Disciplining the ‘Muslim Subject’: The Role of Security Agencies in Establishing Islamic Theology within the State’s Academia

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Disciplining the ‘Muslim Subject’:
The Role of Security Agencies in Establishing Islamic Theology within the State’s Academia

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ABSTRACT: The following article discusses the establishment of centers of Islamic Studies (Islamische Theologie) in Germany. While many authors have discussed different theories which shape the accommodation of Islam in Western European nation states, I suggest that the security dispositif (Foucault) has a strong impact on the way the state and religious communities interact with each other. I argue that against the backdrop of a hegemonic Islamophobic discourse and a securitization of Islam, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz) as the main actor in charge of domestic security issues within the Ministry of Interior, shapes the construction of the German ‘Muslim subject’ to discipline and govern Germany’s Muslims. The Verfassungsschutz becomes a defining power in the attempt to locate Islam in the German religio-political landscape by influencing the politics of several state agencies. This is due to broadening the notion of security which affects the ‘integration policy’ of several state agencies and makes the integration issue a priority in other policy areas. A hegemonic Islamophobic discourse, in which Islam has become a security threat, seems to foster such a policy. I will elaborate the securitization of Islam through the Verfassungsschutz by tracing its role in the institutionalization of Islamic Studies at state universities.

Keywords: Islamic Studies, Germany, Islamophobia, securitization, discipline, subject

INTRODUCTION

The history of church-state relations in Germany has resulted in a formal separation of church and state, while also securing cooperation in fields such as education and social welfare. Churches and religious denominations can be legally recognized as public corporations, which is a privileged status that allows religious classes in public schools and does not allow the state to interfere in the autonomy of these religious public corporations. This status of a legally recognized church or denomination is given at the federal state level (Länder) based on certain criteria. This is a level that no (major) Muslim association has achieved yet.¹ Being legally recognized as a church or a religious denomination would mean enjoying the same rights at the level of law of religion (Religionsrecht). Arguments for non-recognition by the German state are the low membership of these Muslim associations, their short length of existence and the non-existence of widely accepted religious authorities in Islam.² The state meanwhile has introduced different options to facilitate the process of accommodation of Islam towards a legal recognition. One example is the German Islam Conference (Deutsche Islamkonferenz, DIK), which was introduced in 2006 by the Ministry of Interior as a forum to discuss the future relationship between Islam and the German state with a wide range of Muslim representatives.³ At the same time, the DIK has been viewed critically by various Muslim associations, as a space where security agencies are
pushing their agenda. Amir-Moazami argues that “with its top-down approach to Muslims as mere re-actors, the DIK has so far turned out to be much more a governmental technique which aims at reshaping Muslims according to liberal/secular norms.” This political move by the Interior Ministry can only be understood in a wider German context where there have been many public debates, revealing widespread Islamophobic attitudes. For example, a the debate following a former German president’s statement stating that Islam was a religion of Germany, the headscarf ban for Muslim teachers, and debates on building mosques, to mention just a few.

In this article, I will analyze the process of the establishment of centers of Islamic Studies, by the Council of Science and Humanities in Germany (Wissenschaftsrat, WR). Generally speaking, religious policy “allows European governments to gradually take ‘ownership’ of their Muslim populations because it grants them unique influence over organizations and leadership.” They otherwise hardly achieve and aim at creating “the institutional conditions for the emergence of an Italian or German Islam, e.g., rather than just tolerating Islam ‘in’ Italy or Germany.” This means that the state itself is highly interested in governing a religion that has grown to become a minority of about 5% of the socio-religious landscape. My argument is that the security agency is using a security dispositif to influence the state’s politics towards Muslim communities. A dispositif is defined by Foucault as being “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid”. I will focus on the politics of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz, VS) to analyze what kind of ‘Muslim subject’ the VS aims to create by disciplining and governing Germany’s Muslims.

Disciplining here is used in the Foucauldian meaning, describing technologies that create politically obedient subjects with the ultimate aim of power. I do not draw on the notion of ‘subject’ of the late Foucault that deals with the technology of the self as a sort of alternative demeanor to power. My focus will not be on the ‘subject’ that tries to position itself against existing power structures, i.e. Muslim associations, intellectuals and their voices and policies. This does not mean that Muslims have no agency. But following cultural theorist Hall’s reading of Foucault, subjects must submit to the rules and conventions and to the dispositions of power/knowledge. Hence, my focus in this asymmetric hierarchical relation between state agencies and Muslim agencies will be on those in power. I will investigate the knowledge-power-relations produced by those in power, the state agencies and the VS and their technologies of creating a submissive ‘Muslim subject’. I will use official statements of the WR as well as interviews conducted with institutional players involved in the institutionalization of these centers.

DISCIPLINING THE ‘MUSLIM SUBJECT’

The theory of securitization in the Copenhagen School regards security not as an objective condition, but rather as dependent on the securitizing actors in power (media, politicians, etc.). It looks at how objects are turned into security threats requiring ‘extraordinary’ measures, similar to the function of Foucault’s security dispositif in the governance of people. In his understanding of knowledge, power and discourse, a security narrative has to be discursively legitimated in the realm of a political argument. As a social construction, a security dispositif accordingly relies on an imagined security threat. A security dispositif is the basis that necessitates the disciplining and hence legitimizes the governing of people. In the course of the war on terror, ‘Islam’ – as an indefinite object, an imagination, and not an ontological reality – has been turned into a security threat. Cesari speaks about the ‘securitization of Islam,’ arguing
that “it involves actors who propose that Islam is an existential threat to European political and secular norms and thereby justifies extraordinary measures against it.”17 Cesari argues that although these nation states aim at facilitating the socio-economic integration of Muslims, anti-terrorism legislations after 9/11 compromised civil liberties and restricted the public space for Islam. Instead of including Islam in a common social narrative and integrating it into church-state-regulations, the notion of Islam as a security threat was institutionalized by conflating factors such as immigration, ethnicity, socio-economic deprivation, and the war on terror18, a distinctive amalgamation in Islamophobic discourses.19 This is especially true for Germany, where the relationship between Muslim associations and the state has been shaped by a so called ‘integration’-policy that is dominated by security-issues.20

The sociologist Teczan has used Foucault’s reflections on subject and power21 when discussing the creation of the ‘Muslim subject’ by Islamizing Muslim immigrants and Islamizing debates on migration and integration in the German discourse on Islam.22 But the ‘Muslim subject’ is not only the reduction of Muslims to their religious identity, ignoring other aspects of social belonging. It goes further, as Cesari puts it, when trying to display Islam as incompatible with an imagined Western lifestyle and as a security threat. In this sense, Schiffauer describes the ‘Muslim subject’ as ‘suspect subjects’.23 For him, the ultimate goal of the German integration-policy is the prevention of extremism and terrorism that can only be achieved by disciplining Muslim collectives, influencing their attitudes, views and convictions via their regulation.24

The ‘war on terror’ together with a debate on the ‘limits of cultural diversity’ and a proclaimed ‘end of multiculturalism’ in different Western European nation states placed tighter regulations on Muslims. The EU Common Positions and Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism which was passed in December 2001 broadened the definition of terrorism so extensively that “any action designed to ‘seriously damage a country or international organisation’ or that ‘unduly compell[led]’ a government to act in a particular way could fall within the definition.”25 EU-member states soon incorporated the Framework Decision into domestic law or amended existing laws by extending police powers in various policy fields.26 Simultaneously, ongoing public debates on the rise of Islamist terror manufactured “consent to increasingly intrusive surveillance and the circumscription of personal freedoms through the evocation of fear”,27 which resulted in the detention and deportation of people.28 The surveillance of Muslim communities and mosques in the US by the NYPD is one example of this securitization process.29

Therefore, the incorporation of legal Muslim bodies into the political system and/or the law of religion seemed to be potentially helpful for security agencies to combat the threat of extremism and terrorism in the Muslim community, as Laurence suggests.30 Similarly, Teczan argues in his study on the German state’s DIK that the mosque was used as a space to legitimize state interference into Muslim religious issues to regulate and rule it via the security dispositif. This argument is also supported by Schiffauer, who argues that the DIK did not counter the security-policy of the VS. The dialogue was not a dialogue between equal participants, but an asymmetric ‘Socratic dialogue’ that was clear about the outcome before the DIK had already started.31 I argue that political incorporation has become a potential tool for the German state and its security agencies to discipline and govern its Muslim subjects. The state’s aim is to create an ‘ideal’ German Muslim; a politically obedient, loyal and submissive. Disciplinary power, in Foucault’s writings, employs techniques of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgments and examination.32 It is these techniques that the VS uses to create its ‘ideal’ German Muslim.
THE ROLE OF SECURITY AGENCIES

The relation of the VS to Muslim associations is controversial. Schiffauer has documented the basis, evolution, implications and consequences of the way the VS deals with the Muslim community. He shows in his studies that a “new security policy, which is characterized by an expansion of ‘repressive’ measures and their supplementation and extension through ‘preventive’ measures” has been widened. This widening resulted in not only targeting the prevention of crimes but also in creating situations of abstract danger. ‘Preventive measures’ have lead to a new and close cooperation between the VS, immigration authorities and the courts based on the imagined common threat of Islamist terrorism. One of the significant consequences is that concerning Muslims “the usual checks and balances of various state authorities […] are reduced.” Schiffauer notes that this “increases the danger of false decisions, and thus of injustice.” Upon relying on the expertise of the VS, this wide understanding of security affects various fields of politics.

The VS is devoted to the collection and analysis of information on ‘Islamist activities’, which relies on a wide-ranging definition of Islamism. From a legal point of view, the German constitution (Grundgesetz) does not force anyone to convey his/her loyalty to the constitution, says the jurist Poscher. The VS is legally not allowed to publish anything in its yearly reports on Muslim associations that are under suspicion, but against which there is no proof of any anti-constitutional activities, says the jurist Murswiek. But with the creation of the term ‘legalist Islamism’ (see definition below), the VS has created a special category for Muslim associations which profess allegiance to the constitution in public, obey the law and distance themselves from various forms of violence and extremism, but which are nevertheless viewed suspiciously by the VS as using a double-talk strategy to hide their supposed ‘real goals’. This suspicion is brought forward against a number of prominent Muslim associations such as the Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş (IGMG) and the Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland (IGD) by emphasizing their past and/or international relations. By drawing this line, the state produces an ‘acceptable’ Muslim subject vs. the image of the ‘bad Muslim.’ But an in-depth analysis conducted by Schiffauer suggests that these reports are strongly biased. According to the VS, public activities of legalist Islamist associations are portrayed as a strategy to hide their ‘real’ agenda: statements are turned into their opposite, the creation of legal departments are seen as problematic, and youth work is interpreted as creating a ‘parallel society’ (a self-created ‘ghetto’). As Schiffauer has shown, these portrayals by the VS affect the associations. In civil society, many NGOs do not want to cooperate officially, fearing the loss of public funding and negative media coverage. Cooperation with state bureaucracy is also restrictive, as funding for projects is at risk, if they cooperate with Muslim associations under suspicion by the VS. As a result, Muslim associations become excluded from civil society and from dialogue platforms between the state and religious communities. In addition, Schiffauer has shown that individual members of these associations may lose their citizenship or may not even be awarded citizenship, get expelled and lose their permit of residence due to their membership in an association that is suspected of being anti-constitutional. This reveals the impact of security agencies on the politics of other state bureaucracies such as immigration authorities. Another form of policing is surveillance and control after Friday-prayers in different mosques (some belonging and others not belonging to these associations), where people are held for hours by the police. While some Muslims do not feel especially offended, others see themselves as the new ‘Jews’ of Germany.
A fundamental reason for these restrictions lies in the narrow and nativist conception of identity. In public debates, security-issues are intermingled with issues of social cohesion. The notion of ‘integration’ has become a central focus of the state’s politics towards Muslims, as Amir-Moazami suggests. She argues that integration policies increasingly affect the regulation of Muslim religious practice and have become securitized.45

‘Integration’, which is largely used as a euphemism for assimilation in public debates, is threatened at large, according to the VS. The VS defines legalist Islamism as follows in one of its statements:

“Legalist Islamist associations follow a broader strategy of political influence. They present themselves as an interest group of great parts of Muslims living in Germany and strive for creating open spaces for their members to be able to implement a shari’a-based life. They offer a comprehensive network of education and ministry. […] this characteristic of legalist Islamism that looks at Muslims, who permanently live in Germany, can support the creation of parallel Islamist societies (Parallelgesellschaft) and hence become a medium to a long-term threat. This torpedoes the State’s and societal integration efforts and facilitates processes of radicalization. An education aiming at opposing democratic institutions cannot be justified with the right to ‘cultural difference’.”46

This quote reveals the very narrow definition of ‘integration’ and its underlying idea of German identity as a traditional, static and exclusionary concept. Karahan, a member of the IGMG, criticizes the VS not only for ignoring all the positive social efforts he claims his association has performed in the areas of education and ministry, but for transgressing its area of responsibility. He argues that the VS’ responsibility is not to measure efforts of ‘integration’. The creation of “open spaces” for the implementation of “shari’a-based life” is not elucidated any further,47 which is a characteristic of Islamophobic discourses to use controversial terms for legitimizing an exclusionary argumentation or policy. Hence, this allows many suspicions to generate. Karahan also criticizes the Baden-Württemberg VS48 for seeing an Islamist in “everybody who refers to sources that are regarded as being authentic”49 (meaning the Qur’an as the word of God and the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad). This would effectively include all Muslims in this category. Interpreting from the above definitions, the ideal German Muslim subject is a Muslim who does not formulate his own interests, but rather submits to the dictated interests of the VS whose ultimate goal is to protect the German state. The very politicized term Parallelgesellschaft, which means the creation of a ‘ghetto’, is used to combat empowerment and building up own structures to fit into the wider picture of an assimilated ‘Muslim subject’, who is more law-abiding, and dedicated in his loyalty to the constitution. Hence, these passages show the power the VS ventures to have in defining Islam, integration, the Muslim security threat and consequently how society should (not) be influenced by Muslims: No creation of interest groups, no creation of networks of education and ministry, no cultural difference. This reveals a conflation of Islampolitik with issues of security and social integration, as observed in politics and academia by the anthropologist Sunier.50 In the next section, I will address how this submissive German ‘Muslim subject’ is disciplined in the field of education.
After many years of debates and claims by Muslims themselves to establish theological education at an academic level, the catalyst for the institutionalization of Islamic Theology in German state universities came from the Wissenschaftsrat (WR, the Council of Science and Humanities). \(^{51}\) In 2010, a report titled Recommendations on the Advancement of Theologies and Sciences concerned with Religions at German Universities was published, which discussed the future role of Islamic Studies in the German academic landscape. \(^{52}\) In this report, the WR recommended the expansion of Islamic Studies and put special emphasis on the “establishment of theologically competent advisory boards for Islamic Studies at the universities that offer the respective courses.” \(^{53}\)

The background to this recommendation is the legal regulation of state-church relations in science and education. In total, the inclusive secularity of the German system produces domestic religions, ‘civil religions’, which aim to realign society with moral and ethics, something which the secular state cannot provide. \(^{54}\) Generally speaking, the German constitution grants freedom of religion and equal treatment of all religions. This is supposed to make the state neutral towards different religions. On the other hand, the state must respect the “right to self-determination of the religious communities” (art. 140 GG in conjunction with art. 137 para. 3 WRV). In “common affairs”, the state and the respective church or denomination are required to cooperate. One such “common affair” is Christian theological faculties\(^ {55}\), “which are affairs of the state (e.g. regarding the status of the university chairs in public service law) and, simultaneously, of the church (e.g. ecclesiastical doctrine as subject of teaching at university)”. \(^{56}\) Therefore, the state and the respective religious community are obliged to cooperate in the foundation of departments of theology and the establishment of denominational courses of studies at public universities. While the state is not allowed to establish a theology department or any denominational-oriented academic program unilaterally, \(^{57}\) churches and denominations are allowed to have private universities. \(^{58}\) For an accreditation of theological faculties at state universities, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Church are both not only responsible to construct a syllabus, but also empowered to vote against the nomination of personnel and even to withdraw a nominated person afterwards if the person is acting against the denomination of church. The reward of a first academic degree is even bound to the membership of the person in the respective Church. \(^{59}\)

Based on these constitutionally guaranteed rights, the WR clearly states, “Muslims have the constitutional right of participation in the appointment of professors.” \(^{60}\) The WR calls for the establishment of advisory boards that should be in charge of “the establishment, modification and discontinuation of theological study courses, and the appointment of academic staff.” \(^{61}\) At the same time the WR goes on to state, “advisory boards for Islamic Studies should do justice to the self-conception of Muslims, the diversity of their forms of organization in Germany and the requirements concerning theological competence.” \(^{62}\) It calls for the participation of the Koordinationsrat der Muslime (KRM), \(^{63}\) theologically trained individuals from abroad (as it is assumed there are none in Germany), and prominent Muslims from public life, as there exist a “majority of non-organized Muslims in Germany.” Members of the universities may only exercise a “consultative vote.” \(^{64}\) One of the underlying problems here is the non-existence of legally recognized ‘Muslim churches’ and the question that is raised again and again as to who really represents the majority of Muslims. \(^{65}\) Although representation is not a requirement for legal
recognition, this argument has been put forward against legal recognition for many years by German governments.

Although the WR is arguing very much on the basis of the constitutional order and trying to emphasize the principle of parity and the principle of religious autonomy of every religious community (Art. 140 GG), there are some dimensions in the recommendation that must be looked at critically. One aspect is the autonomous power to define the issue. For example, when it is stated that “a church-like structure would be against the self-conception of Islam,” it allows the WR to define who should be on the constitutionally provided advisory boards. I argue that it is a transgression of the discretionary power of the WR. As part of an asymmetric power relation, it reduces Islam to a certain interpretation. Although this issue has been controversial, the reality of Muslim institutions demonstrates the existence of a variety of institutions, i.e. legally recognized denominations, religious departments, or the reframing of waqf into religious departments as is the case in Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and other countries.

A second aspect of WR’s involvement is revealed in the passage, where the WR argues that “there are initiatives in Germany aiming to establish private institutions for the training of imams. In principle, the foundation of a private university run by a [Muslim, FH] religious community is constitutionally provided for and can be realized.” But in contrast to Jewish and various Christian Free Church Universities that do exist, “from the academic perspective, this approach carries disadvantages for a discipline at this early stage.” There is an assumed lack of “integration in academic cooperations” with related disciplines within the university” and that Islamic Studies as a young discipline would not be able to “recruit from a pool of home-grown, young academics, because such does not exist.” This again is factually incorrect as Islamic Studies has existed for hundreds of years in the Muslim world. The WR then concludes that

> the establishment of any private higher education institution for this purpose would have to be accompanied by the establishment of Islamic Studies at a state-run university. Such double provision appears less than practical. Therefore the Council [...] recommends advancing the development of Islamic Studies primarily within the state-run university system”.

This statement supports the idea of establishing Islamic Theology as an academic discipline in the ambit of the state. The German Muslim subject is better disciplined and governed in the context of an existing academic state-system and not independently, and hence more autonomously. But, state universities would also face the same problem of a lack of home-grown academics to recruit from.

The WR also says: “Considering the ethnic heterogeneity of the German Muslims, it would be utterly inconvenient to provide lectures or tutorials in Arabic or Turkish. It would also be obstructive to cooperation with other disciplines represented at the university, in many cases.” Through the issue of language, the state uses another dispositif, a regulatory decision in this case to define the ideal German Muslim subject. While one assumes that Islamic Studies (“Islamische Theologie” in the German document) as an academic discipline should be based on the Arabic language, as is the case with Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in Christian Theology, the WR seems to deal with the language issue from the perspective of social integration policy. Here, the image of the migrant Muslim who does not have a good command of the German language as a justification for integration policy that aims to create successful German Muslims who speak German may play into this policy recommendation. It is also possible that WR would find it
easier to control future departments if they were run in German because they could understand the language of training, teaching and research. This illustrates the will of the WR to determine how the ideal Muslim subject will be produced in these centers of knowledge-production. Based on a conflation of Islampolitik with integration politics, the Muslim subject is clearly meant to be a ‘Germanized’ one.

THE POLITICS OF THE ADVISORY BOARDS

While the WR recommended the “establishment of theologically competent advisory boards for Islamic Studies” to ensure the rights of Muslims to choose their own theologians, this happened in only two out of four centers of Islamic Studies. Regulations for organizing an advisory board have been established, yet not all centers have implemented them. This is not simply a matter of different ways of setting up an advisory board. The security dispositif and the chosen role of Muslim ‘theologians’ is important in the constitution of these boards. I intend to concentrate on the role of the VS in the regulation of advisory boards and not on the role of other actors, as this would go beyond the scope of this article. I will discuss the (non-)establishment process of these advisory boards of the four mentioned centers of Islamic Studies at German state universities and elaborate on the impact of the VS on their constitution.

In Münster, an eight-member advisory board was supposed to be established, based on a contract between the university and the KRM signed in December 2011. This contract provided the responsibilities and duties of the board: It had to agree to the establishment or change of courses as well as regulations of study and exams. The board also dealt with the recruitment of personnel and was even entitled to remove someone from his or her position. While the university had to consider only academic aspects, the advisory board was obliged to consider only religious aspects related to the teaching and moral conduct. The board should be composed of eight members – working voluntarily –: four Muslims from associations (nominated by the above mentioned KRM), two Muslims from public life and another two Muslim scholars of Islam (nominated by the university and agreed upon by the KRM) for the coming three years. These guidelines indicate an equal treatment of Muslims alongside regulations between the state and Christian churches as recommended by the WR.

However, while the legal dimensions basically followed the recommendations of the WR, the politics were found to differ. Before the advisory board was fully nominated, one of the four members that should have been nominated by the KRM was refused. This was not done by the university, which is usually entitled to question nominations, but by the then federal Minister of Education, Annette Schavan. The argument was that the nominee, Burhan Kesici, was linked to IGMG and was thus stigmatized as being anti-constitutional by the VS. In a letter by the Ministry of Science, addressed to the rector of the university, it was stated that the Ministry of Interior had objections against Mr. Kesici which, in turn, would affect the project’s funding. Hence, the Ministry of Science felt obliged to prove Mr. Kesici’s loyalty to the constitution. This reveals the central role the security dispositif plays here. This incident reveals the VS’ interference in the state’s Islampolitik.

This politics stems from the so called Extremismusklausel, which was introduced in 2010 and abandoned in 2014. It was an administrative regulation (Verwaltungsvorschrift), which made financial support by the Federal Republic conditional upon a proven commitment to the constitution. Since the IGMG is a member of the umbrella association Islamrat, which is a direct member of the KRM, the nominee was not considered to be committed to the constitution. But
Kesici was a member of another advisory board for Islamic religious education in North Rhine-Westphalia, where no security considerations were taken into account. At the beginning, this decision of the federal ministry was neither communicated to the KRM, nor to other members of the board, according to Güvercin, a journalist who was nominated for the board in the category of “Muslim personalities from public life.” This led to disgruntlement within the board, although the KRM nominated another person that was again rejected. Meanwhile, the head of the Zentrum für Islamische Theologie (ZIT) called for a meeting of the – not fully constituted – board within one week. The agenda of the meeting was revealing: It asked to nominate a chair of the board and to affirm (zustimmen) – not discuss – the nomination of various persons. An application for the accreditation of a course (more than 190 pages) should have been affirmed. As all the members were working on a voluntary basis, many felt used by the head of the ZIT, who represented the university and the ministry. The KRM refused to participate, as one seat of the board was still vacant. Hence, the meeting did not take place. Rather, the courses that should have been affirmed by the advisory board were now offered without any participation of the board. Güvercin became critical and stepped back as a result of a statement by the head of the ZIT that he was against the system of advisory boards for centers of Islamic Studies. The latter argued that Muslim associations would first of all represent their own interests and secondly they were not theologically trained enough to choose theologically qualified personnel. At the same time, the KRM de facto accepted the refusal of its nominee and nominated an alternative person, because it did not want to “block the process of constituting an advisory board”, although it considered the refusal of its nominee as “non-objective.” This again illustrates the subordinate position of the Muslim representatives in relation to the influence of the state.

In contrast to the ZIT at the University of Münster, the universities of Osnabrück and Tübingen did not consult the Ministry of Interior on their proposed candidates for the advisory boards from the beginning. The ZIT at the University of Tübingen has an agreement on an advisory board consisting of seven theologians. Five are local representatives of the largest Muslim associations: three from DITIB, one from Landesverband der islamischen Kulturzentren and one from the Islamische Gemeinschaft der Bosniaker in Deutschland. Another two people in the category of “Muslim personalities in public life” are proposed by the rector. Originally, the advisory board should have included a member of the Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft Baden-Württemberg (IGBW), which also has links to the IGMG. Although they were included in the negotiations from the beginning, according to a member of the teaching staff at the ZIT/University of Tübingen, the university reckoned that with the exclusion of personnel from IGBW, the advisory board would not have to face any resistance from the government. While members of the IGBW and the KRM were included in the first plans for constituting an advisory board, they were excluded after a while. Hence, it appears that the security dispositif was working: the VS’ marking of the IGMG as a security threat lead to the exclusion of members of this group and determined the composition of the advisory board.

At the Department für Islamisch-Religiöse Studien (DIRS) at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, an advisory board has been established consisting of 13 members. The structure was defined in the constitution of the university in 2007 and was not negotiated between the university and the KRM or between any other Muslim institution(s). In § 11a (3), it is stated that only the head of the university is entitled to appoint the members of the advisory board, while Muslim representatives of Bavaria have to be considered “well-balanced” in the selection (FAU 2007). But in fact, only two out of the thirteen members belong to a Muslim association in
Bavaria. A well-versed non-Muslim professor was named as the coordinator of the DIRS. During the opening ceremony, Bavaria’s Minister of Interior stated:

“It is a crucial goal of our integration-policy that our fellow Muslim citizens […] can find a religious homeland, not outside of our society but in the middle of it, as part of it. […] The bachelor’s degree program is best suited in the hands of the FAU with its long tradition of Islamic Studies”.

This statement is revealing in many ways. It again shows the strategic use of Islamic Theology as a means of integration-policy to discipline the ‘Muslim subject’. Moreover it specifies where the Ministry of Interior wants to see Islamic theology develop, namely inside the (Non-Muslim dominated) university, and not in study programs offered by Muslims for Muslims. Here, perceptions of an ideal academic frame for Islamic Studies by the WR and the security agency coincide. The phrase “religious homeland, not outside of our society but in the middle of it” demonstrates the VS’ power to define the parameters. He defines how an appropriate Islamic theology should look, because the University of Erlangen (FAU) has a long history of Islamic Studies, but these Islamic Studies-programs mainly represent a Non-Muslim perspective.

At the fourth center, the Institut für Studien der Kultur und Religion des Islam at the University of Frankfurt, no advisory board was constituted at all. According to one leading Muslim Professor, such an institution would run the risk of restricting research. From a theological perspective, he argued, there was no church in Islam and hence, such a control would risk the loss of “logic and semantics of Islamic religion.”

The only center where advisory board members positions were challenged is the IIT in Osnabrück, where eight out of nine members of the advisory board are chosen by members of Muslim civic associations and only one is proposed by the university. The head of the IIT advocates a link between Muslim associations and Islamic Theology at universities, because for him, religious authority must be accepted by religious Muslims. In the end, they will serve in the mosques or as teachers in religious classes in public schools. Therefore, Islamic Theology as an academic discipline should be entitled to normativity and not looking at religion from a cold and distant perspective, says the head of IIT.

Summing up the development of advisory boards, it can be said that the interference of the VS counteracts the recommendations of the WR and transforms the advisory boards into disciplinary institutions, in the sense of disciplining and governing the Muslim subject.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the politics of the WR, Ministries of Education and the VS regarding the newly established centers of Islamic Studies at state universities, clearly reveals the interest of these agencies in disciplining the Muslim subject. This is demonstrated in several ways. First, the WR tries to direct the development of Islamic theology in a particular way instead of ensuring it has freedom and independence in research and teaching, turning centers of Islamic Studies into disciplining institutions. Yet, the WR still justifies this on the basis of equal treatment for all religious groups. Second, the VS disciplines the Muslim subject through involvement in the composition of advisory boards, using a security dispositif. By determining the ‘acceptability’ of Muslim representatives, the VS clearly shapes the development of Islamic Theology in the academy. The VS aims to discipline the Muslim subject by defining the main elements of an ideal German Muslim subject. The formation of this desired ‘Muslim subject’ is through the primary
use of German language in academia. This ideal Muslim subject’s views coincide with those of the state, fitting into its construction of national identity, while ignoring objections coming from the subaltern Muslim. The Muslim subject is disciplined by framing it in a primarily German-speaking environment of state academy, desiring no space for self-determination, but obedience to the state. Third, the politics of other state agencies such as the Ministry of Education is framed by the policy of the VS, relying on a categorization of “good” and “bad” Muslims. Fourthly, the incorporation of Islamic Theology into the state’s academic institutions allows state surveillance over these activities.

It is possible to conclude that the institutionalization of Islamic Theology in German academia is a step towards the accommodation of Islam in Germany. But as demonstrated by the non-recognition of Islamic associations as legally recognized denominations, this process is unfolding with strong state interference, especially by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution. Hence, the equal treatment of all legally recognized churches and denominations, which is assured by the federal constitution and which is supported by the WR to some extent, is not being implemented. The role of Muslim faculty members of centers of Islamic Studies who are supporting this policy has not been discussed in this article and needs further attention in a separate paper.

1 Joel Fetzer& Christopher Soper, Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, pp. 105-8. Only in June 2013, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, which is regarded as a heterodox Muslim sect by a number of Sunni scholars, was recognized in Hessen. The rest of the Muslim associations, being majority Sunni and mainly from Turkey, have not been legally recognized yet.

2 Niels Valdemar Vinding, Muslim Positions in the Religion-O rganizational Fields of Denmark, Germany and England, Publications from the Faculty of Theology no. 42, Submitted on 1 march 2013 for the degree of PhD, pp. 189-203.

3 Kai Hafez, Freiheit, Gleichheit und Intoleranz: Der Islam in der liberalen Gesellschaft Deutschlands und Europas, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013, pp.41-44.


9 It is not my aim here to discuss the debate on Islamic studies and Islamic theology and what constitutes them as academic and confessional disciplines, especially in a time when Islam is very politicized. For further reading see: Abbas Poya & Maurus Reinkowski (eds.), Das Unbehagen in der Islamwissenschaft: ein klassisches Fach im Schweinwerferlicht der Politik und der Medien, Reihe global local Islam, Bielefeld: transcript, 2008.


12 Michel Foucault, Überwachen und Strafen, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1992, 166.


16 Cesari does not solely rely on such a constructivist notion of security, but rather goes on to argue that the ‘securitization of Islam’ leads to a de facto transformation of conservative Muslims into fundamentalists and thus meets the dialectic aspect of discoursive theory.
18 Ibid.
22 Levent Teezan, Das muslimische Subjekt. Verfassen im Dialog der Deutschen Islamkonferenz, Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2012. With 9/11, the ‘Muslim subject’ became a potential threat as an outcome of a security discourse, using terms such as the ‘sleeper’ to refer to a diffuse ever-present threat that had to be stemmed. Islamophobic crimes resulting in the loss of people’s lives, such as those in the Netherlands with a Muslim teacher of Moroccan origin or in Germany with a pregnant doctor, were not covered in media and did not lead to far reaching consequences in the way that the murder of Theo van Gogh did.
26 Ibid., p.6.
27 Ibid., p.7.
31 Werner Schiffauer, 2008b.
34 Werner Schiffauer, 2008a, p.55.
35 Ibid., p.56.
36 Ibid., p.56.
41 Werner Schiffauer, 2008b.
42 Kerem Öktem, 2013, pp.45-53.
44 Werner Schiffauer (2008a). For further reading on effects of combatting ‘legalist Islamism’: Kerem Öktem 2013, pp.45-80.
46 BVF 2008, pp.8-9. All citations of the VS are the author’s.
48 Ibid. pp.95-7
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Leuenberger & Andreas Tunger

Muslim asso

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DITIB

Islamrat der Bundesrepublik Deutschland

2010, p.

participation


State/University and the

Catholic ' establishment at a public university of a 'Diplom' degree program in Catholic theology whose goal is the training of a


Philosophy departments due to the non

existence of Islamic theological Faculties, Islamic Studies is only offered in Philosophy departments due to the non-existence of Islamic theological Faculties, which is seen as inappropriate by some critics. See: Michael Kiefer 2013, p.215.


Ibid., p.72.

Ibid. p.19-20. Art. 140 in conjunction with art. 137 para. 3 WRV (cf. footnote 8) says: These rights of participation are realized especially through the religious communities influencing the composition of the faculty personnel. (BVerfG 1 BvR 462/06 of October 28, 2008, 63, http://www.bverfsg.de (cited in Wissenschaftsrat, 2010, p.71)

Ibid. p.71

Ibid. p.75

Ibid. p.76

The KRM is an umbrella organization of the four largest Muslim civic associations and umbrella organizations, the Islamrat der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, the Zentralrat der Muslime, the Verband Islamischer Kulturzentren (VIKZ) and the DIITIB (Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion). It was founded in 2006, shortly before the DIK was established, due to the German state’s longing for a Muslim counterpart. The KRM represents the four largest Muslim associations working on a grassroots-level via educational institutions and mosques.

Ibid., p.76-77. After five years, these institutions should be evaluated.


Wissenschaftsrat, 2010, p. 72

Ibid. p.73

In late 2013, the Europäische Institut für Humanwissenschaften, a private institute, was founded, but not accredited by the state authorities.

Ibid. 72-73

In fact, looking at the personnel granted professorships at the different centers of Islamic Studies reveals that a majority possess Ph.D. degrees in non-theological disciplines and that the theological knowledge is – if at all – pursued by a degree from a course in distance learning. I.e. Prof. Mouhanad Khorchide (University of Münster) obtained his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Vienna and studied in Lebanon Islamic Studies via Distance learning.
Learning. Prof. Harry Harun Behr (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg) is a teacher by training with no Ph.D. in Islamic Studies/Theology.

73 Wissenschaftsrat, 2010, p. 80


75 Wissenschaftsrat, 2010, p.8


78 Letter from Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Research of North Rhine-Westphalia at the rector of the university of Münster, 2012/10/26, Aktenzeichen 225-1.08.03.03/101, entitled “Bestellungen der Mitglieder des konfessionellen Beirates am Zentrum für Islamische Theologie der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster”.


81 Letter from Mouhanad Khorchide at Eren Güvercin, 18 March 2013 entitled “Konstituierende Sitzung des konfessionellen Beirates für Islamische Theologie des Westfälischen Wilhelms - Universität Münster”.


84 Letter of Erol Pürlü, speaker of the KRM entitled “Antwort auf Ihr Schreiben vom 12.11.2012 im Bezug auf die Bestellung der Mitglieder des konfessionellen Beirats für Islamische Theologie der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität“.


87 Letter of Jürgen Rottenecker, principal oft he university, entitled „Einladung zu einem weiteren Gespräch an der Universität Tübingen“, November 2 2010, GZ I 7713.47.


89 Ibid.


91 Ibid.
