INTERFAITH CHAPLAINCY IN A POST-SECULAR CONTEXT

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Abstract

Chaplaincy in public institutions operates at the interface of secular and religious logics. In this context, the paradigm of post-secularity proves to be the key to the interpretation of pastoral care in the public sphere. Regardless of secularization tendencies, religion is regaining importance under the horizon of political interests and a growing consciousness of the social importance of religion. In this paper, three key elements of post-secularity – optionality, religious policy, and communication with secular and other religious positions – are developed and applied to an empirical example in the field of Muslim asylum chaplaincy. Chaplaincy is required to adapt to certain basic conditions and is attributed an integrative function. Conceptual elements of a post-secular chaplaincy are presented, ranging from necessary stakeholder-management, conflicts about an autonomous space of pastoral care, the mediating role of chaplains and interreligious cooperation, to the discovery that chaplaincy can be an innovative space for theological reflection.

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INTRODUCTION

The topic of chaplaincy in public institutions has been gaining new attention in many European countries for several years. On the one hand, institutions like prisons or hospitals see that pastoral care beyond that offered by Christians might be helpful and, at the same time, non-Christian religious communities are expressing a need of specific pastoral care for their adherents. On the other hand, there are state efforts to promote integration through religious policy. In this regard, chaplaincy can be

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perceived as a measure to counter the development of radical thinking and to ensure, instead, religious interpretations that are compatible with the functioning of respective institutions within the framework of the state itself.

Religious policy and a new attention to religion as public religion are characteristic of what can be called the post-secular context. Therefore, chaplaincy in public institutions can be seen a kind of seismograph at the often-conflicting interface between religious and secular spheres. The state strives to manage religious plurality, whereas religious actors and organisations have to consider secular frameworks and to negotiate with its institutions. Against the background of such interactions, this paper looks at the relationship between post-secularity and chaplaincy. The main question will therefore be: How can concepts of post-secularity contribute to understanding contemporary situations and challenges of chaplaincy in public institutions? Furthermore, some elements of response to the following question will be aimed at: How can this reflection contribute to developing concepts of post-secular chaplaincy as an appropriate conceptual response to a given situation?

Post-secularity does not only have an impact on relations between state and religion but also on relations between different religious communities. While some prefer the term "multifaith" in relation to chaplaincy (Gilliat-Ray & Arshad 2015), the term "interfaith" will be used here. The term interfaith chaplaincy (Abu Ras & Laird 2011; Liefbroer, Olsman, Ganzevoort, & van Etten-Jamaludin 2017; Youngblood 2019) refers to a situation, where chaplains from different religions work together in a particular institutional context maintaining both faith-specific approaches and responsibility of the respective religious communities for their chaplains. They keep their distinctive profile, yet also address clients of different faiths. The focus of *inter*-faith chaplaincy is on communication and interaction between chaplains of various denominations as well as between the chaplains and different clients. This organisational model can thus be distinguished from a type of chaplaincy with a common governance and a completely shared practice.

The situation of chaplaincy in public institutions may vary from one context to another. However, despite local specificities there are some common traits which are transnational such that a specific case can be illustrative for a wider context. The following reflections partly refer to an evaluation research in the field of asylum chaplaincy in Switzerland (Schmid & Sheikhzadegan 2020). This one-year research project enabled deep insight into the process of developing Muslim chaplaincy and the interactions between Muslim and Christian chaplains, as well as between

the chaplains and other professions within the institution. One particularity of the Swiss context (unlike in Britain, the Netherlands or the US, for example) is that in most cases chaplains are mandated by the churches and are thus in a more independent position relative to the institutions in which they function. However, as will be shown, in the case of asylum chaplaincy there is a complex structure of governance.

In order to interrelate post-secularity, chaplaincy and interfaith dimensions, this paper is structured as follows. First, a contemporary understanding of post-secularity then, second, the state of research on chaplaincy in respect to secularization and opposing turns of post-secularity will be outlined. An analysis of the specific case of asylum chaplaincy follows, focusing on religious policy and optionality as a basis of pastoral care and examining the issue of adaptation versus contextualization. This will lead into a discussion of interfaith communication and cooperation and, by way of conclusion, some conceptual elements of a post-secular chaplaincy will be presented.

Post-Secularity as Social and Political Context

For more than two decades, secularism as a general theory has been questioned. It is now considered quite outdated by a considerable number of researchers. In order to describe a more nuanced relationship between secular and religious spheres the term post-secularity is now more widely used (Beckford 2012). Post-secularity is not anti-secularity but rather comprises a set of phenomena and perceptions based on the achievements of secularity. Thus, post-secularity can be seen as a kind of modified and reflective secularism, taking into consideration its limitations and counter-developments.

Transferring José Casanova's (1994) threefold understanding of secularity, post-secularity can mean de-differentiation, the return of religion or de-privatisation. Concerning all three aspects, post-secularity does not bring about a complete counter movement, but rather some nuances. On the basis of differentiation there may be a stronger consciousness for overlapping spheres, such as between religion and politics. Even if there is no simple return of religion, there are new phenomena indicating a constant need to express oneself in forms usually called religious or spiritual. And although religious practice and conviction remain a private domain, religions regain public perception and visibility and are respected as a "partner in discourse" (Ziebertz & Riegel 2009: 305). Thus, post-secularity is based on secularity and some of its irreversible achievements.

Following these considerations, I propose eight key characteristics of post-secularity (Schmid 2019, 2020a). These are optionality, new public interest in religion, critique of modernity, non-simultaneity of developments beyond a linear notion of secularization, multidimensional conflicts, religious policy, secularity as a normative framework, a necessary ability and willingness to communicate. However, in this paper, in order to relate them to issues of chaplaincy, I refer only to three of these categories, namely those regarded as categories of interpretation applicable for the current social situation. Moreover, these categories are understood as a normative design that can regulate the relationship between religions, society and the political system so as to mitigate mutual suspicion. Thus, they can also contribute to a concept of chaplaincy in a post-secular context.

Optionality

Within the contemporary framework of freedom in a secular society, the individual can choose to be religious or not. For Charles Taylor (2007: 3), faith is "one option among others" and therefore "an embattled option" to which a plurality of alternatives like unbelief or humanism exist. In this situation people also convert more easily from one option to the other (Joas 2014: 90). Typical are also a "host of intermediate variants, on the borderline of religion" (Taylor 2007: 512) or a "gamut of intermediate positions" (513), which often surprisingly combine belonging to a religious community, individual convictions, and religious practice. Therefore, a specific position will never be isolated but has to find its place next to others without giving up its proper convictions.

> We all learn to navigate between two standpoints: an 'engaged' one in which we live as best we can the reality our standpoint opens us to; and a 'disengaged' one in which we are able to see ourselves as occupying one standpoint among a range of possible ones, with which we have in various ways to coexist. But we have also changed from a condition in which belief was the default option (Taylor 2007: 12).

In a normative sense, it is thus about recognizing the optionality of religion as a key condition of the post-secular age.

Religious Policy

The second category, *religious policy*, is a response to an increased public interest in religion. The incompatibility between established legal systems and a pluralised religious landscape, an increased symbolic

perception of religions linked with a new public interest in religion, conflictual issues related to religious practice and security concerns foster political responses (Schmid 2017a). News solutions and measures are necessary for Muslim communities whose organisational structure does not correspond to the churches, which enforce specific regulations. In a wide sense, religious policy comprises legislation, political decisions and court judgements (Liedhegener & Pickel 2016: 12). If religious policy is actively pursued in the sense of a political field of its own, religion is brought back into the public sphere in a controlled manner. This currently happens in a converging way in different types of state-religion constellations (Portier 2012: 99). New measures of religious policy are in many contexts oriented to Islam and only to a lesser extent to established religions. Jonathan Fox (2018: 127) distinguishes between support, restriction and neutrality and sees in many cases a mixture of elements of all three. In no case is there is a total abstinence of the state in dealing with religious issues. There are rather different types of state interventions with the underlying aim of shaping relations between state and religions politically.

Communication

The third category is the *necessary ability and willingness to communicate*. Increased plurality and conflict necessitate capacities to cope with such situations and to seek mutual understanding on both secular and religious sides. The aforementioned intermediate positions even make this situation more complex. Jürgen Habermas (2008: 137) underlines the necessity of a self-reflexive stance to others: "Religious citizens must develop an epistemic stance toward other religions and worldviews that they encounter within a universe of discourse hitherto occupied only by their own religion". At the same time, they have to find a positive relationship with secular knowledge and to recognise the priority of secular reasons in the public sphere. This is the basis for interfaith relations; interfaith dialogue in a narrow sense limited to the religions themselves without considering the secular context would contradict post-secularity. Habermas rightly underlined that not only religious but also secular people are facing a challenge and that the burden of communication and translation cannot be distributed asymmetrically. All participants are committed to a mutual willingness to learn and must engage in the normative foundations of discourse. This includes the ability to accept and constructively deal with different ways to determine the relationship

between secular and religious, and it leads to "a self-reflexive overcoming of a rigid and exclusive secularist self-understanding of modernity" (Habermas 2008: 138). However, one can be more sceptical than Habermas and assume that translating and understanding are limited and not always possible or necessary (Loobuyck & Rummens 2011). On this basis, a widened model of interfaith relations can be conceptualised which is strongly aware of secularity. In a normative sense, a post-secular context requires the willingness to communicate with different positions in order to arrive at a constructive relationship between secularity and religion.

Whereas optionality concerns the individual, religious policy refers to the state and the necessary ability and willingness to communicate above all to the religious communities. All these levels will also be considered when looking at chaplaincy, starting with governance as framework, then looking at optionality and finally at communication.

Chaplaincy between Secularity and Post-Secularity

The focus of the following analysis of the state of research is on chaplaincy at the interface between secularity and post-secularity. Some authors explicitly speak of a post-secular chaplaincy (Bobert 2011; Carlson 2009) or chaplaincy in a specific post-secular context (Possamai, Sriprakash, Brackenreg, & McGuire 2014; Sievernich 2003). Many others refer to phenomena linked with this interface without necessarily mentioning the respective term. Due to the wide field of chaplaincy studies, among the latter contributions only some exemplary ones can be considered in the context of this paper. The emphasis here is first on institutional developments and then on the impact on the chaplain's role.

The developments and dynamics of secularity have had a deep impact on chaplaincy as in all spheres of social life. Since the 19th century chaplaincy has been challenged by the rise of psychology and the social sciences. Whereas some chaplaincy concepts have integrated insights and seen these disciplines as dialogue partners, others resisted and refused in order to maintain a profile of a dialectical theology of proclamation. However, nowadays an integrative and strongly interdisciplinary paradigm has become mainstream. Psychology has come to be a dominant orientation for chaplaincy. This can be regarded as a "sign of secularization" (McClure 2012: 272) on the one hand, but also as a tool to better understand situations and interactions of human beings, on the other. The

appropriation of methods of social sciences and humanities can be seen as a step in a secularization process.

However, chaplaincy with a persisting religious or at least spiritual profile has been less affected by secularity than social work that has turned into a nearly fully secular endeavour (Shaw 2018). The differentiation of fields of intervention like hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, military, asylum centres, schools and universities, entails a specialisation and design of care according to the logics of the respective institution. Chaplaincy constitutes a religious presence in institutional spaces that like in the case of hospitals have turned since around 1800 from religious in almost entirely secular organisations (Collins 2013: 40). It therefore provides a hetero-topical space with institutions like asylums, hospitals or prisons which can themselves be seen as heterotopias within society (Collins 2013: 54; Swift 2014: 167-169). However, it is important to emphasise that chaplaincy constitutes a service within secular institutions in which chaplains are usually integrated. Therefore, they need to interact with secular institutional logics. Usually the offer of chaplaincy extends also to secular target groups in such institutional contexts. Chaplaincy is thus located at an "interface between church, state, society" (Sullivan 2014: 50) and can be understood as "a form of governmentality that is at once secular and religious" (51) with respect to institutional norms and self-understanding.

The terms "chaplaincy" and "pastoral care" (German: "*Seelsorge*") are today often replaced by "spiritual care". On the one hand, the latter may be seen as a more secular expression (Schuhmann & Damen 2018: 406). On the other hand, paradoxically, due to its rich history and manifold usage, "spirituality" can also be seen as a term to "bridge the gap" (Peng-Keller 2019: 10) between the secular and the religious. As this implies an inclusion of multiple spiritual searches, especially in a medical context (Bobert 2011), the transformation into spiritual care is a response to secularity and pluralism (Craddock Lee 2002). In some contexts, however, chaplains are replaced by psychologists and social workers who take over the function of counselling (Pesut, Reimer-Kirkham, Sawatzky, Woodland & Peverall 2012: 831). This may lead to a competition between these three professions whose methods of interventions (despite their specificities) largely overlap. Against this background, the current situation of chaplaincy can be described as between self-secularization and takeover by other professional groups. On the other hand, the growing medical interest in holistic healing and spirituality can be understood as an expression of post-secularity. Within a more comprehensive approach

to healthcare, rehabilitation and also care for refugees, spiritual and religious issues represent an integral part. So, one might rather speak of "the construction of the secular/sacred tension" (Collins 2013: 43) based on theories of secularization, whereas in practice both might be more interwoven. Furthermore, there emerges a utilitarian perspective on chaplaincy which sees in chaplaincy a useful function within society, e.g. as a part of welfare services at post-secular universities in the paradigm of neo-liberalism (Possamai et al. 2014). Religion and spirituality serve as a tool for rehabilitation in prison (Becci & Roy 2015). Thus, chaplaincy is no longer undertaken for its own sake but enters the logics of the measurable and its value is quantified.

These changes have a strong impact on the professional role of the chaplain. Chaplains become spiritual-care-givers in a wider sense. Thus, the chaplains' profession does not disappear through secularization, but undergoes profound changes. Their continuous presence within public institutions is itself a sign of post-secularity. They find a new legitimation by referring to "a form of secularized spirituality" (Pesut et al. 2012: 834) that can more easily be accepted by health care institutions. Whereas secularity might be seen as a threat to chaplaincy at a first glance, it turns out to become a chance for a renewed understanding of their practice. Yet it is still an open issue if a faith-specific care will disappear and be replaced by a trans-religious spiritual care or by a psychological consultancy or, if in the context of post-secularity, there are just movements into the opposite direction.

In a post-secular context further tasks are required from chaplains that refer to interfaith issues, and much else besides. Chaplaincies are "not only expected to bridge religious or denominational gaps, but importantly also the religious–secular divide" (Kühle & Reintoft Christensen 2018: 194). The impact of secularization strengthens the role of chaplains as "skilful interpreters" (Swift 2014: 150) between religious and secular language, practice and identities and their manifold combinations. Nolan describes the chaplains' task at the interface between religion and the secular as "working with those whose religion is secularized and whose secularism is touched by the sacred" (Nolan 2016: 14). Responding to a renewed public dimension, chaplaincy may be viewed as an expression of "public theology" (McClure 2012: 275f.). An example for this can be seen in an explicitly post-secular military chaplaincy going beyond private individual counselling and dealing with public religious issues (Carlson 2009).

Chaplaincy thus proves to be marked by secularity, on the one hand, but on the other hand is itself already part of a post-secular practice. This

is why it is obvious that to deepen these points it is necessary to look at the specific case and practice of asylum chaplaincy, starting with a focus on the modes of chaplaincy governance specific to the post-secular context.

Governance and Politics on Religion

We can distinguish between two approaches of religious policy. On the one hand, a regulative approach through law, control and restrictions; on the other a deliberative approach based on discourse and participation (Fülling 2009: 27-41, 61). As chaplaincy has become again an issue of religion policy, it may be linked to both approaches. An example from the Swiss context beyond the specific case of asylum chaplaincy is the national plan on prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, published in 2017 after a long process of consultation. Advanced education for chaplains and religious caregivers in public institutions, like prisons and hospitals, is listed among the numerous measures of prevention (Sicherheitsverbund Schweiz 2017: 14). This adds a security policy connotation to an otherwise primarily religious function. In a press release about the pilot project, which serves as a case for this paper, the State Secretariat for Migration sees the chaplains in asylum centres as a stabilizing bridge between the country of origin and Switzerland (State Secretariat for Migration 2018). Chaplains are thus deployed in an integration policy sense. Both documents can be seen as expressing a more regulative approach.

Further, the issue of opening the existing Church-state cooperation model for Muslims so as to integrate them into an established system of mutual rights and duties, is also linked to a deliberative policy. It represents a common approach which is also applied in other fields such as religious education in state schools, social work or the recognition of religious communities (cf. Euchner 2018; Schmid 2017b). The discursive setting corresponds to the system of cooperation between state and religious communities.

It is against this background that the case of chaplaincy for asylum-seekers will be examined in more detail. The idea of establishing a Muslim chaplaincy alongside the existing chaplains from the Roman-Catholic and Reformed churches was first mooted by the interreligious round table in the Canton of Zurich in 2013. Such establishment built on positive experiences of interfaith relations and responded to a situation where a large number of refugees of Muslim faith came to Switzerland.

The refugee context was also a relevant factor for state authorities when evoking the idea of preventing conflicts with the help of an imam or Muslim chaplain. This had already led to a shorter, pilot project in Lugano (Schmid, Schneuwly Purdie & Sheikhzadegan 2017: 4). The basis for the pilot project introducing Muslim chaplaincy was an existing collaboration between the State Secretariat for Migration and the churches, as well as the Jewish community. A general agreement from 2002 regulates the right to exercise chaplaincy in asylum centres according to defined standards. For the recruitment procedure it is conducted by mutual agreement of all the religious communities involved, and an interreligious openness together with consideration of both sexes is guaranteed (Bundesamt für Flüchtlinge 2002: 7).

This agreement gives the religious communities a strong position, wherein they face the state together and are also committed to consensual decision-making. The collaboration with the Jewish community and their strong role in the field of pastoral care, with help and counselling for refugees since the 1930s (Gerson & Hoerschelmann 2004), had the consequence that the interfaith dimension had already been anchored in the mutual agreement and so constituted a basis for an inclusion of the Muslim communities. However, due to their complex organisational structure and the lack of legal recognition of the Muslim communities, this process of inclusion proved to be more difficult and therefore required a separate procedure. It led to a complex structure of governance.

To be part of the project, both the Muslim partner community and the chaplains had to meet requirements according to a catalogue of criteria. The criteria for the partner organization comprised financial transparency, organization respecting the rule of law and democratic principles, observance of the fundamental values of the Swiss legal system, exclusion of economic or political purposes, keeping a register of members (Schmid et al. 2017: 63). The requirements for the chaplains included theological training, language skills, readiness for interreligious cooperation, communication and negotiation skills, respect for the rule of law and democratic principles (Schmid et al. 2017: 73). These criteria enabled the state to check and test their partner and the chaplains. Once the criteria had been reviewed, the cantonal Muslim umbrella organisation VIOZ (*Vereinigung Islamischer Organisationen in Zürich*) which had been founded in 1995 and which currently represents 36 member associations from different backgrounds could act as a partner for the project.

The case of asylum chaplaincy also illustrates how state and established religious communities collaborate when integrating a new partner. The

churches were thus included into the recruitment procedure for the chaplains and into the evaluation process. After all the conditions had been fulfilled and three Muslim chaplains been recruited, the chaplains found themselves in a double governance mandated by the State Secretariat of Migration and legitimated as Muslim chaplains by the umbrella organization VIOZ. This was also a source of tension as the Christian chaplains had their respective church as their supervisory authority, whereas the State Secretariat assumed this function for the Muslim chaplains.

The governance structure has since changed. The Swiss Confederation felt itself unable to finance Muslim chaplains beyond the Zürich pilot project phase. Thus, since 2018 responsibility for asylum chaplaincy has been taken over by the cantons. In the Canton of Zürich, a special structure for the governance of chaplaincy, mainly oriented to health care chaplaincy had been created already. This is an association in which both the Canton and the Muslim umbrella organization VIOZ are members, and is focused on the quality management of Muslim chaplaincy. This new structure assumes now an analogous function to the churches in mandating and training Muslim chaplains, including those in the asylum centre.

Summing up, asylum chaplaincy was both linked to regulative and discursive politics. An established institution such as chaplaincy in public institutions is newly coming into the focus of political interest in view of integration efforts with regard to Islam. As in other fields, a variety of security measures taken before Muslim are allowed to provide their service (Hernández Aguilar 2017). Specific arrangements are implemented that reflect the fact that Muslim communities are not recognised. A strong security or prevention orientation that helps to find acceptance within public debate might put chaplaincy as a whole into question, as it endangers trust of the clients which is vital for pastoral care.

Adaptation or Contextualization?

It is self-evident that chaplaincy today has to respect secular norms, like equality, freedom, diversity and non-discrimination, linked to optionality (Todd 2013: 151). Ajouaou and Bernts (2015) make the distinction between a more voluntary process of contextualization and an enforced procedure of adaptation. Concerning the case of Islamic prison chaplaincy in the Netherlands, they came to the conclusion that despite the requirements imposed by the government it can be seen as a process

contextualization. Concerning the US, Sullivan emphasises processes of adaptation by non-Christian groups "to fit the spaces created by early settlement between churches and the states" (2014: 58). There is also the question of Muslim chaplaincy having the space to develop its own distinctive profile, or if Muslim chaplains will simply be "mirror images of their Christian counterparts" (Kühle & Reintoft Christensen 2018: 185). Although there is room for religion in these contexts, it must meet clearly defined requirements.

The general profile of chaplaincy as practiced in the asylum centre will be presented first and linked with some general conceptions in the field of chaplaincy. Then the question of how Muslim chaplaincy related to and fit into this framework will be addressed. Chaplaincy in the Zurich asylum centre was characterised as follows. (1) It was based on a recognition of the optionality of religion and freedom of the individual. There was thus an emphasis on the voluntary participation of the service-receivers. (2) The individual asylum seekers and their processes were the focus, with space to explore this in conversations. Proselytism is definitively excluded (Todd 2013: 151). Elements of proclamation, mission or communal practice are usually not part of chaplaincy. (3) The result was a trans-religious and humanistic character of chaplaincy focused on the "idea of being present, or being-with" as the "core to spiritual care" (Nolan 2016: 14).

To explore this further, I first refer to interview remarks of one of the Muslim chaplains and compare those with statements of one of his Christian counterparts.[1] Both interviews were conducted in the context of the evaluation research (Schmid & Sheikhzadegan 2020). The Muslim chaplain reflects about his function and the target groups of the chaplaincy offer as follows:

> Religion, nationality, skin colour or language do not matter. In my faith and for me all people are the same. I treat all people, Muslim or non-Muslim, Arab or non-Arab, equally.

The chaplain refers to categorisations between Muslims and non-Muslims, but also to national distinctions like Arab and non-Arab, that might entail inner-Muslim tensions. He presents a universal openness of his task, but does not justify this secularly with the requirement profile of chaplains, but with religious arguments. He regards his faith as a legitimation

[1] All the interview citations in this paper have been translated from German into English by the author.

for universal openness. He does not relate this to "Islam", but more individualistically to his personal convictions as a Muslim. Later in the interview, however, he legitimates this position by referring to verses of the Qur'an that in his view take a universal stance and are open to pluralism (Sura 49.13; 21.107). Concerning Sura 5.32 he interprets this to mean:

> Here, too, we are talking about man and not about Muslim. That means we must have mercy for all. A chaplain who distinguishes between Muslim and non-Muslim is not a Muslim.

For this chaplain it is the universal openness of the Qur'an that forbids categorizing people. Therefore, even to distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims is a criterion of exclusion that, according to him, is forbidden in Islam. Further, as an example, he recalls an encounter with an Eritrean woman who was a Christian:

> For me, all human beings are created equal. Once I received someone from Eritrea. She was a Christian. She had a problem and I dealt with her problem. Then she calmed down and was happy. I have no problems with that. I don't only work with Muslims. I work as a chaplain for everyone. Although most are Muslims. But if they're not, I still talk to them.

This chaplain confronted his basic attitude with respect to his lived practice. It happened that, the majority were Muslims, he repeatedly ministered to non-Muslims as well – a little more than 20%, during the evaluation phase (Schmid et al. 2017: 40). He calls himself "a chaplain for everyone" and illustrates that his intervention in the case of the Christian woman had a considerable effect. As the Islamic justification of universal openness already shows, this opening for him does not lead to a de-denominationalization; on the contrary, denominational profiles remain. He insists on his Muslim profile which he calls "confessional":

> I believe we must promote open, Sunni, Shia and confessional Islam and position ourselves against radical forms of Islam.

He characterises his position as "open Islam", which can be Sunni or Shiite at the same time, and opposes this to radical positions. In doing so, he takes up the discourse of radicalization, which occupies an important place in the general debate on Islam and is repeatedly brought up, especially in relation to the asylum context. Later in the interview the Muslim chaplain refers to some tensions and conflictual cases. Being both a chaplain and an imam – he simultaneously had a duty of imam in

a mosque in Zurich – he speaks about an authoritative and enlightening function:

> I think in this area there is a function of chaplaincy. And that is by taking on this enlightening role. Most Muslims respect the imam and the Sheikh, and what he says can find acceptance. Because when an Imam says something, they are good and obey.

Normally chaplains would not speak of obedience with respect to their relation to their clients, as this may be seen as a contradiction to the principle of individual freedom. Nevertheless, due to his dual role, it is obvious for him to combine dimensions of both.

The pilot project was certainly also influenced by the state in that it wanted to make use of the authoritative function of an imam in the sense of conflict prevention through bridging, presenting a positive picture of Switzerland and contributing to avoid any misconceptions. If pastoral care is otherwise based on individual freedom, as conceptualized by state governance in its multiple functions, it can also contain normative elements in the defence against the danger of radicalization. This can also be seen reflected in the quote in the sense of a kind of alliance between state and religious normativity.

As a next step, selected statements of one of the Christian chaplains will be analysed. He refers to conflictual cases and develops his general understanding of chaplaincy from there.

> If I as a chaplain am explicitly politically oriented, if I have someone in front of me who recognises me as such and is positioned in the opposite direction, then no pastoral care can take place. Then pastoral care is abused. That is the clear example. The same applies, of course, to the religious propria. Basically, chaplaincy must be a-religious, but it must convey the confidence of God.

This chaplain draws a parallel between political "abuse" of pastoral care and different religious profiles. The openness of the chaplain is paramount, so that the client finds a link to him independent from his or her personal conviction or faith. This leads the Christian chaplain to an a-religious understanding of chaplaincy which keeps, however, a kind of theistic character. Further, he observes differences between dealing with plurality in Muslim and Christian contexts.

> In Christian chaplaincy it is different. We are brought up in such a way that we say that the denominational differences between Christians, that is, between Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox, does not count. Because we go deeper into the human level, where there is only God and man. When I speak on this level as a Christian with a Muslim, then we get along well.

What he calls "deeper human level" can be the starting point for chaplaincy in a non- or areligious sense. The Christian chaplain emphasises again his critical stance concerning a specific chaplaincy:

> The risk, of course, is that the more religion-specific the chaplaincy, the greater the potential for conflict among people. Shiites vs. Sunnis; Catholics vs. Protestants.

If we compare the statements of the two chaplains, we can see that they agree on several fundamental points. Both oppose fragmentation and the consequent separation from others. Both see chaplains as not talking only to members of their own religion. They share an open understanding of pastoral care that conveys trust and hope – terms which despite their religious connotations are part of a general language. But there are also fundamental differences. While the Christian chaplain withdraws any form of confession and transforms pastoral care into a non-religious offer, the Muslim chaplain legitimises an open understanding of chaplaincy precisely with a Muslim religious conviction. In addition, he also refers to Islamic norms and makes use of his own authoritative stance as an imam. This is not for the sake of proselytism, but in order to fulfil his state-mandated task of preventing extremism and of bridging between the worldviews of the asylum-seekers and the Swiss context. His position can be characterized as post-secular, whereas his Christian colleague is still more influenced by a secular framework. There is some room for the Muslim chaplain to appropriate the model of pastoral care to be practised in his own way. As the Christian chaplains served as models for the Muslim chaplains, this confirms the tendency that the dominant interfaith chaplaincy model is seen "as an expansion or adaptation of a Protestant-based chaplaincy model" (Abu Ras & Laird 2011: 56).

Looking back, we find both elements of contextualization and enforced adaptation. Adaptation as much as possible to the standards and practice of the Christian chaplains was part of the framework and enforced by the governance structure. Elements of Islamic normativity are also mobilised to coincide with political normativity. The statements of the Muslim chaplain are an expression of a creative appropriation of chaplaincy based on optionality. The framework of state control and governance described above would leave no room for an alternative understanding of chaplaincy. However, the chaplain's religious language illustrates that he has translated the requirements into his own frame of reference. Finally, it must be emphasized that two different attitudes towards chaplaincy can be observed here. These should not be regarded as Christian or Islamic

attitudes *per se* on the basis of this limited example, but rather as two ways of dealing with a particular situation in the contemporary post-secular context.

Interfaith and Interprofessional Communication and Collaboration

For chaplains in an interfaith setting there is a double challenge: to communicate with chaplains from other religions, and with different services in their institution. When it comes to interreligious and interprofessional communication and cooperation, several questions arise. In what form are interreligious collaboration and inter-professionality institutionalized? How intensively are they practised? How is chaplaincy oriented towards it? At one end of the spectrum chaplaincy would work independently of other services and rather present a separate space (Karle 2018). At the other end of the spectrum there would be interreligious teams (Eccles 2014) or interprofessional teams (D'Amour, Ferrada-Videla, San Martin Rodriguez & Beaulieu 2005) in the proper sense. However, the participation of chaplains in such teams would not necessarily exclude "critical distance" (Todd 2013: 156) and conflictual relationships.

As in the case of asylum chaplaincy the interfaith collaboration was more developed than the interprofessional collaboration, the focus will be first on the former. The last section has already shown that there are different notions about chaplaincy which can be distinguished mainly by the weight given to explicit religion. Nevertheless, the Muslim and Christian chaplains collaborated intensively in what can be seen as a first step towards building a team, despite asymmetries with regard to education, professionalism, freedom and career prospects. Furthermore, the Christian chaplains became (albeit informal) mentors and role models for their Muslim colleagues. One of the Christian chaplains looks at interreligious interactions as follows.

> They [the Muslim chaplains] are also very open and this openness has contributed to the fact that we are always in conversation. [...] This has contributed to the fact that I have learned from them; that they have also understood the Christians better; that we have learned from each other. And so, we have found a common way. [...] We have paid attention to the interreligious aspects, to the commonalities – and not to the differences. It was not about being Catholic or Protestant or Muslim, but about the question of what helps people here.

With the metaphor "a common way" the Christian chaplain designates a close cooperation which for him comprises common openness and mutual learning. According to his understanding of a non-religious pastoral care, he refers to the similarities and regards differences rather as obstacles. The dialogue was not about a comparison of different faiths, but about how to support the asylum-seekers. As a possible perspective for dialogue, he refers synonymously to common celebrations which were already practiced.

> For example, I think that if you could have an interfaith celebration once or twice a year, here in the centre, just a prayer, or thanksgiving for the new arrivals, and intercession for all those who are on the journey, just hand them over to God […]. I think Muslim chaplaincy is very important here. Muslim chaplaincy is very important concerning Ramadan and the daily prayers. Because it can happen very quickly that just in these moments, fundamentalists come in.

Here, first of all, reference is made to the possibility of joint celebrations that tie in with the life situations of the refugees. In connection with the topic of prayer, the Muslim chaplain again emphasizes the importance of Muslim pastoral care, which is according to him of high importance with regard to religious duties of Muslims and their specific religious needs, but also and especially with regard to radicalization. One of the Muslim chaplains evaluates the interreligious collaboration as follows.

> We are actually quite strongly networked. It's not that everyone does the work on their own but, in these sessions, we are already together and we are looking at how we can do it together. Also, otherwise the working hours are often overlapping, so that a Christian and a Muslim chaplain are present.

He is here referring to different levels of encounter: overlap of working hours, common meetings, and working in a kind of network. The formulation "how we can do it together" is reminiscent of the metaphor of "a common way" used by his Christian counterpart. The remark about the overlapping working hours illustrate again more a parallel work than a proper team work.

The interprofessional relations turned out to be more challenging than the interfaith relations. One reason for that was that, at the beginning, the introduction of the Muslim chaplaincy was not well communicated to the collaborators of the asylum centre. The interfaces between the different professions were not discussed and planned sufficiently. This meant that prejudices and distorted images could easily grow (Schmid et al. 2017: 47-51). Although a chaplain regularly attended meetings with the health

team, so that they could inform each other about the cases, there was no structured exchange with the other professional groups. In many cases, there was a lack of clarity regarding the tasks of chaplaincy and cooperation. A nursing specialist gave the following statement about the Muslim chaplains:

> The chaplains have much more time than we can offer. The attention, and that they also understand issues concerning religion and culture. [...] Even with psychological stress a good chaplain could catch a part of it, so that you can simply dump a lot of things on the chaplain, that you feel better and have the feeling: 'Now I have been able to tell my story, and he has understood me, has listened to me. That is a good thing for me.'

The specialist nurse gives a positive appreciation of (Muslim) chaplaincy. She appreciates the capacity of the chaplains to understand and translate religious and cultural issues that she or others might not be able to decode. Beyond that specific function, she also highlights a psychological effect of chaplaincy which she considers to be positive. Thereby she not only sees legitimacy for a religious and cultural sphere, but also translates the work of chaplaincy into psychological categories. This example shows that the ability to translate is required not only on the side of the pastoral workers, but also on the side of other possible cooperation partners. However, the evaluation also brought to light critical voices among the staff who considered chaplaincy to be superfluous.

Summing up, while the interprofessional collaboration has not been very well developed, the necessity for communication and translation is all the more evident. It became obvious, that the interfaith collaboration, which was not institutionalized in a formal common team, but nevertheless practiced intensively, can operate as a catalyst for establishing and professionalising Muslim chaplaincy. There is, however, a potential for conflict provoked by differing views on the place of religion in the asylum centre.

Conclusion: A Post-Secular Shape of Chaplaincy

These reflections and analyses show how post-secularity can serve as an interpretative tool to analyse the situation of chaplaincy in specific constellations. To what extent it specifically addresses and develops a specific form of pastoral practice is yet another question. The following aspects summarise the results and show, in a more conceptual way, which aspects a post-secular chaplaincy should focus on. Even if there may be an openness to religion in many of them, the institutions themselves will

be considered as secular here and not as post-secular (Carlson 2009; Possamai et al. 2015), whereas chaplaincy will specifically be termed as post-secular. Due to the focus of the analysed case on Muslim chaplaincy, this also stands in the foreground though a wider impact will also be considered

1. *Stakeholders and expectations:* A post-secular chaplaincy is confronted with multiple and partly contradictory expectations of the state, public institutions, religious communities, other service providers and not least of all the care-receivers. With its expertise in matters of ethics, religion and radicalisation chaplaincy performs a public role beyond personal accompaniment. It is an issue of steady and partly conflictual negotiation of how much room for religion there may be at this interface. Thus, stakeholder management should be regarded as key capacities of a post-secular chaplaincy (Schmid 2020b). Post-secular chaplaincy will therefore integrate both critique and affirmation of religion (Bobert 2011: 268).
2. *Structure and governance:* There are different types of governance of chaplaincy in public institutions by either the religious communities or the state. In the context of religious policy, there is a tendency towards state governance oscillating between control and support that is also common in other fields (e.g. Hernández Aguilar 2017). This makes it necessary for a post-secular chaplaincy to claim its self-determined space so that it does not merely act as a mirror image of state expectations. This does not mean to keep distance in the full sense from state involvement, but to find a balance between integration and independence, participation and abstinence, collaboration and critical opposition.
3. *Role of chaplains:* To work at the interface of religious and secular spheres is highly dynamic as it requires the capacity of translator and mediator. To cope with the different claims, it is not required of the chaplains to be neutral, but rather to be able to negotiate between different normative systems and practice a steady code-switching between secular and religious languages, without losing their own roots in a specific faith-tradition (Youngblood 2019: 226). This necessitates special skills and training. If optionality is the key principle of post-secular chaplaincy, chaplains should be able to deliver that scale of religious or more secular care and counselling desired by their clients. This would also include the possibility to give some careful advice or normative orientation if a client wishes, as code-switching towards his or her specific needs is the opposite of "neutralisation" (Cadge & Sigalow 2013).

4. *Impact for religious thought:* Furthermore, chaplaincy provides the chance to develop further a religious perspective to meet the requirements of both secular and spiritual contexts, which is also essential for ethics. As Ajouaou and Bernts (2018: 63) emphasise: "Islamic chaplaincy is a matter of rethinking Islam in the broad sense". As border-crossers, chaplains are confronted with issues often not yet taken into consideration in theological reflection. Thus, chaplains may also serve as "role models for the conduct of multifaith relationships in society as a whole" (Gilliat-Ray & Arshad 2015: 119).
5. *Interreligious dimensions:* Interreligious cooperation and interaction will be an integral part of post-secular chaplaincy. This implies, for instance, openness towards clients with different religious or non-religious affiliation. A further characteristic will be a collaboration, while yet considering power asymmetries and limits of understanding. While a certain common ground between chaplaincy and secular institutions will be necessary, not surprisingly there will always be different positions and arguments brought forward by chaplains of different faiths.
6. *Theological basis:* Post-secular chaplaincy depends on a positive relationship to religion and spirituality in a wider sense, as it is about being open to people with their diverse spiritual and religious identities and to the work of God outside the religious community. This may lead to a stronger integration of secular and religious issues and help not to polarise one from the other. Thereby "human history" in its whole ambivalence and polysemy can be perceived as a sign "referring to God" (Abu Zaid 2000: 5) which demands a type of chaplaincy that is aware of human categorisations, but goes beyond them nevertheless.

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