

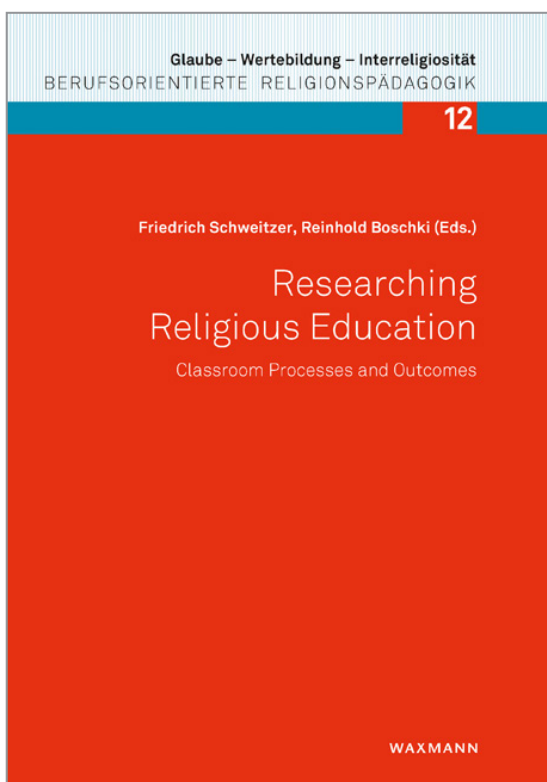
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Current State of Research on Islamic Religious Education in Germany

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Researching Religious Education: Classroom Processes and Outcomes

Glaube – Wertebildung – Interreligiosität,
vol. 12, 2018, 424 pages, pb, € 49,90,
ISBN 978-3-8309-3719-7
E-Book: € 44,99,
ISBN 978-3-8309-8719-2



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Current State of Research on Islamic Religious Education in Germany

This book on “Researching Religious Education: Classroom Processes and Outcomes” aims to give an overview of the current state of empirical research on Religious Education in Germany and selected European countries. While much research on Protestant and Catholic Religious Education has already been done, this work is at an early stage in the field of Islamic Religious Education. Moreover, since it is assumed that the history and structure of Islamic Religious Education in Germany is not familiar to every reader, a more systematic approach is offered in this essay which provides an overview of the development of this young subject and its current status in Germany. In the first section, basic questions and problems are discussed using the term “Islamic religious education”. The second section outlines the development of Islamic religious education as a scientific discipline in Germany. The current state of research, especially research on teaching, is discussed in the third section.

1. The term “Islamic religious education (Islamische Religionspädagogik)”

From a historical perspective, religious education (Religionspädagogik) is a Western concept, developed on the basis of Christian educational concepts. The developmental lines can be traced from classical “catechetics” to religious education as a scientific discipline (cf. Schröder 2012).

Within Muslim cultures, the following development took place. According to Gregor Schoeler, a clear separation between elementary teaching and higher education is already apparent in early Islam between the 7th and the 19th centuries (cf. Schoeler 2013, 269). In “primary schools”, reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and the memorizing of the Koran were taught (ibid., 272). According to Schoeler, further education for pupils and adults took place in the formative (7th–8th century) and classical period (9th–13th century) of Islam rather on an informal basis, by scholars (Sheikhas and Sheikhs) of the Koran, Hadith, Fiqh, Grammar, and Philology, who usually held lectures in front of curious pupils in mosques (ibid., 272–274). “The transfer of knowledge primarily took place in ‘sessions’ (sing. *Majlis*) and in ‘study circles’ (sing. *Ḥalqa*)” (Günther 2016a, 4). Thus, centers of learning developed in Mecca, Medina, Basra, Kufa and Baghdad, and later also in other cities, which led to a practice of study trips to distant cities. It was not until the 11th century that the “Medreses” were founded as institutions for higher education (cf.

Schoeler 2013, 272–274). Schoeler elaborates that in the early days, the mediation of religious knowledge took place in writing as well as verbally. More emphasis was placed on the “oral tradition” than on the written one, because it was assumed that someone who absorbed knowledge only in written form tended to make mistakes because he did not know the “oral tradition” (cf. *ibid.*, 286–289). In this respect, a fundamental teaching principle of “the close, personal contact between teacher and student as a way of safeguarding the transmission of religious knowledge” (Günther 2016a, 5) played an important role.

There are already papers on pedagogy and didactics from the 9th century, such as those of Ibn Sahnūn and al-Ġāhiz (cf. Günther 2005). Sebastian Günther notes that “the educational conceptions of the classical Muslim scholars concern to a high degree questions, which applied Islam as a religion and way of life in general” (Günther 2013, 357). At the core of the medieval Arabic texts on education and religion is one key idea: “the education of man is to be regarded both as a form of relation to God, ‘the Creator’, as well as to fellow human beings, ‘who function as God’s representatives on earth’ (Koran, sura 2, verse 30)” (*ibid.*, 362). According to Günther, the idea of the “al-Insān al-Kāmil”, the “comprehensive educated man” is especially decisive for Islamic educational theories. In this sense, comprehensive education means both training in religious as well as profane disciplines. Günther characterises theoretical literature on education, which was formed in the 19th century, as “pedagogical”. This literature was based on the existing Jewish and Christian educational ideas at that time, as well as on the statements of the Koran and the Prophet on knowledge and education and on ancient Greek ideas (*ibid.*, 364).

Since the 19th century, Muslim scholars regard Muslim education to be in a crisis. According to Ali Ashraf, this crisis is that Muslim scholars have not developed concepts of Islamic education that can respond to modernity. Therefore, the first “World Conference on Muslim Education” was organised by King Abdulaziz University in Mecca in the spring of 1977.

Unfortunately, the participants of the conference saw the “essentials of the problems” rather in the fact that the West had lost its religious roots and that since the Renaissance a process of “moral decline” had taken place. It has been argued that “modern Western education places an exaggerated emphasis on reason and rationality and underestimates the value of the spirit.” (Husain and Ashraf 1979, 2) It has been criticised that “Muslim intellectuals are now being educated in the West, being brainwashed and returning to their own countries after reading textbooks which are all filled with ideas in conflict with their traditional assumptions” (*ibid.*). “Methods and contents would create doubts in the minds of the students” (*ibid.*, 3). It was proclaimed that the “Islamic world” had to dissociate itself strongly from the “West”.

However, another interpretation of the history between the West and the Islamic world speaks a different language. European culture has received decisive impulses from the Islamic world, which is illustrated by countless historical findings. The rise of philosophy, theology, and sciences in the late Middle Ages, the Italian Renais-

sance, and so on, are also decisively affected by cultural influences from the Islamic world. But such influences have, of course, also taken place in the opposite direction.

This leads to the conclusion that in the present situation it is no longer expedient to project one's own problems one-sidedly onto the West. Muslim societies are faced with the challenge of finding solutions for their specific problems within the framework of economic and cultural globalisation, which do not create boundaries but give them a place in global society.

It is to be expected that the crisis in Islamic education is decisively caused by the fact that among the majority of Muslims the willingness to accept the diversity of Islam is declining. Thomas Bauer calls this phenomenon "decreasing ambiguity tolerance". In an interview, he said: "This tolerance of diversity was called into question by the Saudi Arabian Wahhabis in the 18th century and the Salafis in the 20th century. [...] Before that time, it was considered of value that God can speak ambiguously." (Bauer 2016) Bauer explained that the new, more nationalist-oriented elites were orientated towards the West and gained more and more power. The traditional elites came under pressure and tried to hold their own by creating the clearest position possible because the West also had such clear positions. They developed the idea that the Arab countries could become considerably more powerful if they were governed according to Islam. Bauer maintains that Islam had become an ideology (cf. *ibid.*).

Thus, Muslims currently face the challenge of formulating a theological concept of Islamic diversity on an academic level that is authentic regarding Islamic tradition. It is of decisive importance to formulate an educational concept that provides the spiritual, philosophical and theological competences for the reality of a diverse Islam.

Muslim theologians, who live in Europe and the West, advocate a revival of the diversity of tradition in the sense of a "turning point for Islam" (Behr 2016). A shift is demanded from the collective to the subject, from the communal to the societal, from the traditional to the situative, and from a literalistic text interpretation to a hermeneutical (Behr 2006).

Since 2004, professorships for "Islamic religious education" have been established in various places in Germany. The terminology is borrowed from the Christian terminology, which has developed the so-called "Religionspädagogik" over the last 100 years.

After outlining various development trajectories, the question can be raised, whether we can also speak of "Religionspädagogik" in the field of religious education in Islam. From the perspective of a sociology of knowledge, this question must be answered in the affirmative. The appropriation of this term does not imply that Islamic religious education is a modification or variation of Christian religious education. The term only clarifies that this terminology is adopted, while Islamic religious education develops its own profile. It has its own form of theological expertise and draws on its own tradition, which is interpreted in a new context. Thus, the adoption of the terminology of "Religionspädagogik" as an academic

and research discipline takes place, whereby the concrete filling of the content differs from Christian religious education. Of course, methodological adoptions take place, as well as learning from the experience gained in Christian religious education. This certainly makes the reflection of historical developments indispensable because it plays an essential role in the understanding of “religious education” today.

After these clarifying remarks on the concept of “Islamic religious education” in the following, the question will be examined of how Islamic religious education has developed in Germany and where research stands to date.

2. The Development of Islamic religious education as a scientific discipline in Germany

In Germany, Islamic religious education was established as an academic discipline before Islamic theology at universities.

The development and academisation of Islamic religious education is interwoven with the history of immigration in Germany, especially the recruitment of guest workers, primarily from Turkey, which began in 1961. From 1973 onwards, many guest workers brought their families to Germany. Havva Engin describes how the development of concepts were pushed forward through the “education of foreigners” at universities for the language integration of the “guest workers”. The cultural and religious instruction of the Muslim children was guaranteed by “mother-tongue teaching and regional studies supplementary teaching” from 1977, which was taught by teachers from the countries of origin based on the homeland’s curricula (Engin 2015, 369). It was assumed that these “migrant workers” would return to their countries after a certain time. When this assumption was not confirmed, and due to the pressure that Muslims wanted to become a part of society, the urgent question arose how such an infrastructure could be constructed.

In 1999, North Rhine-Westphalia became the first state to introduce “Islamic Studies in German Language”. This was designed as a teaching of and about Islam from an external perspective. That means that the state of North Rhine-Westphalia had the responsibility for the educational plans and not the Muslim community. Since Muslim associations do not have the status of a public corporation, the German Islam Conference (DIK) started to address this topic beginning in 2008 and created transitional solutions to provide a “channel of communication” for the curricula, so that Muslims themselves were involved in their creation. Within the framework of this development, complementary studies were implemented at German universities in order to qualify teachers for Islamic Religious Education (cf. *ibid.*).

Islamic religious education has, therefore, acquired a pioneer role in the German academic landscape. It has developed from the presence of Muslim children in public schools in Germany. From this presence and the necessity of legal and institutional frameworks, which were essential for the religious ‘feeling at home’ of these chil-

dren in Germany, a dynamic evolved, which gave the impetus for the development and establishment of Islamic religious education.

In its academic pioneer role, Islamic religious education has also taken on theological tasks, but it has its own form of theological expertise. This dynamic is formative for the subject and the German situation. Islamic religious education is historically the leading science of Islamic theology in Germany. In this pioneer role, it has established the link with the academic world and the relation to modern science in Germany. However, this did not happen without the help of Christian companions, such as Johannes Lähnemann, a professor of religious education who significantly contributed to the establishment of the Interdisciplinary Center for Islamic Religious Education at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, or Peter Graf, a professor of education who was responsible for the project of the Bund-Länder-Kommission named “Islamic Religious Education in German language – scientific training of teachers” from 2004 to 2006 and thus prepared the way for Islamic religious education at the University of Osnabruck. Peter Müller, another professor of religious education, has led the model project “Islamic Religious Education” in Baden-Württemberg since its foundation in 1990.

Following recommendations of the German Science Council on the further development of theologies and religious-related sciences at German universities in 2010, centers for Islamic religious studies and Islamic theology were opened at four universities (Osnabruck, Munster, Erlangen-Nuremberg and Tübingen).

Initiated by the recommendations of the German Science Council, the development of academically based Islamic studies in the state system of higher education advanced consistently and quickly. The centers should develop different profiles so that the plurality of Islamic faith in Germany could be adequately considered (see <http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/9678-10.pdf>.)

At the same time, the support of junior researchers in Islamic religious education and Islamic theology was also raised to a new level. This step made it possible to inspire research and to make possible its rapid development. Foundations and research communities have funded scholarships to take the first steps in this direction. For example, the Mercator Foundation set up a post graduate program in Islamic Theology, in which 16 young researchers can work on their PhD projects and at the same time are enrolled in a study program (see <http://www.gkit.de/en/>).

Islamic religious education is now faced with the challenge of positioning itself among others in the areas of empirical studies, historical research, evaluation, and theory of science and thus to be on the same level as Christian religious education (cf. Schweitzer 2017).

3. Current situation of the subject “Islamic Religious Education”

The interest in researching religious education in general has strongly increased in Germany over the last few years. According to Bernd Schröder, on the one hand, this is due to impulses from pedagogy, which has developed from a rather theoretical “educational science” into “empirical education research”. On the other hand, it is based on the content-related and methodological differentiation of the Religious Education subjects themselves, both on the Protestant and the Catholic side (cf. Schröder 2014).

The demand for an “empirical turn in religious education” was already formulated by Klaus Wegenast at the end of the 1960s (cf. Wegenast 1968). In the field of Islamic religious education this development is, of course, still at an early stage.

However, Islamic religious education as a young discipline necessarily requires research on religious education to provide empirical foundations for the indispensability of qualified religious education on the one hand, and to provide a better understanding of religious education processes on the other hand. This requires a dialogue between empirical education research and theology. In regard to schooling the aim is, for example, to understand, reflect and accompany religious learning and appropriation processes of children and adolescents. This cannot be done only with theoretical assumptions, especially when we consider the abundance of dimensions, such as development, socialisation, formal education, informal education, etc. which play an important role in all fields of religious education.

In the following, a summary of selected scientific work in the field of Islamic religious education is presented. The studies are grouped according to the five-fold classification of research approaches in the field of religious education, as Friedrich Schweitzer formulated in his article “Questions on the state of research in Islamic religious education in Germany” (cf. Schweitzer, 2017). The following presentation does not claim to be complete, but provides a differentiated and systematic overview.

a. Systematic-theoretical religious education research

According to Schweitzer, “the understanding of religious education is at the forefront, as well as on another level, the justification for Religious Education” (ibid.).

In this field, a series of works can be cited, such as “Islamic educational theory” by Harry Harun Behr (Behr 1998). It gives an insight into the motives and reasons of Islamic life, both for the education of children and adolescents as well as for the self-education of adults. Here, Behr derives the educational conceptions of Muslims from the Koran and Sunna (prophetic tradition) and gradually develops the idea of an Islamic educational theory.

Another book, dealing with Islamic education theory, was edited by Lamyia Kaddor (cf. Kaddor 2008). In this, various authors discuss the theoretical foundation of

Islamic religious didactics. The contributions are supplemented by Christian religious educators and theologians, who accompany this discourse in substance or are involved in the dynamics of the discourse.

Several similar articles are also found in the book “Between heaven and earth: educational and philosophical relationships between sacred text and spirit” (cf. Behr and Ulfat 2014). The book examines the relationship between the sacred text and the spirit as well as between the human being and God in Islam from pedagogical, theological (Christian and Islamic), spiritual and philosophical perspectives.

One of the earlier works is that of Beyza Bilgin. Since 1988, she has dealt with questions of contemporary Islamic religious education in Turkey and in Europe. In her book on Islamic religious education in a modern society (cf. Bilgin and Lähnemann 2007), 18 lectures, which she held in Germany, at the Nuremberg Forums from 1988 to 2000, were recorded in writing. She outlines the profile of an Islamic religious education, whose main focus is openness, diversity, tolerance and pluralism. In his preface, Johannes Lähnemann describes the “pioneering role of religious education in meeting, understanding and cooperation between Turkey and Germany as well as between Islam and Christianity” (ibid., 7).

A recent monograph by Tuba Isik portrays a series of discourses on the justification of Islamic prophecy. It deals with the role of the Prophet Muhammad in the Revelation, from different perspectives, whereby the Prophet is attributed with the role of making Islam “livable”. From this point of view, Isik develops two central aspects for the religious-educational approach to the Prophet in Islamic Religious Education: “A fundamental *feeling of belonging in Islamic faith and the reformulation of the representative function of the Messenger Muḥammad* in a religious-educational intention” (Isik 2014, 223).

In his work “Text and Performance: A didactics of prayer in Islamic Religious Education between normativity and spirituality”, Jörg Ballnus outlines an understanding of prayer didactics in Islamic Religious Education. The author examines the question of how a central concept such as prayer can be shaped when it becomes a topic of Islamic Religious Education (cf. Ballnus 2016).

Furthermore, it is possible to name collective publications which deal with the question of legal and social expectations, the framework conditions, the theological foundations, the educational aims and concepts, the didactics, the methodology, the teachers’ profile, the pupils’ lifeworld, as well as the meaning of Islamic Religious Education in Germany and Europe:

The series “Osnabruck Islamic Studies” deals in the third volume with “Islamic religious education between authentic self-positioning and dialogical opening” (cf. Ucar 2011). This volume shows how Islamic religious education develops in a complex way to a scientific discipline and generates its own standpoint. Many writers have described this development in areas containing tensions between, for example, legal, theological, social and practical questions, challenges, requirements and demands.

The publications of the Institute for Islamic Theology of the University of Osnabrück also deal in two volumes with the establishment of Islamic Religious Education in the German context. In the volume “Religions at schools and the importance of Islamic Religious Education” (cf. Ucar, Blasberg-Kuhnke and Sche-liha 2010), the authors deal with basic considerations of the question of confessional, informative, cooperative, interreligious and dialogical approaches (for example, the so-called “Religious Education for all” in Hamburg). In addition to the pedagogical perspectives mentioned, legal, social, organisational and didactical questions are also discussed. In the second volume, “Islamic Religious Education in Germany: didactical concepts, initial position, expectations and goals” (cf. Ucar and Bergmann 2010), the process of outlining the subject is further illustrated and deepened.

The anthologies edited by Harry Harun Behr, Mathias Rohe, Hansjörg Schmid and Christoph Bochinger deal with the “Professional profile and real context for a new professional field” (volume 1) (cf. Behr, Rohe and Schmid 2008) and secondly with the “Muslim pupils’ lifeworld orientation as a challenge for Islamic Religious Education” (volume 2) (see Behr et al. 2011). The first volume deals with how Islamic Religious Education teachers see themselves and how they are seen by others. The authors, who are themselves pupils, parents, teachers, students, teacher trainers, professors, as well as other experts and affected persons, explore the question of which qualities Muslim Religious Education teachers should have from different perspectives. The second volume focuses on the Muslim pupils themselves and their individual lifeworlds. Based on the question of a fifteen-year-old pupil in an Islamic Religious Education lesson, “What should I do as a Muslim here in Germany?”, the results of accompanying research on Islamic Religious Education are presented. Here the identity of Muslim youths from the perspective of the sciences involved is investigated. The curriculum and didactic profile of the subject of Islamic Religious Education is then discussed from the point of view of forging identity through Religious Education.

From an interreligious perspective, the volumes of the series “Religious-educational Discussions between Jews, Christians and Muslims” deal with the topics “What is a good RE teacher?: answers from Jews, Christians and Muslims” (cf. Schröder, Krochmalnik and Behr 2009), “The other Abraham: theological and didactic reflections of a classical figure” (cf. Behr, Krochmalnik and Schröder 2011), “‘You shall not make an image for yourself ...’: ban of images and didactics of images in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Religious Education” (cf. Krochmalnik, Schröder and Behr 2013), “‘Who is the human being?’: Anthropology in interreligious learning and teaching” (cf. Boehme 2013), “Prayer in Religious Education from an interreligious perspective” (cf. Krochmalnik et al. 2014) as well as “Letter and Spirit: dealing with the Torah, the Bible and the Koran in Religious Education” (cf. Schröder et al. 2017). These topics are reflected both theologically and didactically and offer the reader a thought-provoking comparison between the three world religions.

Taking into consideration the hermeneutic differences in Christian and Muslim understanding of scripture and their consequences for Religious Education at schools, the following volume deals with “The Holy Scriptures of the others in the classroom: using the Bible and the Koran in Christian and Islamic Religious Education” (cf. Velden 2011). The authors offer a concept for a dialogical mediation of holy scriptures in the classroom. A further volume deals with the theological and pedagogical conception of a competence-oriented Islamic Religious Education for senior pupils. The authors want to “get the light from the niche together”, by deriving competence-oriented scripture didactics for Religious Education from Christian-Islamic religious discussions (cf. Velden, Behr and Haußmann 2013).

An anthology dealing with new approaches to Islamic theology and religious education in Europe is that of the Austrian-Muslim religious pedagogue Zekirija Sejđini (cf. Sejđini 2016). It discusses features of a contemporary Islamic religious education in a European context. The book ranges from educational philosophical conceptions of classical Muslim scholars, to today’s religious-educational and religious-didactic challenges in the tension arising between the public and the religious educational mandate.

Another current book dealing with religious pluralism in Europe is edited by Ednan Aslan et al. (cf. Aslan, Ebrahim and Hermansen 2016). The authors first reflect on plurality from a Christian and Islamic theological perspective. In a second section, they deal with the educational and social challenges of religious education in the tension arising between secularity, neutrality and pluralism in Central and Western Europe. The third section deals with religious pluralism, interreligious dialogue and education in Eastern Europe.

Two volumes have already been published in the series “Studies on Islamic theology and religious education”. The first one was edited by Yasar Sarıkaya and Adem Aygün (cf. Sarıkaya and Aygün 2016). This book deals with educational processes from a historical perspective, the question of forming competences in Islamic Religious Education, empirical research in the field of education and the handling of challenges arising in the process of globalisation. The second volume was edited by Yaşar Sarıkaya and Franz-Josef Bäumer. The book, with the title “Starting to new shores – tasks, problems and profiles of an Islamic religious education in a European context” deals with the genesis and establishment of Islamic religious education as a university subject in Germany. The focus is on theological and anthropological foundations of religious learning, models and experiences of Islamic education from an international perspective, gender-sensitive Religious Education, and on practical dimensions of Islamic Religious Education (cf. Sarıkaya and Bäumer 2017).

b. Historical research on religious education

Since Muslims in Germany cannot yet look back to a longer history of religious education, studying the development of educational and religious conceptions dating back to the Middle Ages, especially in the centers of the Islamic world, is indispensable to question one's own history of ideas in an academic form and to find answers to today's challenges.

If one considers not only Germany, but also the whole world, numerous works can be mentioned; however, distinctions need to be made:

The work of Muslim historians, (educational) philosophers, and educational researchers on the history of pedagogy and philosophy of education in classical Islam, include such works as that of A.L. Tibawi on "Islamic Education: Its Traditions and Modernization into Arab National Systems" (cf. Tibawi 1972), Muhammad Naquib Syed Al-Atta's work on "Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education" (cf. Al-Attas 1979) and "The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education" (cf. Al-Attas 1997), Osama Abi-Mershed's work on "Trajectories of Education in the Arab World: Legacies and Challenges" (cf. Abi-Mershed 2011), Abdassamad Clarke's, Afsar Abia Siddiqui's and Amjad M. Hassain's texts on "A Social History of Education in the Muslim World: From the Prophetic Era to Ottoman Times" (cf. Clarke, Siddiqui and Hassain 2013), Mujadad Zaman's, and Nadeem Memon's discussions on "Philosophies of Islamic Education: Historical Perspectives and Emerging Discourses" (cf. Zaman and Memon 2016), and others.

Works by non-Muslim Islamic scholars and historians on the history of pedagogy in classical Islam include such works as that of Sebastian Günther. Of his numerous publications only some are mentioned here: "Advice for Teachers: The 9th Century Muslim Scholars Ibn Sahnun and al-Jahiz on Pedagogy and Didactics" (cf. Günther 2005) and "Pedagogical Advice of Classical Muslim Thinkers" (cf. Günther 2013, also see Günther 2015, 2016b, 2012, 2010, 2006, etc.); Bradley J. Cook's book on "Classical Foundations of Islamic Educational Thought" (cf. Cook 2011); Claude Gilliot's text about "Education and Learning in the Early Islamic World" (cf. Gilliot 2012) and others.

Works of predominantly non-Muslim Islamic scholars, historians, sociologists or religious educators who have accompanied the development of Islamic religious education in Germany. They are briefly explained in terms of their content, since they are formative for the historical development in Germany:

- In 2005, Michael Kiefer carried out an empirical study on the subject of "teaching about Islam" (from an external perspective) in North Rhine-Westphalia. In his book about context, history, progress, and acceptance of the school experiment, he includes the relationship between religion and state. From the legal framework and the different types of religious education in the federal states in Germany, he goes on to a very detailed presentation of "Islamic Instruction" as an independent

teaching subject in North Rhine-Westphalia. In this context, he presents the history, the framework, objectives, organisation, various attitudes towards the school subject (for example of the Churches), teachers, curricula, the course of studies at the University of Munster and acceptance by the parents (cf. Kiefer 2005).

- Christine Langefeld’s anthology is also to be read as a contribution to the status and position of Islamic Religious Education in Germany. It is also about legal prerequisites in a secular state and in this context, the question of religious communities, the formation of Islamic religious communities at the state level as well as the school pilot project in Lower Saxony and the, at that time, newly established master study program “Islamic religious education” at the University of Osnabruck (cf. Langenfeld 2005).
- Wolfgang Gibowskis and Peter Graf’s anthology “Islamic Religious Education – establishment of a new subject” provides information on the development of Islamic religious education as a discipline and Islamic Religious Education in schools in Lower Saxony. They show the beginnings of dealing with the legal right of Muslims in Germany to a confession-oriented Islamic Religious Education. After educational and cultural policy discussion, the school pilot project Islamic Religious Education and its way to becoming a proper school subject is described. Finally, the development of “Islamic religious education” at the University of Osnabruck is presented, which Peter Graf substantially supported (see Gibowski and Graf 2007).
- Wolfgang Bock’s anthology “Islamic Religious Education: legal questions, country reports, backgrounds” deals extensively with the development of Islamic Religious Education in the federal states Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, Hessen, Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia. Here, following the two publications mentioned above, it becomes clear how the introduction of Islamic Religious Education to other German states has been expanded (cf. Bock 2006).
- Michael Kiefer et al. deal in their anthology from 2008 with the current state, the development, the practice and perspectives of the since established Islamic Religious Education in North Rhine-Westphalia. Legal and subject specific questions accompany the discussion because Muslim communities still do not constitute a public corporation (cf. Kiefer, Gottwald and Ucar 2008).
- In 2008, Martin Engelbrecht compiled an expert opinion on behalf of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. From the view of the sociology of religion, he analysed the tension between the diversity of Muslim identities in Germany and their administration or public representation by Muslim associations regarding Religious Education. In discussing his results, he makes connections between the empirically recorded pluralisation of Muslim identity constructions, the migration situation, the integration problem, and the religiosity (especially) of Turkish Muslims, which is mirrored by statistics. Finally, he deals with the Bavarian model of Islamic Religious Education (“Erlanger model”) by showing teacher training, Religious Education, parents, mosques and organisations as potential spaces of discourse (cf. Engelbrecht 2008).

- The two authors, Irka-Christin Mohr and Michael Kiefer, deal with Islamic Religious Education in Germany from the perspective of Islamic studies in a Western academic mold and present the results of their three-year research project. They derive the subject scope of Islamic Religious Education from empirical research results on teaching in four federal states, but also from the analysis of curricula and include them in the academic discussion. Particularly worthy of mention is the question of the discussion and justification of religious maturity as an educational goal of Islamic Religious Education. In this context, Klaus Gebauer deals with the need for interpretation of the Basic Law regarding Islamic Religious Education in this book (cf. Mohr and Kiefer 2009).

Works of solicitors and lawyers who analyse religion in connection with German constitutional law, for example, the book “Islamic education: teaching about religion, denominational education, or what else?” by Martin Stock et al. (cf. Stock et al. 2003) or the two volumes “Handbook of Christianity and Islam in Germany: Principles, Experiences and Perspectives of Living Together” by Mathias Rohe et al. (see Rohe et al. 2016), and others.

Works of Muslim religious educators dealing with the development of the reflection of education in Islam from a historical perspective in general and in particular with the German federal situation are broadly outlined here, since they are important for the German federal situation:

- Mizrap Polat and Cemal Tosun, in their anthology “Islamic theology and religious education: Islamic Education as an upbringing to the development of the self”, deal with provisional location analyses of Islamic theology and religious education. The authors address both religious education in classical Islam as well as building a bridge to a timely and local development of Islamic Religious Education in Germany, accompanied and enriched by the dialogue with Christian religious education (cf. Polat and Tosun 2010).
- In his book “Islamic theology and religious education in Europe”, Ali Özgür Özdil provides a comprehensive overview of the developmental state of Islamic studies in Europe. Starting with the history of Islamic theology as well as the Islamic schools of jurisprudence, he analyses the developmental state in 13 different countries and 31 institutions in Europe and the Islamic world, discussing conceptual approaches at German universities in detail (cf. Özdil 2011).
- Kinan Darwisch deals with the state of research in the field of Islamic Religious Education in schools. He traces the presence of Muslims since the time of the first guest workers in the 1960s, as well as the organisational structure of associations as a legal challenge for the state regarding Article 7(3) Basic Law. In a comparative presentation, he examines the provisional forms of Islamic Religious Education in different federal states. He mentions the educational policy objectives, the content-related and curriculum design, the pedagogical conceptions, the teacher training and the participation of the Muslims. The Muslim umbrella associations and the Shura in Lower Saxony were questioned about their accept-

ance, their satisfaction, their involvement, their say in and their claims regarding the provisional introduction of Islamic Religious Education. The positions of the Muslim umbrella associations are outlined in detail to provide suggestions for improvements (cf. Darwisch 2013).

- Particularly noteworthy are the yearbooks for Islamic theology and religious education, edited by Mouhanad Khorchide and Milad Karimi. In these yearbooks, Muslim theologians and religious educators, inter alia, deal with classical Muslim scholars and re-read them, for example “Ibn Ḥaldūn as a precursor of empirical research” (cf. Khorchide and Karimi 2015).
- A recent work in this area is that of Jörg Imran Schröter. He has dealt with the introduction of Islamic Religious Education in public schools in Baden-Württemberg. Another topic is the establishment of pilot projects for Islamic Religious Education in Germany, whose framework he discusses. In particular, he examines the pilot project of Islamic Religious Education in Baden-Württemberg. Finally, he discusses religious-educational questions arising from this topic (cf. Schröter 2015).

c. Empirical research on religious education

Empirical studies have been of great importance in Protestant and Catholic religious education since the “empirical turn” in the 1960s. Empirical research on religious education has the goal of exploring the religiously plural lifeworld. Its results unite theology and experience in conversation. In the school context, empirical results serve, among other things, to show processes of the acquisition and understanding of basic beliefs by children and adolescents. Accordingly, religious education and acquisition processes can be didactically reflected and followed. In addition to formal education processes in formal and non-formal settings, informal education processes are also investigated in formal and non-formal settings (overview of the educational modalities see BMFSFJ 2005, 97).

Other empirical fields of research are, for example, Religious Education and its effectiveness; Religious Education Teachers, their subjective theories, their orientations, their professional satisfaction, etc.; interreligious learning processes in different settings from nursery school to adult education; analysis of religious books; religious socialisation processes in formal and non-formal settings; and much more.

Here, various research disciplines can also be differentiated: on the one hand, research projects from a sociological-descriptive perspective, on the other hand, research projects from a decidedly (Islamic-)religious education perspective. What they have in common are the methods of empirical social research.

Works from a sociological and descriptive perspective refer to the lifeworld, religiosity and identity of Muslim youths and young adults. Some of the most important works are briefly presented here:

- Yasemin Karakaşoğlu explored in a qualitative-empirical study the orientations of Turkish students of education in Germany with the title “Muslim religiosity and understanding of education”. She studied the connections between religious values and normative concepts and the individual educational ideals of the participants. Her study gives an insight into the diversity of religious orientations of the students and shows that their religiosity does not contradict modern and contemporary educational concepts (cf. Karakaşoğlu-Aydın 2000).
- In 2001, Nikola Tietze explored Muslim identities in a qualitative empirical study. Due to its internationally comparative design, the study is presented below under e) (cf. Tietze 2001).
- Michael Tressat also explored Muslim forms of religiosity in a qualitative-empirical study, which is also presented below under e) for the same reasons (cf. Tressat 2011).

From an (Islamic) religious educational perspective, only a few empirical studies can be listed:

- Concerning children, the author of this review explored the relationship of Muslim children to God. In this work, the qualitative empirical reconstructions show, that Muslim children at the age of about ten years already have a wide spectrum of different divine relations, ranging from a very personal relationship with God to a strong relation to the tradition or even a missing relation to both positions. The work gives indications of how young Muslims can be prepared for a life in a religiously plural society in which the individual relationship to God and the reflexivity of one’s own religion are an essential requirement for the prevention of radicalisation and moral rigidity (cf. Ulfat 2017).
- From the Graduate Program Islamic Theology, Melahat Kisi deals with the topic “Gender equality in Islamic Religious Education”. In her doctoral thesis, she empirically explored on the one hand the question of how and which gender roles are constructed by Religious Education and secondly, which approaches are necessary for a gender-oriented Islamic Religious Education. Thereby, she analyses gender knowledge both in teaching materials and curricula as well as from Religious Education teachers. The work is expected to be completed in 2018 (<http://www.gkit.de/en/postgraduates/melahat-kisi/>).
- There are also empirical comparative studies between Christian and Muslim children. In her qualitative empirical study, Ilse Flöter explored the role of God in the everyday life of ten-year-old children. She analysed both, the conceptions of God and the divine relations of Catholic, Protestant, non-denominational and Muslim children. The study shows how diverse the religious world of children is in the religiously plural present (cf. Flöter 2006). A “personal, private and imaginative relationship with God” was found among Protestant and Catholic children, but not among Muslim children (ibid., 372).
- Zita Bertenrath carried out a qualitative study on the conceptions and images of God among Muslim and Protestant pupils in grades 8 to 12. The aim was

to find out to what extent the pupils include or absorb ideas from the other's tradition. Her analysis of pupil essays made clear that Christian elements occasionally and subconsciously appeared in the conceptions of Muslim pupils ("old man with long beard", Bertenrath 2011, 190f.). In the case of Christian pupils, on the other hand, a "searching, questioning, and critically-thinking religiosity" often appeared (ibid., 196).

- Another comparative study is that of Halise Kader Zengin. She carried out a study on the development of the concept of God among Muslim children aged 7–12 years in Bavaria. She researched Muslim children, who took part in Religious Education at a primary school and a Gymnasium (high school). She compared her results with surveys of Muslim children in Turkey and the results of a study on Christian children carried out by John Hull (cf. Zengin 2010).
- The empirical work of Adem Aygün with the title "Religious socialisation and development of Muslim adolescents in Germany and in Turkey" is presented in more detail below under e) (cf. Aygün 2013).

Aside from qualitative research, there is still a need for representative quantitative research in the field of Muslim children and adolescents in Germany, which up to now has been a largely unexplored field, apart from general children and adolescents studies such as Shell Youth studies (cf. Shell Germany 2015 cf. also 2006 and 2010) or the World Vision children studies (cf. World Vision Deutschland 2010, cf. also 2007 and 2013).

d. Evaluative Research

Evaluative research questions the quality and effectiveness of Religious Education. The lesson is scientifically evaluated based on several scientific quality criteria, both as a subject in general and as a subject for Religious Education specifically. Especially for a young subject like Islamic Religious Education, scientific monitoring and evaluation is of crucial importance for conceptual development, implementation and for its further development.

Among other things, there is a need for research as to what extent Islamic Religious Education satisfies the demands of religious education in general and to what extent it contributes to integration. Initially, it is about how curricula are implemented in the classroom, how the subject is integrated into schools, and how the subject is accepted by parents, teachers and pupils. Furthermore, the focus is on the ability of children to change perspectives and their flexibility in thinking. At the same time, attention is focused on the beliefs and values of the pupils regarding inter-religious points of view. Of course, the pedagogical and theological professionalism of teachers is also of vital importance.

Here, three scientific evaluations of Islamic Religious Education can be mentioned, which have been carried out by the federal states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Lower Saxony.

The scientific monitoring of Islamic Religious Education in *North Rhine-Westphalia* is carried out by the Center for Turkic Studies and Integration Research at the University of Duisburg-Essen in the period from 2014 to 2018. So far, an interim report on initial results is available. The scientific monitoring has the aim of examining and evaluating Islamic Religious Education, to identify needs and discrepancies as well as to provide suggestions for change. The examination is based on the following dimensions: the theological, the pedagogic-psychological and the integration policy dimension. In addition, the acceptance of Religious Education by pupils, parents, religious teachers and the scientific advisory council was determined (cf. Uslucan 2015, 5–6).

Standardised questionnaires as well as structured and standardised interviews were chosen as measuring instruments. Pupils from 4–5 elementary schools and 4–5 secondary schools, their parents and teachers were interviewed. So far 56 pupils from the primary schools and 211 pupils from the secondary schools have taken part in the survey.

Results regarding the primary school pupils:

According to the study, the pupils are largely satisfied with the teaching climate. However, there were “statements about discipline problems in the classroom [...] from more than half of the pupils” (ibid., 22).

Concerning the teaching and learning contents of Islamic Religious Education, the pupils reported: “Knowledge about the Prophet Mohammed was claimed by 98.3% of the interviewees, 98.2% about the Islamic festivals and 94.7% about Allah. In contrast, knowledge of the Islamic family was claimed by 82.1% and of other religions 71.4% of the pupils” (ibid., 25). “Half of the primary school pupils desire more knowledge about other religions (50.9%). In addition, for 38.2% of the interviewees other religions are as important as the Islamic religion” (ibid., 27).

Results regarding the pupils of the secondary schools:

In the results of the pupils’ survey at secondary schools, it is noticeable that both girls and boys are more likely to get their information about Islam from the mosque rather than from the school: “The pupils are most interested in learning about Islam in the mosque (girls: 40.0%, boys: 43.4%). This is followed by school (girls: 35.8%, boys: 31.0%) and at home (girls: 24.2%, boys: 22.1%)” (ibid., 33). Nevertheless, almost all pupils value Islamic Religious Education and the majority feel comfortable with the subject itself and with learning it at school (cf. ibid., 34).

Results about the teaching and learning contents: “Knowledge that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah was stated by 97.6% of the interviewees, that the Koran is Allah’s Word, 96.7%, about the life of the Prophet Mohammed 94.8%, and about Moses and Jesus as Allah’s Prophets 94.6%. 49.3% of the pupils learned a prayer of

invocation, and 59.5% can recite the central prayer Sura Fatiha¹. Knowledge about the festivals of other religions acquired 51.4%” (ibid., 35).

Up to 69.4% of these pupils also expressed the wish to acquire “more knowledge about other religions” (ibid., 38).

Items which express religious beliefs, like “Allah is the only God”, “It’s good to help the poor”, “It’s important to be good to the parents”, “Fasting in Ramadan is important”, “Prayer is important to me”, “I feel good when I pray”, “Islam is the true religion”, “Want to understand Koran verse”, “Important to Travel to Mecca”, obviously gained “very high approval” (ibid., 39).

According to the study, the teaching climate and the care taken by teachers were also positively evaluated: “Most of the answers were given to the statements ‘If we have questions for our teachers, then they have time for us’ (91.4%) and ‘Our teacher helps every pupil who has difficulties with his work’ (88.9%)” (ibid., 40).

In total, the parents positively evaluate the professional and social skills of the teachers, the teaching climate, the motivation and competence acquisition of the pupils: “95.3% of the interviewees are satisfied with the content of Islamic Religious Education, 92.7% with Islamic Religious Education, 90.5% with the knowledge and skills of the teacher and 86.2% with the knowledge growth of the pupils. Most of the interviewees are satisfied with the performance requirements (86.1%) and the engagement of the teacher (89.9%)” (ibid., 47–48).

Teachers evaluated their lessons as follows: “Teachers evaluate the present situation (very satisfied: 100%) as well as the content and curriculum guidelines (very satisfied: 85.7%) of Islamic Religious Education mainly positively. Most teachers are also satisfied with the conceptual freedom in Islamic Religious Education. On the other hand, teachers are mostly not satisfied (42.9%) or less than satisfied (42.9%) with the teaching and learning materials” (ibid., P. 58).

In the case of teachers, it should be mentioned that the following items did not receive high approval: ““The pupils consider participation in the IRU [Islamic Religious Education] as a sign of equality” (true: 28.6%, not true: 14.3%), “Through the introduction of the IRU [Islamic Religious Education] in the German language, the pupils experience Islam as a religion which is a part of German society” (true: 28.6%, not true: 14.3%) and “teachers of other subjects accept the IRU” (true: 28.6%; not really true: 14.3%)” (ibid., 63).

According to the head of the study, Haci-Halil Uslucan, one can recognise a high level of satisfaction and high acceptance of Islamic Religious Education so far. The study concludes that the development of Islamic Religious Education up to now can be seen as positive in terms of integration policy (see Uslucan 2015).

The evaluation of the pilot project Islamic education in *Bavaria* was carried out in 2014. It was aimed at, among other things, the “organisation of the lessons”, the “integration of the children into school”, the “acceptance of the pilot project by the

1 The first sura in the Holy Quran that is important for the ritual prayer.

parents”, and “proven experience in school life” (Holzberger 2014, 10). The survey was carried out as a basis for the design and continuation of the pilot project. Principals, teachers, pupils, as well as their parents were questioned by various questionnaires. 38 primary school pupils plus 15 parents, 30 general school pupils plus 29 parents, 48 secondary pupils plus 40 parents and 49 teachers and parent representatives were interviewed.

The study emphasises that the complexity of the organisation of teaching lessons mainly arises from the fact, that teachers work in several schools and are therefore not always available. However, the success of the organisation shows “the special commitment of all persons involved at the model schools” (cf. *ibid.*, 13).

According to the study, the acceptance by the parents was particularly high regarding the teaching of the foundations of Islam. “90% of the statements were related to the content of Islamic education: the most common responses were that the basic principles of Islam are taught or that the children learn prayers. But a lot of further aspects were addressed. Approximately 14% said that they like the lessons, the lesson structure, that the children’s questions are answered. And 13% of the parents emphasised that the teachers are particularly good. 11% of parents mention that German as the teaching language is particularly positive” (*ibid.*, 22). A quarter of the parents also mentioned negative aspects: “five of them, however, refer to the behavior of the classmates. Five parents, all Turks, disagree with the German teaching language; they would like the Religious Education to be in Turkish. Three statements refer to the lack of text books” (cf. *ibid.*). The parents’ suggestions for improvement were, among other things, the desire for more content, better teaching methods, and the expansion of Islamic Religious Education (cf. *ibid.*, 24). In summary, the parents “place a high value” on Religious Education (cf. *ibid.*, 25). They also expressed their “fear that fundamentalist teachers could be used, and the desire to prevent this through controls.” In addition, concerns were expressed about the fact that the lesson is “not serious enough” (e. g. no grades, no homework) (*ibid.*).

Principals, class teachers of the children, teachers of religion and teachers of ethics as well as parents’ representatives were also asked. According to the study, the subject is generally evaluated as very positive: “According to this, principals give the subject the best grade ‘1’. The teachers for Religious Education/Ethics/Islamic Education are ranked second with a mean of 1.33, followed by the class teachers. The ‘worst performance’ ranking the subject receives is from the parents’ representatives (mean: 1.82), whereby the latter also evaluate the subject with ‘rather good’, with a slight tendency to ‘very good’” (*ibid.*, 27). The positive evaluation was explained in the sense “that there is the possibility for Muslims to receive education in their religion, or rather that a profound knowledge transfer takes place. It is also mentioned that the influence of fundamentalists is reduced and that there are opportunities for children outside the family and/or mosque to ask questions. It is also of importance that through Religious Education, tolerance is promoted (17%), that the identity of the children is strengthened (11%), and that Islam – alongside other religions – becomes normal in schools (15%)” (cf., 29).

Regarding the “integrative aim” of the subject, principals and Religious Education teachers rate this as “very positive”, while class teachers and parents evaluate it as “more positive”. Positive aspects of the subject were named: “Curriculum or curriculum contents (37%), intercultural religious dialogue (27%), teaching in German language (22%), further education for all children of Muslim faith (12%) as well as the high teachers’ qualifications (22%). Teachers also have a positive effect on the staff of the school, make important dialogue possible, and help with advice and support, both in questions of content and in conflicts” (ibid., 31). Negative aspects “refer to organisational questions for lessons: mixed age groups as well as too large classes. Five times fear was expressed that the teaching of Islam could support a tendency toward the isolation of Muslims” (ibid., 32). As suggestions for improvement, the improvement of pedagogical qualifications of teachers was named, the provision of teaching materials and the improvement of the organisational framework (cf. ibid., 34).

“In sum, it can be said that Islamic education at the model schools is very well received. [...] The essential aims of the Religious Education will be achieved – as far as this could be determined after the preliminary test phase” (Ibid., 38).

The scientific monitoring of the pilot project Islamic Religious Education in *Lower Saxony* was carried out from 2005–2008. Since there is no report on this monitoring readily available, the reporting of the findings is low. They are summarised here from the publications of the study leader Haci-Halil Uslucan. Surveys were made in three waves. 214 pupils from 10 elementary schools participated in the first wave, 216 pupils in the second and 235 pupils in the third. 85% of the pupils attended the third and fourth grades.

Within the framework of the survey, attempts were made to collect data about the “acculturation attitudes” of pupils. The results were interpreted as an indication of how “open for integration” the pupils and their families are (Uslucan 2007, 67). The study has shown that “pupils in Islamic Religious Education do not have in any way anti-integrative tendencies, but they primarily rather favor the acculturation strategy of integration. Fears that particularly families with separation attitudes and their children might be interested in an Islamic Religious Education seem to be largely unfounded” (ibid., 68). However, it was not possible to reconstruct “whether the attendance of Islamic Religious Education alone leads to better integration” (ibid., 69).

Uslucan explains that “the pupils primarily show ties to their own family tradition as well as ties to Germans. What pupils, however, in any case reject, is a clear assimilation attitude, that means, abandoning their own cultural ties and a complete identification with the culture of the majority. But also, the attitude of marginalisation, that means a skeptical attitude towards one’s own and the majority culture at the same time is clearly rejected” (Uslucan 2006, 64).

Regarding the assessment of the learning climate, the study shows that “the pupils generally experience their Religious Education teacher as caring and understanding;

at most around 10% of the pupils show themselves dissatisfied with the teachers. Furthermore, the results show that about two-thirds of the pupils are quite satisfied with the lessons; at most a small minority of 10 to 15% express their discomfort regarding the learning process” (ibid., 65).

Pupils stated from their subjective perspective that Religious Education has led to a great increase in their knowledge: “Almost 90% (‘very much’ and ‘a bit’ taken together) said they had been taught about the relevant aspects of Islam (such as knowledge about the Prophet Mohammed, Islamic history, the Koran, etc.). Only for about 10% of the pupils questioned did the ‘Islamic Religious Education’ rarely or not at all lead to an increase of knowledge” (ibid., 65–66).

The importance of other religions and knowledge about other religions was also evaluated: “Regarding the question of whether other religions are as important as Islam, 61% of the pupils gave a clear favorable attitude, 18% had a more restricted attitude and about 20%, however, rejected this or expressed that other religions were not as important to them as Islam. About a third clearly favored the question of whether they wanted more knowledge about other religions. One third said they sometimes desire more knowledge about other religions. Nearly 12%, however, rejected the need for more knowledge; about 21% explicitly did not desire any knowledge about other religions” (ibid., 66).

The survey of the parents showed that parents’ satisfaction is particularly high regarding how the Religious Education teachers handled and motivated the children. The parents’ criticism included a need for more content, more hours for Islamic Religious Education, more depths of the topics, homework, more teacher qualifications, more dialogue, etc. (Uslucan 2011, 162–163). Uslucan concludes that parents who want more factual knowledge and discipline need to know that, in addition to these factors, Islamic Religious Education is also about “the ability to change perspectives, empathy, but also communication skills and social competences” (ibid., 164). According to the parents’ demand for Religious Education in the Turkish language, it should be argued, that through Religious Education in the German language an “increase of language skills in German” should be encouraged and “the ability to communicate with others on questions of their own religious identity by using a vocabulary which is also understandable to German pupils” (ibid., 165).

According to the study, positive results remained stable in the second wave: “In the second survey, due to the inclusion of a control group (pupils participating in Protestant or Catholic Religious Education as well as those who did not explicitly participate in Islamic Religious Education) it was possible to determine how far Muslim pupils differ in their attitude to religion from Christian or non-denominational pupils. The results showed that Muslim pupils, in addition to the knowledge they acquired in Islam, also desire knowledge about other religions and hardly differ from non-Muslim pupils” (ibid., 164).

In sum, Uslucan concludes that “in the course of Islamic Religious Education, a reduction of separatist tendencies and a decrease of marginalisation can be observed, which in turn should be valued as a strengthening of the cultural identity of pupils.

Therefore, this data can also be interpreted as an indication of an integrative effect of Islamic Religious Education” (Uslucan 2012, 329).

In *Baden-Wuerttemberg*, such a broadly-based study has not yet taken place. From 2006 to 2010, the pilot project “Islamic Religious Education in Baden-Wuerttemberg” was accompanied and evaluated at 12 selected locations. The results are included in the work of Jörg Imran Schröter which was presented in b) above. Since the results are based on only 12 selected schools, which do not include the Gymnasium (high school) and thus do not fulfill the conditions for a broad evaluation, the Center for Islamic Theology at the University of Tübingen is actively engaged in the scientific monitoring and evaluation of the subject at all types of schools in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

e. International comparative research

Only a relatively small amount of international comparative research exists. In the age of globalisation, however, there is an increasing need for this.

In Germany, there is already a number of sociological, primarily qualitatively oriented studies that internationally investigate forms and values of Muslim religiosity.

In her empirical study, Nikola Tietze has taken young Muslim men and the forms of their religiosity into consideration. In her comparative study between the situation in Germany and France, she shows an individualised identification of the young men with Islam, which she differentiated in four different forms of Muslim religiosity: “Islam as an outer social body”, “Islam as a community to enhance remembering and belonging to the group”, “Islam as an ethical code of conduct” and “Islam as a part of social identity” (cf. Tietze 2001).

Another work that focuses on the meaning of Muslim religiosity for young migrants and makes a comparison between Germany and France is the empirical study of Michael Tressat. He reconstructs the biographical relevance of Muslim religiosity, from which he formulates three “patterns of meaning” of Muslim religiosity in adolescence: a “creative-reflexive”, a “pragmatic-functional” and a “static-ambivalent meaning pattern”. They manifest themselves as an expression of an increasingly individualising Islam, which develops its own forms, which in turn have functional meaning. Tressat evaluates Muslim religiosity as a “resource in adolescence” shaping young people’s identity (cf. Tressat 2011).

Adem Aygün has compared religious socialisation and development of Muslim youth in Germany and Turkey. Using the “Faith Development Interviews” according to Fowler, he investigates the religious development of the young people (cf. Aygün 2013). He collected data about religious conceptions of 70 Turkish-Muslim adolescents between the ages of 15 and 25 from various school types in Turkey and Germany. Their statements were assigned to the six levels of faith according to Fowler. Aygün notes that “the conceptions of God from the Turkish youths show greater diversity compared to their German-Turkish peers” (ibid., 190). According

to Aygün, the conceptions of the young people remain “conventional and institutional”. God is for them an “authority that dictates everything to humanity”, and he has a “punishing and rewarding image” (ibid.).

Further international comparative contributions can be found in the book “Development of modern Islamic religious education in Turkey in the 20th century” (cf. Ucar and Sarıkaya 2009). The focal point of the discussion is the challenge to provide pedagogical, curricular, methodological and didactic suggestions based on the experience of Turkey on contents, topics, aims and methods of Islamic Religious Education in Germany.

Apart from the above-mentioned works, which comparatively analyse Muslim religiosity, there are a few studies and research projects that consider religious heterogeneity in Europe, including, of course, Muslims. For example, the European research project REDCo (Religion in Education. A Contribution to Dialogue or a Factor of Conflict in transforming Societies of European Countries), which analyses the attitudes of young people in Europe regarding religious heterogeneity and Religious Education (cf. White 2007).

4. Conclusion

Islamic religious education has already taken its first steps at a scientific level in the German scientific landscape and initial important work has been completed.

This short overview shows how a development is emerging in Islamic religious education towards religion-related, empirical research, which is compatible with educational sciences and social sciences. This, however, must continue to prove itself in this respect.

It becomes clear that this empirical-religious education research is of crucial relevance in the field of Islamic religious education. It is through this research, that the ways Muslims want to lead and organise their individual lives are moving more and more into focus.

Not least for this reason, there is still a great need for research in many areas of religious education, particularly in the field of informal education processes in non-formal settings. Does religious learning take place in youth cultures and scenes? How can self-socialisation of young people in youth cultures or in extracurricular and non-institutional groups be described? How can (religious) media socialisation be described? Which “glocal” (cf. Robertson 1998) learning processes take place among Muslim children and adolescents? What forms of communication do Muslim youths develop to make religious issues a subject of discussion? Many more questions could be added.

As can be seen from the overview, Islamic-religious education research, in a historical dimension, is still at an early stage. There is a great and urgent need for further research, both qualitative and quantitative.

It is gratifying that the emergence and development of Islamic Religious Education in Germany has been investigated by numerous sociological studies that provide empirical data which will be of particular value for the further elaboration and development of Islamic Religious Education in the future. Moreover, the work and articles of Christian religious education pedagogues, who have supported and even partially initiated this development and who are always a source of inspiration, will remain indispensable in shaping the subject for a long time. What is missing, are works of Muslim religious educators on the history of pedagogy and the philosophy of education in classical Islam, which look at the issue from a decidedly religious pedagogical point of view and make the findings fruitful. Presently in this field, Islamic religious education makes use of literature which scientists from other branches of science have produced in general about education in a historical dimension.

Evaluative research also requires a larger scope because Islamic Religious Education as a relatively new subject, is facing the challenge of permanently validating the quality of lessons, the curricula, the suitability of teaching materials, teacher qualifications, the effects on abilities, skills, beliefs and values of the pupils and their integration, as well as other effects of teaching. This will ensure a contribution to education and that the challenges Muslims experience living in Germany are faced. Continuously monitoring this process and collecting data is an important contribution to quality assurance.

Finally, there is also a need for further international comparative research because it has the potential to make the cultural code of religion and religiosity visible. Sociological studies on the forms of religiosity of Muslim children, adolescents and young adults show that the religiosity of young migrants and post-migrants also exists at the level of culturality which is reflected in cultural-specific codings, conventions and national identity constructions. Cultural coding, for example, is based on premises about what a “good Muslim” does and does not do. This shows a moral ethical correctness paradigm that is not based on theological tradition, but on the culturalistic-nationalistic consensus of certain groups. Research in this field is particularly important for understanding the difference between Islamic theology and cultural coding. The variable of migration or post-migration plays an essential role for international comparative research because migration in all these areas of tension causes massive change and once again fundamentally influences the cultural coding of religiosity. Such phenomena can generate self-segregation in hermetic worlds with centering such as “we are Muslims, the others are not.” This is linked to an anthropology that is not theological but is characterised by traditional national and ethnic human images.

In Germany, findings in literature can be used to diagnose the gradual development of an Islamic Religious Education which is based on an empirical view of the reality of life for Muslim children, adolescents and also their parents as well as their social and (religious) organisational environment. This religious education is simultaneously authentic, reflected and has its roots in the diversity of its religious tradition. The tasks and challenges faced are enormous, the chances equally so.

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