

RESEARCH

MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN

The research profile of the ‘Muslims in Britain’ unit has continued to develop. This year saw the publication of a report titled ‘Muslims in the Military: Broadening Diversity in the British Armed Forces’ funded by the British Academy. The report is the culmination of two and a half years of research by Dr Asma Mustafa. The research aims to better understand the low representation of British Muslims in the Armed Forces (Muslims make up 0.4% of the UK regular forces, compared to 5% of the general population). The research findings highlight attitudes among young British Muslim attitudes to a career in the Armed Forces and some of the reasons why these attitudes exist. Data were collected through interviews, focus group discussions and an online survey about career decision-making aimed at young British Muslims; and supported by in-depth interviews with British Muslim Armed Forces personnel. Recommendations are made regarding widening diversity in the Armed Forces.

A report by Professor Mark Halstead is near completion based on his project ‘Muslim Futures: A Study of Bradford’. The project was funded by the British Academy under their ‘Tackling the UK’s International Challenges’ programme with a particular focus on ‘Urban Futures’. The report is a detailed study of the city of Bradford and specifies several policy implications of the continuing growth of Muslim communities. The research included thirty interviews carried out in Bradford, London and three European cities (Rotterdam, Brussels and Marseille). The interviewees had knowledge and experience of the Muslim communities in these cities where they held decision-making roles, as local and national politicians, administrators and local community leaders; others were academics who had carried out previous research on Bradford.

The ‘Muslims in Britain’ Discussion group meetings continued throughout the Michaelmas and Hilary terms. The meetings were cross-disciplinary and students, researchers and academics were welcomed. After a short presentation by the main speaker, discussion among the attendees followed. The following topics were discussed:

- Dr Asma Mustafa, ‘Muslims in the Military: Broadening Diversity in the British Armed Forces’.
- Esmat Jaraj, ‘The Missing Muslims – Unlocking British Muslim Potential for the Benefit of All. The Report from the Citizens UK Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life’.
- Professor Masooda Bano, Brasenose College, ‘Changing Structure of Islamic Authority. New Islamic Knowledge Platforms in the West’.
- Dr Sadek Hamid, ‘Possible Futures. Muslims in Britain 20 Years from Now’.
- Dr Zafar Iqbal (Department of Media and Communication Studies, International Islamic University, Islamabad), ‘Islamophobia and its Dimensionalities’.

- Fahad Rahman (DPhil student), ‘Emerging Articulations of “Progressive” British Muslims’
- Farheen Ahmed (VP Welfare and Equal Opportunities, Oxford Student Union), ‘*Prevent*: Why Do So Many Students Oppose It in the UK?’

Both Professor Mark Halstead and Dr Asma Mustafa continued to publish on other areas of Muslims in Britain, as noted elsewhere in this Report. The Muslims in Britain unit also continues to prepare research grant applications on a broad range of topics, including ‘Islamic Virtue’, ‘British Muslim Identity’ and ‘Subjective Well-being’.