An Emerging Model of Muslim Leadership:
Chaplaincy on University Campuses

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Abstract: During the last couple of decades, a new model of Muslim leadership has emerged in the United States: the institution of Muslim chaplaincy. This study seeks to provide an overview of this institution on university campuses. In the post 9/11 context, Muslim chaplains play a crucial role on campuses by humanizing the American Muslim experience and building bridges between Muslims and non-Muslims. The institution of Muslim chaplaincy also provides a critical avenue for Muslim women's public religious leadership. Interviews with 25 Muslim chaplains and their colleagues provide information about Muslim chaplains' roles and responsibilities, the opportunities and challenges they encounter, and future trends.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The institution of Muslim chaplaincy has emerged as a new model of Muslim leadership in the United States over the last couple of decades. Even though the term 'chaplain' has Christian connotations, this model of leadership has been adapted by other religious traditions in multi-religious America. While Muslim leaders in the past were focused on meeting the needs of their own communities, the recent decades have seen the emergence of civil society and faith-based organizations – such as the Islamic Society of North America, American Society for Muslim Advancement, His Highness the Aga Khan Ismaili Council for the USA, Islamic Relief, etc. – that seek to engage the various Muslim communities of interpretation as well as other faith communities. Muslim chaplains are situated within this framework, and we find them working in a variety of institutional contexts across the United States: in hospitals, prisons, universities, and the armed forces. These chaplains seek to facilitate spiritual growth by providing pastoral care and religious education. They are well positioned to promote intra- and interfaith dialogue, building bridges between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The institution of chaplaincy also offers Muslim women new opportunities for public religious leadership.

This study will focus on the institution of Muslim chaplaincy as it has emerged on university campuses in the United States[1]. The purpose of the study is to document the historic moment of the emergence of Muslim chaplaincy, to understand the nature of the chaplains' work, and the opportunities and challenges they face moving forward. Importantly, it will focus on Muslim women's contribution to public leadership through this institution. In addition to secondary research, I conducted 25 formal and informal interviews with current and former Muslim chaplains, students, and university administrative staff at universities across the United States. The interviews were conducted either over the phone or in-person, and focused on understanding the roles the chaplains performed in various settings, the challenges and opportunities they encountered, and the reception they received from students, fellow university staff, and when relevant, the wider Muslim community.

Islam in America

It is estimated that there are between five to six million Muslims in the Unites States (Pew Research Center Report, 2011). Immense diversity exists among these Muslim populations. For instance, it is not

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[1] It is important to note that the term 'chaplain' is not used in all university contexts under consideration. Several universities use the title of Muslim Advisor, Director of Muslim Life, Minister, or Interfaith Fellow instead. However, given the remarkable similarity in their roles and functions, this report considers them under the umbrella term of 'chaplain.'

widely recognized that the largest subgroup of Muslims in America is African American and not immigrants from South Asia or the Middle East. Sherman Jackson (2005) has adeptly traced the origins of the Islamic tradition in America during the slave trade and notes the tradition's reliance on and incorporation of elements of Black Religion and African American cultural heritage. Immigrant Muslims, too, are not a homogenous group. The majority of Muslim immigrants arrived in the US after 1965 when President Lyndon Johnson repealed the national origins quota system (Haddad et al, 2006, p. 6). They hail from countries as diverse as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Mali, Kenya, Russia and Tajikistan. This cultural diversity points to the varied ways of being a Muslim and practicing Islam.

In the United States, we have witnessed a heightened sense of religious identification among Muslims since 9/11. This can be understood as a response to the privileging of Muslims' religious identity over their ethnic, cultural, or national identities in the public sphere, as well as an unparalleled rise in the interest among non-Muslims in learning about Islam. The combination between Muslims finding ways to articulate their faith in a minority-Muslim context, and the heightened interest of the general public has led Muslims to devise contextually-relevant ways of practicing Islam in the United States, and articulating Islam in the public sphere[2] - as a faith, a religion, a political ideology, and a code of law. This historic moment presents an opportunity to overcome "religious illiteracy" (Moore 2007) with regard to Islam and to understand how religion is an integral dimension of our experiences. Muslim leaders in America can play an instrumental role in this effort.

Furthermore, it is estimated that by the year 2030, approximately 45% of Muslims in America will be native-born and the number of Muslims under the age of 15 will more than triple from its current level (Pew Research Report, 2011). These Muslims will face a different set of opportunities and challenges as compared to their immigrant parents, and will undoubtedly seek "homegrown" leadership to guide them.

Leadership and Authority in Islam

Islam is a dynamic religion with a plethora of communities of interpretation and a variety of models of leadership and authority. The Prophet of Islam was not only a spiritual, moral, and religious guide; he was also a political leader. Claimants to religious authority in Islam have, thus, drawn their inspiration from either one or both of these sources of the Prophet's authority[3]. Muslim leaders serve a range of functions

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[2] This is particularly apparent in the number of books and articles published on topics related to Islam especially in the last few decades.

[3] For instance, religious scholars or 'ulama claim the authority for religious interpretation based on discursive knowledge; jurists or qadis derive their authority from both discursive knowledge and political appointments; Sufi

from providing spiritual and moral guidance to their followers, to leading prayers and arbitrating disputes. However, the arrangements of authority and leadership functions have changed over time as Muslim societies have encountered secularism, political nationalism, urbanization, and global migration.

In the United States, many immigrant Muslim communities established themselves by building small mosques and community centers. They recruited *imams*[4] from their countries of origin, or appointed the most qualified persons from amongst themselves. The role of the *imam* in such immigrant communities requires a complex set of skills and qualifications. In addition to the traditional roles of maintaining the mosque, leading prayers, performing rituals, educating children, and sometimes even issuing legal opinions, *imams* in the United States are expected to connect immigrants to the traditions, cultures, and norms of their countries of origin, as well as help them make sense of the norms of their host country. Importantly, in the post 9/11 context, they are also expected to participate in interfaith dialogue and outreach. The broadening role of the *imam* has meant that individuals considered to be qualified to perform the traditional role of a religious leader elsewhere have not always had the required training to perform the varied functions of a religious leader in the American context. Furthermore, as generations of American-born Muslims have come of age, they have not necessarily felt the same connection with their mosque leadership; these young Americans have different ways of engaging with their faith and experience a different set of opportunities and challenges. Therefore, they have been increasingly seeking out "homegrown" leaders who would be able to relate to their circumstances.

All these factors have created an opportunity for the emergence of leaders who are better suited to address the needs of American Muslims. While some of these leaders take on the traditional role of the *imams* of mosques, others serve in a variety of emerging models of Muslim leadership. Muslims now lead civic or community-based organizations, research institutes and think tanks, as well as serve as chaplains in hospitals, prisons, universities, and the military. Within several of these roles, we see the emergence of public religious leadership by women.

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pirs claim spiritual and/or political authority based on esoteric knowledge (*marifa'at*) and lineage; the Caliphs or *khalifas* relied on broad consensus or familial ties for their political authority; and the Shia *Imams* have claimed spiritual authority by highlighting their direct decent from the Prophet in addition to their esoteric knowledge (Asani, 2008, Lecture at Harvard).

[4] For the purpose of this report, the term *imam* denotes the leader of the prayers. It is, however, important to note that the term *imam* has various meanings within the Muslim communities of interpretation. For instance, many Shia Muslim communities reserve the use of the term to identify the hereditary successor of Prophet Muhammad who continues to provide material and spiritual guidance to Muslims.

Women's Religious Leadership in Islam

In discussing women's status and roles in Islam, it is crucial to keep in mind the diversity, and rich and complex histories of Muslims. While the dominant narrative about Muslim women is one of being an oppressed, victimized and excluded population, there are communities of Muslims where women have made remarkable progress in both public and private spheres.[5] Though Muslim women have generally been excluded from public religious leadership, there are instances throughout history when that has not been the case (see Abbot 1942, Ahmed 1992, Smith 1979). The evolution of a particular form of Muslim leadership in the United States is to be located within this complicated paradigm.

Throughout history, social, religious, and political struggles have been, and continue to be, fought by references to and control of women and their bodies. Muslim women are not an exception to this. A variety of patriarchal cultural practices that limit Muslim women's participation in the public sphere have been justified and codified by references to the Quran, or practices of the early Muslim community. Both Muslims and non-Muslims have instrumentalized the narrative of the "oppressed Muslim women" for political and social gains. However, Muslim women are increasingly challenging these religious, political, and social structures, and demanding ethical and egalitarian treatment in the public and private spheres (see Fatima Mernissi 1991 and 2003; Kecia Ali 2006 and 2010; Amina Wadud 1992 and 2006; Asma Barlas 2002; Riffat Hasan 1996). They are examining Muslim history to demonstrate how some legal rulings regarding women were contextual necessities and not requirements of the faith; they are studying classical Muslim texts to tease out examples that portray an ethical vision of Islam distinct from patriarchal traditions and norms; and, they are challenging hegemonic interpretations of Islam, which present Islam as a monolithic faith and restrict women's diverse ways of being.

Debates regarding Muslim women's leadership in the American context include issues of infrastructure (such as adequate and comfortable space for women in the mosques[6]), representation on mosque advisory boards and inclusion in the decision-making processes, increased access to learning classical Muslim texts, and leading prayers. These are serious issues to men and women who wish to propagate a more gender egalitarian interpretation of Islam. Internationally, the question of leading mixed-gender prayers has come to the forefront. It became a highly publicized and politicized debate after a number of Muslim

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[5] See Khoja-Moolji, Shenila (*forthcoming*). *Redefining Muslim Women: Aga Khan III's Reforms for Muslim Women*. South Asia Graduate Research Journal. University of Texas at Austin.

[6] See Women in Islam and ISNA publication. (2005). *Women Friendly Mosques and Community Centers: Working Together to Reclaim Our Heritage*.

women led mixed-gender prayers in South Africa (1994), Canada (2004), Spain (2005), the Unites States (2005) and the United Kingdom (2008). In many ways, leading mixed-gender prayers is a *symbolic* or *representational* issue that has allowed for a broader discussion on women's religious leadership. It has also led to an increasing number of women being included in a range of leadership positions (such as community-based and civic organizations) that were previously not available to them.

Within this context, Muslim chaplaincy on university campuses provides a remarkable opportunity for women to exercise *public* religious leadership. It is important to note the public dimension of this leadership because historically women have exercised religious authority in the form of religious teachers, spiritual counselors, or prayer leaders in women-only congregations in the domestic and private spheres. However, the university space allows them to take their leadership to the next level, serving as chaplains not only in a public setting but, in some cases, in a co-educational context. Of course, as the study will demonstrate later, Muslim chaplains who are female still do not lead the prayers in mixed-gender settings; however this is only one function out of the many other important roles that they are performing.

A number of factors make university campuses an ideal place for the emergence of Muslim women's leadership. Hiring managers at universities are primarily concerned with the spiritual wellbeing and growth of students and are less interested in the internal theological debates on Muslim leadership. Therefore, hiring decisions are based on the merits and professional credentials of the candidates. For the most part, universities fund the positions of Muslim chaplaincy themselves. The chaplains, therefore, do not have to obtain the same level of authorization from their constituencies or religious authorities as they would in a mosque or religious center. Furthermore, the generally liberal and progressive context of educational institutions enables the chaplains and students to think deeply about normative religious practices, making them more likely to accept women as leaders.

Key Findings – Muslim Chaplaincy on University Campuses

Today, Muslim chaplains are present in a variety of settings such as hospitals, prisons, the armed forces, and university campuses. They are providing homegrown leadership to American Muslims, serving as educators and faith-ministers. Within this model, Muslim chaplaincy on university campuses is a decidedly distinct arena that not only pushes the boundaries of what it means to be a chaplain, but also makes available an opportunity for Muslim women to exercise leadership. The study estimates that there are at least 31 universities and colleges across the United States that have formally or informally established the position of Muslim chaplaincy, of which approximately a third are occupied by women.

Figure 1: Institutions with Paid or Sanctioned Part/Full-Time Muslim Chaplains by Year of Post Creation

1993: Wellesley	2002: Rutgers
1994:	2003: Wesleyan
1995:	2004: Brandeis
1996: Bard	2005: Amherst, NYU, Trinity, Yale
1997: Mount Holyoke*	2006: American, Brown, Dartmouth, Princeton, University of Maryland
1998: Columbia, Howard*,	2007: Manhattanville College
1999: Duke, Georgetown	2008: DePaul, Simmons, Tufts, USC
2000: Harvard	2009: University of Pennsylvania
2001:	2010: Babson, Fairfield University, Queen's College (CUNY), Northwestern, Wake Forest

Source: Kassam-Remtulla, Aly (forthcoming). *Islam on campus: Emergence of Muslim Chaplaincy in American higher education*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Oxford University.

For the purpose of this research, I interviewed 19 current and former Muslim chaplains from universities across the United States. I also had the chance to speak informally with some students and university administrators[7]. These interviews offer a glimpse into Muslim chaplaincies on American college and university campuses today.

Figure 2: Interview Subjects in Alphabetical Order by College/University

University	Official Titles and Name
Amherst College, MA	Advisor to Muslim Students, Elizaveta Lozovaya
Bard College, NY	Muslim Chaplain, Imam Salahuddin Muhammad
Brandeis University, MA	Muslim Chaplain, Imam Talal Eid
Columbia University, NY	Imam Syed Zafaruddin Sayeed
Dartmouth College, NH	Muslim Life and International Service and Education Advisor, Dawood Yasin
DePaul University, IL	Muslim Chaplain, Abdul-Malik Ryan
Duke University, NC	Muslim Chaplain, Imam Abdullah Antepli
Fairfield University, CT	Muslim Chaplain, Heba Youssef
University of Maryland, MD	Muslim Chaplain, Tarif Shraim
Mount Holyoke College, MA	Advisor to Muslim Community, Elizaveta Lozovaya
New York University, NY	Muslim Chaplain, Imam Khalid Latif
University of Pennsylvania, PA	Interfaith Fellow and Campus Minister, Carolyn Baugh (current) and Adnan Zulfiqar (former)

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[7] In addition, Pluralism Project Assistant Director Kathryn Lohre and Professor Jane Smith at Harvard University, and Aly Kassam-Remtulla at Princeton University provided valuable guidance.

Simmons College, MA	Muslim Chaplain, Mary Lahaj (former)
University of Southern California, CA	Director of Muslim Student Life, Ali Mir
Trinity College, CT	Muslim Chaplain, Marwa Aly
Tufts University, MA	Muslim Chaplain, Naila Baloch
Wake Forest University, NC	Muslim Chaplain, Imam Khalid Griggs
Wesleyan University, CT	Muslim Chaplain, Marwa Aly
Wellesley College, MA	Muslim Chaplain, Najiba Akbar (current) and Muslim Chaplain, Nancy Khalil (former)

The interviews pointed to at least two factors that set the stage for the establishment of a Muslim chaplaincy on campus. First, a demonstrated need for a Muslim chaplain as articulated by the Muslim student body; and second, as noted by Kassam-Remtulla, institutional isomorphism whereby institutions mimic other similar institutions. Currently, the majority of Muslim chaplains are located at private universities in the Northeastern United States, but slowly and gradually universities in other regions are also realizing the value of this model, and adapting it to their context.

For instance, the University of Southern California established the position of Director of Muslim Student Life two years ago. The current director, Ali Mir, is now being invited by other universities on the west coast to speak about his role. Mir believes that private universities on the west coast could lead the effort to make this a permanent position at universities. It is still rare, however, to see the establishment of Muslim chaplaincy at public universities. Public educational institutions generally do not support chaplaincy offices, and therefore the religious communities themselves have to provide the funding for chaplains and the space for the observance of religious practices. Tarif Shraim at University of Maryland (a public institution) has been volunteering as the Assistant chaplain and Muslim chaplain for 11 years now; during the interview he highlighted the difficulty of establishing an endowment, or sustainable funding for the position.

Muslim Chaplaincy Training

The process for certification of chaplains varies greatly by faith tradition. Some traditions have requirements that place a lot more emphasis on schooling and practicum compared to others. When it comes to Muslim institutions of religious authority, it is important to remember that there is no unified governing religious body or ordaining council in Islam. Different Muslim communities have devised different ways of appointing leaders, recognizing institutions of learning, and determining practices of inclusion or exclusion of women. Due to the diversity of Islam in America, there is no one institution that can claim to represent all Muslim voices or endorse a particular path to becoming a Muslim chaplain.

Thus, as the field has emerged, a variety of institutions have devised training programs for Muslim chaplaincy.

Hartford Seminary is one such institution that provides training in Muslim chaplaincy. There are two programs at the seminary that allow students to obtain a certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy: a Master of Arts degree in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations with a concentration in Islamic Chaplaincy, and a stand-alone graduate certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy. While the latter focuses on pastoral care and ministry skills, the former also seeks to provide students with an academic foundation in Islamic thought and practice, and Muslim–Christian relations. The program also includes a practicum component where students undertake field education and intern at local area hospitals, Islamic schools, mosques, or welfare organizations.

The program at the Hartford Seminary stands out for its encouragement of women's participation. The Program Director, Timur Yuskaev, noted that "one of the benefits of the program is that it opens up the opportunity for women to be religious professionals and many women in America are interested in serving their communities in a professional capacity." Encouragement of women is likely also the result of the leadership of the program's first director, Dr. Ingrid Mattson. Speaking about Mattson's leadership, Marwa Aly, a graduate of the program and current Muslim chaplain at Wesleyan University and Trinity College, noted: "as a woman I definitely have had to prove myself to be taken seriously, and the Hartford seminary paid particular attention to this. Dr. Mattson herself realizes the obstacles for women – she herself faced them before becoming the first woman President of the Islamic Society for North America." The Islamic Chaplaincy program at the Hartford Seminary, which started with 3 students in 1998, now boasts a class of over 30 students. Several of the interviewees including Imam Salahuddin Muhammad, Marwa Aly, Heba Youssef, and Imam Abdullah, are graduates of this program.

The Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit, Michigan, hopes to be the second accredited program for Islamic Chaplaincy. The school is in the process of launching its two-year Urban Ministry Diploma in Muslim Chaplaincy during the 2011–2012 academic year (www.etseminary.edu). The program's objective is to educate and train chaplains who can provide spiritual care to Muslims in varied settings from hospitals to university campuses. The program will provide basic skills in pastoral care, arts of ministry, theology, ethics, dialogue, and interfaith relations. It is, of course, too early to estimate the program's encouragement of female chaplains.

The School of Islamic and Social Sciences at Cordoba University in Virginia offers a Master of Islamic Studies program, graduates of which may qualify to serve as chaplains. The two-year program focuses on

equipping students with knowledge of classical Islam and how it can be integrated into the western context. The program takes pride that several of its "graduates have become *imams*, academics, non-profit directors, and military, hospital, and prison chaplains" (www.cordobauniversity.org). However, the institution does not have formal academic accreditation. Therefore, students who would like to serve at institutions that require formal certification may choose not to enroll in this program. Another institution, Zaytuna College, in California is in a similar position. Zaytuna offers a bachelors program in Islamic Studies, with a concentration track on *Imam* or Chaplain studies. However, the college has not received full accreditation yet (www.zaytunacollege.org).

Besides these programs, there is a wide range of academic paths that Muslims have taken towards serving as chaplains. During my interviews, several chaplains noted that it was a combination of their academic knowledge, community service, and work experience that made them ideal candidates. For instance, Najiba Akbar at Wellesley College focused on peace and justice studies during her undergraduate education and then obtained a masters degree in Social Work and Counseling from Boston College. She noted that Wellesley College's administration was interested in candidates who understood the developmental stages and needs of college-aged students. Similarly, Imam Syed Zafaruddin Sayeed at Columbia University obtained a masters degree in clinical psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University, and joined the United Campus Ministries at Columbia University after his retirement. Finally, Ali Mir at the University of Southern California is a private environmental consultant and has extensive experience in youth organizing. These varied experiences, especially in community and youth development, have made these chaplains ideal candidates, insofar as they are acutely aware of the needs of young American Muslims.

Other paths towards Muslim chaplaincy include academic programs focused on theological and religious studies from American and international universities. Adnan Zulfiqar, the former Interfaith Fellow and Campus Minister at University of Pennsylvania, is now there as a doctoral student of Islamic Studies. Dawood Yasin, the Muslim Life and International Service and Education Advisor at Dartmouth College, studied Arabic, Islam, and spirituality in Damascus, Syria and is currently pursuing a masters degree in Globalization Studies at Dartmouth College (www.dartmouth.edu). Some chaplains have graduated from theological schools – both Naila Baloch at Tufts University and Imam Talal Eid at Brandeis University studied at the Harvard Divinity School. In fact, Imam Talal Eid was the first Muslim to receive a Doctor of Theology degree from the Harvard Divinity School.

Clearly, there are many paths towards becoming a Muslim chaplain. This diversity should be viewed positively since it enables Muslims with different backgrounds and ambitions to serve as chaplains and

cater to the needs of the Muslim and non-Muslim student body. Additionally, it also provides hiring institutions with a range of candidates with varying interests, qualifications, strengths, and weaknesses. That said, this diversity is accompanied by the challenges of non-uniformity. Some Muslim organizations are coming together to determine if a national chaplaincy endorsement body should be established[8]. There are, of course, many pros and cons to having a national body. On the one hand, such a body can provide the much-needed funding to chaplains, act as an ambassadorial institution or recruitment agency, and provide centralized resources and best practices. On the other hand, such a body can also lead to the establishment of strict accreditation policies and uniformity in educational requirements that may diminish the diversity of chaplains that we observe today.

Roles and Responsibilities

Muslim chaplains serve as educators and faith-ministers. The education-oriented nature of universities provides a platform for both Muslims and non-Muslims to engage in healthy dialogue and to learn about each other's practices. In addition, universities are also usually one of the first places where individuals encounter immense religious diversity. Universities, therefore, are avenues ripe for intra- and interfaith engagement. Muslim chaplains at universities are uniquely positioned to harness this diversity and translate it into a pluralistic society with increased mutual understanding and cooperation among faith communities. In a profound way, they undertake the important task of developing "ethically literate" people – those "who can reason morally whenever they analyze and resolve problems, who see the world through the lens of ethics, who can articulate their moral reasoning clearly - even in a world of cultural and religious diversity - and have the courage to make tough choices" (His Highness the Aga Khan, 2009).

Since Muslim chaplaincy is an emerging field, chaplains are still in the process of formulating the role for themselves. During my interviews, it was apparent that the chaplains' roles and responsibilities are influenced by the unique demands of the student body, the requirements of the school administration, and the background of the chaplains themselves. While this gives the chaplains a certain sense of freedom, it also places immense responsibility on them.

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[8] A conference to establish a national endorsement body as well as a Muslim Seminary was held on March 5, 2011 in New Haven, Connecticut, under the auspices of The Muslim Endorsement Council of Connecticut. The Council's mission is "to provide a structure and process for the official endorsement of Muslim Chaplains based on pastoral and Islamic principles and to establish a national standard for such endorsement in order to develop consistency and integrity in the field of Islamic Chaplaincy" (http://shura1432.eventbrite.com/). In the past, a similar body called the National Association of Muslim Chaplains was established, but it is now defunct.

Figure 3: The Varied Roles and Responsibilities of Muslim University Chaplains
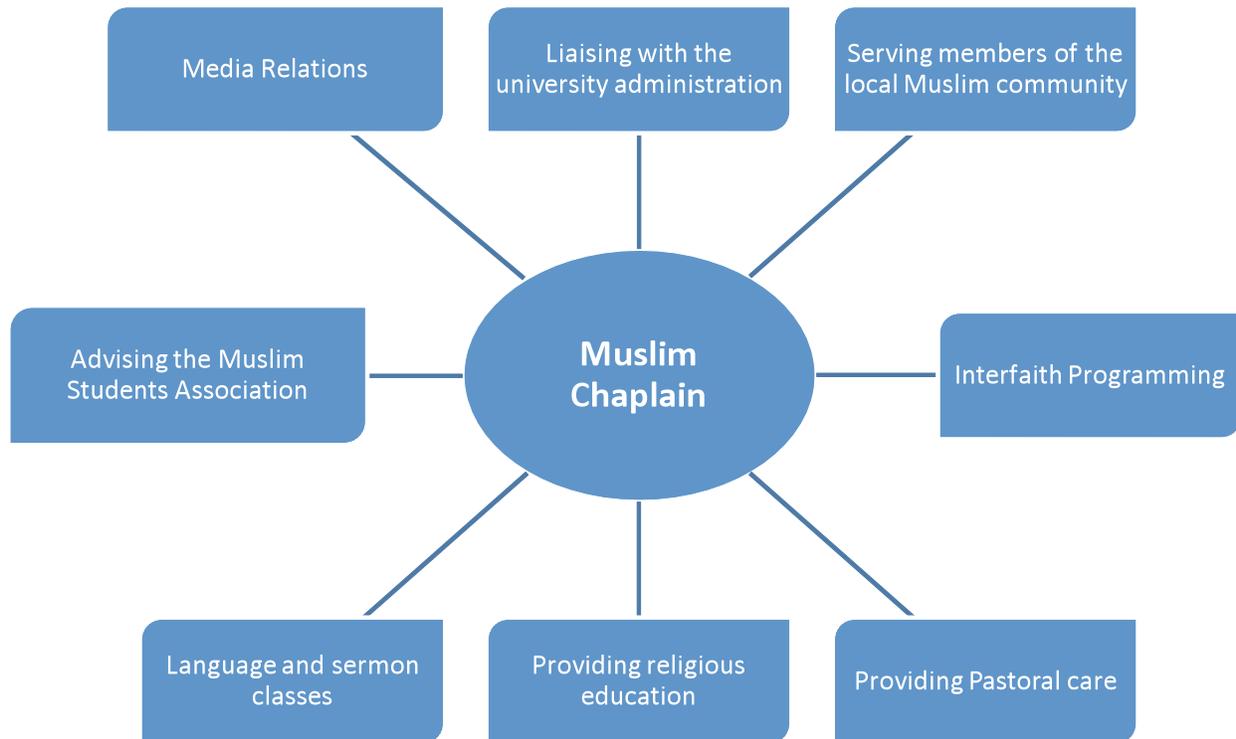
All chaplains interviewed for this study provide pastoral care, and several noted that individual student counseling takes up most of their time. In addition, chaplains also serve as educators for Muslim as well as non-Muslim students. The religious education component of the chaplain's role varies with the needs of the students as well as the chaplain's own comfort with Islamic Studies. Muslim chaplains also serve as the representational voice of Islam on campus, and are regularly sought out by school administration, faculty, as well as non-Muslim students to provide input and advice.

Adnan Zulfiqar at the University of Pennsylvania defined his role as having three different components: first, he interfaces with the school administration and other chaplains on issues related to Muslim students; second, he acts as a counselor to Muslim students and advises the Muslim Students Association (MSA); and, finally, he provides education on religious issues to Muslim as well as non-Muslim students by organizing lecture series and other educational events. The parameters of his role are defined by the requirements of the university administration and the students themselves. This is in contrast to the model of Muslim chaplaincy at New York University, where the role extends outward to the surrounding Muslim communities. Khalid Latif caters not only to the large Muslim student body, but also to Muslim youth that live in the city. Latif is also quite active beyond the New York University campus, serving in a unique ambassadorial role. He undertakes various media and speaking engagements, has developed an

intricate and vast system of Muslim student volunteers, and has embarked on a fund-raising campaign for an Islamic Center at NYU. This model sheds light on the impact of the chaplain's context on the roles he or she is expected to perform.

Another interesting model is that at Amherst College, which employs two Muslim chaplains, one male and one female. The position is part-time, and split between the two chaplains. One of the chaplains, Elizaveta Lozovaya, noted that having two chaplains was a good option for students because they can choose to discuss their issues with whomever they feel most comfortable. While having two chaplains at a co-educational school such as Amherst certainly eliminates any controversies around leading prayers or delivering sermons (*khutbas)*, it may not be a suitable model for other universities. Such a model may reinforce the historical divisions of leadership, with male chaplains taking on public leadership and representing both males and females, and female chaplains focusing on women-only responsibilities. Finally, Dawood Yasin at Dartmouth College is not only the Muslim Life Advisor but also the coordinator for international service activities for Dartmouth students. This gives him an opportunity to take his role as a Muslim leader into the wider campus community– he is able to promote interfaith dialogue and educate students about Islam and Muslim societies.

Due to the focus on the spiritual growth of Muslim students, all of my interviewees in one way or another facilitate Muslim prayers and sermons. Several male chaplains lead the prayers and deliver the sermons themselves. Female chaplains, on the other hand, have had to come up with creative ways to exercise their leadership in this area because, according to traditional Muslim practices, women do not perform these functions. For instance, Marwa Aly writes or co-writes the sermons with male students at Trinity College. She also conducts Arabic language classes for students who are interested in learning verses of the Quran or improving their Arabic pronunciation so that they can lead the prayers. Thus, even though she herself does not perform the function of leading the prayers, she exercises active religious leadership. The Hartford Seminary, in fact, highlights the distinction between the chaplains and local *imams* in an effort to ensure that the larger Muslim community accepts the female chaplains:

> Professional chaplains do not displace local religious leaders, but fill the special requirements involved in intense institutional environments. Thus, a Muslim chaplain is not necessarily an "*Imam*," although an *imam* may work as a chaplain. There is a need for both male and female Muslim chaplains. For example, female Muslim students on college campuses or hospitalized Muslim women may feel more comfortable with a Muslim woman chaplain. (www.hartsem.edu)

Although in the above excerpt the need for female chaplains is articulated in a gendered manner – to provide services to other Muslim women – in reality, the female chaplains that I interviewed articulated their competence for catering to the needs of both Muslim women and men. And, in fact they do so on a daily basis. Naila Baloch, the Muslim Chaplain at Tufts University, even performs marriage ceremonies.

In short, Muslim chaplains on university campuses wear many hats – they provide pastoral care to Muslim students, promote intra- and interfaith dialogue, educate about the Muslim faith and its interpretations, represent Muslims students during university staff and administration meetings, interface with other chaplains on student well-being, and work for the general welfare of all students. These roles and responsibilities are complex and are influenced by the structure of the chaplaincy office, school regulations, and the requirements of the student body. Importantly, the wide scope of the institution of Muslim chaplaincy provides the possibility for women to adapt it in ways that enable their participation in this form of religious leadership.

Challenges and Opportunities

Given the relative infancy of the institution, the interviewees also discussed a variety of challenges that they face. To begin with, there is an overall lack of understanding in Muslim as well as non-Muslim communities about the roles of Muslim chaplains. Many a times, students, faculty, and administrative staff are not able to understand how Muslim chaplains are different from *imams*. However, as this study demonstrates, chaplains have a different range of responsibilities when compared to an *imam* of a mosque. Dawood Yasin pointed out that understanding this differentiation will not only help Muslim communities recognize the need for such leadership but also allow for greater acceptance of women in this role: "a chaplain is not an *imam* – and it is precisely this distinction that can facilitate a breakdown in gender barriers and provide greater opportunity for Muslim chaplains in terms of gender representation."

On a more institutional level, Muslim chaplaincy positions suffer from a general lack of funding – a challenge that is also faced by chaplaincies of most other faiths. Several universities hire Muslim chaplains in an intern or part-time capacity and most of the interviewees fall in this category. Some Muslim chaplains also serve voluntarily. For instance, Columbia University does not fund religious ministers or chaplains. Instead, sponsoring organizations send their representatives to serve in such capacities. Imam Sayeed, mentioned above, does not have a sponsoring organization, as there is no unified Islamic body for endorsement of chaplains or *imams*. Thus, he has been serving at the university in a voluntary capacity for over a decade. Ali Mir was also in a similar position two years ago. His university (USC) also does not fund its 30 or so Directors of Religious Life. Likewise, Mir started

working as a volunteer. He chose not to be affiliated with one specific Muslim organization – "I wanted to maintain my autonomy to make decisions which are best for my students and not influenced by an institution's ideology that is not directly connected to the needs and concerns of students on our campus." USC, however, made his position official two years ago when it realized the need for a Muslim advisor.

When it is a paid position, sources of funding for Muslim chaplaincy also vary. Commonly the universities provide modest funding, usually through the discretionary funds available to the Office of Chaplains. Sometimes the position is supported by private donations from alumni and students. Another way in which some schools have addressed this issue is by jointly sponsoring a Muslim chaplaincy. Consider the case of Marwa Aly who works at two institutions – Wesleyan University and Trinity College, which both have small Muslim student populations and could not afford full-time chaplains.

Most of the interviewees expressed the need for curricular materials, best practices, and counseling tools that could help them improve their work. Both Ali Mir and Tarif Shraim noted that having Muslim counselors and therapists on campus or having access to Muslim counselors in the area would be very beneficial for them. Najiba Akbar went a step further; she felt that the resources and best practices of Muslim chaplains should be "formalized and housed in a setting similar to the Hillel. It should be a national resource that everyone can access." This would also harness the potential for collaboration with other chaplaincy offices across universities as well.

Another area of need highlighted by the chaplains focused on professional development and networking opportunities. Since the current generation of Muslim chaplains is pioneering a new form of religious leadership, it is crucial for them to be able to devise a career path, develop professionally, and facilitate each other's growth. As noted earlier, there are not many institutions that provide consistent on-the-job support to chaplains. One such effort was undertaken in 2006 by a group of chaplaincy students at the Hartford Seminary who founded the Muslim Chaplains Association (http://muslimchaplains.org). The Association brought together Muslim chaplains from various fields – universities, prisons, armed forces etc. – and sought to provide educational and networking resources to them. However, the association did not succeed. According to Imam Abdullah, one of the founders, chaplains from diverse institutional contexts have different priorities and challenges; therefore, associations that address the specific needs of university chaplains are crucial for the future.

Challenges for Female Chaplains

Muslim female chaplains face a plethora of additional obstacles. While all chaplains experience the lack of a clearly defined career path, female chaplains are at an acute disadvantage. Given the predominantly male-orientated nature of Muslim religious leadership, women have limited opportunities for growth and advancement. Nancy Khalil noted that a male chaplain could perhaps go on to become an *imam* at a mosque; however, such opportunities are not available to Muslim women in most cases. Additionally, some co-educational university administrators prefer to hire male Muslim chaplains, who *can* lead the prayers, and thus avoid debates related to Muslim women's leadership. Hence, prospects for additional employment opportunities for women seem bleak.

Female chaplains also face the double-burden of establishing their credibility not only with non-Muslim colleagues and staff, but also with Muslim students and community members. Some interviewees noted that Muslim women leaders do not enjoy wide support from within the Muslim community. It is understandable that both Muslim men and women are struggling to come to terms with this new form of leadership. Marwa Aly, for example, noted that during the first few days of her appointment at Wesleyan University, some male students were quite apprehensive about her ability to be a chaplain given that she could not lead the prayers on Fridays. Aly had to struggle to de-link the function of leading prayers with her authority as a religious leader. She found creative ways of bringing together her mixed-gender student body by facilitating the learning of a group of male students who could lead the prayers, teaching them how to write the sermons, and helping them with their pronunciation of the Arabic language.

In addition, at the institutional level, some Muslim organizations in the United States do not encourage women's participation and may even exclude them. Heba Youssef, the Muslim Chaplain at Fairfield University, recalled an incident when she faced challenges in attending the Annual *Imam* Conference, organized by a national association. The conference sought to inform participants about contemporary issues in Islam. Youssef was informed that she could not attend the conference because it was restricted to those who held the title of *imam* (which in the American context is reserved for men) and that there were no facilities to accommodate women. Even though Youssef and other female chaplains like herself do not hold the title of *imam*, they are indeed Muslim leaders in their own capacity and cater to the needs of their Muslim constituencies. Ali Mir highlighted the seriousness of this issue as one of incongruence of community expectations. He noted that he encourages his female students to take on leadership positions in campus organizations and Muslim civic institutions, but the same leadership positions are not always available to them in the religious domain. "When they [female students] go to their home mosques,

oftentimes they find themselves hidden. This creates a lot of confusion in young women." Thus, making space for women leaders beyond the campus, and accepting and encouraging them in those roles is critical for sustaining women's participation in this form of Muslim leadership.

Finally, to complicate matters a bit more, Muslim women who are chaplains or desire to become chaplains are not a homogenous group. What happens when a woman who does not conform to the popular image of a Muslim woman wants to become a chaplain? What happens when a woman who does not wear the *hijab* (veil) and does not speak the Arabic language wants to participate in Muslim leadership? Only a couple of chaplains interviewed for this study fell in this category. It is crucial to note that women who do not conform to the Arab-centric practice of Islam may have greater obstacles in being recognized as Muslim leaders by Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Marwa Aly noted that while not her reason for her wearing the *hijab*, it has been a positive experience with students since it opens up an area of dialogue. Naila Baloch, on the other hand, observed that "not wearing the *hijab* is sometimes a hindrance because it is true that people make judgments based on one's appearance." That said, Baloch went on to note that "the lack of the visual symbol of the *hijab* makes me more approachable for some people; the point being that both wearing and not wearing the *hijab* can be a hindrance or help, to varying degrees." There is much debate among scholars of Islam about the increasing orthopraxy among Muslims that leaves out some communities of interpretation. Women who do not conform to the popular images will have to struggle to push the boundaries on what it means to be a Muslim woman.

Aly, Youssef and Baloch's examples are not unique. Several female chaplains who are appointed at co-educational institutions are redefining what it means to be a Muslim religious leader. These women are finding creative and innovative ways to attend to the spiritual and educational needs of the students while respecting the traditional practices of Islam. However, sustainability of women's leadership will require far more of an effort than simply the drive and dedication of select women. Their experiences highlight a critical challenge to Muslim women's leadership: a challenge that is internal to the Muslim community, and one that requires a shift at both the practical and conceptual levels. Muslim organizations and members of the community have to consciously invest in women's leadership and encourage female chaplains' participation in order to ensure that this emerging form of Muslim leadership becomes sustainable, and contributes to the strengthening of the American Muslim communities.

Ways Forward

This study traces the emergence of the institution of Muslim Chaplaincy on university campuses, an institution which seeks to address the needs of Muslim as well as non-Muslim students in varied settings. Evidence shows that over the next decade, a larger number of colleges and universities will recognize the need for Muslim chaplains, and there is no doubt that these chaplains will play a critical role in providing homegrown leadership to Muslims in America. However, the sustainability of Muslim chaplaincy depends on a variety of factors both internal and external to the Muslim community. In the post 9/11 context, Muslim chaplains play a crucial role on university campuses by humanizing the American Muslim experience and building bridges between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Therefore, universities may consider investing in this position not just in instances where there are large numbers of Muslims on campus, or when other similar institutions establish this office, but also in order to facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding among students in general. Funding for chaplaincy positions can also come from Muslim communities themselves as is the case for other chaplains who are sponsored by their congregations or ordaining bodies. However, given the diversity of Muslim interpretations and the de-centralized nature of Muslim leadership, it may take some time before Muslim organizations or communities sponsor Muslim chaplains. And even if or when that happens, it would not be without its drawbacks.

Next, Muslims themselves have to provide the space for the emergence of this form of leadership. Muslims chaplains must be given the opportunity to make mistakes, learn from them, and become better leaders. With regards to women, both Muslims and non-Muslims would have to recognize the diverse ways of being Muslim so that more people feel empowered as leaders. Educational institutions would have to make an extra effort to recruit female students in their programs, and hospitals, prisons, armed forces, and universities would have to become more confident in hiring women as religious leaders.

These are immense challenges and cannot be overcome overnight. However, the current cadre of Muslim chaplains is a group of motivated, energetic, and enterprising religious professionals. They are working intensely to strengthen the institution of Muslim chaplaincy so that it is sustainable, diverse, and vibrant – much like the American Muslim communities themselves.

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