

Lund University, Lund, Sweden  
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Masters Programme in Asian Studies  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
South-East Asian Track  
Winter semester 2006



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

**Masters Thesis**

**PRESSURE TO ASSIMILATE:**

**To what degree, and at what expense, do South-East Asian  
Muslims integrate into Scandinavian society?**

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**Copenhagen, Denmark, 15 May 2006**

## **Acknowledgements**

Studying at Lund University and National University of Malaysia was only possible with an extremely understanding mate and friend, in the form of my husband. Without his caring for me and our son during my studies at Lund and in Kuala Lumpur, as well as in Copenhagen, it might have been feasible, but only just. My son, Andrés Ómar, spent some of the last two years with a busy mum, but I imagine that later in life, he'll be proud of his mother. From across the pond, in New York City, my own parents, Trausti and Íris, instilled in me the desire to continuously learn and better myself. For this, I am eternally grateful.

I would like to thank various professors from the Institute of the Malay World and Civilisation (ATMA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia). Professor Wan Zawani bin Ibrahim was extremely kind and welcoming during our stay in Bangi, Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. He and his kind wife welcomed my husband and me into their family. Also from ATMA, Professor Shamsul A.B. took the time in his busy schedule to discuss Islam and Malaysia at Lund, in Copenhagen, as well as at Bangi, Malaysia, and for that, I am the wiser. I would also like to thank Professor Syed Hussain Alatas and his wife for a valuable discussion on Islam vis-à-vis the Far East and the Near East one evening in Kuala Lumpur. Many ideas flowed that evening.

At Lund University, Professor Mason C. Hoadley of the Department of East Asian Languages has been a constant source of insight into the Southeast Asian region, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia, and an expert on the Malay language. Professor Catarina Kinnvall of the Department of Political Science gave me valuable criticism on my “Pressure to Assimilate” questionnaire. Last, but not least, my thesis supervisor, Professor Neelambar Hatti of the Department of Economic History was generous with his time and advice throughout the thesis process.

## **Abstract**

A look at to what degree SE Asian Muslims (Indonesians and Malaysians) are willing to compromise their Islamic beliefs in the Nordic countries. To integrate into Danish society, how much, if any, of their religion/traditions do Indonesian/Malay Muslims give up to “be Danish”?

Through a comprehensive questionnaire sent out to Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims living in the Nordic countries, as well as group and individual interviews, it was found that nearly no Malaysians and Indonesians were interested in participating in the questionnaire. Ten agreed to be interviewed in person.

According to the findings, the majority of SE Asian Muslims is living in an isolated, parallel society within Denmark. A “Vicious Cycle of Muslim non-Assimilation” was found of which both sides, Danes and Muslims, play a part.

Since South East Asian Muslims are, what I like to call, the “Forgotten Muslims of Europe”, the literature available is sparse indeed; hence, much of my information comes from up-to-date reliable news and governmental Internet sources.

This report is an attempt to localise the existing barriers between Danes and immigrants.

## **Keywords:**

Assimilation, Integration, Indonesians, Malaysians, Muslims, South-East Asia, Islam, Denmark, Sweden, Scandinavia

## Reader guide and structure of the report

The first chapter, 'Theoretical Background of this Thesis', introduces the concepts of assimilation and integration in a new society. To give a concrete background, definitions and relevant articles written by different authors, from various sources, are used in this chapter.

The second chapter, 'Introducing the Malaysian and Indonesian Muslim Minority', is a description of the Malaysian and Indonesian Muslim minority in Scandinavia, including their actual numbers.

The third chapter is entitled: 'The "Pressure to Assimilate" Questionnaire'. In this chapter, I introduce my 'Pressure to Assimilate' Questionnaire and discuss the reasons I chose to pose certain questions in hopes of eliciting certain responses. I go through the methods used to garner responses from the Southeast Asian Muslims (specifically: Indonesians and Malaysians) living in the Nordic region and what went wrong.

The fourth chapter, 'Group Interviews and Individual Interviews', discusses the information garnered from formal and informal interviews with Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims residing in the Copenhagen area of Denmark.

The fifth chapter, 'Analysis of the Interviews', categorically analyses various criteria based on the Danish Ministry of Integration's *Seven Criteria for Successful Integration*. 'The Vicious Cycle of Muslim non-Assimilation' is introduced.

The sixth chapter, 'Discussion', is a look at problems of 'the other' in Scandinavia.

The seventh chapter, 'Conclusion', concludes the project's findings.

Appendix 1 contains the 'Pressure to Assimilate' Questionnaire in its entirety.

Appendix 2 gives 'Recommendations for Future Projects'. Here I discuss difficulties and pitfalls from which the project suffered, as well as offering ways to avoid my mistakes in future projects of a similar nature.

Appendix 3 contains the actual numbers broken down, by interviewee, in the tables used in Chapter 5.

## Abbreviations

Bahasa.....	Bahasa Indonesia/Bahasa Malaysia (Bahasa Melayu <sup>I</sup> )
DK.....	Denmark
EUMC.....	European Monitoring Centre
IS.....	Iceland <sup>II</sup>
LDC.....	Less Developed Countries
MDC.....	More Developed Countries
NO.....	Norway
OAP.....	Old Age Pensioners
PTA.....	'Pressure to Assimilate'
SE.....	Sweden
SEA.....	South East Asia / South East Asian
SU.....	Finland (Suomi <sup>III</sup> , sometimes known as FI or FIN)
UKM.....	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia)

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<sup>I</sup> Usually called Bahasa Melayu by ethnic Malays.

<sup>II</sup> Ísland is the Icelandic name for Iceland.

<sup>III</sup> Suomi is the Finnish name for Finland.

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## Introduction

Living in the west, particularly in Scandinavia, can be considered the contradictory of living in an eastern society such as Southeast Asia. This contradiction is in religion, culture, politics, education, health, gender issues, democracy, etc. and even more evident in majority Muslim societies such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

According to the Danish Ministry of the Interior, Danish skills and education; employment; economic independence; lack of discrimination; contact between foreigners and Danes; participation in political life; fundamental values and norms are the seven criteria used to measure successful integration of foreigners<sup>1</sup>. In addition to those criteria, I will add children as an important measure. These criteria will be used in the Analysis chapter to measure the impacts of the western culture on the Southeast Asian Muslim minority residing in Scandinavia. Because of the lack of time and resources, I will use Denmark to represent a typical Scandinavian society that pressures Southeast Asians Muslims to integrate.

The research will be carried out by 1) receiving anonymous responses to a questionnaire sent out to a random group of SEA Muslims living in any of the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, or Sweden), and 2) interviewing a random group of Southeast Asian Muslim citizens, Indonesian and Malaysian, who currently reside in Denmark, in order to find out how much they are integrated voluntarily and how much of their integration is due to pressure to assimilate.

*Why is this research significant?*

Today in Europe, one of the biggest discussions is the integration of first, second and third generation 'foreigners.' While the explosive situation in France and Belgium makes news headlines around the world, Denmark is confronting its own dilemma. One of the hottest issues in the last election was 'Integration.' The section of society most debated as to its ability to assimilate was, by far, the Muslim society. How much do 'foreigners' themselves

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<sup>1</sup> Think Tank on Integration in Denmark, 2001. Seven criteria for successful integration, found in OECD Economics Department Working Paper No. 386 *Migration and Integration of Immigrants in Denmark* (2005:21)

feel they need to integrate into a new society to be accepted? I will include a brief description of the SEA, Malaysia and Indonesia, vs. a description of Scandinavia, specifically Denmark, including a look at such issues as immigration and demographics. My research will focus on the following questions:

- How is Denmark tackling the fact that it has grown from a relatively homogeneous society to a more diverse one, post-1950s?
- Why do we hear so much about Muslims in Scandinavia and the problems that ensue, but rarely hear about SE Asians? Are they few in number? Do they better integrate themselves, or not integrate themselves at all, mingling about with their fellow countrymen?
- How important are traditions for cohesion in a country? Traditions such as “Julefrokost”<sup>1</sup>, Halloween, birthdays, Christmas, are all part and parcel of Danish society. Where do Muslims fit in here, if at all? Some of Denmark’s biggest exports are commodities forbidden to Muslims, for example: alcoholic beer and pork meat. Where does that leave them on holidays, after work functions, etc.? Is there a disadvantage for them, being Muslim?
- Is it more difficult finding jobs, making non-Indonesian friends to be accepted? Is their pressure to change, to adapt? If so, to what extent will Indonesian Muslims give up their identity? Do they take jobs that compromise their feelings on Islam. For example, jobs in restaurants where serving pork dishes, pouring wine, mixing drinks are required, can they take that job? Or in the health sector, where a ‘hjemmehjælper’ (home care provider) is required to bathe an elderly pensioner of the opposite sex, what then?

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<sup>1</sup> Literally ‘Christmas Lunch’ in Danish. Basically long lunches, usually organised by work, in the weeks before Christmas, starting early/mid December.



- How important is fear in the lives of these immigrants when it comes to their children? In Denmark, according to OECD reports (2005:18), Pakistanis and Turks<sup>1</sup> send their children “back home”. Is this possibly done to ‘Islamicise’ them? Late arrival Iraqi Muslims sometimes marry off their children to cousins in the ‘old country’ instead of allowing them to marry the locals (i.e. the Danes). When Muslim parents are confronted with images that they perceive as provocative, be they through television shows, commercials, even children’s cartoons, what do they do? When children’s friends, schoolmates, neighbours encourage “non-Islamic” behaviour, where does that leave the parents? How do they act/react?

## Objectives

The main objective is to better understand SEA Muslims, specifically Indonesians and Malaysians, and how much assimilation they go through to become accepted into Danish society.

### *Other objectives*

- To measure the degree of pressure to assimilate
- To understand the difference between assimilation and integration
- To investigate whether integration may be, in the long term, a much better solution to cohesion of immigrants with natives in a society
- To meet and interview SE Asians who are integrated
- To locate the generator of the non-assimilation problem

## Methodology

The purpose of this report is to describe how living in a western society, such as Scandinavia, can influence and/or pressure immigrants with non-western backgrounds to assimilate into the new society.

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<sup>1</sup> “Where some 80 to 90 per cent of the young people marry someone from outside the country and seek to bring them to Denmark.” (OECD Economics Department Working Papers No. 386: *Migration and Integration of Immigrants in Denmark*. Paris: 2005)

## Pressure to Assimilate

After choosing this subject, the investigation began with thinking as to what should be the main project areas. To become more enlightened with the concepts of assimilation and integration, reports and articles of relevant subjects were read. For more specific information, a questionnaire was created and personal interviews were obtained.

The target group of the report is the Muslim Southeast Asian minority, mainly Indonesians and Malays. I chose Indonesia and Malaysia as they are the largest Muslim majority countries in SEA, aside from Brunei (a small country, with little migration). The main tool used to carry out the report is a set of questions (a questionnaire entitled: 'Pressure to Assimilate'), which I prepared after an initial meeting with a large group of SEA Muslims on 19 November 2005 (See Chapter 3 for further details).

This questionnaire estimates the degree of pressure on SEA immigrants to assimilate. This pressure may come from the adopted nation's government, respondent's workplace, school and/or university, or even a husband or wife. The questionnaire is mostly multiple choice questions which the respondent answered, and then sent back to me by regular mail and e-mail. To get more well-rounded information of a more personal nature, the questionnaire was supplemented by interviews.

During the interview, two different kinds of approaches were used: 1) the informal conversation, where there were no concrete prepared questions asked, where the main point is to get the maximum amount of information; and 2) the standard open-ended interview, where the questions were written down (from the PTA Questionnaire) in order to draw out of the interviewee more specific information. Afterwards, all of the received information was analysed, and conclusions drawn.

Besides the questionnaire, informal interviews and discussions with my supervisors from both Lund University and the National University of Malaysia, the latter where I did fieldwork September and October 2005, assisted me greatly. Steinar Kvale's "InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing" (1996) gave invaluable advice on the interviewing process. Being an immigrant in Denmark myself, brainstorming with fellow immigrants was a common method to get new ideas whilst researching the project.

Because of the present situation (predicament) of Muslims in the world, and the fact that they are often viewed from a western perspective, especially after September 11, the Muslim minority, as well as non-Muslim Scandinavians, in Scandinavia should benefit from this report. This report will be one step forward to better understand Muslims in Scandinavia with Southeast Asian background.

## 1 Theoretical background of this thesis

In this chapter, concrete information (definitions, concepts, theories) is introduced in order to support my analysis chapter and to give more focus on the problem from other authors' perspectives.

The chapter is divided into five sub-chapters.

### 1.1. What is assimilation? What is integration?

#### *Definition of assimilation and integration*

According to the Oxford dictionary, assimilate means 1) *allow somebody to become part of another social group or state*, 2) *absorb (ideas, knowledge, etc) in the mind*; assimilation means 1) *process of assimilating or being assimilated*.<sup>I</sup>

Also, according to an Oxford Dictionary, integrate means 1) *combine something in such a way that it becomes fully part of something else*; 2) *cause somebody to become fully a member of the community, rather than remaining in a separate (esp racial) group*; integrated means 1) *with various parts fitting well together*; integration means 1) *integrated or being integrated*.<sup>II</sup>

In Jane Kramer's New Yorker article of 3 April 2006, cultural anthropologist Rinus Penninx, of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, at the University of Amsterdam speaks of

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<sup>I</sup> Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1989:60)

<sup>II</sup> Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1989:651-652)

"integration, not assimilation" (page 63). Maybe this is what Europeans want of the Muslim immigrants already here, or for that matter, those planning to come here.

## 1.2. Do Scandinavian societies need more immigrants?

Post WWII, immigrants started arriving as refugees<sup>1</sup> to Denmark. From 1960s to ca. 1974 workers from East Europe and Asia came in response to labour shortages. From 1985, asylum seekers arrived from the Middle East and Sri Lanka, and from 1990s refugees from Afghanistan, the Balkan area, and Somalia (OECD, 2005:11). So, is there still a need for new immigrants to fill the labour gap?

According to International Organization for Migration (IOM), in its World Immigration 2005, the answer is a resounding Yes! IOM concludes "...almost all countries in Europe are experiencing below replacement fertility rates. The pace of demographic ageing is much more accelerated. And migration plays a more prominent role for population growth than in any other region...Europe will have to compete with traditional countries of immigration." (2005:152) See Table 1 below.

2003	Natural population de/increase per 1,000 population
Denmark	1.3
Finland	1.5
Iceland	8.0
Norway	3.1
Sweden	0.6

Table 1 shows Demographic Indicators in Nordic Countries (IOM, 2003:140)<sup>II</sup>

Europeans, like the Japanese, are getting old. Here in Denmark, there is talk of raising the retirement age. This was necessary because people are living longer and women of childbearing age are having fewer children. OECD notes "the fertility rate for immigrants

<sup>I</sup> Hungarians were first in 1956 with Soviet invasion.

<sup>II</sup> <http://www.migrationinformation.org/GlobalData/countrydata/data.cfm>

from LDCs<sup>1</sup> without Danish citizenship was more than double that of the remaining population in 2001.” (2005:44) Demographers in Denmark, for example, have stated that a decrease in the unemployment rate of new immigrants would greatly increase the amount of money in the till to provide for those that have retired, or will retire.

Muslim women of childbearing age in Scandinavia are, however, having more children than their European Christian counterparts. Muslim women tend to marry younger and therefore have the possibility of having more children. According to the OECD, Danish women marry, for the first time, at 31, whilst Turkish women married at 19, Pakistanis and Ex-Yugoslavs at around 22 (2005:30). Muslim women may also have a familial network to assist them in child rearing.

At the same time, statistically, the majority of immigrants to Europe, are in fact Muslim. With continuing wars in the Muslim world, as well as the possibility of greater economic opportunity in Scandinavia, the movement of workers from countries where Islam is the majority religion will continue.

### **1.3. Is assimilation in a new society about denying the original identity?**

Learning about a new culture does not necessarily mean forgetting about the ‘other’ culture. Maybe the Finnish governmental brochure on integration of new immigrants to Finland, sums up assimilation best: “Integration does not solely mean the adoption of Finnish customs. One’s own language and culture, previous studies and work experience are remarkable assets that should be put to use also after moving to another country.”<sup>II</sup>

Faten Aggad, of the University of Pretoria, contends: “Assimilating does not necessitate abandoning one’s heritage!...assimilation is a process in which immigrants themselves engage socially in order to integrate into European societies, put aside uncommon factors in their

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<sup>I</sup> Versus MDCs (United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and all European countries).

<sup>II</sup> [www.mol.fi/mol/fi/99\\_pdf/fi/04\\_maahanmuutto/07\\_aineistot\\_kirjasto/01\\_esitteet/kotou/kotou\\_eng.pdf](http://www.mol.fi/mol/fi/99_pdf/fi/04_maahanmuutto/07_aineistot_kirjasto/01_esitteet/kotou/kotou_eng.pdf)

interaction with the original population, focus on shared values and attempt to adapt to European ideals without compromising their culture. It is important for both sides to define their roles; it is crucial for immigrants to understand that in order to assimilate it is important not to impose one's culture and religious practices on others. At the same time the process would not be complete without mutual respect, including the respect of religious and cultural practices by the 'hosts'.”<sup>I</sup>

The Swedish government notes in its Integration Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that “the mother tongue is important if a child or young person is to be able to develop his/her cultural identity and enjoy successful schooling.”<sup>II</sup>

Denmark, however, sees bilingual education differently. In the OECD Report on Migration and Integration of Immigrants in Denmark, “Given the lack of solid evidence demonstrating a strong role for mother-tongue education in improving educational attainment or assisting economic integration, and the weak Danish skills of immigrants, it seems reasonable to ask whether bilingual education might be retarding the integration process.” (2005:33)<sup>III</sup> Similarly “A new chance for everyone – the Danish Government's integration plan” is sadly lacking any clear proposals.<sup>IV</sup>

#### 1.4. What are the rules for assimilation?

The Danish Ministry of the Interior believes that the following points are necessary for successfully integrating foreigners in the Danish society: Danish skills and education; employment; economic independence; lack of discrimination; contact between foreigners and Danes; participation in political life; fundamental values and norms.<sup>V</sup> (2005:21)

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<sup>I</sup> From Centre for International Political Studies (CIPS), at site:  
<http://www.up.ac.za/academic/cips/E%20Update/19-2005%20Assimilating%20the%20Muslim%20Community%20in%20Europe.pdf>.

<sup>II</sup> <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/574/a/20712;jsessionid=aB3m008ZSY36>

<sup>III</sup> OECD Economics Department Working Papers No. 386: *Migration and Integration of Immigrants in Denmark*. Paris: 2005

<sup>IV</sup> <http://www.inm.dk/Index/dokumenter.asp?o=24&n=0&d=2886&s=5>

<sup>V</sup> Think Tank on Integration in Denmark, 2001. Seven criteria for successful integration, found in OECD Economics Department Working Paper No. 386 *Migration and Integration of Immigrants in Denmark*

Other important aspects of assimilation include good behaviour, being polite, respecting others' differences, and respecting the laws of the adapted country. These aspects seem obvious but many immigrants close themselves off from the natives.

Governments must take an active role in aiding new immigrants in the assimilation process. The Swedish Integration Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century furthermore states "The objectives of integration policy are: -equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all, regardless of ethnic or cultural background, -a community based on diversity, -a society characterised by mutual respect and tolerance, in which every one can take an active part, irrespective of background."<sup>1</sup>

In an interview with Konrad Pędziwiatr, Tariq Ramadan, the Swiss Muslim scholar notes: "It is becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy by stressing on the fact we don't have the same values. Thus we are leading the people to think that there is going to be a gap and a clash, and I think we have to change that by making our voices more visible in the public sphere, saying - we have common values, we are building bridges and the future is for those who are ready, not to promote the clash of civilisations. The clash of civilisations is the destruction of both; dialogue of civilizations is the enhancement of both. And this is what I really think we want, don't we?"<sup>11</sup>

### **1.5. Where do the pressures to assimilate originate?**

Pressure to assimilate may come from various places: the national government, the workplace (superiors, managers, co-workers), school and university personnel, neighbours, people in the street, etc. The media also plays a role in accurate/inaccurate information about Muslim immigrants. Its role may help/hinder relations between the natives and 'the other.'

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/574/a/20712;jsessionid=aB3m008ZSY36>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.tariqramadan.com/article.php?id\\_article=640&lang=en](http://www.tariqramadan.com/article.php?id_article=640&lang=en)

Having said that, when referring to the caricatures<sup>I</sup> in Jyllands Posten<sup>II</sup>, Benita Ferrero-Waldner<sup>III</sup> (2006) states: “The reactions to the cartoons depicting Prophet Mohammed also showed the gulf of misunderstanding between us. Around the world Muslims were outraged at what was perceived to be at best ignorance, and at worst provocation of their religion.” She goes on to say that freedom of religion is non-negotiable, as is freedom of speech, but she qualifies the latter as non-negotiable but “with responsibilities.”<sup>IV</sup>

According to an EUMC report on racism and xenophobia, Muslims are among the most vulnerable groups open to being victims in violent racist attacks. (2005: xii, 196). This adds pressure on Muslims to ‘blend in’. For especially Muslim women, this may mean not wearing the hijab<sup>V</sup>, niqab or jilbab, when they really believe it is their duty to do so.

In this project, as Malaysian and Indonesian Muslims are the target group, it is important to describe this minority group. See the next chapter.

## 2 Introducing the Malaysian and Indonesian Muslim minority

A background on the Southeast Asian ethnic minority in Scandinavia must begin with the actual numbers of Malaysians and Indonesians in each of the Nordic countries. See Table 2 on following page.

The dates for final information vary and each of the latest dates are acknowledged and specified.

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<sup>I</sup> First appearing in September 2005, the caricatures were reprinted in numerous newspapers around the world. Demonstrations and boycotts of Denmark and Danish goods followed. Only recently, in April and May 2006, have the boycotts been eased in most parts of the Islamic world.

<sup>II</sup> A major Danish daily newspaper.

<sup>III</sup> European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy speaking at the Plenary Session: Dialogue of Culture – clash of civilizations or clash of ignorance?, Brussels, 27 March 2006

<sup>IV</sup> <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/06/198>

<sup>V</sup> Various headgear for women: 1) hijab covers the hair, sometimes hair, neck and bosom; 2) niqab covers the whole head only revealing the eyes; 3) jilbab covers all parts of the woman: the head completely with only a sheer cloth to see through and the hands are gloved.



## Pressure to Assimilate

	Indonesia	Malaysia	Total percentage of foreigners
2003, Denmark	292 (0.1%)	171 (0.1%)	2003 = 4.9%
2002, Finland	126 (0.1%)	156 (0.2%)	2002 = 2.0%
2005, Iceland	16*	16*	2005 = 4.8%
2001, Norway	55 (0.2%)	12*	2002 = 4.1%
2001, Sweden	507 (0.1%)	747 (0.2%)	2002 = 5.3%

Table 2 shows current numbers and percentages of Indonesians and Malaysians in each of the Nordic countries as well as their total percentage of foreigners.<sup>1</sup> \*Indicates percentage negligible.

The previous table of Indonesians and Malaysians does not express their religion. Since Indonesians and Malaysians are not exclusively Muslim, it is impossible to tell whether these emigrants are in fact Muslim immigrants. Likewise, looking at the total percentage of foreigners, it is impossible to tell which of these are Muslim. There exist approximations of the numbers of Muslims within the overall populations in the respective Nordic countries. But these numbers are inconsistent and really scientific guesswork because for example, not all Iraqis are Muslim, not all Bosnians are Muslim, and at the same time, there exists a small amount of conversion to Islam which may not be recorded officially.

It is important to have a look at the total percentage of foreigners, seen in the last column of Table 2 on the previous page, for each of the respective Nordic nations because the percentages could be an indicator of the openness of the society. With the exception of Finland with 2%, the other four were roughly between 4 and 5 %. The total percentage of foreigners is, in fact, deceiving because foreigners that obtain Nordic citizenship are understandably no longer considered foreigners.

After identifying the target group, Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims, it is important to discuss the method used to obtain information about this group. The next chapter describes the questions used with each SE Asian individual.

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<sup>1</sup> Year provided indicates latest information available. For all the Nordic countries, save Iceland: <http://www.migrationinformation.org/GlobalData/countrydata/data.cfm>; Iceland on: [www.statice.is](http://www.statice.is)

### 3 The 'Pressure to Assimilate' Questionnaire

#### *3.1 Why I chose the questions I chose*

Section 1 of the "Pressure to Assimilate" Questionnaire (located in full in Appendix 1, at the end of this thesis) begins with important information as to who each of the respondents is, including his/her year of birth, where s/he comes from, where s/he currently lives and for how long, and his/her educational level.

Section 2 is specifically for converts to Islam. This was important because of the amount of non Muslims in both Malaysia and Indonesia. The non-majority Christians, Buddhist, and Hindus have regular contact with Muslims, so there is a possibility of intermarriage.

Section 3 questions the respondent's marital state and whether s/he has children, particularly if those children are being raised in Scandinavia. This information is vital because many in the Islamic community tend to think that if a born Muslim marries a person who converted for them (especially if this conversion was one of convenience), the born Muslim's Religiosity decreases because there is a lack of Islamic principles within the confines of the home. Likewise, it was important to know if there are young children involved. In most religions, religious people state that once you have children, you become more religious because you want the children raised in your religion.

Section 4 relates to the importance of Islam on a daily basis, including a belief in God (Allah), Judgement Day, whether Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims are forthright in telling others that they are in fact Muslim.

Section 5 goes through 'The Five Pillars of Islam' and whether or not the individual Muslim values these five fundamental aspects of Islamic belief. Formal religious activities are discussed in Section 6, including whether s/he celebrates non-Muslim holidays, how often the individual goes to a mosque or musalla (a Muslim prayer room), whether s/he avoids pork and alcohol (the two being considered Haram (forbidden) by most practising Muslims).

Furthermore, questions regarding covert and overt symbols of Islam are posed to Muslim women and Muslim men respectively.

Section 7 is entitled 'Here and now'. In it, I try to understand Indonesian or Malaysian Muslims' feelings about how they live their lives are at this moment. I include more fundamental questions about the separation of religion and state, the belief in democracy, and the belief in Shari'a (Islamic law).

More specific questions in Islam, e.g. to which Islamic sect and/or organisation the individual Indonesian/Malaysian Muslim belongs, is addressed in Section 8. Shari'a and Sunnah are addressed as well. Section 9 questions regard more social activities, vis-à-vis Scandinavians, fellow countrymen, other Muslim groups, as well as to identity issues.

Section 10 is concerned with culture and society including home life. I also venture into more political dialogue asking about the war in Iraq, the debate on Islam in Scandinavia, which political party s/he belongs, the participation of Muslims in government in general, as well as the notion of Shari'a in Scandinavia, as regards family law.

The respondent's childhood and his/her religious background, including that of his/her parents' religiosity are addressed in Section 11. Residence information was an important indicator of isolation. A Muslim living in Malmö, or Nørrebro<sup>1</sup>, is surrounded by more immigrants, like himself/herself, making him/her feel less like an outsider.

Section 12 is in some ways the core of the questionnaire. It is entitled 'Assimilation, a two-way street?' In this section, I wanted to probe the individual Muslim's efforts to 'fit in' in the Nordic society, particularly with their language use. But also how they feel Scandinavians react to them, including the sharing of holidays, respecting Islamic behaviour that Scandinavians may not understand (i.e. not drinking alcohol, not eating pork, dressing more conservatively, etc.). I also question the role the media plays in Scandinavia, as well as its possible influence on the average Scandinavian, be it positive or negative.

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<sup>1</sup> Both Malmö, a large city in Skåne, southern Sweden and Nørrebro, an area in western Copenhagen, Denmark, have high percentages of foreigners, including specifically Muslim immigrants.

Education and employment are discussed in Section 13. It is important to know if the Southeast Asian Muslim was contributing actively to Scandinavian society through work or studies. It makes sense that interacting with Scandinavians does mean good integration. I also posed the question as to whether their present employment corresponds to the level of education s/he attained. This was vital, as there are significant numbers of immigrants who are doctors, dentists, lawyers, professionals in general, driving cabs or working as street cleaners. I also wanted to ascertain whether having a Muslim name, or being Muslim, made securing employment more difficult. And since the practising Muslim avoids drinking alcohol, does not eat pork, and avoids contact with the opposite sex (those not mahram<sup>1</sup>), it was important to see which jobs were available to the individual, as well as whether his/her individual Islam, or individual interpretation of Islam hindered their possibility of taking certain employment.

Section 14 dealt with his/her life, and the lives of fellow Muslims around them, after September 11, 2001. Some of the questions in Section 13 are repeated in this section. For example, whether it is more difficult to get a job having a Muslim name. But I also wanted to know whether after the events of 11 September 2001, the respondent felt that s/he isolated herself/himself more in the Islamic community. Again post 9/11, I also queried the respondents on their beliefs regarding 'the West'. Were their feelings more positive, negative, or the same?

The ideal of freedom in a free society highlights Section 15. Freedom of speech does come up, as does the perceived media bias, and the media's perception of Islam. Do individual Indonesian and Malaysians feel they are more free in any of the Scandinavian countries than they are "back home." To what extent did the Jyllands Posten caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad offend Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims?

The last section, Section 16, only involves those who have children who have grown up in or are growing up in Scandinavia. The questions here are meant to probe the level of interference that the parents feel for their children and to recognise the perceived concern

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<sup>1</sup> In Islam, someone a Muslim woman is forbidden to marry, i.e. close family relations: a brother, an uncle, etc.

the parents feel for their children's well-being and morality in "free" Scandinavia. I also wanted to evaluate the possible favouring of the male child as opposed to the female child. Language is also an issue for the integration of the children. If the children are attending school in Scandinavia, the parents may be worried that the children do not speak very well their own native language, be it Bahasa Indonesia or Bahasa Malaysia.

The issue of integration with the child's peers is a vital one. On the one hand, most parents want nothing more than their children to assimilate into the new adopted culture. Parents want their children to be accepted in school, want their children to have friends, and want their children to fit in. This is tempered with the fact that they also want their children to be good, respected/respectful Muslim boys and girls, of whom they can be proud. so where do the parents draw the line?

At the very end of the questionnaire, an area is left empty for free expression and comments. This was in case anyone felt I left something out.

### ***3.2 Responses to the Questionnaire***

After meeting some 30-40 Indonesians and Malaysians at the Eid al-Fitr party, I started writing the main elements of the 'Pressure to Assimilate' Questionnaire. Soon after completing it in December 2005, I sent it to various e-mails: the Indonesian Embassy and the Malaysian Consulate both in Copenhagen, as well as all Indonesian and Malaysian Muslim associations in Denmark.

By January 2006, after receiving no replies at all, I widened my field to include the Indonesian and Malaysian embassies in Stockholm, and as well as all Indonesian and Malaysian Scandinavian Friendship associations in all of Sweden's major cities. By February 2006, I had sent PTA Questionnaire, along with two letters of introduction from Lund University, to back up my questionnaire, to all the addresses of anything Indonesian and Malaysia, or Muslim, in the last three Nordic countries: Finland, Iceland and Norway.

## Pressure to Assimilate

Still I only had a few responses in total. I had addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of many Indonesians and Malaysians in Denmark, so on my own initiative, I printed out 30 copies of the PTA Questionnaire and sent 30 stamped self-addressed envelopes to addresses I chose at random.

Earlier, in December 2005, I had flirted with the possibility that I might do some interviewing. In November 2005, I had received contact numbers of many Indonesian and Malaysians, so I decided to arrange interviews with ten Indonesians and Malaysians. Initially I had planned these interviews as supplements to my PTA Questionnaire. Little did I know that the interviews would be the core of my Masters thesis.

Considering all the time and effort that went into the creation of the 'Pressure to Assimilate' Questionnaire, not to mention the financial cost of mailing my PTA Questionnaire, I was to be greatly disappointed.

Of the nearly 30 e-mails I sent to the Indonesian and Malaysian embassies and consulates, as well as Indonesian and Malaysian Muslim associations, and Indonesian and Malaysian Scandinavian Friendship associations, where I presumed they would be forwarded to some 50-100 odd SE Asians. I received a paltry 13 (thirteen) responses, of which 10 were so incomplete, I could not use them. Only three were usable.

Considering the nearly 500 SE Asians in Denmark<sup>I</sup> alone, and the over 1250 SE Asians in Sweden<sup>II</sup>, three usable responses hardly qualify to draw scientific conclusions. It was fortunate I had the group and individual interviews, which follow in Chapter 4.

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<sup>I</sup> 292 Indonesians and 171 Malaysians, as of 2003, from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/GlobalData/countrydata/data.cfm>

<sup>II</sup> 507 Indonesians and 747 Malaysians, as of 2001, from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/GlobalData/countrydata/data.cfm>

## 4 Group Interviews and Individual Interviews

### 4.1. *Group interviews*

The 19th of November 2005 I had the opportunity to meet a group of Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims celebrating Eid al-Fitr<sup>1</sup> (known as Eid Al-Fitri in Bahasa) at a Danish/Indonesian home in Hillerød, located in the northern part of Zealand, Denmark. The group consisted of approximately 30 to 40 persons. As I spent many hours there, I had the opportunity to speak with nearly all of them on a semi-private level.

The great majority of the Muslims was very interested in my research. I explained the layout of my PTA Questionnaire. I asked the Muslims present which issues were most relevant to them. For me, it was basically a brainstorming session. Their comments became my questionnaire. I took notes as I went along, asking them whether I could meet them again at their convenience. The response to meeting me again was extremely positive. I weigh this response to the willingness to answer my questionnaire. (This, however, as I make clear in my previous chapter, Chapter 3, was optimistic at best).

Chapter 5 is concerned with more personal issues and anecdotes, not addressed in the questionnaire. This has become the most important part of my questionnaire: To what degree, and at what expense, do Muslims in general, Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims in specific, integrate to be accepted in Scandinavian, and in this case, Danish society?

Identity issues come up often during the 19th of November group meeting in Hillerød. On more than one occasion, the Indonesian Muslims, especially the highly educated ones, mentioned their perceived identity. More than one Indonesian Muslim asked me, whether I perceived them as Indonesian Muslims, Muslim Indonesians, Indonesians, or lastly, simply Muslims, a small but vital part of the Greater Ummah (Arabic: the Nation of Islam).

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<sup>1</sup> Three day Islamic holiday following the fasting month of Ramadan. In Arabic, Eid Al-Fitr literally means Festival of Breaking the Fast.

Therefore, since this was vital to the concept of their own perceptions as well as those of 'the other' I included this question.

## **4.2. Individual interviews**

From the initial meeting on the 19th of November 2005, I received contact numbers to be able to meet again with various Malaysians and Indonesians willing to be interviewed. The stipulation of nearly all of them was that they remain anonymous.

Over the next few months, I met with ten people: five female and five male, eight Indonesian, one half Japanese/half Indonesian and one Malay.

### **4.2.1. Yusoff and Noora**

Both Yusoff and Noora are Indonesian Muslims. They are born and raised Muslim. They currently reside in Copenhagen, as Yusoff has been sent here as an engineer working for an Indonesian company which has an affiliate in Denmark. He has been here four years so far. All of these years, his wife and three children have accompanied him. He expects to stay here a further two years. His wife, Noora, does not work outside the home; she takes care of the home, the children, and informally helps arrange parties and get-togethers with other wives of the same company. Only the two elder children are in school. Their school is an international school. The youngest is at home. No one in the home speaks Danish. Yusoff has said he has tried to learn Danish, but finds it very difficult and has very little opportunity to use it. Noora has not attempted to learn Danish nor did she feel it necessary. Yusoff and Noora have only superficial Danish acquaintances, no real Danish friends. Their two eldest children however have a mixed group of friends. The youngest child, a toddler, plays with other Indonesian toddlers.

Yusoff, both at the group meeting outside the home and at the interview at the home wore an Islamic cap<sup>I</sup>. He has a moustache but no beard. Noora wore hijab<sup>II</sup> at the group meeting

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<sup>I</sup> Sometimes called a Hajji cap.

<sup>II</sup> Headscarf, covering the hair, sometimes worn by Muslim women.



in Hillerød, as well as in the privacy of her own home. Since I am female, and there were no mahram<sup>I</sup> men around, I wondered why she kept the hijab on, but I did not ask.

I started interviewing them together but at various times because the phone rang or the children needed something, I was left speaking with only one of them.

Yusoff enjoyed Denmark, he has thought about extending the stay after the five years were over, but he hinted at the fact that it was his wife who wanted to return to Indonesia. He said she missed her family: her parents and sisters. Yusoff said that he regularly travelled between Denmark and Indonesia on business, whilst his family accompanied him once a year to Indonesia. He admitted that most of his friends were Indonesian and his work colleagues. When I asked him the negatives about Denmark, he felt that Danes drank too much and that Danish television had too much pornography.

They both shared the belief that Denmark was a very free, possibly too free for their liking. Yusoff and Noora were both concerned with their children's upbringing and since two of the three children have friends from all over the world, with various religious backgrounds and traditions, they were anxious about these friends influencing their two eldest, at impressionable ages.

Noora mentioned that she often watched cartoons with the youngest child. She had started to monitor what the child watched because she felt that Danish and Swedish television show too many commercials in between cartoons, which were consumer minded, and in bad taste. When I asked her to give an example, she mentioned seeing commercials for music CDs, which were, on the surface, geared towards children, but were full of sexual innuendo or downright sexual in nature. She mentioned one called 'hits for kids'<sup>II</sup>. Some of the songs she mentioned had provocative titles. This aside, she liked Denmark and said Danes were very kind. She mentioned she had no negative episodes regarding her hijab but knew some Muslim women had had problems. Since most of her friends were stay at home mothers, they felt no discrimination in the workplace.

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<sup>I</sup> In Islam, someone a Muslim woman is forbidden to marry, i.e. close family relations: a brother, an uncle, etc.

<sup>II</sup> It's a music CD, sold in Denmark, geared to children.

#### 4.2.2. Ani and Bachir

Ani is the only Malaysian I met. She came to Denmark some 20 years ago as an au pair, working for a well-to-do Malaysian family. One day, a young Indonesian man, Bachir, working for a small Indonesian company in Copenhagen, came to visit the home, and when Ani opened the door, it was love at first sight for both of them. Ani and Bachir decided to make Denmark their home. They both speak Danish and English, as well as Bahasa Indonesia/Malaysia. They have one son, now a teenager. Ani does odd jobs: some catering jobs here and there as well as some translation work. Bachir works as low-level clerk for the Danish government.

In both of our meetings, the group meeting and the private one, Ani and Bachir struck me as a very happy content couple. They regularly go back to Malaysia and Indonesia, mostly to visit family, but also because they both hate the Danish winter. Ani is usually gone two to three months: December, January and part of February, while Bachir can only be gone for one month: app. late December to late January. Their son often, but not always, accompanies them. They were building a house in Malaysia where they plan to retire to in a few years. It is very unsure whether their son will join them.

Ani has said she had no problems being in Denmark. Actually, she felt like she was in Malaysia. When I asked her why, she simply stated all of friends were Malays or Indonesians, all the food she ate was Malay, and except for the cold Danish winters, she could be in Malaysia. She says life in Malaysia is now nearly as comfortable as here in Denmark. Whenever she travels to Malaysia, she sees changes for the better.

Bachir enjoys his job and says very rarely does he personally feel any form of discrimination. He does however admit that he does not advertise the fact that he is Muslim. It must be said that Bachir really looks Japanese, and he himself says he is often mistaken for Japanese. Before September 11, 2001, he says Islam was very rarely a topic at lunch. (He eats lunch with his co-workers at a group lunch area.) Back then, it was very easy to keep his religion to himself. Many of his co-workers barely knew where Indonesia was and certainly not that it was the largest Islamic nation with the largest Islamic majority in the world.

Then, as now, if he was offered pork, he would merely state he did not eat pork meat. Sometimes he was asked, 'why?' Nearly always, he stated he simply did not like the taste. As for alcohol, whenever it was offered, he simply said he would have a drink later. If the same person asked him again later, he just said he already had a drink. Sometimes he said he was driving his car later, and did not feel comfortable drinking alcohol. In this way, he has kept his religion to himself. He vehemently, albeit good naturedly, stressed to me that his religion was his business.

Ani never wore hijab. She also felt her religion was her business. Conversely, Ani, when asked, did say she was Muslim, not a radical or fundamentalist Muslim, but a believing Muslim. In Ani's interactions with Danes, whether as a caterer, interpreter or translator, her clients nearly always knew, or presumed, she was Muslim.

After 9-11, Bachir said Islam was often the topic of conversation during the lunches at work. Since very few know he is Muslim, people say exactly what they feel. Nearly all of what is said is negative, he says. Many of the things he has heard have upset him and hurt him, making him even more sure that not telling his co-workers that he was Muslim was for the best. He does understand some of their anger against Muslims and what they perceive Islam to be, but he does admit to be saddened because his vision of Islam is so beautiful, so far away from the events he sees on TV, and the comments of his co-workers.

Both Ani and Bachir were not happy with their son having girlfriends. But they felt this was something that 1) they could do nothing about and 2) was none of their business. They both hoped their son would marry a Malay or an Indonesian, but then they corrected themselves and said, really, as long as she's a good girl, Muslim or Christian, Malay, Indonesian or Scandinavian, they would be happy. Even when they retire in Malaysia, they plan to regularly visit Denmark.

#### **4.2.3. Wan**

Wan is half Japanese and half Indonesian. He is in his mid 50's and lives in the centre of Copenhagen. He did not want to talk much at the Eid Al-Fitr party, not wanting the others

to hear his opinions. Through much convincing on my part, he finally agreed to be interviewed at his flat.

He worked as a private driver of a top SEA businessperson. He had lived in Denmark for some years, but spoke little Danish. Our whole conversation was in English. He had been married in Indonesia but was now divorced, no children. Of his own accord, he mentioned he was not really close to anyone at the party. He was a member of the Indonesian Association but only came to some of its functions. Otherwise, he avoided Muslims in general. When I asked why, he answered that Muslims were always judging other Muslims. If he wanted an alcoholic drink, he did not want to hear any comments. It was no one's business but his own. He liked Danes, found them very relaxed. I asked him if he told people he was Muslim, he said no, why should he.

With everything that had been going on in the world, from New York City to Bali, Madrid to London, he was fed up trying to explain to others what Islam was and wasn't. I asked him if he could be more specific. He said, in his opinion, Islam was a peaceful religion, not a violent religion. Islam was also, he continued a private religion, between him and Allah<sup>1</sup>. Muslims should not be judging other Muslims or even, he stated, non-Muslims.

Growing up, he had been quite religious (praying five times a day and fasting for Ramadan<sup>II</sup>), but slowly, after living here for some years, he had become more lax in his religious duties. He went to Danish get-togethers and had superficial Danish friends. He said Danes kept a distance from foreigners, i.e. foreigners could only get so close to Danes, because Danes were closest with fellow Danes.

#### 4.2.4. Aziz

Aziz is an Indonesian in his late 40's. He is unmarried, with no children, and works as a consultant at an Asian company. He has been here for two years, and can stay here for longer if he so desires. He wants to learn Danish but is so busy at his job. He asked me a lot

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<sup>1</sup> Allah is Arabic for God.

<sup>II</sup> Two of the Five Pillars of Islam. The other three are giving alms to the needy (called Zakat), pilgrimage to Mecca (called Hajj) once in a lifetime, if health and finances allow, and taking the Shahada, a Muslim oath stating that you believe in Allah and the Prophet Muhammad.

of questions about my research, so I felt he would be willing to be interviewed alone. He was.

I came to visit him at his flat in the centre of town. He liked Denmark and he is willing to stay there. He liked Danes, saying they were very open people. He said he has many Danish business contacts and they always include him in their parties, birthdays, and celebrations, etc. I asked about Christmas. He said no, Danes only want family around for religious celebrations like Christmas.

He admires the Scandinavians and their way of life. Aziz said that in some ways their way of life was superior to the Indonesian way of life. I asked how. He felt Scandinavians were hard working and he enjoyed the higher standard of living here. He does not talk politics or religion with any of his Danish colleagues. In general, they never discuss religion or politics with him. His colleagues know he's Muslim: he doesn't hide this. Some have, however, made comments like: Why don't you eat this pork meat? It tastes really good. It won't kill you! Look at me, I'm very healthy. Those that make the comments continue making the comments even after he politely says no, thank you. But these people are the exception.

Islam is still very important in his life. Aziz does want to marry, and really wants to have children. He doesn't imagine marrying a non-Muslim, even though he is allowed to according to his religion. When I asked, why not marry a Scandinavian Christian? He said, he was afraid she would be too free in her behaviour. Aziz also said that if he got married he'd want to have children and for the sake of the children's upbringing, only a religious Muslim woman would do. I asked, what about a Scandinavian convert, would that be acceptable? He said, yes, as long as she worn hijab, because hijab, he felt, was an excellent judge of a woman's religious strength and her moral character. Muslim women, he said, who did not wear hijab may dress too openly, and this was not to his liking.

#### **4.2.5. Lina**

Lina is a very vibrant Indonesian woman in her early 40's. She had been married to a Danish man, and after their divorce, she had stayed on in Denmark. She spoke Danish well enough, but preferred to converse in English or Bahasa Indonesia. My Bahasa was not that good I

told her! So English it was, albeit peppered with Danish expressions when she did not know the English equivalent. She was very willing to meet again more privately. Lina lives in an apartment in western Copenhagen with her two children. The children see the father somewhat regularly.

When Lina was married, the language at home was a Danish/English mix, since her husband never learnt any Bahasa. She feels it is too late to teach them Indonesian now. The children speak Danish to their father. She works as a home care provider<sup>1</sup> in her area. I was a little surprised. Many Muslim women stay away from certain jobs, and home-care provider has generally been portrayed in the media as one of them. I wondered whether her hijab was any hindrance to her job duties. No, in general, she was willing to do any of the duties her job entailed: preparing breakfast or lunch for older residents, cleaning their homes, tidying up, doing laundry, buying groceries, etc., various jobs that OAP need done.

Danes, Lina said, were very fair. The only job, she would not do, was wash and bathe older men. She felt bathing someone of the opposite sex was uncomfortable for her and demeaning for the old man. She admitted some men specifically requested females to wash them, but this she felt was rude, and often her employer sent whoever was available, male or female. Having said that, her employer knew her one stipulation, as from day one of her employment she had been honest with her boss. Her boss, noticing her hijab, had in fact asked her whether there were any religious obstacles to her completing the job as necessary. Lina was happy for the job and her financial independence from her husband.

She had mostly Muslim friends, Indonesian or Danish converts to Islam. At work, she was well-liked and was always included in job gatherings, but she herself chose not to attend. When I asked why, she said, in general, she did not really feel completely comfortable with non-Muslims. How, I enquired. Lina said so many subjects that were important for her and her children, were not relevant for non-Muslims. Issues like pre-marital sex, homosexuality, and promiscuity were, she felt, part of the Danish everyday life, but these behaviours were Haram<sup>II</sup> in her view. Therefore, she kept her children in an Islamic school, ensuring they

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<sup>1</sup> In Danish called 'hjemmehjælper'.

<sup>II</sup> Haram is Arabic for forbidden, not allowed, avoided.

only had Muslim friends. Interaction with Danish children might cause problems; problems she did not want to deal with alone.

#### 4.2.6. Hamza

Hamza is a man in his 40's living in greater Copenhagen. I first met him at the Eid Al-Fitr party in November 2005. Immediately, he was very talkative and his English was quite good. Since everyone at the party knew each other, he was kind enough to introduce himself. The hostess of the party had also told those interested about my research. Hamza was from Indonesia and very active in teaching Islam here in Denmark, after having studied at a Saudi Arabian college in Indonesia.

Aside from graphic design work on and off, he was also responsible for Web design of an Indonesian site originating here in Denmark. He was agreeable to being interviewed again, so we did meet up again. We met at a café in Copenhagen to better discuss his experiences in Denmark.

Once we started talking, he expressed his belief that while it was nice to live in the West (i.e. Denmark), he felt the differences between Indonesia and Denmark were huge. He was critical of the Indonesian government. Hamza felt more free in Denmark to voice his opposition to the government than in Indonesia. He said all people are treated better here than in Indonesia. He did, however, wish Danes would better understand Islam to avoid common misunderstandings. I then asked for examples. He mentioned cutting the hand for stealing and stoning of adulterers. These were necessary in any society to avoid problems. When I asked if maybe he had been influenced by Wahhabi<sup>1</sup> Islam, he admitted that maybe, his views had become more strict after the Saudi Arabian college but he did feel this evolution was the correct one.

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<sup>1</sup> A strict form of Islam, founded by Wahhabi in Saudi Arabia in the 19th century. In the past, largely restricted to the Arabian Peninsula; more recently, exported to other parts of the world, mostly due to Saudi funding of religious schools, financing of mosques and the giving away free Qur'ans, whose translations fit the Wahhabi school of Islam.

#### 4.2.7. Ida

Ida is an Indonesian woman in her late-30's. Initially she came to Denmark to visit a friend who had married a Dane, never knowing that she would also meet a Dane, fall in love and get married. She has three children by her husband, varying in age from 5 to 16. She doesn't wear hijab, but admitted that whenever she went back home, she put on the hijab. She feels hijab is more of a tradition than truly Islamic. She states she cannot see what all the commotion is about, especially since she cannot find anywhere in the Qur'an that she should cover her hair, bosom yes, but hair, no. She believes in Islam and her husband, whilst initially converting just to marry her, has, over the years, become a practising Muslim himself.

They enjoy a good relationship. As her husband makes good money, Ida stays at home with the children. She speaks wonderful Danish so our meeting took place in Danish. I asked her whether she had any dislikes about the Danish society. She had to think a bit. Finally, she said that both she and her husband felt there was much too much pornography in Denmark. It was everywhere she said. While waiting for the bus, there were ads by H&M<sup>I</sup> in which the women left little to the imagination, i.e. the women were nearly nude. Also, on Danish television, even in the middle of the day, there were naked people. This still shocked her. She and her husband both felt it was even worse now than before. I said, well, Denmark is, in many ways, a free society. She said, yes, she knew, but what about her freedom. Should she not have the right *not* to see naked bodies in the course of her day? Even entering a kiosk to buy ice cream could be dangerous, as porno magazines were put so low on the racks that her youngest could see them. These things bothered her. She even pulled out a magazine called 'Nyt om boligen'<sup>II</sup> It has sms logos on the back. Only yesterday, she explained, she came in and found her daughter looking at the different pictures: Tweety, Spiderman, and...naked women! This was ridiculous, she thought. This pornography had come in through her mailbox and she had not noticed it before. Now she and her husband would be more vigilant.

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<sup>I</sup> Swedish clothing shop in Denmark.

<sup>II</sup> Roughly translated from Danish as 'What's new at home'. Distributed free of charge to all homes in DK.



On another subject, she had mentioned she has had Danish citizenship for some years now. When I asked her whether she was politically active, she said no, she did not get involved with politics, not in Indonesia nor here. Asked her whether she voted in any of the local or national elections, and she did not. She went as far as to say none of her Indonesian friends voted, but she admitted she knew for a fact that many of the parents of her children's friends and her own husband voted in nearly every election.

#### 4.2.8. Ara

Ara is a young Indonesian woman in her late 20's. She is married to a Dane and speaks Danish well. She only stayed at the Eid party for a little while, but I got her details and contacted her. She immediately invited me over to her house for dinner. I gladly accepted.

She and her husband do not have children yet, but hope to once they are more settled. She worked at an Indonesian travel agency, catering to Danes who want to travel to Indonesia. She met her husband in Indonesia some years ago and they immediately wanted to get married. This was a problem for Ara because her parents were religious Muslims. She told her parents that she had met a boy she likes and *Ilhamdulillah*<sup>I</sup>, he was a convert to Islam! She was able to convince her parents that her boyfriend really was Muslim by buying him a Qur'an and inviting him home to meet the parents. Since her friend did not speak Bahasa and her parents only spoke Bahasa, he came over and repeated the *Shadada*<sup>II</sup>, covering his right hand over the Qur'an. This convinced her parents and they got married!

She travels regularly to Indonesia and likes her life. She thinks Danes are very straight people even if they are not Muslim. She said most average Danes are more honest than many Imams<sup>III</sup> she knows. I asked whether she went regularly to visit any Imams, she admitted no, she had not, but many of her friends had and were very disappointed. Ara did not want anyone judging her and only moderate Muslims could be her friends. She did not want anyone telling her what she could or could not do. She said many Muslims use Islam when it

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<sup>I</sup> Since Arabic is the language of the Holy Qur'an, many Arabic words are used in Bahasa. *Ilhamdulillah* basically means "Thank God!"

<sup>II</sup> *Shahada*, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, is a Muslim oath stating that you believe in Allah and the Prophet Muhammad, i.e. you are Muslim.

<sup>III</sup> An Islamic spiritual advisor.

suits them. She knows she cannot technically be married to a non-Muslim man<sup>I</sup>, but she loves him and he does not believe in anything. Her husband is an atheist.

The only time she is afraid they may have problems is if, and when, they have children. She does believe in Allah, the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an but wants to enjoy this life, not think too much about Yom id-Din.<sup>II</sup> Some of her Indonesian Muslim girlfriends have married Danes (some of the men converted, some did not) and then had children. Once the children were born, more conflicts arose. Ara confessed to be anxious about this.

She does have Danish friends as well as Indonesian. She feels completely accepted into Danish society (she acknowledges having a Danish husband helps enormously) and while sympathetic to Muslims' problems with integration in Scandinavia, she feels it is also up to the immigrants themselves to make the effort to be accepted. If this effort means some form of assimilation, so be it.

In the previous sub chapter 4.2, individual interviews were relayed and the analysis of these interviews follows in the next chapter.

## 5 Analysis of the Interviews

As it was mentioned previously in the introduction, I will use the Think Tank of Integration's seven criteria<sup>III</sup> (with variation) as the main tools to measure the degree of assimilation and integration: 1) Danish skills and education; 2) employment and economic independence; 3) lack of discrimination; 4) participation in political life; 5) fundamental values and norms; 6) contact between foreigners and Danes and 7) children.<sup>IV</sup> Each criterion is divided into number of categories which describes each of the interviewees. For example, the fact that Ara has no children means that she may feel less pressure to assimilate because she does not have to think about raising her child according to western values.

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<sup>I</sup> As stated earlier, according to the Qur'an, a Muslim woman can only marry a Muslim man.

<sup>II</sup> Arabic for Judgement Day, literally: Day of Faith.

<sup>III</sup> Think Tank on Integration in Denmark, 2001. Seven criteria for successful integration, found in OECD Economics Department Working Paper No. 386 *Migration and Integration of Immigrants in Denmark* (2005:21)

<sup>IV</sup> N.B. While the Think Tank of integration had employment and economic independence as two criteria, I have chosen to combine them. As I see it, employment leads to economic independence. Also, I have added children as the seventh criterion.

### 5.1. Danish skills and education

The degree of education is an important aspect to identify the mental capacity of an individual to adapt to a new situation. In this report, the new situation is living in a radically different culture. In general, the higher the education, the less differences between people from two different cultures and the more they share and discuss. This is to say that highly educated people are expected to be more tolerant to others by accepting them and interacting with them without trying to influence them or change them.

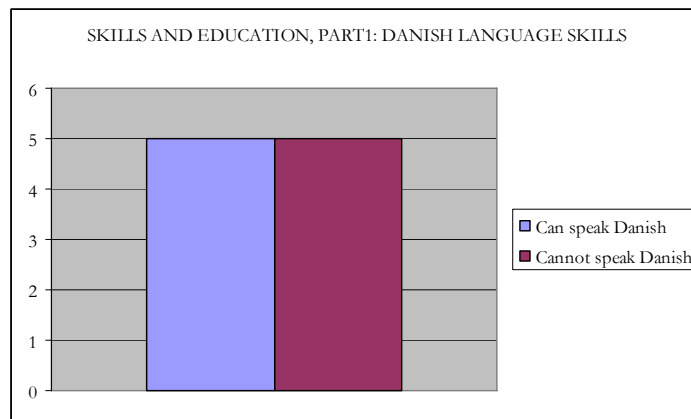


Figure 1: Danish Skills and Education, Part 1

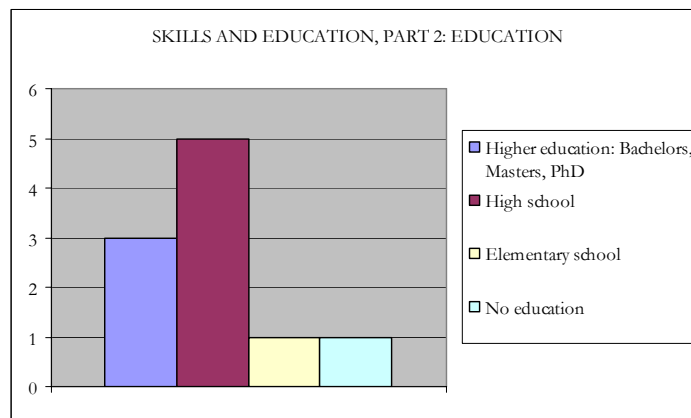


Figure 2: Danish Skills and Education, Part 2

Figure 1, above, shows the level of Danish knowledge of each of the interviewees. Language is vital to the integration of any immigrant. All those living here permanently learnt Danish. Even those here temporarily, e.g. on contract, desire to learn the language of the host country. Figure 2, above, shows the education for each interviewee. It shows that three of

the interviewees have a university degree, five have a high school diploma, one has an elementary school education and one has little or no education.

### ***5.2. Employment and economic independence***

Employment and having a job in a work environment where the individual has direct contact with Scandinavians is a very important measure which indicated that this individual has no, or negligible, problem dealing with non-SE Asians. When SE Asians prefer to work in a SE Asian organisation, it naturally means that they have less contact with Scandinavians. It may indicate they are afraid of working with non-SE Asians, do not want to have contact with Scandinavians, or have no choice, i.e. their contact is with an Asian company. Though not necessarily, this may mean that they are not interested in interacting with Scandinavians or they are not interested in integration.

Figure 3, below, reveals that the majority is employed. Only two of the eight employed interviewees work in a Danish organisation and two are classified as unemployed (being house wives).

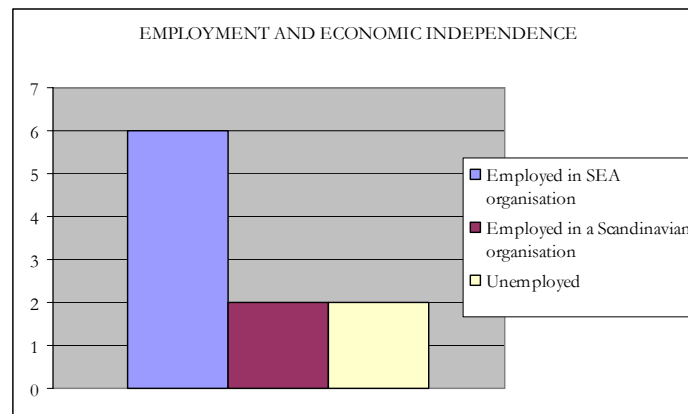


Figure 3: Employment and Economic Independence

### ***5.3. Lack of discrimination***

Figure 4, on next page, clearly shows that none of those with whom I spoke felt discrimination in the Danish society directed directly at them. Having said that, many interviewed overheard negative remarks made about Islam, the prophet Muhammad,

Muslims in general or the Muslim hijab. This does not change the fact that all interviewees felt Danes, and Scandinavians as a whole, were fair people.

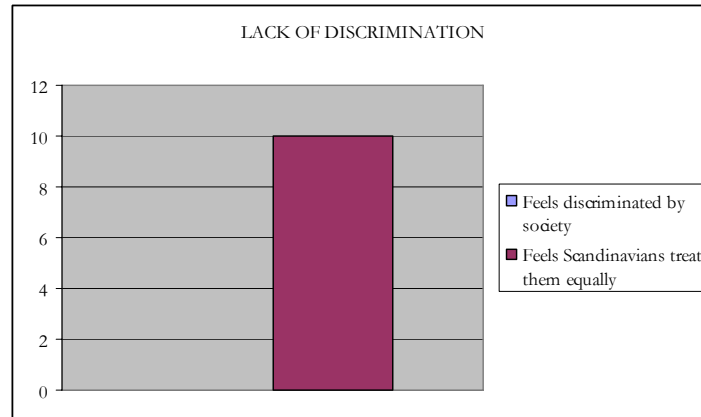


Figure 4: Lack of Discrimination

#### 5.4. Participation in political life

All of those interviewed were either Danish residents or Danish citizens. The former have the right to vote in local, municipal, elections and the latter have the right to vote on a national level, e.g. for Denmark or the European Parliament. None of the interviewees took advantage of this opportunity. (Figure 5 below) Those married to Danes were not so influenced by their Danish spouses to vote. This is a glaring example of Muslims not taking part in the democratic process. By not participating in the politics in the adapted country, Muslims limit their weight in the society in which they reside. Their political clout, albeit small, can make a difference in any election, as every vote counts.

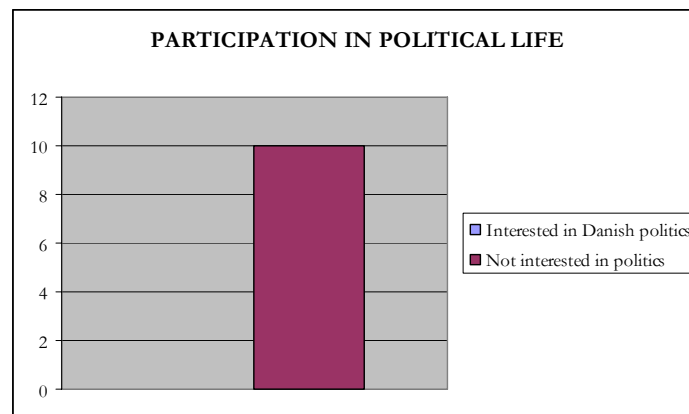


Figure 5: Participation in Political Life

### 5.5. *Fundamental values and norms*

The Muslim religion is a very important factor which identifies whether or not the SEA individual is integrated in the western society. The more religious the individual, the more isolated, in a society where Muslims are the minority, the individual becomes. The more religious the individual, the greater difficulty s/he has in dealing with Scandinavians and accepting their culture's values and norms, especially those that go against his/her religious norms, e.g. drinking alcohol. Religiosity is divided into three categories: 1) committed (very religious), 2) moderate (practicing Islam, but more free) and the lastly, 3) not committed (an atheist, born a Muslim, but who does not practice the minimum Islamic duties such as praying, fasting, etc.).

Figure 6 below shows the level of religiosity of those interviewed. Their level of religiosity directly affects their fundamental values and norms.

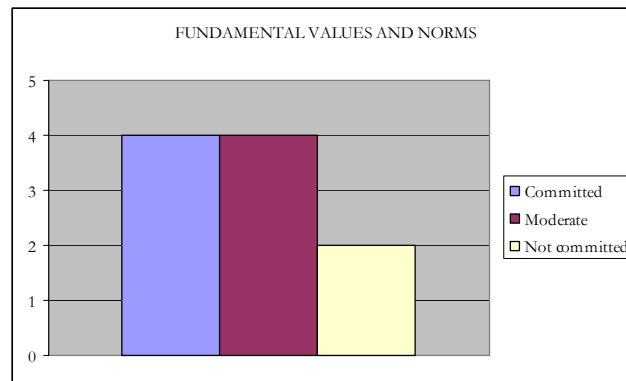


Figure 6: Fundamental Values and Norms

### 5.6. *Contact between foreigners and Danes*

Being social is a direct indication of the degree of integration for SE Asians. Mixed marriages are considered a continuous contact between two cultures and it's a very direct way to learn about the western culture and to integrate faster. Unfortunately, many mixed marriages fail when the male with the SAE background wants to dominate the relationship and exclusively apply his cultural values on the family as a whole. This creates conflict between the couple

especially regarding the raising children. Other social activities, such as participation in social activities and being open to Scandinavian society are important measures for integration as well. Figures 7 and 8 below show contact between SE Asians and Danes.

Figure 7 looks at the marital status, whilst Figure 8 looks at the willingness to participate in Danish social activities, as opposed to participation in exclusively Muslim SE Asian events (Indonesian Muslim Association, e.g.).

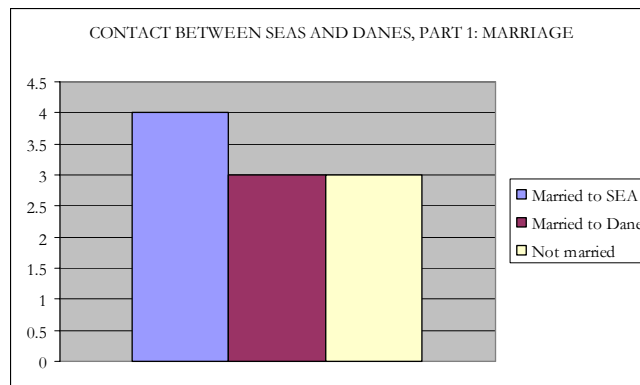


Figure 7: Contact between SE Asians and Danes, Part 1

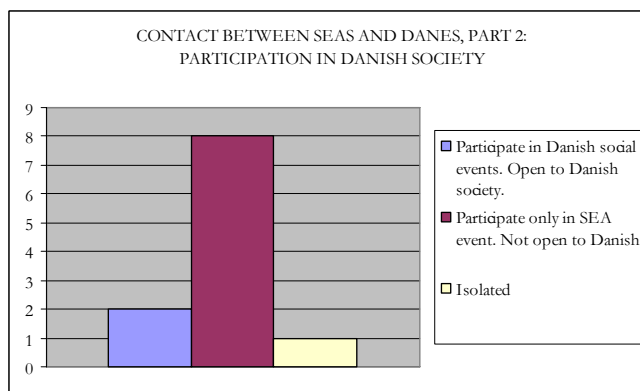


Figure 8: Contact between SE Asians and Danes, Part 2

### 5.7. Children

Raising children in a western society is very difficult for SE Asians. It might be the most difficult problem to deal with. The majority of SE Asians in Scandinavia fear the western society and consider it morally dangerous for their children. This may be because of the

freedom that westerners apply on themselves from an early age. Generally, SE Asians feel pressure to raise their children according to western values. They believe that children should be strictly controlled (not allowing them to have premarital sex, to drink alcohol, to join in parties, to go to discothèques, etc). They deal with this problem in one of three ways: 1) sending their children to their home country, 2) being very strict and not letting them have any contact with Scandinavian kids, or 3) not having kids at all.

Figure 9 shows which interviewees' children (if any) are raised in Scandinavia or in SE Asia.

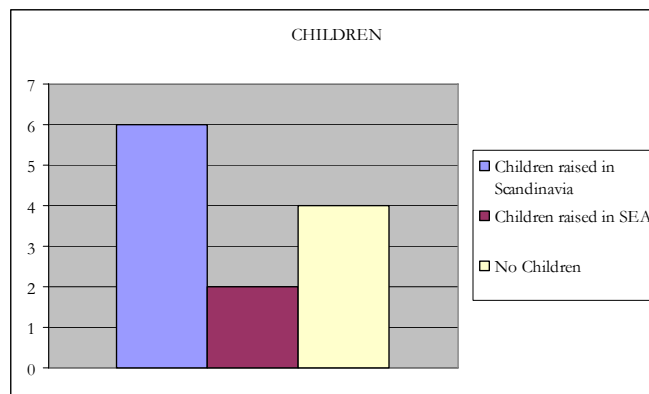


Figure 9: Children

### ***5.8. Conclusion of the analysis***

The previous criteria show that a main problem with integration is a lack of participation in Danish political life as none of the interviewees is interested in participating in any Danish elections. Another problem is the differences in fundamental values and norms, where the majority of the interviewees is religiously committed and even the moderate ones tended to be religious, especially by the standards of secular Danes. Another problem is the lack of contact between SE Asians and Danes even though some of them are married to Danes. The majority participated only in SE Asian, or Muslim, events and is not open with Danes.



To locate where the problem is generated, I have drawn the following figure, entitled ‘The Vicious Cycle of Muslim non-Assimilation’:

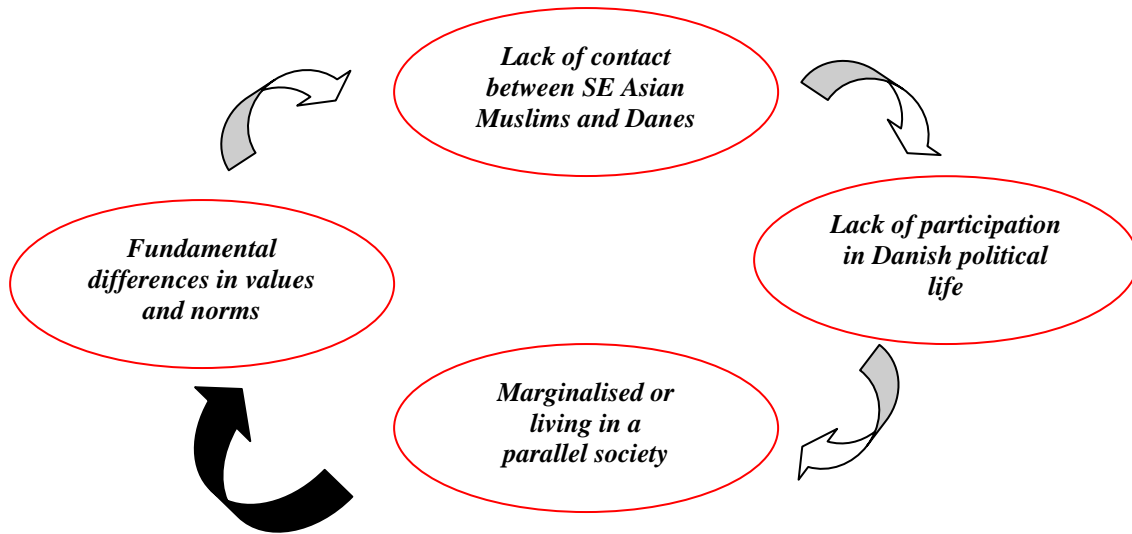


Figure 10: ‘The Vicious Cycle of Muslim non-Assimilation’

Fundamental values and norm differences can be considered the generator of the problem of integration because the bigger the gap between two different cultures and beliefs, the less they have in common and the less they have in contact. Since SE Asian Muslims are an ethnic minority in Scandinavia (usually 0.1%-0.2% of the whole population), the SE Asians stick together and are caught in their own parallel society in order to survive in a society where Danes and Christians are the majority. The differences in fundamental values and norms have created a gap between SE Asian Muslims and Danes, where Danes are afraid of dealing with SE Asians because of their “fundamentalism” and SE Asians are wary of having anything to do with Danes because of the “extreme Danish freedom”. Therefore SE Asians are generally not interested in the politics of a society where they do not feel they belong. This isolates them into living a parallel society which in turn, feeds their fundamentalism.

In order to tackle this problem, this vicious cycle must be broken where there should be more contact between SE Asians and Danes, regardless of the fundamental values and norms differences. SE Asians should accept the society in which they live and should not use their fundamental beliefs and home culture differences as an excuse for their isolation. They

should integrate themselves voluntarily without disregarding their beliefs and without waiting for the Danish society to pressure them to assimilate.

Ideally, Danes should not consider SE Asians as only guests who will leave Denmark sooner or later. They should be more accepting of 'the other' and disregard the limited way of thinking, often exemplified in ideas like "if you are not like us, you are not one of us".

All of the above conclusions can be related to the minority Muslim population (be it SE Asian, South Asian or Middle Eastern) as a whole, within the majority Christian (read: secular) Danish society.

After identifying the problem, the next chapter is a discussion about the feasibility of minimising this vicious cycle.

## 6 Discussion

It is a Catch-22 situation. Muslims feel left out, and so do not integrate. Because they do not integrate, European society excludes them, and so they feel left out. This is of course a generalisation. Many Muslims live their lives quite peacefully in their adopted countries, albeit *never* integrating themselves. They are nonetheless not a burden on the Scandinavian society. There exists the Muslim majority who lives a life on the periphery of Scandinavian society, and because they do, so do their children. Their children may feel quite lost neither belonging to the home country, be it Indonesia or Malaysia, but not either feeling fully Danish, or Scandinavian as a whole, and so never really belonging like their friends.

It is easy to blame 'the other'. This goes for both sides. It is very easy for the Scandinavians to say, well, they have it good here, but they do not they fit in. To a certain extent they are right. The old adage: *'when in Rome, do as the Romans'*, seems to be appropriate. But if integrating into Scandinavian society means, getting drunk on a weekend, going topless on the beach if you're a woman, having premarital sex whether you are a man or a woman, playing poker with some school friends, many Muslims would say no, then they don't want to integrate. So having said that, all the blame cannot be put on the Scandinavians. Muslims

need to realise that they are not in their home country. Bill Glucroft, in 'On these Muslim Streets', states "European Muslims do not necessarily have to take part in, but must accept, certain norms of their host countries that conservatives may find distasteful."<sup>I</sup>

When Southeast Asian Muslim women come to Scandinavia, they start questioning the situations from the home country as opposed to the new situation they find themselves in. Many may appreciate the newfound freedom they encounter in modern Scandinavia. In the article, 'Bravo to the Arab Media', Hassan Yassin writes "They are questioning religious edicts and want a return to the real Islamic views on women where equality is not on paper, but practiced in everyday life."<sup>II</sup>

Ida's comments about herself and her Muslim friends not voting is reiterated in Silvia Suteu's article, 'Muslim Political Participation in Western Europe'<sup>III</sup>. She states that "Their (Muslims') record so far, however, is rather disappointing...it is hard enough to get Muslims to vote." (2003:15) As Shireen Hunter, Director of the Islam Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, stresses: "...everyone shares the blame."<sup>IV</sup> (2005:10) Many Muslims simply do not get involved. Case in point, a Danish woman, named Michelle Hviid wanted to arrange a dinner for 22 April 2006 for ethnic Danes and immigrants to get together and talk.<sup>V</sup> Over 1200 Danes signed up, fewer than 400 immigrants were interested.

Peter Grier, in his July 2005 article 'A Crescent Over Europe?' quotes Bernard Lewis, who stated that "Europe would be Islamic by the end of this century." There is a genuine fear that the centuries old status quo is slowly changing. This fear is shared by the old and young equally. It is said older people take to change with more difficulty. But it is younger people also, for various reasons, who also feel anxious. Unemployed male youth of Europe may look upon immigrants as a reason for the unemployment. Young women may view Muslim

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<sup>I</sup> <http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?mode=8&sid=1&id=1311>

<sup>II</sup> <http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?mode=8&id=1312&sid=1>

<sup>III</sup> Article found at [www.euro-islam.info](http://www.euro-islam.info)

<sup>IV</sup> From *An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe* from The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. The Pew Research Center site: [www.pewforum.org](http://www.pewforum.org)

<sup>V</sup> [http://www.koncern.dk/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=251&Itemid=](http://www.koncern.dk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=251&Itemid=)

women on buses, in the street, in the public sphere, wearing hijabs<sup>1</sup>, niqabs, or jilbabs with fear. They may think, ‘What if Islamic law takes over, and I have to wear these clothes? I do not want to.’ These fears may seem unfounded, but for the people that feel them, they are genuine.

Muslims, like Lina, may feel more affinity to other Muslims than non-Muslims, so they simply avoid interacting with non-Muslim Danes, sometimes thinking Danes are a bad influence on Muslims.

“Most Muslims today are only integrating in superficial ways, and they still see themselves and are seen by Europeans as ‘the other,’” believes Mark Krikorian, Director of the Center for Immigration Studies, in the article ‘An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe’<sup>11</sup> (2005:16-17). Muslims need to stop being victims and start taking responsibility for their own actions, but only their own actions. They cannot take the burden of others’ guilt. They must also reach out to Danes and educate them on the similarities between Christianity and Islam.

## 7 Conclusions

The main objective of this report was to investigate and discuss how Muslim Indonesians and Malays are dealing with the pressure to give up their culture and values thereby adopting western values. This report offered an opportunity for Muslim Indonesians and Malaysians to express their feelings freely and anonymously via interviews and a questionnaire. The PTA Questionnaire may have had some influence on an academic and societal level, but maybe governmental research would be more effective?

Alas, the participation I encountered was minuscule at best, and their degree of interest in reducing the prejudice against foreigners (especially Muslims) in Scandinavia was at most

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<sup>1</sup> Various headgear for women: 1) hijab covers the hair, sometimes hair, neck and bosom; 2) niqab covers the whole head only revealing the eyes; 3) jilbab covers all parts of the woman: the head completely with only a sheer cloth to see through and the hands are gloved.

<sup>11</sup> From *An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe* from The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. The Pew Research Center site: [www.pewforum.org](http://www.pewforum.org).

humble. The concept of free speech and its expression has yet to be learnt by newly arrived Muslims, whether from SE Asia or South Asia or nearly any of the Middle Eastern countries.

It **must** be stressed that due to the lack of responses to the 'Pressure to Assimilate' Questionnaire, the scientific validity of my conclusions is limited.

According to the findings of this report, SE Asian Muslims tend to isolate themselves in Danish society, living parallel lives. This is proven through, among other things, their total ambivalence as far as their participation in Danish politics and Danish elections, and minimal regular contact with Danes. SE Asians do not feel discrimination directed at themselves directly; on the contrary, all those I interviewed stated Danes, and Scandinavians as a whole, were kind, fair and sympathetic. Unfortunately, the constant negative comments they overhear about their beloved religion, Islam, isolates them further within the Muslim community.

The fundamental differences in values and norms between Muslim foreigners and (typically) Christian Danes lead to a lack of regular contact between Muslims and the hosts, the Danes. The lack of communality, in their daily lives, religious festivals, views on life in general, force a kind of self-imposed marginalisation on behalf of the Muslims (be they SE Asian, South Asian or Middle Eastern) so that eventually Muslims live parallel lives with their Danish counterparts in European society. This is a vicious cycle that continues in an endless loop, until something or someone breaks this "Vicious Cycle" –Any individual who is part of the society can break this "Vicious Cycle".

In our more globalised world, maybe one day, cultural differences will mesh and the imagined barriers between the so-called 'western' culture and more traditional societies will fade to oblivion.

Now more than ever, this type of investigation is pertinent to better understand the Muslim group identity and to help in creating a solution to the integration of Muslims in Europe. In doing so, tools can be put in Muslims hands to better blend in with the natives to create a

## Pressure to Assimilate

harmonious heterogeneous society that Europe needs to become. Europeans must face the fact that Europe, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is multicultural.

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## **9 Appendix 1 'Pressure to Assimilate' Questionnaire**

The Questionnaire "Pressure to Assimilate" is included as an enclosure after the references. The reason I've chosen not to include it in the appendix is simple: the questionnaire is 14 pages long, and so a comprehensive document on its own. The Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims who chose to participate in this questionnaire were guaranteed complete anonymity by me; therefore, none of their names is included. Any details as to the participants' age, gender, profession, date and place of birth, etc. are deliberately not included.

The 'Pressure to Assimilate' Questionnaire follows.

**“Pressure to Assimilate”  
Questionnaire**

This questionnaire is anonymous, so feel free to answer all questions as best, and as honestly, as you possibly can. The questionnaire should take app. 20 minutes. Please return as soon as possible. This information will **only** be used in connexion with my Masters in Asian Studies ([www.ace.lu.se](http://www.ace.lu.se)). If you have any questions about my Masters Thesis work, please contact Prof. Neelambar Hatti of Lund University, Lund, Sweden, at e-mail: [neelambar.hatti@ekh.lu.se](mailto:neelambar.hatti@ekh.lu.se). My e-mail is [ace044atr@student.lu.se](mailto:ace044atr@student.lu.se) and my telephone numbers are +45 35 82 81 84 and +45 22 88 76 32.

Please check to the right or left of the question, or circle/underline answer, or fill in blanks.

-Today's date: *day/month/year*: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 1: Preliminary questions**

- 1-1. Are you    Male \_\_\_\_            Female \_\_\_\_
- 1-2. Where, and what year, were you born? Please state place of birth and year of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
- 1-3. Are you living in: Denmark \_\_\_\_ Finland \_\_\_\_  
Iceland \_\_\_\_ Norway \_\_\_\_ Sweden \_\_\_\_
- 1-4. How long have you been living in Scandinavia?  
(Please state number of years/months)... \_\_\_\_\_
- 1-5. How long do you plan to stay? (Please state number of years/months)... \_\_\_\_\_
- 1-6. How many years of formal education have you had? Please state number of years: \_\_\_\_\_

1-7. Were you born Muslim or did you convert? (Please answer, 'born Muslim or 'convert') \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Section 2 is only for converts to Islam, all others go directly to Section 3.\***

**Section 2: Convert**

- 2-1. What year did you convert? Please state year of conversion: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2-2. Where did you convert?  
In Indonesia \_\_\_\_  
In Malaysia \_\_\_\_  
In Scandinavia \_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 2-3. What was the principal reason for your conversion to Islam? (Please check only one)  
a) Faith/Belief in Islam  
b) Marriage to a Muslim  
c) A combination of a) and b)  
d) Other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

- 2-4. What was your previous religion: (Please check any that apply)  
a) Protestant \_\_\_\_\_    b) Catholic \_\_\_\_\_  
c) Jewish \_\_\_\_\_        d) Hindu \_\_\_\_\_  
e) Buddhist \_\_\_\_\_      f) No religion \_\_\_\_\_  
g) Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 3: Marital background**

- 3-1. Currently, are you?  
(Please check only one)  
-Married \_\_\_\_ (Continue to question 3-2)  
-Married in an Islamic ceremony (but not officially)  
\_\_\_\_ (Continue to question 3-2)

-Living with someone without formal marriage papers  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Continue to question 3-5)

-Divorced/Separated \_\_\_\_\_ (Continue to question 3-2)

-Widow/widower \_\_\_\_\_ (Continue to question 3-2)

-Single \_\_\_\_\_ (Please go to question 3-7)

3-2. Was your husband/wife/mate already Muslim when you married him/her?

-Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_

3-3. Did he/she convert to Islam?

-Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_

3-4. What is/was your spouse's/mate's former/present religion: (Please write former/present on the line)

- a) Protestant \_\_\_\_\_ b) Catholic \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Jewish \_\_\_\_\_ d) Hindu \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Buddhist \_\_\_\_\_ f) Muslim \_\_\_\_\_
- g) No religion \_\_\_\_\_ h) Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

3-5. If you are/were married/co-habiting, is/was your husband/wife:

- Scandinavian \_\_\_\_\_ -European \_\_\_\_\_
- Indonesian \_\_\_\_\_ -Malaysian \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, what \_\_\_\_\_

3-6. If married to/ co-habiting with a Scandinavian, how is your Islam affected: (Please check only one)

- Positively affected, I am a better Muslim
- It doesn't affect me
- Negatively affected, I am not practising Islam
- I'm not married to a Scandinavian

3-7. How important is it or has it been that your husband/wife/mate be Muslim? (Please check only one)

- 1-Very important (i.e. must be Muslim)
- 2-Important
- 3-Not too important

4-Not important at all (i.e. do not care if Muslim or not)

3-8. Do you have any children? (Please check only one)

-Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_ (If no, please go to Section 4)

3-9. If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_

3-10. What are their ages: \_\_\_\_\_

3-11. Are they in Scandinavia?

-Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_

-Other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 4: Islam in your daily life**

4-1. When you meet people, do you tell them you are Muslim: (Please check only one)

- 1-Always
- 2-Not necessarily
- 3-Only if directly asked
- 4-My religious beliefs are private, so I keep them to myself
- 5-Sometimes I say I am not Muslim
- 6-Other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

4-2. How important is Islam in your daily life: (Please check only one)

- 1-Very important
- 2-Important
- 3-Not too important
- 4-Not important at all
- 5-Do not know/not sure

4-3. How important is Allah in your daily life and actions:(1 means not important at all and 10 means very important. Circle/underline number)

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- 4-4. How important is the concept of the Afterlife/Judgement Day (Yom id-Din) on your daily activities: (Please check only one)
- 1-Very important
  - 2-Important
  - 3-Not too important
  - 4-Not important at all
  - 5-Do not know/not sure

**Section 5: The 5 pillars of Islam**

- 5-1. Do you believe in the Shahada (La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad rasul Allah)? (Please check only one)
- 1-Completely, no doubt
  - 2-No, I have my doubts since coming to Scandinavia
  - 3-No, I have always had doubts
- 5-2. Do you practise zakat (giving to the poor or needy) in some way? (Please check only one)
- 1-Yes, I do
  - 2-Now I do not, but I did in my home country
  - 3-No, I never have
  - 4-Other, please explain \_\_\_\_\_
- 5-3. Do you practise salat? (Please check only one)
- 1) 5 times a day
  - 2) Daily but less than 5 times
  - 3) A few times a week
  - 4) A few times a month
  - 5) A few times a year, usually on religious occasions
  - 6) Only when I want/need something (dua)
  - 7) Never
- 5-4. Do you fast here in Scandinavia? (Please check any that apply to you)
- 1) All of Ramadan
  - 2) Sometimes during Ramadan
  - 3) Mondays and Thursdays

- 4) On recommended days
  - 5) No, never here
  - 6) No, never here or in home country
- 5-5. If you never fast during Ramadan, is it because: (Please check any that apply to you)
- 1) I have a medical condition that doesn't allow me to fast
  - 2) I do not see the reasoning behind Ramadan
  - 3) I do not want others to know I am Muslim
  - 4) It is too difficult for me in my job situation
  - 5) I never did, even in my home country
  - 6) I make up the fasting days on weekends
- 5-6. Have you made Umrah? (Please check only one)
- 1) Yes
  - 2) No, but plan to go
  - 3) No, and do not plan to go
- 5-7. Have you gone on Hajj? (Please check only one)
- 1) Yes
  - 2) No, but plan to go
  - 3) No, and do not plan to go

**Section 6: Formal religious activities**

- 6-1. Do you participate in any of the below events? (Please check any that apply to you)
- a) Share Christmas with a non-Muslim family
  - b) Celebrate New Year's Eve
  - c) Celebrate birthdays, Halloween, Valentine's Day...
  - d) Celebrate Hindu holy days
  - e) On principal, I do not participate in any of the above festivals
- 6-2. How often do you pray in a mosque or prayer room (musalla)? (Please check only one)
- a) More than once a week
  - b) About once a week

- c) About twice a month
- d) About once a month
- e) Only on Muslim holidays
- f) A few times a year
- g) About once a year
- h) Less than once a year
- i) Never

6-3. Do you eat: (Please check any that apply)

- a) Foods with gelatine
- b) Only Halal meat
- c) Non-Halal meat (excluding pork)
- d) Pork
- e) Only vegetarian food

6-4. Do you drink alcohol?

-Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Question 6-5. only for women\***

**\*Question 6-6. only for men\***

**\*ALL please continue with question 6-7.\***

**6-5. As a Muslim woman:**

- a) Do you use *hijab*? (Please check only one)
  - Always
  - Usually
  - In the mosque/musalla
  - Never

- b) Do you use *niqab*? (Please check only one)
  - Always
  - Usually
  - In the mosque/musalla
  - Never

- c) Do you use *jilbab*? (Please check only one)
  - Always
  - Usually
  - In the mosque/musalla

-Never

**6-6. As a Muslim man:**

- a) Do you wear an Islamic cap? (Please check only one)

- Always
- Usually
- In the mosque/musalla
- Never

- b) Do you wear loose fitting clothes?

(Please check only one)

- Always
- Usually
- In the mosque/musalla
- Never

- c) Do you have a beard? (Please check only one)

-Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_ -Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_

- d) Are you circumcised? (Please check only one)

- Yes, I was circumcised as a baby
- Yes, I chose to get circumcised in connexion with my conversion to Islam
- No

**6-7. Choose the statement that best describes your relationship with Islam (Please check only one):**

- a) Islam is, in its very essence, a very private and personal religion
- b) Islam should be the religion of the state, but non-Muslims should be allowed freedom to practice their religion
- c) Islam, because it encompasses a way of life, should be the religion of the state

**Section 7: The here and now**

7-1. Everything considered, how happy are you living here in Scandinavia, away from your country of birth?

(Please check only one):

- Very happy
- Rather happy
- Not especially happy
- Rather unhappy
- Do not know/not sure

7-2. How often do you think about the meaning of life and its purpose? (Please check only one)

- All the time
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- Do not know/not sure

7-3. If your husband/wife/mate converted to Islam for you, have they ever doubted their decision?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

7-4. Why did you first move to Scandinavia? (Please check only one)

- Marriage
- My employer stationed me here
- Career prospects were better here
- My child lives/children live here
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

7-5. How much do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

a) The best society is one where religion and state are connected (Please check only one):

- Very much agree

- Partially agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Definitely disagree
- Do not know/not sure

b) In our modern world, where norms of behaviour and traditional values are constantly changing, and nothing seems to stay still, it is important to belong to a religion that gives rules and codes of conduct

(Please check only one):

- Very much agree
- Partially agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Definitely disagree
- Do not know/not sure

c) Democracy and Islam can co-exist, in fact, Islam embraces democracy, as all humans are equal in Islam

(Please check only one):

- Very much agree
- Partially agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Definitely disagree
- Do not know/not sure

**Section 8: Specifics in Islam**

8-1. Which Islamic sect do you belong to?

- Sunni \_\_\_\_\_ -Shi'a \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8-2. How important is the Islamic Ummah to you?

(Please check only one)

- 1- Very important
- 2- Important
- 3- Not too important

- 4. Not important at all
- 5. Do not know/not sure

8-3. Are you a member of any Muslim/Islamic organisation?

- Yes, if so please name: \_\_\_\_\_
- No, I am not \_\_\_\_\_

8-4. Of the following statements, which best describes your feelings about the prophet Muhammad's Sunnah? (Please choose one statement and underline it)

- a) Generally, behaviour and principles of the Prophet can be applied to relationships today, with adjustments.
- b) Generally, one should copy the Prophet as closely as possible in all respects.
- c) I do not really know enough about Sunnah.
- d) I do not follow Sunnah.

8-5. How do you feel one should be a Muslim in Scandinavia? (Please check only one)

- a) I do not believe there is a difference in being a Muslim here or anywhere else. Islam should be the same anywhere in the world.
- b) I think it is important for Muslims in Scandinavia to find their own expression of Islam.

8-6. How do you perceive Shari'a?

(Please choose one statement and underline it):

- a) It is a complete set of laws valid in an Islamic state.
- b) It is principally an aid for the individual on Islamic law.
- c) I do not really know enough about Shari'a.
- d) I do not follow Shari'a.

8-7. What should one as a Muslim do in situations not directly mentioned in either the Qur'an or the Hadith?

(Please choose one statement and underline it)

- a) Everything that is not directly forbidden in Islamic scriptures is allowed and therefore Islamic.

b) It is better to avoid things that might be un-Islamic just in case.

c) I do not really know enough about the Qur'an and Hadith to answer.

d) I do not know, as I have never thought about it.

8-8. When you have questions on Islam/Islamic behaviour, what do you do? (Please check any that apply)

- a) Speak to a religious leader
- b) Ask friends
- c) Ask family member(s)
- d) Check the Internet (i.e. Islamic sites)
- e) Use my common sense
- f) Look it up in the Qur'an
- g) Check Hadith
- h) Check Fiqh
- i) Read literature on Islam

8-9. Is there any 'group' in Islam that you feel embarrassed by their behaviour?

- Sunnis \_\_\_\_\_ -Shi'ites \_\_\_\_\_
- Wahhabis \_\_\_\_\_ -Sufis \_\_\_\_\_
- Alawites \_\_\_\_\_ -Druze \_\_\_\_\_
- Hizb ut-tahrir \_\_\_\_\_ -Ahmadiyya \_\_\_\_\_
- Ismailiyya \_\_\_\_\_ -Taliban \_\_\_\_\_
- Another group, which? \_\_\_\_\_
- No group embarrasses me \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 9: Social life**

9-1. On average, which food do you normally eat?

(Please check only one)

- Scandinavian
- Malay or Indonesian
- South Asian
- A mix of above foods
- International foods: Chinese, Arab, Indian, Japanese, Italian, French, American, etc.



9-2. Which of the following groups do you have closest contact with, on a daily basis? (Please check only one)

- a) Malay/Indonesian Muslims
- b) Muslims of another ethnic background than my own
- c) Non-Muslim Scandinavians
- d) Muslim Scandinavians
- e) None of the above

9-3. How do non-Muslim Scandinavians usually treat you? (Please check only one)

- In a positive way
- Neutrally
- In a negative way

9-4. How do Muslim Scandinavians usually treat you? (Please check only one)

- In a positive way
- Neutrally
- In a negative way

9-5. How do non-Muslim Malaysians/Indonesians usually treat you? (Please check only one)

- In a positive way
- Neutrally
- In a negative way

9-6. How do Muslim Malaysians/Indonesians usually treat you? (Please check only one)

- In a positive way
- Neutrally
- In a negative way

9-7. How do Muslims of another ethnicity usually treat you? (Please check only one)

- In a positive way
- Neutrally
- In a negative way

9-8. In Scandinavia, which group of Muslims do you feel close to? (Please circle a maximum of three)

- a) Muslims in general all over the world
- b) Muslims in South East Asia
- c) Muslims in Scandinavia, esp. (please check):  
 -Malaysians/Indonesians \_\_\_\_\_ -Arabs \_\_\_\_\_  
 -Somalis \_\_\_\_\_ -Pakistanis \_\_\_\_\_  
 -Turks \_\_\_\_\_ -Others, which: \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Muslims in Scandinavia, regardless of nationality
- e) Scandinavian reverts to Islam
- f) I do not feel any particular affinity to any of the above groups
- g) I avoid mixing with any groups of Muslims here in Scandinavia

9-9. Do you see yourself as (Please check only one)

- a) A Malay Muslim/An Indonesian Muslim
- b) A Muslim
- c) A Malay/An Indonesian
- d) A Muslim Malay/A Muslim Indonesian
- e) A Dane/A Finn/An Icelander/A Norwegian/A Swede
- f) Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

9-10. How proud are you of being Malay/Indonesian? (Please check only one)

- Very proud
- Rather proud
- Not especially proud
- Not proud at all
- Do not know/not sure
- Do not really feel Malay/Indonesian anymore; I feel proud to be Scandinavian

**Section 10: Culture and society**

10-1. How important are the following areas in your life? (1 means very important, 2 means rather important, 3 means not too important, 4 means not

important at all, 8 means do not know/not sure. Please circle only one)

A-Work?

1 2 3 4 8

B-Family?

1 2 3 4 8

C-Friends and acquaintances?

1 2 3 4 8

D-Leisure time?

1 2 3 4 8

E-Politics?

1 2 3 4 8

F-Religion?

1 2 3 4 8

10-2. Are you interested in any of the following areas?

(Please check any that apply)

- a) Family relationships
- b) Social injustice
- c) Disaster assistance (tsunami in Indonesia, earthquakes in Pakistan and Iran, etc.)
- d) Politics in general
- e) War in Iraq
- f) War in Afghanistan
- g) Situation in Palestine
- h) Muslim brothers and sisters in Chechnya
- i) Muslim minorities in India, Philippines, Thailand
- j) American presence in Saudi Arabia, esp. Al-Hejaz
- k) Possible war in Iran and Syria
- l) Foreign policy in general
- m) The debate on integration and foreigners in Scandinavia
- n) The debate on Islam in Scandinavia

10-3. Are you a member of any organisation or group where you perform unpaid work?

-Yes, if so, please name: \_\_\_\_\_

-No, I am not \_\_\_\_\_

10-4. If there were a vote tomorrow, for which political party would you vote? (Please check only one)

-Please name party: \_\_\_\_\_

-Cannot vote yet

-Wouldn't vote

-Do not want to answer this question

-Do not know/not sure

10-5. Do you believe Muslims should take part in the Scandinavian government? (Please check only one)

-Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_

-Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

10-6. Do you feel the government in the country where you live should allow special courts for family law for Muslims? (Please check only one)

-Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_

-In some cases, for instance (please specify):

\_\_\_\_\_

-Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 11: Childhood and religious background**

11-1. Are you raised in: (Please check only one)

-Capital City \_\_\_\_\_ -City \_\_\_\_\_

-Town \_\_\_\_\_ -Village \_\_\_\_\_

-Other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

11-2. Which best describes your growing up? (Please check only one)

-Lived with my mother and father

-Lived only with my mother

-Lived only with my father

-Other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

11-3. What was the principal religion in your childhood home?

(Please check only one)

a) Islam \_\_\_\_\_ b) Christianity \_\_\_\_\_

- c) Hinduism \_\_\_\_\_ d) Buddhism \_\_\_\_\_  
 e) Other: \_\_\_\_\_ f) None \_\_\_\_\_

11-4. How would you describe your religiosity growing up? (Please check only one)

- a) Non-believer  
 b) Practising religious  
 c) Religious, not practising  
 d) Other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

11-5. How would you describe where you live now? (Please check only one)

- Capital City \_\_\_\_\_ -City \_\_\_\_\_  
 -Town \_\_\_\_\_ -Village \_\_\_\_\_  
 -Other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 12: Assimilation, a two-way street?**

12-1. How much do you feel you do to 'fit in' in Nordic society? (1 means very much, 2 means rather much, 3 means not too much, 4 means not much at all, 8 means do not know/not sure. Please circle only one)

- 1    2    3    4    8

12-2. Is language important for integration into a society?

(Please choose one statement and underline it)

- Very much agree  
 -Partially agree  
 -Neither agree nor disagree  
 -Disagree somewhat  
 -Definitely disagree  
 -Do not know/not sure

12-3. How well do you rate your Nordic language ability? (Please check only one)

- Fluent, close to the level of a native  
 -Excellent knowledge  
 -Working knowledge

- Some knowledge  
 -Just day-to-day small talk

12-4. If your language skills are weak, do you plan to improve them? (Please check only one)

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_  
 -Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

12-5. Do Scandinavians 'meet you halfway' by trying to accommodate your religious/spiritual beliefs? (Please check only one)

- All the time \_\_\_\_\_ -Often \_\_\_\_\_  
 -Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ -Rarely \_\_\_\_\_  
 -Never \_\_\_\_\_ -Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

12-6. If non-Muslim Scandinavians accommodate your religion, how do they do it? (Please check any that apply)

- By not serving pork dishes  
 -By offering alternatives to pork dishes  
 -By not serving alcohol at all  
 -By offering me non-alcoholic beverages  
 -By their more conservative dress around me  
 -By not speaking about Islam negatively  
 -By not mentioning religion at all  
 -By respecting Ramadan  
 -By joining Muslims in remembering/ celebrating Islamic holidays, like Eid al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha  
 -By learning about Islam

12-7. Does your behaviour to Scandinavians influence their behaviour to you; for example, do you believe that if you are optimistic and have a positive outlook, people will be more positive towards you? (Please check only one)

- All the time \_\_\_\_\_ -Often \_\_\_\_\_  
 -Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ -Rarely \_\_\_\_\_  
 -Never \_\_\_\_\_ -Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

12-8. Do you feel there is a religious bias against Muslims and Islam in the media in Scandinavia?

- Very much agree
- Partially agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Definitely disagree
- Do not know/not sure

**Section 13: Education and employment**

13-1. What is your present work situation? (Please check any that apply)

- I am gainfully employed
- I am unemployed
- My spouse (husband or wife) takes care of me
- I am a student and have a student grant
- I am an independent businessperson
- I am a pensioner
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

13-2. Does your present employment correspond to your level of education? (Please check only one)

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

13-3. Do you believe being Muslim makes it difficult to secure employment? (Please check only one)

- Same, no difference at all \_\_\_\_\_ -More difficult \_\_\_\_\_

13-4. Do you believe having a Muslim name makes it difficult to secure employment? (Please check only one)

- Same, no difference at all \_\_\_\_\_ -More difficult \_\_\_\_\_

13-5. In general, do your work colleagues treat you well and with respect, in and outside of your workplace? (Please check only one)

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_

-Other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

13-6. Do your non-Muslim work colleagues invite you home for parties and dinners? (Please check only one)

- All the time \_\_\_\_\_ -Often \_\_\_\_\_
- Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ -Rarely \_\_\_\_\_
- Never \_\_\_\_\_ -Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

13-7. How many contacts/contracts/promotions do you miss out on because socialising (dinners, drinks, bars) often leads to job offers and meetings, and you cannot/do not participate? (Please check only one)

- Very many, because I cannot join them/refuse to join them
- None, I go anyway
- None, I would not want contacts, promotions based on socialising
- Do not know/not sure

13-8. If necessary, would you take a job where alcohol is served? (Please check only one)

- Yes, a job is a job
- Yes, as long as I do not have to pour it/serve it
- Yes, as long as I do not drink alcohol myself
- No, not under any circumstances

13-9. If necessary, would you take a job where non-Halal meat is served? (Please check only one)

- Yes, a job is a job
- Yes, as long as I do not have to serve/handle it
- Yes, as long as I do not eat/taste it myself
- No, not under any circumstances

13-10. If necessary, would you take a job as a home care provider? (Please check only one)

- Yes, a job is a job
- Yes, as long as I do not have to be alone with a member of the opposite sex

-Yes, as long as I do not have to bathe/touch intimately a member of the opposite sex

-No, not under any circumstances

**Section 14: Post 9/11**

14-1. Has your life as a Muslim in Scandinavia changed since the events of 11 September 2001?

(Please check only one)

-In a positive way

-Neutrally

-In a negative way

14-2. If your life has changed in a negative way, because of the events of 11 September 2001, have you isolated yourself more within the Muslim community?

(Please check only one)

-Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_

-Other, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

14-3. Post 9/11, does being Muslim make it more difficult to establish relationships with non-Muslim Scandinavians? (Please check only one)

-Same, no difference at all \_\_\_\_\_ -More difficult \_\_\_\_\_

14-4. Post 9/11, does having a Muslim name make it more difficult to get a job? (Please check only one)

-Same, no difference at all \_\_\_\_\_ -More difficult \_\_\_\_\_

14-5. Since Islam is continuously in the news in some form or another, can you see this as positive?

-Yes, because then more people know more about Islam/ask more questions about Islam

-No, because most of the information given about Islam is incorrect anyway, so it has not helped Muslims

14-6. How do you feel about the 'West' (i.e. the Americas, Europe, Australia, New Zealand)? (Please check only one)

-In a positive way

-Neutrally

-Too broad to answer

-In a negative way

-Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 15: Level of freedom in a 'free society'**

15-1. In Scandinavia, do you dress differently than you would in Malaysia/Indonesia?

(Please check only one)

-Yes, all the time \_\_\_\_\_ -Often \_\_\_\_\_

-Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ -Rarely \_\_\_\_\_

-No, never \_\_\_\_\_ -Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

15-2. Do you do things here that you do not/cannot do in Malaysia/Indonesia? (Please check only one)

-Yes, all the time \_\_\_\_\_ -Often \_\_\_\_\_

-Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ -Rarely \_\_\_\_\_

-No, never \_\_\_\_\_ -Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

15-3. Are you more free to express your ideas about Islam in Scandinavia or back 'home'? (Please check only one)

-In Scandinavia \_\_\_\_\_ -In Malaysia/Indonesia \_\_\_\_\_

-It is the same \_\_\_\_\_ -Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

15-4. On the whole issue of 'freedom of religious expression', do you think Scandinavians go too far? (Please check only one)

-Yes, but only when it is against Islam does it bother me

-Yes, when they poke fun at their own religion, as well as others, it bothers me

-No, none of this bothers me

-Do not know/not sure

15-5. Do you feel equally offended when Jesus ('Aisa'), Mary (Mirjam), Moses (Musa) and Abraham (Ibrahim)

are abused in the press, as when the prophet Muhammad is abused in the media? (Please check only one)

- Yes, all the time \_\_\_\_\_ -Often \_\_\_\_\_
- Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ -Rarely \_\_\_\_\_
- No, never \_\_\_\_\_ -Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_

15-6. In 2005, in a major Danish daily (Jyllands Posten), there appeared caricatures of the prophet Muhammad. How did you feel? (Please check only one)

- Very offended
- Rather offended
- Not especially offended
- Not offended at all
- Do not know/not sure

**\*The following section is only for those who already have children being raised here in Scandinavia. Those with children raised outside of Scandinavia and individuals with no children do not answer next section. Please remember to read Conclusion on last page.\***

**Section 16: Children**

16-1. Do you want your child/children to marry a Muslim? (Please check only one)

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_
- None of my business \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not care \_\_\_\_\_

16-2. Do you want your child/children to marry a Malay/Indonesian? (Please check only one)

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_
- None of my business \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not know/not sure \_\_\_\_\_
- Do not care \_\_\_\_\_

16-3. How would you feel if your child married a Scandinavian? (Please check only one)

- Great, no problem, as long as s/he is happy
- Great, but a Malay/Indonesian would be better
- No problem if s/he is Muslim
- Sad, I always hoped s/he would marry a Malay/Indonesian
- None of my business
- Do not know/not sure
- Do not care

16-4. If you have a daughter, how important is it that her fiancé converts to Islam in order to be her husband? (Please check only one)

- Very important, it is clear in the Qur'an
- Not so important if he is a good man
- Important, but maybe in time, he will convert
- It is none of my business
- I do not know/am not sure how I would feel
- I do not care

16-5. When your child's school friends celebrate Christmas, Halloween, Valentine's Day, birthdays, does your child want to celebrate also? (Please check only one)

- Yes, so I forbid any of the above celebrations
- Yes, this bothers me greatly and I am not sure what to do
- Yes, but I know s/he will grow out of it, once s/he better understands Islam
- Yes, but I want my child to feel like s/he belongs in his/her peer group
- No, so I am not bothered
- Other feelings, please explain

16-6. When your child's school friends go to parties, bars, discothèques, and have sleepovers, does your child also want to participate? (Please check only one)

- Yes, so I forbid any of the above excursions
- Yes, this bothers me greatly and I am not sure what to do
- Yes, but I know s/he will grow out of it, once s/he better understands Islam
- Yes, but I want my child to feel like s/he belongs in his/her peer group
- No, so I am not bothered
- Other feelings, please explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

16-7. Would you forbid your child to do any of the below: (Please check any that apply)

- Wear unsuitable clothes \_\_\_\_\_ -Get a tattoo \_\_\_\_\_
- Date a boy/girl \_\_\_\_\_ -Get piercing \_\_\_\_\_
- Have sex outside of marriage \_\_\_\_\_
- Have an abortion \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

16-8. When your child's school friends play poker, drink alcohol, get drunk, buy games and videos Haram in Islam, are you worried they will influence your child to do things Haram in Islam? (Please check only one)

- Yes, so I forbid close contact with these friends
- Yes, this bothers me greatly and I am not sure what to do
- Yes, but I know s/he will grow out of it, once s/he better understands Islam
- Yes, but I want my child to feel like s/he belongs in his/her peer group
- No, so I am not bothered
- Other feelings, please explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

16-9. Do you buy a Christmas tree and gifts for the younger children? (Please check only one)

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_
- Other feelings, please explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

16-10. How do you feel about what is shown on Scandinavian television? (Please check any that apply)

- I think it is too provocative/sexual
- I think it is educational in many ways
- I monitor what is watched to avoid problems
- I think the earlier children learn about sex and the real world they live in, the better
- I honestly think it is better that children learn about sex from any source rather than me
- My parents never discussed sex with me, so I think the Scandinavian way is better

16-11. Does your child speak Bahasa?

- Yes, fluently \_\_\_\_\_ -Yes, enough to get by \_\_\_\_\_
- Yes, a little \_\_\_\_\_ -No, not really \_\_\_\_\_

16-12. If your child does not speak Bahasa, have you considered sending your child back to Malaysia/Indonesia to learn your first language?

- Yes, I have \_\_\_\_\_ -No, I have not \_\_\_\_\_

16-13. How important is it that your children go to Islamic schools? (Please check only one)

- Very important
- Important, if I can afford it
- Not so important
- I do not know/am not sure how I would feel
- I do not care

16-14. Does your child go (or has your child gone, if older) to Qur'an school weekly? (Please check only one)

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ -No \_\_\_\_\_

16-15. Is a son's education more important than a daughter's?

(Please check only one)

- No, they are equally important
- Yes, he is more important

16-16. Would you arrange your child's future husband  
or wife?

(Please check only one)

-Yes, definitely

-No, s/he will decide

-I do not know/am not sure how I would feel

**CONCLUSION:**

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO USE THIS AREA FOR ANY COMMENTS YOU'D LIKE TO ADD NOT MENTIONED IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE OR TO ELABORATE ON THE QUESTIONS ABOVE OR TO BRING IN YOUR OWN IDEAS OR EXPERIENCES AS TO THE INTEGRATION PROCESS OF A MUSLIM IN PREDOMINANTLY CHRISTIAN SOCIETIES, LIKE SCANDINAVIA:**



## 10 Appendix 2 Recommendations for Future Projects

For a long time, I imagined that not getting the amount of responses I had hoped for put me at a disadvantage. In the end, interviewing SE Asian Muslims gave me the opportunity to meet such kind and truly generous people. They were more open with private information such as telephone numbers, addresses, e-mails than the great majority of Danes. Meeting SE Asians face to face allowed me the opportunity to read their body language and better understand nuances in their responses. In addition, in the end, individual interviews were more personal as the PTA Questionnaire was very broad.

### *Difficulties*

A difficult part in this survey was convincing the target group about the indirect benefits of this research. Unfortunately, in my personal opinion, had they thought there were any direct benefits, maybe they would have spent the necessary effort totalling 20-30 minutes.

My Bahasa was not sufficient to translate the PTA Questionnaire into Bahasa Indonesia, and my resources were not enough to have someone translate the questionnaire for me. Since English was not their mother tongue, maybe many felt the questionnaire to difficult to answer.

I come from a transparent society. SE Asians are from what is termed '*the 3<sup>rd</sup> world*', the developing world, a world where many subjects are taboo and many issues are not discussed in public, certainly not with relative strangers. Much time was spent making delicate subjects accessible and non-offensive.

It must also be hard for newly arrived Indonesians and Malaysians to fully understand the concept of freedom of speech, coming as they do from countries with less media rights than what we see in Scandinavia. Also, even though I, in the introduction to my PTA Questionnaire, promised respondents anonymity, maybe they doubted my sincerity.

## Pressure to Assimilate

The lack of available information on SE Asian Muslim minorities in Scandinavia made my quest for information all the more difficult. Most of the sources I was able to locate were Internet based. This is part of the reason I call them the “Forgotten Muslims of Europe”.

### *Pitfalls*

Relying on other peoples’ responses for the completion of my Masters thesis slowed down my project. The months of waiting for questionnaire responses to come through my mailbox would have been unnecessary. In addition, the importance of my report made my concept of time, and its passing by, quite different from theirs.

I found out, albeit too late, that SE Asians are notorious people pleasers. They would rather please me, by politely saying, yes, of course, they’d love to participate in a study on Indonesian and Malaysian Muslims, than tell me the truth that they 1) don’t want to, 2) don’t have the time, etc., rather than simply saying: No!

Because the PTA Questionnaire was written by a Lund University Masters student, it lacked the official rubber stamp of a governmental agency or a media study. For the majority of SE Asians, as soon as they read my introductory statement to the questionnaire: “This information will **only** be used in connexion with my Masters in Asian Studies”, they lost any interest they may have had. Indonesians and Malaysians are used to the power-distance relationship, where they respect and fear authority. Had this questionnaire been set up by Lund University and governmental authorities, I imagine the responses would have more plentiful.

### *Reasons this investigation is vital*

Millions of Muslims, born Muslims or converts, call Europe home. So Islam, with its Muslims are in Europe to stay. “The successful integration of European Muslims is crucial to the future of Europe. Prognosticators may disagree on the community’s ultimate demographic and social impact, but all believe that Muslims at the very least will be a

## Pressure to Assimilate

significant and sizable minority that will play an important role in shaping the continent's future.”<sup>1</sup> (2005:3)

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<sup>1</sup> From *An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe* from The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. The Pew Research Center site: [www.pewforum.org](http://www.pewforum.org)

## 11 Appendix 3 Chapter 5 Tables

DANISH LANGUAGE SKILLS		
Category	Can speak Danish	Cannot speak Danish
<i>Yusoff</i>		•
<i>Noora</i>		•
<i>Ani</i>	•	
<i>Bachir</i>	•	
<i>Wan</i>		•
<i>Aziz</i>		•
<i>Lina</i>	•	
<i>Hamza</i>		•
<i>Ida</i>	•	
<i>Ara</i>	•	
<b>Total</b>	5	5

Table 1

SKILLS AND EDUCATION				
Category	Higher education Bachelors, Masters, PhD	High school	Elementary school	No education
<i>Yusoff</i>	•			
<i>Noora</i>		•		
<i>Ani</i>			•	
<i>Bachir</i>				•
<i>Wan</i>		•		
<i>Aziz</i>	•			
<i>Lina</i>		•		
<i>Hamza</i>	•	•		
<i>Ida</i>				
<i>Ara</i>		•		
<b>Total</b>	3	5	1	1

Table 2

<b>EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE</b>			
<b>Category</b>	Employed in SEA organisation	Employed in a Scandinavian organisation	Unemployed
<i>Yusoff</i>	•		
<i>Noora</i>			•
<i>Ani</i>		•	
<i>Bachir</i>	•		
<i>Wan</i>	•		
<i>Aziz</i>	•		
<i>Lina</i>		•	
<i>Hamza</i>	•		
<i>Ida</i>			•
<i>Ara</i>	•		
<b>Total</b>	6	2	2

Table 3

<b>LACK OF DISCRIMINATION</b>		
<b>Category</b>	Feels discriminated by society	Feels Scandinavians treat them equally
<i>Yusoff</i>		•
<i>Noora</i>		•
<i>Ani</i>		•
<i>Bachir</i>		•
<i>Wan</i>		•
<i>Aziz</i>		•
<i>Lina</i>		•
<i>Hamza</i>		•
<i>Ida</i>		•
<i>Ara</i>		•
<b>Total</b>		10

Table 4

PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LIFE		
Category	Interested in Danish politics	Not interested in Danish politics
<i>Yusoff</i>		•
<i>Noora</i>		•
<i>Ani</i>		•
<i>Bachir</i>		•
<i>Wan</i>		•
<i>Aziiz</i>		•
<i>Lina</i>		•
<i>Hamza</i>		•
<i>Ida</i>		•
<i>Ara</i>		•
<b>Total</b>		10

Table 5

FUNDAMENTAL VALUES AND NORMS			
Category	<i>Committed</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Not committed</i>
<i>Yusoff</i>	•		
<i>Noora</i>	•		
<i>Ani</i>		•	
<i>Bachir</i>		•	
<i>Wan</i>			•
<i>Aziiz</i>		•	
<i>Lina</i>		•	
<i>Hamza</i>	•		
<i>Ida</i>	•		
<i>Ara</i>			•
<b>Total</b>	4	4	2

Table 6

Pressure to Assimilate

CONTACT BETWEEN SE ASIANS AND DANES						
Category	Married to SEA	Married to Dane	Not married	Participate in Danish social events. Open to Danish society	Participate only in SEA event. Not open to Danish	Isolated
Yusoff	•				•	
Noora	•				•	
Ani	•				•	
Bachir	•				•	
Wan			•			•
Aziz			•		•	
Lina		•			•	
Hamza			•		•	
Ida		•		•	•	
Ara		•		•		
<b>Total</b>	4	3	3	2	8	1

Table 7

CHILDREN			
Category	Children raised in Scandinavia	Children raised in SEA	No Children
Yusoff	•	•	
Noora	•	•	
Ani	•		
Bachir	•		
Wan			•
Aziz			•
Lina	•		
Hamza			•
Ida	•		
Ara			•
<b>Total</b>	6	2	4

Table 8