Science, as a cultural and social practice, inevitably takes shape and is performed within contexts, and reflecting upon its own circumstances, conditionality, and not least its functionality, forms a necessary part of any self-conscious academic discipline, complementing, accompanying, and affecting the scholarly endeavor to which it is committed. Any inquiry into the establishment of Islamic Theological Studies in Germany thus has to acknowledge the fact that the presence of Islam has become a demographic and social reality in that country. It is estimated that around 4 million Muslims currently live in Germany, not including the vast number of Muslim refugees who arrived over the course of 2015 and 2016. These numbers are mostly, although by no means exclusively, the result of processes that began with labor migration to Germany in the 1950s. Muslims in Germany practice their religion in different ways and on various levels, in the family, privately at home, in mosques, or in other forms of religious organizations. Their average age is 30.1 years, which is younger

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1 For debates on scientific knowledge production as a social practice and a cultural phenomenon see Wissenschaft als Kontext—Kontexte der Wissenschaft, ed. by Wolfgang Bonß, Rainer Hohlfeld, Regine Kollek (Hamburg: Institut für Sozialforschung, 1993).

2 In their German version, the recommendations of the German Council of Science and Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat), which were instrumental in providing the scientific-political rationale for establishing the new discipline of Islamic Theology, use the designation Islamische Studien, as opposed to the older, “secular” discipline of Islamwissenschaft. However, since the latter is equivalent, and likewise translated, to “Islamic Studies” in other Western Countries, we use the terms Islamic Theological Studies and Islamic Studies to clearly differentiate between the two disciplines.

than the average age of German society as a whole.\textsuperscript{4} In the federal region of North-Rhine Westphalia, which has the highest number of Muslim inhabitants, one in eight school students comes from a family with a Muslim background.\textsuperscript{5}

By granting religious freedom, the German constitution guarantees individual and collective rights for Muslims. In order to ensure free practice of their religion, Muslims founded Islamic religious communities, at first on the local level, and then, from the 1980s, in umbrella organizations representing the interests of the different Muslim religious communities more broadly.\textsuperscript{6} To become a part of German society, Islamic religious organizations had to frame their religious, social, and political demands within the specifically German setting of secularism. Any form of public engagement had to be conducted in accordance with the established forms of interreligious dialogue and according to modes of interaction between State and religion that have been shaped by particular German historical experiences. As such, Islamic associations have to operate within established linguistic and epistemological paradigms in the fields of religion, education, and politics. Today, these organizations that were initially created in order to conserve a religious cult brought from abroad increasingly claim public recognition and demand a legal status equal with Christian denominations.\textsuperscript{7}

The recent establishment of Islamic Theological Studies and the expectations underlying this process cannot, however, be explained simply as a logical consequence of the Muslim presence in Germany. Various other factors have impacted this process, most of them closely connected to the nature of


\textsuperscript{5} “Jeder achte Schüler muslimisch”, Migazin, January 9, 2013, http://www.migazin.de/2013/01/09/jeder-achte-schüler-muslimisch/

\textsuperscript{6} For an empirical study of this process on a meso-level, and a general overview, see Raida Chbib, Der organisierte Islam in Deutschland. Diversität, Dynamiken und Strukturen (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ruhr University Bochum, 2016). For an overview of the organization processes, see Kerstin Rosenow-Williams, Organizing Muslims and Integrating Islam in Germany: New Developments in the 21st Century (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

\textsuperscript{7} These were, among others, the German branch of the Turkish Ministry of Religion DİTİB (Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion e.V.—Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği), founded in 1984; the ZMD (Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland e.V.—Central Council of Muslims in Germany), established in 1994; the German branch of the IGMG (Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş—Islam Toplumu Millî Görüş), set up in 1995; and the VIKZ (Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren e.V.), founded in 1973.