *I wasn't interested in history at school, because I was being taught that Black people had no history. We were usually being 'discovered' by great white explorers, civilised by the great white conquerors and missionaries, or freed by the great white abolitionists. It was only when I started to listen to reggae music that I began hearing about my own history.*

From personal experience of history lessons at school, I also grew up with a narrow perspective of our (BAACB and Asian) history in Britain. This was mainly framed around the stereotypes that there were very few people of Black, African, or Afro-Caribbean (BAACB) or Asian heritage in Britain until the post-war migration period, including that of the 'Windrush' generation. Yet in reality, the earliest historical evidence of a Black presence in Britain dates back to Roman times (National Archives). The framing of the post-war migration history made me feel that it was one of 'salvation and subjugation.' In reality, the BAACB and South Asian migration to Britain was encouraged by the British Government to fill the labour shortage in mills and factories, a situation which arose from low morale after the Second World War and of

[6] Presently, EMHAI is working on making the archive collection wholly available online. A digital copy of the (BAACB) will be deposited at partner archive organisations George Padmore Institute, Brent Museums and Archive.

poor working conditions and low wages. Other reasons for migration included civil unrest and poverty in their home countries, which were mostly the consequences of centuries of British colonial annexation and looting.

Over six years of collecting oral history interviews, photographs and documents we have built an unparalleled account of the lived experience of Muslims in the UK. The real - life testimonies directly challenge the widely documented narrowly focussed post-war migration period as one of unskilled, non-English speaking labourers coming to the UK to support the declining manufacturing industry. In reality, the interviews reveal that this generation was not only instrumental in supporting the manufacturing industry, but they also undertook many professional roles in schools and the civil service along with bolstering the flagging economy by setting up new businesses and strengthening the workforce in the understaffed NHS.

In 2020, as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement campaigns and the subsequent resulting discussions around how history is curated, there has been a rush of 'statements of change' from history, arts and heritage institutions. These statements acknowledge the inequality in the depiction of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) histories and experience, as well as the complacent oversight of expertise of their BAME staff. This is in favour of the majority white employees, some of whom are often replicating the framing of their interpretations similar to orientalist and colonial frameworks found in academia with little regard to authenticated descriptions. Oforiatta explains why this is problematic:

> *In the British Museum, you have the African galleries, and it's like, 'This drum is from 1500 Ashanti,' but there is nothing else about it. You don't know what it is used for, what context it's from, how it was brought here, who stole it. The museum as it exists today is so much an imperialist project and is so much about power.*

BLACK HISTORY IS NOT ENOUGH

Whilst there are some established BAACB archives and historical institutions such as: The Africa Centre, The Black Cultural Archives and the George Padmore Institute, the experiences and stories of those who are of BAACB and of Muslim faith are evidently absent. At the same time, it is essential to highlight that Muslims do not live in segregation and that their history should not be pigeon-holed to either a Black or Muslim account. In actuality, it is very much intertwined in the broader British narrative of social history. The fascinating story of Malik Al Nasir, illustrates this point evocatively.

Malik (Al Nasir and Thomas, 2020) saw a photograph of a man who is the first Black footballer in Britain during a news report. His resemblance to Malik was uncanny, and a phone call from his mother, who saw the same story confirmed his first instinct. Could this man be related to him? Malik started life in Liverpool as Mark, who lived most of his life in social care growing up in the Sixties in an overtly racist system and society, leaving school with no qualifications. However, the photograph instigated several years of researching and collecting archival material. His journey uncovered familial links not just to the said footballer, Andrew Watson,

but astonishingly Lord Mayors, Colonial Governors, High Sheriffs, MPs and aristocrats. There were even links to the British Prime Minister, William Gladstone. Malik uncovered his family was not only linked to descendants of plantation slaves but also a slave-trading family from which Andrew Watson was descended. Malik is now starting a PhD at Cambridge University to continue research into the company, Sandbach Tinne, that is at the heart of his connections to both Liverpool, Guyana, slavery, and the British Empire.

DOCUMENTING BLACK MUSLIM HERITAGE

The double discrimination faced by the community in the archives and the subsequent reporting of that history alongside Malik's story encapsulates the complex reasons why EMHAI believes it is necessary to document and preserve the hidden history and heritage of the BAACB community. We began engagement with the community at the end of 2015. The partnership resulted in the first archive to maintain the narrative of the Black Muslim community in a historical and contemporary context and we hope to continue to collect material to expand the collection. The archive collection entitled: Exploring the Diversity of Black British Muslim Heritage in London is a unique digital archive consisting of oral history interviews and photographs which document a crucial social history and heritage of Black Muslim communities across London from the 1960s to 2017. It is a direct personal account of the civic, social, cultural experiences, challenges, achievements, and contributions of African, African Caribbean, and Black Muslims in London.

The archive collection consists of approximately 400 items of the following types of material: filmed oral history interviews, transcripts, photographs, curriculum-related lesson plans, filmed events, performances, academic presentations and workshops, together with digitised exhibition panels and promotional videos. The entire collection will be accessible on the Everyday Muslim website.later in the year.

One of the highlights of this project came in March 2017. EMHAI held their first symposium dedicated to the history and heritage of Black Muslim communities in Britain - 'An Exploration of Black Muslims in British History and Heritage' at Rich Mix, in east London. The event was attended by over 120 people from across Britain and Europe. The day was packed with presentations, panel discussions, open mic performances and a photographic exhibition celebrating Black Muslim women by photographer Wasi Daniju (whose work mainly focuses on portraiture, live performance, theatre and photojournalism). Many spoke of how it was the first time they had the opportunity to openly discuss topics sucas anti-Blackness within the Muslim community, share their 'everyday' experiences outside of their own community and, most importantly, were thrilled to know that we would begin to document and preserve their memories and experiences of many generations in an archive collection.

However, this would not be the first time that a non-Black led organisation has actively taken action to highlight the often-hidden existence and experiences of the Black Muslim community. As mentioned by the esteemed filmmaker and lecturer at Winchester University Imruh Bakari: There are instructive lessons to be learnt from Brent Eid Festival 1997, organised by [the late

Fuad Nahdi of] Q-News and [Khalida and Humera Khan of] An-Nisa Society. Much more than a single event, this festival was one moment of actualising the diversity of the Muslims communities in the Borough of Brent. In essence, the festival indicated the value of ongoing and sustained social and cultural work (I. Bukhari, personal communication, 12 May 2020).

RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, to balance the impartial and narrow focus in the framing and portrayal of BAACB in the history and heritage in Britain, we need to train teachers, historians, archivists, and curators of BAACB heritage. To ensure the insights of the community are included and to provide a 'lived' understanding of context and experience, they should be involved in policy and decision-making roles to ensure that a more comprehensive viewpoint is achieved.

For these recommendations to be implemented there needs to be greater financial support and advocacy from; academia, local and national museums and archives, heritage bodies such as the National Archives, English Heritage, Government departments such as Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the Muslim community. Only, a unified investment into the community from all agencies can ensure a sustainable future for 'Muslim' community history in the UK.

SADIYA AHMED
Founder/Director
Everyday Muslim Heritage
and Archive Initiative

Sadiya Ahmed is Director and Founder of the Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative first established in 2013. She has been instrumental in fundraising, project planning and managing heritage and archive projects on the subject of British Muslim history and heritage. She has also initiated and brokered collaborations and partnerships with museums and archives, academics, artists, media professionals and community groups across Britain.

She also established the Khizra Foundation in 2010 as a community group to tackle the lack of representation of the Muslim community across the heritage sector. Subsequently, the Everyday Muslim Heritage and Archive Initiative was established as an umbrella project that has formally begun to archive Muslim life in the UK.

SECTION 3.2

#BLACKLIVESMATTER 2020

Following the murder of George Floyd in the United States, the world erupted in outrage against the racist murder and harrasment of African Americans, an ongoing reality since the theft and transportation of Africans to American shores. The outrage was felt in the UK and the Muslim community were no exception. Black British Muslims in particular took to social media to express their desire for Black dignity and racial equity and attended rallies and protests in solidarity with African Americans. Inequality and racial disparity is a global social issue that with the rise of the far right and the Trump administration has reached a critical level. The Black rights-based organisation, Black Muslim Forum, found in a survey of 100 Black Muslims that around two thirds felt as though they did not belong to the British Muslim community. This section will explore this sentiment as well as other lived experiences of Black British Muslims who are aiming to bring the issues faced by Black Muslims to the fore as well as highlight the diversity of the British Muslim community and how race informs the Black British Muslim reality.

BLACK LIVES MATTER IN THE AFTERMATH OF GEORGE FLOYD

BY SOUKEYNA OSEI-BONSU

This is a reflection on the period building up to and following the murder of George Floyd in America and the ramifications it had on the British Muslim community. It explores the action that was taken by various organisations in the UK and how a report conducted by Black Muslim Forum on the problem of anti-Black racism in the Muslim community helped in mobilising people and bringing an under researched issue to the fore. It also provides a reflection on the problem of compassion fatigue and the need for momentum in such types of protest movements to conclude that #movementnotamoment needs to become a mantra for non-Black Muslims in order to foster change.

GEORGE FLOYD AND RAMIFICATIONS FOR MUSLIMS

The events around George Floyd's death were for many the straw that broke the camel's back. The world saw similar tragedies in the build up to his killing including the execution of Nathaniel Woods, the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor, and years of viral videos depicting African Americans being racially harassed for merely existing. We saw a culture of general and increased contempt for alterity - a product of the Trump administration. Deeper still was the lack of reparative justice and social provisions for African Americans. This injustice originated in the moment they were stolen and transported en masse to American shores - and institutionally sustained to this day. I watched in frustrated disbelief as these events unravelled and in sadness as once again Black people had no choice but to take to the streets and demand the basic human rights afforded to their white counterparts. Saidiya Hartman (2006) has equated the loss the African diaspora has faced with losing 'your mother' and articulates the degree to which enslavement and the pillaging of Africa has devastated the African diaspora. Indeed, what has happened in the aftermath of George Floyd's death is the awareness of the loss of our 'mother' and the awareness of an injustice that continues prolifically in the United States.

The positives to come out of the Black Lives Matter movement is an increased awareness amongst non-Black people concerning the ways in which Black people uniquely face oppression. Whilst this is long overdue, it is a start and social media has allowed organisations and individuals within the Muslim community to be more sensitive to the Black struggle. Asian Image, Amaliah, The Muslim Vibe and various other media organisations have increasingly been publishing content on the problems faced by Black Muslims as well as the problem of anti-Black racism in the Muslim world. British Muslim organisations such as the Muslim Census have also been active in conducting research on the problem of prejudice in Muslim circles to help spark change within the Muslim community. There is a long way to go but wider awareness-raising is a start.

ACTION TAKEN BY UK ORGANISATIONS

Black Muslim Forum is an organisation I started in 2018 to help support Black Muslims and combat the problem of racial injustice against them. A survey conducted in 2019 on the problem of anti-Black racism in the Muslim community was compiled into a report and published in 2020[7] highlighting statistics and lived realities that many non-Black Muslims found shocking - from reports of racial segregation within mosques to physical assault within Islamic schools. The aim of the research was to provide evidence on the realities Black Muslims face in the UK and to resolvethese issues to unite the Muslim community. Amongst the most surprising statistics for some was the fact that 84% of the surveyed Black Muslims felt as though they did not belong to their Islamic society (ISOC) at university. This helped to mobilise several Islamic societies in the UK amongst them the University of Birmingham's ISOC. The report was covered by several media outlets within the UK and shared widely on social media. The main solutions recommended by Black Muslims surveyed in the report was through education and awareness raising. In order to help sustain change within university societies, Black Muslim Forum also published a policy proposal for UK ISOCs to help supportthe change they need to make in order to achieve increased racial harmony in these spaces.

Other organisations that took notable action are Amaliah who provided an online space for Black Muslim women to creatively express how they were feeling inlcuding The Dabiri Group and Hafsah Dabiri who spoke at several events on the problems facing the Muslim community, and Myriam Francois from 'We Need to Talk about Whiteness' amongst others.

COMPASSION FATIGUE

The problem we collectively face now is that of compassion fatigue. Just as the refugee crisis of 2015 which initially mobilised the masses to support the plight of displaced persons eventually lost the public interest, so too will Black Lives Matter amongst non-Black people. #movementnotamoment is a hashtag created on social media outlining the degree of work that needs to collectively be done in order to sustain the change our community needs. This hashtag must become a mantra by non-Black Muslims who are uniquely placed to live the legacy of Prophetic advice[8] and make it their work to undo the many trajectories of ignorance in the Muslim community and replace it with knowledge.

The problem we collectively face now is that of compassion fatigue. Just as the refugee crisis of 2015 which initially mobilised the masses to support the plight of displaced persons eventually lost the public interest, so too will Black Lives Matter amongst non-Black people. #movementnotamoment is a hashtag created on social media outlining the degree of work that needs to collectively be done in order to sustain the change our community needs.

SOUKEYNA OSEI-BONSU

Soukeyna is a student based in London and founder of the Black rights based organisation Black Muslim Forum which aims to suppport Black Muslims globally.

[7] See Black Muslim Forum (2020)
[8] See Antepli (2014)

COMPLICIT (POST GEORGE FLOYD REFLECTION)

BY MUNEERA WILLIAMS

Statements and phrases I heard repeatedly in the immediate aftermath of the murder of George Floyd:

Unconscious bias
Difficult questions
We must do better
America is so terrible

And then there were the questions:

Are we in the UK really that bad?
How did we get here?
How can I be an ally?

The statement I find the most interesting is: how did we get here? The confusion as to how we got here is a conundrum in itself. As a mental health professional, I have become accustomed to the sad reality of suicide. Yet it is important to identify that suicide is not the problem per se, butt sits at the very tip of the iceberg, with an underbelly of issues that do not get resolved, until the point of tragedy and loss of life. Unresolved issues may include depression, anxiety, abuse, shame, loss of control and more. Though mental health may be shrouded with stigma and taboos, this veil is slowly lifting and we are able to understand the complexities involved enough to know that suicide is not the beginning of the problem. Yet when it comes to the matter of race, the lens of logic and consequences are blurred and we are left confused, asking questions like how did we get here?

I did not watch the video of the murder of George Floyd. It sounded horrific, the report of it alone is enough for the imagination to run away with and create its own crime scene. Around this time, social media blew up with self-care tips; these were not the typical “have a hot bath and watch Netflix” type suggestions that tend to saturate women lifestyle magazines and online blogs. Like no time I’ve seen before, new grassroots organisations were formed with the aim to facilitate healing and well being within Black communities. Psychologists and therapists sought ways to make their expertise accessible. People of colour particularly Black people were talking about traumatic experiences of racism, both overt and covert, and the rest of humanity was listening with a keen sense of urgency, though there seems to be some backpedaling now. What was different about this incident? What was it that made the life of this man whose name we probably would not know, if someone had not deemed it newsworthy enough to be shared, had the incident not been captured by someone, and someone else somewhere in a newsroom decided that it was indeed relevant.

There has been a failure to connect how we get to the point of a murder of a person who was supposed to be protected by the state, and that same state being the weapon of choice. As this is a personal reflection I can say in my opinion it starts with value, the slight unpicking

There are theories about our collective consciousness and the supposed communal solidarity as a result of what was being called the ‘great equaliser’ COVID19. But as the global pandemic has developed, it has only exposed, to a greater degree, the structural inequalities that have plagued even the richest of countries; oftentimes with Black people feeling the bite disproportionately.

and dismissal of someone’s humanity which leads to the idea of groups of people not being valuable or not having the same intrinsic worth as other groups of people.

For example, looking at Muslim communities within western nations where racial disparities are at a high, conversations about ethnoreligious hierarchies, the representation of Black communities in the structure of Muslim institutions, and the lack of Muslim representation and acknowledgement for Black Muslim histories and intellect have been tense certainly since I embraced Islam 15 years ago. Black people have spoken about casual racism, which has been excused under the guise of ignorance, age, culture, and even jest, that’s if the recipient of the racism is not accused of being, separatist, sensitive, or having a chip on their shoulders.

Sticking with the theme of British Muslim commmunities and systems, there are countless instances of casual racism, from prominent tv presenters to popular imams and and community leaders. A more recent occurrence took place in Birmingham when a young South Asian imam was giving dawa (proselytising) and reprimanding his peers from his cultural background for being involved in criminality and then proceeded to associate their actions with being ‘Black’. There was the time when a Black non-Muslim woman attacked a non-Black Muslim woman in hijab which of course was wrong. pparently, however, this was the green light for all of the racist tropes on slavery, slurs, and the mocking of facial features to come out. In some respects, it makes no sense to highlight individual cases, because there have been so many. The recipient of racism is left to retell their story, as if we are not aware of these stories, fueling the idea that racism is an individual phenomenon and not a social and structural one. The refusal to acknowledge and challenge these more micro instances of name-calling, profiling and pathologising are the slow steps to the erosion of a person’s humanity. In answer to the question, we got here by ignoring and excusing.

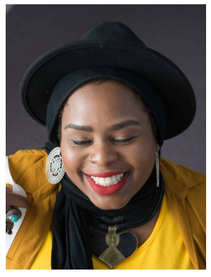
There are theories about our collective consciousness and the supposed communal solidarity as a result of what was being called the ‘great equaliser’ COVID19. But as the global pandemic has developed, it has only exposed, to a greater degree, the structural inequalities that have plagued even the richest of countries; oftentimes with Black people feeling the bite disproportionately.

Change has always been happening. The multiple Black communities (and when I say Black, I am talking about people of African descent) have always resisted these reductive narratives such as the example of Sisters Jamaat, a social organisation active in the 90s and 00s which catered to Muslim youth and ran successful projects in the community. The scope of resistance

is currently widening to also include rest, well-being and recreation as well as the work of challenging norms and celebrating achievements. This is the case for Everyday Muslim Heritage & Archive's Black Muslim History Project, where rather than focus on instances of racism, the project interviewed Black British Muslims and asked questions on all aspects of life.

In this time Black Muslim-only spaces have come under scrutiny. It could be argued that Black Muslim-only spaces are divisive and threaten to further segregate and fracture a community, it can also be argued that these spaces exist and do not need to be formalised. However, there is a case to be held that in these fractured times, for those who access them Black Muslims-only spaces are essential hubs of rest, well-being, strategic planning, thriving, and maybe the more important task of just being among one another without having to explain, contextualise or prove. When we move forward as a community, and meaningful anti-racist practice is wide spread and realised, we may do well to revisit this conversation, looking at the specifics of community and whether there there is still a need for Black only spaces particularly thinking about communal and prayer spaces which theologically are seen as spaces which should be accessed by all.

Many non-Black Muslims are doing the active work of anti-racist practice through listening, spotlighting and celebrating, curating events, heritage projects, and creating new curricula. For non-Black Muslims who have not yet embarked upon the journey of decolonising and unlearning racism (which is a dehumanising practise), within the faith itself there exists a spiritual pedagogy aligned with equity and equality should you choose to acknowledge it.



MUNEERA WILLIAMS

@Blackmuslimwomenbike on instagram and some other women who are resisting and shifting perspectives Shazfit, Olly B, Asra Run Club, Zainab Alema, Asma Elbadawi, and @Abiir187 on Instagram.

Muneera Pilgrim is an international Poet, Cultural Producer, Writer, Broadcaster and TEDx speaker.

She co-founded the Muslim Hip-Hop and spoken word duo that was Poetic Pilgrimage, and is a co-founder of a new platform, Black Muslim Women Bike. Muneera conducts workshops, shares art, lectures, and finds alternative ways to tell stories, build community and exchange ideas. She regularly contributes to BBC 2's Pause for Thought, she is a community artist-researcher with IBT, a mental health development manager, an alumni associate artist with The English Touring Theatre where she is working on her first play, and her first collection will be realised in autumn 2021 with Burning Eye Books.

BLACK BRITISH MUSLIMS AND POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN 2020

BY ISMAEL LEA SOUTH

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The murder of George Floyd triggered protests in Minneapolis and around the world. The murder was part of an enduring pattern; yet another killing of an African American by law enforcement. Though it was an all too familiar situation in which Black people find themselves treated as suspects by default, the aftermath led to social upheaval, catalysing activism, including among British Muslim and Black British Muslim communities.

The killings in the United States struck a familiar chord in the UK where we have had similar incidents with Mark Duggan and Rashan Charles. More recently, Desmond Ziggy Mombeyarara, 34, was seen in mobile phone footage being tasered in front of his infant son at a petrol forecourt in Manchester.

As a father, this brought shivers down my spine. Growing up as someone of African Caribbean parentage in NorthWest London, enmity against the police was a natural feeling. We witnessed friends and family members in the 1990s go through numerous incidents of police harassment.

The way forward necessarily will involve both community and police efforts. Black British Muslims are playing an important role in leading efforts to transform the relationship which includes advocacy, challenging racism, and capacity building.

CATALYSING CHANGE

George Floyd's death highlights long-standing questions on either side of the Atlantic about accountability, justice, and equality. A recent parliamentary research study (Angiolini 2018) supported by INQUEST, a UK charity with expertise in criminal justice, states that individuals from Black and minority ethnic groups are at a higher risk of arrest, and are more likely to die of violent force by police.

How can Black communities feel safe when they are targets of violence by the very institutions that are supposed to protect people? Though I do not have all the answers, I believe in effective community action and working with the members of the police who genuinely want to protect and serve their communities.

First, I believe in activism and advocacy. Lee Jasper is an example to follow; he has been at the forefront of challenging police brutality for over 30 years, encouraging political engagement and peaceful activism in urban communities. Our communities need to support people like Lee Jasper to train the next generation of social activists to be savvy in challenging police brutality in urban communities.

Second, we need to build the capacity of community-based organisations to address youth violence. Specifically, we need grassroots anti-violence youth practitioners to consistently facilitate stop and search awareness training in our communities. We also need youth workers to build capacity in our communities to defuse situations and be socially prepared for police encounters. Such places could include schools, youth clubs, churches, colleges, universities, mosques and community hubs for our youth.

HOW BLACK MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN ARE LEADING

Black British Muslims are leading the way in advocacy, activism and capacity building in communities. An important element is work around anti-Blackness that needs to be carried out in our communities. These efforts build on the momentum spurred by Black Lives Matter as well as recent research findings by the Black Muslim Forum (2020) about racism in parts of Muslim communities in the UK.

Black British Muslims are leading efforts in three ways; first, by skill building in different communities, and secondly, by creating relationships between communities. Finally, Black British Muslims are building platforms to bring people together.

Working at the grassroots level in communities is one of the strengths of the Salam Project, a community-based organisation that works with youth. An organisation that was established in 2005 and currently operates under guidance of our management committee featuring the input of Hajj Khalid Mair, Rashid Rose, Hanifah Kaaba and Ibrahim Janneh, have been running workshops in different communities across the UK. Workshop topics have included: Racism and Unconscious Bias Awareness, Stop and Search Awareness with emotional intelligence and conflict resolution skills, as well as workshops on racism and anti-Blackness in the British Muslim community.

Other responses include the formation of platforms that bring people together. One example is the Black British Islamic Bureau, or the BBIB. I have decided to be the co-founder and senior advisor to a group of academics, professionals, community activists and practitioners who have come together to form this coalition of Black Muslim organisations like: The Heal Project, The Salam Project, Islamic Action, Emotional Insight, The Salamat Foundation and many others.

As an organisation, BBIB have reached out to create and strengthen relationships between Muslim communities including Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB), Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), Islamic Society of Britain (ISB) and Muslim Charities Forum (MCF). All four organisations' senior management have been receptive and are open to working with BBIB who will deliver anti-Blackness workshops in partnership. BBIB's co-chair, Muhammad Sulaiman, says he is "feeling optimistic for the first time in 30 years" that real change can happen. Co-chair Anisa Kissoon, has stated that we "aim to challenge anti-Blackness in the UK and in the Muslim world".

What has BBIB achieved so far? It has emerged as a voice that has recommended credible Black Muslim community activists to be functionally integrated in the management of organisations such as MCB, MINAB and ISB. BBIB will also be facilitating anti-Blackness workshops in Muslim schools and to Muslim charity committees around the country. BBIB's northern representative, Ahmed James is "excited and optimistic in working together to build bridges in communities."

CONCLUSION

While technology has helped to hold law enforcement accountable through recording videos, the resolutions to our challenges lay in tried and true methods of relationship and capacity building. As capacity building is well on its way, our communities need to follow the lead of advocates and activists. At the same time, we expect the role of mediators to be as important as ever before. Organisations like the Black Police Association need to take a more active role as community mediators. Although we are used to viewing police officers as part of a problematic system, such officers, about whom I discuss in another piece can make a difference. The example of the late Jamal Moghe, who led initiatives to build relationships between the Muslim community and law enforcement, demonstrate that there are positive ways to work together.

ISMAEL LEA SOUTH
Co-founder
Salam Project

Ismael Lea South is an experienced Youth and Community Consultant who is the co-founder of The Salam Project. (www.thesalamproject.org.uk) An anti youth crime specialist who facilitates numerous projects/workshops on knife crime, county lines, under-achievement, permanent exclusion, gang crime and extremism/radicalisation. Under The Salam Project banner, in partnership with The Race Trust he manages a mentor project in various inner city schools in Greater Manchester and Greater London. He is also currently managing a structured online digital mentoring project with his team of mentors (professionals, academics, entrepreneurs, craftsmen etc.) who supports marginalised, disenfranchised and at-risk Black (African/Afro Caribbean/Somali/Dual Heritage) youths. This project engages young people in Greater Manchester and Greater London online. (Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, FaceTime and WhatsApp video)

A guest lecturer at The University of Chester who enjoys cooking Caribbean food and concocting various Caribbean juices in his spare time. As an independent freelance researcher, he is working with Wisdom Against Racism and Decolonising the School Curriculum in putting forward Black (African /Afro Caribbean) British history content to be taught in schools. Finally in partnership with Employees Matter and REMA he delivers racism awareness or unconscious bias projects for third party organisations. (Corporate businesses, national charities, statutory organisations, sports foundations etc.)

THE PURSUIT OF ANTI-BLACKNESS OUTSIDE OF BLACK MUSLIM SPACES

BY SULTANA PARVIN

Much of the conversation around fighting racial injustice within Muslim communities is mirrored by events outside of it in wider society. There has been much that has recently been written regarding anti-Blackness within non-Black spaces. Specifically that which pertains to other racially minoritised communities. The events that have followed the creation of Black Lives Matter has allowed the South Asian, Asian and Arab diaspora communities, living in the UK, to open up about the impact that anti-Blackness continues to have within those communities.

There is the slow but steady admission that anti-Blackness within such communities exists and is largely unchallenged. This mirrors the Muslim communities. They too are having to come to the painful conclusion that faith, morality, God centredness has not managed to diminish the searing impact that anti Blackness holds in Muslim communities and homes.

With this in mind, it becomes ever more clear that the work to overcome this is not the job or burden of Black people nor Black Muslims. It is in fact the responsibility of non-Black Muslims to open up this conversation in the most brutally honest way. It is with this in mind that many of my friends and I sought to open up spaces to discuss this very topic. Organising conversations around this was met with discomfort and a need to control the conversation and not upset any group of people that might feel they were being targeted. This became one of the obstacles that challenged the organising of such conversations within mosques. There was no appetite where the main congregation were South Asian. It seemed to mirror the fragility that is sometimes faced when white people are confronted with racism; denial and sometimes anger.

What must be clear is that it is exactly this challenge, which proved the need to ask non- Black Muslims why they felt so uneasy in discussing this very topic. What is it that has caused us as people who have also suffered racism or anti-Muslim hatred, to be blind to a pervasive mentality which has its roots in colonialism? While the backlash to such conversations may be

real, the outcome is also tangible. We may finally have a space within UK Muslim institutions and organisations where they can no longer ignore anti-Blackness.

My own efforts began with small steps, but the continual focus on anti-Blackness has allowed conversations to open up about how all racism and anti-Muslim hatred is a branch of anti-Blackness. How the very real poison of colourism which impacts much of diaspora communities both Black and brown, is also a branch of anti-Blackness.

One thing is emerging from the conversations around this; the growing appetite to discuss this especially from amongst many Black and brown women. This may be because historically, they have suffered much of the scourge of colourism more acutely than men have. Colonial beauty standards may be one contributory factor to this amongst others. The other emergence is the fight back and glory that is young Black and brown Muslims who are no longer accepting the status quo set by generations before and are willing to change the way these discussions are being had.

We only fail ourselves and our children and their children, if we choose not to continue a discussion and actively practise resisting and practically fighting anti-Blackness when and wherever we witness it. We fail because the momentum for this has already begun and we will be left in the shadows. But more profoundly we fail our faith and our own resistance if we cannot call out anti-Blackness from amongst our own. White supremacy should not be given a free ride within Muslim spaces. This is why I will continue to tackle anti-Blackness in South Asian spaces. I will continue to ask the questions around why Black Muslims are 'othered' by such communities who claim to share the same God and faith, and how can we practically be as loud and vocal in being South Asians for Black lives. Our lives also do not matter unless Black lives also matter.

SULTANA PARVIN

Activist and Founding member of BLM Redbridge. A Mother of 3, who works on a range of issues including anti Blackness and colourism within the Muslim community. She is currently studying race and post coloniality.

SECTION 3.3

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The following essays complement other sections particularly education. They add depth and qualitative understanding and insight to the available statistical data. They also identify important categories that need to be pursued via research and the need for specific data relevant to Black Muslims.

BLACK MUSLIMS AND THE POLICE

BY SAFFIE JALLOW AIDARA

INTRODUCTION

> *I became active in politics in the 1980s, at a time of enormous turmoil—there were riots in Brixton, Liverpool and Bristol, "Scrap sus" was a huge issue and young Black men were seen as the enemy within, just as young Muslim men are today. - Diane Abbott (2008)*

British society tends to believe in the myth that it is only in America that Black communities face racial bias in their interactions with the police. As Abbott argued against the dismantling of civil liberties by the government in the name of fighting terrorism, categorically, Black men and the Muslim men in this quote are seen as separate. This essay brings together these categories and explores how race and religion intersect.

In particular, this essay discusses Black Muslims and their interaction with the criminal justice system in the UK and the role different factors play in shaping the interaction such as poverty, education and socio-economic factors. The paper will also document the issues faced with stop and search and highlight the experiences of Black Muslims who have experienced it, with the aim of understanding how their religion affects their interactions with institutionally racist police forces.

The experiences of three Black Muslim in London illustrate what statistical data has shown (Shiner et al 2019). Adding a layer of complexity, the engagement of these men with police illustrate how faith is an important variable that shapes the experiences of Black British Muslims. This essay makes the argument that Black British Muslims are an important demographic whose experiences are obfuscated by the way categories are determined and data is currently collected in the UK.

POVERTY

There are a vast number of factors which affect the way communities engage with the criminal justice system and, specifically, the police. Poverty remains a key determining factor in terms of a person's likelihood to stay in education, gain good employment and ultimately whether or not they will engage with the criminal justice system as a defendant in their lifetime.

There is an overrepresentation of Black people in the poorest households in the UK. Even though Black people make up less than 4% of the poorest households.[9] In terms of comparison, income poverty amongst the white population stands at the lowest rate amongst the ethnic groups at 15%.[10]

From studies that show how being Black and being Muslim are factors that increase the likelihood of a person living in poverty, one inference from these studies is that the same is true for Black Muslims who are at the intersection (that is to say the double disadvantage) of being both Black in ethnicity and Muslim in faith.

The Nuffield College Centre for Social Investigation highlighted the lack of data in regard to the connection between poverty and religion in contrast to the well documented link between poverty and ethnicity (Heath and Li, 2015). The working paper found that there were major differences in the prevalence of poverty between people of different religious affiliations. Muslims were the most likely religious group to be found in poverty with 50% living in poverty.

It is important to note that the authors of the study were aware that people from the Bangladeshi and Pakistani community had high incidences of poverty and therefore it may be difficult to identify whether it was the same people being identified. The Nuffield study concluded that, even when ethnic differences were accounted for, Muslims were still more likely to live in poverty than any other religious group or those with no religious affiliation at all. The paper states "we estimate that, after allowing for the effects of ethnicity and other factors such as age profiles, the size of this increased risk of Muslims experiencing poverty is approximately 20% (compared with Anglicans). The equivalent figures for Sikhs and Hindus are 10% and 7% respectively."

From studies that show how being Black and being Muslim are factors that increase the likelihood of a person living in poverty, one inference from these studies is that the same is true for Black Muslims who are at the intersection (that is to say the double disadvantage) of being both Black in ethnicity and Muslim in faith. As mentioned earlier, living in poverty has significant effects on a person's life chances and one of these areas is in education and social mobility.

EDUCATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

There is plenty of evidence of the impact education has in regard to social mobility. Similarly, education is a predictor of income (Walker 2013). This appears to hold true for ethnic minorities in Britain, though much of the data on the educational attainment of Muslims focuses on Muslims who are South Asian.

It is very difficult to find the outcomes for Black Muslims in the UK. Much of the published data focuses on children from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi population. A very large improvement for Bangladeshi students occurred in the years from 1991 to 2003, but in 2003 they were still below the White British average. However, by 2013 Bangladeshi students were achieving above the White British average and this is despite Bangladeshi students being one of the most socio-economically deprived communities in England. The same was true for Pakistani pupils who also improved substantially. In 2003 their chances of achieving 5 A-C grades at GCSE were only two thirds the odds for White British students. However, the gap has closed steadily and achieved parity with White British students in 2011 and currently their odds of achieving 5 A-C grades do not significantly differ from White British students (Strand 2015).

[9] 46% of all people living in families where the household head is Black/African/Caribbean/Black. See Social Metrics Commission (2020)

[10] Where the head of household identifies as white. See Francis-Devine (2020)

Whilst this sounds like good news for the Muslim community, an interesting report from The Social Mobility Commission (2017) titled 'The Social Mobility challenges faced by Young Muslims' found that:

> *young people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds are more likely than ever to succeed in education and go on to university than other groups - particularly girls. Despite their successes, however, Muslims experience the greatest economic disadvantages of any group in UK society.*

The report highlighted that even though these groups were now taking paths leading to a higher level of education, economic disparity remains.

The outcomes for Black pupils in the UK education system is well researched. Strand (2015) found that:

> *In 2003 the odds for Black Caribbean pupils achieving 5 A-C grades were less than half the odds for White British pupils (32.9% vs. 51.3%), and for Mixed White and Black Caribbean and Black African pupils only two-thirds the odds for White British pupils (39.9% 40.7% respectively). In 2013 Black African pupils achieved slightly above the White British average. Both Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean students have closed the gap with White British students, from 18 percentage points in 2003 to just 2 percentage points (80.4% vs. 82.7%) in 2013, although a small gap remains.*

What these statistics show is that Black pupils (including Black Muslims) are not on a par with the White British population just yet when it comes to educational attainment. Muslims have been shown to be less likely to be awarded first class degrees and this is a pattern which has also been seen with Black students at university who, even with more engagement with their studies, attain lower grades than their white British counterparts.

Problems persist for Black and Brown people in the workplace with the McGregor Smith Review highlighting that all BME groups were more likely to be overqualified and yet less likely than their White counterparts to be promoted (2017). Operation Black Vote (2020) also carried out a report on race inequality in the workplace (Bowyer et al 2020) and found that BAME adults are 58% more likely to be unemployed than their White counterparts but the authors recommend looking within categories because labour market experiences differ among ethnic groups. "For example, although 25-year-olds from Pakistani, Black African, Other (which includes Chinese, Arab and any other Asian group) and mixed-race backgrounds were more likely to be unemployed than their White peers; Indian, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean adults were no more likely to be out of work" (Bowyer and Henderson, 2020).

This is a crucial point. Data on Black Muslims can only be inferred from studies related to Muslims or Black people generally. There is clear evidence of both Black people not performing at the same level as their White counterparts at GCSE level whilst a large group of Muslims of Pakistani and Bangladeshi background are. At university, we see Black students and Muslim

students not attaining the same grades and with the reports showing the greater likelihood of unemployment and underemploymen (Adams, 2020). The only conclusion is that the picture for Black Muslims is a complex one and one that, again, needs further targeted research. It is imperative that the Black British Muslim condition and experience is documented (Busby, 2019).

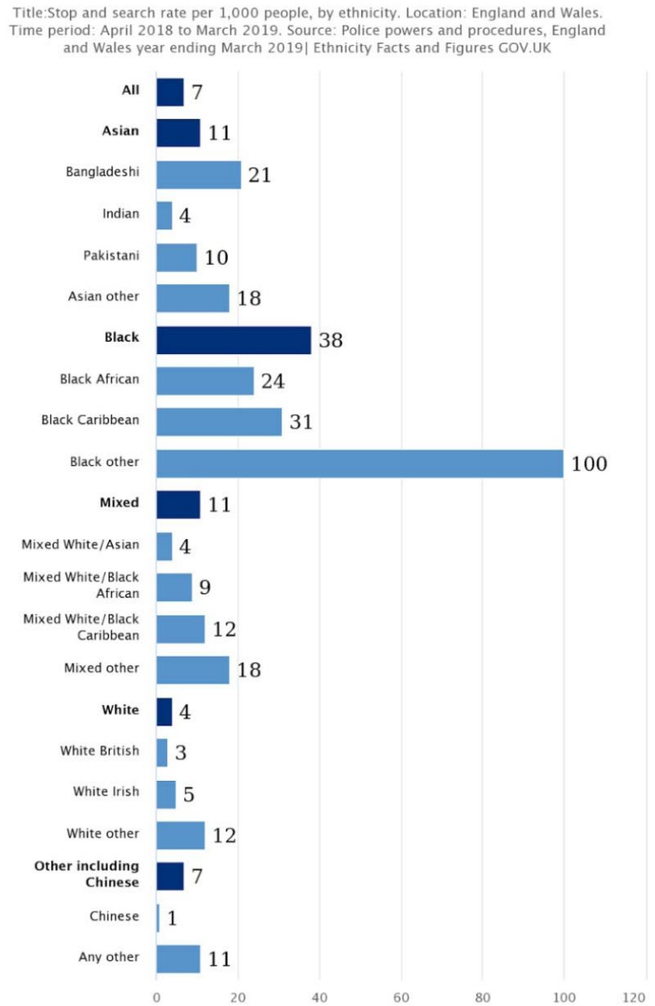


Figure 1: Stop and Search Rate by Ethnicity

STOP AND SEARCH

The statistics in regard to Black people and the way that they experience disproportionate stop and search rates has been a matter of concern for decades. In 2018/2019, 22% of stop and searches were carried out on Black people in England and Wales and this is despite them only making up just over 3% of the population. In contrast, White people made up 59% of stop and searches whilst representing 87% of the population (Ministry of Justice, 2018). More recent data backs up this trend:

This graph highlights between April 2018 and March 2019 for every 1000 white people, there were 4 stop and searches. The number was 38 in regard to Black people (Home Office, 2020).

Hargreaves (2018) offers important insight into the experience of British Muslims. The study revealed that whilst being Muslim only increased the likelihood of a person being subjected to a foot stop by the Police by just 1%, once stopped a Muslim was eight times more likely to be searched. It was also clear from this study that British Muslims were less likely to be stopped if they were in a vehicle. The picture from this article therefore is quite complex and reveals that many different factors can come into play for British Muslims in regard to police interactions.

There is substantial data in regard to Black people and, separately, people who identify as Muslim. Therefore, coming to a view on the experience of Black Muslims and their engagement with police can be quite difficult but the experience of three Black Muslim men sheds some light on the policing of Black Muslim men.

INTERVIEW 1: BLACK MALE, BIRMINGHAM, 34 YEARS OLD

My parents are from Trinidad and Barbados. I grew up in Handsworth, Birmingham. An area with a predominantly Black and Asian population. I had issues with the police from when I was 17 years old until my early 20s. I had an advantage amongst my peers in that my mum worked for the courts and would tell me how to behave if approached. My interactions with the police have always been bad, I feel they try to draw you out and as a Black boy it is your job not to give them an opportunity to put cuffs on you.

One specific incident I remember is my friend and I in the town centre. I went into the McDonalds as he carried on walking ahead. When I came out I saw he was talking to two policemen. As I walked over the police officer said "Oh we have another one". As I said, my mother had told me how to act so I greeted him with a hello and asked him how he was doing. He asked what I had in my bag and I told him CDs of the Rat Pack. He opened the bag and pulled out the CD and I could see he was genuinely shocked. He asked if I was into this sort of music and we went on to have a conversation and he let us go. Whilst this was a good outcome for my friend and I, I found it really disheartening for him to be so shocked that I was interested in that sort of music; it shows that the police have a specific view of Black men and boys. I also had to treat him in a civil way for him to change his attitude towards me as the first thing he said was 'Oh we have another one'. It's clear there is no respect for certain citizens they serve from the offset.

Now the contrary story I have to that is when I got stopped 16 times in one day. It used to be the case that if you produce the slip that they give you, they are not supposed to search you again. I collected 16 slips and I wish I kept them. It is interesting to me that this all happened before I reverted to Islam. I think it is being a young Black male that makes you a target as they do not look at us and think we can be Muslim.

INTERVIEW 2: BLACK MALE, LONDON, 36 YEARS OLD

It is my view that you are targeted because you're Black and they don't know you're Muslim. There is a distinctive look of a Muslim in the Asian community that everyone is familiar with but the majority of police are ignorant about Africans and Caribbeans being Muslim.

INTERVIEW 3: BLACK MALE, LONDON, 31 YEARS OLD

One incident I had with the police was when I was 16. I had been finding my identity as a Black Muslim around this time. I accepted that I was Muslim first and I started wearing a kufi[11]*, carrying 'Fortress of a Muslim'*[12] *and my attars*[13] *everywhere. I was coming back from College and going through Waterloo station and British Transport Police was there and the barriers were open and everyone was walking through. They stopped me and my friends and they saw I have a zone 2 travelcard and Waterloo is in Zone 1. They straightaway notified the police that was there and three policemen ran over, grabbed me and put me up against the wall. This was not too long after Jean Charles De Menezes had been killed and I remember being so scared.*

They were shouting questions in my face like where are you coming from? Where are you going? But the questions were coming so fast that I couldn't even get answers out. They went through my pouch and asked me what the attars was? I asked them to just smell it. They told me they were searching me under the Terrorist Act and at that point my heart sunk even though I knew I was not involved in that. My other friends were there and no one else got the treatment I did. The way they ran up to me and manhandled me was bad but the hostility grew after they realised I was Muslim.

The cases above suggest faith shapes how Black men are treated during stop and searches. In particular, the third individual spoke about the hostility towards him grew when they saw the Islamic items he had in his possession and assumed terrorism.There is evidence that Muslims are more likely to be searched once stopped. In an arena where Black men are stopped so frequently, further research is needed on what role faith plays in how they are treated.

CONCLUSION

There is work to be done in gathering more information on the lives of Black Muslims in Britain. My research shows that whilst some relationships and phenomena can be inferred, there are a number of complex social and cultural factors at play and therefore the lives of Black Muslims cannot be seen to mirror that of our South Asian Muslims. The only way we will be able to get a clear view is for the data about Muslims to be disaggregated; this requires a focus on Muslims not being seen as one racial entity but a faith followed by many races.

[11] Cap

[12] Book of supplications

[13] Frankincense

SAFFIE JALLOW AIDARA

Saffie Jallow Aidara is an associate barrister in Hickman & Rose's corporate crime department. Prior to joining Hickman & Rose, Saffie was a tenant at 15 New Bridge Street Chambers practising in criminal defence and appearing in the Crown, Magistrates' and Youth Courts on a daily basis. Saffie also has experience prosecuting a wide range of matters Saffie holds a Law degree from UCL and a Masters in African Studies from SOAS. In her Masters, she majored in 'Government and Politics in Africa' and her dissertation focused on the political participation of women in The Gambia. She was awarded a major scholarship by Middle Temple Inn to study the Bar Professional Training Course. She won a Criminal Bar Association Bursary and sits on the CBA's social mobility committee. She has undertaken voluntary work with the Personal Support Unit assisting litigants in person through the court process. She has also volunteered on the SPITE for schools project. Saffie currently sits as co-chair on the Black Women in Law's mentoring committee and mentors a number of young Black women pursuing a career at the Bar.

FROM CHARGE TO CONVICTION - THE BLACK MUSLIM'S EXPERIENCE OF THE BRITISH JUDICIAL SYSTEM

BY FATIMA MUHAMMED

In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don't. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color "criminals" and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind.

Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow

Statistics regarding charge, trial, and conviction show that Black people are over-represented in the British Criminal Justice System (CJS) (Watts et al, 2020). We also know that Muslims are increasingly being racialised as a community (Selod and Garner 2015), and are subjects of disproportionate surveillance and increasing criminalisation (Tufail and Poynting 2013, Choudhury and Fenwick 2011). What is less well documented however, is what the landscape looks like when we examine the Black and Muslim intersection, and when we look at this experience from a variety of angles, rather than simply the one dimensional 'defendant' angle.

CHARGE

Little work has been carried out on looking at and properly analysing charging decisions made by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and how this impacts upon minority communities. What we do know is that both Black people and Muslims are the subject of disproportionate attention from law enforcement, who feed cases to the CPS for charges to be considered. Unlike in the US, the CPS are independent of the Police but of course work collaboratively with them in dealing with any case. If it has been established that more Black and Muslim individuals are being stopped, searched, arrested and investigated by the police, it stands that the CPS will receive more referrals of cases for charge, involving suspects or defendants from these same backgrounds.

As a Black Muslim, whether a victim, professional, defendant, judge or any other party involved in proceedings, you are very unlikely to see yourself represented. There certainly are Black lawyers, Black judges / Magistrates and Black court staff, but they are significantly underrepresented, leaving the general court house landscape as largely 'pale, male and stale' as it has been for so many years. It is undeniable that over the years things have changed for the better, but it is arguable whether they have changed enough and whether they are changing quickly enough for the Black Muslim community.

At the charge stage, prosecutors do not necessarily see the defendants that are subject to their charging decisions, so it can be argued that the scope for racial and religious bias is somewhat

reduced. However, a number of cases will involve both photographic and audio visual evidence that may make a defendant's race and or religion apparent. There is also the written evidence such as witness statements or interview transcripts which may contain detailed descriptions. And finally, the obvious detail that many minorities will be familiar with; the name of a defendant which can often indicate race, religion, nationality and heritage in many instances.
After the brutal murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, the Macpherson report (1999) deemed the Metropolitan Police to be institutionally racist, and similarly, the Sylvia Denman report (2001) found issues within the CPS and deemed it also to be institutionally racist. The result being a number of recommendations made to address this. Since then, there has not been another independent report looking at this issue. In 2017 MP David Lammy conducted a comprehensive review into the experiences of people of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds in the CJS. Lammy (2017) has since called for an in-depth review of CPS charging decisions, something that the CPS recognises could be beneficial in addressing inequalities in the CJS and any role it plays in that.

In the absence of any such report, what we do know when looking at the demographics of those referred to the CPS and those charged, who then end up facing court proceedings is the following. Black defendants can be said to face more serious charges including for knife offences, so-called gang related offences, drug offences and violent assault offences (see Shiner et al 2020). In line also with the negative stereotypes of Muslims we do see Muslims disproportionately impacted by counter-terrorism law and policies (Choudhury and Fenwick, 2011). Black Muslims face a double danger of disproportionate discrimination.

COURT PROCEEDINGS

When it comes to court proceedings, the court does, in many instances, present a hostile and non-representative environment for Black Muslims. Not only for those having their cases heard as defendants but also for those appearing as victims and witnesses, and to an extent, those attending court as professionals. Over the years we have heard personal anecdotes from Black people, minorities and Muslims, who have felt they were more harshly subjected to searches upon entry to court. Just recently, stories have appeared in the mainstream media once again, of lawyers of colour being mistaken by court staff as defendants and not lawyers, simply due to their skin colour (Blackall, 2020). For many of us who are Black and working in the CJS, we have similar stories – of being mistaken for defendants, family of defendants, interpreters, list callers and essentially anything other than what we are- i.e. lawyers or even judges and magistrates.

As a Black Muslim, whether a victim, professional, defendant, judge or any other party involved in proceedings, you are very unlikely to see yourself represented. There certainly are Black lawyers, Black judges / Magistrates and Black court staff, but they are significantly underrepresented, leaving the general court house landscape as largely 'pale, male and stale' as it has been for so many years. It is undeniable that over the years things have changed for the better, but it is arguable whether they have changed enough and whether they are changing quickly enough for the Black Muslim community.

Court houses, unlike other public institutions, do not typically have adequate prayer facilities for Muslims. Consequently, unoccupied conference rooms are makeshift prayer rooms while ablutions are carried out in facilities that are not quite appropriate.

Most court professionals lack sufficient faith awareness to know and understand etiquettes of interacting with Muslims i.e. shaking hands with the opposite sex, the requirement to have a space to pray 5 times a day, the impact of fasting during Ramadan and having to attend court. This is exacerbated for Black Muslims by the longstanding misconception that Black people either can't be Muslims, or aren't 'proper Muslims' anyhow.

These issues go as far as the jury in Crown Court trials; a jury is supposed to guarantee you judgment by your 'peers' but as a Black Muslim, your chances of seeing a Black Muslim juror, particularly in certain parts of the UK, are slim to none. This understandably impacts the perception of fairness and challenges the old adage of it being "as important for justice to be seen to be done."

Add to this all the microaggressions of having your name mispronounced, the data that shows Black people are less likely to be considered victims but rather aggressors, and the stereotypical criminalisation of Black and Muslim culture; there are then questions as to how likely it is for Black defendants to receive a fair trial, free from bias. And how likely it is for Black Muslim court users to have a positive experience of the court system to enable them to fully and effectively participate in the justice process.

CONVICTION AND SENTENCING

The lack of diversity of both the judiciary and jurors has been highlighted previously, but now we need to look at the impact of this. The British Judiciary is notoriously under-representative of British society. It doesn't reflect the communities it impacts and we see that minorities, particularly Muslims and Black people receive disproportionately harsher sentences, leading to their over representation in prisons.

The judicial diversity statistics (2019a) show that:

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation among judges in the court was generally lower than the general population
- 12% of magistrates declared themselves as BAME
- There were very few magistrates aged under 40 (5%) compared with 52% of magistrates who were aged 60 or over.

Looking at youth justice, we see that BAME people account for 50 per cent of young offenders in prison (Aidara 2020)—this exponential rise taking place at a time when youth imprisonment in general has fallen by a third. In the year ending March 2019, 27.8% of people in youth custody were Black – more than double the percentage in the year ending March 2006 (12.5%) (Ministryof Justice 2020).

Figure 2a: BAME Judicial Office Holders [14]

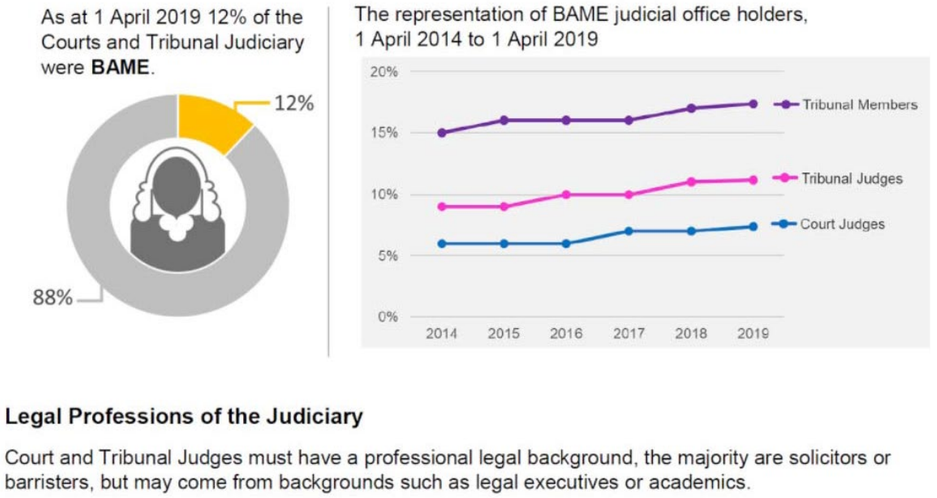


Figure 2b: Representation of BAME judicial office holders [15]

We often see the use of what are called 'deterrent' sentences, deployed as a means to deter criminals who commit a certain type of crime so that they desist from committing said crime, out of fear of the consequences, which are usually immediate custody or otherwise sentences that are more 'harsh' than usual. Often such sentences end up being used to address crimes that predominantly affect or involve Black communities which of course impacts the Black Muslim community. In the UK we have seen this with the 2011 London riots, the Notting Hill Carnival, knife crime offences, so-called gang offences (particularly those involving music artists such as 'Drill artists') and joint enterprise laws.

[14 ,15] See Courts and Tribunals Judiciary 2019b

This targeted use of deterrent sentences has resulted in Black defendants who would arguably, otherwise not have received custodial sentences, being put behind bars and suffering deprivation of liberty, for what would be considered in many instances, low level offending (Prison Reform Trust, 2017; Gormley et al, 2020). Or for first time offences which would in different circumstances, never have reached the custody threshold (Ministry of Justice 2017). So for example, during the 2011 London riots, young Black youths arrested for low value shoplifting offences (e.g. for stealing an inexpensive pair of trainers), who would usually have faced a fine, found themselves incarcerated, as an example to be made of.

KNIFE CRIME - TWO STRIKES AND YOU'RE OUT!

A good case study to look at is that of knife crime. In 2015 the UK government introduced a 'two-strikes' deterrent sentence for knife offences (including for the lowest category of the offence - simple possession i.e. being found with a knife on your person but no evidence of it having been violently used against somebody or brandished in public). Under this new sentencing power, judicial discretion was mostly taken away (not that it was known for being exercised favorably against Black defendants in any event) and judges had to ensure that defendants convicted more than once of being in possession of a knife or blade, would be sentenced to a minimum 6 month prison sentence (and a maximum of 4 years). If that defendant is a juvenile aged between 16 and 17, he would be sentenced to at least 4 months custody in a youth detention and training center. In the year preceding the imposition of this sentencing power, 1,300 people received non-custodial sentences or cautions for such offences. The intention with the new sentencing power was that they would all have faced a prison sentence instead (MOJ 2015). At the time the law was passed, the government claimed that knife offences had fallen by approx 40% between 2009 - 2014. At the same time the proportion of knife offenders going to prison had increased from 22% to 29%, while average sentences for knife offences had increased from 166 days to 227 days (Ministry of Justice 2015).

To then fully paint the picture of the inequality before the law, we can look at one particular case which caused outrage amongst the Black community and many criminal justice reform activists. That is the controversial case of Oxford medical student Lavinia Woodward (Yorke 2017). In 2018, knife crime offending was a hot topic, generating provocative headlines and media imagery. It is against this backdrop that Lavinia's case took place. In 2017, Woodward pleaded guilty to unlawful wounding, after she punched and stabbed the victim, Cambridge student Thomas Fairclough. Briefly the facts of her case were that she had met Fairclough through the online dating app, Tinder and entered a relationship with him. After discovering that he had contacted her mother regarding her drinking, she attacked him. She was said to have thrown a laptop at him before stabbing him in the leg with a bread knife, also injuring two of his fingers. All of this was said to have taken place whilst she was under the influence of alcohol and drugs – aggravating features of the offence under the sentencing guidelines.

Woodward, being a white Oxford medical student with aspirations of becoming a medical surgeon, exceptionally received a deferred sentence (the judge specifies a period of time in which your behaviour and conduct will be assessed with a view to rewarding good conduct with

a lesser sentence, if any at all). When Judge Ian Pringle QC finally sentenced Woodward, he gave her a suspended sentence. In the course of the case, the judge had described Woodward, as an "extraordinarily able young lady", whose talents meant that a prison sentence would be "too severe". The judge praised her for her remorse and made remarks to the effect that it was important not to hinder her future of becoming a surgeon by marring her criminal record. The media reported Woodward being seen mouthing the words "thank you" to the judge as she left the courtroom (Yorke, 2017).

When holding up this case as an example, those in defence of the judge's actions often make the following points; that there were many mitigating factors in her case and that the judge exercised his discretion within the sentencing guidelines. True though that is, there were also many aggravating features, including the fact that the offence took place in a domestic violence context, it was a sustained attack and Woodward was under the influence of drink and drugs. She was also said to have breached her bail conditions by contacting the victim. 24 year old Woodward received a suspended sentence where many of her Black counterparts would have been subjected to immediate custody. As a young white female, studying at one of the UK's most elite institutions, the judge wasn't able to see her as the 'other' in the same way that Black defendants often are.

CONCLUSION

Black Muslims ultimately suffer from discrimination on both a racial and religious level in the criminal justice system Firstly, for being Black, as that is often the most obvious visible minority identifier, but also for being Muslims, a community also viewed with suspicion, racialised and negatively stereotyped. As Black people we do not see ourselves adequately represented on the professional side but we are disproportionately represented on the criminalisation side. As Muslims, we find ourselves equally, inadequately represented, but also inadequately catered for.

The CJS thus becomes an inaccessible and hostile institution for many in the Black community, resulting in Black Muslims having low confidence levels in the system whether seeking to engage with it as victims, witnesses, defendants or professionals. The following recommendations are made as a way forward to address some of these issues:

- Initiatives to support the recruitment of greater diversity in the CJS from court staff to Barristers, Solicitors, QCs, Judges and Magistrates
- Adequate and practical equality and diversity training (including faith awareness) for court staff and the judiciary
- Improved prayer and ablution facilities at court
- In-depth and independent review of charging decisions
- Data looking specifically at the intersection of race and religion for Black Muslims to better understand the 'double damage' suffered by Black Muslims across all access points of the CJS

[16] Although it did still exist in the legislation, allowing judges not to impose the minimum mandatory sentence if they felt that it would be 'unjust' to do so. But the intention and guidance was that such discretion would be exercised only in the rarest of cases

This final recommendation is not just desirable but in fact essential. Without knowing the full extent of the issues, we will always be at a disadvantage in trying to seek solutions to address them. The recommendations are not exhaustive or intended to be 'final' solutions – simply a starting point.

The Black Lives Matter movement was borne out of the inequalities suffered by Black people at the hands of the CJS and yet many Muslims think it isn't a Muslim issue. This is in spite of the number of Black Muslims in the community (see Ali 2015). Justice must be accessible to all for it to truly be Justice. The Muslim community needs to be concerned about issues affecting all for it to be united and true to its teachings.

FATIMA MUHAMMED

Fatima Muhammed qualified as a Barrister and has worked in the Criminal Justice Sector for many years. She has worked on cases and legal issues across multiple jurisdictions and has studied Race and Law and the impact of Western legal systems on minority groups

Please note that this has been written in a personal capacity and views expressed are not necessarily representative of any organisation

BLACK MUSLIMS IN UK PRISONS

BY ABU HAJIRAH

Amazing are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else except in the case of a believer, for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (God), thus there is a good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shows resignation (and endures it patiently), there is a good for him in it.

Sahih Muslim Chapter 13[17]

In 1999 Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) felt that the increasing number of Muslim prisoners warranted significant action and change. Data suggested at the time that the number of Muslim prisoners had doubled in 5 years. The first Muslim adviser Masood Ahmed was appointed and given a small team to look at the issues posed by the increase in the Muslims numbers. These were at approximately 4,500 as reported by the media (BBC, 1999). The official offender equality data was not published by HMPPS until 2013.

This turning point was welcome but also worrying. There was a recognition that Muslims were a significant demographic that required support in ensuring they could practice their religion, have halal meals, and offer congregational prayer on Friday (jum'uah) within the prison system. But it also raised concerns as it was a realisation that Muslims were committing more crimes and entering prison in increasing numbers.

Fast forward to 2020 where the numbers of Muslims both in Britain have increased to projected figures of close to 3.5 million. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) in 2018 published data that showed there are 3.4 million Muslims in Britain based on the Annual Population Survey (Office for National Statistics, 2018). The ONS data show the Muslim community has grown since the last census in 2011 when the population of Muslims was of 2.7 million (Office for National Statistics, 2012).

These demographics are not reflected in the prison system where the Muslim population has increased more rapidly to close to 14,000 which is 13% of the prison population, a significant figure (Ministory of Justice, 2019). It is of deep concern that Muslims in increasing numbers are falling foul of the law and being put in prison.

This paper highlights some of the ethnic and religious dimensions of the changing demographic of the prison population in Britain. It relies on data from published studies and qualitative data from the perspective of an officer of the HMPPS. It shows that the prison system is culturally and religiously heterogeneous. It makes the case that cultural and religious requirements are not met appropriately and this is affecting how well supported Black Muslim prisoners are by their faith communities after they leave the prison system.

RACE, FAITH, AND CHALLENGES OF MUSLIM PRISONERS

One of the reasons for increasing numbers may be attributed to the numbers of prisoners accepting Islam within prison. There are a number of charities and individuals who the current Muslim Advisor Ahtsham Ali supports who provide essential services for Muslims in prison.
Another difference between the demographics of British Muslims and Muslims in the prison

[17] 2999 Book 55 Hadith 82

system is the larger proportion of prisoners from the Black African and African origin communities. It is thought that approximately 40% of the Muslim population is Black with around 45% Asian and 15% others.

Data indicate that Black Muslims are often doubly discriminated against. The Young Review in 2014[18] alluded to this and it was further highlighted by the recent David Lammy recommendations (2017) where he pointed out negative outcomes for Black prisoners across a number of metrics in the CJS with 13 recommendations for HMPPS. He also made particular mention of negative outcomes for Muslims across a similar number of metrics due to the large numbers of Black Muslims.

The social dynamics of the prison system is different from larger Muslim community dynamics. Firstly, because of the perceived divide between the Muslim communities, also although we are all Muslims the communities rarely mix outside of prison except in some well-respected communities in South London and Birmingham. However inside prison their mixing and 'brotherhood' is more prevalent. The brotherhood is something sought after for knowledge and protection. As one Muslim convert ex-offender has put it "The reason why I became Muslim in prison was due to the brotherhood. Sometimes it can be a dangerous place but on the 2's (wing in the jail) the Muslims run the wing so no one messes with you."[19]

Unfortunately, diversity is not reflected in the Muslim chaplain experience where more than 80% of Muslim chaplains are from an Asian background many from predominately Asian communities and have little in common with Black people or Black Muslims. Joliffe and Haque (2017) reported:

> *One Black Muslim prisoner noted that it was important to have more BME staff as it would address the broader issue of white staff 'looking down' on BME people as seeing them as 'just prisoners': just having a few BME staff will get white staff used to seeing BMEs as equal.*

Further, an example of cultural dissonance was an Asian Imam saying "You know, this race [Black] are hot headed. [Imam, Cat B prison]." This is a clear example of the lack of cultural competence that has a negative effect upon Black Muslims in prison.

The practice of Islam is often different with different fiqh (jurisprudence) and understandings which are compounded by different understandings of the community element for Black Muslims. Many Black Muslims converts do not have a Black Muslim community to fall back on where they could get support from and have their community partake in charity programs that help Muslim prisoners except a few. St Giles Trust (2018) and Connect Futures did a study looking into some of these areas with Muslim prisoners. They both concluded that more work is needed to support the Muslim community in prison and there should be a better awareness and understanding of cultural and religious issues and how this impacts upon rehabilitation in establishments.

[18] Young, L. (2014). The Young Review. Improving Outcomes for Young Black and/or Muslim Men in the Criminal Justice System. Clinks [Chaired by Baroness Lola Young]. https://www.clinks.org/publication/young-review

[19] External Interview

This phenomenon of Muslim chaplains is unique to the situation in the UK and attributed to the local history of Muslim communities.

CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES AND IMPACT ON BLACK MUSLIMS

Data from the 2011 Census confirms that the largest Muslim communities are Asian and they have been established for decades. The Asian communities have also transported their religious teachings and access to knowledge through their seminaries such as the Dar ul Uloom in Bury and other locations. These have become recognised places of learning and more importantly for our topic recognised by government organisations as places where their qualifications are accepted. As part of the recruitment process for Prison Chaplains the requirement is to have a recognised Islamic qualification and to have a good connection with a Muslim community. With so many Asian graduates from these seminaries, the road to become a chaplain(which is paid at a much better rate than an imam in a masjid[20] normally) is natural for them. Taking up this position is highly sought after and when positions become vacant, they are quickly taken with chaplains sometimes travelling great distances to take up the opportunity.

The same cannot be said for the Black Muslim communities who do not have that internal / local recognised centres of learning. Many Black Imams across the *masaajid*[21] in the UK have been educated in other countries. Black reverts[22] often become educated at the Islamic University in Medina, or other notable places of learning such as Mauritania, Jordan, or Egypt and some have tried the local route with the recent centres of learning in the UK. But the key is which centre helps you to connect to your own community and the community within the prison that the Muslim Chaplain (imam) serves.

Because the imam also plays a key role for rehabilitation and release they must have connections to the communities that the Black Muslim will be released into. They must be able to leverage the important stakeholders in the community to support the rehabilitation, by providing jobs and alternatives to a life of crime, help for their social ills, and ultimately help them to reconnect with their faith.

If we return to the understanding of the cultural diversity of Black Muslims in HMPPS then we must also understand that a significant portion have come from difficult beginnings and from diverse communities. Stories of war-torn countries like Somalia and Libya are well known, and for reverts the poverty that many of the Black communities in the UK extend from. The most densely populated Black Muslim areas - following the data from the previous Census in 2011 - such as Lambeth, and Southwark who have a number of Black-led masaajid, some characterised by cultural and linguistic norms and practices that are unique to their communities.

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUSLY APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO REHAB

For many years HMPPS has been trying to resolve the issues around overrepresentation of Black people in prison and how best to rehabilitate them. There is evidence that cultural understandings as well as the role of faith can play productive roles in rehabilitating Black Muslim prisoners (see Joliffe and Haque 2017: 27).

[20] Mosque
[21] Mosque (plural)
[22] Converts to Islam

For many years HMPPS has been trying to resolve the issues around overrepresentation of Black people in prison and how best to rehabilitate them. There is evidence that cultural understandings as well as the role of faith can play productive roles in rehabilitating Black Muslim prisoners.

There are principles that are derived from faith that can be utilised in culturally-appropriate desistance interventions. We are reminded of the *hadith*[23] of Thumama, a prisoner, that was narrated on the authority of the scholar Abu Huraira:

> The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ[24]) sent some horsemen to Najd. They captured a man from the tribe of Banu Hanifa and called Thumama. He was the chief of the people of Yamama. People bound him to one of the pillars of the mosque. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came out to (see) him. He said: O Thumama, what do you think? He replied: Muhammad, I have good opinion of you. If you kill me, you will kill a person who has spilt blood. If you do me a favour, you will do a favour to a grateful person. If you want wealth, ask and you will get what you will demand. The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) left him (in this condition) for two days, (and came to him again) and said: What do you think, O Thumama? He replied: What I have already told you. If you do a favour, you will do a favour to a grateful person. If you kill me, you will kill a person who has spilt blood. If you want wealth, ask and you will get what you will demand. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) left him until the next day when he (came to him again) and said: What do you think, O Thumama? He replied: What I have already told you. If you do me a favour, you will do a favour to a grateful person. If you kill me, you will kill a person who has spilt blood. If you want wealth, ask and you will get what you will demand. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: Set Thumama free. He went to a palm-grove near the mosque and took a bath. Then he entered the mosque and said: I bear testimony (to the truth) that there is no god but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His bondman and His messenger. O Muhammad, by Allah, there was no face on the earth more hateful to me than your face, but (now) your face has become to me the dearest of all faces. By Allah, there was no religion more hateful to me than your religion, but (now) your religion has become the dearest of all religions to me. By Allah, there was no city more hateful to me than your city, but (now) your city has become the dearest of all cities to me.

We see that due to fair treatment and understanding of the Prophet (PBUH) and the companions, a prisoner rehabilitated his ways. Such examples illustrate the relevance of faith for designing appropriate interventions to help Muslim prisoners manage and prepare for leaving prison.
A nuanced understanding of the Muslim community and resources for creating culturally sensitive interventions are important. Interventions need to be presented in a way that is

[23] Report, or account of the practices and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him
[24] Arabic Translation of 'peace be upon him'

sensitive to cultural differences without flattening faith as one all encompassing category as Joliffe and Haque (2017) highlighted in their report. This was previously understood but has been somewhat abandoned by authorities post-2010, thus missing out on previously by the successful Black Muslim-led projects launched back in 2006 with the STREET project lead by Dr Abdul Haqq Baker and the lesser-known but overwhelmingly successful SIRAAT project which worked with over 300 Black Muslims in prison between 2006 and 2011 helping them to better understand Islam, and their rehabilitation from an erroneous Islamic ideology.

CONCLUSION

This essay has explored how faith communities have a number of resources to draw on as well as a support system for prisoners as they transition back into society. Cultural understandings involving not just race but faith can play crucial roles in rehabilitating Black Muslim prisoners.

One of the many things which we must learn in this period of efforts to embolden racial justice in our society is that cultural competence and history are more than just significant elements in the puzzle. Cultural competence in engaging a diverse community of Muslims in the prison service in the UK is critical to ensuring their needs are catered for and are better prepared for life after prison.

ABU HAJIRAH

Abu Hajirah works in the criminal justice system for the Ministry of Justice and has done for over 25 years.

Son of a teacher and a prominent family in Guyana, he is a revert to Islam who has studied Islam in a number of countries including Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UK under a number of Islamic scholars.

He is one of the directors of a Mosque and Islamic cultural centre in South London which has led the fight against Islamic extremism from the early Nineties, whilst supporting the community to find solace in practicing Islam un the UK.

During this time he has been involved in many projects that support Muslims from providing aid and spiritual support to refugees and those in need in Bosnia, Somalia, Iraq, Gambia , Yemen, Palestine and many localities.

THE IMPACT OF THE IMMIGRATION POLICY AND THE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT ON BLACK MUSLIMS

BY BILIKISU SAVAGE

On 14 May 2014, a new Immigration Act received royal assent. This legislation has made it more difficult for those who come to the UK.

The new legislation introduced a new system of providing documentary evidence of;

- Right to remain, live lawful in the UK
- Right to work
- Right to right rent or buy a house
- Right to open a bank account

A new streamline appeal system was introduced. The speedier appeals system and the lack of access to public services and labour market created the 'hostile environment'. The UK Home Office's hostile environment policy **is a set** of administrative and legislative measures designed to make staying in the United Kingdom as difficult as possible for people without leave to remain, in the hope that they may 'voluntarily leave.'

Wendy Williams, HM Inspector of the Constabulary, in a landmark report (Williams 2020) found that the UK's "treatment of the Windrush generation, and approach to immigration more broadly, was caused by institutional failures to understand race and racism." Her report concluded that they are in some respects institutionally racist, conforming to the MacPherson report (1999). That definition is:

> collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

To provide insight into some of the effects of the 2014 Immigration Act in the preparation of this report, three families from the Black Muslim community have volunteered to provide information for the following three case studies

Their stories illustrate how the policies which Williams demonstrated "institutional ignorance and thoughtlessness towards the issue of race" have a far broader impact. These three stories show the hostile environment's effects shape the everyday lives of Muslim families have adverse impacts such as separation.

CASE STUDY 1

Family man known as **Individual A** arrived in the UK as a single person in 2000 on a temporary visa. The wife later joined him in November 2004. They had their first child in 2005, two months after the birth of their child, **Individual A** was arrested for using a false instrument and sentenced to 6 months. He served 3 months, even though he was of good character prior to his offence, deportation was recommended. The family continued to live in the UK with no recourse to public funds. They had their second child in 2007, continued to maintain their family ties in the UK and sought a judicial review. Awaiting their appeal hearing, Individual A and wife were required to sign on at their local reporting centre. Their first daughter was granted British citizenship in May 2016. Individual A was deported in 2016 despite having two children born in the UK and one with a British passport at the time of his deportation.

CASE STUDY 2

Individual B arrived in the UK on a temporary visa in 2005. Individual B later married a British citizen. The Home office did not accept the marriage to be genuine. Individual B appealed, while awaiting his hearing date he was reporting at his local reporting centre. One day whilst reporting he was detained and subsequently deported in 2016 despite his marriage and no criminal record.

CASE STUDY 3

Individual C arrived in the UK September 2010 on a tier 1 visa, 4 months after her 5 years visa was granted. The Home Office had refused her husband and children applications hence they could not come to the UK as a family. On arrival in the UK, individual C appealed against the decision and won. The family continued living in the UK and applied to extend their leave to remain in 2015 as they could not meet up with the 5 years requirement for Indefinite Leave to Remain under the Tier 1 (Highly Skilled Migrant Programme) due to the 4 month delays in coming to the UK, but this application was refused because of doubt by the case worker and application of the rule of probability in the genuineness of income based on evidence provided. This family's refusal of leave to remain took 3 years of appeal. Having spent thousands of pounds and traumatised due to their adverse experience the family was granted 30 months leave to remain in 2018.

ANALYSIS

The three case studies cited capture to some extent the impact of the Immigration Act on Black Muslim communities in the UK. There is a growing concern within the Black community and in this case, the Black Muslim community, that what happened with the Windrush scandal can potentially be repeated due to the 2014 Immigration Act. For example, according to an article by Ian Birrell (2020) thousands of children in the UK are in limbo – trapped without immigration status. One study, this year estimated there are 215,000 children living here without immigration status, half of them born in the UK (Jolly et al 2020).

THE WINDRUSH SCANDAL

In 2018, Wendy Williams was commissioned by the Home Secretary Javid to carry out an independent assessment of the Windrush scandal, particularly covering the events from 2008 to March 2018. The report concludes that the Windrush generation and their children have been poorly served by this country. These people had no reason to doubt their status, or that they belonged in the UK. They could not have been expected to know the complexity of the law as it changed around them.

According to the Wendy Williams' report (2020), successive governments tightened immigration controls and passed laws to demonstrate their intention on being tough on immigration. This created and expanded the Home office's hostile environment policy, which had no regard for the Windrush generation.

Additionally, other reports have drawn similar conclusions about the deleterious effects of the 'hostile environment' it created. In December 2018, the National Audit Office criticised officials for poor quality data that incorrectly classified them as illegal immigrants.

A critical report from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) confirmed that the Home Office broke equalities law when it introduced its hostile environment immigration measures (2020). EHRC officials found that officials failed to appreciate the severity of the negative impacts of its policy on this group of people.

SUMMARY

The Wendy Williams report made 30 recommendations for change and improvement which can be boiled down to three elements:

- The Home Office must acknowledge the wrong which has been done
- It must open itself up to greater external scrutiny
- It must change its culture to recognise that migration and wider Home Office policy is about people and, whatever its objective, should be rooted in humanity

The report recommendations clearly highlight the impact of the changes in Immigration Act on Black Britons. The three cases mentioned within the report can serve as the first set of qualitative data collected to reflect the impact of the policies on the Black Muslim community.

RECOMMENDATION

Case studies cited above indicate that there is limited evidence of the impact of the 2014 Immigration Act on the Black Muslim community. It is recommended that further research is carried out to document the impact of the immigration policies on diverse communities within the UK. It is further recommended that the government commissions an independent report to address the impact of the 2014 immigration act on diverse migrant communities in the UK.

This research could address the following areas;

Percentage number of Black people/ Muslims detained since May 2014,
Percentage number of Black people/Muslims deported due to criminal activities.
Request for freedom of information data to establish the number of Black people deported since the new immigration act.
The growing numbers of a high proportion of children born in the UK, who have lived more than their adult life in the UK and their families are now in limbo.

BILIKISU SAVAGE

A business studies graduate, currently studying for Chartered Institute of Personnel Management and working in the civil service as a team leader. An active community leader and a Magistrate with over 12 years service. Passionate in community cohesion and an advocate in safeguarding matters.

SECTION 3.4

EDUCATION

This section explores the key issues faced by Black people and Black Muslims within the rubric of education. It covers institutional miseducation within British state schools and universities, the problem of racialised and draconian disciplinary measures on the part of teachers, the school to prison pipeline, organisations founded to tackle these issues such as Save Our Boys and finally the barriers facing Black Muslims in disseminating knowledge; namely getting their books published.

SAVE OUR BOYS: A YOUTH WORK INTERVENTION

BY RAKIN FETUGA

I. INTRODUCTION

Save Our Boys is an organisation based in London that was set up to help support Black boys who are close to permanent exclusion from school or a life in crime. Save Our Boys is working to change that one boy at a time.

There are many issues that are affecting Black boys negatively. First, racism in broader society. Stop and search, for example, is disproportionately used on Black people. As research shows, racism in education particularly in classrooms is another factor. Second, exclusion from school. A number of studies have shown how exclusion disproportionately affects Black and minority youth. Third, a generational divide between parents and youth. A fourth factor that shapes the life chances of Black boys is a lack of positive role models.

At a time when knife crime is at record levels (Benthem, 2020), Save our Boys' goal is to save their lives. The work is urgent, and responsive to the challenges young Black boys face today.

II. A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

My perspective comes from being a youth worker, a Learning Mentor, a teacher, and experience as a rapper. I grew up in Ladbroke Grove in the 1980s where crime was rife and gangs were active. I witnessed first-hand what the streets can do. The streets are more dangerous than they used to be. We used to settle problems with our fists but now they're settled with weapons. Knives were at one point about making marks on your face; now they are for stabbing.
My saving grace was music. It kept me busy, writing, gathering lyrics. I was a rapper with Cash Crew, and later with Mecca 2 Medina. Thereafter I became a teacher, and started Save our Boys in 2015.

III. WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

Black boys are permanently excluded in high numbers from schools and put into Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). The revelation comes as the Department for Education published new national data on exclusions, which shows Black pupils from a Caribbean background had almost twice the England average rate of short term exclusions at 10.37% in 2018-19 (DfE, 2020).

Exclusion in education is a serious issue; once a child goes to a PRU their education is damaged for life. The child will never be able to access the same level of education they received in a mainstream school. Also there are many other issues as Haroon Siddique explains. "Young Black Caribbean boys are nearly four times more likely to receive a permanent school exclusion and twice as likely to receive a fixed-period exclusion than the school population as a whole, making them the most excluded group apart from Gypsy and Traveller children (Siddique, 2020)."

There is evidence that exclusions lead to incarceration in the form of a "PRU-to-prison" pipeline. The IRR report (Perera 2020) notes that 89% of children in detention in 2017-18 reported to have

been excluded from school, according to the HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales. This is critical because students that go to these establishments meet other individuals who are involved with criminal activity - many of the boys - then get encouraged to join gangs and get involved with crime.

Education research reveals how troubling the picture is. In "White teacher's reactions to the racial treatment of middle school Black boys" Battles (2017) states:

> *'The experiences and challenges of racial identification in school seem to be especially common among Black males, past and present, many of whom have been racially profiled and who struggle with being negatively labelled by some White teachers.'*

Battles' research strikes a chord for me as a teacher. The prejudice Black boys face in school may be shaped by demographics of British schools in which there are few Black teachers and a large proportion of the teachers are white females. Negative stereotypes and images of Black boys are prevalent in schools (Parveen and McIntyre 2021); for example violent, lazy, not interested in education, aggressive and highly sexualised, many of these negative images are perpetuated from the British media. This is a major issue because it is near to impossible to teach someone well if you have low expectations of them and in some cases fear them.

Halley, Eshleman, and Vijaya (2011) show that Black males suffer in schools because of poor expectations from their white teachers. This prejudice also happens because of a lack of empathy as white female teachers do not understand what it is like to be a Black male and to face the challenges they face.

Another issue is the school curriculum; it is incapable of catching the imagination of Black children. History is taught in a euro-centric way where Black children are taught about the contribution of white individuals but what is missing is the contribution of Black people.[25]

The way slavery is taught in schools British people are painted as saviours of Black people. In reality they were one of the main countries promoting and benefitting from slavery.

Afua Hirsch, author and journalist, explains in her article (2019):

> *As I and others have argued before, one reason that British people feel complacent about Britain's role in pioneering slavery, and the racism that underpinned it, is that it happened slightly farther away. The Caribbean is Britain's own Deep South, where enslavement and segregation as brutal as anything that existed on American soil took place at the hands of British people. And that distance facilitates denial.*

Also when Black role models are taught for example Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Malcolm X is taught as the dangerous, angry and violent individual, while Martin Luther King is taught as the peaceful, calm and loving one. This is inaccurate; Malcolm X never used violence and was peaceful and respectful. This image of him is not taught (see Fisher 1992)

[25] See Ahmed (2021) in this volume

What is not made clear when studying Malcolm X is the source of his anger. What doesn't get explained well is that he is reacting to the systemic racism that Black people have experienced in America since the days of slavery and which is still going on today. The deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor are just the tip of the iceberg.

IV. THE CURRENT SCENARIO

Research tells us a great deal but the situation is even more dire. My experience as the Director of Save our Boys working with young men gives me a deeper perspective of what young people and their families are dealing with everyday.

Part of the problem is a lack of preparation and resources in Muslim communities. A recent case in Scotland featured a young man who was killed by another Black Muslim youth. The victim was the son of an Imam. In London, there was a recent case with a youth of Sudanese heritage who was murdered. The parents were unaware of what their son was doing, and what he was going through. Some parents have sent their children to Africa to protect them (Clare, 2019).

These are examples of a generational difference in which young people face a different reality, a reality grounded in Britain. Young people are getting drawn into the challenges and realities of the street, while their parents don't understand that reality. Some young people are caught up in gang territorial conflicts, and become part of gangs like any other youth and Black British Muslim youth are no exceptions to that trend.

Another part of the scenario has to do with public policy. Thanks to budget cuts due, youth clubs were closed, which led to young people being pushed onto the streets. Much of the violence is after school, and has to do with money, drugs, and territory. Right now the safest place for kids is at home!

The divide is felt in our communities. Mosques tend to cater to the older demographic, while young people tend to spend time in other places. It's not unusual to find in mosques older men who sit inside the room, while there are signs that say 'no talking.' Commonly youth are outside chicken shops, end up in shopping malls, or worse, shisha bars that have mushroomed lately and seem to operate all night.

Parents don't understand the youth when children are talking to them, they don't know what's going on. Youth however are in tune to what's happening on the streets. Youth use social media, different WhatsApp groups, different Snap accounts and are part of all the madness that goes on online.

For example, one youth told me recently, there's one Snapchat that tells all the news such as gang wars between Tottenham and Wood Green. Then there's taunting that goes on on social media - which has basically amplified things. Years ago, to find out what's happening you had to talk to someone in the know. Now it's all on social media. You need to know the gatekeepers

to get on those channels. Another influence is music, drill is talking about murder and killing. Lots of rappers talk about people they kill in the songs. So there's a relationship between gang membership, violence, and music, police have caught on to it. But have we as a community?

IV. THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL INTERVENTION

The way Save our Boys addresses these challenges is by bringing people together and providing information and guidance. We bring together an array of professionals, practitioners, and organisations with community members including parents to help educate community members through events and workshops. Our objectives are to raise awareness of the issues young people face, and improve parents' understanding of the situation that young people find themselves in. We also use the opportunity to introduce families and parents to resources such as organisations and practitioners.

Save our Boys run workshops on important topics around knife crime as a response to the significant rise in knife attacks involving young men. Other topics include: gangs, grooming, raising self esteem, extremism, understanding the role of the police, county lines and peer group pressure. In a recent event online, the focus was on Drill, Gangs, and County Lines, an event that lasted well over 2 hours.

Most importantly, we conduct mentoring and counselling with parents and youth. With parents, our objective is to equip them with knowledge and skills to keep youth safe. We also refer families to the appropriate organisations depending on the specific need.

In an era when knife crime has increased dramatically, families and youth need advice - to maneuver inside the system, for example, housing, and education. For example, when there are problems at school, the way to get things done is for parents to communicate by email rather than aggressively turn up at their child's school. The effectiveness of putting one's message on record and strategically including recipients.

IV. MENTORING AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Mentoring is an important tool which I find can assist to change negative behaviour. Mentors use their skills to support and guide the young person. Mentorship is most effective when there is cultural understanding and sensitivity. Mentors' familiarity and knowledge of the culture of the child makes them effective. Also, a non-judgemental approach to mentoring helps the young person to relax and bring down barriers.

Mentors are positive adult role models who can have conversation and can guide the flow and topics of conversations. These are conversations that young people cannot have on the streets with people their own age. Conversations with mentors allow young people to communicate with an adult who has been successful in society.

Mentoring at Save our Boys has sought to change the perspective of young people, to help them reflect on their actions, and recognise the consequences of their actions. Mentoring has also been to equip young men with skills to cope. For example, guiding conversations about clothing and fashion (which are potent symbols) and navigating relationships provides young

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VI. CONCLUSION

In the context of youth and the influences that shape their lives, an important question emerges about identity, race, and religion in Britain. Do Black Muslims face the same issues as the non-Muslim Black boys? The answer is yes. The same stereotyping and low expectations are prevalent in the schools as these issues are systemic.

We have found that addressing Black boys who are Muslim can be tailored to include faith. Save Our Boys helps to mentor young Black boys and guide them back on the straight and narrow. If they are Muslim, the faith is an extra resource which can be utilised to assist the young men to be turned on to education and reach their full academic potential. Knowledge and practices are resources that can transform aspirations and outlooks of young men. Rather than focusing on material rewards, mentoring and guidance can change the value system and ethics of young people. Faith can also transform relationships, displacing old peer networks and hang out spots in favor of new relationships and new places to hang out.

Muslim communities in the UK need to work with grassroots organisations, and think about creative ways to work with youth because the mosque – as an institution – generally is not effective in communicating with young people. We need to think about creative spaces and means to do that.[26]

RAKIN FETUGA

Ustadh Rakin Niass Fetuga is a British born Nigerian. He is an educator who is presently Head of religious education in a secondary school in North London. He has studied the deen of Islam with many scholars including Sheikh Babikr, Sheikh Mumisa and presently Imam cheikh Tijani Cisse to name just a few. He is also a poet, an adviser, life Coach and a spiritual leader. Rakin is also the director of Save Our Boys an organisation set up to support and guide youth who are disaffected, disillusioned and involved in gangs and criminal activity.

[26] Rumis Cave is one such unique space that caters to a wide audience and organises many different forms of activities that attract younger people as well as older

REDIRECTING THE TRAJECTORY: THE IMPORTANCE OF BLACK SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN BRITISH/BRITISH MUSLIM SOCIETY

BY SOUKEYNA OSEI-BONSU

Black and Black Muslim children's abilities and prospects are systemically undermined in British schools through the prominence of the 'school to prison pipeline' and other racialised disciplinary measures. I make the case for solely Black-focused education forums that provide a safe space for Black children to thrive and learn in an environment that does not criminalise or 'other' them. The article will then explore the similarities between British state schools and Islamic schools to highlight the ways in which Black Muslim children are also marginalisedusing the example of various lived experiences. Finally the article will explore the supplementary school Nana Asma'u Community school which was founded in 2018 for Black Muslim children in order to teach them an Afrocentric history and situate them in a genealogy thay can be proud of.

A SYSTEM OF STRUCTURAL MISEDUCATION AND RACIALISED DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

In an education system where empire and whiteness is the norm, where nationalism has inevitably seeped into the curriculum, into classrooms, lesson plans, and history books, the Black child by default is systematically undermined. Schooling is an extension of the state whereby the ways in which Black students and children have their histories undermined reflects the undermining of the Black British citizen. A nation constructed through theft and dispossession cannot provide adequate education to its subaltern subjects. What I mean is that the very telling of the Black experience and Black history is a threat to British nationhood and the imagined fraternity (Anderson, 1991) and therefore before the Black child themselves know they are Black, their identities are securitised and suppressed in order to facilitate the telling of the benevolent white victor's history. This is in more concise terms a system of structural miseducation.

The dispossession of identity is a dispossession of the worst kind and it is silently happening across the classrooms of Britain. Beyond this are the deeply entrenched racist practices on the part of teaching staff such as the tactic of exclusion which Dianne Abbott MP has called a "silent catastrophe" (2002).

Cheryl Phoenix of The Black Child Agenda (n.d.) explores the reality of exclusionary practices in British schools and the inevitable consequence being the school to prison pipeline. She explores how exclusion from school and zero tolerance policies results in socialisation into crime:

> *Removing students from schools as a form of discipline takes them out of this formative environment and important process, and it removes them from the safety and structure that the school provides. Many students who express behavioural issues at school are acting out in response to stressful or dangerous conditions in their homes or neighbourhoods, and in many cases have underlying conditions which have never been diagnosed by the school, so removing them from school and returning them to a problematic or unsupervised home environment hurts rather than helps their development.*

Similarly according to research conducted by the Black Child Agenda:

> *Though they comprise just 7 percent of the total enrolment of school students, Black students comprise 32 percent of in-school exclusions and 39 percent of out-of-school exclusions. Troublingly, this disparity begins as early as nursery. Nearly half of all nursery students excluded are Black, though they represent just 18 percent of total nursery enrolment. They represent 2 percent of out-of-school exclusions, which is 4 times greater than the percentage of total enrolled students that they comprise.*

As a solution to such racialised tactics, schooling facilitated by Black staff can offer a means to reconnect troubled Black children to a genealogy of Black figures they will not study in school. Such a strategy is to provide a space for children to explore their Blackness safe from draconian disciplinary measures. The Black supplementary school therefore presents a solution in an unfair system to reintroduce Black children to their roots in the way their white counterparts are automatically afforded.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN BRITISH STATE SCHOOLS AND ISLAMIC SCHOOLING: EXPLORING THE WAYS IN WHICH BLACK MUSLIM CHILDREN ARE UNDERMINED

According to Black Muslim Forum's (2020) research, the Islamic madrassah is not exempt from racialised tactics on the part of teachers and racist bullying from other students.

> *Many others outlined their experiences of attending madrassah's in the UK such as being called racist names, being told their skin is too dark and being made fun of as well as an instance where physical violence ensued (a Black Muslim madrassah student having a rock thrown at her eye by a racist bully at a predominantly Bangladeshi school).*

Indeed in family dialogues among Black Muslims it is not uncommon to hear about Black Muslims being verbally abused by their teachers in Islamic schools and made to feel self-conscious because of the hue of their skin. Such stories are common amongst Black British Muslims. Of course, the ways in which Black Muslims students are undermined in the Muslim setting differs slightly to that of the secular schooling system. As evidenced by BMF's 2020 report, Arab supremacy and the problem of colourism imported from predominantly Arab and South Asian communities to the Muslim community in the UK poses unique forms of racial superiority that Black Muslim children are subjected to in conjunction with the racial violence suffered at the hands of teachers and other pupils in British state schools. This means the Black Muslim child suffers discrimination from within and outside ofthe Muslim community – from every angle of their educational development here in the UK.

WAYS FORWARD

Nana Asma'u community school is a Black Muslim/ Black supplementary school I founded in 2018 operating at Ghana Muslim Welfare House in North London. The school is named after Princess Nana Asma'u - an educator, poet, military strategist, linguist and daughter of the leader of the Sokoto Caliphate. The school teaches pupils aged 3-11 covering African History, Afro-Muslim history and self-esteem in a creative environment through activities such as short story and poetry writing, drawing, colouring and general arts and crafts.

I believe that in order to undo structural miseducation such schools are necessary in order to sever the trajectory of reductionist history taught in state schools and redirect it to a true reflection of Black history and the Black experience. This school has successfully explored historical figures such as Mansa Musa, Malcolm X, Princess Nana Asma'u, Usman Dan Fodio, Askia of Songhay as well as the Sokoto Caliphate and the Kingdom of Mali. Initiatives such as this are necessary to restore the historical dignity to Black children whose histories are often reduced to conquest and enslavement and it is my hope that children finish the curriculum feeling powerful and empowered.

It cannot go without mentioning that other individuals and organisations have been influential in their endeavour to educate Muslims and non Muslims alike on Black and Black Muslim history and identity. Amongst them are Mustafa Briggs whose Beyond Bilal tour has been an eye opener for many Muslims who were previously ignorant of the reality and history of Islam in Africa and Black Muslim achievement. Additionally, Hafsah Dabiri and Nai'ma B. Robert are two authors that have provided Black Muslim representation in the children and young persons publishing sector. Finally, The Salam Project has been active for years in educating the community through workshops and events on Black excellence, the issues facing the Black community and solutions to these problems.

The ways forward for the British Muslim community I beleive lies in education as both a prevention and a cure for the issues that are prevalent in our community such as anti-Black racism. As Malcolm X once said "education is the passport to the future" and supporting individuals and organisations who are seeking to uproot the problems in our community is a positive step forward to lasting change.

SOUKEYNA OSEI-BONSU

Soukeyna is a student based in London and founder of the Black rights based organisation Black Muslim Forum which aims to suppport Black Muslims globally.

PUBLISHING CHALLENGES FOR BLACK MUSLIM WRITERS

BY HABEEB AKANDE

Getting published is not easy, especially for Black writers. The UK publishing industry is overwhelmingly white, middle-class and has historically excluded people of colour (Saha and Van Lente, 2020). Becoming a published author in the UK is difficult for Black Muslim writers in particular, given the various challenges they face in mainstream and Muslim book publishing.

UK PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

The UK's publishing industry, with a turnover of £6bn in 2018, makes a significant contribution to Britain's creative industries, generating £102bn a year for the British economy. Although the book industry is fairly lucrative, there is a notable earnings gap between successful writers and others. The top 10% of writers earn about 70% of total earnings in the profession. The average (median) earnings of a professional author is £10,500 (The Society of Authors, 2019). However, the average (median) earnings of a professional author's household is £50,000. Most professional writers have another job to supplement their writing income, with just 28% of authors making a living from writing alone without a second job, down from 40% in 2006.

Following the worldwide Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, there has been a significant growth in book sales by Black authors, which resulted in Reni Eddo-Lodge becoming the first Black British author to top the UK book charts in June 2020 (Flood, 2020). First published in 2017, Eddo-Lodge's award-winning *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* started life as a popular blog in 2014. Similarly, Black mixed-race writers, such as Afua Hirsh and Akala experienced a significant growth in sales with their best-selling books, *Brit(ish)* and *Natives*. Despite the recent success of some Black and mixed-race authors, the British publishing industry remains predominantly white at all levels.

To address the industry's "deep-rooted racial inequalities," more than 200 Black and mixed-race writers set up the Black Writers' Guild (BWG), requesting more diversity from major UK publishers (Cain, 2020). Few Black Muslims were part of the BWG signatory list. In the UK, Black Muslim voices are often absent from wider discussions about Black Britons and activism. Black people make up 4% of the UK population, and Black Muslims represent 10% of the UK's Muslim population. Black Muslims are a minority within a minority in Britain. This can make the task twice as hard to get published due to the additional challenges a Black Muslim is likely to encounter in Black, Muslim, and British spaces.

CHALLENGES

For writers who aspire to be published, the acquisition stage is generally seen as the most important and most challenging (Saha and Van Lente, 2020). Agents and commissioning editors have a lot of power to get writers published. They serve as the gatekeepers to mainstream publishing. A 2020 academic study on diversity in UK publishing revealed that finding writers of colour and publishing them successfully remains a challenge for British publishers. The report found a lack of diversity in the industry and strongly encouraged industry professionals to reflect on their practices, challenge their assumptions, and change their behaviour to "make

the publishing industry fairer for all (Saha and Van Lente, 2020)".

A large survey of people working in UK publishing found that "significant progress" still needs to be made on increasing the number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff. The survey revealed that 11% of people working in publishing in London were BAME, significantly lower than London's BAME population of 40% (Flood, 2019). Another survey of 1,000 publishers found that 90% of the workforce was white British (Flood, 2020).

In contrast to the larger publishing industry, there are a handful of Muslim publishing houses serving a small market and only one Black publisher, said Jamil Chishti who runs Beacon Books. The market is dominated by independent publishing houses, some of whom only distribute in the UK, Chishti explained. These include *Darussalam, Ta-ha Publishers, Kube Publishing, Turath Publishing, Blackstone Press, Saqi Books, Claritas Books, Al-Hidaayah Publishing,* and *White Thread Press*. The Muslim book market (publishers, distributors, and retailers) is controlled by South Asian and Arab Muslims who own the majority of Islamic publishing houses in the UK.

According to the Rethinking 'Diversity' in Publishing study, publishers frequently speak about the lack of 'good' and 'quality' stories from Black writers. The researchers of the study found that the notion of 'good' and 'quality' is subjective, and based on a particular experience.

> *To what extent is this notion of 'good' really universal? In an industry that is dominated by the white middle-classes, many of whom attended Russell Group universities, notions of 'quality' are shaped by a very particular experience and education, based on a canon that in recent times has been questioned for its Eurocentric view of the world (Saha and Van Lente, 2020).*

An academic at Regent's University London, Dr. Jonathan Wilson explains that subjectivity may be more difficult to achieve for Muslim publishing houses. "This whole peer-review process and the iterative rounds of checking and revising means that standards are raised and harmful subjectivity is reduced. A lot of Muslim publishing houses do not have the money to be able to bear these costs." In the Muslim context, most 'Islamic books' are sold in independent Muslim bookshops only. Chishti explains that the Muslim book market currently reflects the class composition of the Muslim community, one that is predominantly working class. According to By The Numbers, just under half (46% or 1.22 million) of the Muslim population lives in the 10% most deprived and 1.7% (46,000) in the 10% least deprived, Local Authority Districts in England, based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation measure (Ali 2015).

For Muslims seeking mainstream distribution, a number of independent publishers and imprints of large publishers owned by non-Muslims have successfully released books by Muslim writers in recent years. These include *I.B. Tauris (Bloomsbury), Picador (Pan Macmillan), Frances Lincoln Children's Books (The Quarto Group), Puffin Books (Penguin Books), Hope Road Publishing* and *Oneworld Publications*. The vast majority of these books are written by South Asian Muslims. In the UK, 'Muslim' is often used interchangeably with Asian, as if all Muslims

are Asians. This is because the South Asian narrative tends to dominate the British Muslim narrative (Ali, 2019). Oftentimes South Asian cultural issues and stories are presented as quintessential Muslim stories. An example of this can be found in the recent release of *A Match Made In Heaven: British Muslim Women Write About Love and Desire* (Chambers et al 2020). I was left disappointed that this entertaining collection of sixteen female stories about love, desire and relationships did not include a single Black Muslim woman. Following a tweet I sent out highlighting this omission, the book's co-editor replied to me that there are "some brilliant Black British Muslim writers out there" but her book project was about South Asian Muslim women. She did acknowledge that they perhaps should have made this clearer in the book's subtitle. This was not the first time a British book on 'diverse Muslim stories' have excluded the Black Muslim perspective unless the subject matter is racism or racial identity. Black Muslim writers remain woefully underrepresented in traditional book publishing.

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SUCCESSES

To counteract this, a growing number of Black Muslim women have published articles and non-fiction books for children, young people, and women. Notable UK-based Black Muslim authors who have gained mainstream attention for writing young adult novels include; Na'ima B. Robert, Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé, and Yassmin Abdel-Magied. In addition, Black Muslim writer and lawyer Raifa Rafiq has received plaudits from the UK publishing industry for her award-winning millennial book podcast *Mostly Lit*[27]. Whilst Black Muslim women are making great strides in book publishing, there is still a dearth of published Black British Muslim male authors. Kenyan-born barrister, Hashi Mohamad, Professor Dr. Jonathan A. J. Wilson, and Somali-born politician Magid Magid are some rare success stories of published Black Muslim male authors in the UK. For many Black Muslims, self-publishing seems to be the only available route to get published.

Speaking after the announcement of her million dollar book deal with a major US publisher, Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé said, "Macmillan (publishers) put their money where their money is. Often in publishing, a lot of Black authors don't get support so it was just lovely to see them

[27] See Mansfield, K. (2019).

not lowball me (Flood, 2020).” The 21 year old British-Nigerian Muslim writer wanted to centre Black characters in her debut novel about institutional racism in an elite white school (Khan, 2020).

Halimat Shode, founder of *Black Muslim Times* said, “I feel like Black Muslims are only called upon to talk about race relations.” There is clearly more to the Black British experience than racism. Some have taken it upon themselves to set up their own organisations and safe spaces to document the diversity of Black Muslim experiences. Examples include *Black Muslim Times, Everyday Muslim, Black and Muslim in Britain,* and *The (Virtual) Salon*. More platforms and initiatives are needed to promote Black Muslim stories, writers and poets.

In my view, getting published will always be challenging for writers as the market is saturated. Over 200,000 books were printed in the UK in 2019 alone. I was fortunate that my first book proposal on anti-Black racism and African Muslim history was accepted by an independent Muslim publishing house. However, I did experience some difficulties with subsequent book proposals. When I pitched to write about racism and African history, I did not encounter much push back from Muslim and non-Muslim publishers. This was not the case when I pitched to write a book about intimacy and Islamic sexology. I was asked to significantly change the subject matter of my book about relationships to make it more ‘palatable’ for (South Asian and Arab) Muslim readers. This was something I was not willing to do. I am not alone in this regard. To be published, many Black writers feel they need to conform to the worldview of non-Black commissioning editors who have particular expectations over what kind of stories they deem to be ‘authentically Muslim’ or interesting for readers. Due to the lack of support, I decided to go down the self-publishing route after my first book which was more costly. Fortunately, I was able to finance the upfront book publishing costs. Not many aspiring writers are in a position to self-fund their book projects. It is a risky investment and may not pay off. Interestingly, it was not until I achieved a considerable amount of success with my subsequent self-published books, that publishers reached out to me to publish a similar book on the same topic that I initially proposed to them. From my experience, Black writers are more likely to get published if they are able to demonstrate their commercial value in the market.

For aspiring writers seeking notoriety or to be recognised as an expert or thought leader in their field, traditional publishing is probably the best route over self-publishing. Dr Jonathan Wilson, Professor of Brand Strategy and Culture at Regent’s University in London, suggests:

> *The real barriers are further down and much earlier: as a student, building your career as an academic, or holding down another job that still gives you the time to follow your writing passion and potential. For those that want to take this path, the best advice I can give is to demonstrate beforehand your quality and what you can bring: write articles that showcase your style and perspective, and build your social media following. At the end of the day, publishing a book is about demonstrating to the publisher beforehand that they will make money and gain kudos.*

Traditional publishing also provides better distribution and publishing expertise for new writers. That being said, self-publishing is potentially more lucrative for authors who know how to market themselves and distribute their books effectively.

For example, to make £30,000 via the traditional publishing route for a book selling at £7.99 that pays a 10% royalty payment to the author, 37,547 books would need to be sold. To make the same amount via the self-publishing route with the book selling at the same price but with the self-published author receiving 40% of the book price, 9,384 books would need to be sold.

Self-publishing is something Black Muslim writers should consider if they are unable to secure a suitable book deal. Publishing is not a meritocracy. The best books do not always get picked up by agents or publishers. Whatever route writers opt for, it is important that more Black Muslims are published so that we can enrich ourselves with their different experiences, stories, and insights.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to effect change, publishing houses need to be aware of the various obstacles Black Muslim writers face and develop strategies to find and publish them.

For aspiring writers wanting to get published, do not procrastinate. There is no harm in reaching out to a publishing house or agent with a book proposal. The passion to write is likely to wane over some time. It is also important for aspiring writers to self-promote and actively engage with their audience. Marketing is essential to becoming a publishing success. The industry is not a pure meritocracy.

Black independent bookshops are an untapped market to stock books by Black Muslims. More Black editors and publishers may help to find and publish more Black writers. To achieve publishing success, I believe books by Black Muslims would need to target a wider audience and not just independent Muslim bookshops. The internet is an inexpensive outlet to market to a wider demographic.

For writers going down the self-publishing route, they can start a blog to build an online presence. As their audience grows it would be easier to gain a book deal once they have proved their commercial value.

It is also important to prepare oneself for rejection and criticism. A writer must understand that not everyone will enjoy their work, writing is subjective. Rather than waiting for a major publisher or editor to validate or approve their work, I advise aspiring writers to concentrate on writing and building an audience.

For policy makers, I recommend the following:

- Increase Black hiring.
- Facilitate workshops on creative writing and how to get published.
- Discover different channels (i.e. online) to find Black Muslim writers.
- Rethink what is considered ‘quality’ and ‘commercially valuable.’

HABEEB AKANDE

Habeeb Akande is a writer, historian, and founder of Rabaah Publishers. He is a former student of al-Azhar University in Egypt, and is a chartered accountant by profession. Habeeb is a member of the Society of Authors and has written 6 books including. Illuminating the Darkness: Blacks and North Africans in Islam, A Taste of Honey: Sexuality and Erotology in Islam and Kunyaza: The Secret to Female Pleasure.

IS THERE A SPACE FOR BLACK MUSLIMS AT UNIVERSITY?

BY BASHIRAT OLADELE

It is easy to feel like an outsider at university as a Black Muslim. It can be overwhelming not to find people with similar interests or from the same demographic at university, where you meet people from all parts of the world. This continues to be a common experience for Black Muslims in the UK. This experience is not limited to the wider university environment, but it is also present within the Black community at the universities. Raifa Rafiq, the author of 'It's Not About the Burqa' wrote that she was always the 'sore thumb' when with her Black friends (Rafiq, 2019:201) and this is a perfect description for the majority of Black Muslims at their university's African Caribbean Society. This feeling acts as a form of segregation within African Caribbean Societies as it actively isolates Black Muslims, displaying the narrative that Blackness is conditional or that Islam is not compatible with Blackness. This is flawed and is a structural problem as many Black Muslims at universities remain frustrated by this.

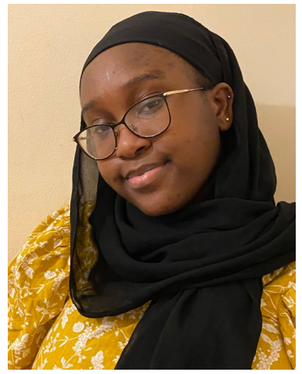
It is important to note that societies such as the African Caribbean Society or Nigerian Society are focused on culture, rather than religion. Despite this, we need to be aware of how these cultural societies are dismissive of Black Muslims such as the assumption that all Black people are Christians. For example, cultural societies are a way of meeting new people and taking a break from the university workload but this can be overpowered by the excessive drinking culture at university that remains incompatible with Islamic principles. Likewise, African Caribbean societies tend to have Christian undertones by constantly speaking about Christian figures, failing to realise that Black Muslims do exist and are being marginalised and having the leaders of these societies being Christians allows this to happen.

In a similar vein, Islamic societies (ISOCs) are in need of a structural change due to the lack of acknowledgement of Black Muslims either from the anti-Black statements or silence when tragedy is afflicted on the Black community. This is evidenced by a 2020 report conducted by Black Muslim Forum (2020) on the experiences of Black British Muslims whereby 84% of interviewed Black Muslims reported that they felt they did not belong to their university's ISOC. This is a statistic that was shocking to many non-Black Muslims - prolifically shared on social media and which mobilised several university ISOCs to take action. Amongst them was the University of Birmingham ISOC which went on to conduct independent research on the systemic problems within their Islamic society in order to spur change and undo legacies of racism within the sphere of the Islamic society.

Organisations such as the Black Muslim Forum and The Black Muslim Girl are spaces that allow Black Muslims to simply exist without having to deal with the flaws of Islamic societies or African Caribbean societies. Spaces needed to be created that allow Black Muslims at university to exist and feel secure within their faith and cultures as Black Muslims. ACM Connect (African Caribbean Muslims Connect) was created in August 2020 as an initiative that aims to reduce the marginalisation of Black Muslims at university, by creating our own spaces. At the moment, ACM Connect is based at the University of Warwick with ambassadors across British universities and aims to have branches at numerous universities to support Black Muslims on campus.

BASHIRAT OLADELE

Bashirat Oladele is an award winning 19 year old Law and Sociology student at the University of Warwick, with a passion for writing and telling the stories that often go unheard. She regularly writes for the student newspaper, 'The Boar' and has been featured in British Vogue. Bashirat has written for the likes of Teen Vogue, Stylist, Cosmopolitan and many more publications. She is passionate about the diversity of the global Black Muslim experience.



WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE LACK OF BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY REPRESENTATION IN BRITISH HISTORY?

BY SAARAH AHMED

My friend and I are both second year undergraduate students of History in a university in London. As Asian and Black Muslims, we represent the 'minority' not only in the study of but also in the representation of 'Us' in the history we are taught. Yet, recently through my personal endeavours to study history from a wider, outside of the curriculum basis, I discovered that British history could actually represent other ethnic backgrounds besides the white British perspective. In schools, we are largely taught about English or British history as being ethnically white with very little or no interaction with non-European countries or references. It is then of no surprise that most Black and ethnic minorities do not take history as a subject in higher education (Mantle, 2020) and are the lowest attendees in museums and other heritage organisations as they do not feel it is 'their' narrative (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 2019).

> One of the striking omissions when I studied A-level history was the lack of opportunity to study anything of my own heritage or of other non-western civilisations. And in the few opportunities that there were, the story was always told from a western perspective (Schools Week, 2017).

This is just one of many voices that reflect how a lack of representation affects whether a student will engage with history and heritage beyond compulsory lessons at school.

DIVERSITY, EDUCATION, AND REPRESENTATION

Michael Gove claimed that the British empire was being taught negatively in schools; with a post- colonial twist (Bloom, 2016). He also argued that students were not gaining a clear understanding of chronology, a sense of time. In November 2012, Gove complained children are being "deprived of the inheritance they are entitled to." However, this issue does not seem to have been completely solved (Beckett, 2012).

Gove's proposed changes (Sellgren, 2013) mean that students of history are not given the opportunity to study a breadth of history from different perspectives, but are being limited to the chronology of Britain's history. Gove makes no effort to distract from the fact that his new curriculum focuses significantly on and only on British history and not the influences of the wider world. Although the new curriculum (Historical Association, 2013) does include one of the below as an optional module:

- Britain's retreat from Empire, including:
  - independence for India and the Wind of Change in Africa
  - the independence generation – Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, Kenyatta, Nkrumah
- The Windrush generation, wider new Commonwealth immigration, and the arrival of East African Asians

The consequences of Gove's changes to the history curriculum are unashamedly from a narrow and it could be argued from a nationalistic perspective as it limits learning from a broad perspective. According to Alexander's research study (2014) "Influencing the Cultural Diversity of The UK History Curriculum," the problem in the UK's history curriculum is that it keeps minorities in the margins of the curriculum.

> *Over 20% of Britain's population is now of minority ethnic background, with nearly 25% of the school age population of Black or minority ethnic heritage. Despite this, according to a review of the national curriculum by Ofsted, the Schools inspection service for England, cultural diversity and multiculturalism are poorly taught in schools. The UK Coalition Government has placed history as central to the formation of British identity and citizenship and has redefined the national curriculum, placing greater emphasis on British 'island' history and neglecting the contribution of Britain's ethnic minority communities to that history and to British identity.*

As the current GCSE curriculum stands, there are options to study a variety of wider world depth studies. These options include 'Conflict and tension,' 'Between East and West 1945-1972', 'In Asia, 1950-1975' and 'In the Gulf and Afghanistan 1990-2009,' as well as, and unsurprisingly, 'The First World War 1894-1918' and 'The inter-war years, 1918-1939.' Those of which have already limited representation; East and West, Asia and Afghanistan, are being 'represented.' however the context of 'Conflict and tension' prescribes a premeditated idea that they are regions that are problematic and the emphasis on war and conflict, strays away from the idea that these countries and communities have a rich history and contributions to offer to the rest of the world. The course is selected depending on whether academic staff have the knowledge and facilities to do so. What little representation is available is most likely not taught at all.

The lack of diversity and representation of the Black and ethnic minority community in the history curriculum has an impact on not only the pupils studying history, but the interest to pursue the subject at GCSE and A-Level. It also underscores the idea that non-white and non-British people had little or no impact or contribution to British history and consequently, society. The curriculum begins with children aged 5, and so from a young age it passes on a limited perspective to pupils. It alienates children from learning about their own heritage, especially if their background is not British.

Britain's first Black female children's laureate and award-winning author of the 'Noughts and Crosses' series Malorie Blackman told the Guardian in an interview, "I understand you need to learn about Henry VIII but when I was young I wanted to learn about something that felt more relevant (Rustin, 2013)." It is clear Blackman grasps the significance of understanding British history, however being a Black female pupil at the time, as well as a member of the BME community, it is difficult to gain a sense of belonging in relation to a curriculum which heavily focuses on a narrow conception of British history. It gives pupils the unfortunate opportunity to dismiss different civilisations and ignore global contributing factors to British history.

Another issue which may arise in schools is the idea of racial inferiority. As Black and Asian students, particularly may already feel disconnected, they may begin to think that their historical contribution is non-existent, inciting a sense of inferiority, as opposed to a majority of white British pupils, of whom have a clear and strong sense of relation and understanding of their background and a sense of contribution to society.

RETHINKING DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

Martin Spafford, who has thirty years' experience as a history teacher and the co-author of the OCR Migration unit in the UK history curriculum emphasises the importance of embedding diversity and particularly the demand to embrace British Muslim history.

Spafford is an advocate of teaching multi-cultural and ethnic heritage within the history curriculum in the classroom. At a conference, in 2016, although focusing on British Muslim heritage he spoke about the different reasons in which he believes it is important to teach of a wider British heritage in history lessons. He particularly describes the need to educate students on British Muslim heritage and its impact on society. He cited from his experience as a teacher of history for thirty years that:

> An understanding of the cultural influence of Islam throughout our history and that relationship goes right back to the thinkers before the Norman Conquest and earlier and of course right up until the present day with cultural influence and importance of Islam, scientific, artistic and philosophical and so on. (Spafford 2016)

He emphasised the "variety and complexity within British Islamic experience" while explaining the importance of knowing our own histories, and believing that they matter. Having that awareness of the Black and minority ethnic history makes sure we do not end up with a narrow sense of what it means to be white British, or Black and British or Asian and British.

The OCR Migration Unit for GCSE (OCR 2013) seeks to "deepen students' understanding of the long history of Britain as a diverse society." The course is designed to rid of any misconceptions pupils may have about what society has conjured the image of migration to be.

Although we may not have enough representation of Black and ethnic minorities in British history, individuals and professionals are using their positions and passion to instigate the much-needed reform in education. Birmingham City University is one of the very few institutions that has introduced diversity into the curriculum. In 2016, applications were available for the first UK undergraduate degree in Black Studies for 2017 enrolment. Although the introduction of a course focusing on the Black minority community has come into existence, the national curriculum and education in terms of British history has yet to transform and progress to reflect its diverse communities. "While those of us running the course are proud that it is the first of its kind, the fact that it has never been done before demonstrates the crisis at the heart of British academia" (Andrews, 2016).

Underrepresentation is a central feature of contemporary university departments; Black historians make up less than 1% of UK university-based History staff (Royal Historical Society 2018). The even less diverse academic staff within these departments of UK universities, can leave room for discrimination, bias and exclusion and a white-washing of ethnic histories and

An understanding of the cultural influence of Islam throughout our history and that relationship goes right back to the thinkers before the Norman Conquest and earlier and of course right up until the present day with cultural influence and importance of Islam, scientific, artistic and philosophical and so on.

understandings that would be interpreted and taught differently than if it were by a BAME academic individual. The absence of BAME academic staffing discourages students of the same background to apply for degree courses like History in fear of not identifying or fitting in with the content, as well as the fear of having their histories miscommunicated.

From the research, opinions, perspectives and evidence gathered in this essay, it is reasonable to argue that although our curriculum has in some sense 'developed,' it still has yet to come a long way. Social media platforms, movements, societies, lectures and advertisements are all examples of media in which Black and minority ethnic communities have a sense of representation (good and bad), however, there is still a feeling of misrepresentation and disapproval, when our own histories are not being shown or taught in an institution.

SAARAH AHMED

Saarah Ahmed is a second year student of History at Queen Mary's University, London. She is also Co-Founder of Sanshimai, a business which strives to reflect heritage and artistic trends through creating handmade products and gifts using recycled materials.

SECTION 3.5

EMPLOYMENT

Underlying education and health inequalities are economic challenges faced by Black Muslims. As previous research indicates for Black Britons, Black Muslims in Britain face prejudice and discrimination; entrepreneurs face a myriad of challenges in setting up their own businesses. This section offers a glimpse into employment and entrepreneurial experiences of Black Muslims.

ON ESTABLISHING THE BLACK POUND

BY SHAMSIDEEN OGUNMUYIWA

A sustainable economic base is the foundation for community empowerment. Our well-intentioned but inconsistent donations are helpful, but inadequate. A system that supports, empowers, that is structured will translate into intergenerational benefits. The future of the British Muslim community, especially brothers and sisters of African and Black Caribbean heritage (the Black British Muslims), lies in developing strong institutions that cater to the community's needs including welfare, education, media, politics and economics.

How would we go about establishing institutions that support economic empowerment? I make the case for establishing the Black Pound, a network that brings businesses together to create a sustainable economic base. I present research with Black Muslim entrepreneurs to identify the challenges that they face in creating an economic base such as trust, attitude, and competition.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE

As an entrepreneur, I have found our lack of collective planning for economic empowerment is best explained by the original purpose of Black communities' immigration to Britain as well as some internal and external variables.

The demographic structure of the Black communities explains their attitude to their communal development. The migration of African Caribbean and Africans after World War II to the UK started with the first wave mostly from the British West Indies. By 1961, 160,000 people arrived to work and settled permanently in the UK (McDowell, 2018).

The second wave was comprised of those who came temporarily from various Commonwealth countries, especially Africans. In the late 1950s to the 1970s, most of the Africans came to study or train and return to their motherlands, which were seeking or had just gained Independence from the UK. A third wave - this time economic migrants - started to arrive in the UK in the 1980s (Williams, 2015) and continue to arrive albeit in more limited numbers. These migrants came largely from the Commonwealth countries especially, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa (Economist 2016). The third wave also came through the High Skilled Visa schemes, after 2000.

The fourth wave included those who came to seek refuge or asylum due to conflicts in Africa in the 1990s and 2000s including Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Senegal, Gambia, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, as well as those who sought refuge from natural disasters (Montserrat).[28]

The drive for these demographic waves of entry into Britain impacts on the entrants' attitude to institution planning. For instance, we find that the first wave, notably the Windrush generation, their children and grandchildren are arguably better integrated[29] socially due to their economic role in British industry, transport, and healthcare (Peach, 1991). Whereas, the second wave, the privileged elitists, who came and returned to their home country, never intended for Britain to become home. However, their British-born children later returned to the UK to settle and start all over.
The third wave, the economic migrants, came to work with the intention to return to "home" in the near future. Therefore, intergenerational succession or developing institutions for the future was not on their horizon. The fourth wave was met with challenges of being refugees.

Britian's policy of dispersal and minimal support meant Somali migrants in particular were provided poor housing, faced discrimination, immigration-related bureaucracy, and dealt with education, literacy and employment difficulties, with numerous concomitant health and wellbeing effects (Mohamoud 2011, Evans and Page n.d.).

Demographic data indicate that the Black and African population in Britain is indeed changing. The 2011 Census indicated there are approximately 2 million Black Britons. In the period between 2001 and 2011, the African population doubled. And that is not the end of the changes: although Caribbean Britons are substantially better off than their African neighbours, demographic and educational trends suggest that the tables may soon be turned" (Economist 2016). According to a report based on the 2011 census data (Ali 2015) there are 272,015 Black Muslims in the UK: of which Black Caribbeans are 7,345; Africans are 207,201; and other Blacks are 57,469; and an additional 5,384 are Mixed White & Black Caribbean as well as 15,681 who are Mixed White & Black African. Generally, Blacks are 3.33% (1,864,890), the Black British Muslims are only approx. 0.6% of the population.

THE BLACK POUND

African Caribbean and African spending power is recognised widely; I observed in London in the 1990s that white and Asian entrepreneurs catered to the requirements of African and Caribbean tastes. Popular groceries in some parts of London including Harlesden are still run by Asians from the West Indies. They trade in goods and services that are staples for Black families and communities. Over time, the market changed and entrepreneurial migrants established their trade. In the 1990s and 2000s, I observed the way Somali refugees in London would start businesses that catered to their communities' needs including groceries and internet cafes. Thus gradually, ethnic businesses started and thrived, giving life to a 'Black Pound.'

Aside from the obvious African grocery shops, which provide the immediate needs of diasporic communities, there were businesses and professional set-ups like accounting firms, solicitors' offices, barbers and hairdressing salons, building tradesmen, cleaning firms, restaurants, Internet Cafés & Business Centres, auto-repairs, and more.

However, as data from the Annual Population Survey shows, the majority of the Black community gained work through employment in government and private establishments, like hospitals, transport, logistics, and in factories (Office of National Statistics, 2020c). "11.2% of Black workers were self-employed, the lowest percentage out of all ethnic groups" (Office of National Statistics, 2020d). It is important to note that most of the migrants are from middle-class backgrounds, which means they were educated and likely to have some professional qualifications, except those who came as refugees - who are a mix of all backgrounds (Daley, 1998).

[28] See Owen (n.d.)

[29] See Economist 2016

HALF-CENTURY LATER

So, after over 50 years, how has the Black British economic base fared?

Business men and women I spoke with believe we are not doing enough to support other Black businesses. One respondent in my research interviews with entrepreneurs believes that the majority of our earnings goes straight into other communities. In essence, most families spend their money in shops and businesses not owned by the Black British community; thereby not giving preferences to buying and engaging the services of members of their own community. This is how the Black community is disempowered.

This attitude exists among Muslims and the non-Muslims within the Black communities. Why is patronage within the community so low? Why is the community's spending power not valued within wider society? These questions call for much soul-searching.

Although Black people account for 3.3 per cent of the population, they make up only 0.67% of the UK's business base (Bounds, 2020). There is also a lack of Black men in senior positions in top businesses, educational institutions and politics (BBC, 2020).

However, London is telling a changing story. According to a 2005 BME Business Report commissioned by the London Development Agency (a Mayor of London's agency for business and jobs), there are around 16,000 businesses owned by people of Black Caribbean and Black African descent (including mixed race Black Caribbeans and Black Africans) in London. These businesses had a turnover of approximately £10 billion (Cannon et al, 2005).

The report further revealed that total turnover of all London businesses was £800 billion, out of which Asian owned business revenues amounted to £60 billion and Black owned businesses had revenues of approximately £10 billion. Although BAME-owned businesses are still concentrated in the traditional and ethnic niche sectors, Black businesses focus on personal services (notably hairdressing and beauty), small-scale catering, car repair services, small scale import and export, legal services, accountancy services, money-exchange & financial services, and small scale construction; Asians businesses centre around medium-to-large scale catering services, food retailing, clothing and textiles, hospitality services, import and export, travels, IT, legal services, accounting services, and money-exchanges.

> ***Our inability to cooperate on mutual contracts and basic business relationships has wider implications. We are unable to synergise and convert Black economic power into a greater impact that translates into developing larger institutions.***

ATTITUDE ISSUES

There were various issues relating to attitude. First, is our attitude to ourselves. We seem to take fellow Blacks for granted. The kind of conversation we have with Black business owners we would not have with other communities. "The treatment is just dastardly," complained a shop owner. "I get more respect from other people than from my [own] people. I really wonder if we [Blacks] are genetically self-hating, or we have been classically conditioned to be like this?" On the other hand, many Black customers also complained about very poor customer service especially to fellow Blacks from Black business owners.

There is the attitude of short-term thinking. Most economic migrants do not think long-term. One entrepreneur told me, "...the concept of 'the home' in Africa or the Caribbean conditions a mindset that does not see a future in this country. Unfortunately, that is a mirage as some of us are now finding out in our old age. Our 7 year plan is now 30 and counting." In fact, such a mindset prevents any sort of succession or intergenerational planning.

We also have an attitude of not promoting Blackness. Our pride and preferences adore others' lifestyle and outlook. Many have no pride in their heritage. Therefore, we are fast losing our languages, cultures and values. African pride is not on display, except in the museum.

African restaurants complained of low patronage and a lack of an internal market. Families would rather eat out in Indian or Chinese restaurants, as one businesswoman who closed her African restaurant for good during lockdown. This is one of the reasons why our food heritage has not gone mainstream in the UK, like Indian and Chinese foods.

TRUST ISSUES

A major hindrance to our collective success is a lack of trust. Almost all Black business men and women consulted for this essay highlighted lack of trust as a huge challenge. One respondent told me that "I have experienced pulling resources together with some friends, my trust was damaged. I felt used and abused. I vowed never to do business with another Black fellow."
We do not part with money easily except where there is trust and protection. The prevalence of mistrust is why we do not transact as much business among ourselves. It is suspected that Black people have the lowest number of partnerships and collaborations amongst all ethnic groups. A tech entrepreneur explained that he felt that mistrust directly in relation to processing payments digitally. "My experience as the CEO of a startup has been very interesting dealing with our communities in both the UK and US. I have recently received feedback about my app and they told me that they don't trust using a card payment on my app because they don't trust the company. However, they seem to be comfortable using their card details on eBay or Amazon."

INTERNAL COMPETITION

Our lack of trust also translates into our attitude to recruitment. "You train someone, they know your business, they become your competitor," was implicitly spelled out by an entrepreneur. I

was baffled and wondered how this should be a problem? Is the goal not to empower, mentor and help others to establish themselves?

People who are competitors do not cooperate. Undoubtedly, our mutual progress is impeded by unconscious envy and jealousy. An African Muslim woman who is a mid-level manager in the postal services told me that her major challenges come from BAME staff, who seek to undermine her authority. “I don’t know what their problem is: my hijab or the fact that I’m a woman who has to manage them? I have to be cool, calm and stubborn,” she said and laughed it off.

An Oxford-based Black business owner listed lack of mentorship, mistrust in own brands, lacking appropriate management and financial skills amongst others as limiting factors for the Black Pound. He advised, “Many of us are professionals within our field and are very successful at what we do, but we are hardly able to get into management positions as it requires a different skill set.”

EXTERNAL COMPLICATIONS

Our lack of a strong economic power base is not all caused by issues within the community. There are external factors too. These range from institutional unconscious bias towards the Black communities, access issues, deprivation, among other factors.

The Black community is generally known as the “hard to reach” group. There is a historical reason for this. African Caribbeans arrived in the UK in waves since World War II to help rebuild the country. However, they had always faced racism and discrimination. They had limits and restrictions forced upon in housing, education, and in health.

Up until the late 1990s, there were places where Blacks dared not go without receiving physical harm. The police picked on them and framed false charges against them; It felt like a deliberate policy to criminalise the Blacks. These led to many race riots and deep distrust. Eventually an investigation into Police by Lord Macpherson officially branded the Police as “institutionally racist” (MacPherson 1999).

So, yes, Black Britons developed an attitude to institutions and authorities; they became hard to reach. The distastefulness remains till today. The recent Windrush scandal has further drained whatever trust the Black community had in their British government. “We felt used and disused,” was how a Caribbean colleague summed it all up.

Even where government’s support and interventions are available, the Black community is the least to access such support. The recent efforts to support UK businesses to survive the Covid-19 impact, as entrepreneurs have conveyed, Black businesses were more adversely affected and as one businessman told me, are less likely to access the intervention loans such as the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS), Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), Large Business Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBIS) and the Future Fund.

Although the issue is often addressed as a lack of access to information and the society provides translated materials to bridge this access, the issues are deeper than that. Most African Caribbeans have no obvious language barriers and the Commonwealth migrants generally speak English as their first or second language. Moreover, the second and third migrant generations absolutely have no language problem, yet the barriers and the glass-ceiling remain. Language may not be an explanatory factor but race and class are. A study for the British Bankers Association (2020) “indicates that after starting a business, Black business owners have a median turnover of just £25,000, compared to £35,000 for white business owners. Median productivity is less than two thirds.” Further, female entrepreneurs who are Black are more likely to report not making a profit last year.

Generally, access to finance has always been a major issue (see Bounds 2020). Black people know that when they approach banks for loans to set-up businesses, the bars are set very high and most of the time they are turned down. But where the same proposals are presented with a white person as the front-runner of the business, the banks set the bars low and provide extra support and assistance. The consequences are troubling, especially for entrepreneurs. As the British Bankers Association recently found, access to finance appears to be a major barrier for Black, Asian and Other Ethnic Minority entrepreneurs, and the reason why 39% and 49%, respectively, stop working on their business idea (British Bankers Association 2020).

Black businesses are treated differently. Some facilities enjoyed by other companies are withdrawn or not offered to Black businesses. Just as an example, a Kent-based Black business manufacturer explained that he recently discovered that his suppliers (of over 7 years) would take payment before supplying him, whereas they offer other companies 30 to 60 days payment facility and he has never had any problem with them which could have warranted such discrimination.

Black business owners are stigmatised. Financial institutions, corporate clients, local authorities, and others do not patronise Black businesses. This is institutionalised. Although this is improving amongst communities that are more diverse, especially in London. Due to demand requirements, some of these institutions have no choice but to accept any provider or supplier.

In effect, the Black communities suffer from lack of equal opportunities in competition for tenders much like how Black people are discriminated against when they apply for jobs based

In effect, the Black communities suffer from lack of equal opportunities in competition for tenders much like how Black people are discriminated against when they apply for jobs based on their skin colour, names or accent. We have heard of artificial intelligence (AI) software which discriminates against ethnic minority names and Muslim names.

on their skin colour, names or accent. We have heard of artificial intelligence (AI) software which discriminates against ethnic minority names and Muslim names. Black Muslims suffer from double-layered discrimination. This also applies to Black businesses.

AWAKENING

These issues combine to block the possibility of a powerful economic base developing. The Black Pound exists and has strong potential but is powerless, lacks synergy, lacks coordination and has no strategy. In reality it can neither develop a life on its own, nor can it sustain a welfare support system. Its control is in the hands of others – not the Black community.

Although the issues handicapping the Black community equally affect both Black Muslims and Black non-Muslims, the Black Muslim community has the solution to cure the malaise. What is required is a sense of unity, a willingness to collaborate, a dose of trust, with the magic of synergy, the Black Pound will acquire meaningful authority to transform and change the perception of the Black people in Britain.

Developing a progressive business aspiration can inspire macro-thinking that empowers communities and helps build other institutions like education, media, welfare and political power.

The reality is dawning and improvements are gradually being seen. London is blazing the trail and we are seeing galloping steps. I am aware of various efforts at developing organisations which key into developing individuals. Training groups into various professions and proving entry level support are stepping stones within the Black communities.

I am aware of credit unions which are being set-up to promote savings and provide banking services including loans. Halal credit unions are also in the works. There are many young people who are also thinking far ahead. Think tanks in the form of strategic groups are developing 20-50 years plans to transform the landscape in education, housing, banking, and media.
With the help of social media platforms, young Black activism is strong and is providing alternative and accessible narratives to promote Black consciousness.

> ***The Black Pound exists and has strong potential but is powerless, lacks synergy, lacks coordination and has no strategy.***

> ***What is required is a sense of unity, a willingness to collaborate, a dose of trust, with the magic of synergy, the Black Pound will acquire meaningful authority to transform and change the perception of the Black people in Britain.***

DEEN OF SOLUTION

In the pursuit of economic empowerment, community cohesion and mutual support must evolve organically. In the context of a divided and inegalitarian society, this is a call to strengthen greater cooperation and equality. Where a part of the community is subdued or where there is lack of trust, disrespect, stigmatisation and economic disadvantage, it's a call to right the wrong and mend the history of economic inequality in Britain. A verse from the Qur'an offers a vision of unity among a diverse society striving for equality.

> "...If God had willed, He would have made you one community, but His Will is to test you with what He has given each of you. So compete with one another in doing good. To God you will all return, then He will inform you of the truth regarding your differences" (Qur'an 5:48).

It is the duty of Muslims to lead the way towards economic progress, unity, and cooperation in Britain. As Black Muslims, the Black race is our community of influence and our primary responsibility. One vehicle to fulfill this responsibility is the Black Pound, a tool to generate Shams Ogunmuyiwa, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Iconic City Ltd with extensive experience in housing management and business development in UK and Africa.

MR SHAMSIDEEN OGUNMUYIWA

Chief Executive Officer
Iconic City Limited

Shams Ogunmuyiwa, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Iconic City Ltd with extensive experience in housing management and business development in UK and Africa. He is also a Customer Service Consultant and trainer in Capacity Building and Leadership Development. He has undertaken various multi-disciplinary roles including Teaching, Publishing, Marketing, Pharmaceutical and Housing. Shams has a penchant for long vision, clear mission, process development and people motivation.

As a Project Manager, Shams was headhunted for the multi-million-pound expansion of an independent pharmacy into a chain of pharmacies in Oxford. He further oversaw the pharmacies' operations, staff management, Customer Service Management and Pharmacy Contract Compliance Regulations, etc for four years. He still consults for independent pharmacies across Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

His business development expertise has benefitted several UK businesses. His previous experience in line with his passion, though diverse, centres around the application of Project Management, Marketing and Communications solutions within Housing and across both public and private sectors. Shams is a graduate of Linguistics, English Language & Literature. He also completed Cambridge University's CELTA Course. He is a Public Relations practitioner, Project Manager, Pharmacy Compliance Specialist, Customer Service Consultant and Housing Management Specialist.

In his leisure, Shams is a relationship management counsellor, public speaker and mentor, HIV/AIDS De-Stigmatisation activist and a social-entrepreneur.

PREJUDICE AND IDENTITY: EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MUSLIM TEACHERS

BY MUSLIMA ADELANI

In this essay, I consider race, class, and gender in the experiences of Black Muslim female teachers. Three teachers' experiences, including my own, reveal how Black Muslim teachers in Britain encounter prejudice and discrimination.

EXPERIENCES OF A FIRST-YEAR TEACHER

As a proactive, determined, newly qualified teacher in 2015 searching to secure a steady income, I opted to work as a supply teacher on a long term contract. This is different to being employed directly by the school authority. Supply teachers work through agencies which act as the employment intermediary between a school and a teacher who is deemed as a casual worker.

I went through a rigorous interview (I was the fourth teacher presented by my agency) for the position of a Year 1 teacher and passed their criteria. When I was hired, I agreed to work on the condition that I will be supported for my NQT year, which the school was pleased to accept.

However, trouble loomed from my first day of teaching at the school. While some parents were welcoming and were willing to work with me, I encountered many hostile and very abrupt parents. I later learnt that I had become the topic of vicious gossip on the parents WhatsApp chat - a platform through which some of the neutral parents' minds were changed by the nasty stories they spread about me. Some of the misconceptions were that I wasn't a good teacher, that I shout at children, and that the children are scared of me. Instantly, emails from parents flooded the school while some came in physically to lodge complaints about me. My classroom turned into a place of observation where parents were brought in to see my interaction with the children. Each visit, albeit without my knowledge and consent, yielded the same outcome as each time the parents came to my class, they met their children fully engaged in activities. The students only acknowledged their parents' presence by waving at them and carrying on with their activities. "He's having fun" and "she's immersed in her activity" were examples of parent's comments each time they visited as they witnessed the connection and relationship that I formed with their children.

To say there was excessive pressure on me would be an understatement. I was under constant pressure to prove my capability to the school management and to disappoint the hateful parents who constantly sought but didn't find flaws in what I did. I constantly demonstrated the required knowledge and professional skills in my duty, I taught as prescribed by the school's policy and was efficient and up-to-date in my NQT targets. In addition to the regular routine observations and learning walks, I had my first formal observation and passed. There was clear evidence that I knew what I was doing, the progress was obvious in books and children showed progress in their learning.

In my discussions with staff at the school, I realised that the two other NQTs (of Australian origin) were not subjected to the rigorous observations and visits like I was having because parents didn't object to their teaching. However, it was very difficult to accuse the school of any abnormalities as they could claim that all the observations were ways to support me. For the fact that I was doing very well in most strands of the Teaching Standards, I reassured myself that there was no basis of pinning an incapability label on me.

A two-day parents' evening was slated for December and the conversation with parents at the meeting was a perfect moment for my realisation and validation that my experience was just

the outcome of my racial profiling. A Black woman with a headscarf in a white middle class school. How daring! Four parents during the first evening apologised for displaying feelings of prejudice towards me. Two more opened up on the second evening. They all confessed that the WhatsApp information fuelled their bias, hence, their complaint letters to the school. However, having followed their children's learning, they realised how much their children achieved and were sorry for the way they'd treated me. I welcomed the sincere repentance and embraced their good, kind heartedness. It was awesome and I felt immensely relieved!

Those moments cleared whatever apprehensions I used to have. My goal was just to complete my induction and I sincerely put in my best, regardless of the hostility in the air. Although the challenges were so rife, I summoned the courage and determination to succeed and refused to validate the perception of the discriminatory actions meted out on me. So I just carried on as normal because I had won some parents to my side.

In January, the management team decided to change my mentor who, incidentally is a Black man who supported me when I was challenged. He was replaced by another Black lady for reasons that later emerged. In March, the second major NQT Induction observation was due. This time, the head teacher and my new mentor came to observe my lesson. During feedback, my mentor started to read the positive aspects of the lesson but the head teacher rudely interrupted thus: "What did she do right? That was not a good lesson." She then turned to me and declared, "You didn't teach properly hence, I cannot support your induction any longer, therefore, you have to leave!"

I was appalled to the point of laughing. I only laughed because I didn't want to cry from the effect of the rude shock. I entreated her to consider supporting me through an action plan since it was a first failure. Unfortunately, they had already made up their plans. Their immediate concern was to rid the school of the outsider who 'does not belong here' in their thoughts. The deputy head once jokingly remarked: "You belong to the inner Local Authorities like Tower Hamlets" in an instance when she commended my teaching. However, I didn't read any hidden meaning to that utterance until the head teacher's disclosure. She was insinuating that as a Black Muslim teacher, I didn't belong in Bexleyheath but rather at Tower Hamlets, which has a higher percentage of Muslims according to the 2011 census. This is an example of many microaggressions that I have faced at this school.

The next day, I had the strength and the voice to protest the outright dismissal and asked for an action plan in a meeting with the head and the deputy to correct whatever strands I failed. It must be noted that this should have been the standard practice. Instantly, I was reminded that I had very limited rights to protest as long as I wasn't a direct employee of the school. Having failed in appealing to them, I agreed to leave the school after work on that day (Wednesday). Realising that they had to provide proof for my purported inadequacy, I was told to teach a lesson for observation by the London Borough of Bexley's NQT coordinator. The local authority (LA) was the Appropriate Body (AB) responsible for quality assurance for NQT induction. They also were responsible for ensuring that schools fulfilled their duties in relation to induction. The lady from LA observed my lesson (Maths) on Friday and her first utterance during feedback was that "The good news is... you can teach. That lesson was good!" She then went on to elaborate on the positives of the lesson. In her report to the head and deputy, she wrote "I'm amazed that she is still smiling, she's very strong and passionate about her job and her lesson was great."

After the meeting with the LA co-ordinator, the head and her deputy booked me until the following Wednesday as they wanted me to hand over to another (Australian) teacher who would be teaching my class.

That was their unmaking. I went to work on Monday as my usual smiling, happy self (my husband advised me every morning and at lunch time to keep a positive demeanour). We had an impromptu meeting in the afternoon where we learned that OFSTED would visit the next day!

To cut it short, the OFSTED crew came in on Tuesday but had to extend the inspection until Wednesday because of some dissatisfaction. One of the inspectors observed my lesson on Wednesday (my last day in the school) and rated my lesson 'Outstanding.' It felt like a triumph! The school Senior Leadership Team tactfully discriminated against me by tagging my skills as being inadequate, although OFSTED rated my lesson as outstanding. I left the school for a better school while they were queried about the decision to sack me.

I later learnt from a parent at the school that the Deputy Head handed in her resignation a couple of days after I left while the Head Teacher was frustrated out of office as she was made subordinate to another Associate Head teacher of one of the partnership schools in the Borough.

The school Senior Leadership Team tactfully discriminated against me by tagging my skills as being inadequate, although OFSTED rated my lesson as outstanding.

THE INTERSECTION OF RACE AND FAITH

My experience reflects that of many other teachers who are tinged by prejudice and inconsistency. Experiences of other Black Muslim educators indicate how critical race as well as faith is to the experience of educators in Britain.

In a different part of London, the experience of a Black Muslim teacher who was cruelly frustrated out of training resonates with many Black Muslims in the university setting. As a student, the teacher had excelled in the rigorous selection process of the Institute of Education but was denied the chance of training as a teacher; something she had always wanted to be.

Having succeeded in all university modules and assignments, the Institute assigned her to a school in a borough in which the British National Party is well organised. As a Black Muslim with a head covering, she encountered hostile, overt racism from the moment she stepped into the school. The staff taunted her but she responded and corrected their assumptions. She challenged and corrected a Religious Education lesson that was wrongly taught (in relation to the concept on *shirk*[30]) and that was when the battle line was clearly drawn. She was ostracised in a school where she was supposed to undergo training.

Being a high achiever, she strived to prepare and deliver lessons which were enjoyed by the students. The more she tried to ignore their hostility, the harder the staff tormented her, to the extent of locking her up in the staff room to prevent her from teaching on a certain day.

In a bid to tackle the hostile treatment, she engaged her mentor who blatantly told her that they'd been instructed by her Institute to fail her.

The Institute could not fail her because her papers could be called in for an appeal. However, the assessment on placement could be altered, since it was a subjective assessment which trainers could defend by citing some inadequacies on her part. She could not take it any further and terminated the training – a decision which left her traumatised, although not before one kind-hearted staff in the school reassured her that "It's not you my dear... it's the system." An unfair system which is biased, and forms prejudiced assumptions on who succeeds in life and who doesn't.

RACE, FAITH, AND DISCRIMINATION IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Discrimination and prejudice against Black Muslims is not an injustice meted on us by racists or Islamophobes alone, but also within the Muslim community. The most disheartening incidences are rooted in discrimination perpetrated by non-Black Muslims against Black Muslims despite our religion's abhorrence of the act of discrimination.

A Black Muslim head teacher narrates her experience of racism, not from white people but from people who profess Islam. She narrated her racism experience as embedded in her being Black, amidst a gathering of Muslim educators. As a head teacher who has the opportunity to attend conferences or gatherings with other educators generally, she lamented that she receives hostile treatment from some Asian sisters the moment they realise she's a head teacher and not a teaching assistant. She confirmed that she gets better treatment from non-Muslims in such gatherings.

Another Black Muslim woman who now teaches in a secondary school had a bitter tale to tell. The experience played out when she accepted a job offer in a Muslim primary school. She recalled how the head teacher ridiculed and humiliated her in every lesson. He always had a negative comment to make about her sentence structure or accent despite the fact that she wrote better than most other teachers. Frustrated that she couldn't please him, she left the school for good.

[30] Islamic precept, to hold something or someone as equal to God

As Black Muslims, we sometimes experience a lose-lose situation whereby we are treated unfairly by racists and not embraced by our Muslim brethren who we think we share a strand of identity with. On the other hand, we enjoy very cordial relationships with some of our Muslim brethren in Muslim settings. This is not a generalisation.

CONCLUSION

The experiences of Black Muslim teachers, including mine, reflect what has been established in literature on race and education in Britain. A report by the Runnymede Trust (Haque and Elliot, 2016) indicates how BME teachers reported feeling isolated and lacking in management support in incidences of racism. Like what I and my respondents experienced, they found that Black teachers, in particular, spoke about being labelled 'troublemakers' or being viewed as 'aggressive' if they challenged any decisions. Similar to what I learned, their research shows that BME teachers have less confidence in being supported by the management in their schools and that they had been subject to discrimination or harassment at work because of their race or ethnicity.

But my experiences and interviews with other Black Muslim teachers suggest that there is a dimension of faith that may shape how Black British teachers are treated in the education sector. There's another aspect of faith that must be considered; that some of the experiences of racism, prejudice, and discrimination come from other BME communities, namely, within the Muslim communities.

As Josiah Isles, an Assistant Head teacher has recently written, a number of factors need to be addressed such as recognition of the experiences teachers face, support that is necessary for Black teachers to succeed, recruitment of Black teachers, for national BAME networks to be more effective, and for trainee teachers to be made aware of support networks.

> *Black teachers and students are being held back by a society that needs to fully recognise the depth of the endemic social problems if any meaningful plans are to be made to resolve them within the education system. We can and must do better so we can prove that Black lives matter in British society (Isles 2020).*

MUSLIMA ADELANI

Muslima Adelani is a Black British woman of African descent. She trained as a teacher in her middle age and teaches at a primary school in the East of London.

RACE, FAITH, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND THE FUTURE OF PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS IN BRITAIN IN 2021

BY MUNTASIR SATTAR

The odds are long for young British Black and Minority individuals to make it into elite occupations. Data suggest that BAME are under-represented in professions such as engineering, banking, and law. The experiences of three young professionals who are Black and Muslim offer insight into how entrenched barriers are; their journeys also illustrate how mentors, networks, and other forms of social and cultural capital were vital in their pathways. The professional pathways of three individuals in London in their mid-20s who all went to state schools offer clues about how barriers are circumvented and how successful transitions from education to careers are made.

According to the Sutton Trust (2020), people in Britain's top jobs are five times more likely to have attended a private school than the general population. Sam Friedman's work has shown how ossified the class structure is, pointing out that only 10% of working class children reach managerial positions and even when they do, they are paid less than those from middle class backgrounds. The picture of social mobility is bleak; exploring the data by ethnicity does not offer very much hope (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). A study by the Royal Academy of Engineering indicates, about 12% of the country's workforce identifies as Black or minority, and in engineering, less than 8% identify themselves as such (2020). Mass N'dow Njie, a barrister who is one of three professionals profiled in this essay, notes that of more than four hundred pupil barristers, only thirteen were Black and few were from state schools according to the latest report published by the Bar Standards Board (Tsang, 2020).

ASPIRATIONS

However, there is evidence of cases of individuals whose pathways from education to employment are illustrative of the success that can be achieved in modern Britain.

Sara, an engineer, decided on her career direction early, a field that would play to her strengths in maths, as early as in Year 9 when the subject came up at school. Mass, a barrister, chose law early as well when he was intrigued by his sister's university assignments. Mariyam, a banker, decided on her career pathway after attending events at a professional organisation. Becoming better acquainted with possibilities and analysing the job market (and pay packages) helped her make the decision.

Mass, the second in his family to go to university after his sister, draws attention to the lack of role models in his field. "There were several moments where I doubted whether I could become a barrister. I didn't see people like me represented at the bar and I thought that I would need to change myself in order to "fit in" so that I would stand a chance of making it." Mass elaborates, explaining that it would have been advantageous had he seen someone take that pathway and learn how to navigate pitfalls. As Hashi Mohammad writes, "never underestimate the power of seeing someone who looks like you – someone whose struggles you may relate to – occupying a place where you hope to be one day" (Mohamed 2020).

Mariyam recalls how her aspirations and interests in finance were formed though her parents had little understanding of the industry. The summer before she started university she went

to a networking event where she met people who worked in the industry. After understanding financial markets, she became curious and pursued a degree in accounting and finance accordingly.

MENTORS AND SUPPORTIVE FACTORS

Mass remembers how disappointed he felt when he was not admitted to Oxford University and felt his pathway to law would be impossible. After working in different industries from sports to finance and setting up his own business, his sixth form law teacher and mentor encouraged him to apply for pupillage – a period of practical training required to become a barrister.

Meanwhile Mariyam credits organisations like SEO for informing and supporting her aspirations. There are "a lot of fantastic schemes out there for ethnic or disadvantaged students, organisations like SEO London, that introduce students who would not know otherwise about skills that they need, how to turn up for interviews, how to apply to not just banking but law, consultancy, professional roles." Such organisations help young people learn about, and break soft barriers, and therefore "level the playing field" as they partner with banks and other institutions.

Her first job was the result of networking. Though Sara points out that students of colour tend to "struggle to utilise their networks," Mariyam refers to networking as a vital tool to securing her first role. Someone "putting in a word for her" made the difference.

JOINING THE WORKFORCE

Sara's first job after university was in the construction industry and was one of very few women and people of colour. The industry is "male dominated, not all women get the same opportunities" and points out that women's experiences vary widely in engineering. She notes that she was treated in a collegial manner, always placed with a female engineer, which she appreciated, and worked with a Black colleague in her first role. Though conscious of being viewed differently because of her hijab, she expresses her satisfaction; rather than encountering prejudice she has been recognised for an award in her industry.

Mariyam's experience similarly was positive and also notes her appreciation for mentors and colleagues. Like Sara, her industry is not very diverse, but credits her professional development to mentors who warned her that her industry is very white and privileged, "things can be disadvantageous in a cut-throat environment. It is very competitive, it requires you to be assertive and forthcoming. One mentor was also from a minority background and told her while on a graduate scheme, "don't advertise you're Muslim."

Mass has also been recognised during his pupillage as barrister of the month while working at Blackstone Chambers. He set up a charity in April 2020 to correct for the lack of Black and Minority representation in law, attempting at once to create opportunities while fueling the ambitions of young people. Bridging the Bar launched its mini-pupillage pilot scheme in December of 2020. Already 1600 candidates have expressed interest and over 60 sets of chambers have committed to supporting the scheme.

IS THE FUTURE OF WORK MULTICULTURAL?

Sara, Mariyam, and Mass all articulate positive experiences in the workplace, noting how their identities are accommodated in different ways. "Colleagues are conscious of Ramadan, and sensitive to *sunnah fasting*[31] too," said Sara, for whom being visibly Muslim was a positive, takes positivity with a pinch of salt, as the "industry is not moving or changing." Mariyam notes:

> *Social mobility is difficult, a vast majority of shareholders come from one ethnic background and that may not change overnight. It's rare to see those in senior positions from diverse backgrounds, to a certain degree, people of colour still need to conform to the social norms.*

They point out that workers of colour have more to prove, and feel that they have less margin for error. Mariyam also notes an incident when a colleague made a deragatory comment about her faith in an Islamophobic micro-aggression in front of her.

Sara notes the difficulty in the workplace for people of colour regardless of faith:

> *If you make a mistake, as someone of colour, it's turned into competence. If you're anything 'other' to white upper class male, it's about your track record, but if it's a white male, it's his potential. It's like starting on the backfoot.*

Mariyam, Sara, and Mass each are in the minority in their workplaces and in this way share a similar experience as Black British Muslims in a diversifying workforce. Each describes adapting to their work environments, but Sara and Mass both address the ways the workplace is adapting to them.

Social mobility is difficult, a vast majority of shareholders come from one ethnic background and that may not change overnight. It's rare to see those in senior positions from diverse backgrounds, to a certain degree, people of colour still need to conform to the social norms.

Mass's experience has helped him recognise that workplaces have to accommodate the increasingly diverse workforce. In a Tweet[32] that went viral, he wrote and posted a photo of himself in a barrister's wig:

Making the argument that applies to the rest of the workforce, in an article he recently published, made the case for embracing and accommodating diversity. He shifts the onus

[31] Days of the year in which fasting (abstaining from food, drink and sexual activity between sunrise and sunset) are recommended following in the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as opposed to the Month of Ramadan fasts which are obligatory for those who are able to.

[32] Ndow-Njie, M [@massndownjie]. (2019, 26 July).You don't have to have gone to Oxbridge [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/MassNdowNjie/status/1154761680242581505?s=20

from individuals who work to acquire social and cultural capital.

If all barristers try to 'fit in,' then we will alienate aspiring barristers from underrepresented groups at the Bar. If we all adopt the same accent and claim to have the same interests, it will seem as if these things are hidden qualifications for the job. If we embrace ourselves, our unique stories and our varied cultures, we can create a 'new normal' in the profession. In this new normal, there will be no such thing as the 'conventional' image of a barrister. Instead, barristers will be as diverse as the society that we live in and as diverse as the clients that we represent.[33]

Mass' argument and Sara's reflection show that employers and workplaces stand to gain from understanding the change that is beckoning. Rather than being anxious about their performance and how they are seen, Sara sets the challenge for them to accommodate minorities like herself. Being a minority, she explains, "forces you to work and work with your back against the wall, we worry and not think about their potential. We don't have a level playing field."

Leveling the playing field and accommodating diversity, as business is finding out, is key to productivity and profitability. Three young Black British Muslims' experiences illustrate the ways in which the future of work is shaping up.

DR MUNTASIR SATTAR
Researcher

[33] Ndow-Njie, Mass. (2021) The only story that I have: Mass Ndow-Njie. Counsel Magazine. https://www.counselmagazine.co.uk/articles/the-only-story-that-i-have-

SECTION 3.6

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as ‘a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’ (WHO, 2020).

The WHO definition links health explicitly with wellbeing, and conceptualises health as a human right requiring physical and social resources to achieve and maintain.

‘Wellbeing’ refers to a positive rather than neutral state, framing health as a positive aspiration. This definition was adapted by the 1986 Ottawa charter, which describes health as ‘a resource for everyday life, not the object of living.’ From this perspective health is a means to living well, which highlights the link between health, wellbeing and participation in society.

Globalisation and other forces worldwide have been responsible for mass population movement resulting in diversity in various societies (Benza and Liamputtong, 2014). Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities now make up 14% of the UK population (Office of National Statistics 2020b).

Net migration for the United Kingdom has risen in the past 3 years (Office for National Statistics 2019), and in the year ending September 2018, 627,000 more individuals entered the UK than left (Office for National Statistics 2018). As a result, non-UK-born communities continue to grow within the United Kingdom, increasing the ethnic diversity of the general population.

Statistics also indicate that there are pervasive inequalities in health outcomes that are shaped by socioeconomic status, deprivation, as well as ethnicity. Research has shown that people from minority ethnic groups are more likely to suffer from chronic health conditions – such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure or obesity – compared with white British people (Watkinson et al, 2021). Research also suggests health inequalities along with economic inequality have an impact on the disproportionate impact of Covid 19 patients who are Black or ethnic minorities (PHE 2020).

It is with these data and analysis in mind that part of the contributions in this report is entitled Health and Wellbeing. This is so that due diligence is established and acknowledged within the framework of unveiling areas that need monitoring as well as remedies provided.

Evidence suggests that women from ethnic minority groups in the UK have poorer pregnancy outcomes, experience poorer maternity care, are at higher risk of adverse perinatal outcomes and have significantly higher severe maternal morbidity than the white British women (Puthussery, 2016; Henderson et al., 2013).

Although UK policies explicitly urge a woman-centred approach that is accessible, efficient and responsive to changing needs, ensuring choice, access and continuity of care, evidence of the impact of such policies in addressing inequalities in maternal health outcomes is relatively thin.

This has led one of our contributors to report on various experiences of BAME women who have received poor services from the NHS during antenatal and postnatal care across the UK.

Another contribution is from another healthcare professional who shines a light on the impact of Covid on Black Muslims in the UK.

Two essays on wider social context of health explore the careers of two Black Muslim women’s forays into health and wellbeing.

This is an area which is not common amongst the BAME, hence the authors contribution to encourage, motivate and inspire us as a step forward in accessing nature and attaining holistic health.

Finally, I discuss how a women-led organisation (FOMWA UK) have been running different events within the BAME communities to educate, encourage, sensitise women and their families to contextual issues within the society.

It is worthy of note that COVID-19 has opened new doors of health, wellbeing and welfare issues amongst families, especially women. Some of them stemmed from deaths in the family units related to Covid and other underlying health conditions. Hence a lot of families, especially women, require welfare and moral support. There are also recurring mental health issues around depression and loneliness, isolation as well as social issues notably around unemployment and homelessness which it is hoped would be looked into as part of the recommendations for this report.

MUJIDAH MEBUDE
Working Group Lead (Health & Wellbeing)

“THEY DON’T LOOK AT US”: AN EXPLORATION OF BLACK MUSLIM WOMEN’S ANTENATAL EXPERIENCES IN THE UK

BY AMANI MUGASA

INTRODUCTION

Mortality rates related to pregnancy are five times higher in Black women compared to white women in the UK (MBRRACE, 2019). Limited research exploring this disparity exists, though studies of Black and ethnic minority (BAME) women and their interaction with antenatal services demonstrate consistently negative experiences. This report reveals antenatal experiences of Black Muslim women to emphasise the need for further research and new policies that will allow women to feel safe in the most vulnerable period of their lives.

THE STORIES

These are the stories of six women who identify as Black Muslims. They were either born in the UK or have been long term residents. These women responded voluntarily to an invitation on social media. Pseudonymes have been used to protect their identity.

FATIMA

Fatima is of Nigerian heritage, living in London. Fatima said,

> I’m scared to say this out loud as I don’t want to offend. I felt like they had this stigma around immigrants. As I walked in the door with my hijab it was almost like ‘oh it is one of those.’ It was almost as if they were annoyed that I was asking questions. It was like: `I’m not going to acknowledge you are in the room, tick, tick, tick, get out!’

Fatima had a strong family history of diabetes and was developing diabetic symptoms. “When I needed a GGT[34] they were saying ‘you don’t need to do that,’ but I knew something wasn’t right.” After repeated requests she was tested and the result confirmed gestational diabetes, “I felt like it could have been prevented.” Fatima was also dismissed in her second pregnancy, “I said ‘you are in charge of two people’s lives and if anything is wrong with my baby, I will hold you responsible as you are not taking me seriously!’ I was shaking when I said that.” The midwife reluctantly agreed and the test was positive again.

Fatima explained: “If I didn’t wear the Islamic ‘uniform,’ a part of me feels I would have been treated more as human, and if I was white, I would have been heard.”

This report reveals antenatal experiences of Black Muslim women to emphasise the need for furtherresearch and new policies that will allow women to feel safe in the most vulnerable period of their lives.

[34] Glucose Tolerance Test

KHADIJA
Khadija is of Somali heritage, living in London.

When Khadija felt contractions, she attended the hospital and was reviewed by a midwife. "She said, 'I don't think you are having contractions; you don't look in pain!'" Khadija was also struggling to urinate and the midwife told her, "you must have a urine infection, drink lots of water you will be fine." With no improvement she returned the next day, "I was seen by a doctor who patted me on the back and said, 'Oh look at you, you are going to give birth right away there is no need for you to have medication.'" Khadija responded, "'but I can't urinate,' but he brushed it off."

The following day Khadija had an antenatal appointment and informed a Black midwife about her difficulty urinating. The midwife told her, "this is not good, go to the hospital and ask for a catheter." They put the catheter inside of me, *SubhanAllah*[35] they took 750ml of urine out!" Khadija said, "I think things could have definitely gone a different route if I had voiced my opinion. When I do, I feel like I come across as a 'typical Black aggressive lady!'"

Khadija went on to have an emergency c-section.

When they took me to the theatre, I genuinely thought I could die. I don't know if everyone would think that, even a white person, but I thought of the statistics. I thought the statistics were true, because they don't look at us. The multiple times I have cried out for help, they didn't really listen.

AMINA
Amina is of Jamaican heritage, and lives in Sheffield. She has experienced antenatal care before and after she became Muslim.

> I had my first when I was non-Muslim, the health service was fine, they would see me, speak normally and wouldn't overly ask me about abuse at home like they do now. I understand once or twice but not every single time!

Amina wears a niqab and said, "they would be surprised when I would have a typically British accent."

Amina discussed how she was treated in the maternity hospital.

> You will find they are not really as attentive to you. They will not really take you seriously – it is like you 'really' have to tell someone you are in a lot of pain before they attend to you. Before I didn't have anything to compare it to, so if people were treating me differently for just being Black, I wouldn't have known any different.

Amina highlighted religious insensitivities.

[35] Exclamation in Arabic, used to express praise, gratitude, or relief

> They don't really care about your privacy on the wards, you don't want a random man being there whilst you are trying to latch on. When I was in labour the midwife left my door wide open and I'm literally crowning and I can see people there! If you ask them for a minute so you can put your hijab on so you can be transferred – they don't want to wait. They don't care about the medication, as certain tablets contain gelatine and if you ask 'can I have something else', they just say 'no.' It is just the little things like that, that we are thinking of constantly.

MARYAM
Maryam is of mixed heritage, living in Southport. She was supported through her delivery by her mother and husband, who are both white.

Maryam needed an urgent induction.

> *Within ten minutes of starting the drip my heart rate was at two-hundred. I said, 'I'm not getting a break in-between my contractions.' They said, 'you aren't having a contraction' and kept increasing the dose.*

When Maryam felt the urge to use the bathroom her mother said, "does that mean she can feel the baby coming? I laboured fast; do you want to check?" But the midwives dismissed her.

> *Both the midwives left to get the pethidine and whilst they were gone, I delivered my son, by myself, in one push. My mum caught the baby. When they came back, my mum said 'if her mum has had a fast labour then chances are, she will too,' They said 'oh we just didn't realise you were her Mum.' "On the postnatal ward I kept saying, can I have some paracetamol? They said, 'Yeah we will get it in a minute,' but it just never came. When my mum came, I said 'can you ask' straight away they gave her a pot of paracetamol! I'm thinking why is it when a white woman asks, you give her pain relief, but when I've asked you five times you are not bringing it to me. Is it that you trust her to recognise pain more than you trust me? My mum was so angry she said we need to complain, but I was like actually it is a really common thing. Any woman of colour I have spoken to has had a really similar experience. She was horrified.*

ASIYA'S ANTENATAL JOURNEY: "I WEPT MYSELF SILENTLY TO SLEEP"
Asiya is of Nigerian heritage, living in Glasgow.

Asiya described a scan appointment where she was told they didn't have an interpreter. My husband was horrified; I pinched him to keep quiet. I told her that I will "try to speak English." Later when Asiya was admitted due to pregnancy complications, her pain medication was delayed.

"I asked for them but to no avail. I laid back in pain, not wanting to appear aggressive. I clutched my pillow and I wept silently to sleep." Later, on asking again, Asiya was told she "should be happy to have free medication in the UK."

On the postnatal ward, Asiya said "I called the nurse and said 'I can't latch'. They just said 'well you will learn'. That is the kind of attitude I got." Asiya's numerous requests for halal food were dismissed and so a friend brought her meals, "I ate like someone who had been in prison!" On the third evening Asiya had already eaten, when the midwife approached her, "you did not come for your halal food! It is expensive!"

> *I felt people could have been a bit more empathic and caring. I suspect they had a problem with my whole presentation. How dare you think you should even have a choice of food, and the choice of food was based on my religion – so you do not respect my religion. Perhaps being Black worsens it. The NHS policies are there but is it enforcing it?*

A MIDWIFE'S OBSERVATIONS

Nafisa is a Black Muslim woman and a midwife in London. She discussed how her university curriculum undervalued the topic of race.

> *We are not taught or expected to think about racial or cultural sensitivities. I brought it up every time - then you are deemed as the angry Black student!" We see a lot of Black Muslim women. There is a lot of stereotypes that you will hear in the delivery suite amongst staff; we might expect a language barrier, we might expect FGM, they might be refugees, they might have a number of children. With FGM, a lot of white midwives think it is to do with faith, but it is a cultural practice. Islam has been vilified and people don't want to try and understand."*
>
> *Black Muslim women are less assertive than other women. How Black midwives treat Black women is the part that I find truly heart-breaking. Some have this expectation that they can just get on with it, 'don't complain.' The White woman might be called a 'princess' and they'll say 'give her the epidural straight away, she can't cope.' That behaviour is either emulated by the white midwives or they also have that bias towards us. They might wait a bit longer to call the anaesthetist to get the epidural. Or not act as quickly for a woman that is symptomatic of an infection.*

Contemplating the statistics about Black women's antenatal mortality, Nafisa said,

> *We are already going in with the assumption that something is going to go wrong, so we can end up denying women a low risk pregnancy and lead a woman down a more medicalised pathway.*

DISCUSSION

The themes throughout these stories include: discrimination and stereotyping, dismissal of symptoms, cultural and religious insensitivities, with-holding or delaying treatment, lack of support and empathy, lack of autonomy and over-medicalisation of care. A UK wide survey of BAME women revealed almost identical themes, in particular: failures of care provision in postnatal care, staff attitudes, being denied choices and lack of sensitivity (Jomeen and Redshaw, 2013).2 Recently interviewed African women also described stigmatisation from the antenatal care staff, predominantly due to the number of children they had (Chinouya and Madziva, 2017).

The midwife's perspective highlighted the difficulties her colleagues had in caring for Black Muslim women. A study investigating how midwives experience caring for BAME women detailed the barriers they faced in providing equitable care, specifically due to language barriers and women's expectations of maternity care. A further study revealed that Somali women felt stigmatised and traumatised through invasive and insensitive questioning related to FGM (Karlsen, 2020).

A large study stated BAME women were twice as likely to worry about pain and discomfort when compared to White women (Redsaw and Heikkila, 2011), possibly due to anticipation of pain being disregarded by staff, as described in these experiences. Despite the women in this report having professional jobs and being fluent in English, it was difficult for them to advocate for themselves successfully under these circumstances. This is even more exaggerated in asylum seekers and refugee women, and there are various volunteer-led charities trying to support such women.[36] The volunteer doulas or birthing partners, recognise the extreme suffering in these women and are acutely aware of the gaps in provision for them (Balaam et al, 2016).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The narratives detailed in this report demonstrate how race can directly and indirectly contribute to the shocking statistics in maternal health and there are projects underway investigating the Black antenatal experience.[37] However, these Black Muslim women are are the perfect example of intersectionality in which their faith and race create a unique experience of discrimination that acts as a barrier to accessing good quality maternity care. The discrepancies in care may appear insignificant as single incidences, but when added up, result in a complete breakdown in the patient and health care professional relationship. This is, at best, traumatising for the mother and at worst can have life-threatening consequences.

There is a gap in research focused on the Black Muslim antenatal experience in the UK and how they compare to other groups. Specific recommendations can be made regarding this group, as often any guidelines relating to Muslims are Asian-centric and unrelatable to the Black experience.

The Antenatal Care NICE Guidelines stipulate:

> *All healthcare professionals should treat you, your partner and your family with respect, sensitivity and understanding. You can ask any questions you want to and can always change your mind. Your own preference is important and your healthcare team should*

[36] See Amma Birth companions. (Nd). What we do. https://www.ammabirthcompanions.com/what-we-do

[37] See Improving me: Improving Women's and Children's Experiences. (Nd) Black Mum Magic Project. https://www.improvingme.org.uk/community/Black-mum-magic-project

support your choice of care wherever possible. Your care, and the information you are given about it, should take account of any religious, ethnic or cultural needs you may have (National Institute for Clinical Excellence (2008).

The NHS needs to ensure these guidelines are enforced, so that health care professionals are unable to divert from providing high quality maternity care for all. If these guidelines were followed on the ground, it would completely transform these women's antenatal experience.

AMANI MUGASA

Amani Mugasa is a junior doctor based in Scotland, of mixed Ugandan and English heritage. Dr Mugasa is very passionate about tackling health inequalities after her experiences in the UK and Uganda, and intends to pursue a career in public health Insha'Allah. As well as caring for her young family, Dr Mugasa is involved in activism and charity work in her spare time, and has just agreed to have her first children's book published.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN BLACK MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

BY AMINA HERSI, ZAINAB GARBA SANNI & RANYA ALAKRAA

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on communities across Britain has exposed the enduring inequalities entrenched in the country. Altogether, Britain's COVID-19 death toll passed 100,000 in January 2021, among the highest per capita in the world. However this has been felt disproportionately by certain groups, in particular Black and Muslim communities, that have come out as the most impacted ethnic and religious communities respectively. This suggests the existence of compounded impact amongst Black Muslims and emphasises the importance of intersectionality and the need for further research in this space. At present, data around the impact of COVID-19 on Black Muslim communities is lacking. We review recent research and provide insight into the perspectives of a Black Muslim doctor at a GP surgery.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

A recent report from Public Health England (2020), into the disparities in risk and outcomes of COVID-19 has confirmed that the impact of COVID-19 has not only replicated pre-existing health inequalities but, in some cases, has increased them. The report finds that the risk of dying, among those diagnosed with COVID-19, is higher in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups than in White ethnic groups. Furthermore, this disparity is particularly pronounced among individuals from Black ethnic groups. The Runnymede Trust finds a similar outcome in their recent report into the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups, stating that Black and minority ethnic people are overrepresented in COVID-19 severe illness and deaths. Nonetheless, there still remains a gap in research and data on the particular impact of the disease on Black Muslim populations. The existing research may provide insights into the exposure of Black African and Black Caribbean Muslim Briton's to COVID-19.

A number of key themes have emerged in recent research exploring some of the main factors why minorities are more likely to be diagnosed and die from COVID-19, and the specific inequalities experienced in British Black Muslim communities.

OVERREPRESENTATION IN FRONTLINE ROLES

BAME community members make up a large proportion of frontline and key worker roles. These roles are both in the NHS and beyond the healthcare sector too. In their stakeholder engagement, Public Health England (2020) found evidence to suggest increased risk of exposure among BAME staff in the NHS and social care settings due to their overrepresentation in these roles. Public Health England (PHE) reports numerous examples of staff not being able to access personal protective equipment (PPE) or appropriate protective measures, as well as feeling reluctant to speak up about these issues due to concerns around bullying and harassment. Beyond the NHS, essential staff in public transport, retail, and education also feature a higher proportion of BAME individuals. These staff also face additional exposure and risk and are often not provided appropriate protection or effective workplace risk assessments. In particular, Black Britons are more likely to be classed as key workers than their other BAME counterparts, with nearly 40% (Runnymede Trust, 2020) of Black African individuals being key workers.

The impact of the pandemic on frontline workers is made apparent by the extent of deaths experienced among NHS Black, Muslim healthcare staff. To name but a few, Raahima Bibi Sidhanee, Gelaluddin Ibrahim, and Dr. Alfa Saadu, of Trinidadian, Sudanese, and Nigerian heritage, respectively.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND CORRELATION WITH POOR HEALTH

Health inequalities in Britain are stark but not new; they are enduring characteristics of British communities that have been amplified by COVID-19. Evidence clearly illustrates that BAME groups tend to have poorer socioeconomic circumstances, which can subsequently lead to poorer health outcomes. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) (Office for National Statistics, 2020) confirmed a strong association between socioeconomic disadvantage and the incidence and severity of a COVID-19 diagnosis. In addition to this increased socioeconomic disadvantage, those from BAME backgrounds also experience higher incidence of long-term and chronic conditions, which are also impacted by socioeconomic status. Ultimately, the ability to protect one's health and wellbeing from coronavirus is affected by one's ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

POOR ACCESS TO HEALTH

Both economically disadvantaged communities and BAME communities experience poorer access to health services. Research has shown that those from BAME backgrounds also have poorer past experiences of health care (Public Health England, 2020). This may act as a discouraging factor when these individuals need to seek care. Furthermore, BAME individuals experience less access to timely preventative care/services. Mental health services are one example. The reduced access and scarcity of culturally appropriate services has increased the impact of the pandemic on BAME communities (including restrictions such as lockdown and social distancing) and puts those with pre-existing mental health conditions at an even higher risk. Additionally, access to healthcare is also deeply affected by communication barriers experienced by BAME communities. These include language barriers but also barriers in understanding the complexity of the NHS and how to apply messaging from the NHS to their own health.

HOUSING AND SPACE

BAME communities may face specific challenges due to the nature of their housing situations and overcrowding. In comparison to white British households, BAME households tend to be larger (in terms of the number of people living under one roof) but not necessarily larger in terms of physical space. This leads to an increased likelihood of overcrowding and thus may impact a household's member ability to self-isolate. Larger household sizes are most common among those of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and Black African backgrounds (Runnymede 2020). Additionally, BAME households are often intergenerational, more so than white British households, thus increasing the likelihood of spread of COVID-19 between young, healthy household members to older, more at risk individuals, in particular if households are overcrowded. Given that a large proportion of these communities are also key workers, they are likely to be leaving their homes, potentially using public transport, and so are more exposed. This puts those in their homes at higher risk.

CASE STUDY

My name is Amina Hersi and I am a newly qualified GP. I currently work 6 sessions a week in a busy Reading surgery. I am Muslim, Black and female and getting to where I am today has not been easy. I was actively discouraged from becoming a doctor, by career counsellors, family friends and even members of my own family. There was very little representation in the NHS of people from my background when I was growing up. I don't think this is because they weren't there, more because they weren't being shown. I really relate with the line "You cannot be what you cannot see."

I love the NHS, I love what it stands for because it is about healthcare, free at the point of access to anyone who needs it, regardless of gender, race, religion. This is the epitome of inclusion, diversity and equality. Unfortunately, there is a dark underbelly. 2020, a year for the history books, placed society under a magnifying glass and all its flaws were made apparent. Pandemics have a way of highlighting the true nature of things. Furthermore, this year has been the year the Black Lives Matter movement went mainstream. I want to highlight that it has been around for years. What is interesting is people who only a few years ago used to reply with "all lives matter" are now Blacking out their social media pages in support of this movement. But we need more than blank posts on social media. We need to sustain the momentum of getting people to accept that racism is real.

Coronavirus has devastated the world. As cases went up, deaths did too. Then the studies highlighted something; COVID IS RACIST. This virus was twice as likely to infect Black people, we were more likely to be hospitalised and more likely to die. Two of my siblings have had COVID 19 and it has been frightening because as a medic I know just how high risk they are. I had a risk assessment at work, to find that I was just 1 point away from being asked to work from home.

Some argue that GPs are not frontline but I have seen Covid positive patients with nothing but a surgical mask and a plastic apron (in a time where we were not even sure this was enough). I very much felt frontline when on March 12th I ran a busy clinic with patients in my office, coughing near my face and not a single mask to be seen: only for lockdown to be announced the next day.

So Covid was definitely something I became fearful of, it was a massive source of anxiety and sleepless nights for me. I worried because I was convinced that I was going to infect and kill my family. Especially as it was affecting ethnic minority groups more severely. Eventually, I realised that I could encounter this virus from anywhere be it public transport, the supermarket, the post office or from my own family.

Because of how prevalent cases were, telephone triage became the new normal and I often speak to patients before inviting them for an examination. It has been an interesting experience because where I work is quite affluent and not very diverse. I have been told, "you sound white on the phone." I'm not sure how you can sound like a race. But I found that some of my patients were shocked to learn that I, the Black hijab wearing lady was indeed who they spoke to on the phone. I've had people walk past my room because they thought I was the nurse (this isn't a slight about nurses) but why is it so shocking that I went to medical school looking the way I do? I like to think I'm doing my part by exposing this part of suburbia to Islam and being an ambassador for Black, female, Muslim medics.

I absolutely love where I work. My manager is just so aware of my religious needs, she has even got me a special sign to put on my door when I'm praying in my office. They have even offered me adjustments for my working pattern during Ramadan. This is the kind of awareness the NHS needs. I am lucky because I get to choose where I work. My comrades in hospitals may not get the same treatment. I remember from my times in hospital medicine, that it was more acceptable to go on a smoking break than it was to say you're going to pray! Both of these activities take 5 minutes and it should not be taboo.

I think diversity is a beautiful thing and it should be celebrated. I also think we should on a one to one basis try to broaden people's horizons and just by doing what we're doing on the frontlines we can change the way people interact with others. My manager is so clued up because the doctor before me made the time to speak to her about Islam and his needs.

Inequality needs to be addressed wherever it rears its ugly head. This pandemic has highlighted a serious issue of health inequality. It's easy to say things like "Black people have more underlying conditions." That is not enough; we need to ask why are Black people more likely to have underlying conditions. This is where we will find that Black and other minority people are more likely to work frontline, more likely to take public transport , more likely to live in crowded homes and more likely to be from disadvantaged backgrounds.

I hope we learn from this pandemic. Someone mentioned a figure to me that there were an extra 70,000 deaths this year than last year. I thought "that's a lot of grief" each of those 70,000 had friends and family: siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, partners, children or parents who would grieve for them. The stories of people dying alone in hospital and being buried alone were harrowing. This robbed their loved ones of closure and without closure how can we heal? I worry that Covid 19 will mentally scar this generation and the number of mental health cases I'm seeing are through the roof. Staff morale is lower than ever, we are running on empty, overwhelmed, overworked and underappreciated.

I really want us to pull together to appreciate one another and show gratitude to all the frontline staff who have kept things going for months on end now: to the social workers, teachers, carers, supermarket staff, police, fire brigade and the NHS workers in all roles be that admin, reception, nursing or medicine.

I hope this pandemic can leave a legacy of change in us, to want to treat others better and to stamp out inequality. Race does affect us, it does affect behaviour and you cannot change what you don't acknowledge. We need to address the elephant in the room that has for so long tried to be swept under a rug. Let's be better and do better.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Black communities and other minority ethnic communities disproportionately. This is not because the disease targets certain communities or people, this is because of the enduring health inequalities that exist in Britain. In addition to this, Black individuals have experienced overexposure to the disease due to being largely concentrated in frontline roles, a lack of PPE particularly at the start of the pandemic, higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage and other household factors.

There is a clear need for further evidence around the experiences of Black Muslims in particular, and a need to engage with this community to ensure they are voicing their concerns, and sharing their stories. Greater evidence and engagement will help to lead to robust policy recommendations that are tailored to this community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Black communities and other minority ethnic communities disproportionately. This is not because the disease targets certain communities or people, this is because of the enduring health inequalities that exist in Britain.

AMINA HERSI

GP based in Berkshire.

ZAINAB GARBA SANNI

Zainab is one of the co-chairs for the NHS Muslim Network: a staff network hosted by NHS England and NHS Improvement which has the following aims: (1) to provide representation for Muslim staff, (2) to provide networking and progression for Muslim staff and (3) to help reduce health inequalities experienced by Muslim communities. Additionally, day-to-day Zainab works in the Innovation, Research and Life Sciences Group leading on an equality, diversity and inclusion programme of work and looking after the NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme and the Small Business Research Initiative for Healthcare. Zainab is also Partnerships Lead for TEDxNHS and does patient advocacy and advisory work in her free time.

RANYA ALAKRAA

Ranya is an Economic Analyst at NHS England and Improvement, working on various projects focusing on evidence-based policymaking in the NHS. She is the Head of Member Development at the NHS Muslim Network aiming to support Muslim staff in the NHS in their career development. Ranya is also the equality, diversity and inclusion champion for her team and is the chair of her directorate's wellbeing group.

HEALTH, COMMUNITY, AND BELONGING

BY ANISA KISSOON

My career has been shaped by my faith and a sense of responsibility to my community. I played different roles working with women, students, and in different sectors from health to the performing arts. But as a Muslim woman of Black Caribbean heritage, I was often seen as an outsider in the Muslim community. Much of this had to do with race, reflecting both the larger disjunctures in the British Muslim community and inequalities in society. I have found ways to challenge these inequalities and to advocate for inclusion. In particular, the tools of the performing arts have been useful to deliver simple messages through powerful ways to strive for unity and equality in our communities and in society.

My career began as a fitness instructor, working with Muslim women who I found were suffering from various ailments. Recognising the lack facilities in the 1990s for British Muslim women in London, I wrote a hundred letters to *masajid* that had already offered men classes such as boxing, wrestling, or football. I thought 'You've got spaces and you're doing stuff for the men, why don't you do something for the women?' Only one mosque got back to me and said, 'thank you very much for your nice letter' and that's it. So I begun to hire out churches and Blackout windows to make it safe for Muslim women who also would ask for nutritional advice. Not only did we manage without any support, but I was also confronted by an imam at a mosque: "Why are you trying to lure our women?"

Despite encountering hostility, new opportunities arose. My career took another turn as I was offered teaching roles. As a PE teacher at several Muslim schools in London, sometimes I would just be given a classroom. I had to use this little space to teach sports and fitness.

Meanwhile, I began to travel extensively; charity had always been one of my biggest passions. I felt it important to take my children with me and we would fundraise for projects and travel to deliver the funds to countries such as Kenya. At the same time, my interest in Prophetic medicine and healing grew and when I travelled to Egypt I was taught how to teach hijama[38] therapy and bring awareness to this forgotten therapy to the UK. By 2006, I was certified and set up my own company in London and finally was ready to write my first book on holistic health.

My second foray in health did not go without significant obstacles, being a Black female revert to Islam. Again I was treated differently. I spearheaded the campaign for hijama to be accredited in the UK, and though I worked with the British Acupuncture Council to ensure hijama was recognised on its own rather than being regarded as a form of traditional Chinese medicine, it was with great reluctance I was recognised by a group of doctors at a conference about hijama. This blow and many others was almost enough to make me want to give up.

Fast forward to the 2010s and my career took another turn - this time, towards the performing arts when I used drama as a pedagogical tool with my children and started a theatre group, U Can B The 1. I was inspired by a drama group in the Congo who used drama workshops to raise awareness of women's safety and we did small charity gigs. For me, it was important to recreate stories, as we were storytellers and poets. Our drama group used performances to teach audiences of women and youth about social issues like cyberbullying or gaming addiction. The group would perform at schools and other community settings; drama is an

[38] Cupping

educational tool that could be used to address a number of issues such as body image, self esteem, and identity. Before this, I was offered a role as a presenter on Islam Channel for 'City Sisters.' I used the platform of television as well as other media platforms to raise important issues in our community, such as domestic violence and racism.

The drama group began to evolve from workshops and smaller performances to much larger shows. A turning point came when my work in both theatre and charity came together. My family and I did a performance for an international charity. Afterwards, we were asked to write and perform in a series of performances, taking our show across the country. These performances would serve as an instrument for fundraising, but we would take real stories and recreate them. We were asked to produce the first Muslim Pantomime, called If the Shoe Fits. Though circumstances were quite difficult with the death of my mother and the birth of my 5th child, the tour was a sell out. It was well covered by mainstream media outlets. In fact, we did it again the next year, and in our third year in 2019, we completed 30 shows in 17 cities. We raised a lot of money as well as raised awareness about important issues. A big part of our play was diversity. We had Black, Asian, Chinese cast members and highlighted racism.

One of the dialogues I wrote into the script drew on the Last Sermon of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

> Mum: I think it is fair to say that everyone matters. Imagine if you were asked to paint the world and you only had grey paint.
>
> Dad: No golden sun
>
> Tony: No blue sky or green grass
>
> Malik: No red pink and purple flowers
>
> Inayat: I think what Mum is trying to say is all the different races, Black people, white people, Asian people are like the different colours on a palette. Together we make the world colourful, bright and beautiful.
>
> Mum: Like our beloved Prophet said in his last speech, no one is superior to the other. Not white over Black, nor an Arab or a non-Arab. Inside we are all the same.

Source: If the Shoe Fits, Kissoon 2017

Audience members picked up on our key themes and ideas. One audience member noted: "So much effort was put into it and it provides comedy, morals, and ethics. It's telling us about the mind, body, and soul." Sheila Nortley, a playwright, said; "the representation of Africa was poignant, beautiful, because we don't get represented much in Muslim stories so it was great to have a Nigeria accent in there, a Jamaican woman in there amongst others. It was so inclusive."

Throughout my years in health, media and the performing arts, I was made to feel like an outsider, to be constantly challenged, and given little or no support. I learned that project funding could be determined by the colour of our skin. Earlier in my career, I would hear comments like: "it's a shame that you're not one of us." As a result, my work has been largely self-funded and I have personally accrued much debt.

I remain optimistic for the future; but we have to do things differently and start to change the tools we use and use them for ways of inspiring our next generation. Can we harness new modes of working together to break down the barriers and bring us together as a community? To do this we must recognise the disadvantaged position Muslim reverts can start from. From feeling alone to feeling like we are on unstable terrain without the extensive support and

ANISA KISSOON

Anisa Kissoon has been serving the community at the grassroots level for over 25 years. She has been a leading lecturer and coach in health and well-being, a teacher, written books, worked with the youth and when and so much more. She is an expert in the practice of 'hijama' ('cupping'). Anisa spearheaded the campaign for hijama to be accredited in the UK. In 2006, Anisa offered the world's first ever accredited 'hijama therapy' course and 'hijama therapy blood analyst' courses in 2013.

As a presenter on Islam Channel, Iqra and featured special guest on numerous news channels, her enthusiasm in promoting health and well-being has benefited thousands globally. Anisa's goal is to revive the forgotten sunnah of Prophetic medicine, whilst specialising in the use of Black Seed, Honey and Hijama. Anisa Kissoon also write the smash hit, 'If the Shoe Fits', The Great Muslim Panto, which was featured in the BBC, Times newspaper and more mainstream media all over the world.

For over 10 years Anisa, along with her family, have used the tools of performing arts and media to inspire and teach. Her main passion is to heal, so whatever platform or method she can do so she will, one person at a time.

THE IMPACT OF FEDERATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION UK WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

BY MUJAHIDAH MEBUDE

INTRODUCTION

Federation of Muslim Women Association UK (FOMWA UK) is a not for profit and non-governmental organisation Muslim women's charity organisation. FOMWA UK was formally inaugurated in London, United Kingdom in 2013.

FOMWA UK was formed by a group of volunteers from an array of professions – a pharmacist, teachers, HR executive, civil servants, scientists, home makers, self –employed people and a social worker. Our aim is to provide support and guidance for the families in the upbringing of children and effective parenting, providing guidance on religious, social and family needs.

The organisation, inspired by a Muslim ethos, empowers and supports women, youth and families. This is done primarily by organising and running major events throughout the year by volunteers. In doing so it puts into practice Islamic values of ethics, care, and community.

During the COVID pandemic, FOMWA organised weekly sessions for women as a support network to engage and discuss concerns regarding the developing medical situation in the UK. Also, volunteers visited vulnerable individuals within the community who were isolated and affected families due to the epidemic and required additional support from the community.

FOMWA UK serves a largely Black Muslim community in London. The socioeconomic context is important because of the disparity that characterises the local communities.

The ONS published a summary of differences in wellbeing by ethnicity, which explains levels of wellbeing in BME populations in England and reports disparities for BME groups (ONS, 2016). With respect to life satisfaction, the White ethnic group reported an average of 7.4 out of 10, compared to 6.7 in the Black ethnic group, though some other ethnic groups reported similar or slightly higher averages. On the question of 'how worthwhile the things they do are' also, the White ethnic group reported a higher average than all other ethnic groups. In the same vein, the recent outbreak of COVID-19, has been reported to have a disproportionate impact on the BAME ethnic minority communities (Public Health England 2020).

The ONS study also highlights the barriers to adopting healthy lifestyles in the African and Black-Caribbean community. It explains that advice on healthy behaviour has little relevance when set alongside the daily struggle against racism and discrimination faced by such families.

It is in this light that this report aims to address the issue of Black Muslim women particularly of African descent with the hope that it can lead to further research and enable appropriate statistics/results to be gathered and explored by policy makers.

FOMWA UK OVERVIEW

Of particular interest to the women is the support for the young members of the community and personal development.

This has led to FOMWA UK developing four major events which are cornerstones of the services we offer to support women. One such service is Islamic Vacation Course (IVC) which is always organised during the school holidays i.e. Christmas break, Easter break and summer holidays. These programmes are run by a group of female volunteers in a mosque and sometimes at a local park. The programme is well executed by having presentations on Islamic etiquettes, Islamic games and quizzes, cookery and indoor/outdoor play.

Our four major events are:

ANNUAL LADIES DINNER – This is usually held in January solely to give women 'me time' out of sight of children and husbands. It has proved popular for the fact that it is a free event with a three course meal served and we usually ask the audience for donations and pledges – funds collected are used to execute some of the projects' expenses for the year.

WOMEN'S CONGRESS – which coincides with International Women's Day/Week. The theme of the annual congress usually centres around International Women's Day's theme. It is a day of relaxation for women focusing on their health and wellbeing through lectures and various activities and workshops at the congress.

As part of our organisational growth, we embarked on collaborative work and got more Islamic organisations outside of London involved in our programmes. The intention is to move forward with global growth in order to reach out to more women who share our values and vision. This culminated in having the first Women's Congress in Manchester this year tagged **Manchester 2020**. The event took place in March and despite Covid-19 starting to rear its ugly head, we had a fantastic turn out of about 90 delegates who attended from London, Manchester, Liverpool, Salford and the surrounding neighbourhood.

Youth Conference brings all youth representatives of our various Islamic organisations together under one umbrella to plan and deliver the programme annually. This programme enables youth from various backgrounds to share the common theme and network under the same umbrella.

A youth participant summarises the impact the conference has had on young people within the community.

> *The online youth conference this year was something I needed, as it was enlightening and relatable. It made me feel like I wasn't alone and in a way it was therapeutic. Hearing and seeing others perspectives on depression and mental health issues. Overall it was very beneficial to listen to.*

Marriage and Family Life Conference is an enlightening annual conference especially within the community and society at large. It emphasises the core practice at home with families as our core objective of delivery. Basically we focus on current issues within the community and society at large and invite a range of speakers to deliver the chosen topics based on tenets of Islam as well as giving practical examples that are in tune with having a better family life.

The two comments below from our participants demonstrates the community's confidence in our work.

> *Even during the lockdown, the organisation has organised events like "Sisters' Hour" online on a weekly basis to assist women in coping with isolation and boredom.*
>
> *I personally have learnt from their marriage conferences how to handle situations in my marriage. There are other ladies I know, who also have equipped themselves with what they have learnt from FOMWA UK programmes. It is very different from many other Islamic organisations because they focus on engaging the public (not only their members) in lectures and activities that have direct benefits in their lives.*

EXPERIENCES /CHALLENGES

Many of the families FOMWA serves are on the lower income threshold and as a result the conferences have an important function. These conferences serve as a space for discussion where relatable/current issues and solutions are discussed and debated. It has always created avenues that highlight further grey areas - the challenges of inadequate housing, effect of government legislation on welfare benefits, unemployment, vulnerable women with social issues but do not know how to access various opportunities that are provided. And those that do know but have had the belief that they have been victim of discrimination and have been marginalised within the society.

As part of providing solutions to the issue of unemployment, FOMWA UK embarked on an Empowerment Project. We had a mini fundraising events through our Ladies Dinner and this culminated in people donating four sewing machines. We have in turn given sewing machines to unemployed women across England and have also signposted and paid for sewing training in order to learn tailoring and become self-employed.

> *I haven't been able to work in the UK for the past four years and FOMWA UK have supported and empowered me to pick myself up and do something tangible with my time. They provided me with a sewing machine and registered me on a four month course.*

The above comments reflect the achievements of FOMWA UK's work, which was centred around helping the unemployed and increasing their employability potential.

CHALLENGES

Although FOMWA UK is registered charity we have no official sponsors, hence all our programmes and events are organised and managed by a team of like-minded professional

women. We receive donations from individuals and self-sponsor our programmes, but finance has been a major challenge for our events. In order to keep abreast of all our efforts, we are now looking inward into charging fees for our programmes – a decision that we have considered in the past but was unsuccessful given that most people who attend our programmes are women who are scraping by with meagre salaries with domestic and financial responsibilities or vulnerable adults – unemployed and the elderly.

I must emphasise that sometimes because our programmes are free, we still face the challenge of having limited people attending our events. This is so because the attitude and behaviour to education and widening of horizons is still backward in some quarters of our community. As a group of volunteers, we have busy work lives. Hence time has always impinge on our schedules and have limited us in stretching out to other parts of the UK as we would have loved to.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

More areas of work are emerging, especially in the area of wellbeing. Of particular interest is family welfare and support for vulnerable members of the community especially in the area of health and wellbeing. Covid-19 has brought in a new era and has increased loneliness, isolation, health related issues and boredom especially amongst vulnerable adults and unemployed people.

We are looking at ways of extending our projects to cover this essential wellbeing role in order to alleviate the sufferings and stress of Muslim women in our community. Perhaps we could start with telephone service to these women. It would be beneficial if we can have wellbeing group established, engage them in practical skills – for example crochet and knitting classes play schemes – for example quiz, educational day trips where women can network and support each other in order to address mental wellbeing and alleviate depression.

It goes without saying that there are lots of initiatives we can delve into but obviously our hands are tight due to finance, personnel and time factors which are unavoidably mitigating against rapid growth.

In conclusion, FOMWA UK has become a force to reckon with particularly in our community and in the society at large.

MUJAHIDAH MEBUDE

Mujidah Toyin Mebude is a community leader and a da'wah worker. She has participated and delivered lectures in various islamic discussions and programmes particularly within the African community. She was one of the speakers at Muslim Council for Britain's (MCB) Conferences – Our Mosque Our Future 2018 and Proudly Muslim and Black in February 2019 (an event organised in recognition of Black History Month).

Mujidah is an accomplished educator who has worked in various key stages of British education – KS1 to KS4. She obtained her degree from University of Westminster, Masters of Science from University of East London and her Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) from University of Greenwich. She is a member of Society for Education and Training (MSET).

Mujidah has worked with various schools and colleges in London and Essex and has also taught at two Universities in the Middle East viz: Princess Nora University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and Sohar University, Sohar, Oman.

She is currently a lecturer at a Further Education College in East London. She is also the Secretary General of Federation of Muslim Women's Association (FOMWA UK) and also an Executive Member of Council for Nigeria Muslim Organisation (CNMO).

Prior to becoming a teacher, Mujidah worked with five local governments in various roles relating to housing management/development and social care.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

BY MIDE ALLEN

Inequalities in health have become pronounced and prominent in Britain in part thanks to the prevalence of Covid 19. Data has long indicated inequalities in several ways; ethnic minorities, in particular Black Britons, are not only more likely to be unemployed but more likely to suffer from obesity, mental illness, and diabetes. It is against this context that Mide Allen's intervention is grounded in sustainability and in faith. Mide Allen has crafted a suite of programmes aimed at tackling ill health and promoting health and well being in a holistic, sustainable manner.

Health disparities in Britain are well known, but interventions to health disparities are less so. Mide Allen, a healthcare practitioner for many years, views these disparities as endemic in the Black Muslim communities. Her observations and years of practice confirm previous research. Health and wellbeing for Mide is grounded in faith as well as in nature.

Referring to ethnic minorities, particularly Muslims of African and Black Caribbean heritage, Mide says: "we don't see health and wellbeing as a priority, more like a hindrance, separate therapeutic side, on a physical perspective, our bodies need to be nourished to be able to perform." While working in dental health, Mide observed how attitudes towards health were shaped. "I noticed that it depends on the education you've had, and a person's financial basis." She gives an example of the environment she grew up in in which "you show love by giving children sweets" but she remarks that "we know what sweets can do."

After serving as a healthcare professional for many years she turned to focus on permaculture. Working with Muslims of African and Black British heritage, she encountered many who were first or second generation Britons. "They said things like 'my mother did that but back home' and people have come to a new climate and you have not learned how to reproduce it in the new climate."

Mide therefore explains, "I see myself as a translator to show how we can have our food and in this climate."

One example of her intervention in health includes eco- or green therapy. "I use different methods including nature to heal anxiety, stress or trauma. I tend to use horticultural practices." Allen plans to branch out into using bees and horses as well.

Though Britain's health indicators are poorer than much of Europe, Allen points out that poor health affects the Black community the most and links it to economic inequality. "The stuff that is good for you is expensive, and stuff that is not good, it's cheap, and with parents working a lot of hours, without realising you start gravitating to things that are not good for you, because I need to sustain the family longer, this is happening in more working class areas, this is happening in places with higher level of minorities."

Her intervention is an important one because her approach to health demonstrates that it is not expensive. "People don't realise they can grow their own food." In her garden and on her allotment she grows vegetables including some that are found in West Africa.

Her approach is also sustainable, teaching and consulting on techniques for growing one's own vegetables. Mide teaches in a variety of settings from schools, nurseries, to community spaces and garden clubs and also hosts an online community.

She draws from her own experience and garden which serves as a workshop in which she keeps bees, raises chickens, and refines her techniques around permaculture. Referring to her objective of inculcating health and sustainability, Mide explains, "basically I'm trying to break the cycle, we've thrown off the track, and I'm bringing it back to the way it was."

MIDE ALLEN

Mide Allen has been working in the community for the last 7 years teaching permaculture. Not only has she re-designed 100's of gardens, she has also been at the forefront in desiging projects like Green Therapy that won the The Best Green Initiative Award in 2020.

She is one of the only few organic beekeepers in the UK and has a passion for preserving bee life in such a crucial time.

She uses her connection with horticultural and agriculture to nurture the next generation and help them to understand that food should be fully halal and tayyib.

Recently she has been working closely with international charities, such as The Heal Project, The Hive and individuals to revive the sunnah foods and showing how to live a sustainable lifestyle.

Currently she is working on a unique online course so she can share her knowledge and expertise worldwide and hopes to help encourage nations to rethink and take personal responsibility for their eating habits.

Website: linktr.ee/Fruitfulgarden
Instagram: @fruitfulgarden

SECTION 3.7

MEDIA

Media practice among the African and Black Caribbean British Muslims is very distinct yet grossly underreported and less celebrated. Where the people consider the general institutions as not serving their peculiar needs in terms of faith, race and economic interests, where they feel the system is leaving their personal stories untold, the significance of a strategic struggle for relevance cannot be overemphasised. Hence the challenges, achievements and prospects of such people in the media-sphere, which this section of the report attends to, shall make a good read.

NICHE OR PIGEONHOLE: POSITIONALITY OF THE BLACK BRITISH MUSLIM IN THE MEDIA

BY AMANDLA THOMAS-JOHNSON

The Black Muslim does not always have it easy. Positioned across two of Britain's most marginalised minorities, they can be viewed as not sufficiently belonging to either. Not corresponding to the dominant stereotypes of Blackness or Islam, they can easily be overlooked.

Their position between communities also grants them a sort of innate cosmopolitanism, able to maneuver between the Black barber shop in Brixton and the curry house on Brick Lane. Through art, music, and poetry, a new generation of Black Muslims have recast what it means to be Black and Muslim in today's Britain, drawing on rich Somali poetry traditions or on their experiences as Caribbean converts to Islam.

In fact, through faith, race and shared histories, the Black Muslim can access a global geography that runs from Barbados to Beirut to Brunei, and from Cape Town to Conakry to Cardiff.

Given the heightened interest in Islam and the recent eruption of Black Lives Matter, I want to draw on my experienes to suggest that this global awareness makes a Black Muslim journalist uniqely placed to take on some of the enduring stories of our time.

However, they are required to be strategic in order to navigate what is essentially a volatile media and political landscape. Just as quickly as opportunities present themselves, they can be snatched away.

I was born in London to African Caribbean parents and converted to Islam at 15, months before 9/11 took place and the war on terror began, events that would shape my life for many years to come.

In fact, through faith, race and shared histories, the Black Muslim can access a global geography that runs from Barbados to Beirut to Brunei, and from Cape Town to Conakry to Cardiff.

My journalistic instincts were shaped by my parents' Pan-Africanism, two years spent on the central committee of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) and a year as an elected trustee of National Union of Students (NUS) among other experiences.

These experiences, coupled with my awareness of Islamic injunctions to stand up for justice and my commitment to accurate and balanced reporting meant I knew early on what sort of journalist I wanted to be: I believed that the purpose of journalism, as the famous maxim went, was to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.

My first full-time job in journalism was at the Islam Channel, a Muslim community television station based in London. Despite being in an overwhelmingly Muslim environemnt, I was one of the few Black Muslims. I worked on stories from across the Muslim world - from the Rohingya to the wars in Syria and Libya. But there were few stories about Africa even though the channel's largest audience was in Nigeria.

This gave me an opportunity to pitch original content while catering to a key audience. I didn't know much about Somalia, Mozambique or Nigeria to begin with, but given my background I had an interest and cared deeply about how Africa was reported on.

I soon learnt that even though I might have been a British-born Black Muslim, a tiny minoriy in the media, I was also connected to a billion people in Africa and tens of millions of others throughout the Americas and Caribbean, people who were often underrepresented in the media landscape. It seemed like a no brainer to focus my attention here.

Later on, as a freelancer, I was forced to think seriously about ways to find original stories. I came to rely on the fact that my identity potentially granted me advantageous entry points into a number of communities. My parents were immigrants and as a person of colour I shared with millions of others a past that had been shaped by colonialism, empire and racism.

I wrote for a Black newspaper about the UK's Montserratian community and about an African literature festival. I worked on a Vice documentary about the Muslim vote. I expanded my horizons, taking an interest in everything from English Traveller communities to refugees fleeing war.

I was not automatically welcome everywhere. Mistrust of journalists runs high in many communities. And a Black journalist is sometimes considered an unknown quantity. Women have it even harder.

I had to put the work in to build trust - turn up to community events, hang around chatting afterwards, and take down phone numbers. I had to be persistent and sometimes annoying. The freelancer must write in order to eat.

I soon learnt that even though I might have been a British-born Black Muslim, a tiny minoriy in the media, I was also connected to a billion people in Africa and tens of millions of others throughout the Americas and Caribbean, people who were often underrepresented in the media landscape. It seemed like a no brainer to focus my attention here.

Stories are the currency of the media. If you want to get on and build a career then you best find them. When I entered the mainstream media, certain Muslim-related stories were worth their weight in gold. There was a frenzy about British foreign fighters going off to Syria and the rise of the Islamic State group.

A central question loomed over the heads of all Muslim journalists: to what extent do we associate ourselves with Muslim-related stories? A Muslim journalist with access to particularly newsworthy sections of the community could get ahead by focusing there. But they risked becoming the 'Muslim journalist.' the one who is the foremost authority on all things Islamic but is hindered from doing anything else. Different journalists responded to this differently. Some avoided Muslim issues like the plague, favouring a more 'mainstream' career advancement; others mastered the Muslim beat.

I feared being pigeon-holed but I also feared that Muslims would continue to be misrepresented unless I did my bit. I had in part come into journalism to give another side to the Muslim story. I realised that the terrifying depiction of Muslims on tabloid front pages was a useful diversion from us having frank public debates about foreign policy, racism and Islamophobia and a convenient excuse to dismantle human rights protections, strip citizenship, scapegoat immigrants, and ramp up surveillance - things that affected all of us in some way - not just Muslims.

I dived into some of the more sensitive topics regarding Muslims, taking care to carefully humanise those I reported on. My work around former Guantanamo detainees and foreign fighters in Syria earned me significant bylines and attracted commissions and employment from the likes of the BBC and Channel 4, where I was an investigative journalism trainee. At the same time I also tried to take on other work that spoke to issues facing people of colour more widely, such as racism in football, keeping my options open.

Many of the Black Muslims I know in the media have also gone 'back home' to report - to countries they fled from as refugees (like Somalia) or to where their parents emigrated from, which in my case was Trinidad and Tobago. This experience is as much about ensuring that one narrates one's own stories as well as an opportunity to connect with roots. I make no apology for using journalism as a way to explore my personal curiosities and my own identity. For those of us from immigrant backgrounds, negotiating between cultures, places and identities in the West, going back home can be a profound experience.

In 2018, I moved to Dakar, Senegal from where I cover West Africa, mainly for Aljazeera and Middle East Eye. I am one of the few Black foreign journalists working in the region. My white peers fit the profile of what an international journalist is supposedly meant to look like and appear to have certain advantages in terms of official access. I have played to my strengths. This part of the world is overwhelmingly Black African and predominantly Muslim. I look at the region with different eyes and see racism in Mauritania; colonialism in Westen Sahara; the erroneous narrative of senseless 'Muslim terror' in Mali.

The longer I remain out here, the further away Europe drifts from the centre of my geographical axis. I try to tell stories from a local perspective, an attempt to avoid placing Europe at the centre of events and describing Africa or Islam in relation to it.

My shift to a more global south perspective - as Britain lurches to the right - had me wondering whether I could write again for a mainstream British publication. But the recent eruption of the Black Lives Matter protests has now opened up a space to write about race, empire and slavery. And once again, the Black Muslim is well-placed to cover this. For how long is anyone's guess.

AMANDLA THOMAS-JOHNSON

Amandla Thomas-Johnson is a London-born journalist of African-Caribbean descent based in Dakar, Senegal, covering West Africa. He has worked for Middle East Eye, the Daily Telegraph, BBC, The Guardian, Aljazeera and was an investigative journalism trainee at Channel 4. He is the author of Becoming Kwame Ture, a biography of the civil rights activist formerly known as Stokely Carmichael.

ETHNIC MEDIA PRACTICE AMONG THE BLACK (WEST AFRICAN) MUSLIMS IN LONDON

BY OLAWALE HASSAN

If I should compare the West African Black Muslim ethnic media practitioners' experience to a bird singing melodiously in a covered cage, would this not seem too harsh an imagery to paint? If however I tell you that the target audience is also in the same cage as the bird; this would probably be a relief knowing that it is not all an effort in futility. As ethnic media is produced by and for an ethnic group or community, it is the connecting ring in the formation of a social, political and economic chain meant to pull the community up the ladder of relevance. As the storage of the people's identity, ethnic media is the expression of their particular and shared experiences, a voice to their thoughts and a preparation for their future.

Rather than adopting an academic approach, this essay shall lean heavily on the personal experiences of Nigerian-British ethnic media practitioners and owners, investors, or independent content providers in the UK, who were interviewed for this purpose to give credence to the observations made and possible conclusions reached at the end of this report.

The fact that ethnic media operate in the fringe is not just understandable, it is expected due to the nature and structure of ethnic media operation. Therefore, it cannot compete favourably with the mainstream media. Be it in print journalism, electronic (social media inclusive) or the entertainment industries, ethnic media practitioners are less recognised in comparison with how mainstream media personalities are promoted, accepted and celebrated. In my view, the experience of the Nigerian ethnic media practitioners suggests that the hurdle is doubled as 'persons of colour' and becomes tripled because they cover the Muslim experience. Do recall the image of that beautiful bird singing melodiously in the covered cage.

It is surprising that though there is no apparent recognition of ethnic media professionals or platforms, there are flashes of achievement, points of prospect, paths to prosperity and a fulfilling future for ethnic media practice among the Black Muslims of West African / Nigerian descent in London.

The 2011 Census indicates that more than 6 million individuals identify as belonging to Black, Asian or other ethnic groups. This shows the significant size of the ethnic population and invariably the important role ethnic media practitioners are playing in British society. A study by the Independent Press Association attests to the growing demand and significance of ethnic media in Britain. "The UK's ethnic populations are continuing to flourish and expand. Across all generations, there is still a fundamental appetite to consume and embrace media that recognises their unique cultural differences and dials into their personal, cultural perspectives (IPA, 2012).

In my view, the experience of the Nigerian ethnic media practitioners suggests that the hurdle is doubled as 'persons of colour' and becomes tripled because they cover the Muslim experience.

EXPERIENCES OF NIGERIAN ETHNIC MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

The following are ethnic media professionals' experiences to narrate the story of the singing bird in the covered cage.

Abdul Kareem Olusola Adetoro-Ipaye is a Muslim ethnic media owner in London, originally trained as a graphic designer who picked up interest in television production, web development and specialised in multimedia. Whilst working with many mosques, Islamic centres and organisations as the Project Lead for the World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY) during the 2012 London Olympics, he encountered many Muslims covering the games for media outlets but noted that none of them were from Black or African Caribbean backgrounds. This made him feel that the Black Muslim experience at the 2012 Olympics was neither captured nor represented.

Abdul Kareem became determined to establish a media outfit that would fill the communication gaps between the Nigerian Muslim community and the general public as well as increase the profile of Black Muslim community activists. He added that although his media outfit has been online since 2012, he registered Salam Television and Magazine Limited, in late 2017, as one of the first, if not the first Nigerian Muslim-owned online ethnic media in the United Kingdom. It is an online television station that he considers as his contribution to the development of community institutions, especially with focus on Muslim experience. He narrates it was neither easy to find any bank loans for the business nor to motivate members of the community to invest in the idea. He had to go ahead with his personal savings.

> *In terms of patronage, some members of the Nigerian Muslim community believe that services related to the religion must always be free, except for few individuals and organisations, who after seeing the quality of services the station offers were able to pay some minimal charges. My community finds it easier to spend on social events despite our being obviously religious.*

Abdul Kareem believes that the Covid-19 pandemic presented a boost for ethnic media practice in the community. Because most of the Islamic organisations and mosques have to connect remotely with their members online presence became more popular than ever. He noted that this change would lead to abundant broadcast materials in the near future, with attendant effects of improved quality and a boost in the number of individuals working in the growing Black Muslim ethnic media industry. He wished there were more collaborative efforts between Black ethnic media practitioners and Asian Muslims who are next in number and influence after the mainstream media practitioners in the United Kingdom.

"Anobi Jones" is a well-known name on Naija FM 101.1 London, a popular community radio station especially among the Yoruba- speaking ethnic groups. His real name is Abdul Razak Ayinde Abioye. As a broadcast media practitioner with over fifteen years experience in presentation and production on ethnic television and radio stations such as Passion TV, Faith TV, Oodua TV and Naija FM, he explains that as a strong believer in community service who sees the family as the core of the community, he became concerned with the rising number of family breakdown cases within the Black community, which according to him is negatively impacting on the general Black community.

> *I felt the need to lend a voice in the media but it was religion that prompted my full involvement in the media. At the wake of the London terror twin-attacks of June 29-30, 2007, I found the one-sided talks about Islam and Muslims on community media as destructive of our delicate unity and sought an avenue to bring people together for amicable discussions of our differences. That was what led to 'Faith United on Radio', a popular programme that featured community leaders and broadcast of Jumah prayers for the first time in our community. The latter content did not go well with some Muslim scholars and the attempt to identify agreeable leadership among the groups made me see the internal strife in the Nigerian Muslim community.*

He resorted to playing the recordings of Sheikh Muhyideen Ajani Bello, a notable Nigerian Muslim preacher's sermons. It was a decision that cleared him from partisanship.

Anobi Jones enjoys being on air as a hobby but is not oblivious of the business part of it. He learnt the business the hard way when he invested in the promotion and sponsorship of artistes who "got wiser" than him when it came to finance. "I was still seeing the business at the planting season, but my artistes saw harvest time, I lost some capital but gained experience." He was quick to add that however, this is not the general practice in the Nigerian community, we are good people."

> *My relationship with the general Black business community has been cordial and mutually benefitting especially during Ramadan when I get my programmes fully sponsored. This post-Covid experience has created a platform for more educated and young Muslim scholars to emerge, I see more talent emerging and hope it would widen the reach of Black Muslim leadership that would appeal to wider audience.*

Sister Nafeesa Ayeola's childhood dream is to become a presenter on television, hence her choice to make a career of broadcasting in London did not come as a surprise to many people around her. However, the cost of having an independent slot on television made her settle for radio broadcasting. Her weekly programme 'Sunnah And Self-Esteem' which comes on air 18:00 - 19:30 Hrs every Friday on Naija FM London, combines (Islamic) religious and social issues in order to have general appeal and possibly attract sponsorship which seems a challenge.

The African Muslim community seems to underestimate the power of the media, else I don't know how to explain why getting some of the Muslim scholars to speak on the programme becomes an uphill task. I have experienced several last minute disappointments in the studio when guests fail to turn up; thank God for plan B contents which save such days. Advertising is poor among our people. I've heard people say 'God will bless my business even if I don't advertise.' I wonder if that is not missing the point even according to the teachings of Islam regarding the need to put in our best efforts before handing over to God in prayer. It is intriguing however that the same set of people find it easier to spend in the promotion of their cultural identity. No doubt,

> ***In my view, the experience of the Nigerian ethnic media practitioners suggests that the hurdle is doubled as 'persons of colour' and becomes tripled because they cover the Muslim experience.***

we are very hard-working and a people who are keenly interested in education, but our use of the ethnic media needs improvement. It is interesting that we are very active on social media for social purposes.

Commenting on what else is needed to be done in order to place the Black Nigerian Muslim community in London at an enviable position, she identifies an urgent need to build strong networks and platforms where ideas and best practices are shared, with a view to penetrate beyond the community's immediate market. Sister Nafeesa Ayeola concluded, "until we establish strong business and social networks amongst ourselves, the chances of us growing our community is very slim."

I asked her if it is not a hopeless situation for ethnic media practice, her response was that, "The future is very bright, and that's why I am still practising."

Maroof Akintunde Adeoye is a recognised name in the Nigerian Muslim community leadership as Amir[39] of the Council of Nigerian Muslim Organisations (CNMO) and the President of a non-political social club - Ibadanland Development Association, United Kingdom. He is a management consultant, an accountant, chartered marketer and an author who pursued the dream of establishing a more cosmopolitan radio station for the Black community in 1998, unlike the existing stations which he sees more as "Yoruba ethnic, sectional and unregistered or pirate stations." As a professional, he is not willing to take shortcuts. Reacting to my question about why did he venture into the media, Adeoye explains:

You need media to showcase who you are as an individual or a community; a media to have a voice, to clear ambiguity and misrepresentation of your ideals, you need media to put yourself out there in the full glare of those who might share your values, invest in your dreams and for your would-be service-users to see you. I was thinking big for a full-blown, general-interest, commercial station located in South East London but when the cost came to my table, it was daunting. The community saw it as a good project that would be grossly under-utilised, and that was it. I revisited the project in 2016, this time, with minimal cost and focused on digital broadcasting. The options are still open for me to work with a team on having the designed community station.

[39] Leader

Adeoye identifies not being strategic as the biggest challenge of the Black Muslim community in London. "We are generally reactionary, and hardly reach out to the non-Black Muslim communities who are more established than we are in this part of the world." He expressed fear that the Nigerian Muslim community may lose the youth who are just forming their identity at a place they are growing up to see as their 'home.' We must create communal spaces and a good image the younger ones would be proud to identify with. Adeoye concluded that, "despite the prevalent challenges, the Nigerian Muslim youth got what it takes to be celebrated globally. The Asian Muslim community in the United Kingdom has done well in this respect, we cannot afford to be left behind."

The success or otherwise of ethnic media practice depends highly on how it addresses the target audience's yearnings, speaks their language, solves their problems, sells their products and adapts to the immediate environment where it operates. The ethnic media practitioner may not make great success in competing with the mainstream media, rather, it should take hold of and maximise the unreached demography of the population that constitutes the ethnic target audience. It must recreate the nostalgic feelings of home away from home in the older audience. Specifically, the Black Muslim ethnic media practitioner of Nigerian descent in the UK must build on the existing trust and unity in the community, and invest in the identity of the younger audience without overlooking the need to collaborate with other Muslim communities in order to exploit the strength in the Muslim diversity. Hopefully, these steps would keep the expressed ray of hope alive.

It is not in vain that these beautiful canaries and robbins in the covered cage sing, how fulfilling it is to know that those for whom the sonorous songs are sung are forever attracted to the unending tunes from these familiar crooners.

OLAWALE HASSAN

Olawale Hassan is a creative writer and a broadcast journalist who voluntarily retired from the service of Lagos State Government as a Manager Programmes (Radio Lagos/ Ekofm) after his further studies and eventually relocating to live permanently in the UK. He carved a niche for himself as a versatile media content producer with a series of award-winning productions.

IDENTITY REPRESENTATION IN ONLINE SPACES

BY HALIMAT SHODE

> ***As the internet generation, many of us are turning to the creation of online spaces to affirm and celebrate our identities.***

In 2016, I established The Black Muslim Times UK, an independent online platform that quickly became bigger than I had any intentions or understandings of. What took place from its inception was several dialogues and discussions about the place of Black British Muslims in the UK. The Black Muslim Times UK content centred around showcasing Black British Muslims in various fields, from sports to tech to the creative arts. I believed there were so many amazing, talented brothers and sisters of African and African Caribbean backgrounds that deserved to be known to a wider audience.

I have spoken extensively, both in interviews and panel discussions, about the need for Black Muslims in the UK to have their own media platforms, as another issue that I was strongly aware of was the lack of representation in Muslim media publications in addition to mainstream publications and media. For example, I noticed that articles about celebrating Eid were centred around the South Asian/Arab experience. Rarely were African and Caribbean experiences being made reference to in food or cultural clothing. This has been an ongoing challenge with no end in sight; it then becomes a matter of creatively tackling the issue, since the institutions are not serving our needs or acknowledging our potential.

The lack of mainstream media representation is a challenge to Black British Muslims. Only one part of our identity is reflected in British media at any given time; either our race or our Islamic faith; never both together. Although Black British experiences are now better documented through such media stations as the BBC and Channel 4, with airtime given to historians like David Olusoga or academic and broadcaster Emma Dabiri, what is needed is those of African/African Caribbean background and Islamic faith to speak on their experiences and perspective. This leads many to turn to online spaces to see themselves represented and support the ventures of those with independent platforms.

As the internet generation, many of us are turning to the creation of online spaces to affirm and celebrate our identities. I was part of the first video project, Black and Muslim in Britain[40], created by Saraiya Bah, Sakinah from the nasheed duo Pearls of Islam, and Mohamed Mohamed. This proved to be widely popular nationally and led to a second series of the project. I also had this conversation with sister Khadija, the founder of Being a Muslim Black Girl[41], when she was at the beginning of her journey to establish her own media platform, which has gone on to produce an amazing number of events, work and much more success.

[40] See Black and Muslim in Britain. (N.d) Home. [YouTube Channel]. YouTube. Retrieved 15 December 2020. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9nJ7cqWZvB2VDdDhQFGCkg/featured

However, with the establishment of new projects, both online and offline, it requires a large commitment and sacrifice in time and money. This is one of the major challenges that I believe the Black, African, and African Caribbean British Muslims (BAACBM) in the UK need to tackle. Without economic strength to fund these necessary online and offline contributions, they risk not having longevity and growth beyond their inception.

I believe the key issue of the BAACBM in the UK is lack of established networks that will lead to growth, and expansion. Many of us are starting from the very beginning, with no frameworks or templates to reference. In this regard, I believe that the Black Muslims in the USA are ahead. In February 2020, the NYU Black Muslim Initiative held their second annual Black Muslim symposium; the conference highlighed the rich contributions of Black Muslims to America.

Within the larger British media, many are aware of these conversations and contributions. ITN's show titled, 'Young, British and Muslim' invited myself and a few other Muslim women to discuss our initiatives and projects that we started. However to relate it back to longevity, there is no practice in place within these institutions that will give funding or access to these contributions or projects.

Essentially, it is like starting from scratch all over again whenever there is an individual or group of people that want to contribute to the legacy and history of Black British Muslims in the UK. Although there are a few Muslim organsiations such as The Aziz Foundation and the Amal Foundation that fund scholarships and projects that Muslims are establishing, there needs to be a bigger contribution to the work that Black British Muslims are doing. This should take place in the form of ongoing initiatives, in the same way mainstream media does this for campaigns or issues they want to raise awareness for and highlight.

The issue of class also plays into this, alongside faith and race. Many do not have the initial start-up capital to fund these projects and have to resort to crowdfunding, donations and their own incomes to supplement the success of the project. If not for these diverse, creative efforts, many projects would not be able to make a successful start, let alone continue over a long period of time.

The word 'community' has completely shifted and taken on a new meaning with the beginning of the pandemic in 2020. With the loss of access to public spaces, online is now a medium that will be even more instrumental in building the work of BAACBM across the UK. This work is already in action and online contributions can be further re-imagined and revolutionised now that there are no physical boundaries in place. This can be achieved with the right support to propel independent projects and media platforms. There is a large potential for growth and expansion with the right strategy in place to support the efforts and contributions of BAACBM across the UK. As previously mentioned, fully-funded ongoing initiatives are the most sustainable method of maintaining this important work.

[41] See Kuku, Khadija. [Host] (2018-Present). Being a Black Muslim Girl. Audio Podcast. https://open.spotify.com/show/1LgTFqbmDtRU66Qma5jxyT?si=guAAHZ_kT8eFxnE2iyT-iA&nd=1

HALIMAT SHODE

Halimat Shode is a writer, speaker and founder of the online publication The Black Muslim Times UK, a platform of representation for Black British Muslims.

She first presented at the first British Islam conference in 2017 held at Amnesty International, she has spoken at universities including Oxford University and SOAS, and chaired a panel discussion at Bradford Literature Festival in 2018.

In 2018, she won the Editor of the Year Award from The UK Black African and African-Caribbean Muslim Awards show.

SECTION 3.8

POLITICS

This section explores key themes relating to the experiences of Black Muslims within the political sector in the UK. It includes reflections on the invisibility of the Black Muslim communities in politics and how this manifests itself through the lived experiences of Councillor Soraya Adejare and Councillor Rakhia Ismail as Black Muslim female politicians.

BLACK [IN]VISIBILITY & THE MUSLIM VOICE

BY ABDUL HAQQ BAKER

INTRODUCTION

During the 1980s, Blackness in Britain could have been considered as a hegemonic concept, encapsulating other people of colour like South Asians. This '*political Blackness*', according to Professor Tariq Modood (1994), was problematic.

> The use of the term 'Black' encourages a 'doublespeak.' It falsely, equates racial discrimination with colour-discrimination and thereby obscures the cultural antipathy to Asians and therefore of the character of the discrimination they suffer.

Such observations were invariably met with hostility and accusations of divisiveness (Sandhu, 2018). On the flip side of the same coin, a similar argument can be made regarding Muslim identity today.

> ***The Black Cause can only, therefore, be successfully represented by those most ethnically and psychologically apposite to address the complexities surrounding it, without dilution or conflation of what may amount to other parallel and occasionally overlapping causes.***

Black Muslim communities and the marginalisation – not to mention anti-Black racism – they continue to suffer among larger, more predominant South Asian communities today. The '*doublespeak*' Modood refers to translates to a '*double whammy*' effect for the minority Black Muslim populace, this being anti-Black racism experienced at macro levels from the predominant non-Muslim wider society on the one hand, and micro levels from South Asian Muslim communities on the other. Habeeb Akande argues that:

> To be Black and Muslim in the UK is to be part of two marginalised and misunderstood communities. There are misconceptions and issues within both communities and towards each other. There is Islamophobia in Black communities and anti-Blackness in Muslim communities. Both are a result of the idea that each community is monolithic (Akande, 2019).

The requirements for distinct Black Muslim voices and visibility are more important than ever, as the type of effective and overarching leadership that is inclusive of other non-Muslim Black diaspora is essential in order to effectively challenge structural, systemic *and* generational racism that disproportionally affects these same minorities across western societies today.

The very public death of African-American, George Floyd, at the knee of a law enforcement officer, together with the prevailing curfews imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, catapulted this long standing societal scourge of racism into the spotlight, reviving Black Lives

Matter protests worldwide. The *Black Cause* can only, therefore, be successfully represented by those most ethnically and psychologically apposite to address the complexities surrounding it, without dilution or conflation of what may amount to other parallel and occasionally overlapping causes.

The need to examine aspects of British identity from socio-political and socio-cultural perspectives has never been more relevant, especially in light of the resurgence of Black Lives Matter protests across the US and UK following the death of George Floyd. Incidents like these, alongside continuing debates regarding anti-Black, systemic racism and privileges afforded to other ethnic groups are also continuing at microcosmic – yet still significant – levels among Muslim communities.

A QUESTION OF LEGITIMACY: WHO SHOULD REPRESENT BRITISH MUSLIMS?

There is a lack of representation of Muslim converts at societal levels. Muslim converts traverse all spheres of British society and yet their voices are seldom heard against the backdrop of socio-economic, political and religious issues that by and large relate to the predominant South Asian (and of late, increasingly Somali) culture (Baker, 2015).

They remain hidden, or invisible, perhaps because of general social perceptions. As Akande argues, "the general perception in UK society is that Muslims are either South Asian or Arab, but not Black. One is either Black or Muslim, but never both. Growing up, many Black British Muslims would often look to the United States to see a positive representation of Black Muslim figures" (Akande, 2019).

In fact, this observation is equally applicable to Black Muslim voices that only function at localised community levels with few representing their respective ethnic groups or indeed, the wider Muslim populace on the whole. The latter type of representation continues to be dominated by non-Black Muslim diaspora – particularly South Asian entities.

These narratives and institutions extend beyond Black British Muslim communities as they have an even more important and overarching role to play among other non-Muslim Black communities in view of shared understandings and experiences, not to mention other commonalities surrounding issues of racial inequality and injustice pervasive at almost every level of society. While these also affect other communities of colour, Black minorities continue to disproportionately bear the brunt of anti-Black racism. Black Muslim voices have been largely muted due to more vocal representations by the predominantly South Asian Muslim community. While this is unsurprising due to the multifarious and complex social dimensions of this largely progressive group, their representation of almost everything that is supposed to reflect Muslim '*Britishness*' should now be re-examined in view of the growing influence of Black British Muslims. Again, similar to Muslim converts (among whom many are of course also Black, of African Caribbean, African descent) Black Muslim *visibility* and representation are such that engagement and leadership at societal levels with all groups regarding pertinent issues of the day, particularly those relating to racial disparity, discrimination and marginalisation, should be the ambit of Black Muslim voices. Arguably, these voices are better placed than co-religionists

heralding from the more traditional/cultural communities, in the same way that converts fulfil the role as conduits between two socio-cultural paradigms:

> *Converts may have greater empathy with non-Muslims because of their non-Muslim past and ongoing relationships with their family of origin. They often have a heightened awareness, compared to other Muslims, of how Muslims are viewed by outsiders, so there can be a strongly reflexive element to their discourse (Zebiri, 2007).*

CONCLUSION

Without ignoring or diminishing the overwhelmingly positive contributions of these more predominant communities, Black Muslims can also play an invaluable role as conduits between non-Muslim Black communities, wider society and the more culturally orientated Muslim diaspora. Debates relating to the (r)evolving issues around British Muslim participation, representation and leadership must begin to incorporate a wider audience and inclusion of members whose presence, visibility and voice have been – to a greater extent – side-lined and, at most, afforded periodic tokenistic recognition. Black Muslim visibility must be as prominent as their counterparts and no longer be consigned secondary and/or superficial roles at localised, microcosmic levels.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that, while advocating increased Black Muslim visibility, the majority South Asian Muslim voice should not be ignored or marginalised in preference for increased Black representation. Rather, acknowledgement that the latter is an intrinsic factor towards shaping the narratives of British Muslims during this tumultuous period and beyond. *Black Lives Matter as do Black Muslim voices*:

> *Until we have eliminated racism from our current lives and imaginations, we will have to continue to struggle for the creation of a world-beyond-race. But to achieve it, to sit down at a table to which everyone has been invited, we must undertake an exacting political and ethical critique of racism and of the ideologies of difference. The celebration of difference will be meaningful only if it opens onto the fundamental question of our time, that of sharing, of the common, of the expansion of our horizon (Mbembe, 20013).*

DR. ABDUL HAQQ BAKER

Dr. Abdul Haqq Baker is the founder and Managing Director of the 2009 award winning youth initiative, Strategy To Reach Empower & Educate Teenagers (STREET) UK, a former Lecturer in Terrorism Studies at the Centre of Studies in Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV) in the University of St Andrews and Research Fellow for the University of Exeter's European Muslim Research Centre. He was also chairman of Brixton Mosque, London between 1994 and 2009 where he successfully countered external extremist threats to the local Muslim community and successfully challenged the destructive propaganda that accompanied it.

His strategic focus involves intervention frameworks that enable strategic community based and statutory collaborations/partnerships to addressed the multifaceted challenges faced by violent extremism and environments at risk of developing them. His STREET programme was subsequently cited by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and British think tank DEMOS, among others, as a model case study. Its effective approach towards youth engagement and intervention led to it winning the Preventing Violent Extremism Innovation award (17th February 2009) for the most innovative youth programme in 2008.

Abdul Haqq's insight, experiences and expertise in successfully challenging violent radicalisation has led to him being widely acknowledged as an authority on violent extremism and counter-radicalisation in the UK as well as an expert in the field of youth intervention projects. He has acted in the capacity of adviser and on occasion, expert witness regarding international terrorism cases.

SURVIVING IN BRITISH POLITICS AS A BLACK MUSLIM HIJABI WOMAN

BY COUNCILLOR RAKHIA ISMAIL

Black people are marginalised in politics in Britain. In my experiences and in those of other Black British Muslim politicians that I know they are twice marginalised. As the first British mayor to wear a hijab in the UK, and the first Somali female councillor too, I felt that we are not included, nor respected, are treated as nothing other than to fulfill a tick box exercise. This is extremely frustrating and sometimes depressing because the needs of our communities are not met and often ignored. Unfortunately, this means over 10% of the UK British Muslim population are voiceless within the government and national parties.

Census data suggests that over 10% of the UK Muslim population are 'Black.' A Muslim Council of Britain (Ali, 2015) study further states that the number of Muslims in the 'Black African' and 'Black Other' ethnic categories is rising.

It was a difficult decision to put myself forward to become a council candidate, but after thinking it through, I decided with the support of my husband and children.

I put myself forward in the 2012 Holloway ward by-election, where I only won the Labour party nomination by 1 vote to become a council candidate. It was difficult to gain the party nomination due to lack of a strong personal network within the party and competing with six other candidates who were better known and connected within the party. On election day, I won the seat by 57% of the electoral vote. Although this area has been a known Labour seat, it was a surprise that I was able to gain this majority in votes, which only happened once in the past in 1995. I attribute this win to my work within the local schools and community as well as it suggests that there is a desire in the community to see diversity and change within the local council.

I also became the UK's first Muslim refugee councillor. It was a piece of delightful news for many communities in Islington and across the UK, inspiring so many Somalis and others to both join the Labour party and become councillors in the UK. It also engaged communities in politics at a time when the Black Muslim community and youth needed to integrate and have a voice in local and national politics.

As a Black woman and Black Muslim mother, in public office, I see increasingly the challenges that the Black Muslim community and youth face on daily basis.

The Black community will continue to face numerous obstacles in trying to achieve parity, and the Black Muslim community will face additional barriers due to being historically ignored within the Muslim community and wider Black British community. This is a result of successive governments' lack of drive to understand the ethnic diversity within the Muslim communities in UK.

As a result, many Black Muslims feel excluded as a lot of times they don't see people like themselves holding public offices in the British government. This includes the Houses of Parliament and Lords, the London Assembly and most, if not all, local government and services.

As a Black young Somali Muslim woman in London, I felt caught in the confusing web of culture,

faith and race when it came to my identity. I was often told that 'I am not Black enough' by the Black community and 'not Muslim enough' by the wider Muslim community. It was difficult for both communities to understand the intersectionality of my identity as a Black Muslim woman. As someone who wears the *hijab* (headcover), it helped assert my identity as a Muslim and ease my acceptance by the Muslim community. However, there is still resistance due to being Black and not from the dominant Muslim ethnic groups in the UK.

This has become increasingly more apparent and concerning to me since I became a councillor in Islington Council in 2012. My identity seems to affect how I am perceived and treated professionally. Within local government, the intersectionality of my identity is often not perceived as representative of either the Muslim or Black communities; but more often as an anomaly and without categorisation. As a Black Muslim female councillor, my voice is often ignored, my views are not included and sometimes I felt bullied. Being a victim of unconscious bias is all too familiar.

When I became the first Muslim Black councillor in Islington, I realised the gravity of the marginalisation that the Black Muslim community faced in the council, which resulted in them having no voice in local matters. This was surprising considering the large population of Black Muslims in the local area. I started proposing ideas to reflect the diversity of the local community and their needs, rather than projects which did not reflect the aspiration of the local residents. This I believe would have saved the Council wasting resources and avoiding duplications of services. I encountered strong resistance to the ideas that I proposed. My ideas around advancing the local community enterprise were disregarded and never discussed in meetings. I then began to contemplate my role within the executive council team and decided to resign. It seemed that I was only included within this executive team to provide visual diversity and not to make a tangible change in the operations of the council.

I resumed my role as a backbencher so I can challenge and advocate for inclusivity, and community cohesion for residents. I realised the leadership was not interested in meaningful engagement other than advancing their political agenda, which leaves behind those who put us in power in the first place. Therefore, as a Muslim woman and local politician, I found it hard to sit back and watch as we all seek a sense of belonging, be it culturally, religiously, emotionally, or professionally.

I started asking myself this question, when I was working in schools a long time ago, "how can we tackle the sheer lack of political representation of Black Muslims in the UK?" As observed earlier, there are hardly any representations for Black Muslims and youths in our school system or local government. Young people growing up need to see people who look like them and they can identify with. This will encourage them to pursue a career in politics to empower and amplify the voices of our community.

While overcoming a number of hurdles to represent the people of Islington, there were times where I was excluded from decision making. In 2019, I was denied access to social media accounts of the Mayor by the Council Labour leadership. This was odd considering previous Mayors' had autonomous control over their contact with the local residents and utilised

these platforms for political gains. Additionally, I have been excluded from discussions where approvals for local events were revoked such as ‘Eid in the Park’ where approval was given initially. These are examples of how the Labour leadership team at Islington council have undermined my position as a Mayor. I represented Islington with graciousness throughout all my work as mayor and councillor. I concluded my year as Mayor, winning Portrait of Britain 2020 Competition, despite all the discrimination I faced inside Islington’s Labour Leadership.

An example of this is that at the end of my year as Mayor I was due to be given my mayoral badge in a ceremonial event by the Council Leader. I was informed by the council leadership team that this will not be the case and instead my mayoral badge will be delivered to me by my chauffeur. This contradicted the usual protocol for the council and was in line with the consistent mistreatment that I have experienced at the Council.

This is my personal experience in Islington council, which was quite traumatic for me and inflicted by the Labour council leader and his leadership team, both on a personal and professional level. It also demonstrates the wider experience of BAME and specifically the Black Muslim community in politics. In my experience, I find the Islington Council establishment has institutionalized discrimination against minorities like me.

I decided to join the Conservative party, which was not an easy decision to make. I decided to approach the Conservative party to make a political statement about the need for diversity of representation for the Muslim community, rather than relying on a single party to advance our interests. It became imperative to cross party as I have waited to see a meaningful change within the Labour party’s treatment of BAME colleagues.

I am quite aware of the Conservative party’s history of Islamophobia and discrimination. Yet, I have decided to join the party with the hope of driving change within the party. I also hope that this will encourage other Muslims and specifically Black Muslims to pursue their interest in politics without limiting themselves to a single party. This will also broaden their scope of influence within the society as voices like mine are needed in all political parties.

I want to stress that changing my political party has not changed my value in life or commitment to fairness and justice as a Muslim woman.

In other words, I think it is deceiving, misleading, and too dangerous democratically that the Muslim, Black and ethnic minority voices should be locked up to single political party. The Black Muslim community, which I belong to, are fairly new to political engagement in the UK. To tackle institutional racism, Islamophobia, inequality and discrimination, we should be seen in all the political parties in the UK as the future of our children’s prosperity depends on inclusivity of British society at every level.

COUNCILLOR RAKHIA ISMAIL

Cllr Rakhia Ismail is a multi award winning British Somali local politician in Islington, a committed grassroots community activist, and by profession fashion, textiles and shoe designer.

She is the mother of young adults, and got involved in politics through Arts in the community by giving a voice to the voiceless as arts speaks volumes, to engage and encourage voiceless communities. Rakhia is a natural campaigner for social justice, youth crime, inequality and brings attention to all kinds of inequalities. She is the first Somali female politician in the UK and became councillor at a time when the Somali community needed a voice in local government, London region, and nationally. As a result, she inspired many Somali females and other minorities in public office as well as the general public to engage in politics.

THE WRONG TYPE OF MUSLIM

BY COUNCILLOR SORAYA ADEJARE

No, I did not covert, no I am not a member of the Nation of Islam, no I did not marry a Muslim. Alongside always having to explain my ethnic heritage as a means of allowing others to feel I have a legitimate claim in describing myself as a Muslim, these are the answers to questions I am often faced with when, as a non hijab wearing Black woman, I profess my religion at public events. These are responses those of dominant Muslim groups never have to give and this in itself is a marker as to the issues Black Muslims face in this country. As a minority, there is a silence in respect of the intersectional issues which affect us, despite the fact that they are so visible at every tranche of representation, and within every organisation.

BACKGROUND

As evidenced in the last sermon[42] of Prophet Mohamed (PBUH[43]), equality and the demonstration of equality are a key Islamic tenet. The reality is that as a Black Muslim outside the parameters of Black nations, unconscious bias, and indeed institutional racism impacts upon the experience of those of us residing in the United Kingdom, at times making the concept of the worldwide community a distant one. As a British Muslim community we are beset with a racial hierarchies which we see dominate all positions, political or otherwise and across every social setting, these hierarchies excluding, by design or default, Black Muslims.

At every stage of my life, I have experienced a society which overlooks the contribution of Black Muslims, or indeed fails to adequately address the concept of inclusion, both within and outside of the British Muslim community. This began at the stage I began *madrassa*[44] where I entered a setting comprised, other than my family, of Muslims of South Asian heritage. Students had to be convinced I was a Muslim, and my treatment, and that of my siblings, at the hands of our tutors differed immensely solely as a direct result of our ethnicity. We were alienated with there being no compunction for those that led the school to create an inclusive setting. This even extended to sermons being undertaken in Urdu. This isolation has been reflected at every stage of my life from university and Muslim student organisations, through to my experience in a multitude of mosques. Yes, I do experience the hand of friendship and I take joy in the opening up of all mosques during Ramadan for community *iftars*[45] and other engagement activities, but my experience is such that I have found, there are some who retain the principle of an exclusive club, and my not being on the guest list.

IT'S ALL POLITICS

It goes without saying that our lives at every juncture are shaped by politics, whether soft or hard, and that within this tribalism is played out in our daily interactions. We see this occur in our places of work, educational institutions, the justice system, commerce, and yes, this extends to religious organisations of every persuasion. Without exception, bodies, irrespective of their function, are led by those who represent a majority group, and which largely represents the majority interests.

[44] Islamic education, often offered in the form of Sunday school

[45] Breaking of the fast, sometimes organised in communal environments

The Black Lives Matter movement has rightly brought to the fore the fact that Black people are subject to systemic racism in every section of society. This treatment affects everything from educational outcomes to employment opportunities, and everything in between. It is clear that majority interests often are exclusive albeit not necessarily intentionally. Nevertheless they result in oversights and an inability to address the needs of the minority.

As a Black Muslim working within the political sphere, the prejudice I have experienced in close quarters is replicated across this sector where there remains an hierarchy in respect of Muslim inclusion. On a fundamental basis, I have been overlooked when members of my party extend Eid greetings to my peers. Although a minor indiscretion, I can only imagine that as a Black Muslim who does not wear a hijab, it is difficult for some to retain a connection with my physicality and my religion.

Taking the concept of exclusion further, we always see elements of institutional racism rear its head in political selection processes, particularly within parliamentary selections. In respect of those who make the decisions, it can appear that they base them upon an unspoken algorithm which suggests Black Muslims will not generate the support those of Asian, Middle Eastern or Turkish heritage can expect. These communities are, without exception, the 'go tos' in respect of meeting the 'gold standard' of Muslim representation. These decisions, despite being applauded by many as we stand grateful for Muslim representation of any kind, are akin to colonialist approaches whereby subjective values are perpetually reproduced. Identity construction underpins the positioning of Black Muslims in this country, with the colour of our skin and ethnic heritage framing much of our experience. Ultimately, we do not fit the normal physical, or lingua franca, expectations of what it is to be a Muslim in mainstream society. The failures within parliamentary selections have to be seen in light of the fact that even in local government Black representation in general does not, in any local authority, reflect the makeup of the areas served.

As a member of a political party, I can say that although the 2019 elections saw an increase in Muslim representation, both in candidates and in securing parliamentary seats, the omission of Black Muslims passed without comment, other than among Black Muslims. Alongside every other political party no inroads were made whatsoever in terms of progression in respect of Black Muslims, nor were any attempts made to address this. This is a failure of both political parties and the approach of the Muslim collective, both of which overlook the importance of Black representation in all its forms. This has to be seen in light of Black communities' continuous calls for increased representation across the board, something which has not as yet been replicated by Muslim organisations in support of Black Muslims; undoubtedly, the question has to be, why?

In preparing for this submission, I took the step of looking up lists of those within the Muslim community considered worthy of recognition, or whose political appointments were considered significant in local government. I again discovered a clear emphasis on those of South Asian heritage. There are some within the Muslim community who will know the name of the first ever Muslim Mayor/Speaker, and the youngest ever Muslim Mayor/Speaker all of whom have been celebrated, but would they know the name of the first ever Black female or male Muslim Mayor/Speaker. They could hazard a guess, but I sense they would ultimately be wrong. Black, Muslim civic representation passed under the radar of the British Muslim community, the significance not being acknowledged or deemed worthy of recognition.

The terms of wider inclusion into political leadership or senior roles, are currently not part of an ongoing discussion. Instead, they remain fixed in advance in a somewhat linear way, placing limitations on who can and cannot enter this arena. While we can all cite teachings which outline the fact that we are all born equal and will die equal, within current systems the Black Muslim remains the subordinate.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, what should be overriding all of our actions as British Muslims is the primacy of equality and piety over racial hierarchies; in the political world this is far from a reality. Despite discrimination being prohibited in Islam, the reality is that the concept of *ummah*[46] still does not fully extend to the Black Muslim community in Britain.

Although, in tokenistic gestures, Black politicians are often included in conversations centred on anti-racism, the intersectional experience of the Black Muslim is, without exception, overlooked. After Christianity we are the second largest religious community in the country, and while we are all faced with the growing threat of Islamophobia, Black Muslims also face institutional racism perpetuated within our own community.

We are also a community with a young demographic and there is a need for us to collectively address the structural conditions we mimic and perpetuate, none of which have any basis in Islam. The hope lies in the discrimination Black Muslims experience being consigned to history; this extends beyond dialogue to actually implementing substantive actions ensuring we have a place at the table and voices which are heard. Although few in number, we have more Black Muslims holding political positions than ever before, and there is a need for them to ensure that the anti-racist agenda is furthered until such time that we are on equal footing.

The nature of our institutions is that they remain rooted in structures which appear to many Black Muslims as inaccessible. Many were understandably created by and for specific demographics during a time when we were all far more isolated. In lacking essential support from wider society we were led to have systems in place which promoted singular group interests and focussed on the needs of singular groups. Nevertheless, in much the same way that councils and other public institutions have recognised that they must comprehensively address institutional racism and resulting inequalities, there is a need for this to be replicated within organisations which represent the interests of Muslims.

It goes without saying that there is no system which has managed to overcome the hierarchies

[46] Defined as 'community.' A reference to a global 'community' of Muslims

it perpetuates. However social equality and equity underpins our faith and we must be at the forefront of ensuring this is fully realised. Within this, our institutions must make clear their commitment to an anti-racism agenda, inclusive of processes which allow full participation and representation at every level. Before this can happen a certain degree of introspection must be undertaken; if Black Muslims are not engaged, then clearly the modes of operation do not serve their needs.

Cross-pollination is a way of immediately breaking down barriers; one cannot truly understand the lived experience of others without gaining direct knowledge of their circumstances. As an umbrella organisation, the Muslim Council of Britain has at its disposal the means of initiating the types of cross denominational, and demographic, conversations which need to take place in order for us to begin to address the complexities of racial identity within our community.

COUNCILLOR SORAYA ADEJARE

Cllr Soraya Adejare is the child of German and Nigerian parents and, alongside 8 siblings, grew up in Hackney, where she now brings up her daughter Nafeesah.

Her background is in Communications, skills she transferred to the teaching profession latterly becoming a secondary English teacher. Having a commitment to the principles of equity and equality, she became a councillor in Hackney in 2014 and has represented the ward of Dalston throughout this period.

SECTION 3.9

RELIGION & COMMUNITY LIFE

Religion is the core of spirituality for many people. Muslims of all hues carry their religion with them wherever they go, because Islam is not just a religion. It is a way of life which combines the law with spirituality, the social with the economics, personal discipline with collective responsibility.

In this section, we take a brief overview of the journey of Islam inthe UK from the perspectives of the African and Black Caribbean Muslims as a community. Of course, decades before the Empire Windrush set sail, there were east African Muslim sailors and other Black Muslims who preceded them, Whose communities were not formed as they are today.

We gain insight into how Islam evolved within the Black communities especially in London from where it spread elsewhere in the UK. We also appreciate the various roles of mosques managed by the African communities play in interfaith and integrational activities, community building and personal development. They provide not only a spiritual centre, but a place for connection, a safe place for solace and support.

The Covid-19 pandemic of the year 2020 witnessed lockdown and a devastating impact on the mental and social wellbeing. Religious institutions including mosques played supportive roles to uplift spirits bright and retain hope.

Thus, the following is a snapshot of our community in the last 50 years in the UK.

THE BLACK MUSLIM PRESENCE IN BRITAIN

BY SHEIKH DANJUMA BIHARI

To consider the history of the Black Muslim presence in Britain, it is necessary to go back further than the Windrush. In the UK there were Black Muslim communities that ante-dated the arrival of African Caribbeans in the 1950s and 60s. Many were Somali seamen who settled in the port cities like Cardiff, from the early 1900s when Aden was occupied by the British controlling the southern gate of the Red Sea[47], as they controlled the northern gate where it meets the Mediterranean Sea by means of the Suez Canal. With the arrival of African Caribbeans who were nearly all Christian in confession, Muslim converts began to appear as early as the 1950s. These conversions were influenced by what was happening in other Afro-Diasporan communities in North America and in the Caribbean. Even before the Windrush, Caribbean emigration to North America, which had begun about 50 years earlier, would influence developments that would change the character of Afro-America which would in turn have an impact upon the UK's African Caribbean community throughout the second half of the twentieth century. In North America there was a discernible Caribbean contribution to the early heterodoxies that were to transmogrify into the Islam that is acceptable to the majority of the *ummah* today.

The spiritual search of the doubly-displaced has not proceeded in straight lines. Instead it has followed the warp and weft of the crisscrossing of the Atlantic - a journey of rediscovery and new beginnings. The double displacement of the African Caribbean, first through transAtlantic slavery and later, the Windrush to the UK, did find echoes in the migration of the African Americans of the southern states plantations to the factories of the north. Both communities of Afro-Diasporans shared the experience of 'the twice removed.' Many leaders of the early movements were the first generation offspring of African Caribbean migrants to North America. One of the foremost was Al Hajj Malik ash-Shabazz Omowale, better known as Malcolm X. And indeed the early movements such as the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam were influenced by pioneers of pan-Africanism like Marcus Mosiah Garvey from Jamaica. Garvey's motto 'One God, One Aim, One Destiny' is said to have been formalised after meetings with the Egypto-Sudanese journalist and pan Africanist, Duse' Mohammed Ali, whom he met while living in London (Arif, 2018).

Many of the African Caribbeans who came over to the UK with the Windrush would therefore have had family members already established in North America. Triangulated trans-Atlantic relationships would be responsible for disseminating forms of Islam, among other ideas, between North America, the UK, and the Caribbean.

> ***The spiritual search of the doubly-displaced has not proceeded in straight lines. Instead it has followed the warp and weft of the crisscrossing of the Atlantic - a journey of rediscovery and new beginnings.***

[47] Gillat-Ray, S and Mellor, J. (2012). Bila¯d al-Welsh (Land of the Welsh): Muslims in Cardiff, South Wales: past, present and future. Muslim World, 100, 452 - 475.

The first wave of Caribbean Muslims in the UK were attracted to Islam as much because of its discipline, as because of its potential to furnish them with an alternative to the identity that had been imposed on them through 300 years of chattel slavery. It was to provide a structure to the day as well as the week; it was to encourage disciplined, clean and healthy living, to eschew smoking, stimulants, strong drink, gambling and dissipation. Around this time - the sixties and the seventies - there were two religiously-based ideologies competing for the soul of Black Britain. The more dynamic of the two was the Rastafari Movement, which had its origins in the Jamaica of the 1930s; around the same time as the rise of the Nation of Islam in the US. Given its emotional proximity and more immediate relevance, the Rastafari movement was to prove irresistible, with its conspicuous symbolism and Bible-based ideology powered by the drum and bass of reggae music - not just to Black British community but to every class of British society, turning London into the reggae capital of the world.

Islam had to wait in the wings until a certain amount of disenchantment set in with what were perceived as the lax mores of some elements of the Rastafarian movement. Many of those who were to utter the shahada in the 70s were former Rastafarians.The most evocative example was of the two Jamaican brothers Abubakr and Omar, along with their cousin Sulayman. They had decided to land on the coast of West Africa, determined to walk barefoot, eastwards to Ethiopia, the soles of the feet never out of contact with African soil, in order 'to beard the lion in his den;' seeking out H.I.M Emperor Haile Selassie I, to ask him in person if he were truly God incarnate, the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah mentioned in the Book of Revelation.They had got no further than the Gambia when walking inland, they heard the *athaan*[48] emanating from several mosques in all directions. They entered, enthralled by the sound and no sooner had they lent an enquiring ear to the milling crowds of Mandinka Muslims than they converted to Islam. The Jamaican brothers returned with their cousin to the UK and Omar, who was to die of cancer a few years later, gave over his accommodation at #25, Bellefields Road, Brixton, to the early Caribbean convert community for use as a mosque. It was among the earliest, though by no means the first of the centres of worship established by the Caribbean convert community.

Many of the early brothers and sisters were influenced by Rastafari, others by the reverberations of the Nation of Islam in the person of Cassius Clay who, by the time of his visit to the UK, was already known as Muhammad Ali. Islam seemed to offer more structure and ordering; a contrast to the Bob Marley lyric (from the track 'Jamming') that seemed to have become the prevailing modus viviendi: 'Ain't no rules, ain't no vows; you can do it anyhow.' Many, like Saadullah, the first Caribbean convert to Islam on record, continued for a time to straddle both faiths. Saadullah Reefa of Trinidad had arrived here in 1956. Like many Windrushers seeking an identity in a hostile environment, he had come under the influence of Rastafari but not much later, perhaps 1958, he converted to Islam. Soon after, Saadullah took himself off to Egypt and the Levant, in particular occupied Palestine and Lebanon.

Meanwhile in the UK, as greater orthodoxy enveloped the Caribbean converts, first by dint of association with the UK's heritage communities, as well as Islamic missionary organisations

[48] Call to prayer

from Saudi Arabia, the ecumenical tendencies of some converts came under increasing pressure towards religious purification. Among the UK-based Caribbean convert community, Wahhabism had taken root and the Sufi orientation had become religio non grata; its dwindling adherents among the Naqshbandi tariqa or the Ansaaru Allah Jamaat -, the latter an African American sect that derived its inspiration from the Mahdi family and the Umma Party of the Sudan.

Three main centres were established around the same time: the one least-remembered was established near what was then the North Peckham Estate in south-east London. Perhaps the earliest one was Masjid Ar Ruju'a in North Kensington, where Saadullah was the 'amir' and Shaykh Salah Janneh the Imam. Shaykh Salah hailed from Sierra Leone. He had completed his Master's in Islamic studies in Saudi Arabia and was deputised to work among the converting communities of inner-city London.

The congregation of Masjid Ar Ruju'a was based in a squat, founded in approximately 1980, drawing congregants from the 'Frontline,' on All Saints Road. Located around the corner from the famous Mangrove Restaurant owned by Frank Crichlow, the mosque was near the heart of what was then a thriving Black British community. According to Abu Bakr James (2018) and author Ishmahil Blagrove, the mosque was on St Luke's Mews, catering to a largely African Caribbean congregation. Muhammad Khaja remembers the significance of the mosque for the community. "This mosque was a hub of support, cultural centre and empowerment of Black Muslims. They made good connections world-wide who supported their cause (Khaja, 2018)."

Though the mosque no longer exists, Blagrove (2021) highlights the role the mosque played in the larger Black British community around the Frontline in the early 1980s. For example, he refers to the manner in which congregants confronted growing drug use and gambling.

The community around the mosque disintegrated in the late 1980s, by which time, the ICM was created in Brixton partly with the help of civil rights activists like Linda Bellos.

Mention must also be made of African Muslims of heritage communities directly from the African continent. Unlike Pakistanis or Bangladeshis, African Muslims never settled in large enough concentrations to form distinct Muslim enclaves. With the possible exception of Yoruba Muslims in Southwark, the rest were dotted about London indistinguishable from their non-Muslim countrymen. Until the establishment of the Central Mosque in Regent's Park, London, they would often slip in and out of the masjids of the predominant heritage communities barely noticed. There were Sierra Leoneans, Gambians, Nigerians, Ugandans Sudanese, Somalis and Swahilis among the Muslims of the heritage African communities. Africans did also blend into the more numerous Caribbean population, sharing the common experiences of racism at the hands of the host society, and of anti-Blackness from the dominant Muslim community - to announce oneself as a Muslim, on top of everything else, was to add to pre-existing problems of underemployment and social exclusion.

The African Caribbean converts were different, however. Brash, flamboyant and fired with the zeal of the convert, they were to deliver salaams at the limit of the decibel level from the opposite side of the street, conspicuously kitted out in thobes, tea towels and skullcaps. Others sometimes emulated the Pakistani community by wearing the trademark *shalwar kameez*, which they no doubt adopted while visiting the Tablighi masjid in Dewsbury (Yorkshire) or the Markazi Mosque, which at the time was located on Christian Street, off Commercial Way in East London, the heart of the Bangladeshi community.

Until the establishment of the ICM in Brixton, the Caribbean Muslim community had remained largely disunited, with a tendency to assimilate into heritage communities wherever possible, in particular with the Moroccan community of Golborne Road, Ladbroke Grove. As numbers swelled through conversion, the ICM in Brixton attracted the attention of the first Caribbean graduates from Islamic universities in Saudi Arabia, and in time the original character of the community was to change, favouring the more puritanical expression typical of Saudi Arabia.

One symbolic change as a result of this hardening of attitudes was the departure of the Nigerian Imam Saadudeen Daniju. He was a Yoruba man and his community, mostly settled in the borough of Southwark not far away, had managed the purchase of a pub which they converted into a mosque known as the Nigerian Muslim community. Many of the Yoruba formerly associated with the ICM now gravitated towards the new mosque on the Old Kent Road, where the visiting professor Dr. Daud Noibi of Ibadan University was a frequent speaker.

The Sierra Leonean community meanwhile, had bought a building on the Brixton Road, again about two bus stops distance from the ICM (which was based on Gresham Road), where Shaykh Salah was invited to lead his community; an offer he accepted, given his increasing marginalisation with the change of management at the ICM. He was followed there by the Ghanaian shaykh Faisal Boadi of Islam Channel fame shortly afterwards.

The spread of Islam among the African and Caribbean communities from the late 1990s onwards is also a story of the children of the Windrush as middle-aged parents and grandparents. Their own children recognised no place as 'back home' ; they were Londoners, Brummies and Mancunians. The children of the African and African Caribbean communities drew closer together, growing up as they did, facing the same challenges of anti-Blackness and under-class status. Forgotten were the earlier days of hostility between the African and African Caribbean communities that had characterised the 1970s. Many young Africans, whose parents like the Congoloese who came from parts of the continent that were not traditionally Muslim would also gravitate towards Islam (like their Caribbean counterparts) usually under the influence of Rap and Hip Hop musical groups out of the US, many of whose headline members were Muslim.

Whereas in 1970s Black Britain a major incentive to conversion was the reclamation of racial identity, by the 1990s the emphasis had shifted. The next wave of converts were concerned with problems that were common to the mainstream metropolis - with anomie and existential angst; such as the social ills that had resulted from the inner-city gentrification that was taking

place alongside urban decay, reflecting the widening gulf, worldwide, between the rich few and the many impoverished. Muslim artistes, African American converts, from stand up comedians like Dave Chapelle to musicians like Yasin Bey were fast becoming the mouthpiece of this growing constituency and were to find the response to their call in the voice of London-based groups like Mecca2Medina.

Islam in Britain in the 1990s had begun to seem less and less the exclusive preserve of the South Asian Muslim communities. The character of Islam among the younger generation of South Asian Muslims had begun to change accordingly. This had as much to do with the interaction between the children of the newly-arrived heritage Muslim communities, mostly Arabic-speaking, from Algeria to Iraq, and the coming of age of the second generation of African Caribbeans, born Muslim in the UK. To this crucible must be factored in the changes that had started taking place in identity politics since the 1970s. During the 1970s the term 'Black' was a catch-all for non-white ethnic minorities, but as the respective communities settled in and planted permanent roots, each community began to assert its own distinct ethnic and religious identity.

The impact of this evolving Muslim mosaic in the western world, giving the younger generation the appearance of an 'ethnic' identity, was to prove attractive to the African Caribbeans who entered Islam in the 1990s. It would result in a diminution of the racialised element of the African Caribbean Islam of the seventies, and the blending in of young African Caribbeans with other Muslims to form the hyphenated identity 'British Muslim.'

SHEIKH DANJUMA BIHARI

Sheikh Danjuma Bihari studied History and Political science at UWI Trinidad, then Anthropology and Linguistics SOAS, London. Sheikh Danjuma worked for humanitarian organizations and as a teacher and lecturer in parts of Africa and the Middle East.

EXCLUSION, ADAPTATION, AND THE DIGITAL CONGREGATION

BY LAMINE KONATE

There are approximately 1,500 mosques in Britain (Graves 2020), many converted from cinemas, warehouses, churches among other structures (Saleem 2018). The Peckham High Street Mosque and Cultural Centre is unique in that it sits in a Victorian-era commercial building; it is also unique in its location on a high street, near a bus station, and a busy commercial area surrounded by groceries, the local library, pubs, and other shops. Its positioning on the busy urban landscape reflects its importance in the social fabric of the high street; partnering with two local charities, Citizens Advice and with Pecan, and responding to difficulties local people face, regardless of their faith. Like other communities of faith that adapted activities to online spaces, they have responded to the needs of the Londoners as well as to larger challenges like Covid 19 pandemic.

Established in 2009, the Mosque serves a diverse community of congregants. It was established by and still serves a West African community who have a shared linguistic and cultural heritage. The Jula speaking congregants include people of Malian, Guinean, Ivorian, and Senegalese heritage; but the mosque serves a much wider and diverse community including north African and Asian. Lamine Konate, Deputy Imam, and Secretary General of the African Ivorian Islamic Trust, explained that its doors are open to all, and while there is a Principle Imam, sheikhs and visitors are encouraged - if not requested - including individuals of Nigerian, Afghan, Pakistani, and Moroccan heritage. Before the pandemic of 2020, its capacity was about 150 people and played an important role in creating a sense of community. The mosque hosts a number of social integration activities including children's activities, madrassah, a women's support group, cultural education, and religious learning circles. Weddings and naming ceremonies among others are part of the services offered regularly.

The mosque is connected with national, local organisations and Southwark Council. It supports the work of Pecan, the community centre on Peckham high street that provides a food bank service. The mosque is also a member of national organisations such as the Muslim Council of Britain and Muslim Association of Britain (MAB). It supports the work of the local Council and has a partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

The way the congregation transitioned online seamlessly and quickly is an example of how many faith institutions and communities responded. Like other religious institutions, the mosque was deeply affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The mosque closed its doors on March 18th 2020 following government guidelines. The mosque management decided to utilise virtual communication software and continue to offer many of its social activities.

Online communication among mosque members began well bbefore Covid-19 pandemic and since the March 2020 lockdown, the congregation continued to reconstitute itself digitally. *Zikr* (recitation) as well as prayer was observed online; families were able to connect as they joined online activities together. Ramadan services carried on digitally as the whole community was connected and read the Quran together whilst sitting in their own homes. An average of 80 congregants signed in on Zoom. Lamine explains that the congregation had a form of online *jumua* (Friday Prayer) in which a *khutbah* (sermon) was delivered and congregants offered *zuhr* (mid-day prayer) on their own.

In addition, other activities and programs adapted to the online space. A nurse offered weekly workshops for women around health including mental health and depression. An advisory group was set up on WhatsApp that allowed congregation members to circulate advice around health. The mosque also set up a youth assembly, and during lockdown, set up events online. One example includes a seminar on Muslim youth in jail, attended by people all over UK.

A survey was carried out in the congregation, which indicated that as a result of the online activities, the Covid-19 has minimal impact on the congregants' wellbeing as they were occupied and engaged. This is particularly significant considering that one of the congregation members lost his life due to Covid-19.

Covid-19 has created a set of challenges, and exacerbated certain pre-existing ones. Lamine makes references to the issues faced by Black British youth such as isolation from the wider British community and sometimes living in one of the most deprived areas in the country. He noted that children in the Peckham High Street Mosque's congregation are no exception.

> *We know what's going on with youth especially when they're Black. There are a lot of problems. We had two teachers, we started a program to teach youth, especially those who are giving exams – for them to be ready. What I realised after Covid, was that Black and minority people are well behind in school. We don't want to let them down. One of the reasons is that we are French speaking – the first generation don't have experience on how to deal with homework. It's having a big impact on the children. One of the issues we are experiencing is that –we can't keep all of them away from the street because of the way they interact – family being very busy, because of low wages, long working hours, helping here and back home, it's impacting children. The lack of good jobs is impacting families and children. Most of the time they'll be staying outside, and the mosque can't take all of them on. This is the main reason we started the program for Muslim youth.*

Rather than feeling like they belong, Konate explains that Black Muslims feel like they are profiled and excluded from Muslim circles. As a result of the barriers to inclusion for Black Muslims, "the lack of opportunities (for Black Muslims within the wider Muslim community) has forced most of us to have our own Islamic centres and mosques." The formation of the Peckham mosque community itself was a response to addressing these issues as well as divisions within the Muslim community.

Mosques like the Peckham High Street Mosque are thus vitally important spaces for Black Muslims. "More than a house of worship, the mosque has a critical and authoritative role in the cultural and political life of Black Muslims, with immediate social implications in the life of Black Muslim communities in Southeast London."

LAMINE KONATE

Lamine Konate is a professional accountant specialising in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) since 2010 and now runs his own accountancy practice based in South London. He is currently the Secretary General of the African Ivorian Islamic Trust and the Deputy Imam of Peckham High Street Mosque.

Lamine is also a junior policy adviser to the Ivory Coast Embassy in London for international organisations and a financial analyst at the Department of Credit Institutions and External Finance (Treasury and Public Accounting). Lamine also serves as the Vice Chair of the Southwark Muslim Forum and works with the Southwark Interfaith forum. He also participates in the Southwark Faith and Health program in the borough and the funding project for Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital charity for the local community in Southwark and Lambeth.

MORE THAN A MOSQUE: HOW AN INSTITUTION CREATES COMMUNITY COHESION

BY IBRAHIM ADEWUSI

The Muslim Association of Nigeria (MAN UK) was established in 1961 by a group of Nigerian students in London. In 1991, the association bought and renovated a pub on Old Kent Road in Southwark and set up a fully functional mosque and Islamic cultural centre established to serve the local Muslim community. In the past 25 years since its establishment, the MAN UK/ Old Kent Road Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre has provided a welcoming space for all Muslims in London as well as the wider community in the London Borough of Southwark. The Centre caters to congregants who include indigenous British Muslims as well as migrants from Nigeria, Afghanistan, Algeria, Morocco, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ghana, Sierra-Leone, Somalia, Eritrea and the Caribbean. In addition to providing space for worship, the Centre also provides dedicated Islamic counselling, organises educational workshops and seminars, community and civic issues. The centre promotes social integration and organises youth engagement activities including supplementary education and Arabic and Islamic classes for children as well as adults.

The MAN UK/Old Kent Road Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre contributes to the enhancement of understanding amongst faith communities, in particular the London Borough of Southwark. The organisation is a member of the Southwark Multi-Faith Forum (SMFF). It participates in interfaith activities and coordinates school visits to the Centre to help to foster understanding of the religion of Islam, whilst dispelling myths or misconceptions.

In addition, the Centre has an important role to play in wider society. It runs outreach programmes and increasingly uses the Mosque's space to provide refuge for the homeless. Also, our Imams provide spiritual and pastoral care in many schools and prisons across London. Further, we continue to engage in local and national endeavours such as community involvement with the Southwark Muslim Forum, the National Council for the Welfare of the Muslim Prisoners, and Muslim Council of Britain.

THE NATURE OF COMMUNITY COHESION

Community cohesion describes the ability of all communities to function and grow in harmony together rather than in conflict. It is this spirit of cohesion that encapsulates and informs the activities of MAN UK/Old Kent Road Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre. Mr Alabi, who served as President of MAN UK/OKR Mosque from 2015-2019, commented in the most recent annual report that "the Centre has become not just a place of worship and spiritual upliftment but also a social hub where community engagement, development and empowerment of our members and the general community is the number one priority."[49]

In the past decades, the challenges faced by Black Muslims living in the United Kingdom include racial discrimination in both local communities and at the workplace. Black Muslims were less involved in civic activities within wider society, and an inability of individuals to harness opportunities for growth and community development.

The above issues inform the set-up of MAN UK/OKR Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre as a community institution. More so, these issues drive the institution's active involvement and commitment to the cause of community cohesion. It is the strong conviction of the MAN Centre leadership that active involvement in community cohesion would empower and also provide the leverage for its community development and growth. The expectation is that such active community engagement would deliver a community at peace with its neighbours whilst developing a sense of belonging, and active development of social and educational programs and activities to create awareness of and facilitate access of its community members to local and wider societal opportunities. Above all, the expectation is to provide institutional leverage for the recognition of Black Muslims' contribution to the local and wider societal developments.

As reported by the Department of Communities and Local Government (Local Government Association, 2004), the approach for the delivery of community cohesion is predicated on three ways of living together involving a shared future and sense of belonging; a focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity; and strong and positive and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.

Hence, the community cohesion activities being delivered by the MAN UK/Old Kent Road Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre includes collaboration with Southwark Council community engagement; working with faith communities; working with the police; providing social interaction; and services for older people and youth. Each of these activities is described below.

COMMUNITY COHESION IN PRACTICE

COLLABORATING WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Below are some ways the Centre initiates or collaborates on civic projects that encourage social cohesion and integration in London.

The organisation, MAN UK/Old Kent Road Mosque & Islamic Centre, is working collaboration with the Southwark Council Community Engagement at several levels. The collaboration includes participating in forums including Southwark Council Forum Meetings, Community Southwark Faith and Social Action Focus Group, the Faith and Community Assembly, the Southwark Interfaith Forum, and the Southwark Muslim Forum.

All of the collaboration has been made feasible by working closely with the team at Southwark Council Community Engagement. The collaborative activities were duly recognised and praised by the Minister for Faith and Communities Lord Bourne at the Department of Housing, Community and Local Government attendance at the Special Inter-Faith Twinning Program on the 19th of January 2018.

WORKING WITH FAITH COMMUNITIES

In working with the faith community, the organisation actively participates in and hosts the rotational meetings of Southwark Interfaith forum. The Centre hosted the Southwark Inter-

[49] See MAN UK/Old Kent Road Mosque. (2019). Annual Report 2016-2019 [available on request from MANUK].

Faith Youth and Children Speak Out event at the Old Kent Road Mosque, and collaborated regularly with the London Sustainability Exchange on delivering a Faith and Utilities workshop to learn about conserving energy and living more sustainably.

The mosque, during its Ramadan breaking of fast (*iftar*), hosted the Most Reverend & Right Honourable Justin Welby in 2018, civic and municipal leaders including Deputy Mayor of London, the Mayor of Southwark, and local councillors.

Also, in appreciation of the Centre's contribution to local interfaith relations, a certificate of recognition by the Faith & Belief Forum was awarded to its Deputy Imam Kazeem Fatai (Gbedemuke) as a Community Champion.

Figure 3: Ramadan Hosting: The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Reverend and Rt Hon Justin Welby (2018)

Figure 4: The Ramadan Iftar Hosting: The Archbishop of Canterbury and Rt Hon Justin Welby (2018)

WORKING WITH THE POLICE

The organisation is actively involved in tackling crime and collaborates with the Metropolitan Police on issues of community policing and other national issues on security and safety. For example, MAN UK/OKR Mosque have hosted workshops on gun and knife crimes, cybersecurity, as well as a 'Stay Safe' workshop aimed at protecting worshippers and premises from attacks.

PROVIDING SOCIAL INTERACTION

The Centre takes seriously the need to interact with the wider communities, both as individuals and as organisations. The management committee puts together social interaction events such as 'The Street Iftar' during Ramadan that attracted a cross-section of the residents of Southwark Borough on the 2nd of June 2018.

The Centre has an important role to play in education in the borough. For example, it hosted visits for students and faculty from the Southwark School and from the St Frances School. Another event the Centre collaborated on was the Lego Robotic Science workshop for children in association with Engineering Mind.

In addition to educational engagement, the Centre has a role to play in civil society. These collaborations include awareness workshops on Modern Day Slavery in partnership with Africans United Against Child Abuse (AFRUCA). There were other partnerships including one with LCC Studio and with the Football Association. Other forms of fostering broader civic engagement includes the role it played in the Visit My Mosque program, organised by the Muslim Council of Britain, with a cross-section of individual visitors from the neighbourhood and London.

In recognition of MAN UK as an organisation that caters to the Nigerian diaspora, His Royal Highness and Duchess of Cornwall invited the Centre for a celebration of British West African Communities on 24th October 2018.

As part of regular interaction with government as well as non-governmental stakeholders, local MP Neil Coyle paid a special solidarity visit in 2019 to express condolence on the New Zealand attack on Muslims and to reassure the community of support of the British government.
These examples demonstrate the various forms of the social interactions delivered by the organisation to improve individual's engagement in wider civic activities. It also exposes Black Muslims from our community to growth and development opportunities as well as better community integration.

Figure 5: MET Police at the Workshop on Gun & Knife Workshop (2018)

SERVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUTH

To reinforce the point that the MAN UK/OKR Mosque's activities with older people and youth demonstrate that the Centre is not just a mosque but an institution that builds community. The provision of services for the youth and elderly is a significant part of the MAN UK/Old Kent Road & Islamic Cultural Centre activities. Such collaboration includes Erasmus Plus Youth Exchange Project 'Together We Rise,' the MAN UK Youth food distribution to the Homeless, the annual MAN UK Elders Trips, and the annual MAN UK Elders recognition award programme. These programmes help to maintain the involvement of our youth and elderly in the organisation as well as stimulate and engage them in health and wellbeing activities.

Figure 6: The Street Ramadan Iftar (2018)

CONCLUSION: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN COHESION

The essence and benefit of the above community cohesion delivery at MAN UK/Old Kent Road Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre are to engender a common vision and shared sense of belonging for all groups in society. To ensure this aim is sustained, the MAN UK organisation is in agreement with the interfaith community on the need for increasing recognition of the importance of interfaith understanding and cooperation.[50] It is our view that this could be achieved through working to put interfaith engagement at the heart of local communities and national society. It is also the shared view that through the provision of support to interfaith groups, it can help increase mutual learning, dialogue and cooperation to achieve community cohesion.

[50] See The Interfaith Network (2020) What We Do - The Inter Faith Network (IFN). https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about

Muslim Association of Nigeria UK/Old Kent Road Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre is located is located in South East London and aims at supporting Muslims in the UK by providing a community space to reach out and help the most vulnerable.

It is a Mosque and registered Charity that offers variety of activities and events such as advice session on legal, housing and health matters, community engagement and educational opportunities, wellbeing and emotional support. Above all, it provides a safe place were Muslims can cultivate their faith while integrating it in the London multi faith and multi ethnic environment.

SECTION 3.10

SPORTS

This section details some of the experiences of Black Muslims within the sport sector in the UK. It is a starting point to understand some of the successes and barriers the Black Muslim community faces whilst trying to engage in sport. It includes Jawahir Roble's journey to becoming the UK's first female Muslim referee, the inspiration behind Black Muslim Women Bike initiative and its aim to shifting perspectives, and the ambitions of Sports Performance Academy to empower people through knowledge and exposure to careers in sports coaching.

FOOTBALL - MY DREAM, MY JOURNEY

BY JAWAHIR ROBLE

PURSUING MY PASSION

My journey begins in Somalia where I was born. When I was about the age of 4 or 5, I started to have a serious passion for football. I remember playing football within the neighbourhood, with mainly boys and a couple of girls. The civil war in Somalia escalated and my family had to flee to the UK. Here in the UK football is well organised. Both girls and boys are encouraged to play it, which was nice to see.

When I was in year 9, I tried to attend football trials and engage with professional football clubs. My family raised objections to pursuing a career in professional football. The main reason being it was culturally unacceptable for a girl to play football. My parents feared being shunned by the local Somali community. There was social pressure to conform as a female to a traditional image, which revolves around girls being encouraged to remain at home and help with domestic chores. Traditionally, football is seen as a boys' game.

At the time, a Black ex-England and Arsenal female player provided local coaching at my school. She advised me to attend an open trial with local teams. Back then, the pay for female players was low, which is why she was undertaking a second job as a coach in my school. This was a further reason for my parents to object to this career pathway.

One of the other main reasons my parents never wanted me to play football was that they were well aware of FIFA's ban on accessories, which was recently lifted in 2015. This rule prohibited Muslim girls from playing while wearing their *hijab*.

After finishing year 11, and during the first year of college I started to consider other avenues that would enable me to continue to engage with football. I discovered courses on coaching and started pursuing coaching qualifications. The prospect of coaching was not seen as problematic by my family. It seemed that it conformed to their ideas of how a female conducts herself outside the house, i.e. no running around.

The coaching role was seen as a support role and not heavily involved with on-field playing. From a clothing perspective, it was seen as a more compliant option to the religious coverings required from a female when compared to when playing in a football kit.

Following the completion of my coaching qualification in 2012, I was curious about how real life coaches do their jobs. I wanted to find out how things work in the training grounds and to ask questions to professional coaches. At a football academy, I secured an administrative role. It was not exactly what I wanted to do but it was a good starting point to gain insight into coaching. On a particular Saturday, the academy had a shortage in the number of referees present for a juniors' match. I was asked to fill in due to my knowledge and enthusiasm for the game; it was my first time experiencing the refereeing role. The parents of the juniors expressed gratitude. Although I felt confused at times and was unfamiliar with the role, it was a valuable experience for me and the gratitude of the juniors' parents made me feel a sense of accomplishment and happiness. It was an exciting experience that introduced me to refereeing. From then on, I was promoted into a refereeing role at the academy and was encouraged to undertake a refereeing course.

The course tutor spoke about refereeing in the Premier League, encouraging me to work hard and climb the corporate ladder. The Premier League is considered the highest level of professional football in the UK and it is my dream to referee a game in this league in the future. During my refereeing course, I began to realise that there is more to a football match when refereeing compared to participating as a player. Understanding of the atmosphere is needed to make the correct judgments and keep the peace on the pitch. Time keeping is important as well as reading the game. At my first time refereeing for a men's game I had taken my female cousin and sisters with me as backup. This was because I felt scared to go to a men's game alone. I doubted my ability to succeed and wanted to have a support network around me, who I can lean on during difficult moments in the match.

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY

Finding the right course was an important factor. I wanted to study sports science in university. But my parents encouraged me to keep football as a hobby and to attain professional qualifications in the university. A back-up plan for her future, they said. While studying in 2014, I had a part-time coaching role for a women's team. I was unhappy about the IT course that I was on so I ended up dropping out at the end of the second year. I had a dilemma on how to tell the parents about dropping out. I told my dad first as I felt that it was harder to tell my mum who I was afraid of disappointing. After having a heart-to-heart conversation with my dad about my career options, I negotiated focusing on a football related career.

I researched with my dad online and found a course in football coaching and management at UCFB Wembley. I applied and got accepted. It was the quickest three years of my life and I really enjoyed it. I was one of only two females on the course. Although a part of a small minority of BAME students, I felt like I belonged due to having a common goal of pursuing a career in football with my classmates. Being the only BAME student, it makes me happy at times because I was breaking the stereotypes and pursuing my dream. But more often it made me feel sad being the only one because I've met a lot of BAME girls, who are into sports but never took it to the next level and made it into a career.

Another potential barrier was that the course was expensive. This reduces accessibility to the course for people from low-socio economic backgrounds such as myself. I ended up working as a carer and continued coaching and multiple part time jobs to pay for the course.

GENDER, RACE, AND COMMUNITY

Currently, I coach my own team of females, made up of mostly BAME girls 4-16 years old. The team is part of a Football Association (FA) initiative to help increase the number of female players. The program itself is called 'WILDCATS.' My plan is to create a local league in the area, which caters to different ages and gives opportunity to the local girls to play football. This is important to me because when I was younger I had always wished that my parents had taken me to a similar environment where girls can play football freely. I set up this programme because I know how much benefit the girls will be gaining from it. Skills like discipline , teamwork, work ethic, and communication.

With my career, I tried to make football mine in the best way that I can, whilst bringing my family along and changing their perception of it. Through my experience I have developed my own style of playing football and refereeing that reflects my own personal values and I share that with those around me when I'm in my element.

My claim to fame came about when I was approached by a player who suggested that his father worked for a news article. The father ended up writing about my career as a referee. Through this article. I shared my values and my story with people so that they know who I am and where I'm heading. I hoped that it would encourage other girls from similar backgrounds to pursue a career in football.

There needs to be accessible role models of similar backgrounds that are celebrated to increase engagement of Black Muslim females in certain sectors. People need to know that there are others who are doing the work that they want to do. There are many unsung heroes within the the Black Muslim community that need to be highlighted and celebrated to inspire the next generation.

Not enough is being carried out by the big organisations to highlight the contribution of the BAME population in sport. Much work is still needed in this space to increase representation and inclusion. This is reflected by the small number of both female and male ethnic referees that are currently active within the game.

My family was instrumental in shaping my career through both their objections and their eventual support. I have had many successes within the field and hope that my shared experience can shed some light on the many barriers that I have faced. I think that the first and most difficult barrier to overcome is the objections raised by the Black Muslim community to females pursuing a career in sports. It is important that our communities begin to engage in a wider capacity with the sport sector and start to understand the challenges as well as the vast opportunities available to those who have a passion for the game. I hope that my story can positively change the community views and result in an increase in the number of Black Muslim females, who feel confident to pursue football just like me. The pathway that my school coach created for my generation is the same pathway I am trying to create for the next.

In my career, race and religion were never an apparent issue. It might be behind doors, which I was never exposed to. The spaces I've been a part of have always been accommodating. I was given special arrangements like my own changing room and the home team always asked me if I had a specific dietary requirement. I've been around the same clubs for so long, now they are accustomed to my requirements.

I had the privilege to travel to China, Spain, The Netherlands, Denmark and few other countries to referee and gain more experience. China was one of my favourite countries that I had visited because the people treated me so well and even at some point made me feel like a celebrity. They were not used to seeing Black people so they ended up taking pictures of me every time they saw me outside.

I think there is a lot of fear within the Muslim community and especially Muslim females being targeted by Far-right groups. However, I feel that everyone needs to have confidence and to aim to not show their fear in front of others and try to live their lives to the fullest by pursuing what they want. Personality and conduct matter more than just the image that people might have of you and will open doors for you.

In Somalia, I would automatically fit in. But in the UK, I have to work on myself to understand the UK culture and language and work to create a comfortable space for myself. Coming to the UK doesn't change my culture and heritage. I found ways to fit in by learning about the country and what is accepted without forsaking my values. Making a home for myself wherever I go.

With my career, I tried to make football mine in the best way that I can, whilst bringing my family along and changing their perception of it. Through my experience I have developed my own style of playing football and refereeing that reflects my own personal values and I share that with those around me when I'm in my element.

My claim to fame came about when I was approached by a player who suggested that his father worked for a news article. The father ended up writing about my career as a referee. I shared my story so that people know who I am and where I'm heading. I hoped that it would encourage other girls from similar backgrounds to pursue a career in football.

There needs to be accessible role models of similar backgrounds that are celebrated to increase engagement of Black Muslim females in certain sectors. People need to know that there are others who are doing the work that they want to do. There are many unsung heroes within the the Black Muslim community that need to be highlighted and celebrated to inspire the next generation.

Not enough is being carried out by the big organisations to highlight the contribution of the BAME population in sport. Much work is still needed in this space to increase representation and inclusion. This is reflected by the small number of both female and male ethnic referees that are currently active within the game.

With my career, I tried to make football mine in the best way that I can, whilst bringing my family along and changing their perception of it. Through my experience I have developed my own style of playing football and refereeing that reflects my own personal values and I share that with those around me when I'm in my element.

My family was instrumental in shaping my career through both their objections and their eventual support. I have had many successes within the field and hope that my shared experience can shed some light on the many barriers that I have faced. I think that the first and most difficult barrier to overcome is the objections raised by the Black Muslim community to females pursuing a career in sports. It is important that our communities begin to engage in a wider capacity with the sport sector and start to understand the challenges as well as the vast opportunities available to those who have a passion for the game. I hope that my story can positively change the community views and result in an increase in the number of Black Muslim females, who feel confident to pursue football just like me. The pathway that my school coach created for my generation is the same pathway I am trying to create for the next.

JAWAHIR ROBLE

Jawahir Roble is the UK's first female Muslim referee. She is a Somali-born British football player, coach and mentor. She has won several awards and has been featured on many national media platforms in the UK in her work to encourage and inspire girls into pursuing a career in football.

THRIVE

BY MUNEERA WILLIAMS

In the summer of 2014, my friend Nisa came to visit. She was living in Brooklyn, New York at the time and she embodied everything I wanted to be as a young 30-something Muslim woman. It is not that I wanted her job or her particular lifestyle and it's not like we had exactly the same outlook on life, but there was something about her that always made me feel refreshed. In hindsight, I think it was her dedication to thriving. This pursuit was not haphazard nor unintentional. Nisa purposefully made an effort to wake up every morning and feel good, she was attuned with how her skin felt, what her hair needed, the power of good people in one's life, the side effects of othering, based on race, gender and faith; and she sought to counter that. For myself, I had been waking up every day and just going through the motions, not really thinking about a happier mindful me. I had become used to bouts of anxiety, depression, and harmful thinking since my early teens, but that summer my body had had enough, I felt heavy and worn and was in need of a change. Nisa, the daughter of an Imam, was the first woman I met who had completed a triathlon. After much questioning she showed me how she started running using the Couch to 5K method, that summer was the summer I slowly introduced intentional wellbeing into my life.

Just under 6 years later and we are at the beginning of a global pandemic. I am sitting in a doctors surgery after ignoring letters from the doctor requesting me to book an appointment for almost a year now. I have been having severe knee pain for a while, and although I did not know the details I knew the result of the MRI scan that I had taken a year ago would result in me having to give up running. "It has taken me a year to come to terms with it," I explained to the doctor. Up until now running had been my go-to stress management, and here he was telling me I could no longer pursue it, and that's when I started cycling.

The Bristol to Bath Cycle Path is a 15-mile off-road cycle lane which was once an old railway route between the cities and is now one of the most popular railway cycling routes in the country (Wills, 2019). After I mastered cul de sacs, outgrew car parks and finished my free cycling lessons with Life Cycle Bristol, it was time to master said cycle path. My instructor and a neighbour prepared me with everything that I would need to know and wear. Gloves, because the first thing you will do if you fall off your bike is push out your hands to cushion the fall, helmet to protect my head of course, water and snacks, and glasses to protect my eyes from bugs, sun, wind, rain and any flying loose debris. The thing that they could not protect me from however is the overt feeling of difference as a result of the actions of other cyclists.

The unfortunate thing about privilege and prejudice, is that it is one of those really difficult things to prove, and the onus is always on the recipient to prove that the snigger, the look, the comment, or the laugh was insidious? This is how racism, sexism and every other form of hate-based -ism or phobia has been allowed to permeate society. There is no way that I can prove that it was because of my gender, race, faith or even size that I received all of the aforementioned when I rode on the cycle path on that day, but what I can say, is in talking to other Black and brown people, working-class people, women, and anyone of any intersection of the above, who has been cycling for longer than I have, they talked of an archetype of a white middle-class male that is heavily represented in cycling. As I was noticing this in my personal experiences, little did I know that there was a wider discussion going on about the

lack of representations and the exclusivity that saturates cycling. Whether it was women being excluded from cycling groups, or Black men being approached by police at the end of cycling routes and quizzed about "what they had been up to." A more overt example was during the heat of summer, the heat of lockdown, and the heat of tension due to the continued murder of Black people at the hands of authorities, people from all walks of life were declaring Black Lives Matter yet on prominent cycling platforms there were ongoing discussions about how cycling should be a Black Lives Matter Free zone.

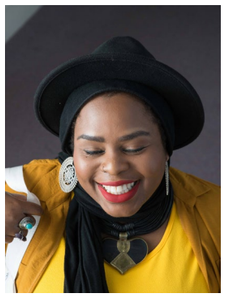
The idea that cycling was a safe space for middle-class white men alone was something that I wanted to challenge. The joy of cycling and inclusion in cycling is something that I wanted everyone to feel was accessible to them. That was one of the inspirations for Black Muslim Women Bike.

> ***Taking up space becomes essential due to the lack of representation of Muslims, of Black people, of women, of people of any intersection of the above and all the other people who are frequently overlooked within particular sports, outdoor activities and spaces of well being.***

Rather than it being exclusively for Black Muslim women, myself and my co-founder Sabah Soufi, realised those who are on the margin have the potential to make space for everyone if they decide to take up space themselves. As bell hooks said, "the margin is more than as a site of deprivation, it is the site of radical possibility." Once we set up the platform we began to meet other people further along on the journey of taking up space and reclaiming cycling. I say reclaiming because, for many of us, cycling was not something totally new. It was something that was a part of our childhood, yet somewhere between there and adulthood, cycling became a luxury and not just in terms of finance, but a cultural luxury. Cycling was a part of our history, many members of my family used to cycle throughout the hilly peaks of St Thomas Jamaica, with baskets full of vegetables like breadfruit, yam and green banana, delivering them to peoples houses. And then there are those who have always been cycling but have just never been represented.

My city, Bristol is fast becoming known as a cycling city, yet complaints of lack of diversity and representation, and lack of support for Black cyclists and cyclists of colour into mainstream clubs are conversations that are now being had. One of the main cycling organisations looking to push the agenda of cycling in the city has denied the relevance of this topic by saying the percentage of cyclists is in line with the diversity of the city. In other words, 'we are happy with the way things are currently, and therefore this is not a conversation that we will be having.'

Here we are in the era of fighting for the acceptance of Black lives to matter; not thrive, prosper, flourish or bloom, just matter. The state of existence is still a conversation, still an argument to be made, a debate to be had. This is why it becomes essential for all those on the perceived margins to take up space in areas outside of struggle and victimisation. Taking up space becomes essential due to the lack of representation of Muslims, of Black people, of women, of people of any intersection of the above and all the other people who are frequently overlooked within particular sports, outdoor activities and spaces of well being. It is a tool for resisting, existing and thriving. This becomes more than a pursuit of the individual, but an endeavour where the efforts of each individual go some way to the re-humanisation of the whole. This is not to say we are not human, nor is the individual tasked with 'saving the nation,' yet when the sight of a Black Muslim woman on a bike, on a cycle path, in cycling gear is an oddity to the extent that people are emboldened to, express "you don't belong, thriving is not afforded to you," This is the dehumanisation that we need to resist.



MUNEERA WILLIAMS

Muneera Williams @Blackmuslimwomenbike on instagram and some other women who are resisting and shifting perspectives Shazfit, Olly B, Asra Run Club, Zainab Alema, Asma Elbadawi, and @Abiir187 on Instagram.

SPORTS PERFORMANCE ACADEMY: AMBITIONS AND CURRENT WORK

BY AL-AMEEN AMODU

As a teenager, I worked as a sports coach in schools and local communities in south and east London whilst playing football semi-professionally. I loved sports and appreciated the structure it gave my life. My experience using sports as a way to engage young people and create community especially during lockdown demonstrated how vital it is for bringing people together, creating a sense of belonging, and supporting the aspirations of youth.

Sport and health were not primary topics in my community however. Whilst growing up and attending the Old Kent Road mosque, I noticed that sports, leisure and health was seldom addressed. There weren't regular events for people to partake in exercise nor was it a topic I ever heard addressed in a sermon. Even though the communities are changing, and the congregations are more aware of health issues and the importance of dedicated leisure time, there is much more work that needs to be done.

I've also noticed that the older generations from Muslim communities are not aware of the career prospects within the sports and leisure industry. This is what informs their decision to encourage their children away from this industry and solely focussed on the traditional STEM and humanities routes.

My passion for sports along with identifying a missing dimension of health in my community led me to start thinking about creating SPA. Sports Performance Academy (SPA) was born out of a passion for teaching, coaching and mentoring people whilst helping them improve in various aspects of life. The fulfilment I felt in helping others achieve their goals was incomparable.

Initially, I felt inexperienced and lacked credibility within the sport industry to start a new venture that has not been carried out before in this space. I had not seen or encountered another Black person, who was carrying out similar work to the scale I imagined in this field. The need to prove myself first as a Black professional weighed heavily on my mind as well as other obligations that I had.

These are similar challenges faced by many Black youth living throughout the UK, which are well known and documented. Black people as well as people from ethnic minorities are not afforded the same opportunities as their white counterparts within the UK. A report by the National Coaching Foundation (2018), describes the contrasting experiences of Black and Ethnic Minority (BAME) and white sports coaches. The report states that BAME individuals turn to coaching as a way to stay involved in sport and physical activities. Often their involvement is limited to local clubs and does not manifest into a professional career. In comparison, a white coach turns to coaching as a natural progression of their career as a professional sportsperson and often has the opportunity to continue coaching in a professional capacity. Additionally, BAME coaches cited lack of pay and progression in the profession as a major challenge despite being significantly more likely than white coaches to have formal qualifications at levels 3 & 4.

Though the odds were not in my favour, we managed to get some activities going.

In doing so, we at SPA have encountered many young people who feel disenfranchised and do not see a place for themselves within the 'normal path' to employment. For example, some attendees of our weekend football sessions have expressed their apprehension towards leaving school to attend further education, yet not knowing how they will proceed onto full time employment within sport. We feel we can help here by offering them alternative opportunities in fields such as coaching.

At Sport Performance Academy, we are creating an inclusive ecosystem that remedies societal issues experienced by many young people when pursuing a career in professional sport. SPA has two goals, one, to support young people's career aspirations in sports. Two, to provide employment opportunities in the sports industry. The second stream focuses on the specialist sports and exercise sessions provided to members of the communities.

A part of what I do is to generate opportunities to stay active while creating connections. Lockdown has had an especially adverse effect on youth and our communities. So during lockdown we created an online exercise class, with over 30 individuals regularly joining in with their families. The sessions have continued to date and continue to grow. Several testimonies were received from participants, expressing their happiness and perceived success from attending the sessions. It has been a pleasure to accompany these individuals on their journey of self-improvement. The class initially began with a group of friends, who attended the same mosque, exercising together and attendance started to increase due to recommendations by word of mouth. At the height of lockdown, the class was attended by Muslims, non-Muslims and people from various ethnic backgrounds and residing throughout the UK.

Also during lockdown, I frequented a local park to train, which I extended to a friend in keeping with government advice. Over time, locals have approached us to join our training session. These sessions have grown now to have over 20 regular participants, from mixed backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, genders and religions regularly training together.

As the sessions would end at sunset, the Muslim participants would offer *maghrib*[51] prayers within the park. Unbeknown to me, one of the participants was Muslim. Over time, upon seeing the group of Muslims praying, he was encouraged to join the group in prayer. This young participant, in particular is relatively new to the UK, does not have many friends here and is adjusting to life within the UK. However, he possesses an unquestionable love for sport and the youthful exuberance that comes along with young age. I have seen first-hand how football has allowed him to gel within a group, feel comfortable and develop personally. His communication skills have improved, as well as self-awareness, politeness and respect. It has

At Sport Performance Academy, we are creating an inclusive ecosystem that remedies societal issues experienced by many young people when pursuing a career in professional sport.

[51] Evening prayer at the time of sunset

> ***In widening the possible pathways for young people, we have observed how significant role models are. In the UK it appears that the only role models available for Black youth are footballers, musicians and entertainers.***

been interesting to witness how his attention has been focussed on playing sports, working within a team all within a safe space. These sessions have kept him focussed and away from the other trials faced by inner city youth.

In widening the possible pathways for young people, we have observed how significant role models are. In the UK it appears that the only role models available for Black youth are footballers, musicians and entertainers. Whilst in and of itself that may not necessarily be a bad thing, an effort should be made to expose the wider industry and show other potential career paths. For example, in football there are a multitude of careers related to the industry, from coaching, broadcasting to logistics. This information should be made more accessible to all.

Our pathway to achieving our goals has taken numerous revisions to our strategy. We have been able to build a community. Along the way, we have consistently reached out with the aim to be more inclusive. I believe the true challenge will be in making Sports Performance Academy accessible to wider society - not just Muslims but Londoners as a whole.

We have much to achieve, particularly in building relationships with institutions like colleges, councils, and NGBs. We want to correct the lack of representation of Black British people but also to expand the number of possibilities and aspirations for young people.

AL-AMEEN AMODU

Al-Ameen Amodu is a FA qualified football coach who has a passion for self development and helping others make the most of their talents. He has played football to a semi professional standard and trains in mixed martial arts. Professionally, Al-Ameen is a Business Analyst and mentors young people.

SECTION 4

LOOKING AHEAD: STRONGER CONNECTIONS

This section details conclusions and reflections from the essays on the lived experiences of the African and Black Caribbean Muslims in contemporary Britain. It also explores recommendations on three different levels; Muslim representatives and communal bodies, Muslim community spaces, and wider society.

CONCLUSION & REFLECTIONS

In a diverse collection of essays, we are privileged to have accounts and descriptions of the lived experiences of British Muslims of African and Black Caribbean heritage. Contributing authors come from a wide range of cultural, professional, and educational backgrounds. Their essays cover themes as varied as invisibility and marginality, space and opportunity, and finally history, and culture. These themes cut across a range of spheres in public life, British Muslim communities, and in the media.

British Muslims of African and Black Caribbean heritage represent an intersection between two identities. The collection of essays challenges society's perceptions of what a Muslim visibly looks like as well as what it means to be 'Black' and British. Authors in this report thus illustrate how established categories and discursive understanding must give way to new perspectives.

In this collection of essays, authors use various approaches to show how race as well as faith influence everyday life in public and community life in contemporary Britain. The essays draw our attention to these themes using examples and case studies, unfortunately many of which highlight cases of discrimination or structural racism in some places of work, public services and education, as well as some Muslim community spaces.

The first set of themes are invisibility and marginality. The presence of structural racism in some community institutions manifests itself in the guise of exclusion, and evokes notions of invisibility. Associated with invisibility is marginality, experienced in relation to management of, religious leadership as well as civic and political leadership.

In a second set of themes around space and opportunity, contributors referred to the lack of spaces and opportunities for Black Muslims with regard to education, business, and politics. The lack of a Black Muslim MP, and the dearth of head teachers and ownership of big businesses among others are presented as examples of how opportunities are limited for Black people in Britain. Several authors describe their efforts and challenges encountered in creating spaces that seek to unite Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds to collaborate and contribute positively together.

A third set of themes are around heritage, history, faith, and culture. Several contributors address the lack of resources and consequent invisibility of Black Muslims in the documentation of local community history. Some contributors point to the importance of documenting and archiving our history, thereby creating resources for posterity, and to change the narrative within British Muslim communities towards one of greater belonging and national identity. A number of contributors referred to the negative consequences of the dearth or absence of historical reference points for young Black Muslims.

This collection of essays reflects the effort and initiative of individuals who are striving to identify and transcend barriers. Each essay illustrates ways Black British Muslims analyse, innovate, transform, and contribute to their communities and indeed, to society. At the same time, bringing such a range of ideas and experienes together is an is an attempt at

representing a wide cross-section of their diverse experiences including in their communities, in their households and in their individuals lives, trials and tribulations, and with the hope that it how it can inform efforts to achieve stronger integration and community empowerment.

The essays are an important set of narratives from individuals who are leaders in their field, who remind us in powerful ways of our responsibilities to work towards equality of recognition, equality of outcomes, and equality of dignity across Muslim communities in Britain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Whilst this report consists of a collection of essays from a diverse range of contributors, each with their own suggested recommendations, the summary list below groups the recommendations into a number of cross-cutting themes.

It is hoped that these recommendations contribute to a more fulfilling, holistic and unifying experience of community life for British Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds, whilst being practical to deliver for those in positions of responsibility and leadership in our community institutions.

1 | MUSLIM REPRESENTATIVE AND COMMUNAL BODIES

A) LEADERSHIP TEAM DIVERSITY

Embed an awareness of the need to ensure an organisation's leadership team is not ethnically monolithic, but rather reflect the communities which you serve. Running leadership development programmes or training opportunities with an emphasis on outreaching to under-represented parts of the local community such as Black Muslims can also be an effective way of building your organisation's leadership talent pipeline in the medium-to-long term.

B) VISIBILITY IN THE MEDIA

Muslim in Britain are not all of South Asian heritage, and it is important that the media coverage of Muslim representative and communal bodies reflects this. This can include ensuring photos or videos on websites, social media or printed publications include a proportion of Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds. It can also include training and headlining individuals from under-represented ethnic backgrounds as media spokespersons, writers, event speakers / chairpersons or other public-facing roles. Engaging with independent media agencies and community groups run by Black Muslim individuals to tap into support networks can support with achieving this.

C) YEAR-ROUND ADVOCACY

Avoid limiting initiatives relating to Black Muslims to specific periods of the year such as Black History Month and ensure that the commitment to being a diverse and representative organisation spans the whole year. There also need to be an advocacy of cultural, linguistic and spiritual needs to reflect the diverse populations within Muslim communities.

2 | MUSLIM COMMUNITY SPACES: MOSQUES, SCHOOLS, CHARITIES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

A) LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Proactively reach out to members of congregations or local community from African or Black-Caribbean ethnic backgrounds to engage them as volunteers for events, attend committee meetings or apply for staff vacancies.

B) EDUCATIONAL CURRICULA

Incorporate Black Muslim role models and the history of Islam in Africa and the Caribbean into curricula in mainstream schools, madrasas and faith schools that will support the next generation to gain a greater appreciation of Islam's global diversity. Also in the context of recognising cultural differences within Muslim communities, but not to generalise or lump groups together, educational initiatives should emphasise that just as there is significant cultural and religious diversity of Muslim within South Asia or the Middle East, so too there is diversity between Muslims of African-Caribbean heritage, compared to those of West African or East African heritage for example.

C) SCHOLARS, IMAMS AND RELIGIOUS GUIDANCE

Training curricula for young Imams, scholars and other religious leaders should include modules on diversity and the history of Islam in Africa and the Caribbean. And when recruiting imams or religious leaders, mosque leaders should build in diversity awareness into recruitment, selection and training, as well as encouraging imams or religious leaders to deliver Friday sermons that engage the congregations in a sensitive way on topics related to bias, institutional racism and unity of Muslims across all ethnic backgrounds.

D) ANTI-RACISM AWARENESS AND TRAINING

Create opportunities for conversations and dialogue about tackling racist attitudes amongst some within Muslim communities by hosting training or awareness workshops on anti-Black racism and related topics. Another way to embed awareness is also to introduce diverse perspectives into regular events and programmes by for example, engaging with independent community groups led by Black Muslims to invite new speakers or writers for congregations or communities to benefit from their expertise and networks.

E) RESPONDING TO RACIST INCIDENTS

Ensure institutional Codes of Conduct for Volunteer and/or Staff is robust and accessible, and clearly includes statements that discriminatory or racist behaviour is unacceptable. In addition, be prepared for if or when incidents do happen, for example by ensuring there are clear complaints procedures that are accessible to local community and stakeholders, and which has strong senior leadership team support for its fair and impartial implementation in the event of receiving a complaint, in particular any complaints related to racism. Complaints should be treated seriously and as opportunities for your institution to learn and develop.

3 | WIDER SOCIETY, BUSINESSES, STATUTORY AGENCIES AND POLICY MAKERS

A) YOUTH SERVICE

There is a need to focus on young people, many of whom have African, Black Caribbean heritage and experience a number of challenges in education and employment as well as social mobility. This means advocating and working towards curriculum reform and teacher professional development to better prepare institutions to serve students of all backgrounds

including Black students. Another way to achieve it is through promoting youth work and youth services such as mentoring and supplementary schooling.

B) HEALTH

Highlights the need to investigate differential outcomes and advocate for fulfilling the diverse cultural needs of Black Muslim patients. Contributors refer to disparity in health outcomes which are alarming and must be resolved.

C) ECONOMY/BUSINESS

Discrimination in the access and award of business opportunities as well as in the formation of economic policies was also discussed by contributors with recommendation to include, create and provide unrestricted access to more opportunities for the Black community, whilst acknowledging and celebrating their contributions to the economic advancement of the British society. The recommendation was made for the creation of business networks to spur economic growth and development. Showing how the 'Black Pound' could help bring community and business owners together and support new Black-owned businesses that have little support.

D) POLICING

Writing on this, contributors emphasise the need to engage in advocacy and activism around the 'hostile environment' created by the state and policing. Stop and search and immigration policies have separated families and affected Black British people disproportionately.

View this report online at:
www.mcb.org.uk/report/race-faith-community-in-contemporary-britain/

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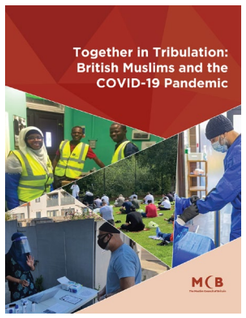

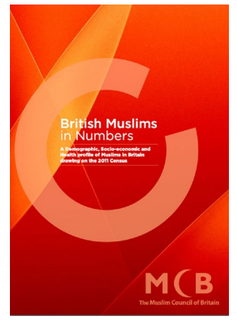

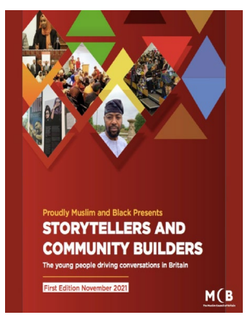

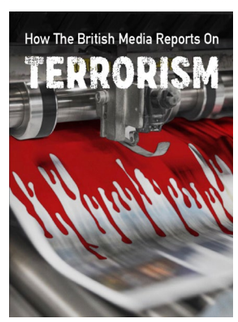

SECTION 5

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NOTES

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The Muslim Council of Britain
P.O Box 57330
London
E1 2WJ

www.mcb.org.uk
admin@mcb.org.uk

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