



CONFERENCE REPORT

Muslim chaplaincy in Europe and North America

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Introduction: background and conference objective

Prof Dr Bekim Agai Director of the AIWG/Goethe University Frankfurt

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The recent rise of interest in issues concerning the religion and social life of Muslims in Europe and North America has generated questions about 'Muslim chaplaincy'. Today, these questions are debated not only within the context of different public institutions, but also in the sphere of politics as well as in the Muslim communities. On the public level, expectations regarding the work of the small number of Muslim chaplains are strongly shaped by experiences with churches, whereas the discussion within the Muslim community is largely centred on two main questions: Does the concept of chaplaincy or spiritual care appear in the history of Islamic thought? Can its existence or use be justified within the Islamic tradition, or are they incompatible?

Experiences with Muslim chaplaincy are currently made on the level of civil society by local initiatives that offer their services to hospitals, at universities or in prisons. There are also university-level chairs for Applied Ethics/Islamic Normativity, which are tasked with developing knowledge with regard to Islam and religious care. Furthermore, the political sphere is paying more attention to this issue, appealing to Muslim institutions and universities to train and make chaplains available to public institutions.

Still missing, however, is a dialogue between the different actors: a critical discussion regarding the content and concepts of chaplaincy within Muslim communities and a debate about the roles that secular universities and Islamic associations can play.

Yet, these two fields—practical expertise and university knowledge—are so disconnected that those working in them remain unaware of the knowledge and data that they each generate. This mutual lack of awareness greatly inhibits their respective abilities to help one another and to effectively deal with or even resolve urgent matters and questions connected with modern life.

The Academy for Islam in Research and Society (AIWG) operates as the hub connecting all the relevant institutions that serve the production of a well-founded Islamic knowledge both inside and outside the universities. In other words, our aim is to stimulate sustainable solutions to current questions connected with Muslim life and religion in Germany and in its neighbour countries.

The AIWG Office is located at the Goethe University Frankfurt. All 10 of the existing departments of Islamic-Theological Studies at German universities are members of the AIWG and have representatives serving on the Academy Board, which also includes members from related disciplines and experts from Muslim civil society. The Academy is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Stiftung Mercator.

Within the context of the 2019 AIWG-International Conference, we aimed at bringing together academic and fieldwork experts on an international scale, to discuss the development of Muslim chaplaincy as a recent facet of social commitment and integration of Muslims in their societies. Given that Muslim chaplaincy is currently being discussed, taught and developed in different countries under similar yet different circumstances, we wanted to look beyond Germany to countries that have undergone similar developments when it comes to Muslim chaplaincy within a secular social context.

The aim of this conference report is to offer some insight into key questions. It briefly mentions several highlights and findings that emerged over the course of the three days. We would like to thank all the participants for their contributions to and their cooperation at the conference and hereafter.

Finally, we have to thank our Federal Foreign Office for supporting the AIWG International Programme in 2018/2019 and for funding this conference.

Exploring Muslim chaplaincy: an overview of the conference

Benedikt Körner AIWG, Goethe University Frankfurt

From 22 – 24 January 2019, 33 specialists from eleven nations came together in Frankfurt (Germany) to attend the conference “Muslim Chaplaincy. A resource for social welfare?” As the starting point for a conference series titled ‘International view on Islam in research and society’, it was organised by the Academy for Islam in Research and Society (AIWG) at the Goethe University Frankfurt. Bringing together academics and experts in fieldwork from Germany, Europe and North America, the conference provided a three-day platform to explore the topic of ‘Muslim chaplaincy’ from different angles. Theological approaches as well as sociological issues and case examples were discussed by assembling academic and practical knowledge.



Extensive debates at the Workshops on Muslim Chaplaincy.

After the keynote speakers dealt with the theological and sociological backgrounds of Muslim chaplaincy, the overviews about the status and situation of Muslim chaplaincy in six different countries were presented.

Workshops on three main fields of Muslim chaplaincy in public institutions also took place within the context of the conference and gave participants an opportunity to exchange views and experiences: Deep insights into the work with Muslims in the fields of prison, military and healthcare chaplaincy were gained.

In a public discussion debating Muslim chaplaincy as an ‘emerging profession’, specialists from different disciplines came together to talk about the future prospects of Muslim chaplaincy as well as illuminate the challenges and opportunities: Ingrid Mattson from Canada, Irene Becci from Switzerland, Ataullah Siddiqui from Great Britain, and Niels Valdemar Vinding from Denmark.

The programme was also enriched by short but substantial lectures, e.g. on the theological background for a Muslim chaplaincy rooted in the Islamic tradition, and an interview conducted with the head

chaplain of the British Armed Forces, Asim Hafiz.

The conference took place in English, and the documents distributed to the participants included a conference programme, a profile sheet of the participants and an information sheet on the Academy of Islam in Research and Society at the Goethe University Frankfurt. ▀

KEY QUESTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE:

- From an Islamic-theological perspective: How do Islamic scholars approach chaplaincy / spiritual care as it is currently conceived with regard to Islamic tradition and sources?
- What is the status of the developments relating to Muslim chaplaincy in the areas of healthcare, prison, and military in different countries?
- What are the challenges or questions that arise in conjunction with the implementation of Muslim chaplaincy and how might they be addressed?
- What can we learn from the different experiences in various contexts?
- How are the training, education and the qualification of Muslim chaplains being conceptualised and organised in different countries?
- With regard to the future of Islam in Europe and the USA, can social commitment and chaplaincy be understood as an approach to a deeper rooting of Muslim minorities in their societies and as a contribution by Muslims to their welfare systems?



»In the last decades, Islam has gained relevance in most of the European countries. The number of Muslims living in European countries is growing, and new challenges arise relating to the recognition and accommodation of their rights. The historical state-church agreements need to be revised within a context of religious pluralisation, and public institutions have to adapt to the needs of the new populations. These challenges are especially pressing due to the climate of political populism, economic crises and terrorism, which favour the growth of Islamophobia but also the feeling of exclusion experienced by the Muslim population in many European countries. The development of Muslim chaplaincy, along with other policies aimed at the recognition and inclusion of the Muslim population, is not only key to fostering the advancement of religious rights for Muslims, but also serves as a means for Muslim communities to articulate themselves and their relationship with state institutions.«

Prof Dr Maria Del Mar Griera



You get what you pay for: Muslim chaplaincy in European national contexts



Inger Furseth, Bekim Agai, and Ataullah Siddiqui (from left to right) discussing the sociological and theological dimensions of Muslim chaplaincy.

Erkin Calisir AIWG, Goethe University Frankfurt

The comparative view of the Muslim population and chaplaincy in various European countries reveals—on the basis of six state-based overviews—the different stages of development and recurring challenges in several parts of Europe. The overviews were presented for Germany (Cemil Sahinöz), Ireland (Umar Al-Qadri), Switzerland (Andrea Lang), Spain (Maria del Mar Griera), Denmark (Niels Valdemar Vinding), and the Netherlands (Mustafa Bulut). Overall, the presentations reflect the rather short history of Muslim communities in Europe and show that in most of the countries the development of Muslim chaplaincy is still at an early stage. In the following pages, Erkin Calisir will summarise the most relevant information.

In the opening keynote address, Prof Inger Furseth highlighted the fact that the legal and institutional frameworks in each country have a significant effect on the development and the form of Muslim chaplaincy—defining both opportunities and restrictions. In particular, the country-specific history of Muslim religion or the different regulations governing the church-state relations continue to define the specific possibility and mode of Muslim chaplaincy. Accordingly, different ways and stages of development can be observed by comparing the country-specific presentations during the conference.

In contrast to many other countries, the Netherlands, for example, has made visible efforts to institutionalise and professionalise the process of Muslim chaplaincy. As for the German and Danish situations, both countries still show a lack of organisation regarding chaplaincy in their Muslim communities. As a result, the need for an umbrella organisation to set up general standards, mechanisms for quality control as well as education and training programmes for chaplains in different areas around the country was emphasised. In Denmark, Ireland and Spain, however, different types of associations were established early on in order to facilitate cooperation with Muslim communities and to maintain the professional work performed by chaplains.

Moreover, while some European countries have specific laws ensuring that chaplains are working in different state facilities, e.g. in prisons, hospitals, the military, or universities, other countries do not. In particular, the Swiss and Spanish governments are more active than others in providing the legal and practical conditions for Muslim communities and Muslim chaplaincy, so that they can provide their services in various state facilities. Germany, in contrast, is still searching for suitable concepts and institutional partners, and Denmark's security agenda has had an inhibiting effect on the development of Muslim chaplaincy.

Funding, training and supervision of Muslim chaplains turned out to be key points of interest that are being discussed or resolved in different ways: Germany, Spain, Ireland and Switzerland, for instance, have recently established post-graduate study programmes or training institutions to offer a standardised education in Muslim

chaplaincy. Meanwhile, the Netherlands has established Master's programmes at three different universities.

Most of the conference participants underlined the significance and need of this spiritual service for Muslims in order to address the increasing religious requirements of European Muslims today, similar to the established and widespread services available to other religious groups. Finally, the question of funding and remuneration of Muslim chaplains remains open. In this respect, Niels Valdemar Vinding aptly summed up the situation in one simple phrase: 'You get what you pay for'. In other words, a well-financed sector of Muslim chaplaincy is essential in order to achieve a professional and successful social service. ■



»It is important that Muslim chaplains are properly trained to work in public institutions, with an emphasis on care, not just religious practices/theology. It is also important to train local Imams/chaplains, and not just import people, in order to care for people who are born and raised locally.«

Prof Dr Inger Furseth

Germany

Approximately five million Muslims of various ethnic groups live and work in Germany today. Muslims with Turkish origins comprise the largest nationality-based ethnic community. Due to the growth of the Muslim population, the demand for chaplaincy in various sectors, e.g. healthcare and prison, continues to increase. Whether we are talking about individual health and psychological issues of the 'guest worker' generation that arrived in 1960–70s or much earlier than the recently arrived refugees, there is clearly a need for social workers and chaplains capable of dealing with different cultural and religious backgrounds. Meanwhile, the deficiency in health and psychological chaplaincy in Germany is remarkable: currently, different Islamic associations, the German government, and church-related institutions offer various forms of Muslim chaplaincy in 119 districts or cities throughout Germany (see figure). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of professional and standardised training for Muslim chaplaincy. In its third term in the year 2014, the German Islam Conference (Deutsche Islam Konferenz – DIK), organised by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, made this a major issue of discussion with Islamic organisations and experts. As a result, different institutions adopted measures and took steps to face current challenges in the field of Muslim chaplaincy in Germany. According to Cemil Sahinöz, full-time chaplains are required to replace the voluntary workers. Therefore, an umbrella organisation shaped by Islamic associations that can monitor Muslim chaplaincy using commonly accepted standards and be held accountable should be established. ■



»For migrants who have been working hard for years, this may lead to disabilities and long-term care. Given the living conditions of the elderly, there is a big need for spiritual care and social welfare. Therefore, in many areas, professional facilities and trainings for appropriate personnel in dealing with the special needs and circumstances of Muslim elderly people become necessary.«

Prof Dr Jörg Imran Schröter

Areas of Work for Muslim Chaplains in Germany

Fields of work for Muslim Chaplains	Number of Muslim Chaplains
Hospital	44
Emergency	17
Prison	45
Telephone service	3
Seniors	4
Asylum	2
Psychiatry	2
Community	2
Military	0
Online	0
Total	119

119 Muslim chaplains in Germany work in eight different areas. Source: Cemil Sahinöz.

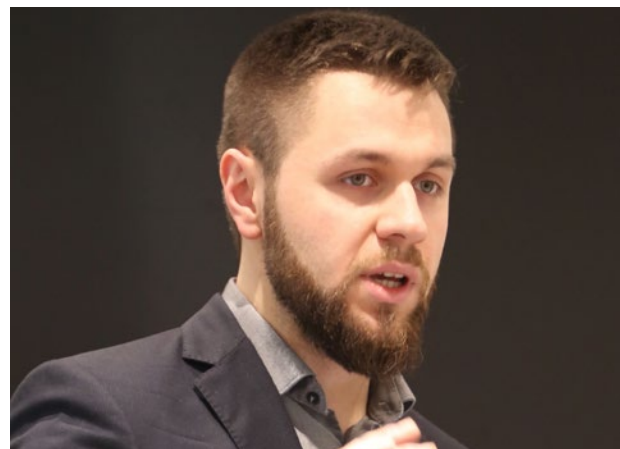
Ireland

The Muslim community in Ireland has a rather young history compared to other European countries. Although the first Muslims came from South Africa in the 1950s, the development and growth of the Muslim community began at the beginning of the 1980s. The first Mosque was built in Dublin in 1983 and since then, the Muslim community has grown steadily. Today, they make up the third-largest religious group with 1.3% of the Irish population. Due to the relatively young history of Muslims in Ireland, public institutions have not yet recognised the importance and growing need for Muslim chaplains. Yet, spiritual care for Muslims as a topic is increasingly gaining public attention. Moreover, the Islamic Centre of Ireland is paying more and more attention to questions regarding the development of Muslim chaplaincy in different fields. It offers, for example, specific information for public institutions, including hospitals, prisons, and universities, and explains the religious needs of Muslims, and how to address them. Furthermore, it developed the training of chaplains for community work and a methodology for assessing the services provided. ▀

Muslim Population in Ireland



The Muslim population in Ireland is growing steadily. Source: Umar al-Qadri.



»Under certain circumstances, Muslim chaplaincy can offer a very unique kind of care in every environment willing to give it a try. One central aspect is the assurance of confidentiality. Besides the special way of reflection in a religious way and the fulfilment of religious needs in different institutions, the possibility of a totally free space for sharing fears, beliefs and more, must be given. I think that many important needs have already been mentioned at the conference.«

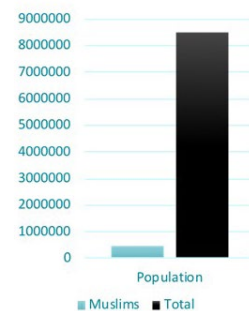
Dzemal Sibljakovic

Switzerland

Muslims in Switzerland make up 5.5% of the total population today. According to current studies, nearly 60% of the respondents describe themselves as religious, with a high level of endorsement among young Muslims for a secular society. With regard to the implementation of pastoral care, the cantons of the Swiss state bear the responsibility for the regulation of chaplaincy in public institutions, with two exceptions: The military and asylum chaplaincy are in the hands of the Swiss government, in close cooperation with the cantons. Currently, Muslim chaplaincy is mainly organised on a demand basis, resulting in significant disparity among the different cantons and regions regarding the levels and approach toward the implementation of Muslim chaplaincy. For instance, the Geneva University Hospital (HUG) has maintained a partnership with the Muslim Chaplain Association (AAM) since 2006, and it provides the services of volunteer Muslim chaplains. The canton Zurich, however, employs one full-time and two part-time chaplains who offer their services to Muslims in prison and in the asylum centre since 2017 (see table). The 'Quality assurance of Muslim chaplaincy in public institutions' (QuaMS) was also established in the canton of Zurich in the same year. Since 2016, new academic research projects and training programmes have been initiated in order to outline the need for Muslim chaplains and to develop educational concepts for them. Although some steps are being taken in different areas of the country, the development of an education and supervision programme, the institutionalisation of this field of work and the professionalisation of Muslim chaplains still have to be addressed in the coming years. ■

Switzerland: Muslim Chaplains in Public Institutions			
Canton	Institution	Number of Professional Chaplains	Since
Geneva	Partnership agreement between the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG) & Muslim Chaplain Association (AAM)	N/A volunteers	2006
Zurich	Prison JVA Pöschwies	1 full-time	2017
Zurich	Asylum Centre Juch	2 part-time	2017
St. Gallen	Cantonal Hospital	7 volunteers	2017

Population



Currently, only one full-time Muslim chaplain is employed in Switzerland.

Muslim population makes up 5.5% of total population.
Source: Andrea Lang.

Spain

The history of Muslims in Spain dates back to the early medieval age when Arabs ruled over the Iberian Peninsula from the eighth until the thirteenth century. Taking into account the long history of Spanish Muslims, the government enacted the “Cooperation Agreement Between the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain” in 1992 that regulates the religious rights of Muslims. Today, two million Muslims live mainly in the urban regions, e.g. Catalonia, Madrid, Seville or Bilbao. The agreement guarantees the right of spiritual support in public institutions, for example, in prisons, hospitals or the military. However, after the law was ratified, it took another 12 years before any kind of initiatives or specific measures were actually implemented in these institutions. In 2004, another agreement was established to organise and finance Muslim chaplaincy in prisons, hospitals and in the military. Within the last two years, a number of different actions have been taken to institutionalise and professionalise the work of Muslim chaplains. For instance, the government is establishing an official register of chaplains and religious representatives. The Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE) accredits Muslim chaplains, so that they can provide their services to public institutions. In cooperation with this Islamic association, the University of Zaragoza is currently working on a concept to develop a course of study in Islamic chaplaincy. However, there are still a number of open questions that need to be dealt with in terms of accreditation, funding and the governance of Muslim chaplaincy. Further challenges concerning the establishment of a Muslim chaplaincy in Spain that will have to be addressed in the foreseeable future include the lack of precariousness vis-à-vis a growing diversity within the population, the lack of legal actions, and the impact of security politics and populism on the Muslim community in Spain. ▀

Muslims in Spain: Facts and Figures		
Citizenship of Muslims	Population	Share of total Muslim Population in Spain
Spanish	833,000	42.8 %
Moroccan	753,425	38.7 %
Pakistani	78,071	4 %
Senegalese	62,489	3.2 %
Algerian	61,987	3.2 %
Nigerian	41,486	2.1 %
Total	1,946,300	(of total population of Spain) 4.2 %

(Observatorio Andalusi & UCIDE, 2017)

80% of Muslims in Spain hold the Spanish or Moroccan citizenship.
 Source: Maria del Mar Griera.

Denmark

In Denmark, the Muslim community makes up over 5% of the total population. The process of institutionalisation and professionalisation of Muslim chaplaincy started in 1997.

Since then, the development of Muslim chaplaincy has been affected by two main factors: First, the 'Muhammad-caricature crisis' of 2005 had a severe impact on Muslim life in Denmark. Second, after various terrorist attacks by radical Muslim groups in Europe, the new political security agenda of the government resulted in a regression of Muslim chaplaincy.

Presently, only two full-time Muslim chaplains are employed in public institutions throughout Denmark. Future challenges include the re-implementation of the institutionalisation and professionalisation of Muslim chaplaincy. Additionally, the political and social debate on education, funding and remuneration needs to be intensified. ▀



Muslim Chaplaincy in Denmark				
Sector	Hospital	Prison	University	Military
Service need, <i>in total</i>	1,360,871 (admitted in 2017)	3,459 (inmates as of 2018)	64,703 (students as of 2017)	37,000 (soldiers as of 2017)
Number of institutions, <i>in total</i>	57	58	8	4
Number of chaplains, <i>Church of Denmark</i>	111	58	15	81
Number of Muslims, <i>statistical estimation (5.3%)</i>	72,126	183	3,429	1,961
Muslim chaplains, <i>full-time</i>	1	1	0	0
Proportional need for Muslim chaplains	5 – 6	3 – 4	1 – 2	4 – 5

Denmark requires up to 17 Muslim chaplains in relation to the Muslim population of the country. Source: Niels Valdemar Vinding.

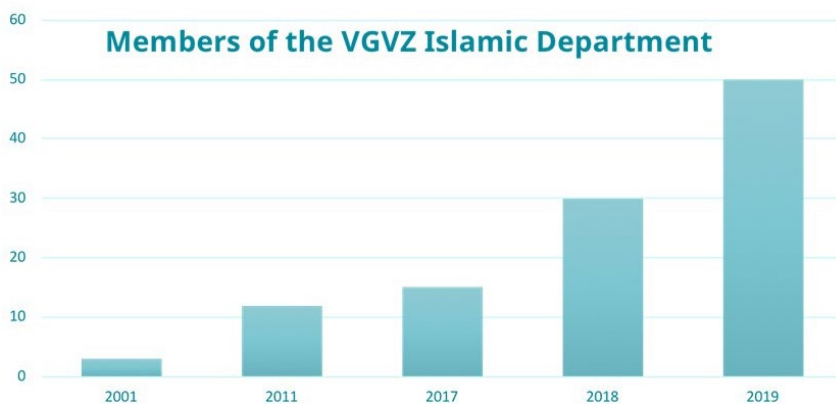
»Because Muslim chaplaincy can not only give comfort and religious care to the needy, it can also create societal change in communities and mosques. It can also build bridges between institutions and citizens with Muslim backgrounds, where chaplains are “cultural interpreters” and problem solvers. There is also dire need in Denmark where most of the chaplaincy has National Church pastors in all fields and there are very few (two) Muslim chaplains attached or hired. There is need to create awareness, train and hire well-qualified Muslim chaplains for the future: for hospitals, prisons, universities and addiction chaplaincy (pornography, drugs, gambling etc).«

Naveed Baig

Netherlands

About 1.5 million Muslims live in the Netherlands today, making up about 6-8% of the total population. Religious institutions and a spiritual care service have been established. Thus, compared to its European neighbours, the Netherlands has demonstrated a remarkable effort in the process of developing and institutionalising a Muslim chaplaincy. In 2001, the 'Vereniging van Geestelijk VerZorgers' (VGVZ), established an Islamic department for the development of Muslim chaplaincy in the healthcare sector. In 2019, this department has grown to encompass 50 members. Among other things, the VGVZ facilitates the training and exchange among chaplains from different fields of work. Moreover, the Contact Office of Muslims and Government (CMO) serves as an umbrella organisation that not only represents all mosques in the Netherlands, but also bears the responsibility for the qualification of Muslim chaplains in public institutions. Overall, 92 chaplains or Imams work in the prison, healthcare, or the military sector. ■

Vereniging van Geestelijk VerZorgers (VGVZ) –
Nationwide Association of Chaplains in Healthcare



Growth of the Islamic Department at the VGVZ. Source: Mustafa Bulut.



Observer Report

Service with mercy: a discussion of theological concepts

Dr Rida Inam AIWG, Goethe University Frankfurt

The most remarkable quality of this particular conference was that there was indeed one axiomatic point that was never up for debate: Muslim members of different European and North American societies are increasingly in need of the service of Muslim chaplains. However, an omnipresent and undeniable requirement of a service is not enough to make it practicable without a commitment from different sides to get ahead in this matter. In this respect, our conference provided a platform for discussion and brought together people who practise Muslim chaplaincy in different public institutions and people who do theological and sociological research on it—in order to discuss the best ways to implement it and to overcome hindrances



Navigating through the different theological aspects together.

es encountered along the way.

As one hindrance, the overall need of Muslims to reconcile the terms 'Muslim' and 'chaplaincy' was identified in the course of the discussions, because the latter has its origin in Christian community work. Another hindrance is the lack of concepts. In his keynote presentation, Prof Ataullah Siddiqui offered the perspective of an Islamic theologian and professor of inter-faith studies on the requirements and service of a Muslim chaplain. He believes in conceptualising it from the perspective of an interconnected theology, because the respective theologies of each religion cannot function in isolation. Prof Siddiqui appeals to a practice of a service-oriented theology that must work in cooperation with other religious traditions in full recognition of God's will to maintain differences among the peoples.

From such a service-oriented Islamic theology, Prof Siddiqui derives three fundamental terms upon which the concept of a Muslim chaplaincy

could be built.

1. Khidmah means service (a term that is not in the Quran but common in the Islamic tradition)
2. Rahmah means both mercy (as a precondition for khidmah) and a form of compassion for fellow human beings (in a broader sense) and for sinners (in a more specific sense).
3. Istiqamah means continuity or steadfastness. This is important because chaplaincy, which is not a 9-to-5 job, requires a very high level of commitment to the service of others with little to no personal gain.

Prof Siddiqui raised the question of developing a practical theological approach of khidmah (referring to the Islamic concept of service) based on the idea that the Quran is healing and mercy. These are the two concepts that also happen to be at the basis of chaplaincy. ▀



»It is very important that the idea of Khidmah (service) should gradually become a significant part of Islamic theology/studies. There are enough resources in Islamic literature, though scattered, that could serve as the basis for such a resource.«

Prof Dr Ataullah Siddiqui

From volunteers to full-time professionals

The obvious need for Muslim chaplains across European countries inspired a large number of volunteers in the last years to take action. However, with no uniform concept to start from, the practice of Muslim chaplaincy became a service relying mostly on the personal commitment, skills and kindness of random strangers. There is no quality control because in most countries there are still no standardisations, no trainings, no professionalisation and consequently no qualified full-time chaplains.

Thus, a key problem identified both from a scientific and practitioners' perspective was as follows: The concept, training, curricula and transparency for the content of the training programmes are the challenges confronting the conditions of the practice and not the challenges that arise within the practice itself.

Most of the challenges emerging out of the practice of Muslim chaplaincy seem to be related to the conflation of different spheres that intersect here. For instance, there is a difficulty in the distinction between religious and social service, not to mention a

difficulty in finding a balance between the needs of the faith and the needs of the institution (such as a hospital or prison). Two major questions that require further clarification before such programmes can actively be pursued are accountability and confidentiality. Yet even here, there is no appropriate legal precedent.

The service of a Muslim chaplain is important, but without a guarantee of confidentiality or pastoral secrecy, and without appropriate training beforehand, it cannot function in the way that it should. Being a trained Imam is also not sufficient, as evidenced by the several prison chaplains at the conference who shared their experiences with us. They stated that even though they are mostly referred to as 'Muslim' chaplains (sometimes even as Imams), religion takes up only a very small portion of the work that they do. ■



»Chaplain is a professional position that is well understood in general society and can be practised by persons from any religious or spiritual tradition; there are even humanist chaplains. By participating in chaplaincy, Muslim religious leaders can serve their communities without losing their specificity as people of faith, while also engaging cooperatively and collegially with people of other faiths and good will who share their passion for service and spiritual care. Chaplains are educated and trained to engage thoughtfully and compassionately with people who are marginalised in society at large and in their own faith communities, uniquely offering connection, rehabilitation and reintegration to such individuals. Chaplaincy is a profession that is open to Muslim women, providing space for their leadership, skills and influence, without contravening conservative or traditional Muslim norms of religious leaders.«

Prof Dr Ingrid Mattson



Waseem Hussain (DK, left) and Dzermal Sibljakovic (AUT) are the first full-time chaplains in their respective countries.

Organisation, funding and gender: a discussion of structural challenges

Benedikt Körner AIWG, Goethe University Frankfurt

Throughout the conference, three major issues arose concerning the implementation of Muslim chaplaincy. These were the legal background of this profession, the funding problem and the gender aspect.

In most of the countries featured in the six country-specific presentations, Christian churches have served as the model for how the state handles religious affairs. Christianity has been the largest religious group in those countries, while other religious groups were much smaller. The more Muslim communities get involved in the public sphere, the more they expect to be treated equally, even though Muslim religious associations are structured quite unlike churches and have a rather young specific history there. Thus one major task discussed at the conference was how to regulate the cooperation between Muslim communities and the state, for example, the organisation of Muslim chaplains in the service of public institutions.

Another challenge is the funding of Muslim chaplains. Muslim communities, generally speaking, have fewer financial resources than the churches. As Muslim chaplaincy represents just one part of a larger framework in need of further financial resources, the work done is mostly carried out on a voluntary basis. Nonetheless, Muslim chaplains do the same demanding job as their Christian counterparts, who do in fact receive proper financial compensation.

Furthermore, many areas of Muslim chaplaincy lack a sensitivity regarding issues of gender and diversity. Muslim chaplaincy is still very much a male-dominated field. This results in a gendered perception of the role of a Muslim chaplain. This is why Prof Ingrid Mattson criticised the fact that the term Imam is often used as a synonym for Muslim chaplain. The profession of a Muslim chaplain must better reflect the diversity of genders that prevails in Muslim communities. ■





'For soldatens beste': an interview with military chaplains

Erkin Calisir AIWG, Goethe University Frankfurt

Mr. Asim Hafiz is the Islamic Advisor to the Chief of the Defence and Service Chiefs of the United Kingdom. In 2005, Mr. Hafiz was appointed as the first Muslim chaplain to the British Armed Forces against the backdrop of the British military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2005.

Mr. Najeeb ur Rehman Naz joined the Norwegian Armed Forces as an Islamic Advisor in 2015. Since 2017, he has served as Norway's first Muslim military chaplain. Due to open debates on the necessity of an advisor specifically for Muslim soldiers, Mr. Naz was appointed as Field Imam after a two-year pilot project.

Erkin Calisir: Mr. Hafiz, could you outline the work of a Muslim military chaplain?

Asim Hafiz: I think the role of the chaplain is the same regardless of the sector you work in—whether in a hospital or in the military. The way that the care manifests itself and the kinds of issues you may have to deal with might be different, but ultimately the principles that you use to deliver your pastoral care will be similar. For example, if you work in the prison service, you will not be discussing the issues of life and death. However, in the military you might be discussing the idea of what it means to potentially be killed in operations. Even in the prison service, you may have a discussion on the morality of respecting other peoples' property or rights. However, in the armed forces you talk of the morality of war and the ethics of conflict—this is part of the role of the chaplain. Ultimately, in my perspective, it is about caring for the individual, for the human aspect of the person you are dealing with. Normally, it is a



Hülya Sügen (GER) and Asim Hafiz (UK) welcomed the opportunity to discuss the situation of Muslim chaplaincy in the German and British Armed Forces.

time of trauma, or some kind of dilemma, or a deep moral question that people have. Therefore, you have to bring to bear your counselling and listening skills, as well as your theological understanding of the situation and moral understanding, to make sure the individual receives the best information possible. I do have a comment on this particular issue: Sometimes,

particularly chaplains in the military, do not have all the answers to the questions someone might have; but, I think they should be able to help people frame the right question. The answer you receive depends on the question you ask. The least a military chaplain can do is help their clientele, the people under their care. A chaplain has to help them ask the right



Najeeb ur-Rehman Naz (NOR) emphasizes the need for more Muslim chaplains in the military.

question and not always give them the answer.

Calisir: Would you like to add something to this Mr. Naz?

Najeeb ur Rehman Naz: There is not much to be added. Imam Hafiz has described the work of a military chaplain in a very good way. I am a military chaplain, and as we say in Norway: 'vi er her for soldatens beste'—'we are there for the soldier's best'. The soldier is always in the focus. We should be available for them. The nature of the military service is that you may have some challenges, conflicts. In the military, you have a distance between a soldier and an officer. Therefore, a soldier does not always feel comfortable to speak to their officers. We chaplains are there to break these barriers. They can talk about

anything with a chaplain. This is something that is very valuable for the care of the soldiers.

Calisir: Could you also provide some insight into your future projects and visions for the Norwegian Armed forces?

Naz: I think it is a bit too early to think of the future because we are in a starting phase of Muslim chaplaincy in the military in Norway. However, as we move forward, we see there is a big need. For me, it is sometimes difficult as the only Muslim chaplain in the military in Norway to cover all the areas. I think there is a need for at least one more military chaplain. What I can say is that it is only a question of time. There is definitely a need.

Calisir: In Britain, the situation

is different: There is the Armed Forces Muslim Association (or AFMA), which you set up in 2009. In addition, you are the Islamic Advisor to the Chief of the Defence and Service Chiefs. What future projects and visions do you have?

Hafiz: As part of my new role as the Islamic advisor, one key strand of work that I have is to help the Defence build strategic relationships with Muslim populations in the UK and overseas. This is the case when we look at the global landscape and where security situations may occur or there is instability. We see these where Muslims are a large population. So the question is: how do I best help the armed forces build a positive relationship with Muslim populations around the world. There is less likelihood



»A clear hallmark of a well-functioning democracy is that it also caters to the needs of its minorities. As such, Muslims have similar social, psychological and religious needs as the majority population. As these cannot be met by the traditional Christian chaplaincy services, then they need to be met by Muslim chaplaincy. Developing this field will ensure that the needs of the Muslim minority are fulfilled sufficiently while also showing that Muslims are included as equal members of society.«

Waseem Hussain

of conflict if we understand each other. Secondly, if you understand the situation better from a human perspective, we do not need to deploy troops to that part of the world. A challenge that we face is that we have a surgical or a very tactical approach. It is a hard-way approach. If I take defence as an example: Are we selling this country weapons? Are we fighting wars with them? Will we fight a war with them? Are we training with them? Are we exercising with them? This relationship is very subjective to your relationship to that country. What I would like to do is to see in the UK and in the defence that we develop a deep human relationship with other countries in the world, specifically the Muslim world. Let us move from developing a relationship built on hardware to a relationship built on software. This can give us meaningful relationships of true friendship and true understanding.

Calisir: Thank you very much. One last question for Mr. Naz. What is the significance of Muslim military chaplaincy for the civil society?

Naz: If a minority—any minority that lives in any country of the world—is included in all the society's institutions and departments, it can give them a very positive signal. This is something that gives them a feeling of trust in the majority society. Which means that their beliefs, culture or tradition are being included or taken care of. This can send very positive signals to the civil society.

Calisir: Thank you so much for the interview and I wish you the best for the future. ▀



Conference programme

WEDNESDAY, 23.01.2019

10:30 a.m.

Registration and Welcome Coffee

Fleming's Express Hotel Frankfurt am Main

11:00 a.m.

Welcome Address and Introductions

Bekim Agai and Raida Chbib (AIWG/Goethe-University Frankfurt, GER)

11:20 a.m.

"European Muslims in the Field of Social Welfare"

An Islamic-Theological Approach

Ataullah Siddiqui (Markfield Institute of Higher Education, UK)

A Sociological Approach

Inger Furseth (University of Oslo, NOR)

Chair: Bekim Agai (AIWG/Goethe-University Frankfurt, GER)

12:00 p.m.

Presentation of Short Overviews:

"Muslim Chaplaincy in European National Contexts"

Germany Cemil Sahinöz (WIR e.V., GER)

Ireland Umar al-Qadri (Islamic Centre of Ireland, IRL)

Switzerland Andrea Lang (University of Fribourg, CH)

Spain Maria del Mar Griera (University of Barcelona, ES)

Denmark Niels Valdemar Vinding (University of Copenhagen, DK)

Netherlands Mustafa Bulut (VGVZ, NL)

Chair: Raida Chbib (AIWG/ Goethe-University Frankfurt, GER)

1:45 p.m.

Lunch Break

2:45 p.m.-4:45 p.m.

Workshops:

"Muslim Chaplaincy in Research and Field-Work"

Prison Chaplaincy

Introductory Notes: Dzemaal Sibljakovic (AUT),

Waseem Hussain (DK)

Chair: Maria del Mar Griera (ESP)

Observer: Husamuddin Meyer (GER)

Military Chaplaincy

Introductory Notes: Najeeb ur-Rehman Naz, Jan Alve (NOR)

Chair: Felix Engelhardt (GER)

Observer: Ibrahim Mogra (UK)

Healthcare Chaplaincy and Related Areas

Introductory Notes: Imran Schröter, Gülbahar Erdem (GER)

Chair: Zuhail Agilkaya-Sahin (TR)

Observer: Mustafa Bulut (NL)

3:45 p.m.

Coffee Break during the Workshop Panel

4:45 p.m.

Break

5:30 p.m.

Bus ride to the Goethe-University Campus Westend, Frankfurt

5:45 p.m.

Short guided tour at the Campus Westend, Goethe-University Frankfurt

7:30 p.m.

Public Session:

"Muslim Chaplaincy in Public Institutions: A Debate on Opportunities and Challenges of an Emerging Profession"

Keynotes

Ingrid Mattson (University of Western Ontario, CAN),

Irene Becci (University of Lausanne, CH)

Panel Discussion

with Ataullah Siddiqui

(Markfield Institute of Higher Education, UK),

Niels Valdemar Vinding (University of Copenhagen, DK)

Moderator:

Nicola Reyk (Journalist, WDR Cologne, GER)

09:30 p.m. **End of session and bus ride** back to the Hotel

THURSDAY, 24.01.2019

8:00 a.m.
Breakfast

9:30 a.m.
Keynote:
**“On the Basis of the Holy Qur’an?
The Compatibility of Muslim Chaplaincy with Islamic Tradition”**

by Talal al-Azem (University of Oxford, UK)

Interview Session:
“Challenges and Opportunities of a Muslim Military Chaplain”

A Talk with Asim Hafiz (Ministry of Defence, UK)
by Erkin Calisir and Benedikt Körner (AIWG/Goethe-University Frankfurt, GER)

Chair: Rida Inam (AIWG/Goethe-University Frankfurt, GER)

11:00 a.m.
Coffee Break

11:30 a.m.
**“The Implementation of Muslim Chaplaincy
in European Social Welfare –
Challenges and Future Prospects”**

*A Research-Meets-Fieldwork Debate (Part 1):
“Observer reports: Results of the Workshops”*
Husamuddin Meyer (Prison Chaplain, GER)
Ibrahim Mogra (Muslim Council of Britain, UK)
Mustafa Bulut (VGZ, NL)

Chair: Felix Engelhardt and Raida Chbib (AIWG/Goethe-University Frankfurt, GER)

12:30 p.m.
Lunch Break

1.45 p.m.
A Research-Meets-Fieldwork Debate (Part 2):

Panel Discussion with
Ingrid Mattson (University of Western Ontario, CAN)
Dzemat Sibljakovic (IGGÖ, AUT)
Naveed Baig (Rigshospitalet Copenhagen, DK)
Maria del Mar Griera (University of Barcelona, ES)

Chair: Felix Engelhardt and Raida Chbib (AIWG/Goethe-University Frankfurt, GER)

3.15 p.m.
Comments on the Conference and Closing Words

4:30 p.m.
End of Conference, Coffee and Cake



List of participants

Prof Dr Bekim Agai

Goethe-University Frankfurt, Director AIWG, GER

Dr Zuhail Agilkaya-Sahin

Medeniyet University Istanbul, Department of psychological counselling and guidance, TUR

Dr Talal Al-Azem

University of Oxford, Oxford centre for Islamic studies, UK

Jan Alve

Chief of military chaplains in Norwegian Armed Forces, NOR

Naveed Baig

Chaplain at Rigshospitalet Copenhagen, DK

Prof Dr Irene Becci

Institut de sciences sociales des religions, University of Lausanne, CH

Mustafa Bulut

Vereniging van Geestelijk VerZorgers, NL

Dr Naime Cakir

Goethe-University Frankfurt, Institute for the study of Islamic culture and religion, GER

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Goethe-University Frankfurt, Managing Director at AIWG, GER

Gülbahar Erdem

University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, Department of Islamic-religious studies, GER

Prof Dr Inger Furseth

University of Oslo, Department of sociology and human geography, NOR

Prof Dr Anne Hege Grung

University of Oslo, Department of sociology and human geography, NOR

Asim Hafiz

Islamic religious Adviser to the Chief of the defence staff at the UK ministry, UK

Waseem Hussain

Imam in Copenhagen, DK

Dr Rida Inam

Goethe-University Frankfurt AIWG, GER

Benedikt Körner

Goethe-University Frankfurt AIWG, GER

Andrea Lang

University of Fribourg, Swiss centre for Islam and society, CH

Prof Dr Ingrid Mattson

University of Western Ontario, Huron University College, CAN

Husamuddin Meyer

Prison chaplain, GER

Ibrahim Mogra

Assistant secretary general of the Muslim council of Britain, UK

Najeeb ur-Rehman Naz

Field chaplain of Norwegian Armed Forces, NOR

Dr Umar al-Qadri

Head Imam, Islamic centre of Ireland, IRL

Dr Cemil Sahinöz

Chief editor of "Ayasofya" periodical, GER

Prof Dr Imran Schröter

Karlsruhe University of Education, Institute for Islamic theology, GER

Dzemaal Sibljakovic

Secretary general of prison chaplaincy at Islamic faith community Austria, AUT

Prof Dr Ataullah Siddiqui

Markfield institute of higher education, UK

Hülya Süzen

Leadership development and Civic education centre, German Armed Forces, GER

Dr Niels Valdemar Vinding

University of Copenhagen, Department of cross-cultural and regional studies, DK



Akademie für Islam
in Wissenschaft
und Gesellschaft

The Academy for Islam in Research and Society (AIWG) is a university platform for carrying out research and debates on Islamic-theological and social issues. It facilitates nationwide projects and exchange among researchers in Islamic-Theological Studies, in related disciplines and with different players in civil society, including Muslim communities.

The AIWG has three main objectives:

1. Research: The AIWG advances the further incorporation of Islamic-Theological Studies at German public universities and facilitates nationwide, interdisciplinary research and cooperation.
2. Interaction: The AIWG facilitates interaction between Islamic-Theological Studies, Muslim civil society and other sectors of society.
3. Providing Facts: The AIWG takes part in the public discourse on Islam by sharing expert opinions and views on related topics.

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