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# The Academy of World Religions at the University of Hamburg

Dr. Anna Körs & Dr. Florian Lützen

Research Infrastructure on Religious Studies (ReIReS)

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## Outline

1. German and Hamburg context
2. Development of the Academy of World Religions at the University of Hamburg
3. Current fields of work: teaching, research and transfer
4. Islamic Theology in Germany and Hamburg

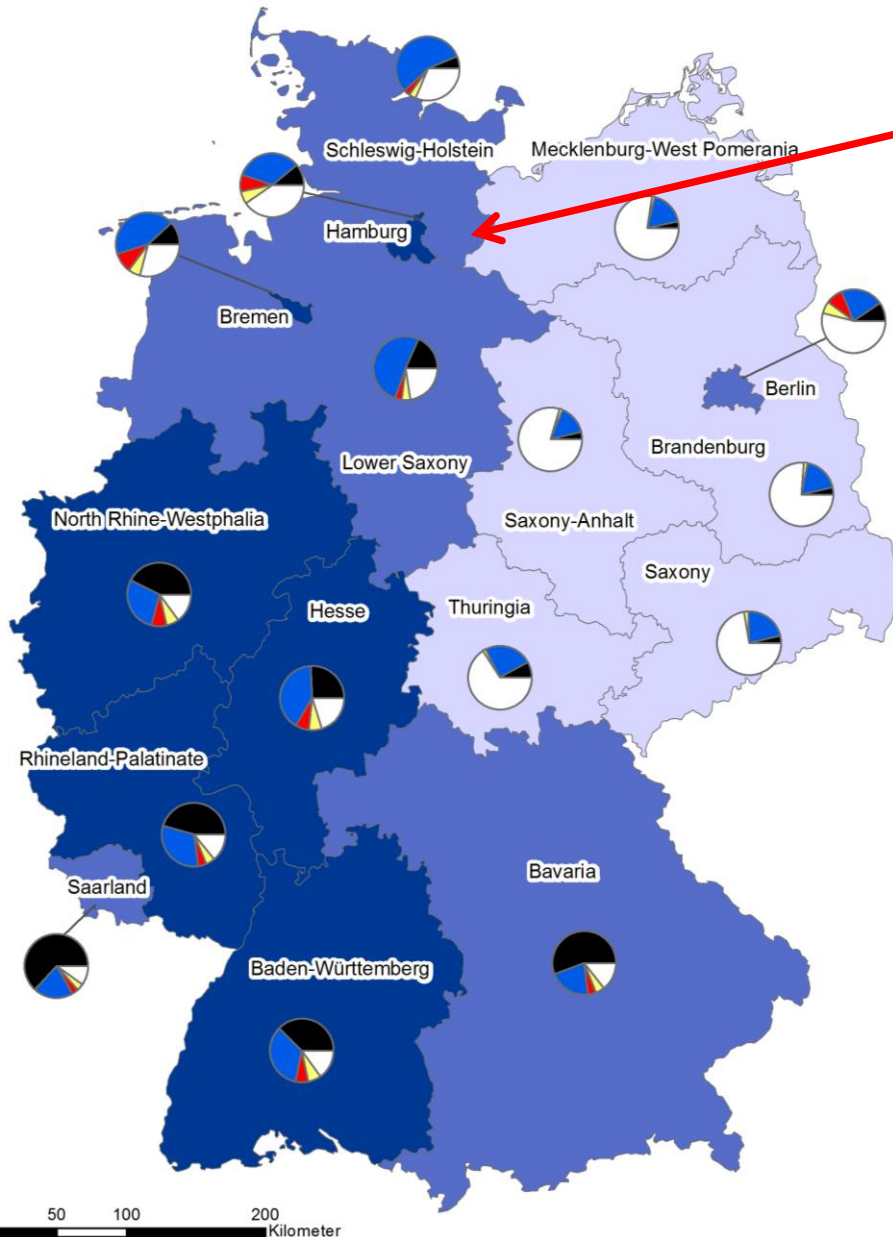


## 1. German and Hamburg context

Germany...

- ranks among the 15 percent of the countries with a **“high religious diversity”** (Pew Research Center, 2014, 15)
  - is characterized by a system of **“positive neutrality”** with diverse co-operations between state and organized religion; emerged in co-evolution with the **two mainline Christian churches**
  - functions as federal system with large parts of **state-religion relations within the competence of the sixteen federal states** (“Bundesländer”), e.g. religious education at public schools (according to Basic Law Art. 7, 3)
  - did not understand itself as an immigrant country until the 1990s, with the consequence that religious issues were dealt with primarily by the federal states and local authorities
- **sub-national levels** (federal states, regions and cities) play a decisive role when dealing with religious diversity

# City-state of Hamburg: (still) Christian, religiously plural and secular



Religion (ausführlich)	Hamburg
	%
Römisch-katholische Kirche	10,9
Evangelische Kirche	33,9
Evangelische Freikirchen	0,9
Orthodoxe Kirchen	1,7
Jüdische Gemeinden	0,1
Sonstige	3,7
Keiner ö.-r. Religionsgesellschaft zugehörig	48,9

Source: Micro Census 2011

**Estimations:**  
**Muslims app. 10%**  
**Buddhists and Hindus app. 1%**

## Religious diversity in German federal states

- low religious diversity (RDI  $\leq 6$ )
  - moderate religious diversity (RDI  $> 6 \leq 7.5$ )
  - high religious diversity (RDI  $> 7.5$ )
- Share of religious groups in % of German population**
- Roman Catholic
  - Protestant
  - Muslim
  - Other recognized religions
  - Unaffiliated or other non-recognized religions

Source: Körs 2017, 447



## Interreligious infrastructure in Hamburg

- Since the beginning of the 1990s "**Religious Education for All**" at public schools
- 1999 Foundation of the first nationwide Shura (Council of Islamic Communities in Hamburg)
- 1989 Alevi Week in Hamburg as "starting point of the Alevi movement in Germany" (Sökefeld 2008, 24)
- 2000 Foundation of the *Interreligious Forum Hamburg*
- **2010 Academy of World Religions** founded - as an "academic center for research and teaching of interreligious dialogue in Germany" (University President Lenzen)
- **2012 "State treaties" with Muslims and Alevis** - "as a result of interreligious dialogue" (Bishop Kirsten Fehrs) and contribution to the "institutionalization of Islam in Germany" (Mayor Olaf Scholz)
- Since 2015, start of talks on contracts between Buddhist and Hindu religious communities and the Hamburg Senate
- 2012 Conversion of the Capernaum Church into the Al Nour Mosque - as a "meeting place of interreligious dialogue" (Daniel Abdin, Chairman of the Al Nour Mosque) and "lighthouse project of dialogue" (Axel Matyba, Commissioner of the Northern Church for Christian-Islamic Dialogue)

## “Hamburg signs state treaties with Muslims and Alevis”



Mayor Scholz (2nd from the right) and religious representatives: "Historic day for Hamburg and Germany", Spiegel, 2012



## 2. Development of the Academy of World Religions

- Since the end of the 1990s, **cooperation** within the university (interdisciplinary working group) and with Hamburg's religious communities (interreligious expert group)
- 2006 Foundation of the **interdisciplinary "Center for World Religions in Dialogue"** (predecessor institution)
- 2010 **foundation of the Academy of World Religions** at the University of Hamburg
- Since 2011 **Islamic Studies/Islamic Theology** (Florian Lützen)
- Since 2014 **Alevism** (Hüseyin Ağuıçenođlu)
- Since 2015 **Islamic Theology** (Tuđrul Kurt)
- Since 2018 permanent **visiting professorship Buddhism** (Carola Roloff)
- Since 2011: Forum Humanum **visiting professorships** in Jewish, Christian, Hindu, and other studies (Sasha Dehghani, Bahaitum, 2020/21; Micha Brumlik, Judaism, 2021/22)
- From 2021/22: 3 professorships Islamic Theology, 3 professorships Alevism



### 3. Current fields of work: teaching, research and transfer

#### Teaching

- **Teacher training: Islamic religion, Alevi religion,** since WS 2015/16
- **Master's program "Religions, Dialogue and Education",** since WS 2012/13
- **Cooperation project "Materials for interreligious-dialogical learning",** 10 volumes since 2013

#### Research

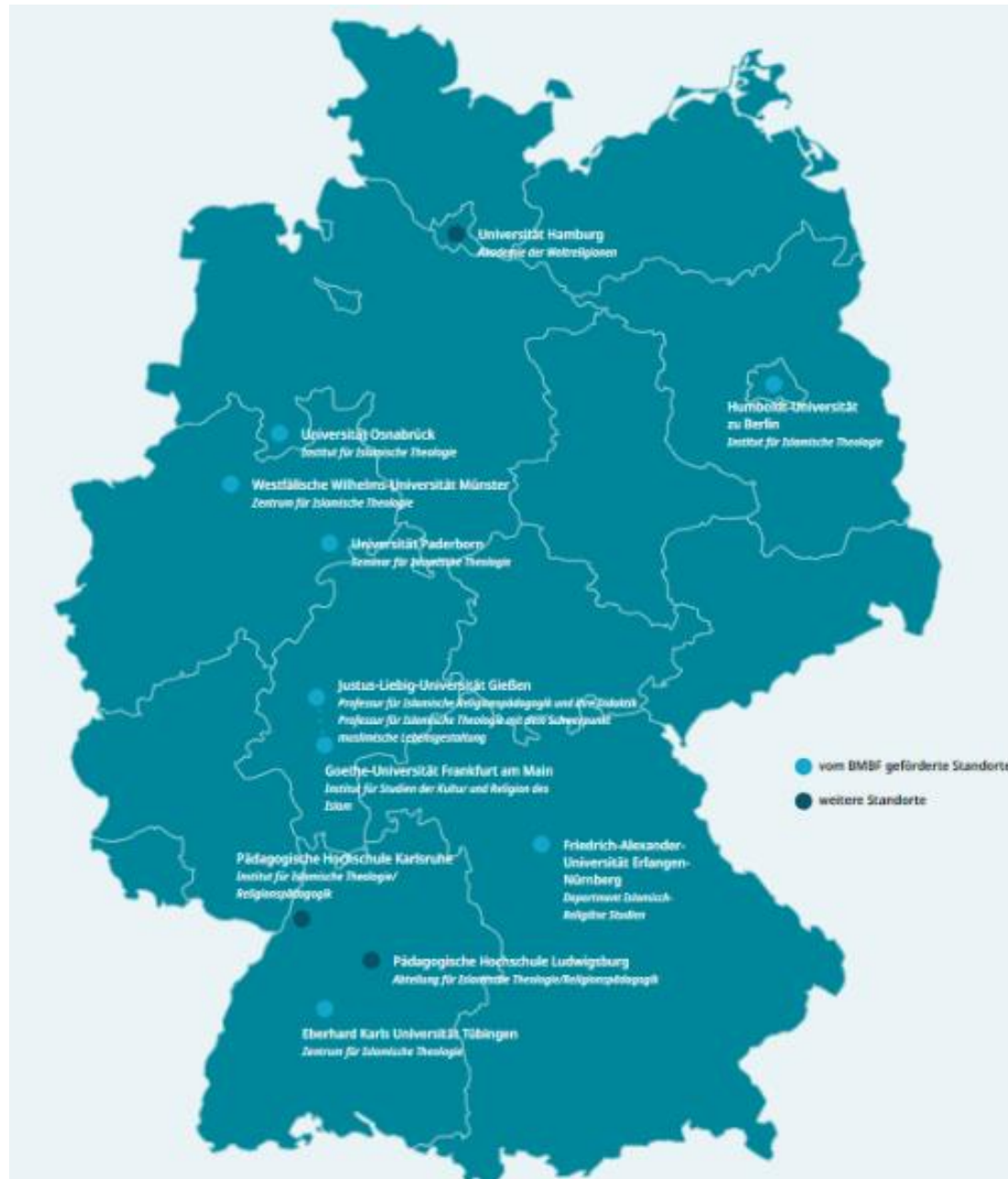
- Research Project "**Religion and Dialogue**", 2013-2018
- Research group "**Digital Quran exegesis**"
- Project "Research Review: **Islamic Religious Instruction** in Germany", 2019-21
- "**Forum Humanum Visiting Professorships**" on various religions/theologies, since 2011

#### Transfer and dialogue

- „Long Night of World Religions“, **cooperation with Thalia Theatre** (since 2010)
- "Art in interreligious dialogue“, **cooperation with Hamburger Kunsthalle** (since 2013)
- „Religions and Dialogue in Hamburg“, **cooperation with city's parliament** (since 2012)
- **Lecture series** (since 2010), 2021: "1700 Years of Jewish Life in Germany"



## 4. Islamic Theology in Germany and Hamburg





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## Publications: Interreligious dialogue

Körs, Anna. 2020. Interreligiöser Dialog: Erfolgsentwicklung oder Übergangsphänomen? In: Heinrich Böll Stiftung (Hrsg.): *Religiöse Vielfalt. Wege zu einer gleichberechtigten Teilhabe*. Band 60 der Schriftenreihe Demokratie. Kuratiert von Lucie Kretschmer. S. 64-69. Online: <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/2021-03/Religio%CC%88se%20Vielfalt%20Endf.pdf>

Körs, Anna & Karsten Lehmann. 2020. Interreligious Dialogue Activities in East Germany. Low levels of Activities within Official Organizational Structures. *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* (JRAT), 6:2, pp. 491-512. Online: [https://brill.com/view/journals/jrat/6/2/article-p491\\_13.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/jrat/6/2/article-p491_13.xml)

Körs, Anna, Wolfram Weisse & Jean-Paul Willaime (eds.). 2020. *Religious Diversity and Interreligious Dialogue*. Cham: Springer.

Körs, Anna. 2018. How Religious Communities Respond to Religious Diversity. From Interreligious Dialogue to Interreligious Relations, Contacts and Networks. In: Ipgrave, Julia; Knauth, Thorsten; Körs, Anna; Vieregge, Dörthe; von der Lippe, Marie: *Religion and Dialogue in the City. Case Studies on Interreligious Encounter in Urban Community and Education*. Münster; New York: Waxmann. Pp. 23-54. Online: <https://www.awr.uni-hamburg.de/website-content/pdfs-forschung/koers2018.pdf>

Körs, Anna; Yendell, Alexander (2016): Interreligiöse Kontakte und Diversity Kompetenz in einer religiös pluralen Gesellschaft. In: Genkova, Petia; Ringeisen, Tobias (Hg.): *Handbuch Diversity Kompetenz: Gegenstandsbereiche*. Wiesbaden: Springer. S. 549-564. Online: <https://www.awr.uni-hamburg.de/website-content/pdfs-personen/koers-yendell-diversity-kompetenz-2016-publikationen.pdf>

Weiß, Wolfram; Amirpur, Katajun; Körs, Anna; Vieregge, Dörthe (Eds.) (2014): *Religions and Dialogue. International Approaches*. Münster; New York: Waxmann.



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## Publications: Governance of religious diversity

Körs, Anna. 2021. Stadt und Religionen. Religionspolitik, Religionsgemeinschaften, religiöse Räume. In: Forum Wohnen und Stadtentwicklung, 01/2021, S. 3-6. Online:

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Körs, Anna. 2019. Contract governance of religious diversity in a German city-state and its ambivalences. In: *Religion, State and Society*, 47: 4-5, 456-473. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09637494.2019.1682445>

Körs, Anna & Alexander-Kenneth Nagel. 2018. Local 'formulas of peace': Religious diversity and state-interfaith governance in Germany. *Social Compass*. DOI: [10.1177/0037768618787240](https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768618787240)

Körs, Anna. 2018. Lokale Governance religiöser Diversität. Akteure, Felder, Formen und Wirkungen am Fallbeispiel Hamburg. In: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 20-29/2018, S. 34-40. Online: <https://www.bpb.de/apuz/272107/lokale-governance-religioeser-diversitaet-akteure-felder-formen-und-wirkungen-am-fallbeispiel-hamburg>

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Körs, Anna 2015. Die Hamburger Staatsverträge mit Muslimen und Aleviten im Spiegel der Bevölkerungsmeinung. Zur Notwendigkeit gesellschaftlichen Dialogs. In: Dirim, İnci et al. (Hrsg.): Impulse für die Migrationsgesellschaft. Bildung, Politik und Religion. Münster: Waxmann. S. 209-224. Online: <https://www.awr.uni-hamburg.de/website-content/pdfs-personen/koers-hamburger-staatsvertraege-2015.pdf>



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# Thank you for your attention!

**Website:** <https://www.awr.uni-hamburg.de/>

**Contact:** [anna.koers@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:anna.koers@uni-hamburg.de); [florian.luetzen@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:florian.luetzen@uni-hamburg.de)