

THE ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS OF ISLAMIC THEOLOGY IN GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract: *After the recommendations on the Advancement of Theologies and Sciences concerned with Religions at German universities in 2010 the new subject, „Islamic Theology” is faced with different expectations by various interest groups from the very start. For politicians and media the mission of „Islamic Theology” is to train religious scholars, Imams, religious teachers and social workers. Together with this challenge, the new subject should give answers to questions relating to integration: Moreover, „Islamic Studies”, a subject with a longer tradition feels itself in competition with „Islamic Theology“. The Islamic organizations try to be a part of the decision making process. The expert representatives of the subject try to meet the different and sometimes even opposed expectations.*

Keywords: *Islamic Studies, Islamic Theology, Religious Studies, University, Germany, Establishment process,*

Introduction

There are approximately 5 million Muslims living in Germany. In this regard, Muslims make up about 5% of the population in Germany. In this regard, people of different religions are free to religious education and exercising religion. However, there is a need for religious staff to guide the process. In school, as part of the religion¹ subject, students are taught in their mother tongue² by teachers from outside. In this light, there is a need to establish Islamic Theology in Germany and provide professional Islamic Education to train local Imams in Germany.

In Germany, Imams mostly come from foreign countries such as middle eastern countries and Turkey. They are nor knowledgeable on social problems and they do not speak German, which makes them unable to solve for social conflicts and integrate with the locals. The influx of foreign imams has raised concerns among politicians see who see Imams as agents of disintegration power. The Home Secretary of Germany, De Maizier, linked radicalisation of

¹ In this case it will be meant islamic religion.

² Mostly was from organized by the Turkish government.

Muslims with the mosques they attend.³ In response, the Scientific Council⁴ in 2010 advocated the introduction of Islamic Theology as a new subject in universities to increase understanding of Islamic teaching. As Islam has no church-like structure and the politics has to provide a neutral treatment towards religion, the Scientific Council suggested that Muslim academics in German form a religious advisory board to appoint teaching staff and design the curricula. The religious advisory board should act as a representative of the local Muslim community⁵.

After 2010, many universities have started to bid to teach Islamic Theology, and the University in Tübingen, Münster and Osnabrück were chosen, later on, the university of Frankfurt and Nürnberg-Erlangen the list of universities in 2012.⁶

The following question was how would be this new subject? The politic wants social solution. The training of the new Imams in German style who will teach, German Islam the developed one. According to Özsoy the university isn't a place to train Imams or solve solution just social issues. If the Islamic theology will do this it would loose his academic character. In which faculty they will integrate the new subject. It isn't a part of catholic or evangelic faculty. It is too small to become itself a faculty. It doesn't also fit in philological- cultural faculties.

Furthermore, the religious society wants an orthodox Islamic education and wants a part of decisions of Professors and University staff. The Professor however wants to be independent to do scientific activities.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

There are just a few researches about the location of Islamic Theology in Europe especially in Germany. After the recommendation of the Scientific Council in 2010 in Germany the interest in this new subject has grown. That is also the reason for recent studies like the researches of Anne-Kathrin Lange (2014), Katrin Janke (2010), Ali Özgür Özdil,(2011) or Jan Felix Engelhardt (2015).

From a methodological perspective, documents, political recommendations and resolutions of the Scientific Council will be analyzed according to the following parameter: comparative analysis of different sources in reference to one and the same topic. Furthermore, the files of institutional implementations of the Centers for Islamic Theology will be examined in a historic-reconstructive way (in order to illustrate the historical development in more detail). A comprehensive online research will also render promising results and can be regarded as a useful tool in discussing online publications and summaries of the Scientific Council. The internet research will be complemented by an in-depth analysis of university websites and their contents.

³Cf. Geis, M., Wefing, H., Der Islam ist uns willkommen. Ein CDU-Innenminister, der wie ein Grüner klingt: Thomas de Maizière will Sicherheit vermitteln. Imame ausbilden und von der Internetszene lernen, published on: 03.09.2009.

⁴ There is no specific translation of Wissenschaftsrat. The Wissenschaftsrat is the highest-ranking Science Advisory Board of the German Government and in the article it will be the term Scientific Council be used.

⁵ The religious issues has to be decided by the religious community. The government are not allowed to interfere the inner religious issues.

⁶ Cf. Lange, A., Islamische Theologie an deutschen Hochschulen, Nomos, Bonn, 2014, p. 19.

The theological literature will especially draw on the publications of the centers, i.e. journals, handbooks or articles.

The following article aims at representing the forms of realizing the concepts of Islamic Theology in Germany. Before discussing and comparing the universities and their scholarly offers, it is necessary to constitute which term should be used for the new subject. Only then, it is possible to discuss how and if there the establishment of a new Islamic Theology has taken place or whether only a copy of an Islamic Theology of a foreign country has been introduced. The next step will be to give a short overview of the Scientific Council and the main part of the article will then focus on the universities themselves.

The Scientific Council

The Scientific Council have chosen three universities with strong religious studies faculties to establish their own Islamic Theology department in 2010 with the focus on religious-scientific teaching.⁷ The department will not only teach religious subjects but also train new imams..⁸ In this regard, a religious advisory board was established to represent the Muslim community and take charge in the appointment of professors and designing the curriculum⁹. After five years, the programs will be evaluated and checked for sustainability.¹⁰ In the meantime, according to Lange, Muslims follow a “Staatskirchenrecht”¹¹ policy similar to the Catholic or Protestants, having a religious advisory board could curb radicalization that creates a constitutional problem but it is also argued that teaching Islamic Theology in University could just be a temporary solution.¹²

The discussion about the term: Islamic Theology

Even choosing the term to name the new course is challenging. There are many options like: Islamic theology, Islamic Studies (Islamwissenschaften), Islamic Studies (Islamische Studien), Islamic Religious Studies. The University of Münster had held several workshops on Islamic theology with different names, however, there is a consensus that Islamic Studies (Islamwissenschaften) should not be used to avoid confusion.¹³ The notion of teaching “Islamic Theology” originated from the teaching of Christianity. However, Klausning, the use of the term theology to describe Islamic studies could lead to misunderstanding as it could mean the adoption of Christian Theology into the Curriculum.¹⁴ According to Lange, the term theology means “the study of the nature of God and religious belief”¹⁵ which is equivalent to Kalām in Islamic science. However, there are not a single Islamic education program or Islamic theological course which could serve as an example for Germany.¹⁶

⁷ p. 55 ff.

⁸ cf. Wissenschaftsrat (Publisher.). Empfehlungen zur Weiterentwicklung von Theologien und religionsbezogenen, Wissenschaften an deutschen Hochschulen, Berlin, 2010, p. 7 f.

⁹ The religious issues have to be decided by the religious community. The government are not allowed to interfere the inner religious issues.

¹⁰ cf. *ibid.*, p. 8.

¹¹ Staatskirchenrecht regulates the legal relationship between the State and the Christian church.

¹² cf. Lange, A., *Islamische Theologie an deutschen Hochschulen*, Sp. 295 f.

¹³ https://www.uni-muenster.de/ArabistikIslam/tagungen/tagung_islwiss_isltheo.html Accessed: 10.06.2017.

¹⁴ cf. Klausning, K., Zur Terminologie einer Islamischen Theologie in Deutschland, in: *Hikma, Zeitschrift für Islamische Theologie und Religionspädagogik*, Nr. 1, 2010, p. 54–66: p. 44.

¹⁵ cf. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/theology>: 23.02.19.

¹⁶ cf. Lange, A., *Islamische Theologie an deutschen Hochschulen*, p. 50.

According to Krämer, Islamic Studies, or known Islamwissenschaften has been introduced in Germany since 19th century.¹⁷ However, the focus of Islamic studies in this era was different.¹⁸ The Scientific Council advises the name of “Islamische Studien”, but this was rejected by the “Islamwissenschaften” representatives. They claimed that the term is misleading and could cause misunderstanding towards the content of the new subject and the existing “Islamwissenschaften”.¹⁹ Behr, who is a Professor for Islamic Education at Goethe University, Frankfurt, claimed that when translated “Islamische Studien” and “Islamwissenschaften” denotes the same meaning, which is Islamic Studies.²⁰

It has to be noted that Islamic Theology has been accepted in spite of its Christian background. Islamic theology has been used to name the new department in Münster university (Center for Islamic Theology), Osnabrück university (Institute of Islamic Theology), Tübingen university (Center of Islamic Theology) as well as in many other academic articles or newspaper.

Islamic Religious Advisory Board

The Islamic religious advisory board does not suit the German national church law which makes it hard for the state accept them as a designated correspondent. However, their participation rights are part of the constitutional law.²¹ Religious communities act as a consultation body and religious associations and Islamic scholars play an role in the community. In Germany, every institute for Islamic theology has their own Islamic religious advisory board. There are five different advisory boards which comprise of representatives from different organizations. For instance, the IIT (Osnabrück) advisory board comprises of three representatives from DITIB²² three representatives from SCHURA – Niedersachsen²³ and three Independent members.²⁴ Meanwhile, The ZIT (Münster) advisory boards comprise of representatives from four associations (DITIB Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion e.V., Islamrat für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren, Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland e.V.) and two government officials.²⁵ The ZITH (Tübingen) has a similar growth/development to Münster but it also involves *Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft Baden-Württemberg* (IGWB) which supervises 30% of the mosques in the Baden Württemberg State. However, the biggest association in IGWB, ‘Milli

¹⁷ cf. Krämer, G., Grundlagen der Islamwissenschaft. Was ist Islamwissenschaft?, MS, o. J., <http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/islamwiss/institut/Islamwissenschaft/index.html> Accessed: 23.02.19.

¹⁸ cf., n.p., Stellungnahme von Fachvertreterinnen und -vertretern der Islamwissenschaft und benachbarter akademischer Disziplin zur Einrichtung des Faches „Islamische Studien“ an deutschen Universitäten, MS, n.d., http://www.dmg-web.de/pdf/Stellungnahme_Islamstudien.pdf Accessed: 23.02.19.

¹⁹ cf., n.p., *ibid.*

²⁰ cf. Eibl, A., Den Islam studieren, Ein Gott, zwei Perspektiven, in: FAZ, 22.07.2013, http://www.faz.net/aktuell/beruf-chance/campus/den-islam-studieren-ein-gott-zwei-perspektiven-12287159.html?printPagedArticle=true#pageIndex_2 Accessed:10.06.2017.

²¹c.f., <https://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/9678-10.pdf>, Accessed: 8.9.17. S.78f..

²² DITIB (Türkisch Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion/ Turkish Islamic Union Institute for Religion) is representative Institute for 800 mosques in Germany.

²³ Schura-Niedersachsen is founded in 2001. In 2015 there were 92 islamic organizations in the Schura Niedersachsen registered. For more information:

<https://www.schura-niedersachsen.de/schura/entstehung-der-schura/> Accessed: 02.03.19.

²⁴cf. <https://www.islamische-theologie.uni-osnabrueck.de/institut/organisationsstruktur/beiraete.html>, Accessed: 23.6.17.

²⁵cf. http://archiv.cibedo.de/dekha_ibrahim2000006807633370199.html Accessed: 24.02.19.

Görüs' is under the watch of intelligence services.²⁶ This allows for the state to interfere in ZITH as the state sees this as a security issue. This raises questions on whether radical organisation such as 'Milli Görüs' should be a part of the advisory board. Meanwhile, the advisory board for DITIB comprises of three government officials, one from VIKZ, one from 'Islamische Gemeinschaft der Bosniaken in Deutschland' and two independent representatives. The advisory board of the DIRS (Nürnberg-Erlangen) comprises of only two representatives from the religious associations however, they only have the authority to advise but not to make decision. This model is highly criticised by the religious associations and Janbernd Oebbecke who is the founder of the Münsteran model claimed that this is unconstitutional.²⁷ On contrary, the two Islamic associations in Hessen, the Ahmadiyya Jamaat and DITIB are recognized by the government, hence, there is no need for an advisory board for ZEFIS (Frankfurt).

In this regard, the advisory board is a unique approach to solve problems among the Muslim community in Germany. Each university and state has their own approach to Muslim's concerns.²⁸ It was reported that 23% of the members of the Muslim community are member of religious associations.²⁹

1. Locations for Islamic Theology

a. ZEFIS (Zentrum für Islamische Studien Frankfurt/Gießen / Centre for Islamic Studies Frankfurt/Gießen)

The Center for Islamic Studies was founded in 2011. It comprises three departments in the Goethe University Frankfurt and the Justus – Liebig University Giessen. These departments were established training for religious education to teacher. The Institute offers the highest level of religious study through the centre of Islamic Culture and Religion in Goethe university course in Germany which offers Professorship of Education with a focus on Islamic Religious Education. Furthermore, Giessen university offers Professorship in Islamic Theology and its Didactics.³⁰ Gießen offers teacher teaching for primary school while Frankfurt offers training for secondary school.³¹ The centre awarded its first professorship to the Presidency of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey in 2002.³² Due to the increasing public attention and the increase of student allocation, the programme can be extended with a second endowed professorship.³³

²⁶ Kiefer, M., Islamische Theologie, islamischer Religionsunterricht – Kritische Anmerkungen zur Funktion und Praxis der neu gegründeten Beiräte. In: Spenlen, Klaus, (Ed.), in: Gehört der Islam zu Deutschland, Fakten und Analysen zu einer Meinungsfreiheit, Bd. 2, DUP, 2013, p. 220.

²⁷ cf. <http://www.islamiq.de/2014/03/07/mitbestimmung-bei-der-islamischen-theologie-fast-nicht-vorhanden/> Accessed: 26.06.17.

²⁸ The details will not be explained because this would be too long. For more information:

Kiefer, M., Islamische Theologie, islamischer Religionsunterricht – Kritische Anmerkungen zur Funktion und Praxis der neu gegründeten Beiräte.

²⁹ Bundesministerium des Innern (Hrsg.): Muslime in Deutschland. Integration, Integrationsbarrieren, Religion und Einstellungen zu Demokratie, Rechtsstaat und politisch-religiös motivierter Gewalt. Ergebnisse von Befragungen im Rahmen einer multizentrischen Studie in städtischen Lebensräumen. Berlin 2007, p. 34.

³⁰ cf. <http://www.goethe-university-frankfurt.de/50747235/zefis> Accessed: 27.02.19.

³¹ cf. *ibid.*

³² cf. Özsoy, O., Takim, A., Sahin, E., Stiftungsprofessur für islamische Religion an der Goethe Universität in Frankfurt am Main. In: Weiße, W., (Ed.), Theologie im Plural, Waxmann, 2009, p. 95.

³³ cf. Özsoy, Ö., Takim, A., Sahin, E., Stiftungsprofessur für islamische Religion an der Goethe Universität, p. 95.

Through the years the ZEFIS have conducted conferences, courses, workshops, sessions³⁴ and a convention 2014³⁵. This has slowly but surely contribute to the establishment of Islamic Theology in Germany.

ZEFIS has been actively conducting discussion sessions, workshops and even a convention in 2014 entitled “Horizons of Islamic Theology” which focused on the future Islam and Islamic education. The Department has produced many successful graduates such as Serdar Kurnaz, s a Professor at the University of Hamburg, Hakki Arslan³⁶ a Postdoc Assistant at the University of Osnabrück,³⁷ and Ulvi Karagedik is an Post-doctorate Assistant at the University of Vienna³⁸.

a. Center for Islamic Theology Münster/Osnabrück

The ZIT Zentrum für Islamische Theologie/Center for Islamic Theology Münster
The Center of Islamic Theology was founded in 2003 as a Centre of Religious Studies.³⁹ The first ideas for Islam as a subject in schools was introduced in 1999 in Bonn. It is agreed that Islamic education teachers should receive the same level of education as Christian religious teacher. Consequently, in 2005, a chair for Islamic Education was appointed. The centre offers an extensions course for six semesters.⁴⁰ The institute is supported by to former private school with the allocation of 7,3 Mio.⁴¹ Sven Kalisch was appointed Professor for the chair. ⁴² Consequently, Kalisch failed to gain the support of board members⁴³ from Islamic associations like KRM – Koordinationsrat der Muslime in Germany and do not want to work with Kalisch again.⁴⁴

In 2010, Khorchide was selected as the Chair for Islamic Education, ⁴⁵ and after the recommendation of the Scientific Council, the University of Münster and the University Osnabrück were chosen. ZIT was founded in 2002 while in 2012 the Centre for Islamic Theology Münster/Osnabrück was founded . ⁴⁶ Münster university has attracted an extraordinary number of students. During its first year, 630 applications were received and the number was doubled in the second year.⁴⁷ ZIT also offers literature subjects which focus on

³⁴ For more information please look in the below website:

<http://www.uni-frankfurt.de/55695869/Forschung> Accessed: 27.02.19.

³⁵ cf. http://www.goethe-university-frankfurt.de/48324337/Conference_2014_Horizons_of_Islamic_Theology Accessed: 27.02.19.

³⁶cf. <https://www.awr.uni-hamburg.de/ueber-awr/professuren/prof-serdar-kurnaz.html> Accessed: 27.02.19.

³⁷ cf. https://www.islamische-theologie.uni-osnabrueck.de/personal/postdocs/dr_hakki_arslan.html Accessed: 27.02.19.

³⁸ cf. <https://iits.univie.ac.at/mitarbeiterinnen/universitaetsassistentinnen/ulvi-karagedik-ma/> Accessed: 27.02.19.

³⁹ cf. <https://www.uni-muenster.de/CRS/> Stand: 27.03.19.

⁴⁰ cf. Özdil, A., *Islamische Theologie und Religionspädagogik in Europa*, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 2011, p. 196.

⁴¹ cf. *ibid.*, S. 198.

⁴² cf. Daknili, M., *Das Centrum für Religiöse Studien an der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster*, p. 106.

⁴³ Sven Kalisch converted 17 years ago. He studied Islamic Studies and Law. Kalisch was doubting that Prophet Muhammad has ever lived. That´s why he got a new job from the university. Vgl. o. V. Neues Aufgabengebiet für Sven Kalisch <http://www.uni-muenster.de/news/view.php?&cmdid=5797>, Stand: 05.02.2017 und Schenk, A., und Spiewak, M., *Religion sind wie Krücken*, 1.10.2008, <http://www.zeit.de/2008/41/P-Kalisch/komplettansicht>, Accessed: 04.02.2017.

⁴⁴ cf. Daknili, M., *Das Centrum für Religiöse Studien an der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster*, p. 108.

⁴⁵ cf. Lange, A., *Islamische Theologie an deutschen Hochschulen*, p. 25.

⁴⁶ cf., n.p., *Glaube muss Gedacht werden*, https://www.uni-muenster.de/Religion-und-Politik/aktuelles/2012/okt/News_Eroeffnung_Zentrum_fuer_Islamische_Theologie.html, Accessed: 05.02.2017.

⁴⁷ cf. *Deutschland.de, Islamische Theologie an deutschen Hochschulen*, Accessed :25.07.2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPBWZMIH0Z4>, Accessed: 14.04.2017.

Islamic knowledge, such as the Hadith,⁴⁸ Quran⁴⁹, Fiqh⁵⁰. Similar to Goethe University in Frankfurt, the centre enrolls many young graduates who later become notable researchers and professors i.e. Amir Dziri who is a Professor at the University of Fribourg.⁵¹ However, the department itself is smaller compared to Osnabrück. The faculty only has 4 Professors and 14 research associates⁵², including Prof. Khorchide who focuses on Salafism⁵³.

b. IIT Institute of Islamic Theology Osnabrück

IIT started offering advanced training programmes in 2004. The pilot Islamic subject in the institute was introduced in 2004. Over the years, IIT has tried to solve issues like radicalization, provide spiritual guidance⁵⁴ and train the next generation of Imams. Between 2004 and 2006, its Islamic programme was conducted by the Peter Graf from the faculty of pedagogy and educational sciences who collaborated with Mizrap Polat and Jörg Ballnus.⁵⁵ Gradually, IIT became ZIIS (Zentrum für Interkulturelle Islamstudien/ Center for Intercultural Islamic Studies) and Bülent Uçar was appointed as the chair person of religious education⁵⁶. In October 2010, IIT was renamed as ZIIS and became one of the four centers for Islamic theology. Its first Bachelor programme started in Wintersemester 2012/13⁵⁷. The center also offers a Master degree program to provide professional development for teachers of Islamic religion.⁵⁸ The Institute of Islamic Theology is larger and offers more courses compared to other departments of Islamic Theology. It organizes long-term programmes like “Lesezirkel”⁵⁹ or “Kunstaussstellung”⁶⁰, and publishes its own Journal “Hikma” or “wisdom” in Arabic each semester since 2010.⁶¹ The contributing editors include Bülent Uçar, Rauf Ceylan (IIT) Omar Hamdan (ZITh), Mohammed Nekroumi (DIRS), Mouhanad Khorchide (ZIT).⁶² The journal also accepts works from non-Muslim researchers and experts of Christian Theology. The articles are published in English and German⁶³.

However, there are still no women editors and professors involved in the journal. Some of the authors, like Bülent Uçar, have stirred controversy when he claimed that working with the religious associations like Schura Niedersachsen or, DITIB is necessary.

Even though that Münster and Osnabrück are partners, IIT Münster is not mentioned as a partner center with IIT while the website did not specify that ZIT is a partner despite the two

⁴⁸ cf. http://www.uni-muenster.de/ZIT/Veroeffentlichungen/publikation_einfuehrung_hadith.html, Accessed: 24.02.2017.

⁴⁹ cf. http://www.uni-muenster.de/ZIT/Veroeffentlichungen/publikation_koran.html, Accessed: 24.02.2017.

⁵⁰ cf. http://www.uni-muenster.de/ZIT/Veroeffentlichungen/publikation_fiqh.html, Accessed: 24.02.2017.

⁵¹ cf. <https://www3.unifr.ch/szig/de/zentrum/team/amir-dziri-de.html> Accessed: 25.07.19.

⁵² cf. <https://www.uni-muenster.de/news/view.php?cmdid=5797>, Accessed: 14.04.2017.

⁵³ cf. https://www.uni-muenster.de/ZIT/Aktuelles/2017/20170413_salam-online.html, Accessed: 14.04.2017.

⁵⁴ Seelsorge

⁵⁵ cf. Klie, A. W. et al., *Institut für Islamische Theologie*, in: Uçar, B. (Ed.) Osnabrück, 2013,

⁵⁶ cf. Bodenstein, M. C. *Islamische Religionspädagogik an der Universität Osnabrück*, in: Weiße, W. (Ed.), *Theologie im Plural. Eine akademische Herausforderung*, Münster, Waxmann, 2009, 125–133, hier: p. 125.

⁵⁷ cf. Lange, A., *Islamische Theologie an deutschen Hochschulen*, p. 21.

⁵⁸ cf. Klie, A. W. et al., *Institut für Islamische Theologie*, p. 25.

⁵⁹ cf. <https://www.irp-cms.uni-osnabrueck.de/veranstaltungen/lesezirkel.html> Accessed: 02.03.19.

⁶⁰ cf. https://www.irp-cms.uni-osnabrueck.de/veranstaltungen/kunstaussstellungen.html?no_cache=1 Accessed: 02.03.19.

⁶¹ cf. <http://hikma-online.com/ausgaben/>, Accessed: 23.01.2017.

⁶² cf. <http://hikma-online.com/herausgeber/>, Accessed: 23.01.2017.

⁶³ cf. <http://hikma-online.com/ausgaben/oktober-2016/>, Accessed: 23.01.2017.

organizations having worked collaboratively to organise workshops and sessions. However, the partnership is briefly mentioned by Münster in its website.⁶⁴

c. DIRS Department of Islamic Religious Studies

DIRS started in response to the dialogues between Christoph Bochinger (Religious Studies), Joachim Kügler (Catholic Theology) and Günter Schorch (Pedagogy for primary schools) from the University of Bayreuth.⁶⁵ In 2006, IZIR (Interdisziplinäres Zentrum für Islamische Religionslehre) was founded to train future Islamic religious teachers under its certification program. Behr was appointed as the director of the centre.⁶⁶ In 2012, DIRS was announced as the newest department to offer Islamic theology courses.⁶⁷ IZIR was integrated with DIRS and Behr was appointed as the director of ZEFIS. There are four professors working in DIRS, Prof. Nekroumi (Chair of Islamic Religious Studies with the Focus Text and Analysis and Jurisprudence, Prof. Hajatpour (Chair of Islamic-Religious Studies with the Systematic Focus), Prof. El Kaisy-Friemuth (Chair of Religious-Islamic Studies with Practical Focus), Prof. Badawia (Chair of Islamic-Religious Studies with Pedagogical Focus).⁶⁸

The main difference between DIRS and the other Departments is that there is a very low interest towards the courses offered by the new centre. In the first semester (Wintersemester 2012/2013), there were only two students enrolled and the number increased to ten in the second year.⁶⁹ This might be due to passive role of the religious associations in the advisory board or the public discussions between Behr and Schura – Niedersachsen pertaining *igāza*.⁷⁰ There are also limited sessions or workshops offered by the centre in comparison to the other four departments. There is only one professor in DIRS with a *Schi'ī* background, Professor Reza Hajatpour who specialises in Media – Ethiq – Religion.

d. ZITh Center of Islamic Theology

In the state of Baden-Württemberg, three Universities have been chosen by the scientific council, University of Tübingen, Heidelberg and Freiburg. For the purpose of analysis, Tübingen was chosen. The main difference between the university and other centres are that it has no history and no groundwork in the field of Islamic theology or Islamic religious

⁶⁴ cf., https://www.islamische-theologie.uni-osnabrueck.de/veranstaltungen/ueberblick_2008_2017.html, Accessed: 13.04.2017.

⁶⁵ cf., Behr., H. H., Rochdi, A., Rochdi, E., Das Modell Erlangen, in: Weiße, W., (Hrsg.), *Theologie im Plural, Eine akademische Herausforderung*, Waxmann, Münster 2009, p. 135.

⁶⁶ cf. *ibid.* p. 215.

⁶⁷ <http://www.dirs.phil.uni-erlangen.de>, Accessed: 28.11.2016.

⁶⁸ <https://www.dirs.phil.fau.eu/about-us/team/professors/> Accessed: 02.03.19.

⁶⁹ cf., n.p., Professoren für Islam-Studien fehlen, MS, 22.10.2013, <http://www.mittelbayerische.de/uni-nachrichten/professoren-fuer-islam-studien-fehlen-21984-art975627.html>, Accessed: 13.04.2017.

⁷⁰ It was a discussion between the DITIB - Schura – Niedersachsen and Professor Behr. DITIB-Schura Niedersachsen announced a paper where they could choose the becoming teachers for Islamic religion into a test, where they have to prove that they were well trained and believe into Islam. Prof. Behr was against this view and published a paper where it says that the graduates are well educated and believing couldn't be tested.

For more information:

Schura Niedersachsen Landesverband der Muslime in Niedersachsen e.V. und DITIB Landesverband Niedersachsen- Bremen e.V., Vereinbarung über die Bildung eines Beirates für den islamischen Religionsunterricht in Niedersachsen, n.d., in MS, <http://beirat-iru-n.de/app/download/5778852067/Beiratsvereinbarung+17.01.11.pdf> Accessed: 19.03.2017.

cf. Behr, H. H., Zur Diskussion um die muslimische Lehrbefähigungsordnung, *Zeitschrift für Religionslehre des Islam*, Heft 11, 2012, Jg. 6, Nürnberg, S. 13–25. http://cms.izir.de/joomla/images/stories/zrli_06_2_heft_11.pdf, Accessed: 03.12.2013.

education.⁷¹ The program started in 2011/2012 with 36 Bachelor students and was officiated by the previous Secretary of Education ehemalige Anette Schavan⁷². Consequently, six professors was hired.⁷³

The number of the new centres is increasing daily and they attract more students than DIRS. This increase is due to the many foreign cooperations which are important for the establishment of Islamic Theology centres. The primary goal of ZITH is to extend Islamic Theology nationally and internationally, as well as to train professional Islamic experts and researchers to support the religious education. ZITH has also cooperated with local and international universities but it still do not have many published works like other centres in Münster and Osnabrück.

2. Conclusion

The establishment of Islamic Theology is an ongoing and dynamic process as each context has has its own challenges and expectations. The process has faced a lot of challenges. One of this issues is the lack on consensus over what it should encompass. Furthermore, there is a lack of qualified professors as most of them are not familiar with education in Germany or come from various disciplines like Islamic Studies or Religious Studies and Sociology. There is also some expectations from the university and politicians. The university can not really open a new department because it is not a philological-cultural significant or part of other theologies like Catholic Theology or Protestant Theology. Politicians want a fast solution for integration and expects that universities will teach a new generation of Imams to solve radicalisation problem while academics want to concentrate on academic studies and research.

Özsoy mentioned that the new subject should just not focus on society problems, but also to focus on fighting radicalisation. There are several courses held like Hate – speech analyzation in Münster and several workshops and sessions in Osnabrück. Furthermore, researchers have published articles on spiritual guidance in Tübingen which shows that the universities react to the current political and societal climate. However, there is a need to curb misunderstandings and foster cooperation between different departments and religious organizations.

It should be noted that every department has their own focus. For example, DIRS focuses on the Media-Ethiq-Religion program, Tübingen international cooperation and the English Master degree program while Münster Theology of Mercy focuses on IIT on a traditional way of teaching and courses like reading circle (Lesezirkel).

⁷¹ cf. Sahin, E., Etablierung der islamischen Theologie an deutschen Universitäten, Herausforderungen, Erwartungen, Perspektiven, in: ZIS – Zeitschrift für Islamische Studien, Heft 1, 2011, S. 15.

⁷² cf. <https://www.uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/zentrum-fuer-islamische-theologie/zentrum/wir-ueber-uns.html>, Accessed: 27.02.2017.

⁷³ cf. Sahin, E., Etablierung der islamischen Theologie an deutschen Universitäten, Herausforderungen, Erwartungen, Perspektiven, in: ZIS – Zeitschrift für Islamische Studien, Heft 1, 2011, S. 15.

The latest Islamic Theology conference has attracted many participants from all around the world. This shows future of Islamic theology and religious education in the European region in term of the priorities of science, politics and society⁷⁴ under the leadership of Prof. Takim, who taught has taught in Frankfurt and other Universities in German. The conference attracted more than 40 researchers from 16 universities, most of them Professors.⁷⁵

The article shows us that there is an establishment of Islamic Theology in Germany, but it is also too early to say whether there is a tradition for Islamic Theology. It is fascinating to see which direction the new subject will go.

⁷⁴cf. <https://zitr.univie.ac.at/en/home/> Accessed: 02.03.19.

⁷⁵ cf. <https://zitr.univie.ac.at/home/teilnehmerinnen/> Accessed: 02.03.19.

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