BRILL

"I'm just an Imam, not Superman": Imams in Switzerland

Between Stakeholder Objects and Self-Interpretation

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Abstract

Current debates on Islam in Europe often focus on imams as religious leaders and key figures in integration politics. Muslim associations undergoing processes of transformation and generational change have equally high expectations of imams. This article uses stakeholder theory to analyse the current situation of imams and draws on empirical material from Switzerland to illustrate both multi-faceted stakeholder claims and imams' self-reflections on role conflicts they experience. It indicates that imams and Muslim associations tend to develop different coping strategies leading either to an enlarged profile for imams or to a differentiation of functions and professions in the social and religious fields.

1   Introduction and State of Research

Imams are a key topic of current social debate and media coverage on Islam in various European countries. Imam training, "imported imams", their language skills and radicalisation are some of the recurring issues raised in this context. Imams are thus seen both as causes of problems and as possible solutions to them, based on the underlying assumption that Muslims and their communities can be steered by imams, who may serve as legitimate interpreters

of Islam and as "agents of cultivation".[1] The multitude of issues linked to the role of imams indicates the centrality of their position in various stakeholder relationships. In additional, there is growing reflection both within Muslim organisations and in academic research on the multiple roles that imams are expected to play. Nonetheless, the general debate on imams is mostly dominated by statements from politicians, journalists and Islam experts. Seldom do Muslim communities and their representatives have an opportunity to define their own views. A rare example is a document on standards for mosques and imams published by the Islamic Community of Austria (IGGÖ), which highlights the requisite capabilities and skills for imams in theology, pedagogy, languages and both interreligious and intercultural dialogue. With regard to their duties, tasks performed both within the community in terms of rituals, preaching and teaching, and outside it, as in "relationships with other religious and nonreligious institutions", are mentioned.[2] Imams are presented as professional function holders who need a wide range of abilities corresponding to the needs and requirements of both communities and wider society. No comparable document exists so far in other European countries.

In recent research, the various relationships in which imams participate are a key topic, although reference is not necessarily made to "stakeholders": Mohammed Hashas focuses on the imam as a "dependent figure"[3] who is strongly influenced by both political power and religious authority. Several analyses focus on imams as objects of security policy in certain European countries,[4] and state control can also be exercised between state institutions, under various conditions.[5] Romain Sèze highlights expectations that

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1　"Agents of cultivation" – my translation of "Agenten der Kultivierung"; see Levent Tezcan, *Das muslimische Subjekt: Verfangen im Dialog der Deutschen Islam Konferenz* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2012), p. 129.

2　IGGÖ, "Kriterienkatalog für Moscheen und Imame" (Wien 2017), p. 11, http://www.derislam .at/iggo/quellen/News_Medien/Publikationen/IGGOE/Kriterienkatalog.pdf (accessed 3 August 2018; my translation).

3　Mohammed Hashas, "The European Imam: A Nationalized Religious Authority", in *Imams in Western Europe: Developments, Transformations, and Institutional Challenges*, ed. Mohammed Hashas, Jan Jaap de Ruiter, and Niels Valdemar Vinding (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018): 79-100, p. 95.

4　Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Michael J. Balz, "Taming the Imams: European Governments and Islamic Preachers since 9/11", *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 19/2 (2009): 215-235; Jocelyne Cesari, "Securitization and Secularization: The Two Pillars of State Regulation of European Islam", in *The Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*, ed. Jeffrey Haynes (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 231-247.

5　Solenne Jouanneau, "Régulariser ou non un imam étranger en France: Droit au séjour et définition du 'bon imam' en pays laïque", *Politix* 86 (2009): 147-166.

imams are active in counter-radicalisation and operate as "social mediators".[6] Such state interests lead to special training programmes for imams—which becomes a stakeholder issue, particularly between the state and Muslim communities.[7] On the other hand, countries such as Turkey and Morocco seek to regulate imams through interstate cooperation.[8] A focus on internal Muslim stakeholder issues is less common: several authors claim that imams are influenced by the ethos of the mosque that employs them and with which they divide tasks.[9] Community members choose which mosque to attend and seem to feel free to criticise imams if they do not agree with them.[10] These examples illustrate that external political debate also influences intra-Muslim discussion and that the internal and external environments surrounding imams cannot be analysed separately.

This article addresses the representation of imams, either as stakeholder objects or according to their own self-interpretation. Its premise is to link the two perspectives: internal Muslim self-interpretation with external debate. Thereby, "self-interpretations" are understood as "self-images" standing in a relationship of mutual influence with "dominant social ideas".[11] What is the situation of imams at the interface of a multitude of stakeholder interests? Who are these stakeholders and what various influences do they have? How do imams' self-interpretations take their position into account? And how does this, in turn, affect the various stakeholders? These questions are implied in the title quotation—taken from a workshop held in Western Switzerland—which

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6   "Social mediators" – my translation of "médiateurs sociaux"; see Romain Sèze, *Prévenir la violence djihadiste : Les paradoxes d'un modèle sécuritaire* (Paris: Seuil, 2019), p. 189.

7   Frank Peter, "Training of Imams and the Fight against Radicalization", *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook* (2018): 342-345; Semiha Sözeri, Hülya Kosar Altinyelken, and Monique Volman, "Training Imams in the Netherlands: The Failure of a Post-Secular Endeavour", *British Journal of Religious Education* 41/4 (2018): 435-445.

8   Benjamin Bruce, *Governing Islam Abroad: Turkish and Moroccan Muslims in Western Europe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

9   Hashas, " European Imam", p. 93; Solenne Jouanneau, "The Reinvented Role of Imams in French Society", in *Imams in Western Europe: Developments, Transformations, and Institutional Challenges*, ed. M. Hashas, N. Valdemar Vinding, K. Hajji and J. Jaap de Ruiter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press), pp. 143-164, esp. 148-149; Romain Sèze, "Leaders musulmans et fabrication d'un 'islam civil'", *Confluences Méditerranée* 95/4 (2015): 43-58.

10 Dominik Müller, "'Aber Hocam …': Imame und die Aushandlung islamischer Autorität im Alltag von Schweizer Moscheen", *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 142 (2017): 67-92, p. 82.

11 Hartmut Rosa, "Four Levels of Self-Interpretation: A Paradigm for Interpretive Social Philosophy and Political Criticism", *Philosophy & Social Criticisms* 30/5-6 (2004): 691-720, p. 694.

is an example of an imam's self-interpretation of what it means to cope with multiple expectations: he seeks to distance himself from a superhuman ideal.

The issue of female imams is not the focus here. In Turkey and Germany, female theologians have been employed as complementary preachers since 2005.[12] In Switzerland, however, no such cases exist so far, although a number of women are active in specific roles, including as chaplains in public institutions. Outside Muslim communities, the terms "imam" and "chaplain" are often used as synonyms. Thus the Pöschwies (male) Prison report speaks of "imams" when referring to Muslim chaplaincy and does not use the word "chaplains", as it does for Christians.[13] Regardless of dogmatic debates about imams and gender, the following reflections refer to various possible models of leadership in religious communities and could also be applied to female imams.

Switzerland presents a special case within a wider European panorama: it has a considerable Muslim population, 5.5% of the total, mainly from a Balkan or Turkish background.[14] Due to the strong elements of direct democracy in the Swiss political system, there is broad participation in political debates across the entire population. These tend to be very controversial, even fierce, as with the issues of head-covering and the construction of minarets.[15] In religion–state relations, which are cantonal affairs, Switzerland combines a model of cooperation with elements of separation, particularly in some French-speaking Swiss cantons.

Before examining the Swiss context more closely, the following section presents some reflections and theoretical bases of the stakeholder approach (section 2) followed by an overview of the empirical material on which the

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12   Iren Ozgur, *Islamic Schools in Modern Turkey: Faith, Politics, and Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 61; Chiara Maritato, "Addressing the Blurred Edges of Turkey's Diaspora and Religious Policy: Diyanet Women Preachers sent to Europe", *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 27 (2018).

13   Kanton Zürich Direktion der Justiz und des Innern Amt für Justizvollzug, "Justizvollzugsanstalt Pöschwies. Jahresbericht 2016", pp. 23-24, https://justizvollzug.zh.ch/internet/justiz_inneres/juv/de/ueber_uns/veroeffentlichungen/jahresberichte/_jcr_content/contentPar/publication_0/publicationitems/titel_wird_aus_dam_e_8/download.spooler.download.1496907627495.pdf/Jahresbericht+2016.pdf (accessed 3 August 2018). See also Farhad Khosrokhavar, "The Constrained Role of the Muslim Chaplain in French Prisons", *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 28/1 (2015): 67-82.

14   Mallory Schneuwly Purdie and Andreas Tunger-Zanetti, "Switzerland", in *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, vol. 9, ed. Oliver Scharbrodt, Samim Akgönül, Ahmet Alibašić, Jørgen Nielsen and Egdunas Racius (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 659-678.

15   Alexandra Feddersen, "Symposium: Switzerland's Immigration Challenge. Same but Different: Muslims and Foreigners in Public Media Discourse", *Swiss Political Science Review* 21/2 (2015): 287-301.

further analyses are based (section 3). Because of the mutual relationship be-
tween stakeholders and imams, the subsequent analyses are divided for heu-
ristic purposes: on the one hand, there is a focus on stakeholders exercising
influence on imams – both internal stakeholders inside communities (sec-
tion 4) and external stakeholders beyond communities (section5). On the
other, the way imams react to different stakeholder influences and develop
coping strategies as stakeholder management is analysed (section 6). In the
conclusion, the perspective is again widened to a more general framework of
debate (section 7).

2   Stakeholder Approaches with Regard to Imams

Stakeholder approaches encompass a wide field of debate. Here, Edward
Freeman's classical interpretation is taken as a starting point and is then en-
riched by a neo-institutionalist approach that focuses on the adaptation of
organisations to their environment, combined with a sociology of conflict
approach. Freeman broadly defines stakeholders as follows: "A stakeholder in
an organization is (by definition) any group or individual who can affect or is
affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives."[16] Stakeholders
may be internal or external individuals, groups or institutions with a special
interest in an organisation or a function thereof. The type and intensity of the
relationship with a stakeholder may vary; different stakeholders may make dif-
ferent claims. When looking at stakeholder groups, no homogeneity can be
assumed, but rather the existence of "different subgroups within each group,
with their own and conflicting interests".[17] Needless to say, not all stakeholders
are equal in power. Some may be more influential than others; hence the need
to differentiate and classify.

Freeman identifies four major characteristics of stakeholders:

(1)   *A relational approach with normative implications.* In an economic set-
        ting this means that "if a group of individual[s] could affect the firm (or
        be affected by it, and reciprocate) then managers should worry about that
        group in the sense that it needed an explicit strategy for dealing with the

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16   R. Edward Freeman, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* (Boston, MA: Pitman,
        1984), p. 46.
17   Zinaida Taran and Stephen Betts, "Corporate Social Responsibility and Conflicting
        Stakeholder Interests: Using Matching and Advocacy Approaches to Align Initiatives with
        Issues", *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues* 18/2 (2015): 55-61, p. 56.

stakeholder".[18] This implies that even stakeholders who may be considered illegitimate should not be ignored. On the other hand, the possible reactions of organisations to claims by stakeholders may vary, ranging from collaboration, involvement and monitoring, to defence.[19]

(2) *A mutual influence between the stakeholder and the object* he or she refers to, as the actions of stakeholders may affect their object and vice versa.[20] So, even asymmetric power relationships are not simply about being at the mercy of the stakeholders, but also allow the exercising of some influence in the other direction. Stakeholder influence varies considerably and is based on distinct and variable factors: according to Ronald Mitchell, Bradley Agle and Donna Wood, power, legitimacy and urgency constitute the three main criteria for determining and classifying stakeholder influence.[21] Whereas power underlines the assertiveness based on different kind of resources, legitimacy is based on "socially accepted and expected structures or behaviors"[22] linked with norms and urgency includes a temporal dimension.

(3) *A logic of understanding:* "You have to understand stakeholder behaviours, values and backgrounds/contexts, including the societal context."[23] Stakeholders can only be understood in their own normative and contextual setting, as a common framework cannot be presupposed. However, this leads to the question of whether the limits of understanding cause more conflictual relationships.

(4) *An idea of balancing the organisation with its stakeholders and taking different stakeholders into account*: "The careful balance between allowing external influences (stakeholders) to determine completely organisational strategies and totally ignoring them is at the heart of modern

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18   R. Edward Freeman, "The Stakeholder Approach Revisited", *Zeitschrift für Wirtschafts- und Unternehmensethik* 5/3 (2004): 228-254, p. 229; R. Edward Freeman, Jeffrey S. Harrison, Andrew C. Wicks, Bidhan Parmar and Simone de Colle, *Stakeholder Theory: The State of the Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 60.

19   Grant T. Savage, Timothy W. Nix, Carlton J. Whitehead and John D. Blair, "Strategies for Assessing and Managing Organizational Stakeholders", *The Executive* 5/2 (1991): 61-75, p. 65.

20   Freeman, "Stakeholder Approach Revisited", p. 231.

21   Ronald K. Mitchell, Bradley R. Agle and Donna J. Wood, "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts", *The Academy of Management Review* 22/4 (1997): 853-886.

22   Mitchell, Agle and Wood, "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification", p. 866.

23   Freeman, "Stakeholder Approach Revisited", p. 231.

stakeholder theory."[24] There is a dynamic between autonomous internal action, definition and interaction. Freeman et al. even speak of "harmony" and "jointness",[25] at the risk of neglecting the conflictual aspects. Balancing different stakeholder interests is a very difficult task, as these interests may be incompatible. As it is not possible to give equal weight to all stakeholders, the concrete question arises of what balancing means, as well as which stakeholder is given priority in the event of a conflict.

Looking at imams, one can assume that in a very general sense, their profession and profile are also shaped by their stakeholders and social context. Reciprocally, the imams themselves may influence the stakeholders. To transfer the stakeholder approach to the issue of imams, the following aspects have to be taken into account:

First, we are considering the non-profit sector, rather than business and financial interests conflicting with moral ones. The non-profit sector has specific requirements for stakeholder management, which have been widely discussed in research. The basic difference is that "non-profit organizations are mission-driven rather than profit-driven".[26] The motivation of internal stakeholders of non-profit organisations is not financial gain, but to fulfil the purpose of the organisation. Their principal internal stakeholders are either professionals or volunteers; external stakeholders range from sponsors, media and lobby-groups to competitors.[27] On the whole, compared with business, stakeholder relationships and management may often be more complex as a result of the different services provided by a non-profit organisation and the "law of non-profit complexity".[28]

Second, the stakeholder approach is not being applied here to organisations, but to imams as individual function holders and thus as a profession, which constitutes a common focus in neo-institutionalist approaches.[29] Imams are

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24   Freeman et al., *Stakeholder Theory*, p. 89.
25   Freeman et al., *Stakeholder Theory*, p. 27 n. 32.
26   Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations: Theory, Management, Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 226.
27   E.g. Ludwig Theuvsen, "Stakeholder-Management: Möglichkeiten des Umgangs mit Anspruchsgruppen", *Münsteraner Diskussionspapiere zum Nonprofit-Sektor* 16 (2001), p. 4, http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-362219 (accessed 2 August 2018).
28   Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations*, p. 229; see also Reto Famos, *Kirche zwischen Auftrag und Bedürfnis: Ein Beitrag zur ökonomischen Reflexionsperspektive in der Praktischen Theologie* (Münster: Lit, 2005), pp. 144-145.
29   E.g. Kathleeen Montgomery, "How Institutional Contexts Shape Professional Responsibility", in *Professional Responsibility*, ed. Douglas E. Mitchell and Robert K. Ream (Cham: Springer, 2015), pp. 78-79.

also a part of the stakeholder relationships in their communities and in the organisations that employ them. Referring to professionals within organisations, Paul DiMaggio and Robert Powell state: "while various kinds of professionals within an organization may differ from one another, they exhibit much similarity to their professional counterparts in other organizations."[30] Both training and professional network building practices are key instruments in this. DiMaggio and Powell see a certain homogeneity, speaking of "a pool of almost interchangeable individuals who occupy similar positions".[31] The basic underlying principle is isomorphism, as an adaption to requirements of the environment. DiMaggio and Powell develop a threefold analytic typology of isomorphic change, comprising coercive processes based on organisational pressure, e.g. by legal requirements; mimetic adaptation to existing models through interactions in the practical field; and normative professionalisation, providing orientation for individual function holders.[32] Depending on the various stakeholders, their influence might favour any one of these three mechanisms, which may cause issues with analysis. Transferring this to imams, a range of reactions can be seen, from rejecting, to accepting and collaborating with stakeholders. The DiMaggio and Powell typology illustrates how reactions oscillate between heteronomy and self-rule, which is the starting point for imams' self-interpretation. According to the approach of DiMaggio and Powell, it is also relevant to compare imams with analogue function holders in other religious communities such as pastors or rabbis.

Coercion and pressure already refer to conflictual issues in stakeholder relationships. To further focus on imams as function holders, their situation, when faced with different stakeholder expectations, could be seen as a role conflict. Ralf Dahrendorf sees human beings "as holders of socially preformed roles",[33] what he calls "*homo sociologicus*", that which is located at the interface between individuals and society. Roles are linked with normative expectations of both specific conduct and specific attributes, determined by society rather than by the individual.[34] Dahrendorf further refers to a distinction between "permissive", "preferential" and "mandatory" expectations, with different degrees

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30 Paul J. DiMaggio, and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields", *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983): 147-160, p. 152.

31 DiMaggio and Powell, "Iron Cage Revisited", p. 152.

32 DiMaggio and Powell, "Iron Cage Revisited", pp. 150-152.

33 "As holders of socially preformed roles" – my translation of "als Träger sozial vorgeformter Rollen"; see Ralf Dahrendorf, *Homo Sociologicus: Ein Versuch zur Geschichte, Bedeutung und Kritik der Kategorie der sozialen Rolle*, 16th edn (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2006), p. 24.

34 Cf. Dahrendorf, *Homo Sociologicus*, pp. 37-39.

of obligation.[35] Because different reference groups have different expecta-tions, role issues become conflictual, which Dahrendorf indicates may lead to either "intra-role conflicts" or "inter-role conflicts".[36] In this sense, it is not so much a matter of personal conflicts, as of structural conflicts concerning roles. Intra-role conflicts refer to claims by different stakeholders on a single role, whereas inter-role conflicts concern different roles in different fields, such as work and family, again implying contradictory expectations from vari-ous stakeholders. However, there may be flowing transitions between the two types of conflict if a role is not yet clearly fixed, as is the case with imams. For instance, the conflict between the imam's role as a religious expert and his role as a social worker may be considered as either an intra-role or an inter-role conflict, depending on how the imam is seen. The issue becomes one of which expectation the imam prioritises – for Dahrendorf, this is where there are stronger sanctions.[37]

Role conflict constitutes a particular challenge, but also an opportunity. In his essay "Intersection of Social Circles", Georg Simmel analyses the am-bivalence of role conflicts with the risk of "mental rupture" on the one hand and a "stabilizing effect, strengthening personal unity" on the other.[38] The "Intersection of Social Circles" not only recognises an effect on the individual level, but also shows the contribution to social cohesion that imams make on a macro-structural level, even if it involves role conflict.[39]

3   Empirical Basis and Data

The empirical material used here is mainly taken from a study on advanced ed-ucation for imams and other target groups in Muslim communities, as well as for professionals in contact with Muslims in Switzerland.[40] The focus on role

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35   Cf. Dahrendorf, *Homo Sociologicus*, pp. 42-45, referring to Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason, and Alexander W. McEachern, *Explorations in Role Analysis: Studies of the School Superintendency Role* (New York: Wiley, 1958), pp. 58ff.

36   Dahrendorf, *Homo Sociologicus*, p. 82.

37   Cf. Dahrendorf, *Homo Sociologicus*, p. 109.

38   Georg Simmel, *Sociology: Inquiries into the Construction of Social Forms*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 373.

39   Michael Nollert, "Kreuzung sozialer Kreise: Auswirkungen und Wirkungsgeschichte", in *Handbuch Netzwerkforschung*, ed. Christian Stegbauer and Roger Häussling (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2010), pp. 157-165, 160-161.

40   Hansjörg Schmid, Mallory Schneuwly Purdie and Andrea Lang, "Islambezogene Weiterbildung in der Schweiz – Bestandsaufnahme und Bedarfsanalyse / Formations continues sur l'islam en Suisse – Etat des lieux et analyse des besoins" (Fribourg: Centre

conflicts experienced by imams only appeared in a final rereading of collected material. The material was thereafter enriched by supplementary observation and secondary analysis, especially concerning external stakeholders. A final source was the protocols from 26 workshops conducted in 2016 and 2017, on the basis of the preceding study, in which imams and Muslim organisations participated.

The abovementioned study was based on 59 semi-structured interviews, dating from May to October 2015. A *first set* of 32 interviews were conducted with Muslim representatives. Half of these interviewees were from German-speaking Switzerland, the other half from French-speaking Switzerland and Italian-speaking Ticino. Among them, 22 were men and 10 were women. 14 of the interviewees were imams, the others had various responsibilities in Muslim organisations, but were in many cases also involved in public debates. The role of imams was one focus of these interviews, though set in a wider context of activities of Muslim communities and specific training needs. The key idea of the study was that programmes of advanced education should not only provide a certain knowledge of the Swiss context, but that they should also respond to a concrete need and strengthen imams in performing their tasks, especially when in contact with the wider society. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using the method of content analysis.[41] Each interview was coded inductively, first analysed for itself and then compared with the others.

The study's approach was to compare self-reflections of imams and community leaders with views of persons operating within state institutions. The *second set* consisted of 19 interviews with 27 people who were professionals in the field of integration, migration, social work, youth work, security, administration and charity organisations, spread equally across the various regions of Switzerland. The interviewees spoke about their perception of the situation of Muslim organisations, imams and their various stakeholders. They did not restrict their focus to their field of work but discussed a broader range of actors and institutions. These interviews were summarised, transcribed as extracts and included in the analysis.

The study illustrates the variety of tasks and roles that imams perform. Many of them are also active as chaplains in public institutions or hold a managerial function within an association or umbrella organisation. The topic of stakeholders was one aspect that emerged prominently in most of the

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suisse islam et société, 2016), https://www3.unifr.ch/szig/de/assets/public/uploads/Rapports/2016/schlussbericht-_islambezogene_weiterbildung.pdf (accessed 10 June 2019).

41   Margrit Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice* (London: Sage, 2012).

interviews, underlining the variety of expectations to which imams are exposed. Interviewees from Muslim organisations referred to their relationship with state institutions and other organisations in civil society, as well as to stakeholder issues within their communities. Interviewees from state institutions focused on Muslim organisations and their own role as stakeholders in that field. It was therefore possible to better understand the internal dynamics within Muslim organisations, for instance between imams, the board and various subgroups such as youth and women, as well as external dynamics, interacting with the State and civil society institutions.

4   Relationships between Imams and Internal Stakeholders

First, internal stakeholders are important as they can exercise an active influence on imams. They are not only passive recipients of sermon and religious instruction, as insinuated by popular literature.[42] Controversial debates can occur within Muslim associations. Internal stakeholders are mainly members, who are in a complex position: they are both non-material supporters and, through paying their membership subscription, material supporters of the associations. They receive services from the organisation, but are also actual or potential volunteers. Members generally have a common interest in the organisation; they share the organisation's purpose but they in no way constitute a homogeneous group. In addition to formal members, there may be other Muslims who attend Friday prayers or other activities of the association without having the formal status of member. The boundaries between formal belonging (membership) and participation in activities cannot always be easily determined. Although only members have the right to vote in general assemblies of the associations, non-members may also exercise some influence by participating in activities and internal or external discussions.

Generally speaking, all members are stakeholders, but among them two types of can be distinguished: *first*, the functional stakeholders, comprised mainly of the board, elected by members in a hierarchical relationship with the imam. Imams depend economically on the board, which is generally their employer – except for imams officially delegated from Turkey, who spend up to five years in a community and are selected and paid by the Turkish Diyanet. Governance varies from one mosque to another: there may be a stronger or weaker board,

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42   An example is Constantin Schreiber, *Inside Islam: Was in Deutschen Moscheen gepredigt wird* (Berlin: Econ, 2017). See also Hashas, "European Imam", p. 94.

a stronger or weaker imam and also models of a shared governance.[43] *Second*, there are stakeholder sub-groups along socio-demographic markers such as "women" or "youth", which may be formal (groups or departments within the organisation) or more informal. Even within these groups there may be a plurality of positions, so the categorisation of stakeholders remains approximate. Furthermore, all kinds of internal dynamics can take place in organisations, including differences of opinion on various issues. There is also considerable variation between different communities. Not all stakeholder-subgroups mentioned are present in all organisations.

The stakeholder subgroup may relate differently, first to the organisation in general, and then more specifically to the imam. Various responses are possible following Albert Hirschman's typology, which has been applied to many different fields: exit, voice, or loyalty.[44] This implies two main responses in protest against unsatisfactory situations – either leaving an organisation or raising one's critical voice, thereby combining loyalty with conflictual debate. Women or youth are especially likely to choose the exit strategy, to establish their own organisations.[45] The creation of independent youth organisations and projects (such as "Project Insert" in Zurich) are examples of this observed during recent years. Another option enabling a certain degree of voicing is the reinforcement of youth departments within organisations and their anchorage on the board by means of a representative. This is especially the case in Diyanet and Milli Görüş mosques.[46] From our perspective, the "voice"-strategy is most interesting, as it reveals critical positions within the communities. The idea of imams as instruments to steer Muslims assumes that they possess direct authority and that the community is more or less passive. A study by Lucerne University has demonstrated, however, that young Muslims refer to many different authorities; imams are only one type of relevant authority among many and they exercise less influence than often supposed in public debate.[47]

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43   Ihsan Bagby, "The American Mosque 2011: Activities, Administration and Vitality of the American Mosque" [The American Mosque 2011, Report 2] (Washington, DC: Council on American Islamic Relations, 2011), p. 17.

44   Albert Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

45   Petra Bleisch, *Gelebte und erzählte Scharia in der Schweiz: Empirische Studien zur Aneignung religiöser Normen durch zum Islam konvertierte Frauen* (Zürich: Schulthess, 2016), pp. 115-117.

46   See Hussein Hamdan and Hansjörg Schmid, *Junge Muslime als Partner* (Weinheim: Beltz Verlagsgruppe, 2014), pp. 29-30, 42-43.

47   Martin Baumann, Jürgen Endres, Silvia Martens and Andreas Tunger-Zanetti, "'Hallo, es geht um meine Religion!' Muslimische Jugendliche in der Schweiz auf der Suche nach ihrer Identität" (Luzern 2017), pp. 2, 18-19, https://www.unilu.ch/fileadmin/fakultaeten/

In most cases, the imam has a special structural status, which varies accord-ing to the association. If he is the only professional in an employed position, this may raise the expectations of him. The following quotation illustrates this:

> The only one who has a paid job is the imam. But he also has limited op-portunities. He cannot be here twenty-four hours, seven days a week. We do not only have members of this mosque, but also non-members and persons who are not Muslims who come to us, or better said, to the imam as a theologically-trained person, whom they ask for advice.[48]

The imam thus can be seen not only as a function holder in an association, but also as a public theological authority and adviser. While underlining the imam's special status, the quotation also emphasises his limitations.

The quotation also demonstrates the great esteem in which imams are held by congregations and expresses respect for their significant contribution in terms of expertise, time and workload. However, imams may also be criticised; the classical role of an imam may be considered reductive: "Sometimes it is reduced to prayer, celebration, sermon and done. But it can be much more than that."[49] Another quotation illustrates the ideal that the imam can be addressed in all situations of concern: "He's the person whose door you can knock on when there's really a problem. This is part of his role. The imam is the one who cares about everything. He's doesn't just lead prayer."[50] This interviewee sees the imam in a kind of universal function, highly idealised as a sort of shepherd caring for his flock and thus closer to the model of a chaplain[51].

Yet another person emphasises the imam's problem-solving capacity: "We are not only talking about prayers and ablutions, we are talking about the chal-lenges of society, children, youth, family, divorce everywhere, how to solve these problems. He's a 'teacher', that's why he has to solve their problems."[52] Again, there is here an implicit criticism of a narrowly-understood role of the imam as prayer leader. The expectation is that he consults with various tar-

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ksf/institute/zrf/dok/Forschungsbericht_Hallo_es_geht_um_meine_Religion.pdf (accessed 3 August 2018).

48   Interview with president of association 1. All interview statements have been translated by the author from either German or French into English.

49   Interview with a female teacher in association.

50   Interview with a female secretary of association.

51   See Sophie Gilliat-Ray, Mansur Ali and Stephen Pattison, *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 171.

52   Interview with president of association 2.

get groups in an adequate manner and thus contributes to overcoming social problems. Internal stakeholders are also conscious of broader interfaces between the community and wider society:

> He [the imam, H.S.] can do a lot, of course, but he cannot simply bring along the interface between the community and the outside world, i.e. the majority society, he simply comes from another country and must integrate himself first. That is the difficulty.[53]

This president of an association highlights the gap between claims made on imams and their actual capacity to respond to these.

Another person stresses the necessity of a shared *Lebenswelt*: "He must have lived in the world in which he's going to counsel Muslims."[54] This is again a strong critique about the recruitment of imams from other countries. One critique refers specifically to the inability of many imams to respond to the particular needs of the younger generation:

> But they don't understand young people. The young people are Swiss, even if they were not born here. Young people have a lot of constraints, they can't understand that this is forbidden, this is *haram*. We need an Islam that speaks to young people, that speaks to them here in Switzerland. We're tired of talking about things that have to do with other countries.[55]

This quotation refers to both generation and immigration gaps and emphasises the need to reinterpret Islamic norms. In workshops, young Muslims articulated their wish that the imams leave room for new types of activities and make it possible for the young to participate. Imams should "be able to respond to current challenges, in the present, in what Muslims are really experiencing".[56]

Another criticism is that imams are not sufficiently aware of women's needs, especially their desire to be professionally active:

> One of the things that is sometimes missing is the need for women to work. Because in our religion, it is "Ah no, the woman stays at home" and some imams impose something that is not Islam on women. In the

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53   Interview with president of association 1.
54   Interview with a female secretary of association.
55   Interview with a female chaplain.
56   Interview with a female responsible for chaplaincy.

prophet's time, the woman's role was not to be submissive, she was active outside. I wish we could work on that again. It would be nice if there were exchange workshops between women and imams and if we could also tell them our needs as women here in Europe.[57]

The interviewee also regrets that the imams are not more present for women and rarely answer their questions – a task sometimes assumed by the imam's wife. The interviewee would like the imams to develop their knowledge of Switzerland and the different ways of life in this country. Another woman likewise observes that imams are not sufficiently present for women: "The problem is also that the imams are not accessible for us. We have no contact with them. There are even ladies who don't have the courage to ask their questions."[58] What she describes is a communication barrier between women and imams. This observation shows a concern, even a willingness, on the part of Muslim women to emancipate themselves from traditional structures of authority and to play an active religious role. Indeed, their attempt to reconcile religion and social integration encourages them to develop a critical discourse on their situation as women, and particularly, a reflection independent of that of their male counterparts.

In summary, when internal stakeholders raise their voices, it requires imams to be multi-functional and flexible, fully aware of the social context and able to address the specific needs of groups such as youth or women. Imams are principally seen in the role of shepherds, bridge-builders, counsellors and re-interpreters of Islam.[59] This shows that expectations of imams inside the community are manifold and extremely high.

5   Relationships between Imams and External Stakeholders

One of the imams interviewed emphasises that much of his work takes place outside of the association and that schools also call him:

Above all, my work is outside … I am called on for mediation, wedding celebrations, sometimes the school calls me if there is a problem on a

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57   Interview with a female chaplain.
58   Interview with a women's group leader.
59   See also Ednan Aslan, Evrim Erşan Akkılıç and Jonas Kolb (eds), *Imame und Integration* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2015), who highlight above all the bridge-building and counselling role (e.g. p. 152), not the other roles.

religious point ... a father doesn't let his daughter come ... just so that I can mediate.[60]

Part of his work takes place "outside", but is related to, members of the association; the rest concerns public institutions like schools and other external stakeholders. Interviewees from different institutions outside Muslim communities favour imams who have been in Switzerland for a long time, have good language skills and a theological education. They also expect the imams to be able to address both young people and adults, be good pastors and assume a de-radicalising role. Finally, they underline the need for imams to answer questions at the interface of religion and society. This results in a complex and highly demanding profile for imams: "We need partners, people who have a vision, a real vision of what Islam could be here. I am not sure if this exists."[61] The emphasis is on a contextualised Islam, which also implies an intensified collaboration with the State. The interviewee highlights that this is still a future project.

When looking at key external stakeholders, several spheres can be identified: politics, administration and public institutions, the churches, the media and the countries of origin. As with internal stakeholders, the various external stakeholders are complex entities. Whereas the issues of internal stakeholders were explored uniquely through interview material, for external stakeholders, reports and information about events were integrated into the analysis. This supplementary material illustrates both the demands of stakeholders and areas in which imams already meet to these demands.

5.1   *Politics, Administration and Public Institutions*

Several of the professionals interviewed highlighted the importance of imams as contact persons for public institutions such as schools and for building up networks against radicalisation.[62] A police commander spoke about an imam who, instead of engaging in de-radicalisation, stated: "As soon as I encounter a radicalised person, I do not want to see him anymore."[63] Another interviewee, however, was aware of the limitations of the role of imams and that their specific type of discourse has to be respected: "An imam will have a religious discourse and that is what is expected of them, while a mediator will speak

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60   Interview with imam 1.
61   Interview with a commissioner for religious affairs.
62   E.g. interview with integration commissioner 1.
63   Interview with a police commander.

differently."[64] Moreover, imams are seen as proponents of a Swiss Islam: "A Swiss Islam should be developed which is connected with Switzerland."[65] Thus expectations are high.

In the federalist system of Switzerland, religious matters are largely the responsibility of the cantons, but federal authorities are nonetheless involved in procedures related to residence permits for imams[66] and have also initiated several reports and research projects on the issue of imams. The National Research Programme 58 on "Religions, the State and Society" included a study on imams, which also considered authorities and political stakeholders:

In their statements, the institutions' main concern is that the imam communicates the values and norms of Swiss society to its brothers and sisters in faith, i.e. that the imam functions to some extent as a "transmission belt" between authorities and the Muslim community.[67]

Imams are thus seen as contact persons and agents of integration. A 2013 Swiss federal government report on the situation of Muslims points out the imams' highly ambivalent image. On the one hand, imams are seen as a potential risk: "In individual cases, religious authorities do not act as mediators but as troublemakers. Specifically, so-called 'hate preachers' should be mentioned here, who act as accusers of the prevailing legal and social order and fuel conflicts."[68] On the other, their potential bridge-building role is highlighted: "Religious caregivers perform a variety of social tasks. In positive cases, they play a bridging function between the state and the religious community, but also between and within religious communities. This often occurs unnoticed

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64   Interview with integration commissioner 2.

65   Interview with integration commissioner 3.

66   See Alberto Achermann, Christin Achermann, Joanna Menet and David Mühlemann, "Das Zulassungssystem für religiöse Betreuungspersonen. Eine explorative Studie", (Bern/Neuchâtel, 2013), https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/integration/berichte/studie-zulass-relig-betreuungspers-d.pdf (accessed 3 August 2018).

67   Ulrich Rudolph, Dorothea Lüddeckens and Christoph Uehlinger, "Imam-Ausbildung und islamische Religionspädagogik in der Schweiz? Schlussbericht. Eine Untersuchung im Rahmen des Nationalen Forschungsprogramms Religionsgemeinschaften, Staat und Gesellschaft" (Zürich, 2009), p. 6, http://www.snf.ch/SiteCollectionDocuments/nfp/nfp58/NFP58_Schlussbericht_Rudolph_de.pdf (accessed 27 August 2018; my translation).

68   Der Bundesrat, "Bericht des Bundesrates über die Situation der Muslime in der Schweiz unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer vielfältigen Beziehungen zu den staatlichen Behörden in Erfüllung der Postulate 09.4027 Amacker-Amann vom 30. November 2009, 09.4037 Leuenberger vom 2. Dezember 2009 und 10.3018 Malama vom 1. März 2010" (Bern 2013), https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/aktuell/news/2013/2013-05-08/ber-d.pdf (accessed 3 August 2018; my translation).

by the public."[69] A prominent event on a federal level in recent years was the opening ceremony of the Gotthard tunnel. Despite some public controversies beforehand, imam Bekim Alimi from Wil in Eastern Switzerland participated in the religious ceremony alongside a Catholic and a Protestant Pastor, a Rabbi and an atheist preacher. He was seen both as an official Muslim representative and as an equivalent to Christian and Jewish ministers.

Zurich, as the largest city and the most populous canton in Switzerland, has a relatively high proportion of Muslims in the population (6.25%).[70] Since 2006, the city of Zurich has organised an annual reception for imams, highlighting their importance as interlocutors in administration and politics. Between 2010 and 2014, the Canton of Zurich organised a platform of exchange with imams, involving regular encounters with these "key persons".[71] In Zurich, as well as in other cantons, one relationship which can be highlighted is with the police, who also regard imams as relevant interlocutors. The police college in eastern Switzerland, for example, organises a regular visit to a mosque in St Gallen, led by the imam Mehas Alija from St Gallen.[72]

There is also a great number of activities in western Switzerland. Since 1996 in Neuchâtel, the cantonal government has held a constant dialogue with a large variety of Muslim associations through the "groupe de contact Musulmans", in which some imams also participate. One interviewee emphasised that this group, as a "sign of openness towards Muslims", enabled a qualified discussion on issues concerning Islam.[73] In the Canton of Vaud, a process for the recognition of the "Union vaudoise des associations musulmanes" (UVAM) as an organisation of public interest has been initiated. One of the conditions for recognition is that its representatives and persons responsible for religious matters must have adequate knowledge of the French language

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69   Der Bundesrat, "Bericht des Bundesrates über die Situation der Muslime in der Schweiz", p. 88 (my translation).

70   Bundesamt für Statistik, "Ständige Wohnbevölkerung ab 15 Jahren nach Religions- / Konfessionszugehörigkeit und Kanton", Dargestellter Zeitraum 2015, 2017, https://www .bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/kataloge-datenbanken/tabellen.assetdetail .1861473.html (accessed 3 August 2018).

71   Kanton Zürich, Direktion der Justiz und des Innern, Fachstelle für Integrationsfragen, "Muslimische Organisationen", https://integration.zh.ch/internet/justiz_inneres/integration/ de/welcome/religionsgemeinschaften/muslime.html#title-content-internet-justiz_ inneres-integration-de-welcome-religionsgemeinschaften-muslime-jcr-content-content Par-textimage_3 (accessed 5 August 2018).

72   Polizeischule Ostschweiz, "Polizeischüler/innen zu Besuch in der Moschee El Hidaje", https://www.polizeischule-ostschweiz.ch/aktuell.html?id=17 (accessed 5 August 2018).

73   Interview with integration commissioner 4.

and the legal framework in Switzerland and in the Canton, as well as of religious plurality.[74] UVAM also initiated an imams council to promote internal dialogue between imams and their visibility.[75] In the Canton of Geneva, the focus is on a training course for imams, comprising language skills and Swiss law, ethics and theology.[76]

5.2   *Churches and Interreligious Dialogue*

Research results from Germany show that, for many Christians, interreligious dialogue should be about theological issues, whereas Muslims tend to be more interested in social and integrational issues.[77] Their religious and theological interest explains why churches often focus on imams; from the State's perspective there might be an expectation of finding an equivalent to priests and pastors.

Through their function, imams can play an important role in interreligious activities – when it comes to explaining religious practices of Muslims, for example. The programme of the annual Swiss-wide "Week of Religions" in the Canton of Zurich mentions imams together with the board: "The imams and heads of the mosque associations will be happy to answer your questions over coffee and cake."[78] There are some imams with special communication skills who are particularly active on interreligious issues. For example, since 2005 in the Canton of St Gallen a bi-annual week of interreligious dialogue ("ida-Woche") is organised jointly by the cantonal government and the churches.

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74   Le Conseil d'Etat du Canton de Vaud, "Règlement 180.51.1 d'application de la loi du 9 janvier 2007 sur la reconnaissance des communautés religieuses et sur les relations entre l'Etat et les communautés religieuses reconnues d'intérêt public" (Lausanne 2014), Art. 11, 12 and 13, http://www.publidoc.vd.ch/guestDownload/direct/Reglement%20LRCR%20pdf .pdf?path=/Company%20Home/VD/CHANC/SIEL/antilope/objet/CE/Communiqué %20de%20presse/2014/11/500061_Reglement%20LRCR%20pdf_20141117_1165895.pdf (accessed 5 August 2018).

75   Union Vaudoise des Associations Musulmanes, "Règlement du Conseil consultatif des Imams", https://www.uvam.ch/uvam/structure/conseil-des-imams/ (accessed 5 August 2018).

76   Université de Genève, "Formation pour les Imams et les enseignants d'instruction religieuse islamique", https://www.unige.ch/rectorat/formations/formation-imams/culture -et-societe-suisses/ (accessed 5 August 2018).

77   Gritt Klinkhammer, Hans-Ludwig Frese, Ayla Satilmis and Tina Seibert, *Interreligiöse und interkulturelle Dialoge mit MuslimInnen in Deutschland: Eine quantitative und qualitative Studie* (Bremen: Universität Bremen, 2011), pp. 251-258; Hansjörg Schmid, Almila Akca and Klaus Barwig, *Gesellschaft gemeinsam gestalten: Islamische Vereinigungen als Partner in Baden-Württemberg* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2008), pp. 206-211.

78   Vereinigung der Islamischen Organisationen in Zürich, "Tag der offenen Moscheen" (2017), http://vioz.ch/medien-ueber-vioz/3902/ (accessed 5 August 2018).

Bekim Alimi, imam at the mosque in Wil and president of the Muslim organisation in eastern Switzerland (DIGO) since 2015, participated in this event as a panel speaker in 2015. Mustafa Memeti is imam at the "Haus der Religionen" in Bern, which hosts a great number of interreligious and intercultural activities. A further example is a Christian–Muslim encounter regularly organised since 2008 by the Foccolari Movement in Basel, in which an imam plays an important role alongside a Catholic priest.

5.3   *Media*

In their coverage on Islam, the media represent a further stakeholder: they often regard imams as key spokespersons of Muslim communities. One of the interviewees testified: "When current topics are on the move in the media, the imam is certainly also asked and his opinion is sought."[79] Imams are a recurring topic and the media have the power to present a positive or negative public image of them. While this cannot be explored in detail here, it can be illustrated by a few examples. In 2015, the French-speaking magazine *Temps Présent* interviewed several imams and revealed that they sometimes lacked the ability to answer common critical questions related to Islam.[80] In 2016, the German-language magazine *Sternstunde Religion* presented the issue of imams by illustrating their everyday tasks and lives, but also explored tensions arising from the transnational relations of some imams as Turkish officials.[81] Generally, Muslim organisations do not see imams as key interlocutors with the media, aiming instead to train professional media spokespersons; however, the media keep coming back to imams.[82] Their transnational status and training abroad can be an issue,[83] but imams and their role in relation to Swiss society are also a recurring topic.[84]

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79   Interview with a youth leader of a Muslim organisation.

80   Pietro Boschetti and Philippe Mach, "Mon imam chez les Helvètes : Une vie sous surveillance", *Temps Présent*, 30 April 2015, https://pages.rts.ch/emissions/temps-present/6627228-mon-imam-chez-les-helvetes.html?anchor=6745666#6745666 (accessed 5 August 2018).

81   Sternstunde SRF Kultur, "Ausbildung für Imame in der Schweiz?" (2016), https://www.srf.ch/sendungen/sternstunde-religion/ausbildung-fuer-imame-in-der-schweiz# (accessed 5 August 2018).

82   Schweizerisches Zentrum für Islam und Gesellschaft, "SZIG-papers 5. Muslime im öffentlichen und medialen Raum" (Freiburg, 2018), p. 32, https://www3.unifr.ch/szig/de/assets/public/uploads/Recherche/A5_SZIG_Themenheft_5_D_WEB.pdf (accessed 5 August 2018).

83   Saïda Keller-Messahli, *Islamische Drehscheibe Schweiz: Ein Blick hinter die Kulissen der Moscheen* (Zürich: Neue Zürcher Zeitung NZZ Libro, 2017), pp. 30-34.

84   Noemi Trucco, *Muslimische Aussagen im medienvermittelten Islam-Diskurs der Deutschschweiz* (Fribourg: Universität Fribourg, 2018), p. 52.
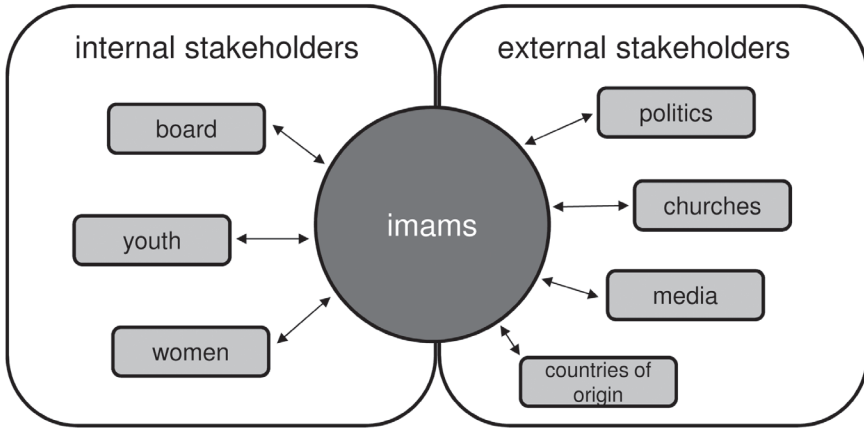
5.4   *Countries of Origin*

Transnational relations constitute a particular challenge for imams. As the over-whelming majority of imams in Switzerland were born and trained abroad, it is quite natural that they are integrated in transnational networks. Only in special cases are state politics involved, beyond personal networks. A special case is the imams who are sent and paid for by the Turkish Diyanet. This leads to a structural conflict with the executive boards of associations. However, from the imam's perspective, being paid by the Diyanet increases their independence from the board.[85] Reflecting this strong link to their country of origin, Samim Akgönül speaks of the "eternal first generation",[86] perpetuating the situation of migration. In order to maintain control, Turkey has introduced special courses for students coming from Europe in some Turkish universities.[87] The link is slightly looser for Bosnian imams, who are employed by local communities in Switzerland, but require a decree from the Sarajevo-based *Rais-ul-ulema*. The statutes of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina consider not

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85   Patrick Loobuyck and Petra Meier, "Imams in Flanders: A Research Note", *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 25/4 (2014): 471-487, p. 480.

86   Samim Akgönül, "Appartenances et altérités chez les originaires de Turquie en France: Le role de la religion", *Hommes et Migrations* 1280 (2009): 34-49, p. 43.

87   Kerstin Rosenow-Williams, *Organizing Muslims and Integrating Islam in Germany: New Development in the 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 194-195; Benjamin Bruce, "Imams for the Diaspora: The Turkish State's International Theology Programme", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45 (2019) DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2018.1554316.

only imams, but the whole Bosnian Muslim population abroad, as an integral part of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[88]

To summarize, the external expectations are manifold, as are internal ones. Imams are principally seen as guides at the interface of religion and society, experts in issues concerning Islam, dialogue partners and, at least in the case of the Diyanet imams, delegates of their country of origin.

6   Stakeholder Interaction, Conflicts of Roles and Coping Strategies

On the basis of the preceding sections, the following preliminary stakeholder map can be drawn:

A further step is to evaluate the influence of different stakeholders, which can vary enormously: stakeholders can be classified by means of a typology developed by Mitchell, Agle and Wood[89] based on a combination of the three stakeholder attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency, which are all social constructs.[90] As the impact of stakeholders may vary, it is only really possible to identify tendencies, which requires the analysis of specific cases[91]: The media may become "dangerous stakeholders" based on power and urgency, because of their ability to shape the social perception of Islam, to pass judgements on trustworthiness and to their often pressing dynamics. Policies that define procedures and conditions for recognition may combine all three attributes, depending on the will shown by the political stakeholders elaborating them to engage or interact with Muslim communities.[92] Thus, in the case of imams, external stakeholders can be extremely influential. Among internal stakeholders, the board has overall legitimacy because of its legal function, which more informal groups within the organisation do not have; concerning power and urgency however, it depends on the case.

Further dynamics are created when certain internal and external stakeholders interact or raise similar claims, which might enhance pressure on imams. An example from the material presented above is the criticism of internal stakeholders neglecting women's issues, which resonates with a general

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88   Riyaset of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Hercegovina (ed.), *Constitution of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Hercegovina 1997* (Sarajevo: 2008), Art. 1.
89   Mitchell, Agle and Wood, "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification", p. 874.
90   See Mitchell, Agle and Wood, "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification", p. 868. Power recalls Dahrendorf's characterisation of stakeholders by the ability to sanction.
91   Mitchell, Agle and Wood, "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification", p. 868.
92   Theuvsen, "Stakeholder-Management", p. 13.

critique of Muslim misogyny that arises in public debate. In this sense, certain issues, interests and perspectives of internal and external stakeholders overlap. However, it is important to point out that stakeholder relationships "are not static but, rather, are in constant flux",[93] so that new stakeholders may appear and the power, legitimacy or urgency of stakeholders may change.

Not all stakeholders act on the same level and they require different responses in terms of stakeholder management measures. One strategy might be to address the concerns of respective stakeholders in dialogue with them. The issues for the imams are then: Which expectations do they accept and internalise? Which do they reject? How do internal stakeholders reinforce external expectations? In what respect do different stakeholder interests conflict with each other? How can this diversity and antagonism be managed? Being confronted with multiple stakeholder demands can be conflicting, as it may be difficult, even impossible, to respond adequately to all of them. For instance, while communities may expect their imam to be a teacher and preacher guarding the authenticity of Islam, external stakeholders may expect social activities linked with a renewal of Islam.

What are some possible coping strategies in view of this situation? First, imams are becoming increasingly used to encountering criticism, but an imam concedes self-critically: "We imams aren't used to people not wanting an imam."[94] Growing reflection among imams regarding their role can be observed, with a change of emphasis from religious authority to religious care. One interviewee draws a parallel with the role of a priest: "If they have a problem in the family, they come to us. We try to be helpful in this area as well. What a priest would be in church, maybe the imam is here, too."[95] This is a sign of mimetic isomorphism caused by uncertainty. Again, in a sense of mimesis, the NFP-report of 2009 speaks of imams as "multi-talents", like pastors.[96]

An analysis of the interview material shows three possible reactions which could be explored in further research:

One strategy is an *integration of multiple role-segments*[97] within the imam-role which require different capacities and skills in various situations: "The role can vary … with social, cultural, sometimes media-related, and spiritual

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93   Mitchell, Agle and Wood, "Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification", p. 870.
94   Statement of an imam in a workshop.
95   Interview with imam 2.
96   Rudolph, "Imam-Ausbildung", p. 5.
97   See Dahrendorf, *Homo Sociologicus*, p. 38, where he states that a role comprises several "role-segments".

tasks."[98] This imam calls this "four ministries", thereby showing awareness and a willingness to accept multiple roles and stakeholder relationships to cope with intra-role conflicts. The various tasks are all seen as legitimate. In this case, the imam also needs to be able to switch roles; what might be problematic are limitations concerning capacities, time resources and access to different types of activities.

The second strategy therefore focuses on differentiation between roles such as imam and chaplain and the possibility of a *separation of roles and discharge*, as imams are often over-burdened:

> But somehow it needs a separation, where the imam can say, I am not responsible for what happens in society. Of course, I must be interested, but there must be a person who deals with it professionally. This means that every mosque needs social workers, people who deal with youth work and the challenges that affect society.[99]

A similar proposal was made by some of the professionals interviewed, who spoke about the need of "human resources that go beyond the imam"[100] or more concretely "one to two permanent employees per mosque".[101] Those proposing such a reaction are aware of imams' multiple roles. The idea is a separation and a differentiation of professional roles, so that some tasks might be taken over by volunteers. Underlying this reaction is an understanding of the conflict as an inter-role conflict, implying that unreasonable role expectations must be delegated. However, such a separation between social and religious issues might also be disadvantageous, as it favours a religious discourse separated from social reality.

A third strategy is a *change of the role profile*, emphasising, for instance, the imam's profile as a social worker, whose interventions would be strongly shaped by religion. One of the interviewees goes in that direction:

> I have personal experience with many young people ... I have faced situations such as marriage, violence, alcohol, drugs, many things, belonging to this country, identity, citizenship ... these are themes related to being Muslim ... it is not just about talking about Koranic texts.[102]

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98   Interview with imam 3.
99   Interview with imam 4.
100   Interview with a church staff member.
101   Interview with integration commissioner 5.
102   Interview with imam 3.

This results in a reinterpretation of the imam's role to integrate stakeholder expectations.

These three strategies illustrate that reflection on the role of imams is taking place and that a variety of options and reactions are possible. The combination of roles and role-segments carried out and the type of stakeholder strategy management applied will depend on the individual case. However, reflection, differentiation and specification of the profile of imams can be seen as signs of professionalisation in a specific context, which often implies a compromise between different stakeholder expectations.[103]

7   Conclusion

The reactions of imams to the demands of different stakeholders vary considerably. Among imams, a distinction may be made between prominent "model-imams" responding positively to stakeholder expectations, average imams without any particular reaction and others considered to be deficient. This involves the risks that imams may be divided between "good" and "bad" imams.[104] When an imam states "I'm just an imam, not Superman", it implies that both internal and external stakeholders tend to overestimate the role of imams.

Such tensions illustrate that conflict in the face of differing expectations is a structural part of the profession in a diaspora context where religious, cultural, social and integration issues often overlap.[105] Imams act as agents for whom the ambivalence of social conflicts is evident. There are different levels of conflict: between imams and stakeholders, but also between different stakeholders.[106] Imams can gain authority by assuming the role of conflict managers at the interfaces of social circles, in order to prevent isolation. This requires professional skills to communicate and interact with stakeholders, which can be figuratively understood as a kind of multilingualism.

One perspective for imams might be not to react spontaneously, but to develop a model of imamate that integrates the demands of different stakeholders.

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103   See DiMaggio and Powell, "Iron Cage Revisited", p. 152.
104   See Jonathan Birt, "Good Imam, Bad Imam: Civic Religion and National Integration in Britain post-9/11", *The Muslim World* 96/4 (2006): 687-705.
105   Bruce, *Governing Islam Abroad*, p. 294.
106   Taran, "Corporate Social Responsibility", p. 58.

An option for Muslim organisations might be a kind of "churchification",[107] becoming a more church-like institution and thereby adapting to a successful model for the relationship with State institutions. Many aspects are not specific: pastors and priests also have to cope with a range of high stakeholder expectations and the way in which external perceptions and their own action interrelate is decisive.[108] Above all, strong stakeholders can be positive as much as they can be a burden, as their influence and networks can act as strengthening factors.[109]

Many issues seen in the Swiss scenario apply in other countries too: for example, tensions between home and foreign stakeholders are a key characteristic for Muslim communities in migration contexts.[110] As for political interventions concerning standards and the training of imams, Switzerland has been relatively reluctant compared with other European countries. This may be a disadvantage in some respects, but it also opens a large space for creative and self-determined reflection by imams themselves on their stakeholder issues.

Acknowledgements

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