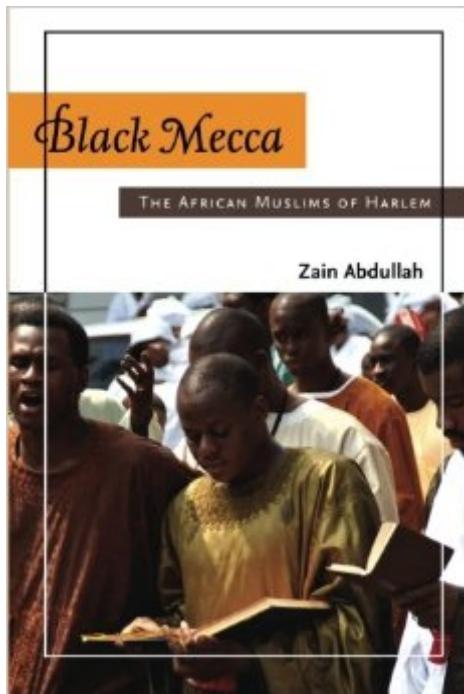


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# Black Mecca: The African Muslims Of Harlem



## **Synopsis**

The changes to U.S. immigration law that were instituted in 1965 have led to an influx of West African immigrants to New York, creating an enclave Harlem residents now call "Little Africa." These immigrants are immediately recognizable as African in their wide-sleeved robes and tasseled hats, but most native-born members of the community are unaware of the crucial role Islam plays in immigrants' lives. Zain Abdullah takes us inside the lives of these new immigrants and shows how they deal with being a double minority in a country where both blacks and Muslims are stigmatized. Dealing with this dual identity, Abdullah discovers, is extraordinarily complex. Some longtime residents embrace these immigrants and see their arrival as an opportunity to reclaim their African heritage, while others see the immigrants as scornful invaders. In turn, African immigrants often take a particularly harsh view of their new neighbors, buying into the worst stereotypes about American-born blacks being lazy and incorrigible. And while there has long been a large Muslim presence in Harlem, and residents often see Islam as a force for social good, African-born Muslims see their Islamic identity disregarded by most of their neighbors. Abdullah weaves together the stories of these African Muslims to paint a fascinating portrait of a community's efforts to carve out space for itself in a new country.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Black Mecca -Is a captivating and fascinating look into the the rich and variegated lives of the Senegalese community of Harlem.Dr.Abdullah true to his Anthropological erudition and pedagogical professionalism:provides an intimate account and insider's perspective on the complexity,

spirituality, and continental duality of this ethnic enclave and their cultural and religious juxtaposition with the long suffering non-immigrant 'Black Community' of Harlem; whose subculture, linguistic and sartorial expressionism has defined the concept of 'blackness' and the perception of Harlem to white Americans, Europeans and Asians for decades. For anyone who believes or thinks that the 'Black community' of Harlem is culturally monolithic ,spiritually and religiously rooted in Judeo-Christian beliefs and practices then reading Black Mecca is a must!! I highly recommend Dr. Abdullah's book to elementary,high school teachers and college professors that are teaching courses on contemporary black studies and urban sociology to incorporate Black Mecca into their lesson plans and required reading list.

Excellent reader! Two thumbs up! Thought provoking and very insightful. Taking you on a journey into a captivating and fascinating look into the the rich and variegated lives of the Senegalese community.Wajeedah Mohammad

Black Mecca is an insightful narrative of the Muslim experience in America.Dr. Abdullah uses his skillful knowledge of neighborhoods and people to tell elegant stories of success and struggles with substantial detail to illuminate the differences and strengths of Islam in America. In particular I found interesting his insight on the relationship between African Americans and African Muslims. I was appreciative of the clear language and impressed with the laborious task of documenting the growth of an important culture and people in the American tapestry.Insha'Allah the book will open the eyes to all people to see the beauty and talent of the African Muslims such that their journey is unfettered by bigotry and allowed to achieve the American dream with dignity.

I found this book extremely thought provoking, informative and interesting. Personally, I've never thought much about the dynamics of the muslim community and their quest to feel that they've become infused in their community as a whole part and not as a fractured piece. I guess we're all just living to survive and accomplish our own goals that the plight of others is not often considered. This book opened my eyes to another aspect of our society. Not the usual societal pitfalls i.e. hunger, homelessness and the over abundance of health issues. Great work!!

Starting in the 1960's through September 2011, the palate of the American public has been over-saturated with predominately two types of Islamic ideologies: the Nation of Islam and the Arab cultural Islam. Black Mecca, written by Dr. Zain Abdullah, gives insight into a wider, more robust

pictorial of the Islamic religion. Black Mecca gives a firsthand account of present day life for both African immigrants and Afro Americans in the Harlem community. This documented account of the personal lives and behind the scenes views of their daily challenges gives the reader a preview of what will become the new Harlem community. The new Harlem renaissance will be a mixture of this multicultural, linguistic, and bicoastal dynamic outlined in the pages of this great work, Black Mecca. I advise all educators, ethnic historians, and anyone else interested in where American culture is headed to read this book.

Black Mecca: The African Muslims of Harlem, is a very interesting and intimate look inside an African Muslims community. Dr. Abdullah's book welcomed me into a world within a world. It took me on a compelling journey through the lives of several individuals. I became personally connected to them while sharing their everyday blessings, shortcomings and some of their cultural traditions. In the second chapter, I found myself in a sixty-foot, single-cabin catamaran on a journey across the Atlantic with fourteen Senegalese men bound for New York. I really enjoyed reading this book and found it hard to put down once I started the journey.

Black Mecca gave an interesting perspective on how African Immigrant Muslims perceive America to be. The sacrifices, struggle's and faith of the African Muslims are well documented by Dr. Abdullah. The American Dream at times was/is a nightmare. But the dream is more promising than the perception of home. The book is a great read in helping one to understand the importance of culture, traditions, faith and community of immigrant African Muslims trying to be successful in Harlem USA.

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