

# SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY STAVANGER

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Global studies. Intercultural communication. 30-MATH

**What factors influence the achievements of Muslim Men and  
Women in tertiary education?**

Muhammed Mataar Baaba Sillah

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# I

This thesis is the apogee of a two year programme of intensive study and research at the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger, Norway. It is, inter-alia, an embodiment of work and an engagement of the thought of Scholars in and around Norway and the World. It is the assemblage of what young Muslim men and women students who are currently living in Stavanger and are studying, finishing or have just completed their studies at Universities in Norway say about their current situation as students, as descendants of refugees, as immigrants and as practicing adherents of Islam. It is about the challenges they face, their achievements, what they think about each other in relation to a future in matrimonial life, their religion and the future of Islam in Norway.

It is a synthesis of all the above and beyond and of course my own insights, perceptions, experience as an older immigrant in Norway who, has traversed many a country and indeed a few continents. I trust that everything that is presented in the pages below will be a true reflection of the views of my respondents. I hasten to add that the sample I have selected might not be a representative sample of views of all Muslim men and women throughout Norway. With this in mind though, I believe that the results of the study will at the very least be instructive in more ways than one and can perhaps be the basis for further studies? It is anticipated that the analysis of the status of the discourse in 'Men and women in tertiary education will take on board and examine the literature, the facts and figures of the allied nodal issues that have some bearing on policy and the making of a truly multi-cultural Norway.

I am to admit that it is impossible to include all the issues related to the topic considering the brevity of such a paper.

Finally, I want to say that I will take full responsibility for the errors, oversights and shortcomings of this write-up.

Muhammed maxtaar Baaba Sillah

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### *Dedication*

To my father and all those in exile and those who live within the margins and cannot free themselves from the fetters of necessity.

## II

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## **Chapter 1**

### **BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Setting - out**

Immigrants, refugees and their descendants are now a reality in the Norwegian body politic. They come from diverse religious, racial and multi-cultural backgrounds. Their stay in Norway can no longer be considered transient. They are here to stay!

Their adjustment, to life in Norway, their integration, inclusion and exclusion, the mobilisation of their resources, their education, organisations, institutions, an Norway's bid to building a future harmonious and peaceful multi-racial/multi-cultural/multi-religious society all come together to give urgency to the cause for meeting the challenges and the tasks that lay ahead in the immediate, near and distant future.

This modest piece of research and any other research that reviews the multifarious strands of immigrants' lives in the society will be a welcome addition, an added string as it were to the bow of enlightenment and a bold step towards adapting and making the best of our new reality. Yet in spite of its size, I have personally placed a very high premium on its findings. I also hope it can inform future work in research and policy formulation that celebrates and embraces meaningful diversity.

## 1.2 initial misapprehensions

In the past several years, there have been noticeable and unprecedented admission rates of young immigrant, Muslim men and women and people of other ethnic and racial origins at many tertiary institutions in Norway. Since my interest, to begin with was rather vague and misanthropic, I often asked banteringly, what courses are all these young immigrants on? The answer I got consistently was that they were on courses in engineering, education, Medicine, Pharmacology, Accountancy, Architecture, nursing or some other social care programme.

Soon, my disinterest and earlier cynicism began to give way to a new optimism and a re-kindled enthusiasm by the upsurge of the number of young Muslims in tertiary education. I later learnt that there were probably just as many girls as there were boys.

Based on my initial superficial impressions and a later genuine interest in this development, I was struck by an oddly curious motive to interrogate this conundrum. So when it came to writing a thesis, I thought that it would be a good subject to explore for several reasons:

### *1.2.1 ESN Schools*

My experience in Britain as a member of the teaching profession, the education of immigrants was at the time, educational programmes that in the main, mirrored their class positions and status in the society. These were programmes that I called the ‘treadmill’ in and the Asian community referred to as ‘sin-bins’, meaning the dump. That type of educational programmes essentially sets the immigrants up for defeat by consigning them to the ‘educationally sub-normal Schools, (ESN). The ‘treadmill, as it were, never accorded them the means through which they can become upwardly mobile in the society. There were of course some exceptional cases that the establishment could point to as indicators of success but these were few and far between. Besides, the immigrants themselves hotly disputed this. Thus triggering off a terrific dispute in literature especially akin to the building of a multi-racial and multi-cultural Britain. Some hard questions were asked and some solutions were sought while the debate on educating young immigrants continued to rage at all levels.

### *1.2.2 Soft policing*

The second reason was that many, if not most, were educated to serve as mediators of containment of resistance of immigrant communities. This way, they became the cyphers of the establishment, the gatekeepers of the institutions for the control of deviance, of dissent and in general, a part of the social control apparatus. In short soft policing! Later on these quislings (as they were referred to) will graduate and be rewarded as the loyal Barons and Baronesses of the race-relations industry and managers of ‘urban aid’.

The third explanation that was readily bandied about by the ‘experts’ was that immigrant youth, especially the young males do not have positive role models. Therefore, the argument runs, they squander the opportunities open to them as opposed to other groups in larger society.

### *1.2.3 Young Muslims in real academia*

Now, especially when I found out that these youngsters were in ‘real academia’ in Norway, I felt that I needed to keep abreast of the trends and decided that perhaps this is, among other things, something to explore in more depth against a different socio-political backdrop and I hoped that the experience in Norway will negate the experiences of the past.

This was how I came to my topic.

My encounter with the different methods of social research eventually led me to proposing in this study, a shoe metaphor for a research question. Like a tight fitting shoe, those that wear it feel it. I therefore needed to be alert to where the pinching and chafing are most felt in order to pursue the direction in which the nibbling, gnawing sensations point to. In more ways than one, they had yielded to me a sense of the world of pinching and chafing I now inhabit. These sense impressions led me to undertaking an enquiry that delved straight into engaging with my partners in conversation.

## **1.3 Purpose of study**

I have a personal vested interest in this project because I want to find some tangible reasons as to why Muslim girls seem to be more committed to service delivery at the Islamic education centre, why they seem to be outperforming boys in giving back something to their community. What factors could or might have influenced this trend? Does this observation mirror their overall

performance at University? What other factors might have influenced them generally as a group, as members of the same gender or other influences beyond their individual levels?

#### **1.4 Justification of research**

Learning and discovering new things have always been exciting for me. Especially now that I can look back and see that I had a foot in both the past and the present and a foot in both the traditional and the modern. I reckon this gives me the distance, yet the insights of how the role and status of both women and men have and are still changing in the many homes I now inhabit as an immigrant, and older immigrant, a visible minority, with several other identities.

Finally, I want to declare from the outset that I have elected a more non-conventional, if you like, a bohemian ‘narrative-related’ style and approach in the presentation of this thesis. The thesis thus departs from and breaks with the tradition of writing in a dense and often turgid way akin to the popular practice in academia.

I have as a result tried to prod the narrative in ways that it will make for an organic link between theory, empirical research and real issues in the lives of my conversational young Muslim partners in higher education. It explores in some depth their real life situations, their communities and their lives both inside and outside in larger society and beyond.

In the course of this journey, I have had the privilege of having five young Muslim men and five women in tertiary education and two teachers, one at secondary and the other at further education as conversational partners. I found them extremely, open, cooperative and helpful in giving me their take on the conversational themes.

The main anchor of this thesis is the major and minor influences that were elicited from them in the cause of the conversations I had with them. The core theme upon which all else hinged on was “What factors propelled and gave rise to their achievements in higher education”.

I hope that this study can open up some new vistas in areas of enquiry, hitherto unexplored.

#### **1.5 Theory/practice and Vistas**

I must admit though that this study has afforded me the possibility of relating theory directly to practice and vice versa. More especially, how my enquiry in the field has informed theory and has laid the basis of the building blocks and the formwork on which to generate theory.

After having embarked on this journey, a journey of the mind, I have had some rude awakenings, challenges, some thrills and agonies but victories are always sweet. Without doubt, I intend to wallow in the sweetness and the freshness of the victories out to be clinched upon the completion of this enquiry. Accomplishing this task and learning more about my own community and its trajectory would be one of those imminent triumphs I am looking forward to attaining!

Welcome on board!

## **Chapter 2**

### **APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY - SOME CONSIDERATIONS**

The main approach to this study is largely Sociological although the theories it might generate will cut into social psychology for more in-depth accounts. Its framework assumes, a social science and an interdisciplinary pathway as background to the study. This is to say that it will review theories and research findings in these disciplines where they have a bearing on the study. : The necessary first steps are to hold conversations, listen to what people say especially if it is relevant to your inquiry. Engage now and then casually with others both in and out of one's conversational partners. This way it is possible to garner the most poignant aspects based on emerging themes and patterns on which the theories can be built.

This way, the data can generate its own theories; make sense out of; propose explanations, interpret data, provide meaning to phenomena and attempt to discover convergence. What explanation(s) to deploy in order to best substantiate the theories generated so that they can have some validity, clarity and contextual meaning. All of these are with the ardent bid to throwing some light on the trends, peculiar features that prevail among and within the Muslim men and women in tertiary education, their communities, their main influences in relation to the impact their families, communities, larger society may have had and continue to have on their achievements.

#### **2.1 Predication**

It will concentrate its attention on unravelling the extent to which these features are predicated upon the person/people in their individual and social contexts. The economics that determine the society, the culture that defines it and the politics that governs them. These core phenomena will be employed and placed against the social context in which the current work is being undertaken. Importantly, the research will attempt to RELATE the findings against these phenomena.

## 2.2 Grounded theory

This is why; one could expect this thesis to have some biases towards a theoretical leaning. However, as the pages unfold, one could readily glean in the write up of the thesis especially in the theory and conclusions sections, The Grounded theoretical approach and method.

There are three reasons for having theories in science counsels Argyle, (1969). “Firstly they integrate diverse findings in a coherent and economical form. Secondly, they provide a frame of reference for looking at phenomena, suggest the variables to be studied and they make concrete predictions for further research. Thirdly, they give a satisfying feeling of 'explanation' which makes the phenomena seem less perplexing”. P23.

This need not delay us but a quick word about the theory in shorthand would be fitting at this juncture to explore. One hopes that one does not risk the possibility of a gross-oversimplification of the model.

Developed by Glaser and Strauss through their collaborative work with dying patients in hospital. The bedrock of their theory, earlier known as the ‘constant collaborative method, which later assumed the renowned name of grounded theory. Today its application in several fields of enquiry varies from drama, manufacturing, management and education etc.

Grounded Theory is essentially, a method used in the social sciences seeking to discover theory that emerges out of the taking a part of and the assemblage of information. It is said to work quite in reverse to the conventional social science research. Instead of starting out with a hypothesis, grounded theory begins with gathering and sorting out information through several creative methods. It is called the reverse engineered hypothesis.

Bailey (1994) proposes that, “*Grounded theory* is theory that is discovered or generated from data rather than being abstract and tentative” p 55. Additionally, we will attempt to juxtapose the emerging theories against the conventional theories outlined below.

-Socialisation and early childhood theories

-Role-theory-Are roles learned?

- Gender theories-masculinity and femininity

-Globalisation perspectives as prisms through which we view our local and global Worlds.

It is on the strength of my convictions that emerged out of the experience garnered out of working with the Muslim youth and my renascent interest in their education and the seeming nonchalance of the young men in service delivery at the centre that led me to formulating questions around the following: their lives, families, school experiences with teachers and peers, friends, community, daily experiences, their spirituality, their thoughts about each other, identity, larger society in terms of laws in relation to gender, performance at University, their parents adjustment to life in Norway and so on.

It is anticipated that the findings and the discussions they generate will form the core of this Thesis.

The conversations I had with the young Muslim men and women and from existing empirical data that I have examined as background reading led me further into constantly shaping and reformulating these thoughts about the lives of this group in their social environmental and political contexts. The result of my musings that visited a revisited me became a constant lurking and often times a nagging reverie at the back of my mind. I did however, allow these cogitations to surface as part of the conversations I had with them. The list is inexhaustive but here are a few of the reflections that kick-started the process.

## **2.3 Conversational themes**

*a) The local, regional and the global:*

Does the situation of the young Muslim second generation immigrants mirror the lives of other second generation immigrants at the local, regional, national and beyond?

*b) Looming asymmetries:*

What are the reasons for this looming asymmetry between Muslim men and women in tertiary education in terms of service delivery at the Islamic centre?

*c) Conspiring factors:*

What factors have come together and led to this seeming imbalance if any? If we can establish that there are shortfalls, what are the causes and consequences for the individuals in the group?

*d) Future trends*

What does the future hold if the general trends persist?

*e) Major influence*

Who have been their major influences in terms of making a decision to pursue higher education?

*f) Tenacious woman?*

Are these young women, relative to men, naturally pertinacious?

Is this a phenomenon that has been nurtured by their home environment?

*g) Dropping out males*

If the young Muslim males have not demonstrated a commitment to their own organisations development, could it also be that they are not as committed to their work at the University?

If the answer to this question holds even a slightest veneer of truth, then, could one infer that the young men are not doing as well as their women counterparts and why?

*h) Community bubble*

How do the two gender groups regard each other in terms of a future with each other as potential couples and as a community or is the community bubble poised at the threshold of an inevitable burst? How would this impact on their families and community?

*i) Male priorities*

Again, if the young male's ebullience in advanced education began to peter out, what are the causes and consequences of this? Perhaps, they have other priorities, other earthly distractions/attractions/values other than formal education for now?

*j) Role models*

Do the young Muslim/immigrant young males have positive role models in their communities that they can emulate or is this just another media fad?



### *K) Intergeneration perceptions*

Is there a difference between the older and younger generations' perception of Islam and the future of Muslims in the west and do they have generation-specific issues?

### *l) Environmental influences*

To what extent does an enabling/disabling environment backed by legislation (promoting or not promoting gender balance in education), make for the equalization/unequilisation of the sexes in terms of access and other varied possibilities such as upward mobility, a career with prospects in the world of work AND for women's and men's entry into the so-called MALE TERRITORY In higher education?

The responses to these themes will constitute the inquiry to generate the findings and theories for this corpus of research, which I hope, will be unknotted in the succeeding pages.

## **2.4 Description of my partners in conversation.**

Much unlike their parents, most of them were born here by Immigrant parents that came to Norway as foreign workers that migrated in this country after the post-war boom to fill the chronic shortage of labour. They may also have come as refugees or internally displaced people from their home countries as a consequence of war, adversity or conflict. Another category of migrants who have settled here came purposely to work especially in the Oil industry in the Stavanger region as foreign expatriates. Some of them do stay on but for those who leave, their stay endures a relatively short time. However, those that came to join their parents have spent the best part of their early childhood and now early adult lives in this country.

## **2.5 Statistic**

Official statistics on religious orientation in Norway are not easy to come by although there are estimates tendered by, Statistics Norway 2008. They estimate the population of immigrants from Muslim countries and their descendants to be 163,000. 84,000 were registered as members of Muslim faith-communities, Jacobsen, (2011) p 15

## **2.6 Graded, shifting, multiple and negotiated identities**

My partners typify the second-generation immigrants from the world over who, have grown-up speaking two or more languages depending on the context. They have also grown-up in two or

more cultures. They carry multiple identities. They are Norwegians as well as descendants of Muslim parents who came to Norway with their own cultural and religious practices as refugees or have settled in Norway for a host of other reasons. Their parents will have passed on to them the culture of their origins, exposed them to their core values, religious and traditional practices and their language. The point to be noted here is that the young men and women speak other languages in addition to Norwegian. They are adherents of another religious faith other than their host culture's religion. They have grown up in two or more cultures. Depending on the circumstances/context they are in, they will tell you that they are Somalis, Moroccans, Sudanese, Algerians, and Norwegian and so on. This goes to lend credence to the view on identity, which has recently gained currency and appeal; known as the 'negotiation perspective'. Briefly, this view as espoused by Stella Ting-Toomey, (1993), p 95 in *Theory: The conceptualization of mentality*, suggests that, "an identity is not something that an individual possesses or chooses to have, but something that he negotiates in dialogue with one or more other individuals".

These young men and women can be aptly described as creatures of several worlds with several shifting identities!

Identities are innovational! They are pliable. Like clay, they can be moulded and remoulded, can shift and adapt to one context to the other.

Speaking about the graded identities potentials, the Austrian Sociologist, Manfred Prishing quoted in Bausinger's *Intercultural demands*; argues that, "in the more static past, identity was structured in concentric circles. Family, neighbourhood, Village or Town, region, nation.

In our more complex society, we have to do with the complex constitution of an identity by combining concurrent partial identities. Respectively identity offers not only of certain places but also of groups, of class, age and gender

This means that identity is far more dynamic, flexible and subject to change.

One could even say that the notion of identity is a product of change. It is by changing conditions and constellations that the problem of identity is called into question", (1999) p 2

Importantly though these descendants of immigrants, guard their identity as Norwegians covetously. To them, this identity is paramount and takes precedence over other national identities, if and when they relate to like-situated peers in official or formal settings. However, when they relate to people of common origins and religion, it is a different ball game altogether. They are very keen on maintaining and thus revering in addition their parent's cultures, their

Muslim identity and are resolute about cohering with the precepts of Islam. According to Jacobsen, (2011), as in other European countries, young Muslims have emerged as a presence to be reckoned with in the shaping of Muslim landscapes in contemporary Norway. “Active within the frame of mosques and religious organizations as well as in establishing their own forums and organizations, these young people have become a driving force in (re) defining Islamic traditions and Muslim identities”, p 6

All my partners maintain strong ties with their families, the homelands of their parents, their religion and were forth-coming. They had a good sense of who they were and what they wanted out of higher education.

I had used casual conversation and open-ended cueing and probing methods so that they will suit the different temperaments and to afford me greater latitude in focusing on their reflections. The idea being that the approach can potentially facilitate a more interpretative quest into the meanings of what they say, the usefulness of it in relation to their situation and the leads that can be gotten from the conversations they had with me and what they generally talk about in their everyday exchanges with one another and the applications of these in other contexts. On completion of my discussions with them, I was suddenly struck by a sense of void in my thought processes, thus imbuing in me the feeling that I need to make the critical connections between the forward and backward linkages of theirs and mine in situating ourselves in the general scheme of things as immigrants in Norway.

## **2.7 Brief survey on the work in sphere**

Ever since the inception of this voyage, my intension was to endeavour to locate literature that was helpful in identifying and engaging with the issues and the plight of national minorities.

The growing body of studies currently undertaken seems to be shifting its focus more on the national minorities questions in relation to the extent of their inclusion and by implication their exclusion in the society. I have also in my quest, tried to find relevant work done not only in terms of generating findings that could illustrate the intersections between these minorities and their hosts and how these findings are linked wit immigrant related studies that view them as non-negligible constituent partners in the society and how the dynamics of these multifarious communities interplay to reflect the Norwegian diversity. I had also wanted to find information relating to this sphere that addresses human issues with a human face. I could not find a single text that embraced all these so, my forays did not amount to much except that I had to put together strands from different locations in the domain.

Many young people from immigrant origins are part of a religious organization, and 7 out of 10 identify as Muslims ;( Løwe (2008), (2010). Close to half of Løwe's sample view religion as 'very important' to life (the highest value of 10 alternatives), which sharply distinguishes the group from youths from majority backgrounds”, p 162.

## **2.8 Previous related studies**

As far as I am aware, no specific or identical enquiries have been done in this area. However, investigators have done some work that is germane to my topic but these tend to focus on ethnic individuals and ethnic communities. Whereas my study targets specifically miscellaneous Muslim individuals, who are uniquely placed under the following circumstances both in time and in space. They are momentarily in institutions of learning at the apex of the pyramid of education in Norway. They are either pursuing courses of study leading them to the professions, finishing their degrees or have just completed their courses of study. Their common denominators are that all of them originate from African immigrant and Muslim backgrounds, were born here or have migrated here.

The closest to my study (as far as I know), was undertaken by Mubarak Ali, who examined the ‘Dreams and plans of the Muslim youth in lower and upper secondary schools in Stavanger region-“How do Muslim youth think of their future?” Ali examined issues of identity, integration education and the dreams these youth harbour in order to make future careers and a life in Norway. (Master’s Thesis), December 2011.

Interestingly, some of the respondents in Ali’s study are the same group of young Muslims who will have proceeded on to higher education and are either finishing, have finished or may have dropped out of tertiary education for some reason. I suspect that some of Ali’s respondents may well have been in the same age-bracket as my respondents in view of the time frame between his study and mine?

## **2.9 Related studies**

Other scholars who have done some outstanding pieces of research in the terrain and have some bearing on my work but they do not necessarily speak directly to my central theme and my approach to this study. These include, most notably, Inclusion and exclusion of young adult migrants in Europe - Barriers and Bridges, Katrine Fangen, Kirsten Fossan, Ferdinand Andreas Mohn, (2010)

In the pitfalls of egalitarianism. Here Fangen et al. reviewed the general situation of immigrants in Norway in relation to inclusion and exclusion and explored wide ranging and diverse issues that include immigrants' engagement in the labour market and the prevailing measures to incorporate immigrants into the work force. They appraised the status of housing and living conditions for immigrants, labour migration and family re-union, citizenship, social networks and participation, the health-care system and related statistics, racism and prejudice and the intrigues of the media, education among other things. Their chapter in the Compendium, chapter 6 is very informative and analytical. Backed by relevant research and a welter of historical antecedents of present day Norway. They have in addition; utilized both qualitative and quantitative research data. Their work is very insightful! All aspects of their write-up inform the background of my study in very significant ways.

Additionally, Christine Jacobsen's work in (2011), *Islamic Traditions and Muslim Youth in Norway*, which is just as directly relevant a an excellent background read for my study especially, in light of her engagement with the future of these youth vis a vis their potential contributions towards the building of either a lustrous or a bleak multicultural Norway. My reading of her is that these young Muslim men and women are sitting on the fulcrum of the Scale of religiosity with their hands on the critical lever that could tip the scale either towards 'hope or towards fear') for a pluralist society. Jacobsen's work generally attempts to: Put the monitors on the pulse on Islam and young Muslims from across Europe, compares like with like and offers leads into the politicization of Muslim identities;

Reviews Islamic revivalist tendencies among the youth,

Dissects Muslim identity politics in the west, identifies the youth within a 'global Islamic community',

Points to the changing configurations of religious authority, the effort to go beyond the parameters of culture and so on in the context of unbridled globalisation and the new patterns of migration. Jacobsen, (2011), puts all of it across in these terms; "Over the last few decades questions regarding the future of Islam in Europe have become increasingly pertinent to researchers as well as governments and their policy makers. One of the main issues being looked at concerns continuities and changes in the religiosity of 'Muslim youth' – a category that currently epitomizes both the fears and the hopes of multicultural Europe. How are Islamic traditions reworked by young people who are born and educated in European societies and what modes of religiosity will they contribute towards shaping the future"? P 6. Jacobson's work in this area is by all accounts a seminal treatise and I agree fundamentally with her central arguments however, I have difficulty

where she views Muslim youth as the lynch-pin for change in either towards harmony or towards discord. This will be taken up in the conclusions.

Much like Jacobsen, Tariq Ramadan, (2005), believes that the young Muslims in the West are developing their own homegrown form of Islam and their own traditions. Their brand of Islam will flourish independently of the Islam that is native in Muslim countries and the variations that their parents brought along.

In his *Western Muslims and the future of Islam*, Ramadan claims;” a silent revolution is sweeping Islamic communities in the West, as Muslims actively seek ways to live in harmony with their faith within a Western context. French, English, German, and American Muslims-women a; well as men-are reshaping their religion into one that is faithful to the principles of Islam, dressed in European and American cultures, and definitively rooted in Western societies”. P2.

Ramadan has been a towering figure both as an activist, a Scholar and a consummate debater in the discourse on Islam and the youth in the West. The thread that runs through Ramadan’s thesis is his insistence, (particularly with the new generation of Muslims), that the religiosity of the youth represents a radical departure from Islamic traditions as they obtain in the Muslim countries and among the first generation of immigrants.

## **2.10 Statistical data and sociology**

Heeding Berger’s caution, we note that Statistical data by themselves do not make sociology. They become sociology only when they are sociologically interpreted, put within a theoretical frame of reference that is sociological, Berger, (1963).

It is against this backcloth that I plan to take the liberty of referring to the work of Daugstad G. (Ed.). 2009. *Immigration and Immigrants*, Statistical Analyses 104. Oslo: Statistics Norway.

The advantage of utilizing his statistical analysis is because of what I refer to as ‘reading statistics without tears’. It is the statistics that is friendly to novices and lay people. It is easy to read and one does not need a statistical background to see the wood for the trees. His work assists and complements the work of already garnered qualitative data and throws some light on pretty obscure areas of the situation of immigrants and the host culture in almost all facets of life including attitudes, admission and drop-out rates at all the tiers of education, health, housing, labour, income, gender differences, male-female ratios in education, marriage and divorce even life-expectancies and a whole raft of other things describing the human condition. I have found his work most invaluable in all aspects of my work. Further, it helps us to make sense out of the ever-changing Norwegian demography. Thus inputting heavily in our understanding of the trends

and patterns of the future. I have where necessary, lifted data from OECD and used them in like-manner to buttress some arguments.

### **2.11 Inspiring gender theory**

The inspiration I have drawn from gender in education from Epstein ET. Al. (1998) among several others such as Sheela Drudy, (2005), (Drudy and Lynch 1993, among several others continue to whet my appetite in gender theory in relation to the education of boys and girls. In failing boys Debbie Epstein ET. A (1998) I in 'Failing boys' attempt to explore the nature of the public debate and

“Its status as a kind of globalized moral panic, and the importance of moving away from simplistic, often alarmist, descriptions and proposed 'solutions' towards hearing more thoughtful, and especially feminist, voices and analyses of the issues involved” p 3 in Failing boys.

The authors of this chapter in the compendium are insistent that differences among boys and among girls as well as between boys and girls are key to understanding what is happening in schools. Consequently, they propose a thorough-going analysis and goad us to make a genuine attempt at understanding the prevailing varied masculinities which boys take up and inhabit thus creating problems for themselves and educators and educational establishments.

### **2.12 Binarism-viktors and vanquished**

They warn against the tendency toward slipping into what they call Binarisms. That is to say, as critiqued by David Jackson, ‘the gains of one sex constitute the inevitable losses of the other Jackson (1998).

On this score, they conclude by applauding the contributions of the feminist perspectives, in injecting the new but yet to be permanently established thinking in education that the education of both boys and girls can be improved. They insist that there are no victors and no vanquished in the education of boys and girls. Secondly, since the centrepiece of feminism is principally, equity; “the complex interweaving of such issues, the ways that differences which make a difference shape and are shaped by each other must not be forgotten”. P 12.

### 2.13 Starting and ending points of studies

As I understand it, much like drama, the alpha and omega of studies, its starting and ending points are the posing of questions. The reason for engaging with my partners was to get them to elicit responses that could be tied to our areas of inquiry. This way, the responses I got from them led me tidily into the generation of new thinking.

The process of the conversations conformed to the overall standards of the ethics of inquiries even those enshrined in Islamic ethics based on Islamic jurisprudence. Since I was not a mahram to my female interviewees, I had to interview them in pairs. Islam forbids any man who is not a “Mahram” to be together alone with any of the women and vice-versa.

Mahram in the Islamic terminology means someone who one is forbidden to marry like fathers, brothers, uncles, mothers, stepmothers etc.

In addition to my partners I spoke with two teachers in order to get their take on how they viewed the performance of their Muslim pupils in relation to the school environment including school curricula. Did they discern any patterns; akin to influences on performance and achievements at the schools they are currently teaching and the pupils eventual entry into higher education?

Some considerations during the conduct of the conversations!

I was acutely aware of the potential for the confounding effects of results by giving the respondents the wrong signals. I had set the climate of the interview in such a way that it could not have created a distance between my respondents and I. This was why in connection to the motivations of my respondents for going into higher education, the role of parents, siblings, friends and their peer group’s influences were sought. I was specifically interested in their network of friends, family, teachers and the School, the media, the law and the role of legislation and any other factors that can have a bearing on them, however subtle or overt. This was primarily to allow me to gauge the connection between the effects of up bringing and its consequences for later achievements in higher education.

Questions appertaining to migration and the settlement process as exemplified by their parents’ longing ‘Dreams’ of returning to the long left homeland could attest to how much these older immigrants have settled, (not settled) and adjusted (not adjusted) to their new country of residence and how does their inability to settle mentally and adjust to their new lives impinge on their children and to some, even their grandchildren’s lives? These intersections in their lives cannot be accorded an auxiliary status as they lay among other things deeply embedded in the marrow of current immigrant lives and in the immigrant narratives.



Instances of what I call 'Mosque sanctuary' is a new phenomenon that is growing both in magnitude and occurrence. These Mosque sanctuaries are simply about Muslim men who generally feel unhappy, persecuted and harbouring a feeling of lethargy, hopelessness and insecurity. They come in the Mosques and will not leave as they feel protected and secure. They are generally between their late thirties to their mid-fifties.

Similarly, many immigrant women have been admitted to hospitals for one sort of behavioural malady or another stemming from, in part, this constant fear of losing their children. Some of them have had their children taken away from them because in the eyes of the social workers, they do not 'demonstrate a loving relationship towards their children. Others are depressed for several other reasons including their youth striking out on their own. Still those, whose children have been taken into care, accept grudgingly to the option of enlisting on parenting lessons to learn how to be a parent on terms and conditions set by the state with little or no bearing on their sensibilities. . I have been privy to many cases with Barna Vann and in one instance I had to stand and give testimony in Court to explain peculiar child-rearing practices, cultural and religious differences. Some of the psychological reports provide strange accounts such as a mis-matched décor in the home and that reflects a state of internal discord in these immigrant parents. Therefore, the parent in the psychologist's judgment is incapable of raising her child in that environment. Another instance was when a psychologist said in court that he observed the immigrant child playing with dolls. According to him, the child was hitting the dolls so, this was a case of child-abuse. The 'swirl of change that Giddens will refer to later in the text does not seem to find resonance with immigrant and refugee families in that and in his own words, Attitudes towards children have altered radically. We prize them so much because they have become so much rarer. And partly because the decision to have a child is very different from what it was in the previous generations". These immigrant families do not share the same tier of time, the same understanding of the Western concerns of children being 'rare commodities' and therefore, out-priced. The immigrant family harbours a different sense of family planning and current notions of modern family life.

Both immigrant families in these circumstances and Barna Vann need to dialogue and find together a happy medium where they can accommodate each other's styles of child rearing, values and concerns of raising children.

My experience of work in psychiatric rehabilitation, reminded me of the symptoms or symptom clusters I observe based on what families report, which could range from unhappiness and

depression, loneliness, lack of adjustment to a new society and importantly for most, the long dark nights and cold climate.

Deplorably, as you will see later, the Norwegian data is silent or rather diffident or both in exposing the data collected on immigrants and their ailments. What are the long-term ramifications of Mosque refugees, children taken away from their parents and the overall mental health status of Muslim immigrant families?

### **2.14 Subtlety of culture**

I had hoped that outside of the conversations situations it was possible to garner information that one may not have been able to secure during the course of the conversations. What they say even in casual conversation can be useful for one's study. Fortunately this was the case in my study. Some puzzling, albeit tangential phenomena relating to respect and the way elders are perceived came to the fore. What one can or cannot say or talk to elders about or do with them, which I could not get from my respondents, came out of a casual conversation with some elders. In the course of my interaction with these young Muslims, a new dialectic had emerged but we will come back to this later.

One of the main reasons for undertaking this investigation was to collect some information. Amazingly, towards the tail end of the transcriptions of the interviews, I could readily discern a clear pattern in the responses.

### **2.15 Definition and clarification of terms**

Before delving into the substantive issues of this essay, I would like to clarify a few terms that I have used quite prodigiously, at times interchangeably throughout this write-up. This is to ensure that we have the same understanding of these terms. I want to stick with the original definition of the second generation of immigrants. That is to say, we will be referring to them as the 'second generation', 'descendants' and these are those sired by the first generation of immigrants who came here either to work or have come here to seek refuge. Tarring this category of immigrants with the same brush with other immigrants from Europe or even those from the neighbouring Scandinavian countries to my mind tends to fudge the different categories of migrants. It obscures pertinent research data especially when, the second generation is conflated with immigrants from Scandinavia and other Europeans whose stay in Norway is very transitory. The term Muslim men and women in tertiary education refers to those born here or have come here to join their families,

herein referred to the second generation of immigrant Muslims. That is to say, the children of the Muslims that had migrated to Norway from the fifties onwards. This category includes those young men and women who were born here and those who were not born here but have joined their parents at an earlier age on the secondary immigration ticket. The general age bracket that we shall focus on in this study is; those between nineteen and twenty nine years, which means that we are looking at a ten year, age span.

Tertiary education might have been used interchangeably with higher education and this concerns those at the post senior secondary school and beyond the Videregående level.

I have also used conversational partners, partners in conversation, partners and respondents (rs) interchangeably.

## **2.16 Influence**

Within the context of this write-up, the term influence simply means; the ability to induce, to cause something, the factor that affects what one does or thinks and the exertion of one's power over another to cause the other to do something and in this context, what is it that spurs the Muslim men and women in higher education.

## **2.17 Achievement**

Unless otherwise stipulated, achievement means in this write-up the action of accomplishing something directed to a purpose or goal.

## **2.18 Digital**

An extremely user-friendly digital recorder with tremendous capacity was used for the conversations with my group. These lasted on the average about between twenty-five minutes and thirty-five minutes per respondent. The transcriptions took an inordinate length of time but it was well worth it as going through each response with a fine tooth-comb; identifying the main points, ranking them in recurrent and emergent themes and then setting them aside as concepts to be further placed in categories to be deployed eventually in the theory sections was a challenge in its own right.

## Chapter 3

### Presentation of findings

In this chapter, I plan to undertake the following tasks. 1) To present my findings and discuss them generally. 2) Later on in the theory sections I will explore these in more depth and how they engender theory. I will attempt to provide some answers to the themes that I have deliberately omitted in the presentation of my findings because they merit further treatment.

“What factors influence the achievements of Muslim men and women in tertiary education?”

This question constitutes the core of the project. In spite of being raised in the same family, Muslim women and men are influenced differently by different factors in their environment. The study reveals though that Muslim women are faring better in tertiary education than their male counterparts. Admittedly though, I have made some considerable revisions on my initial propositions about the seeming apathy of the young men. My first finding is that my earlier supposition about the young Muslim men was wrong. They are busy with work. Their erratic attendance and not participating in the implementation of received training and giving back to the centre some service was due to their family, studies and work commitments. And in view of their situation, work takes precedence over and above all-else.

#### 3.1 Nuance of culture

After speaking to some older immigrants and one of the young men who has become close to me, I learnt that culturally, they could not face an adult in their community that they have respect for and tell him/her that they had other things to do. It will be up to the adult to figure out himself/herself why they are not coming. The second point about this is that in their own mind's eye, it would have been an unpardonable rule-infraction to leave ‘Allah's calling’ and do otherwise. This is to say that devotion to Islam means its work must be given priority. That said, their avoidance in my opinion was in part for them not wishing to be confronted or judged and of course, some of them were for some reason or the other indisposed. I stumbled into a major cultural difference in relation to coded gestures. In as much as seeing it in light-hearted banta now

that the code was unravelled, it just confirms the truism that we ought not to make quick and ready surmises about things we do not know about other cultures.

When I had conversations with the young men originally from Somalia, all of whom have strong ties with the horn of Africa and have learnt and imbibed this custom of holding elders' beards from their parents when in their reckoning, the situation seems dire and demands corrective action. Despite the fact that some of them were born in Norway this custom was passed on to them and for those who had joined their parents later on in their childhood the custom is very much alive in their ways and in their society.

When an elderly man with a beard speaks with them, the greatest mark of honour and the demonstration of a sense of contrition that they admit guilt for committing one misdemeanour or another is to hold his beard. This way, they can mitigate the consequences of the wrath of the elder by holding his beard. Whereas, in my culture, coming from Senegambia, it is the greatest mark of disrespect. I did not know how to react to the tradition to begin with but raising the subject with the older Somalians, in a rather surreptitious manner, assisted in the unravelling of the riddle.

### **3.2 Beyond culture**

In agreement with Hall, (1976, beyond culture), quoted from Raimo Steve W, when he posed the question, "Can we, really understand all the nuances, the subtle differences or distinctions in expressions, meaning, and responses that encompass communication"? My answer to that is an emphatic no!

In my opinion, this was a clear instance of dealing with youngsters from what Hall refers to as a 'high context culture' Hall writes;

"These transactions feature pre-programmed information that is in the receiver and in the setting, with only minimal information in the transmitted message (Hall, 1976). Interestingly, the cultures cited as having a high context mode of communication are Japan and Arabia. Somalian way of life and religion are heavily influenced by Arabian ways and with such close geographical proximity; religion, long-standing intermingling in commerce, intermarriage, and customs. One could infer that the two cultures are very similar in myriad ways and therefore Somalians do have a high context culture. Now I know why they held my beard. Back to the questions.

### **3.3 Representativeness of outperformance**

The out-performance of males by women in tertiary education: Is this just a local trend or has this phenomenon a regional, country-wide or even a Global dimension?

Equity Research, opined that the participation rates for women in higher education have increased between 1999-2005 in all regions of the world. Global Gender Parity Index of 1.05. There are now more undergraduate women than men in higher education (UNESCO, 2007).

This view is echoed by the SSB (Central bureau of statistics in Norway), whose figures are very revealing. They argue in *Feminisation of higher education?*

Women's participation rates are higher than those of men in North America and Europe.

Since the mid-1980s, women have been in the majority in higher education, and today more than six out of ten students are women. The proportion of women is particularly high at university colleges (64 per cent). Whereas 39 per cent of women aged 19-24 years were in higher education in 2008, this applied to only 25 per cent of the men. The female majority in higher education is not unique to Norway. The situation is similar in most EU countries, including the new member states. Women now make up the majority (61 per cent) of the graduates at universities and university colleges. 55 per cent of students at Master's Degree level and 63 per cent at Bachelor's degree level are women.

### **3.3 Looming asymmetries**

What are the reasons for these looming asymmetries?

My study has revealed a number of interesting findings that I did not anticipate about the situation of Muslim men and women. The majority of Muslim men who gained access to higher education in Stavanger often take a gap year or two or several gap years in a row to work and save money to continue their education, prepare for marriage and to support the family. Often, their fathers are generally at retirement age and have a small pension for not having worked here for the requisite time to earn themselves the necessary pension points for a good retirement package.

The young women, unlike their male counterparts, do not generally take a gap year. They go from start to finish!

### **3.4 Family expectations**

The expectations families have of Muslim women are different from the Muslim males.

### 3.5 Gender roles

The young Muslim women, like their brothers live at home with the family. Most of them work part-time to maintain themselves and help now and then in the house financially. But this is not generally expected. They have more time to study and complete their courses on time. The demands that are placed on them are relatively minimal. By and large participation in household chores and in conventional gender roles like shopping, looking after younger siblings, helping them with homework, attend School events in place of their parents as their parents might not be fluent enough In Norwegian to follow the proceedings at meetings. Since they do not go out to clubs or to meet friends in town, they have ample time to study and fulfill all the course requirements.

What factors have led to this imbalance or otherwise?

### 3.5 Loans in Islam

Generally, the majority of Muslim men and women in Stavanger do not take study loans because of the way the clauses of Sharia are interpreted. According to one School, it is considered 'Haram', (unlawful). Study loans, home loans or loans of all sorts as long as interest is generated, should be avoided.

The interesting thing about usury in Islam is that regardless of whether one is either the lender or the borrower, as long as interest is generated from the transaction, both parties are culpable. This is why it is forbidden to Muslims. Islam forbids usury. The relevant laws are aimed at preventing the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few at the expense of the masses, out of mercy not only for the latter but also for the former (Qur'an 59:7). Accordingly, usury is prohibited in the strongest possible terms.

One school does not forbid one from taking loans. It holds that the precepts are socially and historically dated. Therefore, it contextualizes the loan agreements against the backcloth with which the transaction is taking place. This clause is differently interpreted and those that adhere to this School take loans only if they can be clear in their consciences that taking it is inevitability. But there is a general consensus between both schools that taking loans and knowingly that interest is generated is unacceptable. However, this latter school holds that one who practices it out of necessity will still be forgiven if he repents sincerely (Qur'an 2:279).

### 3.6 Gender policies

To what extent can policies in support of gender issues have a big impact on its citizenry?

The general political climate we live in Norway is an enabling environment especially for women. The young women see women Prime ministers, women executives, women decision makers, women politicians and other women in key positions doing well, speaking for themselves and not through others. The Norwegian Gender Equality Act has, argue gender activists, and become a model for expanding the protection against discrimination in other areas as well. In this way the argument runs, the Act has strengthened anti-discrimination laws in general.

What does the future hold if the general trends persist?

Contrary to the fears of certain sections of the community, society needs to take stock of any deficiencies that may be akin to some sections of the society from time to time and address them accordingly. For example, Current research and curriculum development projects with schools point to ways, which pay attention to the lessons, learnt from earlier feminist interventions are steps in the right direction.

### 3.7 Are women naturally tenacious?

Tenaciousness is a trait that is endowed to both men and women. It is not a character trait that is exclusively the preserve of females. Is this a phenomenon that has been nurtured by their home environment? Home environments do play a significant part in our personality formation and development regardless of gender. It provides us the medium for language learning. It facilitates our bonding with other family members; assist us in our growth and to build our character.

How do the two gender groups regard each other in terms of a future with each other as couples and as a community or is the community bubble poised at the threshold of an inevitable burst? The bullishness with which my partners handled this question was astounding. One can understand them in light of the high value premium they place on marriage and family and the vision they hold on keeping a family together in the name of Islam so very dearly. This is the way, they were brought up and it seems like they only envision 'ideal type marriages'. Without being mindful of the attendant pitfalls. Many if not most of my partners though are on the verge of getting married. Some are in courtship, some are newly wedded and still some are hoping to marry. . They don't seem to, as it were, to see beyond the romance phase. MQ said that 'he cannot see any changes in Muslim men marrying Muslim women. The only change he can foresee is the duration of



courtship extending”. ZA says, “In my opinion I think it will be a trend that will only increase in the future”. EKA says that

“Yes I do believe that young Muslim men and women can have a marrying and sharing life together, however I can see that the western culture may have affected that in that it became easier to give up on a marriage”

One of them though MOHAM A has located the blind spot and said;” I see Muslims still marrying only Muslims for the large part. But I think it is an increasing divorce rate among Muslims, as it is among non- Muslims in Norway. I personally know a lot of young divorced Muslim couples. Unlike the first generation of Muslims in Norway, the second generation tend to be more prone to separation and divorce. The factors can be many, but economic issues are one of the main reasons in my estimate”.

### **3.8 Marriage e and divorce**

Marriage and divorce are part of the institutions we have created to enhance the overall well being of the family and to create within the family, a safe and secure environment for coupledom or partnership of the spouses and for the children to grow. The institution is also mindful of possible rifts, feuds and clashes to the extent that the institution has created ways to settle disputes between spouses and in the event of divorce, it ensures that one spouse does not take advantage of the other or exploit the vulnerability of the other. The admonishment that is given to both parties by their elders is the exercise of sobriety. By the same token, the moral of the rifts in marriage is that No group is immune to feuding, separation and divorce. I must mention though that being staunch adherents of Islam, the young Muslims can expect the support and denunciation of divorce as an abomination according to Islam from religious leaders and elders in their communities. However, divorce as an antithesis of marriage has been around as long as marriage existed on this earth. In fact, Islam itself recognises its prevalence and its tendencies and has established its own procedures and ground rules leading to and after it occurs.

A recent SSB report is alarming. In the period 2008-2012. Divorce among a couple that had been married for more than ten years, is about 1 percent.

### **3.9 Divorce among immigrants**

Among immigrants in most groups there were fewer divorces where both spouses are from the same region than for the population as a whole. Excepting the few from Africa. The differences are still small, and for some groups are also small numbers. Most divorces occur in marriages where both spouses come from the same country in Africa. Where the marriage had lasted 7-10 years, divorced 5.4 percent in the period 2008-2012. There are differences according to what country it is in Africa spouses come from. The proportion of divorces in all such is higher for immigrants from Somalia (3.4percent), while it is slightly lower among those from Eritrea (2.7 percent). One could therefore reasonably conclude that the community bubble is no longer at the threshold of a burst, it has in fact popped!

The alarming rate of divorce among the immigrant families stands testimony to the fact that my respondents are ill-prepared for the propensity towards divorce among them and for now, does not factor in their equation, just like any other community in Norway. It will take a little while yet for them to realise this especially now that they will start out new careers, children, the bills, tiffs and the rigours and challenges of life to set in and etch their noughts and crosses deep inside their matrimonial skins.

As we shall see later in the discussion, the role of the modern family, relationships, having children have changed markedly in the past three decades.

### **3.19 Dropping- out males**

Have the young male's ebullience in advanced education began to peter out or do they have other priorities, other earthly distractions/attractions/values other than formal education for now?

My daily interaction and experience with quite a substantial number of young Muslim men tells me that they have dropped out of tertiary education and they are not likely to go back to their studies. These are mainly those who have initially gone directly on to the world of work and afterwards felt that they could enlist on a study programme but find it daunting. The other category is those who had undergone some apprenticeship programmes that led them to higher education but find that they lack the capacity or find the discipline of studying too much. There are also those that are constrained by family-demands, by their religion (because of the loan issue), or just simply give up because they have established careers or whose value for tertiary education has changed over time. For now and in the foreseeable future, they may never come back to tertiary education.

Do young Muslim/immigrant young males have positive role models in their communities that they can emulate? It would suffice to say that there are umpteen role models around and one does not need to go scouting for positive role models in one's community. There is no direct evidence to support this proposition.

Is there a difference between the older and younger generations perception of Islam and the future of Muslims in the west?

My partners in conversation have been quite emphatic about playing down their differences with their parents. Listen to what they said:

EKAΛ(woman) "I do believe that I am trying to stay on the right path of Islam and inshallah with continued prayers of help from Allah I will stay on the path".

ZAI: (woman) "I do believe that I share somewhat the same brand of Islam as them, but I know less and that might make us different. But as I learn more I think I will be more like them, just more tolerant".

MOHAM: (man) A; "I do share the same brand of Islam as my parents for the most part. But I think it is also true to say that I am more tolerant and respectful to other people's beliefs. I think it is because I am more exposed to other religions and other brands of Islam than my parents were in Morocco.

MQ: (man) I do share the same brand of Sunni Islam as my parents. Obviously growing up here, I am more tolerant to other religions.

Increasingly, the situation of Muslims in the West is assuming some new dimensions. It will as a consequence become totally different especially in their practice and outlook from their parents brands and from the brands in Muslim countries. Their parents generation grew up with a massive blend of Islam and their home cultures, in their homelands and it is difficult to tell apart where Islam begins and where customary practices end. Whereas for them, they're abiding task is to begin to define their own brand of Islam within a secular context. Interestingly, the fact that they are all more 'tolerant' than their parents spells several things all at once; their threshold of tolerance is high and they could see how different they are from their parents. They were better than their parents in countenancing other people's religions and other religious persuasions. Third, their tolerance levels could render them prone to accepting and become willing to embracing a different brand of Islam than their parents. Another interesting point is that generally when trends appear in a society, they are like tides that wash everything in their path. They come with their

own momentum and mood and before we realize what happened they would have already changed the landscape and everything within and under its skyline.

Again, since all of them are still going through that process of learning/searching for their own Islamic and individual identities, they have not got to that stage where they can make independent/autonomous decisions.

### **3.20 Brands of Islam**

The process might take a few years but in my opinion, they will embrace an Islam that will sever its ties with Muslim countries. The scale and extent to which their brand of Islam will shed and incorporate new things peculiarly adapted to their home-situation is for now an unknown quantity. It will be interesting to see the direction and how things unfold in the coming decades. How much of an influence have the youth experience from the teachers in both secondary and further education?

### **3.21 Experience at school/teacher/observations/expectations/learner styles/ learning outcomes new challenges**

I asked my two teachers the following two questions and below are their responses!

Do you see any difference in the performance between your male and female second-generation pupils? How has the harmonization programme of standards in education in the OECD countries changed or influenced the way you work and does it affect your own view of education?

K O T- A female teacher at secondary School.

We have only a few immigrants in my School. We have mainly refugees. Generally the immigrant girls have caught up quickly. My impression is that the girls are doing better than boys.

With regard to the harmonization programme, they deal with business and economics.

They are designing certain tests, international tests called PISA. And everybody, whatever you have been taught, whatever you have in your country, everybody has to answer the same questions,

It is across the board! From Hong Kong to England to wherever, yes.

Of course, you have to focus on globalization because it is a reality, for good or for bad. But I have had a very critical approach to it, because I saw it coming. This business about ‘everybody should learn the same things are ridiculous. It’s like, there are some powers behind it, economic powers and it must be. Because that’s what they were all about. They want everybody to think in the same way. To analyze in the same way. To know the same things and not to question too much. Because these questions you have in the tests, you have it in Science, Math, and a little bit in the Social Sciences and they are not analytical.

That’s much worse now than before. They have imposed so many tests on schools now. Everybody would use a lot of time and methods to show that we are doing well on what they test us on. Everybody wants good results and all the rest of it. We are all like a big market!

### 3.22 MUD. 2

A male Teacher in senior secondary

“Our school is extremely diverse. And of course, it’s just not girls, but a mixture with boys? And then, over the years, there’s been this harmonization process, where they’re trying to maintain standards across the board with a performance test called PISA, but this is a process of comparing education systems and seeing which of them works best and why. And the Finish module was identified as the one that was most suited to both learning and teaching.

In terms of the suitability of the Norwegian model to the learning outcomes of young men and women, it was felt in theory that, the Norwegian school system has a methodology that is friendlier to girls than boys, in the sense that; the work is very theory based. And then also, it requires the kind of behaviour where students sit down and they are orderly. The teachers have something to do and they do it. And this theory says that, boys and girls do not learn the same way”. And the way the school system has been designed and the way it has been run so far tends to provide an environment, which is more conducive for girls to learn.

Two views there. However Kot’s bone of contention with the PISA goes beyond the pages of this discourse but her comment about the idea about PISA offering a cloning-type of curriculum has been the subject of a few discourses. The latter utterance by the male teacher in senior secondary school about the conduciveness and the affinity with which both the learning and teaching styles resonate with girls’ learning styles is corroborated by the OECD, (2007). The notion about the Norwegian model as being more conducive to girl’s education though is contested in some

quarters as there is ample evidence to show that girls all over Europe and the West are out-performing boys and their curricular are not based on the Norwegian model.

### **3.33 Excellent teachers and pupils relationships**

The relationships between teachers and pupils seem to be positive all the way regardless of the sex of the teacher. While applauding this new development, I will hasten to add that in spite of what I referred to elsewhere as the ‘EXPLOSION IN EDUCATIONAL ENTRANTS’ at University, the majority of Muslim youth go out to face the challenges of a life outside the educational institutions. It is not clear why the majority of these young Muslims dropout even before they go into tertiary education? SSB has found a correlation between the educational attainment of parents and the entry of their children into higher education. If this is the case, then our society still harbours residual tendencies towards the reproduction/replication of a class society although I often hear the argument that Norway is a class-less society. Perhaps both Weber and Marxist notions of a class society need some re-appraisal in the Norwegian society?

### **3.34 Dreams of return!**

What effects does migration have on the psychological and social well being of migrants and their descendants? BIOGENIC VERSUS SOCIO-GENIC FACTORS!

To emigrate is never a light undertaking especially when the distance is long, when return is uncertain and the move a long term one. Leaving behind all the familiar things and one’s comfort zone add to the concerns of the migrant.

Mead, (1947), suggests that the immigrant is a culturally disoriented person who is both subject to special strains which intensify conflicts within him and is bereft of the culturally useful means of helping with reducing tensions. Reusch (1948) noted that in the transition period following migration, the older responses are not appropriate for dealing effectively with existing realities and that the task of changing values and rearranging behaviour can be disastrous.

Maltzbury (1955) supplementing this theoretical viewpoint found that the rate of first admissions to psychiatric hospitals was markedly higher for immigrants regardless of sex or color. As refugees and other displaced persons have been shown to have high rates of psychological illness.

All of these tendencies of immigrants and refugees to buckle under the strain have been corroborated by several other studies but for brevity, we will limit our citations just to the above.

### 3.35 Representation

I tried to secure some Norwegian data on this subject but the data that is available is not segregated. Be this as it may, According to SSB, there is strong anecdotal evidence to validate the supposition. The incidences of violent crimes, muggings, stabbings, homicides, substance abuse, petty acts of larceny, the gross over-representation of immigrants in psychiatric units are a cause for concern. Seven out of ten children in children's homes in Oslo are immigrant children, (NRK,Eko), 22 10 14. If this is the harbinger of what is to come, the future of these children growing up in the society and will soon become adults sooner or later, is grim. Spitz (1946) observed that institutionalised children showed a marked deterioration in behaviour during the period 8–12 months, and that some simply sat staring expressionlessly into space. Later studies have confirmed that institutionalisation particularly affects language and social responsiveness. Goldfarb (1955) found that children who had spent the first three years of their life in institutions were unable to form close interpersonal relationships, as well as having deficient control of impulses”,(Quoted from Argyle,(1969) p 51.

The hotly debated youth-disaffections and their recourse to extremism and violence have begun to rear their heads in this country. Incidents of Norwegian Muslim youth absconding to the war zones of the Middle East are a case in point. All these cannot be viewed in isolation from the situation of second-generation Muslim immigrants in higher education. Those immigrants that are afflicted, incarcerated, left for the war zones come from families, from communities, they are brothers, sisters, cousins, friends, Schoolmates, attendee of the same Mosque, a relative and what have you! The communities are small so if there is grief in one, there is grief in all.

There are grounds to suppose that the incidence of mental illness especially the induced psychosis type among immigrants especially among immigrant youth and undocumented immigrants. Owing to the nature of their material conditions they live under. As had happened in other countries immigrant youth fell between the gaps of three slats but in the past few years, there is a new slippery, magnetic gap that they are falling through readily in their numbers. . One of these is criminality or being criminalised), the second is the incidence of a high morbidity rate among them, the third is the incidents of mental illness, the fourth is the literalist/Jihadist. Caught-up in this quadrangular axis, all of which lead one to a downward spiral with little or no chance for rescue. the youth risk either being mis-diagnosed, die untimely deaths due to over-exposure to

the hazards of drugs or wind-up as vegetables in psychiatric units or join the new Jihadist movements with cells all around the world. Often we fail to fathom out the difference between mental illness and criminality. Perhaps we can learn from the experiences of the U S A or Great Britain where there are sizeable numbers of long residing immigrants who have either had a brush with the law, lived in the custody of one or the others 'total or partial institution' (Goffman's terms), had referrals to probation services, or committed to psychiatric institutions etc.

Here are some startling examples from Britain and the USA to illustrate this points I am making above.

persons of African -Caribbean origin are more likely to be both imprisoned and admitted to secure hospitals in Britain.

Approximately 6 times as many Black men and women were in prison in 1997 compared with White counterparts.

### 3.36 Ethnic differences in prisoners: Criminality and psychiatric morbidity

JEREMY COID ET. AL, (2002)

The UK experience reveals that it is in the field of forensic psychiatry that racial injustices and cultural oppression are felt most acutely by African Caribbean service users.

Black and ethnic minorities are more often:

1. Diagnosed as schizophrenic
2. Compulsorily detained under the Mental Health Act,
3. Admitted as 'offender patients',
4. Held by police under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act,
5. Transferred to locked wards from open wards,
6. Not referred for psychotherapy,
7. Given high doses of medication,
8. Sent to psychiatrists by courts,



## 9. Have unmet needs

Source: S. Fernando (2003) Cultural Diversity, Mental Health and Psychiatry: The Struggle Against Racism Stats and facts.

The use of imprisonment has been highest for African American and Hispanic males. It is now estimated by the U.S. Department of Justice that approximately one third of all Black males will experience state prison in their lives. Incarceration rates have resulted in nearly 1.5 million children (or 2 percent of the entire population under age 18) having a parent incarcerated.

In both Britain and the USA, the situation of their black and ethnic minorities in relation to psychiatry, incarceration and other allied malaises have now reached crisis proportions. Are there lessons for Norway?

Again, the Norwegian data is silent on this subject but, the SSB has confirmed that there is a disproportionate representation of immigrant youth in psychiatric units.

### 3.37 Going home

After thirty to forty years of either self-imposed or in real exile (for example), when you speak with most older immigrants, they tell you that they are planning to go 'home' and they make it sound as though they are leaving imminently.

As an older immigrant, I share their sentiment and I can readily understand why. In my experience, every one that leaves either under duress or even on one's volition, there is still some unfinished business back home. This 'dream' is often prevalent among all the older immigrants, particularly among those who left in a hurry, are illiterate or semi-illiterate and cannot find something of value to engage in exile, those whose lives here are merely one of existence.

### **3.38 SUSPENDED ANIMATION!!**

They are in the main in a state of suspended animation. They are delaying living their lives and are encapsulated in their own worlds. And above all they are cocooned in their own dream. Without having anything to wake up and go to, these older immigrants gravitate towards rendezvous points in the city to while away their lives and time. They are often found basking in past glories, Telling and retelling stories of their past greatness and lamenting their predicament.

### **3.39 Large families too little resources**

Many, if not most of them have on the average larger families to support but do lack both the mental and other wherewithal's to keep their families going. This often results in mental breakdowns, Mosque sanctuaries and total indifference to what obtains around them. A tiny minority are consumed by misdirected anger and are gripped by a sense of negative feelings of suspicion and persecution. This is the general cohort that often falls prey to the literalist traditions of Islam. In the end, they become disillusioned, resentful and wallow in hopelessness. It is crucial to note that all of them come from families with children growing up or have grown up in the society. Their status of health does impact on the overall well being of their children and families.

It could be deduced that a part of the behavioural oddities as evinced by both the older and middle-aged immigrants could be tied to their feelings of loss of control over themselves, their children and their families; the consequences of relocation to a different society and ways that they cannot fathom out, and lack of adjustment to the changes in their environment which is in a continual state of flux. Perhaps their ordeal is exacerbated by their social circumstances. We can safely conclude that their status of mental health derives from both bio and socio-genic origins that invariably impacts on their families!

### **3.40 Stark choice**

Nothing in life stops to wait for us until we are ready to deal with it. The older generation is confronted with three new issues that they have to address. -Their children have now or are becoming adults. -They are at that age where they are procreating. -The older immigrants cannot leave their already established families. They are faced with health issues as shown by medical researchers (Claussen; 2007), (2010) who found among other things significant correlation between level of education, occupation and mortality rates.

And finally, the situation back home is not ready for them. The political climate remains unchanged and much of what they have been longing for in their past is probably no more.

In reality though, they are bereft of their past and what they had always known to be the order in which things are. Without acquiring the new language and mental apparatus to code, decode and uncode present and past schemata-to borrow Piaget's term. They are faced with the daily drudgery, along with the daily emotional and cultural shocks they encounter. Typical examples are the changing values and attitudes of power relations within the family, attitudes towards Alcohol consumption, homosexuality and Gay marriages, gender-relations, gender and equity and the GENERAL hostility towards Islam especially in the media. In the meantime, larger society

continues to plod along the path to modernity, to what Anthony Giddens, BBC, Reith lecture, (1999), calls our runaway world. Giddens argues in reference to the changing role of the family; “Among all changes going on today, none are more important than those happening in our personal lives.

### **3.41 In sexuality, emotional life, marriage and the family**

Most of us can tune out of from larger problems for much of the time. We cannot opt out however, from the swirl of change reaching right into the heart of our emotional life”.

These older immigrant men are gripped with fear of the changes and a braying sense of alienation. They cannot see a role for themselves amidst all these colossal changes taking place in such a small segment of time. Whither shall they head to and whither shall they follow? The runaway World has indeed run away and left them standing at the precipice.

### **3.42 Psychology, racism, racialism and the media**

My mother bore me in the southern wild and I am black but oh my soul is white. White is an angel as the English child but I am black as if bereaved of light. ( Blake; Little black boy!)

The U S Civil rights commission defines racism as;

“Any action or attitude, conscious or unconscious that subordinates an individual or group based on skin colour or race can be enacted individually or institutionally”.

I proffer another definition by the Director of the Institute of race relations, London, A Sivanandan. His definition touches the point rather than just to point at it. Racism, argues Sivanandan, (1975), is the term used to describe systematized oppression of one race by another, this has usually manifested itself as the oppression of blacks by whites and is based on the ideology that one race is inferior to another. Whereas racialism is the social phenomena of dislike by people of one race for the people of another, not so much that one race as a whole oppresses another. Nicolson, (1982), agreeing with Sivanandan proposes that racialism is the ideology and racism is the practice. Up until the period just after the Second World War, the phenomenon of racism was a taboo subject. It was mooted but never verbalised, pointed but never touched, felt but

never declared. Even worse, it was omitted from the race or any other discourse of the Jim Crow years. Blacks in the USA knew this too well to the extent that from childhood they were taught to fear and to keep away from the white people, never to contradict them, never look them in the eye, never challenge them. At a time that in their recent past, lynchings were common occurrences, they had learned and mastered the rules of segregation, the art of subterfuge and their place in the scheme of things. They lived with whites in the same society but there was a hiatus between the two communities, one white and the other black.

Historically, racism has always been a means to an end. It had served specific functions in different contexts going as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century when slaving nations needed to find some moral grounds for defending, explaining away the reasons for indulging in the practice of slavery and that was simply to galvanise the attitudes to racial supremacism by dehumanising their victims and presenting them as lesser beings than themselves.

Here is what Hume said in his defence of slavery in, (1851), I am apt to suspect the Negro and in general all the other species of men to be naturally inferior to whites. There never was a civilisation of any complexion than white, nor any individual eminent in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences.

Racism did grow out of slavery. Its pickings were so lucrative that even the clergy looked the other way as they too benefitted from the trade. The trade was so debauching that the missionaries built a Chapel in Cape-Coast, in Ghana over-looking the dungeons where at any one time, they would bless the souls of one thousand five hundred captured Africans who were held awaiting shipment through the middle passage into thralldom and the horrors of the new world. Africa was carved-up by Europe in 1884. By this time, all the ideas and theories about racism became most highly developed and the ways and manner in which this was done was very systematic.

By deploying religious and moral reasons as grounds for civilising and Christianising the heathens; extracting texts out of context from the Scriptures to explain the need to save the Africans from themselves, through folklore and literature, eugenics, Intelligence testing, through colonial education, through taxation and through the policies of segregation and divide and conquer. Today, racism has assumed new forms and new guises in the world's nations. We see it in immigration, numbers of school drop-outs, incarcerations, exclusions from public spaces, racial profiling among police officers, customs officials and at its lowest level, physical violence against people of colour. The most significant perpetrator and beneficiary is the media.

In Norway, there is no policy that either promotes racism or racialism. In fact there is legislation against all types of discrimination including, gender, race, religious affiliation, sexual orientation

or functionality. However, there are clear instances where the practice has gone unchallenged. According to Fangen, (2009), for example, some academics and politicians claim that skepticism against immigrants who claim benefits, must be treated with suspicion. The politicians and academics say that this is necessary in order to prevent exploitation of welfare benefits. In such instances, I will agree that such skepticism is necessary in order to prevent fraud. However, if this practice is stretched across the board so that regardless of race and origin, everybody is treated with suspicion, and given equal treatment at the Welfare office, then there is no cause for alarm. But, if this skepticism applies only to young immigrants, then the practice is inherently racist both in intent and in action.

### **3.42 Racism and varied prejudice**

Immigrants face the daily prejudice from individuals and more insidiously, the racism of the institutions. Friday June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 for example, a member of the progress party in Arendal's City Council; Sylvi Hardy said on NRK, evening news that "Immigrants smell and they beat their children".

### **3.42 Proxy-racism**

Joseph Hacker, the former editor of Black Britain in the BBC (2014), (The why-factor), has argued that, 'what we have now is what is called 'proxy racism'. Peoples race are no longer under attack. It is their culture, their religion, the clothes they wear, the food they eat and everything that goes along with their history or their ways. These are denied, they are inferior so the old racism is back again". (2014) BBC. Earlier on I had hinted that the media was perhaps one of the greatest beneficiaries and perpetrators of racism. What I did not pin-point is its powerful effect in shaping public opinion, ideas, beliefs and theories, ways of thinking and acting, based on a particular interpretation of society and history. For children and especially immigrant children, who have grown up on Tarzan and Gena and their savages in the African jungle, Robinson Crusoe and Man Friday, Thorbjørn Egner's Vesla Hoa (en liten neger gutt, en ekte hottentot, the ugly duckling and other such imagery and racial stereo-typing in the media; the portrayal of Muslims as terrorists cannot auger well for the enhancement of the Muslims positive self-definition, self-image an self-esteem, tolerance from larger society and mutual respect. The young Muslim men and women in higher education, the subject of this paper; who are now at the prime of their youth an young adult

lives will have assimilated thousands of hours of television viewing of negative images of themselves, their race and their religion from the media.

I want to share with you the results of two groundbreaking psychological experiments. The first, conducted by Albert Bandura known collectively as the Bobo doll experiments. In 1961 and in 1963 respectively. Bandura observed children after the children had watched an adult model act aggressively towards a Bobo doll. Bandura's most significant observation on the children's behaviour after seeing the model get rewarded, punished or experienced no consequence for beating up the bobo doll. Albert Bandura concluded the following which did form the basis of his 'social learning theory' or 'observational learning theory'. The kernel of this theory is that a person does not have to directly undergo an experience to learn from it. In other words, one can learn indirectly by observing other people's behaviors and the eventualities those models experience.

When one person observes another person experiencing a punishment in response to a behavior, the observer generally becomes less likely to engage in that behavior. On the other hand, when an individual notices that another person is being rewarded in response to a behavior, the observer will generally become more likely to engage in that behavior. A psychologist called Kenneth Clark and his wife, Mamie, conducted the second experiment. This experiment is famously known as the 'Clark Doll Experiment (1939). Basically, the Clarks presented two dolls to black children. One white and the other black. The children were asked for their preference and most of them chose the white doll because it was for them nicer. The dramatic results helped in influencing policies on racial segregation. The kernel of Bandura's theory is that a person does not have to directly undergo an experience to learn from it. In other words, one can learn indirectly by observing other people's behaviors and the eventualities those models experience.

When an immigrant for example, observes another like-situated person with fitting racial-likeness/ a compatriot/ a fellow of the same religious order, experiencing a punishment through abuse and derogatory remarks or in such situations, the immigrant generally becomes less likely to engage in that behaviour. On the other hand, when an immigrant notices that another person is being rewarded in response to a behavior, he will generally become more likely to engage in that behavior. This is not just unique to immigrants but is true for all regardless of race or origin.

Put differently and in the context of my partners, if one is constantly being negated through the medium of books, television and in the print media, one is likely to develop responses that are highly likely to be inimical to one's person and one's self.

### 3.43 Correlations

The results of the experiment by Clark and his wife with black and white dolls equally demonstrate a positive correlation between preferences of white over black by black children. Is this an instance of self-negation and self-loathing? (These experiments were replicated as recent as 2012 and the results are consistent with the original findings, BBC Why-Factor, 2014).

However, it would suffice to say that the lesson to be learnt here is that the way visible minorities, Muslims, immigrants and other minorities are portrayed), in the media will have had over the years a lasting, impairing and emasculating effect on their performance at all levels of education. In both studies, the evidence they reveal in terms of most children and particularly black children who preferred the white doll raises issues of negative self-image and a distorted conception of self; a troubled self and a low self-esteem. Conversely, the images in the media of Muslims and visible minorities will have imbued white children with a false sense of white supremacism and black children with the reverse, inferiority complex. Verbal aggression that the immigrants meet in their daily lives, argues Argyle, (1969), does not inflict direct biological damage, but it affects self-esteem which can have somatic consequences...Aggression often results when an individual is attacked by another, or when self-esteem is attacked. P46

It would be difficult for anyone not to see the nexus between the immigrant's imbibed negative sense of failure/defeat and all their experience and how these experiences appear to them. I daresay that this is an obvious influencing factor. Let us look at the work of the media.

Eide and Simonsen (2007) have argued that 'foreigners' are systematically represented as suspicious by the Norwegian media. Andersson (2003) opined that the public debate about immigrant youths in Norway has been characterized by sensational media stories about 'problems' with youth gangs and forced marriages. Prieur (2002 :) criticizes the media for their frequent focus on young male immigrants (often of African origin) and their criminal behaviour, their violence and their gang membership.

In his analysis of the presentation of Somalis, in the media, Klepp (2002) has found that from the beginning of the 1990s up to 1998, there was a change in the way Somalis were represented by the media. Of the total number of reports about Somalis in the Internet versions of the newspapers, 88 per cent had a negative focus (Klepp 2002). Further, 30 per cent of the coverage on Somalis is about crime, and most of it presented in a negative manner (Eide and Simonsen 2007,

A survey of eight Norwegian newspapers over five weeks in 2003 showed that Muslims, to a greater extent than other immigrants, were portrayed negatively (Lindstad and Fjeldstad 2005:

Pedersen et. al.,(2006) maintain that the social solidarity of many Norwegians does not extend outside a circle of national citizens, as people 'distrust foreigners.

### 3.44 Intersections-psychology and Islam

Internal incongruousness is not an innate malady, dysfunction or natural predisposition but a consequence of external conditioning, both white and black children will continuously strive to achieve 'internal consistency' to pinch a phrase from, Festinger. This is closely related to in Islamic science and in the literature as 'fitra'. This phenomenon is variously defined as a state of (purity) homeostasis, balance, human nature, natural religion, harmony the natural state of being, Islam. In other words, order is to nature as Fitra is to human beings...Ramadan, Tariq. 2004. P230

This state of purity is prevalent in humans from when they are born. They do not harbour notions of 'otherness' nor do they prejudge others and as it were, do not carry innate feelings of resentment, exaltation, cynicism, fear or favour or ill-will towards other people. It is the family, the State and her institutions and the society that teaches them other ways of viewing and attending to things and other people around them. Because these children and adults later, are bombarded with information that cannot sit well in them about issues of race, they are forever struggling to regain their internal Fitra especially when they feel that something does not quite sit well within them, thus plunging them into this internal state of incongruity.

In psychology, a related phenomenon is known as 'cognitive dissonance, a theory advanced by Leon Festinger.

Cognitive dissonance is the mental discordance within our psyches, resulting from us holding two contrasting views about something. or discomfort experienced by an individual who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values at the same time, or is confronted by new information that conflicts with an existing mind-set. Feininger`s theory of cognitive dissonance focuses on how humans strive for internal consistency. When inconsistency (dissonance) is experienced, individuals tend to become psychologically uncomfortable and are motivated to attempt to reduce this dissonance, as well as actively avoiding situations and information, which are likely to increase it. Similarly, in jean Piaget`s theory of cognitive development, the infant is constantly trying to find a cognitive balance by regulating the balance between what he calls the functional invariants-assimilation and accommodation. For reasons of brevity, we will not be going into them but, much like fastener, the strive for congruence is pivotal in Piaget`s theory. The lesson to be learnt here is that attitudes are learnt. They are not innate!



### **3.45 Gender differences in experience**

I asked my respondents what their experiences of racism and racialism were, if any in Norway and below am a summary of their responses. It was clear that there is a marked gendered difference in their experiences. In sum, a significant number of the women had never experienced racism whereas for the men, all of them have experienced both the racism of the institutions and the most extreme form of racialism that is, direct physical attacks to their homes, or experienced verbal abuse or attack to their persons or religion. Looking at the responses of the Muslim men and women, it is small wonder why the majority of the women would not be confronted by the naked racialism, their brothers encounter in their daily lives in the streets and social spaces because they are never out in those places where the likelihood of the experience of racial abuse can occur. Besides, in spite of all the victories that Norwegian women had won over the years, there is still, a concealed and lingering vestige of male supremacism in the society. However when I confronted the women who had not experienced either racialism or racism, with something close to their chests, with the infamous ‘cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed’, they said that this was a ‘red line’ for them but in quick retort they added that they do not condone the violent reaction even though they could understand it.

### **3.46 Exclusion! Those excluded know something about ostracism**

Immigrants live in high-density accommodation. The immediate impression is always of overcrowding as forcibly confirmed by most studies of immigrant settlement. The population and housing census from 2001 shows vast differences in living conditions between those of non-Western backgrounds and those without immigrant backgrounds (Statistics Norway 2002a). While most Norwegians and Western immigrants live in detached houses with few people sharing several rooms, many non-Western immigrants live in 'cramped dwellings', with 54 per cent sharing a household with less than one room per person (Statistics Norway 2002a). A statistical study on young adults (aged 20–25) with Vietnamese, Turkish and Pakistani backgrounds carried out by, Løwe, 2008 conveyed that they lived with their parents more often than young adults

without immigrant backgrounds, mirroring the general statistics above, their living conditions were much more crowded than the average, Løwe; (2008), (2010):) The seemingly significant overlap between those suffering from comparatively low wages, low-level employment and relatively unfavourable housing suggest that these differences are not merely cultural or a matter of preference. In our sample of more than 250 life-story interviews points the Population and housing census, (2013) Many young adults of non-Western backgrounds report that lack of space and silence in shared flats, is a partly excluding factor in the sense that it prevents them from studying at home. We can therefore conclude that both racism and racialism are not dreamed up demons, they are neither figments nor fantasy but a fact of life that immigrants (including Muslim men and women in higher education) encounter and put up with as a matter of course in their daily lives. Self-loathing is debilitating to the souls and spirits of the victims of racism. At times to the extent that the very same victims deny its existence.

It seems like that the strong urge for affiliation and acceptance by the group, (which might vary from one person to the other) can make the individual to adopt such extreme tacks of affiliative behaviour to the extent that they can totally surrender themselves to the group norm, even at their own detriment. This can to a large extent explain instances where, immigrants themselves deny being racially slighted or even to abnegate the prevalence of racism and racialism.

We will take heart though that none of them though have experienced this scourge in any educational establishment, as far as we know, this trend in education therefore deserves accolades.

### **3.47 Legislation and social change**

The role of legislation in social change! As will be seen later in our discussion on the role of the state and in our conclusions, legislation is crucial in the affirmation of commitment to change any undesirable state of affairs. There is overwhelming evidence to buttress this point in Norway and the World over. In Norway, for example, argues Mary Teigen, (2013) Director for research, inclusion and migration at the Institute for Social Research in Oslo, that Norway has enacted legislation against many different types of discrimination – for example, discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, political view, sexual orientation, functionality and age.

“Our research shows that legislation related to gender equality has served as a model for protection against discrimination in other areas. In a number of important areas this protection has been formulated in the same way as for gender equality. Thus both

protection against discrimination and the opportunity to practice preferential treatment in certain cases have been strengthened for many groups.” P 24 in STRONG GENDER EQUALITY LEGISLATION HAS ENHANCED OVERALL PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

### **3.48 Transnational perspectives**

Jacobsen, (2011) has pointed to the significance of the judicious applications of theories of globalisation in our analysis of Islam, Muslims and the youth in Europe when she writes; “Theories of globalization, transnationalism and diaspora also came to have a significant impact on the understanding of Islamic traditions and Muslims in Europe”. P 38 in Islamic traditions and Muslim youth in Norway. This is why we shall for the rest of the write-up situate our study against a global backdrop so that we can identify and relate our findings on the factors that influence Muslim men and women in higher education, against what obtains not only at the local level in tertiary education but against what is happening globally.

## **Chapter 4**

### **THE STATE, SCHOOL AND FAMILY!**

#### **4.1 In what ways have the agents of socialisation influence our group of respondents**

“When a child suckles, it looks up to its mother”! (Wolof proverb depicting socialisation)

“When the mango falls from the tree, it does not fall at the foot of another tree!”(A Trinidadian proverb).

The concerns of this chapter are to attempt to relate issues triggered off by the findings on Muslim men and women in tertiary education and relate them to socialisation theory and more specifically on the influences that are brought to bear on people regardless of gender, class, social standing race and other social categorisations. Socialisation has been variously defined in several different ways as the process by which a young person is added to the group so that he learns the ways of the group over time. The child learns the group’s practices, the group norms, values and language and so on so that by the time it reaches adulthood, it can function competently in his society and

environment as a fully-fledged individual; ready to pass on his knowledge, skills and attitudes. In other words, socialisation in all its manifestations has at its core, learning, and adaptation to the environment, transmission of values and knowledge learnt and improvement of society.

## 4.2 Agents of socialisation

In any society there exist institutions which the sociologists call the agents of socialisation. Agents of socialisation are innovations created within society whose purpose is to regulate society in order for it to function and to harmonise differences between the individual and his society and vice-versa.

The institution of the family is one such agent. In socialisation terminology, it is often referred to as a primary agent of socialisation because as young individuals, we come into contact with it from when we are born. It has a profound influence on us. We learn from the family our ascribed positions in our society (social class, ethnicity, caste, power position and power relations), gender and gender roles, taught the language of the family, the clan the ethnic groups', modes of behaviour, spirituality and beliefs, work practices and ethics, the things that the family reveres or shuns and what the State regards as good or evil. All of these influences are long lasting and may or may not change over time.

The School is another crucial socializing agent! When we are at School, we learn to be with other like-situated individuals. Perhaps we may even wear the same uniform? We may be of the same age grade, more or less contemporaries and as children, we learn to become ourselves but ourselves in relation to other individuals who may not come from the same, race, cultural background, class or caste and we learn to be with them. The School teaches us all the basics of the three R's-reading, writing and arithmetic as well as other things in the Syllabus and what is referred to in educational circles as the 'hidden curriculum'. The hidden curriculum is essentially things one picks up in the course of one's schooling such as our group norms, group values, and codes of conduct. Examples are School rules, hierarchies, authority, cooperation, sharing, caring and basically, learn how to live in society with all its sanctions for good or bad behaviour. This is why the School is referred to as a secondary agent of socialisation! The other agent of socialisation is the one that most people recognise readily and talk about often times. You frequently hear parents' or neighbours say, 'ever since he started keeping company with that lot, he has changed for the worse or for the better'. 'Birds of a feather flock together' show me your friend and I will tell you you're habit'!

## 4.2 Peer group

All of these popular adages refer to the Peer Group influences on the individual. These are groups of people around the same age as you, and in the same status. Adults AND children Almost everybody has a peer group that they relate to in more or less ways at school, at the youth club, at work, at University, the political party, Mosque, church, Temple, and in the present era of the world wide web, social networking sites etc. Its influence is prodigious especially among the youth and adolescents.

## 4.3 The search for self and its price

This is so because the youth are searching for their identity and with this common denominator they are learning together to become adults by creating their own worlds, exclusively theirs. Conformity to the group norm is vital infringements are not tolerated. Their norms veer into arenas such as the way they dress, the music they listen to, their hairstyles; they even invent their own unique lingo and so on. Looking back at the responses I got from my respondents on the differences between them and their parents; to whom, I had argued that they are still in that nascent process of searching for their own identity and self-hood. One could readily see how much they yearned to conform to the spiritual and traditional ways of their parents. This is so because; they are cognisant of their parent's postures. Armed with their parent's stances, they know that they cannot go wrong and they could therefore drop and hinge their chains on this safe anchor at least, for now. One could also infer from what they say that they are, regardless of their seeming self-assuredness that, they are hedging their bets. And perhaps as they say, 'be more traditional in their conformity to their religion as they 'get to know more about Islam'. They did not say though that it might go the other way!

## 4.4 The Media

This powerful agent of socialisation has a profound impact on us. We come into contact with it in our daily lives in the form of radio, television, newspapers, and Internet and to use a modern collective term to depict them, the print and electronic media. It would appear that our contacts with them are almost unavoidable. From early childhood onwards, we have had a daily dose of it from children's programmes to popular series from Hollywood, Bollywood, and Nollywood etc.

With the advance of modern technology, we can view events happening at remote corners of the world without moving from our bed and sitting rooms.

Through this agent of socialisation, our likes, dislikes, dominant ideologies, values, hegemonies are constructed, expressed, assembled, peddled and consumed. However, for the purposes of analysis in this chapter and the succeeding chapters, we are going to juxtapose the major agents of socialisation within the context of the influence they have on the achievement of Muslim men and women in tertiary education.

#### 4.5 The state

The state comprises four major organs namely, the Executive, the Judiciary, the Legislature and the media often referred to as the fourth estate in a democracy. The question is what is the role of the state? The different organs of the state work in tandem for example in Norway; it had taken a look at the education system and instituted reforms. Following the reformation in 1537. And these reforms have persisted all the way through to the present day. In 1827, Norway introduced the *folkeskole* reform. In 1980s, the *folkeskole* was phased out and it made way for the *grunnskole* reform. Reform 94, The Bologna process that aimed to harmonize educational standards across the board throughout Europe. The latest reform is the *kunnskapsloftet*. The grounds for these reforms are essentially to bring about improvement and change in education. These reforms are then with the collaboration of the other organs for example the legislature which ratifies the law in Parliament, the judiciary makes the laws that govern the reform, the Executive will implement the reform and in instances where the media feels that the people are short-changed by the reform or the reform is making in-roads or there are too many women teachers in schools and it is an affront to patriarchy and masculine values and so on the media brings the matter to the notice of the public for debate and perhaps another review and may be another reform and this goes on ad infinitum.

I asked my partners about their main influences in terms of their achievements in higher education? I will quote just two because all of them gave virtually the same answers. The family, friends, neighbours, teachers, the School they went to and the location of their homes in relation to the University/College clubs and members in the same Mosque. Here is what they said, first a female and then a male.

“I was influenced by first my father then my mother”. “I was influenced by my parents and sisters”.

Socialisation in all its manifestations through its agencies has at its core, learning, and adaptation to the environment, transmission of knowledge learnt and improvement of society. The young Muslim women and men growing up in this society have had much to learn and imbibe of values of equity now deeply entrenched in themselves and in the society. They could not have missed the prevailing virtues of inclusion of women in all aspects of life, especially in the school environment. My women partners involvement in voluntary work at the Centre is a clear manifestation of having assimilated values of independence, service and duty to society from both the School and from Islam. Let us now survey the terrain that the socialising agents inter-penetrate via the rest of the conversation themes.

#### **4.6 Human endowment not exclusively female**

Are these young women naturally pertinacious? The short answer to this is that tenaciousness is a trait that is endowed to all humans regardless of gender. It may seem to the onlooker that women are taking a stand and taking their rightful places in society but this does not necessarily spell disaster for either the society or for men. Effectively, women have been ‘empowered’ some say they have been given a voice or some other terminological exactitude. They are all referring to the same thing.

Here is another good and dramatic example that ties in with the reform that liberated captive wives and incarcerated women from the prisons of their homes to liberating paid work. In the 1970’s, strong labour legislation had led to the women in Norway leaving the Kitchen for paid work. Thus, according to Anita Haslie, (2013), “THEY LEFT THE KITCHEN AND CHANGED THE NORWEGIAN ECONOMY,

A minor revolution took place in the course of one generation: Norwegian women went from being homemakers to wage earners. This has been highly significant for the Norwegian economy over the past 40 years”, (2012), p 27 in THEY LEFT THE KITCHEN AND CHANGED THE NORWEGIAN ECONOMY

Echoing Haslie, Charlotte Koren (2012) , says:

“But it’s almost impossible to imagine what Norway would be like today without this development.” (ibid) p 27

Koren (ibid), argues convincingly that, what Haslie termed the ‘minor revolution that took place in Norway when women made their entry into the labour market from the seventies to the present. According to Koren, the whole Norwegian economy was transformed beyond recognition and she points to the following indicators:

- Six hundred thousand (600 000) new women employees, entered the market.
- The family income increased substantially. The consequence of this is a more affluent life style in terms of the family’s ability for consumption.
- More consumption stimulates the economy.
- It had liberated women from the drudgery of un-paid and under-valued work and has empowered them in giving them financial independence
- It had also helped men in that they have more money in their pockets.

Other spin-offs include more tax revenues, more child-care facilities, facilities for the elderly, and the creation of a more egalitarian society that promotes and protects equal opportunities. Other workers such as Warner-Søderholm and Bertsch, (2012) found that most of the countries that are preoccupied with planning for the future (Future Orientation), are leaders with regard to re-enforcing equality of opportunities in practice. This was a significant piece of legislation in that a few years prior to its enactment, women especially in the west were clamouring for ‘Women’s liberation. Tied to this demand was the equal work for equal pay call. Securing the legislation was a victory they had won and it does not look like they will ever look back. Today, this piece of legislation in practice has allowed all women in Norway regardless of their origin, position in society and personal endeavours in life, the chance to become independent of men, a chance to contribute to the economy, a chance to make independent decisions and the freedom to choose.

Socialisation as a social phenomenon is so pervasive that it is impossible to identify any arena in human discourse that it does not rare its immutable head and no culture can make claims to its ways being impervious to other influences. It had also become clear that in spite of some of the parents of the second generation Muslims not having had much formal education and tertiary education for that matter. They upheld the value of education and the liberating influence it harboured. They then inculcated this highly prized value in their offsprings. This is especially evident in the responses of EK and Ay and practically every one of them were driven by the strength of their own convictions about the importance of education. It is important to note here as



the chapter unfolds to point to the significance of these self-driven respondents. The drive and urges towards higher education here is an intrinsic motive and that motive is cultured and spurred from without. It is indeed a complex interplay between both intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation.

All my respondents were very clear that they were impelled by mother, father, siblings or friends and the general environment.

#### 4.7 Teaching of the Quran and hadith

They were also propelled by the teachings of Islam in through many verses in the Quran and in through Hadith (the prophetic teachings) as exemplified in the following extracts: Allah, the Exalted, says:

"And say: `My Rubb! Increase me in knowledge." (20:114)

"Are those who know equal to those who know not?" (39:9)

"Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge." (58:11)

"It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah." (35:28)

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, "Allah makes the way to Jannah easy for him who treads the path in search of knowledge."

[Muslim].

The Messenger of Allah said, "When Allah wishes good for someone, He bestows upon him the understanding of Deen."

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Commentary: Knowledge and understanding of Deen (religion) here stands for the understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith, religious injunctions, and knowledge of the lawful and the unlawful.

This Hadith highlights the excellence of knowledge and the fact that it is a sign of Allah's Help to the person who possesses it and acts upon it.

In my opinion the most significant Hadith in relation to the education of Muslims is the following; ‘The seeking and pursuit of knowledge is an obligation to all Muslims, meaning both men and women’. I say this because contrary to popular belief, Islam enjoins all regardless of gender to the first call made to the Prophet, Muhammed and that was-‘Iqra’ meaning- read! In fact the greatest teachers in Islamic history were Muslim women especially when a sizeable number of Muslim men’s numbers were decimated by the ‘Jihads (holy wars) and during the times they were embattled by the crusades and other proxy wars.

The other question that is often asked is whether this so-called seeming phenomenon of women-tenaciousness especially of descendants of immigrants is nurtured by their home environment? As cited earlier, home environments through the agency of its socialising effects do influence everyone within it regardless of gender.

These young Muslim women have as it were, been born in a home environment where they see their mothers take on the proverbial role of the female. Over time though, as they grow up, they will have noticed the changing face of the traditional subservient woman to a confident modern woman.

#### **4.8 African woman stake-holders of matrimony**

The ‘role-conflicts that were rare begin to surface in different ways especially in relation to the assumption of duties in the home to make for a functioning family.

Indeed their parents have travelled over to Norway with their customs and have adapted/transplanted these practices in a different environment and they are real stakeholders in a functioning matrimonial life. Since all of my conversational partners originate from African backgrounds, they will have been influenced by the strength they see in their mothers in several fronts including, their adaptiveness, resilience and crucially in the maintenance of balance between the traditional and the modern ways of living. African women generally are known to be robust and malleable because the harshness of their environments and the demands of the daily grind to eke out an existence and to survive with their children make them very resilient. They are also ardent defenders of family values.

#### **4.9 Too many children?**

I often hear advocates of family planning ratchet-up slogans such as “too many children are a burden not a blessing”. The counter-narrative here from the traditional African societies will say “Too few children is a curse”. What they mean by this retort is that one needs lots of children to increase the production in the family and to perpetuate the family name. They therefore need to maintain harmony and cooperation within the family. So, a clash of viewpoints ...two parallel universes, differences of perceptions of the same elephant viewed through two different lattices and a lesson for Giddens.

The traditional family as it obtains in the underdeveloped World is an autonomous economic unit of production. Every family member is involved in the production for subsistence and sustenance. Every family member too knew his or her place in the family hierarchy.

When they travelled overseas, they carry with them, the baggage of their past and an accompanying psychological outfit baked in the dough of their origins. This does not in the least preclude gender roles.

#### 4.10 Gender roles

Gender roles are very clearly defined and each plays their role based on their home culture’s understanding of ‘how things are supposed to be’. Yet in spite of these clearly defined roles that they act out, they are not immune to their new host society’s influences.

The way the Norwegian society is structured owing to the nature of its post industrial relations of production, presents to the migrant *family, a new social structure and therefore a new way of doing business. Consequently, both* in terms of the labour market and the institution of the family, there are phenomenal changes and challenges to overcome and obviously, there is bound to be inevitable role conflicts to these new demands and dynamic changes within the new Worlds the migrant family now inhabits. Herman Bausinger adds his voice in his Intercultural demands and cultural Identity, Bausinger writes; “the ways of life are no longer marked and paved but have to be worked out and opened again and again. That means the liberty to decide but at the same time, insecurity. And this Forsters the need for transparent configurations, stable social relations and networks but also a stable and trustworthy cultural background. It is primarily this need, which provokes and produces the longing for and a consciousness of a firm cultural identity. The problem and task is to coordinate and reconcile transcultural demands and cultural identity. P 27

## **Roles and gender in tertiary education**

To what extent does the way the young Muslim men and women are brought up influence their educational achievements and the choices they make in early and late adulthood? In the previous chapter on socialisation, we had identified the State, the family and the School as major agents of socialisation among others. We have seen how the state sets rules of conduct for the State institutions; how the media intervenes on behalf of society, how the family moulds individuals and prepares them to become competent members of the society through various means and how the School with her 'hidden curriculum' prepares the young so that they can take up their responsibilities later on in adult life. We have concluded that the influence of socialisation is inevitable and even though we may come from another culture, perhaps with a dissimilar religion, another set of values and an outlook on life that may be different to the host cultures, we are not impervious to changes from without. To put it differently, the parts that these institutions play in our lives prepares us to assume what are known in sociology and social psychology as roles.

### **5.1 Division of labour**

It is simply the playing out of socially defined sets of duties; meeting expectations, norms and behaviours that a person has to undertake and accomplish. In other words it is the part that a person plays within a given context, which is closely allied, to the division of labour in every society. For a concrete example! A young Muslim male in his early twenties has taken a year off from his studies and is holding down a job as a Taxi driver. When he is at work, he acts out the role of the friendly Chauffeur, pays attention to where the client wants to get to and is prepared to engage with the client about the weather and a host of other platitudes. After work, he comes home, and is greeted with several letters that came in the post. All of them are bills he will settle at the end of the month so, he files them aside. In this instance, he is playing the role of the family secretary and accounts controller.

The last letter came from his youngest brother's School inviting his parents to a parents meeting. He calls his younger sister and hands the letter to her and asks her to go to the meeting instead of her parents. He is here playing the role of a manager of things in the family. He delegates (a function of management), the responsibility of attending the meeting to his sister.

His father reminds him that his appointment with the clinic is on Friday. He notes that in his tablet and offers to take his father. Here, he is acting out the role of the eldest male immigrant's son in a patrilineal family, he is playing the role of a facilitator and this goes on to infinity.

However, he cannot go out of the home and go to the Supermarket and starts to instruct the tellers how to receive and give change to customers. If he does this, he will be getting into a role conflict.

In this chapter, we will look at the role of the immigrant family in bringing up the young men and women in Norwegian society. We will do this with a view to examining gender roles and how these impact on the subsequent behaviour of the young men and women in tertiary education. We will later on see how gender theory is informing new ways of thinking and how it helps our understanding and achievements of the status of men and women in tertiary education.

Over the past thirty years, immigrant women have settled in Norway and have adapted to a large extent to Norwegian society. Those that had children when they came here have started having grown-up children and some of them are becoming grandmothers. It is their children who are the subject of this study. Much like their Norwegian women counterparts, they have left the kitchen for paid work. And to their husbands, this does not come without a price!

## **5.2 Changing family dynamic**

The dynamics of the proverbial immigrant family has changed significantly. The roles that were fixed are now shifting. Decisions that were taken unilaterally are now negotiated.

## **5.3 Role conflict management**

However, the difference between the immigrant parents and the second generation is that they manage and contain their conflicts amicably (for the sake of their children), through the ways they know how including the use of intermediaries, elders and spiritual leaders in their communities. This is of course changing as those born here, are making demands on each other in more or less the same ways as their Norwegian peers who do rarely turn to elders and Imams and Priests to settle their conflicts.

They have other institutions in the society to turn to. This by itself often creates a larger conflict between families (if the Muslim women and men resort to the State institutions to settle their disputes). The older generation often feels slighted, as it would like to resolve the conflict in its own backyard. They are suspicious of mediating agencies and all of them could cite instances where things have gone and will always go against them, thus confirming their self-fulfilling paradigm that the institutions of the society are not capable of handling their feuds. (Perhaps there is some sociological/social-psychological merit in this such as loss of self-esteem, perception of

authority! In their mind's eye, their social structures are loose and not as rigid and based on clauses from a book of rules that they cannot relate to at the widest stretch of the imagination. , feelings of alienation, redundancy, emergent value differences and inherent truth in their judgment but all of these are beyond the scope of our discussion).

The older immigrants would like to settle the conflicts through the ways they know how by invoking customary practices by interpreting and reinterpreting the rules of marriage in relation to the designated roles of the parties.

Marriages in the traditional families are often a contract between families and at times even between communities. Whereas in most Western societies, it is between individuals and increasingly to a lesser extent, between families. So, those immigrant men and women born here or have come here, have a double knot tied inside their souls. Because their marriages though contracted in the traditional sense, but within them, they have a muddled picture, they are caught in a double-bind, Bateson's, (1956), phrase. Their marriages could be likened to a 'hybrid animal or a pot-pourri of things'. It is neither traditional nor modern and yet both systems continue to impinge on their consciousnesses.

Even in the larger society, a few significant changes have recently occurred. Giddens, (1998) puts these changes succinctly when he said, in the Reith Lecture that: "Modern couples once constituted, now have their exclusive history or biography. It is a unit based on emotional communication or intimacy. The idea of intimacy is infact very new. Whereas this was not the trend in marriages, we will not doubt the importance of it in a good marriage. For the couple, it is crucial. Communication is the means of establishing the ties in the first place and it is its chief rationale for its continuation. The idea of relationships is also a new phenomenon. The meaning of marriage nowadays is completely changed. Marriage signifies that the couple is in a stable relationship to mainly promote that stability. Since it makes a public declaration of commitment. Marriage is no longer the chief defining places of coupledness. The position of children is interesting and somewhat paradoxical. Attitudes towards children have altered radically. We prize them so much because they have become so much rarer. And partly because the decision to have a child is very different from what it was in the previous generations". For the immigrant families, divorce in their eyes is both a shame to the family and a flagrant flouting of some cherished and deeply held values and principles. Those immigrants, who harbour such views and lack the analytical tools in situating their dilemma into a present day context, blame themselves and the larger society for their failings. This can eventually be an unconscious cause of great resentment towards the host culture's 'damning influence on the disaffected spouse'. Even though divorce is

legal in Islam, Islam itself sneers at it. However there are some new developments in Muslim partnerships that will be taken up when the two gender groups speak 'one on one'.

#### **5.4 Gender roles**

We will now briefly focus on the young Muslim men. Earlier on I had argued that no cultures are immune to influences from others. While maintaining this position, I will further argue with the qualifications that unlike their sisters, the male descendants (who are practicing Muslims) are relatively resistant to changes in their milieu and the ways they are familiar with. Perhaps this is due to several factors or a combination of them. The deeply ingrained role learning they were subject to throughout their childhood and adolescence, as future heads of the family did cut very deep gullies into their sub-conscious and have probably propelled them into fait accompli action tendencies. As a moral guide, their 'super-ego' (Freud's term), they do not wish to cave-in under the changing dynamics of the family all around them. It might also be that the immigrant young male does not want to let the 'side' down as in his position, he is constantly judged and re-evaluated to assess whether he is measuring up to expectations of the side. It could simply be a case of 'cultural lag' in that it might take some time to adopt and let the new practice sink in and evolve. Could it be a manifestation of the primordial male resistance to territorial invasion and change? These latter questions might have some reverberations in their later matrimonial lives but we will leave it to history to confirm either way.

The young Muslim men have assumed the role of the adult male in the family and the responsibilities that go along with it. They are still staying with their families and are a big financial benefactor to the family income and a major decision maker not owing to their financial contributions but because of their deftness with the knowledge and ways of the society. Therefore his judgment is sought for relations with voluntary, statutory and welfare agencies; even to relatively routine and mundane daily events in the lives of the individual family members he plays a role.

#### **5.6 Different sets of expectations**

Since Immigrant families are generally patrilineal. They do not have the same expectations they have for men as they have for women. The family therefore consigns the young men and women into the traditional gender roles and have expectations of them playing these roles without

deviation or doddering. Some young men though born in Islam have slipped through the net and have struck out on their own. They may or may not have severed their ties with their families and the Umma (Muslim community). This band of young men has found themselves unskilled, semi-skilled jobs in Firms or may have clawed their way up the hierarchy at their places of work through longevity, in-service training and have landed themselves on reasonably well paid jobs. They are caught-up with life and all its trappings of affluence and status symbolisms -a nice car, holidays in the sun, flat, pre-marital encounters and so on. They become, in the words of a facetious young Muslim man ‘Muslime-lites (let)’.

This is the group that Eriksen in *‘Ambivalence and Fundamentalism (1999)’* refers to as “creolized Muslims” who can, drink beer today, eat roast pork the next day and join the mosque congregation the day after.

It will be a good idea to follow this group up in studies as they, in my opinion, merit some research attention. Will they come back to Islam (as some older immigrants have done)? Will they assume any of the other categories of the pure identities? Take on Hyphenated identities? Will they continue to uphold and maintain their Creole identities? My guess is as good as any bodies, but looking at the trends in the past decade and more, I reckon that the majority will come back to Islam albeit in a ‘rag-bag’ sort of sorts. Some will go back and uphold the orthodox line, others will continue to be let while their will still be others that become nominal practitioners.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Boys and girls education**

We are first going to pose some questions about the education of boys and girls and how much impact does the domination of schools by female teachers have on the achievements of pupils?

#### **6.1 Gender influence and social change**

Boon or Bane? The much talked about ‘feminisation of the School and its gross over-representation of female teachers are still shrouded in polemics. Why has boys’ education suddenly become such an issue? Do boys need male teachers and do immigrant males need immigrant male role models?



For a while and for a little while only, say fifteen years, give or take a year or two, not more, not less, have the concerns of some parents, educators, educational inspectors and more especially the media began to raise some doubts and some discernments about the seeming under-achievement of boys and men in education. According to Sheelagh Drudy, (2005) - Gender balance/gender bias: the teaching profession and the impact of feminisation.

“There has been a proliferation of media scare stories and moral panics about the under-achievement of boys. Indeed, there have been expressions of concern by government ministers in a number of countries (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2005; Skelton 2007).

Arguably, men and boys have for many years fared very well and have gone on for years and received more advanced and more valued education than their female counterparts In the OECD member states .

If boys and men have had their heyday over the past couple of centuries or (at least since around the 16<sup>th</sup> century or thereabouts when schooling became formalised), and up till recently and their relative performance to girls and young women, begin to be notice to be waning or taking a perceived turn in the wrong direction, surely there must be a reason(s) for this sudden development. And if the current trends are anything to go by, it will be presenting a formidable challenge to the dominant masculine ideologies.

Both qualitative and quantitative research results point to girls and women’s out-performance of men in the highest tier of education, OECD, (2008), and this situation is not only in Europe but all around the world. DEBBIE EPSTEIN, JANNETTE ELWOOD, VALERIE HEY AND JANET MAW (1998), have argued in ‘Schoolboy frictions: feminism and 'failing' boys’,

That, “Indeed, much of the public debate about boys and

Schooling has been conducted in precisely the terms that a young feminist called “Oh, you mean they're not doing better than girls any more, like they should!” p 3

Before engaging with the substantive issues of the debate, what are the facts on the ground?

It is a known fact that women have for a long time been preoccupied with the education of children. It has also been established that this is in fact a global phenomenon tied closely to the Exigencies of the ‘economies, changes in the relations of production, the development of urban centres, the position of women in society, cultural definitions of masculinity and the value of children and child care, Moore, (2005).

Below are some statistics to attest to the dominance of females in educational establishments throughout the world regions:

Table 1. Percentage of teachers who are female in selected countries.

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Percentage Teachers who are Female</i>
Brazil*, Russian Federation, Italy, Slovakia,	Women more than 90% of primary teachers
United States, United Kingdom, Ireland	Women more than 80% of primary teachers
China, Tunisia	Women between 49% and 54% of primary teachers
United States*, Ireland*, United Kingdom*	Women between 56% and 59% of lower & upper secondary teachers
Canada*	Women 67% of lower & upper secondary teachers
Finland*, Italy*, Czech Republic*	Women 71%, 73%, 81% of lower secondary teachers respectively, 57%, 59%, 56% of upper secondary teachers respectively
Korea*, Switzerland*, Germany*, Netherlands*	Women between 28% and 40% of upper secondary teachers

Sources: Countries with asterisk\* UNESCO 2003; others UNESCO 2008.

In some countries women are greatly in the majority, with the largest proportions found in Brazil, the Russian Federation, Italy and Slovakia. In only a few countries are the number of women and men in primary teaching approximately equal. Examples of these are China and Tunisia. However, globally, there are some variations – even in primary teaching, which is the most feminised sector

## 6.2 Dominations of schools by female teachers and effects on pupils?

‘How much impact does the domination of schools by female teachers have on the pupils/students’ performance? The much talked about ‘feminisation of the School and its gross

over-representation of female teachers are still shrouded in polemics. What is the evidence to support or refute this perception? In as much as the evidence above reveals that is, teaching being a highly feminised profession and in addition to the common sense, the ‘domestic ideology’ which espouses the notion that maintain that the nature of women enables them to be more able to handle children than men. There is no evidence to suggest in the least that the gender of the teacher can influence the performance of pupils/students in any way, shape or form and there is no real or apparent nexus between the influence of female teachers on the performance of either boys or girls. Trying to make the link between the two has become a non-starter.

According to Miller, (1996), teaching is probably the best example of the ambiguities inherent in all paid work performed by women. Their qualifications for doing such work at all have usually rested on what they were thought to know and be able to do 'naturally'. This often meant no more than an extension of what they were in the habit of doing anyway. In some instances, female teachers have been used as a whipping-girl for boys' perceived under-achievement relative to girls. What is evident, clear and without doubt is that data on gender differences in performance in public examinations in many countries indicate that girls' performance is better overall (Drudy and Lynch 1993; OECD 2007; OFSTED 2003).

Again, Drudy et.al, (2005), found no correlation between feminization and teaching. A study in the United Kingdom in fact points out that in primary school children; the gender of teachers had little apparent effect on the academic motivation and engagement of either boys or girls (Carrington et al. 2007). A recent international review of research on gender and education points out that with few exceptions, most empirical studies and reviews indicate that the sex of teachers has little, if any, effect on the achievement of pupils (Sabbe and Aelterman 2007). We can therefore on the strength of the above evidence conclude that the gender of the teacher has no known influence on pupils and cannot be said to be an influencing factor.

### **6.3 The vexed questions**

What is it about boys that are causing alarm in their education?

Epstein et.al call it the “Vexed question”. They argue in the discourse on failing boys that this phenomenon could be aptly referred to as the ‘poor boys discourse or the lads movement’. To them, the under-achievement of boy’s arguments blames women for the failures of boys’. If it is not women teachers, then it is mothers; if it is not mothers, it is feminists; most often it is a combination, Epstein et.al (1998).

Jane Miller (1996) points out, (some) men have expressed concerns about the effects women teachers have on boys for as long as there has been schooling provided by the state. In general, these concerns have been about women teachers making boys 'soft', smothering them with matriarchal values. Some of these 'solutions' to the under-performance of boys, as Lynn Raphael Reed (1998) suggests, take the form of a masculinization of teaching styles, both by using curriculum content thought to be more interesting to boys and by adopting teaching styles likely to favour boys, particularly in secondary schools.

#### 6.4 Male mentors

Another proposed 'solution' is that of introducing male 'mentors' into schools who, it is thought, can offer boys a better male role model. However, as Raphael Reed points out '[Unproblematized] notions of masculinity are embedded in certain "positive" role models. But all of these are not new. In the fifties and sixties, even during the post-colonial era, up to the mid eighties for example, the 11 plus, (that later came in another guise called the 'common entrance'), exam, was skewed in boys' favor on the ground that boys mature much later than girls. In relation to this I had argued elsewhere in West Africa weekly magazine, (1986), that the entrance exam itself was 'uncommon'! It was not only biased against rural children but the exam itself was not a 'culture fair' means of assessment! Biased against peasant and rural children, the exam was nothing but a 11-plus tightrope for the urban elites children to walk and the rest to fall. Thus separating at that early stage the future elites, the boys and the rest. Recent research and public examination results in many countries have tended to confirm patterns of gender differences in academic achievement – i.e. on average, in the last decade and a half of the twentieth century in most of the developed world girls have performed better (OECD 2007) Research has suggested that girls learn to read earlier, obtain higher grades and cooperate more with their teachers.

Drudy's argument based on a historical perspective on the predominance of females in teaching. Is compelling by dint of its versatility and in its ability in making forward and backward linkages in explaining how we have found ourselves in this situation. . She writes, "Obviously, patterns of choice or lack of choice of teaching as a profession are linked to the social construction of masculinity and femininity. Research indicates that the Feminisation of teaching is a cumulative historical and social process. The manner in which the Feminisation of teaching has occurred involves subtle patterns of socialisation in Western cultures. In many Western societies there has

been an ideological link between women's domestic roles and their commitment to teaching. This 'domestic ideology' proposes that women are 'naturally' more disposed towards nurture than are men." Page 13.

### **6.5 Do boys need male mentors and do immigrant boys need role models?**

Often, we hear 'folklorist' pronouncements and lay-theories about the significance of the baneful impact of absent fathers and male figures on the life and adjustment of the boy-child. This kind of thinking is more often than not propagated by the media. And by extension, the effect of the maladjusted male immigrant who is unable to adapt to the rules and norms of society will have had a tremendous impact on the psychological and social adjustment of the second generation of youngsters. Neither my study nor my personal knowledge of the immigrant communities in Norway and elsewhere, nor any other pertinent study will have led me to such spurious and reckless conclusions. To this, Miller, (1996), proposes that Most recently, these criticisms arise from: concerns about the lack of male role models, a belief that there is a bias away from science and technology, a suspicion that education and assessment are becoming more 'molded' to suit females, anxieties about the relative underachievement of boys in some areas, and the particular unemployment problem experienced by unqualified male school leavers. That said, I want to turn to the next question.

Do boys need role models and mentors are still an open question as research evidence in this area is pretty scanty and inconclusive. Although what little evidence that has percolated through points to the fact that masculinity is a social construct. Be that as it may, the absence of males in teaching is not the least desirable as our society comprises both male and females and it is worthy of having both sexes represented. There is a clear and definite anomaly in the ways we select the professions and career paths we follow as men and women, (though outside of the scope of this paper), this state of affairs warrants our urgent attention. Finally I want to draw the curtain on this subject and move on. To do that I think it would be fitting to conclude with the following:

- a) A study has demonstrated that 'masculinity is not a fixed essence but a shifting, gendered social identity (Nilan 2000).
- b) Teachers need to understand how boys construct their gender identities (Renold 2004; Keddie 2006) and help them develop an understanding of the effect of certain forms of masculinity in their lives (Martino 1999).

c) To affirm in the clearest possible terms that the relationship between male and female only exists because they are there and can only be seen in relation to each other. In the same way that masculinity and femininity are social constructions. “We teach our children what it is and they absorb our reality, who is us and who is them, who we are... Ruth C White (2014), Bbc why-factor, Author of Culture of the mind.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

For almost half a century of mixing, through influencing and being influenced by others, in addition to many years of doing mission in other lands especially in Africa, the colossal cultural exchange that has taken place has now produced a spectrum of a cultural, spiritual and linguistic mosaic in Norway. One would therefore hope that among other things, one of our future goals in building a multi-faith, pluralistic, poly-ethnic, multi-cultural society would be to maintain the distinct ethnic qualities and identities that constitute and differentiate the Norwegian diversity. This mosaic also illustrates to a large extent the solvency of ethnic identities, leading many to assume or construct various social identities. Rather than subsuming or obliterating identities under the banner of integration, it is better to embrace difference and celebrate its enriching and all enduring, indelible character. There is great danger in subsuming immigrant issues or relegating them to an appendage status. All in all this will in the name of inclusion result to exclusion, in the name of integration results in assimilation. This often unwittingly imbues in the immigrants, a sense of alienation, oppression and domination

Ngugy Wa Thiongo (1981). warns in *Decolonising the mind* that To accept assimilation is to accept permanent inferiority. What seems constant In Norwegian society, as in other societies around the world, is the permanence of change. Norwegian society is not daunted by and not averse to change! In fact, the Anders Breivik saga and the ways and manner in which the whole Norwegian society (including Muslims), were united in grief and weathered the storm were remarkable. The overall new accommodation of immigrants and her increasing general tolerance to difference as evinced in the enactment of new legislation against discrimination are clear testimonies of her capacity for inclusion, adaptiveness and for change. Yet in spite of this capability, the Breivik incident, did throw up some conflicting judgments depending on what side of the divide one stands. A few major lessons for race-relations are that the tools that the psychologists use are not as neutral to them as thermometers are to physicists. Psychology has never been devoid of ideology! Terrorism does not have a fixed place of abode, nor does it have a race, colour nor religious persuasion!

A final word about racism and racialism. Notwithstanding their ignominiousness, their egregiousness as moral evils, their restraining influences on their victims, there is another side to it which I have not seen or heard explored in any significant way, (if at that). Much like oppression of any hue, there are always personality types that resist their onslaught. Some personalities are indomitable so when they experience the phenomenon, they do not cave-in to their emasculating effects. These indomitable personalities stand up against them and the harder they hit, the more they resist and eventually they triumph against the odds. Take for example, the more the French authorities or other authorities clamour about religious symbols, the more Muslim women resist the demand even at the face of such draconian legislation. In fact now, many women wear the Hijab and the Boka out of resistance and the impedance continues with vigour and intensity.

What we have here is a combination of personality, achievement motivation and both intrinsic and extrinsic drives that egged-on those that go into higher education. One could therefore say that racism in this instance does carry a quality of Hobbes' leviathan.

To conclude, it seems to me that there is a great meeting of minds, (a fusion of horizons to pinch a phrase from Gadama), between the youth and Scholars in what I call the 'new prisms through which both the Western Muslims and analysts now propose to view the World of the next generation and beyond. I might add a little emphasis here that; the young Muslims in their part will now have to create a new-a new make-over of who they are and thoroughly adapt themselves, their new self-image, a new identity as Muslims in secular societies.

The consequences of sheltering girls from outdoor activities and exposing boys to outdoor life in the community is still prevalent today and is not likely to change for another decade when the current generation of Muslim youth become the parents of the up-coming generation. Interestingly, the effect of keeping the young Muslim women at home has spawned a couple of interesting developments. Thus making a significant dent on the lives of the young women albeit serendipitously. Muslim women have stayed at home and kept up with their work and do not take a break in their studies. On the other hand, the Muslim men take gap years and are exposed to familial responsibilities. The roles that they have assumed and acted out, have ushered in a distinct pattern of attendance and performance in tertiary education. What has emerged is the clear out-performance of Muslim women over their men and this trend is likely to continue in view of the influence of the structure of the immigrant family; the literal acceptance of the interpretation of Islamic law, vis a vis the acquisition of loans, opportunities for their men to take on jobs and relegate their education to a lower priority. Above all, the stupendous impact of legislation that favours equity is a force to be reckoned with in the Norwegian republica. The trends are already set, so is the near future!

### **7.1 The conquering hijabs and tertiary education**

Today, Norway is endowed with a sizeable multi-cultural multi-faith community, the majority of whom are between the ages of 15 and 29, SSB, (2008), a good number of them Muslims, born in Norway, growing up in this society and are engaging with all its institutions, not least the institutions that are set up by their own communities. Like their peers in larger society, they are coming of age, marrying and settling down as adults. They are poised at the threshold of life's second stage in the cycle of life-marriage.

Unlike their parents, they have multiple identities, as they themselves will affirm without hesitation. However, it is the manifold influences that bear on the Muslim men and women in higher educational institutions that this study is devoted to.

### **7.2 Islam sans frontier-home of spirituality**

What stood out clearly thus far is that they are different from their parents. They are first of all Norwegians, they dream in Norwegian, think in Norwegian even play in the Norwegian way. What is common between them and their parents is that they are both adherents to a religion, Islam. A religion that up until forty years ago did not take root in Norway. Now, it is a fact of life not only in Norway but also all over the world. Roy, (2006) has argued forcibly that Muslims in recently settled minorities have to reinvent what makes them Muslim, in the sense that the common defining factor of this population as Muslim is the mere reference to Islam, with no common cultural or linguistic heritage.

Islam can no longer be considered as a religion that has a fixed place of domicile. It is therefore a religion that its adherents will adapt and fit into the realities of their local terrain.

### **7.3 Spirituality in every heart, spoken by multitudinous**

It is a religion without borders-Islam sans frontier. It is heartening to see the religious sermons conducted in both Norwegian and English and how the young Muslims relate to them in the most natural manner as if, the vehicle of the transmission of the Quran and Hadith from their inception was Norwegian and or English! The lesson here is that spirituality does not have a secluded home. It is found in every heart and is expressed by many tongues, in all the nooks and crannies of the world.



#### **7.4 Woman in higher education**

The presence of women and their performance in higher education over the past decade occurred in leaps and bounds and there are no signs of this trend abating.

#### **7.5 Contestant zones of academia**

One could also readily discern a comparative shrinkage of men at almost all the academic disciplines except in the traditional male dominated subject areas such as Mathematics, Science, technology and history. But even these areas are no longer the private Fiefdoms of men as there is some strong anecdotal evidence to indicate that women have already started breaking the glass-ceilings and smashing the glass walls and clawing their way through to what is increasingly becoming what I call the ‘contestant-zones’ of academia.

This is already apparent from my respondents. Muslim women respondents are in what used to be very strictly male territory already. Of the five Muslim women respondents in my study, one of them is in Aeronautical engineering, the second was doing her Masters in electrical engineering, the third was in pharmacology and the other two were in languages and the arts. While all four of the other five young Muslim men are in Petroleum engineering, one was in the social sciences.

#### **7.6 Debunking my earlier supposition**

The question is; what could one glean from this? First of all, my findings debunk my original misgivings about the education of the descendants of the immigrants. All of those in tertiary education are within the confines of serious academic engagement. The majority of my Muslim males are pursuing either degrees in Engineering or are doing a post-graduate degree in Engineering. Second, Male territory in academia is being vied for by women.

It is important to note that all these changes did not happen haphazardly or did not occur in a vacuum. It is as a result of to some extent the ‘hand of chance’. These Muslim men and women live in a city whose economy is booming due to the oil industry and therefore, (unlike the rest of other Muslims in other locations), affords them the option of not taking loans. Additionally, there has been a conscious and concerted global effort to reverse the dominance of males in education and to proffer equity in its place. They had done this with the collaboration of organisations at the local level through the enactment of legislation and a policy of gender inclusiveness. At the global level, it was done through several bilateral and multi-lateral institutions such as the OECD, the European Union, the African Union, and the United Nations at a global level. Since the seventies,

the campaign for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 is the precursor to several other conventions by the United Nations. Following on in 1995, was the Platform for Action. Gender equality has now become acknowledged as a human right as enshrined in the third millennium development goal in 2000.

The reversal of gender programmes in education, the campaigns for the education of the girl-child, and the standardisation of educational provisions across the board in Europe. In addition the intervention of Gender theory, the action of civil society groups and local legislation and policies. All of these among other miscellaneous initiatives have conspired to deliver a profound influence in engendering a positive attitudinal change, the creation of possibilities for the augmentation of performance standards and issues pertaining to gender equality and inequality in society and some other spin-offs of a greater or lesser notoriety. Significantly though, it should be now evident that the factors that have influenced the achievement of Muslim men and women in higher education are legion! These include but not necessarily limited to the following:

- All the agents of socialisation including the family, the school, the state with all her organs and the media-the fourth estate in a democracy.
- Peer groups; the religious organisations, trends in the society and their own intrinsic drives to pursue their education at an advanced level, reinforced by their own personal successes on their courses and future job prospects.
- Global, regional concerted action and the importance of investment and legislation in instituting attitudinal change, support for minorities and the removal of barriers that prevent the marginalized from taking hold of their life's chances.

Since my earlier misgivings about the educational programmes that second generation immigrants in Britain were engaged in, have been discredited, I have become convinced that I need not be weary of expending cliches pertaining to the signification of education in developing all sectors of a society. This has been proven to be right especially when one reflects on the relative backgrounds of the young Muslim men and women. Within a span of about (give or take), thirty years, there has been a discernable metamorphosis of their status in relation to educational attainment, functional competence and upward social mobility and stability; particularly for (the second generation of Muslim women), compared to their parents generation.

## 7.7 Due credit

Credit must always be given where it is due! Feminist theory has warned that ‘Education reflects, implements, often challenges and sometimes destabilizes values in society. It can have extraordinary power, and this power can be harnessed to help bring about gender equality. It continues to draw attention to research that examines ways in which education contributes (or fails to contribute) to bringing about that equality. *Gender and Education Journal*, (2014). Trail blazers of the coming decades! It is early days yet but if the current trends are anything to go by, there is a good chance for women to enter into ‘male territory’ in the coming decade without much ado. They have done that already but not on the desired scale and magnitude. Although Specific data on Muslim men and women is scarce to come by or even absent, we can readily glean from the data that regardless of religious affiliation, women’s overall performance in this sector is remarkable including Muslim women. I therefore have no hesitation to refer to the Muslim women in higher education by a fitting metaphor ‘the conquering hijabs in higher education’. Notwithstanding these, Muslim men though relative to the women are not faring as well, their sustained presence in higher education is somewhat at a takeoff point and increasingly gathering momentum as evidenced by their presence in what is referred to in the immigrant community as ‘high-status professional training programmers’. A decade ago, one could, metaphorically speaking, count in the palm of one’s hand the number of Muslim men in higher education. My haunch is that in the coming several years, perhaps in the next decade, and after they have become more confident about giving a more liberal interpretation and reading of acquiring or shunning different types of loans and when they can assert their full identity as Western Muslims, their erratic pattern of attendance in higher education will change. I can also expect that the roles that both Muslim men and women in higher education have been cast as a result of the circumstances around their families will change. Their roles will change and the nature of other expectations and demands on them with their new realities will change out of necessity! There is therefore no scintilla of doubt in my mind that our conversation partners will thrive and become the trailblazers of the coming decades.

## 7.8 Lessons

The main lesson that can be drawn from this study is that if society wishes to change or address serious anomalies within her purview and is committed to effecting that change; that change must emanate from committed legislation that is closely tied with innovative policy implementation strategies and follow-throughs at all levels, from the grassroots at the local to the region and the

nation and beyond. The government white paper of the 2012(diversity and community) is a step in the right direction but certain aspects of ‘integration’ and language learning tied strictly to jobs and not to other spheres of existence of the immigrant could do with a bit of adjusting and fine-tuning.

We must recognise and acknowledge the differences and diversity of our cultural values, our different languages, accord them the requisite status as we strive towards achieving equal opportunity across the board! We can then expect real change to come into fruition to benefit all humankind.

This way, the onus of building a pluralistic society will (not as implied by Jacobson), be just on the shoulders and arms of a few. Rather, that responsibility should therefore be evenly spread and placed squarely at everybody’s doorstep and of course with the provision of the means and wherewithals to create that change. A genuine change to speak to the concerns of the Norwegian diversity. It will address the needs of all women and men in all sectors of the economy, including most especially the education of men and women, boys and girls at all the tiers of education; apprenticeships training and vocational education for failing immigrant boys, education for those in the non-formal sectors, Narrow the differences between different communities, legislate against an unbridled media that foments rifts within and between our communities. And above all build unity in diversity!

We will now give the last word to the OECD on the current trends in educational attainment in relation to Men and Women in tertiary education.

“This new trend is more than likely to persist in coming decades. While it should probably continue to help reduce the wage inequalities, which disadvantage women, its other possible social consequences have yet to be studied. However, in terms of educational inequalities, it would seem that in promoting equal opportunities for men and women the focus can no longer be solely on women”.

OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (2008).

This way we can allay the fears expressed in global village posed by Dean Barnlund when he said: "Will its residents be neighbors capable of respecting and utilizing their differences or clusters of

strangers living in ghettos and united only in their antipathies for others?"P1 in Intercultural Communication.

The choice is ours-history is still enlisting on our side!!!

## 7.9 Summary of main findings

The factors that influence the achievements of Muslim men and women in tertiary education are legion. These include but not necessarily limited to the following:

- All the agents of socialisation including the family, the school, the state with all her organs and the media-the fourth estate in a democracy.
- Peer groups the religious persuasion they follow, trends in the society and their own intrinsic drives to pursue their education at an advanced level.
- Global, regional concerted action and the importance of investment and legislation in instituting attitudinal change, support for minorities and the removal of barriers that prevent the marginalized from taking hold of their life's chances.
- Racism could be either a restraining or a mitigating force for enhancing or suppressing the achievement of Muslim men and women in higher education.
- Finally a word about attitudes! Certain prevalent and deeply entrenched attitudes must be revisited from time to time in order for them not to take root and have severe and deleterious effects on certain sections of the community. This must include institutional regulation so those that ferment crises and rifts are not given a cart blanc to operate with impunity.
- Much like their opposite numbers in larger society, Muslim women are faring better in tertiary education than their male counterparts.
- Immigrant families are generally patrilineal and have different expectations of young men and women.
- The young Muslim women, unlike their male counterparts, do not generally take a gap year. They go from start to finish!
- The consequences of sheltering Muslim young women from outdoor activities and exposing boys to outdoor life in the community is still prevalent today and have had a

substantial dent, albeit serendipitously on the out-performance of the Muslim women over their men in tertiary education.

- The so-called traditional male areas of tertiary education are no longer the preserve for men.
- My earlier misgivings about the education of the descendants of the immigrants have now been debunked as the findings point in the other direction.
- Specific de-segregated data on religious groups are not readily available but there are anecdotal and pretty reliable estimates to go by.
- I continue to be baffled by and even after this study as to why religious and sexual orientations statistics are not made available given Norway's up-beat and trail-blazing roles she had played in many arenas. What has happened to the Norwegian sense of introspection? 0000
- The young Muslim men do take a gap year or several gap years in order to work and save money for the following reasons:
  - Prepare to set up a home for when they get married.
  - They assist the family in their daily activities of living and assume the role of the head of family even though their fathers are alive.
  - They do come back to their studies but at a much later time or never.
  - Those Muslims that live in Stavanger do not generally take loans (home loans, study loans or any other loan), as long as these loans generate interest.
  - However, it seems that this is only unique to Muslims who live and study in Stavanger.
  - Usury in Islam means the generation of interest and both lender and borrower are culpable. Muslims are therefore forbidden in indulging in the practice. This position is now contested by another School of thought.
- The second generation of immigrants tends to be more prone to separation and divorce compared to their parents or even to larger society.
- Quite a substantial number of Muslim young men have dropped out of tertiary education and are not likely to go back to their studies. Yet in spite of what I earlier referred to as the 'explosion' of entry at University, the majority of Muslim youth go out to face the challenges and rigours of a life outside academia.

- The participation rates for women in higher education have increased from 1999 in all regions of the world. There are now more undergraduate women than men in higher education.
- In Norway today, more than six out of ten students are women. The proportion of women is particularly high at university colleges (64 per cent). Whereas 39 per cent of women aged 19-24 years were in higher education in 2008, this applied to only 25 per cent of the men. The female majority in higher education is not unique to Norway. The situation is similar in most EU countries, including the new member states.
- The general political climate in Norway is an enabling environment particularly for women. The gender Equality Act has become a model for expanding the protection against discrimination in other areas in society.
- Both qualitative and quantitative research results point to girls and women's out-performance of boys and men in all tiers of education.
- There is no evidence to suggest that the gender of the teacher can influence the performance of students either way.
- Since the nineties, in most of the developed world, girls have performed better. Girls learn to read earlier, obtain higher grades and cooperate more with their teachers.
- Unlike their parents, the second generation have multiple, shifting identities, as they themselves will affirm without hesitation. They are also significantly more tolerant to difference than the older generation.
- The 'dream' of the older generation to go back to the homeland they left behind is still a pipe dream to come through especially when they are now faced with new competing 'dreams'.
- In Somalian culture, younger men cannot face an adult they hold in esteem and tell him that they have other things to do. It became evident that Somalian culture is indeed a 'high context culture'. It will be up to the adult to figure out himself/herself why they are not coming or doing what the adult expects from them.

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