

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 experiences together 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.

