An evaluation of immigration and integration policies with respect to the muslim community in Iceland

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Abstract

This paper contains research into the socio-economic integration of foreigners of Middle Eastern and/or Muslim background into Iceland. Its focus is on government integration policies in Iceland in comparison to the Scandinavian nations of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The policies themselves, ministries and official offices involved in the process of making the policies and putting them in action, the practical aspects of the policies such as delegation of tasks and their execution, are also examined and evaluated closely in the context of each country.

Though the focus is on integration policies, issues concerning the integration of Muslims and Middle Eastern immigrants as found in literature on the subject are also dealt with.

Interviews and focus groups with the goal of understanding the status of this particular immigrant community in Iceland were conducted and results of those interviews are contained in this paper.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research Question

The following study focuses on the socio-economic integration of immigrants of Muslim backgrounds and Middle Eastern[1] origin in Iceland. The main focus of the study is the research into and comparison and evaluation of the target countries' integration policies, how integration policies affect immigrants and their integration into society, and how well these policies are established and being practiced in each country respectively. In terms of the sample of immigrant population, the research focusses on those living in the capital city of Reykjavík and surrounding areas where the greatest number of Muslims and people of Middle Eastern origin reside.

It does not focus on a particular type of immigrant, i.e. solely those who have come to Iceland due to chain migration or marriage or in whatever other manner possible. Nor does it focus solely on those who are of a particular occupational or educational background and the like criteria. As far as I'm aware no other study of the Muslim and Middle Eastern population in Iceland has been made, let alone on their socio-economic integration, and there are simply not enough people of the background in question to merely focus on one specific type of immigrant from among them. Therefore, the Muslims and people from the Middle East who participated in the research by way of interviews and offering information and input come from different countries and from every walk of life, have differing reasons for being in Iceland and different cultural and traditional backgrounds, as well as speaking many different languages. Some are practising Muslims while others are Muslims by name only, by their own admission, and yet others are either irreligious or belong to other faiths outside Islam. Among the religious intervieewes were Christians and Baha'is.

Statistics, as found in Appendix 2, offer information about the focus groups which were establised to get an insight in to the diverse groups described above. The ratio of interviewees was 8 men to 5 women and their ages varied from 20-60. Most had lived in Iceland for 5-10 years, though several had lived there between 5-25 years.

[1] A list of countries included in this definition can be found in Appendix 2.

In short, this research offers a broad look at Muslims and people from the Middle East and their socio-economic integration in Iceland regardless of background, as well as an evaluation of the policies which aid immigrants in their integration.

1.2 Statement of problem to be investigated

In view of an ever shrinking world in terms of greater mobility and modes of communication and travel, inter-cultural marriages as well as migration to far off places for economic reasons are on the rise, as are the numbers of people from war-torn and troubled areas applying for asylum across the world. Immigration to Iceland is by no means a new phenomenon, though the country has, for obvious geographical reasons, as well as for the fact that only 300.000[2] people live on the 103.000 m^2 island which doesn't have a lot to offer foreigners in terms of business and economical opportunities, not been the most feasible of choices for people seeking to relocate. Other reasons not relevant to this research, such as Iceland's obscurity in years past, its rather hostile climate, high income tax rate, relatively low wage, high retail prices and cost of living, must also have been a factor in how few immigrants traditionally have relocated to Iceland. However, over the last few years the number of people moving there has steadily risen, to which both the Icelanders, meaning those of that specific Nordic ethnicity and/or born and raised there, and the immigrants have had to adjust. This has indisputably had both positive and negative effects.

It should be mentioned that the rather sudden rise in immigrant numbers in Iceland has worried the nation for various reasons. It is true that there seems to have been a surge in which Iceland overtook the other Nordic countries in terms of percentages of immigrants compared to native Icelanders. In the year 2000 the total population of Iceland numbered 274.537, of which the immigrant population made up 3.21%. That same year immigrants in Denmark, Norway and Sweden made up 5.01%, 4.16% and 5.68%, respectively, of the total populations. In 2004 Denmark's immigrant numbers had risen to 5.18% of the population, which constitutes a 3.4% rise from 4 years prior. Norway's immigrant population rose to 4.68%, a 12.5% increase in 4 years, whilst, interestingly, Sweden's immigrant numbers fell to 5.42% of the population, a -4.6% decrease in numbers. In 2004 immigrants in Iceland numbered 3.76% of the total

[2] Population figures from 9th January 2006. Source: Statistics Iceland (Hagstofa Íslands) www.statice.is

population, which means a 17% rise over 4 years, the greatest rise in immigrant numbers of all the Nordic countries. These figures, found in Appendix 2, clearly show that there certainly is a case for saying that the increase in immigrants is quick and perhaps alarming for various reasons, such as maybe economic and social ones. Without proper analysis these numbers, however, don't explain the underlying reasons for increased or decreased immigration, the social circumstances, what allows for immigration or makes it difficult, so on and so forth.

As stated above, the research which is presented here will focus on the social integration of foreign nationals into an otherwise mostly homogeneous nation. These last two words are important and significant in terms of the issues which can surface when a homogeneous nation experiences a rather rapid influx of 'others'. Integration and issues connected to it have become popular topics, much discussed in the media, and very relevantly so for before stated reasons. The Icelandic government as well as the municipalities that have addressed the integration issue, have in theory opted for integration of foreigners as opposed to assimilation[3]. In layman's terms assimilation entails "the social process of absorbing one cultural group into harmony with another or the state of being assimilated; people of different backgrounds come to see themselves as part of a larger national family"[4]. Though the second half of that definition doesn't sound negative at all there is a tendency, where assimilation policies are applied, for the immigrants' cultures to become so absorbed into the cultures if the host countries that the prior become all but forgotten, which can potentially give rise to conflict among the indigenous and non-indigenous, the people born there vs. the ones who moved there to work or settle, or whose parents brought them there, for instance. Other concerns include identity issues or even crisis especially among second generation immigrants.

Many Icelanders born and bread in what has until recently been a very homogeneous country are quite keen on the idea of assimilation, as seemingly it poses less of a risk to their current way of life. But as is quite usual in the case of Iceland, after a period of public discussion and debate which serves to familiarise the public with a given idea, the population picks up on trends from the mainland of Europe, especially the Nordic

[3] www.felagsmalaraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-skjol/Skyrsla_nefndar_um_adlogun_utlendinga.pdf
[4] WordNet Dictionary / www.hyperdictionary.com

countries, often seen as role models. Talk of assimilation is hardly heard now in the context of immigrants in Iceland and that might be traced to the fact that Britain and the Nordic countries don't favour it, though the particular route has, for instance, been adopted by the French.

The most succinct definition of social integration is that it is "the action of incorporating a racial or religious group into a community, or more specifically, the act of combining into an integral whole"[5]. Social integration denotes socio-cultural action by communities and governments. This might even be considered reactions to immigration and the need to manage it. Social integration also signifies an achieved socio-cultural condition. Landecker defines this type of integration, or the achievement of integration, as "the consistency of norms within any social system"[6].

With this core definition in mind, further two interpretations of integration ought to be explored. The divergences lie in the question of to what levels immigrants must become part of their host culture and give up aspects of their own culture to be considered integrated.

One approach to integration is the embracing of all people and any culture, i.e. the multicultural approach. This implies that while the core values of the host society must be agreed upon by all, any values which the immigrants hold out with the rules which both parties hold in common are permissible, welcomed and accepted, even expected.

The other approach, sometimes referred to as assimilation, also supports the idea that the core values of the host nation must be agreed upon by both parties. It further holds that while immigrants do not have to accept all aspects or values of the host society, in order for them to settle successfully among the indigenous, they must shed their cultural ways of life near enough entirely, or else be marginalised.

Examples of countries where the two approaches have been put in practice are Great Britain and France. The ideological differences in their approach are made evident by

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[5] WordNet Dictionary / www.hyperdictionary.com

[6] Nathalie S. Friedman. Observability in School Systems: A Problem of Inter-System Integration. Ayer Publishing, 1980

the way that "France [is] emphasising the universalist idea of integration, of transforming immigrants into full French citoyens [whilst] Britain is seeing integration as a question of managing populations, and allowing ethnic cultures and practices to mediate the process."[7]

Delving further into the meaning of integration as a population management tool, which is the interpretation that the Icelandic government has, however vaguely, adopted, it can also be viewed as a value. "[I]ntegration is a value *per se*, in so far as it rests on the fundamentally democratic notion that, in spite of the divergences, people who have respect for what is right and, in particular, for human rights, can live in harmony."[8] This notion of what is right, a notion which covers a set of rules, has to be agreed upon by all parties, and both the immigrants and the indigenous government and population must be "loyal to the values to which they lay claim"[9]. This is a must for them to be able to solve problems and be creative in their solutions, as well as work towards a common future, and thus gain the desired state of integration. It is vital to progress towards integration that society accept that conflict will arise between the immigrants and indigenous people. Society must also know that this conflict can (only) be resolved, in accordance with rules they all accept.

This is where integration programmes and services put in place to benefit all parties come into play. In 1990s Netherlands "[t]he establishment of [...] services constituted an acknowledgement that immigrant and other minority groups have particular needs and rights to participate in society according to their own custom and convictions."[10] Integration policies and favourable attitudes towards them, as well as mutual acceptance between immigrants and indigenous people become a social and political necessity to avoid the result of exclusion, namely ghettoisation.[11]

Through publication the Second Chamber (Tweede Kamer) or lower house of the Netherlands' Parliament has stated that "[t]he term integration policy more properly

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[7] Adrian Favell, Philosophies of Integration. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux 1998.
[8] Bernarnd Lewis and Dominique Schnapper. Muslims in Europe. Pinter Pub Ltd, 1994
[9] Lewis and Schnapper, 1994
[10] Peter Reinsch. Measuring Immigrant Integration: Diversity in a European City. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. Volume 29, Part 4; 1-7.* Carfax Publishing, 2003
[11] Lewis and Schnapper, 1994

expresses that the social integration of minority groups, and the persons affiliated with them, is a reciprocal process of acceptation. To this end concessions must be made by those integrating as well as by the society in which they settle."[12]

Important milestones are reached in terms of integration when the needs, rights and social contributions of immigrants are met with the same understanding and acceptance as those of the indigenous people with the implementation of integration policies.

Now to the question of when and how this mutual acceptance and integration is achieved. It is relevant as this is part of what constitutes integration. Reisch states that "[a]round this illusively simple instrument [of integration] revolve two central concerns, namely: the attributes and activities that differentiate between those who are integrated and those who are not, and the presumptions made and the conditions created by social researchers to infuse such measurements with a degree of validity."[13] In the understanding that integration is both the journey and the destination toward mutual acceptance, Reisch concludes that "[t]o monitor individuals' integration into their immediate social surroundings, a conceptual model is needed that: allows for divergent integration objectives, provides a framework to order and evaluate empirical observations, and elucidates concrete criteria to designate the locally integrated."[14] Reisch is essentially speaking about policies that are solidified in terms of the seriousness with which they are backed up, yet flexible to be able to move with the times and different groups of immigrants.

To summarise, socio-cultural integration can be interpreted to denote a socio-cultural goal for a society as well as a value system which applies to immigrants and indigenous people alike. The values are accompanied by rules which must be respected and adhered to by both parties. They can then be used to creatively and pro-actively solve problems that will inevitably arise, and thusly move towards a future where indigenous and immigrant populations have mutual goals and are accepted by one another for their differences as much as for what they share.

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[12] Reinsch, 2003
[13] Reinsch, 2003
[14] Reinsch, 2003

With these definitions in mind it is the premise of this thesis that social integration is of vital import to the social, mental and physical well-being of any person relocating to a culture and society different from their own. Moreover, the above also applies to the native population of the country, as integration is not possible without the efforts of both the immigrants and the ones who reside in the country prior to the immigrants' arrival. In line with these ideals, the importance of an organised integration system, for instance in the form of governmental integration policies, as well as an executive branch in charge of implementing those policies run by or delegated to responsible agents will be explored. These policies can work as a tool enabling new Icelanders and 'old' in the integration process, in a manner respectful to both immigrants and natives.

This is at the very core of the topic of integration. With government and municipalities as well as the immigrants working towards a common goal, which as stated above is the integration of people of immigrant origin into the Icelandic socio-economic structure, both sides can begin to see the positive effects of that integration work on society as well as the individuals who after all, en masse, make up what we call society.

There are various reasons for immigration and this paper will only briefly discuss the ones that most commonly apply to immigrants in Iceland. The main reasons for immigrants seeking to come to Iceland are economic, by marriage to an Icelander or as asylum seekers. The first two are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and the last reason has, due to strict regulations, never been much of a factor, with the exception of quota refugees. Asylum seekers do enter Iceland but for various reasons very few receive refugee status. Refugee status would give a refugee secure government assistance in starting a new life. Some of the reasons behind this will be dealt with later on in this thesis. All of the above will be looked at in order to shed light on the success rate of the integration of Muslims and immigrants from the Middle East from within these differing categories among Icelanders.

To understand whether a specific group of people is becoming a part of their new society and integrating successfully as defined earlier, one must look at a variety of relevant concerns and issues. They range from sociological issues such as the groups' or individuals' notions of race and ethnicity and general cultural understanding, to practical issues like their employment history and field of work, language acquisition,

the immigrants' levels and types of education in their country of origin as well as the level and type of education they received in their host country, living conditions in their new country, medical issues, matters of religion, understanding of rights and duties, and lastly but not least whether any government and/or municipal integration policies are in place – and being implemented. A very important factor is also the makeup of the host country's population. These elements must be looked at to see whether they have worked as a hindrance or been helpful in the integration process of the immigrant group on which this study focuses. This paper will in that context explore to what extent the native community and the immigrants extend themselves and meet each other midway on issues of import when it comes to integration, such issues as were mentioned above and will be discussed later. The aim of the research is also to investigate the immigrants' views in regards to integration, and to explore such questions as whether they find integrating difficult, do they fear a loss of identity or cultural values, and do they even believe it is important or of value to them to integrate.

The goal of combining the native Icelanders and the immigrants into an integral whole has been set out in manifestos and proposals by the government of Iceland, as well as several cities and towns, in which substantial numbers of immigrants reside. With groups of immigrants whose backgrounds vary noticeably from that of the native population in terms of religion, culture, values and sometimes appearance, it is important to explore whether and how much background and appearance effect – hamper or help – successful integration. While many other immigrants certainly also differ from the Icelanders in the manners listed above, what sets the Muslims and those of Middle Eastern origin apart is the religious and political aspect associated with Islam and the Middle East, and consequently the dangers which accompany them, as perceived by others, whether ill or well informed. It is specifically important to mention in this context the horrible events that was took place just over 5 years ago in New York and continue to affect our world today with the current situations in Iraq and Afghanistan and the war on terror. These factors sustain and perpetuate the perceived threat which many consider all Muslims and people from the Middle East to be, regardless of political or religious persuasions. This along with the media feed from neighbouring countries which have over the years had a much larger number of Muslim and Middle Eastern immigrants, with its pros and cons, does tend to demonise the

Muslim and the Middle Eastern population, which often leads to them being discriminated against.

Professionals in the field of immigrant issues in Iceland interpret recent studies[15] showing anti-immigrant sentiments on the rise as being copied sentiments from mainland Europe, a spill-over effect of the real troubles those countries have had, i.e. the headscarf issue in France, education and youth discipline/delinquency issues in Denmark, honour murders within families in Sweden and Norway, and the recent hate-murders in the Netherlands, issues of which Icelanders are becoming increasingly aware and afraid. That is to say, aware of events that have occurred in other countries and afraid that they will take place in Iceland, but as of yet none of that has materialised. The fact remains that integration is vital in order for natives and immigrants to live in one community successfully and work at creating a multicultural society which embraces the best of all worlds. This will hopefully prevent, as far as it is possible, conflicts based on ignorance or racism. The process, success rate and level of that integration will therefore be explored in this paper.

1.3 Methodology

The focus group interviews took place in Iceland during the months of July and August 2005. The people who participated were chosen due to their different cultural and educational backgrounds. Their ages, family circumstances and current work situations were also a consideration for choosing them. Some of the participants were found with the help of the Reykjavik mosque chairman, while others were found and chosen through word of mouth as well as through networks of acquaintances which I had established over years as a teacher of the Icelandic language for foreigners. I did not interview or seek to interview people I knew personally, rather asked around for people who fit the specific criteria, i.e. people who are from the Middle East, Muslims or from predominantly Muslim countries, as well as making sure the participants were willing and able.

The interviews were conducted in two types of settings. Initially the idea was to form one focus group of 10-15 individuals who would then be interviewed as such once or

[15] www.gallup.is/index.jsp

twice. As people were being contacted in this regard it soon turned out that not all were able or up for this arrangement, for various reasons. Some did not care for the format as they had concerns about privacy or were simply shy. Fortunately, those to whom this applied were more than happy to meet with me individually, as they were generally eager to share their thoughts, opinions and experiences. One focus group meeting was set up with the help of the mosque chairman and a group of five men and one woman (an Icelandic wife of an Arab man), met once at the mosque for a discussion. Further interviews took place at the interviewees' homes, workplaces or places of study. They were given the option of where to meet and when, and most chose their own homes. The interviews were most individual, one-on-one, though some further small group settings were arranged and were conducted with two to three persons at a time. The co-operation of the aforementioned mosque chairman was crucial and very much appreciated. Reaching such a wide group all at once and finding some of the candidates for the one-on-one interviews would have been impossible without him.

Only a minority of the interviewees were already used to speaking about the issues dealt with in this paper, or issues concerning immigrants in general. This was the reason why most wanted to meet in the privacy of their homes, as they were not sure what to expect. A few who did not want to participate mentioned as their reasons that they had already done such interviews and nothing ever came of them, it was pointless and frustrating as nothing came of it in terms of societal change or government policy, or that Icelanders were too nosy and they themselves were too proud to be treated like guinea pigs so why should an immigrant allow himself to be treated as such.

The way the comparison chapters are organised is by presenting the information on Iceland first and then that from Denmark, Norway and Sweden. This set-up was chosen to provide a clear way of comparing how things are set up and working in the countries which the Icelandic government sometimes looks to for ideas and inspiration versus how things are set up and working in Iceland itself.

2 Theoretical Framework

The literary review provides an overview and examination of some common issues as set forth in literature regarding the social integration of Muslims and people of Middle Eastern origin in Denmark, Norway and Sweden as well as in some Northern European countries. The aim of the review is to identify issues, questions and solutions which particularly concern Muslim and Middle Eastern immigrants. Furthermore it is to see how these apply in the Icelandic context. That subject is further detailed in Chapter 6 which covers interviews conducted with Muslims and people of Middle Eastern background living in Iceland.

The issues concerning immigrants and integration in the sample countries, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, are very similar, as are logically some of the research and findings. Therefore the issues dealt with in the various literature is mostly of a similar nature. The tradition of receiving foreigners as labourers, asylum seekers or for any other reason has a longer history in the Scandinavian countries than it does in Iceland. Logically then, more studies have been conducted over a longer period of time on the situations there than has been done in Iceland.

A multitude of challenges await people of immgrant origins in their countries of settlement. These problems are of a varied nature, social, political and religious, linked to family, education, public image and acceptance, how they are perceived by the people already residing in the immigrants' new country, as well as how the immigrants perceive their new environment, to name but a few. All of these challenges are minimised or aggrevated depending on the climate of the time, the immigrants' backgrounds and attitudes, the culture of the host country in question, and the attitudes of the indigenous people and governments of the host countries towards immigrants.

In his books Towards a European Islam[16] and Muslims in Western Europe[17], Jørgen S. Nielsen mentions some of the unique problems he has found facing Muslim and Middle Eastern immigrants in the European context. Studies conducted with this particular

[16] Jørgen S. Nielsen. Towards a European Islam. Macmillan in association with Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, Univ. of Warwick, 1999.

[17] Jørgen S Nielsen. Muslims in Western Europe. Edinburgh University Press, 1992.

religious minority and geographical location in mind have homed in on several common concerns which contribute to any problems they have as well as successes they experience. These include migration reasons and trends, questions of culture, ethnicity, racism, religion, society and ethnic relations. In this thesis reference is made to issues identified in Nielsen's books as found to relate to immigrants of Muslim and Middle Eastern origin in the Icelandic context, just as they applied to those in continental Europe.

In their book Muslim Minorities in the West: Visible and Invisible[18], Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane I. Smith also discuss a range of issues from which I have gleaned topics that are particularly relevant to the Icelandic situation and which I will take into account in this thesis. Some of the topics overlap with Nielsen's, and they will therefore be discussed as a whole. The issues of relevance to this thesis and which will be discussed are as follows:

Migration settlement
Family Ties and Challenges to Tradition
Housing and Life Styles
Childrens' Education
Questions of Identity

2.1 Migration settlement

When moving to another country, in whatever shape or form the move comes about, immigrants are inclined to settle in areas where others of similar backgrounds and/or family members have previously settled.

> Interpersonal and ethnic connections link the new migrant with the previous migrants and natives in the receiving country by ties of ethnicity, kinship, and friendship. Co-movements of migrants might be affected by preferences to live in the neighbourhood of people that share the same traditions, experiences, and values, but also by advantages in receiving information and help in order to

[18] Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane I. Smith. Muslim Minorities in the West: Visible and Invisible. Lanham, Md.: AltaMira, 2002.

> achieve easy integration in the economic, cultural and political systems of the destination country.[19]

Within towns and cities is not uncommon to find particular areas containing large populations of people with similar or same backgrounds, language, cultures, ideas, beliefs and outlooks. They end up living in close proximity to like-minded people who can provide necessary social support and networks of information, assistance and friendship. It would likely be of great value to most immigrants to also find conveniences and necessities with which they are familiar in close proximity to where they have settled. For Muslims and people from the Middle East these might come in the form of mosques, shops selling *halal* foods, schools teaching languages and religion of their different regions of origin (i.e. Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Turkish, etc), and Islamic schools. These facilities are likely to be found in the vicinity of where they have chosen to settle, or rather: the immigrants are likely to settle in the vicinity of such facilities.

The Danish *halal* meat production industry is one example of conveniences and necessities familiar to immigrants, as mentioned above. One reason why Denmark was the first of the Nordic countries to receive large quantities of Muslim and Middle Eastern immigrants is not only due to their then relaxed immigration rules, but also due to a surprisingly down-to-earth factor. The Danish meat industry was preparing *halal* meat for the European market even before Muslims started immigrating to their country in as noticeable numbers as they later did.

> [T]he Danish auhorities had at a very early stage made arrangements for the provision of *halal* meat. Denmark's traditional concern for its agricultural exports led it to become one of the pioneers among European suppliers of agricultural produce and expertise to the Arab world. During the 1970s the Muslim World League representative in Copenhagen was accepted as the authority guranteeing the *halal* nature of Danish meat exports, especially of poultry. By the end of the decade, the bulk of poultry exports went to the Muslim world, with the result that the poultry available in most Danish supermarkets was *halal* and included Arabic text to that effect on the packaging!

[19] Thomas Bauer and Klaus F. Zimmermann. International Migration Review, Vol. 31, No. 1, 1997.

> Denmark thus also became the main supplier of meat to the Muslim communities in all the neighbouring countries, where restrictions were tight[20].

Everyone needs physical nourishment. Whereas many immigrants might find it easy, or at least doable, to adjust to any sort of cuisine, it is a whole other matter when what you eat and what you don't, what you can and what you can't, are dictated by your culture, conscience or religion. Such seemingly simple matters as being able to find religiously and traditionally acceptable food can influence a person's decision as to where to reside, given they can make that choice, and the availability of such foods can facilitate integration. If access to familiar foods etc is available, the immigrants' time and energy can be spent on different things, possibly more challenging and relevant in terms of integration and living in a new country. Being able to find religiously and traditionally suitable food was a positive factor in the Muslim immigrants' ability to settle and integrate in Denmark.

2.2 Family Ties and Challenges to Tradition:

Disappearance of Traditonal Networks and The Expansion of Spheres

Though the issues dealt with here are not unique to Muslims or people from the Middle East, it is unique to another minority, one that generally faces challenges in regards to the tradional family. That minority is women.

Opposite to men, women who come from villages or small towns, in addition to dealing with the move from one country to another and the transition that follows, often struggle with the challenges of the disappearance of their traditional networks.

There are countries in the Muslim world and Middle East, wherefrom immigrant women may find themselves moving to the West, where women generally take care of womens' needs. In the role of wife, even as sister or daughter, women are busy aiding and assisting one another, offering information and exchanging ideas on life, child-rearing and education, or on whatever else they do not discuss with men. They provide friendship and companionship. In some communities, associating with un-related men

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[20] Nielsen, 1992.

would be considered taboo for women and it continues to be so, even when they have been removed from the context of their countries. Women, whose lives and daily activities had been physically limited to the house, yard and maybe market place, often feel displaced upon arriving in the West. Though their lives are seemingly limited, this is true only in spatial terms. They were used to being near enough constantly surrounded by their extended social network, i.e. the women in their house and neighbourhood, whilst taking care of the children and home. Loneliness sets in with they lose this and realise that in their new country their only links to society are now their husbands.

They are completely dependant on their husbands socially, and in some cases they may even have to trust him in all aspects, for instance in the cases of illiterate women. Their knowledge, be it of cooking, medicine, daily life skills, or of the Qur'an, will all be oral. Were they therefore to venture into the new and unknown world of their host country they would be at a loss on several fronts – socially, linguistically and educationally. Not being able to even read a road sign, let alone able speak to just anyone due to the way you've been used to conducting your life is immediately alienating.

Rarely, in the findings from the Nordic countries, are first generation immigrant women able or willing to step out of their traditional way of life and try on new roles in their new country, for instance within the workforce outside the home. They maintain their modest, secluded lives, and thus losing the relative independence they had or may have had. The woman now must rely on her husband for all she relied on him before, plus for all that she used to do with the help of female friends or within the context of the safety with which her own culture provides her. It is also common that women have to depend on their children for interpretation and help in different aspects, such as going to the doctor.

Another part to the spectrum applies to the women who until their move to the West lived according to the traditions and norms of their countries want to experiment and branch out in terms of lifestyle once they have settled in their new countries. They may want jobs, wear different clothes so as to blend in with the 'locals', pursue an education, or any number of things they witness in the society in which they now live. As mentioned earlier, though, this doesn't normally become an issue until the second

generation. New immigrants in general maintain their traditions whereas it becomes harder for their children to make sense of them, having never lived in a country where they were the norm. This will be discussed further in the section dealing with identity.

Though their challenges are unique to them, women are not the only ones faced with difficulties. Their wives being so dependant on them also creates a challenge for the men who may not know or understand all about the womens' needs. Some may choose to interpret those needs as they perceive them. Those interpretations then may be dependant on culture, tradition, personal disposition, and what is considered appropriate and acceptable.

And there are more challenges. As many migrate for economic reasons, males who are fit to earn a decent income are often the first to arrive in a new country. The husbands generally lead lives out with the homes in the host country as they did before leaving his homeland. They go out to work, meet people and make friends. It is common for men to provide their immediate family with housing, food, money, information, as well as medical, educational, societal and social support, and every other need which must be taken care of or sought from outside the home. Add to these responsibilities the potential financial provisions for the family members in their home countries and you can see why the husbands are often overwhelmed by the task. They are not only the sole providers for their immediate family in financial and social terms, but also responisble for the financial needs of their extended family back home. Granted, they may have been accustomed to that beforehand, but it becomes harder once they have, on top of it all, become the main or only link the women have to society.

As mentioned above, there are those who are well meaning but simply do not quite understand the womens' needs or issues, and then there will be those who choose to intepret their wants and needs as they see fit. Their traditional roles and perceptions are challenged in a Western society, which is in all likelihood not structured as the society with which they were used. The circumstances of their migration and the effect of the new urban environment forces new immigrants to re-evaluate the roles of all family members. Pressure grows when family members start arriving.

> It was expected that, as the male head of the family, he had responsibility for relating between the family and those country institutions necessary to the family's welfare: schools, health service, social security, etc. Often he would find himself on his own in this, simply because the network of relatives which at home had helped provide contacts and influence either did not exist or was ineffective in relation to the host structure. The husband also found that he was being required to provide social and psychological support to his wife, a role which traditionally was in the hands of the network of female relatives.[21]

In the manner detailed in this section, spheres expand and roles of men and women, husbands and wives, boys and girls, change upon migration to the West.

In the cases of those economic migrants whose specific aim is to work and earn money and to build for themselves a better life back in their country of origin, the above concern is not very common. There are already Muslim and Middle Eastern families in Iceland who struggle against the odds to make ends meet on a single salary so the wife can stay home to take care of the children. Their lives are not made easier by the relatively low wages and high cost of living, along with prejudice in society towards women who choose the more historically traditional role of mother and housewife. So far most Muslims and Middle Easterners who come to Iceland come through marriage or to build better lives and are prepared to work hard to do so. That applies to both male and female immigrants. Therefore they have to mingle with people of all sorts outside the home and must have been aware of having to do that before leaving their countries to go to Iceland. It is, however, a concern well worth being aware of as, if the immigration trend continues more and more immigrants from different countries will continue to move to Iceland. The unique issues concerning women as stated in this section might then have to be tackled, in order for them to integrate successfully.

2.3 Housing and Life Styles

Isolation and individualism are words which spring to mind when one categorises the style of living in the West. This is noticeable in the manner which people lead their lives and also in the building styles of houses and flats. Though Westerners would

[21] Nielsen, 1999.

likely not consider themselves isolated, they might accede to being individualistic. If one compares the work, home, and social atmosphere of a typical Westerner's environment to that of a typical person from the Middle East and Muslim world, one can see that they differ quite a bit. The Westerner may be living in his or her own flat, studying or working in a chosen field out of personal interest, spending time with friends more than family, never or seldom mixing the two, while it wouldn't be uncommon to find their Middle Eastern counterparts living with a couple of generations of family members, working or studying with the aim of providing for themselves and the family, provide them with a better life, and spend much of their time with the extended family.

As it is not uncommon in the Middle East or among Muslim cultures for a few generations within one family to live together under one roof, splitting the family and moving its members in smaller family units into flats and houses is a challenge on its own. This new arrangement often does not allow for the same life as in the country of origin. Though "[l]ittle study has been done [...] of the effects of European housing styles"[22], Nielsen does comment that:

> [t]he combination of apartments or terraced houses designed for nuclear families, and a climate forcing life indoors, makes the traditional social life style of extended village families extremely difficult.[23]

Due to the difference in building styles, the Nordic/Western houses in general do not provide people who are used to different lifestyles and spaces with room enough to entertain guests as they were used to before. Though not necessarily spacious, many homes in the Middle Eastern and Muslim countries have guest quarters. Some people are used to having special dining areas for guests, so men and women can dine separately. To entertain large numbers of guests at the drop of a hat while adhering to religious and cultural protocol requires spacious living quarters. Generally speaking, in Western housing which is affordable to the average family, there won't be enough room for men and women to eat and socialise separately. Out of necessity, those whose

[22] Nielsen, 1999.
[23] Nielsen, 1999.

convictions compel them to follow these rules of segregation must therefore all but abandon their roles as hosts and dine almost exclusively with family members. In such cases, a form of isolation from the outside community, from anyone but close family members, is the unfortunate result.

Poor housing, i.e. concentrations of flats in areas where banks will lend low-income families and individuals enough money to buy or rent houses or flats, are not uncommon in the Nordic countries. There banks and loan funds would in the past not lend people of immigrant origin money to buy their homes except in certain less-than-desirable neighbourhoods, which then became occupied mainly by foreigners, often of poor financial means and educational background. Governments, particularly those of Norway and Sweden, are working towards eradicating this problem by banning discrimination in loan distribution based on country of origin or immigrant status. Poor housing does not exist to the same extent in Iceland. Though in some areas of towns and in the city of Reykjavik housing prices are lower than in others, banks and other institutions lend the same amounts to anyone, as long as they meet the requirements, none of which entail being in possession of large sums or money or even being an Icelandic citizen.

As styles of houses differ from Scandinavia to the Middle East so do peoples' lifestyles in general. Due to, among other things, climate and lifestyle, hobbies, interests and family relations of the Nordic people are very centred on the indoors. This has its effect on people who are used to warmer climates and a life spent more outside. In warmer climates daily activities are to a greater or lesser extent participated in outside. Though many Middle Eastern and Muslim women, as mentioned above, may be somewhat confined to the house, many of their houses have enclosed gardens where they can spend the day and do their work and socialise, unseen by strangers, if that is of importance to them. Trips to the markets, picnics and other similar outdoor activities are more common there than in the north countries, as is working outside, be it in retail, business or other functions. Construction and such work are of course universally accepted as outdoor jobs, out of obvious necessity, and therefore not mentioned specifically as being part of one culture or another. Segregated parks exist for Muslims who are concerned about how men and women interact. The need of both Muslim men

and women to go out and enjoy nature with family and friends is natural. The climate, when not scorching hot, offers opportunity, to spend time outside.

Though the weather in Scandinavia, more precisely Denmark and the southern parts of Norway and Sweden, isn't as temperamental as in Iceland, it is not as suited to planned outdoor activities as in typically warmer climes. Here again comes a change which at first might seem small, but to people who are used to spending time outside with friends and family, both leisure time and sometimes work, being cooped up inside in front of the television, a favourite pastime of Icelanders, doesn't seem like a fair trade at all. It definitively does take some getting used to. Another activity which is perfectly suited for the indoors and much favoured by the Nordic nations is drinking alcohol and plenty of it, a hobby in which not many Muslim families would be particularly keen on participating.

2.4 Childrens' Education

Children's education is a sensitive issue that has the potential to cause conflict. While children born of Muslim parents or those of Middle Eastern background study in the European setting, the rules their teachers are guided by are those of the society in which they live. In Northern Europe the education system is aimed at the development of the autonomous critical individual[24]. The methods of teaching differ from one country to another and from one part of the world to another. While, depending on their geographic location, family situation and social standing etc, most of them would learn to read and write, young school children in non-Western countries would not necessarily be trained in thinking ideas and teachings over critically and applying independent thought.

For example, rote learning is emphasised in many countries, especially where religion or a strong social philosophy is favoured by the government. These are general statements and as such rather unfair to those non-Western countries that *do* emphasise autonomy and critical thought in their curriculum. The example is merely given to point out the vast difference there might exist between the Muslim or Middle Eastern parents' schooling in their native land and that of their children in their new country.

[24] Nielsen, 1999.

Culture, practices, and more pertinently religion, are sensitive points for integration. Some immigrant parents prefer the Western way of teaching, or in this case, the Scandinavian school system, or at least don't mind it. In general, it is the religiously minded who will step up and raise their concerns, but only where subjects or teachings in schools infringe upon their beliefs or practices. Considerations in regards to religious studies have been made in some countries so as to teach all religions fairly without emphasising one and downplaying another. Other studies, such as sex education, biology, physical education, or in short any subject where differences may come up based on beliefs are now carefully scrutinised. This is done with a view to tread delicately so as not to offend while still maintaining the level of education which the particular country has developed and favours. Too many opinions are confusing, and situations are complicated further when concerned parents have too much say in their children's education in terms of wanting to control curriculum or the methods of teaching. Unfortunately, a solution which proves to satisfy everyone is hard to find.

Some schools offer immigrant children instruction in their native language, i.e. the language spoken in their country of origin. This does in some cases allow for smoother integration, as children study both their new and old languages, as well as their own culture. This is believed to help children in learning the language spoken in their present country of residence. However, what has happened in many cases is that the children become proficient in neither language and are constantly being torn between two cultures, not belonging fully to either.

All-Islamic schools where children can get all their education as stipulated by law exist in the Scandinavian countries. In some places, whether Islamic schools are in place or not, mosques offer language lessons and teach about Islam. These schools receive the same funding from the government as other schools founded upon principles based in religion or philosophy.

Yet another issues which must be taken into consideration by parents and school authorities are matriculation exams, such as those held for instance in the UK[25]. In order

[25] David Gilborn. Anthropology & Education Quarterly, Vol. 28, No. 3, Ethnicity and School Performance: Complicating the Immigrant/Involuntary Minority Typology. (Sep., 1997), pp. 375-393

to do well in school, pupils need proper support. GCSE exams or General Certificate in Secondary Education, are basically a pass into the world of further education and sometimes employment. Unfortunately, poor language abilities and therefore little access to the 'correct' subjects can build a chasm within the student population where some are able to graduate with the desired GCSEs while others cannot. Those in the latter group are most likely to be members of a minority population. This can of course be overcome, by finding the weak points of education and figuring out what actions need to be taken for all to sit at the same table and have the same opportunities when it comes to education.

2.5 Questions of Identity

> To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul. It is one of the hardest to define. A human being has roots by virtue of his real, active and natural participation in the life of a community which preserves in living shape certain particular treasures of the past and certain particular expectations for the future. This participation is a natural one, in the sense that it is automatically brought about by place, conditions of birth, profession and social surroundings. Every human being needs to have multiple roots. It is necessary for him to draw wellnigh the whole of his moral, intellectual and spiritual life by way of the environment of which he forms a natural part.[26]

The issue of living in two cultures concerns all immigrants, whatever generation, though differently depending on the generation. The level to which this becomes an issue depends somewhat on whether a person is born and/or raised in their host country or born out with the host country. It is hardly possible or even desirable to lose ones' original identity and pick up another entirely. When the inevitable mixture of two or more cultures takes place, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, there are challenges involved. As Nielsen's puts it:

> On the one hand they [immigrants' children] are being socialised in a home environment dominated by the parental culture, reinforced by the institutions set

[26] Simone Weil and Arthur (TRN) Wills. The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind. Routledge (UK), 2001.

> up by the immigrant community, such as mosques and *Qur'an* schools, local grocery shops, etc. ... On the other hand, they have been and are being educated in a European system of education.[27]

Children, who in schools learn different things from what their parents learned and in different ways than their parents learned, do actually live in and with two cultures. This is not in the educational or social sense only, as religiously, linguistically, behaviourally and in family size and organisation they may also differ and act differently from others in society, or are set apart from the rest of children in their community. This can lead to them feeling rootless, belonging neither here nor there.

> [I]t seems to be increasingly possible, and even useful and convenient, to maintain significant links with one's own culture, language, religion and country of origin, while a process of insertion and integration is simultaneously at work. This is equally true, in different forms, for the second and third generations, who do not have, in a proper sense, a country (and culture, etc.) of origin which lies somewhere in an unknown 'outside', but at the same time do not belong exclusively to the country (and culture, etc.) in which they have been born – and particularly do not belong to its majority tradition, also in religious terms.[28]

Significantly, Allievi and Nielsen point out as they include the younger immigrant generations, that it is also true for the younger generations that "without identity, there is no memory, no relation to the past, no platform for a future, no differentiation between self and others and no possible relation to the world" (Mirdal, 2000).[29]

Living in and with two cultures has its pros and cons. Some of the pros are for instance mutual cultural understanding, adaptability and the ability to get on with more than one group of people. On the down side one could mention the tendency for such a group to become isolated and/or alienated due to not fitting perfectly in either society. A child

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[27] Nielsen, 1999.
[28] Stefano Allievi and Jorgen Nielsen, editors. Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities In and Across Europe. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003.
[29] Stefano Allievi and Jorgen Nielsen, 2003.

from a Middle Eastern background might therefore not fully identify with the ways of his or hers parents' culture, while at the same time finding that he or she doesn't fully belong in the culture of the country in which they are living. It may be harder for the children of immigrants to make sense of their traditions and special cultural behaviour, foods, idioms, and such like, as they have never lived in a country where these were the norm. Theirs is a rich culturally mixed existence.

> Second-generation [...] Muslims grow up absorbing different sets of collective memories and histories, worldviews, and codes of behavior. Their identities are imprinted with interwoven systems of values of their parents and have been influenced by the historical and socioeconomic circumstances surrounding their expatriation from their country of origin. At the same time, they have assimilated their ways of being and thinking of the environment in which they live.[30]

Religion and tradition are often taken for one and the same thing, when in fact they mix only in a complex and delicate manner. What it means to be a Muslim has different meanings to different people within the Muslim communities themselves. It depends on country of origin, family tradition, level of education, and on the individual, to name but a few factors.

> But it is also true that identity, in contemporary societies, is articulated and subject to a process of pluralisation and even of creation, through syncretism, inclusion, cognitive contamination and even invention. The question [of identity] is also complicated by that fact that Muslims in Europe constitute a minority identity.[31]

People who are unfamiliar with Islam and the Middle East and who come from outside those particular immigrant communities cannot always easily tell if what a Muslim or person from the Middle East does, says, eats, practices, etc, is based in culture, personality, religion, or tradition. Unfortunately, prejudice and hatred often dictate that

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[30] Haddad and Smith, 2002.
[31] Stefano Allievi and Jorgen Nielsen, 2003.

any negative behaviour be blamed on religion and culture rather than on people, their individual personalities and agency to act as they wish.

Islam and the Middle East have been the religion and region of choice in a negative context for a long time now. Admittedly, many ugly scenes, murder, torture, tyranny, power struggles, wars, etc, have and are taking place in exactly that part of the world and among precisely a predominantly Muslim population. This hasn't helped Muslims and people from the Middle East outside that region, many of whom have in actuality fled their countries due to the unsettling and unfair behaviour of a loud and militant few. Other minority groups have had their fair share of blanket statement antagonism, but topics which tie into this, the reasons behind the unrest, are seldom discussed.

In context of religion, the truth is that while many Muslims are informed practitioners of Islam, having actually internalised what they were taught in school and at home and learned to incorporate it into their lives, many know only snippets from the *Qur'an*, the *hadiths* or *sunnah*, and hint at their teachings and practices. Those who attend the mosque will hear the *imam's* interpretation of a certain *surah*, while others choose to read it for themselves and interpret it that way. Some will interpret and incorporate into their lives only what they've learned to recite. Yet others read books of instruction on how to understand the holy words. Therefore, while the words and actual meaning of the Holy *Qur'an* remains the same, the interpretations of the sacred texts could technically be as many as its reader. Some may not be able to read it for themselves. In that case, they will have heard the *Qur'an* recited and learned to recite all or part of it themselves in Arabic, which may or may not be their mother tongue or a language they even know or understand. Their understanding of what it means to be a Muslim may be different than that of their neighbour with whom they may share belief. It is gleaned from a patriarch, their mother, or a local *mullah*. When asked they may claim to do or say things a certain way because they are Muslims when in fact it has more to do with their culture, family or personality.

Neighbours who are fellow Muslims but come from different backgrounds and countries may therefore not agree on the specifics, like certain interpretations, actions and celebrations. These could for instance be actions which one would deem a part of Islam and therefore absolutely essential, versus actions that are sprung out of cultural

context rather than religious. When this is transferred onto a foreign context, when the immigrants have started making their mark on the society into which they have moved, misunderstanding and judgmental opinions may arise.

This mix of different Muslim and Middle Eastern cultures and religious interpretations as to what 'real' Islamic practices entail, forces the immigrants, who are keen on establishing mutual understanding and respect in the community, to separate what is cultural behaviour and what is essentially Islamic. Interestingly, this is a task typically taken on by the second generation, i.e. the younger, educated generation. They need to find their own identity, as it is not just in the indigenous society but also in the Muslim community that questions of identity arise. In doing so religions can be made stronger and this is often done successfully. The price, however, is high as it often costs them the segregation of the younger generations from the older, as the older ones who didn't grow up in the new country, still link their cultural practices to their religious practices, and thus their mixture of practices continues. Another type of separation may also occur between the young generation and religious community leaders who often don't agree at all with the young ones' often intellectual, academic approach to religion.

> It is here that some of the most radical new formulation of Islamic ideals may be found (Currer, 1983; Sharif, 1985; Hussain, 1984). This is a process which involves a break with the inherited cultural expressions of Islam, with the inherited gender and authority-related patterns of Muslim life, and also involves an at least partial disregard for the traditional sources for the expression of specific Islamic identity. Tradtitional dress codes, methods of arranging marriages, and social gender-roles are, in theses circumstances, losing their importance as symbols of Islam. The emphasis appears to be moving to the underlying values of ethical and spiritual principles. With time, it may be expected that the basic Islamic principles identified through this process will, in turn, lead to new cultural forms of expressing Islamic identity.[32]

The above situation hasn't yet arisen in Iceland. The Muslim community has only just established itself firmly enough to operate a mosque which is open for Friday prayers.

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[32] Nielsen, 1999.

Again, religious prejudice hasn't been detected in Iceland as much as 'simple' racism. Therefore, overhauling of religion, culture and practices in the above context doesn't seem likely to happen in the near future in Iceland, but it will be interesting to see if the second generation will follow in the footsteps of those in the Scandinavian countries and re-evaluate their parents' faith, and in so doing perhaps establish their religion even firmer in new soil.

With people from different cultures moving into otherwise previously homogenised societies, not all issues could or even should be dealt with at once. What some may see as the immigrants' own concerns, issues such as regard food, clothes, modesty in swimming pools, moral values and practices for dating, and the like, any efforts made by government and municipalities to meet the immigrants half-way in order to raise their standard of living, raise them in fact to the same standard as others in the country, play a vital role in integration efforts. Also, the government playing a part helps eliminate issues regarding discrimination and racism.

The availability of *halal* foods in cafeterias in schools and work places, allowing people to wear their traditional clothing at work, giving them time off for religious and cultural celebrations, and providing them with space (at work and schools) for saying prayers, for instance, not to mention the building of actual places of worship, are ways in which society meets the immigrant population mid-way. For example, some might feel that parents ought to fix their children's lunch boxes at home instead of asking a school kitchen which provides the school children with lunches to make sure the food they get is up to their standards or follow their rules of what is acceptable food. Certainly many parents would do that, but in order for all residence of the community and pupils at the school to be treated as equal, it is vital that the schools, in this example, cater, quite literally, to all if they are going to cater to any at all. Those in authority would likely not hesitate to change menus were a child found to have food allergies!

The availability of appropriate foods for those with specific religious dietary requirements, presence and number of religious meeting places, religious and language education and acceptance in terms of the clothes people wear and the way they look in general all show how well the government is able to balance its efforts with that of the

community of indigenous and immigrants to build a strong society of individuals which all stand on equal ground.

A common problem which haunts any immigrant groups of the same nationality or some similar identity, is that they will be seen, by the host country, as one whole and their behaviour, outlook, attitude, etc, will be perceived as representative of that whole. Those who do not share their background may therefore assume that what one of them does or thinks applies to all of them. This is a generalisation, though, as people will stick to this notion to varying degrees depending on their exposure to any given group of immigrant or people of a certain nationality. But as this does occur and is relevant it will be dealt with somewhat.

This problem in the Muslim context takes on a slightly different form. The common perception nowadays is in their case no longer limited to personality, as it ought to be in a fair world, or even nationality, which would be alright. One form of this common perception is based upon the simple formula that if they look alike, they are alike, inside as well as out. In the Muslim context, however, this problem is based more upon the narrow context of perceived religious conviction. As the individuals will have different national backgrounds (and therefore appearance), education and religious interest, to name but a few variables, this stereotyping is false and can have undesired consequences for the individual.

As an example, if a non-Muslim runs into a particularly nasty Muslim from a certain country, the aforementioned is more likely to judge Muslims in general and condemn them rather than judge the nationals of the particular country from which the nasty individual comes, or even merely the person him/herself.

This is already happening on a large scale around the world because of the manner in which the media reports on terrorist acts, uprisings, and even daily lives of Muslims around the world, some scenes of which are simple and innocent but foreign enough to some to look threatening. Even scenes of Muslims in unified prostrated prayer in mosques or elsewhere can look menacing and alienating to those who don't understand what is being portrayed. Some of the scenes in the media are of course negative but the media coverage, instead of focusing on peoples' individual acts, has turned on to a

religion which is now by many thought to preach only violence and vengeance. Muslims all over the world cannot escape that branding and misunderstanding which are the results of the above. However, this is hardly anything new in the history of human behaviour, but is something which hopefully can be curbed, and what better ways to do so than with integration programmes and general enlightening.

To summarise, the misinterpretation of characters and nationalities isn't unique to followers of Islam and those from the Middle East. The difference lies in the fact that whereas judgment or assumption in the case of the latter is confined to one perceived cultural identity and its supposed characteristics as well as the common background of the people on that basis, in the case of Islam people of various cultural backgrounds are lumped together into one whole, the stereotypical Muslim. Islam contains people of a great many nationalities and traditions, and people simply cannot be judged fairly as a whole on the back of this identity. A group of men and women who happen to be Muslim may not have more in common in all actuality than their daily prayers, if even that, as that's assuming they practice their religion.

Findings of research in the Nordic countries, in particular those done in Norway, show that in the Nordic setting a strong sort of common identity among immigrants with shared ideology did not exist. As a part of the integration process, the Muslim and Middle Eastern communities as a whole and in smaller sub-sections must reflect on their values and ideas. These include the current situation of the young and the elderly, problems found within education and employment, violence and youth delinquency, the subjugation of girls and women, human rights abuses, and, not least, the implications of citizenship for immigrant Muslims. They must work at understanding these questions and match the issues with their new way of life, all the while trying not to compromise their beliefs and philosophies, as well as not losing their personal and national identity. Therefore, though common identity may exist in some Muslim or Middle Eastern immigrant communities which share, as described above, a culture, religion or belief system of some sort, it doesn't exist in others. The concept of *umma* doesn't necessarily transfer with people who move from one country to another, or even exist at all in traditionally non-Muslim countries. Many possible explanations for that exist. Research done by Haddad and Smith in Norway has come up with the following:

> [T]he universalism of Islam, the concept of the Muslim umma, is not a determining factor for many communities that remain entrenched within the boundaries of their various national, political, linguistic, ethnic, and religious groupings. At the same time, second-generation Norwegian Muslims are striving to accommodate Islamic perspectives to the Norwegian context and to set up pan-Islamic networks and associations. Acquiring Norwegian citizenship involves both rights and duties that have to be assumed. In their attempt to participate actively in the construction of a multicultural and multi-religious Norwegian society, Muslim communities are driven to reflect, ideally with honesty and self-criticism, on their own values and ideas. They have to examine in depth a number of important issues. Integration is not an easy task and becoming a citizen is not the same as being an integral part of the nation. The latter might still take a few more generations.[33]

There are differing opinions on how best to help children integrate, and studies have shown that while sometimes their schooling as children leads them to drop out, not pursuing further education and ending up unemployed or doing menial work, other studies show that children of immigrant backgrounds do very well, even better than could be expected, and choose carriers in the sciences, law, medicine and the like. They therefore tend to swing from one extreme to another, and a balance will likely not be struck until people of immigrant origin can consider themselves fully a part of the nation in which they live, as they have then become fully integrated socially.

In relation to culture and tradition, there are obvious conflicts between the original immigrants and their children, the first, second and third generations, and so on. Honour killings, arranged marriages and others issues have tragically and controversially been topics of conversation and in the media in the Nordic countries of late. This behaviour, these crimes and general disrespect for human life and individuals' choices, fall outside the parameters of acceptable behaviour made by modern Western society and are continually being dealt with in order to eradicate the horror and problems these issues cause among the native population as well as the second and third generation

[33] Haddad and Smith, 2002.

immigrants who often have grown up knowing only what life has to offer in the country they reside in. The traditions of their fathers are unknown to them.

> In the process of settling down in the new country, Muslim immigrants in Norway have to reappraise their ties with their homelands, their kinship relations, and their cultural and religious traditions. In the diasporic context, Muslim immigrants in Norway must reflect upon their cultural and religious identities and question them. They have to make choices and decide which elements to keep and which to discard. As Eugen Roosen pointed out, "In order to see and use one's own culture as right, one must first have gained distance from that culture. In other words, one must first have questioned it or must have been questioned by a process of forced acculturation.[34]

Becoming a native may take a few generations. Immigrants who move abroad will try to stay close to their roots, their native backgrounds along with all which that entails. Their children, growing up in a different environment and living in two cultures, won't necessarily become completely removed from their parents' roots, but generally try to mix their current environment and its norms with values and ideas brought from overseas and taught in their homes. They will most likely feel that they belong to the country in which they live more than their parents, and so it goes for a few generations. Immigrants of Muslim and Middle Eastern origin haven't lived in the Nordic countries long enough for researcher to observe a complete stage of integration, i.e. people of the above background who have become indigenous. The same applies for Iceland, as the particular immigrant community in question is still very small and young there, along with the fact that not much research has been done among them in general.

[34] Haddad and Smith, 2002.

3 Immigration Laws and Policies

As physical immigration precedes social and economic integration, immigration laws and policies of the sample countries as well as Iceland will be looked at in this chapter. How easy or difficult it is to enter any given country can in some ways be an indication of how well the integration process will proceed. That is to say, whether a nation's policies in regards to immigration tend to welcome foreigners can be some indication of what those who are accepted into the country can expect to find in terms of organisation and structure on a social level with the immigrants and their needs in mind. What follows is an overiew of these laws and policies and an evaluation of them in relation the above statements.

3.1 Iceland

This chapter covers the various ways inwhich, at the time this is written, it is possible for foreigner nationals to enter, live and work in Iceland. Each permit is presented seperately, with information as to the method and practices of implemenation. The permits are as follows:

Limited and Unlimited Residence Permits
Work Permit (in some cases the same as a the above)
Citizenship
Family Reunification / Family Ties
Asylum Seekers and Refugees

The information in this chapter comes from various government webpages[35], all of which are frequently updated. Some information can be found on official websites of organisations[36] specialising in helping foreigners in Iceland.

[35] www.eng.domsmalaraduneyti.is/laws-and-regulations/nr/860
www.eng.domsmalaraduneyti.is/laws-and-regulations/nr/105
www3.domsmalaraduneyti.is/log-og-reglugerdir/thydingar/nr/114
www.reglugerd.is/interpro/dkm/WebGuard.nsf/8f4a7d7ca32eedc1002565000051607a/fc15cea71c76ad2700256f1e003ce449?OpenDocument

[36] www.fjolmenningarsetur.is
www.ahus.is

The most recent laws and acts on foreigners, the Regulation on Foreigners and Act On Foreigners, were introduced in January of 2003 and amended most recently in September of 2004. It is the Directorate of Immigration, under the Ministry of Justice, which processes the applications and paperwork in accordance with the laws made by the above ministry.

Information regarding how to enter Iceland and the regulations which surround that procedure are provided by the government itself, so the information is certainly available. However, all of it is in the rather terse format favoured by those who write law texts. For English speakers the information can be found as the official translation of the laws is found in the Law Gazette, where in one can find the original Icelandic and authoritative text. It is therefore hardly accessible, and not something everyone will find easy to comprehend, or even want to spend time reading. However, the content on the Directorate of Immigration's website, layout and accessibility are changing to accommodate the growing numbers of immigrants.

Two organisations purpose built for passing on information to foreigners and being of assistance to them, The Multicultural and Information Centre[37] in the West of Iceland and The Intercultural Centre[38] in Reykjavik keep very informative websites. Along with a few other independent sites they offer succinct and easily comprehensible information which is bound to be more helpful due to their simple layout. They are also very helpful for the simple reason that not many are interested in, and some are not capable of sifting through, pages of immigration laws and acts on foreigners, to find out how they might enter Iceland and what their rights and duties might be.

3.1.1 Limited and Permanent Residence Permits

A limited residence permit to stay in Iceland is normally granted for one year at a time and must be applied for before entering the country. This is the only way for people to then apply for and get a work permit later on, therefore this is generally done in conjunction with applying for a work permit. Upon application, the person must show proof of being able to sustain themselves, and/or of having received a job in Iceland.

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[37] *Fjölmenningarhús* in Icelandic translation
[38] *Alþjóðahús* in Iceland translation

The Directorate can also grant a foreign national, whose application for asylum is under consideration, limited permission to stay, a provisional permit until the decision has been made. The foreign national must however request such permission.

Slightly differing rules apply depending on the applicant's country or area of origin. Citizens of any of the Nordic countries, for instance, can move to Iceland without hindrance and they need not have obtained a work permit prior to arrival in order to work in Iceland. The same goes for foreign spouses of Icelandic nationals who have resided in Iceland for over two years.

Citizens of the EEA may remain in Iceland for six months in search of work. They can obtain a residence permit when they have been accepted for employment or begun working in Iceland. Citizens from outside the EEA must obtain a residence permit prior to arriving in Iceland.

A permanent resident's permit can be granted to a foreign national who has been staying (legally) in Iceland for a continuous period of three years. The foreign national must have attended a course in the Icelandic language for foreigners, a total of 150 hours worth. The course must be conducted by a teacher or school acknowledged by the Ministry of Justice. A person who has not sat through classes but has learned Icelandic in some other way and has 'acceptable command of the language' may also sit an exam to prove their language abilities. A residence permit grants the holder the right to stay in Iceland indefinitely.

The Minister of Justice has issued rules on courses in the Icelandic language for foreigners. These rules contain provisions regarding the duration of the courses, minimum attendance and the type of certificates evidencing participation. The regulations include information on payment for participation in a course or an examination. The courses which are a requirement by law for permanent residency are not free of charge. A person who has resided in Iceland for a minimum of 10 years and is over 65 years of age need not fulfil the course participation requirement. The same applies to those who are physically or mentally unable to participate, if and as confirmed by a doctor.

3.1.2 Work Permit

As with the residence permit, work permits must be acquired before entering Iceland, in the case of those coming from outside the EU and EEA. To receive a work permit, an applicant must first receive a residence permit.

As with the residence permit, some exceptions apply to Nordic citizens and citizen of the EEA and EU, as they are free to enter Iceland for up to three months to look for work or set up business.

3.1.3 Citizenship

A foreign national who has lived in Iceland for seven years is eligible to apply for citizenship. Citizen of the Nordic countries, however, can apply after five years of living in Iceland. A foreign national married to an Icelandic national can apply for citizenship after three years of living in Iceland after marriage, or in the case of foreign nationals cohabiting with Icelandic nationals, they may apply after five years of living together.

3.1.4 Family Reunification / Family Ties

A close family member of a person who has received or will receive a permit to stay in Iceland is entitled, after applying, to such a permit as well. By definition, a close family member is a spouse, a cohabiting partner or a partner in registered partnership. In all cases the persons involved must be 24 years of age or older. The term 'close family member' also includes a child under the age of 18, and other dependant relatives closely related to the person who has the permit to stay. The permit issued to a family member must be of the same sort as the one issued to a person who has received or will receive a permit to stay.

3.1.5 Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Iceland is part of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and Dublin Convention. A person receiving asylum is granted the status of a refugee, and the permit they receive to stay may form the basis of a residence permit, to be renewed if conditions apply. The successful asylum seeker's close family, spouse, partner and children are entitled also to asylum. Because of the distance from mainland Europe many people who enter Iceland and apply for asylum have actually set foot in a Schengen country before reaching

Iceland. Due to the Schengen nations' agreement, their automatic expulsion to the country from whence they last came is therefore mandatory and inevitable. Those asylum seekers who have managed to get to Iceland directly, be that by accident or design, if allowed to stay have generally been given what is called Leave to Remain on Humanitarian Grounds. The reasons for this is usually that the Directorate of Immigration, in failing to establish that the person doesn't actually originate from whence they claim to originate, cannot send them back to anywhere. They therefore must let them remain.

Only one individual who came to Iceland on their own accord and applied for refuge has ever received full refugee status.

3.1.6 Quota refugees

The Directorate of Immigration does allow so-called quota refugees to enter Iceland, as decided by the government, after having received such a proposal from the Refugee Council of Iceland. People, who are allowed to enter as refugees as a result of a mass refugee problem, are granted this permission on the basis of group assessment. The person will therefore receive a permit to stay, but not a residence permit. This permit will be renewed every year if conditions suggest a need to do so, and after three years the holder of the permission may apply for a residence permit.

3.1.7 Repatriation

The Icelandic government does not fund repatriation and has no programme in place to accommodate or encourage this.

3.2 Denmark, Norway and Sweden

The following information was gleaned from official government websites[39] of the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish immigration and migration boards, as well as from official websites designed to help immigrants learn about the process of entering the countries, their rights there and duties.

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[39] www.udlst.dk
www.inm.dk
www.udi.no
www.migrationsverket.se

The chapter covers the various ways inwhich it is possible to enter, live and work in the sample countries. It also includes a further task of the same organisations which handle entries, that task being repatriation of asylum seekers and refugees.

Each permit is presented seperately, with the policies, methods and practices of each country detailed one by one. The different permits are:

Limited and Unlimited Residence Permits and Work Permits
Citizenship
Family Reunification / Family Ties
Asylum Seekers and Refugees
Repatriation

3.2.1 Limited and Unlimited Residence Permits and Work Permits

Having been granted a residence permit in Denmark, a person may apply for and obtain an unlimited residence permit. The number of years varies depending on the applicants' situations. The provisions are that the applicants have actively made an effort to become integrated into Danish society, as well as satisfying a number of specific requirements. Those include not having committed serious criminal offences or owing debts to the public authorities above a certain amount. Residence permits with a view to a permanent residence permit are primarily granted to refugees and persons who have entered Denmark through Family Reunification.

Residence permits, temporary or permanent, generally carry with them the right to work in Denmark. A person can also get a permit to work in Denmark if demand necessitates foreign labour in any particular field.

In Norway this is referred to as Residence and Work Permit for the following reasons. Since Norway became a member of the European Economic Area in 1994, citizens of the 18 member countries have expanded, which has lead to simpler access to residence and employment in Norway. The simplification entails that a residence permit will in most cases provide the holder thereof with access to take up employment. Therefore the obtaining of a (separate) work permit no longer applies to this group. Students fall under the same category as EEA citizens. The application for residence permit must still

be made, but this can be done by employee or employer, from abroad or after arriving in Norway. Receiving a residence permit in Norway does not constitute grounds for a settlement permit.

Those whose countries do not fall under the EEA category must obtain either residence or work permits prior to entering Norway. This is generally done by obtaining work or promise of work, again, prior to entering Norway. Therefore, for them the general rule still applies that a person must obtain guarantee of work before entering the country.

In order to get employment in Sweden a person must first be issued a work permit. The requirements for a work permit are a written offer of employment from an employer in Sweden, guarantee from the employer of salary, insurace coverage and other details equal to Swedish practice in the profession, and accomodation arrangements in Sweden. Furthermore, the applicant must be fully prepared to leave Sweden upon finishing employment. The permit is restricted to the work the applicant initally entered the country to do, and to the initial employer.

Work permits are under normal circumstances issued for a year at a time, or if less than a year, for the period which the person has been offered employment. Permits are granted for a maximum of a year and a half if the employment is due to a temporary labour shortage. The permit may be extended up to a total stay of four years if the work is part of an international exchange.

3.2.2 Citizenship

As it is the Danish Parliament which grants citizenship, in order to be eligible applicants for Danish citizenship must satisfy certain criteria established by the Parliament. The criteria includes an age limit of 18 years, as well as a certain level of knowledge of the Danish language as documented by a language training centre or other educational establishment. The applicant must also have resided in Denmark continuously for at least nine years, eight years in the case of stateless citizens and refugees. If an applicant has committed a crime he or she cannot receive Danish citizenship until after a period of time, the length of time being determined by the severity of the crime. If the crime is of a very serious nature, a person may never be able to become a Danish citizen. The same restriction applies if a person has outstanding debts with public authorities. Young

foreign nationals with no criminal records who have lived in Denmark for at least 10 years, Danish-born citizens and citizens of other Nordic countries and may be granted citizenship by declaration, which means the above criteria do not have to be fulfilled.

It is the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration that handles the applications for Norwegian nationality. The criteria for applying is that the applicant be at least 18 years old, have lived and had permanent residence in Norway for the last seven years, have a record of good conduct, and owe no significant maintenance payments. Exemptions as to the length of residence may be made for nationals of the Nordic countries. Exemptions may also be made for a person who used to be a Norwegian national, for a person married to a Norwegian national, and in cases of "special circumstances".

Citizenship in Sweden is divided into two categories, application, also called naturalisation, and notification. A person of the age of 18 or older can be granted Swedish citizenship. Exemptions from this age requirement are made in the case of children under the age of 18, as they can become Swedish citizens along with their father and mother. Also, a child, one of whose parents is Swedish can become a citizen if the parents submit an application. Applicants must be able to prove their identity in the form of legal documents or a passport. The applicant must also have resided in Sweden for at least five consecutive years, or in the case of stateless persons and refugees, four years. For citizens of one of the Nordic countries two years of residence suffice.

3.2.3 Family Reunification

Family reunification typically includes immediate relatives, i.e. spouses, cohabiting partners, registered partners, and children under the age of 15. It involves them joining relatives in Denmark with a view to receive permanent residency. Those relatives must have a permanent address in Denmark and qualify in other ways as permanent residents in Denmark. This is allowed under the Danish Aliens Act. The right to work, i.e. work permit, is generally accompanied with the temporary residence permit. Mandatory conditions, which vary a bit depending on the category to which the applicants belong, include specifications regarding the resident's housing, income conditions, the age of both parties to a marriage to be over 24, and that they have greater affiliations with Denmark than any other country. The residence permits are initially issued for a limited

period of time. They can be extended provided the above mandatory conditions remain valid. After a number of years applicants can apply to have their temporary permit converted into a permanent one.

In Norway, close family members of people residing in Norway, i.e. spouses and registered partners, cohabitants who have lived together for at least two years, and children under the age of 18, may receive a permit for family immigration. The permit is initially granted for one year, and after three years the person may apply for a settlement permit. Requirements which must be met by the applicant whose family seeks reunification are connected to housing and subsistence, which means that housing must meet certain standards and that the applicant can provide for the family members who will be joining him or her.

Family reunification is called 'family ties' in Sweden. A person wishing to join his or her family in Sweden must apply for and receive their own residence permit. They must do so on their own, out of country. The relative in Sweden cannot take care of these applications or apply on behalf of family members. This applies to the following relations of a Swedish resident: children under the age of 18, spouses and partners, or future spouses and partners. In the case of the last category of relation, the applicant must, at an interview at an embassy or consulate, produce documentation of their relationship to the person in Sweden. In the case of children, they must be able to prove they lived together in their country of origin or domicile.

There are exceptional cases, where other relatives than those stipulated above may qualify for residence permits by reason of family ties. Further proof is required of the Swedish resident and their relatives with whom they live or lived regarding their dependence on their family and difficulty living apart from one another. Furthermore, the applicant must apply for residence in Sweden soon and not more than 10 months after their relative was granted residence permit in Sweden.

Further exceptions can be made in the case of a relative of a refugee or a person who has been granted asylum. The relative can be granted Swedish residence if he/she and the refugee/asylum seeker had a close relationship, even if they did not live together, in the country where they used to reside.

3.2.4 Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Iceland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden have all agreed to the United Nations Refugee Convention, known as the Geneva Convention. All nations resettle refugees after agreement with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Refugees who in this way enter a country are called 'quota refugees' and all countries receive them, using different methods, funds and quotas allocated by their government. Though work procedures vary, requirements for asylum seekers are the same across the sample countries. Criteria for choosing quota refugees and how many are chosen vary quite a bit from country to country. The method favoured by the Icelandic government was mentioned in section 3.1 above.

All sample countries are part of the Schengen passport-free area agreement. They, along with Finland, signed the agreement on 19th December 1996, but it has taken differing lengths of time to actually implement the co-operation. Denmark and Norway implemented the Schengen agreement by 25th March 2001. Iceland commenced implementation the same day and Sweden followed suit the day after.

3.2.5 Repatriation

Though repatriation, or return as it is called in Sweden, involves leaving the sample countries, it is included here as it is within the realm of the immigration laws.

When a country from which a refugee has fled becomes stable he or she is given option of returning there. This is called repatriation and it is practiced in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Repatriation also applies to immigrants who have entered one of the countries above before war or other calamities started in their land of origin, and who, after their home country is safe for return, decide of their own free will to move back home. Government grants are available for such people. Grants generally cover the actual move to the country of origin, and in some cases grants are also given to help those who choose to move in setting up their lives again in their native land and even to pursue studies.

3.3 Evaluation

Iceland and Scandinavia have similar laws and policies concerning immigration. Laws for immigration need to be in place, of course, but what happens after a person has

moved in to a country is also of great importance. In the Scandinavian countries the emphasis over the recent year has moved from immigration to integration.

Iceland hasn't had as much experience as the sample countries when it comes to immigration. Refugee status has only been given to a few select, and there is no evidence of repatriation being practiced there. People who come to Iceland as asylum seekers or those who enter on work permits and get residents permits can have their family join them, provided they fulfil certain requirements. The organised removal of people to their land of origin is the only thing missing from the government's immigration policy in terms of comparison to the sample countries.

The sample countries offer financial support to those immigrants who choose to move back to their countries of origin. These immigrants may have entered their host countries as asylum seekers, refugees, or labourers. In the case of the first two groups the governments see it as their duty to help them move back to their countries. Furthermore, they offer financial assistance in setting up their lives back in their home countries. This goes hand in hand with the fact that in their integration programmes, all sample countries acknowledge the fact that vocational training may be used by the immigrants in the host country, but it may also come in handy in their countries of origin, should they choose to return.

Furthermore, the Scandinavian countries are more lenient when it comes to family reunification, as the relation of the family member who desires to be reunited with someone in Scandinavia has to be proven as either "close" or the nature of their relationship such that they cannot be without one another for one reason or another.

All countries, Iceland and Scandinavia, grant Nordic citizens permission to live and work without any paperwork involved. Only for those from outside the Nordic countries and outside any other special agreements such as the EU and EEA, do special restrictions and applications apply.

All in all, Iceland and the Scandinavian the countries are similar in terms of the laws concerning immigration. Iceland has followed in the footsteps of Denmark of late in making laws regarding marriage between foreign nationals stricter. Icelandic laws in

this regard do tend to be reactionary, as they follow the trends of the Nordic countries that are reacting to actual situations there. This is all well and good, provided they aren't use to discriminate. That is the danger when it comes to traditions unfamiliar to Icelanders, such as arranged marriages. Often such marriages are fixed and involuntary, but sometimes they are actually voluntary and with general laws to cover these issues it is difficult to be fair.

The Icelandic government doesn't have a good reputation among activists and human rights fighters when it comes to asylum seekers and refugees. The Nordic countries have until recently been more accepting. Things are changing, especially in Denmark, but Denmark still does accept quota refugees. So does Iceland. The first group arrived over 30 years ago from Viet Nam. Since then almost all refugees have been from among the former Yugoslavian countries. Only last year did this trend change a bit with a group of refugees arriving from Colombia. Croats and Serbs in Iceland are often all considered refugees, when some of them actually moved to Iceland of their own volition and for various reasons. These (homogenous) groups that enter Iceland have all been settled in villages around the island, which has created little pockets of immigrant communities. This is both good and bad. Good as they have useful and needed contact one with another as their common culture enables them to understand one another in a way that others might not, but the negative part is that they tend to become inclusive and excluded as they live in small villages where integration can be hard. Only in larger villages has their settlement been successful; immigrants have generally moved from all smaller places of settlement to the larger ones.

Though immigration policies are similar, the restrictions they impose seem in some cases to be only justifiable in the Nordic countries, where as Iceland has followed their example in some regard, without having reason to, as of yet. The work which takes place after immigration is also far behind in Iceland. This is mainly to do with the lower number of immigrants to Iceland. When viewed in that context it doesn't look all that negative.

4 Government and Municipalities' Integration Policies

4.1 Integration Polices and their Implementation in Iceland

One of the premises of this thesis is that there is an obvious and necessary element missing in regards to immigrants in Iceland and their treatment as the government has not established a policy to deal with the issues of integration. In the absence of a government policy on integration, this chapter covers the independent municipalities' social integration programmes in Iceland. This section contains information about the ideology, history of the integration programmes and their management, and information about the programmes themselves and the methods of implementation. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the above, their strengths and weaknesses.

The goal of combining the native Icelanders and the immigrants into an integral whole has been set out in manifestos and proposals by the government of Iceland, as well as several cities and towns in which substantial numbers of immigrants reside. With groups of immigrants whose backgrounds vary noticeably from that of the native population in terms of religion, culture, sometimes values and sometimes appearance, it is important to explore whether and how much peoples' backgrounds and appearances effect – hamper or help – successful integration. While many other immigrants certainly also differ from the Icelanders in the manners listed above, what sets the Muslims and those of Middle Eastern origin apart is the religious and political aspect associated with Islam and the Middle East, and consequently the dangers which accompany these aspects, as perceived by those not so informed about them. It is specifically important to mention in this context the tragic events which in New York 5 years ago, the effects of which continue to be felt today with the current situations in Iraq and Afghanistan and the war on terror. These factors sustain and perpetuate the perceived threat which many consider all Muslims and people from the Middle East to be, regardless of political or religious persuasions. This, along with the media feed from neighbouring countries which have over the years had a much larger number of Muslim immigrants and immigrants from the Middle East, with its pros and cons, does tend to demonise the Muslim and Middle Eastern population, which often leads to them being discriminated against.

Professionals in the field of immigrant issues in Iceland interpret a recent survey carried out by Gallup[40] showing anti-foreign sentiment on the rise as being copied sentiments from mainland Europe, a spill-over effect of the real troubles those countries have had, i.e. the headscarf issue in France, education and youth discipline/delinquency issues in Denmark, honour murders within immigrant families in Sweden and Norway, and the recent hate-murders in the Netherlands. These are issues of which Icelanders are becoming increasingly aware and afraid. That is to say, aware of events that have occurred in other countries and afraid that they will take place in Iceland, but as of yet no such events have materialised. If integration is successful in its aim and implementation, it will hopefully prevent, as far as it is possible, conflicts based on ignorance or racism.

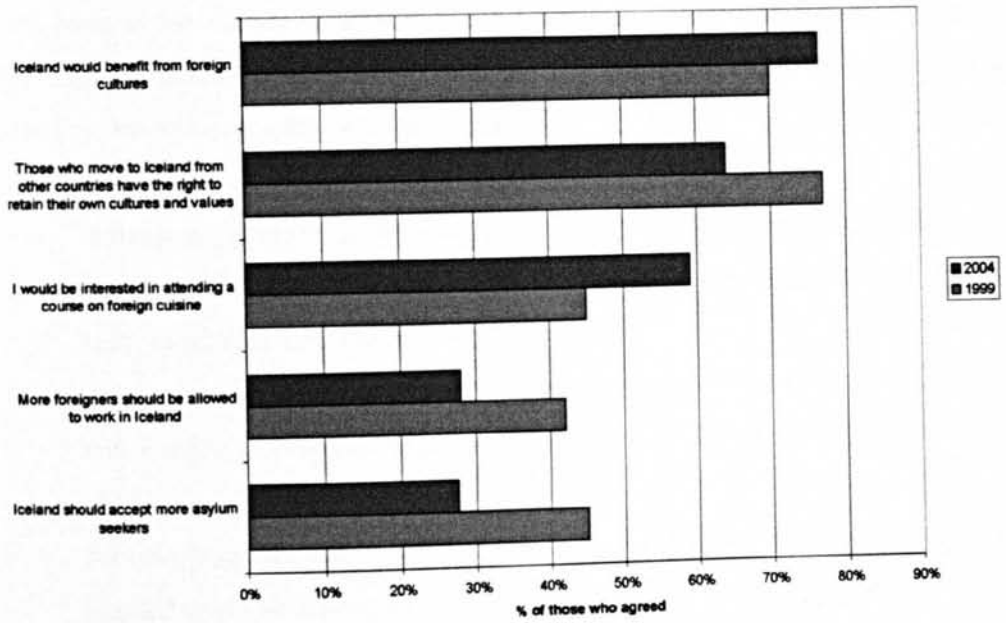

Figure 1 Results of Gallup Survey

[40] www.gallup.is/index.jsp (December 1st 2004.) The survey was conducted by IMG Gallup in Iceland in November 2004 on behalf of the Intercultural Centre. The results show among other things that while in 1999 58% of the nation disagreed or highly disagreed to the statement that more foreigners should be allowed to receive employment in Iceland, the figures from 2004 show that 72% of the nation are of this opinion.

I am her showing the negative results of the survey – other possible answers were agree and highly agree. Other survey questions and answers from 2004 were: *Iceland would benefit from foreign cultures* – to which 23.5% disagreed or highly disagreed; *Those who move to Iceland from other countries have the right to retain their own cultures and values* – 35.8% disagreed or highly disagreed; *I would be interested in attending a course on foreign cuisine* – 41% disagreed or highly disagreed; *More foreigners should be allowed to work in Iceland* – 71.9% disagreed or highly disagreed; and *Iceland should accept more asylum seekers* – 72.4% disagreed or highly disagreed.

As mass movements of immigrants into Iceland are a relatively new phenomenon integration efforts are still on a very basic level. It is safe to say that Iceland, the government and municipalities have a long way to go in this area.

The government of Iceland has as recently as March of 2004 drafted a proposal[41] regarding services to be rendered to immigrants in Iceland, including the structure and organising of those services and how they ought to be effectuated. This proposal was commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs in November of 2003, and written by a work group comprising employees and appointees from the above ministry as well as a representative from the independently run Intercultural Centre and an appointee from the Ministry of Justice. A meeting with stake holders was also held in January 2005 to discuss further implementation and delegate responsibilities. Their draft, though considered to contain suggestions only for services that should be offered to immigrants and does not focus on integration, does however contain valuable information. The tasks and results of the group are categorised as

- making suggestions as to how to increase co-operation and co-ordinate the services provided by those who work the most with the immigrants, namely the state, municipalities, and other organisations;
- defining and prioritising the parts of those services which ought to be offered and suggest a possible relegation of function of differing parties mentioned above;
- forming suggestions in regards to areas where services to foreigners residing in Iceland might be needed and how that service might best be organised.[42]

Though it seems obvious that with increased social, governmental and communal services due to awareness of immigrants' and Icelanders' divergent needs comes a smoother integration, nowhere in the Ministry of Social Affairs' work group's suggestion is immigrant integration actually mentioned as the reason for the groups study and suggestions. They did, however, read and discuss several studies and papers

[41] www.felagsmalaraduneyti.is/malaflokkar/utlendingar/utgefid-efni/nr/1544 (December 7, 2004) Though much of the material on the Ministry's site can be found in English as well as Icelandic, this proposal to which the link refers, is not to be found in English. Translation by author of thesis.

[42] www.felagsmalaraduneyti.is/malaflokkar/utlendingar/utgefid-efni/nr/1544 (December 7, 2004)

on the issue of integration, which indicates their intent to facilitate smoother integration of immigrants with their proposals being put into action. Yet, the document is vague and any clear information as to who should do what is missing.

In their final analysis the group suggested the establishing of a National Centre for Immigrant Services, *Landsmiðstöð um þjónustu við innflytjendur*, which would combine the efforts and expertise of those familiar with integration from all over the country to work in unison at increasing awareness and services. The site chosen by the government for this centre is in a town called Ísafjörður in the West of Iceland. Ísafjörður has over the past few years received a large number of immigrant groups, both refugees and migrant workers and therefore has a rather large immigrant community. This was done as part of government policy to spread their offices around the country and move away from centralisation. However, as most immigrants actually live in the area around the capital city of Reykjavík, the choice of location has been somewhat criticised.

While immigrants live in most towns and villages in Iceland by now, only the City of Reykjavík, and the neighbouring Kópavogur, the largest town in Iceland, have formulated specific policies regarding the integration of foreigners. Unlike the Ministry of Social Affairs, Reykjavík and Kópavogur mention integration as the main reason for their service proposals. Reykjavík uses as a guide to its proposal the vision that the Reykjavík community may enjoy the multiplicity of life and culture where knowledge, broad-mindedness, equality and mutual respect will be discernible in the communication between people of different backgrounds[43]. It lays out some guidelines whereby this might be achieved and makes it its goal to:

- Reduce prejudice toward foreigners and increase the city's inhabitants' knowledge of multicultural society;
- Ensure that institutions guarantee immigrants' full access to their services;
- Ensure that children of foreign descent will be able to use and benefit from the educational system on an equal level with other children;

[43] *Fjölmenningarstefna*, Mars 7 2003. Reykjavíkurborg. English: Multicultural Policy, March 7 2003. City of Reykjavík.

- Ensure that all immigrants are given the chance to study Icelandic at the correct level, and that they are encouraged to do so;
- Ensure that the knowledge and education of immigrants benefits themselves as well as the city's inhabitants;
- Ensure that the inhabitants of Reykjavík take advantage of the society's cultural diversity;
- Ensure that city officials have access to reliable information regarding the immigrants' living and working conditions, social conditions, etc;
- Ensure that immigrants know their rights and duties;
- Ensure correct procedure if a person's rights are violated on grounds of ethnicity / origin.

As for the implementation of these goals, in the first instance the responsibility of carrying out these tasks was that of City Hall's Development and Family Department, which monitored the co-ordination of the various city organisations in conjunction with Reykjavík's Advisor for Equality. The Intercultural Centre mentioned earlier functions partially to provide the actual services mentioned in the guidelines above, but mainly it is there to provide people with information as to where to go to seek the services they need and want. The Intercultural Centre is a public limited company owned and managed by the Reykjavík section of the Icelandic Red Cross Society. It was established in 2001 by Reykjavík and the neighbouring towns of Kópavogur, Hafnarfjörður and Seltjarnarnes. These all work as partners under short but renewable contracts.

As for follow-up, since the guidelines are still so very new the monitoring and reporting stages have not produced much if any information.

Interestingly, the harshest criticism in regards to the integration of foreigners and also regarding immigration comes from current or former professional in the fields. Their criticism is directed at the Icelandic government and the media, not at the immigrants themselves. The main gripes are about the apathy of the government in issues concerning immigrants and the media circus which distorts the truth. Georg Kr.

Lárusson was the Chief of the Directorate of Immigration from 1999 to 2005[44]. He commented that there simply is no satisfactory policy in place in regards to receiving foreigners. He further stated that laws are certainly in existence which guide officials in terms of who may enter and who may not, etc, but as far as treating people fairly, providing them with opportunity to prove themselves, have decent lives, and in all other humane aspects, the government has some serious catching up to do. Immigrants in Iceland have long been viewed as a convenient and cheap source of labour. As such they have been welcomed, to a degree, but since they are more than simply labourers, more work needs to be done to help them settle and have meaningful lives as valued members of society.

In a newspaper article covering a *Reykjavik Academy's* journalists' symposium and in which Lárusson spoke, he said that until now, because of lack of policy, the government has been "trusting in God and good fortune" [45] when it comes to immigration issues. By that he means that the government waits until something goes wrong before acting or establishing policies concerning immigrants, all the while hoping all will go well. Amongst other things the government hopes that as the country has received "good foreigners" so far, it will continue to do so. Hope isn't a necessary element in successful immigration and integration, but enlightened policies are as are their implementations. According to Lárusson, lack of ambition on the government's part shows that the government does not care about the people but only for their services. Their sole contribution is seen as being cheap and needed labour, and the government is not willing to invest in their future. Iceland has received many an immigrant because they are, as stated, needed for work. They therefore contributed economically, and these types of contributions are appreciated, and no efforts made to benefit further from their presence in the land.

The above symposium dealt with journalism coverage of immigrants, asylum seekers, and in general the issues of foreign nationals in Iceland. Lárusson further criticises the

[44] In 2003 the name changed, in Icelandic only, from *Útlendingaeftirlitið* (loosely, Patrol on Foreign Nationals) to *Útlendingastofnun* (loosely, Organisation or Institution for Foreign Nationals). This occurred after changes in the laws were implemented in January 2003 which more clearly defined the work and lays out the responsibilities of the Directorate.

[45] www.mbl.is 7 February 2005. "Getum ekki bara stólað á Guð og lukkuna öllu lengur." ("We Cannot Merely Rely on God and Good Fortune for Much Longer.")

media, which he says "doesn't exactly make the job [of the Directorate of Immigration] easy". There are certain laws with which the Directorate must comply, all drawn up by the Ministry of Justice, under whose jurisdiction the Directorate falls. The media has attacked the Directorate's work especially harshly when it comes to asylum seekers. As the media features such stories they refer to harsh asylum laws without understanding the legal aspects. Immigration laws will not be discussed in great detail in this research. It is sufficient to say that though Iceland has been criticised more than once for its hard stance on asylum seekers, it is true that due to the country's geographical location most people who come to Iceland have either set foot in another Schengen country or have already applied for asylum and been rejected in the country they arrived from. For these reasons they are lawfully denied permission to apply for asylum. It only adds to the problem when journalists write about issues out of context and with little legal understanding of the matters they are dealing with, says Lárusson.

The employment rates of foreigners in Iceland are excellent, with about 96% of immigrants employed. Most people who enter are not asylum seekers or free loaders, but people ready and willing to make a contribution. Many of those are also highly educated yet in many cases unable to get jobs in their field of study or profession, mostly due to language barriers. "Icelanders are preoccupied with peoples' Icelandic language skills"[46], said anthropologist Guðrún Margrét Guðmundsdóttir at a symposium regarding immigrants. Icelanders display this obsession in the way they place great emphasis on speaking the Icelandic language correctly in order to *be* Icelandic. People pay attention to how others speak and criticise them for making the slightest error. So deep seated is this obsession that foreigners are not understood when speaking Icelandic, because in general the Icelandic ear or Icelandic sensibilities have not become accustomed to understanding the language if not spoken flawlessly.

At the above symposium held in April of this 2005 by leading academic organisations, UniCom, *Mannfræðifélags Íslands* (The Icelandic Anthropological Society) and *Reykjavíkur Akademían* (The Reykjavík Academy), some suggestions for integration were made. The suggestions which all agreed on concerned the Icelandic language and

[46] www.mbl.is. Anna G. Ólafsdóttir April 2005. "Aðstoða þarf unga innflytjendur í framhaldsskólum." (English: "Academic Assistance Must Be Given to Young Immigrants in Higher Education.")

teaching it to foreigners. The general consensus was that the teaching of the Icelandic language to immigrants of all ages should be emphasised, so they can move into the work force with confidence, and be part of society without discrimination. The concerns raised in this regard are focused on the fact that programmes are simply not in place to assist the immigrants in doing this. The emphasis seems to be on what immigrants must do, such as learning Icelandic, and not so much on what government should do to help. Many workers' unions reimburse their members upon completion of the courses taken, including but not exclusive to Icelandic for foreigners. One suggestion is that the government might want to aid the newcomers in similar ways, maybe by encouraging employers to give their workers time off to learn Icelandic, which might be a tremendous help and financial contribution to an otherwise potentially expensive and time consuming course of study.

The fact that the city of Reykjavík, despite its lofty integration goals, recently shut down a large language school, a municipal school that was funded by the city and had a large Icelandic for Foreigners department with experienced teachers and original material, seems to fly in the face of the city's ideology regarding education for all. The funds were redistributed to another organisation that offers Icelandic lessons, making it harder for foreigners to find classes that are reasonably priced, suit their schedules and location. Study courses and programmes that get subsidies from the government, good as they may be in theory, are often directed at workers in specific fields so they learn words only associated with work. The danger in such narrowly focused programmes is potentially that peoples' place of work may very well become the only place they can make themselves perfectly understood. Other courses focus too much or solely on grammar and the academic approach of language learning. Needless to say any methods, when too limited, do not help people in becoming functioning members of society in all its breadth and depth.

The price of courses is yet another matter. Foreign nationals who want to receive permanent residency can do so after three years of dwelling in the country and after having taken 150 hours worth of Icelandic courses. This is a requirement for application, yet the applicants themselves must pay for the courses. Now that the options have been narrowed due to the shutting down of the largest language school in Reykjavík, shopping around for the cheapest and best is harder to do. Again, as the time

spent in classes could have been used for working and making, not spending money, many opt simply not to learn the language and postpone indefinitely their rights to apply for permanent residency. Or if they really desire to obtain residency, they may attend classes, tired after a long day at work. An interesting note: even though they don't necessarily learn much, if language students sit through 85% of their Icelandic lessons, they receive their diplomas, and thus the requirements have been fulfilled. This again shows that in policy making there is little regard or respect for the foreigners and their status and well being. As such, there is precious little point to the requirements made. It seems obvious that the language requirement isn't necessarily supportive of someone acquiring language skills.

Laws are often modelled upon laws passed in countries with more experience than Iceland in the field of immigration and integration, and more trouble, such as Denmark and other European countries. The official responses to crisis or events have more often than not been modelled in that fashion. An example of that is the newly passed so-called '24 years-of-age rule' which the Icelandic government adapted from the Danish law which states that in order to get married persons must be 24 years of age or older. This law was passed originally in order to hinder forced marriages, which to Western sensibilities is a good thing, of course. However, this was a direct response to events which had happened in Denmark, while in Iceland no real issues concerning this had discussed, other than the fear that it might happen. In Denmark however it was a problem, and though the law was disputed there and criticised as racist, it had great relevancy to what was occurring and recurring in society. Fake marriages to obtain residency or citizenship did and still do occur in Iceland, but the matter of forced marriages was not.

Another suggestion from the aforementioned symposium concerns young immigrants and children of immigrants who have reached high school and college age. It suggests adapting the school system favourably so youngsters of immigrant origin and those wishing to pursue further education can actually participate and enjoy the benefits. As it is now, some consider further education unnecessarily difficult for immigrants. Students who do not speak the language well or even at all, and are new to the Icelandic methods used in education are nevertheless excepted to achieve and put out the same work as indigineous students. Adapting the system to those young people who need it, in terms

of the language used to teach them or the subjects they are required to take, would make a tremendous difference for their future in the country. They could then pursue paths of study and careers which otherwise would have been closed to them due to lack of education. No one suggested that learning Icelandic isn't important, but giving these kids a fighting chance to improve their skills and academic abilities on equal ground with Icelandic kids is key to their integration and inclusion. This can be done by lowering the Icelandic language requirement and offering more general subject classes in languages other than Icelandic.

4.2 Integration Policies and their Implementation in Scandinavia

This chapter covers the government and municipalities' integration programmes in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Each section contains the ideology and history of the integration programmes, that of the associated ministries and how they are organised, and information about the programmes themselves. The chapter concludes with a comparative evaluation of the separate policies above.

The sections for each country differ in lengths and details of information. This is mainly due to the fact that the information was most if not all gleaned from official websites which issue differing amounts of information. Nevertheless, as much as it is possible the chapter contains similar information on the programmes in each country.

The information for the section on Denmark[47] was extracted from the relevant Ministry's web page, as was the information regarding the integration policies of Norway[48] and Sweden[49].

4.2.1 Denmark

The Danish government has concluded that knowledge of the Danish language and employment is an absolutely vital part of integration, both economical and social. This applies to any and all foreign nationals entering the country with intent to stay for a while, whether they are economic migrants, people reuniting with family members or

[47] www.inm.dk All references and quotes within Danish section are taken herefrom unless otherwise stated.
[48] www.udi.no All references and quotes within Norwegian section are taken herefrom unless otherwise stated.
[49] www.integrationsverket.se All references and quotes within Swedish section are taken herefrom unless otherwise stated.

refugees and asylum seekers. The government's goal is to aide immigrants "in acquiring the necessary Danish language proficiency and knowledge on Danish culture and society so as to make them participating and contributory citizens on an equal footing with other citizens of society".

To this end, many measures have been taken. One step was an enforced legislation banning discrimination on grounds of ethnicity or even language ability. Judging someone's competence in the Danish language was part of that, as this is highly subjective. Despite this, the government announced in 2001 that municipalities could do better in this area, as about 60.000 people of foreign origin were unemployed due to lack of knowledge of the Danish language. In November 2000 the Minister of the Interior at the time set up The Danish Think Tank on Integration to "clarify the integration of foreigners in Danish society, analyse future trends in the number of foreigners and address the social consequences." The government subsequently approved of the Think Tank's definitions as appropriate benchmarks, as well as approving the criteria it established of what constitutes successful integration. The seven point criteria are as follows:

1. Danish skills and education
2. Employment
3. Economic independence
4. Lack of discrimination
5. Contact between foreigners and Danes
6. Participation in political life, and
7. Fundamental values and norms.[50]

The Danish government's current strategy is particularly focused on the economic integration of foreigners. The Think Tank's findings lead them to conclude that education, employment and economic independence are crucial, and participation in the labour market is the most important route to success in terms of becoming a part of

[50] This refers to the immigrants learning about human rights and societal norms as held by native Danes and the Danish government.

society in every way. Education (vocational and language), employment and economic independence are the path to inclusion and meaningful integration.
In short, in order for immigrants to integrate successfully the above points must be fulfilled. Clearly some points must be fulfilled by the immigrants' themselves, while others fall under the responsibility of the government and municipalities, and also the society in general.

Delegation plays a large role in the success of the programmes set up by the Danish government so far. To help municipalities in their role, certain initiative programmes within the above criteria and encompassing the four themes listed below have been set up by the government, where municipalities and volunteer organisations and individuals have been mobilised to carry out the tasks locally. Some are affiliated with religious institutions or schools; some are made up of people in neighbourhoods. Financial support and achievement recognition are but two ways in which the government encourages them these in their work. Among the programmes initiated were language training, benefit programmes with fines or punishment for non-attendance, and subsidised work. The main objective is that:

> [a]ll citizens in Denmark should have access to working and social life – also our new citizens who have come to Denmark as refugees and immigrants. The Government intends to integrate new citizens so that they can take part in working and social life on an equal footing with the remaining part of the population. Today the proportion of our new citizens not on the labour market is far too large. If the new citizens' ties with the labour market were like those of the remaining part of the population, 60,000 more people would have a job. It is a waste of resources if these people do not get a job. Refugees and immigrants are citizens bringing qualities and competencies needed by our enterprises and the Danish society. [...] In the Government's opinion it is beyond all doubt that work is the key to successful integration. The Government presents its proposal on how to make both newcomers like refugees and immigrants, who have lived in Denmark for some time, active and equal partners in society. [...] The proposal of the Government can be summarised in four main themes:
>
> Short-cut to the labour market

Effective Danish courses

Better utilisation of qualifications

Integration - a common concern.

The Ministry for Refugee, Immigrants and Integration Affairs[51] was created in November of 2001, and the minister is currently Rikke Hvilshøj. When the ministry was created, several fields of responsibility were transferred to it from other existing ministries. The tasks which the new ministry oversees and is responsible for are:

- Matters concerning the Aliens Act, the Act on Integration of Aliens in Denmark (the Integration Act), the Repatriation Act, the Act on the Board for Ethnic Equality, international cooperation in the refugee, immigration and integration field, and matters concerning finances, statistics and analyses within the refugee, immigration and integration field
- Matters concerning Danish nationality
- Matters concerning the Act on Teaching Danish as a Second Language for Adult Foreigners and others, and the Language Centres
- Integration of ethnic minorities working in the state sector, including matters concerning grants for job-related Danish lessons at workplaces
- Matters concerning the State Secretariat for Urban Regeneration (*Statens Sekretariat for Kvarterloft*), implementation of proposals from the Urban Committee (*Byudvalget*) and matters concerning urban political initiatives
- Matters concerning the Special Team for Maladjusted Juveniles (*Udrykningsholdet*), implementation of proposals from the Urban Committee and matters concerning increased efforts to help socially vulnerable refugees and immigrants
- Matters concerning labour market political initiatives for immigrants and refugees, increased integration efforts, application of pool funds for special projects for vulnerable groups of the unemployed, including ethnic minorities, removal of barriers against employment of immigrants and refugees, and matters concerning a more open labour market for refugees and immigrants

[51] *Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration* in Danish.

- Matters concerning the grant for bridging the employment gap between ethnic minorities and the labour market.

The ministry has four departments, the Administration Department, the Integration Department, the Immigration Department, and the e-Government Department. Each of these is organised into several subdivisions. As can be seen somewhat by the ministry's departments and responsibilities, the emphasis within Danish Integration Policy is on immigrants' participation in the economy and society by being gainfully employed. The ministry's belief, established after years of experience with immigrants and trial-runs with different integration programmes, has already been established above. Its fundamental tenants are that only with active participation in the work force can a person be truly integrated. The reasons behind this conclusion are mainly three.

Firstly, figures have shown that more immigrants are unemployed than indigenous Danes. A lack of knowledge of the Danish language is too often a deterrent to employers for giving immigrants a chance at a job. Secondly, it has been seen that those immigrants who do find jobs most often end up working with Danes or others with whom they interact in Danish, thus improving their vital language skills on the job. Thirdly, those who possess certain vocational, or otherwise, skills do not find suitable jobs and are not happy to work just anywhere, see that their skills are going to waste as no opportunities arise for them to utilise what they know. Neither do opportunities arise for them to learn new skills or expand on old ones. Their futures seem unclear and their lives fruitless, which is more than likely to work against a person's interest in integrating.

As stated above, many people have the skills needed by employers but cannot find suitable jobs due to language barriers. Due to high numbers of immigrants, the Danish government has, through trial and error, come up with several schemes and plans to encourage integration over the years. These schemes have always included participation of the state itself in the form of housing and financial support. They have also included Danish lessons, which now have become mandatory, and free of charge, and volunteer outreach programmes. Yet, the results, though noticeable, have not been altogether to their satisfaction. It is clear though with the new ministry being created in such detail that integration and the issues concerning refugees and asylum seekers are a high

priority. The efforts made there by the minister, staff and appointees are more and more outreach-oriented, as well as pointed in the direction of the younger generations.

The most recent development within the integration field is new plan named *A New Chance for Everyone*. With it the Danish Government hopes to

> [...] enhance its current integration efforts through several new initiatives intended to boost education and employment among immigrants and their descendants, counter ghettoisation in vulnerable neighbourhoods and prevent and combat crime.

What the new plan entails is a route to vocational jobs for those who are unemployed and whose language skills are lacking. This brand new plan, which came into effect in January 2006, will be overseen by a team of four consultants, working within the Integration Service. For the next two years they will help the municipalities in their integration efforts. They are all experts in their fields of vocation. These consultants also helped in devising the plan.

The new plan applies, and appeals, mainly to those immigrants who would likely not have studied much after the obligatory 15 years of schooling, and might not have been able to find employment to their liking. With the new plan they have the chance to learn a vocation of their choice. They will be taught and monitored by masters of whatever trade they choose. This is of course made possible in part by the fact that many industries actually need people for the jobs. Municipalities are asked to participate in this new plan, if possible, and the request was made officially by letters of invitation from the ministry. In September 2005 the Minister of Integration and the four integration consultants invited all leaders of municipalities in Denmark to a series of three conferences on integration. They find that speaking to all involved, not only mayors, for instance, is more beneficial, as all must learn about the task at hand.

As part of the scheme the employers receive subsidies for receiving young people for on-the-job training programmes, so they do not have to pay them full wages whilst the youngsters are being trained. Whereas before these young people would have been required to go to specialised schools to learn the vocation and read text books in

Danish, they now learn on the job, all the while speaking Danish with their co-trainees and co-workers. Before the change the training lasted from three to six months, but the duration of training has been lengthened to twelve months to better train them, and the school attendance requirement has been revoked.

Another new development is the rethinking of Danish education for those who have been traumatised in one way or other. As many of Denmark's immigrants are refugees and asylum seekers, they pose a new problem to teachers of the Danish language. Language skills place high on the scale of importance. It is an important way for immigrants of becoming valuable members of society, and not to become secluded and excluded. Danish teachers have found that people who have experienced the atrocities of war, famine, and natural disasters, to name but a few traumatic experiences, are a difficult group to teach. Add to this the fact that some of them may be ill-educated, maybe semi- or illiterate, and the efforts for them to process what the teacher is saying doubles. The teachers, the point has been made, must take the pupils' backgrounds into consideration when teaching them, whatever they are being taught.

With the language being so essential to the integration of foreign nationals, the Danish government has established a rule that to become a permanent resident an immigrant must complete 150 hours worth of Danish courses. These courses are to be on offer from the municipalities in which the immigrants live, and they have a right to receive the first three years of tuition for free. It is up to the municipalities whether they administer a tuition fee after the initial three years, but they are encouraged to facilitate studying in every way.

The main point in Danish government's integration programmes involves an introduction programme which comprises an individual contract, a training course in social affairs, Danish lessons and a so-called activation programme. This programme is to be offered by municipalities, to which the responsibilities have been delegated, to immigrants who are not citizens of the EU or the Nordic countries. The programme's purpose is to help the newcomer learn the Danish language and become self-reliant and ready for the labour market as soon as possible. The entire programme is free of charge. Attendance in classes and so forth is mandatory for those receiving any social benefits.

The individual contract is meant to be binding and is drawn up by the participant personally and someone from the municipality. Others may be involved but it is of utmost importance that it is done carefully so as to ensure it covers activities and offers that are relevant and of interest to the individual. If, for instance, the immigrant knows some Danish already he or she need not start at level one. The contract is also meant to help identify interests and skills needed or possessed, relevant to getting a job.

The individual is encouraged to take the contract seriously and stress that his or her wishes be taken into consideration. This is so as to help the immigrants develop and use their skills. Though the programme is aimed at integration of immigrants in Denmark, it may allow for the possibility that the immigrant may one day return to his or her country of origin. They may therefore undertake a course of study or training which they know they can utilise once they have returned to their own country, if they for some reason choose not to remain in Denmark.

4.2.2 Norway

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KRD) is the ministry in charge of the Directorate of Immigration[52], as well as the newly established Directorate of Integration and Diversity, which began operations on 1 January 2006. The latter was established as result of the KRD wanting to assess means of strengthening the integration efforts already in place, with an eye on long-term integration. A consultant company proposed a restructuring of the administration of immigration and integration, and as a result the directorate was established in December 2004. The mandate of the new directorate is as follows:

> The new Directorate will be the expert body on integration and cultural diversity and will act as a coordinating body in relation to other directorates. The Directorate will be subject to political control, and will work on strategies to develop a good multicultural society. Another important task for the Directorate will be to coordinate implementation of integration policy and the policy for inclusion and diversity at the Directorate level[53].

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[52] *Utlendingsdirektoratet* or the *UDI* in Norwegian.
[53] www.udi.no

The new directorate will have its own regional offices. During the establishment process the UDI has a role to play in working with the new directorate and the KRD by providing experience and know-how, as well as serving as the structure on which the new directorate's regional offices' structure will be based.

The UDI, however, is the national authority and central administration body in the field of integration. The keywords used in describing the UDI's activities with immigrants in the Norwegian society are equal rights, participation and integration.

Within the UDI there are several different departments, five to be precise, each delegated different responsibilities having to do with immigrants and the organisation surrounding such work. The five departments are the Administration Department, the Asylum Department, the Integration Department (INA), the Residence Department and the Strategy and Documentation Department (SODA). An additional office, the Information Office, is also directly under the Director General. The Director General of the UDI and its five departments is currently Mr Trygve G. Nordby.

"Equal rights, participation and integration are key words describing the Directorate of Immigration's activities with immigrants in the Norwegian society." The UDI's work is planned and executed with a view to some very specific rules or values, which are their so called core values. This works as their guide in all integration work and other work having to do with immigrants. These three core values are dignity, professionalism, and comprehensive approach.

The first of the three, dignity, emphasises the fact that it is people who are the subject of the UDI's decisions. In order for them to implement human policies, the UDI must focus on, for instance, developing good communications systems and work processing, as well as providing clear information to ensure all are dealt with fairly and to everyone's satisfaction, in as much as this is possible. This actually applies to internal parties, employees, just as much as it does to external parties, the clients. Professionalism, the second core value, is needed for the UDI to be able to implement and contribute to human policies. Often times the field in which it is engaged evokes strong feelings in communities. As the implementing branch of immigration legislation and part of the central government administration, the UDI's aim is to be perceived as a

professional body, providing the best objective and fair service possible. As last but not least of the three core values, the goal of a comprehensive approach plays a role of shedding light on the interplay between work tasks. The UDI's tasks are in fact rather torn between being the regulating or controlling arm of immigration as well as implementing measures aimed at facilitating integration. Therefore, conscious and informed choices must be made, balancing the UDI's work between quality and quantity. It is their belief that conscious choices can only be made when people see and are informed as to the connection between the directorate's varying and many tasks. Furthermore, their comprehensive and balanced approach enables them to "contribute to public debate to ensure impartiality and balance in the immigration field."

The way the UDI manages the work done within its realms is to use the last core value, a comprehensive approach, as the link between the two other values of dignity and professionalism. All employees are aware of the goals and their interconnectedness, and by being aware realise that the values create a balanced whole which will help them achieve their three main objectives, which are 1) to deal with all cases and tasks within reasonable time, 2) provide a satisfactory user service, and 3) develop a flexible organisation.

The UDI is the national/central expert authority in the field of integration. Furthermore, it is

> [] responsible for reporting on the situation of immigrants in the municipalities through annual status reports (municipal reports) based on interviews with representatives of the local authorities and immigrant organisations.

In terms of specific integration activities, the UDI's work and focus has been developed in response to an increase in the immigration population over the last few years. Due to the increase a need arose for an efficient integration policy. It fell on the UDI's shoulders to provide knowledge and support to municipal authorities around the country, as well as to others working within the field of immigrant integration.

Two main areas are the focus of the UDI's integration work. Firstly, the development of qualification programmes which help immigrants participate quicker in regular working life, education and society in general, and secondly, combating racism and

discrimination and breaking down barriers in the community which "prevents immigrant backgrounds from participating in Norwegian society on an equal footing with Norwegians". To this end the UDI offers services such as the Interdisciplinary Advisory Service and the Interpreting Service to their clients.

The first one has among its main tasks to help local authorities

- in acute conflict situations where xenophobia or racially-motivated violence or harassment appears to be among the problems
- to survey and analyse problems and outline possible solutions
- to implement preventive measures to counteract xenophobia, racially-motivated violence and/or harassment

Local authorities, police, local administrators and politicians share responsibility and have a "central role to play in preventing and stopping undesirable behaviour and in promoting positive social development for all inhabitants". According to the UDI's website, statistics from the experience gained in the service's first three years of work show that conflict levels have been reduced in those communities which have used the service. It was for that purpose which the UDI established the service in 1996, to "ensure that local public agencies received[d] expert advise" in conflict situations.

Within in the Advisory Service is a network of people from various professional backgrounds. They have extensive experience in working with conflicts where racism and xenophobia are the cause or among the causes.

The Interpreting Service is a tool used to attain good communication, which is viewed a prerequisite in all stages of successful integration. Adequate communication here means "communication that complies with the laws and regulations governing their work". The service has as one of its aims to "increase awareness of the responsibilities the public service department and agencies have through their information and guidance obligations, also when interacting with minority language users". Furthermore, the reason for their emphasis on interpretation is that it has been shown that wrong or flawed use of an interpreter may be an indirect manner or source of discrimination.

One of the main aims of the UDI is to establish quality assurance within the interpreting sector and organise the interpreting service thoroughly, as due to its complex nature interpretation in the public sector has been more or less unregulated as well as hampered, much due to lack of knowledge about the actual task and role of the interpreters.

Financial matters have also hitherto hampered work in the interpretation field. The UDI wants to improve in providing information to important user groups in the public sector. An important stage in the realisation of the above goals is strengthening the public interpreting services which now offer interpretation via monitors, in order to make qualified translators more available through out the country. This project is financed by the UDI.

Just like in Denmark language skills are an important issue. Poor Norwegian language skills are one reason why immigrants find it hard to find jobs in Norway. Though within the law there is an act which prohibits discrimination when hiring employees, a prominent reason for not wanting to hire non-Western people is the employers' scepticism towards them. To combat this scepticism, the UDI has done more than just encourage recruitment of immigrants; it has encouraged recruitment with a twist.

> The UDI [] encourages local authorities to recruit persons with immigrant backgrounds to high-visibility positions in their local communities. In this way they may serve as role models for others.

Another programme which has been developed, the introductory programme, is quite specific and aimed at individuals rather than groups. That is to say, each newcomer who participates in it will along with an advisor tailor make his or her own programme, suited to their individual needs and wants, similar to the one in Denmark. "Newcomer" is a term used for a newly arrived foreign national between eighteen and fifty-five years of age who needs qualifications and who has been settled in a municipality for less than 2 years when the municipal authorities make their decision about their participation in the programme. In more detail though, the parliament has decided that the following are eligible to take part in the introductory programme:

- Resettlement refugees
- Refugees with asylum
- Asylum seekers who have been granted residence on humanitarian grounds
- Persons with collective protection
- Persons who have been granted family reunification with a person from group 1, 2 or 4.

To be included in this provision, it is a requirement that the person living in Norway has not resided in a municipality for more than five years at the time the application is made. If a person is granted family reunification with someone with residence on humanitarian grounds, he or she has the right and obligation to an introductory programme, if permit for reunification was granted before 1 July 2005 and if the applicant arrived in Norway before that date.

Once the municipality has settled the newcomer and decided that they must participate in the programme, this being within three months of them being settled in the municipality, the local authorities must provide the introductory programme to the immigrant, free of charge.

The general rules stipulate that the programme must be for a whole year and must at a minimum include a course in the Norwegian language, social studies and some measures of preparing the person for further studies or for working life. As the emphasis is on getting the person ready for Norwegian society, relative freedom and different options exist within the framework so as to be adaptable to the individual's goals. Some flexibility regarding time limits exists, so the programme may last up to two years and under special circumstances be extended to three years.

The introductory programme helps people make plans for their futures in Norway. The goal of the programme is to help the participants find employment more quickly upon its completion, or, for those who want to take the academic route, to help them get the education they need to become financially self-reliant. Things the participants will become familiar with through the programme include working life and how it functions in Norway, opportunities in Norway in general (but more specifically in their

municipalities), Norwegian society, the local community and the educational and employment options in the municipality.

Within the organisation of the programme, the participants are well provided for, socially and financially. Firstly, they are assigned a contact person or programme advisor with whom they will consult in drawing up an individual programme. The Red Cross and other NGOs in conjunction with some, not all, municipalities also offer a service called refugee guide. The guide is a volunteer whose task it is to introduce the newcomer to the local community. They are a personal guide, an individual from the community, who can play an important role in helping the newcomer build his or her social network, along with offering an opportunity for the newcomer to practice their Norwegian and learn about happenings and opportunities in the municipality. The volunteers are matched up with the individuals by the NGOs, according to qualifications, wishes, needs and expectations.

The programme gives people the rights and the obligations to attend full-time, and so they get an introductory programme allowance, of which they pay tax, though it does not contribute towards a pension. They also receive five weeks of holiday, and are allowed to take on extra work. Money will be deducted from the newcomers' allowance if they do not attend. Child benefits are available for those with children, though those who need day care for their children will have to pay for it themselves. They will receive the same reimbursements as other parents of young children do. Housing allowance grants have been available to participants since September 2004.

A new law regarding language education came into affect in 2005. It stipulates that anyone entering Norway after 1 September 2005 must complete 300 hours of Norwegian language courses. The courses are provided by local municipalities and the new immigrants have up to three years to finish their courses of study. This leads to entitling the immigrants to obtaining settlement permits and, further down the line, Norwegian citizenship. A provision is made for those who need longer to learn the language, as it is possible to apply for a further 2700 hours of Norwegian language courses. Again the reasons behind this programme are to further peoples' integration into society, economically and socially. The course is free of charge to the newcomers.

4.2.3 Sweden

The Swedish Integration Board[54] was founded by the Swedish government on 1 June 1998 to replace the Immigration Office. The head of the board is currently the director-general Andreas Carlgren. The change from Immigration Policy to Integration Policy was made the year before with the country's emphasis moving from issues of immigration to the more holistic and comprehensive approach of integration. The underlying reason was a change in immigration patterns in Sweden. Typically, the foreigners entering Sweden were mainly labour immigrants, but around 1980 that changed and most of the immigrants were refugees and asylum seekers. Much help was given but no scheme in place to promote the newcomers' self-sufficiency. In some cases municipalities placed the care of the refugees in the social welfare system which sent the message to other residents of the country that refugees and asylum seekers, and by default, immigrants in general, were people who needed help and looking after. The attitude this created was not a desirable one and not conducive for bridging cultural gaps or furthering economic and societal development of both people and municipalities. Therefore changes were needed.

The Swedish government changed its approach so as to further the country along and curb the influx of problems associated with immigrants and clashes between cultures. In brief, comparisons made between different countries with significant numbers of foreign born residents showed that in those countries where the reception of foreigners was based on finding them employment and helping them along to self-sufficiency the immigrants in question and societies in general faired better economically and socially than in those countries where reception was based on care-taking.

The Swedish government's Migration Policy is responsible for overseeing several policies concerning people of foreign birth. It embraces the government's Integration Policy as well as several other related matters, which are Refugee Policy, Immigration Policy, and Return Migration Policy. The Integration Policy is mainly concerned with:

- Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for everyone, irrespective of ethnic and cultural background

[54] *Integrationsverket* in Swedish.

- Social cohesion built on diversity
- Social development characterised by mutual respect within the boundaries following from society's fundamental democratic values in which everyone, irrespective of background, should participate and share a sense of commitment.

The government has opted for a multifaceted organisation with a far reaching approach which covers all bases when it comes to foreigners and foreign countries. The Swedish government's view on immigration, migration and integration, as well as a view of how far the government ought to look in its operations concerning integrations are basically that:

> [e]verything hangs together. If for instance economic and democratic development can be actively encouraged in poor countries where human rights are disregarded, this may in time cause fewer people to try and solve their problems by fleeing or moving elsewhere.

As this quote shows, the government's vision stretches far, even outside Sweden as it believes that integration problems and solutions are interrelated.

By the same token, the government's stance is that if individuals' social and economic integration can be made successful, with all involved working together, this will lessen societal and economic problems and instead further development in these areas. People who for some reason have had to leave or chosen to leave their country of origin can thus, if they choose to return to their countries, become valuable assets to those countries largely due to successful integration in as many ways as possible in their host country. Whether they choose to return isn't a given, but even if they don't they will (at least) become valuable contributors to societal and economic development, as they have been valuable and appreciated in the country in which they've resided whilst away from their own.

The overriding principal of the Swedish Integration Policy is that "all residents shall have the same opportunity and conditions to take part in Swedish society, with all that this means in terms of rights, obligations and opportunities". The task of the Integration Board is to ensure that the visions and goals of the country's integration policies have

the desired impact on various areas of society. The concept of the Integration Board is as follows:

> The Swedish Integration Board is to actively promote integration. We do this by initiating alliances on various levels and within different parts of society. Our partners include local governments, public authorities, employers, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, other popular movements, researchers and moulders of public opinion. As a knowledge-based public authority, the Swedish Integration Board functions as an initiator, driving force and co-ordinator, within projects that demand efforts from various partners in society.

Sweden today is characterised by ethnic and cultural diversity. The government's view is that this diversity is a positive force in the development of the society, not a hindrance to progress, and that working for integration is working for development. Therefore, providing all residents with opportunity to participate and contribute to societal development, as well as harnessing the power they bring and taking advantage of it, is the real role of the Integration Board.

The Integration Board's activities affect all newcomers to the country, regardless of their status upon entry, whether asylum seeker, refugees, or economic migrants. The Board works to create conditions conducive to integration, by mobilising all private or public figures and organisations that will be able to effect change and contribute to diversity and integration. The goals of the Board are to:

- assume the overall responsibility for ensuring that new immigrants receive support for their integration into Swedish society,
- promote equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all people regardless of ethnic or cultural background,
- prevent and counteract racism, xenophobia and discrimination,
- follow and evaluate development with respect to the ethnic and cultural diversity in society.

The Swedish Integration Board is divided into three departments, the Analysis Department, the Development Department and the Administration Department. Within each department lie further areas of responsibilities. The first department is dedicated to giving newcomers "a good start", which implies a fair chance to support themselves and participate in society. This task falls under the Department of Introduction, under the above mentioned Analysis Department, which has the following mandate:

> The Department of Introduction is in charge of reaching agreements with local governments in regard to providing introduction/residence for the newly arrived. This department decides on and provides information concerning state grants for local governments. The department is also in charge of developing and following up the methods for receiving newly arrived immigrants, as well as giving publicity to these results. The Swedish Integration Board's agreement with the National Labour Market Administration, the Migration Board, the National Agency for Education, and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities forms a foundation for co-ordinating the development of the introduction policies. The aim is to increase efficiency and ensure that the various efforts are adapted to the individual involved.

The Development Department houses the department detailed below. The role of this department is "promote, prevent and counteract". Its mandate is as follows:

> The Department of Strategic Measures promotes equal rights, obligations and opportunities, regardless of ethnic and cultural background. Everyone should be able to determine his or her life choices, with due regard to being able to support oneself and having access to education. This means that schools and working life must be open to an ethnic diversity. This is why there is a continuous collaboration with businesses, government authorities, local city councils, organisations and other actors.
>
> The assignment of the department also includes preventing and counteracting discrimination, racism and hostility towards foreigners. In cooperation with, among others, non-governmental organisations, the Swedish Integration Board can provide assistance given its know-how and experience within this field.

The third and last department, the Department of Social Analysis, is in charge of area data collection, analysis and publishing, falls under the Administration Department.

> The responsibility to follow, analyse and evaluate the processes of integration, the development of society and people's living conditions based on an ethnic/cultural background, rests with the Department of Social Analysis. Collecting information in this regard is an important part of the work.
>
> The collection of information and the analyses result, among other things, in an annual publication that presents current trends and changes within the field of integration from a societal perspective. Based on the statistics gathered in the database STATIV, the department can follow and analyse the development of integration and contribute data and analyses to the other departments and units.

It should be added that the Migration Board, as it is concerned with Refugee issues and Policy as well, sometimes reaches outside Sweden, in a special programme called the Sweden Programme. The Migration Board does this in conjunction with local authorities. The programme applies to refugees who are part of specific quota groups selected by the Swedish government to enter the country. The programme lasts four to five weeks and is held in a country from whence Sweden accepts refugees. Over the four to five weeks the refugees are given information about Sweden and about various aspects of community life there, along with a basic and simple learning of phrases and words in the Swedish language. They may also be provided with written information in their own languages, in order to deepen their basic knowledge of their new host country.

4.3 Evaluation

The sample countries have had many years of experience when it comes to working with immigrants and dealing with issues of integration. The varying programmes and strategies they now follow have been created out of their experiences and out of need, as that need has arisen, in order to create a better and fairer society. Such idealism and all the work which has gone into it aren't just a nice thought or gesture. If done right the various programmes facilitate the possibility for immigrants to stand on equal ground

with native residents of their host countries, and makes them useful contributors to society, socially as well as economically

It is clear from the policies in place in Scandinavia now that the emphasis has shifted from simply hosting people from different places to actually valuing them and desiring them to become part of society. The emphasis of all three countries is very firmly placed on actively working to encourage people to speak the official language of the country, by making study courses mandatory, and free of charge. The incentive which mandatory and readily available language study gives to the newcomer, coupled with the opportunity to study the culture and a trade or subject of interest are very proactive steps on the governments' part. They aren't leaving the integration work to the immigrants themselves but rather taking charge of it. Directing the immigrants into the labour market with skills training aimed at their own fields of interests in hopes that they will be happy in their chosen field of work leads to inclusion in society.

In recent years the trend within all sample countries has been to shift the emphasis from an immigration policy to an integration policy. Besides from sounding less restrictive, it has given much needed respect to the issues of immigrants who to some were not viewed as valuable additions to the society but rather as beneficiaries of a generous welfare system or as people seeking to snatch jobs away from the natives of the host countries.

In all of the Scandinavian countries responsibilities have been shifted from the government taking charge of all issues having to do with immigrants to getting the municipalities, organisations and individuals involved. In so doing, in providing them with the chance to have more of a say in what goes on with the immigrants living in their midst, a sense of community and willingness to succeed has emerged. Working with the 'native' community, the immigrants have also been given a stronger role in shaping their own future. The future of their host countries is, in the process, inevitably shaped for the better as they have a greater purpose of being there, an understanding of both language and culture, and a meaningful way of supporting themselves, one which is of interest to them. Above all, organisation is the key in these countries. Study, trial and error, and conferring with the people and groups involved has lead to the programmes, which continue to evolve.

A quote from the Swedish Integration Board sums up the essence of the meaning and function of integration:

> Integration cannot be created for others – it is the result of interplay between different parties. It is out of this interplay that a societal development that is characterised by mutual respect and tolerance can grow. This is a development that everyone, regardless of background, must be part of and responsible for.

As is pointed out in Appendix 1, after work on this thesis began, the Icelandic government established a committee to look into integration in the Nordic countries in order to see whether such a system was needed in Iceland, and if so, what elements were applicable to the Icelandic context.

The work of the Scandinavian integration boards has produced some valuable ideologies behind integration which the government of Iceland could absolutely apply to the Icelandic immigration community, and thus be successful in creating what the Scandinavian countries have aimed at creating: a fairer, functional society for both indigenous peoples and immigrants. In such a society bout groups would have an equal chance at being successful at what they want to do and at being part of society. Whether the government has with its newly established committee looked to the Scandinavian countries and adapted their policies to its needs will not be discussed here as this development is more recent than the rest of research. Instead, here are some suggestions for what ideas it might take from Scandinavia and how they would apply in Iceland.

4.3.1 Language

Language is a crucial element to integration. This cannot be stressed enough. Language acquisition, however, doesn't come easy to all. Icelandic is a Germanic language, and though many immigrants in Iceland are of Nordic and Germanic descent and have therefore a certain closeness to the language, the needs of others who don't share the connection must be looked at as well. Besides, even those who share a similar background to Icelanders do not pick the language up easily, as it is a particularly difficult language to learn.

As a former teacher of the Icelandic language to foreigners I have an insight into the abilities of students of various background as well as the programmes offered to them. Much more is needed in terms of programme availability. The population of Iceland in general, native and immigrant, considers language learning very important. The immigrants, in general, want to study it, but it is hard to find courses and schools, especially when they are being closed down. Making language learning a mandatory prerequisite for residence permits is a great way of ensuring linguistic integration, linguistic. But Iceland would do well to implement what the Scandinavian countries have in this regard: language learning and other specialised course of study free of charge, readily available within municipalities, and in some cases where this is appropriate and agreed upon, providing people with a native mentor or guide to basically have conversations with to enhance their language and social understanding. Programmes like the last one suggested exist but are privately run and the problem with private programmes is that people only learn about them if they move in the circles that are familiar with them. Information is hard to come by if you work from dusk till dawn, as so many do in Iceland, and government programmes are few and far between.

4.3.2 Training

Vocational training programmes, such as are in place in Scandinavia, would not be hard to set up in Iceland. Many vocational colleges exist and are quite popular. Problems have arisen in the past as immigrants wanting to learn a particular trade have not been successful as the colleges also require them to study Icelandic and other academic subjects, and for a long time such programmes were not adapted to the needs of those whose Icelandic was limited or non-existent. Some colleges have changed their programmes over the years and offer special courses suited to the needs of immigrants with varying degrees of Icelandic knowledge and academic background. Those efforts are greatly appreciated by those seeking to advance themselves in a foreign society.

These programmes could now do with an upgrade. The government could get more actively involved and implement programmes in more trades than those offered (mainly computer skills so far), team immigrants with professionals in the fields, and emphasise hands-on experience to the same or greater extent as academics. For many immigrants it is impossible to move into a trade such as baking, hairdressing, mechanics or painting because they must find an apprenticeship and to do so you almost always have to "be

connected", know someone in that field of expertise before hand. The upgrade mentioned above would be ideal in the form of apprenticeships formally organised by government or municipalities so as to give the immigrants who don't know anyone a fighting chance with in the (desirable) job market.

4.3.3 Academics

The same applies to those who choose the more academic route. Lately, with much work on the parts of private bodies and institutions such as the Intercultural Centre, the academic needs of young immigrants have been emphasised. Mentor programmes, where volunteer youth help youths of Asian background (mainly, as the programme in mention was a reach out programme to Vietnamese youth born and raised in Iceland yet very isolated in their own culture and norms) were organised. Iceland doesn't have much of a tradition of volunteering if any at all so the programme had some problems finding mentors. Yet mentoring, peer-to-peer work, if encouraged by municipalities, might be a great idea as it brings together people who otherwise might never receive an understanding of each other. The problem here might be the unequal relationship which might develop with only one being the beneficiary. This problem may not be overcome until a tradition of volunteering develops in Iceland.

Another matter which concerns academics is, as mentioned above, the requirements for all students to do the same work. Some English college programmes exist, but in schools and colleges in general kids and youth whose Icelandic skills vary greatly must study the same subject in the same manner as all other students regardless of background, as the curriculum has yet to be adapted to their needs.

Curriculum has been changed to suit the needs of English speaking youth. There are more languages spoken in Iceland, so more work is needed. This is an area in which the government may without much encouragement work to improve as education is of high import in Iceland. The only question is whether the government finds the education of the country's immigrants as important as that of the natives. This remains to be seen.

4.3.4 Involvement of Municipalities, Professional and Private Bodies

In all of the above suggestions the participation of municipalities has been greatly stressed. There is much need to re-emphasise this, as this co-operation of many parties,

professional, governmental and private, would have a ripple effect on society as a whole. It would generate understanding of the issues being dealt with, a clearer vision of how to tackle them now that more are involved, and in all likelihood obvious results which would encourage people to do more of the same work. It would create a united front working on the same issues, because it benefits them and they can see the beneficial results.

The idea of all of the above is utilising the structures and know-how already in place within the society. By going down the route of getting involved and mobilising as many organisations, municipalities and individuals as possible the work is shared by all, and responsibilities and workload are therefore made lighter. The task is thus made more manageable, not to mention holistic, and more likely to be participated in by more native Icelanders and suit a greater number of immigrants.

Iceland is a large island with small population, and the size of the population always adds an extra dimension of issues. You have to know someone to get places, and people can be overly critical of immigrants, as they are of one another. Different criteria may apply for foreigners, but the same scepticism is applied to all. This only evaporates when people start getting to know one another and working together. Unfortunately, it often is the case that if circumstances or needs don't throw a group of people together, they won't ever get close one to another.

In order for people in Iceland to come together on the subject of immigrants and integration, a fundamental shift must take place in the way which immigrants are viewed. They are now a welcome workforce in Iceland. They need to bee seen as a welcome social addition, a group which has more to contribute than their hours at work. Some things like the way most Icelanders expect perfection from immigrants in terms of language ability will take time to change to more lenient standards. Immigrants' other contributions, however, such as cultural and religious, and others which require time as well, but also the initiative of the government and municipalities to show that they accept them, and find them of worth. As mentioned, some municipalities have already done so, in theory. The next step is showing this acceptance and willingness and commitment to creating a multi-cultural society in action.

5 Statistical Data

This chapter contains comparative statistic data concerning the research. Section 2 of the appendix contains the data tables that the following charts are based upon.

5.1 Demographics of Interview Participants

Figure 2 shows the division between the numbers of men and women interviewed. More women were willing to assist in the research, while many men approached for interviewing purposes saw no point in participating as they didn't believe change in integration matters would occur any time soon.

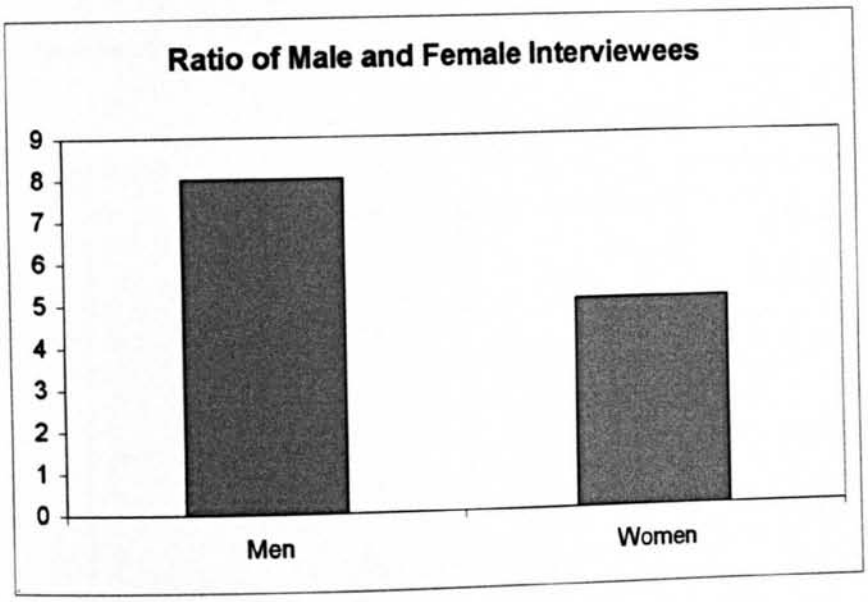

Figure 2 Ratio of Male and Female Interviewees

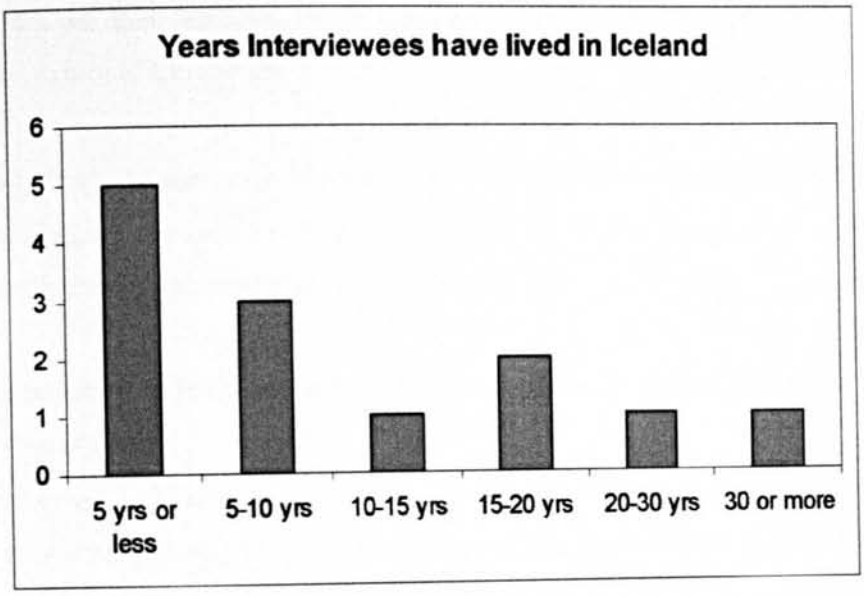

Figure 3 Interviewees' Number of Years Resident in Iceland

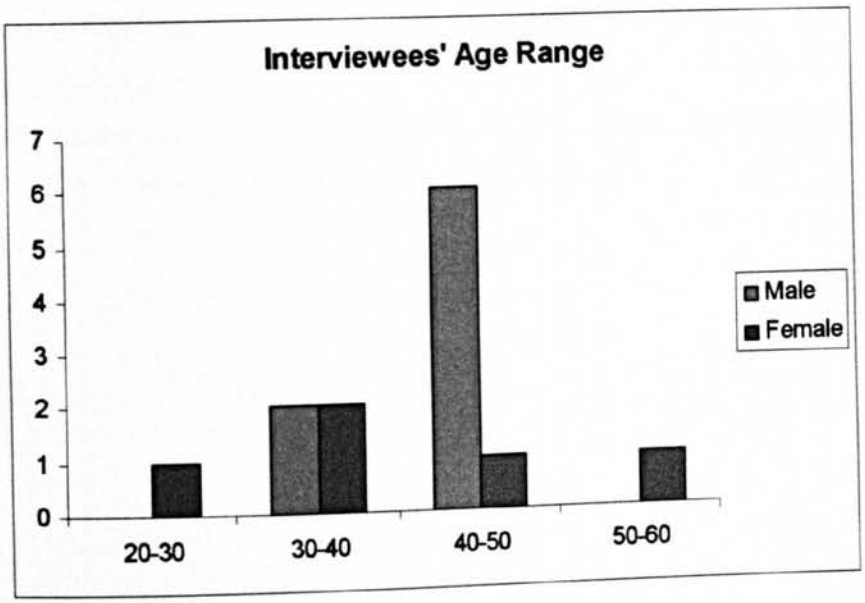

Figure 4 Interviewees' Age range

Figure 3 shows the number of years the interviewees have been residing in Iceland. Most participants were relatively new to the country, and they were the ones who saw a need for change and had hopes that further talk and publicity would lead to such changes as integration policies can bring about. A couple of interviewees had lived in Iceland for a while. One was very disillutioned after all this time, seeing no change in

Icelanders and their attitudes, while the other was optimistic, but acknowledged the stubborn nature of Icelanders!

Figure 4 shows the age range of participants. The males in the age range of 40-50 were most willing to participate in this particular research. The equal amount of 30-40 years old provided some balance for the questions posed in the interviews.

5.2 Statistics of Iceland and the Scandinavian Countries' Immigrant Population

In order to get a clearer view on statistics on immigrants and immigration trends from around the world, immigrants were divided into categories of continents. The categories were established according to the internet site Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia[55].

Figure 5 compares the number of immigrants to the total population in each of respective Nordic country. In Iceland, the immigrant population as a percentage against the total population is the lowest out of the four countries, yet there has been a steady increase over the past 5 years. In contrast, the Swedish immigrant population remains the highest of the four, yet has been in decline for the first 4 years with a slight increase in the 2004.

[55] www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continents

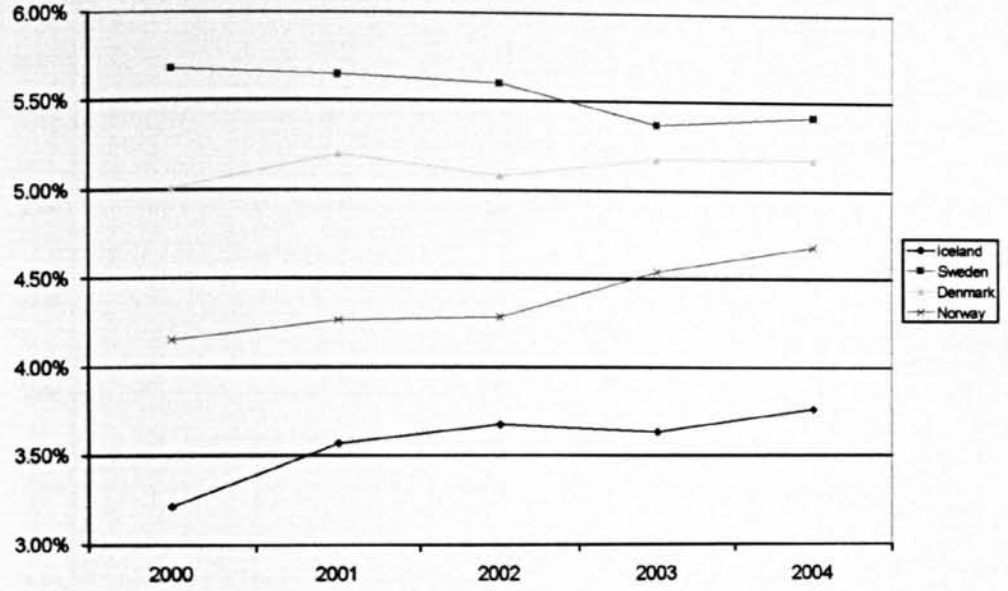

Figure 5 Immigrant Population as a percentage against the total population of each respective country, from 2000 to 2004

The following graphs, 6-10, should be read in context with the rising or declining immigrant populations shown in Figure 5. For example, because Iceland's immigrant population as a percentage of its total population has grown over a five year period and its Oceanic immigrant population in real numbers has stayed the same, the percentage of Oceanic immigrants in Iceland has dropped over the same five year period. In real terms, the number of Oceanic immigrants in Iceland has decreased by 1 over a five year period and subsequently the graph in Figure 10 should be read taking into consideration the rise of Iceland's immigrant population.

Figure 6 shows that in 2004 Norway's African population rises above Denmark's African population, which until then had the lead in the number of African immigrants. Norway is followed by Denmark, then Sweden and lastly Iceland at the bottom.

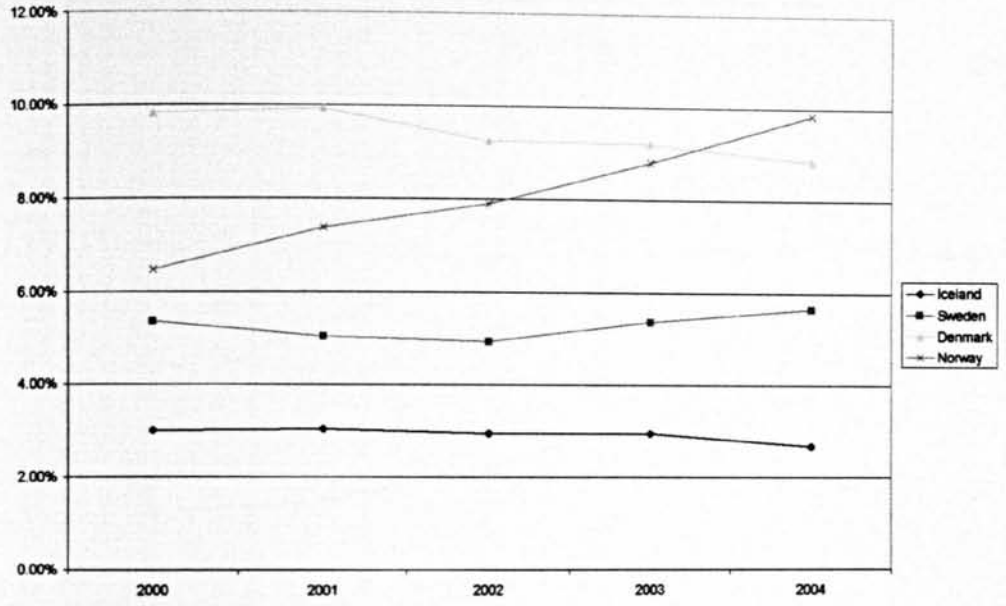

Figure 6 Percentage of African Immigrants Against the Total Number of Immigrants

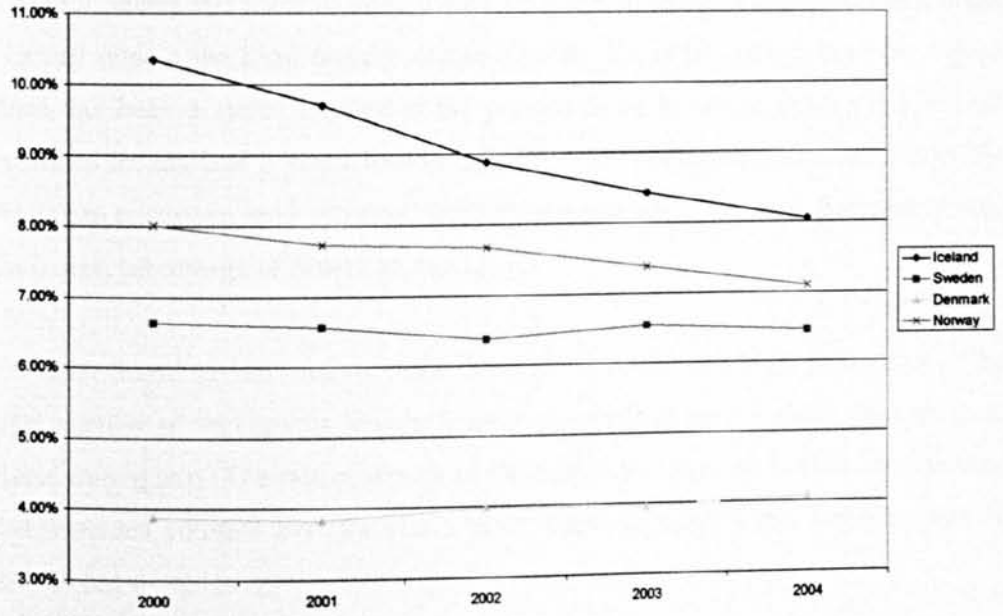

Figure 7 Percentage of American Immigrants Against the Total Number of Immigrants

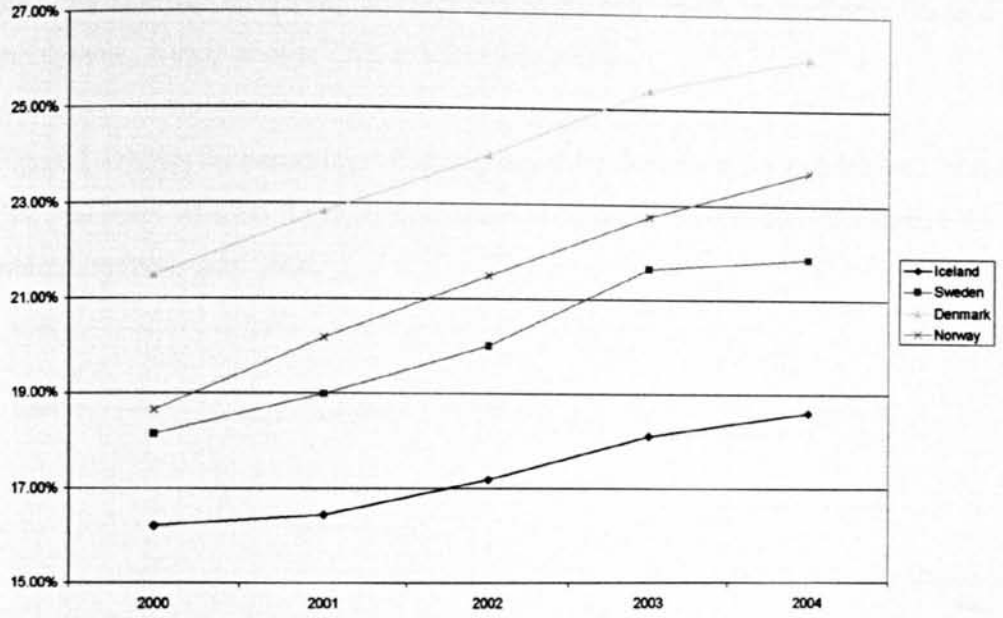

Figure 8 Percentage of Asian Immigrants Against the Total Number of Immigrants

Figure 7 shows the trend in immigration from the American continents. Iceland and Norway remain the most popular destinations for American immigrants even though there has been a steady decline in the percentage of American immigrants to both countries for the past 5 years. Sweden and Denmark's immigrant population from the American continents have remained stable for the past five years, with Denmark having the lowest percentage of American immigrants.

For each Scandinavian country, Asian immigrants comprise a high percentage of the total number of immigrants. Figure 8 show all countries have a rising percentage of Asian immigrants. The rate of growth of Denmark's and Norway's Asian immigration has remained constant over the past 5 years whereas Iceland's and Sweden's rate of growth has started to slow.

In terms of percentage, out of all Scandinavian countries, Iceland has the most immigrants from European countries. Approximately 70% of Iceland's immigrants are from european countries. Figure 9 shows that over a five year period, Iceland's European immigrant population has remained at approximately the same level, whereas the other Scandinavian countries European immigrant population has decreased during

the same time period. Norway has experienced the most significant decline in European immigrants, a drop of over 7.5% in a five year period.

Figure 10 shows the percentage of immigrants from Oceania in Iceland dropped for the first two years whereas the other Scandinavian countries experienced a percentage rise, which continues until 2004.

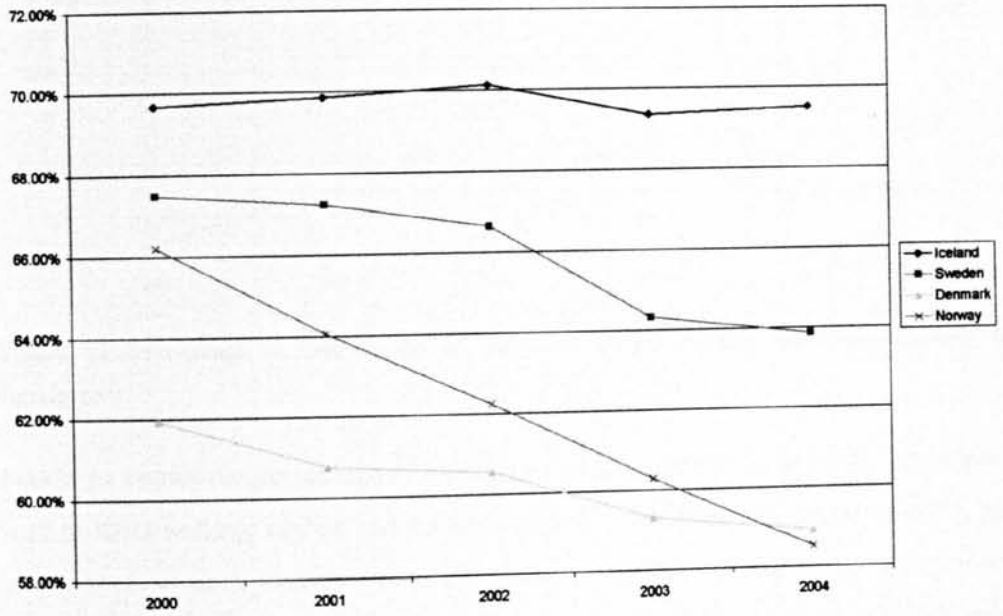

Figure 9 Percentage of European Immigrants Against the Total Number of Immigrants

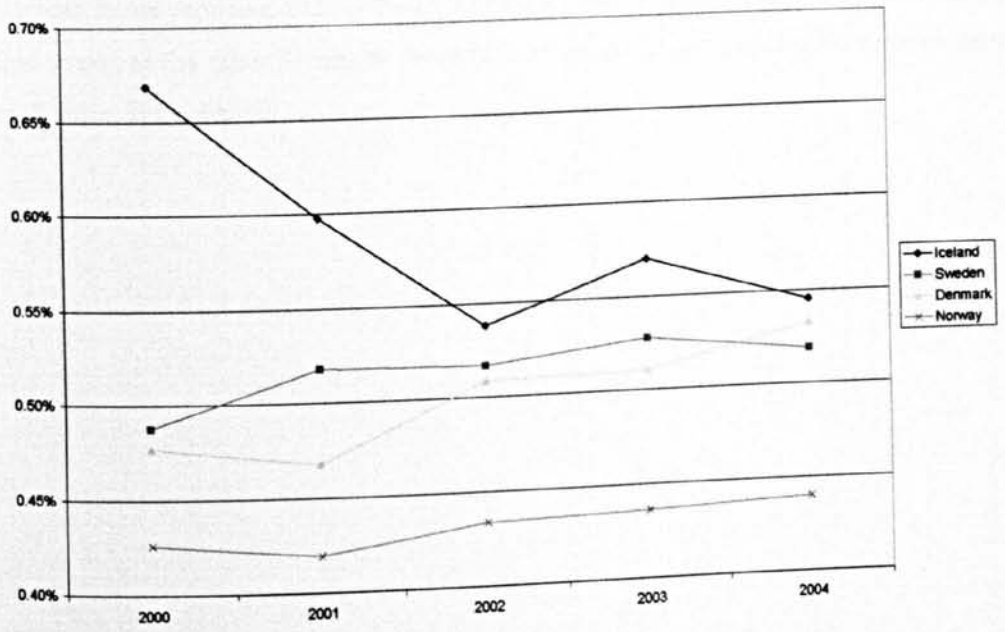

Figure 10 Percentage of Oceanic Immigrants Against the Total Number of Immigrants

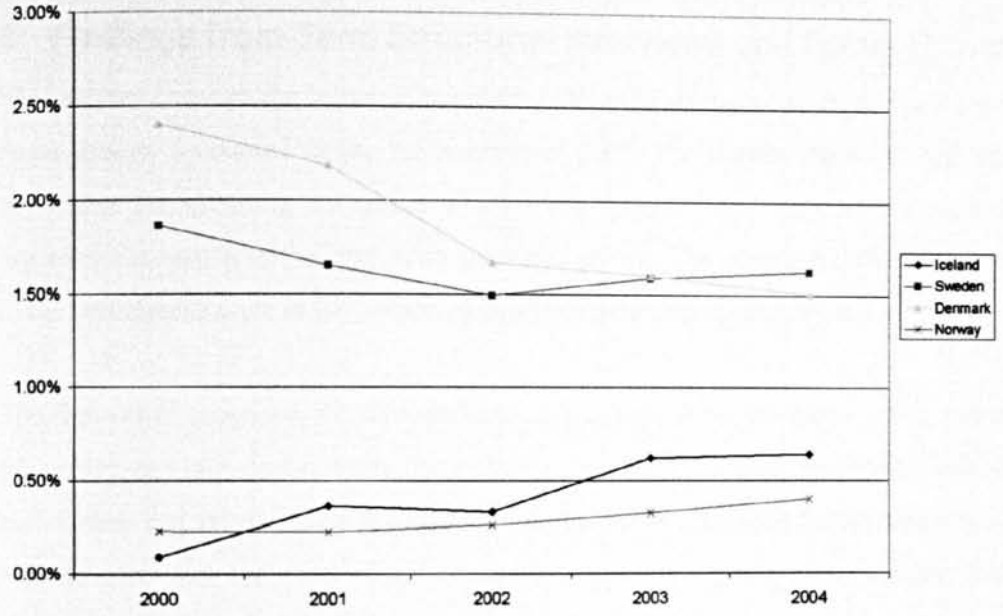

Figure 11 Percentage of Immigrants of Unknown Origin Against the Total Number of Immigrants

Figure 11 shows the percentage of immigrants whose identity has yet to be established such as those seeking asylum and stateless persons. It is difficult to spot any trend in the graph because each country is equally likely to encounter immigrants of unknown origin at any time and the reasons might include mass fugitive situations or backlogs of asylum applications. That being said, Iceland is of course less likely to do so simply because fewer refugees end up there. It being an island, getting there without stopping first in one of the other Schengen countries, which would obligate Iceland to send them back there, is hard to do.

6 Findings from Semi Structured Interviews and Focus Group

This chapter contains the information resulting from the semi structured interviews and focus groups conducted during the summer of 2005. The chapter starts off with the arguments for choosing the topics which were discussed, and then moves on into reporting the results of the interviews and focus groups. The questions which were put to the participants were in the context of eight carefully chosen categories.

The first set of questions, which were general questions about integration, were put to the participants as a starting point from which to move into the connected topics. Not all participants had taken part in focus groups dicussions or interviews before, and not all were familiar with the terms which were used. Therefore, this way of easing them into and preparing them for the conversations at hand was decided upon. The first category covers the cultural and religious aspect of integration, and the effects the immigrants' cultures and religions, where applicable, have on their current lives and lifestyles. The second category includes questions concerning language acquisition in the host country. The third category covers financial issues, relating to work and standard of living. In the fourth category political views are covered, as is the immigrants' participation in Icelandic politics. In the fifth category the focus is on the children of the participants, their education and lives in Iceland, and related topics. The sixth category of questions is concerned with finding out about any existing integration programmes, their importance, if they prove helpful or not, any suggestions for future programmes, etc. The seventh category includes questions regarding Icelandic society and the immigrants' perception of it. The eighth and last one contains any general concerns which were not asked speficially by me during the discussions but were brought up by the immigrants themselves.

6.1 Queries Posed to Partcipants in Focus Groups and Semi-Structured Interviews

The questions follow in order of categories. The categories were formed to facilitate a smoother, more organised manner of interviewing.

6.1.1 Getting started

I started by asking the interviewees general questions about the subject at hand, posing the questions below for them to think about the issue before moving into further definitions.

The questions asked were:

- What are the immigrants' perspectives on integration, or 'fitting in'?
- How do they define the notion of becoming part of society?
- Is integration important or not? Why?

6.1.2 Religion and Culture

As the study concerned a particular group with a particular background which is unique and differs from the rest of the inhabitants of Iceland both religiously and culturally, some specific questions arose. Finding out how they define themselves, whether those definitions go along with what people in Iceland think of them in general, whether they are thought of as purely one religious group or one cultural group or a combination of the two, and what role their backgrounds – cultural, religious, educational, and linguistic – play in their lives as newcomers in a culture which to varying degrees differs from their own, is quite important and it is the focus of this section.

With the above and below information, one could more easily set the group of Muslims and people from the Middle East apart from other immigrant groups and indigenous Icelanders in terms of the religious and cultural aspects of their lives, and one could also see how these aspects play into their integration in Icelandic society.

The questions asked were:

- Do religon and cultural background pose problems or prove difficult for integration? If so, how?
- How do religion and cultural behaviour affect (their) integration?
- Do the immigrants' cultures and countries of origin make a difference when it comes to integration? If so, how?

6.1.3 Language

Before the interviews were even begun I was aware through the literature regarding integration, from my own experience as a teacher, and through the media information coming from Iceland, that language acquisition is absolutely vital for any person if they want to integrate into society. This has become a hot topic in Iceland lately, beginning in seriousness with new legislation in 2003 which requires foreign nationals to study Icelandic for a certain amount of hours in order to receive permanent residency. It didn't help matters that a language school run by the city of Reykjavík was closed down in 2004, and clashes of opinion have arisen among Icelanders, between Icelanders and foreigners, and even between the immigrants themselves, as to what can and ought to be expected of them in terms of learning Icelandic.

There are arguments for and against learning Icelandic and making the study obligatory, but though most agree that it is important, the extent to and speed at which Icelanders expect foreigners to learn their language are generally unreasonable. This view was evidenced through (informal) surveys I conducted during Icelandic language lessons in a Reykjavík language school over the space of 2-3 years. It seems to go beyond requiring that people manage living day to day without the aide of someone to translate for them and instead require them to build a vocabulary and master a clarity of pronunciation near enough or as good as the native Icelanders'. Those who manage to get to that stage in this rather difficult language are complimented on their accomplishements while others are too often criticised for not putting in enough effort. All tend to be judged against the amount of years they've been in the country, not on personal ability, closeness of their mothertongue to the Icelandic language, whether they have even had time or money to attend language classes, or other more reasonable and fair criteria.

The questions asked were:

- Language barriers – do the immigrants in general make an effort to learn Icelandic in order to communicate with the native population?
- How important is language to the process of integration?

6.1.4 Economic issues

Questions in this category included issues concerning the immigrants' employment status, whether many sought social benefits, owned or ran their own business, and such like.

The questions asked were:

- What are the immigrants' economic contributions?
- What do they take?

6.1.5 Political Issues

The idea was to find out about the immigrants' political involvement. As the majority of the ones interviewed had not yet become Icelandic citizens and therefore could not vote, the only question to really explore was the one regarding their political involvement in other spheres, as for instance within municipalities.

The questions asked were:

- Do the immigrants vote, and how?
- Do they participate actively in politics, i.e. run for offices?

6.1.6 Children

This research purposely did not figure in second generation immigrants, i.e. children of immigrants to Iceland, whether those children were born in Iceland or abroad. The aim was to research and evaluate the success of social integration amongst adult Muslim and Middle Eastern immigrants who had come to Iceland to work, study, or for whatever other reasons. The study also delved into the procesess of integration. This covered their personal lives and places of work and worship, family and other network groups, government sponsored programmes, and such like.

To find out about what is stirring in the elementary education system in terms of integration was not the objective of this research. However, as it turned out, most topics of discussion, in one way or other, turned towards children and their prospects and future in the country, almost regardless of whether interviewees even had children, though as many of them do they are understandably concerned about their welfare.

The future is something the immigrants I spoke to are specifially concerned about. Some parents had come to Iceland with the intent to build a better future for their children, others had children in schools and play schools and involved in social activities, and though they may not have been planning on staying for a long time in Iceland, their main concerns while in Iceland, other than the predictable ones of work and language, are their children. Some interviewees do not have any any children yet but those who are considering it have to take into account how they themselves have fared so far in a country which doesn't necessarily share their ideas on religion, child rearing, socially acceptable behaviour, family structure (for instance the idea of the extended family living together and playing an active role in each others' lives), to name but a few issues. Therefore, any discussion about integration inevitably led to thoughts on the immigrants' perspectives based on their own experience and also on that of their children, as they perceive their experience to be, and in perspective of what the future may hold for them in terms of integration.

The questions asked were:

- Are the practicing Muslims immigrants concerned about their children growing up in a secular society with little or no religious education? Are they concerned about their own values and traditions being forgotten? What, if any, are their concerns regarding religious education, mainly Christian, in Iclelandic schools?
- The second generation – issues concerning identity.

6.1.7 Integration Programmes

Looking into what, if any, integration programmes have been implemented in Iceland in general and more specifically in the different municipalities, is the main aim of the study. According to the examples from the sample countries, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and literature regarding the topic, social integration isn't a task to be left to immigrants alone, but a common task to be executed by co-operation of people – immigrants and indigenous – and organisations and governments, first and foremost, as well as cities and towns. Finding out about the immigrants' views on the programmes, if they feel enough is being done, and their suggestions as to what might be done in order to encourage integration didn't require many questions but was a key issue in the

study. In section eight some of the same questions were brought up again, with a more personal spin to them.

The questions asked were:

- In terms of government programmes for integration – are they in place and being implemented?
- Are they immigrants aware of them? How are they made aware?
- If these programmes do not exist, have they any suggestions for how such programmes might be constructed?
- Do immigrants take advantage of them in general? How?

6.1.8 Regarding Icelandic Society and Culture – living in it and becoming part of it

This section focused on the immigrants' opinions and views on the Icelandic society and culture, people, values, life styles, etc. Differences and commonalities were brought up, as were ways in which immigrants do or do not integrate and adjust to life in Iceland, and the possible reasons for this. Issues of discrimination, how far the immigrants in this particular social group generally go to become part of the culture and how far they are allowed by the native population to enter into society were discussed, as was the likelihood of them wanting to live in Iceland longterm and what effect that had on their perception of themselves in the Icelandic context. The question of whether they will ever become like native Icelanders in their own mind and in the minds of people around them was quite a significant one. Some of these topics were iniated by the interviewees themselves, that is, they were not asked directly but expressed a need to mention it in context of the topic of integration.

The questions asked were:

- What are the immigrants' social contributions? What do they take?
- Do the immigrants become part of the society? If yes, in what ways? If no, in what ways do they not?
- Networks – how are they formed?
- Finding information – is it easy or hard?
- Are they inclusive or exclusive?
- How well and in what ways do the adjust?

- What are the immigrants' general opinions of Iceland, the culture and its people, their values and lifestyles?
- Marrying locals – a common way to integrate? Is integration thusly made easier or harder? How?
- Homogenisation? Issues concerning identity.
- Do the immigrants feel discrimintated against?
- Do they remain in Iceland?
- Do they remain loyal to Iceland?
- Do they "become Icelandic"? What does that mean?
- Do they know and strive to learn about their legal rights and duties?

6.1.9 Immigrants' general concerns

In this last section are included questions and concerns which the interviewees themselves came up with during the discussions.

- What are the immigrants concerns?
- What are the solutions?
- What is to be done to attain integration?
- What are the barriers, if any, which obstruct integration?
- Concerns regarding the language.
- Concerns regarding education.
- Concerns regarding employment.
- Concerns regarding religion.
- Concerns regarding racism.
- Other concerns.

All questions were put to all participants, but the responses to each category varied widely, depending on personal interest, knowledge of the matter, and desire to divulge their thoughts and feelings on particular issues, to name the three reasons I could find. The discussions more often than not turned up more questions than were initially asked, and those issues will also be discussed in this chapter.

6.2 Responses from Participants of Focus Groups and Semi-Structured Interviews

Here are the answers from the focus groups and individuals to the questions posed to them, as introduced in the previous section.

6.2.1 Getting Started

As the topic of integration has been somewhat in the limelight of late most had an idea of what the word means in its general social context intepretation. On a personal level, most mentioned that integrating meant understanding the culture, understanding the mindsets of those born here, and the beaurocracy – and that language knowledge was a crucial part of it it, too. The consensus from the get-go was therefore that language is absolutely vital to integration, though participants did mention that with a working knowledge of English they could definately get by. In saying that, they also realised that 'getting by' in society isn't the same as integrating into society. An understanding of society and language, and participation in society, i.e. not becoming an exclusive community within the wider society, are in this study the two most commonly mentioned interpretations of what integration means. In regard to the Muslim participants, i.e. those of a religious mindset, their religious perspective did play a part in their understanding or interpretation of integration. Unity and tolerance were two commonly used terms which when incorporated into peoples' lives could make for an easier adaptation and integration. It was made clear though that in most the participants felt that integration is a two-way road, meaning that whatever rules and terms apply to the immigrants typically apply to the people already settled in the country, though generally the immigrants are the ones who must adapt to their new circumstances in greater measures.

Without any exception the participants found integration to be absolutely vital to their wellbeing in the country, no matter the reasons that had brought them to Iceland or length of time they intended on staying there. However, the length of time they intended on staying and their personalities and personal needs for integration varied, as did their interest in and desire to integrate. As some have family members who speak the language or know how to maneuvre in the administrative sector of society, they found no need to learn to do those things themselves in order to live good productive lives in

Iceland, especially if they were planning to live and work in Iceland for a limited time only, typically five to seven years.

On the basis of the question as to whether integration is important, the answers of the immigrants lie in two categories. There are those who have come to Iceland only to work and who do not plan on living there for a long time. They learn what they need to know to get by and to be sure they do what they are meant to and get what they have earned, but that is about the extent of their knowledge of Icelandic society. Part of what they learn might include the Icelandic language, though many live for years without ever having to use the language much in a work setting or even sociallly, and therefore have no reason, or see no reason, to pursue a course of learning. A knowledge of their rights as employees of a specific work place, national health issues, benefits, a knowledge of matters concerning play school and other educational facilities, are other things they might consider important, as they are directly relevant to their daily lives.

Then there are those who come to Iceland with a plan to live there for a while, from five to seven years and upwards. They may therefore have plans to buy flats and cars, their children will go to school in Iceland, they will need to rely on the Icelandic health services if they fall ill, and will need to maneuvre differently within society as possible future Icelandic citizens, for their own benefit. They therefore learn what they need to, but if their plans and objectives are long term their knowledge will have to run deeper than merely that of a working knowledge of the system. A certain loyalty to the country develops as peoples' reasons for being there are clear and longer term, and they find that more information about their new country is beneficial to them. Intentions on remaining there for a long period of time tend to facilitate the development of loyalty to, for instance, host country and work, as well as knowledge about the same but on a deeper level than were they transient migrants.

6.2.2 Religion and Culture

The general findings of the research among the religious Muslims was that their religion or life philosophy per se created no hindrance to their integration. A few practices, as well as physical features and choice of clothing due to their national backgrounds, however, do set them apart from the general population and cause some curiosity and, in some few cases, problems. To name a few examples, the simple fact

that whereas many immigrants in Iceland have dark hair and skin, people born in Iceland of Icelandic parents generally do not and this immediately sets these newcomers apart from the indigenous population. National and traditional clothing items such as the womens' *hijab*, *saris* or the *shalwar kamiz*, as well as prayers five times a day at workplaces, and dietary requirements and/or restrictions also add to the 'otherness' of the newcomers and turns them into somewhat of a curiosity.

Those Muslims or people from the Middle East who had experienced any problems due to these or similar issues found that people weren't knowledgeable about whether the Muslims' or Middle Easterners' behaviour or attire were due to their culture, personality or religion, i.e. Islam. Though they may have been curious they often seemed to approach the matter hesistantly yet defensively and negatively. That is if the matter was discussed at all, as sometimes people would rather remain uninformed and in the dark as opposed to ask questions in order to find out what they didn't know. Furthermore, those who did approach with questions often chose to approach the persons involved or discuss their differences on the basis that they were either Muslim or Arab, regardless of which term the issue concerned. Obviously, some Muslims are not Arab at all, and not all Arabs are Muslim, and though no major concerns arose, the interviewed Muslims and immigrants from the Middle East recognised peoples' lack of understanding and knowledge about what they thought they were discussing in an informed manner.

Admittedly, those who had lived in Iceland before 11th September 2001 could sense a difference in perception and 'line of questioning' from people who approached them with queries. In general they found Icelanders to be a rather inquisitive bunch and didn't mind answering their questions, but out of the necessity of self-preservation they had learned to figure out whether their questions were fuelled by a desire to know more or by antagonism. Some interviewees admitted to having changed the way they dressed or even acted in public after being stared at, which they felt was rather uncomfortable an experience, and an unnecessary one. In some cases men had encouraged their wives to cease wearing their veils outside the homes as they didn't want to be stared at anymore.

If social integration involves getting on with the people of the country and learning to live in some ways as they do, some immigrants are at a disadvantage where hobbies and

social events usually revolve around things which in some cases are not common in their home countries.

The hobbies and interest which are not commonly practiced in their midst but are widely practiced in Iceland might include Western arts (classical music, art gallery exhibits, performance arts like ballet, opera, classical theatre), and sports such as extreme adventure sports and the 'posh' sports of golfing and fly fishing. If they do not learn to appreciate these events there isn't a whole lot else on offer! The weather is in part to blame, as it doesn't allow for a lot of outdoor activities due to its unpredictability, with its only constant being the incessant wind and frequent rain. Social life in Iceland takes place inside for the most part, in pool halls, pubs and cafes, in homes and within families. It is much more individualistic than in the countries from which most of the interviewees hail. This is one reason why social networks are important to the immigrants as without them they may very well, socially, be lost completely.

Only on a certain social level do Muslims acknowledge that their religion, or rather certain religious practices, mostly concerning things *not* to do, affect their integration into society. As popular pastime activities of Icelanders involve the frequent and rather excessive drinking of alcohol, the religiously practicing Muslims don't find any common ground on those terms with their Icelandic work-mates and friends. Other popular activities such as going to the swimming pools and hot springs, where all must undress and shower before entering the pools, are rarely participated in by those whose religious convictions teach them to guard the privacy of their bodies. In some areas of social life non-participation is the only option for the Muslims who are concerned about staying true to their religion and its practices, but, again, they themselves generally do not see it as a hindrance to their integration. One could say that they simply abstain from certain activities and take part in others. And abstinence is painless when you don't know what you are missing. That sounds alright, it if weren't for that fact that options for hobbies and such like in Iceland are few and not very varied. As mentioned, the weather puts a certain damper on activites with which people from the Middle East might be familiar, i.e. outdoors activities such as picnics and going to bazaars, of which there is only one in Reykjavik (indoors even due to unpredictable and hostile weather). Other activities, such as festivals and holidays are few and far between. In short, there

aren't a whole lot of activities in which to participate if one doesn't like or want to do what the majority does on a regular basis. This can lead to boredome, exclusion and negative feelings about the host environment. Also, when a native Icelander notices an immigrant choosing not participating in common activites it can seperate and alienate the two from one another.

6.2.3 Language

Though most of the interviews were conducted in English, all those who participated in the interviews have at least a working knowledge of Icelandic. That is to say while they all knew enough to get by in their daily lives, some knew more than others and were practically fluent in the language. Those were generally people who had lived in Iceland the longest.

All had at some point entered Icelandic language classes, some with good results while others had learned next to nothing. As an example of how networks and minority communities work, the members of the mosque offer informal Icelandic lessons or help to one another. This extends to the newly arrived members of their community as well as those who have been there longer and are in need of lessons. How much they learn all depends on their abilities to do so, stress levels or whatever is going on in their lives, and how interested they are in acquiring the knowledge. Often need determines interest and just like other immigrants in Iceland the ones interviewed have found that most Icelanders understand and speak English to a greater or lesser extent, and therefore to get by in their jobs they need not necessarily know Icelandic. That being said, the jobs most of them have are not jobs they have spent years qualifying for or require them to know much of Icelandic beyond the basics of the job. The lack of Icelandic knowledge more often than not proves to be a hindrance for immigrants when applying for work for which they are qualified.

All interviewees agreed that language plays a crucial role in the process of integration. The reason for this is that if one wants to live succesfully on all levels of a particular society one must learn the language of that society. There were no differing opinions on this issue. Again, some have found that it is easy to get by on only knowing English, but it still does not suffice if one wants to truly understand and become part of society.

6.2.4 Economic issues

Most of the interviewees do not work within their field of education. Only a handful are actually satisfied with the work they have. Only a couple of them are their own bosses with business which are enjoying varying degrees of success.

Many foreign nationals come to Iceland with a view to work hard and make as much money as possible for a few years, after which they'll return to their native countries and continue their lives there in relative comfort due to their earnings. In general, such isn't the case for most Muslims and people from the Middle East now living in Iceland. Many marry Icelandic women, in the cases where that happens it's mostly Arab Muslims who have married Icelandic women, Muslim and non-Muslim, while others enter on work visas to join family and friends. The worker pays taxes from wages earned doing a job which in many cases falls under the category of jobs which Icelanders don't want to do anymore. In that way they make a considerable and appreciated, necessary even, contribution.

As for the notion of getting what one is entitled to for ones' tax money, it only came up in the context of sick-leave and childrens' education, which many find to be too ethno-centric and building on Christian values, without consideration for the childrens' individual believes. Most were quite pleased or satisfied with the health care system, but it was not dicussed at any great lengths.

Most immgrants who enter Iceland do so on work visas. Several nationalities have already received a reputation for being good workers. They work hard, many have several jobs, and the way they handle money is significantly different from the 'traditional' Icelandic way of spending instantaneously and using heavily credit cards, overdrafts and instalment plans. The trend among immigrants is to pay things such as down payments on flats, cars and trips abroad in saved-up cash. Many are able to provide for family abroad, whilst providing for themselves and their family in Iceland, and also buy houses and cars in their homelands. Many mentioned that they didn't find it all that hard to work as much as they did, as they as they had planned to come to Iceland and work, not have a life, and were therefore prepared for the sacrifices that lay ahead.

There are many examples of mistreatment of foreign workers, especially when it comes to refusing them their rights, ignoring their rights, or keeping employeees in the dark conerning their rights as a worker and tax payer. However, most Muslims interviewed shared that if they so requested they were given a place and peace and quiet to pray if prayertime occured while they were at work, and this generally without it becoming an issue with the employers or other employees. Some have been pestered by fellow workers but as the attitude of those practicing Muslims living in Iceland seems to overall be that of stoism and understanding of the fact that people judge when they lack understanding, this hasn't been a huge issue for them either.

6.2.5 Political Issues

In regards to political experience and participation, there doesn't seem to be much interest or movement from either inside or outwith the Muslim and Middle Eastern immigrant communities towards co-operation, or even participation, in this particular area. A few immigrants who were interviewed had been asked to 'adorn' political parties' lists of candidates but too far down the list to actually be given a role after elections or any standing of importance. They suspect it may have been a ploy to get the foreigners' votes.

The Muslims and people of Middle Eastern descent interviewed for this research expressed no desire to form a party or movement based on the above criteria. In fact they all agreed that setting themselves apart as a Muslim or Middle Eastern would seem like a pressure group and would be counter-productive to integration purposes and further encouraging tolerance. It would also go against one of the things the Muslim Association stands for, which is to promote unity, not fight it.

Political interest in foreigners has hitherto been focused on asylum seekers and the issues concerning them, as opposed to an interest in immigrants in general and in integration. When the focus group interviews were conducted, only a few of the political parties actually had an agenda or line involving foreigners, their lives in Iceland, input, etc. Their experiences and needs as seen by Icelanders, or the politicians involved, were on the parties' agendas, but to the knowledge of the interviewees, and in what I could turn up, no information had been gleaned by political parties from the immigrants themselves regarding their needs, wants, concerns and so forth.

A new political council, the Council for Foreigner Nationals, was organised last year and meant to jump into action. This was halted when a movement of foreign women called Association of Women of Foreign Origin and which has existed and worked at the grassroot levels for several years, objected to the council on the grounds that no foreigner had a place or position on it. The forming of the council and any work it might have done has been postponed until qualified immigrants have been found to take part in its work, which is meant to cover the needs and make known the perspective of foreigners in Iceland, the new Icelanders as they are sometimes called. It is run under the Ministry of Social Affairs.

6.2.6 Children

Though in this study it was never the intent to focus on the 2nd or 3rd generations of immigrants, i.e. the children of the immigrants in question, it is impossible to go on withouth taking into account the concerns of parents whose lives have in many ways been drastically changed and who, on top of it all, have to deal with different educational traditions and rules than those to which they are accustomed. As mentioned earlier, over the years and as the need has arisen some schools, mainly in the capital city and surrounding towns, were chosen as reception schools for immigrant children. Those schools, its staff and teachers, are particularly accustomed to dealing with issues and needs that arise out of circumstances like those young immigrant children are put into.

Those situations include language difficulties, but also cultural issues. In most cases, children are not made to participate in activities which they or their parents find compromising to their religious convictions. Religious examples are the easiest from which to work, as so many abound, and a good specific example of activities might include religous education classes. Parents who do not wish for their child to sit in on such a class are allowed to ask the teacher to excuse the child. Permission to authorise the absence falls within the teacher's role. Furthermore, some teachers encourage indigenous children to ask direct questions of immigrant children about things they are curious about, instead of whispering about them and perhaps making fun. In this way some individual teachers do encourage understanding between children of different cultures. However, it has been mentioned by the foreign community, there are no official policies in this regard. It is not enough to rely on individual, well meaning and enlightened teachers to carry out the task of integration in classrooms. Significantly,

permitting children *not* to participate in certain classses does *not* facilitate integration. Their absence only further sets these children apart and enhances their being perceived as the part of a strange 'other' group of people. As pointed out by some in the focus groups, many of the children look quite different physically from most of the Icelandic-born children. Their hair, skin and eyes are darker, and some girls start veiling in their early teens. These features raise questions and cause curiosity still, though it may be diminishing with more and more people of different ethnicities moving to Iceland.

In Iceland, religious education is part of the curriculum. In such classes Christianity is mainly taught, with a focus on its worldview and ethics, though an introduction to other religions is provided. Teachers have been known to ask children of non-Christian faiths to prepare presentations on their belives to read out before the class. The role and execution of religious education has been a much discussed topic over the last years. Some believe it to be fundamental to peoples' adjustment and integration to learn about the age-old rules onwhich the customs, laws and values of Iceland and its people rest. These age-old rules in the case of Iceland happen to be based in Christianity, as Iceland's state religion has been Christian for over 1000 years now. Immigrants who practice other religions and who are informed about the elementary schools curriculum, however, suggest that values of people, nations and countries on the one hand and the state religion on the other are not necessarily so linked that they must be taught in context of one another. To teach basic values like kindness to fellow human beings and respect, one must not necessarily put it in the Christian context. To add to such lessons that this is what Jesus taught migth very well alienate a child whose believes are incongruant with exactly that teaching. The argument is that being taught respect and kindness to others, to name but one example of a humanitarian value which many religions have in common, and to act on those princicples, doesn't require faith in Jesus as God and as the son of God, both of which are heretic teachings in the eyes of Islam and other religions, whilst non-existant in others. In saying that, there is absolutely no call being made for offending the native population and its beliefs. It's a delicate balance which has to be struck, if the government is at all willing to look into this issue.

A Middle Eastern member of a minority religious community with whom I spoke mentioned a newly established interfaith forum where he hopes people of varying faiths can present their ideas for a different curriculum, which teaches those very principles

and values taught in today's Christianity lessons, which are called Religious Education classes. He hopes the studies will be more in line with social studies. Thus children will learn about the values of the country inwhich they reside without being taught these values in the context of one particular religious doctrine, which in turn tends to be taught 'the truth'. The Christian elements in Icelandic history which are vital to understanding the nation and its creation could even be taught in a form of history class. The forum might not have power to change things in that direction but their suggestions will hopefully be heard, in light of a movement towards furthering understanding and co-operation with and among foreign nationals and native Icelanders.

Muslims are also involved in this interfaith dialogue between the main denominations in Iceland. The mosque chairman as already been in contact with priests and such dialogues will be under way soon, they hope. The fight to be understood and accepted in their religious context doesn't have to be fought by Muslims alone, and the issues on the agenda are some of the same as concern other groups, i.e. religious education and inclusion for children.

Though integration programmes are offered to non-native children entering the schools, in which they learn mainly the language and some things concerning cultural dos and don'ts, no programme is as of yet in place to prepare the indigenous children for any newcomers' arrival. They would likely benefit from learning somewhat about others' cultures and languages from teachers and books, rather than only from the immigrant children themselves or from the random teacher who happens to be so inclined. Thus they might be more prone and prepared to aid the immigrant children in the integration process. Again, it is currently up to individual teachers to take action in cases concerning clashes between differing cultures and religion. As an example, food customs differ significantly between cultures. In schools were school dinners are prepared for the children, parents whose children have food allergies can rest assured that once notified the cooks and teachers will be aware of the special needs of the child and act accordingly. That might include telling a child queueing up for food not to eat a certain meal or food, or pointing them towards an other option. The same work rule applies when on school sponsored outings. However, a child's dietary needs, if based on religious convictions are not taken as seriously as eating a certain food will not put its life in danger, in as far as the non-religious perceives; no physical danger, anyway.

The obligation is not on the teacher or the cooks or whomever planned the outing, as the needs are religious and not physical. Again, this is simply how things work in the absence of policies to cover such practical points.

The level of emphasis immigrant parents place on their children maintaining their cultural identity seems to depend on their reasons for being in Iceland and perhaps consequently on how long they intend on staying there. Those who have moved to Iceland for temporary economic reasons continue to speak the mother tongue in the home and are not very concerned about losing touch with their roots, as they see themselves returning to their home countries before long. Their children also grow up knowing very clearly that they wont be staying for long, though this has caused problems as they sometimes do not wish to return to the unknown as their memories from their homeland may be vague or non-existant.

In the families where both parents are immigrants to Iceland and plan to stay for a while, the emphasis on teaching their language and culture is clearly felt, and both are often taught in a systematic manner. In some religious and cultural centres within certain communities, and in the Intercultural Centre, parents can bring their children to be taught the languages of their parents' countries. These facilities are generally much used, though some parents prefer to teach their children at home. It is important in this context to note that in cases of mixed marriages the need to teach about and instill awareness of the non-Icelandic parent's nationality and traditions seemed neither more nor less than in cases of same-nationality marriages between foreign nationals. In those cases it came down to practicalities and the parents' and childrens' personalities and desires to keep in close contact with the family and culture abroad.

6.2.7 Integration Programmes

As of yet the Icelandic government has not implemented any integration programmes. Certainly, some programmes for some minorities do exist, the most recent being established around teenage Viet Namese, the children of immigrants, to encourage them in their pursuit for further education. In fact, integration programmes exist and are up and running for quota refugees, and the city of Reykjavik and the towns of Kópavogur, Akureyri and Ísafjörður, all with relatively large populations of foreigners, have constructed policies to this end. At the moment, the programme for the Viet Namese

youth and the refugees are being implemented, but the rest have yet to materialise in their full potential.

As no integration programmes exist as of yet, except for refugees, immigrants cannot take advantage of policies and programmes to help them in their integration. It is therefore important to note that all but one said they'd participate in integration programmes having to do with language training and learning about the culture, if these were offered at all. No active integration programmes are in place for the general immigrant public, yet the immigrants seemed eager to participate in some structured programme which might bring them closer to society in general. There is no need or demand for seperate programmes for each group of ethnicity or religion, though as the above examples show, groups such as youth and asylum seekers get special attention, which seems only normal given that it may be argued that they are likely more vulnerable than other groups. However, as most of the interviewees agreed upon, there is a great need for organised, specialised programmes, as integration doesn't happen overnight or un-aided. The hope that it will all just 'click', that the native population and the immigrants will simply get along without any difficulty is "a nice dream but a pipe dream", as one interviewee worded it.

The Intercultural Centre offers anti-racism seminars for teens as they work during the summers for the city of Reykjavik and in towns around the capital area. These teens work in groups cleaning up the city and towns, doing gardening jobs and such like. There they work with kids from their areas and schools, often with ones they did not know before. To prevent racism and to teach them about other cultures and tolerance, representatives from the Intercultural Centre have taught them in words and by example about the situation of those who enter Iceland as foreigners. As an example, to experience some of what others must go through to intergrate and adjust, the youths are presented with the Arabic alphabet and asked to learn to spell their names. This, in general, turns out to be quite a task for the kids, an eye opening experience with tangible proof of how difficult a task can be though others find it simple. The hope is that this experience will have preventative effects, and incidents between immigrants and native Icelanders fuelled by racism will diminish, or of course hopefully cease to be. The idea and execution of it is entirely that of the Intercultural Centre.

Among the Muslims there was no great concern about such programmes though two suggestions regarding generating understanding between cultural groups were mentioned. One has to do with inclusion and religion classes on the primary educational level and the other with inter-religious discussion groups. Both have been mentioned somewhat.

To recap, instead of teaching Christianity in class, during which time most Muslim children will be encouraged or told by their parents and allowed by their teachers to leave the classroom, they suggest teaching universal principles which have nothing to do with separate or individual faiths but rather issues that concern all human beings, such as tolerance, understanding, goodness, obedience, and such like. Religious teaching, if it must take place in schools, ought to include religions of the world, and not emphasise Christianity. Though they know they are living in a predominantly Christian country, they find this intertwining of school and church to be inappropriate and not conducive to integration. This is because from early, developing childhood the children are separated into groups depending on religion, as most Muslim parents do not want their children to participate in religious studies which focus almost solely on Christianity. Granted, there are classes called Religions of the World, but while one lesson is dedicated to each of the other world religions, Christianity gets most of the attention, which in the end means that Muslim children are not participating as much in the classroom and are segregated from the rest of the class – by their parents' choice, admittedly, but as was said before, they would rather have them in class with the other children than out of class by themselves, if their conscience only allowed. Lessons about universal human principles of behaviour and about the world and its religions might serve as stepping stones to eliminating misunderstanding and promoting acceptance and equality.

6.2.8 Regarding Icelandic Society and Culture – living in it and becoming part of it

Regardless of its accuracy, the most noticable and noticed social contribution of immigrants currently to be witnessed in Iceland is that of their hard work as manual labourers, along with the many and varied restaurants which offer food from all over the world. Some shops selling decorative items from around the world are still few and far between, but they are growing in popularity. Shops from the Middle East and Muslim world are still a minority among the ethnic shops and restaurants, but over the

past few years people of immigrant origin have managed to affect the hitherto monotonous landscape of food and art in such a manner that their presence is no longer viewed as 'too foreign'.

It doesn't take much to become famous or at least recognised in such a small country as Iceland. A few people of Muslims and/or Middle Eastern background have for that reason, due simply to their outspokenness and because they have been interviewed on television, radio and in the newspapers, become spokespeople of sorts for the group of people the indigenous population see them as representing, though they may or may not have chosen that role themselves, or be preferred representatives by those who share their background. I use the term 'spokesperson' loosely as they are not officially so and they don't see themselves as such. This in a way is a contribution to a dialogue, as long as the media coverage remains positive or unbiased, and while people in the society are benefiting from what they hear and see.

Whether an individual integrates into society depends greatly on their willingness and interest in the host country. In terms of integrating into the work force, though, immigrants certainly have done that, but as mentioned before, they occupy mainly the manual work sector.

Most of the interviewees have Icelandic friends and through them experience what it is like to be part of the society. This applies to those who do not see themselves as being in any way integrated. Having said that, many of the Muslim women, and the men to some extent, admitted to having few Icelandic friends, and that the friends they had made were mainly those they met at the mosque, i.e. other Muslims. But as their association with them is rather limited to the mosque setting, and so many of them have Icelandic families, they did not see themselves as being an inclusive minority or society among other minorities as well as Icelanders.

Immigrants, and in particular Muslims and Middle Eastern people, are few and far between in politics and social issues involvement. Public positions, being heard on differing social levels and participating in planning and sculpting the future for people and municipalities; making a difference on a broader social level are just not activities which they will participate in publically or in the most obvious way. Women of foreign

descent have organised a womens' political movement which meets regularly, and some members and leaders of that movement are from the Middle East or predomenantly muslim countries.

Networking and the manner in which this is done, is, like other issues concerning social matters, a highly personal process and differs therefore from one person to another. The most common way is through extended family, friends and workmates. Many marry Icelanders and in so doing already have a network of people who can guide and help them and provide assistance in many things, friendship and comfort, if they are so inclined in the first place. The same goes for friends made at work or other places. Common hobbies and interest, backgrounds even, can work as a magnet in bringing people to befriend one another. Workmates have a slightly different role as they may not be as close to the immigrants as are family and friends. Their role in the immigrants' lives may however be quite substantial and often they are a great source of information and help on issues regarding their work, as well as companionship during work times.

Some of the practicing Muslim women attend monthly or semi-weekly meetings held at the mosque. There they read from and discuss the Holy *Qur'an*, taking turns preparing lessons or discussion topics, after which they take time to socialise. To some who do not get out much or do not have many friends in Iceland this is where they receive most of their social interaction and information, if needed, on the basis of their common faith and lifestyles. It seems to help them to be understood and welcomed by a sisterhood, despite the fact that this group is rather detached from the rest of society. Or maybe because of that fact, as it caters to specific, unique needs they have and must have met. It must be said though, that most women who I met during the course of my research either had plenty of friends with whom to discuss their problems and joys or whatever issues, or didn't find it necessary to associate much with anyone outside the home, mosque and circle of mostly immigrant friends. Because some have already made up their minds not to stay in Iceland long they see no special need to work towards lasting relationships with any indigenous friends. For some, the monthly meetings at the mosque are source of strength and community they wouldn't want to do without.

It is hard to get by and move about in the system (*kerfið* in Icelandic, a word meaning bureucracy or goverment process and quickly learned and it is much used by all who live in Iceland) without knowledge of the Icelandic language. Without knowing the language one cannot get to know the system and how it works. This is why networking is crucial, as a first step, in learning about rights and duties, the ins and outs of society. As outlined above, there are various ways of networking that have proven effective and are used by most immigrants to varying extents. All interviewees agree that networking is important, though some find it more important or relevant to them than others. Some build their own networks, like for instance in the form of the mosque community, where they can receive information on issues that concern them, and be of assistance to those in need of information they have already gathered. As has been mentioned, others have an instant network when they marry their Icelandic spouses and join their family network. Others find that work mates and employers can be a useful source for finding the important information they need to find their way around the system. The above people more often than not plan on staying in Iceland for some length of time and therefore have a vested interest in learning as much as they can about the 'system', as knowledge of it works as a key to society, and is part of integration.

There is a significant difference to be felt in the attitude of those who are not planning on staying in Iceland for long, or have ended up staying longer than they thought they would initially. They generally don't care as much about finding information and learning about the system as a whole as they find they get all the information they are interested in and need from employers. That type of information would be regarding taxes, rights and duties, benefit information, and such like.

Others learn about the system half-way, or enough to reap the benefits from it. An example would be the pension funds. All who work in Iceland, foreigners as well as natives pay a certain sum to a pension fund chosen for them. The employers match or exceed the amount and pay into the same fund and as the name implies it is meant to be used when the individual stops working, generally at the age of 67. However, if and when a foreign national working in Iceland short term decides to leave he or she may take the money out of their pension fund account. This applies to those working in Iceland short term. If a person becomes an Icelandic citizen they cannot get the money until they turn 67 years of age, whether they live in Iceland that long or not. This is one

reason many choose not to apply for citizenship. They may only want to remain in Iceland and work for 20 years and having to wait for years afterwards for a sum of money which is some countries is quite substantial seems a bit of a waste. This is therefore something which a foreigner would be keen to learn about, as he or she could potentially leave the country without receiving the money set aside for them.

Due to the amount of Muslims who come to Iceland to join family members already here or to join an Icelandic spouse, or due to the closeness of the people of the mosque, for many the matter of networking is already solved. Marrying native Icelanders is rather common a way to enter Iceland. In the case of this particular group of Muslim interviewees, half of them had entered Iceland because of their wives. The Muslims interviewed who are married to Icelandic women said that without a doubt their wives' knowledge of the society and connection to it made a big difference in their own integration.

As for finding information, such as how to apply for work, where and when to turn in tax reports, where to turn for medical help, and other issues which require more than basic English or basic Icelandic, they felt it a definate advantage having a spouse who had either gone through it all before or knew whom to ask. Access to assistance and information was thus, via the spouses, made easy and straightforward. Furthermore, having an Icelandic spouse significantly lessened the risk of the immigrant misunderstanding something having to do with the way things work within the Icelandic society and beaurocracy, for any prolonged period of time anyway, as well as being an almost sure-fire way of ensuring the immigrants did all they were meant to do, fulfilled their duties to the country and municipalities.

The spouses' thoughts and feelings on this subject were unfortunately outside the scope of this research.

When speaking to people at the mosque one clearly senses that they are interested in an inclusive society where they are taken seriously and respected for who they are instead of judged on the basis of their religion and ethnicity. They have a firm believe that being Muslim in Iceland is groundbreaking work and their work is somewhat of a mission. This mission is to teach about Islam, to teach tolerance, and invite people to

get to know them. Those who are involved in the work of the mosque on an active level find that it is their role to reach out to the community, albeit not aggressively in any way, and do not miss a chance to be interviewed by the media, be it radio, newspaper or television. The mosque chairman is the one who bears the brunt of the publicity, having lived in Iceland the longest of all Muslims, around 30 years. His Icelandic is excellent, which come into play as well, though more and more interest is to be found among the media to talk to other Muslims as well.

As to how well they integrate, the question is rather vague and was intially only directed at participants to get their personal view of their own integration and acceptance into society and understanding of it. No academic means of measuring was used. Their views on how well they integrate will of course be coloured by their personal biases and it is rather difficult to write up a general summary of such a large group on such a vague topic. But as has been mentioned before, on the whole the muslim population integrates into the Icelandic socio-cultural environment in as much as they see fit without compromising their religous believes and standards. As for the people from the Middle East their integration is as intangible and depends purely on the individuals' abilities, circumstances, and desires to do so. Theirs may be a little bit easier as is that of the non-practicising Muslims, as issues such as alcohol consumption and eating of pork and other non-*halal* foods, while not posing a problem, often create a slight divide between those who do not understand the reasons from abstaining from consuming these. Therefore anyone who can have a sausage and a pint won't be seen as quite the foreigner as those who wont. The same rule applies to any activity which, if taken part in, brings the participants closer to the indigenous people who enjoy it.

Interestingly, most minority groups in Iceland are, by Icelanders, considered rather exclusive and only interested in associating with people of their own nationality in their free time. The immigrants interviewed noticed this trend and commented on it, and though most didn't see themselves that way some commented that many others of the same background as they were fit this description.

Though views on Iceland, its culture and its people were somewhat split between those who practice a certain religion or philosophy, and those who do not, the spiritual and the non-spiritual, all who planned on settling in Iceland for good either preferred it to

their own country for various reasons, were satisfied and comfortable enough to live there, or stayed for family or health reasons. Though the religious immigrant sample does not agree with the life styles of Icelanders in general, i.e. excessive drinking and relations between men and women outside marriage, and other things widely accepted in the West, their opinions didn't affect they way the felt about the country and the people as such. As the health care system is quite efficient, and workers' unions and other official institutions which they need offer good services, this is a great help in their becoming comfortable in the country. Most found Icelanders to be rather closed and to 'keep themselves to themselves', but friendly and very much so once they had opened up and gotten past their initial inhibitions.

The question as to whether marrying locals made integration simpler or more difficult was addressed seperately again. This was done in order to find out whether those immigrants married to Icelandic spouses felt their integration into society had been facilitated by the fact that their partners were Icelandic, or whether this in fact made it harder, perhaps due to prejudice towards the spouse or due to too much reliance on the spouse. The answers were again very varied and depended entirely on the person interviewed. For the most part though immigrants either considered themselves fortunate to have an Icelandic partner to help them along in the society, though a few saw no special benefit in it. None of the interviewees mentioned overly relying on their spouses and consequently perhaps alienating themselves from society.

The question of homogenisation only came up as a concern in terms of racism and being clearly different in appearance. Many did find that the general attitude towards anyone with darker skin, hair and eyes along with the typical, as it were, Asian, African or Arabic look, was to regard them with suspicion, which generally dissapated with time and practical experience.

Only a handful of interviewees considered themselves Icelandic. Those were the ones who had lived there the longest, and even then they said they felt Icelandic, plus whatever nationality they were born. That is to say, no one interviewed identified so strongly with Iceland, its culture, nation, customs etc, that they felt entirely like one of the people there. Again, this is likely connected to the fact that very few have stayed longer than 10 years in Iceland, and most never intended on staying there for very long

anyway, thus always retaining a big portion of their own culture which didn't give room for new ways of live except in limited ways, typically in clothing, hobbies and activites, and some types of food.

Very few felt personally discriminated against. Those who commented on this question felt that events outside Iceland involving specific nationals or religions, like 11th September 2001, along with Icelandic peoples' prior association with people of specific origin influenced to a great extent the way they treated immigrants. That is to say, if a person had had a negative experience, say with a man from Africa, he would tend to view other Africans with suspicion at first. Again, a generalisation, but it was mentioned enough to be a credible notion and worth mentioning. Though none of the ones spoken to could recall any major discrimination against them due to their backgrounds or religious believes, they felt is a growing trend in society towards resenting foreigners in general. In a recent study[56] Muslims and the mentally handicapped were named as the people most Icelanders would least like to have as neighbours. This opinion is sadly but most likely based on second-hand experiences rather than first-hand encounters with Muslims or event the mentally handicapped.

The individuals' reasons for coming to Iceland determine in most cases whether they will remain there or move back to their own countries. Of the ones spoken to, a minority had made plans to remain in Iceland for good but decided against it once they had experienced life there and come to the conclusion that it was not what they wanted. Mixed marriage couples were no more likely to move to the immigrant spouses' countries of origin than the couples both of whom were immigrants. It simply depended on their circumstances in Iceland, as well as the situation in the country from whence they came. In a few cases, the fact that the children had grown up in Iceland, had friends there and had become accustomed to a certain lifestyle which they could not have in their parents' countries of origin was the determining factor for the families to remain in Iceland.

[56] jse@frettabladid.is. "Vilja sist búa nálægt múslima." (English: "Living in Close Proximity with Muslims Considered Least Desirable.") Fréttablaðið (English: The News Paper) 20 August 2005.

Loyalty is hard to measure, as is a person's 'Icelandicness'. After living for years in Iceland, especially if their spouse and loved ones come from there originally, the immigrants were more likely to feel a strong bond and affection for the country than those who had no family there of Icelandic 'stock'.

6.2.9 Immigrants' general concerns

The main concerns raised were in regards to the lack of value placed in foreign immigrants, the rather shallow impressions and opinions which they felt many Icelanders had formed of them based on the actions of another person of the same nationality or religion, and that new laws as well as fears towards immigrants were basically 'imported' from the mainland of Europe into Iceland. Thus, issues were made of events regarding immigrants which hadn't actually happened and weren't likely to happen.

A greater flow of informaton, prevention programmes based on facts as opposed to news from other parts of the world, and pre-emptive measures were at the top of the interviewees' lists of wants in regards to integration. Integration programmes in schools and work places would be of great use, or any programme really which showed the government's active interest in the immigrant population and in not allowing things to slowly deteriorate until actual societal and inter-racial problems arise which need fixing. Social integration in education, for instance, should call for active measures where policies exists that integrate children and make them equal to one another, as opposed to, for example, simply allowing children to skip classes and thus be set further apart from the rest. Active measures and not passive are needed, or such was the feeling of the interviewees in general.

Closemindeness and apathy from both sides is a real barrier. So is feeling threatened and forced into doing or accepting something. That last sentence applies to immigrants and the indigenous population alike, and therefore constructed programmes to inform both sides would move the integration work further than people working zelously at their own initiative.

As has been mentioned, parents in particular had concerns and ideas about the education system. They find that the state church, the Lutheran church, has too much

influence in the schools and play schools. Priests will sometimes visit the children in playschools and play for them and sing, even give them colouring books which to a child is obviously fun. This is all done during school hours and it is not looked upon favourably by some immigrant parents who see religious teachings as being something which ought to be done outside the schools and inside the homes. It should not, in their view, be the schools' responbility to teach religion and moral values, but rather the responsibility of the parents. As has been mentioned, some have suggested teaching ethics and moral values which all humans have in common, such as loving one another, not lying, stealing, cheating, etc. These can be taught in schools, but intead of doing so under religious pretenses this can be done as a 'moral values' class. All children, regardless of religion, can participate in those types of classes. The argument is that teaching about moral values doesn't require one to take a stand on any issues where peoples' beliefs may diverge. Being good to your neighbour, as an example, or learning to obey your parents, doesn't demand you either pronounce or denounce any religious tangents, any thing or any One.

When it comes to work in Iceland most immigrants actually don't work in their chosen field. Most are employed in manual labour and as many come to Iceland simply to make money and then move back to their own countries, it is something they can deal with for a few years and live somewhat happily in the meantime. Those who have other aspirations, however, find that their degrees, diplomas and work experiences from other countries account for little and are too often disregarded. Great emphasis is placed on them knowing the Icelandic language, which is only fair, in most peoples' views. It does however bother people when they cannot move on in society, up the work and salary ladders, because unreasonably high standards are placed on them in terms of knowing the language. Knowing enough to do the work, and then in all likelihood learning more as you progress on the job, rarely comes into consideration for those immigrants who had tried to get jobs more suitable to them. There are exceptions to this, of course, but as a concern about the job market, this was one that most frequently came up in discussion. As a result, most immigrants are stuck in manual labour, fish factories, bread factories, other food industry jobs, cleaning and child minding. As a further consequence, a certain class distinction is becoming evident in the Icelandic society, but that issue goes beyond the scope of this paper and will not be discussed further.

The concerns when it comes to learning and speaking Icelandic are mainly two. First, facilities and prices. In the capital city, Reykjavik and the surrounding towns finding schools that offer Icelandic courses is relatively easy, though costly. Courses aren't really widely offered, though, neither in the capital city nor in the towns and villages dotted around the country. In fact, in the villages it is sometimes impossible to find any Icelandic classes. People must pay for the courses themselves despite attending a certain number of them is a requirement for permanent residency. Going to courses presents a double financial loss for those who want to do so in order to gain residency, as they must pay rather large amounts for the courses considering their wages, and they must attend the courses when they could have been going to work earning money.

The second concern is the standard of Icelandic imposed by the Icelanders. They are, according to most of the interviewees, simply too high. Immigrants cannot be expected to learn the language swiftly and easily, as it isn't an easy language and they work full-time, and many don't even work with Icelanders or even hear or speak Icelandic at work. When they do learn the language enough to get by many find that Icelanders expect more of them than is reasonable in terms of pronunciation.

On a slightly comical note, many if not most immigrants do not understand the Icelandic peoples' curiosity! This is a topic more suited for an anthropologist, but I think it's important to at least mention it. Asking one another questions about certain personal things is quite alright, or has been considered alright, in Icelandic culture. This could include asking for information about ages, salaries, family members' names, as knowing where people come from is traditionally very important to Icelanders. This seems very invasive, unless, and until, a person becomes used to it.

The general impression of the immigrants who were interviewed is that they do integrate quite well, socially and economically. They consider themselves both observing society and participating in it with open minds. They find that the reception and reaction they get from Icelanders is more or less positive, and verifies their feelings on their integration.

Through no fault of their own, however, some of them are bound to be seen as different simply because the colour of their skin and eyes is generally darker than that of the

average Icelander. This may seem like a simple definition but it's true none the less. There have always been some foreigners in Iceland, mostly Western immigrants whose resemblance to the people already living in Iceland made it easy for them blend in. About 30 years or so Iceland started to receive more and more immigrants from further a field. More and more foreigners of all colours, cultures and creeds are entering Iceland. Those who aren't from Western and Northern Europe, United States, Canada, Australia, and other Western countries (bar the southern European nations), are still easily recognisable though, due again to their darker skin colour, etc. Though people are no longer surprised to see them in the streets, at work, in schools, and pretty near everywhere in society, they are still generally regarded as the 'immigrant other', and even addressed in English as opposed to Icelandic without being asked what language they speak. It is simply assumed they don't speak Icelandic. Again, this is no fault of the immigrants, but a societal issue which will likely only be dealt with successfully by using time as a mediating factor. Time and more immigrants coming to Iceland, speaking Icelandic, participating in society like Icelanders, will slowly but surely turn peoples' perception around to accepting them as part of the society.

But there are other factors which, in the minds of Icelanders in general, might influence their perception of how well immigrants integrate into society. It has to do with non-participation.

As mentioned before, some religiously minded immigrants or those who for various reasons choose to retain aspects of their culture which are dramatically different than those of the Icelandic culture, choose *not* to do certain things. That may be drinking, a favoured pastime of Icelanders, eating everything which is on offer at work cafeterias and at parties and such like, as no ingredients are off limits to them. By not partaking in activities they do set themselves somewhat apart from the general population.

In regards to integration programmes, it is clear from the interviewees' words and perceptions that there is work still to be done. The ones that do exist are few and even those are for specific groups, mainly refugees. There are other ones, like the ones for youth mentioned in section 7 above, but these programmes are not for the general immigrants as approached for interviews in this research. Integration is certainly a two-way street, and teaching Icelanders about foreigners is an important step towards

mutual understanding, whereas those who move to a new country are, in general though not always, open to new ideas and ways of living as they have to be because they are no longer on their own soil. People in the host country may see them as immigrants, even intruders, who need to pick up on and adapt to their way of living, and from whom nothing can be gained.

7 Conclusion

With a view to evaluate the key issues of immigration and integration polices in Iceland, I have looked into the socio-economic integration of Muslims and people of Middle Eastern origin into Icelandic society. The method favoured in this instance was to compare and contrast the policies, procedures and success of the countries to which the Icelandic government looks for example and comparison, and often models its laws and work methods upon. Those countries are the Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Iceland has a much shorter history of immigration than Scandinavia. Its location in the middle of the Atlantic, small population, and limited work opportunities have hitherto been a deterrent for people moving and settling there. Even refugees were an unknown factor in the Icelandic foreign nationals' landscape until the first group of quota refugees arrived around 30 years ago. Of course there were foreign nationals, and people did marry foreigners who moved to Iceland. However, the concept of mass influx of foreigners who did not marry locals, many entering Iceland with the express purpose of working and making money in order to secure a better life for themselves and their posterity, is a new one. The opportunity has arisen for people to come to Iceland for the above reasons as native Icelanders have become more educated and shunning traditional work, i.e. the manual labour, forcing many employers to seek employees elsewhere. While the rates and salaries offered to workers in, for instance, the fish industries and factories in Iceland are not enticing to the native population, they often are acceptable to those of foreign descent who are looking for work to secure a brighter future for themselves and their children, or enable them to live in Iceland for other reasons. It should be mentioned that an up-side of many manual labour jobs is that workers have the chance to work long hours and receive better pay for that.

7.1 Summary Findings

In comparison to the sample countries, Iceland's integration efforts are not nearly as advanced. What policies the government has commissioned and have been written down have yet to be implemented. Several municipalities do have clear agendas when it comes to integration. Unfortunately the executive branches are not working at their plans progressively.

As a former head of the Directorate of Immigration was quoted as saying earlier, the government's stance is to wait and hope that all goes well. We have seen from the countries near Iceland that immigration and integration, despite policies, do carry with them some problems. Most likely this is why the Icelandic government feels a need to hope for the best, as it knows the worst could happen. But there are ways around bad experiences.

The uniqueness of Iceland's current position when it comes to integration is too good for the government not to notice, or to pass up the opportunities it brings. Iceland could potentially avoid the pitfalls associated with the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish immigration and integration experiences. In dealing with massive immigrant numbers, and finding that it wasn't enough to allow people to just move into their countries and merely exist there, these nations pioneered ways to integrate their newcomers into society, while also moving their ideals and methods into mainstream politics, instead of leaving these issues on the backburner.

Instead of dealing with similar issues in the future with which the sample countries have had to deal, Iceland has the chance now to improve on what the other countries have done, and prevent some of the negative issues from happening. Of course it's not just about prevention of possible problems and issues. The city and towns that have an integration plan have a vision of building a multicultural society. This is doable and has been done before, albeit in different countries. One need only learn from and hopefully avoid others' mistakes and follow their example where good things have developed.

Though numbers of immigrants vs indigineous Icelanders are steadily rising, Iceland doesn't have as many foreigners as the sample countries. Any fears of becoming overrun by foreigners has no claim in reality. Implementing integration programmes now, programmes which have been proven to work and are put into action while the immigrant population is relatively low, will help prevent any foreseeable problems. Foreseeable, because we've already witnessed them in neighbouring countries.

This, and other studies, have shown that people come to Iceland to work, and for the most part they like it. Unemployment among the foreigners in Iceland is less than in the

sample countries, and this research has given every reason to believe that immigrants would welcome integration programmes which would help them become part of the society to which they already contribute economically. Their social contribution potential has yet to be witnessed. By implementing practical integration programmes the government can show whether it values immigrants or merely provides for them.

The scope of the integration policies in the Scandinavian countries leave the reader with a clear idea of what is achievable. Crucially, the government must itself engage with the goal of integration and this must be made evident through policy making, strategies and work delegation.

However, active and not simply verbal encouragement from official institutions, i.e. the government, is needed for the foreigners to feel at home and for them to feel the need to integrate. An immigrant in a nation whose government doesn't have a plan for foreign integration and therefore doesn't seem to see the need for it, is not likely to gain that person's trust and belief in the importance of integration. And they will therefore likely not be seeing any great efforts on the immigrants' behalf, unless they are highly motivated individuals in terms of integration, as any need for such efforts are not encouraged or even mentioned through the official channels.

The issue of money which has been poured into integration efforts in the Scandinavian countries hasn't been mentioned in this research, for a reason. The simple fact, is that if a nation and its government are interested in something and view it as beneficial to them they will find the resources to pursue it. Therefore, if the government of Iceland sees investing in the future of its immigrants, for instance through integration programmes, as important for the country and its progress, surely it will want to do so constructively, i.e. in the form of informed and executable policies. I emphasise that the policies must be not just theoretically viable, but practically too. Municipalities have come up with sound programmes which have not been put into action, either because they've been forgotten, no one has been given the mandate to carry out what the action plan says, or it is simply seen as enough to write a plan. Planning and writing policies, and doing so well, is an important and serious task. However, the execution thereof and proposals regarding plans of action, are every bit as vital.

Some ideas of policies which have worked in Scandinavia would likely work also in the context of Icelandic immigrants and their integration. For instance, language learning, academic and vocational courses of studies, delegation to municipalities, encouragement/incentive programmes for individuals and municipalities, and labour market training incentives, are all examples of programmes which are applicable to Icealndic context.

For example, the way in which language requirements for residency are achieved might be reviewed to encourage immigrants to participate in courses, and all that with the aim not only of making them eligable for permanent residency, but conversant in the language, and knowledgable about the culture and country in which they reside. Language courses as set up in the Scandinavian countries, as part of a 'welcoming' integration packet. It includes cultural classes to better inform the immigrants in ways only years of experience or being born there would otherwise normally accomplish. Though the programmes are often aimed especially at refugees and the underprivileged or unemployed, the same strategies work for those who have jobs and have come to Iceland of their own volition in order to work. If learning the local language is as important to integration as studies, foreign example and even interviews with immigrants show, something must be done about that issue in Iceland. Offering more options in terms of education, encouraging the municipalities to organise teaching programmes for all, and providing them free of charge as is done in Scandinavia, would definitely boost the numbers of immigrants participating in Icelandic courses.

The main reasons why people do not participate are the high costs of courses and the fact that they work long hours. Incentives where employees are encouraged to hold courses in the workplaces are already in place within some institutions in Iceland, but they are privately run, and the government has no hand in organising or encouraging them. Therefore it is up to the individuals, again, to make progress in this area. A government policy is needed which would provide fair opportunity to everyone and can be simply put into place, molded after the policies already in existence and use in Scandinavia.

The educational system as it is now satisfactorily nicely for young children who have varying needs, most related to cultural matters and language acqusition. Youth,

however, who move to Iceland in their teens and desire to study at the same level as their indigineous peers, in vocational and academic colleges often find that the requirements are too strict for them to participate. The option of studying in a foreign language, when given, is limited to the English language, and though that is great for those who can utilise that option, clearly not all immigrants speak English. It is also clear to see that an immigrant youth who, for instance, at age 10 moves to Iceland cannot by the time he or she turns 16 be required to perform academically at the same level as an Icelandic youth, born and raised in Iceland, in subjects such as Icelandic. As all subjects are taught in Icelandic the youth's abilities in the sciences, for instance, cannot necessarily reach their full potential as they may not understand everything the teacher is saying. Therefore, a modification of the educational system to meet the needs of foreign students is needed, for the future of the youths involved as well as the good of society. For them to have any hope of living their lives in Iceland on equal footing with their peers who are born and raised in the country education is fundamental, and a good investment as, again, the benefits thereof and effects will be felt in the society at large and in the country's economy.

The government needn't work alone in the implementation of any policies it chooses to establish or adopt. In fact, following the model which has been especially succesful in Denmark, it might consider delegating responsibilities to the municipalities, after, of course, making sure the integration policy is clear in theory and as to its practical parts. A programme which encourages the municipalities, whether that be financially or in any other way, would prove helpful in keeping them focused on the task. The results might turn out as good as in the succesful municipalities of Denmark, where organisations and individuals have rallied around the cause to make integration a real community effort. All of that is made possible through the government's clear agenda and stance on integration issues; no-nonsense policies with understandable implementation pathways all set up, and mutually beneficial incentives so as to spur communities on. Providing guidelines and people trained in explaining them is also helpful, and has been done in Denmark, as opposed to people and organisations basically being left to interpret policies and procedures on their own.

In Scandinavia the general labour market is seen as a pivotal place for people to integrate as they may be out amongst the country's native population, perhaps even

speaking the language, and in general participating in daily life as it's lived in that country. Though immigrants in Iceland are in general gainfully employed, their contribution to the economy and the society might be enhanced were they to be offered courses which trained them in work and skills in which they were interested. They could then go to work in a field of their choice and in which they'd be more likely to remain, and thus their contribution to society and economy will go on for longer. But even if they don't remain in their field of work or in the country for a longer period of time, a person who is happy on the job will prove a happier resident of that place while it lasts. Simple but true. It is interesting to note that the on-the-job training programmes set up in the Scandinavian countries all clearly state that the training is to aide the immigrant's integration into society, but the vision is also focused on their country of origin. If they choose to leave their host after having received the necessary skills and acquiring work experience, that is all fine and well. It's not considered a loss for the country, as their contribution will already have been felt in the labour market. Plus, the integration process has become very personal, focusing on humane integration, assessing the individual's needs, and valuing them and their skills.

At this time, when immigrant numbers as compared to those of the total population in Iceland are still at a relative low percentage, the government might want to take advantage of the favourable numbers and work with the organisations which have already established themselves as being at the forefront of integration, to create a policy for integration. Put into action at such an early stage, while immigrant numbers are low though rising, and before potential problems occur, as feared by some, an integration policy would be of great benefit to the nation as a whole, and a great example to others as to how to treat immigrants as not only conventient labourors, but as people possessing valuable skills, making invaluable contributions to society as a whole.

Appendix 1 - Recent Developments

A few months after the research which went in to this thesis had commenced the government of Iceland made two rather significant announcements which tie in directly to the research. These announcements were made in April and December 2005.

The first one came from the Ministry of Social Affairs. The ministry commissioned a group of experienced people in the field of immigration and integration which produced a document in April of 2005. The document stated that despite the increase of immigrants into Iceland over the past decade there remains no evidence that any of the ministries have formed an integration policy. Among other things it was the role of the people engaged in the commission set up by the ministry to make recommendations as to how all government ministries could contribute to a holistic integration policy. The work carried out by the commission has been published on the Ministry of Social Affairs' website.

The direct link to this body of work is:
<http://www.felagsmalaraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-skjol/Skyrsla_nefndar_um_adlogun_utlendinga.pdf>

In response to this document, the Ministry of Social Affairs has now organised a committee which will discuss the affairs of immigrants. More specifically, the main objective of the newly established Immigrants' Council is to discuss issues concerning the social integration of immigrants. Furthermore, the council will be an advising body to the government as it constructs official policies for the integration of immigrants.

Announcements of the establishment of the Immigrants' Council were made on 21 December 2005.

The direct link to the news story is here below:
<http://www.mbl.is/mm/frettir/innlent/frett.html?nid=1174685>

Appendix 2 - Data Tables

Demographics of Interview Participants

Table 1 Intercultural Centre Survey results

	1999	2004
Iceland should accept more asylum seekers	45%	28%
More foreigners should be allowed to work in Iceland	42%	28%
I would be interested in attending a course on foreign cuisine	45%	59%
Those who move to Iceland from other countries have the right to retain their own cultures and values	77%	64%
Iceland would benefit from foreign cultures	70%	77%

Table 2 Sex of Interviewees

Men	Women
8	5

Table 3 Number of years Interviewees' resident in Iceland

Number of Years	Number of Interviewees
5 or less	5
5 -10	3
10 - 15	1
15 - 20	2
20 - 30	1
30 or more	1

Table 4 Age of Interviewees

Age in Years	Male	Female
20-29	0	1
30-39	3	2
40-49	4	1
50-60	1	1

Statistics of Iceland and the Scandinavian Countries' Immigrant and Native Populations

The following information is available on the national statistics websites[57] of the four countries in question. The data was compiled from tables found or built on those websites.

Table 5 Iceland's Immigrant Population by Country

		Population by citizenship 2000-2004				
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
African	Algeria	12	13	11	9	5
African	Egypt	7	7	9	9	7
African	Ethiopia	18	22	26	23	28
African	Kenya	11	15	14	17	17
African	Morocco	51	56	64	63	63
African	Nigeria	29	26	28	28	29
African	Other Africa and unspecified	95	113	103	110	104
African	South Africa	31	34	34	29	20
African	Tanzania	3	3	1	1	2
African	Tunisia	8	10	10	10	9
African Result		***265***	***299***	***300***	***299***	***284***
Americas	Argentina	9	12	8	9	5
Americas	Brazil	23	19	23	26	27
Americas	Canada	84	81	72	65	73
Americas	Chile	38	47	51	46	48
Americas	Colombia	28	27	32	32	36
Americas	Mexico	24	22	25	25	20
Americas	Other America and unspecified	110	149	130	134	132
Americas	United States	597	601	567	521	515
Americas Result		***913***	***958***	***908***	***858***	***856***
Asian	China	135	140	159	174	227
Asian	India	41	46	44	48	51
Asian	Indonesia	10	15	20	17	19
Asian	Iran, Islamic Rep.of	6	4	5	8	8
Asian	Iraq	10	10	8	7	6
Asian	Israel	4	5	8	7	6
Asian	Japan	24	27	30	34	42

[57] www.statbank.dk, www.statice.is, www.statbank.ssb.no, www.ssd.scb.se

Asian	Jordan	14	13	10	9	8
Asian	Korea, Rep. Of	7	8	7	7	7
Asian	Lebanon	3	5	4	4	2
Asian	Other Asia and unspecified	58	73	101	113	124
Asian	Pakistan	10	8	12	16	25
Asian	Philippines	483	547	598	609	647
Asian	Sri Lanka	26	37	33	42	40
Asian	Syria, Arab. Rep.	8	8	9	10	7
Asian	Thailand	444	481	484	474	490
Asian	Turkey	15	23	24	32	29
Asian	Vietnam	133	173	200	231	239
Asian Result		***1431***	***1623***	***1756***	***1842***	***1977***
European	Austria	42	45	53	53	57
European	Belarus	17	16	17	27	25
European	Belgium	55	55	57	51	36
European	Bulgaria	58	62	72	68	64
European	Countries in former Yugoslavia	594	674	716	692	670
European	Czech Republic and Slovakia	59	74	79	88	117
European	Denmark	960	945	898	870	890
European	Estonia	45	57	67	70	66
European	Finland	87	110	96	87	87
European	France	154	176	162	131	131
European	Germany	489	591	610	551	540
European	Greece	6	10	9	7	7
European	Hungary	49	49	54	53	46
European	Ireland	40	44	42	37	30
European	Italy	75	87	96	97	229
European	Latvia	49	69	84	85	89
European	Lithuania	184	317	368	395	423
European	Luxembourg	2	3	3	2	1
European	Netherlands	121	124	131	123	119
European	Norway	318	314	327	323	293
European	Other Europe and unspecified	26	36	41	50	39
European	Poland	1479	1666	1810	1856	1903
European	Portugal	112	125	103	103	357
European	Romania	50	61	69	75	90
European	Russia	180	215	232	218	195
European	Spain	100	110	127	111	100
European	Sweden	311	316	305	326	306
European	Switzerland	25	26	32	33	36
European	Ukraine	70	85	98	108	106
European	United	391	435	410	370	341

	Kingdom					
European Result		***6148***	***6897***	***7168***	***7060***	***7393***
Oceania	Australia	35	38	36	38	40
Oceania	New Zealand	24	21	19	20	17
Oceania	Other Oceania	0	0	0	0	1
Oceania Result		***59***	***59***	***55***	***58***	***58***
Unknown	Foreign country not specified	2	2	2	29	29
Unknown	Stateless	6	34	32	34	39
Unknown Result		***8***	***36***	***34***	***63***	***68***
Grand Total		***8824***	***9872***	***10221***	***10180***	***10636***

Table 6 Denmark's Immigrant Population by Country

		Population by citizenship 2000-2004				
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
African	Africa unknown	17	21	19	21	26
African	Algeria	405	401	351	352	340
African	Angola	60	61	60	62	63
African	Benin	24	24	22	28	19
African	Botswana	19	19	18	16	17
African	Burkina Faso	14	15	14	19	21
African	Burundi	253	299	319	370	385
African	Cameroon	122	138	167	199	243
African	Cape Verde	7	6	5	5	5
African	Central African Rep.	0	1	2	2	2
African	Chad	2	6	5	5	4
African	Comoros	12	10	9	10	6
African	Congo	69	110	128	178	235
African	Djibouti	14	15	14	15	14
African	Egypt	584	598	581	551	550
African	Eritrea	85	85	81	87	101
African	Ethiopia	528	540	472	459	418
African	Gabon	0	0	0	1	1
African	Gambia	409	421	397	373	371
African	Ghana	710	764	788	844	914
African	Guinea	37	39	42	43	43
African	Guinea (Bissau)	12	10	8	8	9
African	Guinea (Equatorial)	0	0	0	0	0
African	Ivory Coast	247	260	241	255	265
African	Kenya	305	350	352	380	395
African	Lesotho	17	16	15	15	15
African	Liberia	50	40	36	43	50
African	Libya	55	52	47	50	65
African	Madagascar	8	13	14	13	17
African	Malawi	9	13	15	15	15
African	Mali	15	15	19	20	21
African	Mauritania	22	21	13	12	7

African	Mauritius	30	33	26	25	23
African	Morocco	3360	3376	3048	3069	2968
African	Mozambique	60	67	69	76	74
African	Namibia	22	18	20	19	20
African	Niger	2	2	3	7	8
African	Nigeria	357	399	408	456	476
African	Reunion	0	0	0	0	0
African	Rwanda	134	173	204	245	253
African	Saint Helena	0	0	0	0	0
African	Sao Tome and Principe	0	0	0	0	0
African	Senegal	46	47	50	52	56
African	Seychelles	12	10	9	10	9
African	Sierra Leone	252	249	238	228	223
African	Somalia	14144	14891	13049	13034	12030
African	South Africa unknown	289	317	333	327	339
African	Southwest Africa unknown	0	0	0	0	0
African	Spanish Ter. in Africa	0	0	0	0	0
African	Sudan	185	237	348	395	416
African	Swaziland	5	5	5	3	2
African	Tanzania	365	382	394	366	373
African	Togo	82	87	83	90	87
African	Tunisia	471	486	444	476	463
African	Uganda	729	754	689	703	671
African	Zambia	149	164	162	154	167
African	Zaire	110	109	98	131	130
African	Zimbabwe	114	119	124	120	113
African Result		***25029***	***26288***	***24058***	***24437***	***23538***
Americas	Antigua and Barbuda	0	0	1	1	0
Americas	Argentina	205	228	252	256	252
Americas	Aruba	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Bahamas	6	6	8	9	8
Americas	Barbados	10	8	9	8	8
Americas	Belize	4	5	4	4	3
Americas	Bermuda	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Bolivia	62	82	71	71	82
Americas	Brazil	911	960	996	1046	1089
Americas	British West India	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Canada	1175	1230	1275	1294	1328
Americas	Chile	556	563	540	530	522
Americas	Colombia	316	333	304	304	297
Americas	Costa Rica	39	40	39	41	41
Americas	Cuba	166	198	221	233	244
Americas	Curacao	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Dominica	6	6	6	6	6
Americas	Dominican Republic	41	47	41	45	48
Americas	Dutch West India	0	0	0	0	0

Americas	Ecuador	133	147	156	154	155
Americas	El Salvador	18	19	17	18	16
Americas	Falkland Islands	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	French Guiana	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	French West India	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Grenada	3	3	3	3	3
Americas	Guadeloupe	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Guatemala	47	53	59	61	46
Americas	Guyana	33	35	33	28	27
Americas	Haiti	14	12	7	8	7
Americas	Honduras	40	43	42	46	49
Americas	Jamaica	63	63	64	69	66
Americas	Martinique	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Mexico	259	287	324	350	347
Americas	Nauru	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Nicaragua	79	80	77	77	78
Americas	Northern America unknown	1	1	2	1	1
Americas	Pan Americas	12	12	13	13	13
Americas	Paraguay	15	15	14	20	20
Americas	Peru	300	327	314	333	327
Americas	Puerto Rico	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	S./C. America unknown	3	3	3	2	1
Americas	Saint Lucia	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	St. Kitts and Nevis	1	1	0	0	0
Americas	St. Vincent and Grenadines	4	4	4	5	4
Americas	Surinam	4	4	3	3	2
Americas	Trinidad and Tobago	52	53	53	45	44
Americas	Uruguay	91	90	83	82	81
Americas	USA	5021	4982	5113	5110	5410
Americas	Venezuela	178	191	216	218	214
Americas	West India Islands	0	0	0	0	0
Americas Result		***9868***	***10131***	***10367***	***10494***	***10839***
Asian	Abu Dhabi	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Afghanistan	3257	5455	7804	8574	9294
Asian	Asia unknown	12	11	7	7	5
Asian	Bahrain	32	31	15	10	9
Asian	Bangladesh	151	157	154	167	157
Asian	Bhutan	10	12	16	16	18
Asian	Brunei	3	3	3	3	3
Asian	Cambodia	83	75	75	75	91
Asian	China	2594	2915	3258	4362	5221
Asian	Dubai	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Hong Kong	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	India	1304	1373	1374	1481	1732
Asian	Indonesia	237	263	286	303	436

Asian	Iran	5178	5127	4560	4840	4658
Asian	Iraq	12649	15354	16704	18918	19264
Asian	Israel	607	652	657	662	634
Asian	Japan	863	893	946	1008	1007
Asian	Jordan	789	811	754	744	740
Asian	Korea, Dem. People Rep.	26	26	27	26	31
Asian	Korea, Rep. of	316	323	307	294	307
Asian	Kuwait	42	52	49	53	51
Asian	Lao People's Dem. Rep.	2	2	4	6	8
Asian	Lebanon	2842	2568	2071	2059	1925
Asian	Macau	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Malaysia	119	142	167	162	187
Asian	Maldives	3	3	5	6	4
Asian	Middle East unknown	40	40	41	43	39
Asian	Mongolia	10	8	14	14	21
Asian	Myanmar	18	57	76	90	246
Asian	Nepal	74	83	87	110	101
Asian	Oman	0	0	1	1	2
Asian	Pakistan	7003	7185	6796	6917	6910
Asian	Palestine	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Philippines	2117	2205	2235	2348	2460
Asian	Qatar	0	3	2	2	4
Asian	Saudi Arabia	13	17	15	13	11
Asian	Sikkim	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Singapore	133	130	134	131	160
Asian	South East Asia unknown	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Sri Lanka	4465	4356	3698	3650	3312
Asian	Syria	607	611	534	608	590
Asian	Taiwan	58	67	67	66	78
Asian	Thailand	4230	4660	5056	5303	5503
Asian	Trucial Oman	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	United Arab Emirates	4	5	4	2	2
Asian	Vietnam	4744	4755	4403	4236	4094
Asian	Yemen	44	46	40	44	44
Asian	Yemen	0	0	0	0	0
Asian Result		***54679***	***60476***	***62446***	***67354***	***69359***
European	Albania	91	119	131	144	158
European	Andorra	0	0	0	0	0
European	Armenia	549	582	442	446	399
European	Austria	732	749	754	776	809
European	Azerbaijan	71	85	107	117	143
European	Belarus	146	210	271	293	308
European	Belgium	503	510	553	579	549
European	Bosnia-Herzegovina	20299	20331	17899	17258	14972
European	Bulgaria	407	419	445	478	512
European	Croatia	487	491	452	437	431

European	Cyprus	25	22	24	21	17
European	Czech Rep.	198	235	245	268	284
European	Czechoslovakia	199	193	189	179	174
European	Estonia	399	464	515	527	503
European	Europe unknown	1	1	1	1	1
European	Finland	2112	2024	2034	2089	2050
European	France	3191	3193	3157	3244	3301
European	Fyrom	1489	1632	1734	1853	1928
European	Georgia	78	90	104	110	114
European	Germany	12450	12607	12748	12882	13131
European	Germany (DDR)	0	0	0	0	0
European	Greece	653	654	637	653	649
European	Hungary	392	402	428	427	456
European	Iceland	5808	5922	6185	6776	7232
European	Ireland	1095	1073	1117	1138	1146
European	Italy	2736	2801	2934	2908	2920
European	Kazakhstan	34	45	48	51	56
European	Kyrgyzstan	4	5	6	5	7
European	Latvia	624	775	834	899	887
European	Liechtenstein	2	3	2	3	4
European	Lithuania	1057	1379	1558	1714	1679
European	Luxembourg	18	19	21	19	21
European	Malta	24	22	22	24	26
European	Moldova, Rep. of	84	122	144	152	162
European	Monaco	0	0	0	0	0
European	Netherlands	4421	4660	4843	5006	5221
European	Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0	0
European	Norway	12548	12911	13034	13350	13696
European	Poland	5570	5672	5691	5768	5781
European	Portugal	554	567	564	567	582
European	Romania	1075	1161	1201	1268	1322
European	Russia	1928	2185	2455	2661	2861
European	San Marino	0	0	0	0	0
European	Serbia Montenegro	0	0	0	72	526
European	Slovak Rep.	112	124	125	147	167
European	Slovenia	42	50	51	55	50
European	Soviet Union	434	402	347	332	303
European	Spain	1675	1781	1905	1979	1935
European	Sweden	10718	10795	10731	10646	10866
European	Switzerland	1161	1150	1156	1171	1204
European	Tajikistan	9	10	13	14	15
European	Turkey	35798	35513	32625	30555	30131
European	Turkmenistan	2	3	5	7	7
European	Ukraine	689	972	1201	1446	1755
European	United Kingdom	12580	12703	12747	12732	12782
European	Uzbekistan	37	52	64	92	111
European	Vatican City State	0	0	0	0	0
European	Yugoslavia	11659	11638	10829	10754	10188
European	Yugoslavia, Fed. Rep.	726	1385	2077	2213	2122
European Result		***157696***	***160913***	***157405***	***157306***	***156654***

Oceania	Australia	866	882	963	994	1035
Oceania	Cook Islands	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	East Timor	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Fiji	4	7	5	5	5
Oceania	French Polynesia	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Kiribati	3	2	3	2	2
Oceania	Marshall Islands	1	1	1	1	1
Oceania	New Zealand	331	329	332	335	353
Oceania	Pacific Islands unknown	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Papua New Guinea	4	4	5	4	4
Oceania	Samoa	2	2	1	1	1
Oceania	Solomon Islands	2	2	2	2	2
Oceania	Tonga	1	9	9	8	12
Oceania	Tuvalu	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Vanuatu	1	1	1	1	1
Oceania Result		***1215***	***1239***	***1322***	***1353***	***1416***
Unknown	Stateless	6027	5597	4236	4151	3912
Unknown	Unknown	90	192	97	93	90
Unknown Result		***6117***	***5789***	***4333***	***4244***	***4002***
Grand Total		***254604***	***264836***	***259931***	***265188***	***265808***

Table 7 Norway's Immigrant Population by Country

		Population by citizenship 2000-2004				
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
African	Algeria	267	301	320	342	371
African	Angola	42	40	47	59	63
African	Benin	0	0	0	0	1
African	Botswana	38	44	51	46	48
African	Burkina Faso	5	5	4	5	6
African	Burundi	67	80	97	142	406
African	Cameroon	49	67	104	147	178
African	Cape Verde	56	53	55	56	52
African	Central African Republic	0	1	1	1	2
African	Chad	4	4	4	3	11
African	Comoros	1	1	0	0	0
African	Congo	116	151	182	277	433
African	Congo Brazzaville	25	61	84	103	141
African	Côte d'Ivoire	44	41	38	35	31
African	Djibouti	5	5	8	9	10
African	Egypt	131	142	167	182	185
African	Equatorial Guinea	1	1	1	1	2
African	Eritrea	152	196	227	283	353
African	Ethiopia	843	1041	1333	1578	1704
African	Gabon	5	5	3	3	3
African	Gambia	472	479	472	430	407

African	Ghana	704	677	676	709	689
African	Guinea	15	16	18	14	16
African	Guinea-Bissau	4	4	4	3	3
African	Kenya	273	305	296	316	327
African	Lesotho	2	3	3	1	2
African	Liberia	8	11	14	20	267
African	Libya	18	24	25	56	77
African	Madagascar	40	39	36	41	45
African	Malawi	6	8	15	22	29
African	Mali	5	7	6	10	12
African	Mauritania	3	3	2	1	0
African	Mauritius	29	32	27	29	33
African	Morocco	1380	1440	1457	1472	1477
African	Mozambique	18	31	36	37	39
African	Namibia	31	38	41	46	44
African	Niger	3	2	4	4	9
African	Nigeria	216	232	245	283	302
African	Rwanda	155	199	215	298	337
African	Sao Tome and Principe	0	0	0	0	0
African	Senegal	33	39	47	58	55
African	Seychelles	3	3	2	2	2
African	Sierra Leone	118	130	156	162	236
African	Somalia	4844	6152	6588	8377	9861
African	South Africa	169	172	189	215	227
African	Sudan	273	329	348	476	507
African	Swaziland	4	2	2	5	5
African	Tanzania	292	322	345	357	389
African	Togo	35	35	36	37	38
African	Tunisia	216	238	256	270	278
African	Uganda	193	213	222	231	247
African	Western Sahara	0	0	0	1	1
African	Zambia	72	80	91	91	90
African	Zimbabwe	82	90	89	96	94
African Result		***11567***	***13594***	***14689***	***17442***	***20145***
Americas	Anguilla	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Antigua and Barbuda	1	1	1	2	3
Americas	Argentina	108	110	103	124	150
Americas	Aruba	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Bahamas	2	2	2	2	1
Americas	Barbados	9	8	8	7	8
Americas	Belize	3	2	1	1	2
Americas	Bolivia	53	57	61	67	76
Americas	Brazil	574	653	717	796	916
Americas	Canada	1180	1181	1169	1232	1208
Americas	Chile	2433	2361	2303	2197	2135
Americas	Colombia	260	329	383	424	455
Americas	Costa Rica	37	36	38	44	53
Americas	Cuba	166	246	296	321	343
Americas	Dominica	4	3	2	2	3

Americas	Dominican Republic	143	158	150	186	201
Americas	Ecuador	96	107	116	130	136
Americas	El Salvador	38	36	39	44	43
Americas	Grenada	6	3	2	2	6
Americas	Guatemala	46	42	48	50	63
Americas	Guyana	16	19	17	15	15
Americas	Haiti	3	2	2	2	3
Americas	Honduras	13	12	12	13	12
Americas	Jamaica	24	34	41	47	49
Americas	Mexico	224	246	257	273	294
Americas	Nicaragua	37	41	37	33	34
Americas	Panama	15	11	15	17	18
Americas	Paraguay	18	19	16	20	27
Americas	Peru	276	264	271	308	315
Americas	St. Kitts and Nevis	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	St. Lucia	3	3	2	1	1
Americas	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1	2	2	1	1
Americas	Suriname	2	5	5	2	3
Americas	Trinidad and Tobago	60	68	73	69	72
Americas	United States	8325	8037	7915	7976	7703
Americas	Uruguay	46	40	39	35	31
Americas	Venezuela	96	111	127	147	143
Americas Result		***14318***	***14249***	***14270***	***14590***	***14523***
Asian	Afghanistan	448	953	1816	2950	4346
Asian	Armenia	26	41	84	114	132
Asian	Azerbaijan	55	76	105	138	150
Asian	Bahrain	2	1	1	1	1
Asian	Bangladesh	205	229	220	223	217
Asian	Bhutan	5	8	6	7	7
Asian	Brunei	0	1	1	2	4
Asian	Burma	33	34	48	81	204
Asian	Cambodia	32	31	28	31	51
Asian	China	1269	1202	1288	1512	1875
Asian	Cyprus	35	38	35	32	30
Asian	Georgia	12	16	58	78	85
Asian	India	2203	2174	2172	2215	2130
Asian	Indonesia	192	227	267	311	423
Asian	Iran	3683	3795	4249	4674	5113
Asian	Iraq	5790	9891	10778	13038	13373
Asian	Israel	202	223	244	253	261
Asian	Japan	433	413	412	425	420
Asian	Jordan	40	45	51	62	76
Asian	Kazakhstan	20	25	98	112	141
Asian	Kuwait	23	5	4	5	5
Asian	Kyrgyzstan	2	4	6	8	17
Asian	Laos	39	33	30	22	24
Asian	Lebanon	303	302	306	304	292
Asian	Malaysia	171	156	153	162	175
Asian	Maldives	4	4	8	9	6

Asian	Mongolia	6	8	10	15	26
Asian	Nepal	116	146	182	236	233
Asian	North Korea	8	6	4	5	5
Asian	Oman	15	16	16	1	1
Asian	Pakistan	7363	6731	6867	6676	6572
Asian	Philippines	1781	1962	2109	2356	2610
Asian	Qatar	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Saudi Arabia	16	12	10	8	8
Asian	Sikkim (replaced)	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Singapore	102	110	117	123	126
Asian	South Korea	200	200	191	213	224
Asian	South Yemen (replaced)	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Sri Lanka	3405	3177	3034	2851	2755
Asian	Syria	161	191	241	325	364
Asian	Taiwan	24	24	26	30	33
Asian	Tajikistan	6	13	29	32	34
Asian	Thailand	2381	2725	2992	3636	4248
Asian	Timor-Leste	0	2	2	0	2
Asian	Turkmenistan	8	12	16	29	33
Asian	United Arab Emirates	2	2	3	3	3
Asian	Uzbekistan	22	26	29	49	58
Asian	Vietnam	2452	1897	1561	1582	1580
Asian	Vietnam, North (replaced)	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Vietnam, South (replaced)	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Yemen	14	14	15	22	32
Asian Result		***33309***	***37201***	***39922***	***44961***	***48505***
European	Albania	133	132	138	160	167
European	Andorra	0	0	0	0	0
European	Austria	613	593	587	594	597
European	Belarus	89	113	165	201	266
European	Belgium	440	445	439	458	469
European	Bosnia-Herzegovina	12196	11611	8826	7850	5952
European	Bulgaria	355	413	464	533	567
European	Croatia	1241	1573	1721	1842	1881
European	Czech Republic	156	187	187	215	232
European	Czechoslovakia	55	53	47	43	41
European	Denmark	19205	19405	19653	20008	20006
European	Estonia	270	301	388	472	473
European	Finland	5731	6003	6121	6362	6332
European	France	2293	2279	2323	2408	2473
European	German Democratic Republic (replaced)	0	0	0	0	0
European	Germany	6707	7055	7538	8233	8839
European	Greece	281	315	316	338	361
European	Hungary	254	291	308	341	336
European	Iceland	3983	3930	3992	4219	4114

European	Ireland	450	438	471	467	468
European	Italy	1052	1107	1103	1176	1204
European	Latvia	276	343	397	485	534
European	Liechtenstein	3	3	3	3	3
European	Lithuania	262	359	528	756	892
European	Luxembourg	15	17	17	19	18
European	Macedonia	207	259	289	341	334
European	Malta	14	20	22	22	22
European	Moldova	17	29	68	92	110
European	Monaco	1	1	1	1	2
European	Netherlands	3533	3587	3718	3837	3950
European	Poland	2042	2023	2205	2619	2741
European	Portugal	553	564	581	616	622
European	Romania	480	480	585	672	746
European	Russia	2749	3288	3882	4829	6203
European	San Marino	1	1	1	0	0
European	Serbia and Montenegro	10249	8849	6497	6004	5665
European	Slovakia	91	140	169	262	321
European	Slovenia	15	14	13	16	20
European	Soviet Union	99	54	41	34	29
European	Spain	1106	1136	1171	1268	1269
European	Sweden	25136	25170	25140	25241	25432
European	Switzerland	887	866	866	861	873
European	Turkey	3481	3299	3339	3510	3540
European	Ukraine	231	284	405	572	713
European	United Kingdom	11367	11074	10966	11188	11018
European	Vatican City State	0	0	0	0	0
European Result		***118319***	***118104***	***115691***	***119168***	***119835***
Oceania	Australia	567	564	598	649	688
Oceania	Fiji	11	8	9	9	12
Oceania	Kiribati	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Marshall Islands	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Micronesia, Federated States of	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Nauru	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	New Zealand	179	197	194	200	196
Oceania	New-Guinea Territory (replaced)	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Palau	1	1	1	1	2
Oceania	Papua New Guinea	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Samoa	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Solomon Islands	2	2	2	2	2
Oceania	Tonga	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Tuvalu	1	1	1	0	0
Oceania	Vanuatu	0	0	1	1	1
Oceania	Wake Island (replaced)	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania Result		***761***	***773***	***806***	***862***	***901***

Unknown	Stateless	375	380	446	604	767
Unknown	Not stated	37	36	39	41	55
Unknown Result		***412***	***416***	***485***	***645***	***822***
Grand Total		***178686***	***184337***	***185863***	***197668***	***204731***

Table 8 Sweden's Immigrant Population by Country

		Population by citizenship 2000-2004				
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
African	Algeria	500	518	529	531	544
African	Angola	158	153	165	192	207
African	Benin	7	7	7	6	8
African	Botswana	27	31	33	29	28
African	Burkina Faso	9	9	10	15	23
African	Burundi	72	88	241	435	763
African	Cameroon	77	111	143	203	396
African	Cape Verde	61	63	64	63	59
African	Central African Republic	1	1	14	14	20
African	Chad	23	21	19	28	27
African	Comoros	0	0	0	0	0
African	Congo, the Democratic Republic of the	679	727	719	792	825
African	Congo, the Republic of the	90	103	140	170	195
African	Cote d'Ivoire	204	206	197	207	217
African	Djibouti	42	38	38	40	35
African	Egypt	592	618	650	662	683
African	Equatorial Guinea	2	2	2	3	4
African	Eritrea	965	1007	1031	1141	1320
African	Ethiopia	2400	2186	1987	1929	1929
African	Gabon	0	1	1	1	1
African	Gambia	1560	1465	1410	1413	1359
African	Ghana	439	463	480	563	624
African	Guinea	50	49	50	60	73
African	Guinea-Bissau	33	36	37	32	29
African	Kenya	623	657	678	685	705
African	Lesotho	5	4	4	3	4
African	Liberia	78	103	116	180	247
African	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	146	149	170	196	230
African	Madagascar	12	13	15	10	13
African	Malawi	10	10	11	13	16
African	Mali	24	19	17	23	22
African	Mauritania	10	15	16	9	11
African	Mauritius	50	50	58	57	50
African	Morocco	1234	1344	1384	1475	1510

African	Mozambique	55	56	61	66	68
African	Namibia	17	21	21	20	23
African	Niger	2	1	0	1	2
African	Nigeria	401	427	473	566	721
African	Rwanda	108	122	152	169	195
African	Sao Tome and Principe	0	0	0	0	0
African	Senegal	109	112	124	129	144
African	Seychelles	35	36	34	32	35
African	Sierra Leone	124	202	269	360	430
African	Somalia	11535	9570	8655	8784	8979
African	South Africa	311	421	486	504	526
African	Sudan	411	456	457	491	602
African	Suriname	0	0	0	1	3
African	Swaziland	4	4	4	3	3
African	Tanzania, United Republic of	406	433	443	451	449
African	Togo	130	117	99	89	87
African	Tunisia	797	803	794	871	889
African	Uganda	803	706	671	648	652
African	Zambia	104	104	104	106	106
African	Zimbabwe	116	140	148	148	134
African Result		***25651***	***23998***	***23431***	***24619***	***26225***
Americas	Antigua and Barbuda	3	4	3	3	3
Americas	Argentina	433	434	452	487	495
Americas	Bahamas	4	4	4	5	5
Americas	Barbados	87	90	87	78	79
Americas	Belize	2	1	0	0	0
Americas	Bolivia	597	589	611	632	660
Americas	Brazil	1465	1543	1578	1591	1684
Americas	Canada	1710	1684	1653	1665	1645
Americas	Chile	10330	9896	9448	9147	8949
Americas	Colombia	1020	1083	1072	1091	1213
Americas	Costa Rica	86	88	77	83	77
Americas	Cuba	926	889	883	859	879
Americas	Dominica	24	26	23	25	17
Americas	Dominican Republic	81	97	118	133	149
Americas	Ecuador	237	283	360	442	492
Americas	El Salvador	974	843	698	661	596
Americas	Grenada	37	34	33	33	32
Americas	Guatemala	104	95	82	80	74
Americas	Guyana	27	23	21	21	24
Americas	Haiti	21	18	23	24	23
Americas	Honduras	80	79	73	77	100
Americas	Jamaica	59	67	69	64	69
Americas	Mexico	567	619	624	694	733
Americas	Nicaragua	199	187	175	187	183
Americas	Panama	51	50	48	51	52
Americas	Paraguay	39	34	34	35	32
Americas	Peru	1882	1787	1697	1688	1697

Americas	Saint Kitts and Nevis	0	0	0	0	0
Americas	Saint Lucia	18	15	12	14	11
Americas	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	9	9	8	8	7
Americas	Trinidad and Tobago	118	113	117	116	114
Americas	United States of America	9972	10026	9625	9416	9260
Americas	Uruguay	305	299	294	302	315
Americas	Venezuela	203	205	220	221	214
Americas Result		***31670***	***31214***	***30222***	***29933***	***29883***
Asian	Afghanistan	3799	4563	5300	6075	6781
Asian	Armenia	350	387	457	488	528
Asian	Azerbaijan	132	139	162	227	350
Asian	Bahrain	23	27	26	23	17
Asian	Bangladesh	1035	1031	1062	1163	1315
Asian	Bhutan	9	11	9	9	7
Asian	Brunei Darussalam	0	0	1	1	1
Asian	Cambodia	49	44	47	49	57
Asian	China (excluding Hong Kong)	4438	4853	5195	5675	6171
Asian	Georgia	87	101	116	142	177
Asian	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	India	1678	1828	2089	2544	3023
Asian	Indonesia	460	507	575	613	664
Asian	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	14324	13499	12944	12464	12443
Asian	Iraq	33116	36221	40146	41516	39772
Asian	Israel	702	670	630	637	616
Asian	Japan	1841	1850	1941	1979	1997
Asian	Jordan	509	539	543	594	693
Asian	Kazakhstan	136	209	263	322	387
Asian	Korea, Democratic People's Republic of	16	11	10	10	7
Asian	Korea, Republic of Korea	564	594	580	601	634
Asian	Kuwait	20	26	28	27	24
Asian	Kyrgyzstan	40	48	59	95	145
Asian	Lao People's Democratic Republic	238	194	152	145	146
Asian	Lebanon	3369	2961	2304	2238	2225
Asian	Malaysia	745	747	750	747	751
Asian	Maldives	4	4	5	5	3
Asian	Mongolia	27	36	38	49	75
Asian	Myanmar	97	94	91	103	134
Asian	Nepal	31	38	47	60	75

Asian	Oman	7	4	7	6	12
Asian	Pakistan	897	990	1024	1200	1513
Asian	Philippines	1846	1898	2019	2126	2277
Asian	Qatar	4	9	15	18	19
Asian	Saudi Arabia	136	132	131	112	119
Asian	Singapore	338	299	337	247	243
Asian	Sri Lanka	889	949	948	962	971
Asian	Syrian Arab Republic	6035	5984	5450	4801	4217
Asian	Taiwan	156	165	160	163	180
Asian	Tajikistan	44	45	50	53	61
Asian	Thailand	5765	6251	6848	8306	9795
Asian	Timor-Leste	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	Turkmenistan	42	49	45	57	80
Asian	United Arab Emirates	35	35	43	58	41
Asian	Uzbekistan	95	108	147	234	338
Asian	Vietnam	2408	2171	2028	1989	2045
Asian	Yemen	45	43	46	55	64
Asian	Yemen Democratic Peoples' Republic	0	0	0	0	0
Asian Result		***86581***	***90364***	***94868***	***98988***	***101193***
European	Albania	212	228	257	296	334
European	Andorra	1	1	1	1	1
European	Austria	2767	2832	2883	2922	2911
European	Belarus	331	408	465	536	610
European	Belgium	629	709	725	717	738
European	Bosnia and Herzegovina	22839	19728	16957	15479	14821
European	Bulgaria	1002	805	796	805	810
European	Croatia	7520	6859	5470	4194	3581
European	Cyprus	104	101	92	87	93
European	Czech Republic	433	471	527	566	581
European	Czechoslovakia, former	0	0	0	0	0
European	Denmark	25567	26627	28091	29704	31170
European	Estonia	1554	1662	1768	1906	2155
European	Finland	98571	97521	96306	93474	90303
European	France	4709	5018	5133	5128	5208
European	Germany	16357	17315	18123	19071	19938
European	Greece	4407	4478	4524	4514	4478
European	Hungary	2988	2727	2463	2303	2309
European	Iceland	4057	4136	4208	4232	4155
European	Ireland	1146	1236	1330	1366	1421
European	Italy	4512	4776	4829	4838	4826
European	Latvia	694	780	858	934	1072
European	Liechtenstein	7	6	7	7	4
European	Lithuania	574	727	943	1102	1451
European	Luxembourg	26	23	24	25	29
European	Macedonia	1925	1715	1420	1326	1304
European	Malta	51	52	54	52	55

European	Moldova, Republic of	61	85	115	148	173
European	Monaco	1	1	1	1	1
European	Netherlands	3801	4080	4281	4469	4806
European	Norway	31997	33265	34672	35486	35558
European	Poland	16667	15511	13878	13412	14664
European	Portugal	1317	1334	1305	1309	1314
European	Romania	2949	2495	2327	2343	2360
European	Russian Federation	5658	5925	6235	6478	7123
European	San Marino	2	2	1	2	2
European	Slovak Republic	349	363	400	415	505
European	Slovenia	625	627	539	509	520
European	Spain	3320	3557	3687	3794	3850
European	Switzerland	2260	2189	2069	2008	1938
European	The Federal Republic of Germany	0	0	0	0	0
European	The German Democratic Republic	0	0	0	0	0
European	Turkey	15846	13907	12632	12404	12269
European	Ukraine	1101	1237	1412	1563	1701
European	United Kingdom	13062	13822	14156	14360	14561
European	Vatican State	0	0	0	0	0
European	Yugoslavia, Federal Republic of	20188	20741	20087	0	0
European Result		***322187***	***320082***	***316051***	***294286***	***295703***
Oceania	Australia	1776	1883	1867	1826	1806
Oceania	Fiji	20	19	20	20	21
Oceania	Kiribati	4	4	5	5	5
Oceania	Micronesia	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Nauru	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania	New Zealand	508	538	538	542	552
Oceania	Palau	1	0	0	0	0
Oceania	Papua New Guinea	1	1	2	5	5
Oceania	Samoa	8	10	7	7	4
Oceania	Solomon Islands	1	0	0	1	1
Oceania	Tonga	9	10	11	8	8
Oceania	Vanuatu	0	0	0	0	0
Oceania Result		***2328***	***2465***	***2450***	***2414***	***2402***
Unknown	Stateless	4962	4642	4298	4746	5153
Unknown	Under investigation	1092	0	833	714	662
Unknown	Unknown citizenship	2841	3221	1946	1806	1703
Unknown Result		***8895***	***7863***	***7077***	***7266***	***7518***
Grand Total		***477312***	***475986***	***474099***	***457506***	***462924***

Table 9 Total population of Iceland and Scandinavian Countries

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Denmark	5082740	5090246	5114324	5121986	5135369
Iceland	274537	276725	278250	280390	282941
Norway	4299811	4319099	4338203	4354584	4372726
Sweden	8405480	8433142	8466689	8518164	8548468

Table 10 Immigrant Population as a percentage of the total population of the country

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Denmark	5.01%	5.20%	5.08%	5.18%	5.18%
Iceland	3.21%	3.57%	3.67%	3.63%	3.76%
Norway	4.16%	4.27%	4.28%	4.54%	4.68%
Sweden	5.68%	5.64%	5.60%	5.37%	5.42%

Appendix 3 – The Muslim Association in Iceland

An Interview With its Chairman

The following information adds insight into the every day concerns of the lives of Muslims and people from the Middle East living in Iceland. It touches upon events at the mosque, *halal* foods, circumcision, burials, in short: the practical things.

The chairman of the Iceland mosque and of the Icelandic Muslim Association, *Félag íslenskra múslima*, played a crucial role in finding people to participate in the focus groups and individual interviews. He is from Palestine but has lived in Iceland for about 30 years. He also participated in the focus groups, but in a separate telephone interview conducted in November 2005 he shed light on some practical issues concerning daily Muslim life in Iceland, issues which had not been covered in the previous group interviews.

Some of the below information is also to be found on a website[58] maintained by an Icelandic Muslim, not living in Iceland at the moment. The site's function is to provide information about Islam and about the Muslim community in Iceland.

The Icelandic Muslim Association is a member of the Islamic European Conference. The mosque itself is run on a voluntary basis by the Association and it is operated on funds donated by members. The mosque was established in 2000, and in the year 2005 was the first time the management were able to make ends meet financially. Only around 10% of the members are actively involved in what it has to offer, and therefore filling leadership roles and organisational capacities can be tricky. Lack of time, limited knowledge of Arabic and/or Icelandic, the chronic low funds of the association and the many hours of work required from volunteers simply are not all that appealing to people with busy lives. Nevertheless, it is the personal contributions and volunteer work that keeps the mosque running.

[58] www.islam.is

The goal of the Association is to have 400 members on the register at the beginning of the year 2006. The ratio of Icelandic converts to foreign members (old and new) is about 50:50. The members do not engage in any proselyting but people are converted to Islam after hearing about it in various other ways. The missionary work done in Iceland is courtesy of young men of Arab, near-Asian and British origin. The aim of their work is generally to keep the current membership in good shape spiritually, or in other words, to keep the fold well fed spiritually. These young men are sponsored from abroad to work among the Icelandic faithful as well as among the rest of the population. They get much attention both positive and negative as their clothing, all appearance and demeanour is more in line with what one would find in a traditional Muslim country, and therefore very different in most Icelanders' eyes. They set up stands with books and pamphlets in the towns and city centres and welcome queries about Islam.

The mosque does not have an *imam* at all times but during the holy month of Ramadan an association based in Libya called The World Islamic Call sends a qualified *imam* to Iceland. This is done upon the mosque chairman's request. The ideal situation would see one from among the ranks of the Icelandic members go to study to become an *imam* so as to take care of his own brothers and sisters. The vision is of an *imam* who speaks the language of the people in the land and will be seen as a tool of unification. This is seen as especially vital as the next generation, second generation Muslims, speak more Icelandic than Arabic. The government of Iceland hasn't legalised any sort qualifications or language skills requirement the *imam* must have. Laws and rules of practice have been established in other European countries such as Scandinavia and the Netherlands, and these have included language requirements as it's considered desirable that the general population of the country understand the sermons. The members of the mosque community are aware that this is likely what the future will bring for them, too, but for now getting one on loan is good enough.

Male circumcision is of course practiced among the Muslims in Iceland. More important than going through the ritual at the correct time when the boy is only a few days or weeks old is the emphasis on simply having it done as a religious and symbolic act. One Reykjavík based paediatric surgeon is known among the Muslims in Iceland, as he will do the surgery for them, though not before the boy in question has reached one year of age. This is done at the surgeon's private clinic and no resentment was

found during the interview in regards to the fact that this service isn't provided in hospitals. A likely reason for that is that no other minority religion is favoured there either nor symbolic gestures made. The relative few instances where this service has been needed are another reason for relaxed demand as is the fact that the Muslim community have found a good doctor whom they trust and who respects them. The main issues is for the boys to be circumcised, and for now one doctor is also enough to serve the whole Muslim community, whether privately or publicly funded. It should be mentioned that Muslims pay for the circumcision surgery themselves.

Regarding food, *halal* meat isn't very readily available. An abattoir called *Sláturfélag Suðurlands* allows a Muslim butcher, or one who knows what to do, to slaughter a hundred or so lambs at a time which he then sells to the Muslim community (presumably the butcher bought them beforehand, or sells them for the abattoir). This doesn't happen very often, and isn't really necessary as, according to the mosque chairman, Muslims are allowed to eat the food of the Christian and Jew. A very obvious goal of the Muslims here is to utilise everything which brings together people of different ethnicity and religion. No matter how small or seemingly insignificant the issue, it has the potential of being a point of unification, just as it could be a point of contention. Therefore, in stead of continually preparing their own *halal* meat which would likely only be consumed by the relatively small group of Muslims, they agree on eating the particular meat of the Christians and Jews which they can. Incidentally, Islam allows the consumption of horse meat, which is convenient as it is still eaten and available in Iceland, though theoretically banned 1000 years ago when the nation became Christian. Good habits die hard.

The Islam which is taught and practiced at the mosque is, quoting the mosque chairman, "a pure Islam, as Mohammad taught it". There are no divisions between Sunni and Shi'a, and no politics involved. There are also no cultural clashes as what is preached are the teachings of the Prophet, the words coming directly out of the *Qur'an*, and all done in three languages: Arabic, Icelandic, and English. This is done to prevent misunderstanding or feelings of exclusion and seems to work as people of all nationalities, ages and backgrounds attend *Jumaa*, or Friday Prayer.

Friday noon is the only time organised prayers are offered at the mosque. This is due to the work schedules of leaders and members which don't allow for daily communal prayers. During the week different groups meet for differing reasons in the mosque, as it is used by the whole Muslim community as a centre of study, prayers and other things, as any mosque would.

Muslims have special burial plots in the newest of Reykjavík's cemeteries. It was first assigned to them when a little child died at birth and his Muslim parents wanted the child to receive a Muslim burial. The cemetery in question was at that time in the planning stages. When the matter came up and the parents and mosque chairman started investigating further their options, the cemetery authorities contacted the mosque chairman to ask him how to organise a Muslim burial plot. The way the deceased face Mecca and the manner in which they are buried, and other significant points were studied by the persons in charge. They were keen to help out, though it must be pointed out that the government didn't bring this issue up. It was at the death of a little child and at the mosque chairman's request that Muslims obtained a burial plot sacred to them. Even then it was the people running the cemetery who took matters into their own hands.

Understandably though, says the Mosque chairman, ideas awaken as they are needed. Before the need arose no one thought to ask for or offer burial plots for Muslims.
The number one reason or encouragement for the establishment of the Muslim Association and mosque was that as their numbers grew they figured they had to find a proper place to meet and worship. Previously, they had met in private homes. Another and equally important reason was to be able to introduce Islam to those unfamiliar with it. He stresses the word *introduce*, as they have neither interest in nor funding for active missionary type work. Theirs is more along the lines of a calm friendly information campaign. Issues regarding missionary work were touched upon earlier. Another reason for the importance of having a place of worship is to prepare the next generation, the young people, which they believe must necessarily be strengthened. Social interaction and instruction is also part of what goes on in the mosque. This provides the youth with the roots and knowledge pertaining to their culture and Islam.

At the time this is written the Muslim Association and its mosque are to be found at Ármúli 38, 3rd floor, in Reykjavík. It is open all evenings from 20.00, but anyone wishing to use it outside those hours can contact the chairman and request it. *Jumaa* is held every Friday and *Tarawih* prayers are observed there every evening during Ramadan. Festivals and celebrations within the Islamic calendar are also celebrated at the mosque.

Womens' meetings convene during the winter months, from September through May. Sometimes meetings are held during the summer months, and they are always advertised in advance. The meetings last a couple of hours and the agenda is mainly an explanation by one of the sisters of the Qur'an, material which has been decided upon beforehand, and light refreshments and socialising.

It is of worth to mention that in August 2004 representatives from the Scandinavian wing of Risala, an organisation which promotes Islamic thought, visited the Icelandic Muslim Association to investigate conditions for Muslims in Iceland. Risala consequently agreed to contribute to the building of a mosque in Iceland.

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