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*Studies in religion and society*  
4



Welfare and Values in Europe  
Transitions related to Religion, Minorities and  
Gender

Northern Europe:  
Sweden, Norway, Finland, England

Volume 1

National Overviews and Case Study Reports

Anders Bäckström  
Coordinator



**SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME**

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Information regarding the project is available at <http://www.crs.uu.se/> or <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/projects.htm>

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# Contributors to this volume

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

Anders Bäckström

## **Welfare and Values in Europe**

This book is the first in a series of three from the research project *Welfare and Values in Europe: Transitions Related to Religion, Minorities and Gender*, WaVE for short. The WaVE-project responded to a call by the European Commission's 6th Framework Programme for research on 'values and religions in Europe'. The call invited studies aiming 'to better understand the significance and impact of values and religions in societies across Europe and their roles in relation to changes in society and to the emergence of European identities'. The Commission sought an exploration of how religion is used as a factor in solidarity or discrimination, tolerance or intolerance and inclusiveness or xenophobia. It was looking for insight on ways to ensure the peaceful coexistence of different value systems through a comparison of various policies and practices employed in European countries, and through a consideration of their relative degrees of success. It was the positive response by the European Commission to our proposal in 2005 that enabled the European research group to carry out this project successfully. The project ended formally in March 2009 with an international conference at Uppsala University; the work on these volumes has been completed since then.

## **The background to the study**

The WaVE-project should be seen as part of a wider development of research in religion and society at Uppsala University. It started in the 1990s with a project on church and state in which, amongst other areas, the social/diaconal function of the Church of Sweden was investigated.<sup>1</sup> The separation of church and state in Sweden in the year 2000 was analysed as part of the increasing separation between religion and society, but the study also included investigations into the deregulation of the welfare state and the

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<sup>1</sup> The project was part of a broader initiative by the Swedish Research Council under the title 'The State and the Individual: Swedish Society in the Process of Change'. The title of the project is: *From State Church to Free Folk Church. A Sociology of Religion, Service Theoretical and Theological Analysis in the face of Disestablishment between the Church of Sweden and the State in the year 2000*. The results are summarized in the final report: Bäckström, Anders and Ninna Edgardh Beckman and Per Pettersson (2004). *Religious Change in Northern Europe. The Case of Sweden*. Stockholm: Verbum.

increase of poverty resulting from the financial crises in Europe at the beginning of the 1990s. This development sparked a new interest in the organisations and associations of civil society, of which churches and religious organisations are part. After its separation from the state the Church of Sweden became the largest organisation within the civil society in Sweden. The study formed the background for the inauguration of a Centre for the Study of Religion and Society at Uppsala University, an enterprise developed in conjunction with the Foundation Samariterhemmet.<sup>2</sup>

As part of the work on the church-state project an international reference group was formed. This group became the core of a new network with a clearer focus on the place of religion in the different welfare regimes of Europe. In 2003 the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation accepted a second project entitled *Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective. A Comparative Study of the Role of the Churches as Agents of Welfare within the Social Economy* (2003-2009) – it is known as WREP. The aim of the project was to analyse the function of majority churches as agents of welfare in a comparative European perspective. Its motivation lay in an awareness of common developments observed around Europe, such as an aging population, growing migration and an ever greater strain on the economy.

The WREP-project included four different welfare models together with four different majority church traditions with theologies that are ‘incarnated’ in the respective locality. That is a) the social democratic model of the European north which has developed within the context of Lutheran state churches (*Sweden, Finland and Norway*), b) the liberal model typical of Anglo-Saxon countries (*England* with its established Anglican Church), c) the conservative or Christian Democratic model found mainly in continental Europe, where the Catholic Church is dominant (*France, Italy* and to some extent *Germany* with its special history and bi-confessional status) and finally d) the countries of southern Europe where the state plays a weaker role compared with that of the family (Orthodox *Greece* but also *Italy*, at least to some extent). In total eight countries were covered by the project. In order to make the project feasible and at the same time collect reliable and comparable data, the study focused on one middle-sized town, in which different kinds of data were collected including printed material of various kinds and interviews with representatives of the local government, the churches and the wider population.

The project brought together different areas of society (a new idea at the time), namely the fields of religion, welfare, gender and social economy. The project revealed the interconnectedness between different welfare regimes of

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<sup>2</sup> An agreement between the Foundation Samariterhemmet and Uppsala University to develop research within the social/diaconal sphere of society was signed in 1999. The Centre has now changed its name to the Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre and has moved to new premises at Uppsala University, see [www.crs.uu.se](http://www.crs.uu.se) for more information.

Europe and their background in both social/political and religious circumstances. The study also shows that care within religious organisations, as within the welfare organisation of the state, is normally carried out by women. Our data reveal that the representatives of the local majority churches, of local governmental social organisations and of the population as a whole expect churches and voluntary organisations to function as complementary organisations to the state. At the same time a critical voice is asked for. The fact that the churches themselves are contracting at the same time as growing demands are made upon them is an increasing dilemma. Two edited volumes from this project were published in 2010 and 2011.<sup>3</sup>

*The Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective* project has been introduced at some length as it constitutes the background to the *Welfare and Values in Europe* project reported in this volume. WREP did not, however, cover the religious and social conditions as they appear in the eastern part of Europe – i.e. in the post-communist countries where the welfare situation is quite different, and is continuing to evolve. In this part of Europe, the majority churches have often moved from being oppressed by the state to having a central role in national identity after the fall of communism. The WREP-project also revealed the need to include religious minorities in the study as a whole, as their presence to a high degree shapes the discussion on the presence of religion in the public sphere of society. Thus the WaVE-project has the advantage of resting on experiences of WREP. At the same time the project has an agenda of its own, which will be developed in the following section.

## The Welfare and Values in Europe project (WaVE)

In the WaVE-project, the focus has shifted from the function of and interaction between majority churches and welfare regimes to the study of welfare as the ‘prism’ through which core values are perceived – for example those of inclusion and exclusion. The methodological issues and the comparative nature of the project are also extended in the sense that the religious minorities found all over Europe are included and are seen in relation to the values of the majority cultures. The number of researchers has grown accordingly from 24 to 34. The partners of the project, together with the researchers will be listed in Appendix 1.

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<sup>3</sup> Bäckström, Anders and Grace Davie (eds) with Ninna Edgardh and Per Pettersson (2010). *Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective. Volume 1. Configuring the Connections*. Farnham; Ashgate; Bäckström, Anders and Grace Davie, Ninna Edgardh and Per Pettersson (eds).(2011). *Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective. Volume 2. Gendered, Religious and Social Change*. Farnham: Ashgate.

## **The aim**

The WaVE-project was formed against the background of major transitions in the welfare state and the growth in religious activities in the domain of welfare. By shedding light on the degree to which religion, on the one hand, and welfare, on the other, are viewed as private and public matters, WaVE entails a comprehensive re-examination of theories of secularisation and counter-secularisation in the European context. WaVE is predicated on the assumption that the intangible concept of 'values' is understood best through the ways in which they are expressed and developed in practice. The provision of basic needs, and the related notion of citizenship and belonging, comprises the most fundamental level at which coexistence between different cultures, values and religions can be examined.

## **The objectives of the project may be summarized as follows:**

First, the project sets out to assess the impact of religion in societies in different parts of Europe as a bearer of values of solidarity and social cohesion, or as source of tension and exclusion. WaVE pursues this aim through an in-depth examination of the values expressed by majority religions in their interaction with minority communities in the domain of social welfare needs and provision.

Second, the project studies the values expressed by minority groups (religious minorities in particular), both in their use of welfare services, and their search for alternatives (tracing trends in the establishment by minority groups of their own welfare networks). WaVE offers insights into the extent to which minorities are perceived to challenge the values, cultural identities etc. of the local majorities.

Third, WaVE seeks to bring to light the gender-related values underpinning conceptions of welfare and practices in welfare provision in the localities under examination, focussing on whether there are particular elements of tension or cohesion embedded in values relating to gender, and to the rights and needs associated with women and men. The relationship between religious values, minorities, and gender is a critical and relatively under-explored field of research. The effects of and the transitions in this relationship in terms of social welfare, social cohesion, and conceptions of citizenship and belonging, form a key dimension of the WaVE-project.

At the same time the study raises important questions concerning the secular state's idea of a clear separation between the religious and the secular. There is an uncertainty in the state's expectations of the religious organisations of civil society which is clearer in the north-west than in the south-east of Europe. This concerns the consequences of an increased social involvement of religious organizations for the role and identity of the secular state. The project therefore explains an important factor behind an increasing observance of religion in the public sphere of society, a tendency which is

contradictory to the general understanding of Europe as a place where religion becomes ever more private. A full explanation of the theoretical background and aim of the study is found in Chapter 2 of this volume, *The State of the Art-report*.

## Methodological considerations

WaVE is an empirical study concerned with the relationship between majority cultures and minority religions across Europe and their relationship to welfare and values as they appear in a local context. It was from the start a comparative project as it was looking for similarities and dissimilarities following north-south and east-west dimensions of Europe. It covers considerable geographic breadth as well as religious and social complexity.

The complexity of the religious and social developments taking place in Europe and the substantial differences concerning both welfare organisation and religious majority/minority relations in each country, urged us at an early stage in the project planning to use qualitative rather than quantitative data. Quantitative data is useful in order to frame values across countries and religious communities in Europe and in order to study changes over time. It also gives a comprehensive understanding of the religious and social situation in each country. These kind of data were however already available through the World Values Survey (WVS) and through the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) covering most of the countries involved in the WaVE-project.<sup>4</sup>

Instead of collecting statistical data on a national level, we decided to follow the model established in WREP and to dig deep into one medium-sized town in each country, using a range of qualitative methods.<sup>5</sup> The great advantage of working in this way has been a much more profound understanding of the complex relationships in the locality between majority and minority relations. It has also been possible to observe at first-hand the contributions of women both as givers and receivers of welfare. Conversely it has been much more difficult to foresee what would happen in the course of our research. In what way would the provision of welfare services function as a prism through which values of conflict or cohesion would become visible?

An important choice concerned the towns in which in-depth observations could be carried out. These towns should be middle-sized relative to the population of the respective country. They should exhibit values connected

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<sup>4</sup> [www.issp.org/](http://www.issp.org/); [www.worldvaluessurvey.org/](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/)

<sup>5</sup> A full account of the methodology used in WREP can be found in Bäckström, Anders and Grace Davie (eds), with Ninna Edgardh and Per Pettersson (2010). *Welfare and Religion in 21st Century Europe: Volume 1. Configuring the Connections*. Farnham: Ashgate, chapter 1, p 1-23.

to post-industrial circumstances with growing employment within the service society. Most important of all was that the towns in question were able to exhibit a majority religious tradition alongside minority communities either as autochthonous ethnic/religious groups or as religious minorities growing as a result of migration into Europe.<sup>6</sup> Equally important, however, were practical issues such as accessibility and appropriate contacts with the locality in question. The selected towns are listed below – those marked with an asterisk were also included in the WREP study.

- Sweden: Gävle (population circa 90,000 located north of Stockholm)\*
- Norway: Drammen (population circa 57,000, located close to Oslo)\*
- Finland: Lahti (population circa 98,000, located north of Helsinki)\*
- Latvia: Ogre (population circa 29,000, located east of Riga)
- England: Darlington (population circa 98,000, located south of Newcastle)\*
- Germany 1: Reutlingen (population circa 110,000, located south of Stuttgart)\*<sup>7</sup>
- Germany 2: Schweinfurt (population circa 55,000, located in Northern Bavaria)
- France: Evreux (population circa 54,000, located north-west of Paris)\*
- Poland: Przemysl (population circa 68,000, located in the south-east of Poland, near the Ukrainian border)
- Croatia: Sisak (population circa 53,000, located in central Croatia)
- Italy: Padua (population circa 200,000, located 40 km from Venice)\*<sup>8</sup>
- Romania: Medgidia (population circa 44,000, located near the Black Sea)
- Greece: Thiva (and Livadeia)<sup>9</sup> (combined population circa 43,000, located north of Athens)\*

More information about each of these places can be obtained in the project description, and for the eight countries that were part of WREP, in the working papers published by the Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre.<sup>10</sup> The precise location of the each town can be seen in Figure 1.1

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion and definition of minority groups see chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup> The population of Reutlingen is predominantly Protestant; the population of Schweinfurt is predominantly Catholic.

<sup>8</sup> Italy was included in the WREP project; the town in question however has changed from Vicenza to Padua.

<sup>9</sup> Greece was included in the WREP project where both towns were studied; in the WaVE project, the study has focused on Thiva only.

<sup>10</sup> For further information, see the following: *Presentation of the Research Project Welfare and Values in Europe. Transitions Related to Religion, Minorities and Gender* (2006). Research Project funded by the European Commission Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). Uppsala: Uppsala University; Edgardh Beckman, Ninna (ed). (2004). *Welfare, Church and Gender in Eight European Countries: Working Paper 1 from the Project Welfare and Relig-*



Figure 1:1. Map of case study locations. Reproduced here with the kind permission of stepmap.de

The data collection was carried out during the autumn 2006 and the year 2007 and has been divided into two stages.

*The first stage* was a mapping process which included fieldwork in the thirteen European towns (twelve countries) covering the north-south and east-west axis of Europe. This fieldwork included information on the welfare

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*ion in a European Perspective.* Uppsala: Uppsala Institute for Diaconal and Social Studies; Yeung, Anne Birgitta and Ninna Edgardh Beckman and Per Pettersson (eds).(2006). *Churches in Europe as Agents of Welfare – Sweden, Norway and Finland. Working Paper 2:1 from the project Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective.* Uppsala: Uppsala Institute for Diaconal and Social Studies no 11; and Yeung, Anne Birgitta and Ninna Edgardh Beckman and Per Pettersson (eds).(2006). *Churches in Europe as Agents of Welfare – England, Germany, France, Italy and Greece. Working Paper 2:2 from the project Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective.* Uppsala: Uppsala Institute for Diaconal and Social Studies no 12.

regime in question, an introduction to the majority religious tradition of the country, and an overview of the minority situation in the town studied. The researchers were asked to map as broadly as possible ensuring that the following information would be covered: a) the groups present in the locality with a description of ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ communities, b) whether or not these groups provide welfare services, either internally to the group or externally for others as well and c) how these various groups interact? The researchers were encouraged to find this information by approaching a) local authorities – asking for statistical information, b) central offices for majority churches – to ask about welfare-related activities, c) a selection of representatives of minority groups and d) the local media. Online material was also gathered together with material produced by churches, religious communities and voluntary organisations. This included quantitative data and national statistics. The results from previous interviews within the WREP-study were also available in eight of the case studies. In order to give the four new countries an opportunity to catch up with this kind of information, they were given an extra year of funding.

The first mapping process was a research enterprise in itself, resulting in an overview of religious minorities in different regions of Europe, showing its breath and complex history. The overview shows that minorities can be indigenous as the Sami people in the north of Europe and Turkish-Tatars in the east of Europe. They can also be a result of changed borders as in Poland and of changed history as in Latvia (the Russian speaking ‘minority’). They can also derive from immigration within Europe (most often from east to west) or from other continents, most often from Africa or Asia. The reason for migration can be work opportunities in the west or the result of oppression and conflict (ethnic, social, political or religious). These groups can be of different Christian origin as in England or representing other religions, most often Muslims as in many West European societies. The interrelationship between ethnic and religious affiliations is strong but they do not overlap completely.

The mapping process was used finally as a means for a strategic selection of interviews with a) individuals representing religious minorities, b) individuals representing local authorities working with religious minorities and c) individuals representing majority churches with a special relation to minority communities.

*The second stage* was the in-depth interviews with the individuals selected as described above. The focus was on the minority groups present in the given localities. The interviewers were asked to include a broad range of questions following the practice in WREP. These interviews were complemented by participant observation in the communities studied with notes taken. Shorter interviews largely for clarification were also carried out. The ‘principle of saturation’ has been used in order to decide when to stop the

collection of material. All in all about 30 interviews were conducted in every town, in some cases fewer and in some cases more. All interviews have been transcribed and have become an important source of information. In the WaVE-project approximately 400 individuals that have been interviewed across the north-south and east-west divide of Europe. Together with the WREP-material, more than 800 interviews have been performed, transcribed and analysed.

The enquiry included the study of the values of minority (religious) groups and the extent to which these values are perceived as different to, or in conflict with, those of the majority. Attention was also paid to the tendency to establish independent networks for the provision of welfare-related needs. The expression of minority group values, their search for alternative means of social care, the extent to which their welfare-related values are perceived as different to or in conflict with those of the majority, and the extent to which values are particularly gendered, are embedded in the analysis of the interview research.

Throughout the observations and interviews indicated above, researchers have gleaned insight into the gendered nature of the rights and needs of men and women, in both majority and minority communities. By means of observation, note has been taken of the relative participation of women and men in both the provision and receipt of welfare assistance. By means of the interviews, information has been gathered about the extent to which these patterns are religiously motivated, and whether this leads to greater social cohesion or social exclusion.

Our methodology has resulted in a broad overview of examples grounded in the historical tradition of each country. In order to make the most of the fieldwork, and to extract as many examples as possible of local cooperation between religious communities and local authorities, the research team in each country was asked to focus on examples of tension or cohesion in the respective locality. The advantage of this method is the breadth of examples that resulted from that analysis. This is certainly reflected in the reports of this and future volumes.

That said, there is an obvious tension between comparability and contextuality embedded in a project like this. The project is clearly comparative in the sense that similarities and dissimilarities between majority-minority relations have been studied throughout Europe. At the same time the comparative nature of the project is based on contextual situations mirroring the complexity of reality on the ground. This has been a demanding part of the project but at the same time a very enriching enterprise as it has offered insight into the very complexities that surround the European situation. Generalisations of current religious and social developments in Europe are clearly dependent on this kind of knowledge.

## Project coordination

The WaVE-project has been based at the Religion and Society Research Centre at the Faculty of Theology, at Uppsala University. The work of a project such as WaVE would not have been possible, however, without an extended group of people with an interest in the area of welfare and values amongst majority and minority religions across Europe. All in all 34 junior researchers across Europe have been involved in collecting data together with senior colleagues who have contributed to the analysis of the material in the respective country. A complete list of partners and researchers attached to the WaVE-project can be found in Appendix 1.

A project of this size can only come to a successful conclusion if the organisation is well developed, with regular meetings to discuss progress. *The Researchers' Handbook*, which displays the design and structure of a European Commission sponsored project, acted as a guide in this respect. Such a project is divided into work packages and deliverables following a time schedule from the start to the end of the project.

WaVE contained eight work packages (WP1 to WP8) and sixteen deliverables. WP1 was the **State of the Art-report** (deliverable 1) and is *included in this volume as Chapter 2*. WP1 also includes an overview of the national situation (deliverable 2), *which will appear as the first report from each country in this volume*. WP2 constitutes the **Development of Methodology** (deliverables 3, 4 and 5) which includes the guidelines for the mapping process and the interview sessions. *The Work Package is attached to this volume as Appendix 2*. WP3 concerns the **Fieldwork** (deliverables 6 and 7); these were interim reports on the case studies for internal use only. WP4 is the **Analysis of the Local Data** (deliverables 8, 9 and 10) and constitutes the final case study report (D9) – *this is the second report from each country in this volume*.

WP5 is the **Comparative Cross-country Analysis** (deliverables 11 and 12) which includes a preliminary and a final draft of the comparative analysis – for internal use only. WP6 is the **Dissemination of Results at Local and National Level** (deliverables 13 – the local conferences and 14 – the national conferences). WP7 is the **Generation of EU Policy Recommendations** (deliverable 15), *which will appear in the final volume*, together with WP8, the **Final Report** (deliverable 16).

Each partner has had certain responsibilities linked to a particular work package. Further, to keep the research group together, and to adhere to a strict time table, the consortium had to meet on a regular basis. Accordingly the whole group of researchers has met once a year and the junior researchers, with direct responsibility for data collection, twice a year. The meetings have taken place in different countries, making these occasions a source of information in themselves. These meetings have included not only a high standard of conversation connected to the aim of the project, but also relaxed

gatherings in the evenings in order to encourage the social side of the work. This combination of hard work and relaxed interaction has been very fruitful.

We are pleased that we are able - after some delay - to publish these reports in hard copy. They will also be placed on the following website: [www.crs.uu.se](http://www.crs.uu.se). We hope that they will be read by a wide variety of researchers and stakeholders, as well as by the European Commission itself. The reports vary a little in their style and presentation but we trust that they convey accurately the scope of the WaVE project and the richness of our data.

### **Acknowledgements**

It is important first to acknowledge the core group of coordinators, those who conceived the idea in the first place, who found the resources and dealt with both the intellectual organisation and day-to-day management of the project. They are Anders Bäckström, Grace Davie, Effie Fokas, Ninna Edgardh and Per Pettersson. The team represents a range of disciplines and each individual contributed differently to the project. The support staff of the Religion and Society Research Centre should also be acknowledged, namely Barbro Borg and Maria Essunger. Lina Molokotos-Liederman has been responsible for checking the reports emerging from the project. All of these people deserve our warmest thanks; they have played a vital role in the success of the whole undertaking.

I would also like to thank the institutions that have contributed financially to the project, most of all the European Commission with its substantial grant, with Andreas Obermaier as our latest contact person. I must also include the Foundation Samariterhemmet and the Faculty of Theology at Uppsala University, both of which have provided premises and covered extra costs attached to the project. Finally the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation has made the production of this report possible. Anna Row has been responsible for the editorial work of this publication.

We are pleased to note in conclusion that the WREP and WaVE projects have borne fruit in the form of a major research programme known as *The Impact of Religion: Challenges for Society, Law and Democracy*. This is an Uppsala University programme running from 2008-2018, and is funded by the Swedish Research Council. The focus is on the visibility of religion studied through six different themes.<sup>11</sup> This multidisciplinary research programme would not have been possible without the experience drawn from the WREP and WaVE projects. For further information see [www.impactofreligion.uu.se](http://www.impactofreligion.uu.se).

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<sup>11</sup> The themes are 1) Religious and social change, 2) Integration, democracy and political culture, 3) Families, law and society, 4) Well-being and health, 5) Welfare models-organisation and values, 6) Science and religion.

As the coordinator of the WaVE-project it is my privilege to extend my especial thanks to Grace Davie and Effie Fokas. Without the expertise of Grace and her extraordinary talent in managing large and complex meetings, the project would not have been completed. Effie started as a doctoral student within the WREP-project, but very quickly became a key contributor; it was Effie who authored both the proposal and the final summary of the results.

In this respect Effie exemplifies one of the great advantages of this kind of project. That is to give space to young researchers in order to develop their interests and to grow as researchers. Indeed one of the most pleasing aspects of the whole venture is the emergence of a new generation of scholars that have one by one obtained their doctoral degrees and launched their careers. Their enthusiasm and growing skills have contributed enormously to the whole project; it has been a pleasure to work with them.

This is the first volume of three, and covers Sweden, Finland, Norway and England, i.e. the Protestant north of Europe with strong or moderately strong welfare states. In the next volume the data from the countries further south will be reported. The last volume will present the results from the eastern part of Europe. As already explained, each volume contains two reports from each country, first a report on the national situation covering the characteristics of the welfare system and the religious composition of the country, and second a case study covering the mapping process and the analysis of the results from the interviews. The project is introduced by the *State of the Art Report* compiled by Effie Fokas. The results from the whole project will be compared and analysed in the last volume.

Finally, as the coordinator of the project *Welfare and Values in Europe: Transitions related to Religion, Minorities and Gender*, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the project and have helped to bring it to a successful conclusion. The consortium as a whole will be listed in Appendix 1, and the contributors to this volume are introduced at the beginning of this volume.

Uppsala, November 2011  
Anders Bäckström  
Coordinator

## Chapter 2: State of the Art Report

Effie Fokas

A snapshot of European society at the commencement of the WaVE project reveals a number of controversies pivoting on conflicts – perceived or real – between minority and majority value systems.<sup>1</sup> The aftershocks of the explosion over the cartoons of Mohammed, emanating from Europe throughout the world, continue to be felt in the form of debates on the proper balance between freedom of speech and religious sensitivity. Meanwhile, we have witnessed strong debate over the subjection of immigrants to ‘citizenship tests’ aimed at assessing whether their values are compatible with those of the majority community. The Dutch example is the most striking, suggesting little tolerance for immigrants who do not embrace Dutch values of relatively ‘radical’ tolerance<sup>2</sup>; the Dutch government policy is deemed ‘necessary to preserve cultural values as a burgeoning Muslim population challenges traditional ideas of European identity’ (Tzortzis, 2006). The claim is reminiscent of the words of a leader of another liberal country – Denmark – that ‘Danes for too many years have been foolishly kind. They have not dared to say that some values are better than others. But this must happen now’ (EUMC 2003). These are poignant examples of Europe-wide, if not global, relevance, with far reaching consequences. Meanwhile, in individual European countries we have seen renewed debates regarding the wearing of headscarves in public schools (most recently in the UK), tensions concerning the building of mosques (Greece, France and Italy), and controversy over the ‘identity soup’ (containing pork) served in soup kitchens in France to the exclusion of Jews and Muslims. A common thread linking these issues – if only superficially – is religion.

Of course, conflict over religion and values is not limited to minority-majority relations. In Europe at least, we are also witnessing parallel to – or as undercurrents of – these developments major tensions between religious and secular worldviews (e.g., in France a law suit against a parish priest for ‘misleading’ the public about the existence of Jesus, and in the UK debate on

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<sup>1</sup> It should be emphasized that this chapter was drafted at the start of the project, in 2006, and thus reflects the social realities and the research state of the art at that time.

<sup>2</sup> The Dutch test was to entail immigrants’ viewing of a video depicting homosexual men kissing and topless women on a beach.

the teaching of the creation story in schools). Indeed, Europe finds itself at a critical juncture in its relationship to religion. Currently we experience an unhealthy situation in which definitions of this relationship are being drawn on a *reactive* basis, in a climate of frequent, attention grabbing ‘events’.

It is within this context that the European Commission has issued a call for research on ‘values and religions in Europe’. Specifically, the call invites studies aiming ‘to better understand the significance and impact of values and religions in societies across Europe and their roles in relation to changes in society and to the emergence of European identities’. The Commission seeks an exploration of the following: how religion is sometimes used as a factor in social mobilisation, solidarity or discrimination; the processes leading to tolerance or intolerance and xenophobia; and the challenges that religious, ethnic and cultural diversity may pose to legal, educational and political systems in European countries. The research is to impart insight on ways to ensure peaceful coexistence of different value systems through comparison of the differing ways European countries address these issues with various policies and practices and their relative degrees of success in this.

WaVE is a response to this call for research. It identifies three major and *interconnected* dimensions of social change in Europe – change related to religion, minorities and gender – and examines these dimensions through the prism of welfare. In so doing, WaVE grounds its approach to the intangible concept of ‘values’ in the ways in which values are *expressed and developed in practice*: the provision of basic needs, and its related notions of citizenship and belonging, comprise the most fundamental level at which coexistence between different cultures, values and religions can be effectively examined.

WaVE’s central concepts and objectives may be expressed as follows: First, WaVE is a study of **values** in Europe, as observable through the prism of **welfare**. We aim to learn about the values of various groups, as discernible in the domain of welfare (i.e., in the expression of, and provision of, ‘basic’ individual and group needs).

Second, WaVE focuses on values leading to **cohesion** or **conflict** within society. WaVE aims to gain insight into the value systems that lead to conflict and/or cohesion between and within groups, with a special focus on minority/majority relations. And third, WaVE examines the extent to which these values are related to **religion, minorities, or gender**. Is there a religious dimension to examples of conflict or cooperation? Are the examples of conflict or cooperation between majority and minority groups? Is there a gender dimension in these?

The study will entail in-depth qualitative research in medium-sized towns of twelve European countries: Sweden, Norway, Finland, Latvia, England,

Germany<sup>3</sup>, France, Poland, Croatia, Italy, Romania, and Greece. WaVE focuses on majority-minority relations in the context of welfare provision in each of the selected towns. By examining conceptions of and practices in welfare amongst various social and religious groups on the ground, WaVE will shed light on elements of cooperation and social cohesion, where they exist between various groups, but also on the potential for tension and conflict.

The twelve countries included in the study represent a very diverse range of patterns in terms of religious backgrounds; welfare systems; gender regimes; and history and current situation of immigration and minority presence. Spanning north, south east and west of Europe, the scope of the project captures wealthy and poor parts of Europe, different levels of secularisation, different types of minority groupings (ethnic and religious, autochthonous and immigrant, first generation to several generations of immigration), and variations in terms of the place of religion in the public sphere. This diversity presents us with a number of challenges and opportunities, which will be discussed below.

The purpose of this text is first to set out the field in which we operate on a European level of scholarship and enquiry, identifying gaps in scholarship which WaVE seeks to address and highlighting the significance of this study within the context of particular challenges to social cohesion in Europe. Thus in the first four sections that follow, WaVE's basic concepts and sub-concepts are discussed with reference to existing literature and our research aims in relation to each of these. A fifth section, entitled 'Grasping the intersections', explores one potential method of analysis of the research. In a sixth section, on 'Managing WaVE's diversity', attention is drawn to the particular challenges posed by comparative research spanning such geographical breadth as does WaVE (focusing especially on differences between eastern and western Europe, as well as on definitional problems). Finally, the text closes with consideration of WaVE's overall structure and methodology.

## Welfare and Values in Europe

The WaVE project grapples with the underlying assumptions that welfare is fundamental to conceptions of Europe, and that European state welfare provision is, at root, aimed at social cohesion, inasmuch as welfare systems are based on structures of interdependence between the members of a community, as embedded in citizenship laws and expressed through sense of belonging. Conversely, social exclusion is effectively the negation of the foundation of citizenship and the type of social contract on which the liberal de-

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<sup>3</sup> Two case studies will be conducted in Germany: one a town with a Catholic majority and the other in a town with a Protestant majority.

mocratic national welfare state has typically been founded (Dahrendorf 1985, cited by Schierup et al.) And certainly social cohesion is at the forefront of the aims advanced by the European Union and embedded in its motto for a 'social Europe'.

But in the context of rapid de-homogenisation of European societies and that degree of social *dis*cohesion that comes with it, we have tendencies towards shrinking welfare states, and the development of a so-called new poverty in Europe. The most conspicuous forms of social exclusion and the most conspicuous manifestations of the crisis of the welfare state across Europe are related to minorities. A stark and recent example is the riots that spread out from Paris in November of 2005. And, related to the above, there is a rise in cultural, or identity, politics in Europe, as national identities are increasingly considered as being under threat in this context of increasing diversity within European nations. This situation is described by Schierup et al as the 'dual crisis' (that of the welfare state and of the nation) witnessed throughout Europe and, as a result, comprising the 'European dilemma' whereby 'a growing population of socially excluded minorities represents... a growing threat to "social cohesion"' (Schierup et al. 2006, p.15). In the extent to which the aim of welfare policies is to achieve social cohesion, it is important to understand the *shifting* values related to welfare (do the same values that underlay the establishment of welfare systems across Europe apply now in the context of dehomogenised societies?), and the impact that these shifting values have on social cohesion.

Together with social cohesion, another related 'European aim', at least as far as the European Union is concerned, is expressed in its motto of 'Unity in Diversity'. The intrinsic merit of diversity, per se, has certainly come into question in new ways in recent years, perhaps especially with the rapid rise in religious diversity in Europe. More specifically, it is the diversity *within* nations, not of the European nations themselves, which is increasingly singled out as problematic, as for example in the Netherlands following the killing of Theo van Gogh, and in Britain following the London bombings of 2005. In fact, one might describe *this* as a basic European dilemma and one which also has major repercussions for (and is affected by) the welfare domain: should we strive to preserve diversity, or to promote integration? This is a dilemma often seen strictly in either/or terms. According to Rogers Brubaker (2001), the differentialist turn of the last third of the twentieth century may have reached its peak, and rather than interest in preserving diversity, increasingly we are seeing a 'return of assimilation'.

In the context of such debates about the desirability of diversity, it is important to seek to understand the relationship between diversity and social cohesion: if indeed diversity is thought to threaten social cohesion, then in what way exactly? Is it the mere presence of difference that is the operative factor, or is it the presence of different, perhaps competing, values? From

quantitative studies and values surveys we have information about the values claimed by different groups of peoples. But these are often abstract notions, and tell us little about whether, in practice, differing values are in fact leading to conflicts and thus damaging social cohesion. Values do not exist ‘in the air’, as it were, but are grounded in everyday life and interaction, and they need to be examined this way – on the ground and through qualitative research – if they are to shed any light on actual, lived social cohesion and/or conflicts. Only through such research is it possible to capture critical nuance, such as cases where conflicts that seem on the surface to be driven by different cultural values, are in reality conflicts of *interests*, but simply between different cultural groups. And, of course, the solution to a problem of competing interests is very different from the solution to a problem of differing values. Also, only through such qualitative research is it possible to grasp significant temporal dimensions: a well-managed conflict may be a necessary precondition for social cohesion to develop in a given context, so what today may seem like a conflict situation could in time lead to cohesion. Such nuanced information requires in-depth qualitative research on the ground.

This is the intention of the WaVE project, and within the specific domain of welfare provision, selected – as explained above – for its particular importance as the most fundamental level (beginning with provision of basic needs) at which coexistence between different value systems can be examined. Furthermore, WaVE aims to grasp the factors influencing these values: is it religion, minority status, and/or gender, or a mixture of these (or, yet other factors)? Clearly the European Commission call for research is to some extent informed by concern regarding minority (particularly immigrant) values clashing with those of the majority in European countries. By addressing these questions through the prism of welfare, WaVE simultaneously narrows the scope for a more manageable and practical study and focuses on one of the most critical domains of interaction between minorities and majorities in Europe.

The welfare of minorities, and the impact of minorities on the welfare systems of majority communities, comprise two powerful influences on tension or social cohesion within European societies. In the contemporary context of contracting welfare systems, welfare policy constitutes one of the most heated forums of political debate and of electoral significance. Parties vie for positions in government often on platforms related to reform of pension and health, tax and social security systems. Immigration plays a central role in these political competitions, as many perceive of immigrants as threatening to their welfare systems. Meanwhile, immigrants often fare particularly poorly within the welfare systems (with needs not nearly addressed, particularly in the case of third country nationals) and, at the same time, immigrants are also the least likely to affect welfare reforms due to relatively low rates of political participation.

Comparative research on welfare regimes has devoted little attention to the experience of minorities within the various national welfare systems, in spite of increasing debates regarding minority (especially immigrants') *claims* on these systems (Morissens and Sainsbury 2005). The work of Morissens and Sainsbury is a rare and important exception in its display of major disparities between how migrants and citizens fare in welfare states (a discrepancy which widens for migrants of colour) (Morissens and Sainsbury 2005, 637). This latter is important because on the one hand, we have these glaring discrepancies and the clear evidence that immigration status and ethnicity are associated with a higher risk of poverty. On the other hand, there are debates over whether the new multicultural contexts across Europe signify the end of the European welfare states as we know them (Banting and Kymlicka 2004; Kymlicka 2005). An underlying question is whether multicultural welfare policies lead to greater social cohesion and solidarity or, on the contrary, whether they simply lead to an undermining of welfare systems all together. Traditionally, opposition to immigration and multiculturalism was voiced from right-wing factions throughout Europe; today, such opposition is developing within the left also, as a perceived threat to the welfare system (Kymlicka 2005). In his consideration of whether there is a 'trade-off' between heterogeneity and redistribution, Kymlicka examines patterns of social spending in relation to levels of immigration in various contexts throughout Europe, and he concludes that there is not, in fact, a 'trade-off'; rather, it is the *pace* of immigration which may play a role (i.e., where there are sudden and large increases in immigration, there we find smaller increases in social spending). At the same time, he admits that 'one of the most compelling challenges facing national welfare states is how to maintain and strengthen the bonds of solidarity in increasingly diverse societies' (Kymlicka 2005, 22).

Critical to any study of welfare on the ground is a clear conception of the meaning of the word (or, at least, conceding of the lack thereof). The concept of 'welfare' carries a broad range of meanings: in general terms, for some it indicates well-being, for others a state programme; for some it is a private notion and for others it is public. When we try to define the word in greater specificity the task becomes more challenging: what does welfare include? Health, education, employment, housing? Does it include a sense of belonging? Or of happiness? (in which case, it may even include such concepts as cultural preservation, freedom of expression, etc.). Is it an objective or subjective concept? These questions are dealt with extensively in the fields of sociology, anthropology, psychology and economics, and certainly no consensus emerges.

The problem of defining welfare was encountered also in the Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective (WREP) project, to which many of the WaVE researchers contributed (see Middlemiss 2006). The definitional

problem was rendered an opportunity as the project collected conceptions of the term welfare from approximately 450 respondents across eight European countries, revealing a great deal of diversity in these. Similarly in the WaVE project, we define *welfare* broadly in order to capture the broad range of mechanisms of social inclusion and/or exclusion which impact on the well-being of individuals and communities in Europe. We expect an even broader array of conceptions of welfare emerging from the WaVE study than did from the WREP project, given WaVE's inclusion of post-communist countries and, accordingly, of potential new configurations of welfare definitions.

As explained above, welfare is the prism through which we study values in Europe. The three corners, so to speak, of the prism are religion, minorities and gender, which we have identified as three important and *interrelated* domains of social change in Europe. Each of these domains is addressed in turn, and in interconnection with the others, in the following paragraphs.

## Religion

From an historical perspective, religions have played an influential role as bearers of values associated with welfare provision and tending to the basic needs of the community. Furthermore, religious institutions have played an important role in the forms of welfare systems which developed in different national contexts (Manow 2004, Fix 2003). Christian churches in western Europe in particular have influenced the forms of welfare provision through their roles both as providers of social services and as bearers of values, and we are able to detect differences in patterns of welfare provision across various religious (and non-religious) backgrounds. The historical trajectories of the churches, distinctively affected by such events as the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, etc., are also reflected in the historical trajectories of the welfare state in many national contexts. As a result, Europe offers a kaleidoscope of religious values underpinning social welfare provision, evinced in the locus of responsibility and in the scope of services offered.

In spite of acknowledged and general trends towards differentiation of religious and political spheres, today religious institutions in Europe (especially in western Europe) continue to play active roles as actors in welfare provision and/or as participants in public debates on the values related to welfare. The formulation of church-state relations varies from country to country as does, accordingly, the 'official' place of religious institutions in the national welfare system. Yet research in medium-sized town western European contexts has revealed that, even where vast differences appear at the national level, there emerges a common value-core and way of behaving in relation to the concept of welfare at the local level (Hervieu-Léger 2004).

As Hervieu-Léger notes, even in the absence of explicit reference to particular religious traditions, institutions and mentalities may be largely shaped by religion. Meanwhile, in post-communist eastern European contexts, religious revitalisation is not necessarily accompanied by a smooth integration of religiously-based welfare provision into the welfare systems (Zrinscak 2006). In these contexts we find significantly different constellations of the relationship between religion and welfare – both different from those in western Europe and different between each case as well. Indeed, the differences *between* post-communist countries may be more consequential from a research perspective than the similarities between them.

The picture becomes more complicated when we add the dimension of minorities: will similar patterns emerge at the local level in our studies, in spite of all the complicated formulations of minority identities and the varying patterns of majority-minority relations alluded to above? Statham et al note that ‘although European societies see themselves as broadly secular, Christian religions often play important institutional, social and political roles, regardless of how many or how few people actually believe or practice the religion. These institutional arrangements define pre-existing conditions and the political environment into which migrant religions have to find a space for their community’. (Statham et al 2005, 429). In western Europe we are, indeed, speaking mainly in terms of migrant religions, but in post-communist contexts, religious majority-minority situations *tend* to be old and relatively settled. Rather than religious migrant minorities being a source of change in these contexts, in many cases *emigrants* from these countries are introducing change in western European host countries.

Clearly, differences in religion are related to different value systems. According to a study by Roccas (2005), there is a striking correlation between religiosity and values and, in fact, there is more similarity of values between different faith groups than between religious and secular people of the same cultural backgrounds. Meanwhile, according to Hunsberger and Jackson (2005), historically studies have shown more religious people expressing prejudice (in terms of self-reported negative attitudes towards stereotypic perceptions of various categories of ‘others’) than non-religious individuals. This fact is important when we consider the number of majority religion-run welfare institutions operating across Europe (in many cases, offering services not provided in the localities by the local government). One of the objects of our study is to determine the extent to which majority religion prejudice negatively affects minorities’ (religious and ethnic) experience of the welfare system. As Hunsberger and Jackson note, ‘religions can uphold legitimizing myths that explain and sustain problems such as inequality (e.g., conservative and heritage values), but may also sometimes promote and sustain traditions intended to support diversity and tolerance’ (2005, 818). In other words, religion alone does not suffice as an explanatory factor – hence

our focus on *intersections* between factors (e.g., welfare, values, minorities and gender). Indeed, religion-based prejudice against minorities is likely to be intensified if and when members of the majority religion perceive themselves to be in conflict with other religious (or nonreligious) groups for limited resources: for example, ‘the (often erroneous) perception that immigrants create competition with members of host populations for jobs can create prejudice against these immigrants’ religion in particular’ (Hunsberger and Jackson 2005, 818). But of course, this reflects a conflict of interests, not of values. Perceived competition may generate and intensify the hostility, discrimination, and aggression that sometimes occur between religious groups whilst, at the same time, these same religious groups may be promoting principles of tolerance, love of one’s neighbour, etc. In fact, there may be an acute divergence between the self-image of particular groups as egalitarian (in line with their religious teaching) and as explicitly expressed in their attitudes, and their *implicit* stereotyping and discrimination. Similar to the explicit/implicit distinction is a grey area in religious beliefs related to the gender domain: as Hunsberger and Jackson note, ‘the belief that women are uniquely nurturant and loving may be associated with affection toward women, and yet it might also be seen as justification for restricting women to low status domestic roles’ (2005, 820).

So much for majority religion values. In terms of minority religions, minority status in and of itself often leads to group identification on the basis of religion; this is likely to be enhanced for immigrant communities, as they tend to be somewhat detached from core public institutions promoting civic values and tend, instead, to rely on their religious institutions and family networks as a ‘community support system’ (Statham et al. 2005) Here again, then, we see at least two factors operating in relation to one another – religion and immigration status (minorities) – to shape patterns in welfare and values.

The degree of religious homogeneity and religious pluralism in most European countries has changed and has become fluid in the last two decades. Likewise, the role of the religious factor has become more prominent especially in formerly communist societies. What are the consequences of a strong role played by majority-religion values, in the context of the increasingly rapid diversification of Europe’s religious identities and the major changes in the respective roles of women and men? Does the presence of (traditional) religious institutions in the domain of welfare provision carry certain implications for minorities (religious, but also ethnic)? Are there particular gendered implications, e.g., for women of a minority faith? More specifically, do the values transmitted by majority-faith institutions, or of institutions as influenced by minority faith, act as instruments of solidarity (e.g., by extending indiscriminately their assistance to people of other faiths or ethnicities), or do they lead to exclusion and intolerance?

## Minorities

Within the broader aim to understand patterns of social cohesion and/or conflict, WaVE seeks to examine the extent to which minorities are perceived to challenge the values and cultural identities of local majorities and, if so, the effects of these perceptions on the welfare and well-being of minorities. This aim bears more obvious results in western European contexts than in eastern European post-communist cases, but the latter cases tend to impart important insight into historical coexistence between majorities and minorities and relative absence of such perceptions of values conflicts. A recent study on 'Majorities' attitudes towards minorities' conducted by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) communicates fairly disheartening results for western Europe: one-fourth of Europeans living in the 15 EU Member States indicate a resistance to a multicultural society (a percentage which was the same in 1997), and half the respondents expressed a resistance to immigrants overall (the percentages are highest in Mediterranean countries and especially in Greece). Two-thirds of respondents feel that multiculturalism has reached its limits, and four-tenths oppose civil rights for legal migrants. Finally, a majority of respondents perceive a collective ethnic threat from minorities (an attitude especially strong – again – in Greece) (EUMC 2005). According to this study, immigration is one of the strongest influences on majorities' attitudes towards minorities. The belief that immigrants pose a 'threat to our way of life' is reportedly high in Greece (69% of respondents) and in the UK (54%), but also in France (42%), Germany (39%) and Italy (38%) (Eurobarometer 2004).

As Boeri et al note, 'Migration is one of those issues which is inevitably bound to divide public opinion and put social cohesion at stake' (Boeri et al 2002, v). The increasing presence of minority groups (religious and ethnic) in European settings has introduced particular challenges to European social policies and their value bases. It has also entailed a motivation for harmonisation of European social schemes, given the possibility of people moving from one country to another in pursuit of better welfare services.

Certainly negative reactions to the presence of internal migrants have to do with economic considerations and with the (perceived and real) burden on social security and public services. Inspired by the principle of Equal Treatment (Art. 51 of the EC Treaty), the EU bans differential access to welfare by natives and EU foreigners. Considering the significant differences in the generosity of welfare systems across Europe, the implementation of this principle is problematic (Boeri et al 2002).

Indeed, Baldwin-Edwards notes that 'the piecemeal adaptation of welfare systems to immigration and the needs of migrants has been *ad hoc*, juridical, and unnecessarily costly and difficult to implement...the trend of governments has been to diminish the rights of (legal) migrants, whereas courts have been enforcing the established rights and even extending them' (2006,

8). Morissens and Sainsbury (2005) have conducted empirical research which supports this conclusion: migrants' receipt of welfare benefits is generally far below the levels of majority groups, and that of migrants of colour is even less. Likewise, an EUMC report on 'Islamophobia and European identity' (2003) indicates that Muslims generally suffer, more than members of any other population group, of high unemployment, low wages and poor working conditions. Citing the case of Britain, where legal protection from discrimination includes race and ethnicity but not religion, the report notes that Pakistani Muslims are three times and Indian Muslims are twice as likely to be unemployed as Indian Hindus, whilst Pakistani and Bangladeshi men, who are predominately Muslim, earn significantly less than all other groups (meanwhile, Indian men have now surpassed the income level of white men) (EUMC 2003). Meanwhile Muslim groups are the most likely, of all minority groups, to put forward group demands, most of which are related to Islam and, often, perceived as challenges to liberal democracy (e.g., headscarf in public spaces) (Statham et al. 2005). A considerable body of literature exists on minority group demands and these are often also the subject of mass media reports. The WaVE project, through the empirical qualitative fieldwork in medium-sized towns, should produce interesting results on *individual* minority demands and on the extent to which these concur with expectations of group demands across the country cases.

Furthermore, the project will provide insight on the values expressed by minority groups both in their use of social services (do they have different demands on welfare systems?), and in patterns in their own provision of social services (where applicable, in cases where minority groups have established their own ethnic, national and/or religious networks involved in welfare provision). There is a considerable amount of literature (though little empirical research) on immigrant organisations. Yasemin Soysal sixth chapter of *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* ('The collective organization of migrants'), though dated (1994), represents the most thorough research on this subject to date. The work of Shrover and Vermeulen (2005) is helpful in imparting insight into the deeper significance of immigrant organisations as 'an indication of how immigrants see themselves and the rest of society, of how these differences are perceived by others; a translation of which is found in government policy' (831). They argue that the study of organisations offers valuable information about the settlement process of immigrants. Neither study covers as many countries as are included in WaVE, nor analogous geographical breadth.

Does this lead to a fragmentation of the welfare system and to a weakening of conceptions of universal welfare systems aimed at social cohesion? Banting and Kymlicka (2004) engage in depth with this question, as does Peter Taylor-Gooby in an article entitled 'Is the future American? Or, can left politics preserve European welfare states from erosion through growing

‘racial’ diversity?’ (2005). The question of whether European diversity is necessarily leading to an Americanisation of European welfare systems (or, more generally, whether increased diversity harkens the end of the welfare state) is increasingly raised in welfare-related literature. The 1 May boycotts and marches held by ‘illegal’ immigrants in the US this year make this question all the more poignant and also suggest a possible alteration: might the US be facing European-style expectations and demands of immigrants related to citizenship and belonging?

## Gender

Some of the more pressing welfare challenges facing Europe today are related to gender issues. Within western European majority communities, we have witnessed rising debate on what has been controversially labelled the ‘selfish [female] sex’, and which is considered responsible for gaps in care for children and the elderly: the accusation in the representative literature is that ‘the elderly and vulnerable are paying the price for a generation of professional working women’ (Wolf 2006). If gender equality in welfare systems is meant to include ‘a sense of “freedom” to participate in the labour market’ and an element of ‘autonomy from’ the family (Daly 2000), then it seems gender equality in welfare systems is coming into question. What value systems support such a questioning? Is social change ushering in neo-traditional values in this domain? What variations and patterns do we see in eastern European contexts (Pascall and Kwak 2005)?

Meanwhile, women from eastern Europe are emigrating in droves to fill this gap in care left by western European women (Kofman et al 2000). From this perspective, immigration may be seen as an element of *relief* to the welfare system rather than a challenge: female immigration for the purpose of domestic work serves to facilitate increased female employment in the receiving country and simultaneously fills gaps in care for children and the elderly (Sciortino 2004). At the same time, though, this group of immigrant women represents one of the most vulnerable layers of society in the receiving countries, as they are often working in sub-optimal and sometimes dangerous conditions. Human trafficking and sex trade are a particularly salient problem for this group of minorities.

And, at the same time, some of the most socially *divisive* welfare challenges in Europe are arising amongst religious minorities and their gendered needs and values: these range from the headscarf issue (as a barrier to education and employment of Muslim women) to more controversial issues, as polygamy, female circumcision, sharia divorce – which ‘contradict most liberal states’ legal and moral understandings of equality, between individuals, and men and women’ (Statham et al 2005, 431). In the context of the

aforementioned rise in identity politics, women are frequently targets of these politics, as they are often the bearers of those aspects of culture considered most foreign and often antithetical to ‘western European values’. It is immigrant women who are most often implicated in the maintenance of (or, at least, failure to ‘overcome’) traditional practices such as arranged marriages, authoritarian gender and generational relations, and religious practices (Yuval-Davis et al 2005, 519).

The gender dimension is a major marker of changing societal values and, furthermore, one of the most significant factors of modification in the domain of welfare provision. As Daly and Rake note, ‘One cannot acquire a comprehensive understanding of the welfare state without recognising that norms and values concerning gender relations are a part of all welfare policies and practices’ (Daly and Rake 2003, p.2). A great deal of work already exists on the prominent role of women in provision of care within the home (i.e., for their families), as well as in the voluntary, private and public sector; this study aims to identify trends in and effects of gender role changes on a European north-south and east-west axis. Also, it seeks to trace similarities and differences between the developing roles of women and men in the domain of welfare in minority groups, on the one hand, and majority groups on the other: are changes in gender roles, as an element of fundamental social change, similar or different across the groups examined in this study? More specifically, WAVE will seek to bring to light the gender-related values underpinning conceptions of welfare and practices in welfare provision in the localities under examination.

The gender dimension must also be examined in relation to religion: perceptions of the appropriate division of roles in the home and family and in paid and unpaid employment are shaped by the ‘social norms, beliefs, and values existing in any society, which in turn rest on levels of societal modernisation and religious traditions’ (Inglehart and Norris 2003, p.8). Indeed, cultures and institutions are marked by religious traditions throughout Europe, and thus religion may play an important role in both the development (or not) of gender equality at the popular and state levels. Especially in non-Christian cultures (as noted above in relation to immigrant women), religion is hypothesised as a strong influence on gender structures and gender relations (Inglehart and Norris 2004; and Bayes and Tohidi 2001).

## Grasping the intersections

The concept of intersectionality is useful for the WaVE project, as we seek to grasp interconnections between the dimensions of religion, minorities and

gender in the broader context of our study of welfare and values in Europe<sup>4</sup>. If our choice to study values through the prism of welfare is one innovative aspect of WaVE, a second is the focus on the interconnections between our sub-concepts of religion, minorities and gender. This approach will help us to understand the complex relationships of social identities (e.g., between one's sex, religion, ethnic background, generation and country of residence), and to be sensitive to the many situational elements that effect social outcomes (e.g., outcomes of social cohesion or of tension).

Intersectionality is an analytical tool used increasingly widely in gender and racial studies and is considered a major advance in these areas, in terms of somehow limiting their thematic exclusion from other fields of inquiry. But at the same time there is an element of methodological exclusion, in the sense that intersectionality remains somewhat limited to the fields of gender, especially, and race.

According to Dorothe Staunaes, intersectionality as it arose in an American academic context focused on the interconnections between gender, ethnicity, race, age, sexuality and class, and on how certain people get positioned as not only different, but also as troubled and marginalised. However, it did not include a consideration of how these categories work and intersect in the lived experiences of concrete subjects.

Even from within the approach of intersectionality, there is always a danger of overstating the boundaries of particular groups and reifying homogenised conceptions of these (even, that is, when interconnections between the categories are taken into consideration). Accordingly, qualitative research that allows the examination of *lived* experiences and processes of interaction between individuals and groups is most conducive to an understanding of the complexity and ambiguity that are entailed in lived experience. As Staunaes notes: 'social categories are done, undone and redone in relation to other doings' (2003, p.104). The way that the categories interconnect must be studied in *concrete* situations. And from this point, observations can then be made regarding where the interconnections lead to problematic outcomes, and where they do not and, in fact, where they may rather foster positive interaction between various groups. Clearly, it is not the categories themselves that are important for our purposes, but the *values* that are attached to these categories, and the way those values influence the interaction and relations between majority and minorities and in society generally<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to present a broadly accepted definition of intersectionality. It is regarded by some as a category of analysis, and by others as a (non-neutral) theoretical paradigm, but in all cases it may be described as focusing on the intersections, or relationships between, various social categories. In an article entitled 'The Complexity of Intersectionality', Leslie McCall describes it as a focus on 'the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations'. See McCall 2005, p.1771.

<sup>5</sup> This focus on values was central to the study of the person who is thought to have coined the term 'intersectionality', Kimberlé Crenshaw. See Staunaes (2003) and McCall (2005).

Intersectionality is proposed as a useful tool for analysis in the WaVE project. However, considerable thought must be given to the particular approach most appropriate to our overall objectives. Leslie McCall describes three broad approaches within intersectionality: the anticategorical, the intercategorical, and the intracategorical (McCall 2005, p.1773ff). The anticategorical approach seeks to deconstruct analytical categories, focusing especially on the complexity of reality and questioning the use of categories in any significant way. The intercategorical approach provisionally adopts existing analytical categories in order to be able to document relationships of inequality among social groups and changing configurations of inequality among multiple and conflicting dimensions. And the intracategorical approach also maintains a critical stance towards categories but acknowledges the stable and durable relationships that these categories represent and uses them to focus on particular social groups at neglected points of intersection, in order to reveal the complexity of lived experience within such groups.

At the present juncture in the WaVE project, our aims contain strands of each of these three approaches. Certainly McCall's description of the overall process of intersectionality studies suggests that this analytical tool will apply well to the WaVE project: in such comparative studies of a variety of groups, 'complexity is managed ... by what first appears to be a reductionist process – reducing the analysis to one or two between-group relationships at a time – but what in the end is a synthetic and holistic process that brings the various pieces of the analysis together' (McCall 2005, p.1787). It is hoped that WaVE could contribute to the debate on intersectionality, foregrounding religion into the debate and, in general, bringing together 'various pieces' for the analysis which are rarely juxtaposed but, through an intersectionality approach, promise to offer fruitful insight. The multiplicity of identities is a banal point, yet it is often overlooked in, and undermined through, simplified political and media discussions. Such simplification is especially conspicuous in relation to religious identities. With the aid of the intersectionality approach, WaVE seeks to offer a realistic picture of the complexity and multifaceted nature of identities, and the important and *varied* interrelations between multiple identities which lead to different results in terms of social cohesion and/or tension in society.

## Managing WaVE's diversity

As mentioned above, the diversity in the WaVE project entailed by its inclusion of twelve countries across a vast geographical scope in Europe presents us with a number of challenges as well as opportunities. More precisely, it presents us with challenges which – if managed well – may be considered significant research opportunities.

The most conspicuous of these challenges are the vast differences that we find along an East-West divide in Europe – namely, between western European countries (and those included in the WREP project), and the post-communist eastern European countries included in the study (Latvia, Poland, Croatia and Romania). Finding frameworks which apply equally well to both eastern and western Europe is a tremendous challenge, particularly as regards the study of welfare, religion and minorities, given the vastly different experiences between eastern and western Europe in these three domains. Thus, a deep conceptual chasm in terms of these domains is a first point that must be recognised: the different experiences of welfare and religion need no explanation here, but it is worth emphasising the difference in the domain of minorities, in terms of the fact that these eastern European countries are cases of vast *emigration* rather than immigration, and the fact that minority presence there tends to be an integrated part of the social fabric of these countries (native or autochthonous groups, usually indistinguishable by language or culture from the rest of society) *and*, significantly, the term ‘majority’ simply does not apply clearly in some of these contexts (much less ‘majority religion’). These differences carry vast implications for the development of WaVE’s methodology (see below).

However, it is also important to note the *transitional* nature of these three domains in the post-communist countries under study; this second point warns us against simple generalisations about an East-West divide. Third, and related to the above, there are significant variations between each of these countries in terms of developments in these three domains: developments in welfare systems vary from case to case, as do trends in the ‘revival’ and/or re-establishment of churches; meanwhile, emigration takes place at different paces and to different destination countries.

Beyond this very obvious source of diversity (the East-West distinctions), there are also very challenging differences across all of the country cases to do with terminology<sup>6</sup>. For instance, terms such as citizenship, integration, and pluralism mean very different things across Europe. It is impossible to reach a consensus on these terms that can apply to all cases in the WaVE project; accordingly, we must resort to a series of ‘footnotes’ in each of our case studies, explaining the meaning of these terms in each particular context. At the same time, this particular challenge may be considered an advantage, in the sense that we will draw insights on the diversity within Europe as reflected in terminology.

Of these terminological problems, a particularly challenging one is the term ‘minority’. This problem stems from the great diversity of experiences with minorities across our twelve country cases, which have led to differing

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<sup>6</sup> As noted above, this subject was explored by Martha Middlemiss within the context of the WREP project. See Middlemiss 2006.

conceptions of the term in each case, and to different uses of sub-concepts (such as ‘national minority’).

For the purposes of the fieldwork (WP3), we have addressed this problem by taking a broad definition of minorities based on the following reasons:

a. We expect to find very different results in terms of the relationship (one of tension or cohesion?) between majority communities and different kinds of minority communities (i.e., autochthonous or immigrant, primarily ethnic or religious, etc.).

b. We try to allow space for the different definitions of ‘minority’ in each case to arise. Different conceptions of minority (including whether the definitions have a religious dimension) may tell us something about the development of and/or potential for tension or cohesion.

c. We wish to include attention to a possibly vast array of self-definitions of the ‘minorities’ themselves (as these self-definitions may vary from those of the researcher or of the broader majority community).

d. Taking such a broad definition may help us to avoid reifying preconceived notions about conflict related to particular groups (i.e., modifying stereotypes).

The difficulty in defining the term minority beleaguers the research and policy-making communities in general, well beyond the WaVE study. Significantly, this difficulty is even evident in formal institutional documents: for instance, neither the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, nor the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities contains a definition of the term. It is useful (and interesting) to pause and consider the problem of defining minorities at this level, particularly in the case of the Framework Convention, because of the repercussions it entails for the attainment of rights and privileges by minorities in Europe<sup>7</sup>.

One definition commonly used in international law (though not officially designated) is that offered by the Permanent Court of International Justice in its ruling on a particular case:

a group of persons living in a given country or locality having a race, religion, language and tradition of their own and united by this identity of race, religion, language and tradition in a sentiment of solidarity, with a view to preserving their traditions, maintaining their form of worship, ensuring the instruction and upbringing of their children in accordance with the spirit and tradition of their race and rendering mutual assistance to each other (Gilbert 1996, p.164).

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<sup>7</sup> The Framework Convention’s lack of a definition of minorities has been the subject of strong critique: ‘one cannot accord rights to wholly nebulous concepts...some definition is necessary’. John Packer, cited in Gilbert (1996), p. 162. According to John Valentine (2004, p.445), the failure to provide a definition in the Framework Convention was the result of the failure of the member states to agree on one particular definition. For more on the subject of defining minorities, see Sasse and Thielemann (2005).

Meanwhile, in debates on the subject within the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, there was discussion of according minority status only to ‘those nondominant groups... which wish to preserve stable ethnic, religious or linguistic tradition or characteristics, markedly different from those of the rest of the population’ (Gilbert 1996, p.164). The definition adopted by the London-based ‘Minority Rights Group’ is ‘a group within a state which wishes to preserve its own identity’ (Gilbert 1996, p.165).

According to either of these definitions, if minorities are – only by the mere fact of their existence – considered to be claiming and maintaining identities which are different to those of the majority, then there is a great deal to be learned about social cohesion or social conflict between majorities and minorities by studying minority values.

Within this maze of definitions of minority, ‘national minority’ is also a difficult term with multiple meanings in multiple contexts. The two main uses of the term are for **a.** indication of those minorities whose members are nationals of the state in which they live, or **b.** indication of the nation from which a particular minority derives. However, in the WaVE project we have discovered a far broader range of meanings, in terms of specific factors attached to the term.

We have also discovered that it is not easy to consider minorities in numerical terms either (i.e., a minority as numerically smaller than the majority population). Determining whether a group is smaller than the majority is not always a straightforward matter: for example, in particular regions or localities, a group that is a minority at the national level may be a majority in that given context.

## Structure and Methodology of the Project

WaVE is a three-year project (February 2006-February 2009). Our work for this three-year period has been planned according to eight ‘workpackages’ (WP), beginning with the preparation of a State of the Art report (WP1), and followed by the Development of Methodology (WP2), the Fieldwork conducted in the fourteen localities (WP3), the Analysis of the local data (WP4), the Comparative cross-country analysis (WP5), the Dissemination of the results at the EU, national and local levels (WP6), the Generation of EU policy recommendations (WP7), and the drafting of a Final report (WP8).

The Methodology of the WaVE project is set out in three texts produced through WP2: Guidelines on the qualitative methods as applied to WaVE; Guidelines for the mapping process; and Guidelines for the collection of material. These are internal documents meant to guide the researchers through the planning and execution of the fieldwork (WP3). Some basic

aspects of the methodology will be discussed here, including the focus on qualitative methods; the role of the ‘mapping process’; and the plans for the collection of the material.

## WaVE’s Qualitative focus

One of our starting points in the WaVE project is the assumption that values cannot be grasped independently of practices: understanding values requires attention to how values are expressed in actual practice, as well as to ‘official’ values expressed verbally. We aim to understand *lived* values as they influence majority-minority relations and social cohesion and/or tensions throughout Europe. Accordingly, our study should include consideration of what people do, what people say they do, and how they explain their actions and any changes in their actions over time. Such material is not graspable through quantitative research alone. Survey and statistical information must be supplemented with observations and with interview material.

Qualitative research allows us the necessary flexibility for grasping how values are expressed and developed on the ground and how, in practice, these values may affect majority-minority relations. It also enables us to capture nuance related to **religion** and different religious groups, to **minority** status and to different groups of minorities, and to **gender** patterns and changes within these amongst different groups. Meanwhile, by examining all of these dimensions through the prism of **welfare**, we are approaching the most fundamental level at which coexistence between different cultures, values and religions can be effectively examined – that of the expression of, and provision of, ‘basic’ individual and community needs (bearing in mind that what is considered ‘basic’ is itself an expression of values). It is through this approach that we can best supplement the existing quantitative research on welfare and values in Europe.

Accordingly, we have chosen to focus our research on the interaction between majority and minorities in particular towns in the twelve countries included in the WaVE study<sup>8</sup>.

Case studies allow a special opportunity to delve into the complexities of social life and to reveal detail in terms of diversity, variation and heterogeneity (Ragin, cited by McCall 2005, p.1782). Our case studies also allow us to glean insight into at least three levels: the regional, the national, and the local levels. It also allows us to detect similarities and differences between these levels, and to compare these levels across the twelve countries in WaVE (i.e., local level could sometimes be similar across our countries, whilst the national level could be different).

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<sup>8</sup> As noted above, there are 13 case studies in all, as there are two German case studies: one town with a Protestant majority and one with a Catholic majority.

## The mapping process

The ‘mapping process’ is the first stage of our fieldwork in the selected localities: it entails a broad mapping of all of the groups present in the locality (majority and minority), a description of how the local welfare system operates (who are the main actors in local welfare and what are their main activities?), and a consideration of the basic forms of interaction between these various groups (are there any notable examples of tension, or cohesion, within and between various groups, in domain of welfare?). The mapping process will play a critical role in helping us achieve WaVE’s overall aims. First, by providing information on minority presence, networks and associations in our localities, we will already be making a significant contribution to knowledge on minorities in Europe. Assuming that the welfare state is about social cohesion, our focus on whether minorities establish their own welfare activities will offer us insight into whether the *mere existence* of various welfare-providing minority organisations leads to greater fragmentation of society, or whether, instead, it strengthens civil society and the groups’ position within society (*or*, indeed, whether some combination of the two emerges). Second, the mapping process is designed to help us make informed decisions about how to choose the sample for our in-depth research (second stage of the fieldwork), so that it will best reveal the sources of cohesion or tension between minority and majority communities, as observable through the domain of welfare. We will map quite broadly, taking into consideration what constitutes the ‘majority’ as well as all religious, ethnic, national and/or racial groups which claim (or are conferred, by the majority), a minority status, regardless of the size of the group.

## Collection of the material

Regarding the collection of the material (i.e., the in-depth research, following the mapping process), we have chosen not to prescribe a focus on particular minority groups, but rather on any groups, issues, themes, phenomena, etc. (or combination of these), which help us to fulfil WaVE’s objectives and to grasp WaVE’s central concepts. WaVE researchers, in conjunction with their senior scholars, are asked to take decisions that are most appropriate for their local context, and to justify their decisions with reference to WaVE’s objectives (see above, p.23).

Likewise, given the diversity of cultures and contexts included in the WaVE project, the precise methods for the collection of material will necessarily be varied. Researchers have been asked to choose specific research methods in accordance with what may be the most appropriate and most effective way in a given context of grasping WaVE’s central concepts and fulfilling WaVE’s objectives. Beyond this, the Guidelines for the collection of the material provided to the researchers offer a series of suggestions on

how to prepare for the field, how to plan the in-depth research, how to manage the interview context, and how to record and report the results. But, most importantly, researchers are asked to bear in mind WaVE's central concepts and objectives and to take decisions regarding research methods accordingly.

Clearly, there is a tension between comparability and contextuality embedded in our research. Emphasis on comparability is more conducive to the drawing of scientific and analytical conclusions, whereas emphasis on contextuality is geared toward representing the complexity of reality on the ground. We will be continually challenged to strike a proper balance between the two. Certainly at this juncture (during the fieldwork process), our emphasis is on contextuality and on gleaning insight into our local complexities.

Finally, WaVE takes an inductive approach to the development of theory. Junior researchers will approach their fields of study first through observation and then through in-depth research, seeking to describe, as close to the ground as possible, the complexity of majority-minority relations in each town. A following analytical phase will address the various factors affecting social cohesion of social tensions in each case and will assess the extent to which values related to religion, minorities or gender are at play in either case.

## WaVE's broader aims

In direct response to the European Commission's call for research on 'values and religions in Europe', it is hoped that, based on WaVE's fulfilled objectives, we will be able to share insight into the impact of religions in societies across Europe as a bearers of values of solidarity and social cohesion, or as source of tension and exclusion. We will aim for a nuanced understanding of the religious factor in its relation to other factors influencing the co-existence of various religious groups in towns across Europe. Furthermore and on this basis, WaVE is expected to shed light on the relative benefits and drawbacks of the privatisation of religion, as well as of welfare.

We also hope to add to discussions of the relationship between multiculturalism and welfare, and between multiculturalism and gender. Literature on both these subjects is often dominated by agenda-setting rather than reflections on actual practices, and by agenda-setting based mostly on most visible trends in western European countries. WaVE offers the opportunity both for reflection on actual practices, and for cross-country comparison of results through which we will gain a much fuller picture of the situation across Europe, north, south, east and west.

Finally, WaVE is expected to bring into sharp relief potential contradictions between values expressed at the local level, as well as between values claimed at the European Union level, on the one hand, and European Union

policies, on the other. With critical insight into each of these three dimensions, WaVE will develop policy recommendations aimed at their harmonisation and, in turn, at greater social cohesion throughout Europe.

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# Chapter 3 Sweden

## 3:1 OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SITUATION

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### Introduction

Based on its very low figures of religious attendance and traditional religious faith, Sweden has a reputation of being one of the most secularised countries in the world. True as this might be, what the image conceals is the strong and complicated role that religion still plays in Sweden, not least through history and culture. The modern history of Sweden has its foundation in national homogeneity, grounded in the principle of one people and one faith. This principle is closely connected to the Lutheran majority church, to which nearly 80% of the Swedish population still belongs, even though formally state and church were separated in 2000. The recent presence of other world religions and official policies tending towards multiculturalism adds new religious aspects to Swedish culture. Religion thus continues to play an interesting role in Sweden, behind the seemingly straightforward image of a country on its way towards complete secularisation.

The Swedish welfare state was built after the Second World War, based on the idea of 'the home of the people' (*folkhemsidén*). The basic principle of the model is that the state and local authorities guarantee the basic needs of all citizens. This principle is based on strong values of solidarity and shared responsibility. Decades of success for the system have since the 1990s been replaced by growing problems with keeping up the high level of benefits and services, a development, which is increasingly questioning also the values underpinning the whole welfare structure. Immigration is one factor, among many, challenging the system and immigrants have also been among those most affected by emerging new forms of poverty.

### Previous research

The role of religious agents in welfare has not been a major area of research in Sweden. The simple reason for this is that religious agents have not had a

significant role in the modern welfare system. In recent years a new interest has developed for other agents to complement public service provision, including voluntary agents and among them religious organisations. This development has been specifically addressed at Uppsala University with the research developed at the Uppsala Institute for Diaconal and Social Studies/Centre for the Study of Religion and Society, Uppsala University, where also the WaVE project is based. The project *Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective* (2003) with its Swedish case study (Beckman & Ekstrand & Pettersson 2006) will be an important starting-point for the WaVE studies. The description below of the welfare system, the gender situation and the role of the majority church to a large extent build on these previous studies.

As for the situation of minorities and the relation between religion, welfare and values, the overview relates to existing research from several areas. In order to communicate the goals of the Swedish integration policy to the general public, the Swedish Integration board, a governmental organisation operating at a national level, has published studies touching upon issues brought together in the WaVE project. In the report "A common value base in a plural democracy" (Sahlberg ed. 2004) the ethicist Elisabeth Gerle and the philosopher of religion Olof Franck discuss conflicts of values occurring in relation to religion and gender equality. Conflicts between individual rights and rights of groups are discussed in relation to the goals of Swedish integration policy, which include the respect of difference, within the limits of the democratic values set by society (Sahlberg ed. 2004, 11). The potential conflicts between group rights and a common value base are discussed in direct relation to the situation of religious minority groups in a report discussing state funding of religious organisations. A specific paragraph in the law (§ 3, SFS 1999:932) stipulates that to be eligible for financing the faith community has "to contribute to uphold and strengthen the basic values that society is founded upon". The degree to which this paragraph implies a real barrier has been an issue of constant discussion, which is highly relevant for the debate on religion and common values (Ekström et al 2006).

One specific aspect to be taken into consideration in the Swedish situation is the observation made in the World Value Survey that, from a global perspective, it is not the immigrants coming to Sweden that are "different", but the Nordic populations, and among them especially the Swedes. The difference is seen in a low adherence to traditional values related to family and religion and a strong support for values of individual freedom and self-expression, which are quite unique in a global perspective (Pettersson & Esmer 2005).

The Swedish welfare system is based on the three pillars of healthcare, social care and education. It is especially in terms of the healthcare system and the school system that value conflicts related to the welfare of (religious) minorities have occurred. Olof Franck (2005) presents a possible philosophi-

cal-ethical understanding of the concept of “value base” (*värdegrund*), which is more and more used in the Swedish context, especially in relation to the school system. There is also the National Centre for Values Education at Umeå University (<http://www.vgc.umu.se/>), which has been assigned with a coordinating role. Göran Linde (2001) discusses how the value base can be dealt with in the public school and how it relates to Swedish ethnicity (2001). Value conflicts that have occurred in Christian and Muslim free schools<sup>1</sup> in Sweden are discussed by Elisabeth Gerle (1999), with a special emphasis on conflicts related to gender equality.

The Swedish authorities are responsible for both the financing and the operation of most of the healthcare system. This implies a homogeneity, which sometimes comes into conflict with the specific needs of ethnic and religious minority groups. Such issues related to Islam, e.g. concerning food, gender and possibilities for prayer, are discussed by Jan Samuelsson (1999), while Finnur Magnússon (ed. 2002) discusses ethnic and cultural aspects in the relations between professionals and patients in health and social care.

The increased immigration to Sweden since the 1970s has resulted in a rapid growth of research on immigration, some of it published through Swedish Government Official Inquiries. A gradual shift has taken place, from a monocultural “study of immigrants” to an intercultural focus on plurality and multiculturalism (Lorentz 2001). This shift mirrors a change also in the official policies of the Swedish authorities. In a recent governmental report the policy change from the 1970s up to today is described as a change from a policy of assimilation, to a period of immigration policy (with assimilation as more of a free choice), leading on to the present integration policy (aiming at equal rights, duties and possibilities for everyone in a multicultural society). The report argues for a new change to an active antidiscrimination policy (Det blågula glashuset 2005, 115). The more self-critical attitude towards Swedish integration policies is clearly expressed in the publications from the more recent *Inquiry on Power, Integration and Structural Discrimination*, highlighting different aspects and effects of immigration and integration policies. In contrast to earlier studies, the directives for the inquiry had as a starting point the existence of structural ethnic discrimination. The task was thus not to find out whether discrimination exists, but to analyse the mechanisms behind it and propose actions to counter it (Direktiv 2004). The final report formulated a deep critique of failures in Swedish integration policies (Inquiry on power, integration and structural discrimination 2006).

Reports on the situation of immigrants in Sweden are regularly published also by the Swedish Integration Board, as well as, by the National Board of Health and Welfare, which is the national supervisory authority for social services and public health.

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<sup>1</sup> Free schools are run on a private basis, but receive funding from the public authorities.

There are several independent research institutes presently focusing on the situation of minorities in Sweden, among them the Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations at Stockholm University (since 1983) and the Centre for Multiethnic Research at Uppsala University (since 1984). There are also several new research centres at more recent universities and university colleges. Researchers engaged in studies of international migration and ethnic relations have formed since 1992 a national network (IMER).

## The contribution of WaVE

Few scholars of religion have been active in the IMER network (Roth 2003, 47). Among the work by scholars of religion in this area there is a recent overview covering the religious minority situation in Sweden, but without specifically addressing welfare issues (Andersson & Sander ed. 2005). There are also overviews covering the specific situation of Islam in Sweden (Svanberg & Westerlund 1999) and some studies specifically addressing gender issues in relation to Islam (Roaldh 2003, Sultan-Sjöqvist 2006). In comparison, few reports have been published on the situation of religious minority groups in Sweden, even less within the framework of welfare and values.<sup>2</sup> For the WaVE-project it is interesting to note that political scientists have observed a lack of knowledge on the interconnection between discrimination based on ethnicity and discrimination based on religion in the Swedish context (Det blågula glashuset, 72). This gap does not seem to be compensated for in on-going public inquiries on discrimination, except for some critical studies of how religion is presented in school text books (Sawyer & Kamali ed. 2006). The contribution of the WaVE project concerning the interconnection between transitions related to religion, minorities and gender will therefore fill an obvious gap in the existing literature.

## Characteristics of the national welfare system

In the typology of Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990) Sweden is characterised as a typical Social Democratic welfare regime, built on the principles of universalism, comprehensive risk coverage, generous benefit levels, egalitarianism and full employment. There is in this type of regime also a high degree of, what Esping-Andersen (1999) calls, “de-familialisation”, meaning policies that reduce the individuals’ reliance on the family and maximise individual command of economic resources. This facet of the Swedish system has to do with the fact that it is closely connected to policies aiming at gen-

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<sup>2</sup> A recent exception is Sultan 2006. For an overview of Swedish research on immigrants and religion see Nordin 2004.

der equality, with the goal that women and men “shall have the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities in all significant areas of life” (<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/4096/a/26327>, 14 June 2006). Swedish gender equality implies that women and men support themselves and combine work and parenthood when they have children. No entitlements are targeted towards women in their capacity as wives and taxation remains individual.

This specific feature of the Swedish welfare system leads Jane Lewis (1992) to conclude that Sweden is a “weak male breadwinner society”, moving towards “a dual breadwinner” model, while the Swedish historian Yvonne Hirdman characterises the present Swedish situation as based on a “gender equality contract” (Hirdman 1998). Hirdman’s theory is that dominant “gender contracts” structure gender relations in society, within a basic discriminating system of gender hierarchy and gender separation. According to Hirdman, Sweden admittedly has not obtained gender equality, but has at least achieved a political consensus around equality as an ideal. This political consensus and its dependence on the basic idea of gender similarity rather than gender complementarity is an important background for understanding value conflicts in relation to minority groups in Swedish society, who do not share the dominant values.

The general responsibility for welfare in Swedish society rests on the public sector and is regulated by law. During recent years, and especially in the aftermath of the economic recession during the 1990s, a shift has occurred giving more freedom to other agents to act on behalf of, in cooperation with, or in a complementary way to, the public authorities. This includes private companies, NGOs and families (the latter especially for the care of elderly relatives).

## Background to the present system

The present welfare system has developed from a historical situation in a peasant society where family and church were the central welfare agents. Until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century church and society were interwoven in a way that it is hard to imagine today. Church and state, parish and municipality were a legal unity. The responsibility of the family included most of what we call today welfare services: healthcare, social care and education. As the basic public authority, the Church was responsible for a large part of society’s complementary services, such as care for the poor, medical care and education. The role of the Church began to change in 1862, when new laws separated local government responsibilities from church responsibilities for the first time. Thereafter, a number of institutions were separated from the church, for example schools and care for the poor during the 19<sup>th</sup> century,

and medical and social care during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Beckman & Ekstrand & Pettersson 2004).

The 1930s became the starting point for the development of a new welfare model. The Swedish idea of society as a big family, “the home of the people” idea, was born as an answer to the need for social security networks that could replace the previous system based on family and relatives. This “home of the people” would not be based on charity, but instead financed by a tax system in which burdens would be shared according to ability. The 1950s and 1960s were a period of unparalleled economic growth in Sweden, during which an extensive tax-financed social welfare system was created. This included a series of reforms, many of which were later emulated elsewhere in the world.

As a part of this development the Church of Sweden’s role as a folk church was integrated within the framework of the Swedish welfare model. The Church became a provider of public welfare within the spiritual sphere with clear and legally defined boundaries in relation to the social welfare responsibility of the state (Beckman & Ekstrand & Pettersson 2004).

Another aspect of these changes has to do with gender. The enormous growth of the public sector was made possible by the gradual inclusion of the female half of the population in the labour force. In the beginning of the 1990s women and men in Sweden almost had the same degree of participation in the labour force. As a result of the recession during the 1990s the figures decreased for both men and women. In 2003, 79% of the women and 84% of the men were counted as part of the labour force.<sup>3</sup> Women occupy about 80% of jobs in the public sectors of education, healthcare and social care ([www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se)). This means that to an overwhelming degree women are the actual providers of public welfare services in society.

The principle of gender equality in Swedish politics dates back to the 1970s, the moment when the specific term *jämställdhet* began to be used to denote equality between women and men in society. In 1980 a new government authority, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman ([www.jamombud.se](http://www.jamombud.se)) was established as a result of the adoption of the Equal Opportunities Act. The act prohibits sex discrimination in the labour market; it also requires that all employers, whether in the public or private sector, actively promote equal opportunities for women and men in the working environment. All employers with a minimum of ten employees are required to prepare annual equal opportunities plans, as well as, plans of action for equal pay. The primary task of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman is to ensure compliance with the Act through advice and information (Beckman & Ekstrand & Pettersson 2004). It is worth noting that the new government appointed in the general elections in September 2006 has declared its intention to create a common

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<sup>3</sup> Women and men from 20 to 64 years old who are either employed or registered as job-seekers.

legislation and one common authority for handling all matters of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability. This would mean the end of a separate Equal Opportunities Ombudsman in Sweden ([www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se), November 2006).

## Present challenges to the system

The Swedish model is currently facing several serious challenges.<sup>4</sup> The greatest may be demographic change, with an aging population increasingly in need of support. The proportion of the population aged 65 and over in 2004 was 17.2%, which is close to the EU average. Life expectancy at birth was 82.7 for women and 78.4 for men, which is high in comparison (Eurostat 2004).

A second challenge is globalisation, which makes it more difficult to control market forces. Less control over capital incomes automatically threatens a welfare system built on tax financing. A third challenge is the EU demand for a balanced state budget. This demand challenges the priority of welfare for all people over state macro-economic objectives.

A fourth challenge comes from international migration and has to do with the potential conflict between generous welfare provision for all residents and a generous immigration policy. This challenge causes an intense debate, often touching upon value issues. The defence of the national welfare system sometimes turns into “welfare nationalism” that tends to exclude non-native Swedes (Johansson 2005, 252). The issue was raised in a particular way in terms of the planned expansion of the EU, when the prime minister in November 2003 articulated his concern about a possible wave of “social tourism” towards Sweden, a fear which later was documented as unjustified (Doyle et al 2006).

A fifth challenge to the welfare system consists of people’s increasing expectations of perceived quality of life and fulfilment of individual needs. Individualisation of social services presupposes a variety of different alternatives to choose from. Such variation and flexibility is difficult to provide within the uniform Swedish model. A sixth challenge comes from the consequences of applying market models and competition to the organisation and management of welfare services and public management. With the ambition of making the public welfare provision more efficient and reducing its costs, management models from the commercial business sector are increasingly being implemented. While there are obvious gains to be made, questions have been raised as to how far it is possible to adopt commercial models in the management and provision of welfare services. In public debate it has also been questioned whether the implementation of the ideas of competition and commercial efficiency might contribute to negative effects on the work

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<sup>4</sup> The summary below is based on Beckman & Ekstrand & Pettersson 2004.

environment for personnel in welfare services, thus resulting in increasing days of sick leave. It is also questioned if models from the “profit sector” are threatening the core values of the supposedly “non-profit” public welfare services.

A seventh challenge to the Swedish welfare model is the increasing problems of unemployment and people who for different reasons are excluded from the labour market. The challenge lies in the fact that the Swedish welfare system has been built on low levels of unemployment, which have been difficult to achieve after the recession during the 1990s, even though Sweden still does fairly well in European comparison. In 2005 unemployment was 7.7% among women and 7.8% among men (Eurostat). An eighth challenge comes from the growing economic and social gaps and the “new poverty” that can be seen in society through new types of social exclusion.

Several of the challenges mentioned are connected to marginalisation processes that divide the population into a majority that fits well into the welfare system and a minority that is excluded from many of the benefits. Long-term unemployment and risk of poverty is still low in Sweden, but for specific groups and among them immigrants, the risks are higher. (Schierup et al 2006, 195-230). Even though Sweden presents itself as a multicultural society, integration policies have not worked out as intended; the welfare of immigrant populations from non-European countries is a serious challenge. The difficulties of immigrants, especially non-Europeans, to establish and support themselves in Swedish society have been documented in a series of extensive reports (Statistics Sweden 2002, Rapport integration 2005, de los Reyes 2006). Alarming accounts have been published on the deterioration in welfare for, what has been called “visible immigrants” (Social rapport 2006), i.e. people who are perceived as looking different than native Swedes.

It is also clear that several of the challenges mentioned have an obvious gender dimension. “Burn out” syndromes have affected women more than men during recent years and significantly contributed to a rise in the amount of people on sick leave. Violence against women is an issue debated frequently and especially in relation to what is perceived as flaws in the legislation against rape and sexual assault, resulting in few verdicts against perpetrators and short periods of imprisonment. The “sexualisation” of public space is an issue, which has caught more, and more attention, as well as, sexual assaults committed through contacts established on the web. Among issues raised in the official campaigns for gender equality the gap in levels of income between women and men is an important issue, as well as, the low representation of women in boards of private companies (Beckman & Ekstrand & Pettersson 2004).

An issue connected both to minorities and gender concerns the protection of young immigrant women from violence from relatives, motivated by preserving the honour of the family. This issue has become especially heated in

Sweden after several cases of “honour killings” of young women, where honour seems to have been the main motive. The debate was fuelled by a few brutal murders around the turn of the millennium (Honour Related Violence 2005, p 37). Most of the Swedish media have been very careful not to relate the motives behind this violence to religion (Roald 2003). The debate has revealed aspects of incompetence from the Swedish authorities in how to deal with the issues (de los Reyes 2003).

The above-mentioned challenges are all publicly debated and form the background for rethinking the Swedish model. Various solutions have been on the agenda in all political parties since the 1990s. It has been argued that Social-Democratic policies during recent years have followed the same “Third Way”, as the UK’s New Labour. The emerging “New Swedish Model” approach, led by the Social-Democratic party, is by the same authors said to represent the ideals of the “embedded neo-liberalism” prescribed by the EU (Schierup et al 2006). This policy change has, however, not been enough to satisfy the non-socialist parties, who formed an “Alliance for Sweden” and succeeded to gain a majority over the Social Democrats in the general elections in September 2006, highly due to their promise to deal with the prevailing high levels of unemployment by creating a better climate for business interests ([www.maktskifte06.se/](http://www.maktskifte06.se/), 2 May 2006). An interesting aspect of the shift is that the Alliance for Sweden gained their majority by leaving previous arguments for a more radical shift in welfare policies behind. The Alliance instead argued that it would be better at creating conditions conducive to welfare.

## An overview of the minority presence in the country

Immigration to Sweden by citizens from other countries developed after the Second World War. In 1945 the number of people in Sweden born in other countries was as low as 100,000. By 2000 the number of foreign-born people went over the one million mark, in a total population of nine million.

During the 1950s and 1960s immigrants to Sweden came primarily from the neighbouring Nordic countries and from Southern Europe in order to find work. During the 1970s this type of immigration receded. Instead refugees started to come from places of conflict in Asia and South America. During the 1990s a large group of immigrants were refugees from the Balkans. Since the middle of the 1980s the majority of immigrants to Sweden have been refugees and people who have been granted residence permits to live in Sweden for humanitarian reasons. About half of all immigrants today are people with family ties to former immigrants (Nilsson 2004).

Swedish official statistics register neither religion nor ethnicity. The only way to identify ethnic groups of foreign origin is thus through their regis-

tered place of birth. By the end of 2003 there were 1,078,000 people in Sweden born in another country and an additional 800,000 persons who were themselves born in Sweden, but who had one parent (or two) born abroad. This means that 22% of the population in Sweden has a foreign background in the sense that they are, either born in another country, or have at least one parent born abroad (Nilsson 2004). The numbers of foreign citizens in Sweden were 476,000 (2003).

By the end of 2003 the largest group of Swedish residents born in a foreign country came from Asia (295,000). The second largest group came from another Nordic country (279,000). The third largest group came from the former Yugoslavia (138,000) and the fourth largest group from one of the 15 older EU-countries, other than the Nordic countries (102,000). The 10 new EU-countries were represented with 78,000 residents, Africa with 62,000 and South America with 54,000. European countries outside of the Nordic and the EU countries were represented with 32,000 residents and North America with 26,000 (Nilsson 2004).

There are also five groups in Sweden officially recognised by the parliament as “national” minorities. This gives them a right to special protection, including protection of their historical languages. These minorities are the Sami (15-20,000), who are an indigenous people, the Swedish Finns (450,000), the Tornedalers (50,000), the Roma (40-50,000 if including travellers) and the Jews (25,000). The protected minority languages are Sami, Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedal Finnish) Romany Chib and Yiddish ([www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se), 11 April 2006).

The increase in the number of immigrants to Sweden is illustrated in many of the large cities, where there is frequently one or more areas regarded as a typical “immigrant suburb”, such as Rosengård in Malmö or Rinkeby in Stockholm. This geographical segregation affects both first and second generations of immigrants. Within the “immigrant areas” the ethnic mixture is normally wide. The problem of geographical ethnic segregation has caused a lot of debate over the years and has also resulted in academic studies (e.g. Molina 1997).

Formally all Swedish residents have the same right to public welfare services. In this respect there is no difference between minorities and the majority. The official national minorities have special protection for example with regard to their languages. The restrictions in rights that mostly affect immigrants are related to time and reasons for coming to Sweden. Some benefits are related to income and to the earning of an income for a certain duration, which may mean that an immigrant does not have the right to a specific benefit. The most important limitation, however, is not set by citizenship, but by residence permit. Asylum seekers only have a right to medical care for acute illness and may be obliged to pay for this care. For children there are special and more generous rules, including the right to go to school. Never-

theless, the situation of children of asylum seekers is often precarious, especially due to the stressful situation they find themselves in. The status of approximately 20,000 people residing illegally in Sweden is especially difficult. This group consists of mainly three categories (Social rapport 2006, p 341):

- “hidden refugees”: people who have been denied asylum in Sweden, and are hiding from the authorities hoping for a new chance.
- “black labour”: people who come to Sweden to work without work permits.
- “victims of trafficking”: primarily women who come to Sweden illegally as a result of the sex trade.

Political parties negative to immigrants have so far had very little success in Sweden, even though the elections in September 2006 saw a rise in support at the local level for this type of politics. However, there are informal structures of discrimination pointed at in several reports from the *Inquiry on Power, Integration and Structural Discrimination*. This type of ethnic discrimination has severe consequences, especially when it excludes people from the labour market, as a range of social rights are based on income from paid labour. (Kamali ed. 2005, de los Reyes ed. 2006).

## The characteristics of the majority Church

In some respects the Church of Sweden was separated from the State by the Church of Sweden Act on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2000. The Government no longer appoints bishops or other senior church officials, and the Parliament does not enact Church legislation. But the Church is still regulated by law, and has certain legally defined rights and obligations. The Church is, for example, still responsible for the funeral system as a whole, not only for the Christian part of the population. The Church authorities are thus required by law to offer places for burial acceptable also to other religious communities such as, for example, Muslims. In 2004, 68.5% of babies born in Sweden were baptised in the Church of Sweden and 88.2% of the deceased had their burial in a religious ceremony arranged by the church (Church of Sweden Statistics, [www.svenskakyrkan.se](http://www.svenskakyrkan.se)).

The Church of Sweden is organised in three levels: national, regional, (diocesan) and local (parish). The local level consists of about 2,200 parishes. The parish level is seen as the base of the church. Most church activities are performed on this level. According to the Church Constitution, the parishes have four tasks: worship, teaching, social/diaconal work and mission. The parishes are normally territorially defined; members of the Church

of Sweden living within a certain area constitute a parish. There are also a few non-territorial parishes. There is no possibility for members to choose which parish they want to belong to. You belong to the parish within which you live. In order to belong to the few non-territorial parishes, you have to meet certain criteria, which are very narrowly defined. There is a debate on the so-called principle of territoriality, but the General Synod has been reluctant to change the present system in any radical way.

The Church of Sweden is a relatively wealthy church, mainly due to the fact that all members have to pay a church fee (or church tax). This fee is collected by the state tax authorities and has the legal status of a tax, even if it is only applied to those who are church members. The Church also receives incomes from land property and is even a successful shareholder in several companies. A significant amount of money is also raised voluntarily each year. The number of employed staff is about 25,000 approximately 3,400 are ordained priests and 1,200 ordained deacons (Matrikel för Svenska kyrkan 2005).

The total wealth of the Church of Sweden is approximately 38 billion crowns (about 300 million Euros). This includes land property, church buildings etc. The main source of income (approximately 80%) is from church fees, which yields approximately 10 billion crowns per year. The total amount of costs for the Church of Sweden is about 12 billion crowns every year (Beckman & Ekstrand & Pettersson 2004).

There are no official statistics on the number of voluntary workers in the Church of Sweden. One major group is constituted by the approximately 60,000 people who function as elected members of different church councils and synods. Another large group is the members of church choirs. They are about 100,000, of which about 75% are women. Different church clubs and voluntary organisations, such as the Church of Sweden mission, are heavily dependent on voluntary work. The high number of employed staff, however, points to the fact that many church activities are organised by employees (Bäckström & Beckman & Pettersson 2004).

## Religious composition in the country

The religious dominance of the Church of Sweden is most clearly expressed in that it has 7,053,000 members (Church of Sweden Statistics 2004), representing 78.3% of the population. Since 2000 the figures have been reduced by 50-75,000 members each year. Comparable figures of belonging to other denominations are hard to obtain. As already mentioned, religious belonging may not be registered in Swedish official statistics.

When it comes to estimating religious affiliation the most commonly used source is the public authority that distributes financial support to religious

communities: the Swedish Commission for State Grants to Religious Communities (SST). In 2004, 39 religious communities were eligible for such grants. In religious terms, they were of Christian, Muslim and Jewish origin and for the first time a Buddhist organisation (*Sveriges Buddhistiska samarbetsråd*) was also included.

The data below are based on figures from SST. A few observations are necessary to understand the figures correctly. According to the regulations SST distribute their grants according to the number of people “served” (*betjänade*) by the religious organisation. The concept “served”, meaning those who participate in an organised way, is used instead of “membership” because not all religious groups have individual membership. When exact figures are missing SST make estimations of the numbers of people “served”, based on reports on participation in activities etc. provided by the religious organisations. The application of the concept “served” explains the rather low figures provided by SST on the numbers of Jews and Muslims in Sweden. When higher figures are given (sometimes several times higher than the figures from SST) these are based on estimations of origin and cultural belonging rather than religious activity. In comparison with the number of members in the Church of Sweden it would be more relevant to use these figures, as membership in the “folk church” for many people is more of a sign of solidarity with a Christian heritage than an active choice on religious grounds. In order to use the most solid figures, the statistics from SST are, however, selected and shown below.

It is worth noting that immigrant religions in Sweden tend to adapt to the way popular movements (*folkrörelser*) and the old Free Churches have been organised (Larsson 2005). Some kind of national organisation is also needed for a minority to be eligible for state funding. Christian immigrant minorities are normally organised in parishes or dioceses. In the case of the Roman-Catholic Church the diocese of Stockholm represents the Roman-Catholic Church in Sweden. In the case of oriental and Orthodox churches the type of organisation varies depending on both the tradition and size of the minority. The largest one is the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of Sweden and the rest of Scandinavia. There is also a joint national organisation, *The Ecumenical Council of Orthodox and Oriental Churches*.

There are several national Muslim organisations in Sweden, and many local organisations. *The Islamic Collaboration Council (Islamiska samarbetsrådet)* has taken on the task of coordinating Muslim activities in Sweden and representing Islam in SST. The council represents four Muslim organisations: *The United Islamic Communities in Sweden (Förenade Islamiska församlingar i Sverige)*, *The Swedish Muslim Federation (Sveriges muslimska förbund)*, *The Swedish Islamic Communities (Svenska islamiska församlingarna)* and *The Union of Islamic Cultural Centres in Sweden (Islamiska kulturcenterunionen)*, with a fifth one, *Islamic Shia-communities in Sweden*

(*Islamiska Shiasamfundet i Sverige*) as associated member (www.sst.a.se, 10 May 2006).

Another umbrella organisation is *The Swedish Muslim Council (Sveriges muslimska råd)*, which, according to its home page (www.sverigesmuslimskarad.se, 10 May 2006), brings together nine organisations, among them *Young Muslims (Sveriges Unga Muslimer)*, *The United Islamic Communities in Sweden (Förenade Islamiska församlingar i Sverige)*, the oldest Muslim organisation in Sweden, and *The Swedish Muslim Federation (Sveriges Muslimska förbund)*, another well-established Swedish organisation. A national organisation for Bosnian Muslims is also part of the Swedish Muslim Council.

Two organisations within the Church of Sweden received financial support from SST in 2004. These were *The National Evangelical Missionary Society (Evangeliska fosterlandsstiftelsen)* *The Mission Society Bibletrue Friends (Evangelisk-luthersk mission/Bibeltrogna vänner)*. Members of Swedish free churches are sometimes also members of the Church of Sweden, although the amount of this type of double organising has been reduced after the connection between church and state was dissolved in 2000.

**Table 3:1:1 Religious organisations receiving support from the Swedish Commission for State Grants to Religious Communities (SST).**

<b>Religious organisation receiving a grant</b>	<b>Estimated number of people “served”</b>
The National Evangelical Missionary Society ( <i>Evangeliska fosterlandsstiftelsen</i> )	47,000
The Mission Society Bibletrue Friends ( <i>Bibeltrogna vänner</i> )	3,000
The Mission Covenant Church of Sweden ( <i>Missionskyrkan</i> )	128,000
The Pentecostal Movement ( <i>Pingströrelsen</i> )	123,000
Interact ( <i>Evangeliska frikyrkan</i> )	50,000
The Baptist Union of Sweden ( <i>Svenska baptistsamfundet</i> )	30,000
The Swedish Alliance Mission ( <i>Svenska Alliansmissionen</i> )	23,000
The Salvation Army ( <i>Frälsningsarmén</i> )	20,000
The Methodist Church ( <i>Metodistkyrkan</i> )	7,000
The Adventist Church ( <i>Sjundedags adventistsamfundet</i> )	4,000

Other Evangelical Lutheran Churches	10,000
The Hungarian Protestant Church in Sweden	4,500
The Catholic diocese of Stockholm	100,000
Orthodox Churches	103,000
The Official Council of Swedish Jewish Communities	10,000
The Swedish Muslim Council ( <i>Islamiska samarbetsrådet</i> )	100,000

Not all religious movements want or are eligible for applying for a grant from SST. Figures on the numbers of adherents to some of these in 2001 are given in the table below.

**Table 3:1:2 Religious organisations of considerable size that have not applied for a grant from SST. Numbers according to Skog (2001).**

Religious movement/organisation	Estimated number of adherents
Jehovah's Witnesses	23,500
The Faith Movement (Word of Life)	6,000
Mormons	8,000
Buddhists	8-10,000
Hindus	3-5,000

## Welfare and minorities

No studies on religious minority groups establishing their own social organisations seem to exist. As a result of the general trend in Swedish society during the 1990s of accepting more diversity in the welfare sector, some health services for immigrants and some confessional free schools have been established. Free schools are run on a private basis, but receive funding from the public authorities. There are presently 66 confessional free schools in Sweden out of which six are Muslim and three Jewish (Friskoledatabasen, [www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se), 10 May 2006). Although the figures show that these schools are very few, in relation to the school system as a whole, the issue of confessional free schools has caused considerable debate. Free schools as such are questioned, as they are perceived by some people as threatening the cohesion and integration of Swedish society. This threat is perceived as provocative when it comes from Islam, especially in relation to Swedish policies on gender equality (Gerle 1999).

The Christian Council of Sweden coordinates some activities in the social field, e.g. spiritual care in hospitals and prisons. In a similar way the Swedish Muslim Council tries to coordinate spiritual care for Muslims, with e.g. 10 imams visiting Muslims in hospital care. The Swedish Muslim Council has also taken an initiative to help people who are released from prisons and need help with re-integration in society. The organisation also relates to the Swedish Emergency Management Agency preparing society to manage serious crises. Another field of activity concerns the situation of families with disabled children, which constitute a very vulnerable group ([www.sverigesmuslimskarad.se](http://www.sverigesmuslimskarad.se), 10 May 2006).

## Places of worship

The establishment of a place of worship is very important for most religious groups. Most Christian churches in Sweden have such places. If they do not have their own place, they often use the localities of the Church of Sweden. Also Buddhists and Hindus have increasingly established their own places of worship (Andersson & Sander ed. 2005). In 2004 Stockholm, Gothenburg (ahmaddiya), Malmö, Uppsala, Trollhättan and Västerås had mosques specifically built for the purpose (Andersson & Sander ed. 2005). A study from 1995 on the establishment of mosques in Sweden was, however, symptomatically called a study in “intolerance and administrative powerlessness” (Karlsson & Svanberg 1995). Data from the mid-90s presented in the study indicate that about half of the Swedish population was at the time against the building of mosques. The debate had been going on for approximately ten years and although only a few mosques were built, one mosque had been burnt down (in Trollhättan). Since then several new mosques have been built and the issue now seems to be less frequently debated. However, new fires and other attacks have also occurred, which indicates that there are still active and violent groups in Swedish society that do not accept the establishment of public buildings representing Islam.

## Welfare, gender and the majority church

There are so far no studies made on the activities of the Church of Sweden as a whole in terms of welfare provision. This has probably to do with the fact that the provision of services performed by the Church is minor in relation to the services provided by the public sector. The changing situation for the Church of Sweden related to the separation of the church from the state in 2000 was covered in the project *From State Church to Free Folk Church*. The final report from the project includes a chapter on welfare (Bäckström & Beckman & Pettersson 2004) and two of the earlier reports from the project

deal specifically with the role of religion in welfare (Bäckström 2001, Jeppsson-Grassman 2001).

### The complementary role of the Church

After the formal separation of Church and state the Church of Sweden is now one of the main agents within the voluntary sector (or civil society) in Sweden. The role of the Church of Sweden in the welfare system is complementary. The relative importance of this complementarity may have increased as a consequence of the separation of church and state in combination with the state's growing interest in cooperation with the third sector in Swedish society. This complementarity has two major aspects: direct activities and symbolic activities. The direct activities are mainly of a complementary character, for example bereavement counselling, running a shelter for homeless people with financial support from local authorities (e.g. in Gävle) or organising day-time activities for elderly people. The symbolic function of the Church in welfare is about giving the individual an opportunity to relate to a collective identity and also to something transcendent, which offers both ultimate security and a legitimisation of values of care and safety. This is very visible in times of catastrophe and crisis. The church also functions as a critical voice defending values of human dignity and solidarity (Bäckström 2001).

### Church and public opinion

The folk church character of the Church of Sweden has sometimes made it difficult for the church to act politically within Swedish society. When the Church takes an active part in political debates this is often criticised based on the argument that the Church ought to concentrate on spiritual activities and not take part in daily politics. One of the more intense debates was caused by the Bishops' conference in 1993 with the pastoral letter *Rich and Poor* (Biskopsmötet 1993). The bishops' letter discussed global economy and its consequences for the poor and argued for a more fair distribution of economic goods between rich and poor countries. Another pastoral letter from the Bishops (1992) concerns how liturgical acts, such as baptism, weddings and funerals, should be handled in relation to immigrants.

A more regular way for the Church of Sweden to make its voice heard with regard to welfare issues is through the political culture in Sweden, focusing on agreement and cooperation. This is expressed in the tradition of the Government and other decision-making authorities sending out their proposals for comment (*remiss*) to a number of organisations before the proposals are brought to Parliament. The national Church council and the

Archbishop or the Bishops' Conference send their comments on a number of government proposals every year.

## Church and gender

With regard to gender, the position of the Church of Sweden has changed significantly during the last 150 years. In the Swedish peasant society a woman was not recognised as a citizen in her own right, but as part of a male-dominated household. This social order was religiously legitimated according to Lutheran teachings on vocation, which defined the role of women in the household as wives, mothers, daughters, sisters or servants, under the supervision of the housefather. This teaching was most clearly expressed in the "house-table" (*hustavla*), which was a collection of biblical quotations that Luther had added to his catechism in order to clarify his teaching on the callings of the different estates (the spiritual, the political and the domestic). As the catechism was printed in the Hymnal and taught in the parish catechism meetings, the knowledge of the "house-table" became widespread. The "house-table" was based on a complementary understanding of gender. Man and woman were seen as having been given separate roles by God. While the role of the man was in public life, the woman had her task in the home, as wife, mother and housewife.

The sharp limitations to a public role for women were increasingly challenged from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This also challenged the ideology of the Church. The historian Inger Hammar (1999) has shown how women in the first emancipation movement reinterpreted Lutheran theology in order to widen the sphere of women into the public domain. The establishment of diaconal mother-houses by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century played an important role in opening new working possibilities for women. An important precondition for the changes was the growth of evangelical revivalist movements, especially during the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century these traditional roles of women have been continuously challenged and overridden in the church, as well as, in society at large. The church has progressively accepted wider roles for women. Women were allowed to be priests through a decision in 1958 and since then a wide range of new occupations have also developed within the institution of the church, many of which are heavily dominated by women (Beckman & Ekstrand & Pettersson 2004).

The Equal Opportunities Act regulates matters in the church to the extent that the church operates as an employer, a fact that encouraged a discussion on principles for gender equality in the church synod. In 1995 a statement was adopted which stated that the Church of Sweden aims at gender equality in all its activities. A result of the adoption of the declaration on gender equality in the church synod is that a report on the present situation with

regard to gender equality is to be presented to the church synod every fourth year, at the beginning of every election period (Beckman 1998).

## Religious minority-majority relations

The role of the Church of Sweden in relation to religious minority groups is both interesting and ambiguous. The positive side is connected to its “folk-church” status. This is often interpreted as a task of being a church for everyone in Swedish society, including people who belong only nominally to the church and people who are members of other churches and religions. In practice this may mean that churches make their premises available for worship to minority groups. This is also recommended officially in a letter from the bishops (Biskopsmötet 2001). The negative side of the ambiguous relation of the Church with minority groups is connected to the fact that the Church of Sweden is so much wealthier than the other communities, which means that its openness may sometimes be perceived as dominance, tending towards proselytism.

As a result of its dominant position, the Church of Sweden has on the national level taken on the task of informing the public about the situation and needs of both autochthonous minorities (especially the Sami, Roma and Swedish Finns) and immigrant minorities, especially Muslims. During recent years an urgent issue has also been how to develop forms of worship adapted for a multicultural society. This work has been especially important in urban parishes where in areas of large immigrant groups the majority church is suddenly approaching a minority situation (*Lika olika som andra* 2006).

The relationship between majority church and minority religious groups within the area of welfare is so far not directly covered in research. What does exist since the beginning of the 1990s is research on different aspects of the dialogue conducted between the Church of Sweden and representatives from other religions (e.g. Ahlstrand & Sandvik ed. 2001, Stenmark & West-erlund 2002, Selinder & Åmell 2005).

The relations between majority church and Christian minority groups take place within the framework of the Christian Council of Sweden, which gathers 25 member churches. Except for the Church of Sweden the organisation also includes the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm, more than ten Orthodox churches and several churches from the so-called Free Church Family ([www.skr.org](http://www.skr.org), 19 April 2006). The Christian Council is also actively engaged in the situation of refugees, issues of integration and inter-religious dialogue. An initiative called “The Easter Appeal” was developed in the spring of 2005 and concerned the treatment of asylum seekers, especially families that had waited for many years to receive a residence permit. The appeal gathered approximately 150,000 signatures from individuals and sup-

port from more than 60 organisations. It gained a lot of publicity and probably also influenced a temporary permission for asylum-seekers in hiding who have spent several years in Sweden, to have their case tried again (www.skr.org, 3 May 2006, Qviström 2005).

## Gender and religion

The field of gender studies in religion is vast in Sweden and covers both Christian and other religions. There seems, however, to be very little research on the relation between gender and the presence of other non-Christian religions in Sweden. One of the few exceptions is the international renowned scholar on gender and Islam, Anne-Sofie Roald, who has also conducted studies on the situation of Muslim women in Sweden (Roald 2003). A recent dissertation deals with the situation of female Muslim converts (Sultàn-Sjöqvist 2006).

It is impossible to generalise on issues of gender causing debate in relation to minority religions, as these are so many and varied. Generally speaking, there is a perceived tension in Swedish society between gender equality and religion. This tension also concerns the Church of Sweden and especially a continuous resistance among groups of priests in the church against the ordination of women as priests (Beckman & Ekstrand & Pettersson 2006).

Minority religions are often perceived as “more religious” than the Church of Sweden, because being a member of such a group implies a more committed action than being a member of Church of Sweden. In this way minority religions are probably more likely to be perceived as problematic in relation to gender equality. As Grace Davie (2000) has noted, Sweden is characterised by “belonging without believing”: Swedes belong to a church, but do not have strong religious beliefs, nor do they attend Church services or activities on a regular basis. This means that to be a nominal Christian is to be “normal”, but to be an active Christian, especially in a minority group, and even more so to belong to another religion, is perceived as odd in the Swedish secular context, and thus viewed with suspicion.

There are two reasons for the specificity of Islam among minority religions and especially those dominated by immigrants. The first reason is that Islam has become a negative symbol of immigrants in Sweden, or to quote a report on the building of mosques in Sweden: “A new metaphor, ‘Muslims’, has more and more come to replace ‘immigrants’ as a code name for foreigners in Sweden” (Karlsson & Svanberg 1995, 21, c.f. Roald 2003, 85).

The second reason for the special role of Islam is that issues of gender also have become a symbol of what distinguishes “Swedish culture” from “foreign cultures” (Roald 2003, Brune 2004, Kamali 2005, 44). Gender equality has become a hallmark of Sweden and everything from EU to Islam

is treated with distrust in this respect. Swedish gender equality policies are based on a view of women and men as basically similar. Public institutions (schools, hospitals etc.) generally make no formal distinctions between women and men (Samuelsson 1999). The separation of women and men in public life in Muslim traditions (for example mosques, where men and women pray in different sections) is, thus, automatically associated by many native Swedes with a degradation of the female sex.

Islam has through these processes been loaded with the negatives associated both with religiosity and being foreign, both of which are perceived as being “against gender equality” and, thus, against what is essentially Swedish.

Several issues have come to symbolise this basic conflict in public debate during recent years and has caused strong reactions from a wide range of people from leading politicians to ordinary people writing letters to the editors. The veil or *niqab* has become symbolic in Sweden, as in many other countries, of this problematic issue (Larsson 2005).

## Conclusions

To summarise the report shows that there is a gap in Swedish research, which the WaVE project will attempt to fill. This gap concerns how conflict and cohesion in society are related to values connected to religion, minorities and gender. The Swedish study will be able to benefit from previous Swedish research on the intersections of gender and ethnicity with regard to issues of welfare. The specific contribution of the project will be related to the religious dimensions of the issues at stake.

Particular areas of potential conflict related to the objectives of WaVE in the Swedish case could be summarised in the following points. They concern how conceptions of being Swedish relate to:

- the idea of the “people’s home” guaranteeing the welfare of its citizens.
- gender equality, interpreted as the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men in all significant areas of life.
- belonging to the Church of Sweden, but without strong beliefs or frequent religious practice.

How these ideas contribute to conflict and/or cohesion in relation to the presence of new religious minorities in Sweden is of particular interest, on which we will expand in the local context of our case study.

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## 3:2 GÄVLE CASE STUDY REPORT

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### Abstract

The Swedish case study was conducted in the town of Gävle. It focused on two local welfare institutions, a public school with a high degree of immigrant pupils, and a family centre run by the local authority in cooperation with the Church of Sweden. The collected data consists of official documents, information from the internet, 43 individual interviews and some observation. Analysis show that conflicts of values between minority groups and the majority culture appear in a number of fields. But most of these value conflicts and tensions are handled by negotiations and compromises in a way which can provide good examples for other localities and local contexts. Most of our policy recommendations are generated by these good examples collected from the actual practice in Gävle.

### Gävle and its population

The Swedish case study is carried out in Gävle, a residential town in the County of Gävleborg in the middle of Sweden. Gävle has 92,000 inhabitants. Nine percent are born in another country, compared with 13% percent in Sweden as a whole. In the 1980s Gävle started to increase with the arrival of refugees mainly from Iran and Latin America. During the 1990s they were followed by groups coming mainly from the Balkan countries. The last few years the arriving immigrants have predominantly come from Iraq and Burma (6,M).<sup>2</sup> Today people born in at least 153 different countries are represented in Gävle. Fifteen nationalities are represented with more than 150 individuals (Table 3:2:1). The number of immigrants is increasing by approximately 200 per year (3,F).

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<sup>1</sup> Per Pettersson is the author of the report as a whole, while Ninna Edgardh has contributed in the planning of the work, the collection of material and is the author of the section on the Family Centre in Gävle.

<sup>2</sup> When interviews are cited in the text, they are coded with an individual number for each interview followed by an indication of the interviewee's sex (F= female, M=male). When there are two respondents in the same interview, they are distinguished with a number following the indication of their sex, e.g. (22,F,2). When the same part of the text refers to two different interviews, the references to the two interviews are separated by a semicolon, for example: (3,F; 6,M).

**Table 3:2:1: Total population in Gävle municipality and the 15 major nationalities listed by country of birth and sex (31st Dec. 2006).**

Country	Men	Women	Total
<i>Total population</i>	46,763	45,621	92,384
Sweden	42,321	41,361	83,682
Finland	972	728	1,700
Iraq	347	479	826
Iran	277	336	613
Turkey	180	188	368
Norway	183	109	292
Thailand	207	59	266
Chile	110	120	230
Germany	118	107	225
Poland	137	84	221
Bosnia-Herzegovina	97	117	214
Yugoslavia	87	111	198
Somalia	95	98	193
Syria	76	106	182
El Salvador	81	85	166

### Official national minorities

In Sweden there are five official ethnic minorities which benefit from certain rights. These “national minorities” are the Sami, Swedish Finns, Tornedalers, Roma and Jews (Edgardh Beckman 2006). Due to Swedish law there are no statistics on people based on ethnicity, so we don’t know how many of each group are in Gävle.

There is no Synagogue, Jewish congregation or organisation and no visible group of Tornedalers. According to the national Sami information centre there is no Sami group. Statistics on country of birth tell us that about 1,700 of the population in Gävle are born in Finland. But a number of these are immigrant ethnic Swedes born in Finland, not belonging to the Finnish culture. There is a group of Roma in Gävle, presumably around 100-200 individuals, most of Finnish origin. A few years ago there was a conflict between two large groups of Roma families with the result that one of these groups moved away from Gävle, which led to a reduction of Roma in Gävle (15,F; 26,M). The local authority has an especially employed “Roma-pedagogue” to handle contacts and provide social support to the Roma group (15,F).

## Religious minorities in Gävle

As ethnicity, religious affiliation is also not available in the Official Statistics of Sweden (Personuppgiftslagen 1998, Rapport från statens kulturråd 2001, p. 4). Thus, statistics concerning religious belonging can only be provided by the churches and communities themselves. According to the local authority’s register on organisations there are eight religious organisations, all of them Swedish Christian minority denominations. No religious immigrant association or congregation is included. But we found that at least three exist; the Catholic Church and two Muslim groups.

### Muslims

There are two Muslim groups in Gävle. One is more linked to the Sunni tradition, while the other to the Shia tradition. The Sunni group is the major one, well organised and running a mosque called the Islamic Centre located in a former shop. According to their chairman there are approximately 3,000 people in Gävle of Muslim cultural origin. Most of those practicing their religion attend the prayers and activities at the Islamic Centre. Approximately 250 attend the Friday prayers (20,M). The Shia group is quite small and “invisible” with a mosque in the basement of a house. Internal conflicts within the Shia Muslim group have sometimes been reported by the local media. The police as well as journalists have tried without result to find out what the conflicts are about (7,M; 31,F).

There have also been signs of a conflict between the Sunni and the Shia groups. In May 2006 the Sunni imam at the Gävle Islamic Centre was attacked by two masked men who tried to kill him. He managed to escape but was wounded from a knife in his chest. In a newspaper interview he said that the conflict between Sunni and Shia Muslims was behind the attack: *“I have no proof but I feel quite sure”* (Arbetsbladet, 5 October 2006). He said that *“the conflict between the Sunni and Shia in Iraq is spreading among Mus-*

*lims all over the world. There are Shia Muslim groups starting to be active even in Europe and in Sweden”, and adds, “in my private life I have no enemies” (Arbetarbladet, 5 October 2006).*

### **Pentecostals**

The Pentecostal congregation in Gävle has around 600 members, a Swedish main pastor, a Spanish speaking pastor and an evangelist of Finnish origin. Within the congregation there is a Spanish speaking group of about 30 persons from Latin America: Cuba, Panama, El Salvador, Peru and Chile. They arrange meetings 2-3 times a week. There is also an African group of 20 people meeting once a week with people mainly from Burundi and Rwanda. There are also about 15 Finnish congregation members and a few others from the Middle East. The main pastor indicates that the congregation regards it as very important to work with issues promoting integration (34,M).

### **Public welfare provision for minorities**

The local and regional authorities represent the Swedish welfare state at a local level and have responsibility for health care, care for children and the elderly, and all education up to university level. The welfare services provided are very extensive and financed mainly by taxes (for an overview of the national Swedish welfare system, the local welfare system in Gävle and the role of the Church of Sweden as an agent of welfare, see Pettersson, P. and T. Ekstrand and N. Edgardh Beckman 2004, and Edgardh Beckman, N. and T. Ekstrand and P. Pettersson 2006).

All people who are registered in Sweden have equal rights to public welfare provision. Minority groups have the same rights and formal access to public welfare as the majority. But one needs to be registered by having a permanent or temporary residence permit. Thereby many immigrants who have arrived recently and are waiting for a residence permit, or have been denied a permit and are in hiding, are outside the ordinary welfare system. They are provided with medical care only for emergency, but nothing more than that (1,M). Even parts of the Church of Sweden's diaconal work have implemented the same general principles as the local authority for access to its services, thereby excluding some of the most needy from any assistance (2,M).

All Swedish local authorities are supposed to receive a number of immigrants and take responsibility of integrating them into the Swedish society with financial support from the state. Gävle has agreed to receive 160 per year. This figure is calculated according to population, housing capacity and other similar factors. The Gävle local authority has established an Immigrant Centre with a number of employees in order to coordinate its activities directed especially to recently arrived immigrants. The Centre is divided into

different units. A “Receiving unit” is responsible for initial contact and arranging initial practical issues, such as housing, schooling for children, etc. The “Establishment unit” handles all issues that have to do with employment and the labour market. There is also a special unit for Swedish education for adult immigrants, the “Swedish for Immigrants”. Another special unit handles therapeutic support to refugees with traumatic experiences, the “Gävle Refugee Trauma Centre”. There is also a special “Interpreter Service” available 24 hours a day. In order to inform immigrants on public welfare services available at large in Gävle, the Immigrant Centre has produced a brief but very informative publication in about 20 different languages which gives a good overview. In an effort to integrate immigrant knowledge and cultural competence into the local authority’s administration a number of immigrants have been employed in certain strategic positions in the local authority’s different fields of welfare activities (14,M).

### Minority organisations, a tool for integration of values

As is the general practice in Sweden, Gävle local authority supports financially different kinds of voluntary organisations if they fulfil certain criteria. A special contact person is employed to support the forming and running of ethnic organisations. This is regarded as a support to their respective social and cultural life, but also as a way of integrating minority groups into Swedish society. Only organisations that adapt their structure to a given democratic order receive support. The local authority’s contact person is himself an immigrant and says that a major task for him is to educate the boards of ethnic organisations in democratic organisational principles and to make sure that these organisations live up to democratic principles of receiving financial support. He has constructed a special system to evaluate the organisations by giving them points based on the implementation of certain values, e.g. if they work actively for democratisation, if they practice and work for gender equality, and if they have special activities for children and young people. These values are thereby imposed into immigrant ethnic organisations.

There are 22 ethnic organisations (2006) in the local authority’s register of organisations. In principle all political or religious organisations are excluded from financial support. But the Gävle Islamic Youth Association is included because it mainly runs social youth activities (6,M). Ethnic organisations have a general welfare function in providing social contacts and a community. Many have also more specific social functions, e.g. strengthening mother tongues and providing social support and links to the home country. Some organisations also arrange the distribution of support to relatives in need in their respective home country (3,F).

## Unemployment, the major welfare issue for immigrants

According to several of our interviewees, unemployment is the major welfare issue among immigrants in Gävle (3,F; 6,M; 25,M). Due to the comprehensive public welfare system a basic standard of living is provided to those who are not part of the labour market, but to become integrated in society and to get a chance to improve conditions of living they need to have a job. In Sweden there has traditionally been a strong link between paid work and the social security system of the welfare state. Basic social needs are distributed to everyone at a minimum level, but most of social security is linked to individual income that comes from a position in the labour market (Salonen 1998). Our interviewees stress that unemployment is the major factor causing social segregation of immigrants and hindering the integration process.

The general rate of employment in Gävle is 75% among people in the age group of 20–64 (2004). In the parts of Gävle where most immigrants live the rate of employment is only around 50%. Two of these areas, called Nord and Nordost (North and Northeast), are according to a national survey listed among the most segregated areas in Sweden (Rapport 2006). Among Swedish residents living in these areas there is an over-representation of people who are unemployed with poor economic conditions, and added to this, they often suffer from drug addiction or have criminal backgrounds, etc. (26,M).

In October 2006 there was an initiative to support the creation of relationships between unemployed immigrants and prospective employers. An “Exhibition of Plurality”, with the subtitle “Inspiration for Integration”, was arranged by the local and regional authorities in cooperation with associations, organisations and companies. The major aim was to provide immigrants with the possibility of getting a personal contact with organisations and employers in the Gävle region.

## The majority church as an agent of welfare

The Church of Sweden has a dominant position in the religious life of Sweden at large, including in Gävle. Up to 82% of the population are members of the Church of Sweden (2003). About 75% of all new-born children are baptised in the Church of Sweden and approximately 90% of all deceased are buried in the Church of Sweden’s grounds. These figures are similar to the general Swedish situation. Like most parishes in the Church of Sweden, the parishes in Gävle have a relatively high number of employees, with approximately 200 persons employed on a long-term basis (2003). Two thirds of employees are women.

The Church of Sweden organises a wide range of activities and services provided to individuals, as well as, to organisations, e.g. schools, prisons and hospitals. Most people restrict their participation in church activities to life rites (baptism, confirmation, wedding, funeral) and occasional participation

in worship. Around 10% of the population takes part in Christian liturgical services at least once a month.

## Majority church relationships to minority groups

The Church of Sweden in Gävle has actively worked on establishing good relationships with minority ethnic and religious groups, stressing tolerance and freedom of religion. Staffan's parish seems to have the most developed contacts with national minority groups as well as immigrant groups and has made a special commitment to provide services for the Finnish minority group (31,F). For several years good contacts and cooperation have developed with leading persons at the Islamic Centre and a few years ago a mixed youth group of Swedish and Muslim teenage girls was organised.

This cooperation with the Islamic Centre has been linked to a European project called "Dialogue Week", a French initiative sponsored by EU promoting activities and friendship between Christians and Muslims all over Europe. Gävle was the first Swedish locality taking part in this project (31,F).

Two of the parishes organise meetings for Swedish and immigrant women and the Diaconal Council gives substantial financial support to a voluntary youth centre with a special aim in promoting social integration among immigrants (26,M).

## Context and timeframe

Data was collected from May 2006 to September 2007. In September 2006 elections to national, regional and local parliaments took place. The Social Democrats lost the election at the national level and a new government with a conservative prime minister entered. Significant media attention before and after the election was given to "The Sweden Democrats", a small right wing political party with the aim of stopping immigration as its major objective. This party strengthened its position being represented by one or two delegates in several local parliaments, including in Gävle.

Gävle has a long tradition of social democratic dominance, and the election did not change this, although the presence of the Sweden Democrats has caused some worry among the established parties and among the majority of the population. Our data collection took place before any possible effects could be noticed due to the political change in the national government. Apart from the elections we have not noted any other major changes or significant events at national or local level that took place during the period of the Swedish case study, which could have affected our data collection.

## Methods and sources

Our choice of methods and sources is motivated by the special character of the Swedish comprehensive welfare system. We chose to take advantage of the possibilities given by the extensive organisation and transparency of the Swedish public authorities' administration, using their statistical resources and open access. Since there are so many different minority groups present in Gävle we found it difficult to collect data on an individual level without doing this within an organisational frame in which our data would be representative for a larger group of minority individuals. Thus we started covering the minority situation at large in Gävle, their general access to welfare services, special activities for minority groups and their own organisations. Informants in key positions providing an overview of the situation at large in Gävle have been used as the main sources of information. In line with the common guidelines in the WaVE project we gave special attention to the presence of the Roma ethnic minority and the Muslim and Pentecostal religious minorities in Gävle.

For our in depth fieldwork analysing values in practice we have chosen to focus on the *major national* and *religious minorities* present in Gävle and on *two local welfare institutions*. We decided to cover the major world religions: Islam, Catholicism, Buddhism and Hinduism (Table 3:2:2). According to the local authority's statistics the major national groups representing each world religion in Gävle are: Iraqis among the Muslims, Thais among the Buddhists, Chileans among the Catholics, and Indians among the Hindus. Added to these four national (and religious) groups we chose to focus also on one of the five official "national minorities" in order to cover the aspect of belonging to a group which is being especially recognised by the authorities and by a law guaranteeing certain rights. Of the two national minority groups present in Gävle, Finnish and Roma, we choose the Roma. They are significant wherever they appear through their specific culture, visible especially in their dress, making their minority identity public. They also represent a minority religion in Sweden since many of them belong to Pentecostalism. The Finnish group is quite well integrated in the Swedish society and does not represent any specific religious profile outside the major Swedish Evangelical Lutheran affiliation.

**Table 3:2:2: The choice of focus on five national/ethnic groups in Gävle covering five world religions.**

<i>National/ethnic group</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Iraq	Muslim	796	462	334
Thailand	Buddhist	239	49	190
Chile	Catholic	231	124	107
India	Hindu	128	66	62
Roma	Many are Pentecostals	100-200	?	?

When choosing welfare spaces we looked for a place, an issue or an activity broad enough to include interaction and encounters in between different minority groups as well as among people belonging to the majority population. Our choice was: a) a public school in an area of Gävle with a high degree of immigrants, and b) the recently established Family Centre run by the local authority in cooperation with the Church of Sweden.

Focusing on one specific school in Gävle meant concentrating on the people involved in that school, primarily pupils and the school personnel, and on the issues that are on the agenda in this school. According to a national state investigation this school is located in one of the most segregated housing areas in Sweden. The focus on the recently established Family Centre in Gävle has meant looking at the interaction between the Centre and the minority groups that come in contact with the centre. Issues which are brought up in these contexts automatically and directly also focus in a significant way on gender issues, as well as, on religious aspects.

The data we have gathered include written documents from local authorities and organisations, information available in the internet, individual interviews and some direct observation. At the websites of the two local newspapers, the *Gävle Dagblad* and *Arbetarbladet*, we have searched for published material on minorities, religion, Islam, immigrants etc., in the period from January 2006 to May 2007. We have also collected the regulations and annual reports of the ethnic and religious associations, which are included in the local authority's register. Statistical material on the population has been provided by the local authority's statistical office. From the information centre, "The Citizens' Centre", we have collected different printed materials. We have interviewed 43 individuals, including, 22 women and 21 men.

From those, 15 interviewees have been born in countries other than Sweden. We have also made some participatory observation at the Family Centre.

During the interviews, we tried to get people to tell us about their own experiences and actual practices, e.g. what they have done in certain situations or what experiences they have from encounters between individuals belonging to minority groups and the Swedish welfare system. We have also tried to find what welfare needs individuals in minority groups have asked for themselves and how these needs have been met by the Swedish welfare system, or solved in other ways, or not solved at all. We are aware of the weakness in our choice of collecting data from officials as key informants of which most belong to the majority population. However, this was the best choice in order to reflect the Swedish local situation in Gävle.

## Findings

### Findings in the mapping of Gävle at large

We have not found any major tensions or permanent conflicts between majority and minority groups, or in between different minority groups. However, some discrimination of Roma people, a feeling among Muslims of being looked down at, and tensions in between some immigrants groups have emerged.

There is a wide spread and very old prejudice against the Roma group seeing all Roma individuals as potential thieves. This prejudice is a type of racism that exists in many European countries, not only in Sweden. The Roma people have a history in Sweden of being regarded as having less value than other human beings (15,F). Our informants state that they often are treated with disrespect and segregated from common social life by the Swedish majority population, as well as, by immigrant groups. A Roma woman living in Gävle indicated that she had never gone to a restaurant in Gävle because she knew that she would not be welcome. According to one story we were told, a restaurant owner said to a few Roma when they had just sat down at a table that they were not welcome and that they had to leave immediately. In this case the restaurant owner himself belonged to one of the recently immigrated minority groups (15,F).

One of our informants stated that sometimes a specific conflict of values can appear in between the strong Roma value of the family and the Swedish majority culture. Sometimes Roma pupils in public school suddenly disappear from their class for some time or even permanently (7,M). The reason for this is the Roma cultural tradition of keeping very tight bonds within the extended family of relatives. If they for example do not travel immediately

to a relative who is ill, e.g. in Finland, they are expelled from the community of relatives (7,M).

Similar negative attitudes to the Roma from the majority population are also experienced by many Muslims. When asked about minority group encounters with the Swedish welfare system, the chairman of the Islamic Centre stated that many immigrants perceive that they are looked down at and feel segregated when they are in contact with the authorities. He blames the media for providing mostly negative descriptions of Muslims, connecting them with criminal activities and stressing how different Muslims are as compared to the majority of the population (20,M).

In our general mapping we have also found some minor tensions between different groups of minorities. Some of the interviewees mentioned specifically that there are tensions between different immigrant families in some housing complexes. These tensions and minor conflicts often have to do with the usage of common spaces in blocks of houses, e.g. the washing machines. They are mostly related to the deprived situation of unemployment and are of a general human nature, which appears when people are unemployed, and are not due to tensions specifically related to the minority cultures as such. We have also previously mentioned that there are some tensions between the Sunni and Shia Muslim groups, as well as within the Shia group itself.

One of the interviews with a local authority representative at the Gävle immigration centre is significant as it indicates the way most interviewees in the Swedish case follow the Swedish tradition of keeping religion out of the public space and discourse. When asked about possible conflicts of values related to religion the local authority representative said that religion or values never come into the focus of her work and the only conflicts she has heard of concerns minor things that are solved at a local level in each case (3,F). But when continuing she mentioned an example when some pupils in an introductory course said that they couldn't follow the lectures during Ramadan. Then, she said,

“we got help from a man that he himself is a Muslim. He told the others that ‘you can eat in the evening when you come home’, no one is off during Ramadan” (3,F).

So of course religion appears in different ways, she added. This comment on the issue of Ramadan came after a while and was obviously not part of her daily agenda since she regards religiously related issues as minor and unproblematic. They are solved if they come up, which they mostly do not.

After having mentioned Ramadan she added that there are a lot of discussions on issues concerning family, children and equality between women and men in which different values play a major role.

“We have a lot of these discussions in our introductory groups of immigrants. Such different views can e.g. appear when we are having a Christmas party with traditional Swedish dances around the Christmas tree and games like ‘The little frogs’. Then there might be some girl that cannot take this Somali man by her hand.” (3,F).

Her comments concerning the role of religion and values among immigrating minority groups in Gävle were especially linked to the school context and the family context. Thereby this interview was one indicator pointing at school and the family centre as good welfare contexts for the study of conflicts and cohesion relating to values and religion in practice.

### Findings at the school

The selected school has 290 pupils and consists of two pre-schools with children 5-6 years old and one school from years 1-9 with children 7-15 years old. About 80% of the children have a language other than Swedish as their mother tongue, which means that pupils with Swedish as their mother tongue are a minority in the school and some classes consist of only immigrant children. The largest groups of pupils are Kurdish, followed by Arabic speakers and Somalis, followed by different small groups of Thai, Burmese, Vietnamese, Africans, and others (16,M). This diversity of languages can in itself become segregating and create barriers among the different groups. The school has a double strategy in handling language diversity: 1) in order to support the development of mother tongue languages the school has a number of mother tongue teachers who regularly gather each language group for language training and support for pupils linked to the minority culture; 2) during the school lessons pupils have to speak Swedish and are not allowed to speak any other language. In the breaks during the school day they are free to speak other languages, but most pupils prefer to use Swedish even then.

The school has a reputation of having succeeded in handling the specific needs of immigrant pupils and managing value conflicts (5,F; 7,M; 20,M). Thus, we wanted to benefit from the knowledge and experiences of the school: in what areas do value conflicts arise in the school context? What practical solutions are especially crucial when these value conflicts become visible? How does the school system, as part of the Swedish welfare system, handle and solve these conflicts over values? Are there any conflicts over values that the school has not been able to solve yet?

We made a choice to focus mainly on the people in charge of the school as our main sources of information. We regard mother tongue teachers as minority group representatives, as they themselves belong to the respective minority group. Our interviews with mother tongue teachers also showed that in practice they act as advocates for minority group rights internally

within the school. They also have a broad function of acting as cultural interpreters, helping and supporting the pupils to do their homework in different subjects in the school. One of the Swedish teachers stated: *“We get a lot of help from our mother tongue teachers who work here, as bridges to the homes”* (32,F). She mentioned especially their role in communicating the Swedish policy of gender equality saying,

“when thinking about gender equality, in between boys and girls, an area in which we work a lot. It is a difficult area because the boys are often taught at home that they shall have the power, while the girls shall assist at home and do the cleaning” (32,F).

She continued,

“as teachers we are supposed to transfer certain values to the pupils, but they have other values brought with them from home which are their truths. We touch upon this all the time” (32,F)

One of the mother tongue teachers confirmed this saying that,

“I have a sort of responsibility also for the pupils’ development. The first part concerns educating the children in their mother tongue language....and the other part is to help the children with different subjects in school. To be a support”.

He further explained that he even acts as a religious interpreter from the minority culture perspective, and even as a religious teacher:

“I used to say to my pupils who are Muslims - most of them are Muslims, some are Christians also - this is what the Christians believe, but we believe like this, and like this, and like this. I think that is my responsibility to explain. Otherwise it will be problems at home”..... “Thus, it is important that the pupils become aware of the differences between this culture and what our own culture says. We shall not lose our own culture, compensating it with other people’s culture. But we shall understand each other’s culture” (25,M).

We have conducted interviews with nine individuals at the school: a) two male headmasters; b) four teachers: a male mother tongue language teacher, a female mother tongue teacher, a female teacher in mathematics, natural sciences and language, and a female Swedish teacher; c) a female school nurse. In addition to these seven adults we also had a short interview with two immigrant male pupils of about 12-14 years of age. Five of the interviewees are immigrants: four Muslims and one Catholic.

According to the two headmasters the cultural mix at the school is generally working out smoothly and without any problematic conflicts. But they also stress that there are great cultural differences based in the different

views, values and religion, which are clearly visible in the school's daily life and this has to be managed. One headmaster stresses that the issues and questions raised by children from non-Swedish cultures are often very different from the questions normally raised by Swedish children in the way that religion plays a much more significant role among the immigrant children.

“It can be religious questions, for example concerning Ramadan. The issues are very sensitive, for example in biology when discussing naked human beings that are posed. The children bring it up” (16,M).

The headmaster mentioned that last week he had to handle a situation with a pupil who got very upset by another pupil's view of God. The background was that a teacher during a lecture had used a metaphor consisting of a telephone call with God without thinking that this would be problematic. A Muslim pupil reacted strongly against this way of describing God. But another pupil who is Christian defended the teacher by saying that the teacher was speaking specifically about the Christian God, not about the Muslim God. The Christian pupil argued that the Muslim pupil should not comment on this since the teacher was not referring to the Muslim God. According to the headmaster this way of talking about religion, a subject that is so sensitive and emotionally charged, is totally different from an equivalent situation among Swedish pupils.

The significance of religion at the school due to its multicultural situation is further stressed in interviews with the mother tongue teachers. They mention several areas in which values linked to religious belonging makes a difference in practical issues at the school. But they also stress that even if a majority of the pupils and their parents come from other cultures, where religion plays a more significant role in society than in Sweden, their religious involvement varies a lot. Only a minority within each minority group practice their religion in a strict way. According to the interviewees the majority of immigrants are more or less liberal and for about half of them religion plays no significant role (27,F; 33,M).

Our interviewees mention a number of areas and situations in which value differences have been highlighted. Some value differences in between minority groups and the majority system have been easy to manage, while other differences have caused conflicts and called for negotiations. In many cases values linked to religion have caused discussion in a way that reveals tensions in between the cultures of different minority groups and the existing school curriculum, which is shaped by the Swedish majority culture. This majority culture is regarded by most Swedes as very secularised, but obviously many immigrants regard it as Christian and influenced by values that are different from the values that are integrated in their own religion. One Muslim representative said:

“The culture in school has been to support the country’s religion, even if people in Sweden say that they are secularised and that there is freedom of religion. But I think that school books are imprinted by the old idea of people being Christian, even if this is not acknowledged.”(25,M).

### **Relationships between the sexes**

A major area where there are differences in the views between Muslim pupils and the Swedish school system with its majority Christian background seems to be the issue of relationships between the sexes. An important difference for many immigrants is the Swedish practice of having mixed school classes with boys and girls within the same classroom. Parents and pupils from a Muslim background are used to schools with classes separated by sex.

The general practice of mixed classes has not been raised as a problematic issue at the school. But in the context of swim education there was a conflict in the spring 2006 over the values related to the Muslim tradition of the division of the sexes at the school. A few Muslim parents did not want their daughters to participate in swim education because it took place in a mixed group with both boys and girls. In Sweden swim education is part of the general obligatory school curriculum for all children. Upon the request of parents the headmaster decided to make an exception and permit the children not to participate. When this decision was published in the local media it was criticised as an exception that was prohibited by the school curriculum. Several articles in the local newspapers had headings such as: “*The rules of the Imam direct the X-school*”, “*The word of the Imam is a fact at the X-school*” and “*Is it up to him to rule?*” (Gävle Dagblad 11.05.2006 ; Arbetarbladet 12.05.2006; Gävle Dagblad 12.05.2006). In a few weeks the headmaster withdrew the agreement to exempt the Muslim girls from swim education. In a new agreement that was accepted by their parents, the school arranged a possibility for the girls to have separate swim education.

Another practical issue where special arrangements have been requested concerns showers in the context of sports activities. According to Muslim tradition, as expressed by parents and pupils, it is not allowed for an individual to show himself or herself naked to anyone else, not even to other individuals of the same sex. This has been solved by permitting Muslim pupils to shower with their underwear on, or to shower and change clothes individually when this is possible.

Apart from sports and swim education, the most often mentioned school subject in which divergent values appear is biology. Immigrant Muslim and some Christian pupils and their parents have reacted negatively when drawings or models have been showed completely naked human beings as part of the education on the human body or education on sexuality. Sometimes these reactions have been so strong that the teacher has had to use pictures of the human body without any genitals, a practice which has been accepted by the

school (16,M). This is in conflict with the general Swedish majority values promoting an open attitude to sexuality as a natural part of human life, and can also come in conflict with the curriculum according to which education on sexuality is obligatory.

### **Religious festivals and food**

The school has tried in different ways to adapt the Swedish standard school curriculum to different cultural norms and the needs of minority groups. The previously mentioned cases of swim education and education in biology are two examples. Two other areas are religious festivals/holy days and school luncheons. The school has created an internal integrated calendar of the school year including all the festivals and holy days of the religions represented at the school. This is seen as a way to educate both the pupils and the teachers about the traditions present at the school and to pay equal respect to different religions. In practice this means that all the different Christian and Muslim holidays are noted in the school in an informative way, although not celebrated collectively. Thus, the school makes a general notice of the meaning of Ramadan, as well as of Christmas, for pupils of all religions. The school also allows pupils of different religions to be absent from school during their respective holy days, even if the school in its general planning follows the Swedish national calendar, which is rooted in the Christian tradition.

In all public Swedish schools for children between 6 to 18 years of age, free school luncheons are served to all pupils. Thereby, religious traditions and restrictions concerning food automatically become an issue in the Swedish school context. The wish for vegetarian food has existed for many years in the schools. But, along with the increasing immigration of Muslims, the need for special meat and dishes without pork has increased and become an issue on the agenda. Thus, today the school also serves “religious food” according to the needs of Muslims.

### **Visits and arrangements in Church buildings**

Our study at the school has confirmed its image as a good benchmark concerning the development of strategies and policy in handling minority-majority value relationships. There is only one area in which the school is struggling presently. It concerns occasions linked to the Swedish culture and tradition when common gatherings for the school takes place within a Christian framework.

The most frequently mentioned example of this problem is the celebration of the end of the school year (26,M; 33,M). In all Swedish schools the end of school year in the beginning of June is celebrated with a common gathering for the whole school with the singing of songs, a speech by the headmaster and often also by a priest. This celebration often takes place in a local church

building. The basic aim of having large gatherings at important occasions is that all pupils within the school should be present and manifest unity and togetherness, and have a common experience. This makes it difficult to arrange special separate alternative solutions for certain individuals or groups, without losing the whole idea of having a common gathering.

After some discussion on the new multicultural situation during spring 2006, the end of school year celebration was for the first time, in June 2006, arranged outdoors in the city park and not in the church. At the time of the interviews it was still an open question how this issue would be handled in June 2007. The headmaster said that before the decision, the pupils would be invited to state their opinion by voting for the different alternatives (32,F; 33,M).

Another example of conflict is the celebration of the Santa Lucia day on December 13<sup>th</sup> when Christian songs are sung by choirs in almost all Swedish public contexts, such as in schools, hospitals, work places, public open spaces, etc. Most Swedes do not see this as a specifically Christian celebration, but more as a cultural tradition. But some of the Muslim pupils and teachers do not want to take part because they identify it as a religious tradition in which they do not want to participate (25,M).

Even study visits in churches have appeared problematic for some of the Muslim pupils, arguing that they cannot even enter a Christian church building. One of the teachers told this:

“The classes 4-6 planned to make a study trip to Uppsala to visit Uppsala Cathedral and look inside to see all things. It is like a cultural treasure, a museum. But the immediate reaction was that we can’t enter a church, we are Muslims” (32,F).

The interviewed teachers and headmasters stress that they have to negotiate with the pupils, and sometimes also with parents, in order to find practical solutions when such conflicts of values are raised (16,M; 32,F; 33,M).

### **Swedish religious normality in change**

The study at the school shows the typical character of Swedish cultural normality as seemingly non-religious, although it relies on a predominantly Christian heritage. According to Swedish religious normality religion is something private which should not be exposed in public settings. But the normally hidden face of the Swedish majority religion comes to the surface in certain occasions. In these occasions, like the celebration of the end of the school year or the celebration of the day of Santa Lucia, the religious expressions are taken for granted and seen as most natural in public settings. Thus, there is one Swedish religious normality under “normal” conditions and a different religious normality under certain “abnormal” conditions (cf. Bäckström & Edgardh Beckman & Pettersson 2004). This shift of “normality”

takes place without reflection for most Swedish people, but it is not surprising that people coming from other cultural and religious settings observe and react to these two divergent ways of handling religion in the public sphere.

Our in depth study of the school shows that issues concerning certain needs of minority groups have become a major issue on the agenda along with the increasing arrival of Muslims in Gävle over the last ten years. Almost all areas where conflicts of values have appeared in the school have been related to differences in between the Swedish majority culture with its Christian roots and cultures in which Islamic cultural values are strongly integrated. The major change in the schools' awareness of the significance of religious and cultural value differences took place a few years ago when the children of a conservative imam were pupils at the school. The imam, along with a few other Muslim parents, asked for negotiation meetings with the headmaster concerning the special religiously related needs of Muslim pupils. The result of these meetings was a special agreement named "Advice and guidelines for the Muslim pupils at X-school, 2005". In this document seven areas of specific Muslim needs were described: the fasting period/Ramadan, school vacation during religious festivals, food, showers/swimming/sports, school camps/study tours, Christian and traditional festivals at the school, Muslim prayer times. The guidelines of this document were used only for a short time since it was withdrawn in 2006 when the possibility to be exempted from swim education was criticised in the media. Headmasters, as well as the interviewed minority representatives, say that the principles of the guidelines are so integrated in the school today, that a formal document is not needed. But they see the meetings with the imam and the agreement as important steps in making all people at the school aware of the need for negotiations and compromises between minority group practices and the general practices of the school. The headmasters stress that they see these issues as practical issues that have to and can be solved. They are related to values, but they concern practices and have to be handled as practical issues (16,M; 25,M; 33,M).

## Findings at the Family Centre

The Family Centre represents the Swedish welfare system reaching out to groups in special need of welfare provision, not least immigrant groups. The idea comes from the Swedish Parliament taking actions in order to promote public health in Sweden and specifically address psychological problems among children and young people (Handlingsplan för Familjecentral i Andersberg 2004). Family Centres are built according to the basic principles in the health care system, with universal and free health care for pregnant women and children and social care for families expecting a child. This service is complemented by the public pre-school and preventive individual and

family care. The aim is to bring together knowledge and resources from different sectors of society in one centre in order to facilitate help towards families with small children. Sometimes agents other than the authorities are included. In Gävle the Church of Sweden has been involved in the establishment of the centre from the start in February 2005. The local parish contributes to the rent of the premises and two part-time workers, one deacon and one pre-school teacher.

The Family Centre is located in an area where social exposure is higher than in other parts of Gävle. Unemployment is approximately 12% and almost 15% of the population is born in a country other than Sweden. Most of the residents live in rented apartments (Fakta om Andersberg 2006). The big grocery shops have moved to more profitable areas, the post office has closed and even the church has left the shopping centre. In order to counter the downward spiral the municipality has built a new and well frequented public library in the former shopping centre. The Family Centre can be found next-door. Baby carriages stand in a row at the entrance and as a visitor you have to look out not to fall over a toddler when you step inside. The atmosphere is welcoming and friendly.

### **Aim and methodology**

Our research questions concerned the relationship between, on the one hand, the Centre, representing the Swedish majority culture with its thoroughly organised Swedish welfare system, and, on the other hand, the recent and different immigrant minority cultures. Which values permeate the work at the Family Centre and how are they related to Swedish majority culture? Are there value-related conflicts between the majority culture and different groups of new Swedes in the practice of the Family Centre? Around what issues is there cohesion? When there are conflicts, around which issues do they revolve? What role does religion play in the meeting between minority and majority culture? What does it mean for the majority church to be one of the initiators with employed personnel present? What role does gender play in this context?

The methodology selected implied that we would reach minority groups through the activities at the centre. During the study we discovered that the Centre had major problems reaching these groups, which meant a major methodological problem for our study. But time constraints did not permit a revised methodology, which meant that we had to limit our objective. Thus, the study primarily shows the logic of the majority culture. Values held by minority groups are only approached indirectly, through the ways in which they are perceived by the personnel at the centre and a few visitors, represent rather well integrated immigrant groups, as they could communicate in Swedish.

### **Conflicting values concerning welfare provision**

The Family Centre is an example of how the Swedish welfare state, often summarised in the expression “the home of the people” (Sw: *folkhemmet*), tries to adapt to a new era, with new demands on cooperation and adaptation to more differentiated needs. It also exemplifies how difficult it is for the institutions, constructed during a period of uniformity in the late-modern industrial society, to transform in order to serve a new era.

The Family Centre seems to a large extent to function in accordance with the rules set by the ideology of the “home of the people”, imprinted by “social engineering” and an ambition to “put life in order”, to use an expression coined by the historian Yvonne Hirdman (1989). It is the homogenous Swedish welfare society that seeks to reach out with the ambition to help and support every citizen, but this appears to be somewhat complex in a new situation of cultural and religious diversity.

We experienced this in taking part as participant observers during one afternoon in the Centre, when the personnel prepared for the cooking-course that was going to be held during the evening. Swedish vegetables were piled up in the open kitchen in the middle of the Centre. A woman from Armenia, practicing at the Centre, prepared some buns made with carrots. The participants will learn how to make a leek soup and a gratin with root vegetables. All food was healthy, cheap and mostly vegetarian. Chicken replaced pork in sausages, as well as, in traditional food at Christian feast days, such as Christmas and Easter. The Swedish cultural tradition was used, but adapted to fit a more plural religious situation.

Still the couples who came are not as many as it was hoped for and they were mainly of Swedish origin. Surveys show that the majority of visitors at the centre are generally of Swedish origin. Furthermore, the percentage of immigrants has decreased from the first to the second year (Besökarenkät 2005 and 2006). Interviewed personnel say that they see a need among the immigrants that they have not yet understood how to meet. They argue that many immigrants have larger socio-psychological needs related to pregnancy, birth and early childhood than other groups. Still they are reluctant to come to the activities arranged by the Family Centre. The Centre tries in a range of ways, from providing professional interpretation to arranging targeted group activities for immigrants, courses in cooking, meeting places for immigrant women, etc.

One of the personnel said to us “*We do try, we try and try...*” (22,F,1). Still the result seems always to be the same. The persons who are supposed to be in most need do not come. Somehow the will to help and the needs do not meet. This rift between ambition and practice can be interpreted as having to do with different value systems. The experience of failure seems closely connected to the very ambition, which in turn can be seen as an expression of dominant Swedish cultural values, directed more towards giving

than towards listening to the voices of the newly arrived persons as citizens with both resources and needs. The ambition is for society to take a holistic responsibility in relation to the wellbeing of families, but expectations of this kind of care do not seem to exist among the immigrant groups. Many of the immigrants come from cultures where a similar responsibility is only taken by family, maybe extended family, friends and neighbours. Recent immigrants do not have access to these networks anymore, but this is what they seek in relation to family members in exile, a religious or language group, or more distant relatives living in Sweden. It might be that they do not even understand the ambition to provide social relations in an organised and tax-financed form through the Family Centre because it is so unexpected, especially coming from the authorities. One of the personnel told us about visitors from South Africa, who could not really believe what they saw in the Family Centre. She recalls how they kept on repeating the same question: “*Is it really free of charge?*” (22,F,2).

Sometimes the ambitions of the Family Centre might even come into conflict with the survival strategies of immigrants to connect to their family and kin. Another representative of the personnel told us:

“They are supposed to be at home and cater and cook and have everything ready, so they do not have time to come...to leave home.” (24,F).

Conflict over culture is also seen in relation to breast-feeding. Swedish maternal care is very clear about the necessity of this, but also presupposes that it should stop after a year or so, in order for the mother to return to working life. This means that immigrants making use of the social security system need to go back to work or to Swedish-classes after maternity leave, or they will stop receiving money. Several of the employees told us about the problems caused by this rule because the babies were not weaned and cried all day when they were placed in public day care.

In a recent study on families from Iran living in Sweden Hanna Wikström (2007) writes about how perceptions of normality and deviation have an influence, both on the majority population and on the Iranians themselves. One of Wikström’s interviewees, Shima, told us how at her work she struggles to transmit another, alternative image of normal immigrant life. In a telling quotation Shima said,

“They only listen to TV and read and see only this that is written. But they never ask...why do they never ask ‘how is it in your family?’ (Wikström 2007, 196f).

The ambition of the Family Centre is to reach out to the neediest groups. It is clear from the interviews that the staff experience at least a partial failure of this ambition. One possible reason may be that the logic of the welfare sys-

tem at least to a certain degree still is conceptualised according to the old paternalistic idea of the homogenous “people’s home”, where the public authorities, as representatives of the head of the household, know in advance the needs of its members. As a result, Shima’s question “how is it in your family?”, is too seldom asked.

### **Role of religion**

The most visible representatives of religion at the Family Centre are the church employees. Still it is not obvious to which degree the Church of Sweden represents religion. While no longer a state church, the Church of Sweden is still clearly associated with and seen as a resource in relation to the authorities. This tendency even seems to have increased during recent years, when the church after a long period of being more and more marginalised and reduced to a religious function in society, has re-established its public presence through different forms of cooperation with authorities and other organisations of the type exemplified by the Family Centre (Davie, Edgardh and Pettersson, forthcoming).

The presence of the church at the Centre is explicitly without any evangelising aim. The interviewed church employee underlined that the aim of her presence at the centre “is social, not Christian”. When asked what this means she said that when she is engaged in Christian work she speaks about faith, reads from the Bible or sings songs with Christian content with the children (22,F,1). To wear a cross or something similar at the Family Centre is however not a problem, neither is it a problem to organise cultural activities related to Christian holidays. At one point a Muslim school girl worked with staff from the Church at the Centre, as part of a school programme that encourages students to spend a few weeks at a place of work so that they can gain some understanding of what it is like to work. Although the parents were positive to this, the staff got the impression that they would have found it difficult for her to do the same in a place that was affiliated to a Muslim group different from their own (19,F).

Religion does not seem to be an issue of conflict at the Centre. A problem mentioned by someone in personnel is that the Centre does not have enough competence in existential issues. One example concerns a family from southwest Asia, having experienced several miscarriages and accusing themselves, feeling that this is God’s punishment. “I do not know if we are equipped to meet such questions” (19,F). The personnel in this case tried to normalise the situation by a medical approach, saying that the situation was not caused by them doing anything wrong. The religious and existential questions however remained unresolved.

To summarise it seems that the strategy from the part of the Centre is to let the Christian tradition in as a cultural and institutional resource, as long

as it is not explicitly religious, but adhere to the idea of religiosity as something private. The parish has obviously approved of the same strategy.

### **Gender and free choice**

The Family Centre is a highly gendered milieu, in so far as all of the employees, as well as most of the visitors are women. Men are of course welcome, but even in the allegedly gender-equal Sweden care for children is primarily a female responsibility. Still the fact that Swedish men take part in care of the children is what our interviewees first mentioned when we asked what normally strikes their immigrant visitors. Different views on gender roles also seem to be what causes strongest feelings among the personnel at the Centre. One interviewee gave us an example of a type of argument she often finds herself having with mothers with partners from another culture. She argued with the woman because she seemed to accept things that from a Swedish perspective seem strikingly unequal. It may concern for example separated parents with children living with the mother, but with the father still telling her and the children what to. It is clear from her story that her overarching principle is ruled by the value of the free choice:

“Yes, this thing with the veil, it is her choice. Like this: ‘Do you want to wear the veil?’ If she wants to, ok, but the fact is that he cannot decide for you if you are going to wear it or not. Does it feel right for you? ‘Well, I do not know, but if I do not, he says that...’ Yes, but if you go to yourself. Does it feel right for you to wear it?’” (22,F,2)

The issue is obviously very sensitive. The pre-school teacher said that she has to hold herself back in these discussions because she becomes so upset.

“Why do they permit it? How can they permit it? And they are not supposed to meet any other men, they are not allowed to date other guys, although they do not live together! And they buy it! You get so angry then.” (22,F,2)

Two dominant values seem to interact in the related argument from the employee of the Centre. The first is the value of gender equality, interpreted in terms of similarity. Similar rules are to be upheld for women and men, boys and girls. The second value is individual autonomy. This value has made its imprint on European modernity ever since the Enlightenment, but is not as self-evident in many of the countries from which immigrants come to Gävle. These cultures are often much more collectively oriented, starting with the group and relationships within the group, rather than with the autonomous individual. The invisible norms of the autonomous individual and the value of a free choice are discussed in a recent anthology about the Orient in Sweden, mostly starting from school situations. Ann Runfors (2006) observes in one of her essays how the ideals of the teachers are connected to individual choices, expressing a personal, reflexive standpoint, while what is not cho-

sen, decreed and hindering is perceived as negative. The free choice is perceived as so natural that it is taken as evident rather than as a standpoint. But, she observes, even free choice is set into a frame with certain limitations. Any choice is not accepted (Runfors 2006, p. 119).

In the case of the Family Centre it is obvious that a choice of a woman to let her (former) partner decide for her is not perceived as positive by the interviewed employee, irrespective of the motives. We can speculate that these motives may be related to dependence on the man and his relatives for the security, support and safety of the family. The Family Centre wants to offer an alternative security in an organised form. When this option is not exercised by a woman it is hard for the staff at the Family Centre to understand that such a decision can be an actual individual and free choice. Probably it is correct to say that the presuppositions involved in the choice are not conscious from the part of the woman. But neither are the presuppositions of the representative of the Centre. Her argumentation is instead a clear example of how dominant Swedish cultural values are taken for granted from the part of the welfare system.

The manager of the Family Centre indicated that it is difficult to get immigrant men involved in issues concerning their young children. The Swedish authorities have the view that both parents have the same responsibility for their children, even if in practice more women than men are involved in child care. This view is not self-evident among all immigrant groups. One example where this shows in practice is in the support groups for parents with small children organised at the Centre. These groups are open for men and women, but dominated by women. The cultural difference appears when women from ethnic minority groups bring their children to the meeting, not expecting the father to be able to take care of the child in their absence. This is something Swedish fathers attending these groups have reacted against, asking why the men cannot take care of their children (19,F).

## Analysis: emergent values

### Family

The most striking values that appear as significant when studying the interaction between minority groups and the majority culture are different values related to the family. Family related values are strong among the interviewed minorities. This has to do with cultural roots that stress the importance of the family. But also just being a minority group can in itself stress the values related to family and relatives, since the need of keeping up one's own culture as a minority will focus on a close network. Thereby any group of people living in a minority situation in a foreign environment can be expected to

rank family related values higher than they do when living in situation of being the majority.

### **Values of the individual's individuation**

Most immigrants coming to Sweden arrive from countries and cultures where the traditional role of the family is still functioning the same way as it was in Sweden 150 years ago. This means that individuals are socialised into *strong bindings to family and relatives*. In the Swedish modern society individuals are rather fostered to liberate themselves from the dependency of the family. The idea of individualisation as something good and *a strong individual identity and individual autonomy* apart from the family is implicit in most social settings in the Swedish culture of today. This was obvious in the study of the Family Centre and confirms previous results from international comparative surveys (Halman 2007).

### **Values of community building outside the family**

Swedish informants in the school described the problem of immigrant children that tend to keep to their relatives and family during their free time after school, as *not taking part in the majority's leisure time activities and associations* (30,F). This was regarded as part of the strong *value of the family*. The consequence is that children, as well as, parents miss many opportunities to interact with native Swedish people. Thereby the strong value of the family can sometimes contribute in a negative way to the cultural segregation in between immigrants and native Swedes.

### **Values of the "common society" in relation to family relationships**

We mentioned previously that occasionally Roma pupils leave school without any notice in beforehand due to the high value of family relationships. In this case the strong collective *value of family relationships* comes in conflict with the Swedish majority's strong collective value of the common public school.

### **Values of gender roles**

Differences between minority and majority *values concerning gender roles* and differences in *values of gender equality* appear in many of the interviews. One example from the Family Centre is that in dominant Swedish culture men are supposed to be involved in taking care of children equally with women, an idea many immigrants do not agree with. Traditional gender roles concerning the division of labour between women and men are much stronger among most immigrant minorities as compared to the Swedish majority culture, in the sense that women are expected to be a home and take full responsibility of cooking as well as child care. The Swedish public welfare providers, such as the Family Centre or the school, take the principles of

gender equality and the individual's freedom of choice for granted. When women state that they accept that their husband takes all decisions and withdraw themselves from any power in the family, this is very difficult to accept for Swedish officials. Personnel at the Family Centre seem to struggle with the problem of how to distinguish between legitimate cultural differences and illegitimate oppression within the family.

### **Values and the practice of breast feeding**

The importance of breast feeding is stressed in Swedish child care policy. But the Swedish norm expects it to last only one year. Interviews at the Family Centre showed that some people coming from other cultures are used to longer times of breast feeding which come in conflict with the Swedish norm.

### **Education**

A number of significant values within the area of education have appeared in the Gävle case study, mostly in our study of the school.

### **Values on relationships between girls and boys**

The general Muslim tradition in keeping boys and girls apart in separate different school classes comes into conflict with the Swedish general way of having mixed classes. Even if this does not cause a problem in everyday school work it is an underlying tension produced by different basic *values in practice concerning the relationships between girls and boys*. But in the context of sports activities and swimming education these different values between Christian and Muslim traditions concerning *relationships between boys and girls* come to the surface, especially when differences in values related to the body and sexuality are added. Thus, in activities where children have to wear fewer clothes, mixed groups are not accepted by the religiously more orthodox.

### **Values on the body and sexuality**

In biology education different *values concerning sexuality and the visibility of genitals* come in conflict between the Muslim minority's values and the values of the Swedish majority culture. In the context of sports education minority and majority *values on the human body* also come in conflict. According to Muslim tradition individuals shall not show themselves naked to any person at all, while the majority culture takes it for granted that this is no problem among persons of the same sex, e.g. when changing clothes or taking a shower.

## **Values on religion and religious freedom**

Swedish religious normality over the last century has been characterised by stressing the *freedom from religion* in the public space as very important. This normality is now being challenged by immigrant minority groups stressing the *freedom of religion and religious expressions* in the public sphere. It was not until the arrival of larger groups of Muslim immigrants that a pupils' individual religion has been regarded as an important issue in Sweden to be taken into account in the daily work of the schools. But Muslims have raised many different issues in the school agenda related to their values differing from the values of the majority culture. The way of handling the special needs and interests of minority groups at the school can be seen as expressions of the majority culture's official values of *tolerance* and *freedom of religion*. Special arrangements have been made e.g. in biology, sports, school luncheons and religious festivals. The special common calendar for religious festivals is also an illustration of these values.

## **Social care**

### **Different value systems of care in tension**

In the context of the Family Centre a tension between two different welfare systems came to the surface based on two *different value systems of care*. Immigrants with a strong *value of the family* as the basis in society expect the family network to fulfil the primary caring functions when different needs appear. The Swedish public welfare system on the other hand is based on an ambition to free the family network from all forms of obligations and is constructed to actively seek individuals in need and to take initiatives in order to care for them. *The public welfare system is highly valued* as having a caring duty. Therefore the employees at the Family Centre feel that they are not doing a good job if immigrants in need do not use their services. The immigrants, on the other hand, are used to the caring of family members and relatives in need within their own network. Public authorities can even be regarded with suspicion and felt as a possible threat to the integrity of the highly valued family.

### **Values of solidarity**

The Gävle local authority organises many forms of support in order to assist with the settling and integration of immigrants. Even if Gävle has many other social problems related to native Swedish people that would require more resources, the local authority invests a great part of its own budget, as well as, state funds to support people that have escaped from war and oppression in order to give them a new start. They receive financial support, education in Swedish language and about Swedish society, support in keeping up with their mother tongue and help in the organisation of social and

cultural activities in order to maintain their cultural identity. The values expressed in practice through these activities could best be described as *values of solidarity*.

## Employment

### Values on having a job

The major welfare problem for immigrants in Gävle seems to be unemployment. Staying out of the labour market means living outside a major part of society. *Having a job is highly valued* in the Swedish majority culture, as well as, among minority groups. But among most immigrant groups employment among adult men seems to be of significantly higher importance than in the Swedish majority culture because it is closely related to their status and position within the family. When they find themselves being without a job immigrant men often get lost socially even within their own family. Their wives and children often take the lead in finding new roles in the new society, while the men gradually lose their traditional authority, which makes them feel very frustrated.

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# Chapter 4 Norway

## 4:1 OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SITUATION

Olav Helge Angell

### Introduction

The WaVE project combines the perspectives of religion and religious-based values, minorities, gender and welfare. A review of the research literature on issues related to the aims of WaVE at the national level should include recent relevant research on the social and welfare-related role of religious agents, on the relationship of the majority church to minority groups, on minorities at the national level, with special focus on religious groups, as well as on gender equality, particularly as it relates to religion and values.

Some research has already been conducted on Christian-based agents and their role in the welfare state, the size of their activities and the orientation and function of such agents in the Norwegian welfare state (Angell 2001, Angell and Selbekk 2005, Angell and Wyller 2006). There are also more specific studies on particular welfare organisations representing both religious majority and minority agents (Angell 1996). Research, especially empirical data, on the social and welfare-related role of religious agents affiliated with other, non-Christian, religious traditions, seems to be non-existent.

In general, there is little research on the relationship between the majority church and minority groups and national minorities. The two national minorities in question in Norway are the Sami and the Romani people. Research regarding the relationship with the Sami people deals with the significance of religious movements within the church and their significance in the Sami cultural and identity projects; there are also studies on the role of the church as part of the Norwegian state in the “norwegianification” efforts during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Steinlien 1999). Research on the Romani people mostly concentrates on how organisations within the Church of Norway contributed to culturally repressing the Romani people on behalf of the state (Hvinden 2000, Halvorsen 2004).

There is very little research on the relationship of the majority church to religious minorities. The only one to be mentioned here is the study on reli-

gious dialogue between the Church of Norway and the Muslim minority (Leirvik 2001).

Research on national minorities examines most of the minorities, defined as autochthonous (the Sami) and those that in a stricter sense are defined and acknowledged as national minorities. A *national minority* is defined as an ethnic, religious and/or language minority with a long history of belonging in the country (St.meld. nr. 15, 2000-2001). In Norway two groups of people with Romani cultural roots are distinguished in public documents, the Roma/Gypsies and the Romani people/Travellers.<sup>1</sup> Both are categorised as national minorities according to the standards of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. In addition, Jews, Kven (people of Finnish descent living in northern Norway) and Skogfinn (people of Finnish descent living in southern Norway) are recognised as national minorities according to the same standards.<sup>2</sup> Research on these minorities focuses on repression - primarily by the Norwegian state, but in some cases, also by the majority church (see above) - and on their history, cultural traditions and resources. This applies to studies on the Sami (Broderstad et al. 1999, Gaski 1997, Minde 1997) and Romani people (Hvinden 2000, Bay 2002) and people of Finnish descent living in northern Norway (Ulrich 2003). Research on the Jewish minority deals with identity issues (Scheer 2005).

Research on modern minorities, related to recent immigration to Norway, often combines religion and ethnicity or country origin. Among the most researched national groups, Pakistanis have received the most attention (e.g. Lien 1997, Østberg 2003). Most of the research deals with socialisation and integration issues in society.

Studies dealing specifically with religious minorities and life stance communities focus on Islam and Muslims (Jacobsen 2002, Predelli 2004, Roald 2005) and the Norwegian Humanist Association (Knutsen and Emberland 2006). The research focuses on religious freedom (as does Høstmælingen 2004), socialisation and identity construction, values and modernity, and welfare needs.

The issue of gender equality, as it relates to the majority church, is reviewed in Angell (2004) (see also Eriksen 2004). Berg and Berg (2002) review relevant Norwegian research on "immigration and gender", or more

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<sup>1</sup> This distinction may create confusion. In most countries the term "Romani people" is used to designate all groups with roots in the Romani culture. In this text we will not maintain the distinction between Roma and Romani, but use "Romani people" as a common designation in accordance with what is common language in other countries.

<sup>2</sup> According to international law, the Sami people in Norway are also a national minority. However, the Sámediggi (the Sami Assembly) has declared that it does not consider the Council of Europe's Framework Convention to be applicable to the Sami people, since as an indigenous people they have legal and political rights exceeding those covered by the provisions of the convention (KRD 2001). It should be noted that whether a person or group is labelled as a national minority is up to the individual or group concerned.

precisely, research based on issues and research questions “related to immigration to Norway where the gender dimension is made relevant” (p. 1). It means that in the case of religion, the only researched minority religion is Islam. The review seems to give priority to the ethnic-cultural dimension of immigration and only secondary importance to religion. To their surprise, the researchers were able to identify only a few research contributions explicitly dealing with gender and immigration.

Very few studies have been conducted on values as they are related to religion, welfare and minorities. In any case, in this field it is difficult to distinguish religion and culture. Two studies may be worth mentioning: Moen (2002) and Rasmussen (2004), the first focussing on elderly people and their needs, the second on the encounter between Pakistani and other third world country families and the public child welfare system.

Against this background one may conclude that there has been a lack of explicit research interest in combining all the perspectives included in the aims of the WaVE project. Our review shows that one or two of the perspectives are dealt with in the existing research, and this to a varying extent, something which provides an opportunity for the WaVE project to contribute to increasing the knowledge on the issues in question as they pertain to Norway.

## Characteristics of the national welfare system

There are many typologies to characterise national welfare systems. One of the most well-known is that of Esping-Andersen (Esping-Andersen 1990). His typology is defined by political ideology and the Scandinavian countries belong to the category of social democratic welfare regimes (as opposed to conservative and liberal), a typology parallel to or based on Titmuss’s earlier social policy models (Titmuss 1974). Titmuss distinguishes between the institutional, the achievement-performance, and the residual models. According to Titmuss’s system, the Scandinavian welfare regimes are characterised by the institutional model of social policy, though, for example, the Norwegian welfare model has significant elements of achievement orientation.

## The role of the state, the private sector, the family, men and women

Norway’s healthcare system provides a wide range of services not only in the major urban areas which are most concentrated in the southern part of the country, but also in the most thinly settled parts. Apart from socio-cultural and political considerations, this is one reason why, in Norway, the provision

of health services has traditionally been in the hands of the public sector. Except for a few specialised private hospitals in the main urban areas, voluntary sector health agencies, such as the Red Cross and church-based agencies are fully embedded in the system. By contrast, a significant private provision of ambulatory healthcare (physicians, dentists and physiotherapists in private practice) has co-existed with the public system.

Welfare services are generally financed through the National Insurance Scheme (NIS), grants from the central government and local governments and out-of-pocket payments by the service receivers. The NIS also administers the public pension system and other income transfer programmes. The NIS is financed by contributions from employer taxes, from employees, self-employed people and pensioners and the state.

In general, municipalities provide the social services and the personnel working in this sector is directly employed by the municipality. Some nursing homes and day-care centres belong to and are managed by voluntary organisations, including Church parishes and other Church-based organisations; they are funded by the municipalities. Up until now, very few enterprises have involved commercial entrepreneurs (*ibid.*).

In terms of the role of the family, the degree of public intervention in the care of children and the elderly is decisive for the importance of the family in social policy. It has been claimed that Norwegian family policy has its distinctive feature in its combination of ideological individualism and public family policy (Stjernø 1994). In a way the mutual family responsibility was removed with the introduction of the old age pension system in 1936. Until 1964 there was a mutual financial responsibility for children and parents, and until 1973 students' access to loans and grants from the State Educational Loan Fund was dependent on parents' income.

Concerning the roles of women and men in the welfare sector we may take as a starting point that the labour market in Norway is one of the most segregated along gender lines in the Western world (Birkelund and Sandnes 2003). Almost half of all women employees work in the public sector and women comprise 67.5% of all employees in this sector. In the health and social sector, which primarily consists of public services, 83% of employees are women. In typical private sector professions, such as construction and entrepreneurial activity, only 8% of employees are women (figures from 2001, Statistics Norway).

Religious and political history provides an important context for the understanding of today's welfare regime. In Norway, like in the other Nordic countries, there was no conflict or rivalry between state and church after the Reformation. The Protestant Reformation in our countries meant that the state – or rather the king – gained control over the largest organisation in the country, i.e. the Church. This situation transformed the Church into a state tool and made the king, in his capacity as a Christian, responsible for provid-

ing for the poor and the needy, thus taking over the traditional welfare duties of the Church (Ingesman 2000). This undoubtedly contributed to strengthening the administrative capacity of the state. Against this background, the state developed early the capacity to manage a national welfare system that eventually developed into a universalistic welfare state as we know it in the post-war period, i.e. after the end of the Second World War.

According to traditional Lutheran theology responsibility for welfare belongs to the state. As a consequence, after the Reformation, the king took the responsibility for organised welfare provision. Today it means that there is no formal (state-endorsed) role for the majority church in the national welfare system.

### Issues and challenges

Of the many challenges to the Norwegian welfare system, which are publicly under debate, I will mention the following: (a) the rapid increase in the number of people receiving disability pensions, poverty (though it is currently a minor problem), (b) the ageing of the population (and concern about how to fund future old age pensions), (c) the lack of capacity in the hospital system and d) the quality of the service providing institutions for the elderly and disabled. These challenges rank high in the media and the public debate and represent recurrent concerns in the political and economical debates in Parliament and the government. Angell (2004) provides more information on these debates.

**Table 4:1:1 Some social indicators**

		Norway		EU (25 countries)		EU (15 countries)	
		2000	2004	2000	2004	2000	2004
Employment rate	Total	77.5	75.1	62.4	63.3	63.4	64.7
	Females	73.6	72.2	53.6	55.7	54.1	56.8
	Males	81.3	77.9	71.2	70.9	72.8	72.7
Unemployment rate	Total	3.4	4.4	8.6	9.1	7.6	8.1
	Long term, total*)	0.3	0.9	3.9	4.1	3.4	3.4
	Females	3.2	4.0	10.1	10.2	9.2	9.2
	Long term, females	0.2	0.6	4.8	4.7	4.3	4.0
	Males	3.6	4.8	7.4	8.1	6.4	7.1
	Long term, males	0.5	1.0	3.3	3.6	2.8	3.0
At risk of poverty rates after social transfers**)	Total	:	11	16	16	15	17
	Females	:	12	17	17	16	18
	Males	:	11	15	15	15	15
Life expectancy at birth***)	Females	81.4	82.3	80.8	81.2	81.4	81.7
	Males	76.0	77.5	74.4	75.1	73.9	75.4
Proportion of population 65 and over	Total	15.3	14.7	14.8	:	15.4	

Source: Eurostat.

\*) Long term unemployment: 12 months and more.

\*\*) Poverty rates, cut-off point: 60% of median equivalised income after social transfers, 2000 and 2004. For EU members: Eurostat estimates.

\*\*\*) Life expectancy data refer to 2000 and 2003.

Concerning the organisation of the welfare state, issues related to privatisation, what level of public activity should have primary responsibility for the various welfare services and the function of the hospital system, are among the issues currently under debate. All three debates have in common the question of effectiveness and efficiency of service provision. More specifi-

cally related to gender are issues of trafficking and violence against women. A particular aspect of the debate on the structure and function of the hospital system is the issue of further centralisation, primarily as an issue of rationalisation related to the quality of service provision. One way that centralisation affects women is in their position as mothers, or expecting mothers, when proximity to a relevant health facility leads to an increased feeling of safety.

## Religious composition in the country

Approximately 86% of the Norwegian population are members of the majority religious community, the Church of Norway. Almost 400,000 people are members of registered religious and life stance communities<sup>3</sup> outside the Church of Norway. This amounts to about 9% of the Norwegian population. Registered religious communities outside the Church of Norway had almost 384,000 members in 2006 (Statistics Norway). In addition, approximately 27,000 were members of unregistered religious communities. Life stance communities counted close to 80,000 members. Both registered and unregistered religious communities receive central government subsidies. Overall the communities outside the Church of Norway may be considered religious minorities. In this context a *religious minority* may be defined simply as a social group or community that has different religious traditions from the majority of the population.

As is seen in figure 4:1:1, Islamic communities made up the largest group of the registered communities in 2004. The 82 Islamic congregations count almost 78,000 members (Statistics Norway). The Roman Catholic Church has 46,000 members and 32 congregations. The 233 Pentecostal congregations have 46,000 members in total. Among the small religious communities the Jewish community counts less than 1,000 members. Among the unregistered communities the foreign evangelical communities is the largest group with close to 16,000 members. Islamic unregistered communities have about 3,000 members and 10 congregations. About 5.6% of the population are not members of religious or life stance communities (Statistics Norway).

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Religious Communities Act (1969), a religious community may be registered “if its activities and doctrine do not conflict with the law or with public morals” (section 13). Government registration of religious communities is not required. A religious organisation may and must register only if it is seeking state support. Registration makes it subject to statutory rights and obligations among which is the entitlement to an annual grant from the Treasury. When they receive state grants they may also claim a corresponding grant from the municipalities in which their members live. In both cases, the grant will be proportionately and approximately equivalent to the sum budgeted for the Church of Norway on the basis of the number of members.

**Members of religious and philosophical communities outside the Church of Norway. 1990, 2000 og 2004**

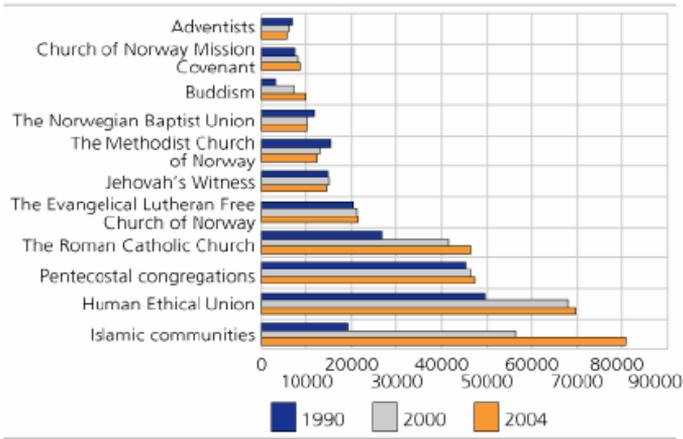


Figure 4:1:1. Source: Statistics Norway 2004.

A more detailed overview of the religious and life stance communities (philosophical communities) represented in Norway is given in Figure 4:1:1. It should be noted that Statistics Norway use the term Human Ethical Union, in the figure, which refers to a particular life stance organisation, but which is not their official name in English. The official name is the Norwegian Humanist Association. In 2004 its membership was approximately 70,000 (children included).<sup>4</sup> This means that Norway has the largest organised humanist movement in the world in proportion to the size of the population (Repstad 2003). The Norwegian Humanist Association's membership amounts to approximately 1.5% of the total population.

The size of the Association may be interpreted as a reaction against what may be experienced as the privileged position of the Church of Norway as a state church. The Association is among the sharpest critics of the Church and its privileges in Norwegian society and among the strongest voices to emphasise religious freedom with reference to the Declaration of Human Rights (Angell 2004). During the last few years the Association has also committed itself to raising its voice, not only against what they perceive as Christian fundamentalism, but also against Islamic fundamentalism, both national and international. The strength of the Norwegian Humanist Association may be understood in a long-term perspective as an expression of a religious polarisation in the population, a heritage from the Pietistic movement, which held

<sup>4</sup> Membership figures include members who receive a government subsidy. Membership figures in "The Human Ethical Union" deviate from those found on the organisation's web site. The reason for this is that the latter only registers adult members, i.e. children whose parents are members are not included.

a strong position in Norwegian religious life from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at least until the 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

The quantitative approach, as measured by membership, has its weaknesses. For instance, there is no simple answer to the question of how to measure the proportion of what may be called “immigrant religiosity” (Leirvik 2001). For instance, in general Islam is not a membership religion, though it has gradually transformed towards this direction as an adaptation to Norwegian society, which is a highly organised society, and because of the favourable legal system for public, financial support by membership. Leirvik suggests that in order to understand the extent of minority religiosity one should focus on ethnic and cultural background rather than membership both with regard to Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism in Norway (p. 25). This means that the figures in the diagram above should be interpreted as minimum approximations.

## Characteristics of the majority church

### Majority church and state

The Church of Norway is one of the remaining official “state churches” in the world. The King is the constitutional head of the Church of Norway. He exercises his authority through the Government Council of State. Legislation and finances concerning the Church are approved by the Parliament (the “*Storting*”). The way the Evangelical-Lutheran religion is incorporated in the Norwegian Constitution implies for example that the King is obliged to declare it his religion and that at least half of the members of the government must be members of the Church of Norway. Only these members make decisions in Church matters in the cabinet meetings.

In 2002, a Church of Norway Commission on Church-State relations presented its report on the future relationship between state and church in Norway. In the report a strong majority concluded that ties between the Church and the State should be loosened, and a new “order” established, more in accordance with the multicultural and multireligious Norwegian society. In 2006, a government appointed committee reached similar conclusions (NOU 2006: 2). The public discourse following the publication of the document revealed that there is no unanimous attitude to the questions of the future status of the Church of Norway among the Norwegian public. There are strong political interests connected to retaining the relationship between church and state as it is. In the comments made by the parish councils about half concluded that they want to retain the existing church-state relationship,

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<sup>5</sup> More details about the Humanist Association can be found in Angell 2004.

while the other half wants to weaken the relationship, i.e. a change in the same direction as the relationship between church and state in Sweden.

### The role of the Church in life cycle rituals and in times of crisis

Church of Norway statistics for 2004 show that over 44,000 individuals were baptised. This number represents about 77% of those born in Norway that year. The baptism rate for children born 15 years earlier was 88% (Church of Norway). While the number of baptised children is declining, the number of confirmations has increased. The percentage of youth receiving confirmation seems to be fairly stable, about 68% (Statistics Norway). About half of all weddings take place in church, and more than 90% of all funerals are church funerals (Church of Norway). There are considerable regional variations. In Oslo 76% of funerals were church funerals, but in other regions the rate of church funerals was close to 100% (ibid.).

**Table 4:1:2 Percentage of infants baptised in the Church of Norway 1960-2004.**

Year	Born	Baptised	%
1970	64,551	62,094	96.2
1990	60,939	50,067	82.2
2000	59,229	48,023	81.1
2004	56,959	44,042	77.3

Source: Church of Norway 2006.

The Church still plays an important role in public space in times of crisis, such as national disasters. It is quite common for religious rituals to be part of the symbolic manifestations of mourning and caring during times of fatal accidents or disasters that attract public attention. In such cases, the Church - or maybe more generally religious traditions – is in a state of readiness and represents a symbolic repertoire which still offers an important ritual function in Norwegian society.

### Structure and finances

The governing of the Church relies on a double power structure, an Episcopal structure, pastors and bishops, and a Synodal structure, where lay people play significant roles through their representation in various councils and committees. The Church of Norway General Synod meets annually. Up to 80

of the 85 delegates are members of the 11 diocesan councils. The Church of Norway National Council, led by a lay person, is the Synod's executive body. The number of clergy employed by the Church is about 1,400. In addition there are various types of lay personnel (Church of Norway).

The Council on Ecumenical and International Relations is the executive arm of the Church in international and ecumenical matters. The Sami Church Council is responsible for the Church of Norway's work among the Sami people in Norway. Central administrative functions are carried out by the Royal Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs. A more systematic analysis of the structure, power and authority in the Church of Norway is provided in Repstad (2002).

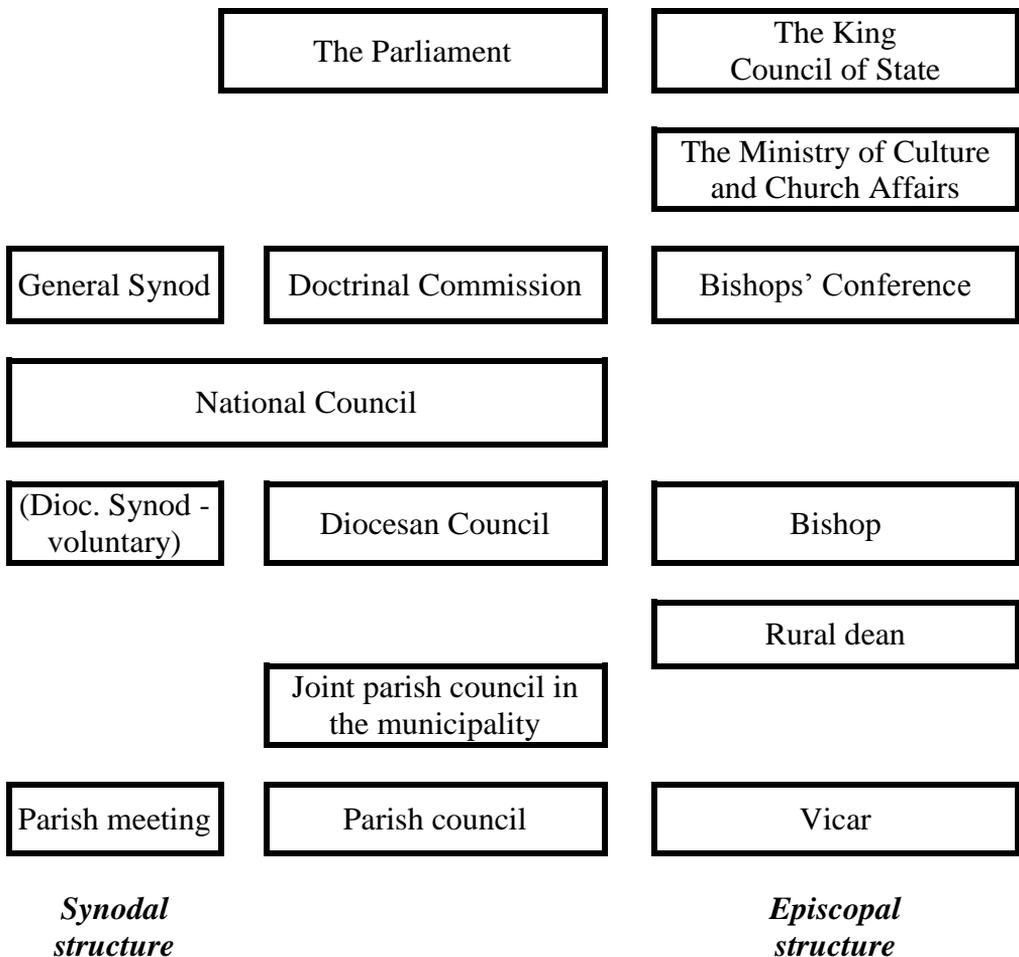


Figure 4:1:2. The structure of the Church of Norway

Financial responsibility for salaries and the maintenance of buildings is shared by state and municipal authorities. Additional parish activity largely

depends on donations and voluntary activities. According to Norwegian church law, the municipal councils are obliged to finance a certain level of activity of Church parishes. In 2002 the total grants from the municipal councils amounted to approximately 235 million euros. In addition, the Parliament granted close to 118 million euros, which covers clergy salaries and regional and central administrative functions. Public grants amounted to approximately 90 euros per church member. Annual church offerings contribute around 13 million euros to church activities in Norway and abroad.

### Religious-based welfare provision

There is a shortage of systematic study on the role of church-based welfare provision in the Norwegian welfare state to date. Most of the material available is in the form of case studies and only a few use a quantitative approach (Angell 1994, Lorentzen 1990, Martinsen 1984). With regard to gender there is even less documentation and only a few studies, historical in their orientation (Jordansson and Vammen 1998, Martinsen 1984). In this section I will restrict myself to the role of the church in “institution-based” or “residential” care.

Church-based or diaconal activities make up about 10% of the total institution-based activities in healthcare and social services in Norway (Angell 2001). The category of ‘the church’ in this case includes the majority church, The Church of Norway, and most of the Christian minority communities. In 1997 diaconal and other private institutions ran 14% of the beds in the institution-based part of healthcare and social services in Norway. The public sector at state, county and municipal level ran 86% of the total number of beds. The distribution of the church-based welfare provision is shown in Table 4:1:3.

**Table 4:1:3 The work of church affiliated institutions as part of the total of institution-based activities in health and social care in Norway according to sub-sector beds, 1997.**

<b>Beds by sub-sector</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Somatic health-care <sup>6</sup>	1,182	14.991	8
Psychiatry	407	6.368	6
Substance abuse	1,338	2.670	50
Children's homes	189	1.481	13
Care for the elderly	2,880	43.377	7
<i>Total</i>	5,996	68.887	9

An investigation of the welfare activities organised by the parishes of the Church of Norway shows that a considerable number of staff and volunteers are involved in such work in all fields of welfare services, though care for the elderly generally seems to be a prioritised field of activity (Angell and Selbekk 2005). It is difficult to assess the quantitative and qualitative significance of this type of work when seen in a welfare state perspective.

The predominance of the public sector in welfare service provision in Norway implies that most of the welfare services organised by the Church of Norway are integrated in the public welfare service system. There are no restrictions related to ethnicity or religion on who can make use of the services. This means that the welfare services organised within the Church of Norway are available to minority groups and, like other service provision, are more or less well adapted to cater to special needs of particular minority groups.

In addition to the general scheme of welfare services, the Church of Norway organises particular services directed to minority groups. Such services are most likely to be found in areas where the concentration of minority groups is high. In Oslo, the Church City Mission runs what it calls a Workshop for Primary Medicine ("*Primærmedisinsk verksted*"), which is a centre aiming to develop activities and methods for health promotion in a multicultural setting. This may be one of the few welfare service initiatives organised by the church to cater for the special needs of minorities.

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<sup>6</sup> Somatic healthcare refers to care related to physical health problems.

The extent to which religious minorities have organised activities to deal with welfare needs of their own members or the population at large varies. Among the Christian minority groups, some have established welfare institutions serving the population at large, most of them integrated in the general public scheme of welfare service provision.

**Table 4:1:4 Beds in institution-based facilities run by church agencies outside the Church of Norway and their share in the total church institution based activity (diaconia) by sub-sector, 1984 and 1997.**

Institutions by sub-sector	1984*		1997	
	No. of beds	% of total diaconia	No. of beds	% of total diaconia
Somatic health care	451	25	433	37
Psychiatry	45	8	0	0
Substance abuse	240	14	581	43
Children's homes	162	56	69	37
Care for the elderly**	800	18	369	14
Total***	1.700	19	1.452	24

\*Beds in the care for mentally disabled are subtracted from the original figures in 1984.

\*\*The number of beds in 1984 is an estimate.

\*\*\*The total number of beds in 1984 is a rounded figure.

The activities referred to in Table 4:1:4 are organised by communities such as Pentecostal congregations, the Norwegian Baptist Union, Seventh Day Adventists, the Salvation Army, the Church of Norway Mission Covenant and Christian Centres to name the most active (see Angell 2001).

Institutionalised welfare provision in a Muslim context in Norway seems to be connected to the mosque (Vogt 2000). More than in the countries of origin the mosque is an "Islamic room" (ibid) with social as well as religious functions. Muslim-based welfare networks have their centres in the mosque. Sports activities, health information, various forms of social, psychological and material support are organised and channelled through the mosques (Haugen 2000). In a wide sense these forms of welfare provision supplement the aid that is provided by the welfare state.

The statements made by the Church of Norway on the situation of minorities in the country have mainly concerned specific national minorities (cf.

section 7.1). No theological or ethical statements seem to have been made on welfare, minorities and/or gender.

## Welfare, religion and gender

### Gender equality

Using the categories introduced by feminist critics of Esping-Andersen, the Norwegian welfare system may be characterised as a dual breadwinner model type of gender regime (e.g. Sainsbury 1999). Norway is reputed to be one of the best countries in the world for women. The UNDP has developed two indices measuring gender equality, GDI (Gender related development index) and GEM (Gender empowerment measure). On both indices Norway ranks on top of the list (UNDP 2002). At the same time, the labour market in Norway is extremely segregated, as already noted. Having said that, many women hold central positions in the political system, in the political parties, in parliament, and in the government.

The Norwegian Gender Equality Act was adopted in 1978. The Act prohibits all discrimination on the grounds of gender and is applicable to all areas of society. It also stipulates that public authorities, employers and social partners are responsible for actively promoting gender equality within their spheres of responsibility.

One of the most important elements of the Act was the establishment of a Gender Equality Ombud<sup>7</sup> as an independent body responsible for enforcing the Act. In addition, the government-funded Gender Equality Centre has been established to monitor, promote and mainstream gender equality and equal opportunity measures in all areas of society.

Pursuant to the Gender Equality Act, it is the responsibility of public authorities to promote gender equality in all areas of society. A gender mainstreaming strategy was introduced in 1986 and is still being actively applied. The principle of gender mainstreaming has been integrated into Norwegian government budget policy. The aim of gender-sensitive budgeting is to promote gender equality and a fair distribution of public resources, as well as, to enhance the effectiveness of service delivery (UD 2004).

With regard to gender equality we may conclude that it becomes “more complicated when we no longer relate to a Norwegian, white society. We

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<sup>7</sup> This is the official English term, as defined by the Norwegian Ministry of Children and Equality. The English word “ombudsman” has a Scandinavian origin. In Norwegian almost all types of positions with this particular function are now termed “ombud” (this is not the case in other Scandinavian languages). The change is part of a conscious change in the Norwegian language, removing gender-biased forms and changing them into gender neutral forms.

can assert that Norway is not necessarily the best of countries to live in for those women who are not ethnically Norwegian” (Birkelund and Petersen 2003).

## Religion, gender roles and gender equality

Historically the church has exerted a strong influence on Norwegian culture, including the understanding and formation of gender roles. Leaders in the Church of Norway argued strongly against the introduction of a woman’s general right to vote (which they were granted in 1913). On the other hand, the church has provided space for women to take social responsibility and develop skills that were not open to them in society at large in times when gender equality was not on the public agenda (Seip 1998). This means that although the church, through the institutional secularisation process, has lost power, it has provided some opportunities for women in order to challenge the gender orthodoxy both in church and society.

The issue of gender has first and foremost been addressed at a central level in the Church of Norway through the Church’s participation in the Ecumenical Decade 1988-1998 of the Churches in Solidarity with Women launched by the World Council of Churches in 1987. At the Church of Norway General Synod in 1990 a resolution was adopted stating that all councils and committees at the level of the congregation, the diocese and the National Council of the Church of Norway should work towards ensuring that neither sex has less than 40% representation. Throughout this process special attention has been directed towards “women and the parish council” and towards professional work in order to increase the number of women in professional and leading positions, gender roles, theology and issues, which the Gender Equality Act raises for the Church (see e.g. Church of Norway 1993, 1996).

Repstad (2002) has studied women who have or have had leadership positions within the Church of Norway and their experiences as women in these positions. He draws no unambiguous conclusions, but underlines that the most striking outcome of the study is the variation in the women’s experiences. Repstad’s conclusion is that in the committees and councils where the women have had their experiences, other lines of conflict are more central than gender, for example those that concern theology and church policy.

The Norwegian project connected to the Ecumenical Decade has later been subject to several systematic analyses. In one of the studies Lande (2002) concludes that traditional conceptions of man and God were difficult to change in the direction of equal merit between men and women and that women as pastors and as leaders in the two power structures are still problematic in the Church of Norway. Eriksen (2004) is even more critical. She concludes her study saying that it is difficult to find examples of a concrete and goal-oriented follow-up of the mainstreaming strategy. It seems that

many people in the Church are geared towards equal value between men and women, but hesitate in the face of the question of equality.

There are no “new” explicit sources of conflict related to welfare provision regarding religion, minorities and gender. There is the old sceptical attitude among Jehovah’s Witnesses towards blood transfusion. More recently needs have been voiced, for example, Muslim women have expressed the need to be attended to by female healthcare givers (doctors, nurses). This need has been acknowledged by the system, but it has not made the necessary adjustments to implement such measures. The situation has not created any conflicts yet. There have been discussions about whether young, non-married Muslim women should be given the opportunity in the healthcare system to have their hymen replaced in case they have been sexually active before marriage. This is no longer performed in the public healthcare system and it does not seem to have created conflicts.

## Overview of the minority presence in the country

### Minority presence in Norway

In the description of minorities in public documents, a distinction is made between “national minorities”, a category in which indigenous people are included, and “other minorities”, a term corresponding to the category of “urban minorities”. The indigenous Sami are a people located in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The exact number of Sami is not known, but their number in Norway is stipulated to about 40,000 out of a total of about 70,000<sup>8</sup>. The Sami are spread all over the country, but the majority lives in the north. The number of people belonging to the other national minorities is unclear.

Of the second group of ethnic minorities there were 301,000 first generation immigrants in Norway at the beginning of 2005 and 64,000 persons born in Norway from two foreign-born parents, a total of about 365,000 persons. The immigrant population amounted to 8% of the total population and comprised approximately 200 different countries of origin. Three out of four immigrants in Norway had non-western background.<sup>9</sup> By convention Statis-

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<sup>8</sup> There is no clear definition of who are Sami and the criteria used vary between the countries. The most natural definition used in Norway is based on the necessary criteria to have the right to vote in the Sami parliament elections (the Sami Act, 1987): a) the person must use Sami language as a domestic language, or at least one of the parents, grandparents or great-grandparents have or have had Sami as a domestic language, b) the person should define herself/himself as Sami. There is no unified registration of the Sami population in Norway. Source: Statistics Norway.

<sup>9</sup> The immigrant population, as registered in public population statistics, consists of people born of two parents born abroad. As a result, the immigrant population comprises first-

tics Norway does not make records on the basis of ethnicity, race, skin colour or the like.<sup>10</sup> All immigrant categories are based on country of origin (Tronstad 2005).

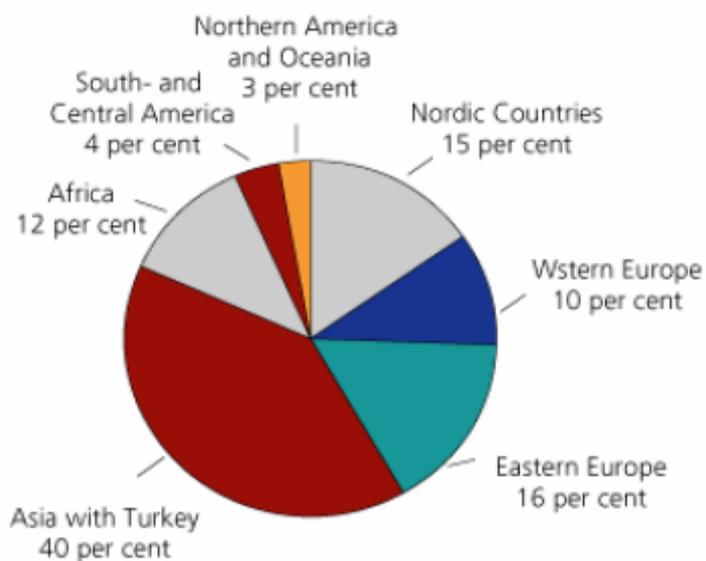
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generation immigrants and people who were born in Norway by two foreign-born parents. In public statistics, Western immigrants are defined as immigrants from the Nordic countries, Western Europe (except Turkey), North America and Oceania. Non-western immigrants are defined as immigrants from Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, South and Central America and Turkey. Non-western immigrants may be categorised in two groups, those who originate in the former Eastern Europe and those that come from third world countries (Statistics Norway).

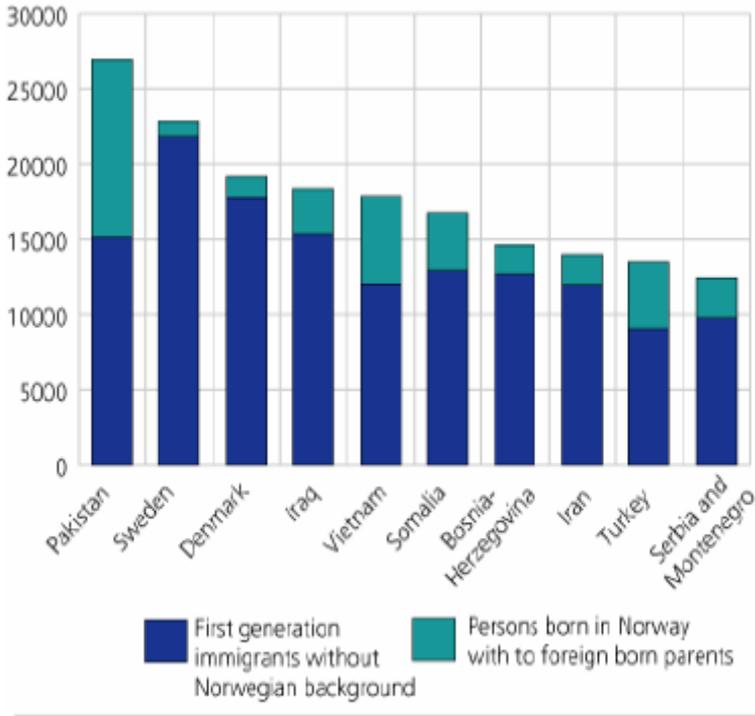
<sup>10</sup> The reasons are primarily that valid measures of such qualities as ethnicity and race are considered subjective measures, which on the individual level may change and require census data. Norwegian statistics are primarily based on high quality filed data.

**The immigrant population in Norway, by country background. 1 January. 2005. World regions. Per cent**

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**The ten largest immigrant groups in Norway. 1. January 2005.  
Absolute figures**



Source: Statistics Norway 2005.

The majority of European and American immigrants, who make up approximately half of the foreign-born population, are either Christian or non-religious, with the exception of Muslim refugees from Bosnia and Kosovo. Most non-Western immigrants practice Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, or Hinduism. Foreign missionaries and other religious workers operate freely in the country (US Department of State 2004).

At the beginning of 2005, Norway's refugees totalled more than 107,000, or 2.3% of the Norwegian population. Refugees from Iraq, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Iran and Vietnam made up the largest groups. Seventy six percent of refugees were registered as principal applicants while 24% came to Norway as dependents (Statistics Norway).

**Table 4:1:5 Refugees\*, by country of origin. 1st January, 2005.**

Country	Number	Country	Number
Iraq	14 335	Russia	2 504
Bosnia-Herzegovina	12 073	Turkey	2 102
Somalia	11 534	Croatia	1 821
Iran	10 628	Ethiopia	1 815
Vietnam	10 577	Eritrea	1 321
Serbia and Montenegro	7 953	Pakistan	1 214
Sri Lanka	5 733	Poland	961
Afghanistan	4 715	Rest	13 279
Chile	4 643	<i>Total</i>	<i>107 208</i>

\*The definition “refugee” refers to persons resident in Norway, who have come to the country after fleeing from persecution (family included). Children born in Norway to refugees are not included.

*Source: Statistics Norway 2005.*

Religious minorities are described in an earlier section.

### Major patterns in immigration

The historian Knut Kjeldstadli has written the first comprehensive overview of immigration in Norwegian history (Kjeldstadli 2003). The study shows that there has always been immigration to Norway and that waves of influx of people have reflected shifting economic situations, living conditions and opportunities abroad, as well as in Norway. For the period after World War II, Table 4:1:6 presents the foreign-born population in Norway by place of birth.

**Table 4:1:6 Population by place of birth; foreign-born population by regional groups of countries (%).**

Year	Total in 1000s	Abroad, Total	Abroad, Total	Nordic countries
1.12.1950	3,279	1.4	100.0	56.4
1.11.1970	3,874	2.0	100.0	42.7
1.1. 1990	4,233	4.3	100.0	24.6
1.1. 1995	4,348	5.4	100.0	22.5
1.1. 2001	4,503	6.8	100.0	21.9

**Table 4:1:6, continued:**

Year	Rest of Western Europe, except Turkey	Eastern Europe*	North America, Oceania	Asia, Africa, South and Central America, Turkey
1.12.1950	19.0	5.1	17.0	2.4
1.11.1970	25.1	7.5	17.5	7.2
1.1. 1990	18.7	6.6	9.8	40.3
1.1. 1995	15.6	11.9	8.0	42.1
1.1. 2001	13.6	14.2	6.0	44.3

\*Totals refer to resident population.

\*Based on the political situation 1950-1990.

Source: Statistics Norway

First, the percentage of the total resident population born abroad has increased systematically since 1950. Second, from around 1970 there was a sharp increase in the influx of people from countries in the South. Third, a less conspicuous, but nevertheless significant, increase in the immigration of people from Eastern Europe took place from around 1990.

Until the 1960s immigration to Norway was marginal and consisted primarily of people from the Nordic countries and Western Europe and former

emigrants to the United States returning to Norway (Kjeldsrud and Sivertsen 1997). A change appeared in 1967, when the recruitment of foreign workers from Pakistan, Turkey, Morocco and Yugoslavia started. This wave of immigration lasted until 1974. Meanwhile, at the beginning of the 1970s, most European countries experienced an economic recession due to the first oil crisis and as a consequence restrictive measures were introduced on immigration. The recession and an increasing scepticism towards new immigrant populations and their integration in Norwegian society led to a ban on immigration in 1974. An exception was made for skilled labour in the petroleum industry and shipping and specialists in general.

A second phase of immigration started in the late 1970s and involved primarily family reunification of labour immigrants arriving in the country during the previous decade. A third phase started in the mid-80s through the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers. As a consequence there was no clear drop in the number of immigrants in the years following the ban of 1974.

## Geographical distribution of minority groups

Forty-two percent of the country's religious minorities are concentrated in the Oslo metropolitan area, including 76% of the country's Muslims and the country's entire Buddhist community (US Department of State 2004).

Based on their country of origin there are immigrants resident in all of the Norwegian municipalities. Oslo has the highest proportion of immigrants with 22%, followed by Drammen (17%). Oslo has the highest part of non-western immigrants with 18%, followed by Drammen (14%). Forty-seven percent of the non-western immigrant population and 38% of the western immigrant population lived in Oslo and the neighbouring county of Akershus at the beginning of 2005 (Statistics Norway).

Immigrant populations, both of western and non-western origin, are concentrated in central areas in the south-east, especially those of non-western origin. An interesting exception is the fact that several municipalities in the very far north, in Finnmark County, indicated rates of immigrants above country average. Immigrants from Russia and Sri Lanka make up a large part of the immigrant population in these municipalities (Forgaard and Dzamarija 2004). The situation may be explained by the general policy of dispersing refugees all over the country, the proximity of (northern) Russia and northern Norway and the affinity of refugees from Sri Lanka to dominant trades in the north of Norway, closely connected with fishery.

## Official policy concerning minorities and their welfare needs

Formally minorities enjoy the same rights and access to public welfare as the population at large. No acts distinguish between ethnic, national or religious

groups. Membership in the NIS is compulsory for all residents; it covers all residents in Norway. In particular this means that all those that have lived in Norway for a minimum period of time before the age of retirement are guaranteed a minimum pension. Second country nationals are secured welfare rights according to the EEA agreement. Third country nationals generally enjoy the same welfare rights as other residents in Norway.<sup>11</sup> There is an exception for those that are given official status as refugees (Melve and Sicakkan 2004).

In public policy the Sami and the national minorities are subject to special provisions. For instance, the heated debate on the exclusive rights of the Sami to control and use the natural resources in their core area in Finnmark county in the north has resulted in a special Finnmark Act. The Act establishes a new autonomous organisation for the administration of land, water and resources in Finnmark. About 95%, which is an area the size of Denmark, is being transferred from the state to this autonomous organisation. According to the Act, the Sami Parliament appoints half of the board members, who will in principle have the deciding vote in matters concerning changing the use of the uncultivated areas of the innermost part of Finnmark. Sami is one of three official languages in Norway in addition to the two forms of Norwegian (*Bokmål* and *Nynorsk*). Every individual has the right to use one of these three languages in his or her communication with the public authorities (Melve and Sicakkan 2004).

A White Paper has been produced on public policies towards national minorities (St.meld. nr. 15 (2000-2001)). In order to support and strengthen the participation of national minorities in society, the government supports financially these minorities through their organisations. More generally, for second and third country nationals the government has established several funding schemes for local and national immigrant organisations (Melve and Sicakkan 2004). With regard to the Romani peoples, who have travelling as part of their culture, the government has stated its intentions to adapt public educational programmes to their travelling customs. At the same time the basic and general right and duty of all children and young people to attend primary and lower secondary education must be taken into consideration (KD 1998). In the case of children and young people belonging to minority groups, when an intervention is under consideration by the Child Welfare Agency (CWA) the ethnic, religious, cultural and language background of the person has to be respected (St.meld. nr. 15 (2000-2001)).

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<sup>11</sup> “Second country nationals” are defined as persons who are citizens of one of the other member states of the EEA (including EU member states). “Third country nationals” are defined according to EU legislation as persons who are not citizens of one of the member states of the EU or the EEA (see e.g. Council Directive 2003/109/EC of 25 November 2003 concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents).

## The organisation and activities of religious minorities

The religious minorities presented above are by and large defined as religious groups (minorities) by the groups themselves and are acknowledged as such by the public authorities. What may be less obvious is the classification of Jews as both a national minority and a religious minority. Scheer's comparison of the official definition of Jews and the self-understanding of the Jewish community shows that a shift has taken place in the official definitions over the past 10 years; this shift has no doubt been influenced by the Jewish community, from a being defined as "first and foremost a religious minority" to now being referred to in the following way: "The Jews consider themselves a religious minority, but also as a cultural and language minority" (my translation) (Scheer 2005, St.meld. nr. 15 (2000- 2001)).

Religious minorities are organised in a diversity of ways. Christian minorities are usually organised in denominations and also on a national level. One exception is the *Pentecostals* that are best described as a non-denominational community of independent, local congregations. Types and size of activities depend on the size of the congregation. Their basic activity is religious worship. Some congregations organise welfare activities such as child and youth work, scouting, visiting services and other care activities for seniors. Of great symbolic importance to the Pentecostals is the work of the Gospel Centre, an organisation contributing significantly to the care for people with substance use problems. The *Christian Centres* are organised the same way and represent non-denominational churches in Norway. They run various forms of social activities in addition to their religious activities, and some of them engage in substance abuse rehabilitation.

The *Catholic Church in Norway* is organised in churches and bishoprics as elsewhere. In addition to worship, social and health services are provided through religious orders and other organisations and institutions, for example hospitals, welfare services for children and the elderly, welfare provision for immigrants and refugees and people with an intellectual disability and their families.

For the other Christian religious minorities a common feature is likely to be that local congregations, in addition to religious worship, run various forms of social activities and organise work for children and youth. The *Salvation Army* is registered as a faith community and differs somewhat from the pattern described above. As a faith community, the organisation's membership is low in Norway. However, in addition to religious worship, the Salvation Army's provision of social and health services is comprehensive. This work encompasses health programmes (including work among AIDS sufferers), drug rehabilitation, care for the elderly, children's homes, accommodation for the homeless, prison work, food distribution, home visits, thrift shops and aid to refugees.

Among non-Christian religious minorities, the Muslim communities make up the largest group. There is an umbrella organisation for Muslim faith communities and organisations, the Islamic Council of Norway (ICN) ("*Islamsk Råd Norge*"). There are congregations and prayer houses (mosques) in all parts of the country. Most of the activities organised by the Muslim minority have their origin in the mosques, but during the 1990s several Muslim organisations were established recruiting members across confessional and language environments (Vogt 2000). One of these organisations is the ICN, others are youth organisations and women's organisations. The organisations have different purposes, but in general they aim at providing their members with information on Norwegian society and on Islam and Muslims in Norway and improving contacts and relations with the non-Muslim community. To some extent, they also ensure that welfare services are provided in accordance with religiously prescribed norms (such as separate swimming for women and children) and help their members in facilitating a Muslim identity in a modern Western country.

There are also *Hindu* cultural centres in several Norwegian cities and towns. Typically these centres help transmit the Hindu life philosophy, celebrate Hindu festivals, and provide information and counselling. In particular, the institutions take care of the Hindu cultural and language identity; thus, religious rituals are conducted using Tamil, Hindi and other Indian languages.

The *Buddhist Federation* of Norway functions as an umbrella organisation for several member associations. Buddhist religious activities are primarily organised by these associations. They run temples, meditation centres and bookshops. Activities organised include courses on meditation and Buddhism, celebration of Buddhist festivals, publications and support to Buddhist monks and nuns. The associations provide ritual services for the laity, and generally serve the Buddhist population, and the public at large.

## Current public debates on immigration

A study conducted in 1996 on how Norwegian mass media deal with issues related to immigrants and refugees, including xenophobia and racism, revealed that crime was the dominating theme; more was reported on racism, less on discrimination (Lindstad and Fjeldstad 1997). A divided picture of immigrants was presented in terms of their national origin: immigrants with western background, more often than those with non-western background, tended to be characterised in positive or neutral terms, being viewed more often as individuals, rather than anonymous members of a group. Generally the voices of immigrants were rarely heard in the media.

A review of two large national newspapers and their columns during the beginning of 2006 gave the impression that the overriding theme related to

immigrants and immigration was *integration*,<sup>12</sup> with sub-themes such as discrimination in the labour market, choice of marriage partners (especially related to people of Pakistani origin), the role of religion (Islam) in society (fear of future imposition of Sharia in Norway), the role of women in Islam and in other immigrant cultures, societal and cultural values and human rights (for example, the freedom of expression versus the ban on blasphemy, as during the Muhammad cartoons controversy), and language proficiency requirements.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, some attention is given to the issue of whether Norway should relax its strict regulations on immigration. As it is, regulations are less strict for foreigners who hold expertise in demand in the country. Moreover, as a member of the EEA, Norway has to abide by its regulations on possibilities of movement of persons within the area. The question is relevant with regard to labour immigration since a future shortage of labour is expected in important welfare sectors, including the social and healthcare sectors.<sup>14</sup>

The level of intensity and focus of the debates varies, in the sense that they concern both tension, conflict, and social cohesion. Generally, the debate is not very heated and relatively peaceful, in contrast to, for example, the situation in Denmark. The mass media often repeat that “Norway has become a multicultural society” as a way of expressing a state of affairs, which should be taken as our common foundation on which we base our commitment and actions. If this statement is generally accepted, the main question is: how do we learn to live together in this situation? The debate in the media may be interpreted as more focussed on this question than it was ten years ago.

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<sup>12</sup> Integration of ethnic minorities has been the goal of public policy for at least 20 years (Djuve 1999). The official public policy definition of the concept is as follows: “[...] equal status for all through equal opportunities, rights and duties to participate, irrespective of origin” (St.meld. nr. 17 (1996-97)). For an elaboration of the idea of integration in Norwegian public policy see Djuve 1999.

<sup>13</sup> In 2005, the parliament passed an act that requires all adult immigrants with a (provisional) residence permit that may be converted into a permanent residence permit to follow 300 hours of Norwegian language training and social studies education. If they want to acquire Norwegian citizenship, they must be able to prove such education and training or “sufficient knowledge in Norwegian or Sami” (AID 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Opinion polls show that a large majority of Norwegians are positive to increased labour immigration. It is worth noting that in the polls no distinction was made between countries of origin. It may be perceived as more acceptable to have labour immigrants coming from the EEA area than from third world countries. On the other hand, opinion polls have also shown that Norwegians are sceptical of making it easier for refugees and asylum seekers to obtain a residence permit in the country (Tronstad 2004b).

# Religious minority-majority relations

## Institutionalised relationships

The Church of Norway has an institutionalised relationship with the major Christian religious minorities through the Christian Council of Norway (CCN) ("*Norges kristne råd*") which was established in 1992 as a council of churches with a broad ecumenical agenda, including all major denominations except the Pentecostal Movement. This situation has now changed. In 2006 the CCN merged with the former Council of Free Churches in Norway, an organisation founded in 1903 as an instrument for the free churches to promote their religious rights in a country with a state church. The Catholic Church is a member of the new council.

With regard to interreligious relations, i.e. relations between the old world religions and philosophies of life, there are several forums or associations in Norway in which the Church of Norway takes part. The contact group of the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations (CNCEIR) ("*Mellomkyrkjeleg råd for Den norske kyrkja*") and the Islamic Council of Norway (ICN) were both established in 1993. In addition to these two partners, the CCN is also represented in the group. The group is a national interreligious dialogue forum between Christians and Muslims in Norway. An analysis of the work of this forum can be found in Håvarstein (2002).

The Council for Religious and Life Stance Communities (CRLSC) ("*Samarbeidsrådet for tros- og livssynssamfunn*") in Norway was established in 1996. The goals of the council is to build bridges between the communities, promote mutual understanding and respect, to work towards equality of rights, and to work with social and ethical issues from the perspective of the various traditions.

Internationally, on a less formal basis the Church of Norway is participating in the European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL). The forum was established in 2002 as a body of senior religious leaders of Europe's historic religions, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, but with members of other religions in Europe. The church-affiliated aid organisation, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) supports the ECRL financially as part of the organisation's ongoing work within interreligious dialogue.

The Church of Norway has not made explicit statements on minority religions at the national level. If the Church of Norway has dealt with minorities, it has focused primarily on national minorities, especially the Sami and the Romani, and the way they have been treated by the Church of Norway. How this relates to the status of the Church, as a state church, is a topic covered in the recent report on the future relationship between state and church, initiated by the Church of Norway (Kirkerådet 2002 section 3.1). On this

particular aspect, voices have been raised in the church indicating that “the real problems” may lie elsewhere, primarily in the majority-minority situation (NCA 2002). Majority-minority relations connected with immigration and the integration of immigrants was on the agenda of the Church Synod in 2006. A decision made on the issue emphasised the responsibility of the Church to contribute to a “respectful integration” in a situation where Norwegian society develops towards a multicultural and multireligious society. The Church admits that it has not done sufficiently to promote integration, neither in its own organisation, nor in society at large. It is a task for the Church to contribute to reducing distrust and social distance and to take an active role in the public debate to influence politics in a way that makes Norway a good place to live for everyone irrespective of national and cultural origin (Church of Norway 2006).

### Freedom of religion for minority groups

Every registered religious and life stance community has approximately the same financial support from the state in proportion to their membership. The public school system has a Christian preamble, but the opportunity for religious preaching in school is very restricted. Religious education is provided in the form of an obligatory curriculum that covers both Christianity, as well as, other religions and philosophies of life. The objective of the curriculum is to help pupils familiarise themselves with their own cultural roots and gain knowledge on other cultural traditions represented in the local community and in society at large. The idea is to support the pupils in developing self-confidence and to make it easier for them to meet people from other cultural traditions with tolerance and respect (St.meld. nr. 32 (2000-2001)). The obligatory character of religious education has been viewed with scepticism and was partly resisted by some of the non-Christian communities; some of the religious lay organisations in the Church of Norway and the Norwegian Humanist Association were sceptical and resistant to the obligatory character of religious education. One of the arguments for the complaints has been based on the principle of religious freedom according to the European Convention on Human Rights (Angell 2004).

Though government policy contributes to the generally free practice of religion, Muslims sometimes encounter difficulties in obtaining local permission to build mosques. For instance, for a long time, from 1985 to 2003, the town council in Drammen regularly turned down applications to build a mosque (US Department of State 2004). However, the public authorities in Drammen finally accepted the application to build a mosque in March 2003 (*Drammens Tidende* 26 March 2003). Though the repeated rejections took place in the town council, the construction of the mosque seems to have had a wider popular support. An opinion poll conducted in 2003, after the final

and positive decision was made by the council, showed that people in Drammen were split in their support. About half of the respondents disagreed with the decision to approve the construction of the mosque (*Drammens Tidende* 6 July 2003).

In the capital of Oslo there are several mosque buildings. The first one is a large mosque built in the Arabic style. The main argument against the construction was connected to the issue of whether prayer calls using loudspeakers should be allowed, and not to the building itself. The local public authorities decided that using loudspeakers for the calls to prayer should be allowed at the same level as the ringing of church bells. The issue was discussed in Parliament and both the Progress Party (“Framstegspartiet”) and the Christian People’s Party (“*Kristelig Folkeparti*”) were in favour of a total ban on loudspeaker prayer calls. However, the majority rejected the proposal (*Aftenposten* 3 Feb. 2000, 23 Nov. 2000). No other reports of religious minority groups experiencing difficulties in establishing places of worship have been observed.

## Debates on the presence of religious minorities

As is evident from the above, there are debates particularly related to the presence of Islam and Muslims. For instance, the Muhammad cartoons controversy had to do with the place of religion in the public sphere, freedom of expression versus respect for religion in a modern, secular society and the lack of a “Reformation” in Islam. The debate also brought forward different voices from Islam on how to interpret the Islamic tradition(s) and the issue of who can give authoritative interpretations of theological texts and traditions.<sup>15</sup> The debate focused on Islamism, religious fundamentalism, liberalism and tolerance in the Islamic tradition and how to interpret the violent responses to the caricatures all over the world. A way of characterising the debate in Norway might be to distinguish between participants who primarily seemed to use a conflict perspective in understanding the situation and those that seemed more inclined to use an integration perspective, emphasising dialogue as the way to proceed in order to foster better mutual understanding and respect. The debate became heated.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> One of the consequences of the debate in Norway was that existing pictures of Muhammad in certain Norwegian school books of religion (pictures were originally made by Muslims and according to the Muslim tradition, (Muhammad’s face had been cleared by the original artists) and dated from the end of the 16th century, will be removed from future editions. The pictures were introduced about ten years ago and had not provoked public reactions until the cartoon controversy.

<sup>16</sup> Re. the newspaper *Dagbladet* 13 March 2006 and feature articles in *Aftenposten* 12, 14 and 15 March 2006. According to an opinion poll conducted in early February 2006 for the newspaper *VG*, almost half of the respondents said they had become more sceptical about Islam as a religion after the turmoil around the Mohammed cartoons. Approximately 30%

Another debate related to Islam concerns the position of women in Islam and the social role of immigrant women in Norway, as compared to the official goals of Norwegian gender equality policy. The discourse on new interpretations of gender roles in Islam in the European Muslim context is covered for example by Roald (2004). The debate has been slightly confused in the sense that it has been difficult to see how a distinction is made between religion and culture (to the extent that such a distinction is possible). For instance, when the position and status of women is connected to the concept of male and family honour, it has been associated with Islam as a religion, though researchers participating in the public debate have repeatedly pointed out that the same relationship is found in the context of other religions as well (Wikan 2003).

The only minority religion high on the agenda in the general public debate in Norway is Islam. Less attention is given to gender related issues connected with Christian religious minorities in the general public debate. But there are some Christian-based newspapers in which these issues are debated, such as *Vårt Land* (“Our country”) that used to be associated with the Christian People’s Party without being its mouthpiece. The most common issues discussed are gender roles in the organisational structures of the religious communities. The Christian minorities outside the Church of Norway are generally conservative in their conception of gender roles. Little research is done on these minorities.

The debates referred to above all concern social and cultural integration. To judge from the debates, it seems to be widely accepted that the goal of immigration policies should be integration a position held by the political authorities in Norway (Eriksen 1998, St.meld. nr. 17 (2000-2001)); the issue of integration vs. assimilation has over the last few years been less prominent in the debate. Only one of the political parties represented in the parliament may be said to promote assimilation in a more or less ambiguous way, the Progress Party. But though the issue is not prominent in the public debate, it is more indirectly a topical issue at the local community level (cf. Aarflot 2004). The Progress Party is receptive to and gives a public voice to sentiments in the population that are opposed to immigration of people with non-western background and in favour of assimilation rather than integration.

## Conclusions

The Norwegian welfare state is inclusive in the sense that in terms of both rights and duties, no formal distinction is made in terms of ethnicity, gender

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said they had become more mistrustful towards Norwegian Muslims after the Muslim reactions towards the cartoons (VG 8 February 2006).

and religious affiliation. Legislation is based on the general values of human rights and (gender) equality. On the other hand, the focus on the individual and individual rights may run counter to the values of those who are more family centred, which may be the case in some minority groups. This may for example affect the status and legal rights of children in a family and create tensions between minorities and the majority population.

Labour shortages in the public welfare sector and higher private affluence have contributed to increased import of female care workers from countries in the south. These workers do not enjoy the same working conditions as most employed ethnic Norwegian women do, conditions that have made the Norwegian welfare state being characterised as women friendly.

There are apparently no explicit sources of conflict related to welfare provision regarding religion, minorities and gender. On the other hand, there may be potential sources of tension. One possible source is related to the dominant religious tradition in Norway – and the other Nordic countries – and its “state friendliness”. This means that the state and the public sector enjoy a high degree of legitimacy and trust. The same may not be true among immigrants, who may have very different experiences of and expectations from the state as a result of their experiences with the public authorities in their countries of origin. Different attitudes to the Norwegian welfare state among minorities may also be linked to religion and religious differences. We lack systematic knowledge in this field.

At high levels of society, among political and intellectual milieux, there are contacts and efforts to strengthen and promote social cohesion between the religious and ethnic majority and minorities. How this translates into efforts and relationships at a lower level in society and what types of social mechanisms operate at a local level and contribute to the tension and/or cohesion, is an open question. On the basis of this report it seems that more research has been conducted on minority groups and their situation, than on relationships across minority-majority boundaries. These are examples showing that the particular perspectives brought together in the WaVE project are not well researched in the Norwegian setting.

Norway has never been ethnically homogeneous, though it has been common among the majority population to think so, especially since most of the population has lived without contact with minorities. As in many other places in the world, the relationship between the ethnic majority and indigenous groups, in the Norwegian case the Sami people, has been characterised more by tension and suspicion, for example over the issue of control of natural resources. Traditionally, national minorities have generally not been included in the collective definition of the majority (“we”). The new wave of immigration starting in the 1960s has contributed to creating new groups of “others” in the population. This applies to ethnicity as well as religion.

For parts of the majority population, the position of the Church of Norway as a state church does not seem to create a problem in terms of freedom of religion and religious equality, despite the fact that there are religious minorities that experience the situation as discriminating and say so. Generally, this situation may be due to the fact that the majority population has not been accustomed to think of themselves (“ourselves”) as (only) a majority vis-à-vis minorities.

Ten years ago, the voices in the public debates on immigration, minorities and their situation, as well as, on majority-minority relations, tended to be clearly dominated by the representatives of the majority population. We can view this as an indication of the divide between “us” and “them” in Norwegian society. Over the last decade the situation has changed. Today representatives of minority groups participate in society and in the public debate as committed citizens, contributing to reduce the divisions. Perhaps people are perceived as more “equal” today than they were ten years ago in this respect. But inequality may remain in other areas or may be reconstructed along new dimensions. It is typical, though, that among minorities, women tend to be more silent than men. This is evident for example in the newspaper reporting of public debates on issues related to Islam, though women’s voices are not absent.

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# 4:2 DRAMMEN CASE STUDY REPORT

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## Abstract

The primary focus of the in-depth study in Drammen is the mainly Turkish Muslim minority and the interactions and relations between the majority and this minority in the field of education. Sources of the data are mainly observation, interviewing and document analysis. Findings include that generally the minority is quite satisfied with the local welfare system, with some modifications. This also applies to its view of the school and the way the school has adapted to the needs of minority children. Children's – girls' as well as boys' – education is important to minority parents. Generally, the school functions as an important mechanism of social cohesion. A liability for some children is poor language skills. A source of tension is that minority parents are less active in school democracy than is expected of them and that children often are withheld from participating in extracurricular activities and important social events. Another source of tension is the minority's own attempts to improve school performance through homework assistance programmes, and the way it is interpreted by central actors in the majority population, including the local newspaper. Central values for minority families seem to be the wish to combine being integrated in Norwegian society and at the same time to maintain a Turkish-Muslim identity.

## Presentation of the town

### Introduction

Drammen is an old port, industrial town and commercial centre in the south-eastern part of Norway, only 40 km south of the capital, Oslo, with about 57,000 inhabitants. Drammen has undergone significant structural change during the last twenty to thirty years and has become a regional service centre. In 1980, 27% of the employed population was employed in industry, as compared to 21% for the country as a whole. In 2003 secondary industries (industry and mining) made up 18% of the total employment, somewhat less than the national average. Over this period Drammen changed to become primarily a trade and service town. In 2003 more than 80% of the gainfully employed persons in Drammen, those who work for pay, had their work in the tertiary industries (the service sector).

Drammen has a wide variety of clubs, unions, societies, and associations. In this way the local civil society is rich and strong. An indicator of the importance of civil society in Drammen may be that some of the committees

and associations are regularly represented in the town council meetings, where they have the opportunity to submit proposals or to give their comment on current issues of political decision making. In particular, this applies to collective actors involved in social welfare activities (Angell and Wyller, 2006).

### The majority and minority presence

As defined by Statistics Norway, immigrants 0-17 years of age, make up 21% of the total population in Drammen in that age group. If we include all age groups then the immigrant population makes up 18% of the total population in Drammen.

**Table 4:2:1 Immigrant population<sup>1</sup> in Drammen, by country of origin. 1.1.2006.**

Country of origin	0-17 years			Total population <sup>2</sup>			Natl. level	
	N	%	% of total 0-17 years	N	%	% of total population	% of immigr. pop.	% of total pop.
Nordic countries	89	3.5	0.7	767	7.6	1.4	13.8	1.2
Eastern Europe <sup>3</sup>	413	16.2	3.4	1,319	13.0	2.4	17.6	1.5
Western Europe, exc. Turkey	31	1.2	0.3	300	3.5	0.5	10.0	0.8
Asia, included Turkey	1,778	69.8	14.6	5,773	57.0	10.3	40.1	3.3
Africa	200	7.8	1.6	306	3.6	0.5	12.3	1.0
South and Middle America	35	1.4	0.3	-	-	-	3.7	0.3
North America, Oceania	3	0.1	0.0	-	-	-	2.4	0.2
Nationality not specified	-	-	-	1 670	16.5	3.0	-	-
Total	2,549	100.0	21.0	10,135	100.0	18.1	99.9	8.3

<sup>1</sup> The immigrant population comprises persons born abroad or with both parents born abroad.

<sup>2</sup> The total immigrant population in Drammen amounts to 10,135 people as of 1st Jan. 2006. The figures allocated to the specific geographical categories are based on available statistics referring to figures on the national origin of immigrants living in Drammen, but specifying only countries contributing more than 100 individuals.

<sup>3</sup> Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Albania; Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Source: Population statistics. Statistics Norway

There is a very small presence of non-immigrant minorities in Drammen. Neither the Sami, nor the Jewish and Roma minorities are represented in the Drammen area on a permanent basis. The Roma are travelling people and are only present during shorter visits. Together with Oslo, Drammen is the Norwegian town with the largest proportion of non-western ethnic groups in its population. The municipality established an international culture centre in 2003 to stimulate an expansion of the range and ethnic diversity of what is offered to the population in the field of art and culture.

Drammen hosts a plethora of Christian and non-Christian religious and philosophical groups and communities. Among the Christian communities, the main traditions and denominations are represented. Other religious groups and traditions represented are Muslims, Buddhists, Jehovah Witnesses, Hindus, the Sikh community. Table 4:2:2 shows how persons who are not members of the majority Church are distributed among different religious and philosophical traditions.

**Table 4:2:2 Religious affiliation of the population in Drammen, main categories 2004, percentage distribution of members outside the Church of Norway (CoN) (N=8610).**

Religious groups	Percent of population outside CoN	Percent of total population
Muslims	42	6.4
Pentecostals	10	1.4
Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindu	10	1.4
Norwegian Humanist Association	9	1.4
Roman Catholics	7	1.0
Other Christian groups	20	2.8
Other religious groups	2	0.6
Total	100	15.0

Source: Drammen municipality: <http://www.drammen.kommune.no/>

Not surprisingly, the largest religious group is the Muslims. This reflects the significant immigration of ethnic minority groups in Drammen. Among the

Christian denominations outside the Church of Norway the Pentecostal Movement is the largest. The position of Muslims and Pentecostals in Drammen correspond to the relative strength of the two groups at the national level. Sikhs, Buddhists, and Hindus make up 3-4% each. It is also worth noting that the Norwegian Humanist Association holds a relatively strong position among the religious and philosophical groups outside the majority Church (cf. Angell, 2004).

## The local welfare system

### **Role of local government**

In the Norwegian welfare system the state at various levels holds a dominant position both in its role as regulator and as a provider of benefits and services. Like the other Nordic countries Norway exemplifies a social democratic welfare state regime in Esping-Andersen's terms (Esping-Andersen, 1990). In the case of welfare benefits and services a certain division of labour exists between the national, regional and local levels in the sense that there are some areas where benefits and services are organised within the welfare system at a national level, whereas most of them are organised at, and remain the responsibility of, the municipal level. For example, social security offices exist in every municipality, but benefits (such as unemployment benefits, sickness benefits and old age pensions) are organised by and offered as part of the National Insurance Scheme (Angell, 2004). Hospitals are the responsibility of the state; the same applies to employment services. Recently a merger took place between the National Insurance and the National Employment organisations and the social welfare system with the objective to improve the coordination and efficiency of the employment and welfare administration. Drammen hosts a hospital, but the services offered are not part of the local welfare system. Dental services are the responsibility of the county. The local public welfare system is basically universal in its range and character.

Drammen offers a wide range of health, social and educational services. In addition to the services already mentioned, childhood centres, day care centres, an introduction centre for immigrants, volunteer centres; health stations, nursing homes/combined nursing homes and service centres, outpatient clinics, home-based services, such as home help and other kinds of personal assistance, transport services and other practical help and financial support are offered.

In Norway the responsibility for primary and lower secondary education belongs to the municipal level. Additional and complementary services are offered, e.g. services provided by the childhood centre. Educational services are offered to the adult population as well. In Drammen adult education is an integrated part of the introductory centre. The services of the centre are in

part based on the right and obligation to participate in an introductory programme for newly arrived foreign nationals between 18 and 55 years of age, who need to obtain basic qualifications and who have been granted asylum or a residence or work permit as refugees and who have lived two years or less in Norway. The aim of the programme is to help qualify participants for a job or further education.

### **Role of majority church**

There is no formal role for the majority church in the local welfare system. A religious-based interdenominational organisation (Blue Cross) runs a substance abuse rehabilitation centre in Drammen. Despite its location it is not part of the local welfare system. The reason is that this area of health and social services is the responsibility of the county and the state.

Most of the welfare-related activities of the local church are informal and not aimed at service seeking people in a narrow sense of the word. One of the church-based activities in Drammen is the Church SOS (crisis hotline, the Norwegian equivalent to The Samaritans in the UK). Like the Blue Cross centre mentioned above, the Church SOS organisation located in Drammen serves the whole of the county and is only indirectly part of the local church.

Although there is no formal role for the majority church in the formal welfare system inter-organisational relationships exist between the public sector and the local majority church in matters of welfare. Generally, there seems to be little interaction in the way of systematic and regular cooperation. One of the few areas in which regular cooperation between church and public sector exists is in the field of care for the bereaved ("*sorggrupper*"). In this field of activity parish deacons collaborate with the municipality, the Red Cross and the Norwegian Humanist Association. A somewhat related area of cooperation is the municipal crisis team. Such teams are common on a municipal level around the country and the church is regularly represented in the team (cf. Angell and Selbekk, 2005). The crisis team is called on in cases of major accidents and other comparable incidents in the community. Typically, the police and the fire service are also represented in the team.

Another area of cooperation is care for the elderly. The extent to which the church and the municipality in Drammen interact varies among the parishes. In some parishes there is a tradition for the parish to co-operate with the municipal home-based care services, in other parishes no such tradition exists.

### **Role of minority associations and networks**

As with the majority church there is generally no formal role for the minority communities and associations in the welfare system, but the specific character of the welfare activities of the communities entails a formal relationship with the public authorities in certain cases. Most prominent is the relation-

ship concerning the running of schools.<sup>4</sup> One of the Christian minorities, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, runs a combined primary and (lower) secondary school with the Drammen area as its catchment area, that is, the geographic area from which students attend the school. Though the school is explicitly faith-based, it recruits children from a diversity of religious and ethnic groups, i.e. Muslims. Other minority communities are involved in education related activities of a more informal nature, such as homework support (see p. 148f.). There has been an attempt to start a private, Islam-based combined primary and lower secondary school in Drammen. The school has been endorsed by the public authorities in Drammen. So far legal regulations by the government in 2006 have prevented its establishment and operation (see also p. 148 and 154).

Most of the religious minorities registered in Drammen do not offer health care, social work or general educational activities. In addition to what has been mentioned above, one of the Christian minority communities, a Pentecostal congregation organises activities directed towards people with substance abuse problems. This agency takes place in cooperation with the local public authorities.

## Context and timeframe

Parliamentary elections took place during autumn 2005. The outcome resulted in a new three party government, headed by the Labour Party. One of the consequences was that the Minister of Education announced a temporary but complete stop to the establishment of new private primary and secondary schools. The decision had direct impact on the majority-minority situation in Drammen. An Oslo-based Muslim organisation had earlier applied for permission to establish a Muslim combined primary and lower secondary school in Drammen. The town council endorsed the establishment by a formal decision (see above). However, due to the government decision the school was not established.

Local government elections took place two years later, early autumn 2007. In Drammen the number of representatives in the town council with ethnic minority background, doubled from 7 to 12 out of a total of 49 members, i.e. an increase from about 15% to almost 25% of the members (cf. Wold, 2007). The elections were carried out at a time when the field work

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Private Schools Act (KD, 2003) schools based on religion or alternative pedagogical methods (like Rudolf Steiner and Montessori schools) are entitled to financial support from the state, at a rate of 85% of the cost for a public school pupil. Private schools require state approval. Presently there are, for example, around 40 Christian schools as compared with some 3,200 public schools.

had been completed, and the outcome, consequently, did not influence the situation and dynamics presented in this report.

## Methods and sources

In the Norwegian case study we chose to put our main focus on the relationship between majority society and the Muslim communities in Drammen, with special emphasis on the Turkish ethnic community (predominantly Muslim). The main welfare arena selected for studying actions and interactions of the minority and the majority communities is the local compulsory public school system.

The *Muslim minority* is the largest religious minority community in Drammen (about 3,500 registered members). Generally in Norway, among non-Christian religious communities the Muslims are by far the most visible in the media and no other non-Christian tradition creates the same amount of public debate among the majority population and in majority and minority relations. The same seems to be the case in Drammen. More specifically, Muslims in Drammen are people of different national and ethnic backgrounds and with different histories of immigration. This leaves us with a mixed and interesting picture of relations between a religious minority and the majority population. We have chosen to focus primarily on Muslims originating from Turkey (the largest national category among immigrant Muslims). They came to Norway as labour immigrants in the early 1970s. They represent several orientations within Islam, they come from different places in Turkey and they seem to have both urban and rural backgrounds. Most of them come from the town of Beysehir and surrounding villages in the Konya region.

In the fieldwork we combined several methods. Most of the information was collected through in-depth personal interviews. In some cases telephone interviews were used. We also conducted focus group interviews. Interviews were carried out for various purposes. Most of our interviews were with Muslim parents of school children. One of the purposes of the interviews with immigrant parents was to collect biographical information. Other categories of interviewees were religious leaders, leaders of minority group associations, heads of school and teachers, local politicians, administrative staff and grass roots level social and health workers. In most of the parent interviews only the mother was present. In some cases we interviewed both mother and father together and in some cases only the father. Most of the heads of school and teachers interviewed were women, reflecting the gender profile of school staff. We also interviewed one of the editors of the local newspaper along with one of his associates. Newspaper content analysis was a key data collection method. Drammen has only one newspaper. Altogether

32 personal interviews were conducted; comprising 17 females and 15 males. Another 16 group interviews were carried out, most of them with two types of participants (parents and teachers) comprising about 35 persons, about half males and half females. The interviews were carried out between October 2006 and October 2007. Interview citations in the report are given a reference symbol. In the reference R2, M, for example, R2 is the interview identifier and M denotes the person's sex (male, as opposed to F, female). Participant observation (various degrees of participation) took place at school premises and in places in Drammen where young people meet; we participated in municipal meetings and conferences and in some large-scale public events like the celebration of the National Day.

The data collection did not pose any significant problems. We recruited parents for interviewing through the schools and through the religious organisations and their leaders. The whole recruitment process took a long time and it was often difficult to have contact with the leaders of the minority organisations.

We interviewed parents about their experiences with the welfare system in Drammen, and with the school in particular, their contacts with the school and their participation in organised activities, etc. As interviewers have their strategies for an interview, it is to be expected that interviewees also have their strategies in interviews. Therefore, it is useful to reflect on how to read and interpret the information provided in the interviews. Both at the national and the local level the extent of the immigrants' integration in Norwegian society - and their will to become integrated - have been topics of discussion in the media. In such circumstances, a question may be if the minority representatives interviewed in the study are better adapted to and integrated in the local society than the average person and family in the relevant category of people. In the encounter with interviewers representing the majority population some of them may have chosen to be more careful in what they communicate about their values, experiences and perceptions of the welfare system and the school than in a more "natural" situation, say, only involving persons from the minority community.

## Findings

### Examples of co-operation and cohesion between groups

In social science literature the phenomenon of social cohesion is conceptualised in different ways. The concept is widely used in EU documents indicating a social phenomenon of political importance in the Union (see e.g. CDCS, 2004). Regina Berger-Schmitt's analysis of the concept and her development of an instrument to measure this "aspect of quality of societies"

may be understood in this context (Berger-Schmitt, 2000). Berger-Schmitt draws on political documents, as well as, on social science research literature in her analytical approach. Summarising, she distinguishes two societal goal dimensions which the various uses of the concept incorporate:

- a. Reducing social inequalities and social exclusion
- b. Strengthening social relations

The first dimension relates to social inequalities and lack of social integration. Integration means that minority groups participate in the common activities of society or the community, but still have the right to remain culturally separate from the majority. Related to education we may associate this dimension with opportunities and possible inequalities in educational enrolment and qualifications; programmes to compensate unequal individual and family resources; availability of relevant support for parents and children, social isolation and/or discrimination, lack of completed education.

The second dimension, the social capital dimension, concerns quantitative and qualitative aspects of social relationships between individuals and groups, “their mutual feelings of commitment and trust due to common values and norms, a sense of belonging and solidarity” (Berger-Schmitt, 2000:5). Related to education this may concern a children’s social network both inside and outside school, parents’ contacts with other parents and with the school, the quality of the school and the educational system.

In more ethical terms, social cohesion may be defined as “the willingness of members of a society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper” (Stanley, 2003, p. 5). Members’ willingness means that they collectively, as autonomous persons, “choose to form partnerships and have a reasonable chance of realizing goals, because others are willing to cooperate” and “do good across group dynamics and organizational boundaries” (Heuser, 2005, p. 13). The presentation in this section is structured on the basis of the two goal dimensions specified by Berger Schmitt.

### **Reducing social inequalities and social exclusion**

Muslim parents being interviewed were unanimously concerned with the education of their children and they are ambitious on behalf of their children. Among parents interviewed it was common for them to want their children to attain high-status positions in society and in professions, such as law, medicine, and civil engineering. If their dreams come true, this is likely to contribute to reducing social inequalities.

At the stage when minority pupils pass from lower secondary (*ungdomsskolen*) to upper secondary school (*videregående skole*), many of them are advised by the school advisor, the health visitor and other staff to choose vocational course studies instead of general studies. One of our interviewees

explained this referring to what the staff considered realistic educational expectations or the pupils' own interests, but in the minority of Turkish background some parents perceive this as an expression of prejudice among the staff at school. Alternatively, parents dislike this type of advice because they believe that it will prevent their children from attaining high status positions in society and, therefore, preclude them from serving as role models for other children, role models that they consider badly needed. An ethnic majority interviewee ascribed the sceptical attitude to vocational education and the associated future job opportunities among some minority parents, to knowledge and experiences from the "home country", where the social status and wage levels of craftsmen are relatively low and the trades do not require education.

In Drammen it is easy to find initiatives, programmes and arrangements aimed at reducing (some) inequalities and social exclusion, at the municipal level, at the organisational level and at the family or individual level. A few examples illustrate such efforts. Within the context of the school system as our welfare domain an example of cohesion are celebrations on festive occasions. One such important occasion is National Day (17 May).<sup>5</sup> In Drammen (as elsewhere) the celebration of National Day (Constitution Day) has as its central event the school children's parade. The celebration has both an action aspect and a symbolic aspect. It is prepared at school and it has a symbolic meaning. An important aspect of the celebration is that it is inclusive in its functioning because the celebrations take place in such a way that people of different ethnic origins can feel that what is celebrated is relevant to them and their situation. It means that all children are supposed to participate, irrespective of national origin, and that parents are encouraged to get involved together with their school children in the celebrations. It seems that the organisers in Drammen have been successful in this respect.<sup>6</sup> One of the issues in this connection has been what cultural symbols should be accepted in the parades, i.e. the extent to which cultural symbols other than the traditional Norwegian symbols, like flags and costumes, would be acceptable. The relevant authorities in Drammen have appeared to be liberal in the sense that they have supported a pluralistic orientation: the basic values to be celebrated on the National Day should be freedom and democracy and not nationalistic values.

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<sup>5</sup> Kristoffersen has studied the celebration of National Day (in Oslo) in a multi-ethnic perspective (Kristoffersen, 2000). The purpose of the study is to get a better understanding of how the immigrant population relates to the celebration and what meaning the rituals have for them in their identity construction. Kristoffersen is interested in whether the celebration rituals contribute to integration or exclusion of minorities, especially those from non-European national backgrounds.

<sup>6</sup> In 2006 a team from the public television visited Drammen to capture and report the atmosphere of the celebrations in a multicultural setting. School children and adults from various national origins were interviewed in the programme.

Several Turkish-Muslim communities in Drammen organise homework assistance programmes. Homework assistance programmes for children of Turkish background are very important in the Turkish milieu. During an interview a group of religious leaders indicated that homework assistance programmes are common in Turkey. In this connection it is interesting that a large majority of the interviewees, be they parents, youth and religious leaders, rejected the idea of establishing a separate primary and secondary school for Muslims in Drammen. For example, a leading member of one of the communities told us that a few years ago the members of the community were asked if they would like to have a school for Muslims in Drammen. According to the interviewee most of the members were quite satisfied with the Norwegian public school and did not support the idea of a separate Muslim school. But there were, at that time, members that spoke in favour of such a school (see below).

The reasons given by our interviewees for their sceptical attitude to a Muslim based school are that they are afraid that such a school would develop into a closed social system; that the children therefore might be prevented from learning Norwegian and from integrating in society and that they might develop a negative attitude towards non-Muslims. A leader in one of the other Muslim communities said:

“We want to abide by Norwegian law and traditions, and want [to have our children in] ordinary schools so that the children are integrated [in Norwegian society] without losing their identity.” (R2, M).

One of the imams in Drammen put it this way:

“I mean that if we want to integrate ourselves in the society, it will be very difficult if we should have a school only for ‘our’ pupils. Forget about having a school with only likeminded pupils.” (R1, M).

The understanding of the crucial role of language competence for success in school has resulted in putting resources into native tongue training for school children in all primary schools in Drammen. Lately the effort has been reduced at some schools because of changes in the funding system and reductions in the available financial resources. Moreover, several homework assistance programmes have been organised, so far primarily by voluntary organisations, like the Red Cross and Muslim organisations.

### **Strengthening social relations**

The way National Day is celebrated in Drammen may contribute to both dimensions of social cohesion. Here, as another example of the social capital aspect, we will mention the project “Build Bridges – Not Walls” (Den norske Helsingforskomité, 2001). It is a joint project by the municipality of

Drammen, with the schools as important participants, the United Nations' Association of Norway and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee. Since 1998 the project has organised festivals, conferences, workshops and human rights schools in Drammen and in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina. The focus is on human rights, multicultural understanding and handling of conflicts and the aim is to contribute to developing interaction and understanding across group and cultural divides in the local community. In this case the public authorities have committed themselves to a cooperation with various types of voluntary organisations and agents (including theatre groups, artists, sports clubs, other cultural organisations, youth clubs and so on) in prevention work and work that creates a positive attitude to difference. The project involves not only the municipality and voluntary organisations, but also local business.

Another area of cross-cultural interaction is the area of sports. For children and youth - especially for boys - this is an important area of welfare. It is a domain that facilitates social integration across ethnic backgrounds. For the majority culture in Norway adult volunteering is an important resource for the continuation of the amateur sports clubs and their activities. Some of the Turkish communities in Drammen have engaged in such activities, both among adults and children. The participation in both generations promotes social cohesion. On the other hand, there are other Turkish communities that have not adapted to the expectations of adult volunteering that is inherent in traditional Norwegian culture (cf. Carlsson and Haaland, 2006).<sup>7</sup> The practical consequence in certain areas of Drammen is that children from various ethnic backgrounds meet in sports activities, but at the same time the running of the activities is undermined by the absence of minority group parents in the activities that are necessary to maintain the operations of the clubs. At least one of the local sports clubs may be discontinued because of this.

Drammen promotes itself as a "multicultural town". The multicultural perspective runs through the planning documents developed by the municipality and is a recurrent theme in planning conferences. Some examples of efforts to strengthen social relations focusing on school as the welfare domain are given below.

Generally, it seems that schools under study have made conscious efforts to create trust among minority families in their catchment areas through adaptation to the voiced or perceived needs. Parents indicate their experiences of teachers and the school caring for their children and treating the parents respectfully. An example of how trust in the school may be expressed and how social relations may be strengthened is what a mother said about the situation of her children:

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<sup>7</sup> For an interesting article on how football serves as an integrating mechanism in present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina, see Sterchele, 2007.

“When the children came [to this school], they were new [to the area], and they had difficulties there. In the beginning they did not tell me. After a couple of months my son told me he did not have a good time [at school], that he had no one to play with. Then I asked the other children, and they said the same. I went to see the teachers. They told the other pupils to play with my children. Now it is all right.”(F9, F).

Parents express trust in the school system and, more generally, in the Norwegian welfare system. More specifically, in one of the schools in Drammen they have started a programme for parental training (school for parents), in order to help parents of minority children understand what the school expects from them as parents. The aim is to strengthen the ties between the school and the parents and to involve the latter more closely in mutual parent relationships that can also exert influence on the running of the school. A related action has been to offer native tongue assistants in parent-teacher meetings and to have parents sharing a common native tongue discuss matters of common interest in these meetings in their own language. This helped increase the attendance rate of minority parents.

But even if minority parents do not participate in advisory boards and decision making meetings as frequently as majority parents they attend social and festive occasions, parties for parents, cultural performances where the children are the actors, and other similar events. Their food traditions and other aspects of their cultural traditions are exposed and shared with majority families and the school. This illustrates cultural exchange in a situation that provides an opportunity for minority families to demonstrate their competence. It is an integrated part of the schools’ “resource oriented” strategy where difference is exposed and used as a common resource in the education programmes.

At the family or individual level, birthday celebrations are an example. The schools we have studied do not allow at the school premises selective invitations of guests to a birthday party. Both the school and the parents have made efforts to increase the chances for minority children to take part in birthday parties, something which has often not been the case. However, “self exclusion” is due to different reasons. Firstly, in some of the countries of origin of minority parents birthday celebrations are not common. Secondly, parents say they feel insecure about what is going on in the party, especially what the children are served to eat. This applies in particular to Muslim families. Thirdly, due to poor economic conditions some families may be unable to take the child to the party or to buy a birthday present.

This has been a topic of discussion at parent meetings and it has become common for parents hosting a birthday party, where religious minorities are represented, to adapt to the particular rules prescribed by religion. When transport is needed, (majority) families offer to help out others (minority children). At least one of the schools in our study offer school premises for

such occasions, free of charge, in order to enable families with scarce resources and little home space to have access to premises, where they can host a larger party that would otherwise be impossible. This particular school district includes areas with big differences in the average socio-economic status, where minority families are more likely to have poor living conditions than families belonging to the majority population.

Inequalities may have an impact on the density and quality of social relationships and in this way the two dimensions of social cohesion are interdependent. One of the decisions recently made at the central level of government is that in primary and lower secondary school (compulsory school) the school is not allowed to impose costs on families for the participation of children in obligatory activities, regardless whether they take place in or out of school (like school camps). In the schools studied in Drammen this has been extended to all activities organised by the school or by the parents on a collective basis, for instance through the executive committee of the parent council. This is to prevent social exclusion and to strengthen relationships between all children.

### Examples of tension/problem points between and within groups

It is worth noting that social tensions and conflicts are not necessarily threatening the integration of a society, and conflict and cohesion are not antonyms. As Coser suggests, conflict tends to be dysfunctional only for social structures in which there is insufficient tolerance or institutionalisation of conflict. Social structures are not threatened by conflict as such, but it is rather their rigid character that may threaten them (Coser, 1998 [1956]). Thus, to the extent that relevant conflicts are identified, it is of interest to study how the conflicts are coped with or handled in the local community, and if relevant social structures are modified and changed in order to “fit” the new situation.

Generally, we are left with the impression that the representatives of the Muslim minority groups interviewed have a positive attitude to the Norwegian welfare system, as they know it. To a less extent than the majority population they seem to hold expectations that the state has to put things straight for them and take care of their special welfare needs. Among our sources of information the opinion that the Norwegian welfare system is too “kind” and benevolent is much more widespread than the opinion that the system should be more inclusive and better in taking care of the special needs of minorities. Several interviewees said that they know those who take advantage of the system, and they are very negative to such behaviour on a religious basis – to receive public benefits in a situation where you do not work but are healthy, is “*haram*” (proscribed, forbidden). They are negative

to such behaviour also on more pragmatic grounds; it undermines the system's capacity to support those who really need it.

We have not come across examples of overt conflict or open confrontation between groups in Drammen related to welfare and the working of the welfare system. This does not mean that the institutionalised system for provision of welfare goods and services functions according to the needs of the minority groups. There are tensions and problem areas related to the provision of welfare services. One key informant representing the minority groups in Drammen claimed that people in the minority population experience lack of understanding in their interactions with representatives of the welfare system, not least in the health care and social services. Those who make decisions do not know the values and the ways of those that the decisions concern; the latter may feel that they are crushed, humiliated, and that they are unable to voice their needs because of lack of language competence. We do not know how representative this view is among minority groups; in the in-depth study only one of the interviewees, a woman, confirmed this claim in her experiences with public welfare services in Drammen. She characterised her experience as bullying and thought it would never have happened to an ethnic Norwegian. The negative experience refers to interactions with primary health care services; the family's experiences with the hospital were all positive. It must be underlined that our interviewees were not selected to make up a representative sample of families from a Turkish background in Drammen. Consequently, we have no basis for making a judgement on the frequency of such negative experiences in the group. In addition, some interviewees in the in-depth study conveyed negative experiences with the health system, which are probably shared by many, irrespective of ethnicity and religious identity, like the following:

“I question the health system: they take things for granted and sometimes have an arrogant behaviour. They expect parents to understand their professional language; that we accept what they say. I feel that we meet with little understanding for the fact that parents may worry about their child.”(P2, M).

A related example is that some elderly people from Turkish background express a need for Turkish (speaking) doctors. They find it difficult to communicate with Norwegian (speaking) doctors. This is much less apparent among second and third generation Norwegians.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, among the interviewees the need for psychologists with a minority background was

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<sup>8</sup> The immigrant population, as registered in public population statistics, consists of people born of two foreign-born parents. As a result, the immigrant population comprises first-generation immigrants and people who were born in Norway by two foreign-born parents (Statistics Norway). In this report we have chosen instead to speak of generations of Norwegians. The immigrant population, as defined above, will, according to our terms, comprise first and second-generation Norwegians.

expressed. The reasons given were both linguistic and cultural. Since help provided by a psychologist is based on interpretation of the help seeker's statements, it is important that the helper is able to communicate in a language with which the help seeker is familiar; it is also important to understand the cultural significance of relevant events and experiences that may have a different significance for persons brought up in the majority culture. An imam stated:

“Generally the health care services in Norway are of high quality. However, with regard to mental health, it is an almost hopeless task to be a Norwegian psychologist trying to help for instance someone with Turkish background. It has to do with language, but also other things. For example, divorce has become a fairly common thing in Norway, but it is less common with us. Or if one of the parents die. [...] It is difficult for a Norwegian health worker to understand how we experience things like that.” (R1, M).

Such issues have not been covered in the local media.

An indicator of conflict in the domain of education is the reaction to the establishment of a homework assistance programme in combination with accommodation, for boys, organised by one of the local Muslim groups of Turkish background, the Islamic Culture Centre in Drammen. The institution is a very light version of a boarding school, so far only for boys. It offers religious education (“Qur'an school”), where the children learn Arabic and study the Qur'an in order to learn about Islamic values and the Islamic way of life, as well as, classes in Norwegian, mathematics and English. The premises can accommodate up to 24 boys. The number of boys being accommodated is usually less, it varies and the boys spend only one or a few nights there at a time. The institution has created strong reactions, for example as they have been expressed through the local media. The local newspaper (*Drammens Tidende*) in an editorial piece and through editorial space given to members of the majority community and minority groups, especially representatives of other Turkish-Muslim communities, have expressed critical attitudes towards the school as a means of social and cultural segregation. According to sources in the local newspaper it has been difficult for the news media to get permission to enter the premises. But according to critics in the majority population classes in Norwegian, mathematics and English (given by an elderly, Norwegian, white male) have been accused of serving as a pretext for religious purposes, suggesting that the main goal of the school is religious or a Qur'anic education. It should be noted that the programme is controversial, not only among the majority population, for instance as expressed in the local media, but also among the minority community (see p. 149).

However, the negative attitude to establishing a Muslim school in Drammen among our interviewees may not be representative of the Muslim communities there. A few years ago the issue was debated in the local press and voices were raised in favour of a Muslim school, in order to improve the integration of Muslim children in Norwegian society (see e.g. Sandli, 2001). Among our interviewees one of the families was positive to having a Muslim school in Drammen, stating that they would have sent their children to such a school:

“We would have done that because of the milieu; it would have been many foreign children together there” (F3, F).

It is interesting to note that it was only when the public authorities came to know the existence of the programme presented in the section on conflicts and tensions above, that the municipal council committee on childhood, education and social services recommended to the municipal council that all municipal schools in Drammen should offer homework assistance programmes to their pupils. As long as the public authorities only knew the existence of more limited homework assistance programmes, where the pupils received classes in basic subjects, as well as, Norwegian and Turkish culture, they did not find it sufficiently important to help satisfy the needs of the minority population of such assistance.

Public authorities considered the existence of the controversial programme as a “danger” to the community, threatening social cohesion, affecting mutual feelings of commitment and the sense of belonging and solidarity in the community. What some external observers may have perceived as the closed character of the programme (as the programme was described in the local newspaper) may also have created fear that it might foster attitudes and convictions associated with the 11 September 2001 attacks and the events following in Europe (bombings in Madrid and London). The public action may be interpreted in terms of Coser’s analysis, as a structural adaptation to a conflict situation in order to adapt to the new situation.

The long-term effect remains to be seen. However, referring to what the leader of the institution said in an interview:

“It is those who have attended, and no longer make use of the activities who are the best judges. They say that ‘the initiative came too late and should be an offer to a wider age group than today’. They want us to extend it to secondary school and college and university students.” (P2, M).

The leader is very critical to the information provided in the local newspaper about immigrant milieus. About the alleged closed nature of the institution his comment is that “*we are open for everyone to visit us. We are open for criticism in order to improve the quality of what we are doing*” (P2, M). We

may interpret the statement as expressing the view that the local newspaper contributes to creating an atmosphere of conflict rather than “building bridges”.

Another source of conflict or tension between the majority and some minority families is what seems to be the difference in perception of the importance of extracurricular activities and of the role of the parents in their relations with the school system. In the Norwegian school philosophy, as expressed in plans and other official documents, schooling is not limited to what is taking place within the school premises. However, teachers often experience that minority group children do not participate in schooling activities outside these premises, be they excursions to local museums or week-long school camps away from home. For instance, a teacher told us that she had experienced that children, whose parents had not given permission for the children to participate in a local excursion, had been observed in the streets taking care of younger siblings on that very day during the time of the excursion. More often than not, this applies to girls. As judged by the teachers representing the welfare state, the absence from such “extracurricular” activities, has negative consequences in the long run; the absent children become less acquainted with Norwegian society. The social consequences among the pupils themselves may be indicated by the following quotation from a Turkish-Norwegian girl:

“In the second half of tenth grade the Norwegian girls started to be interested in making friends with us. It happened after we had been on a school trip to Poland. Then we had lived together. Afterwards, when we were back to school, everybody talked to everybody else.” (F17, F1)

The phenomenon of preventing children from taking part in such activities as described here is so widespread that it is specifically mentioned in a recent government White Paper dealing with inclusion and participation in Norwegian society (St.meld. nr. 49 (2003-2004)).

A related tension is connected to the role of parents in basic education. It is expected that parents cooperate with the school since they have the prime responsibility for bringing up their children (KUF, 1999). This is seen by the school as a problem and a challenge as parents of minority children tend to participate less than majority parents in parent-teacher meetings at school, for example. Several reasons have been given by majority representatives for the situation. One of the reasons may be that there exists a conflict of expectations. While the majority population – and the school as an institutionalised expression – expects cooperation in line with what is written above, expectations of relevant minority groups may be that the school should deal with the education alone, as long as there are no problems related to the behaviour of their children.

## The complexity of the issues

The design of the report may easily structure the analysis of the data in a way that tends to simplify the possible complex relationship between conflict and social cohesion. As an example of the complexity of the relationship between the two we will focus on the controversial homework assistance programme presented earlier in the report and provide an interpretation of the phenomenon that links it to other phenomena discussed in the report. In analysing the homework assistance programme we will distinguish between an insider and an outsider perspective. In the section on conflicts we presented the outsider position, where the local media probably have played an important role in transmitting a negative view of the programme to readers. Most likely, the newspaper has been their most important source of information on the programme.

From the insider's point of view the programme looks different. The leader of the programme stated the purpose of the programme in the following way:

“The reason for setting it up was to pass our identity, our values, on to the children. The young children attend the classes in the Mosque during the weekends until they reach 8-10, then they fall off. The parents wanted something with which the children could identify. [...] It was [also] a way to avoid child care cases in situations we did not overcome. If the children had somewhere to be taken care of outside home, it would be an important preventive measure.”(P2, M).

The intention was to establish contacts and relationships with the school, the child welfare authorities and the social security office. However, they found out that maintaining such relationships required more resources than they had. This last point shows that by intention the programme would contribute to increasing social capital on an organisational level.

From what we saw during our visit to the premises in which the programme is carried out, the premises are equipped as a high quality Turkish house, giving the place a Turkish atmosphere in the middle of Drammen. But the institution has other functions as well. Some parents interviewed emphasised its significance as a place where the children (the boys) learn proper conduct, learn politeness, in addition to other educational benefits. Two male parents answered the question about why parents send their children to this programme in the following way:

F1, M1: “There are many reasons. They [the children] are assisted in their homework, they learn English, and they learn how to respect other adults; things like that, proper conduct.”

F1, M2: “They learn how to live with others, they learn about friendship and many other things. [Parents send their children here] to protect against nar-

cotics and many other things that might happen to them. It is difficult to look after the children. Therefore it is an advantage that they learn and that they are protected. It means a lot.”

It is reasonable to understand the homework assistance programme itself – when successful – as contributing to social cohesion in the sense that the goal is to improve school performance of children from a Turkish background, including increased language competence. Improved performance will increase chances that the pupils will later gain access to higher education and be successful in the labour market, and thus, prevent social exclusion. The Norwegian language lessons are an important part of the homework assistance programme. The manager tries to have all the assistants speak Norwegian when they talk with the boys. When the boys do their homework, they are asked to use only Norwegian in their communication with each other. The teachers also try to have them watch Norwegian television, like children’s programmes and news programmes. The programme has created tensions in the local community as described. Outside viewers have feared it will undermine social integration. Insiders see it as an effort to add to the chances of the children’s successful integration in society and at the same time developing a Turkish-Muslim identity.

### A local situation in flux – changes regarding religion, minorities and gender

The main thrust of voluntary migration to Norway (especially people from Turkey and Pakistan) took place in the first half of the 1970s (Angell, 2007). Because of lower housing prices in Drammen, groups of Turks and Pakistanis moved from Oslo to Drammen. They brought with them Islam to Drammen.

During the past two decades the settling of refugees and family reunification have been the major reasons for the influx of migrants to Drammen. Only lately, since the last extension of the EU, has the number of people coming from the former East European countries increased. This group of people, and those arriving from some Far Eastern Asian countries, like Vietnam, as refugees (involuntary migrants), have contributed to increasing the number of Roman Catholics in the Drammen area. However, as the town has grown, the percentage of registered Catholics has remained fairly constant over the past decade.

There are indications that the rate of Muslim females using religious symbols in public space has increased over the past decade. Observers at some of the primary and lower secondary schools in Drammen claim that – as they have experienced it – it has become more common among Turkish-Norwegian women to wear the *hijab* than before, including among school girls. Observers provide diverse interpretations and explanations on the

change of dress habits. Some see it as a result of religious pressure from certain religious groups which are among the most conservative ones in the Turkish-Norwegian community. Others interpret the change as a result of pressure on Muslim girls, both from Turkish and other backgrounds, from certain recent immigrant groups that tend to be more conservative in religious matters than those of Turkish background, whose families have been in Norway for a long time. An example to illustrate how parents may experience religious pressure from the environment is the following, related by one of the Muslim families:

“Our son went to church with the others to attend the end-of-term service in the church. At Easter the other Muslim children in his class complained about him. They said: ‘You are a Muslim; you shall not go to church’. The teacher got mad at the behaviour of the [other] Muslim children.” (F15, F).

Moreover, there are those that explain the change they have observed as a consequence of the changed distribution of ethnic groups in certain parts of the town. They interpret the change in dress habits as a sign that in certain localities the minority has become a majority, and that this change has made the minority more open, thus making them dress according to what they think is right and less influenced by (former) majority rules. The various explanations may be compatible, e.g. they may be characteristic of changes that have taken place in different local environments. We do not have observational data allowing us to confirm or refute the statements made by the interviewees.

A change has taken place in the patterns of interaction between the school and the parents in the community of Turkish origin over the past couple of decades. School leaders and teachers more or less unanimously agree that fathers used to represent the family in the family-school interactions to a far greater extent than today, when mothers now play a more prominent role; this was confirmed by our own observations during the field work. The change in interaction patterns may have different explanations. One of the interviewees attributed the change to a change of power within the family, in favour of women, from a role where to a greater extent they were confined to the home, to a situation with increased societal participation. Since this observation is connected with changes taking place over a fairly long time span, it is likely to be related to generational changes. Others attributed the change primarily to change in the pattern of language competence among men and women – or fathers and mothers. The pattern of immigration among people of Turkish background was that the men came first, as employment seekers; the rest of the family came later. A consequence was that men, through their active participation in work life, learned Norwegian at an early stage. The women, more confined to the home according to traditional gender roles, did not learn to speak Norwegian, or only after a long time. There-

fore, the fathers took care of the family's interaction with the school of their children. Later, the demands on all immigrants to learn Norwegian through obligatory participation in language classes have helped improve the language competence, also of women. Moreover, the generational argument is valid here: second generation persons, irrespective of gender, tend to be more language competent than persons of first and intermediate generations. This is the impression conveyed by the interviewees, both minority representatives, as well as, those representing the majority.

## Analysis: emergent values

### Emergent values

The concept of value is central in many scientific disciplines. In this article we will take value in the sociological sense as our main starting point. In this sense the term refers to the ultimate good or desirable; on the individual level, who we want to be and what we want to do (Graeber, 2001, p. 1). One of the challenges in values research is to study and understand the (possible) link between values and actions; how values facilitate action towards ends that enhance certain outcomes or are perceived to do so by society's members, and how values may be deduced from action patterns. One way to try to come to terms with the problem is to see the relationship between values and actions as dialectical, in line with the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard's statement that life must be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards (see e.g. Thielst, 1994). Along such lines we may approach the issue of values through the question: How do we make our findings meaningful, engaging moral considerations? One way of doing this is to ascribe values to actions and attitudes, where values are perceived as heuristic devices introduced by the researcher to make sense of patterns of observations (Deth and Scarbrough, 1995). This is in line with the way Inglehart conceives of values, as connected with people's consistent patterns of emphasis on certain types of goals (Inglehart, 1990, p. 74) or as "consistency generators" (Sniderman *et al.*, 1991). We should not expect consistencies across domains of action or life segments; the institutional differentiation characterising modernity is associated with corresponding separate values spheres. A potential problem with this conceptualisation of values is that it may disregard possible inconsistencies in people's patterns of action and attitudes within given domains of behaviour, and make people more rational and consistent than there is reason to believe (see e.g. St. Paul's letter to the Romans, chap. 7).

## Education

Some of the examples given above make the value of education a topic of interest. Interview data almost unanimously tell us that high level of education is as an important value in the various Muslim communities in Drammen, as it is in the majority population. Some of the interviewees suggest that children's education has become a more important value over the years since the influx of immigrants started in the late 1960s. They ascribe the change to the increased level of parents' education in successive generations of parents. Parents with high levels of education may tend to perceive education as a value in itself, as an autotelic value; and their education may provide them with a better understanding of the instrumental role of education in society, as an important key to social mobility and a good job, i.e. as an instrumental or heterotelic value.

In the data, we have not found support for an attitude that education is more important for girls than for boys or vice versa. As to girls' education, a teacher from a minority background put her experiences this way:

“Some [parents] think that the girls are going to get married. But I hear [mothers say]: ‘I am a cleaner and do not want my girls to have it like that. I want them to have good education.’” (L9, F).

This conclusion is likely to be representative for the minority groups as a whole. Statistics confirm behaviour consistent with the view expressed in the quotation. It shows that in Drammen second generation immigrants – or Norwegians – to a slightly less extent than the whole population, continue their education after completing obligatory school, and girls to a slightly higher degree than boys. The same pattern is observed in higher education (IMDI, 2007).

We have not studied classroom interactions in our research. Most social research concludes that the way the school system operates it favours girls (Haug, 2004). If seen in a family perspective the roles of the father and the mother in stimulating and supporting the education process and attending to the interaction and cooperation with the school system are different. Supporting children in their school work is considered to be in the mother's domain.

By considering several orientations or communities within the Muslim religious tradition in Drammen and by interviewing Muslims from different national backgrounds, comparing values, attitudes and behaviour across such divides, it seems that culture is more important than religion in explaining minority group attitudes, opinions and behaviour, and their adaptation in the majority society. On the other hand, the content of some of the homework assistance programmes established by the Turkish Norwegian communities, some of which include religious education, indicates that religious values are important. But in our case we are still speaking of Turkish Islam. The insis-

tence that gymnastics classes be organised in gender specific groups, the increased prevalence of females wearing the *hijab* also speak of the importance of religious values. But the school has adapted to the situation and conflicts seem to have been avoided. It is worth noting that religious values, as they are expressed in this paragraph, affect males and females in different ways. The restrictions in clothing and behaviour, presumably based on religious doctrine, primarily affect females (see e.g. Prieur, 2004, pp. 51-53).

In a wider perspective the part of the homework assistance programme that concerns religious education may be seen in connection with what majority representatives see as challenges or problems regarding social integration and social cohesion. Two of the challenges mentioned are the fact that minority parents involve themselves, to a lesser extent than majority parents, in the running of the school, and that minority children are absent to a larger extent than majority children from extracurricular activities and social events, like birthday parties. In the analysis we will draw on Thor Ola Engen's analysis of minority families and their educational strategies in Norway (Engen, 2006).

We have ascertained that the minority parents interviewed agreed that (good) education for the children is an important value. Those interviewed, representing schools in Drammen as school leaders and teachers, agreed that this was also their impression of the parents. The behaviour of minority parents and minority children of taking less part in activities directly or indirectly related to what goes on at the school, which is the basis for the schools' worrying, may be understood as being connected with the parents' valuing of education. However, we will once more turn back to the controversial homework assistance programme. But in this context we will concentrate on the first part of the quotation from the leader of the programme presented on page 22: "*The reason for setting it up was to pass our identity, our values, on to the children*". The espoused value of education, the patterns of behaviour of children and parents, which constituted a basis for concern among school representatives, and the emphasis on the need of passing on the parents' identity to the children may be interpreted as parts of a whole, i.e. as elements in the parents' adaptation to the situation in which they find themselves as minority in Drammen.

Engen (Engen *et al.*, 1997; Engen, 2006) has launched the hypothesis of a division of labour between school and home in educational matters as the parents' functional adaptation. As Engen interprets the curriculum for the 10-year compulsory school in Norway, he sees a possibility that minority parents may interpret it a way that the school will take the main responsibility for qualifying the children for entrance and active participation in majority society. But the school will leave to the parents to take the main responsibility for the tasks related to qualifying the children for the minority culture (Engen, 2006: 156). In this way there is a common interest for the school

and the parents to provide the children with as good a competence as possible in Norwegian language and how society works. This may be understood by minority parents as an assimilation strategy by the majority. The tacit agreement of a division of labour between the school and the home makes it necessary for parents to take care of an important part of the “identity work” by means of separate structures in the community. This may be done in different ways and it may be perceived in different ways by parents. The controversial homework assistance programme may be one way of dealing with this issue.

Engen points to a possible paradoxical consequence of an understanding among parents of a division of labour: in return for letting the school take care of the children for qualifying purposes in its own way, parents may decide to withdraw the children from informal contact with majority peers. Full integration in school thus means (to some extent) segregation outside school. However, the segregation may have negative consequences for the children’s future chances to build up a career. Segregation impacts on their chances of learning the majority language and to develop a relevant Norwegian habitus, i.e. to embody the ways of getting around in Norwegian society, which could prevent them from building informal social networks that are so useful to majority youth, cf. Bourdieu’s concept of social capital emphasising informal social networks as a resource (Bourdieu, 1986).

The homework assistance programme is not only about supporting children’s efforts in school in order to improve their performance and strengthen their religious identity. It is also about their specific Turkish Muslim identity. The division of labour hypothesis applied to our material is a way of making the material meaningful and associating it with certain values. An answer to the questions on who the parents want to be and who they want their children to be, could be that they want for both parties to be Norwegians, Turkish and Muslims. Their educational strategy and their functional adaptation, indicate “multiple identities”: in their relationship with the school their “Norwegianness” is important, outside school their “Turkish Muslimness” is what is at stake. The opinion of the public authorities that we interviewed, who worked in close contact with the school, was that the balancing of identities impacted girls more than boys. In case this is true, it may be connected with the notion of “honour”, reputation and status, where the family’s honour is closely connected to the future of females. Consequently, girls are more controlled in their behaviour than boys, and they may experience more pressure than boys. Helping girls survive and find their own way in these circumstances is seen as a core task for some of the public authorities we interviewed. One interviewee said the goal of this part of their work was to “*teach the girls to balance without falling. It means to do things without the parents discovering it, to a certain extent*” (G8, F).

## Family

There is always more than one way of making behaviour meaningful. Above we interpreted the withdrawal of children from extracurricular activities as part of a more comprehensive strategy to maintain “Turkish Muslimness”. Another way of interpreting this is to consider more narrowly a tension between a set of values connected with the family and another set of values connected with the individual. In modern, western society the individual has become the primary concern in questions of rights and duties; in the curriculum for the 10-year compulsory school in Norway the focus of attention is the individual’s growth to become a responsible citizen. In many immigrant milieus the family and its interests are as important as the individual and his/her interests. A school-based health visitor in Drammen related that:

“I have discovered value differences between me as a health visitor and the parents of minority school children when it comes to the children’s out of school activities. Many children have nothing to do after school and there are so many good, organised activities offered to them here at X. [...] I can say to the parents that I think it would be good for the children that they have their own things. Then it becomes clear that the children cannot participate because they have to attend to duties they have at home; look after children, do housework and so on. [...] While we in Norwegian culture think that it is good for children to be free and to have the opportunity to express themselves as individuals to make them independent, they [the minorities] are much more concerned with the family.” (H4, F).

This is in line with what the parents themselves say when asked about their conception of or associations with “welfare” or “good life”. Compared with Norwegian majority culture or what is usually associated with “western culture” many minority families express in words or actions what we may understand as the ethical primacy of the family in the sense that the individual’s moral interests are subsumed under those of the family.

With regard to the specific issue of participation in school camps away from home, the absence of minority children may be explained as expressing the parents’ fear of having boys and girls together. Parents that we interviewed confirmed this, and so did the health visitor cited above, referring to her talks with parents at school:

“Even when we assured them that the boys are going one place and the girls another, it is not enough for all of them” (H4, F).

Parents and religious leaders argue that it is against Islam to have free mixing of boys and girls. When “free mixing” is not possible to prevent in school, it may still be enforced (to some extent) in extracurricular activities. It will be seen as especially important in an age when the children are about to reach puberty and under circumstances where parents may fear a relaxed

social control with the children, as during excursions or school trips. This may be taken to be another expression of the ethical primacy of family, including the prescription of certain behaviour codes of boys and girls.

The absence of minority children from birthday parties may be explained in a similar, more pragmatic way. It was related in some of the interviews with minority parents that birthday celebrations are not common in Turkey. The parents' behaviour may in part be explained that way; some parents may not think about arranging a birthday party for their children, and may not consider it important for their children to go to other children's birthday parties. In addition, parents explained in the interview that they - at least in the beginning - were insecure about allowing their children to participate in such parties because they did not know what went on and what the children would be served to eat (referring to dietary constraints in Islam). Other practical reasons were also conveyed in the interviews. In such cases behaviour is not necessarily an expression of values, but of implicit knowledge and habits, or *habitus*, to use Bourdieu's concept. On the other hand, religious values may be involved.

### Cohesion or conflicts based on interests rather than values?

According to Coser (Coser, 2003), since classical Greek times a distinction has been made between conflicts based on consensus and conflicts that involve discrepancies over fundamental values in society. In Coser's framework the former may give rise to adjustments and reform, while the latter may cause a breakdown of society, a social revolution.

The interpretation of patterns of behaviour by parents according to Engen's theory makes connections between values and interests topical. As perceived by the school, the social withdrawal by parents and their children may be interpreted as a value conflict. For the parents, the tension may be understood in terms of interests and possibly a matter of negotiations between school and home. Schooling may be evaluated primarily in instrumental terms where the "who to be and what to do" is connected with opportunities in the labour market and social status associated with the position acquired in the market. Analogous line of reasoning may be used to understand families and their sceptical attitude towards a Muslim primary school. In its consequences, the strategies based on interest may lead to social cohesion through a process of socialisation.

We may also (partly) understand the degree of parents' participation in school and children's absence from extracurricular activities in terms of time and money as scarce resources: the rates of low income families are higher among the immigrant population than in the population as a whole. In the categories of families that we are studying, "traditional" gender role patterns are more widespread than in the majority population. With low paid work,

the work load may be heavy on the husband and the task of taking care of the children rests with the mother. Thus, family obligations, in addition to language problems, may cause parents to give low priority to involvement in school related activities. Likewise, extracurricular activities for children are time and money consuming. Instead of having one of the older children participate in such activities, a daughter (!?) may take care of the young children at home and give the mother an opportunity to attend to tasks to be performed in town.

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# Chapter 5 Finland

## 5:1 OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SITUATION

Anne Birgitta Pessi, Eila Helander, Henrietta Grönlund

### Introduction

Finland represents the Nordic social democratic welfare model with a strong public sector, tax funding and equal treatment. Gender equality has been central. The background of the social democratic welfare model lies particularly in the long tradition of political democracy, the Lutheran version of Christianity, the long history of social-democratic political values and strong will and ability for social and national integration. Eighty two percent of Finns are Lutheran, so Lutheranism is considered a part of the Finnish identity.

The status of the Evangelical Lutheran Church has gradually changed from a state church to a folk church since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the church has an independent relation to the Finnish state. The Lutheran Church, as well as, the other existing folk church, the Orthodox Church (1% of Finns are members), nevertheless have duties that could be performed by either the state or the local government, and based on their public rights in state legislation, these churches are entitled to collect taxes. The social role of the Church has remained active after the depression in the 1990's when its social work was oriented increasingly towards the unemployed and people with financial and mental health problems.

Recent research on the level of the whole country concerning the social, welfare-related role of religious agents in Finland is limited. Only a few studies have examined from a broad perspective the different churches and faith-based organisations as welfare providers (Helander 2005, Yeung 2003 and 2006). Statistical research at the national level concerning the social welfare work of the Evangelical-Lutheran church in relation to changes in the society and the Finnish welfare model has recently been carried out by Grönlund and Hiilamo (2005 and 2006). Saari, Kainulainen and Yeung (2005) have examined the financial aid and donations by the Church similarly with statistical research at the national level. Research on more defined

issues – such as the Church's role in helping those with excessive debt (Gothoni 2006), and its work in relation to poverty and the poor (Karjalainen and Malkavaara (eds.) 2000; Mäkinen (ed.) 2002) has also been carried out. In addition, a few hand-book-style publications on church social work have recently emerged (e.g., Helosvuori et al. 2002).

Finland is a homogenous country not only in terms of religion but also in terms of ethnic minorities, as the refugee and immigration policy has kept the number of foreigners fairly low. Immigrants representing over 40 nations form a mere 2.2% of the total population, Russians and Estonians being the largest groups. Despite the small proportion and recent arrival of most ethnic minorities, minority groups in general in the Finnish context, especially immigrants and refugees, have been relatively adequately studied. There are also reports on minorities and challenges in relation to minority groups (e. g. Similä 2003; Protassova 2005). The viewpoint of research on minorities has often been problem-based, focusing on themes such as unemployment and exclusion (Valtonen 2001). Liebkind et al. (e. g. 2000) have carried out several studies in relation to ethnic and also linguistic minorities in Finland. Many of the studies also observe integration policies and welfare. The perspectives of children and youth have been studied extensively, (e.g. Alitolppa-Niitamo 2004), as have the themes of identity, integration, and racism (e.g. Kulsoom 2005). Some research also includes national minorities (e. g. Kulsoom 2005). The overall situation of national minorities (Roma and Sami people, Swedish speaking Finns) has also been recently reported in the 2004 "Second periodic report on the application of the framework convention on the protection of national minorities". Since research on ethnic relations, multiculturalism and minorities do not have the status of an independent, established discipline in Finland, analyses on these topics are quite diverse. There are several comprehensive bibliographies about relevant research (e. g. *Muuttoliikkeet...*, 2004).

Research into the civic participation of minorities has also included the view point of churches and religions (Silvain et al. 2005). Minority groups, especially in relation to religion, have been examined from the viewpoint of the immigrants' religious activity and their relation to religious surroundings (Martikainen 2004). Special interest has been shown in Muslims. Sakaranaho has studied Muslims in Finland, for example from the viewpoint of the welfare society (e. g. Sakaranaho et al. 2004), and Tiilikainen (2000) has concentrated on Somali immigrants.

Gender equality has been central in Finland as Finnish women were the first in Europe to receive universal and equal voting rights. Women's status has been strengthened by the social security system and the possibility of reconciling family life with paid work. Nevertheless, for example income equality and the unequal division of short-term employment are still substantial problems. Also, research into gender issues is extensive but studies fo-

cusing especially on the relation of religion and welfare are nevertheless scarce. Yeung (2006) has studied the intersections between welfare, church and gender in Finland, as Markkola (e. g. 2002) has focused on the history of women, religion and social work. The theme of gender and world views or religion has been studied by Helve (e. g. 2000), and by Tiilikainen (e.g. 2004 on Muslim women in Finland) from a Muslim perspective.

The relationship between the majority church and minority groups has not been examined a great deal in recent research. Research into the Church's relation with sexual minorities can be found (e.g. Nissinen et al. 2003), but studies into other minorities in relation to the Lutheran church are scarce. Only a few older studies can be found concentrating, for instance, on the Sami people and the Church (Kähkönen 1990). Almost ten years ago, the diocese of Helsinki has also published an anthology of immigrant groups in Finland, especially the challenges that multiculturalism poses to the Church (Tammi (ed.). 1997).

As a synopsis it can be said that recent research combining all the themes of the WAVE project is scarce. The intersections of the dominant Lutheran Church and religion with minority and gender issues within the perspective of welfare and values have been understudied and, thus, deserve additional attention.

## Characteristics of the national welfare system

Today the Finnish social protection system follows the principles of the Nordic social democratic welfare model, the main features of which are:

- the principle of universality (the right of all to social protection regardless of where they live, their profession or economic position)
- a strong public sector
- tax funding based on legislative rights of citizens/residents
- equal treatment

Economic, social and educational basic rights are guaranteed in Finland by the state and the municipal authorities. In the Finnish system, the *social protection* by the public sector consists of preventive social and health policy, social welfare and health services, as well as sickness, unemployment, old age and other benefits. Practically all households at some point or other receive a form of income transfer or use social and health services (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, overall social protection 2004). Furthermore, all residents are covered by *social security schemes*, which govern basic pensions (national pensions), sickness and maternity benefits and unemployment

benefits. In addition, all employed persons are entitled to benefits based on employment, such as employment pensions and benefits for employment-related accidents. The basic elements of the Finnish social protection system also include social insurance (Basic elements in Finnish social protection 2001). Overall social welfare consists of a whole span of social services and benefits, as well as, last resort income support (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, social services and benefits 2004).

The central government, the municipalities and the employers mainly finance social expenditure in Finland. The direct contribution to the social protection expenditure made by the insured is far lower in Finland than in the other EU countries. This is a characteristic feature of countries where benefits are based on the principle of universality (Finnish social protection system 2002).

Most Finnish municipalities have less than 10,000 inhabitants. Municipal institutions provide statutory services, either on their own or along with other municipalities. The most important areas in the service sector are primary health care and specialised medical care, children's day care and schooling, care of the elderly, services for the disabled, social assistance and child welfare. Social assistance is a last-resort benefit. The municipalities can also purchase these obligatory services from the private sector – or other agents such as the church (rarely though) – so that private services supplement public services. Generally speaking, the municipalities finance approximately 70% (2006: 65% Haataja et al. 2006) of the costs of providing social and healthcare services. State subsidies contribute a fifth (2006: 25%) of these costs, and client payments cover the remaining 10% (Ministry of Social Affairs and health, promoting social welfare 2004).

How much money is really invested in welfare? During the early 1990s the ratio of social expenditure to GDP rose considerably due to the economic recession in Finland. Economic growth, savings in public expenditure, a drop in unemployment and reform measures have consequently lowered the ratio, and it is now near the EU average (28, 3% in 2003). In 2001, the social protection expenditure accounted for 25.4% of GDP. However, in 2003 Finland's expenditure on social protection as a proportion of GDP stood at 27% of GDP (38.5 billion euros), which is still below the average of the other EU countries (Ministry of Social Affairs and health, promoting social welfare 2004; Finnish social protection system 2002). But in what areas is this money primarily invested? About one third of the Finnish social expenditure is invested in the elderly. The second largest expenditure relates to sickness and health. Together they take over half of the total social expenditure, and their share will expand in coming years. It is estimated that expenditure on unemployment will remain at approximately 10% in the next few years and amounts spent on families with children will drop slightly (from the current 12%).

In Finnish families both parents often work full-time, including mothers with small children (about 70% of mothers with young children are employed). In addition, women in many families are still in charge of most domestic tasks. Women also usually take parental and other similar types of leaves thus enjoying the assistance from the state. This weakens their position on the labour market. Furthermore, 27% of households receiving minimum income security are single parent households. This usually suggests that women are primarily the heads of households (Stakes: *Toimeentulotukea...*, 2006).

On the whole, the Finnish welfare system is to a great extent run by the public sector (state and municipalities). The role of private companies and NGOs is much more limited. In principle the majority church does not have a formal, state-endorsed role in the welfare system. However, the third sector and church welfare activities were very strong during the recession of the early 1990s and since then they still remain relatively active – but also debated.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, according to the latest Sociobarometer studies (2004, 5; 2006), welfare and healthcare services have been extensively restructured. This also means an increase in regional co-operation. Currently approximately up to 90% of healthcare centres already buy services from private companies. Nine out of ten social offices use services from private companies and organisations. Welfare and healthcare services in general have had serious difficulties recruiting employees. One third of those interviewed for the 2004 Sociobarometer study considered that competition between service providers has negative effects, while only one fourth found the influence positive. Therefore, since the 1990s the role of the third sector and private sector has increased in the Finnish social welfare system but this growth has remained moderate (Saari 2001, 70).

The general trend of economic development in Finland has been mainly positive in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The only evidence remaining from the recession of the early 1990s is structural unemployment, which continues at a high level of 8.4% in 2005 (8.9% female and 8.2% male unemployment) with the EU unemployment average (25 EU countries) being 8.8% (9.9% female and 7.9% male unemployment).<sup>2</sup> Also the national debt has remained relatively high. Long term unemployment (12 months or more) is still 2.2% of the working force, while the EU average is 3.9% (Eurostat. General and regional statistics. 2006). Furthermore, major issues that have emerged during the last years are the slight growth of (proportional) poverty,

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, in spring 2006 the major Finnish newspapers, e.g. Helsingin Sanomat daily, included a variety of somewhat heated statements – both in favour and against what? (e.g., *Palvelujen siirtäminen järjestöille olisi vastuutonta*, 2006) – reacting to a text by a right-wing leading politician who had tried to promote a greater role of NGOs in social service provision.

<sup>2</sup> In March 2004, out of the total number of unemployed job applicants, 161,600 (56%) were men and 127,000 (44%) women (Employment bulletin of the Finnish Ministry of Labour 2003).

the increasing number of single-parent-families, the growth of economic gaps between different regions of the country, the increase of income differences and, thus, the risk of social exclusion.<sup>3</sup> In 2005 the share of persons with income below the risk-of-poverty threshold (60% of the national median income after social transfers) was 11%, while the EU average was estimated at 16% (Eurostat. General and regional statistics. 2006).

Additionally, Finland is one of Europe's fastest ageing countries. According to demographic forecasts, in 2020 a fifth of Finns will have reached 65 years of age (at the moment 15.9% of population are 65 or older, Eurostat 2006). Together with the decreasing young age categories, this development will mean great changes in the age structure of the population: the pyramid is turned upside down. (*Sosiaaliturvan suunta 2005-2006*; Types of Social welfare in Finland 1999; Finland is ageing 1999.) In general public debate on welfare has recently focused on the care of the elderly and its costs. Since both women and men work full time, the care of the elderly is usually financed and organised by the public sector. The increasing numbers of elderly people, cuts in financing of the welfare sector, as well as difficulty to find employees in the nursing public sector have resulted in criticism towards the care provided as inadequate and even poor. In the political debates, some have wished for the third sector to take on more responsibility, which again has been interpreted as bringing back the care of the elderly to women free of charge.

The increasing ageing of the population is also one of the central reasons behind perhaps the most central welfare-related debate of today's Finland: a radical re-organisation of the municipal service structure. This process is still under debate and development; yet one direction is the increasing co-operation of municipalities in welfare and health provision and also the merging of smaller municipalities (*Kunta- ja palvelurakennemuutos*, 2006). This process has also triggered discussion on the gender-dimension (e. g. *Alustava arvio...* 2005).

Two further specific challenges of the Finnish welfare scene must be noted. First, over the last few years, considerable changes have occurred in the Finnish operational environment and workings of the healthcare system. The service system has become more open care-orientated. For instance, the number of mental health patients cared for in hospitals has been cut significantly (*Handbook on Preparedness Planning for Health Care 2002*; Wahlbeck 2003). Second, the increasing long-term dependency on social assistance is a fact: the number of social assistance recipients has, to some extent,

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<sup>3</sup> *Sosiaaliturvan suunta 2005-2006*; Report on Social Affairs and Health 2002; Kainulainen, Rintala and Heikkilä 2001; *Sosiaalimenojen kehitys pitkällä aikavälillä*, 2002; *Sosiaali- ja terveystietomus 2006*. In 2005, social exclusion – and its consequences – affecting children, youth, and alcoholics or other substance abusers have increasingly become a cause of public concern and debate.

fallen in recent years, but costs have not decreased. The economic situation of households who have long relied on social assistance has gone from bad to worse (Trends in Social Protection in Finland 2002). It has been generally acknowledged that support and services are inadequate for those with the most difficult and accumulated difficulties. Marginalisation is a reality for many facing long term unemployment or mental health problems. Less than half of the Finnish municipalities estimated that it was possible to provide good social services with the existing resources and 10% percent admitted to have serious difficulties. As resources lessen with the diminishing proportion of tax paying citizens and increasing proportion of those who are retired, it seems that the weakest in need of special services suffer the most (Socio-barometer 2006). Measures, such as renewing the pension system and the municipal service structure have been undertaken. Nevertheless, the increasing responsibility of family and the third sector has been seen as unavoidable in the public debate.

Gender in relation to welfare, the themes of income equality and the unequal division of short-term employment have been central in public debate. The current government agenda contains a comprehensive section on gender equality. It has set up an equality action plan, which, among other things, aims to achieve an income equality program. Other areas covered by the action plan include women in leadership, fixed term service relations and the use of paternity leave. Finland is currently renewing its equality legislation and making the gender impact assessment aspect of mainstreaming all government administration (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Equality Policy 2004).

On the whole, at the moment there are no obvious sources of extreme conflict related to welfare provision regarding religion, minorities or gender. Quite the contrary, one topic often raised in the media is the forthcoming need for more immigrants to fulfill the increasing need for employees in the welfare and health sectors.

## Religious composition in the country

Most Finns (82%) are members of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland. The Orthodox Church of Finland has the same official “folk church” status as the Lutheran Church, although only one percent of Finns are members (57,000) (Church in Change 2004; *Kirkko muutosten keskellä* 2004). Other, smaller, Christian groups with a proportion of one percent or less of the population include: Pentecostals (50,000 in a total population of 5,25 million) and members of the Finnish Free Church (13,000). There are also small groups of Roman Catholics (8,000), Adventists (4,000), Baptists (2,600), Methodists (1,200) and Anglican- Episcopalians (100). In addition,

there are Jehovah's Witnesses (19,000), Muslims (approximately 25,000, of which 2,600 officially registered), Mormons (3,300) and Jews (1,200). Up to 13.5% of Finns are non-affiliated (Evangelical Lutheran church, other churches and religions in Finland 2004; Church in Change 2004). The number of those who do not belong to any church has grown over the last few decades, similarly to Western Europe. It includes, however, members of non-registered religious communities (e.g. Pentecostal congregations). Atheists are still a rarity in modern Finland: only 3% of those surveyed in 2000 identified themselves as atheists.

## Characteristics of the majority Church

The status of the Evangelical Lutheran church of Finland has gradually changed from a state church to a folk church since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g., Björkstrand 1990, 17). Freedom of religion came into effect in 1923. The church of Finland has an independent relation to the Finnish state. The legal status of the church is defined in the Constitution and in a separate Ecclesiastical Act. Nevertheless, both the Evangelical Lutheran and the Orthodox Church still have duties that could be performed by either the state or the local government. The parishes keep local population registers of their members, and people belonging to other denominations and those listed on the non-denominational population register are buried in the more than 1,000 cemeteries maintained by the Lutheran and Orthodox parishes (Kääriäinen 2002). At the moment only about 2% of Finns are buried without a church service, and 87% of all infants are baptised. Sixty-eight percent of marriages are solemnised in the Church. (Church in Change 2004, 47).

Based on their public rights in state legislation, the Lutheran and Orthodox churches are entitled to collect taxes. In addition to church taxes from church members, they are also entitled to a proportion of the corporate tax collected from societies and corporations with the exception of registered religious organisations and freethinker societies, that is organisations for the convinced non-religious in Finland (Seppo 2001). The latter privilege and its replacement with a statutory allowance from the state have been discussed in the parliament but so far the practice has not been changed. (*Kirkko muutos-ten keskellä* 2004, 31-32; Heikkilä et al. 2005).

Parishes receive 78% of their income in the form of a church tax charged together with state and local taxation (Kääriäinen 2002). The largest proportion of church tax (44%) is used in parish work. Also, the maintenance of churches and other buildings takes up 17% of tax income (the average amount raised as taxes are about US\$ 145 per member per year; Evangelical Lutheran Church, finances 2004). In 2000, the church had 19,600 (full or part time) employees (Kääriäinen 2002; Mäkeläinen 2001b). The number of

parishioners per pastor is exceedingly large in Finland; there are approximately 2,300 parishioners for every pastor. Approximately 21,300 people work in the Church: 45% do parish work and 9% work as diaconal workers. The rest work in administration, cemeteries, etc. The amount of diaconal workers increased by 21% from 1999 to 2003. Up to 70% of the all church employees and 91% of diaconal workers are women. The ordination of women was approved in Finland in 1986 and today 32% of the church's pastors are women (Mäkeläinen 2001b, Church in Change 2004, 87). Still today there are critical voices and debates from time to time, and there is sometimes reluctance by certain male priests to cooperate with women priests. Such occasions are reported to church media and other types of media.

The most important levels of administration in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland are the parish, the diocese, and the church as a whole. The key principle of administration is that each administrative body includes both clergy and lay people. With the exception of the diocesan chapters and the Bishops' Conference, all administrative bodies within the church have a clear majority of lay people (Mäkeläinen 2001a).

Church members belong to the parish in the area they live. Large parishes are characteristic to Finland's ecclesiastical situation. Of the 570 parishes in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, only 30 have less than 1,000 members. The average parish has 7,000 members. The highest decision-making body within each parish is the parish council (parochial council), the members of which are elected every four years. All members of the parish over the age of 18 have the right to vote in the parish council elections. The parochial council for example determines the church tax rate of the parish and approves parish budgets (Mäkeläinen 2001a). The Church is composed of nine dioceses, eight of which are regional, with the remaining one covering all of the country's Swedish speaking parishes. A bishop is the head of his or her diocese's administration. The supreme decision-making body for the entire church is the Synod, which determines the doctrines, policies and finances of the church; it meets twice a year (Kääriäinen 2002). The church's common organ for general administrative functions is the Church Council. Its duty is to take care of the church's common administrative, economic and strategic needs.

The social services of the Finnish church worked primarily with the elderly, but as the social situation has changed, work is increasingly oriented towards people of working age faced with problems such as unemployment, financial concerns and mental health problems. In 2004 the Church diaconal work made 734,000 contacts with welfare users (mostly at the diaconal offices or people's homes) meeting 268,000 welfare users. Parishes organised 11,000 events for distributing food in which 426,000 people took part (not included in the contacts indicated above) (*Kirkon tilastollinen vuosikirja*

2004, 2005). There is extensive cooperation between the church and the municipal social service offices. The increased social role of the church after the depression of the 1990s was not only active but also visible (Mäkeläinen 2001b).<sup>4</sup> Employees in Christian social work organised demonstrations against reductions in social security. Pastors and bishops participated actively in debates on poverty, thus challenging the public sector. The extension of church welfare services was widely reported by the media and the active role played by the church during the recession gave it a more positive public image. Since the recession the social workers of the church have remained active participants in public debates on a variety of social, environmental and human rights issues. Furthermore, the Finnish bishops have published jointly a small number of official statements, on issues such as sexual ethical issues *Kasvamaan yhdessä (Growing together)* and *Kohti yhteistä hyvää (Toward Common Good)*, both in 1999. The latter concerns social ethics and expresses the bishops' concern over the need for community-based responsibility (Hytönen 2003a, 18). Overall, during the 1990s the church has been quite active in its societal and ethical statements. The church has, for example, regularly published statements on the initiatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (See, e.g., Hytönen 2003a, 170-174).

The Evangelical Lutheran church of Finland has never been extremely active on gender issues (Sulkunen 2004). Gender and religion were, nonetheless, intertwined in the assembly of the Finnish work and moral reform in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Women took on philanthropic work (e.g., founded orphanages, deaconess institutions, women's homes) and participated both in home missions and in social work rooted in revivalist religious values (Markkola 2002, 429-430, 438-441). The Finnish church did not develop a gender equality plan until December 1998 (*Kirkon keskushallinnolle tasa-arvosuunnitelma* 1998). Over the last few decades, the church of Finland has published statements, or participated in consultation documents, on a variety of issues related to gender equality: for instance, concerning gender equality (1982), violence (1982), sexual crime (1994), prostitution (1996), domestic violence (2000) and trafficking (2005) (Hytönen 2003a, 256-171, *Lausunto ulkoministeriölle ihmiskaupan..-2005*).

Concerning minorities (cultural and religious) and immigrants, the Church does not have any particular tensions with any groups. Overall, the promotion of values (both by acts and statements of welfare) of the Church concerns far-reaching solidarity – for both all people living in Finland and internationally. The Church has, for instance, published a statement ad-

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<sup>4</sup> The volume of diaconal aid was 900,000 counselling sessions per year at the turn of the millennium. Approximately 7% of the population received help and counselling from parish diaconal workers. The parishes also arrange meals and other activities for the unemployed. A total of 440,000 people participated in such meals in 2000 (Salonen 2001).

dressed to the Ministry of Labour about ethnic equality<sup>5</sup>, and it offers its services and welfare activities for all people, regardless of their religious or cultural background (*Kirkon työ... 2006*).<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the Church views itself as “internationally penetrating all the levels of the Church’s actions”. This is exemplified in investing, among other things, in missionary work, friendship-congregations abroad, and international training offered by dioceses and the Church Council in Finland. The highest level of the Church, the Church Council, has specific offices and working parties for work with immigrants and foreigners living in the country. They focus on supporting the values of solidarity and love, and the adjustment of immigrants and refugees, etc. (*Kansainvälinen työ, toimijat Suomessa 2006; Kirkon työ... 2006*). The Church also organises various activities, such as confirmation education in various languages (most popular are: Arabic, Russian, French, Chinese), particularly for immigrants (*Maa-hanmuuttajarippikoulut 2006*). Also, local parishes offer services to immigrants and foreigners, and cooperate with municipalities and other associations in assisting minorities.<sup>7</sup> The Church is engaged in active dialogue and cooperation with Finland’s minority religions (the Orthodox and Catholic church, etc.) at all levels (*Church in Change 2004, 67-68*).

Sexual minorities have been a debated topic in the Church. The Church Council was against the right of same sex unions in 1999, as well as, against the right for same sex couples to adopt each other’s children after registration of their union. In 2005 it also recommended that fertility treatments (assisted conception) should be made available only to heterosexual couples, not to single women or couples of the same sex. The Synod has considered initiatives concerning the position of sexual minorities in the Church but these initiatives have not lead to any decisions (*Church in Change 2004, 18-19*). At the moment opposing positions are represented within the Church at all levels. The Church has not clearly explained its stance towards these minorities, although official statements on specific issues have been negative towards same sex unions and the rights of same sex couples, causing criticism in public debates, especially among younger people (e.g. Mikkola et al. 2006).

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<sup>5</sup> Lausunto hallitukselle laaditusta toimintaehdotuksesta Kohti etnistä yhenvertaisuutta ja monimuotoisuutta 17.8.2000

<sup>6</sup> The church also publishes on its website solidarity-promoting texts and statements on immigrant activities ([http://www.evli.fi/kkh/to/m\\_muutt/ktmmk.html](http://www.evli.fi/kkh/to/m_muutt/ktmmk.html)), such as one by Järvinen-Tassopoulos 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Just to mention one example, the congregation union of Helsinki organises, among other things, intercultural marriage enrichment week-ends and multi-cultural recreation camps for families in various languages. Among the activities of other organizations, the congregation union of Helsinki, for instance, supports financially the activities of the Romano Mission, an association offering Christian-based activities in child protection, spiritual work, and welfare activities for the Romany people.

## Welfare, religion, and gender

Finland was considered the European pioneer in gender equality in 1906: Finnish women were the first in Europe to receive universal and equal voting rights and the first women in the world to become eligible for parliamentary elections (Sulkunen 2004; Manninen 1999). Susan Faludi's bestseller 'Backlash' points out that the key objectives of equality policy include sovereignty over one's own body and over one's own money. Finnish women are highly educated and their participation in the workforce is likewise one of the highest in the world. The other Nordic countries have nevertheless surpassed Finland in terms of participation in the workforce and even the United States has caught up with Finland.<sup>8</sup> Overall, however, Finland remains today a good example of Jane Lewis's (1992) "dual breadwinner model".

Julkunen (2003) states that international feminism usually maintains a critical stance toward social welfare provision and its patriarchal roots. According to some critics, social security is partial to men, as it gives them the right to social security and restricts women to the role of unpaid caregivers thus forcing them to depend on need-oriented social services. Even if Finnish social security has some "male-privileging" aspects, women nevertheless perceive the welfare state as a supportive partner rather than an oppressor. Individual allowances and social insurance benefits have been a priority in Finland (Julkunen 2003). As noted above, today Finnish women participate in working life nearly as frequently as men. Marriage in Finland is not associated with a reduction in female labour force participation. The Finnish social policy does not encourage women into part-time employment, as other Scandinavian social democratic welfare states do (Bryson et al. 1994, 123-124). Overall the history of the Finnish social legislation displays some tensions and conflicts in terms of the status of women. Legislation strives on the one hand to promote motherhood, but on the other to support women working outside the home. Attempts have moreover been made to combine these two aims (Manninen 1999).

While both Finnish women and men work full-time, women are in fixed-term employment relationships and work part-time more frequently than men (Equality Programme of the Finnish Government 1997). In general, women and men work in slightly different professions in Finland. The majority of women are in posts that serve, take care of and educate people. They work, for example, as sales assistants, cleaners, in various office and secretarial functions, in nursing and in childcare. The majority of men, in contrast, for instance, produce, handle and transport goods. Women and men also work in different social sectors. Women work more often in the public sector whereas more men are employed in the private sector (Korvajärvi

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<sup>8</sup> In Finland participation in the workforce is further reduced because of early retirement by older age groups, both men and women (Julkunen 2003).

2003). Unemployment affects both men and women, though not quite to the same degree. After the recession, male unemployment fell faster than female and now unemployment among women is slightly higher.

Despite Finland's egalitarian image, the position of women in the labour market is by no means equal to that of men. Even if the quota provision in the Equality Act (since 1995) has increased women's participation in the state's decision making, Finnish women still have a smaller role than men in decision-making for the society. Other challenges remain: women in many families are still in charge of most domestic work. Working life reconciled with family life has been a pillar of Finnish equality and family policy. Legislation has been used to promote this goal, but long-standing customs are persistent (Engelberg 2006; Equality Programme of the Finnish Government 1997). Finnish women also spend more time than men in voluntary or unpaid work, especially in social services.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Finland has been – and in many ways still is – more conservative than the other Nordic countries in the area of human body rights. For example, rape in marriage was criminalised as late as 1994 and family violence was not prosecuted until 1995. There are also other signs of “attitudinal patriarchy” in Finland (Julkunen 2003). The number of women subjected to domestic violence is higher in Finland than the average of industrialised countries (Heiskanen and Piispa 1998).

Overall, however, there is no feminisation of poverty in Finland as we find in other countries: the risk of poverty as a result of lack of income is the same for women and men in Finland. Women's status both in the labour market and at home has been strengthened by the Finnish social security system and the possibility of reconciling family life with paid work. Social services and family-policy income benefits have improved also the situation of single mothers in particular. Evidence indicates that certain groups of men are on average more prone than other people to becoming marginalised and dependent on the safety net provided by the welfare state. However, now more so than earlier, the lifestyle of certain women puts them too at a greater risk of falling into poverty (Equality Programme of the Finnish Government 1997).

As far as gender is concerned, the recession did not have a great setback for the welfare state and gender equality, as some feared it would. But the 1990s did leave a legacy. Finnish society as a whole is now tougher than 10 years ago and the state seems to be less friendly towards women than it was at the start of the 1990s. The 1990s also brought about greater neutrality on the gender issue; it became overall less politicised and less talked about (Julkunen 2003).

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<sup>9</sup> In 1987 the figures for unpaid work were: 25.78 hours per week for women, 15.17 hours for men (Jallinoja 1989). As Forsberg et al. (2000, 43) state, even Scandinavian women take part both in politics and the labour market, women retain major responsibility for the household work.

Today one particular gender-related challenge concerns the employment and salary differences between men and women. Overall, finding a continuous employment is more difficult for women especially among young age groups. In 2001 nearly half (48%) of women under 25 were employed short-term as the amount of men in short term employment was 35%. Among older age groups (25 to 29 year olds) the percentages of short term employment were 35% for women and 19% for men (*Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriön opas...* 2003). This is viewed as the result of women being more frequent users of parental and similar type of leaves, which bring costs to employers. Furthermore, women's wages are lower than men's. Today the difference between women's and men's wages, even among the well-educated, is approximately 20%, which is the eighth highest of all EU countries (Huuhtanen et al. 2005). On the other hand, single men are the main beneficiaries of minimum income security. In working life, women still tend to do archetypal women's work rather than working in strategically important positions.

The special concerns of immigrant women, for example, their awareness of their rights as well as trafficking, have increasingly been called into attention by NGOs. In Finland as much as 14% of users in shelters for persons suffering from actual or potential family violence are immigrant women, even though their proportion in the Finnish population is less than 2% (Haarakangas et al. 2000). Also, in Helsinki, where most immigrants in Finland live, up to 40% of Somali-speaking mothers were single parents by the end of 2004, while the proportion among Finnish speaking families is 28%. Single parenthood was common also among Russian (37%) and Estonian (36%) speaking mothers (Joronen, Tuula 2005).

## An overview of the minority presence in the country

Finland has had minority – ethnic, cultural, religious – populations for centuries. Today about 6% of the population are Swedish speaking Finns. Other national minorities include the Sami people in the North, Jews, Tatars and Roma, each group consisting of less than 1% of the population (Statistics Finland: Population by age group, end-2005). The official languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish. The Sami people as an autochthonous minority and the Roma and other groups are entitled to maintain and develop their own language and culture. The right of the Sami people to use their own language is enacted by law (Constitution of Finland II. Basic rights, 14 §). Since the 1970s, the number of new ethnic minorities has increased through the arrival of refugees and other migrants. Compared with the other Nordic countries, due to Finland's refugee and immigration policy, the number of foreigners in Finland is fairly low. At the end of 2005, out of a total population of 5,25 million, 113,852 (2.2%) were immigrants from over 40

nations; Russians (24,621 incl. the former Soviet Union) formed the biggest group, followed by immigrants from Estonia (15,459), Sweden (8,196), Somalia (4,704), Serbia and Montenegro (3,954, incl. the former Yugoslavia), Iraq (3,267), China (2,981), Great-Britain (2,762), Germany (2,792) and Turkey (2,621) (Statistics Finland: Population by age group, end- 2005).

For centuries, Finland has been a country of emigration, from where people have migrated to other parts of the world. It was first in the 1980s when the number of immigrants exceeded that of emigrants. The first modern refugees came to Finland from Chile in the 1970s and were followed by the Vietnamese “boat people”. After that, small groups of refugees and immigrants from various countries have found their way to Finland. At the end of the 1980s about 100 refugees came from the Near- and Middle-East. In the 1990s the new groups were the Africans, primarily from Somalia, and eastern European countries, especially from the areas of the former Yugoslavia. In 1990 over 24,000 Ingrian Finns that were defined as repatriates came to Finland, either from Russia (incl. the former Soviet Union) or Estonia. Immigrants from other European countries have come primarily because of marriage, study or work opportunities (Migration Institute: Foreign population in Finland by citizenship 1980-2002; Kokko 2002).

The Swedish speaking population is concentrated geographically in three coastline areas in southern, south-western and western Finland. Sami people live in Lapland, northern Finland. Jews and Tatars reside primarily in bigger cities and towns. Likewise the Roma live mainly in more densely populated areas. Half of the recent immigrants live in Southern Finland, especially in the greater Helsinki area (42,000, approx. 4% of total population in the area). Only Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Turku – the biggest towns around the capital area and elsewhere in the Southern Finland – have an immigration population of over 5,000 (also approx. 4% of total population in the cities). In other parts of the country immigration populations are low. The largest groups are found in Oulu, Vaasa and Tampere. In very few municipalities their size is over 1,000 people. In over 65% of all the country’s municipalities there are less than 50 immigrants (Kokko 2002; The second periodic report... 2004).

Finland has taken several measures to protect the national minorities (Swedish speaking Finns, Sami people and Roma), such as the adoption of language laws covering the Swedish and Sami languages, the development of anti-discrimination legislation, the office of the Ombudsman for Minorities, and regional advisory boards for Roma affairs. The current structures do not adequately take into account the needs of the Russian speaking population. Initiatives in support of minority language media and minority language education need to be developed further. Specific steps have been taken to improve integration of persons belonging to minorities. Free of charge teaching of the national languages is available to persons who have recently ar-

rived in Finland (The second periodic report... 2004.). The policies aim at integration of immigrants as equal in their status in Finnish society, while also maintaining their own cultural tradition and identity (Kokko 2002, 37-38).

All Finnish citizens and people who live permanently in Finland have the same rights to welfare services regardless of their ethnic or religious background. As for social support, aid refugees are in the same position as other permanent residents. A person is considered as a permanent resident, if he or she aims to live in Finland permanently and has, if required, a one-year's residence permit. Living in Finland legally is a condition for eligibility of social welfare. The length or permanence of residency is assessed on the basis of the reason of immigration. Immigration is considered to be permanent if a person has arrived as a quota refugee, an asylum seeker with a one year's residence permit, an asylum seeker with a permanent residency because of need of protection, as a family member of a permanent resident, or as person with a permanent job or a work contract valid at least for two years. Those who have come to Finland for shorter periods or with an intention to study are not considered to be permanent residents (The Social Insurance Institution of Finland: Residence based social security 2006). Residence-based social security varies depending on a person's country of origin.

Persons entering Finland from the EU, the EEA (European Economic Area) or Switzerland are eligible for National Health Insurance, childcare subsidies and family allowances, and will accrue credit towards national pension/survivors' pension if their employment lasts between 4 months and 2 years. They are also covered under the Unemployment Allowance Act. Employees with a contract of employment that lasts at least 2 years or is open-ended are considered to be permanent residents in Finland. Along with the benefits available to the employees listed above, the latter are also eligible for such benefits as child disability allowance, regular disability allowance, maternity grant and housing allowance. Employees from other countries are required to have a contract of employment for at least 2 years or one that is open ended (Residence-based social security: Legislative changes effective 1 January 2005, 2006).

A person waiting to be accepted as an asylum seeker receives financial support, who is paid through the refugee centre and it is 15-20% lower than the basic welfare support paid to permanent residents who need it. The refugee centre takes charge of the health care of its residents (Directorate of Immigration: Information for asylum seekers. 2006; The Ministry of Labour: Asylum seeker in Finland 2006). Those who have received an official refugee status are entitled to the same welfare services as the rest of the population. Problems in refugee politics are related to the long handling period of applications, which can take years. A person waiting for this decision is entitled only to limited welfare services. A temporary residence permit (B per-

mit) does not give the right to welfare services, a work permit or an identity card. A person with a B-permit is entitled only to the most essential services, for example children can receive day-care only in cases of child protection (The Refugee Advice Center 2006).

Finnish public discussion on immigration has been dominated by issues related to refugees and asylum seekers even though most of the immigrants come to Finland due to family reasons. Emphasis on multiculturalism means that issues related to religion, culture and ethnicity have surfaced in discussions and in the media. Even though the majority of immigrants have a Christian background, issues related to Islam and Muslims have dominated public discussion. The Freedom of Religion Act gives children the right to receive education in their own religion and there are no restrictions regarding the following of a religious dress code, such as the headscarf for Muslim girls and women. In the workplace the equality code guarantees a Muslim's right to daily prayers provided they do not disturb or intervene with one's work.

There has been a lot of discussion about the right of the religious majority, Evangelical Lutherans, to display Christian symbols and to follow traditional religious customs in schools during Christian holidays if there are people of other faiths present. Some schools have gone to the extreme, in order not to offend people of other faiths, by forbidding any Christian symbols or Christmas celebrations. To clarify the situation the National Board of Education has now given guidelines for multicultural situations by allowing Christmas celebrations and the singing of a traditional hymn at the end of the school year as part of the Finnish cultural heritage. Overall, however, the Finnish cultural scene has changed permanently as the first generation immigrants are a key issue of discussion. How the situation will be when their children, born and educated in Finland, start to define their relationship with the Finnish cultural heritage, including religion, remains to be seen. In the past few years the discussion on immigration has received a new emphasis.

A number of mainstream media have shown increased interest in the coverage of minority issues (The second periodic report... 2004). Educational issues related to children of the new ethnic minorities, especially the lack of trained teachers in their languages and religions, have been discussed in the media (E.g., Saxell 2006; *Maahanmuuttajien...* 2006). Reports on Muslims have focused more on international issues rather than on the Muslim immigrant communities in Finland. When the coverage is focused on Finland it has usually been more on the positive side. For example, in spring 2006 the leading newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* reported how a Somali youth prepared himself for the national matriculation examination (A-levels). Overall, Finns have developed more positive and open attitudes towards immigrants during the past few years. However, unfortunately Somalis, Russians and the

Roma are still perceived rather negatively by Finns and face discrimination (*Asenteet maahanmuuttajiin...2006; Lait eivät... 2006*).

As already stated, due to the ageing population and a low birth rate, the need of skilled immigrants as a labour force has been taken up in public discussions.<sup>10</sup> The free movement of labour force within the Nordic countries has been possible for decades. Membership in the EU has now increased the number of potential workers.

## Religious minority-majority relations

Even though they have formed their own communities with varying degree of staying apart from the Church, traditional revivalist movements from the 19<sup>th</sup> century have not separated from the Lutheran Church in Finland. They have a strong foothold in the life of Finnish piety and the Lutheran church. For example, a sign of their continuing vigour are their summer festivals, including the summer festival of the conservative Laestadians, which brings together close to 80,000 people.

The Orthodox Church of Finland has the same official ‘folk church’ (national church) status as the Lutheran Church. However, on the basis of its size (1.1%) it forms the largest religious minority in the country. Orthodox Christianity came to Finland in the beginning of the second millennium. It gained a foothold mainly in the eastern part of the country. After the Second World War about 450,000 Finns - many of whom were Orthodox Christians – were evacuated from areas that became part of the Soviet Union to different parts of Finland. Consequently Orthodox congregations were founded in previously solely Lutheran areas. Their numbers have grown slightly in the past decade mainly due to immigration from Russia. Comprised nowadays of three dioceses, the autonomous Orthodox Archbishopric of Finland belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Many parishes are geographically widely spread and many of their members are not able to participate regularly in the liturgy and other church activities. Children of Orthodox families are entitled to education according to their faith within the public education system.

The second largest religious minority are Pentecostals. There are about 50,000 Pentecostals in Finland. However, the Pentecostal influence is more far-reaching since children who are not baptised are not counted as members. In terms of size Pentecostals are equal to the Orthodox Christians but due to historical reasons they do not enjoy the same official status as the

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<sup>10</sup> However, one particular challenge in Finland for immigrants is that they should know both Finnish and Swedish in order to work (particularly) in the public sector, including welfare and healthcare. For example, in the Finnish healthcare sector only 2% of employees are of immigrant background.

Orthodox Church. Other Christian groups, including the Roman Catholics (about 8,000), form about 0.5% of the population (Evangelical Lutheran church, other churches and religions in Finland 2004; *Kirkko muutosten keskellä* 2004.).

There are about 25,000 Muslims in Finland and they comprise about 0.5% of the population. Finland has had a Muslim minority since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Tatar merchants arrived from Russia. The Finnish Islamic Congregation was registered in 1925. There are 700 Tatars living in southern Finland, mainly in the greater Helsinki region have five mosques. The second wave of Muslim immigration came to Finland in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The biggest increase in the number of Muslims took place in the 1990s with the arrival of the Somali refugees. There are about 700 Finnish converts to Islam 80% of who are women. Immigrant Muslims have established their own places of worship (20-25 mosques) and societies the majority of which are based on ethnicity. Only a small minority of immigrants have registered as members of these groups. It is estimated that Muslims in Finland are: Somalis 25%, Arabs 20%, Albans/Bosnians 20%, Kurds 15%, Pakistanis/Bangladesh 5%, Tatars 2.5% and converts 2.5%. Immigrant Islamic societies arrange daily prayers and the teaching of the Quran for children. In 1996 Islamic groups came together to form a cooperative organisation called the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Finland.

Two gender related issues have surfaced in the public discussion on Islam. A few years ago a young Muslim woman was murdered in Sweden because of having a non-Muslim boyfriend. It was discussed in the media whether such “honour killings” have occurred also in Finland among the Muslim population (Honour Related Violence, 2005). The second issue concerns female circumcision. According to the Finnish law, female circumcision is defined as a mutilation of the body and consequently forbidden. The issue has been widely discussed both in the newspapers and in TV. A Somali female medical doctor and a Somali female nurse-midwife have taken part in the discussion. They also work actively among Somalis to inform them about the dangers of female circumcision. Some Muslim leaders have stated that female circumcision is not demanded in the Quran. A third issue, but of less public interest, has been the question of how Muslim women, who are not working outside the home, especially the elderly, can learn the ways of Finnish society and culture.

Muslim groups have not established their own official welfare-providing networks. This does not mean that such networks do not exist within the various Muslim communities. Christian organisations such as the YWCA and local Lutheran congregations have arranged support groups, especially for immigrant women, specifically for Somali women.

The Freedom of Religion Act (2003) seeks to address a number of concerns expressed by people who do not belong to the Lutheran or the Ortho-

dox churches that have a special status in Finland. Religious minorities are allowed to establish their places of worship provided they follow the laws of the country. There seems to be some resentment among the majority population towards such buildings if they are too visible and change the traditional cultural milieu. About 15 years ago there was an intense debate in Turku on whether Muslims should be allowed to build a large mosque. The mosque was never built. Due to the debate on terrorism and extreme Islamist groups, the public image of Muslims through the media is slightly negative. Contrary to Muslims and the issue of building a mosque, Buddhists, perceived as followers of a peace loving religion, have been comparatively well-received by the local community in order to be able to establish their temples.

## Conclusions

Finland has a history of being a relatively homogenous country both religiously and culturally. The Lutheran Church and Lutheranism have been a part of the Finnish identity with a visible role in society, particularly as an agents of welfare especially after the recession in the 1990's. In the last 15 years both Finland and the Church have faced and are facing new challenges, albeit also opportunities, through migration, the ageing of the population and the fracturing of the universalistic welfare state.

As resources for health and welfare services are becoming more and more limited, the role of the third sector, the Church included, is re-negotiated both in terms of practice and values. The situation adds pressure to the traditional Finnish principles of universalism and gender equality, for instance as social services enabling the combination of work and having children are being discussed.

Thus, both the majority Church and different minority religions and other minorities operate in a new situation terms of values but also new practices have emerged in welfare work after the recession and the EU membership. Networks with other welfare providers, new ways of financing, the challenges of multicultural and religious welfare users, and cooperation with organisations, are common practice especially in the local parishes.

Research focusing on this dynamic situation and the transitions both within the Church, minorities, and their relation to the changes in the society is needed. Is the role of the Church that of a conforming bystander, an innovative re-shaper or a resisting opponent of the changing welfare surroundings, or maybe all of these, depending on the situation? The Church has a dynamic position: on the one hand, it is radically criticising problems in society, and on the other, it is co-operating with society. Its values are both independent and dependent in relation to the Finnish social context.

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# 5:2 LAHTI CASE STUDY REPORT

Elina Juntunen, Anne Birgitta Pessi

## Abstract

This study focused on the welfare activities of religious communities at the grass-roots level in Lahti. We aim to analyse the conflicts, the cohesion and the values that are related to welfare, particularly in relation to minorities and gender. We first conducted a pilot study (five communities) and then a deeper analysis on three communities: the Pentecostal Church, the Salvation Army, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The findings of this report present their welfare activities, particularly from the viewpoint of cooperation and cohesion, as well as, in terms of possible conflicts and cohesion. Then we analysed the values reflected in these findings: the intrinsic values of family and networks, education, care and the elements of security, equality and justice. The findings also raise issues of identity and integration, which are also related to policy recommendations.

## Presentation of the town

### Brief presentation of the majority and the minority presence

Lahti is located in Southern Finland, 104 kilometres from Helsinki, the capital of Finland. The population has climbed from around 3,000 in the 19th century to almost 100,000, making it the seventh largest city in Finland. Lahti is the regional capital of the *Päijät-Häme* region, which has a population of ca. 222,000. Lahti is a young city of entrepreneurship. The population grew particularly during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>1</sup> During the late 1990s and between 2000 and 2002 the population grew by approximately 500 a year.<sup>2</sup> The age structure of Lahti inhabitants is quite typical for southern Finland: 0-14 years 15.2%, 15-64 years old 67.0%, and over 65 years of age 17.8%.<sup>3</sup>

Lahti has industrial traditions, particularly in carpentry, and now has a diversified industrial structure. The private business sector has always played an important part in the economy, with a remarkably small percentage of jobs in the public sector. For instance, only 6.3% of the sources of livelihood in 2004 were in education, social and health care services.<sup>4</sup> Almost half of

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<sup>1</sup> Lahti, status and area, population and development 2004; Lahti 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Lahden kaupunki, talousarvio 2004 ja taloussuunnitelma 2004–2006, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Lahti Pähkinänkuoressa, Lahti Guide.

<sup>4</sup> Lahti, status and area, population and development 2004; Lahti 2005.

the sources of livelihood (44%) were in the wholesale and retail trade or other services for business life. Almost a fifth of sources of livelihood (19.1%) were in construction. Altogether, small and medium-sized enterprises make up the largest percentage of businesses and 15% of the workforce consists of entrepreneurs. Design and environmental technology are the main sectors attracting development and investment. Most new jobs are in the service sector. The location of Lahti is logistically advantageous; 1.5 million people live within 100 km of the city. The new motorway link to Helsinki makes Lahti easy to reach.<sup>5</sup> In 2006 the new Helsinki-Lahti railway shortened the travelling time from Helsinki to Lahti to less than 50 minutes. Lahti may thus become a capital “suburb”.

In 2006 there were 2,700 people with foreign citizenships living in Lahti. This is 2.8% of the population of 98,000 people in the municipality (the proportion in the whole country is 2.2%). Immigrants who have received Finnish nationality are not included in these statistics as they are not separated in statistics from other Finnish citizens. The immigrants in Lahti represent various backgrounds and 95 different nationalities are present. The largest groups, each constituting a proportion of 1% or less of the population of Lahti, at the end of 2006 were Russians (1,146 or about 43% of immigrants with non-Finnish citizenships) and Estonians (321 or about 12% of immigrants with non-Finnish citizenship). These are the same nationalities which form the largest groups of immigrants at the national level. In addition, there were 163 immigrants from Iraq in Lahti at the end of 2006, and approximately 80 people from each of the following two countries: Thailand and Sweden. Other nationality groups were composed of 70 people or less.<sup>6</sup> The number of immigrants in Lahti is growing. They need various special services, starting from language and employment courses.<sup>7</sup> The figures of foreign people, both in Lahti and at the national level, are presented in the following table:

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<sup>5</sup> Lahti, status and area, population and development 2004; Lahti 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisohjelman seurantaraportti 2006; Statistics Finland: Foreigners in Finland 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Lahti ja Lahden seutu vertaistensa joukossa; Lahden palvelustrategia 29.5.2006.

**Table 5:2:1 Foreigners in Lahti and in Finland 2006**

Country of origin	Lahti ( % ) (2006) <sup>8</sup>	Finland ( % ) (2006) <sup>9</sup>
Russian	1, 1426 (1.16)	25,326 (0.5)
Estonia	321 (0.3)	17,599 (0.3)
Iraq	167 (0.16)	3,045 (0.06)
Thailand	97 (0.1)	2,994 (0.06)
Sweden	78 (0.8)	8, 265 (0.16)
Ukraine	69 (0.07)	1,467 (0.03)
Turkey	68 (0.07)	2,886 (0.05)
Germany	59 (0.06)	2,978 (0.05)
Serbia Montenegro	50 (0.05)	3,340 (0.06)
USA	52 (0.05)	2,119 (0.04)
Great Britain	41 (0.04)	2,910 (0.05)
Sudan	42 (0.04)	978 (0.02)
Norway	31 (0.03)	693 (0.013)
Iran	44 (0.04)	2,602 (0.05)
Kazakhstan	20 (0.02)	300 (0.006)
Syria	23 (0.02)	137 (0.003)
Belarus	19 (0.02)	323 (0.006)
China	20 (0.02)	3,382 (0.06)

At the moment Lahti has agreed to receive 20 refugees each year. From 2001 to 2005 a total of 95 refugees have been received in Lahti under this quota.

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<sup>8</sup> Maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisohjelman seurantaraportti 2006, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Suomessa vakituisesti asuvat ulkomaalaiset

The number of new repatriates<sup>10</sup> during the same period was 301 and the number of asylum seekers 33. The number of immigrants coming to Lahti as the result of family reunification was 10 during the same period.<sup>11</sup>

There are also Roma people living in Lahti. Official statistics concerning their proportion in the municipality cannot be found since it is illegal in Finland to collect statistics based on ethnic criteria, but according to an interviewee<sup>12</sup> there are about 200 Roma people in Lahti. At a national level the number of Roma is about 10,000 people. Roma live all around Finland, however most can be found in the cities of western and southern Finland, including Lahti. Most of the Roma people in Finland are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Some of them are also members particularly of the Pentecostal Church. The Finnish Constitution guarantees to the Roma equal rights, equal access to education and the law, and the right to treatment without discrimination, in just the same ways as the rest of the population. The Roma have also the right to maintain and develop their language and culture.<sup>13</sup> A mapping of questions related to Roma culture in the welfare and social services in the municipalities in general has been requested, for instance in a report by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.<sup>14</sup> The ombudsman for minorities has criticised Lahti in his statement in relation to the Roma people's living standards and social security.<sup>15</sup> The welfare organisation of Finnish Roma has a family home for Roma children in Lahti.

Concerning religiosity, 84% of the inhabitants of Lahti belong to some religious community. There are two national churches in Finland – and in Lahti – the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church. The majority of the Lahti population, 79.9%, are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The members of the Orthodox Church are about 1,000 people. Every sixth person has no connection to a congregation.<sup>16</sup> Overall, membership of religious communities in Lahti is smaller than the average in Finland.<sup>17</sup> This is a very typical phenomenon in the Finnish urban areas.

There are also three Lutheran revival movements belonging to the Lutheran Church that are active in the Lahti area: two Laestadian groups (*Esi-koislestadiolaiset* and *vanhoillislestadiolaiset*), Neo-Pietists (*Kansanlähetys* and *Kansan raamattuseura*) and Evangelicals (*Suomen luterilainen evankeliumiyhdistys*). None of these movements carry out specific welfare services.

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<sup>10</sup> Repatriates or returnees refer to Ingians. Ingrians are people of Finnish origin who have lived in Russia and who have been granted the right to return to Finland.

<sup>11</sup> Maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisohjelman seurantaraportti 2005

<sup>12</sup> Pastor from the Pentecostal church 22.11.2006

<sup>13</sup> Romanit Suomessa.

<sup>14</sup> Suonoja & Lindberg 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Maahanmuuttajien kotouttamisohjelman seurantaraportti 2005; Statistics Finland: Foreigners in Finland 2005; Suonoja & Lindberg, 2000; Vähemmistövaltuutettu moittii Lahtea romanien asumisasioissa. Kirkon tilastollinen vuosikirja 2004, 128.

<sup>16</sup> Uusi Lahti: Joka kuudes lahtelainen ei kuulu rekisteröityyn uskontokuntaan. 3.3.2004

<sup>17</sup> Kirkon tilastollinen vuosikirja 2004.

Smaller religious communities – other than the two national churches – in Lahti are the Pentecostal congregation (1,000 members), the Salvation army (27 soldiers), and Jehovah's Witnesses (500 members). Pentecostals organise various services in addition to religious services, such as children's services, youth work and international activities. Most of their social work, however, concerns street mission and prison work.<sup>18</sup> The Salvation Army organises both spiritual services and day-care centres and residence halls in Lahti.<sup>19</sup> The Free Church in Lahti (*Lahden Vapaaseurakunta*) has approximately 500 members. It organises child and youth work and Scout activities, and maintains its own private day care. It also provides some welfare work, especially for substance abuse victims.<sup>20</sup>

The history of Muslims in Finland is relatively long. The first Muslims were Tatars from Russia in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Additionally, after the Second World War a few Muslims came to Finland to study or because of marriage. In the 1980s and 1990s Muslims came to Finland as refugees from North-Africa, the Middle-East and Somalia.<sup>21</sup> Nowadays Muslims are quite a fragmented group in Lahti (500 Muslims in Lahti, as noted earlier) and they are mostly immigrants. However, it must be noted that the number of Muslims in Lahti is very difficult to estimate; there is a very fast migration rate for Muslims within Finland, from one city to another. It is also challenging to estimate who actually are Muslims, as not every individual reveals his/her religious background. Furthermore, Muslims are a very heterogeneous group, as they have arrived from various different countries. In Lahti the largest groups are from Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. There are also a few Muslims in Lahti from Somalia. There is a mosque in Lahti but it is visited only by no more than ten people on a weekly basis. Muslims have also their own graveyard in Lahti.<sup>22</sup> The national and Lahti religious landscapes are summarised in the following table:

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<sup>18</sup> Lahden helluntaiseurakunta 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Pelastusarmeija 2005; Suomen Adventtikirkko 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Lahden Vapaaseurakunta 2005.

<sup>21</sup> Härkönen 2002.

<sup>22</sup> The person from Muslim community in Lahti 12.4.2007

**Table 5:2:2 Religious communities in Finland and in the Lahti municipality**

<b>National churches</b>	<b>Situation in Lahti</b>	<b>Situation in Finland</b>
	<b>Members - Percentage</b>	<b>Members - Percentage</b>
Evangelical Lutheran Church	79,032; 79.9%	4,366 255 <sup>23</sup> ; 83.1%
Orthodox Church	1,000; 1.8%	57,000 <sup>24</sup> ; 1%
<b>Religious communities<sup>25</sup></b>		
Jehovah's Witnesses	500; 0.5%	18 230
Baha'i community		514
The Pentecostal congregation	1,000; 1%	48,313 <sup>26</sup>
Methodist church	30; 0.03%	650
<i>Lahten tunnustuksellinen Luterila seurakunta / The Confessional Lutheran Parish of Lahti</i>		307
Free church	500; 0.5%	13,553
The Seventh-day Adventist Church	151; 0.15%	5,262 <sup>27</sup>
Baptist church	50; 0.05%	2,500
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	210; 0.21%	4,500 <sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Evankelisluterilainen kirkko, 2006.

<sup>24</sup> Evankelisluterilainen kirkko, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> This information is based on the statistics by the National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland (national level) as well as, concerning Lahti, on the information by the communities themselves, Population Register Centre and an article (*Joka Kuudes lahtelainen ei kuulu...*, in *Uusi Lahti*, 6.9.2006).

<sup>26</sup> Espoon helluntaiseurakunta, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Suomen adventtikirkko, 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Mormonikirkko, 2006.

Muslims	500 <sup>29</sup> ; 0.5%	30,000 <sup>30</sup>
Salvation Army	27 <sup>31</sup> ; 0.03% (Soldiers)	1,100 (Soldiers) <sup>32</sup>

Based on recent information by the religious communities themselves in their web sites it seems that the Adventists and the Free Church provide the most active and versatile – or at least most visible – social welfare work in comparison to other religious communities, not including the Lutheran Church. The Adventists and the Free Church offer, for instance, material assistance, services for the Roma and international welfare work. Additionally, the Salvation Army and the Pentecostals are quite active. The Salvation Army is well known for their welfare activities, also in the national level; hence, they have adopted a ‘no need to advertise’ approach in their welfare activities (they do not even promote their services via the internet). These two communities have served as the focus of our two preliminary WAVE pilot studies (see Attachment 1).

## Brief presentation of the local welfare system

### **Role of local government**

As elsewhere in Finland, welfare provision is dominated by the local municipality. Welfare services also constitute a major part of the local municipal budget. In 2006 the majority of the budget of social and health services was spent on: special health care services 68,7 million €, geriatric services 62,7 million €, local area social services 47.5 million € and special social care services 23.5 €.<sup>33</sup>

Overall, the expenses in Lahti on municipal social welfare and health services<sup>34</sup> are among the lowest compared to larger Finnish towns. This is particularly so in special health care and care for the elderly. Expenses in social services<sup>35</sup> have been, however, little over the national average.

Lahti has taken pioneering actions in social and health care; the open public health care services of the town centre were recently outsourced. This contract is budgeted at approximately €2 million. The official reports conclude that this model has started well.<sup>36</sup> Lahti also has positive and innovative examples of municipal social and health care. There are new and indeed

<sup>29</sup> Joka kuudes suomalainen ei kuulu kirkkoon, 6.9.2006.

<sup>30</sup> Evankelisluterilainen kirkko, 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Female from the Salvation Army 10.4.2007

<sup>32</sup> Suomen pelastusarmeija, 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Lahti: Sosiaali ja terveystoimiala. Toimintakertomus. 2006

<sup>34</sup> In Finnish, sosiaali- ja terveydenhuolto.

<sup>35</sup> In Finnish, sosiaalihuolto.

<sup>36</sup> Toimintakertomus 2004, 1.

pioneering innovations, such as the Santra Service call centre (*Palvelu Santra*), and the “District godparent” project. A few projects have built on previous EU-funded social projects, for instance, the “*Liipola social entrepreneurs*”, which has also extended to other cities.

There are certain issues of debate in the local context; these issues concern possible gaps in the local welfare system. The recession of the early 1990s had a substantial impact on the traditional industries in Lahti. During the height of the recession (1994) 26.8% of Lahti inhabitants were unemployed.<sup>37</sup> Even now unemployment remains higher than in Finland: on average 12.0%<sup>38</sup> in Lahti, 6.7%<sup>39</sup> in Finland in January 2008. Furthermore, the percentage of long-term unemployed in Lahti is above the Finnish average.

The town offers a printed guide particularly for immigrants. The guide basically introduces only non-religious activities and services comparable to services of the city.<sup>40</sup> More information can be obtained from the local Lutheran parish on its own activities, but no other religious communities are included.

### **Role of majority church**

The Lahti parishes have a lengthy tradition of engaging in social work, in cooperation with the municipality and other organisations as well. The church’s social work of the Lahti parish union concentrated on six areas:

- strengthening conversation and discussion, as well as, counselling activities
- responding to challenges brought by work life and unemployment
- supporting volunteers
- identifying worries and anxieties of individuals and societies, as well as, globally
- developing cooperation
- raising international responsibility

The written core task (documented in 2004) of the Lahti parish union social work is to “promote Christian faith-based justice, participation, and neighbourly love in the lives of individuals and the society, as well as, globally”.<sup>41</sup>

Social welfare work is strongly incorporated into the parish’s overall strategy of “serving”. The written documents summarise the concept of serving: “1) we help and support especially those, whose distress is the strongest,

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<sup>37</sup> Lahti, tilastoja ja kalvoja 2005, Lahden työttömyysaste 1990–2004.

<sup>38</sup> Lahden työttömyys tammikuussa 2008. 29.2.2008

<sup>39</sup> Tilastokeskus. Työllisyys ja työttömyys tammikuussa 2008.

<sup>40</sup> Lahti City Guide for Immigrants 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Diakonia- ja yhteiskuntatyön toimintakertomus 2004, 1.

and who are otherwise not helped, 2) we carry our common responsibility over the global Christian welfare work, and 3) we promote rightness and participation in everything.” These aims are very much in line with the national level documents on church social work. Concerning the relation of worshipping and serving, Lahti documents also indicate that “serving, in its essence, starts from and returns to the divine service” [referring to mass, the Sunday service].<sup>42</sup>

Lahti church social work includes numerous activities in fifteen fields, grouped here under the following categories:

1. Counselling and discussion (including also “Serving Telephone” counselling<sup>43</sup>)
2. Mental health care and crisis work
3. Material helping (money, food, and other)
4. Work with the elderly
5. Activities for the unemployed (especially the *Takatasku* centre)
6. Work with the handicapped
7. Activities for substance abuse users and criminals
8. Work with immigrants
9. The Mary’s Chamber volunteer centre and other volunteer activities (e.g., “substitute mothers”)
10. Activities for and in cooperation with the places of employment
11. Social activities (e.g., nature protection programme)
12. Recreational activities
13. Fund raising (e.g., large annual and nation-wide *Yhteisvastuu* fundraising)
14. International welfare work
15. Cooperation projects and research

The Lahti parish union and its parishes employ 36 persons in social welfare activities. In total women are a very clear majority of people involved in church welfare work, both in paid and voluntary work. However, the person in a leading position is a man. Even if the number of paid staff is high, especially in an international comparative perspective but also in a national perspective to some extent, the role of all parish members in serving is very much underscored in the written documents. “Serving is a matter of the entire congregation”.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Missio, Visio, Arvot ja Strategiat 2004, 5, 8-9. The concept translated here “global Christian welfare work” is in the document in Finnish “maailmanlaajuinen diakonia”.

<sup>43</sup> In Finnish, *Palveleva puhelin*.

<sup>44</sup> Quotation from Missio, Visio, Arvot ja Strategiat 2004, 8. Diakonia- ja yhteiskuntatyön toimintakertomus 2004, 5. Out of the 36 persons, 27 are church social workers (mostly permanent staff), three office personnel (permanent staff), and six working in projects or for a fixed term (e.g., a person hired for economic counselling for a few years, as well as kitchen

During the last years the Lahti parish union has initiated novel examples of well-being activities. For instance, most of the immigrant activities and specifically cooperation initiatives have been initiated in Lahti particularly by the church. For school children the Lahti parishes have developed SMS counselling (in 2002), which has spread to other parish unions in Finland.<sup>45</sup> The parish union has also employed a church social worker focusing only on economic assistance, something very rare in Finland. Furthermore, during the recession Lahti parishes were the first in Finland to start offering the services of priests and church social workers within the premises of municipal employment offices. Some other Lahti innovations in church welfare work (e.g., a day care club for the elderly) have also gained national attention and even won a national prize for church social work innovations (“*Diakonia-idea*”).<sup>46</sup> Also the head of Lahti social work has been an active a figure both in the local and national media in discussing issues, such as social marginalisation. Altogether, the activities of the Lahti church social work can be considered as rather a significant source for forming public opinion, particularly in the issues of altruism and care.

Furthermore, the Lahti Parish Union provides extensive services for immigrants. Interestingly, these services are also introduced in the Lahti guide for immigrants provided by the city. The guide introduces the Parish Union immigrant services, which include, among others, Finnish language courses, courses for training voluntary tutors for immigrants, office hours for immigrants in the parish service centre, and immigrant group activities. All these activities by the Church aim to support the integration of returnees, asylum seekers, refugees, and other immigrants to Lahti. The Parish Union has particular immigrant and returnee workers who only focus on these issues and similar, activities. The work of the Parish Union is based on the principles of freedom of religion (e.g., services are offered to everyone, regardless of their faith) and respect for difference.<sup>47</sup>

### **Role of minority associations/networks in welfare**

The role of third sector actors, including the Lutheran Church, was underscored during the economic recession in the early 1990s. Still today, after the economic growth and since the recession, the welfare model of Finland in-

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and diaconal staff hired for the clubs for the elderly). All in all, the number of priests in Lahti parish union is only little higher than number of church social workers.

<sup>45</sup> Lahden seurakuntayhtymä, uutisia 2004.

<sup>46</sup> Diakonia- ja yhteiskuntatyön toimintakertomus 2004, 1; Diakonia- ja yhteiskuntatyön toimintakertomus 2002. Additionally, the fact that the social services of Lahti parish union (services of the parish union – not the parishes, who also have their separate social services – such as special services for the handicapped) are located in the same premises may well increase the public knowledge of the church welfare services. This Service Centre (palvelukeskus in Finnish) is centrally and rather visibly located in the downtown of Lahti; it also incorporates the Mary’s Chamber volunteer centre.

<sup>47</sup> Diakonia- ja yhteiskuntatyön toimintakertomus 2002.

creasingly resembles a “mix-model”: the role of the state is strong but also other agents are playing an increasingly important role. This is even more evident locally than in the national level; for instance, the findings of the WREP project indicated that the activities of the Church are various, multi-faceted and strong both in terms of welfare and its networks of cooperation. The activities of the Church are also strongly appreciated both by the citizens and the local municipality administration. An important role is also played by various third-sector agents in Lahti.<sup>48</sup>

There is a very versatile organisation sector in Lahti. In the social and health care sector, for example, there are least 75 different active organisations. These are service organisations mainly for disabled, ill and elderly persons, children, youth, and their relatives.<sup>49</sup> There are also over 50 sport organisations and a few dozen cultural and other interest clubs.<sup>50</sup>

Among these organisations in Lahti there are a few that are created mainly for or by immigrants. These include, for instance, the Ingrians in Lahti (*Lahden inkeriläiset ry*), the Lahti Russian language support, the Päijät Häme Tuglas association (for Estonian culture, see below), and the international women’s association Mamuset Martat. The Ingrians in Lahti arrange various different events, such as theme evenings for Ingrian returnees (e.g., some of these evenings are specially concentrated on elderly Ingrians and their needs). The Lahti Russian Language Support concentrates on making the Russian language and culture more widely known. The association works in cooperation with immigrants, schools, Russian language students and their families. The Tuglas Association was founded by Finns interested in the Estonian language and culture. The Mamuset Martat is an open multicultural association for all Finnish and immigrant women. The board of the association consists of both Finnish and immigrant women. It organises, for instance, sports classes, collective meals, and special theme evenings (e.g., discussions on various themes).<sup>51</sup>

Many religious communities have a very active and varied welfare work in Lahti. There are at least 20 religious communities in Lahti. The Evangelical Lutheran Church has a long tradition in welfare work, as noted above, but there are also other active agents. The Pentecostal Church, the Salvation Army, the Free Church, and the Orthodox Church offer remarkable and multi-faceted support for welfare. The social work of religious communities has been introduced in section 2.1 and will be discussed, as part of our findings, more thoroughly in section 5.

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<sup>48</sup> Yeung 2004; Yeung 2006.

<sup>49</sup> Järjestöt ja tapahtumat Lahden seudulla, 2007.

<sup>50</sup> Lahden kulttuuri- ja urheilujärjestöt. 2007.

<sup>51</sup> Lahti City Guide for Immigrants 2006.

## Context and Timeframe

During recent years and during our empirical research, no specific dramatic incidents, nor extreme changes, concerning welfare, values, and minorities took place. The context for our case study has been described in the above chapter. However, during our research period various media debates took place that concerned the particular situation of minorities and welfare in Finland. In the following section, we present some of the most visible and active themes that have been discussed in the media concerning our interest in the WAVE project. These themes will highlight some particular viewpoints of discussion concerning minorities in Finland.

The most important discussion has focused on the Roma, particularly a TV show that was concerned with the stereotypes – and perhaps the fears – that relate to Roma. In many of the sketches of this show the Roma were portrayed as being thieves and pathologically work-shy. The same image of Roma has been projected in jokes that have spread among the population at large. The Roma started to campaign against this TV show and, for instance, the Finnish Roma Forum asked the national broadcasting company (which produced and broadcast the show) to take the series off the air. However, at the same time some Roma highlighted in media discussions their culture's internal problems. They addressed, among other issues, their own racism (e.g., related to blood vengeance). Furthermore, in summer 2007 a Roma man murdered someone based on blood revenge; this was followed by vivid media discussions on certain Roma practices and their persistence in Roma culture even today. Due to these events there are unparalleled public discussions about the status of the Roma in Finnish society and their communities' internal problems. During these debates the Finns have been forced to confront their own prejudices against Roma.

Local media in Lahti have also noticed the issues related to this particular TV show. However at the local level more vivid media discussion has recently concerned the accommodation of Roma: Lahti's agency for apartment rentals has expressed a few complaints concerning its work with the Roma. The agency has not responded to the Roma's cultural requests concerning living in a block of flats. For example, younger people cannot live above the older Roma. This conflict has led to a developing cooperation between the Roma and the authorities.<sup>52</sup>

Another very active public discussion in the national level has recently concerned the asylum question and the active stand that the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church has recently taken in defending threatened individuals. In one particular case, the Directorate of Immigration decided deport an Iranian-Kurdish asylum seeker. After this decision she hid from the authorities and was given sanctuary by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Turku

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<sup>52</sup> Lahden talot jatkaa yhteistyötä mustalaisten kanssa. *Etelä-Suomen sanomat* 13.1.2006.

in June 2007. It must be noted that such an incident is still rather new in Finland, at least in terms of media visibility.<sup>53</sup> The Directorate of Immigration in Finland criticised the actions taken by the Lutheran Church in this affair; the message was that it is not the business of the Church to advise the Directorate of Immigration on its decisions. At the same time the Church in Turku followed the guidelines on churches as sanctuaries published by the Finnish Ecumenical Council in the spring 2006. According to this guide, the church is required to help people who are in need. Also, many vicars stated that they would be willing to offer sanctuary to an asylum seeker, if they judge the decision to expel them as unfair.<sup>54</sup>

After these events the Directorate of Immigration and the Evangelical Lutheran Church agreed to cooperate in asylum questions. In the subsequent media discussions the Directorate of Immigration emphasised that they acted according to the law and thus fairly; hence, they perceived the criticism by the Church to be wrong. They also noted that it is positive that the Church participates in the discussion, but it should aim to affect the law, not the Directorate's actions. In the media discussion there were also requests by Church representatives and the media to adopt a more clarified stand on these issues.<sup>55</sup> The message in the media seemed to be that the Church should intervene even more strongly in such issues.

## Methods and Sources

The analysis of the research focused on three communities: the Pentecostal Church, the Salvation Army, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Our principal aim was to focus on the religious communities' welfare work and to analyse through these welfare activities conflicts, cohesion and values, which minorities and Lahti citizens generally experience in Lahti. We chose groups that reflect both the majority (e.g., the Ingrians and their relation to the Lutheran Church of Finland) and particularly minorities that are representative of – according to our mapping research<sup>56</sup> (see further, appendix 1) – welfare issues and activities, as well as, issues relating to both religious minorities (e.g., Pentecostals) and national/ethnic minorities (e.g., these groups organise activities for, e.g., Russians, in Russian) in the Finnish and

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<sup>53</sup> Kirkon suojavaikka ei estänyt kurdinaisen säilöön ottamista. Helsingin sanomat 28.8.2007.

<sup>54</sup> Uvi halukas avoimeen keskusteluun kirkon kanssa. Kotimaa 1.6.2007.

<sup>55</sup> In many other countries, Churches prepared for asylum questions earlier than Finnish Evangelical-Lutheran church. In Norway for example Church opened asylum as early as 1993. Iranian Kurd protected by church to be deported: Helsingin Sanomat 13.9.2007; Kirkon suojelema kurdinainen palautetaan Iraniin: Kirkko ja kaupunki 3.9.2007; Kansanedustajat vetoavat Naze Aghain puolesta. Kotimaa 30.8.2007; Uvi halukas avoimeen keskusteluun kirkon kanssa. Kotimaa 1.6.2007.

<sup>56</sup> In the mapping phase we researched in what kind of welfare work the Pentecostal church, the Salvation Army, the Free Church, and the Orthodox Church are involved in in Lahti.

local Lahti context. The WAVE fieldwork was focused on five religious communities or minority groups. Data was gathered from November 2006 to May 2007.

Our research methods are based on interviews, e-mail-surveys, internet research, articles, etc. We have interviewed nine people from three focus groups (Pentecostal Church, Salvation Army and Evangelical Lutheran Church). These interviewees were mainly people who were responsible for their communities' different welfare activities on minorities (e.g. immigration work), yet the data includes, for instance, an Ingrian returnee (i.e., the Returnee work director of the Lutheran Church). Our interviewees include both those in high positions of our chosen minorities (e.g., leaders of the local department), as well as, their grass-roots representatives (e.g., priests, diaconal workers, volunteers). Overall three of the interviewees were volunteers and the rest paid workers. Six of the interviewees were women and three men. The following list presents our individual interviewees<sup>57</sup>:

***Pentecostal Church:***

*Pastor (male)*

*Responsible person for immigration work (male)*

*Responsible person for friendship service (female)*

*Responsible person for food service (female)*

***Salvation Army:***

*Leader of the Lahti Department (female)*

*Leader of day nursing (male)*

***Evangelical Lutheran Church:***

*Pastor assigned to work among Ingrians (female)*

*Diaconal worker for immigrants (female)*

*Returnee work director (female)*

Interviewees are coded from 1 to 9. The letter M indicates male and F female. In all our interviews we strictly kept in mind the methodological aim to illustrate particularly the level of everyday life and grassroots level; for instance, a central theme in all our interviews was the experience and atmosphere of cohesion in the locality, its citizens and their solidarity. All respondents reflected this differently. Often those in a higher position in hierarchy were also able to shed light on wider experiences that they had learned via their position, also concerning the grass-roots level of everyday life (e.g., experiences of the returnees).

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<sup>57</sup> In the following chapters we only refer to these individuals in general terms, for instance, as "representatives/interviewees(s) from the Pentecostal church".

One particular notion in our data concerns the voices of women. For instance, we conducted focus group interviews (in 2005) and observation (in 2006) in the multicultural Martha organisation in Lahti and particularly its group of immigrant women. We consider our data to represent wide-ranging views on welfare in general, their particular welfare work, and the minorities' positions in Lahti.

Thematic interviews were our research method for this empirical design. The themes concentrated on welfare and special needs of welfare, values, cooperation in welfare, a sense of community, as well as, social cohesion and possible conflict. For example, under these sub-themes were included values of religious communities, values of minorities, and values of Lahti citizens. For instance, we asked the interviewees' outlooks on the special needs of minorities in the welfare sector in Lahti. All theme interviews lasted from one hour to two hours and were taped and transcribed.

Our main method of data analysis was content analysis, as we wanted to seek the views and experiences of the interviewees and their similarities and differences in terms of the following themes:

#### **Cooperation and cohesion:**

- The welfare work of religious communities
- Cooperation between religious communities and public sector
- Views of immigrants: cooperation and cohesion between religious communities and minorities
- Cooperation and cohesion between minorities
- Cohesion view of gender; gender and welfare, particular issues
- Cohesion among people in Lahti; national level cohesion

In addition to the cooperation and cohesion themes we also looked for the opinions of interviewees on problems and tensions in welfare and cohesion. We concentrated on following points of views:

#### **Problems and tensions in cooperation and cohesion:**

- Tensions and problems in the local welfare work system and the welfare work of religious groups
- View of immigrants: problems in welfare and cohesion
- View of gender: problems in welfare and cohesion
- Conflicts and problems between minorities and Lahti citizens

Overall our experience was that the above themes responded well to our research focus: the welfare work of religious communities and how these activities reflect the conflicts, cohesion and values that minorities and Lahti citizens generally experience at the local level.

# Findings

## Welfare provision by minority groups and cooperation and/or cohesion between groups

### **The welfare work of religious communities**

In this section we introduce the primary findings of our field work: description of the welfare work of the Pentecostal Church, the Salvation Army, the Free Church, and the Orthodox Church in Lahti (i.e., both for the mapping phase and our in-depth analysis). The Evangelical Lutheran Church's welfare work has already been introduced earlier in this report. Our main viewpoints related particularly to the Pentecostal Church, the Salvation Army, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church – and their relations to minorities – because they are the most visible and active religious welfare actors in Lahti.

Overall, most of our interviewees expressed very holistic views on citizens' welfare. They emphasised that individuals need different elements for their welfare and well-being; physical, mental, social, and spiritual aspects have to be in balance in one's life. Furthermore, a person's welfare is based on one's own knowledge of her/his well-being.<sup>58</sup>

According to our interviews, religious communities can support one's wellbeing by offering spiritual and mental reinforcement. They also should concentrate on offering social and economic support. The most important matter is support that enables a person to feel a spiritual and social sense of community – a sense of togetherness – in the community's activities. People have a “built-in need and feeling” for groups as points of reference. All our interviewees strongly emphasised that social work and welfare activities are fundamental tasks (also) for religious communities. For example, interviewees in the Orthodox Church in Lahti considered that they have to strengthen their social work in the future – which is not yet very active – because people seem to be more and more in need.

The *Finnish Pentecostal Church* has an official position, as a registered denomination in Finland. Lahti's Pentecostal congregation acts as a part of this denomination. The local congregation has over 80 years history in Lahti and today it has about 1,000 members. The congregation has been involved in social work through its history in Lahti, but after the Finnish economic recession in the early 1990s it expanded and developed its activities. The most important areas of its welfare work are child and youth work, activities with immigrants, the friendship service (i.e. sending volunteer friends to homes) and food assistance. Child and youth work and friendship services

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<sup>58</sup> As noted in Methods chapter, we have analysed, and refer to, our interviewees together. We do not bring out interviewees as individuals but we emphasize the communities they represent.

are very often supporting forms of activities that cannot be replaced. For instance, there is a child and youth work club (“a kid's action club”) in the Liipola’s residential area, which has one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe, and yet there are hardly any other activities for youth, not even by the municipality. Our interviewees also emphasised that their church services are places for rest and relaxation; they support one’s wellbeing, especially in today’s hectic life. Social work in the Pentecostal Church is directed mainly to all persons in need.

The Salvation Army also has a central position in Lahti’s social service sector. It is difficult to estimate how many persons are involved in the activities of the Salvation Army because they are not registered and most of them, including their volunteers, are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Salvation Army is not a denomination in Finland. The most important forms of welfare work, such as day nursery and accommodation for homeless people, were started in the 1940s. Today the Salvation Army’s main areas of welfare work are material support, such as food and clothes, Christmas fundraising, residence hall and day care services. They also offer active spiritually oriented social work in hospitals and at homes for the elderly. Material help is directed particularly to people who have economic problems – among these people about 50% are Ingrian returnees and immigrants, mainly from Russia. Day care by the Salvation Army is open to all children in Lahti. About 10% of these children are immigrant and some come from an Islamic religious background.

The Free Church is an independent Christian denomination in Finland and it has about 100 congregations in Finland. The Free Church has functioned for about 90 years in Lahti, having now about 500 members. Welfare work consists of a day care centre, food assistance and different social and spiritual groups, such as mother-child groups, marriage courses, children's action groups, day clubs for children, Bible and prayer groups.

The Orthodox Church in Finland is an autonomous Orthodox archbishopric of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Church has a legal position as a national church in the country, along with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The Orthodox Church in Lahti was founded in the 1950s. Welfare work consists mainly of pastoral care, financial support, and a residence hall for women. Most of the welfare work is directed to its own members, but according to our interviewee “it is possible to help non-members too”.<sup>59</sup>

All interviewees told us that their communities are active in welfare work in Lahti because it is the most important way to practice a religious and value-based love for one's neighbour. The welfare work is based on God’s command to serve fellow human beings. In other words, spiritual values and

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<sup>59</sup> Deacon from the Orthodox Church, 23.8.2006

motivations are the most significant reasons to actively offer social work to people in need.

### **Cooperation and cohesion: religious communities and the public sector**

All the religious communities included in this research cooperated actively with the public sector. Especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Salvation Army have a very long tradition of cooperation with both the public sector and third sector associations. Often this cooperation is based on and supported by exchange of information: for instance, the Church introduces and “advertises” its immigration activities in the annual public third sector network meetings, as well as, in meetings between the church’s social workers and municipal authorities.<sup>60</sup> Altogether the staff of the immigrant work of the Lutheran church is an inseparable partner for the public immigrant work services. All of our case study communities had also positive experiences with the public sector.

To take the Salvation Army as an example, at Christmas time the Salvation Army obtains information on people in need from the social services of the municipality. Also the Salvation Army’s day care centre collaborates with the municipal social work, health care centre, and schools.

There have also been changes in the network of cooperation in Lahti in recent years. The Pentecostal Church started its diverse and active welfare work in the early 1990s because of the Finnish economic recession. This development had also been supported by the fact that several of its employees had recently worked as missionaries in challenging areas (e.g., in India); they wanted to bring their humanist, international orientation to their home congregation too. One particular example is the Liipola youth work, noted already above; the Pentecostal Church started a youth and children action in the Liipola residential area because all youth work had been stopped there by the public sector. The Pentecostal Church had then decided to start to cooperate with the municipal authorities and Liipola’s secondary school to start children and youth work again. The services offered were met with joy and today one hundred children take part in the Pentecostal Church’s children’s action in the area.

Notwithstanding these active forms of cooperation, there is little or almost no cooperation between religious communities in welfare work. Nevertheless, the representatives of these communities share very similar opinions on welfare and even on the tasks and ways that congregations support people’s welfare. One interviewee from the Evangelical Lutheran Church said that the lack of cooperation is caused by different theological views.<sup>61</sup> One inter-

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<sup>60</sup> It must be noted that none such meetings are compulsory; Lahti has been very active on such issues.

<sup>61</sup> For example, the Pentecostal church and the Evangelical church have different views of baptism.

viewee from the Pentecostal Church pointed out that in spite of differences in doctrinal views they have mutual respect for each other. Both representatives informed us that they are willing to recommend each other's services and occasions for immigrants. There are also examples of cooperation between religious agents but the Salvation Army's Day Care Centre and the child care work of the Evangelical Lutherans Church are both part of an educational network focusing on early education in Lahti. For instance, Evangelical Lutheran Church representatives invite Salvation Army day care staff to their annual religious celebrations.

All interviewees see people's welfare as a comprehensive, holistic phenomenon and are of the opinion that communities need to support spiritual well-being too. Religious communities also view that it is their obligation to support people in terms of material help, if they have the means to do so.

Overall, what is the particular role of religion and religious agents in local welfare and cohesion? Obviously the social work of religious communities creates cohesion when they cooperate with the public sector and offer their services to large groups of individuals. Religious communities are not a separate part of the Finnish society as they are important actors that organise various services. Overall public sector authorities acknowledge that they receive support from congregations for their services and for local welfare without which they could not manage.<sup>62</sup> Although many of our interviewees wanted to criticise their role as complementary social workers filling the gaps in welfare, at the same time they benefit from and enjoy the confidence and respect both of citizens and public authorities. Furthermore, welfare for them is a channel through which the religious communities may spread both their own message and the overall message of caring, love and solidarity. Welfare services are a channel through which religious groups the church creates its (positive) image and trust.

### **Cooperation and cohesion: between religious communities and minorities**

Every religious community in this research has been engaged in various forms of social and welfare action with immigrants, refugees and Ingrian returnees. The Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Pentecostal Church were the most significant actors concerning immigrant questions; the Salvation Army in helping minorities and immigrants focuses mainly on material assistance. The Evangelical Lutheran Church deals with the majority of immigrants because it introduces itself in the municipal information package that all incoming immigrants receive in Lahti via the municipal immigrants services (8,F).<sup>63</sup> Interviewees from the Evangelical Lutheran Church wanted

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<sup>62</sup> See also Yeung 2004; 2006.

<sup>63</sup> When interviews are cited in the text, they are coded with an individual number for each interview, followed by F for female, or M for male.

also to emphasise the role of the Pentecostal Church's multidimensional welfare and community support work in Lahti (7,F; 8,F). The Pentecostal Church's particular asset to immigration work is, also in the view of the Lutheran Church, its members' international backgrounds (e.g. from South America, Russia and different parts of Eastern Europe) and their language skills. They use, for instance, simultaneous interpretation in their spiritual occasions and services.

All three groups of our study meet immigrants and minority representatives from various ethnic backgrounds. The greatest number of "clients" come from Russia and other parts of Eastern Europe. Muslims are often from Africa and the Middle East. Most of the clients participate in the activities (e.g. different information events, small groups, religious services) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Pentecostal Church. Very often these different immigrant groups need help from religious communities in language issues, for instance when they have to deal with official matters with the public sector. Russian immigrants and Ingrian returnees seem to need, according to our interviewees in various communities, mostly economic and material (e.g., food) assistance.

The interviewees from the Pentecostal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church said that their special assets to immigration work is cooperation with the public sector, active voluntary work, and the fact that their work is not based on office hours (1,M; 8,F). Such flexibility allows them to visit immigrants' homes also during evenings and weekends. Immigrants also participate in such cohesion-building; especially the Pentecostal Church has many volunteers with immigrant backgrounds and many of these people act as leaders of international small groups and clubs and volunteer groups in their church.

As mentioned above, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Pentecostal Church meet a large part of Lahti's immigrants and Ingrian returnees. Both of these churches support the immigrants in managing their daily duties and everyday life by offering support persons (volunteers) and helping with various municipal bureaucratic matters. Immigrants are also supported in becoming familiar with and understanding the municipal welfare service sector, for example, by giving information and accompanying migrants in meetings at civil service departments:

"But then comes a situation when they have individual visits with the authorities and so then we come into the picture. We help, we come along to the offices, we interpret, we fill the forms, like in the police station. I have pondered that I have been in contact with the immigration service probably some 300 times, via phone, e-mail, letters. Sometimes I wonder why." (2,M).

Notwithstanding these similarities, the Pentecostal Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church have also differences in their orientations towards support-

ing immigrants and their participation in the community. In the Pentecostal Church interviewees emphasised the possibility for immigrants to find friends and meaningful social networks in the Pentecostal Church. The Pentecostal Church puts a lot of effort in building recreational activities for minorities and is concerned with the mental health and social participation of immigrants. Many of them have had stressful experiences when they left their home countries and came to Lahti, as our Pentecostal interviewees reminded us (1,M; 2,M). The Pentecostal Church in Lahti also aims to offer interesting volunteer tasks for immigrants (e.g. singing in the choir or acting as a small group leader) within the Pentecostal community. In other words, they aim to offer “their own “community to the immigrants. The Evangelical Lutheran Church also has friendship networks, support persons and small groups. However, the Lutheran interviewees mostly emphasised their aim in supporting immigrants in terms of networking and engaging in Finnish society and its various networks as a whole, not particularly in the Lutheran Church context. They teach, for instance, various practical civic skills to immigrants, such as how to spend and save money wisely. The Lutheran Church social work (“diaconal work”) also aims to help immigrants in their search for jobs and education possibilities (8,F).

As these activities and services are varied, a question arises on what kind of relationship immigrants and returnees have to the spirituality of these religious communities that assist them. The Ingrian returnees and some of their children and family members are very interested in the Evangelical Lutheran Church and its activities. This is most likely explained by their, in many cases, Lutheran background. Ingrians in Lahti often want to participate in confirmation education in order to learn the basic Christian doctrine. Confirmation classes in the Ingrian culture are a very important part of community life; in many cases many, or even all, family members participate together. The priest from the Evangelical Lutheran Church that we interviewed considered that these confirmation classes are a key for Ingrians to gain Finnish identity: to attain Finnish customs and to learn Finnish culture:

[Reasons to participate in a confirmation school:] “but also there is this search for citizenship. Here in Finland we have this Lutheran nation church; people think that I would become more of a Finn. I find this a way to integrate to society” (8,F).

Interestingly, one interviewee from the Evangelical Lutheran church saw that Ingrians seek the activities of the Lutheran Church because the church accepts their traditional practices. The church is experienced as tolerant enough, especially in the religiosity of elderly Ingrians there are various influences from folk religion (“folk Orthodoxy”) that is typical in Russia.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Turunen, 2005.

They have, for example, wanted and been allowed that the deceased in a funeral may be blessed in open coffins, a practice that is never used in Finnish funerals; this tradition is valued, for instance, as it allows them to whisper to the deceased's ear.<sup>65</sup> Ingrians in Lahti have also asked the Lutheran priest to bless their crosses and dresses used in confirmation (7,F).

According to our findings, the experience in Lahti is that immigrants, in spite of their religious background, are very often also interested in Christianity, at least to some extent, although they had initially contacted the religious community for non-religious reasons. Still, as a whole, immigrants search mainly for support in daily issues and possibilities to form social relationships in congregations. The search for friends and social networks is particularly underscored; some Muslims had asked the Lutheran Church workers to find them friends. Both in the Evangelical Lutheran Church and in the Pentecostal Church there are also ecumenical small groups which serve as the most important places to build social bonds, also in the sense of "religion-meets-religion". Thus, these groups offer a forum for a dialogue between religions and cultures:

"And then about food, we have once a month an ethnic lunch. It means that these immigrants get to shine. We have had Chilean chicken, African chicken and rice. We have had Asian food. Once a month. These people make all the food by themselves and we pay for the food. A couple of weeks ago we had this sort of food bazaar here, probably 20 points that served food here and downstairs. From Jamaica to India we had probably all possible varieties! People from different countries made this food. We had Indian chicken, some pie from Texas and so forth. Then these people may experience... they make this food, and we eat and praise them to the skies, how great a food they make. They can shine when they get all this positive feedback." (1,M).

Overall our interviews indicated that many minorities participate in social work, but not in spiritual occasions (e.g., in the case of the Salvation Army). The Pentecostal Church has tried to face this challenge: it wants to find some special form of voluntary work that may appeal to larger groups of people and to bring new members (1,M). This would also be, in their view, a way to support one's commitment to their community and to build overall cohesion and solidarity.

All our interviewees strongly emphasised that they aim to teach Christianity in a way that does not insult or offend immigrants or anybody else. Consideration for all individuals is thus highly valued. For example, the Salvation Army day care centre wants to support the cultural and religious heritage of immigrant children, but the children are allowed – with parents' permission – to participate in Christian activities too. Even more fascinating is the fact that, according to our interviewees, for some Muslim families it

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<sup>65</sup> On the contrary, the Orthodox Church in Lahti has not approved such a tradition.

has been exactly the Salvation Army's Christian background that has been the reason for them to choose a particular day care centre; a Christian background may prompt a sense of trust and security.

According to our interviews, main spiritual communities for the Roma in Lahti are the Free Church and the Pentecostal Church. They are active for instance in music groups of the Pentecostal Church; the Lutheran Church service seems to be too "traditional and boring" for their taste, according to our Lutheran interviewees. However, the Roma people search for support on different social and economic issues, from the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Pentecostal Church and the Salvation Army.

Overall most of our interviewees emphasise the openness of their community, also towards minorities. They express that every individual is welcome to ask for help and support from their social services and their community.

### **Cooperation and cohesion among minorities themselves**

As noted above, notwithstanding the active forms of cooperation between our case study communities and the public sector and their active welfare work for immigrants, there is practically no cooperation between religious communities in welfare work.

Based on our interviewees the most important relationships, networks and sense of community for immigrants, refugees and for the Ingrians, are in their own cultural groups and among relatives. In other words, immigrant groups socialise mostly within their own groups. Interviewees explained the situation in terms of the great importance that immigrants place on family and family values. On the other hand, our interviewees also admitted that people in Lahti are quite reserved and shy to build friendships with immigrants, even if there is no, or very little, open racism in the Lahti region.

Still, our interviewee from the Evangelical Lutheran Church considered that there are differences between the sense of mutual community and togetherness among immigrants, not so much from one national group to another, but between generations. Younger generations – usually the second generation in Finland – are not so close to their family and relatives, and to family-centred values, as the earlier generation (8,F). This seems to concern both the Ingrians and Muslims. By learning the Finnish culture and language, it has been easier for the younger generations to bond and build contacts with Finns:

"Finnishness starts to stick to these immigrants. The old ties between families are not anymore the only ones." (8,F).

However, this is not always the case; younger generations could also be, for instance, more nationalistic towards their home country. This is the case for example of some young Russian boys living in Lahti; according to our inter-

viewees these youngsters have an admiring attitude towards Russian culture and society.

### **Viewpoint of gender on cohesion: where are the men?**

Every interviewee told us that most of the participants in their religious communities are women. Women are the majority in joining spiritual occasions and activities, but also the most enthusiastic about the voluntary work of these institutions. For example, the pastor from the Pentecostal Church that we interviewed estimated that 70-80% of their active members are women (1,M). Also in the minority groups, e.g. Ingrians, women are very often the majority. Especially Ingrian older women are very eager to join the Lutheran congregational activities and together with younger Ingrian women, they are also active in Finnish civic organisations. Through these networks they have found various important social relationships and networks (7,F; 9,F).

As a result, men are rather invisible in congregational activities, however, not completely: although they do not participate very often in spiritual services, they have searched for economic and social support (e.g. food assistance) from religious communities, and actually even more often than women. This is the case, for instance, both in the Salvation Army and the Lutheran Church: [On those who depend on EU food support:]

“At the moment the situation is that there are more families, relatively. But in almost similar measures come these lonely men.” (5,F).

## Tensions and problem points between and within groups

### **The local welfare system versus the welfare work of religious groups**

Our interviewees viewed the local public sector (e.g., cuts in welfare) critically. They asked why the city of Lahti has invested so much in sport and culture while people are suffering and while people are not very satisfied with basic social services in the town. Availability and quality of services do not seem to respond to the needs and expectations that people have. Resources have been cut in social and health care services, in education, as well as, in day care. There is continuous insufficiency of day care places in Lahti and the local schools cannot organise special education for all in need. The city of Lahti has also cut down resources in youth work. Almost every interviewee mentioned the fact that many people who would need social and economic support have not received sufficient help from the public sector. That is part of the reason – and a very central one – that they feel they have had to step in to assist.

Unemployment in particular is one of the most central problems threatening people's welfare in Lahti. It is also the most common reason for people's

need for economic and social help from religious communities. Long-term unemployment has caused deep-rooted and lasting poverty among some individuals and families, which is also the case in the national level.

In addition to unemployment, many cuts in the social and health care sectors have caused particular problems in Lahti. Health care and geriatric nursing, in particular, have had to concentrate mainly on basic care. Thus, for instance, the recreational services offered by the religious communities face greater demand. All of our interviewees were especially worried about the loneliness of elderly people and people with mental problems. The public sector also seeks cooperation: both the Salvation Army and the Pentecostal Church have received requests to organise recreational services in different municipal departments, such as in hospitals. The Pentecostal Church also regularly visits the homes of lonely elderly people; it has also organised very active friendship service networks (volunteers) in order to reduce loneliness of the elderly.

The elderly are not the only group suffering from loneliness. According to our interviewees there are also lonely young people and young families in Lahti. Many families live without any contacts with relatives as their families live far away in other parts of Finland. The lack of relatives and other social networks is a particular problem of single parent families, often women: "Many families are today alone. They have no networks whom to rely on, and to ask for help. They have no-one who can come to babysit for a few hours so that the parents can, for instance, go see a doctor. There are lots of these people. It is surprising. Having social networks surely increases the wellbeing of all individuals." (3,F).

### **Problems, conflicts, tensions: viewpoint of minorities**

According to our interviewees, the main difficulties facing immigrants concern loneliness and lack of social networks. The reasons for this loneliness probably relate to lack of particular civic skills, which could help immigrants integrate better to Finnish society. It is very typical for immigrants to have weak language skills in Finnish. It is, thus, difficult for them to manage their personal matters and seek a way to an education and work life. Also contacts with Finnish people can be weak because of insufficient language skills. Our interviewee from the Pentecostal Church estimated that the city of Lahti does not offer sufficient language teaching for immigrants they cannot get language courses as fast as they would hope and need (2,M).

Another problem among immigrants is the various types of mental health problems. These may be caused, in part, by their difficulties to integrate into Finnish society and in many cases also by their earlier traumatic experiences. Also, receiving asylum in Finland is often a very long, stressful and troublesome process. Therefore, immigrants are uncertain about their future in Finland:

“There is this moment when a refugee comes to Finland. These enormous expectations. And suddenly one sees what this all is and then one’s spirits start to go down. And then two years pass. And where are these two years? Somewhere here and there, and usually the life of these individuals sort of stops there. Their friends, social circles, work, language skills, state of mental health, they all get into a rut and stay the same. And then that is the whole rest of the life. Just the same.” (2,M).

Our interviewee from the Pentecostal Church indicated that Lahti’s health care service sector does not always recognise, at least not well enough, mental health problems among immigrants; thus, they may not receive proper treatment and support (1,M).

One could also ask whether, the immigrants’ own culture can, in some cases, exacerbate their mental health problems and complicate their treatment. Some of them do not always want to share their problems with people outside their family; for instance, they may not be willing to discuss their health issues. Thus, our interviewee experienced that it is difficult to recognise their problems and hard to find correct and useful support for them (2,M).

Many interviewees pointed out that a lot of immigrants have difficulties taking care of their financial issues and need financial counselling. Most of these needy individuals are individuals with multiple problems. Very often financial problems have been caused by incurring debts. Many immigrants also send money for relatives abroad and this creates more and more financial problems for them. Especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church has aimed to aid immigrants with their financial issues; the Lahti parish union has even hired a church social worker to focus only on money matters, helping people to get their life and finances on track through careful holistic planning (8,F).

Ingrian returnees have similar problems as other immigrants. Because of their weak Finnish language skills they have difficulties to get education and work. Ingrians do not have equivalent jobs in Lahti as they did in Russia; even high education has not helped them get a job in Lahti.

A very typical problem among Ingrians – perhaps also for other immigrants – is distrust in the Finnish public authorities, such as police and doctors. Yet a person has to trust Finnish officers and share their situations, experiences, and views, if they want to benefit from the public welfare services. Like many immigrants, also Ingrians, have financial problems in Lahti partly because they send money to their relatives abroad.

All of our interviewees from the Salvation Army, the Pentecostal Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church considered and pondered on the identity of immigrants and refugees. Our interviewees thought that many immigrants may have problems and challenges in specifying their personal, social and cultural identity in Finland:

”Russians we are not, Finns we do not become. So who are we?” (7,F).

Some immigrants seem to want to emphasise their own background (e.g. via their dressing), but for example Ingrian returnees would like to hide their Russian heritage (yet not the young men, as indicated above). The problems of specifying one’s own identity is a particular challenge for the immigrant youth as they have to build a Finnish identity of their own kind, while at the same time often their families and relatives aim to maintain their cultural and religious heritage – sometimes their parents not even speaking Finnish. For example, Ingrians look for their identity – and mix elements – from the Russian, Ingrian and Finnish cultures.

In addition to identity problems, immigrant youth have some particular challenges in trying to cope with the Finnish education system. One interviewee from the Evangelical Lutheran Church indicated that immigrant students must be very active and independent in order to pursue education and to cope well in the school system. Thus, immigrant students need more support and advice in their studying than what they currently receive. This same interviewee emphasised that the city of Lahti needs to invest more on support of the Russian youth and their education; this is a particular group at risk of social exclusion in Lahti (7,F).

Immigrants also face some particular conflicts in relation to other inhabitants in Lahti. However, a positive finding was that according to our interviewees there is overall little (visible) racism in Lahti. Still, there have been some violent conflicts between immigrants and Finns, particularly confrontations between Russian and Finnish youth have been noticed in the media, even at the national level. Some particular narratives<sup>66</sup> were shared with us during the interviews. For instance, one interviewee from the Evangelical Lutheran Church expressed that the most visible racism in Lahti today is directed particularly toward Russians. She also described one example (one that had also ended up in the media) in which Russian and Finnish girls had a fight in a disco club and this fight had led to physical violence. When this event was publicised, police and town officers in Lahti organised a public meeting for citizens to discuss racism in public (8,F).

### **Problems and tensions: aspects of gender**

Interviewees mentioned Muslim and Thai spouses that have encountered some particular problems in Lahti. Muslim women may have Muslim husbands who do not accept that their wife has a life outside the home; for example, visiting the doctor can be a problem for these men. For Thai spouses

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<sup>66</sup> Another example: a voluntary worker from the Pentecostal Church had experienced racism while seeking a job. He told that colour of his skin had prevented him from getting a job from one firm in Lahti. The employer said that a darkskinned isn’t welcome to this firm.

problematic situations are caused by Finnish husbands, who have often drinking problems and can be violent towards their wives.

According to our interviewees the position of Ingrians looks very good. It has to be noted, however, that there are gender differences; Ingrian women are active and well-connected in social networks, but men are passive. Ingrian women have several social contacts and they are willing to participate in various activities. In all the religious communities that we interviewed the Ingrian women were also active welfare service beneficiaries. Interviewees emphasised that this seems to be caused by low pensions and the fact that the Ingrians help their relatives; many even send money and other material help to Russia.

## Analysis: Emerging Values

In our inquiry, values are defined as relatively stable, desirable goals which guide the actions of individuals (e. g. Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992). Values are often seen as normative and justified, but are also often unrecognised and emotional. We considered also the theoretical model developed by Schwartz (1992). His theory includes the idea of ten basic values which motivate and are orientated towards the self or others and towards change or preservation.<sup>67</sup> However, in this particular study, whose methods were rather data rather than theory-oriented, and whose focus is very much on community and societal perspectives, a more concrete analysis of value arenas seemed more useful.

According to our data *family and networks, education*, as well as, *care* proved to be the *intrinsic values* that are reflected in welfare, and particularly in related conflicts and cohesion. In what follows we will consider each of these, also from the particular viewpoints of minorities and gender.

Interviewees from the Pentecostal congregation and from the Salvation Army emphasise in their welfare work the support for *families* and *social networks*. According to them, both institutions are worried about the high divorce rates in Lahti. Thus, in the last few years the Pentecostal Church has invested a lot in this issue: for instance, it has initiated mother-child clubs and work with couples. The Salvation Army representatives stated that all day care centres should offer more flexibility and openness to support families. For example, they suggested that there could be mediating categories between day care and being outside day care: unemployed parents, for example, could bring their children for few hours into day care in order to allow the parents some free time. Many interviewees were also concerned about the elderly and their loneliness – their lack of family and other social

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<sup>67</sup> These ten include: self-Direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, and universalism.

ties. In their view it would be important that family work involves grandparents too. In general, interviewees thought that immigrants in Finland are more family-oriented than the Finns; this is one of their strengths. Especially Ingrians, Roma, and Muslims spend a lot of time with their families and relatives. In contrast, our interviewees argued – and they may well be right even if the methods of this study do not allow us to verify this – that although Finns do value their families, they respect at least as highly – or even more – their friends. This could be caused by an individualistic culture and/or the lack of close family ties: due to urbanisation and internal migration people very often do not have their relatives in the same city.

Interviewees from minorities and religious communities emphasised the value of *education*. Language education is their priority, but vocational education is also important to them. Altogether, offering educational possibilities is considered a task of the public sector, yet many minority groups and religious communities at the moment offer education too, both in basic everyday skills, knowledge and in language. According to our interviewees their role should be increased, for instance, by offering training for volunteers. In the last few years the Pentecostal Church has invested a lot in volunteer education and training in social support services.

According to our interviewees, promoting the value of *caring* for others is the most important task of religious communities towards all people. Caring for our interviewees includes meeting both spiritual and material needs of individuals in a holistic manner. Spiritual caring is naturally the most important resource and form of help of the religious communities, but all of them try to help people materially as well. Only one interviewee was worried about providing material help (such as money) because it may be the only reason for the person to come to the congregation. Interviewees told us that very often congregations are the last possibility and chance for their clients to get help. They view this – to some extent – positively: religious communities should help those in the deepest need, those that are abandoned. They often also act as guides on where people could go for help.

To look at our findings in a more holistic manner, the *emphasis on the intrinsic value of care* also promotes other, more abstract values. The following two in particular relate to our findings:

### **Security:**

- Through caring we can fight against the loneliness of the elderly, families, the unemployed. Also over-stressed, over-worked individuals are at risk..
- The ideal: nobody needs to be alone; people should be reminded of their responsibility to care for others, for all (this was particularly emphasised by the Pentecostals and Salvation Army).

- Supporting the social networks of the immigrants: they will take care of their own people (as noted by the representatives of the Lutheran Church, in particular).
- Care (e.g., by religious communities) may further build trust (e.g., on public sector and other official agents) and promote social capital in the society.

### **Equality and justice:**

- All people should be treated alike (in particular emphasised by the Salvation Army, in our data).
- The spiritual dimension: in the eyes of God we are all alike; in other words, religious values promote (or they should promote, according to the interviewees) care and equality.
- People respect money and economics too much, this equality and care become secondary (emphasised by the Salvation Army and the Pentecostals).

The values of caring, family and networking are also strongly interlinked. Especially our interviewees from the Pentecostal Church emphasised that the congregation is the place to build social relationships, make friends and feel cared. Their caring is thus based on community building and a sense of togetherness, which also shows in their concrete activities (e.g. support immigrants, lonely families and the elderly). Furthermore, all the interviewees emphasised their tasks in supporting people's health and especially mental health. The Pentecostal Church, the Salvation Army, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church put a great deal of effort in offering recreational activities to people (e.g., various camps, small groups, discussions, home visits).

The issue of *recreational activities* was actually quite central in all our value-related material: *sports and culture* were perceived as a way to support welfare and social networking, thus community and togetherness.<sup>68</sup> Concerning sports, physical activities are strongly considered as part of welfare, and Lahti has actually been devoted to supporting citizens' physical exercise and health (e.g., by preparing its own exercise strategy).<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, many interviewees criticised the fact that the town has invested its money in sports and culture instead of (more) in social welfare and health care services: their message is that city officers (seem to) want only to entice new inhabitants to Lahti, instead of caring about how the present inhabitants cope with their lives. Looking at the positive side, the value of environment and

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<sup>68</sup> Concerning culture, there is, for instance, new a congress and concert centre Sibelius hall in Lahti; some interviewees considered it a symbol of Lahti's rich and versatile culture life. The hall has been a lot in national media too.

<sup>69</sup> Lahden terveystuellastrategia 2007. Also, it must be noted that Lahti has the image of a Finnish sports city.

respect for ecology were also strongly related to these recreational activities, particularly to sports. The interviewees emphasised that it is important that people in Lahti have possibilities to live near a clear, valued and protected nature.

In relation to *gender*, the Pentecostal Church's representatives emphasised the differences between their values and those of the surrounding society: for instance, in their view people want too much freedom today. People do not take responsibility for their choices and for the care of others. Media promote values that over-emphasise sexuality and a false image of women (i.e., the only and 'correct' image of a woman is based on specific expectations on what a woman should look like). A disrespectful image of women can lead to discrimination. This, in their view, is very problematic for all women but particularly for immigrant women as they could experience discrimination (e.g., disrespect by Finns towards Russian and Thai women). Positive issues on gender were also noted: the value of citizen participation (e.g., volunteering) in welfare by women of various cultures. This may, however, also be reflected in care and welfare more negatively as women may assume an overemphasised role of household care and welfare (e.g., the particularly strong role of the Roma women was emphasised by the Pentecostals).

All the above noted values that were reflected through welfare issues in the local everyday life touch upon minorities in particular. Furthermore, the issue of *identity* was central in all the accounts reported to us. Particularly in relation to the Russians (not Ingrians) and the Roma, the issue of disrespect, sometimes even racism, came up; the Roma were underscored particularly by the Pentecostal interviewees. The Russian youth and men were of particular concern for the representatives of the Lutheran Church: nationalistic views towards Russia by youngsters and social exclusion of Russian men (e.g., lack of language skills, passiveness in society).

Overall both of these values and the particular issue of identity come down to the question of *integration*: do we wish to integrate the minorities into our culture and religious heritage (as emphasised by the Pentecostals, e.g., via volunteering) or do we wish to promote divergence and various minority cultures, i.e., integration into a broader, divergent community (the view emphasised by the Lutheran interviewees)?

## Data

### **Interviews (background data):**

The male from Muslim community 12.4.2007

Dean from Orthodox Church. 23.8.2006 (via e-mail)

## **Research interviews:**

### *Pentecostal Church:*

Pastor (male). November 2006

Responsible person of immigration work (male). November 2006

Responsible person of friendship service (female). November 2006

Responsible person of food service (female). November 2006

### *Salvation Army:*

Leader of Lahti Department (female). December 2006

Leader of day nursing (male). December 2006

### *Evangelical Lutheran Church:*

Priest of Ingrians (female). December 2006

Diaconal worker for immigrants (female). November 2006

Returnee director (female). November 2006

Group interview in the international women group. September 2005.

## **Observation material:**

Notes from the two visits in the international women groups. December 2006 ( MAMUT Martat).

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# Chapter 6 England

## 6:1 OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SITUATION

Martha Middlemiss Lé Mon

### Introduction

A study of England has not only to take account of the religious mix and immigration history of the country, but also the current media and political climate. All of these factors can be seen to impact not only on public policy, but also on the commissioning of research. In addition it is paramount to draw attention from the very outset to the particular situation one finds oneself in when studying England. England is one of four national, or semi national components, with distinct legal systems, which make up the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The focus of this report is on the situation in England, but given the particular constitutional arrangements of the UK as a whole and the fact the many political decisions and welfare systems cover the whole of Britain, this report will occasionally refer to Britain, or sometimes even the UK, rather than England. This is to allow for accurate presentation of statistics or the research of others. This issue is a practical one, but also serves to highlight the major conceptual issues at the heart of this study. In attempting to sketch the situation with regard to religion, minorities and gender any study of England, must necessarily pay attention to the different degrees to which these countries within a country share political leadership and public service systems. In doing so it must recognise the impact that these overlapping boundaries can have on concepts of national belonging and touch on notions of citizenship, identity and multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism, as it has been practised in Britain, is based on the recognition of group rights rather than individual rights. This has meant, in contrast to the French case, that the focus has been on giving the right to make decisions to ethnic or religious groups, rather than individuals. One consequence of the implementation of this model, however, within the framework of a society also keen to protect individual rights has been the

confinement of any discussion of cultural diversity to the private sphere. The logic behind this being that if allowances made to particular groups to decide over their individual members are kept within this sphere, cultural considerations will not be able seriously to impinge on individual rights. In practice, however, this model when implemented within the framework of a society already used to fluid national identities has led to the development of hybrid identities. A group within society, which would be defined in terms of its ethnicity or race by those outside the community, may, for example, adopt the identity 'black British'. Here they are, Modood argues,

“not so much seeking civic rights against a hegemonic nationality as attempting to politically negotiate a place in an all-inclusive nationality” (Modood 1998, 389).

If this is true for groups that wish primarily to define themselves in terms of ethnicity it is no less true for religious identity (Ameli and Merali 2004; Statham et al 2005). Increasing calls for laws against religious discrimination and for cultural and religious practices to be taken into account by social and health services are examples of current challenges to the traditional system (Meen et al 2005; Grewal, Ini et al. 2004; Morgan 2003). The same situation can be observed in calls for recognition of inequalities in opportunity and care for minority groups in general, but with particular emphasis on the gender dimensions of such issues (Yuval Davis, Anthias and Kofman 2005). The question is how this system of multiculturalism, in a country, which also still retains an established church, can be adapted to meet the current challenges and what is relevant and possible in the current climate. Modood argues for a moderate secularism incorporating a pluralisation of the church-state connection (Modood 1998, 394) and this is one potential way forward. The question is whether current research provides an adequate basis for such conclusions.

Current political interest in the potential for community building, which faith communities and partnerships between government and voluntary bodies can have, means that there is currently a wealth of literature exploring the roles of religious groups at local level in community development and their social capital forming potential (Farnell et al 2003; Smith, K 2004; Furbey et al 2006). Government interest can be seen both in its publication of a major report *Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities* in 2004 (Home Office Faith Communities Unit, February 2004), and in the commissioning of a *Review of the Evidence Base on Faith Communities* (Beckford, James A. et al 2006) completed in 2006.

Where in many countries in Europe immigration is closely connected to the Muslim presence and the presence of religions other than Christianity is a fairly new phenomenon, England's situation is closely tied to the fact that all major world religions are represented in the country. This said, the cur-

rent focus at an international level on the Muslim community has not passed England by and has received increasing media, political and academic attention, not least since the events of 7 July 2005 (Abdul Bari 2005). In particular, one on-going research project *Philanthropy for Social Justice in the British Muslim Societies*, which is studying the “charitable habits of British Muslims and the effects their giving has on aiding and promoting social justice”, is of interest in this context.<sup>1</sup> It is a rare example of a project, which seeks to connect the study of minority groups and values expressed in everyday life, in relation to the majority society. Its presence in the wealth of material that does exist serves to highlight the gap that exists at the intersection of the topics we focus on here.

## New Perspectives

Despite the wealth of research that is available on issues of minority groups, of religious identity and of gender, there are no studies currently available in England or indeed in Britain as a whole that have focused on the intersection of values relating to religion, minorities and gender. It is here that the current study can make a valuable contribution. Over and above this there are further gaps in current research that can be addressed by this study. Most research mentioned above and in the following report focuses on perceptions of minority groups from other people’s perspectives. Where it does address discrepancies between minority and majority perceptions of the minority group this is rarely done with respect to an exploration of value orientations and shifts in these, on which the WaVE project focuses. Furthermore it is clear that most research done in this field is quantitative, an approach which has huge advantages, not least in terms of developing public policy, but which needs to be complemented by the nuanced responses which an in-depth qualitative study can provide.

The WaVE project also has another asset to bring to the development of knowledge in this field, namely the unique approach of studying the lived values of communities and individuals through the prism of welfare. Work that does exist on minority groups in the sphere of welfare in England is primarily in the healthcare sector and, therefore, does not allow interpretations based on a broader understanding of welfare, is quantitative and focuses on health inequalities and service user satisfaction. The case study will, however, use the field of welfare to access value orientations, which are hard to access through direct questions.

Finally, we can see that most research to date on minority groups in England has focused on ‘multicultural’ urban environments. As this report will go on to show, however, the unequal spread of minority ethnic and religious groups in the country means that this approach leaves significant gaps in

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.religions.divinity.gla.ac.uk/Centre\\_Islam/philan.htm](http://www.religions.divinity.gla.ac.uk/Centre_Islam/philan.htm) 20 April 2006.

knowledge of less diverse areas of the country, where there is a nonetheless minority ethnic and religious presence. The English case study, by focusing on one such town, is an attempt to redress this balance.

## Characteristics of the national welfare system

In Esping Anderson's model of welfare regimes Britain is labelled as a liberal welfare regime (Esping Andersen 1999). It has what has been described as a 'mixed economy of welfare', where the State directs and organises welfare while not necessarily acting as provider (Clarke, Lanagan and Williams 2001a). The model exists as a balance between family, market, voluntary sector and public provision.

The basic framework of the welfare state was put in place post World War Two (1948) as a system of national insurance based on three basic principles: family allowances, a national health service and full (male) employment. It was a move away from concentration on poor relief, although the poor law tradition has continued to live on in the concern of the British system with the alleviation of poverty (Lewis 2001, 10). A shift in focus has, however, taken place. This is evident in the focus of current day policy on shared responsibility for welfare between the state and the family, voluntary sector and market. It can also be seen in the increase in calculation of people's economic resources as a basis for deciding eligibility for social security support (means testing). This is a move away from basic (non means tested) security to a system based on labour market (re)integration supported only secondly by needs based minimum support (Clasen 2003, 581).

At the beginning of the century voluntary organisations, worked in partnership with the state and were seen as part of the welfare system. Gradually, however, the state took control over the sector and voluntary organisations were seen as a supplement (Lewis 1999). In the post war system the state was viewed as a support to the family economy and a woman's place in the welfare system was as a dependent, yet an active connection was made between participation in the labour market and benefit provision (Lewis 2001, 11). The state took on the role of primary provider in the fields of health and education and here state provision expanded. But, in those areas of welfare where responsibility for provision had been given to local authorities, voluntary bodies provided services, which the local authorities did not have the capacity to produce. The role of the voluntary services, thus, remained central to welfare provision as the role of the private sector continued with the provision of private education, pension schemes and health insurance alongside public provision.

Reforms in the 1960s and 70s introduced a system where finances were allocated centrally. Government increasingly moved focus from the state to

the market and the individual and family (Lewis 2001, 13- 14). Further reforms in the 1980's and 90's broke up the administration of public welfare into agencies and the purchase and provision of services were disconnected from one another. Welfare was consumerised and the voluntary sector and private sectors both had a role to play through entering into partnership with the state. The family was given a role in both carrying out welfare work and making choices. Following policy shifts from institutional based care to 'care in the community' women in particular took on much in terms of hidden welfare work.

## The roles of women and men in the welfare sector

Women are in the majority in two respects. More women than men work in the public sector and the majority of women who work, work in the public sector. (National Statistics, 2006a). Women are also statistically more likely to be working with young children, the elderly and mentally disabled, or in a secretarial capacity and to be working part time (Department of Health, 2004).

In the home too there are significant differences. In 2001, 16% of those aged 16 and over in Britain were caring for a sick, disabled or elderly person, 28% of those for over 20 hours per week (Mahler and Green 2002, xi). Women are more likely than men to be carers and are also numerically dominant in the sub-groups with the largest commitments (Mahler and Green 2002, 2). Gender differences can also be detected in the types of caring work carried out and women are more likely than men to provide care in the form of personal care (National Statistics 2006b). Figures charting the work of unpaid carers are particularly important as indicators of gender roles in the welfare sector when it is realised that 59% of those being cared for in this way do not receive visits from health, social and voluntary services (Mahler and Green 2002, xi). Women also spend more time caring for their children than men, a figure that holds even when comparing full time workers. While the age of the youngest child clearly affects a mother's role in the labour market, the same is not true for her male counterparts.

## Equality and Gender Equality

Issues of gender equality are generally addressed in terms of individual rights and are frequently one part of a blanket approach to combat discrimination in society. Changes to parental leave rights in recent years are part of the government's wider 'Welfare to Work' programme, a policy with an explicit emphasis on encouraging women of working age into the labour market. This marks a major change in policy. Despite this, take argues that there is an implicit gender bias built into the current framework with its fo-

cus on paid employment as the basis for citizenship (Rake 2001, 226), while the rights of women are often addressed within the sphere of the family. While parental leave is based on individual rights, maternity leave at 26 weeks, plus optional additional 26 weeks of unpaid leave, is significantly longer than the 2 weeks paid paternity leave available to fathers. Pensions are also based on individual rights and the amount of basic state pension received on retirement depends on the number of years the individual has made national insurance contributions throughout their working life. In addition, contributions can be made to other pension schemes, but here there is often no automatic right of inheritance for a spouse. This system, therefore, means a double discrimination for women, who distanced from the labour market by family policy, are also penalised by loss of pension. In contrast, tax credit available to families with children is allocated to families rather than individuals.

Two pieces of legislation in Great Britain make provision for discrimination on the grounds of sex. These are the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) and the Equal Pay Act 1970. Both acts apply to men and women of any age (including children). The SDA makes direct and indirect sex discrimination unlawful in employment, education and the provision and sale of goods, facilities, services and premises. The Equal Pay Act gives an individual the right to the same pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, where the individuals are doing like work.

## Challenges to the welfare system

The welfare system has been under considerable strain in the decades following its conception due to a number of demographic and social factors. The first of these is an aging population. Households with one or more members over the age of 60 now represent 30% of the total and there are also large numbers of the very elderly who require significant amounts of care and resources. In addition, differences can also be seen in working patterns. Unemployment amongst men is much higher than it was 50 years ago, women now make up nearly half of the workforce (30% in 1948) and more people work part-time and in a self-employed capacity. In sum, the capacity of the labour market to support the welfare state has shrunk.

Family and household composition have also changed dramatically testing a system based on male employment that could have important consequences for a system, which relies on informal care provided by family members. Household size has shrunk and lone parents now represent 25% of families with dependent children (ONS 2001, 16 Table 3.2). This is of particular significance when noted that lone parents are much more likely than their married or cohabiting counterparts to be dependent on state benefits (Bradshaw et al. 2003, 18f). This alongside factors, such as upwards trends

in the use of health services, have contributed to a situation where government funding of social services has risen significantly since the conception of the welfare state (ONS 2001, 7).

## Issues in current debate

The organisation and funding of the healthcare system in the country is probably the most debated issue in the media today. This includes issues of funding levels in general, but also of allocation and concern that individuals' access to health care is determined by the area in which they live, as funding and services available differ from region to region. These debates include issues of finance, as well as, of human resources and availability of care in deprived areas. Connected to this is also the issue of human resources in the health sector, the lack of workers, low levels of pay and issues connected to the import of trained professionals from outside the UK, not least many former colonies.

Over and above this focus on healthcare in general there is much debate concerning the situation of elderly people in Britain today. The availability of appropriate and good quality care and support is questioned, as is the funding of care and the adequacy of pensions, as well as, the sustainability of the pension system in the longer term.

Poverty in general and child poverty in particular is also a key issue and this is connected to factors of multiple deprivation. The fact that areas with high levels of poverty often also have large minority ethnic communities has in turn raised issues of the relation between policies of integration, multiculturalism, community cohesion and welfare provision. Discussions of issues of poverty also have a particular gender dimension and the problems faced by lone mothers and by ethnic minority women in particular, both of which are less likely to be in paid employment than their peers (Women and Equality Unit).

Many other issues that are high on the agenda in public debate in general also have a gender aspect, such as the care of very elderly people, the majority of whom in Britain today are women. Also hotly debated issues are the lack of accessible affordable childcare in the country (Clasen 2003, 576), flexible working and parental leave. Finally one issue, which is highlighted particularly with reference to women, is that of violence against women, particularly forced marriage and domestic violence. Despite new legislation covering domestic violence in 2003, a national study concluded that the scale and impact of domestic violence on both individuals and society as a whole have both been underestimated (Walby 2004, 97).

## The UK in an EU perspective

While perceptions of welfare issues, such as levels of unemployment and poverty, have a relative dimension even within a national context, this is even more evident when subject to European comparison. Unemployment in the UK is, for example often referred to as high in national discourse, but, as Eurostat statistics show, total unemployment is well below the EU 25 average of 8.0% at 5.4% (figures for summer 2006, Eurostat 2006b). Long-term unemployment rates for both men (1.3%) and women (0.6%) are also well below the EU 25 averages (men 3.7%, women 4.5%) (Jouhette and Romans 2006, Table 7). These figures can, however, be deceptive in that unemployment is only defined as those without employment, but who are seeking it. Figures for those who are 'inactive' in the labour market are much higher than for those unemployed, particularly for women. Levels of female inactivity are nearly 19 times higher than female unemployment. This is interesting when seen in comparison with Sweden, for example, which has similar levels of unemployment as the UK. In Sweden levels of female inactivity are only about 9 times higher than female unemployment (Jouhette and Romans 2006, Table 2).

The percentage of the population aged over 65 was 16% in 2005, close to the EU 25 average of 17%. Employment rates amongst the over 60s were, however, 42%, well above the EU 25 average of 26.7%. Figures for expected healthy life years after the age of 65, however, paint a less positive picture, particularly for men. In the EU 15 countries the average man can expect 10.1 healthy life years after 65, but the average UK male can only expect 8.2. The figures for women in the UK are 9.6, much closer to, although below the EU15 average, of 10.7 (Eurostat 2006a). When compared with figures for general life expectancy, the figures are also revealing of a gender related health inequality: women in the UK may have a longer life expectancy of 81 years as compared to 76 for men (EU 25 average 81 and 75 years respectively) (Eurostat 2005, 81).

In terms of poverty and social inequality, the UK is an interesting case. Inequality in the UK grew faster than in any other industrialised country except New Zealand between 1977 and 1990 (Hornsby-Smith 2006, 209). Up to 18% of the population are at risk of poverty, with an income below 69% of the national median after social transfers. This is in comparison with the EU 25 average of 16%. These figures may not seem to indicate that the rate of poverty in the UK is particularly high, but it is considerably higher than the lowest rates in the EU of 8% in the Czech Republic and 10% in the Scandinavian countries (Eurostat 2005, 125). What is particularly striking about the UK, however, is the poverty gap in the country. Measures taking into account the distribution of income within the country (Gini coefficient) where 0% represents perfect equality and 100% all wealth concentrated in the hands of one person, shows that while Slovenia, which has a similar pov-

erty risk rate as the UK, has the lowest coefficient of 22% in the EU 25, the UK shares the highest figure of 35% with Greece (EU 25 average 29%). For most EU countries the Gini coefficient places the countries in a similar place on a comparative EU poverty risk scale as measures that calculate the difference (ratio) between the richest and poorest quintiles in society, but this is not the case for the UK. The UK's relative ranking is more favourable when based on this second measure. This shows that it is global inequality over large sections of society that is the major issue for the UK, rather than the gap between the very rich and the very poor (Guio 2005, 3).

## Religious composition in the country

The following table shows the population of Great Britain by religion.

**Table 6:1:1 Population of Great Britain by Religion in April 2001<sup>2</sup>**

	Total Population (%)	Non-Christian religious population (%)
Christian	71.8	
Muslim	2.8	51.9
Hindu	1.0	18.3
Sikh	0.6	11.0
Jewish	0.5	8.7
Buddhist	0.3	4.9
Any other religion	0.3	5.2
All non-Christian religious population	5.4	100
No religion	15.1	
Religion not stated	7.8	
All population	100	

The Christian category covers almost two thirds of the population (41 million) and includes all Christian denominations in the country. The next largest group is those who declare that they have no religion.<sup>3</sup> Muslims comprise about half of the non-Christian religious population in Britain and at 1.6 million make up 3% of the total population. Hindus make up about 1% of the

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<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics and Census, April 2001, General Registrar for Scotland. Figures compiled by Office for National Statistics and published October 2004. <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=954> The 2001 Census included for the first time a question about religious affiliation. Response to this question was however voluntary.

<sup>3</sup> This figure includes all who ticked 'None' in the Census as well as those who answered Jedi Knight, Heathen, Agnostic and Atheist and those who ticked 'Other', but did not specify a religion. Census, April 2001.

population and people who affiliate with Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism comprise groups, which represent less than 1%, but at least 0.3% of the population. The remaining 0.3% are affiliated with non-Christian religious groups, which do not fall within the religions above. In England and Wales 151,000 people fitted into this category by selecting the category 'other religion' on the Census form. The largest of these groups were Spiritualists (32,000) and Pagans (31,000), followed by Jain (15,000), Wicca (7,000), Rastafarian (5,000) and Zoroastrian (4,000) (ONS: Census 2001).

The Census does not show what percentage of the Christian population affiliate with the Church of England but polls regularly produce a figure of about 50% as the table below indicates.

## Christian Population of Great Britain by Denomination<sup>4</sup>

**Table 6:1:2 Christian Population of Great Britain by Denomination**

	Base: 1,625 adults 18+ giving a voting intention	Base: 1,960 adults 18+
	20-24, March 1992 (%)	17-22, May 2001 (%)
Church of England	57	49
Roman Catholic	12	11
Church of Scotland	6	6
Non-Conformist/ Free Church (Methodist/Baptist etc.)	6	6
Other Protestant	2	1
Muslim	*	2
Hindu	*	1
Orthodox Greek/Russian	*	*
Buddhist	*	*
Jewish	*	*
Other	4	2
None	13	18
Don't know	0	1

An '\*' indicates a finding of less than 0.5%, but greater than zero

## The Characteristics of the majority Church

<sup>4</sup> Responses to the questions: "What is your religion, if any?" (If Christian), "What denomination are you?", Figures Ipsos Mori 2006, <http://www.mori.com/polls/trends/religion.shtml>

The Church of England is an Established Church, although England has no written constitution and the nature of establishment is rather defined through the series of relationships, which Church and State have to one another expressed both as privileges and restrictions. The Queen is the Supreme Governor of the Church and is thereby obliged to be in communion with the Church and is crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury, but has no spiritual role. The Church has responsibility for religious services for important events in national life and 26 senior Bishops sit as members of the House of Lords, the second chamber of parliament. This structure is, however, currently under review and proposals under discussion would, if accepted, reduce the number of Bishops, change the manner in which they are appointed and introduce representatives of other faiths (Sunday Times 2006). Various modifications in Church state relations over the past hundred years have, however, resulted in a situation where parliament has handed over most of its legislative authority in internal ecclesiastical affairs, such as doctrine and worship, to the General Synod of the Church. Nonetheless, final authority continues to rest with parliament which, when a measure has passed through all of its stages, must either accept or reject it.

In practice the connection between Church and state also has implications for the work of the Church at a local level. The network of parish churches in England is ancient and many rural parishes correspond to local administrative areas. The clergy of a parish have a pastoral responsibility for those resident in the area regardless of whether they are baptised members of the Church.

Church of England funerals represent 45% of all deaths in England (Archbishops' Council, 2004, 11). In 2001 Church of England/ in Wales marriages made up 24% of all marriages performed. Attendance levels at these services are not recorded, but a survey from 2003 indicates that 59% of the population attended a funeral in a church/place of worship in that year, 49% a wedding and 37% a baptism (Church of England 2003, Table 10). The number of children, young people and adults being baptised has remained fairly stable at around 46,000 per year since the beginning of the 1990s, but there is a steady decline in infant baptisms, as current figures represent a rate of 181 infant baptisms per 1,000 live births (18%). The total number of Church of England Baptisms and thanksgiving services for the birth of a child as a percentage of live births is, however, closer to 28% (Archbishops' Council 2004, 8).

The parishes of the Church are the key units in both its structure and ministry. Parishes are run by elected Parochial Church Councils (PCC) that run the parish in collaboration with the Priest. PCCs also send lay representatives to deanery and diocesan synods, the area and regional units of the Church. The Deanery synod, which coordinates activity in the local area, also functions as the electoral body to the General Synod for both clergy and

lay people. These representatives join the Bishops of the church in governing the national church. This does not, however, tell the whole story. In 1999 the Archbishops' Council was set up with the task of giving a sense of direction to the Church nationally and support the Church locally. It does this by working with the General Synod (to which it reports), the House of Bishops, the national boards and councils of the Church, the dioceses and a number of other bodies.

The Church is, therefore, governed by its Synod, but is led by its Bishops and ultimately by its two Archbishops. The Archbishop of Canterbury is also Primate of All England and the figurehead of the Church. The 43 dioceses in the Church of England are in turn each led by a Bishop, who is responsible for all those living within his diocesan boundaries.<sup>5</sup> At a national level, the Bishops make up one of three houses of the General Synod (the House of Bishops)<sup>6</sup>, which takes responsibility for developing the position of the Church on issues of the day. Like the boards and councils of synod who produce reports for ratification by Synod, the House of Bishops produces reports and statements, which are statements of their common mind and intended as guidelines for the Church.

Funding to support the work of the Church of England comes from investments and independent giving. The Church Commissioners manage the assets of the national Church, but following financial losses in the early 1990s, which forced a review of the entire system, the parishes now fund two-thirds of the Church's total expenditure, around £850 million per year (Archbishops' Council 2003b, 10). Formally most clergy in the Church of England do not receive a salary, but are given a stipend to meet living costs (on average £16,910 p.a. in 2001), housing and a pension on retirement. In 2001 there were 0.17 full time stipendiary clergymen and women per 1000 inhabitants in England (Archbishops' Council 2003a, 3), a figure that reveals that, although the funding for such posts represents 44% of the Church's annual expenditure (Archbishops' Council 2001, 5), the Church could not function as it does without the work of other categories of church workers, many of whom are not paid (Archbishops' Council 2003a, 10).<sup>7</sup> In addition to ministry costs, expenditure seen nationally covers: worship and buildings 32%, support and administration 18% and the community 6% (Archbishops' Council 2003b, 10).

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<sup>5</sup> 44 if the Diocese of Europe is included.

<sup>6</sup> All of the Diocesan Bishops, the Bishop of Dover and some of the Suffragan bishops elected from within their number.

<sup>7</sup> There are, for example, as many (unpaid) Lay Readers as stipendiary clergy working for the Church and half as many retired clergy, who still play an active role in Parish ministry. See Archbishops' Council 2003a.

## Official Statements made by the Church: Social and ethical issues

The Church of England frequently responds to consultation documents and reports/legislation from Government. This is done via official responses from the Archbishop's Council or Boards of the General Synod or in comments in the press by individual Bishops. In addition, the Church publishes reports on issues of concern and individual Bishops make statements in speeches and sermons. The broad nature of this approach means that it is impossible to discern any one 'church line'. The fact that the Church is asked to and actively responds to government policy consultations is, however, interesting and over the past couple of years the Church has submitted official comments or commented publicly on issues such as Civil Partnership (Archbishops' Council 2003c), Charities and Charitable Status (Archbishops' Council 2002), Drugs Policy (Church of England 2002b), Employment Regulations (Church of England 2003) and Asylum, Immigration and Citizenship (Church of England 2002a).

Those bishops who sit in the House of Lords in particular have the opportunity both individually and collectively to make their voices heard and directly influence legislation. One recent such example was a debate in May 2006 on assisted dying for the terminally ill, where a number of senior churchmen including the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke (Archbishop of Canterbury 2006a).

One report produced in the 1980s is also worth mentioning. The Church Report 'Faith in the City' (1985) was explicitly titled as a 'A call for Action by Church and Nation' showing the Church's own belief that its place is to make recommendations not just for the Church, but also for the Nation as a whole (Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas 1985). The twentieth anniversary of its publication also saw the formation of a Commission on Urban Life and Faith, instigated by the Church but with a broad membership base representing the diversity in urban communities. The report of this commission demonstrates not least the Church's own view of itself as a key opinion former on issues of social justice (Archbishops' Council – Commission on Urban Life and Faith, 2006). At the time of the publication of the report the Archbishop even instigated a debate in the House of Lords on the contribution of churches to civic life (Archbishop of Canterbury 2006b).

Further examples of the Church contributing to public debate on social issues are debates in General Synod on issues such as social justice and Asylum. Its 2001 debate on social justice and on asylum in 2004 were both based on or resulted in commissioned reports (Reed (ed.) 2001 and Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council, 2005). Both led to calls from members for the need both to debate the issue within the church; encourage further reflection and practical action and to put pressure on gov-

ernment (BSR 2001; Reed 2001; General Synod July 2001; General Synod of the Church of England 2004, 470- 491).

## Interfaith relations

The Church works ecumenically on a wide range of issues and this applies to interfaith relations as much as other fields. In 1981 the General Synod endorsed the *Four Principles of Inter Faith Dialogue* agreed ecumenically by the British Council of Churches, which focus on fostering dialogue, mutual trust and cooperation in service to the community (Church of England 2004) The Church employs Inter Faith Relations Advisers at national and diocesan levels and through its clergy and lay people is involved in several national and international interfaith initiatives.<sup>8</sup> At parish level many congregations are engaged with the other faith communities in their neighbourhoods although the extent and manner of this varies. The tone of debate in the Church and the national church's commitment to interfaith issues can also be seen in a report produced in 2005. In focusing on the situation at local level, it encourages continued cooperation and dialogue (Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council, 2005).

Finally, in its role as national church with particular responsibility for the coordination of a religious presence and pastoral care in a number of areas of national life the Church increasingly works in cooperation with representatives of other faiths. Concrete examples of this are in hospital and prison chaplaincy. The Church has also spoken out on a number of occasions on issues relating to freedom of religion, representing not only its own position, but also that of minority religions in the country. One example of this is in the Church's response to a government consultation *Preventing Extremism Together: Places of Worship* (Church of England, 2005).

## The role of the Church in the national welfare system

The Church has no official role in the welfare system as regards welfare provision, over and above the pastoral responsibility of priests for their parishioners and apart from the education sector where there are several types of Church schools, but neither are there formal restrictions to involvement. Rather the Church acts in the welfare sector as and alongside other voluntary bodies. Much of the work that the Church does in terms of welfare provision, therefore, takes place at a local level and many parishes are active in provid-

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<sup>8</sup> Including the Churches Commission on Inter Faith Relations ([www.cbti.org.uk](http://www.cbti.org.uk)); the Inter Faith Network for the UK ([www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)) ; the Inner Cities Religious Council ([www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)); the Council of Christians and Jews ([www.ccj.org.uk](http://www.ccj.org.uk)) . Through the Network for Inter Faith Concerns(NIFCON) ([www.anglicannifcon.org](http://www.anglicannifcon.org)) the Church of England is also in touch with inter faith issues internationally as a member church of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

ing welfare services, both on their own and in partnership with local authority and voluntary organisations. There is, however, no national monitoring of such work.

Welfare services that local churches provide can usually be divided into two categories: (i) informal welfare provision, such as visiting the elderly, which is mostly focused on members of the congregation, and (ii) more organised welfare provision, often larger project based initiatives, which are open to all and usually focused on the geographical parish and its inhabitants, which in some areas includes minority groups.

## Welfare, Religion and Gender

### Church and the formation of the roles of women and men in society

Callum Brown's analysis, which places the de-Christianisation of British society as a process that dramatically accelerated in the late 1960s in direct relation to factors in the modernisation of society including the changing roles of women (Brown 2000), is contested. However, whether or not the hypothesis holds, his study reveals important evidence of the place of the wife and mother in British society in past generations as preservers of Christian discourse. Women have been responsible for both grassroots involvement in the church and the education of children into the faith for many generations.

As women gained more rights during the Victorian era and fought for the right to vote they also gained roles outside the home, within the Church mainly as philanthropists. However, as the doctrine of subordination was both preached and accepted even by many of those women who sought a role for themselves, the influence of the Church meant that women's talents remained limited to a motherly role, which it was believed came naturally to them (Heeney 1988, 13 -14). This perception of the role of women as primarily a domestic one may well not be due entirely to the Church, but its influence is by no means insignificant as an informal legitimator of a traditional role. Despite changes to the perceived role of women that came about as a result of the tasks taken on by women during the First World War, this perception of women's work as in a different sphere from that of men persisted well into the twentieth century.

### Church stance on gender issues

For the past decade the Church has ordained women to the priesthood and in this way has gone some way in supporting more equal gender roles in soci-

ety. The process was, however, controversial within the Church and concessions made to those opposing the ordination of women continue to bar women from the episcopate and limit their opportunities (Middlemiss 2004, 196-7). This cautious ambiguity mirrors the Church's general reluctance to speak out on such issues in the interests of holding together a broad church. A recent report of the Doctrine Commission, for example, makes only passing reference to the gender issue despite the fact that it explicitly addresses the themes of power, sex, money and time (Doctrine Commission 2003). Where the Church has spoken on gender issues it has concentrated on the family in Church and society (Board for Social Responsibility 1995, 93). In so doing it highlights its position as the established Church by claiming a 'special position' for marriage 'within the social and legislative framework of our society' (Archbishops' Council 2003c).

### Welfare, Minorities and Gender

As women are still so clearly identified with the family sphere and, therefore, with the operation of the welfare system in both formal and informal ways, it is perhaps unsurprising that many issues concerning welfare and minority groups in society also particularly impact upon women. Women's primary role as carers and the particular incidence of poverty amongst ethnic minority women have already been mentioned. Over and above this, however, there are issues with particular gender dimensions, which also highlight the global nature of issues of welfare in society. Research on the globalisation of the domestic aid market has shown the particular impact this has on women from ethnic minorities (Cox 1999), while research into issues of legal recognition of the legal codes of some ethnic and religious minorities has shown the impact of such issues on women (Bano 1999).

As Sudbury points out, much research into issues of political and community activism has been both gender and colour blind. Ethnic minority women have often been visible as symbols of community and of struggles for equality, but invisible as active agents (Sudbury, 1998, 54). There is on the contrary much done by such women, both through formal and less formal channels, and alternative methods of activism need to be taken into account, because both cultural and practical factors relevant to particular communities come in to play. (Sudbury 1998, 58).

# An overview of the minority presence in the country

## Immigration patterns

Britain has a long history of immigration, which has varied extensively over different periods, patterns of which can still clearly be seen in the make-up of society, as different ethnic groups have significantly different age structures reflecting patterns in immigration. The Census shows that, other than those in the white British category, those most likely to be born in the UK are people from the mixed ethnic group and from the other black group. Of non-white ethnic groups numbers born in the UK decline with age. For example, up to 83% of Black Caribbeans aged 25 to 34 were born in the UK, but only 5% of those aged 45 to 64. For some other groups such as Black Africans, Chinese and Bangladeshis, this sharp decline occurs in younger age groups, reflecting their later immigration (Annual Population Survey 2004 and Census 2001, 2006a).

The immigration of ethnic minority groups is bound up with the history of the colonies. From the 1500s until 1833 the slave trade drove immigration, but with the abolition of slavery in 1833 numbers coming to Britain from the colonies decreased at the same time as immigration from the rest of Europe increased.

Following the Second World War, labour shortages in Britain led to a period of increased immigration both from other countries in Europe, particularly Poland and from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan. At around the same time, the British Commonwealth Act (1948) gave residents of the Empire and Commonwealth the right to enter and reside in Britain as they wished sparking immigration from the West Indies in particular (National Archives 2006). This was the start of mass immigration to Britain, but it was not until the 1970s that political pressure led to a series of revisions of immigration laws designed to curb immigration. By 1972, legislation meant that a British passport holder born overseas could only settle in Britain if both members of a family had a work permit and proof that a parent or grandparent had been born in the UK. This slowed immigration, but didn't stop it and around 83,000 immigrants from the Commonwealth settled in the UK between 1968 and 1975. In particular a large number of African Asians came in 1972 following expulsion from Uganda.

By the 1980s, decline in manufacturing work and the fact that work permits were harder to obtain without professional qualifications meant that the largest immigrant groups were Americans (to banking and industry), Australians, New Zealanders and South Africans making use of family-ties entry rules, and South Asian men and women with medical qualifications (BBC 2002).

A final period of immigration to the UK can be said to have begun with the fall of the Iron Curtain, although it is perhaps too early to say whether the enlargement of the EU in May 2004 can be seen as a contribution of this period or will merit a separate reference in the future. A significant growth in asylum seeker applications from the late 1980s onwards contributed to a growth of immigration taking it to new levels between 1990 and the current day, at the same time as both the channels of immigration and people's reasons for movement have increased so that the process has become more complex (BBC 2005b).

## Religious minority groups

As we have seen 41 million Britons identify themselves as Christians and of these 40 million describe their ethnicity as white. So, while nearly seven in ten can be described as white Christians, there are considerable minorities both of other faiths and other ethnic origins. The majority of black people and those from mixed ethnic backgrounds describe themselves as Christian showing a black Christian population of 815,000 (71% of the total black population) and a mixed ethnic Christian population of 353,000 (52% of the total mixed ethnic population).

Amongst other faiths there are also clear patterns. Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups are even more religiously homogeneous than the above named Christian groups as 92% of each ethnic group are Muslims. The largest non-Christian faith groups as categorised by ethnicity are Pakistani Muslims (686,000), Indian Hindus (471,000), Indian Sikhs (307,000), Bangladeshi Muslims (261,000) and white Jews (259,000). The Indian group is religiously diverse (45% Hindu, 29% Sikh and 13% Muslim), but while not all Indians are Sikh, nearly all Sikhs are Indian (91%). This pattern of a faith community concentrated in one ethnic group is also clear within the Jewish population as 97% of Jews describe their ethnicity as white. Other faiths, such as Buddhists are more widely spread across ethnic groupings (Census 2001, 2005).

Ethnicity and religion are clearly connected, but cannot, however, be used as proxy measures for one another. The majority of the British Asian community does not, for example, identify with one religion (Home Office Research 2004, 8). Indeed it can be said that each of the different religions in the country can be regarded as a religious minority, but that within this broad spectrum the groups can be further divided along lines of belief and ethnicity.

The connection between ethnicity and religion is, however, important in terms of the perception of religious minorities in the eyes of the law. British legal protection for minorities is focused on race and ethnicity and so there is little recognition for groups whose self-identification is non-racial, a situa-

tion which impacts particularly on Muslims (Statham, P., et al. 2005, 434). The Race Relations Act (1976) does not generally afford rights to religious groups and several tests of this have failed to extend rights to Muslims under this law (Lewis 2002, 250). The ethno-religious groups of Sikhs and Jews have, in contrast, received protection under the law since 1983. The one legal provision relating directly to religion in the country, however, the blasphemy law, which has been used in recent times with relation to Christianity, was also interpreted in the *Rushdie* case in the 1990s as not applying to Islam (Statham, P., et al. 2005, 434). This has, however, come under renewed debate as The Racial and Religious Hatred Act made its way through the parliamentary process. This extends measures making it an offence to stir up racial hatred to encompass religious hatred (Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006). The measures are, however, by no means uncontroversial and have sparked public debate on freedom of speech and freedom of religion (BBC 2005a).

There also exist significant differences between groups as to what extent religious affiliation is seen as an important aspect of identity and this varies both by ethnicity and by religion (Home Office Research 2004, 19). In short, the only religious group in England with distinct legal status and subsequent protection is the Church of England. Other Christian denominations and faiths are treated in the eyes of the law as voluntary associations. There is, however, some argue, a change taking place in the British legal system with relation to religion, namely towards the protection of individual religious rights (Sandberg 2006).

Generally speaking, religious minority communities present in the UK have created some form of representative body (bodies) regardless of whether this is a natural phenomenon for the religion or not. Without such forms of representation the groups would find it much harder to make their voices heard in political and legal systems and in the media. The large number of varied types of organisations that are member bodies of the Inter Faith Network for the UK gives an indication of the nature of such bodies and the complexity of the situation with many religions represented by several bodies, not necessarily in agreement ([www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)).

## Geographic spread of minority groups

While Christians and those with no religion are fairly evenly dispersed throughout the country, those from the minority religions are concentrated in London and some other large urban areas following patterns that also appear when looking at the geographical spread of ethnic minority groups.

The Jewish population is the most heavily concentrated in London (56%) and even within London is concentrated in one borough, Barnet. A similar pattern can be seen in the Hindu (52% live in London), Sikh and Muslim

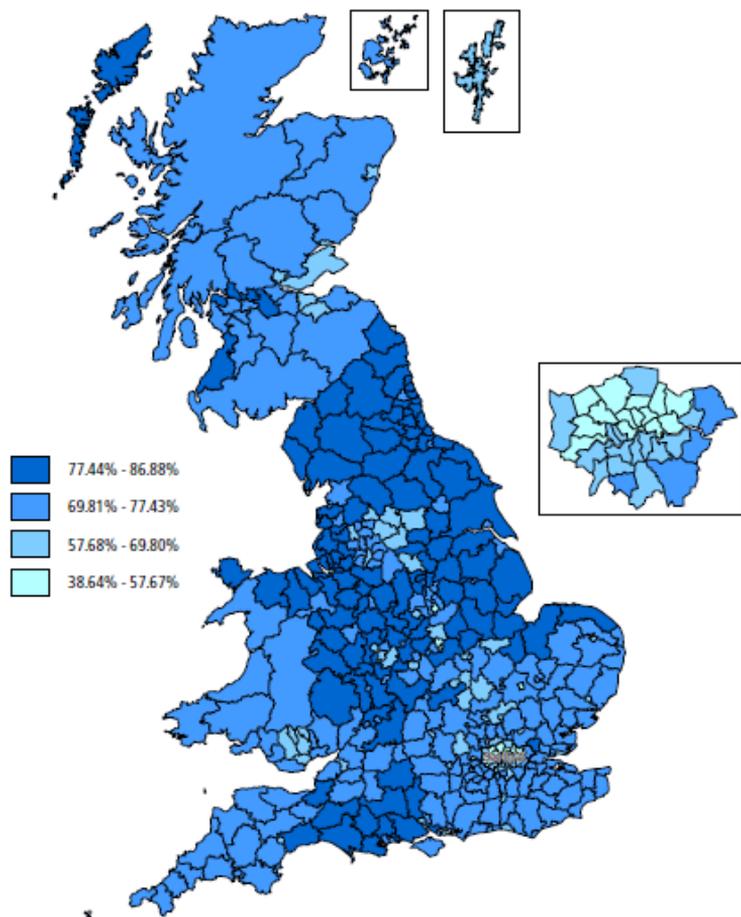
populations (38%). As with the Jewish population, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim populations are concentrated in smaller areas of the regions where they can be found. For example, 7% of Hindus live in Leicester in the East Midlands, where they comprise 15% of the population. The smaller numbers of representatives of other minority religions in Britain also follow the patterns for the other religions shown above. Of the 149,000 Buddhists living in Britain, 36% live in London with the rest dispersed across the country (Census 2001, 2004).

The following two maps illustrate the contrast between the spread of the Christian population of Britain and that of the religious minorities, represented here by the Muslim population.<sup>9</sup>

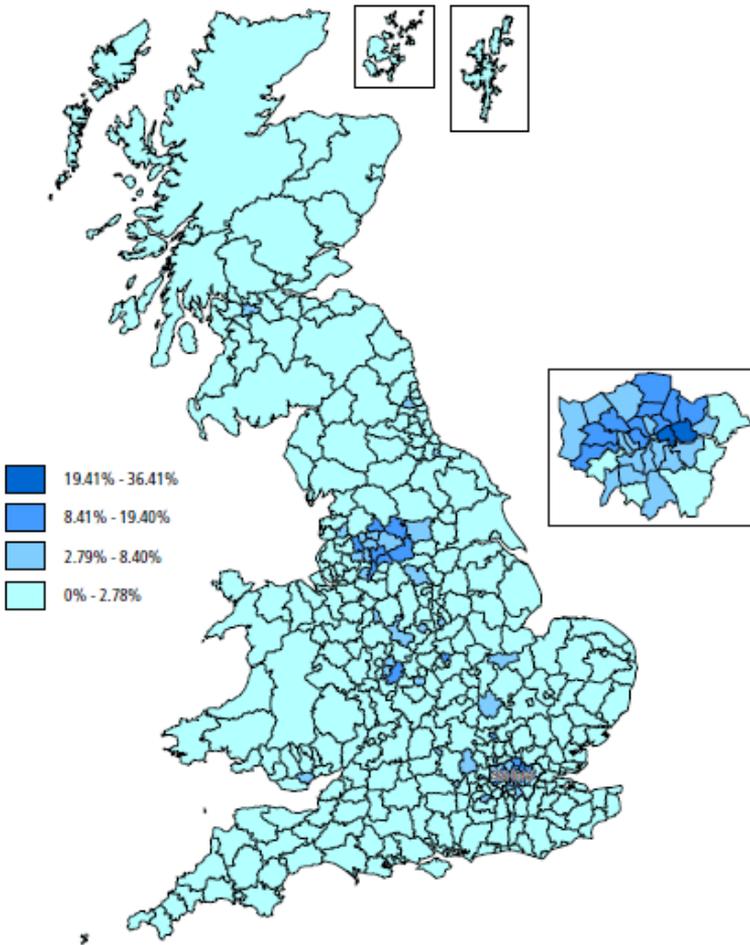
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<sup>9</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.1.1.0. Retrieved from National Statistics website: [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

Christian population: by area, April 2001



Muslim population: by area, April 2001



## Religious minority-majority relations

### Rights and access to public welfare

National welfare policy and regulations concerning discrimination dictate that all citizens and legal residents should have equal access to welfare services and in addition have the right for their individual beliefs and needs to

be taken into account. There is, however, recognition that, although all have the same rights to services, needs are different so, for example, as Muslims in general live in areas of high deprivation, they have greater need of a number of services than the population on average (Home Office 2004, 15) and as occupational patterns often vary along lines of ethnicity and religion so do opportunities for accessing welfare services (Home Office 2004, 14).

Government awareness of these issues coupled with interest in the potential, which faith communities can have to impact positively upon neighbourhood renewal projects, have led to the development of guidelines for local authorities in cooperating with faith communities, (Home Office Faith Communities Unit 2004 and 2005; Local Government Association 2002; Neighbourhood Renewal Unit 2004).

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In addition to these above named factors, the issue is sometimes complicated by the fact that concessions for religions within the systems of the public sector have been formed with the Church as a model. One example being the prisons system, by law Prison Chaplains must be clerics of the Church of England. So, although ministers of other faiths may be appointed as religious ministers within prisons, the overriding responsibility for a prisoner's spiritual welfare is held by an Anglican priest. This Chaplain therefore holds an ambiguous double role of minister of his own religion and facilitator of that of others. (Beckford, 2001, 39 – 53).

## Current media debates

Race relations and social cohesion have become important issues in recent times and race relations are now seen as the second most important issue facing Britain. Surveys show that in the public mind race relations and immigration are in the top six issues facing Britain, where as a few years ago, it barely registered as a concern (MORI 2006a). In a poll of British adults in September 2005, which asked for spontaneous answers to the question: "What would you say is the most important issue facing Britain today?", 17% named race relations and immigration and a further 32% named it as another important issue facing the nation in answer to a follow-up question (MORI 2005c). There is less direct attention paid to religion in the media, but polls focused on issues such as terrorism often also touch on issues of religion. One survey for the Greater London Authority in October 2005, which otherwise focused on democracy and police response to the 7 July

attacks, showed that while 56% of Londoners support the banning of discrimination of people because of their religion, 32% oppose such measures (MORI 2005d). In a poll carried out following the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in a number of newspapers in Europe, however, 72% felt that British papers were right not to publish the images and 82% agreed with the statement that people in Britain are generally more tolerant of other people's religions than people in other nations (MORI 2006b).

Newspaper readership in particular has a significant influence on opinion on issues such as immigration (MORI 2005b). A recent report shows that the British press currently has a hostile tone towards immigrants, but also that this is nothing new in the British context (Greenslade 2005). Other research concludes that a majority group is twice as likely to be written about in the British press than a minority group, but also that majority groups are represented more positively than minority ones (Gardikiotis, A., Martin, R., Hewstone, M., 2004, 643). This is particularly true of the Muslim population where positive stories are practically unknown and negative stories about Muslims more common than those about other faith groups (Greenslade 2005, 11-12).

## Faith schools

One issue, which has been well aired in public debate, is that of faith schools. The debate is a wide one encompassing as it does questions on the status of the large number of Church controlled and aided schools, as well as, the wishes of minority religions in the country for faith based education for their children. Tensions here surround the nature of faith-based teaching, the respective ability of different religious traditions to provide 'neutral' religious education, and the risk of segregation that the spread of faith schools may entail (Johnston, Wilson and Burgess 2004). This debate is frequently focused on the Islamic community, which has been the most active of the minority faith communities in lobbying for faith schools so as to gain access to Islamic education for their children. Not least important here is the gender issue as debate frequently includes the issue of single sex schools for girls. Where such schools are not available some women have set up their own nursery schools and a national self-help network (Abdel Haleem 2003, 101). By 2001 there were about 60 Islamic schools in Britain, although to date a maximum of 9 of these are state schools. The issue of state control and funding of faith schools has in itself become a significant political issue. Proposals to introduce compulsory quotas forcing faith schools to draw 25% of their pupils from a different faith background were rejected, but have raised the profile of the debate in the public eye. The debate has also highlighted the overwhelming Christian dominance of the faith state schools sector. Of about 7,000 state faith schools, 4,646 are Church of

England, 2,041 Roman Catholic, 37 Jewish, 2 Sikh as well as 9 Muslim schools and 1 Hindu school currently in the process of becoming state schools (BBC 2006f).

Over and above the debate over faith schools one discussion, which has focused around the classroom, is the issue of school uniform and conflicts between those who wish to wear particular items of Islamic dress and schools who want to apply a dress code (see Ameli and Merali 2006). This debate culminated in a House of Lords ruling in favour of one such school, which had been judged to have taken pains to accommodate Islamic dress into its dress code (BBC 2006a). In recent months one government minister's comments on the veil as a mark of separation sparked a high profile and heated debate about aspects of Islamic dress and other forms of religious symbolism worn by individuals in public (BBC 2006c and BBCd). High profile figures from politicians and Muslim organisations to the Archbishop of Canterbury have entered the debate and at an individual level both Muslims and Christians have faced dismissal over related issues (BBC 2006d, BBC 2006e and BBC 2006f).

## Places of Worship

Non-Christian religions have consistently experienced difficulties establishing and expanding places of worship. Naylor and Ryan attribute this largely to three factors: firstly, the lack of formal protection for religious communities in law and secondly the fact that most applications for the construction of worship sites that are to be located in residential areas, where non-users have been able to object to the plans on the grounds that the building does not fit the character of the area. Thirdly, they argue that conflict around such sites is bound up with political interests and concerns over the effects that the presence of a non-Christian worship site can have on an area (Naylor and Ryan 2002, 39 – 40). While new patterns of cooperation between the state and minority religious groups are emerging in some urban contexts, the tendency in most planning authorities remains one of “emphasising the external impact of places of worship while simultaneously negating the need for such premises” (Gale and Naylor 2002, 405).

One related issue, the continued existence and freedom of places of worship, has also been high on the political agenda over the past year. In October 2005 the Home Office launched a consultation document to gather comment in advance of proposed changes to the law as part of the government's anti-terrorism strategy. This originated in proposals from working groups set up following the bombings in London in July 2005 and focused on the Muslim community and the use of mosques by radical clerics. It proposed new powers for courts and the police to close down or take over control of places of worship where those with responsibility are deemed not to have taken

sufficient steps to stop extremist behaviour (Home Office 2006 §17f; Home Office 2006b)

## Conclusions

Having begun the discussion of the interconnections between religion, minorities and gender in England in a consideration of the multicultural model of Britain, it seems appropriate also to conclude there. The material presented, both in content and in terms of its abundance, shows that the question of how a plural society can develop in England today is clearly on both public and political agendas. Much of the material presented here concentrates on the situation in England within the framework of the wider British society and in that respect is very specific, but when seen within the framework of the WaVE project the similarities with other countries in Europe are striking.

Adrian Favell has argued that for too long the academic discussion of multiculturalism in Britain has been introspective and in continuing to propagate exceptionalist arguments has denied Britain the opportunity to learn from and alongside other European countries in developing new models to meet the challenges of the future (Favell, 2001). The English situation has a particularly long history of immigration, which has brought a variety of ethnic and religious groups to the country. It also has a history of a multicultural model, which has focused on group rights and diversity at this level. Finally, England continues to have an established Church with clear ties to the State and with an ambiguous function as both a religious community in its own right and as a champion of faith community interests in general. These factors may set it apart from many other countries in Europe, but the English case does share in common general discussions on immigration, on an increasingly plural society, on the Muslim presence in Europe, on significant demographic, financial and structural challenges to the welfare system and the particular situations for women in all of these.

The continuing challenge is to understand what, if any, impact England's particular history has on the lives of individuals caught up in these national and indeed international systems today, on their welfare, wellbeing and the values expressed in these systems and by individuals in tackling them in everyday life.

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## 6:2 DARLINGTON CASE STUDY REPORT

Martha Middlemiss Lé Mon<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

In Darlington, a medium sized town in the North East of England, the residents who are not ethnically white British and also Christian, make up a very small percentage of the population. In this respect issues of welfare and wellbeing for members of minority groups in Darlington are similar to the situation in many other towns in England. The minority communities also represent a breadth of different experiences from the often invisible, but settled Gypsy / Traveller population, the more visible and also settled Bangladeshi, Muslim community to the new and fast growing and less coherent Polish community. Observation of the ways in which members of these groups interact with welfare services, coupled with interviews show that while many are happy with the services on offer there are some areas of particular importance for the minority communities and difficulties connected to their minority status to be overcome. In actions and attitudes expressed in relation to welfare issues basic values can be identified. These values have their roots in cultural tradition and religion and, while by no means exclusive to the minority communities in the town, they seem to be particularly strong motivators within these groups.

### Presentation of the town

#### Introduction to the town

Darlington is a Medieval market town in the North East of England with a population of about 99,177 (DBC 2006a). The ethnic minority population in the town is well below the national average at 2.1% compared with a national average of 9.1% (DBC 2006a). Traditionally migration into the area has been a very marginal factor in the growth of the town, but although the North East region has one of the lowest proportions of people born outside of the British Isles (2.7% as opposed to a national average of 7.53%), between 1991 and 2001 it experienced the biggest rate of change in these figures of any area except London.

Although Darlington has a history as a manufacturing town, today 80% of those in paid employment have jobs within the service sector and the average wage in the town is low (Middlemiss 2006, p. 5). Unemployment in

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Douglas Davies supervised and participated in the fieldwork and dissemination and provided constructive criticism of the working reports.

Darlington is also slightly higher than both regional and national averages and population density is above average (DBC 2006a).

### Majority and minority presence

Darlington, like the North East region as a whole does not have a particularly diverse population in terms of either ethnicity or faith. Nearly 98% of the population of the town are of white ethnic origin and 80% identify themselves as Christian. However, given that large numbers of most of the minority ethnic and religious communities in the UK as a whole are concentrated in large urban conurbations, the situation for minority communities in Darlington is similar to that for many others in medium sized towns throughout the country.

Figures from the 2001 Census can be broken down for analysis at levels of both town and administrative and electoral districts, called wards. In contrast to practice in many other European countries this Census collects information on the population categorised by ethnic origin. Table 6:2:1 below shows the numbers of people by ethnic group at town level and regional level as a percentage of the population. Collectively the non-white British population is referred to as the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) sector of the population. In 2001 the Census also included for the first time a voluntary question on religious affiliation, allowing for the religious presence in the country to be mapped and compared to ethnic identity (Table 6:2:2).

**Table 6:2:1 Number of people by ethnic group at town level and regional level as percentage of the population**

	Darlington	North East	England
Total population	97,838	2,515,442	49,138,831
<b>Resident population (%)</b>	97.9		
	0.6	97.6	
White	0.9	0.5	90.9
Mixed	0.4	1.3	1.3
Asian or Asian British	0.1	0.4	4.6
Indian	0.3	0.6	2.1
Pakistani	0.1	0.3	1.4
Bangladeshi	0.2	0.1	0.6
Other Asian	0.1	0.2	0.5
Black or Black British	0.1	0.04	2.1
Caribbean	0.00.4	0.1	1.1
African		0.02	1.0
Other Black		0.4	0.2
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group			0.9
Total BME as % of total	2.1	2.4	9.1

Figures from Census 2001

**Table 6:2:2 Number of people by religious affiliation at town level and regional level as percentage of the population**

	Darlington	North East	England
Total population	97,838	2,515,442	49,138,831
<b>Religion (%)</b>			
Christian	79.8	80.1	71.7
Buddhist	0.1	0.1	0.3
Hindu	0.1	0.2	1.1
Jewish	0.0	0.1	0.5
Muslim	0.6	1.1	3.1
Sikh	0.3	0.2	0.7
Other religions	0.2	0.2	0.3
No religion	11.4	11.0	14.6
Religion not stated	7.5	7.1	7.7

Figures from Census 2001

Statistics indicating numbers of foreign born residents show that the largest proportion of migrant residents in Darlington is from Germany,<sup>2</sup> followed by those born in India (BBC News A and Soni 2002, p. 59). Census data do not show patterns of migration since the accession of the 10 new states to the EU in 2004, but data from the Worker Registration Scheme show that although the North East has the fewest such migrants of any region in the UK, this has made an impact on diversity in the region. Up to 4,700 registrations were made between May 2004 and February 2006 of which 328 were in Darlington ; these figures are likely to be well below actual figures. When broken down by nationality the largest of the groups represented here are those of

<sup>2</sup> Most likely children of British Army personnel who have been stationed in Germany (Pillai 2006, 16)

Polish nationality, followed by Lithuanian and Czech (Pillai 2006, pp. 18 - 21).

Migrants in the region are younger and more mobile than the British born population supporting other evidence indicating that many are EU citizens coming to the region to work, but not necessarily to settle, unlike earlier migration flows during the second half of the twentieth century, mainly consisting of Black and Asian migrants from Commonwealth countries. These migration flows were predominantly long-term, long-distance and characterised by existing family and community networks (Pillai 2006, p. 16).

### **Distinct Communities**

Although there are several distinct minority communities in Darlington, these are not always easy to define in terms of language, religion or ethnic background (Thandi 2002, p. 61). In the following we have therefore made use of the categories into which the individuals we spoke to have placed themselves, and which represent the ways in which the communities have grouped themselves in Darlington. Here the groups are listed roughly in terms of size, although as ethnic and religious classifications sometimes coincide and have been included together here, this order is not systematic. The numbers of those given in each of the groups are taken from the Census.

#### *Traveller / Gypsy Community*

There is an established Gypsy and Traveller population resident in Darlington, but although Gypsies and Irish travellers are recognised as Ethnic Minorities under the Human Rights Act it is not monitored as an ethnic identity for Census purposes so there are no statistics as to how many are resident in Darlington. . The generic term Traveller is often used to include a variety of groups including Roma, but also English Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Fairground and Showmen and New Age Travellers.<sup>3</sup> Another difficulty in assessing numbers is the seasonal mobility of a large sector of this group. While some families have settled permanently in Darlington a significant number continue to travel for work as seasonal labourers and other families not based in Darlington travel to or through the town throughout the year. Lack of campsites means that many of those travelling through will set up unauthorised encampments and will therefore be moved on quickly by the local authorities.

The two sites in Darlington leased to members of the Traveller community by the Council provide 52 permanent residential pitches (hard standing areas each for 2 caravans) and 24 shorter term transit pitches (DBC B). This means that unlike the other minority communities in Darlington, the Traveller population lives on the outskirts of the town. In addition to the two larger

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<sup>3</sup> The term Traveller will be used throughout this report to refer to those of the Traveller/Gypsy community in Darlington.

sites there are three smaller owner occupied sites and a large number of families who currently live in houses. One estate in particular has a large concentration of Traveller families. The two Council owned sites are home to two distinct communities, one of which at least has a distinct faith profile in the Charismatic Christian tradition. Many of the families who live there attend a particular church in the town centre. Other members of the community in the town identify with one of the more high church Anglican churches, or the Roman Catholic churches.

### *Bangladeshi*

The Bangladeshi community seems to define itself much by ethnic origin and language and many refer to themselves as Bengali and Bangladeshi interchangeably, but the vast majority are also Muslims. The Bangladeshi group is one of the smallest ethnic groups in the area (595 people). The largest community is however resident in Darlington (284) and to be found almost exclusively in the Northgate ward near the centre of town (DBC 2006b).

### *Muslim*

According to the Census 559 people in Darlington identify themselves as Muslim, a population which is heavily concentrated in Northgate ward, where the Mosque is situated. Over 90% of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities are Muslim, but there are also Muslims in Darlington from other ethnic groups. The Pakistani population, while relatively large in the region is small in Darlington itself (c. 86).

### *Indian*

While the number of ethnic Indian individuals in Darlington is fairly large (430) populations are distributed across urban Darlington. In addition the population is divided along faith lines, the major religions represented being Hindu (c. 120) and Sikh, as well as some Muslims. Therefore, community groupings tend to be formed along faith lines. The Sikh community, (c.300), in particular, has always structured itself along religious lines despite the diversity of languages and parts of India represented amongst its members.

### *Polish (and citizens of other countries in central Europe)*

The Polish community is not visible in the Census, but estimates within the local authority indicate large numbers in the town and surrounding area (c. 7,000). These immigrants from Poland and other central European countries tend to come to work and are active in a wide variety of employment sectors (Fitzgerald 2007).

### *Chinese*

Mixed as regards religion (about half of the Chinese community in the Census report themselves as being of: “No Religion”), the Chinese community (240) is more scattered geographically than any of the other minority ethnic groups in the town. To the external observer the community is therefore not very visible, but for its members, one Chinese respondent emphasised, there exists a community distinct both from the majority community in Darlington and from the Chinese population in the region as a whole (17, F).

### *Christian churches*

Almost 80% of the population of Darlington call themselves Christian, but there are no formal membership statistics for the Christian churches to indicate numbers of people who feel a sense of affiliation with a particular denomination. Nationally about 50% of the population of the country tend to indicate a sense of affiliation with the Church of England and in Darlington it has 10 parishes covering the town, with more in the surrounding area. Also represented in the town are the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodists, the Eastern Orthodox church, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Salvation Army, the United Reform Church, and the traditional Anglican Communion as well as about nine non-denominational (Free) churches, including Baptist, Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations.

### *Other Ethnic minority and faith communities*

In addition to the groups noted above two others in particular are worth mentioning. Firstly, the long established and well integrated African Caribbean population. Of those who classify themselves as Black or Black British in the Census the vast majority specify African (160) or Caribbean (140). Many are affiliated to a variety of Christian denominations, but Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Rastafarianism are also represented (DBC 2006b). Secondly, there is a small Jewish community (43 people), although there has been no Rabbi based permanently in the town for years and recently the synagogue, which had been used occasionally, was closed (4, M).

## **Minority Welfare needs**

### *Deprivation*

Statistics, which break down the town into its 25 wards show that the town mirrors the national situation as regards inequalities in health and wealth. Figures from the national index of multiple deprivation show clearly that while some in Darlington live in comfortable circumstances, 44% of the residents of the town live in wards that are in the 25% most deprived in the country (Middlemiss 2006, 5). The vast majority of the individuals, who ascribe themselves an ethnic identity other than white British, live in two of

the most deprived wards in central Darlington (Soni 2002, p. 55). In addition to this, statistically more deprived wards on the east side of town are also experiencing dramatically larger increases of rates of immigration than the more prosperous west side (BBC News A). It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that minority communities in Darlington are overrepresented amongst those who have significant welfare needs.

### *Unemployment*

Most EU born migrants have moved to Britain to work, and have strong employment rates and low inactivity levels, therefore pushing up the employment rate for migrants in total. For non EU born migrants in the North East however the situation is the reverse with lower employment and higher inactivity levels (Pillai 2006, pp. 24-5).

## The local welfare system

### **Public Service provision and organisation**

#### *Role of local government*

An elected Council has responsibility at local level for public welfare services which do not come under the jurisdiction of the health care authorities. The Council decides on the budget and policy framework for the local authority. Services are then provided through a departmental structure staffed by professionals (DBC C). Today however, the local authority itself does not actually run all services, but is rather responsible for contracting and monitoring both for profit and not for profit service providers.

#### *Health care*

Responsibility for general local health care and hospital care is held by the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Acute Hospitals NHS Trust respectively. These organisations are independent statutory bodies accountable not to the Council but to the county statutory health authority and the public through a board consisting of both professional and local lay people.

#### *Partnership*

The running of the town is significantly influenced by the existence of a local strategic partnership, the Darlington Partnership, which is a formalised way of coordinating interaction between authorities, businesses and civil society at a local level (Darlington Partnership 2003, p. 18).<sup>4</sup> The Partnership

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<sup>4</sup> The assembly is controlled by a bi-annual assembly made up of representatives of community, public, private and voluntary sectors. For further details of Council strategy, goals and priorities see *Striving for Excellence* Darlington Borough Council Corporate and Best Value

is therefore not a service provider in its own right, but sets goals in the form of a community strategy, which all organisations and authorities in the town agree to work towards together (Darlington Partnership A). It has no funding with which to provide services over and above those disposed of by its member bodies, so rather than being a new source of action or funding, it is supposed to be a catalyst and facilitating body and is dependent on the strong voluntary sector of over 500 voluntary organisations and community groups in the town with over 10,000 volunteers (Darlington Partnership 2003, p. 10).

#### *An overview of the local public welfare provision*

The public welfare provision available to those legally resident in Darlington is fairly comprehensive and for the most part free at point of contact. Some services, such as education for children, is freely available to all, while other aspects are conditional on the level of income, or need for a service that the potential recipient can demonstrate. Basically, however, those resident in Darlington who need it have access within the public sector to health services, housing support, assistance at home or residential care for the elderly and disabled, income and child support, fuel allowance and free bus travel for the elderly. Private and voluntary bodies may be commissioned by the local authority to provide services within these areas, but otherwise services provided by voluntary bodies and financed by other means are over and above this basic provision.

During 2005-06 there were 1,409 people aged over 65 receiving services via the council helping them to live in their own home and a further 485 were being supported in permanent residential care. Community based services of different types were also provided for 673 people aged 18 – 64 and residential care for a further 73 adults under 65 (DBC 2006a, pp. 1-2). Given that c. 18,500 people over the age of 65 are resident in Darlington, however, and that 14,588 residents are reported in the Census as having a long-term limiting illness, these figures above are not large and raise questions as to the number of people relying on informal care from relatives and voluntary bodies.

### **Provision for Minorities within the welfare system**

#### *Equality Policy and Social Inclusion*

Both Local Authority and PCT are legally obliged to develop and implement equality policies for both employment and service delivery within the wel-

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Performance Plan 2004/5. See also Middlemiss 2006, for a model of the organisation of welfare provision in Darlington.

fare sector.<sup>5</sup> At a practical level this includes initiatives to raise awareness amongst staff of the needs of particular groups and develop links with community leaders (DBC 2006c, pp. 9-11). Departments regularly assess their progress in this field against set targets and hold consultations both with minority groups in general and with representatives of particular groups (DBC A and 2, F). Regular consultations with members of the general public also show similar levels of satisfaction with health services from people of all ethnic groups.

Other social inclusion initiatives include a Police Liaison Group, set up to facilitate interaction between the police and the minority communities in the town and extensive translation and interpretation services provided by both social services and the PCT.<sup>6</sup> In addition one of the active goals of the community strategy is to increase BME involvement in the town's community partnerships and to develop interfaith activity. How far these goals have been achieved varies between the different community partnerships. Initiatives range from a 'World Cup International Football Tournament' for boys aged 9-12, to attempts to find members of the minority communities willing to sit on the partnership boards.

As regards interfaith activity at a town level a Multi-Faith Forum was set up in 2005. This is mainly a discussion forum involving a small number of people (1, M). There are a number of reasons for the limited nature of this initiative, one of which is a caution expressed by some as to whether encouraging interfaith activity is a useful approach. This is well expressed in the response of one community worker in Darlington to a national mapping exercise organised by the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom in 2003, here presented in an extract from the final report:

"A respondent working with young people from the Bangladeshi community and others in Darlington suggested that interfaith issues were perhaps best not tackled directly, given the sensitive aspects of religious identity, particularly in the context of the current situation in the Middle East. Friendship building exercises were, he felt, a better starting place to open minds to others' different faiths and cultures"(Interfaith Network for the UK 2003, p. 57).

The football tournament mentioned above is an example of a current initiative organised with such a strategy in mind (3, F).

Finally, it is important to note the upsurge in recent years in government interest in working with faith communities in community development and the project funding available for services and projects run by faith communi-

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<sup>5</sup> General targets set in the Council's Race Equality Scheme (DBC 2002) are specified in annual action plans and these are then followed up as part of the annual review of progress. Internal documents specify in detail how far targets have been met.

<sup>6</sup> Service users can request interpreters for any language and a significant amount of information material is available in Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu and increasingly in Polish

ties. In 2005 a number of community development bodies organised a seminar day in the region on faith-based community regeneration work, mainly attended by those working in the field. Participants commented that, while this development is largely beneficial to faith communities, there is a risk that authorities use such cooperation to further their own agendas, rather than focusing on meeting the faith groups' needs (Humphreys 2005, p. 10).

#### *Immigration policy and connection to welfare rights*

Figures from the National Asylum Support Service show 19 households of asylum seekers, made up of 31 individuals living in Darlington in September 2006 (NERS 2006, p. 5). National policy towards asylum seekers including dispersal schemes, namely that asylum seekers are not allowed to work and that their benefits are provided through voucher schemes rather than as cash means that asylum seekers, have particular difficulties in accessing services, over and above the problems, such as language difficulties, that members of settled minority communities have. These differences are highlighted in a report from 2002, which notes a feeling amongst asylum seekers in Darlington of inadequacies with housing, language services and English classes and the amount of vouchers (Thandi 2002, pp. 106-8).

#### *Welfare rights for travelling Gypsies and Travellers*

While Travellers formally resident in the town have the right to access welfare services, those who are only passing through can easily fall through the net. The local authority is legally required to move them on, but not obliged to provide welfare services. It is therefore often difficult for many of these families to access even basic health services. Here, however, Darlington is unusual in employing a Health Visitor with particular responsibility for this community who has in turn liaised with other bodies to set in place systems which can ensure that these families have access to health care. When the local authority is notified of an unauthorised encampment the Health Visitor is now also notified immediately and if possible visits the site to assess needs and administer basic health care before the families are moved on; she has also arranged for access to emergency dental care, something which she is not aware of for Travellers in other parts of the country.

#### **Role of majority church**

The majority church in the town, the Church of England, continues to have a particular role given its status as an established church. This is evident in its presence in all areas of town, representation on the Partnership and a certain coordinating function in terms of ecumenical work. It does not, however, have a particular function within welfare provision in relation to the local authorities over and above that of other voluntary organisations. Given the established nature of the Church, the parishes and, as an interview study in

2004 showed, the priests in particular feel very keenly their responsibility for the wellbeing of all those who live within the parish boundaries (Middlemiss 2006). This said, the ways in which this responsibility is expressed vary considerably from parish to parish. By far the most active of the Christian churches in the social field, however, is not the majority church, but the Baptist church in the town centre, which runs extensive programmes for the homeless and those with drug addiction in the area. The services provided by all the Christian churches and by other organisations with a Christian ethos, organisation or background are open to all and support and care is not conditional on the recipient's faith. In practice, however, services provided directly through the churches are mainly used by those with some personal connection to the worshiping community (see Middlemiss 2006)

### **Minority associations/networks**

There are about a dozen groups, associations and networks in Darlington, which have been set up for the benefit of one particular minority group or community. Some of these also have more narrowly defined target groups (usually age or gender), such as the Bangladeshi Women's Association.

The size, scope and extent to which such groups are active varies, but as far as investigations could ascertain none of these groups runs what could be described as welfare or social work programmes. They seem to function mainly as social networks, through which informal welfare needs may be recognised and met by members of the community. Representatives of both the Sikh community and the Islamic society, for example, both stressed the worship centred role of the Gurdwara and the Mosque and the fact that no formal welfare programmes are run from, either of these buildings, but there are many examples of more informal support (6, M and telephone interview 3, M). One good example can be found within the Sikh community. Following the traditional communal meal after worship, care is taken to make sure that some members of the community, who it is known suffer financial hardship, are able to take away the remaining food with them. This is, however, not explicitly discussed to avoid embarrassment and cannot be seen as a policy decision within the community itself (16, F).

One more formalised body working for and with minority groups in the town is the Racial Equality Council (REC). Interviews with some of those who work with minority groups indicate that there has been suspicion of the REC from members of some groups, who have felt that it has been less representative of their interests than those of others. This is also indicative of the pitfalls of assessing the role and influence of minority groups by studying formal associations and organisations. Their role in practice is often very different to its appearance on paper and in several cases an association turns out to be one or two influential people. This highlights the important role of individuals in voluntary and community based groups.

## Context and timeframe

The fieldwork for this study took place between September 2006 and September 2007, with the main concentration of research on site taking place in two periods in January and May 2007. No major national or local events took place during the fieldwork that might have had a significant impact on results, but some changes locally are worth mentioning.

Local council elections took place in May 2007 and, while this did not significantly affect the political composition of the council, it meant that some welfare issues were perhaps more prominent in people's minds than otherwise due to the on-going election campaigns.

More generally as work started it became clear that the authorities were just becoming aware of and beginning to try to interact with the new, but sizable Polish community so issues connected with this community were high on the agenda. Finally, it is worth expanding on the introduction given to the Racial Equality Council above. At the time of fieldwork this organisation, which represents both Durham and Darlington and had been very active in Darlington in the past, appeared to be without a director, no longer had offices in the town and proved impossible to contact. This represents a hiatus in, if not cessation of, activity in Darlington by the one body which claimed to represent minorities in the town in general.

## Methods and sources

### Groups and Themes

We are focusing on three very different minority groups:

1. The established Bangladeshi/Bengali community, which is also a Muslim community, concentrated in one area of the town.
2. The Traveller/Gypsy community, which has been present in the area for many generations, but is a fairly invisible minority.
3. The very new and fast growing Polish community.

In addition we focus on issues of children, the elderly, and women's roles and situation, and as work progressed we found that our thematic focus, was the most productive. In particular there were difficulties in gaining access to the Traveller community. In the analysis below therefore, while more information on the key groups is included, the focus is primarily on key themes, including examples from a wider range of communities.

These groups were chosen because together they represent the breadth of different minority communities in the town highlighting different aspects of

minority community experience. The Bangladeshi community is a community that is established in the town and where several generations are represented, with younger generations often born in the town, in contrast to parents and grandparents. Like the Bangladeshi community the Traveller community is a long established presence, including both families that have settled permanently in the town and families that travel for part of the year. The Travellers also have their own distinct culture and community concentrated in areas on the outskirts of town. Unlike the Bangladeshi community that has received more attention (both wanted and unwanted) as a result of increasingly widespread BME rhetoric and recent global and national events, however, the Travellers have long been an invisible minority.

The third group forms a contrast to the first two in that it is a very new community. It is also less visible in official statistics than the Bangladeshi community. The recent arrival of this group to the town provides the opportunity to test for differences in experience connected to knowledge of and adaptation to the welfare system.

The three themes, children, the elderly and women, were chosen because in all groups in society, including the majority population, they represent areas where welfare services are in particular demand and where debates and conflicts around issues of welfare are explicitly value laden.

## Methods and Materials

The study took place in two stages. In the first mapping stage a comprehensive amount of documentary material as much as possible was collected and complemented by shorter fact finding interviews, mainly held over the telephone. Documentary material collected included online versions of local newspapers; local authority and Partnership documents both internal and public; websites for local and regional bodies in both the state and civil sectors. In addition the transcripts of 28 interviews with representatives of local authorities, local churches and voluntary organisations, which we collected in the town in 2004 as part of research into the role of the majority church in welfare, were available as important background material (see Middlemiss 2006).

The second in-depth phase of the study focused primarily on open ended interviews with members of the minority communities and with people who work with these communities in a professional or voluntary capacity: 17 semi structured interviews of between 45 minutes and 2 hours were carried out. These were complemented with participant observation in 3 groups followed by shorter interviews with staff and participants. Interviews were carried out at the convenience of the interviewee and were held in their home or place of work, where the researcher was often shown the premises. Interviews were

recorded and these recordings were complemented by notes taken during interviews and during and after participant observation sessions.

In the text where interviews are cited or used as the basis of a statement in the text the number given to the interview for cataloguing purposes and the gender of the interviewee are indicated in the following manner (16, F). Additional information about the interviewee is, where appropriate, noted in the body of the text. On occasions where the researcher's notes from a participant observation session provide the material this is indicated in the following manner (Group 1).

## Representation

Representation is an issue for this study at a number of levels, both at a research level in terms of the extent to which individuals interviewed can be said to be representative of the communities of which they are members and at a local policy level. These two aspects are interrelated, as frequently those people whom it is easiest to gain access to are those who are in contact with the local authorities (and English language competence is also an issue). By stereotyping people as speaking for a predefined community we run the risk of studying communities of our own construction (Bauman 1996, p. 8). Also even if those people we speak with and observe can be said to represent their community at some level they may well only represent one part of it, as generational and gender aspects are particularly important. In addition there is also the question of to what extent the locality is representative of the country as a whole. Given the qualitative nature of this study and the necessarily small size of the sample it is therefore important to bear in mind that the results of this report can only be indicative.

## Findings

### Cooperation and Cohesion between and within various groups in the welfare domain

One place where members of several different minority communities meet with each other and with white British (nominally) Christian residents is in the field of childcare and schooling. Sure Start is perhaps the best example of this.<sup>7</sup> Sure Start focuses on highlighting aspects of the cultures of the dif-

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<sup>7</sup> Sure Start is a government sponsored programme targeting children under five and their parents from deprived areas. It is part of wider policy aimed at eradicating child poverty. Services provided vary from support and education for parents, activities for parents and children and facilitating access to other services, such as health care.

ferent parents (mainly mothers) and children who use the facilities of the centre and this seems to be popular and to function within the confines of the centre. Although to what extent this facilitates cohesion, or integration outside of the centre is harder to say. Having once found their way to the centre and built up a sense of familiarity with the surroundings and trust in the staff it is also common for parents to use it as a gateway for other services, such as health care and employment advice (5, F).

The minority communities studied have been found to be tight knit and treated like extended family, but even within this community people will turn to their own family first and attempt not to go outside it for assistance unless absolutely necessary. In the words of one young mother from the Sikh community,

“The fact that it is smaller congeals people together really, brings people together. So I think, like you say, there is family support, which is direct and that would obviously be the first thing to do, but even outside of that people will support each other with minor things, like as I say it could just be, can you read me this letter, can you do me this bit of shopping, can you come with me to the GP” (16, F).

Similarly an older Chinese woman emphasised the fact that, although her community is spread out around the town, everyone knows and looks out for everyone else (17, F).

In the Polish community the family network is, for many, the route into Britain, into the local area and towards employment. Polish people that we spoke to were themselves the evidence that family and friends act as advisors to those planning to move to Britain and when they arrive provide accommodation, help and support (10, M). Other studies have indicated the tendency within this community to turn to family and friends rather than state benefits and this is also evident in Darlington (10, M see also Fitzgerald 2007, p. 5).

While ties to the extended family seem to be closer in these minority communities than in society at large, however, the basic reliance on the family as the primary element in welfare seems to be the same. This prioritisation of the family is one where the values of minority and majority seem to coincide. This is especially clear regarding the sense of children as a particular priority, although again this seems to be even stronger in the minority communities studied than in the majority community in general. One simple example of this is the contrast in clothing of the children at a playgroup attended by children both from Traveller and non-traveller families. The children from Traveller families arrive for the most part immaculately dressed in outfits that for the majority of other children would be reserved for special occasions (Group 1). This emphasis on clothing may well be a sign of the importance to the group of presenting themselves well in the face of judge-

ment by those outside the group, but other indications, such as the prioritisation of doctors appointments for children, even when this means considerable inconvenience in travelling long distances, also point towards an attitude of putting children in the centre (13, F).

The prioritisation of children is particularly clear when seen in relation to a woman's position in the family before and after motherhood. Motherhood is, within the communities studied, an important factor that can both draw women closer to mainstream society and also push them away. One way in which motherhood draws women closer to mainstream society lies in the fact that many women seek health services when pregnant, or health and social services for their children, that they may not have sought for themselves. Midwives are important points of contact for many women with little English and have been the first point of contact for many, opening doors to other areas. One young woman, originally from Poland and who knew no one other than her husband had, for example, been taken along to a language class by her midwife. There she has begun to learn English and has also met other young women (Group 2).

### Examples of tensions between and within groups

There are clear differences in how different communities within the town make use of collective space and which spaces they use and make their own. There are, for example, interesting tensions between the Local Authority's focus on integration and elements of some communities in the town who prefer to stay within one area of the town and will only attend events specifically targeted to their community. One community worker witnessed to the fact that while not averse to attending events organised by the Local Authority specifically for them many members of the Bangladeshi community are reluctant to attend events organised for a more diverse audience, even when held in familiar spaces (3, F).

Different attitudes and priorities are evident within groups which sometimes appear as tensions, often inter-generational. One such example is a generational split which can be seen within the Chinese community as regards care for the elderly. In one case, where support from social services was requested by some of the younger members of the community for the older generation, the help was eventually not taken up by the older members of the community, who did not want to accept support from outside the family (2, F).

In general very little animosity from the majority population towards the minority populations is reported. The one real exception to this is indications that the Traveller community feel discrimination and prejudice at a number of levels from schoolyard bullying to problems with access to health, social and educational services, and rude or patronising behaviour from some indi-

viduals and service providers. One story, told second hand, is an illustration of the perception of this from within the Traveller community:

“There was a lady in town who, she was in a café she said, with one of the children who is secondary school age, but she is having her home tutored and she was in a café and the people in the café rang up and reported her and said the child should be in school. ‘Fortunately for me’, she said, ‘the policeman who came went to our church and he knew that we were travelling people and he knew that my children were being tutored’. She felt very strongly that the people in this café were prejudiced, she said, ‘if you were there with your school-aged daughter I don’t think that they would have phoned’” (13, F).

In cases where individuals from the other groups studied in the town did report being on the receiving end of negative attitudes on several occasions, they faced such attitudes with, what I interpreted as, tolerance and understanding. One good example is a health sector worker who reported a (very small) number of patients who had asked to transfer to an ‘English’ alternative. Her feeling was that this occurred in cases where there was no obvious solution to the patient’s medical problem, but that the patient attributed her inability to solve the problem to a lack of competence and assumed this to be based on inferior skills. Skills assumed to be inferior because she came from outside the UK (15, F).

### **Self containment and self sufficiency**

Not only do many members of the minority groups studied seem to prefer to keep care within the family, they also seem reluctant to make use of benefits, or other services to which they are entitled and which could improve the quality of life for them or their families. Representatives of social services and of various minority groups in the town agree that there is generally good awareness of the services available. They also agree that lack of information is not what prevents people seeking support. In the words of one Sikh woman, who also works for the council, many people will ask neighbours to translate or interpret for them,

“those services would be available to them through the council... but again very much the values here is what stops people accessing services. I don’t know whether it is that they don’t want to be seen not managing, it is this whole ethos of not wanting to ask for help. That is the best way I can describe it”.

Interestingly, these observations coincide with the conclusions of an in-depth interview study of Bangladeshi women in London, where researchers concluded that resistance to services in the welfare sector cannot be explained by poor information and language, but require more complex and culturally rooted explanations (Ahmed and Rees Jones, 2008).

Anecdotal evidence from those within the social services also provides a further illustration. Many elderly people request home help/carers of their own ethnic/faith group, but the lack of workers from the minority communities in the town means that such requests are often not met. This highlights the fact that the feeling of belonging to a group, which leads people to request carers from their own 'group', may also be one of the factors which means such carers are not available, as the strong group sense has negatively influenced integration with the wider community.

Demand for carers from the same community as the individual requesting the care strengthens the image of minority communities as community oriented groups, which prefer to keep problems within the boundaries of the group and particularly within the immediate family. However, although it seems to be the case that in many respects people turn first to their own community for help, as one interviewee commented, it can be the case that people prefer not to be assigned a case worker from their own community since it can be seen as a failure to be looked after by 'someone else's daughter' and this feeling can be softened if the carer comes from outside the community. The ideal of one's own family looking after one in old age may not have been satisfied, but the sense that others have intimate knowledge of family affairs, which can then be spread in the community is softened. This highlights the double role of the community as support, but also a burden in terms of imposed expectations.

It is also interesting to note that the Council has not found it easy to recruit care workers from the south Asian communities. One interviewee observed that a recent targeted recruitment drive resulted in several women from the Bangladeshi community applying, but all later withdrew their applications:

"in the end they turned down the job because they felt that it was not a good job to do from the family's side...It wasn't approved to go and work in other people's homes and also they are not very comfortable with helping some unknown person bathe or change their clothes. It is not very acceptable" (5, F).

Not only is being cared for something to be kept within the family, caring, it appears, is also restricted to that domain.

The importance of being able to take care of oneself and one's family is also evident in other areas. Within the Traveller community it appears, for example, in the central role of the father's search for work defining the parameters of family life. Interestingly those interviewed from the Polish community point to what they call a 'lack of work ethic' in the majority population as the major value difference between the Polish immigrant community and the majority population. They seem particularly surprised by the numbers of young people leaving school to take 'dead end' jobs for

quick money rather than working hard to educate themselves (11, M and 5, F).

Different needs and priorities held by different groups in the same area of town cause tension, particularly in deprived areas. One example of this is in the Northgate community partnership. This ward contains the Bangladeshi community as well as similar numbers of white British residents. The area has been allocated extra funding for regeneration which is to be distributed by the community partnership, made up exclusively of white British residents and where the Bangladeshi community has found it hard to find a voice. Different attitudes and wishes for a community centre held by the Bangladeshi community on the one hand and the community partnership on the other are therefore difficult to resolve.

### **Integration targets as a cause of tension**

In addition interesting tensions have emerged between the general contentment of many in the minority communities with the services that they receive and the need of the local authorities to show that they are meeting targets for involvement of minority groups. Many members of minority communities are happy with the services they are receiving and simply want to ensure that they know who to contact should something go wrong. But the local authorities are under pressure to live up to equality plans and therefore to prove that they are involving minority communities in decision making and reaching them with services. This leads to the authorities having actively to pursue interaction with communities who are happy with the status quo (2, F).

Local civil servants are well aware of this and targets can sometimes force them to act against their better judgement and local knowledge, which can mean, at one extreme, that guidelines intended to improve integration and reduce tensions can hinder the process. One example of this is a meeting of representatives of minority groups in the town called at the request of assessors of the council's equality policy and held against the better judgement of the civil servants responsible at local level. The assessors asked to meet representatives of a number of bodies, but to save on time wanted, rather than visiting each group, to gather them together for one meeting. The result was a meeting where, amongst others, representatives of the Muslim community were sat at the same table as representatives of the Gay, Lesbian and Bi community. The result was a heated and, in the opinion of the local civil servant involved, non-constructive debate. This has, the person involved feels, set back processes that were in place and was without doubt not a positive catalyst (12, M).

This study in itself has also served to highlight areas of tension related to integration policy. Reactions by interviewees to the use of the term "minorities" varied from hostile, through pragmatic to positive. The difference of

opinion lies in to what extent use of the term is seen to create tension and to what extent pragmatic use can promote cohesion, using the discourse of the day to the advantage of the local community in the battle for resources. For one representative of the Traveller community, whom we approached regarding participation in the study, this issue was particularly sensitive. This individual did not object to the use of the terms “minority” and “majority”, but rather to the fact of what was seen as ‘yet more’ research on a community, which has to fight hard for resources in other regards, not least within the welfare sphere (telephone interview 2, F). On the other hand one community worker, herself with an ethnic Indian background, noted the fact that in a small town like Darlington to belong to a minority can be useful, particularly in applying for jobs, as equality policies mean that employers are keen to ‘tick the boxes’ of ethnic diversity (5, F).

## The ‘grey areas’ in between

### **Trust**

There is a tension for many in the minority communities we studied between seeing the benefits of externally organised group childcare and reluctance to leave their children with people outside the ‘extended family’. However once trust in an individual, who runs a playgroup, for example, has been established this can be overcome. There is very little evidence of reluctance for children to mix with children from outside the community, as has been the case in the past, not least with the Traveller community and parents who brought their children to the playgroup mentioned above, who stressed the positive effect on their children from the interaction with other children outside of the family environment (Group 1). Members of this community are, however, still anxious that their children should attend schools along with other Traveller children.

One example of the phenomenon of trust in individuals rather than in the welfare system is the fairly recent request of the Traveller population for a liaison officer within the local authority specifically for their community. This request was declined on the grounds that if one group in society was given such a resource then all others could legitimately also demand such treatment, but it was also felt that this solution may potentially be problematic in that it would concentrate knowledge of the community in one person (12, M). Attempts are now being made instead to educate staff better across the board about the needs of different minority groups in the town and to provide lists for the respective groups of contact people within each department who have experience of working with particular groups. However, it is clear from speaking to individuals from within social services and health care who have, over a number of years, built up contacts with particular minority groups that these personal contacts are of particular value. Members

of the communities in question make use of these individuals as mediators between themselves and welfare services in general. If they have contact, for example, with someone from social services they will tend also to approach that person for advice on health service matters too, rather than using the official channels. One example is regular contacts between the Chinese community group and a representative from social services, something that provides a two way communication on the needs of the community and the services of the council, without being a formal element of welfare provision (2, F and 17, F).

### **Practical issues as catalysts to value conflicts**

In many cases what we have found to be important is not differences in values between groups on their own, but how those differences that might exist are highlighted when lack of resources force individuals to seek help that they would prefer to avoid.

#### *Money*

Many would prefer to care for their elderly relatives without external support, but lack of financial resources means that they feel forced to seek help. This can create conflict both within the family and for the carer herself as she struggles with feelings of guilt. Similar tensions appear when women who feel they have to work because of the family's economic situation feel caught in a tension between the need to earn money and the feeling that they are abandoning their family duties. Even if they are themselves happy with the situation, they may face disapproval from others in the community (5, F).

#### *Language*

Lack of competence in English can both impede people seeking help outside the community, where they might be willing to otherwise, and 'force' people to compromise on principles that they would otherwise be reluctant to, for example, where mothers have to use husbands or children as interpreters. One member of a Basic English class fought hard with her limited English to convey the frustrations of having to rely on family as interpreters. In particular she wanted to stress the feelings of inadequacy, as a mother, having to rely on one's own child for translation in situations, such as negotiations with the local school, or the child's doctor where the maternal figure ought to be able to shield her child (Group 2).

This study is by no means the first time that issues of language competence within minority communities and the impact that this has on other areas of life has been highlighted.. A study in 2002 of educational and employment needs amongst Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Darlington drew out many of the same issues addressed here (Thandi 2002). Using questionnaires translated into a number of community languages this

survey reached people we could not reach with interviews and found that, although residents in Darlington from minority communities are generally satisfied with services provided by the council (Thandi 2002, pp. 107-9), language was identified by both professionals and members of the different communities as the most common barrier for members of the BME communities to services, education and employment prospects (Thandi 2002, p. 134). A number of the recommendations Thandi makes, such as increasing the availability of interpretation services and information leaflets translated into a variety of languages, have been implemented. However, language remained one of the major concerns to which interviewees referred. Not least problems in communicating with doctors and the associated complications of needing to involve family members in visits to health care services.

### *Time*

In the Bangladeshi community it is the working hours of the men (often 'anti-social' with nights on shift work, in the catering/hotel business, or as taxi drivers) which define the patterns of the whole family (3, F). Many women structure their day around the man's shift pattern in order to be able to spend time with their husband, but also so as to be able to prepare traditional food. In that they have responsibility for childcare, however, in addition to adapting to these hours the women are also required to get up and get children ready for school, etc. Once the children have gone to school women may then go back to sleep for an hour or two, but this is the time when most provision for crèches and activities for mothers with small children are available. So these women are not able to make use of such provision and are cut off from the wider community. The men's working patterns also mean that they themselves find it hard to attend language classes or other adult education provision. One language class for women running during school hours and providing a crèche is an example of provision that has been adapted to fit the needs of the intended target audience. The timing and child care facilities makes the otherwise impossible possible for many of the women who attend (5, F and Group 2).

For the Traveller community time constraints are seasonal as many families travel during the summer months, following the work of the father, and this impacts on the entire family (8, F). One of the consequences is that families often return to the town too late to register their children for their preferred school for the next academic year. A choice closely connected to faith based values as the Traveller families tend to prefer the local Roman Catholic schools, for their Christian ethos, but such schools are also popular with other parents because of their academic record and are quickly full. Families also experience significant difficulties in accessing health care as a consequence of adhering to their travelling lifestyle. One health care worker has witnessed the priority that members of the Traveller community place on

health care, particularly where children are concerned, despite practical problems with registration and the relay of information while they are on the move. They are frequently, she noted,

“labelled very much as poor attenders / non- attenders, but in actual fact that is not the case, they weren’t receiving the appointments, [...] but I can ring and say little Johnny has an appointment next Wednesday and 9 times out of 10 they will move mountains to get back for it” (13, F).

### **Space**

One area where different groups in society express different and incompatible preferences is space. This can be seen in several ways, one is the issue of ownership of community space. Several minority communities in the town, of which the Bangladeshi community is one, have lobbied for their own community hall. They would be happy to let other groups make use of such a hall, but an important aspect would be their own ownership of the space. Alternative solutions of shared spaces, or use of ‘other people’s’ space is not seen as adequate (3, F; 6, M and 9, F).

A second aspect concerns religious spaces and buildings as representations of the community. This issue is currently being highlighted in the town in relation to the Mosque. The current building (a converted church) is now too small for the worship needs of the community, who are applying for planning permission to divide the space by building an extra floor and raising money for this purpose. Representatives of the community feel that opposition to the proposals by local residents is unjustified and based on prejudice, not least because the application does not include a change of use for the building. This is however also interesting when pitted against assurances that as Muslims in Darlington they feel no sense of exclusion or fear in general.

A third issue of space concerns the town itself. For members of the minority communities the contrast between living in a town the size of Darlington and living in an urban conurbation seems to be particularly acute and impacts upon individual and community life in both positive and negative ways. Several members of a basic English class commented that living in Darlington, rather than in one of the larger urban conurbations, which have larger minority communities, meant sacrificing social opportunities and access to ethnic food and clothing stores and community centres. In line with Thandi’s (2002, p. 110) findings, however, while there was an element of regret in these comments, they were not uttered as a critique of Darlington, which in most regards was seen as a place in which people enjoyed living. It is possible that this sense of contentment, despite the fact that Darlington lacks the advantages of larger communities in terms of cultural resources, has a connection to the tightly knit nature of the communities in Darlington (at least as far as the established minority groups are concerned).

## Other issues

### **Women and Family - the gender dimension to practicalities**

#### *Food*

Food plays an important role in the family lives of members of the minority communities in Darlington and the relationship to food and food preparation serves as a helpful illustration of women's roles as carers. In the various Asian communities in the town in particular the women have responsibility for the children and,

“a very big part of our culture, for the food, you have to cook fresh every day and you have to cook so many dishes, it is a big thing really, you can't just get things out of the oven...It is a big thing in our lives really, the focus on the family meal and the kind of meal” (5, F).

This illustrates the ties that continue to bind women in these communities to the domestic sphere. As the same Asian women continued, commenting on the difficulties for women who want to work,

“in our Asian culture, the home is the priority still. There isn't you would not get so much help from your partner, they have to be looked after, so it is only the little bit of spare time which you can have when you are not supposed to do something else that you can do. I suppose once the children are in school that is the time when you get those 6 hours to start working.”(5,F).

Interestingly our interviews also provide an example of the importance of homemade, traditional food as a key element of family life at a time of changing eating practices for the majority. In response to a direct question as to whether tensions had ever arisen between residents from minority communities and from the majority population a representative of the women's shelter in Darlington said that the only area that had ever been a problem was over food and food preparation in the shared kitchen. At one point the smell of the food prepared by a woman resident with her small children, as well as, the time and space needed to prepare it had irritated other residents (14, F).

In the Traveller community too, providing well cooked food for the family is a matter of importance and pride. A year or so ago a suggestion was made that lessons in cooking healthy food be arranged on one of the sites as a service to the community. This suggestion never made it as far as the community itself as one health worker's horror at the suggestion resulted in its rejection. This idea, a product of good intentions had failed to take into account both whether this was the kind of service that was really needed by this group, but also the insult that would be taken from it in that the women

of the community would take it as an implication that the food they are providing for their families is not good enough.

### *Identity and clothing*

The fact that Asian women in Darlington find it hard to find the kind of outfits that they want to wear, prompted one woman to request and then attend sewing classes with the aim not only of making clothes for herself, but also setting up a business making and selling them. The sewing classes run in Darlington, funded by community grants, have led to women setting up their own businesses, but have also had a confidence building function; they have also been a point of contact for the women involved with women from other cultures and have acted as a first contact, which for some has been a way in to other services (Group 3). One reason why this has functioned so well, and the same is true of language classes organised through Sure Start, seems to be the fact that they are women only (5, F). This feels less threatening to some women, and for some enables them to take part, where as if there were men present in the class rooms, the male members of their family would not allow participation. For the Muslim women this is also true for women's only swimming and aerobics sessions, also arranged through Sure Start. Religious and cultural modesty regulations mean that these women are not able to swim or exercise in a mixed gender environment.

This is not the place for an explication of the role of the veil in Muslim communities in Britain, but the issue deserves a mention in as far as it surfaced in the course of fieldwork. One young Bangladeshi woman, born in Darlington, educated and with a full time job reflected on the fact that she herself switches between sometimes wearing the veil to work and sometimes not, but that whether or not she wore it seemed to have a greater impact on her non-Asian colleagues than on herself. She felt her own identity to be more closely tied to her community (and ethnic origins) than her colleagues perceptions of her. She, like another respondent from the Sikh community, felt herself to be first Bangladeshi and then British, whereas non Bangladeshi workmates stress the fact that to them she is as British as themselves (9, F and 16, F).

### **Intersections between minority, religion and welfare domains**

At a practical level the intersection between minority community/ethnicity, religion and welfare can be seen in the use made by individuals of religious institutions as community centres. Other studies have shown that migrant workers often turn to faith organisations early on in their time in Britain and that they are more likely to seek support through such organisations than through official channels (Audit Commission 2007, 11 §18). The majority of Polish immigrants to Darlington come from a Roman Catholic background and such is the demand on the local churches by members of this community

that the local Roman Catholic diocese is working to bring a priest over from Poland to minister to this community (7, F). This does not, however, mean that all Polish residents automatically turn to the church. Interviews revealed significant differences in levels of piety, active churchgoing and assumptions that the church might be a place to turn to for support. It is true that the Catholic churches, and particularly those in the region that offer services in Polish, are a point of contact for many Polish people new to the country. However, as an interview with a representative of a Roman Catholic Church in the town indicated, it seems that few of these expect much from the church as an organisation other than a place of worship and of contact with other Polish people (7, F). The churches seem, in other words, to function more as facilitators of community formation than of integration with the wider society, even if the latter also occurs.

### **The local situation in flux, as regards religion, minorities and gender and changes to come**

One area where representatives of the local authorities are particularly aware of the potential for conflict lies in the possibility of tensions between older, settled minority communities and the new and fast growing central European, mainly Polish community(ies). Interviews with representatives of local authorities confirm the indications of a huge growth in the numbers of migrant workers in Darlington who have moved from central Europe (1, M and 4, M).

While there are no obvious signs of animosity on the side of the majority community to this influx of a new type of immigrant, those responsible for welfare and educational provision are aware of the need to strike a balance between making sure the needs of this community are met adequately and not appearing to 'favour' these new immigrants and be accused by established immigrant groups of ignoring them because they are settled and undemanding (1, M; 10, M; 12, M). This balance is made all the more difficult to strike by the fact that these new arrivals are hard to reach. There are no concrete figures of how many there are, many do not speak English and as they are not a single settled and defined community, but rather many small groups, it is hard to define what the needs of the 'community' might be.

A meeting in early 2007 for the Polish community set up by a local councillor to assess the needs of the community was attended by much larger numbers than expected. Those organising the event interpreted this both as an expression of need for information on services and of a lack of distinct community amongst the Polish migrants (1, M). The Council and Partnership are now concentrating efforts on supporting the formation of a Polish community group.

This was a sensitive issue locally at the time of the fieldwork as those who are seeking funding to help establish support for the Polish community

locally need to demonstrate that there is a coherent community before they can secure the financial support which could help to establish such a group identity. So while many are aware of the current lack of cohesion in this 'community' few are prepared to admit it.

In addition, one reason why there is relatively little animosity towards these 'new' immigrants on the part of the majority community may well be that they are currently mostly of working age and relatively self sufficient, taking on unpopular jobs and making relatively few demands on welfare services.<sup>8</sup> Other studies have shown that many of these 'new' immigrants intend to return to their home country within a few years, but whether they will remain or stay is an open question. Interviews with members of the Polish community in Darlington revealed distinctly open-ended attitudes towards the future where consideration of welfare issues will play a significant role in influencing decisions.

It is evident within the selected minority communities that conflicts within the domain of welfare are being stored up for the future when the next generation become the very elderly and a new generation of children are born whose grandmothers work. For the Polish community there is an issue of whether Polish people who have come to this county for work will bring teenage children to join them to benefit from a British university education or have to return to look after elderly parents, or whether they may try and bring them to Britain instead (11, M).

For both Polish women and members of Bangladeshi, Traveller and other communities in the town there is a question of whether women who have made a career for themselves will leave work or work part-time to make time to care for elderly parents. Several women interviewed felt that they could see such a conflict on the horizon, which would involve both internal conflict, as they struggle with their own conflicting priorities, and external, as family members exert pressure. Many young women from the communities we studied work and are building careers and their families do not oppose that, those that have children even find that it is their families that make this possible by providing help with childcare. While the members of this older generation are currently young enough to be self sufficient the daughters and daughters-in-law feel that in a few years time they will be faced with a stark decision between career and caring full time for elderly relatives.

For many working-age people we spoke to the change was also one they felt would come as their children, now at school, entered adulthood. They feel themselves to be a mediating generation, but feel that a big change is on

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<sup>8</sup> Compare Audit Commission report: Crossing Borders, January 2007. The national picture indicates that migrant workers, particularly those from central Europe, currently make few demands on welfare services. However recent news reports of the strains put on antenatal care services in some areas by the large numbers of immigrants with little or no English indicate that this may be changing (BBC News (B)).

its way as ‘mainstream’ values enter their communities through their children in a way not seen before. One interviewee expressed the feeling that her children are British in a way that she is not, even though she herself had lived almost all of her life in the UK too. This said, even those who see this contrast between their generation, who would describe themselves as, say Indian, and their children who are more likely to call themselves British, feel that their children have values which are similar to their own and tied to their minority culture. The following story of an 8 year old Sikh boy sums this up well:

“I suppose looking at my grandparents, my mum to me, my mum works, but still has very strong cultural values as well and I think probably my son will be much the same and I know, just as an example, he talked about, we went to a parents evening and the teacher said to me ‘he is always wanting to help other people’, and I said ‘It is probably just part and parcel of him’ and she was very concerned, she said ‘He needs to concentrate on what he is doing’. And when I discussed it with him he said, ‘Well no mum it is part of our religion isn’t it, it is part of our culture. If somebody wants me to help them I would rather help them first and put myself second’ and I think that ... he will display the same values as what I have, as what my mum has and my grandparents and I think to be honest a lot of it is in the religion, you know, and that I would say that kind of stems from religion, culture, the both of them really (16, F).

## Analysis: emergent values

### Analysis of values

#### **Conceptualisation of basic values**

In attempting to extract basic values from the attitudes and behaviours exhibited in the examples above I have made use of Shalom Schwartz’s model for conceptualisation of basic values (Schwartz 2007, p. 39). This model developed for use in quantitative research, is nonetheless useful here as an aid to developing a tool for the analysis of qualitative material. It is possible to make use of the six main features of basic values which Schwartz lists as a tool for identifying values in the material. The six features are as follows:

1. Values are beliefs that are linked inextricably to affect
2. Values refer to desirable goals that motivate action
3. Values transcend specific actions and situations
4. Values serve as standards or criteria that guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people and events.

5. Values are ordered by importance relative to one another to form a system of priorities.
6. The *relative* importance of values guides action.

Guided by this model it is possible to see basic values in the material as distinct from norms, actions and attitudes, which are guided by these values.

From our material it is not possible to say that certain values are held by particular groups or communities in the town and not by others. There are however indications that different hierarchies of values may exist within different communities, or at least be influenced by cultural and religious traditions.

### **Interests, attitudes or values**

A number of examples of conflict and cohesion in the welfare domain appear, at first glance, to be based on differences in values, but on closer inspection can be found to have a much more prosaic explanation. Reluctance to visit a doctor who does not belong to one's own ethnic or religious community seems at first to be related to values connected to community cohesion, but is often based rather on the practicalities of a language barrier.<sup>9</sup> However, this said, the relationships between interests and values are often complex and intertwined. A woman who indicates a desire to see a doctor who can speak her language may be doing so because of a wish (on the part of herself or her husband) not to have to make use of a translator if she needs to visit a doctor when her husband is not able to accompany her.

Similar comments can be made about observations of conflict over issues of space. It is possible that the desires of a community for its own community hall, or of the Muslim community for an extension to the mosque, are based on securing the interests of that particular community in one part of town and connected to issues of power relations between minority and majority communities. But it is hard to argue that such focus on securing the interests of a community are not based on basic values related to the existence and preservation of that community.

### **Family**

Many of the issues of welfare commented above relate back to the domain of the family and serve to highlight values connected to the understanding both of a 'good' family and the role of the family in wider society, but also of roles within the family.

Family values and care in the community have long been popular terms within the British welfare system, used with equal vigour by politicians on

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<sup>9</sup> See also Donovan cited in Gilliat-Ray (2003), 341 for presentation of research showing that South Asian women often prioritise shared language and quality of care over gender in contrast to the assumption that Muslim women always prefer to see female doctors.

both sides of the political spectrum, but what exactly family values are is practically never specified.

There can be no doubt that in all the minority groups we have studied in Darlington family is valued highly and prioritised, but the basic values which underpin this are complex.

At one level it is connected to gender identity. In the Bangladeshi community, to take the example where this is most clearly evident, to be a good woman, whether mother, daughter, wife or daughter-in-law, involves taking responsibility for the family sphere, that is for the household cleaning and cooking, and for the care of the children and elderly relatives within that household. To be a good man is to support the family financially and to be able to protect and speak for the family. That the individuals who make up the family do their duty and fulfil their role is therefore a value understood to underpin the family unit and which makes the family what it is. In an ideal world, therefore, if everyone in the family does their duty by it, the family will be able to be self sufficient and not need to rely on society at large for support. Self-sufficiency, therefore, becomes a value as an expression of the ideal family unit as does self-subjugation, as it is in the taming of possibly contradictory individual desires that the family as a collective can be said to flourish. This later issue becomes particularly obvious in the roles of women in relation to the family and in particular in tensions between contradictory sets of values held by younger women. The increasing numbers of those who have received an education and started a career have come to embrace values of independence, self-determination and personal fulfilment. In the choice between career and caring for elderly relatives within the family home these values collide with those of duty to the family and the self-sufficiency of the family unit.

A further element which adds to the tension between values here is the value of respect, and in particular respect for elders. The importance of respecting and caring for one's elders is a value emphasised by members of all of the groups we have studied, often expressed as dissatisfaction with the way in which older people are treated in British society at large. Individuals refer to cultural tradition and religion as the motivations for their sense of duty towards the older generation. Therefore, we can see respect as a further value which itself supports the family unit as a collective entity; but the value of respect also serves to illustrate the sense of belonging, not only to family, but also to a wider community group. In those groups we have studied family may be the obvious first unit of reference, but it is closely followed by that of the cultural and/or religious community. The community is, in other words, understood to be a form of extended family in value terms. Preserving the community means preserving the values systems that uphold it and these are closely connected with those which preserve the family. Respect for elders and the duty of care for the family are therefore naturally

seen to extend to members of the community group and the notion of self-sufficiency of the family also extends to the community group, although to a lesser degree.

The concept of respect for the elderly can also be used to draw attention to a further basic value, namely dignity. Individuals refuse help and support to which they are entitled and which would improve their quality of life because they do not wish to be cared for by outsiders. Similarly people refuse aids, such as stair lifts, saying this would be an imposition of their disability on the family home, regardless of the consequences of refusing such aids might have on their need of help from family members. Both examples represent increased and not reduced burdens on the family, which, as a consequence, is required to assist and care for older family members; consideration for the family can, therefore, not be the only concern in refusing such support. Rather it seems that needing to ask for help from outside, or to use aids which imply disability, seems undignified and offends the individual's sense of what is 'proper', as well as, their identity as a respected older member of a caring family and community.

This sense of identity being closely connected to group identity and to the importance of a sense of community coherence is also visible in other ways. The symbolic value of the ownership of space is one good example of this.

### **Education and Employment**

In the areas of education and employment we see the connection between deep seated values related to quality of life and a striving for material well-being. Many of the groups we studied have moved to Darlington in search of work, but not just work, work that will pay better and provide a better quality of life for the individuals than in their countries of origin. Employment, is in this respect, an instrumental value, valued for the quality of life and security, which it can give to the worker and his or her family. For many, employment is also instrumental as a source of independence: for men particularly in their role as breadwinners, to be able to provide for their families and not depend on others, and for some women as a source of individual identity and personal freedom. In this respect education and employment are particularly closely linked. Education, and language knowledge in particular, opens many doors and is highly valued by people in all the groups we studied as an instrumental value, which can lead to self-sufficiency (for both individual and family) and independence.

In this area the notion of a work ethic also appears as both an instrumental and a more autotelic value. The need and valuing of a strong work ethic can be explained in instrumental terms in that it is necessary if quality of life is to be achieved for oneself and one's family. It appears, however, as a value in itself too in relation to values of self-sufficiency. To have a strong work

ethic is part of doing right for oneself by society. There lies a value in providing for oneself and not needing to rely on others.

In addition to the connection between education and employment named above, there are also many values related to the sphere of education, which are also connected to views of the family and parental ambitions for their children. Parents who have recently moved to the country value education as a way into British society for their children. For those where several generations have lived in the country, education in schools is valued as part of the child's material future, while extra language classes (at the Mosque for example) are seen as important instruments for the preservation of a particular minority culture and religion, which is itself an ascribed value. Generally the spheres of secular and religious education appear to be kept separate in Darlington and there is little value-related tension around this issue. One area where it is visible however is in the question of sex education in schools for children from the Gypsy and Traveller population. Parents from this community are vehemently opposed to their children taking part in such lessons. In this opposition values of modesty, grounded in a Christian religious belief are combined with an emphasis on the values of tradition and culture. These values are seen to be superior to the secular values which are used by the schools to support their arguments that such education should be available to all. Focus on the issue of whether the family has the right to decide what is best for the children means that this discussion relates not only to values of modesty, but also again to family self-sufficiency and parental authority.

### **Health and Social care**

Within the welfare spheres of health and social care the two values that appear particularly strongly in the material are human dignity and autonomy. This is true from the perspective of the individual, namely the importance of personal dignity, and also from an institutional perspective in that those providing welfare are expected, in striving for a system that gives equality of care to all, to take account the human dignity of all and the right of individuals to decide for themselves what constitutes dignity for them. Both of these values are, in this context inextricably intertwined with the values of respect and trust. The material shows the value placed on respect shown to both individuals and groups, not least in relation to culture and religion. It also shows the importance of relationships between individuals or groups of receivers and individuals representing the providers within the welfare sphere. This seems to be particularly important where the minority communities are concerned and highlights the importance of trust as a basic and instrumental value.

That human dignity is valued is also evident at the level of informal relations. This is particularly visible within community groups in terms of their concern that the weak in society in general and one's own community in

particular receive the support or help that they need. This concern is clearly linked to a value of human dignity, when expressed, as it frequently is, as a concern to provide care in a way that will not embarrass the recipient. At this level the value of human dignity is also made visible in the stress placed on the notion of 'putting others first'. Within the family children are prioritised, as is noted above, but men are also prioritised in many families in that their needs and wishes constrain the use of time and space. Over and above this the concept that one ought to go out of one's way to help others in the community, particularly the elderly, or not to impose one's disability on the family home is evident in a number of examples above. Prioritisation of children in particular is also related to women's identity as homemakers and 'good' mothers, but there is also a more general sense of the importance of putting others' needs before one's own, which is often, but not only, expressed by women.

## Values related to religion, minorities and gender

### **Hierarchies of Values**

It is clear that the notion of putting others first has a gender element and that wives, daughters and daughters-in-law, and mothers to an even greater extent, are to a significant degree affected by this. This is not to say that this value is not also strong in the majority community in the town, but it seems to have a particular relation to minority communities. Within these communities it has a particularly high position within the hierarchy of values, as is evident by its dominance when value conflicts occur both within and between groups.

A similar relationship can be found between minority groups and the value of self-sufficiency as expressed in reluctance to receive help from institutions and/or those outside of the immediate family. It is clear that self-sufficiency is also a value to be found within the majority population, not least the older generation, but the threshold for seeking help seems to be much higher within minority groups in the town.<sup>10</sup> This could be interpreted as indicating a prioritising of the value of self-sufficiency.

While many underlying values appear to be the same in both majority and minority communities they seem to be 'stronger' in the minority communities where the 'threshold' is higher for seeking help. It is possible that this is an indication of different hierarchies of values in the majority and minority communities.

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<sup>10</sup> Several interviewees within the framework of the WREP study in 2004 focusing on the majority community made reference to the reluctance of the older generation to seek out and make use of welfare services.

## Religious and cultural tradition and values

The intersection between minority, religion and value formation can often be found at a deeper level than the practical connection between ethnicity, religious affiliation and value expression. The intersection seems rather to be found in the continuing national cultural influence of a religious tradition – one example of this being the Polish residents of Darlington, who despite their very varied levels of religious affiliation, share in common similar values in the welfare domain.

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# Appendices

## 1:1 The WaVE team

In total, 34 researchers have been included in the WaVE project. The coordination committee is listed first, then the support team, and then the group of researchers involved in each case study. The senior scholar is named first, followed by the junior researcher.

### COORDINATION COMMITTEE

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## 1:2 The Consortium of the WaVE project

Welfare and Values in Europe (WaVE) was a Specific Targeted Research Project within the European Commission's 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.

Thematic Priority: Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-Based Society. Project no: CIT5-CT-2006-028632.

The contractors who are responsible for the work in each respective country are the following:

### **Partner 1:**

UU: Uppsala University (Coordinator) – Anders Bäckström

### **Partner 2:**

EXETER: Exeter University – Grace Davie

### **Partner 3:**

EHESS: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris – Danièle Hervieu-Léger

### **Partner 4:**

PADUA: University of Padua – Chantal Saint-Blancat

### **Partner 5:**

JAGELLONIAN: Jagellonian University – Irena Borowik

### **Partner 6:**

ZAGREB: University of Zagreb – Siniša Zrinščak

### **Partner 7:**

LATVIA: University of Latvia – Zaneta Ozolina

### **Partner 8:**

UNESCO: UNESCO Chair on the Study of Intercultural and Inter-religious Exchanges, Université de Fribourg – Martin Hauser

**Partner 9:**

DURHAM: Durham University – Douglas Davies

**Partner 10:**

HELSINKI – University of Helsinki – Eila Helander

**Partner 11:**

AGDER – University of Agder – Pål Repstad

**Partner 12:**

WURZBURG – University of Würzburg – Hans-Georg Ziebertz

**Partner 13:**

HEIDELBERG – Diakoniewissenschaftliches Institut, University of Heidelberg – Heinz Schmidt

**Partner 14:**

PANTEION: Centre for Social Policy, Panteion University – Nikos Kokosalakis

**Partner 15:**

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## 2 Development of methodology (Workpackage 2)

*WP2 leaders: Pål Repstad and Hans-Georg Ziebertz*

The development of methodology for the WaVE project (WP2) is an on-going process taking place during different stages in the project, as the methodology is fine-tuned according to the specificities of our research fields. The Methodology workpackage is to produce three texts (deliverables), which are to serve as tools for the junior researchers for their research at the local level (commencing September 2006 and coming to a close in June 2007):

Guidelines on the qualitative method as applied to the WaVE study (D3);  
Guidelines for the mapping process (i.e., the first stage of the fieldwork) (D4); and  
Guidelines for the collection of material (i.e., the second stage of the fieldwork – in depth research).

The material below will not apply equally well to all the case studies. Accordingly, researchers must use their discretion in applying the guidelines, under the supervision of the senior scholars. They should also raise any questions they have on the discussion forum of the WaVE website, as this will be most helpful for all the researchers.

In the pages that follow you will find:

### **D3 – Guidelines on the qualitative method as applied to the WaVE study**

- A. WaVE Central Concepts and Objectives
- B. WaVE basic research questions
- C. Hypotheses and counter-hypotheses

#### **D4 – Guidelines for the mapping process**

- A. Background questions about the locality (see also ('Appendix'))
- B. Suggestions for how to go about the mapping process
  - General suggestions
  - Research ethics
- C. Suggestions for classification of the material
  - Categories
  - Some typologies

#### **D5 – Guidelines for the collection of material**

- A. Selecting the sample
- B. Suggestions for the data collection
- C. Indicators for group descriptions (if applicable)

#### **Appendix – List of background questions about the locality**

##### *Deliverable 3:*

#### **Guidelines on the qualitative method as applied to WaVE**

One of our starting points is the assumption that values cannot be grasped independently of practices: understanding values requires attention to how values are expressed in actual practice, as well as to 'official' values expressed verbally. We aim to understand *lived* values as they influence majority-minority relations and social cohesion and/or tensions throughout Europe. Accordingly, our study should include consideration of what people do, what people *say* they do, and how they explain their actions and any *changes* in their actions over time. Such material is not graspable through quantitative research alone. Survey and statistical information must be supplemented with observations and with interview material.

Furthermore, qualitative research allows the possibility of in-depth and intensive study, usually resulting in more nuanced information. This is important for the WaVE study, inasmuch as nuanced information is needed in working with stereotypes about various groups. The qualitative method also allows the opportunity to gather information from the context in which it is embedded; the researcher thus has access to a wider range of information, *if* (as is recommended) research is conducted in the informants' everyday surroundings. Meanwhile, not constrained by pre-

constructed surveys (as in the case of quantitative research), the researcher has the ability to adjust his or her questions and methods of attaining information according to the lessons learned through the research process.

Thus, qualitative research allows us the necessary flexibility for grasping how values are expressed and developed *on the ground* and how, *in practice*, these values may affect majority-minority relations. It also enables us to capture *nuance* related to **religion** and different religious groups, to **minority** status and to different groups of minorities, and to **gender** patterns and changes within these amongst different groups. Meanwhile, by examining all of these dimensions through the prism of **welfare**, we are approaching the most fundamental level at which coexistence between different cultures, values and religions can be effectively examined – that of the expression of, and provision of, ‘basic’ individual and community needs (bearing in mind that what is considered ‘basic’ is itself an expression of values). It is through this approach that we can best supplement the existing quantitative research on welfare and values in Europe.

Our study of localities allows us to glean insight into at least three levels: the regional, the national, and the local levels. It also allows us to detect similarities and differences between these levels, and to compare these levels across the 12 countries in WaVE (i.e. local level could sometimes be similar across our countries, whilst the national level could be different).

Given the great diversity of context examined in the WaVE study – with tremendous differences in how WaVE central concepts are played out in the 14 case studies – the research will necessarily take different forms in the various case studies. Decisions regarding research sample and research methods must be made according to how the WaVE objectives can best be realised in each given context. It is therefore important that WaVE’s central concepts and objectives be reiterated here: it is this ‘big picture’ which should guide us as we enter the research field.

### ***C. Hypotheses and Counter-hypotheses***

This list of hypotheses and counter-hypotheses is to serve as a *tool*, to help us to bear in mind our broader questions as we enter the field, as well as to make us more aware of our own expectations. It is not a list of questions requiring a response from the researcher, although it may help

the researcher in planning the questions he or she will ask in the field. Nor is it an authoritative list: you may add your own hypotheses and counter-hypotheses, and/or you may overlook some of these as irrelevant to your own case study.

1. Religious institutions play a significant role in providing welfare services
2. Religious institutions play a significant role in shaping the discourse on issues of welfare
3. The activity of religious institutions in the welfare domain is a direct result of new welfare needs arising with the shrinking of the welfare state.
4. The activity of religious institutions in the welfare domain is not directly related to the shrinking of the welfare state, but to broader social and religious change in Europe.
5. Religions is an important factor in the shaping of welfare needs
6. Religious institutions express noble welfare values (e.g., advocating love of neighbours), but the most efficient provider of welfare is the state
7. Religiously provided welfare is better, more idealistic, allowing greater flexibility, closer to the recipients of welfare provision, etc.
8. Religiously provided welfare is discriminatory, thus more likely to lead to social exclusion
9. Religiously provided welfare tends to uphold certain gender structures
10. Gender-divided (i.e., men's only and women's only) minority group institutions uphold gender divisions and the subordination of women.
11. Gender-divided minority group institutions lead to the strengthening of women's position within the group and within society as a whole.
12. Religiously provided welfare tends to uphold the dominant patterns of welfare provision
13. Instances of integration or polarisation between minority and majority groups will depend on the *relations* between the groups rather than on the specific characteristics of the group

14. Increased provision of welfare services to minorities will lead to increased cohesion between the majority and the minority.
15. Increased provision of welfare services to minorities will lead to increased conflict between the majority and the minority.
16. Minority group institutions uphold gender divisions and the subordination of women, thus justifying the feminist critique against them.
17. Majority and minority group institutions reveal the same gender divisions.
18. Increased presence of religion in the public sphere leads to decreased gender equality in society.
19. Increased presence of religion in the public sphere has no clear effect on gender equality. Effects depend on how and where gender equality is assessed.
20. Strict privatisation of religion may create a more peaceful society with less conflict.
21. Strict privatisation of religion may lead to a more polarise, conflict-ridden society.

*Deliverable 4:*

**Guidelines for the Mapping Process**

The mapping process is the first stage of our fieldwork in the selected localities and will play a critical role in helping us achieve WaVE's overall aims. First, by providing information on minority presence, networks and associations in our localities, we will already be making a significant contribution to knowledge on minorities in Europe. Second, the mapping process is designed to help us make informed decisions about how to narrow the scope of and choose the sample for our in-depth research (second stage of the fieldwork), so that it will best reveal the sources of cohesion or tension between minority and majority communities, as observable through the domain of welfare. Accordingly, we will map quite broadly, taking into consideration what constitutes the 'majority' as well as all religious ethnic, national and(or racial groups which claim (or are conferred, by the majority), a minority status, irregardless of the size of the group.

It should be noted that at the mapping stage we are focusing on collection some basic information on *groups*, as such. Then, based on the results of the mapping process, we will decide on which *groups, issues, themes and/or phenomena, etc.*, we should focus in each case study (in other words, we need not focus on groups, as such, for the in-depth research; see D5 for guidance on this matter). We will try to make decisions which ensure both comparability and contextuality (paying sufficient attention to case specificities which may have important theoretical implications for the study as a whole).

The mapping process is thus an integral part of the WaVE research, and it is an end in itself. **Researchers are asked to map as broadly as possible, presenting the following basic information** (please see D4, C for more specific questions):

- a. What groups are present in the locality? (description of ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ communities, in accordance with D4, C – Categories)
- b. Do they provide welfare service, either internally to the group or for other as well?
- c. How do the various groups interact? (what information are you able to gather from gatekeepers regarding any notable tension, or cohesion, within and between various groups, in the domain of welfare?)

The results of such a broad mapping process will enhance our ability to draw some basic comparisons across all case studies (this is especially important, since we are not able to conduct in-depth studies on the same groups and to draw comparisons this way).

### **Definitions of ‘majority’ and ‘minority’**

Conceptions of ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ vary significantly across the 12 countries included in the WaVE study. For our purposes, by ‘**majority**’ we mean literally that part of the population which forms the numerical majority. In some cases, ‘majority’ will be closely linked to a ‘majority religion’, and so the two should be examined together. In other cases, there will be no particular relationship between the two. Also, we must be aware of the relative uses of the term ‘majority’: i.e., certain groups may be considered part of the majority, when viewed from a particular perspective. Accordingly, it is important that we *describe* as close to the

ground as possible, explaining our use of the term ‘majority’ in each given context.

Arriving at a common definition of ‘**minority**’ which is relevant across Europe is an especially difficult task. For the purposes of the fieldwork (WP3), we take a broad definition of minorities based on the following reasons:

- a. We expect to find very different results in terms of the relationship (one of tensions or cohesion?) between majority communities and different kinds of minority communities (i.e., autochthonous or immigrant, primarily ethnic or religious, etc.).
- b. We try to allow space for the different definitions of ‘minority’ in each case to arise. Different conceptions of minority may tell us something about the development of and/or potential for tension or cohesion.
- c. We wish to include attention to a possibly vast array of self-definitions of the ‘minorities’ themselves (as these self-definitions may vary from those of the researcher or of the broader majority community).
- d. Taking such a broad definition may help us to avoid reifying preconceived notions about conflict related to particular groups (i.e., modifying stereotypes)

We will study various levels of ‘authority’ within minority groups (e.g., leaders as well as general group members). This approach is helpful in allowing us to detect possible differences between leaders’ and others’ ability to distinguish between religion and culture. It will also enhance our ability to trace gendered differences related to different access to leadership positions.

We have chosen to examine whether minorities establish their own welfare activities) whether through formal organisations or informal networks). Assuming that the welfare state is about social cohesion, this focus will offer us insight into whether the *mere existence* of various welfare-providing minority organisations leads to greater fragmentation of society, or whether, instead, it strengthens civil society and the groups’ position within society.

The research will raise difficult questions of identity and identification of groups and of individuals. Specifically, it will shed light on potential tension between ascribed identities and self-identifications (both at the group and individual levels). We must seek to be sensitive to the relativity of identity (between majority and minority groups), as well as to the flexibility of localised identity (i.e., how identity may be linked to more than one place, beyond the locality and even beyond the national borders).

Finally, it should be noted that embedded in our research aims is a tensions between comparability and contextuality. Emphasis on comparability is more conducive to the drawing of scientific and analytical conclusions, whereas emphasis on contextuality is more conducive to representing the complexity of reality on the ground. We will continually be seeking to strike a proper balance between these two aims.

### **The guidelines for the mapping process consist of four parts:**

- A.** A list of background questions about the locality (see below and Appendix)
- B.** Suggestions for how to go about the mapping process
  - General suggestions
  - Research ethics
- C.** Suggestions for classification of the material
  - Categories
  - Some typologies

### **Part A: Background questions about the locality**

First, as noted in D4 above, the very basic information we seek to gather in the mapping process is the following:

- a.** What groups are present in the locality? (description of ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ communities, in accordance with D4, C – Categories)
- b.** Do they provide welfare service, either internally to the group or for others as well?
- c.** How do the various groups interact? (what information are you able to gather from gatekeepers regarding any notable tension, or

cohesion, within and between various groups, in the domain of welfare?)

Beyond this, in order to understand the nature of interaction between majority and minority groups in the domain of welfare, we need to have a basic idea of the characteristics of the local welfare system, and of the majority church's role therein. We thus begin our enquiry with questions related to these two subjects, and will then move on to consider minority groups specifically. **A list of background questions about the locality may be found in the Appendix to this workpackage 2.** PLEASE note: these are not meant to be *interview questions*, but questions to guide your gather of background information about the locality.

These questions will also be useful in our presentation of the mapping results, as part of our first draft case study reports (in other words, similar to the process for the writing of the State of the Art – Overview of the National Situation reports: in the first drafts we presented information in a format based on a list of questions; in the second drafts we re-organised that information).

It is also important to note that these questions will not be equally applicable to all case studies. Please use these questions to *guide* your mapping process, but if a questions or group of questions is not applicable to your case study (if, for example, there is no majority church presence in the domain of welfare), please simply indicate that this is the case.

Finally, please note that these questions may miss some very important background information for your particular locality. Accordingly, do not hesitate to add other similar information which is relevant to your particular case study (e.g., simply add a section at the bottom entitled 'other information').

## **Part B: Suggestions for how to go about the mapping process**

### **1. General suggestions**

First, we suggest that you begin by approaching the local authorities for statistical information regarding a. the local welfare system and b. minority groups and immigration. In most cases there will be local welfare

centres/offices: it is highly recommended that you establish contacts there and seek information from these offices as well. Statistics are a very important part of the mapping process, but they must be supplemented with interview data. Ask those who are responsible for this information to tell you their perspectives on it: whether it is comprehensive, up-to-date, etc.

Second, we suggest you visit central local offices of the majority church to attain information about the various welfare-related activities based in the diocese and in individual parishes (where applicable).

Third, we suggest that you also make contact with some representatives of minority groups and try to glean insight into different minority-group associations which may exist in your locality.

It may also be helpful to speak with representatives of the local media to ask about the nature and history of the minority groups present in the locality and about relations between minority and majority groups (you can cross-reference their responses with the information you have gathered for questions 1.f. above, on the issues currently debated in the local media).

*In this way, you will try to make primary contact with individuals from various groups, rather than beginning with 'gatekeeper'/'insider' individuals from only one group, which might give the impression of and/or possibly lead to a biased starting point.*

Beyond this, the best way to approach individuals from particular groups will vary from case to case: accordingly, you must use your best judgement and try to find methods for the mapping process most suitable to the environment in the given locality.

It is especially important that we approach individuals and groups carefully, bearing in mind that they may feel vulnerable or may have developed a suspicion of outsiders because they have been victims of journalists' or others' creation of stereotypes against them. In this context, it may be immensely valuable to develop initial contacts with people who themselves have inside information about the minority groups ('gatekeepers', or 'door-openers') and who are interested in and willing to give information and to help researchers make contacts within the minority

groups. These individuals (as all contacts) should be shown gratitude and respect.

At the same time, it is important to try to maintain a balance so as not to bond too closely with particular ‘gatekeepers’/‘door-openers’, as this may close other doors for you. Thus, gratitude to particular individuals must be balanced with establishment of new contacts with other insiders, in order to be able to secure information from a range of different angles. This is vital for quality research, but it is also important for the ‘gatekeepers’ themselves, as close association with the external researcher could potentially create problems for him or her, especially if the researcher is considered by anyone as a possible threat (for instance as an investigator from the authorities).

Please bear in mind that this process is to help us decide on which groups to focus in conducting the more in-depth research. Accordingly, even in your first contact with groups in the locality, you can begin trying to determine which groups are interesting to study from the perspective of *interaction* between the minority and majority communities (whether ‘positive’ or ‘negative’/harmonious or tense). In other words, bear in mind that we do not plan to focus on the groups themselves as much as on the *interaction* between majority and minority groups.

In this context, it is useful to be aware of different *types* of associations that could be included in the research. For example, beyond general groupings of individuals from a particular religious, ethnic or national background (e.g., the ‘Muslims of Gävle’ or the ‘Pakistani Association of Thiva’), there may also be ‘issue-specific’ groups, operating either within those larger general associations or separate from them (e.g., a youth group, a children’s play group, a ‘Mothers against Violence’ group, etc.). Attention to such associations will offer insight into the diversity within particular groupings; it is also more likely to lead us to perspectives of women and children, given that the larger general associations tend to be led by men.

Finally, it is also important to consider factors which fluctuate over time and which may change the nature of the interaction between particular groups over the course of our study. For example, broader economic factors – i.e., international, European, national and local economic conditions – which may be affecting what we see on the ground in terms of

welfare needs and practices, and which may change over the course of our research.

## 2. Research ethics

In all our contact with respondents we must abide by our *code of research ethics*:

**First**, please see ‘Research Ethics Guidelines’ on p.22 of the WaVE Researchers’ Handbook: it is the responsibility of each researcher to follow these guidelines.

**Second**, please follow the more detailed guidelines below (the following points are borrowed and translated from a text prepared by Pål Repstad):

***Sensitive information:*** One issue which is especially important when conducting research amongst ‘vulnerable’ minority groups is how we should handle controversial, ‘unpleasant’ information which might arise from the research in relation to a particular group. For instance, what if we come across instances of systematic violence or oppression internally in a group? Or of minorities within minorities which are subjected to differentiated treatment? Such data should not be ignored in the name of solidarity with the group as such, or for fear of stigmatisation by the majority. On the other hand, such data *must be* checked and re-checked, and not transmitted based on hearsay alone. Finally, such information should be placed within a context: e.g., what are the possible reasons for such a situation to arise, and how can it be dealt with constructively?

***Anonymity:*** In dealing with such delicate information, principles of anonymity are very important, especially concerning the possibility of whistle-blowing victims. It is more difficult to maintain anonymity of leaders and others in formal positions in small-to-medium sized towns: the anonymity of such individuals can hardly be secured when the names of the towns are presented in the reports. Meanwhile, people in public positions do not have the same right to anonymity concerning matters of work. Accordingly, we should be careful not to promise anonymity where we cannot guarantee it. At the same time, we need not use people’s names in our reports: the occupations or positions of individuals are important, not their names.

***Offering written summaries for review:*** We should think carefully about whether we will promise informants the opportunity to read the written summary or minutes from their interview. This can be useful and give additional information. However, it is quite time-consuming, and there is always a risk of second-thought tactical changes. There is no ethical duty to offer this service to informants, and it should be considered in each case. There is, however, an ethical duty to keep our promises, once given.

### **Part C: Suggestions for classification of the material**

**Categories:** Classification of various groups may be quite complicated: some groups may seem to you to be defined primarily by their ethnicity, whilst they may claim first and foremost a religious group identification. Thus we suggest that you present the results of the majority/minority mapping process bearing in mind the following distinctions (and presenting statistics accordingly, *where possible*):

**1. Citizenship:** what is the breakdown of percentages of citizenship in the entire locality (what percentage of the population holds citizenship of the country in which they live and, for the rest, what other national citizenships do they hold?)

**2. Ethnicity:** what ethnicities are represented in the locality? (again, please present figure where possible)

**3. Religion:** what is the breakdown of percentages of religious affiliation in the locality (what percentage is considered to be members of the majority church [where applicable]; what percentage claims a different religious affiliation, and what is the breakdown of different faiths/denominations?)

**4. Autochthonous or immigrant:** are the particular minority groups present in the locality 'old'/native to the locality, or are they immigrant groups?

**5. Gender:** what is the gender compositions of the group (percentage of male and female members); what is the gender composition of the group leadership?

**6. Generation:** if members of an immigrant group, are they first, second, third, etc. generation immigrants (or a mixture: how many generations of immigrants present in a particular community?)

*Please note:* We must be specific in explaining our definitions of ‘immigrant’. Does ‘immigrant’ refer to someone born abroad, or also further generations? Also, be careful with the term ‘national minority’, if it is used in your locality: are these self-declared minorities, or is this a title conferred on them by the authorities? If presenting statistics, what do these figures relate to: a census, or estimations? And finally, in cases where you have both ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ data, please present both, but with some explanation of the source.

**Some Typologies:** This list is to help in our presentation of the results: it is not exhaustive.

1. Is the local welfare system a universal system – a centralised structure for provision of all basic needs – or a diverse system of several groups tending to different types of needs? Or would you describe it otherwise?
2. Is it a universal system for all, or means-tested (i.e. providing help only to those who can demonstrate need), or something in between?
3. What is the division of labour between private and public sectors, in the domain of welfare?

*This last typology is more appropriate for the second stage of the fieldwork:*

4. Can we detect differences between secular versus religious welfare providers in terms of a sensitivity to receivers’ religious profile and b. sensitivity to receivers’ needs? (note: ‘sensitivity’ here does not include a moral judgement but rather a value-free consideration of whether and the extent to which these factors are taken into consideration).

*Deliverable 5:*

### **Guidelines for the collection of material**

Given the diversity of cultures and contexts included in the WaVE project, the methods for the collection of material will necessarily be varied, in accordance with what may be most appropriate and

most effective way in a given context of grasping WaVE's objectives. Thus, the following guidelines entail a range of suggestions for the researcher; but, most importantly, WaVE's central concepts and objective must be born in mind (see D3, A).

**The guidelines for the collection of material consist of four parts:**

- A. Selecting the sample
- B. Suggestions for the data collection
- C. Indicators for the presentation of the material

**A. Selecting the sample**

Based on the results of the preliminary mapping conducted in each case study, we have agreed that the best way to fulfil WaVE's objectives is to design our in-depth research based upon what groups, issues, phenomena, etc., help us to fulfil those objective most effectively (and efficiently: e.g., other factors to take into consideration are practicality, access, time resources, etc.). Thus, the Methodology WP leaders will not suggest that we conduct in-depth research with particular groups, or on particular issues. Instead, junior researchers, together with the senior scholars, should take decisions that are most appropriate for the local context, and they should be able to *justify their decisions* with reference to WaVE's objectives.

Examples of selection criteria:

The best way to get to the WaVE objectives will vary from case to case and, accordingly, cannot be prescribed. However, it may be helpful to consider some examples.

E.G., In order to grasp values which may lead to minority-majority conflict or cohesion in the welfare domain, one may choose to focus on the concept of pluralism as evinced in the field of education (how are pluralistic measure pursued and received by the local minority and majority communities?). Or, for example, one may choose to shed light on mechanisms which lead to social cohesion or tension: e.g., a community centre focused explicitly on providing services to women of different ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds, together in the same space (what effect does this have on tension or cohesion between various groups?)

Size of the sample:

It is suggested that we follow the ‘principle of saturation’ in deciding when to stop collecting material: when you start hearing the same information being repeated most of the time, it is probably wise to stop. The number of informants required will depend upon the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the case: If the field is homogeneous, fewer informants are needed than if there is a multitude of experiences, stories and points of view.

## **B. Suggestions for the data collection**

### *Preparation for the field*

1. Before embarking on the fieldwork, it may be useful to make a note of any expectations we may have as researcher (in terms of the research results), so that we may be aware of possible biases/prejudices we may have, and so that we can track any changes in these. (Making your own list of hypotheses may be helpful).

2. It may also be useful to prepare a short, informal text with which to introduce yourself and the project to your potential respondents. (In some cases, the WaVE brochure can be used; in others, a shorter and less formal text may be appropriate; and in yet others, only verbal communication will be the best approach). In any case, we should be prepared to point out our independence from local, national and EU authorities, so as to avoid scepticism as well as unrealistic hope for help and immediate results in terms of improved conditions of life.

### *Planning the in-depth research*

1. Most effective for our purposes would be to begin with observation of practices in a process of interaction with the groups and actors (e.g., if possible and appropriate, taking part in group activities), and only after this to begin conducting interviews. This will allow us to pick up on concrete examples of issues related to WaVE’s objectives, and to notice possible contradictions between discourse and practice; on this basis, we can then incorporate such concrete examples into our interview sessions.

2. We should aim to gather as much material as possible from different sources and contexts: e.g., read local media, attend local meetings and religious gatherings, etc., and also collective qualitative data from as

many sources as possible. This will allow us to develop a broader understanding of the groups and phenomena we are studying. It will also allow us to cross-reference information.

3. Related to the above: the fieldwork should be broad in scope. Rather than being limited to interview research and collection of printed material, WaVE should include such methods as biographical approaches, ethnography, participant observation, etc. Attention to place and space are important (e.g., where is a particular religious organisation situated? What are its buildings like? What does graffiti in the area convey?). The research methods employed to gather data will vary from case to case in the WaVE project: it is suggested that researchers use the methods most appropriate for the given context (and these may vary even with the locality), and those method with which the researcher is most comfortable and with which he/she may have more experience. Please seek advice from your senior scholars, from the coordination committee, and from one another as needed.

#### *In the interview context*

1. In the interview context, questions related to respondents' values should be *specific* and related to practices which are indicative of values, rather than general questions provoking general value statements. For examples, ask: 'How do you usually tackle a situation where a family is facing financial difficulties', rather than 'Do you think egalitarian values are important?'

2. One useful approach is to ask about the informant's own practice, and then go on to ask whether this is a practice typical to the group to which he or she belongs, or whether there are other practices prevailing in the group. This could lead to an explicit discussion about specific situations.

3. Researchers should ask for documentation of practices (statistics and so on) where relevant (in a careful manner, so as to not appear suspicious).

4. We should try to get a sense of individuals' system of priorities and whether they communicate a hierarchy of needs: how do people prioritise their own needs, and how do they evaluate others' needs within a system of priorities?

5. We should pay attention to any detectable differences between the attitudes and actions of individuals in positions of authority and of individuals who are members and/or employees within a particular group. (As noted in D4, we should try to meet with individuals from various levels of authority).

#### *Recording and reporting our results*

1. In reporting the results we should *describe as close to the ground as possible*. Thus, when recording the information (i.e., keeping your own notes), be specific and very descriptive. Analysis and evaluation should come at a later stage. This approach – reserving analysis and evaluation for *after* the collection of data – will help us be more sure to capture *values* rather than attitudes, as we will then have the opportunity to consider a range of statements together with practices, with the added insight of events and developments in which those statements and practices are embedded. It will also help us to avoid homogenising minority groups on the basis of one or two examples of behaviour of particular individuals within a particular group.

2. Also, we must be careful in reporting our results to distinguish ourselves and our voices from those of our respondents.

3. Guidance on the *format* for reporting our results will be given at a later stage.

#### **C. Indicators for the presentation of the material**

*For those researchers studying groups in depth, it will be helpful to take into consideration the following indicators:*

- a. size of the group membership
- b. change in size of membership over time
- c. range of ages of members
- d. gender composition of group membership
- e. education level of its leaders
- f. rates of unemployment within the group
- g. types of employment: white collar/blue collar/agricultural, etc.

## APPENDIX (to D4)

### List of Background Questions about the Locality (for the mapping process)

#### ***Reminders:***

- In addition to the information indicated below, the mapping process is also to produce responses to the following basic questions:
  - a. What groups are present in the locality? (description of ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ communities, in accordance with D4, C – Categories)
  - b. Do they provide welfare services, either internally to the group or for others as well?
  - c. How do the various groups interact? (what information are you able to gather from gatekeepers regarding any notable tension, or cohesion, within and between various groups, in the domain of welfare?)

Beyond this, the following list of questions about the locality is important background information that will help us to understand the nature of interaction between majority and minority groups in the domain of welfare.

Note that the questions below are not meant to be *interview questions*, but questions to guide your gathering of background information about the locality.

Finally, please indicate if a question is irrelevant for your particular case study, and please add similar information which is not covered by these questions but is relevant to your own study.

#### **1. Characteristics of the local welfare system**

- a. Are there any easily observable differences between the national and local level welfare systems? (*Please refer to your response to question 2.a of your ‘Overview of the national situation report’: we should place our description of the local welfare system within the context of our description of the national welfare system as a whole. Is the national system centralised or decentralised? And what is the specific relationship between the local and national levels in your particular case study?.*)
- b. If so, can you provide any information about the reasons for these differences?

c. Please present an overview of the local public welfare provision (what public services are provided?). Please quantify where possible (i.e., number of welfare offices, numbers of requests received there, etc.)

d. Are there easily observable *gaps* in the local welfare system?

e. Which challenges to the local welfare system can be foreseen in the near future (migration, demography, patterns of gender and family, etc.)?

f. Which issues concerning the organisation of welfare are currently debated? (what issues are debated in the local media?)

g. How can the roles of women and men in the welfare sector be described (include figures if available)?

h. Which issues concerning *gender in relation to welfare* are high on the agenda in public debate (e.g. lone mothers, elderly/immigrant women, burn out syndromes, trafficking, violence against women, the willingness of men to take on different types of care)?

i. Are there explicit sources of conflict related to welfare provision regarding religion, minorities or gender?

***For points e-i, try to indicate distinctions between the local and national level.***

## **2. Majority church role in the local welfare system**

a. Is there a formal (i.e., endorsed by the local public authority) role for the majority church in the local welfare system? How is this related to the role of the majority church in welfare provision at the national level? (i.e., are the local specificities determining the role of the church in this particular locality?)

b. What are the welfare-related activities of the local church? Please quantify where possible (including number of institutions/organisations, and numbers of persons seeking aid from these).

c. Are there easily-observable links between the majority church welfare activities and local minority communities?

*In general, for points a-c, please try to indicate distinctions between the church at the national and at the local level, bearing in mind the extent to*

*which the role of the church at the local level depends on the overall role of the church in society and in the welfare system specifically.*

### **3. Overview of the minority presence in the locality**

*As noted above, the mapping process is designed to help us decide how to narrow our focus and select our sample for the second stage of the research. Accordingly, for this first stage of the fieldwork, we will map quite broadly, providing a picture of **all** minority presence in the locality, regardless of size.*

- a. What minority groups are present in the locality (religious and ethnic, immigrant and autochthonous)? Please provide percentages where possible.
- b. What is the official local governmental policy in relation to these minorities and their welfare needs? Do they have the same rights and formal access to public welfare as the population at large?
- c. What have the major patterns in immigration to the locality been? (immigration primarily from certain places? during certain periods?)
- d. If there are autochthonous minority communities, can you provide some information about their development as communities in the locality?
- e. If there are immigrant minorities, are there relations between the immigrant community and the “old country” (country of origin) that are significant for our study (for instance for issues of integration)?
- f. Are the minority groups organised in denominations, associations or other organised forms? If so, describe these organisations and the type of activities with which they are generally involved.
- g. Have the minority groups established their own institutions which are either explicitly welfare-providing institutions or social organisations dealing with welfare needs?
- h. If these institutions provide welfare services, can you ascertain a. in which sectors (what kind of services do they provide?), and b. why they provide these services?
- i. Can you determine the source of these institutions’/organisations’ funding? (do they receive any state funding? Are they based on private donations?)

j. What is the content and tone of current debate on immigration (as reflected in the media)? (e.g., Is there discussion about assimilation more so than about diversity? Who are the main voices in the debates? Is there a focus on tension and conflict, or on social cohesion?)

k. Are there particular debates related to the Muslim presence in the locality? If so, what is the content and tone of these debates? (Do they focus on tension/conflict, or on social cohesion?)

l. Are there issues concerning *gender in relation to minority religions* which are on the agenda in public debate? If so, what is the content, and tone, of the debate?

m. Are there any such gender-related issues specific to Islam?

n. Have religious minority groups encountered difficulty in establishing their own places of worship?

o. Have Muslim groups faced particular difficulty in establishing mosques?

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