

International Conference:  
Religious Communities and Sustainable Development.  
Points of Departure for a Post-2030 Development Agenda  
08 – 11 June 2021

Safiyya Abdul-Mujib

Geography student at London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom

**How does Islam shape the environmental perceptions and practices of British Muslims?**

Studies indicate religion has an influential role in shaping underlying motivation for sustainable behaviours (Minton et al, 2014), attitudes to climate change (Morrison et al, 2015) and how climate change should be tackled (Hope and Jones, 2012). There are rich contributions from an Islamic lens to the emerging field of religion and environment and there is very little empirical research in understanding how Islamic environmental ethics manifests within Muslim communities. Such ethics are derived from the Qu'ran and sunnah (sayings and behaviours of the Prophet Muhammad). This paper explores accounts of lived experience of Muslims in Britain where Islam is a minority faith through ten semi-structured interviews with members of Islamic environmental groups, individual campaigners, as well as general Islamic organisations that are incorporating environmentally conscious practices. This is supplemented with participant observation of Muslim and interfaith environmental groups. Findings from this study suggest Islam can give deep and rich motivations for pro-environmental behaviours. Action tends to occur at a local scale, but the internet and social media are increasing international connections, thus rescaling networks at grassroots levels. While there is some awareness of Islamic environmental ethics, low levels of environmental literacy, perceptions of the environmental movement as exclusive, and socio-economic constraints are barriers to implementation. Women and converts to Islam play a prominent role while mosques and making links between environmental and social justice are seen as important ways of engaging Muslim communities.

Keywords: Islam, environmental ethics, Qu'ran, sunnah, minority faith, Britain