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## CURRICULUM & TEACHING STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Achieving interfaith maturity through university interfaith programmes in the United Kingdom

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**Abstract:** Given the recent surge in acts of violent, religious extremism around the world, this report investigates whether and how institutes of higher education in the United Kingdom are developing interfaith maturity in their student population. Using King and Baxter Magolda's framework for intercultural maturity, I analyze three case studies: The University of Cambridge's Inter-Faith Programme and their scriptural reasoning program, London School of Economics and Political Science's Faith Centre and its Faith and Leadership Certificate, and the University of Edinburgh's multi-faith Chaplaincy and its Camino Peace Pilgrimage. Following the case study analysis, this report provides practical, policy recommendations meant to assist higher education administrators and policy-makers improve their interfaith programs with the intent to encourage their students to be respectful, engaging, and open to an increasingly diverse world.

**Subjects:** Conflict Resolution; Peace Studies; Terrorism; Education; Higher Education; International & Comparative Education

**Keywords:** extremism; interfaith; religion; diversity

### 1. Introduction

In June 2011, the United Kingdom (UK) introduced the Prevent Strategy to Parliament by command of the Queen in an effort to prevent radicalization and extremism on the UK territory (HM Government, 2011). The document listed specific duties for HEIs in the UK with regards to preventing radicalization on college campuses, such as vetting external speakers with ties to extremism and providing adequate pastoral and welfare support to college students (HM Government, 2011). The Prevent Strategy was met with mixed reactions. Many faculty, staff, and students expressed concern that the duties would threaten the autonomy of universities and their freedom of speech (Cornell, 2016; Greer, n.d.; Grove, 2015; Merrick, 2016; Sabir, 2016).

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kristen Allen's research focuses on the intersection between religion and education and addresses issues such as identity development, extremism prevention, and interfaith engagement strategies for young adults in higher education. This report is an extension of the author's research interests. This report and her other research projects engage with the recent growth of acts of violent, religious extremism around the world in an effort to provide prevention options for higher education administrators, policy-makers, educators, and students.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The basic purpose of this report is to assist higher education administrators to develop student education programmes that successfully expand student world views and reinforce intercultural maturity. My research shows that institutes of higher education in the United Kingdom have room for improvement with regards to developing intercultural maturity in their student body. The benefits of such initiatives have the potential of changing the lives of university students and those with whom they engage both inside and outside of college campuses.

The conversations surrounding the Prevent Strategy point to the need to address radicalism and extremism on college campuses. One option that many universities have pursued is the development of interfaith programs. This report investigates whether and how HEIs in the UK are developing intercultural maturity in their student population, specifically in regards to religion. Using King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) framework for intercultural maturity, I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of existing UK HEI interfaith programs and activities and make policy recommendations based on the results of the analysis. The end goal is for all universities in the UK to develop intercultural maturity in their student body, which may, in turn, help to decrease the amount of violent, religiously motivated acts in the UK and around the world.

## 2. Literature review

There are a variety of conceptual models to describe intercultural competencies (e.g. Deardorff & Jones, 2012; Howard-Hamilton, Richardson, & Shuford, 1998; Ottavi, Pope-Davis, & Dings, 1994; Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004; Pope-Davis, Reynolds, Dings, & Ottavi, 1994). In their piece titled, "A Developmental Model of Intercultural Maturity," King and Baxter Magolda (2005) provide the examples from Pope and Reynolds (1997), who include in their list of intercultural competencies "the ability to identify and openly discuss cultural differences and issues" (p. 271). They also refer to Landreman (2003), who conducted a review of intercultural competence literature and found that definitions of competence are inconsistent and do not address application of such skills. More recently, Deardorff and Jones (2012) created a model for intercultural competency. They defined intercultural competence as "the process of learning to understand cultural otherness [that] leads to enhanced self-understanding which supports greater understanding of cultural others" (Deardorff & Jones, 2012, p. 285). They discussed strategies for developing the mindset of intercultural competence, such as using materials from a variety of cultural perspectives, ensuring participation in a safe environment, and multicultural events as opportunities for international and domestic students to engage with one another (Deardorff & Jones, 2012).

The King and Baxter Magolda (2005) model is uniquely based on human development theory, or "the developmental complexity that allows a learner to understand and accept the general idea of difference from self without feeling threat to self enables a person to offer positive regard to others across many types of difference, such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, and religion" (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 572–573). Many human development scholars, including King and Baxter Magolda (2005), posit that a holistic approach to education will assist students in developing the skills necessary for tackling complex problems, especially those within intercultural contexts (Baxter Magolda, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Bennett, 1993; Bidell, Lee, Bouchie, Ward, & Brass, 1994; Jones & McEwen, 2000; Kegan, 1994; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Knefelkamp, 2005; Mentkowski & Associates, 2000; Ortiz, 2000; Storti, 1990). King and Baxter Magolda (2005) suggest that thinking about intercultural competency with a "holistic perspective provides a possible explanation for the ineffectiveness of simpler, more superficial approaches to intercultural competence that rely on dispensing information and teaching desirable behavior and skills" (p. 573). Instead of a model that views teachers as dispensers and students as receptacles of intercultural behaviors and skills, King and Baxter Magolda (2005) proposed "a multidimensional framework that describes how people become increasingly capable of understanding and acting in ways that are interculturally aware and appropriate; [they] call this capacity intercultural maturity" (p. 573). Their model of development of intercultural maturity is holistic because it integrates three primary dimensions of development: cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal, which are based on fellow human development scholar Kegan (1994) model of lifespan development. In sum, the King and Baxter Magolda (2005) model points to intercultural maturity, which they define as follows:

... the developmental capacity that undergirds the ways learners come to make meaning, that is, the way they approach, understand, and act on their concerns. Thus, demonstrating one's intercultural skills requires several types of expertise, including complex understanding of cultural differences (cognitive dimension), capacity to accept and not feel threatened by cultural differences (intrapersonal dimension), and capacity to function interdependently with diverse others (interpersonal dimension). (p. 574)

In terms of the educational applications that can lead to intercultural maturity, King and Baxter Magolda (2005) suggest multicultural education classes (Hornak & Ortiz, 2004); intergroup dialog programs (Schoem & Hurtado, 2001); and study-service abroad (Yonkers-Talz, 2004). King and Baxter Magolda (2005) state in their conclusion that “further study of educational practices aimed at promoting intercultural maturity” is sorely needed (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 589). In the research that follows, this report will focus on this need of “further study of educational practices aimed at promoting intercultural maturity,” specifically with a religious, or interfaith, lens (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 589).

### 3. Why interfaith?

In addition to confronting violent, religious extremism, HEIs must engage with an increasingly, religiously diverse world. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (Higher education statistics agency (HESA), 2013) found that the average age of a UK HE student in 2013 was between the ages of 17 and 24, which accounted for 65% of the total, student population at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels during the 2013–2014 academic year. Per the 2011 Census, young persons aged 0–24 accounted for: 30% of all religions; 35% of the Sikh community; 48% of the Muslim community; 30% of the Jewish community; 32% of the Hindu community; 25% of the Buddhist community; and 26% of the Christian community. These percentages illustrate that young adults account for a large portion of participants in the UK, religious groups.

In a report titled, “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050”, the Pew Foundation (2015) made predictions about the future composition of the religious landscape of the UK. They reported the following percentages for the entire population of the UK for 2010: Christian-64%; Muslim-5%; Unaffiliated-28%; Hindu-1.4%; Buddhist-0.4%; and Jewish-0.5% (Pew Foundation, 2015). They predicted that in 2050, the Christian community will decrease to 45% of the total population and the Jewish community to 0.3%. The Muslim, unaffiliated, Hindu, and Buddhist communities, however, would increase to 11%, 39%, 2%, and 1%, respectively (Pew Foundation, 2015). Young persons studying in the UK will have to engage with an increasingly religiously diverse population.

The UK is not alone in this phenomenon as the religious composition of the world is also rising in diversity. The world’s Christian population is expected to grow from 2.2 billion in 2010 to 2.9 billion in 2050. Nearly one in three people worldwide (31%) are expected to be Christian at mid-century, the same share as in 2010. The number of Muslims around the world is projected to increase rapidly in the decades ahead, growing from about 1.6 billion in 2010 to nearly 2.8 billion in 2050. The Muslim population is expected to grow twice as fast as the overall global population. Consequently, Muslims are projected to rise from 23% of the world’s population in 2010 to 30% in 2050. As of 2010, there were nearly 14 million Jews around the world. In 2050, the Jewish population is expected to number about 16 million. The share of the world’s population that is Jewish—0.2%—is expected to remain about the same in 2050 as it was in 2010 (Pew Foundation, 2015). It is clear that religion plays and will continue to play a significant role in the lives of UK youth.

Returning to intercultural maturity as a means of addressing these and other realities, King and Baxter Magolda’s (2005) Model was developed as “a multidimensional framework that describes how people become increasingly capable of understanding and acting in ways that are interculturally aware and appropriate” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 573). Their model addresses the broad topic of culture. Given the global concerns about violent religious extremism and the growth in religious diversity in the UK, this report will analyze examples of HEI interfaith programs and initiatives using the King and Baxter Magolda (2005) framework for intercultural maturity with a religious lens.

### 4. Methodology

In order to contribute to the existing literature on intercultural development with regards to religion, or interfaith competency, this report will investigate three case studies of the UK universities that have interfaith programs. For the purposes of this report, I look at descriptive, multiple-case studies

in order to describe interfaith interventions and the real-life context within which these interventions occur, and to explore differences within and between the cases (Yin, 2009).

In the preliminary stages of research, the HEIs examined included the top, 10 HEIs in the UK. Rankings were based on the 2016 Times Higher Education World Rankings, an online, global, HE ranking system (World University Rankings, 2016). First, I investigated whether the top, 10 HEI websites included information about interfaith programs. Search terms included “interfaith” or “multi-faith” and “programme,” “community,” “chaplaincy,” or “centre”. Within those websites, I looked for programs, initiatives, and events that brought different faiths together. Five of the top ten HEI, interfaith organization websites included limited information, such as location of places of worship and student, religious organizations, but did not discuss opportunities for interfaith engagement, so these were not selected for the purposes of this research paper. For those interfaith programs that did include interfaith engagement opportunities, I investigated their mission, general approach, events, and activities. Two of the top 10 universities, the University of Manchester and the University of Bristol, both name their interfaith communities and events, but these opportunities are named only and are not described on the website. Such limited information would not allow for an accurate analysis, so neither of these cases were selected for this report.

With these case selection methods and with consideration of King and Baxter Magolda (2005) model of intercultural maturity, I chose to focus on the three case studies that best exhibited opportunities for interfaith growth as discussed on their websites: University of Cambridge’s Inter-Faith Programme (CIP) and their scriptural reasoning program, London School of Economics and Political Science’s Faith Centre and its Faith and Leadership Certificate, and University of Edinburgh’s multi-faith Chaplaincy and its annual Camino Peace Pilgrimage. Each of these interfaith centers and associated activities offer unique glimpses into the efforts of top, UK HEIs to develop interfaith competency in their student body.

#### **4.1. Variables**

These three case studies were examined according to their potential to move students through the three levels of interfaith maturity—initial, intermediate, and mature—in the three levels of development—cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal—per King and Baxter Magolda’s (2005) model with an interfaith lens.

##### **4.1.1. Interfaith, cognitive development**

Cognitive development pertains to “how one constructs one’s view and creates a meaning-making system based on how one understands knowledge and how it is gained” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). The goal of the King and Baxter Magolda (2005) model in the way of cognitive development is for students to obtain intercultural, cognitive maturity. For the purposes of this report, interfaith, cognitive maturity means that students should possess the “ability to consciously shift perspectives and behaviors into an alternative [religious] worldview and to use multiple [religious] frames” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). There are historical and psychological challenges that interfaith initiatives and programs must address in order to adequately assist students to develop this ability. Many religious perspectives and behaviors have deep, historical roots that may be difficult to change. Most students start at the initial stage of interfaith, cognitive development, which includes the following traits: “assumes [religious] knowledge is certain and categorizes [religious] knowledge claims as right or wrong; is naive about different [religious] practices and values; [and] resists challenges to one’s own [religious] beliefs and views different [religious] perspectives as wrong” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). In order to move toward interfaith, cognitive maturity, students must evolve their “awareness and acceptance of uncertainty and multiple perspectives; [and] their ability to shift from accepting [religious] authority’s knowledge claims to personal processes for adopting [religious] knowledge claims” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). The end result is interfaith, cognitive maturity.

#### 4.1.2. *Interfaith, intrapersonal development*

Intrapersonal development relates to “how one understands one’s own beliefs, values, and sense of self, and uses these to guide choices and behaviors” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). The goal of King and Baxter Magolda’s (2005) model in the way of intrapersonal development is for students to obtain intercultural, intrapersonal maturity. For this purposes of this report, interfaith, intrapersonal maturity means that students should obtain the “capacity to create an internal self that openly engages challenges to one’s [religious] views and beliefs and that considers [religious] identities in a global and national context; and integrates aspects of self into one’s [religious] identity” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). Most students begin at the initial stage of intrapersonal development, thus they tend to show characteristics such as the following: “Lack of awareness of one’s own [religious] values and intersection of [religious] identity; lack of understanding of other [religions]; externally defined [religious] identity yields externally defined [religious] beliefs that regulate interpretation of experiences and guide choices; [religious] difference is viewed as a threat to identity” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). As students evolve their intrapersonal abilities, they exhibit the following traits: “evolving sense of [religious] identity as distinct from external others’ perceptions; tensions between external and internal definitions prompts self-exploration of [religious] values, [religious] identity, [religious] beliefs; immersion in own [religion]; recognizes legitimacy of other [religions]” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). The end result is interfaith, intrapersonal maturity.

#### 4.1.3. *Interfaith, interpersonal development*

Interpersonal development relates to “how one views oneself in relationship to and with other people (their views, values, behaviors, etc.) and makes choices in social situations” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). The goal of King and Baxter Magolda’s (2005) model in the way of interpersonal development is for students to obtain intercultural, interpersonal maturity. For the purposes of this report, interfaith, intercultural maturity means that students should have a [religious] identity that is “solidified and enables individuals to consider and work with different [religious] beliefs and perspectives without feeling threatened” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 582). Most students begin at the initial stage of interpersonal development, meaning they have “dependent relations with [religiously] similar others [as] a primary source of identity and social affirmation; perspectives of [religiously] different others are viewed as wrong; awareness of how social systems affect group norms and inter[faith] differences is lacking; [and they] view social problems egocentrically, [and have] no recognition of society as an organized entity” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). As students progress in the interpersonal abilities, they show a “willingness to interact with [religiously] diverse others and refrain from judgement; relies on independent relations in which multiple, [religious] perspectives exist (but are not coordinated); self is often overshadowed by the need for others’ approval, [and] begins to explore how social systems affect group norms and intergroup relations” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). The end result is interfaith, interpersonal maturity.

#### 4.2. *Limitations*

There are a few limitations to this study that are worth noting, namely related to case study research on websites. If an HEI website did not include information about an interfaith program nor interfaith engagement opportunities, that does not necessarily mean that these opportunities do not exist. They may simply be not included on the website. For those websites that did exhibit information about interfaith programs, the advertisement may be different than program implementation in reality. Variations in program implementation may include factors such as leaderships style and student group composition. The self-reporting typical of HEI websites does limit the validity of this exercise as the websites are primarily designed to self-promote. Furthermore, it is important to note that this research is concerned with analyzing the three case studies, not attacking them. This report is meant to assist researchers and higher education administrators in considering how they can improve their services so that their student body has sufficient opportunities to develop interfaith maturity in all three areas of development.

## 5. Analysis

### 5.1. University of Cambridge's Inter-Faith Programme

The CIP was created in 2002 as a part of the Centre for Advanced Religious and Theological Studies (CART) at the University of Cambridge. The purpose of the program was to encourage research and education projects that would bring Jewish, Muslim, and Christian individuals together. In 2005, CIP began a three-year feasibility study resulted in a long term endorsement by the Board of the University in 2008 (About Us, n.d.). The mission of CIP is as follows: "The Cambridge Inter-faith Programme: Pursues academic research into Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and their interactions with each other and with the wider secular and religious world, historically and today; provides and facilitates high-quality education in this area for a wide variety of audiences at every level; shapes debate about and between the religions nationally and internationally" (About Us, n.d.). The CIP Approach to Inter-faith Encounters entail five directions: first, "participants' critical love for their own traditions," meaning people who are primarily immersed in a religious or secular tradition and recognize that that tradition, like all traditions, has flaws; second, "partnerships of difference between participants," meaning that the most fruitful inter-faith interactions are those that include participants who are open to considering how their different traditions can and do engage with each other; third, "a commitment to long-term apprenticeship and collegiality," meaning that CIP is dedicated to pursuing partnerships of difference as a lifelong learning process and to helping others develop and sustain partnerships of difference through immersion experiences; fourth, "a constant pursuit of deeper understanding within and between traditions," which refers to participants deepening four tracks "their own tradition ... the traditions of others ... the common good of creation and humanity ... and partnerships of difference"; fifth, "work done both for its own sake and for practical benefit," meaning that engagement done for its own sake should not have expectations, but should be open to all possibilities; and finally, "Abrahamic faiths and beyond," meaning CIP focuses on Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, but is exploring other traditions as well (CIP Approach to Inter-Faith Encounters, n.d.).

Using this approach, CIP developed the practice of scriptural reasoning as the core practice of the program. During scriptural reasoning (SR), participants meet and read passages from their own sacred texts. Through discussion, participants consider the text's content, the ways in which different traditions have worked with the text, and how the text shapes perspectives on contemporary issues. The goal of these discussions is not agreement. Rather, participants are encouraged to grow in understanding of various traditions, texts, and interpretations. The discussions provide a medium for discussing even wider issues, such as identity and culture (Scriptural Reasoning Overview, n.d.).

CIPs SR program clearly challenges students in the way of interfaith, cognitive development, or how they construct their views and understand knowledge and its attainment. Students first starting the SR program likely assume that religious knowledge is certain and can be categorically right or wrong. The program encourages participants to challenge these assumptions by illustrating that others within and without their religious tradition view sacred texts, their interpretations, and their applications in very different ways that cannot easily be labeled as right or wrong. Naivety about a diversity of religious practices and values is eliminated during SR discussions wherein people of different religious backgrounds discuss their sacred texts and traditions. As students move into the immediate stage of interfaith, cognitive development, they become aware and begin to accept the multiple, faith-based perspectives presented and discussed during SR. They may feel uncertain of their own religious beliefs and the religious authorities who assert them as they move into the last stage of cognitive development. Students who reach interfaith, cognitive maturity through their involvement in SR will develop a "critical love for their own traditions" and the ability to use multiple cultural frames and worldviews in their own lives (CIP Approach to Inter-Faith Encounters, n.d.).

CIP's Approach to Inter-faith Encounters as used in their practice of SR is a superior means of developing interfaith, intrapersonal maturity in their student body. The SR program encourages students to move beyond the initial stage of intrapersonal development by making students aware of their own religious values and identity via reading passages from their own sacred texts and

discussing the text's content, how their tradition has used the text, and how the text shapes their views on contemporary issues. The SR program develops an understanding of other religions as participants are encouraged to listen to others read their own sacred texts and discuss their perspectives, which dually serves to challenge the idea that difference is a threat. As participants move past their initial stage of interfaith, intrapersonal development, the SR program challenges them to further explore their religious values and the tensions between internal and external definitions through continued discussion regarding how they and others inside and outside of their religious group understand their sacred text and traditions. Furthermore, the program encourages participants to immerse themselves in their own, religious cultures while recognizing the legitimacy of other religions by ensuring that SR discussions are considerate and respectful. In their final stage of intrapersonal development, SR participants can openly engage with challenges to their own religious, belief systems during discussions with those inside and outside of their religious group who have different perspectives on the meaning of their text, traditions, and contemporary events, and to consider their own and other social identities in a global context. The goals of the CIP Approach to Inter-faith Encounters, to include "participants' critical love for their traditions," "partnerships of difference between participants," and "a constant pursuit of deeper understanding within and between traditions" is a direct parallel between the goal of interfaith, intrapersonal maturity Model (CIP Approach to Inter-Faith Encounters, n.d.).

In terms of developing interfaith, interpersonal maturity, CIP's Approach to Inter-faith Encounters and the SR program is an excellent means of developing healthy views of oneself and "partnerships of difference" (CIP Approach to Inter-Faith Encounters, n.d.). During the initial stage of interpersonal development, participants of the SR program are introduced and encouraged to consider the perspectives of others with different religious backgrounds than their own, which serves to challenge participants' "dependent relations with [religiously] similar others [as] a primary source of identity and social affirmation" (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). During these interactions, participants in the initial stage may still view religiously different others' views as wrong, but SR discussions will push students to at least consider these views. At the intermediate stage of interfaith, interpersonal development, SR participants may demonstrate a willingness to engage with religiously diverse perspectives as the staff leaders of SR encourage discussions that are fruitful and respectful of differences. In using the Inter-faith Approach to Encounters, these SR staff leaders use the SR discussions as a medium for discussing wider issues, such as identity and the way that social systems affect intergroup relations. Students who reach interfaith, interpersonal maturity can demonstrate a solidified identity while working with diverse, religious beliefs and perspectives during SR discussions regarding sacred texts and wider issues. This is the goal of the SR program, to enable students to engage with different, religious beliefs and perspectives inside and outside of the collegiate experience.

One shortcoming of CIP is that it focuses primarily on the three Abrahamic faiths, which does not reflect the wide scope of religious traditions within the UK. As formerly discussed, the UK is home to a variety of religious groups, which each have sacred texts that can and should be discussed during CIP's SR program. Furthermore, it is unclear from the CIP website how many students participate in these discussions, what their religious traditions are, how often and for how many years students regularly participate in SR and other CIP activities during their collegiate experience. This information is important for a variety of reasons. If only a few students participate or if only one religious tradition is represented during SR, the full scope of the Approach to Inter-faith Encounters may not be fully realized. Furthermore, if students do not regularly participate and/or do not participate throughout their collegiate experience, they may not move between the levels of interfaith development. It would also be helpful to know whether CIP assesses interfaith maturity progress in regularly attending students. Information obtained from such an assessment would assist staff in improving their programs in the way of interfaith maturity.

### **5.2. London School of Economics and Political Science's Faith Centre**

The London School of Economics and Political Science's Faith Centre became part of the Saw Swee Hock Student Centre in 2014 (Saw Swee Hock Student Centre, *n.d.*). The theme of the Faith Centre is "sacred desert," which refers to the desert as "a place of spiritual significance in nearly all the world religions" (Desert Window, *n.d.*). Thus, the "sacred desert" that is the Faith Centre is a place wherein people from all religious backgrounds can rest and interact with others.

With this mission in mind, the Faith Centre instituted an extracurricular Faith and Leadership Certificate program. The certificate course deepens participants understanding of different religions and aids in the development of leadership skills with the purpose of assisting twenty-first-century leaders to engage with a religiously charged world in an informed way. The course runs for seven Monday evenings and one weekend. It includes the following: "Short, creative introductions to the main world faith traditions from expert scholars and community leaders; Consideration of the changing dynamics of religion in the world today and evolving models of secularism and religious pluralism; and training in decision-making, mediation and reconciliation by people experienced in the field" (Faith & Leadership Certificate, *n.d.*). The course is free, but interested students must apply and numbers are limited.

The Faith Centre's Faith and Leadership Certificate program aids in interfaith, cognitive development in a few ways. Students first starting the certificate program likely assume that knowledge is certain and categorize knowledge as strictly right or wrong. The program encourages participants to challenge these assumptions by encouraging them to consider the changing dynamics of religions. Evolving knowledge is not so easily categorized. Naivety about different cultures and practices is challenged by the "short, creative introductions to the main world faith traditions from expert scholars and community leaders" (Faith & Leadership Certificate, *n.d.*). As students move into the immediate stage of interfaith, cognitive development, they will become more aware and begin to accept the multiple perspectives presented and discussed during their Monday night and weekend sessions. They may begin to feel stirrings of uncertainty regarding their own beliefs and the authorities who assert them by engaging with their peers and interfaith instructors. The certificate seekers who reach interfaith, cognitive maturity will exhibit the ability to shift perspectives into other worldviews through continuous discussion, reflection, and their "training in decision-making, mediation and reconciliation by people experienced in the field" (Faith & Leadership Certificate, *n.d.*).

The certificate program is also a unique means of developing interfaith, intrapersonal maturity in their participant pool. Participants may lack an awareness of their own religious values and identity at the beginning of the program, which may be somewhat sustained by the apparent lack in self-reflective activities within the program. However, lack of understanding of religions in the initial stage of intrapersonal maturity is challenged via the short introductions to main world faiths. Those who view religious difference as a threat to their identity are trained in mediation and reconciliation, both skills that confront this initial stage of intrapersonal maturity. Participants may move past their initial stage of interfaith, intrapersonal development, especially in the area of understanding other faiths, but the lack of self-reflection and understanding of their own religious identities and beliefs may hinder further development. Those who do make it to the final stage of intrapersonal development will be able to not only consider social identities in a variety of contexts, but also engage in challenging their own religious beliefs and values.

In terms of developing interfaith, interpersonal maturity, the Faith and Leadership Certificate program is a good method of developing healthy views of oneself in relation with others from a variety of religious backgrounds. In the beginning stages, participants will likely be dependent on relationships with others who have similar religious backgrounds. However, dedicated involvement and interaction with leadership and participants from different, religious backgrounds through the certificate program will challenge this dependence. A lacking awareness of how social systems affect interreligious relations is confronted by the program's encouragement of "consideration of the changing dynamics of religion in the world today and evolving models of secularism and religious pluralism" (Faith & Leadership Certificate, *n.d.*). At the intermediate stage of interfaith, interpersonal

development, participants will likely demonstrate a willingness to engage with their program classmates and leadership without judgment. Participants in this stage may still feel the need for the approval of others within and outside of the program, which limits the impact of the program. Finally, students who reach interfaith, interpersonal maturity can demonstrate a fluent ability to work with different, religious beliefs and perspectives during their decision-making, mediation, and reconciliation efforts, as gained through their program training. As identity is central to the ability to successfully engage with a diversity of beliefs and values, the program may be limited in the way of developing interfaith, interpersonal maturity. In other words, how can you know someone believes differently than you if you do not know what you believe.

As discussed, the certificate program's apparent lack of self-reflection is a significant limiting factor for all three dimensions of interfaith development. This is especially true in terms of interfaith, intrapersonal development, which is primarily concerned with understanding self, what you believe, and what you value. Furthermore, the Faith Centre's website states that the Faith and Leadership Certificate program primarily focuses on "main world faiths." It is unclear how the Centre determines what these "main world faiths" are, and while there may be more than simply the three, Abrahamic traditions, this focus may still limit the impact on program participants. The cap on the number of participants makes programmatic sense, but it limits the impact on the LSE student body nonetheless. Finally, as the program is quite short and is a one-time opportunity, participants may not have enough time to reach interfaith maturity in the three dimensions of development.

### **5.3. University of Edinburgh's Chaplaincy**

Religious studies have continuously played a crucial role in the University of Edinburgh since its founding in the late sixteenth century. The Chaplaincy has developed over time and now includes an extensive list of religious groups to which it caters. The Chaplaincy holds regular events to include discussions, social gatherings, and fundraisers, as well as weekly events, such as meditation, prayers, and lunches, all with interfaith foundations (Welcome to Chaplaincy, n.d.). The Chaplaincy affirms the following values: "hospitality, welcome, generosity, connection; respect, listening, compassion, caring, love; interdependence, relationship, mutuality, boundaries, inclusion, accompanying, collaboration; and learning, holism, creativity, integrity" (<http://www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy/about/mission-statement>). With these values in mind, the Chaplaincy uses the following guiding principles: "recognise and respect the inherent dignity and worth of another; foster an environment that promotes personal empowerment; act in accordance with the stated values, especially when resolving conflict; and the importance of challenging that which threatens the affirmed values" (Mission Statement, n.d.).

Each summer, the Chaplaincy hosts the Camino Peace Pilgrimage. The purpose of the trip is as follows: "Religion is at the heart of some of the most conflicted places of violence and hatred in our world. Peace between us as nations and the healing of the earth will be served by peace and healing between us as religious traditions" (Camino Peace Pilgrimage 2016, n.d.). A dozen or so student participants from various religious backgrounds travel to Spain together to walk 100 miles on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route. Each day consists of walking and interfaith activities, such as meditation, prayer, self-reflection, and group discussion. The pilgrimage is led by two, interfaith leaders. In 2016, one of the leaders came from an evangelical, Christian background, and the other came from an Islamic background.

The Chaplaincy's Camino Peace Pilgrimage distinctly encourages students in the way of interfaith, cognitive development. Those students who start at the initial phase of cognitive development usually assume that religious knowledge is certain and can be easily categorized as either right or wrong. Learning about other's perspectives and religious beliefs during daily group discussions will challenge this polarization of thinking. As students move into the immediate stage of interfaith, cognitive development, they evolve an uncertainty about their extreme views on different, religious perspectives by listening to and engaging with religiously dissimilar others within their pilgrimage group. They may even discover that participants with similar religious backgrounds have different beliefs and values than their own which also encourage cognitive development. Students who reach

interfaith, cognitive maturity through their involvement in the pilgrimage will no longer view their peers' views and values as either right or wrong. They are able to use multiple, religious frames of view, which is the ultimate goal of the University of Edinburgh's Chaplaincy program.

The pilgrimage is an exemplary means of developing interfaith, intrapersonal maturity in student participants. Students who begin at the initial phase of intrapersonal maturity may not have deeply considered their own values and identity, but are encouraged to do so during the pilgrimage, self-reflective and discussion activities on a daily basis. An understanding of other religious cultures can be developed during the daily discussions and participant storytelling. As participants move past their initial stage of interfaith, intrapersonal development, their sense of unique, religious identity will evolve. Self-exploration of religious values during meditation and discussions may cause tensions between external and internal definitions, which is a part of the maturity process. In their final stage of intrapersonal development, students should be able to engage with and challenge their own religious values, views, and beliefs due to their experiences with others and during self-reflective activities on their tour.

Finally, the Chaplaincy's Camino Peace Pilgrimage is a superior means of developing interfaith, interpersonal maturity. Dependence on relationships with religiously similar others is challenged by close, group interactions during the strenuous, daily treks. Hearing perspectives and stories from other participants with different, religious backgrounds confronts misconceptions about differences being wrong. Student participants may begin to understand that people from different, religious backgrounds experience the world differently. At the intermediate stage of interfaith, interpersonal development, students may judge their peers less as they come to see them as comrades rather than different others. They may observe how the people around them interact with one another during the daily walk and group activities and explore how social systems impact group norms and relationships. Finally, students who reach interfaith, interpersonal maturity through their participation in the pilgrimage will have developed close relationships with religiously dissimilar peers. It is through these relationships that participants have developed the capacity to engage in meaningful interactions with religiously diverse others. After the pilgrimage, many of these students may continue with these relationships and form other relationships with persons from various, religious backgrounds due to the experiential knowledge gained during their trip.

In terms of limitations, funding is provided for some participants, but the cost of the trip may hinder many students from applying. This and the abilities of the trip leaders may limit the number of students who can participate and therefore limit the impact that the trip has on the full, student body. Furthermore, the trip is short and may not allow for students to move through all stages of interfaith maturity development.

## **6. Policy recommendations**

King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) essential argument is that promoting intercultural maturity is the most effective when the developmental model is incorporated into applied practices. While they do provide some general examples of how these practices may look, there is a need to give more practical policy recommendations to HEI administrators and policy-makers. To that end, there are some key aspects within each of the developmental groups that should be incorporated into all interfaith programs and activities. This section will provide practical policy recommendations based on these key aspects and the cases study analysis conducted above.

### **6.1. Interfaith introduction, discussion, reflection, and action**

In terms of the practical means of developing interfaith cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal maturity, there are four types of activities that should be incorporated into every interfaith program: introduction, discussion, reflection, and action (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

#### **6.1.1. Introduction**

The first, introduction, relates to providing information about various religions and applies to all three areas of development. Introducing the beliefs, values, and customs of various religious groups

helps students to understand “alternative [religious] worldviews ... and multiple [religious] frames” (interfaith, cognitive maturity); “[religious] identities in a global and national context” (interfaith, intrapersonal maturity); and “different [religious] beliefs and perspectives without feeling threatened” (interfaith, interpersonal maturity) (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). A good example of an introduction-type activity is CIP’s SR practice, whereby students are introduced to other faiths via their associated texts.

#### *6.1.2. Discussion*

The second activity, discussion, relates to verbal interactions between people of different faiths about their beliefs, customs, values, and interpretations of world events. This practice assists students to “consciously shift perspectives and behaviors” (interfaith, cognitive maturity); “openly [engage] challenges to one’s [religious] views and beliefs and [consider] [religious] identities in a global and national context” (interfaith, intrapersonal maturity); and “consider and work with different [religious] beliefs and perspectives” (interfaith, interpersonal maturity) (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). A good example of a discussion activity to promote learning in all three areas is the London School of Economic and Political Science’s Faith and Leadership Certificate, which teaches participatory specific, leadership methods for engaging in productive discussion and mediation with persons of different faiths.

#### *6.1.3. Reflection*

The third activity, reflection, mainly relates to intrapersonal development, but also plays a big role in cognitive and interpersonal development in that one must know what one believes and values in order to understand how that knowledge is created (cognitive development) and how to interact with others (interpersonal development). To promote intrapersonal development, reflective activities should allow students time to process all new information and how that new information impacts their beliefs and values. University of Edinburgh’s Camino Pilgrimage allows their students time every day of their trip to perform this act.

#### *6.1.4. Action*

The final activity, action, has two components. First, students should be provided with the opportunity to learn about and with their interfaith peers through active opportunities, such as community service projects, pilgrimages, and interfaith events. While not absolutely necessary, these opportunities may be more appealing to young adults than other types of events. The second component is encouraging long-term, active commitment to continued interfaith learning and engagement. Interfaith programs should find ways to embolden their students to continuously pursue interfaith maturity throughout their HE careers and their lives.

### **6.2. Required interfaith education and engagement**

The four activities above should be incorporated into all the UK, interfaith programs. Unless these opportunities are required, however, the impact will be limited and varied. All three of cases discussed above are voluntary, which means that they are limited to students who actively seek out the interfaith centers and opportunities for engagement. HEIs should seriously consider requiring at least one, sustained interfaith activity for all of their students so that the entire student body can develop interfaith maturity. Requiring this experience is one aspect of this policy recommendation. The second aspect relates to time. As with all three of the case studies discussed, limited time in terms of longevity and frequency in participating in interfaith programs can limit progression toward interfaith maturity. HE administrators should assess their students’ progress along the three levels of development in order to determine how long and how often their interfaith programs should run. The final aspect that must be considered is accessibility. Administrators must consider whether their interfaith opportunities are viable for their students (i.e. financially).

### **6.3. Interfaith representation and respect**

In addition to requirement, interfaith programs should consider the program composition. Two of the programs discussed above suggested that they cater to the three, Abrahamic traditions. As

previously shown, the focus on so few religions does not reflect the religious diversity of the UK. HEIs should make sure that their interfaith opportunities engage with a greater variety of faiths. This means that they should ensure that their interfaith program leadership and student participant pool are religiously varied. This is especially important as young adults at the initial phase of interfaith development are easily influenced by their peers and those in positions of authority. HEIs should also encourage their leadership and students to view their religious traditions critically and should support students' love of their faith backgrounds.

#### 6.4. Summary

By requiring interfaith programs that include introduction, discussion, reflection, and action in a religiously varied and respectful student group, HEIs will inspire their students to be interfaith mature rather than religiously extreme. It is important that all levels of development are respected and supported so that no student feels isolated or neglected. This is a difficult, but vital task that if successfully implemented, will encourage a peaceful society in the UK.

#### 7. Conclusion

This report investigated whether and how HEIs in the UK are developing interfaith maturity in their student population. Using King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) framework for intercultural maturity, I analyzed three case studies according to their potential to move students through the three levels of maturity—initial, intermediate, and mature—in the three levels of development—cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. The analysis of University of CIP and their scriptural reasoning program, London School of Economics and Political Science's Faith Centre and its Faith and Leadership Certificate, and University of Edinburgh's multifaith Chaplaincy and its Camino Peace Pilgrimage, and understanding of interfaith maturity progression led to the following policy recommendations: interfaith introduction, discussion, reflection, and action; required interfaith education and engagement; and interfaith representation and respect. More examples of interfaith programs and activities are needed to inform HE administrators and policy-makers. Furthermore, additional research is needed related to measuring impact and time required to develop interfaith maturity in college-age students. The ultimate goal of interfaith initiatives and reports such as this should be to eliminate violent religious extremism and encourage young adults to be respectful, engaging, and open to an increasingly diverse world.

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