Welfare and Values in Europe:  
Transitions related to Religion, Minorities and Gender (WaVE)

NORWAY  
Drammen Case Study Report -- D9

Olav Helge Angell  
Kristin Briseid

Table of Contents

1. Abstract .................................................................................................................... ................2
2. Presentation of the town.................................................................................................... .......2
  2.1. Introduction ...........................................................................................................................2
  2.2. The majority and minority presence......................................................................................3
  2.3. The local welfare system.......................................................................................................4
      Role of local government .........................................................................................................4
      Role of majority church............................................................................................................6
      Role of minority associations and networks ............................................................................7
3. Context and timeframe ....................................................................................................... ......7
4. Methods and sources ......................................................................................................... .......8
5. Findings.................................................................................................................... ..............10
  5.1. Examples of co-operation and cohesion between groups ...................................................10
  5.2. Examples of tension/problem points between and within groups.......................................17
  5.3. The complexity of the issues...............................................................................................22
  5.4. A local situation in flux – changes regarding religion, minorities and gender ...................24
6. Analysis: emergent values................................................................................................... ...26
  6.1. Emergent values..................................................................................................................26
      Education................................................................................................................................27
      Family.....................................................................................................................................31
  6.2. Cohesion or conflicts based on interests rather than values? ..............................................32
7. References ...................................................................................................................33
1. Abstract

The primary focus of the in-depth study in Drammen is the 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.

2. Presentation of the town

2.1. 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).

### 2.2. 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>0-17 years</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Natl. level</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>% of total 0-17 years</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>% of total population</td>
<td>% of immigr. pop.</td>
<td>% of total pop.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic countries</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1,319</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe, exc. Turkey</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia, included Turkey</td>
<td>1,778</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>5,773</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and Middle America</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America, Oceania</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality not specified</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,670</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,549</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>10,135</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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 2 shows how persons who are not members of the majority Church are distributed among different religious and philosophical traditions.

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

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

Source: Drammen municipality: [http://www.drammen.kommune.no/](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).

2.3. 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 relationship concerning the running of schools. 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. 12f.). 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.13 and 19).

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.

### 3. 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 p. 7). 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 had been completed, and the outcome, consequently, did not influence the situation and dynamics presented in this report.

4. 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.

5. Findings

5.1. 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). 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. 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.

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 in 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). 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:

“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.
5.2. 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. Accordingly, among the interviewees the need for psychologists with a minority background was 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. 13).

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 as 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.

5.3. 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 narcotics 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 home
work, 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.

5.4. 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. Therefore, 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.

6. Analysis: emergent values

6.1. 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 insistence that gymnastics classes be organised in gender specific groups, the increased prevalence of females wearing the *hidjab* 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.

**6.2. 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.

7. References


Welfare and Values in Europe: Transitions related to Religion, Minorities and Gender (WaVE)


**Internet sources**


The Catholic Church in Drammen: [http://drammen.katolsk.no/](http://drammen.katolsk.no/).
8. Endnotes

1 The immigrant population comprises persons born abroad or with both parents born abroad.

2 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.

3 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.

4 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.

5 Kristoffersen has studied the celebration of the 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 whose from non-European national backgrounds.

6 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.

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

8 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.