

Title

Leadership and Capacity Building in the British Muslim Community: the case of Muslim chaplains

What this Study Contributes

This project seeks to find out more about four aspects of Muslim chaplaincy. Firstly, we want to find out more about who decides to become a Muslim chaplain, and why? What kind of prior training and experience do chaplains bring to their role? What is the career trajectory of Muslim chaplains? Secondly, we are seeking to establish what is actually involved in the work of a Muslim chaplain. What is said and done, when, where, and how, during Muslim chaplaincy practice? Thirdly, the research intends to find out how the emergence of Muslim chaplaincy has been shaped by prevailing institutional structures and power dynamics. How have Muslim chaplains navigated their way through the politics and structures that shape their work? Fourthly, through consultation with the users of Muslim chaplaincy, the research will investigate the impact of chaplaincy practice.

Team

Principal Investigator: Dr Sophie Gilliat-Ray (Cardiff)

Co-Investigator: Professor Stephen Pattison (Birmingham)

Research Associate: Ali Omar (Cardiff)

University

Cardiff University

Award

Phase 1 Large Grant £270,381

Research Partners

St Michael's College, Cardiff (Revd Stephen Roberts)

Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE), Leicester (Dr Ataullah Siddiqui)

Muslim Chaplains Association (Maulana Sikander Pathan, Secretary General)

Islam Resource Group, College of Health Care Chaplains (Maulana Yunus Dudhwala)

Association of Muslim Chaplains in Higher Education (Asgar Halim Rajput)

Asim Hafiz (Ministry of Defence)

Approach

In the first year of the project, the research team will conduct interviews with past and present students of the MIHE course, as well as with serving Muslim chaplains from a range of sectors (health, military, prison, education). The first year will also involve a detailed review of relevant literature and a critique of the syllabus and learning materials provided to MIHE students.

In the second year of the study, the researchers will conduct follow-up observation of Muslim chaplains, as they actually conduct their chaplaincy work. Interviews will also be conducted with stakeholders and observers of Muslim chaplaincy development, such as members of the Association of Muslim Chaplains, and with users of Muslim chaplaincy.

The data will be analysed by all members of the research team, who combine sociological, theological, educational, and pastoral skills and expertise.

Findings

Project finishes **30th June 2011**.

This interdisciplinary and innovative research will chart the emergence of a new religious discourse and practice in Britain. It will increase our understanding of the sociology of Muslim religious professionalism by asking questions

about the recruitment, training and education, and deployment of Muslim chaplains. Furthermore, by examining the texts, rituals and Islamic traditions that underpin Muslim chaplaincy, the project will for the first time begin to chart the educational and theological underpinnings of Muslim chaplaincy.

As an outcome of the study, there will be informed dialogue about Muslim religious training and professionalism in Britain, which reflects both stakeholder and academic perspectives. The research will also contribute to international discussions about Muslim involvement in chaplaincy, especially in the USA.

Activities and Outcomes

Sophie Gilliat-Ray 2008 'From 'Visiting Minister' to 'Muslim Chaplain': the growth of Muslim chaplaincy in Britain, 1970-2007' in *The Centrality of Religion in Social Life: Essays in Honour of James A. Beckford* edited by Eileen Barker, published by Ashgate, pp 145-157.

http://www.ashgate.com/default.aspx?page=637&title_id=9174&edition_id=11347&calcTitle=1

Further Information

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/relig/research/researchcentres/csi/research/muslimchaplaincyproject/muslim-chaplains-research-project.html>