

STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL AND
COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

What Role of God and National Curriculum in School life?

A Comparative Study of Schools with a Muslim Profile
in England and Sweden

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Åsa Brattlund



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Abstract

What Role of God and National Curriculum in School life?

A Comparative Study of Schools with a Muslim Profile in England and Sweden

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of principles and ethics that dominate four schools with a Muslim profile, two in Sweden and two in England.

The specific objectives of the study are: to examine educational policies with regard to primary schools with a confessional orientation in Sweden and England; to compare two primary schools with a Muslim profile in Sweden with two such schools in England; and in these four schools to describe and examine the manner in which school heads, teachers and other staff deal with the encounters between the values found in the national curriculum of Sweden and England respectively and the principles and ethics embodied in their private philosophy of life; to describe and examine the views of school heads, teachers and other staff on school leadership and any educational, ideological or personal role model they emulate; to describe and examine the expectations and views of parents with regard to the school with a Muslim profile; and describe the views of the pupils regarding their schools and the norms and values in school and; finally, to examine the attitudes of some local authority politicians in Sweden to MP schools.

The findings indicate great difference between the two schools with a Muslim profile in Sweden, on the one hand, and the two schools in England, on the other. The fundamental reason for that lies in the parameters which had been established in these countries as the conditions for being permitted to establish and run a school with a confessional orientation. Since the schools in both countries had conformed to the relevant legislation and framework in their respective countries with regard to such schools, they had therefore consequently developed in different directions.

Keywords: Islamic school, Muslim, Muslim school, Primary school, comparative study, International Education, independent school, school leader, intercultural, confessional school, faith school, religious education, confessional, school head.

Preface

In this edition in 2016, I made the following corrections: Page 87, removed a paragraph that was doubled. Page 118, translated some lines from Swedish to English. Page 176 filled in the data in Table 9.3 (data previously accidentally fallen off) and moved Table 9.3 to Chapter 9.10.

Sincerely
Åsa Brattlund

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Abbreviations

AMS	The Association of Muslim Schools
AMSS (UK)	Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK)
CEIFO	Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations (CEIFO, Centrum för forskning om internationell migration och etniska relationer)
CSIC	The Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EUMAP	EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program
EUMC	European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
GCSE	The General Certificate of Secondary Education
LEA	The Local Education Authority
Lpo 94	Curriculum for the Compulsory School System, the Pre-School Class and the Leisure-time Centre. (Lpo94, Läroplan för det obligatoriska skolväsendet, förskoleklassen och fritids 1994)
NC	National Curriculum
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
OSI	The Open Society Institute
P.T.A	Parents and Teachers Association
RE	Religious Education (Syllabus for RE in Schools)
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (in Schools)
SCA	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority
SFS	Swedish School Law (SFS, Svensk Författnings Samling)
SIS	Swedish Islamic Schools (SIS, Sveriges Islamiska Skolor)
SNAE	Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket)
SVT	the Swedish public service television company (SVT, Sveriges Television)
UD	The Ministry for foreign affairs (UD, Utrikesdepartementet)
UN	The United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
SCAA	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Dictionary of Islam

Burqa: A burqa is an all-enveloping outer garment which covers the wearer's entire face except for a small region about the eyes, which is covered by a concealing net or grille. It covers the woman completely from head to foot.

Eid-al-Fitr: marks the end of the fasting period of Ramadan and the beginning of the following month. Eid ul-Fitr means the Festival of Breaking the Fasts. On the day of the Eid, communal prayers are held in mosques or Islamic community centres, and before the prayer begins, Muslims must give a certain amount for charity (provided they are financially capable) known as "Zakatul Fitr". The prayer is two rakaahs only, and it is an optional prayer as opposed to the compulsory 5 daily prayers. Following the prayers, people congratulate and embrace one another, eating special foods and sweets at a mosque, community centre, or at people's houses with festive moods and atmospheres. Gifts are exchanged (especially given to children). (Esposito, 2003).

Eid-al-adha: occurs on the tenth day of the Islamic month of Dhul Hijja. It is one of two Eid festivals that Muslims celebrate. Eid ul-Adha is celebrated by Muslims worldwide as a commemoration of Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son (Ishmael) for Allah. Others celebrate Eid-ul Adha as it marks the end of the Pilgrimage or Hajj for the millions of Muslims who make the trip to Mecca each year. (Esposito, 2003).

Hadith are traditions relating to the words and deeds of Muhammad. Hadith collections are regarded as important tools for determining the Sunnah or Muslim way of life. Prayer beads consist of a string of 33 pearls or stones. One use is during the recitation of the 99 names of Allah (Baek Simonsen, 1994).

Hajj: the Pilgrimage to Mecca in Islam. It is the fifth of the Five Pillars in Islam. Every able-bodied Muslim who can afford to do so is obliged to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his or her lifetime (Esposito, 2003).

Halal: "Quranic term used to indicate what is lawful or permitted. Most legal opinions assert the presumption that everything is halal (permissible) unless specifically prohibited by a text. Often used in conjunction with established dietary restrictions, halal can refer to meat of permitted animals that have been ritually slaughtered, hunted game over which the name and praise of God have been pronounced, and fish and marine life" (Esposito, 2003:105).

Haram: "Legal term for what is forbidden or inviolable under Islamic law" (Esposito, 2003:109).

Hijab: "Traditional Muslim women's head, face, or body covering, of numerous varieties across time and space, often referred to as veil" (Esposito,

2003:112).

Ramadan: One of the Five Pillars of Islam when Muslims are required not to eat or drink from dawn to dusk. Fasting during Ramadan is not obligatory for several groups for whom it would be excessively problematic. Children before the onset of puberty are not required to fast. If fasting would be dangerous to someone's health, such as a person with an illness or medical condition (this can include the elderly), that person is excused. For example, diabetics and nursing or pregnant women are not usually expected to fast. According to hadith, observing the Ramadan fast is not allowed during menstruation period for women, though they are obligated to make up for this afterwards. Other individuals for whom it is usually considered acceptable not to fast are those in battle and travellers who intend to spend fewer than ten days away from home. If one's condition preventing fasting is only temporary, one is required to make up for the days missed after the month of Ramadan is over and before the next Ramadan arrives. If one's condition is permanent or present for an extended period, one may make up for the fast by feeding a needy person for every day missed (Esposito, 2003).

The "*half niqab*" is a simple length of fabric with elastic or ties and is worn around the head. This typically leaves the eyes, and occasionally the forehead, visible.

Surah, seurah or Sura: Chapter. "The Quran is divided into 114 surahs, arranged by descending length rather than chronological order" (Esposito, 2003:307).

Shi'a Islam: "A branch of Islam which was originally distinguished from others on the basis of the particular view as to who was to be legitimate leader of the Muslim community" (Baek Simonsen, 1994: 226).

Sunnah: "Established custom, normative precedent, conduct, and cumulative tradition, typically based on Muhammad's example. The action and sayings of Muhammad are believed to complement the divinely revealed message of the Quran, constituting a source for establishing norms for Muslim conduct and making it a primary source of Islamic law. In the legal field, Sunnah complements and stands alongside the Quran" (Esposito 2003:305).

Sunni Islam: "The most widespread branch of Islam. The "sunna" or practices of Muhammad form the basis for the Sunni understanding of Islam" (Baek Simonsen, 1994: 233).

Umma, ummah; "Muslim community. A fundamental concept in Islam, expressing the essential unity and theoretical equality of Muslims from diverse cultural and geographical settings" (Esposito, 2003:327).

Wudu: "Obligatory cleansing rituals performed in order to render the believer ritually pure. Required prior to prayer for both men and women. Consist of washing the hands, mouth, face, arms up to the elbows, and feet" (Esposito, 2003:341).

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Frame of the Study

Since the end of World War II, there has been a considerable increase in immigration to Sweden and the UK, as there has been to other parts of Europe. A growing proportion of these immigrants are Muslims. At the beginning of the 1990s, the estimated number of ethnic Muslims in the world was calculated to be 1.3 billion (Sander & Larsson, 2001). At present, there are approximately 20 million Muslims living within the European Union (EU-MAP, 2008). It has been estimated that over the next 30 years, the number of Muslims in Western Europe will increase to between 25 and 65 millions. Today there are approximately 400 000 Muslims resident in Sweden (EUMC, 2006). In 2001, the number of individuals in Great Britain with a Muslim background was estimated to be approximately 1.6 million, constituting three per cent of Great Britain population (Office of National Statistics, 2001). The majority of these had immigrated to Great Britain from former British colonies, in particular from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Those who were already British citizens have moved to Great Britain to work or to study. However, the Muslim population in Europe, including Sweden and UK, does not constitute a homogenous group. They are individuals having varied cultural, linguistic and socio-economic features as well as having different perceptions with regard to what Islam represents to them and how their belief is to direct and influence their life.

Since the terrorist attacks; on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001, in Madrid on 11 March 2004 and in London on 7 July 2005, the tendencies towards *islamophobia*¹ have increased in Sweden, UK and the rest of Europe. (EUMC, 2006; Mayor of London, 2006). It has become increasingly difficult to be a Muslim. The sense of “we” and “the they” has also increased, where it has become more common for the images of Muslims to be of threats and enmities. There is a greater risk that religious Muslims in particular will become more isolated, especially in a secularized Sweden (Sander & Larsson, 2001).

A significant number of Muslims are very likely to want to retain their religion and to pass it on from one generation to the next. In Sweden, the majority

1. Islamophobia: fear/phobia concerning the Islamic religion and its adherents, Muslims, and partly the campaigns against Islam and Muslims which are based on this fear (Larsson, 2005).

of children of Muslim parents attend local authority schools or independent schools which do not have a Muslim profile. In England, the majority of children of Muslim parents attend schools fully funded by the state and run by local education authorities, the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church (Walford, 2004). In both Sweden and England, groups of Muslim parents were not happy with the local authority schools and decided to establish independent schools with a Muslim profile.

It is important here to make clear that this study does not deal with Koran schools that are Islamic in the strictly traditional sense. It deals with those schools in Sweden and England which, like all other compulsory schools, adhere to the National Curriculum (NC) but which in addition have a Muslim profile. It is in this sense that the term *schools with a Muslim profile* is to be understood in this study. In practice, those schools are termed throughout this thesis as *MP schools*.

From their very inception, MP schools in Sweden and England have been the subject of heated debate. In the media, such schools have been portrayed as representing a threat to Swedish and British values. In these debates, those running and working in these schools are often accused of holding intolerant and fanatically religious values. The points raised by the critics of these schools have included claims that they contribute to increased segregation in society, that the pupils will be marginalized and brought up in intolerance, that they do not adhere to the NC, that they act as greenhouses for potential future terrorists, that girls attending these schools are subordinate to boys, that they do not abide by society's democratic values and that those legally responsible for running the schools are financially dependent on foreign, non-European, Muslim organizations and interests (Daragahi, 2003; Moloudi, 2003; Ghasemiani, 2003; Curties, 2005; Sturmark, 2006; Roth, 2007).

Sweden and Great Britain are considered to be strongly secularized (Inglehart & Baker, 1997; Karlsson & Svanberg, 1997) and as result many of its citizens do not have any personal experience of what it means to have a faith. This presumably means that it is much more difficult for those religious Muslims who have opened their own schools to be accepted as equal colleagues in the "municipal education family." There is a risk that Muslim school leaders and teachers will be automatically regarded with some kind of negative curiosity. That they are viewed suspiciously, based on a claim that they are not adhering to the NC. In society there is considerable uncertainty and apprehension with regard to MP schools (Borevi, 1997) which facilitates the spreading of negative rumours about the schools. These rumours are often begun by people who have never set foot in any of these schools. Furthermore, in a secularized society, there is in my opinion a risk that a non-religious individual will hold an exaggerated interpretation of religious symbols and actions and view them as being entirely negative, threatening and oppressive.

As in Sweden, in England there has been debate concerning MP schools. Opponents of such schools have argued in favour of a secular school system.

Criticisms of MP schools in England appear regularly in discussions in the media and political discourses. Very often such criticisms are based on the assumption that MP schools contribute to the segregation of their pupils from the rest of society (David Bell, 2005).

Those who are critical of MP schools claim that they are concerned that these schools are not acting in accordance with the “basic values” current in Swedish and British society. Those who are most critical resume that Muslims live according to their own, completely different or contradictory values to the “Swedish” or “British” values (Daragahi, 2003; Ghasemiani, 2003 Sabuni, 2005). In England the chief inspector of schools, David Bell (2005), had a speech about citizenship to the Hansard Society². Bell argued: “Faith should not be blind. I worry that many young people are being educated in faith-based schools, with little appreciation of their wider responsibilities and obligations to British society” (Guardian Unlimited, 7 January 2005).

The debate on MP schools is understood in different ways according to the observer. For example, those who are pupils, parents, staff, heads, the owners or those who are readers, listeners or viewers who already hold preconceived negative images of Muslims and/or those politicians and opinion leaders who are seeking arguments in support of a closure and prohibition of MP schools.

In England, the place of spirituality in education has been recognized in the 1988 Education Reform Act. Nonetheless, on the one hand faith-based groups have criticized the modern education system for its secular dominance and single focus on the functionality of life. On the other hand, criticism has been made in England with regard to the incorporation of religion within education and that non-secular schools are permitted. Some critics have posed the question as to “Why a secular state should undertake to promote non-secular school” (AMSS UK, 2004:12). “Hostility is based in part upon the idea that “religion” is inconsistent with such processes as independent thought and freedom of expression. However, it is also clear that within such criticisms, there appears to be a belief that the inclusion of religion influences education towards indoctrination” (AMSS UK, 2004:12).

Secularism³ can also be interpreted as a form of indoctrination. Lankshear (AMSS UK, 2004:12) argues: “the real issue is to obtain for religion the same rights that are already enjoyed by secularism. Indoctrination is perceived from a variety of perspectives by different people. The feeling of Muslims is that their children, when attending schools with a non-Muslim profile are unilaterally

2. The Hansard Society is an “independent, non-partisan political research and education charity. We aim to strengthen parliamentary democracy and encourage greater public involvement in politics.”

“Our dynamic Citizenship Education Programme works with teachers and young people to educate and inform them about parliamentary democracy and develop original ways to involve them in participatory democratic activities” (Hansard Society, 2007).

3. Secularism may be defined a variety of ways. As a philosophy of life, all transcendent is excluded. That religion should exercise no influence over politics. That society is to be run without any influence from religion or religious principles (Nationalencyklopedin 2009).

influenced to accept secularism”.

As an institution, schools have duties with regard both to conveying knowledge and to upbringing. Included in the duties with regard to upbringing is the mediation of democratic values. In England, in the Education Act 1996 section 351, two broad aims for the school curriculum are reflected. These aims require that “all maintained schools provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that: (i) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society and (ii) prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.”

In Sweden, it is the intention that schools be open to all pupils, regardless of their cultural, social, economic or religious background. The school is duty-bound to convey and instill in the students those principles and ethics which sustain society. At the same time, there is a considerable discrepancy between the ideals society promotes and the manner in which these ideals are interpreted and in which they are translated into concrete action. Schools represent value systems, which implies that if social realities include patterns of growing segregation and widening rifts, then it is likely that similar patterns will also emerge in schools. In school, those value systems are presented to pupils, both in an oral form and in a written form, need not necessarily be also apparent in behaviour patterns.

The focus of the present study is on principles and ethics. Values give expression to that which is considered to be good and worth striving for or that which is regarded as evil and therefore ought to be avoided or discarded. “As a rule, it is not possible to prove the truth of values but it is nonetheless possible to motivate them” (Hedin and Lahdenperä, 2000:4). What we do is governed by value systems that express reactions, opinions, attitudes and priorities concerning various occurrences (Hedin and Lahdenperä, 2000).

The actions of the school head and teachers at MP schools may be expected to be determined by their aim and determination to mould the pupils into “Swedish and British Muslims” respectively. Although the expectation is that the school head, teachers and other staff are acting within an Muslim framework, these actions are also required to fall within the boundaries of the framework stipulated in national educational policies together with the laws and regulations governing the educational system and the terms on which financial resources are granted to schools in the public sector.

At various times during the past ten years, I have worked as an educator and mentor in various primary MP schools in Sweden. In my experience many of those who founded MP schools and/or have worked in them, feel that they have not been afforded an equal opportunity to present their case or defend themselves. They and their pupils and parents feel that only infrequently have they themselves been allowed to speak out.

The Muslim founders of and employers at MP schools in England and Sweden, do not constitute a homogenous group, having as they do roots in various parts of the world. Some were born in Sweden or the UK, while others have

immigrated there from countries such as Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, or from other European countries. They have immigrated as refugees, as labour-market migrants or for marriage or university education. They have very varied educational backgrounds.

Those parents who have chosen to place their children in such a MP school also have a wide variety of educational backgrounds, ranging from those who have not completed any formal schooling or who are illiterate, to those with some kind of university degree. For some of these Muslim families, it has been especially important to ensure that their children receive an education, in Sweden or the UK, on the basis of the principles and ethics enshrined in the Islamic religion and have therefore chosen to place their children in a MP school.

In Sweden in 2003, the broadcasting of two television programmes, “In the violence of the school” (I skolans våld, SVT :1, 20030508) and “In the violence of the school 2” (I skolans våld 2, SVT:1, 20040512), resulted in a comprehensive and nation-wide inspection by the state of MP schools and became the point of departure for an intensified, aggressive debate in the media in opposition to MP schools.

Aims and objectives of the study

The general aim of the study are to gain a better understanding of those values that dominate four MP schools, two in Sweden and two in the England.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. to describe and examine educational policies with regard to primary schools with a confessional direction in Sweden and England;
- ii. to compare two primary MP schools in Sweden with two such schools in England;
- iii. to describe and examine the manner in which school heads, teachers and other staff deal with the encounters between the values found in the NC of Sweden and England and the principles and ethics embodied in there Private Philosophy of life;
- iv. to describe and examine the views of school heads, teachers and other staff on school leadership and any educational, ideological or personal role model they emulate;
- v. to describe and examine the expectations and views of parents with regard to the MP school and to describe the views of the pupils regarding their schools and norms and values and;
- vi to describe the attitudes of some local authority politicians in Sweden to MP schools.

What Role of God and National Curriculum in School life?

The specific research questions are as follows:

What guides the work at the school? God, or the NC or something else? Why were these schools founded, and what is their purpose? Why have parents and children chosen a primary MP school? What are the problems and conflicts in the school?

The study builds on the findings from:

- i. field studies conducted at two MP schools in Sweden (during 1998) and two in England (during 1999)⁴,
- ii. an analysis of; the debate regarding MP schools in England and Sweden,
- iii. I have also gained much insight and knowledge from participation in different projects and as a consultant for school leaders, teachers and other staff in MP schools, and knowledge and experience gained through an EU project in which the Institute of International Education has been collaborated with teacher teaching colleges in Milan and Madrid, and knowledge and experience gained through participation in an International research project knowledge and experience gained through earlier studies.⁵

4. The study is part of a larger research program, lead by Holger Daun at the Institute of International Education, Stockholm University. The greater part of the finance for the study was from the Swedish National Research Council.

5. Knowledge and experience gained by the present researcher through participation in the collaborative project between the Institute of International Education, Stockholm University and four MP schools in Sweden. The project was operating for two years (2000 and 2001) The aim of the project has been to provide school management, teachers and other staff at these schools with the educational tools necessary for dealing with multicultural encounters in school (the Swedish NC, the ideals of the Muslim staff, the ideals of the non-Muslim staff, together with the ideals of the Muslim pupils and their parents) where each culture has its own ideals, and on the basis of these together with the values and norms associated with (a) the Swedish NC, (b) Islam and (c) school management, teachers and other staff, to facilitate encounters such that it is made possible for the participants to discuss and reflect on how their own points of view, their own religious beliefs may influence their role as school management, teacher or other member of staff and as a transmitter of various norms in the school. The project has been largely financed by Stockholm University.

A European project: Socrates Comenius 3.1. The programme of Measures of the European Common Market for cooperation in the education sector. A report on the project is to be found in: Brattlund (2004). The course: The Multicultural school, in Del Buono, M. (eds). *Strategies for intercultural education*. Milano: IRRE Lombardia (in English, Italian and Spanish).

An International research project. Results of the project have been published in: Daun, H, Brattlund, Å & Robleh, S.(2004). Educational Strategies Among Some Muslim Groups in Sweden. H. Daun & G. Walford (eds) *Educational Strategies Among Muslims in the Context of Globalization*. Some National Case Studies. Leiden: Brill Publisher.

Previous studies on this subject have resulted in the following publications: Brattlund, Å. & Samuelsson, J. (1991). *Islam – en folkrörelse, muslimer i svenskt samhällsliv* (Islam – a popular movement, Muslims in Swedish society). Skellefteå: Artemis. Samuelsson J. and Brattlund, Å. (1996). *Kärlek och familjeliv enligt islam*. (Love and family life according to Islam). Stockholm: Natur & Kultur. Brattlund, Å (2002). *Muslimska skolledare har profeten Muhammed som en viktig förebild i pedagogiskt ledarskap*. (Muslim School Leaders have Prophet Muhammad as an Important role model for pedagogical leadership). Pedagogisk forskning.

I. 3. Significance of the Study

It is the intention that a study of the present kind will be of interest to decision-makers at local and state level, researchers, those working with teacher training and school heads and teachers at primary schools.

There was very little scientific knowledge with regard to MP schools available in the period before the field studies were carried out. Therefore my study will contribute to extending this knowledge. The present-day situation, when this study is being presented, is very similar. That is to say, not a great deal is known about life in MP schools. However, in the case of Sweden, a number of theses have appeared with a focus on different aspects of MP schools.⁶

The ambition is that valuable knowledge and conclusions may be drawn from investigating the motives of those who founded and/or work at MP schools, together with an enquiry into the various issues concerning values and the manner in which school heads, teachers and other staff deal with the encounters between different principles and ethics. The study is therefore to be regarded as one step in order to better understand the values that determine the daily life in some MP schools in Sweden and England.

It is considered to be particularly important that conceptions regarding the values to be found in MP schools are not restricted to the voices and views of those onlookers who are to be found at a considerable distance from the internal everyday life of the schools. Therefore the ambition of this study is to focus on this aspect of a number of MP schools in Sweden and the UK.

I.4. Limitations of the Study

In the case of Sweden, MP schools are a relatively recent phenomenon and therefore there is only a limited number of earlier studies in this area. This fact has inevitably influenced the structure of the present study. In addition, since the total number of such schools is limited, the selection of schools for the study has been restricted.

Further limitations with regard to this study is that ten years have elapsed since the field studies were carried out. This means that the conditions for Muslim schools in England and Sweden most likely have changed during these ten years.

Another limitation is that it had not been possible to use a tape-recorder.

A further limitation derives from the low number of pupils who have written letters and the small number of parents who have been interviewed. The reason

6. Gustafsson, C. (2004). *Muslimsk skola, svenska villkor* (Muslim school, Swedish conditions). Aretun, Å. (2007). *Barns "växa vilt" och vuxnas vilja att forma: Formell och informell socialisation i en muslimsk skola* (Children as Social Producers and Adults' Wish to Shape : Formal and Informal Socialisation in a Muslim school) and Berglund, J. (2009). *Teaching Islam. Islamic Religious Education at Three Muslim Schools in Sweden*.

for the low number of pupils is that at the outset I had decided to restrict the study to years 5 and 6 and that the classes were small. This restriction arose from the fact that most of the MP schools in Sweden at the time of the field work had been granted authorization to provide education only for pupils in years 1–6. Subsequently, pupils in years 5 to 6 had been selected on the assumption that these would have had experience of a MP school over the longest period of time. One reason for the small number of parents having participated in the study is that the field study was limited to a three-week period at each school and it was therefore difficult for more parents to find a suitable time to be interviewed.

The present study does not deal with traditional Muslim education in the form of study of the Koran in classes held in evenings and weekends for young Muslims of different ages, which is also to be found in both Sweden and England. These classes are largely held in premises at a Mosque or the prayer-rooms of various Muslim organizations and centres. Rather, the present study is focused on general compulsory education provided at certain MP schools in Sweden and UK that are run in compliance with the respective NC.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 contains an introduction and presents the Frame of the Study.

Chapter 2 begins with a definition of the term “Muslim.” In order to facilitate comprehension of subsequent parts of the thesis, five central concepts are defined here concerning private philosophies of life and values, norms, and ethics.

Chapter 3 presents a methodological description of the study.

Chapter 4 presents a short historical background of those ethics that are given expression in the national curricula of Sweden and England. The chapter contains a summary of the conditions for approval to be granted for the founding of an independent school in Sweden and a voluntary aided school in England. There is also a review provided here of religious education as a subject in schools in Sweden and England.

Chapter 5 and 6 provide a description of the schools that are included in the study. The two schools in Sweden, are described in chapter 5, and the two schools in England in chapter 6. Organisation of the school, the decision-making process, the school’s norms and values, and the Muslim ethos of each school are described in these chapters, together with the dress codes for pupils and staff, and the types of music, literature, arts, and films that are deemed to be not acceptable and the types of Muslim textbooks, texts, tapes and films that are used in each school.

Chapter 7 provides an analysis and comparison of Muslim *profiled* schools in Sweden and England, on the basis of the State regulations in Sweden and England with regard to schools with a confessional direction. The attitudes of

some local politicians in Sweden to MP schools and the attitudes of the owner with regard to School C in England are also presented and discussed.

Chapter 8 provides an analysis and comparison the views of The School Heads of Muslim profiled schools in Sweden and England.

Chapter 9 provides an analysis and comparison the views of The Teachers and Other staff of Muslim profiled schools in Sweden and England.

Chapter 10 provides an analysis of Parental and pupil choice of school.

Chapter 11 provides a Summary and concluding discussion.

Chapter 2

Key Concepts

2.1. Introduction

Here, in order to facilitate an understanding of subsequent sections of this thesis, certain central and key concepts will be defined and discussed, such as "Muslim," values, norms and ethics.

2.2. The concept of "Muslim"

It is never easy to provide a definition of the concept "Muslim." However, it is useful to attempt a definition here because this will at least indicate the broadness of the semantic field that is covered by this term. On the other hand, the drawback of providing a definition is that the chances are that it will result in an unfortunately static, overly narrow and too simplified a representation of reality. Thus, one ambition associated with any attempt at defining the term "Muslim" is that the individuals concerned will thereby be categorized in a manner that would be contrary to the very purpose of the definition. Although the ambition in proposing a definition is to attain clarity, the risk is that this definition may end up being used, either consciously or unconsciously, to label individuals in terms of pre-determined and prejudiced generalizations. However, since this term appears in various contexts in this thesis, some definitions are nonetheless attempted here.

A distinction is often made between ethnic Muslims and practicing, actively faithful Muslims. An ethnic Muslim is a person who originates from a country where the culture is dominated by Islam (and who is not openly an atheist or adherent of some other religion), but who never, or only occasionally, performs the religious rites prescribed by Islam. These individuals may occasionally perform the rites because it is convenient for them to do so or because this is the way things are supposed to be done. Actively faithful Muslims perform these rites because they are in accordance with their inner convictions. However, it is almost impossible to draw a clear line between these two groups, particularly since Islam is much more than a religion, in the sense that the concept of religion

is usually understood from a western/ Christian perspective. That one does not fast or perform the daily prayers prescribed by Islam does not necessarily mean that one has abandoned or freed oneself from that which Islam represents (Brattlund and Samuelsson 1991; Samuelsson, 1999).

A division between “practicing” and “non-practicing” Muslims is problematic, being a matter of definition and degree. The definition that I has been utilized in this thesis has been adopted from that provided in “Muslims on Education” (2004:11), the position paper from *The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK) (AMSS UK)*,

...we use the descriptive term “Muslim” to encompass not only practicing adherents of Islam, but also those who identify themselves as such (without necessarily being practicing) or who belong to a household or family that holds Islam as its descendant faith.

With the exception of one child, all the pupils who have participated in this study are from Muslim families. These pupils describe themselves as Muslims. Although the term Muslim pupil is used throughout this thesis, in my opinion this might give rise to difficulties since this usage might imply that the identity of each child/pupil being equated with that of the parents. As in the case of other, non-Muslim children, these Muslim children, as they grow up and mature, might develop views of their own with regard to their parents’ religious views (here read Islam) and private life philosophies and towards those values which have been mediated during their upbringing in the home and outside the home, in school and in society at large.

2.3. The Inglehart Values Map

Pupils who have attended an MP school in Sweden or in England are likely to be conduits for those values that will be valid in the society of tomorrow, they will also be influenced by the values of their family together with the spirit of time and values found at the local, regional, national, international and global level.

As freedom of the individual increases, the values held by the individual come to play a greater part. The motor of the society of tomorrow will to a considerable extent be values. We must therefore understand people’s values in order to be able to understand the society of tomorrow (Eklund, et al. 2003) (author’s translation).

Those Muslims and non-Muslims who have participated in this study have roots in a variety of countries and in different parts of the world. Some are from societies and families displaying traditional values and survival values

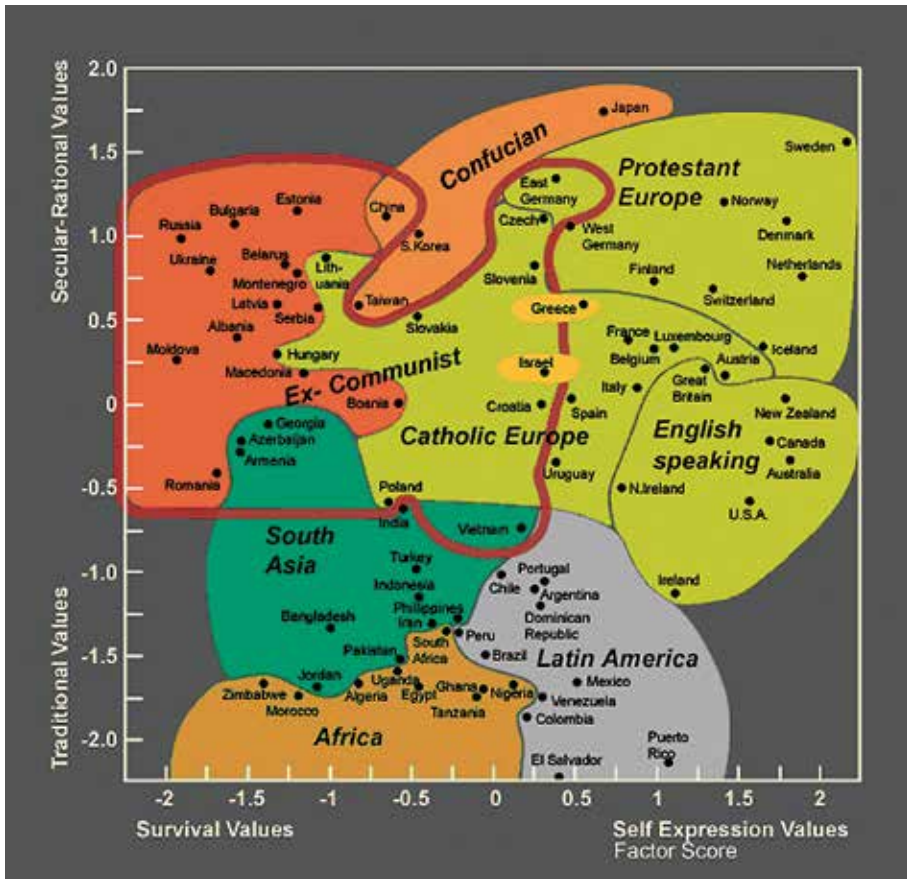


Figure: 2.1.From World Value Studies. The Inglehart Values Map. (1997). http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/library/set_illustrations.html

and others from those displaying Secular-rational values and self-expression values. Inglehart and Baker (1997) describe two circumstances that illustrate the greater differences between individuals and peoples in various parts of the world; degree of secularization – and degree of individuality – in society. The map reproduced above is taken from the World Values Study and provides an overview picture of values in different countries. One feature shown by this picture is that Swedes are the most individualized and the most secularized people among the countries included in this study.

The map demonstrates the significant gradations of differences between the countries of Europe. Although both Sweden and Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) are to be found on the scales for Secular-Rational values and Self-Expression values, Great Britain is significantly lower on both these scales than is the case for Sweden. The map also demonstrates that countries such as Pakistan, Indonesia, Morocco, Jordan and Iran are to be found on the scales for Traditional values and Survival values. However, there are significant differences between these countries with regard to their position on the scales for

Traditional values and Survival values.

Hofstede & Hofstede (2005:2-3) speak of “people’s mental programming” “Every person carries within him- or herself patterns of thinking, feeling, and potential acting that were learned throughout their lifetime. Much of it has been acquired in early childhood, because at that time a person is most susceptible to learning and assimilating. As soon as certain patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting have established themselves within a person’s mind, he or she must unlearn these before being able to learn something different, and unlearning is more difficult than learning for the first time.” Those Muslims and non-Muslims who have participated in this study carry with them aspects derived from different societies and social environments in which they have grown up and in which they live as adults. They originate from countries which are to be found somewhere on the scales for Secular-Rational values and Self-Expression values, and countries which are to be found on the scales for Traditional values and Survival values.

Islam is the source of ethics for a Muslim and implying a higher reality where ethical ideals are considered to be given by God and where the values of individuals are related to the fact of having being created by God. This source of ethics is shared by Muslims with Christians and other religions. The teachers and other staff working in MP schools in Sweden hold a variety of religious beliefs, including those who are Muslim or Christian, believer or non-believer. There are those who regard ethical ideals as being given by God working alongside those who regard ethics as being derived from wisdom, through which it is possible to determine right from wrong. There are also those who hold the conviction that this is a matter of emotional empathy, where the close relationship between one individual and another is the source of ethics (Orlenius, 2001).

2.4. Private Philosophy of Life and Systems of Philosophy of Life

Assumptions about theory and values often interact in our understanding of reality and our system of values. Both our understanding of reality and our system of values influence our fundamental stance, our attitude towards life as a whole (Jeffner, 1973; Koskinen, 1995). As with everyone else, the Muslims and non-Muslims who work in MP schools hold their private philosophies of life. Such philosophies, unlike other systems of religious belief such as Islam and Christianity and systems of non religious belief as Humanism and so on, are unique to each individual, although many contain borrowed elements from various sources. Some might still continue to regard themselves, to some degree or other, as Muslims, Christians, or humanists, while for others their private philosophy of life explicitly might be contingent on regarding themselves as Muslims, humanists, socialists, liberals, and so on.

All individuals have their own image of “reality.” Like everyone else, the

school leaders, teachers, other staff and parents at MP schools have gained images of reality through that which they have been taught and learnt while growing up, in the home, in school, during leisure time and as adults. Images of reality might, for example, be concerned with the origin of the universe, gender roles and so on. Such images contain various understandings that may have been derived from science, tradition, religion or their own interpretations. Images of reality are more or less constantly being revised. Koskinen (1995) describes five different perspectives on "reality:" (i) *image of the world*, (ii) *image of God*, (iii) *view of humanity*, (iv) *view of society* and (v) *view of history*.

The image of the world in the west and in Christianity has been influenced by Neo-Platonic dualism, whereby the world is regarded as being constituted of two elements: spirit and material, where material was valued less than spirit. During the 19th century this view changed and as the issue regarding spirit became increasingly confined to the world of religion, material came to be valued more highly than spirit.

For the believer, it is implied that their religious faith has a certain meaning in everyday life and activity. To hold a belief has consequences for individuals and for society (Sander, 1989). Many Muslims in Sweden and England have a more secularized opinion with regard to the relationship between religion and everyday life. They have attempted to adapt the practice of Islam to circumstances as they exist in Sweden respectively England (Otterbeck, 2000).

The image of God. The Koran is the holy book of Islam and it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. In the Muslim tradition, Allah, God, has been given ninety-nine names. These names are considered to be particularly beautiful and reflect on some of the many properties of God. Most of the names are derived from the Koran. Each name stresses that "God is great," whereby it is not possible to confine God to human, limited and simplified definitions. The names of God are recited as the believer makes use of a string of pearls, moving one pearl as each name is spoken. A couple of examples of such names are the Lawgiver (*al-Muhyi*) and the All-Knowing (*al-Alim*).

Islam, does not involve any beliefs in predestination. Humans have free will, the right and ability to distinguish between good and bad (Hedin, 1999).

Sorgenfrei (2006) opposes any understanding or image of Islam and Muslim theology that relates these to fatalism, where people are denied responsibility for their own actions. Sorgenfrei suggests that such views have their origins in Orientalist research on Islam "which wished to seek out Islam's 'hideous and demonic character' rather than to gain an understanding of it." Sorgenfrei refers to one *hadith* in Tirmidhi which underscores the importance of "human responsibility and ability to act." The message from Muhammad in this *hadith* is that "a person must first and foremost make every effort to accept responsibility and not passively pass this on to God. Only after individuals have done everything in their power, shall they turn to God" (Sorgenfrei, 2006:35-36).

Any view of humanity is closely associated with each individual's image of the world and image of God. The manner in which an individual views her/

his humanity subsequently influences the values held. Values which he/she considers to be worthwhile and good and/or values which he/she considers to be bad and detestable. Muslims and Christians may consider themselves to be part of a meaningful context, given by God. This may imply that he/she strives, in a natural way, not only to take care of himself/herself but also to accept great responsibility for other people and for nature. The view of humanity influences such issues as human worth (Koskinen, 1995).

The view of humanity forms the basis for those virtues which are given prominence in the NC, Lp094, in Sweden: (i) “the equal worth of all people”, (ii) “the sanctity of human life”, (iii) “equality between men and women”, (iv) “solidarity with the weak and less fortunate” and (v) “freedom and integrity of the individual” (to have the ability to use freedom in a responsible way). A central virtue based on these five virtues is “respect” for all human beings, regardless to religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual preferences, appearance or abilities. Other virtues include being helpful, generous and honest. According to this NC, the school is not only to transmit theoretical and practical knowledge, but also to promote the personal development of the pupils in order for them “to become mature people and responsible and useful members of society.”

In England the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002 requires every school to have a policy about valuing diversity and challenging racism.

The view of society held by an individual influences her/his understanding of reality. Is it the understanding of the individual that society consists of free and independent individuals or does society consist of individuals who are dependent on, and subservient to, the state? Is the view that society is to be democratically constructed and that one and all are free to express their opinions?

The view of history indicates the view of an individual with regard to those forces which drive history forward. Is it, for example, God or “the market” which is the motor, no matter what individuals do? In such a case, it is a question of determinism, that is to say, the view of history which regards the process of history as being predetermined and which excludes the possibility that individuals are able to influence and shape their own history (Koskinen, 1995).

As stated earlier, our understanding of reality and our system of values influence our fundamental stance, our perspective on life as a whole. The question as to whether a person takes a fundamental stance that is optimistic or pessimistic, open or closed, positive or negative, curious or indifferent, is of great significance for the understanding he/she has of life.

2.5. Central and peripheral values

Although we as individuals have our point of departure in our own culture, we may also relate positively, negatively or neutrally to values of other cultures. This is dependent on how central or peripheral a particular value is to our own culture. By looking at how children are raised in different cultures, we can

obtain an understanding of which cultural values are in the forefront. During child-rearing, the child's environment mediates a cultural competence (Herlitz, 1999).

Both formal and informal learning exist. The former is given through a direct conscious expression and instructions as to how to behave, while informal learning is about admonitions and encouragement that is not verbally expressed in a direct manner. We react in a much stronger emotional way when someone violates something that is informal, compared to how we react when a person violates something that is formal (Herlitz, 1999).

In Sweden, while the equal value of all humans is often spoken about, all too often certain groups, such as Muslims, are excluded. One way this is indicated is that ethical ideals are often ascribed to them to which they do not in fact subscribe. There is a tendency to attempt to explain all traditions and habits in one's own culture as "reasonable, correct and natural". Ethnocentrism makes it difficult for us to understand the origins of our own behaviour as a means of cementing and uniting the members of a group. These actions may fill the function of creating an identity and community. The motivation for certain actions may be superior ethical values. Other actions remain difficult to understand and the only purpose might be thought to be to strengthen identity. According to this perspective, there is a central ethic which promotes fundamental values such as responsibility, goodness, care, concern, solidarity, generosity. There are also ethics which act as signals, a number of ethical rules which remind and limit: food, drink, clothes, hair, beard, pleasures, leisure, sexuality, marriage, family life, upbringing, gender roles, holidays, ceremonies, rites of passage and so on, where the primary function is to draw a boundary for the group from others and inspire them to realize the goals of the group (Hedin, 1999; Hedin and Lahdenperä, 2000).

In what different ways might those Muslims in MP schools in Sweden and England, having backgrounds in countries that are considered to be Muslim, comprehend the fundamental values and systems of values found in Sweden and England, both in terms of those ethics that are signals and central ethics? In what ways is it possible to misunderstand ethics as signals to the extent that common values become unclear or difficult to interpret? Conversely, Hedin and Lahdenperä (2000) raise the question as to whether there might be unwritten rules, norms, traditions and habits in Swedish society and in schools in Sweden which others might consider to be improper, or even immoral. Although there is no formal parental participation in schools in Sweden, there are a number of schools in Sweden, both local authority and independent schools, who have initiated actions to strengthen the position of parents in various organs and thereby increase parental influence over the schools.

When the NC in Sweden states that the duty of the schools is to "transmit," "ground" and "imprint" values such as democracy, the equal value of each person and virtues such as a sense of justice, a sense of responsibility, honesty, these appear to be rational and straightforward. But they are more complex than this

since they deal with values and appraisals, that is to say:

that which one feels strongly about, that which one appreciates as valuable, holy, honest, right, just, good, beautiful, aesthetic, worthwhile, heroic or improper, distasteful and immoral (Hedin & Lahdenperä 2000:48) (author's translation).

... if the duty of the school is to transmit and ground "Swedish" values in the sphere of a philosophy of life, that is to say, ideas about the meaning of life, family life, child upbringing, sexuality, care and education, and also compensate for "shortcomings" and "misconceptions" on the part of immigrant parents, the following conclusion might easily be drawn: the school is to assimilate pupils with immigrant backgrounds and make them into Swedes ...

From this perspective, there is a risk that immigrant parents will be regarded as being incompetent – having "erroneous" values – while the Swedish school will be regarded as being "good and knowledgeable" (Hedin & Lahdenperä, 2000:51) (author's translation).

In the English NC the two broad aims for the school curriculum are reflected in section 351 of the Education Act 1996. It says that "all maintained schools provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The Act requires the Secretary of State, local authorities and the governing body and school heads to take steps to achieve these requirements. The Secretary of State meets his responsibilities in this area by providing a national framework which incorporates the NC, religious education and other statutory requirements. This framework is designed to enable all schools to respond effectively to national and local priorities, to meet the individual learning needs of all pupils and to develop a distinctive character and ethos rooted in their local communities.

One of the consequences in situations where pupils with an immigrant background adopt a stance which is contrary to their parents' culture, language and values is a culture clash, one that is to be avoided in society but instead arises within the family (Lahdenperä, 1997; Hedin & Lahdenperä 2000). In such a case the school is in contravention of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Sweden has ratified. Here one of the provisions is that the education of the child is:

the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own (Article 29 UN Convention of the Rights of the Child).

2.6. Ethics

The term “ethics”

Ethics ties moral ideas to schemes of thought that bring about clarity and make morals more visible. While ethics is more related to character, the term moral is more closely tied to the social behaviour of individuals. The interpretations people make of reality and how they choose to behave are determined by circumstances related to morals. Morals may be considered as being good or bad, conscious or unconscious. Morals are equivalent to those norms and values that, in combination with facts, determine how individuals make judgments, decisions and courses of action. Metaethics deal with, reflects on, how ethical concepts work and what significance these concepts have (Koskinen, 1995).

Moral stances become complicated because it is possible for our general ethical principles to be used in support of alternative courses of action that may be contradictory.

Morals, and therefore also those morals and ethics that have become conscious, consist of two parts: norms and values. Norms are concerned with various types of action which may be right or wrong, more or less right or wrong or neither right nor wrong, and may be either a duty or a prohibition. Values refer to various circumstances which may be considered to be bad, that towards which one ought to strive or that which ought to be avoided or abhorred.

In the view of Orlenius (2001), ethics provides answers to two questions: (i) What do we want and how are we to achieve it? and (ii) Which values are worthwhile pursuing and which actions are right and which wrong? A conscious ethical stance cannot be mediated. Each individual must experience and gain this for themselves.

2.6.1. Fundamental values in school and society

Koskinen (1995) describes six factors, which he terms the fundamental values of society, and how they interact with each other. They constitute the fundamental prerequisites, in a society, at a certain point in time, for what is valued and how it is valued. These are: (i) changing economic and social prerequisites, (ii) development of new technologies, (iii) new knowledge and new understanding, the level of science in all areas, (iv) current philosophies of life, political ideologies and religious systems of belief, (v) cultural currents in art, literature, drama, and

so on including powerful and intrusive media such as television, internet and advertising, which are of particular significance today, and (vi) praxis – that is to say, the manner in which one in fact acts in any given society.

National curricula reflect the actual values and currents that are to be found in society. Various factors influence and determine what the individual believes, but the exercise and application of norms and values shape the actual values of the individual in practice. If a teacher tells a class, in glowing terms, that no one is allowed to harass anyone else, while in practice harasses a pupil or a colleague, then this practical action will gain great significance with regard to shaping the views of the pupils as to what is right and wrong. Equally, practical actions will gain great significance with regard to the views of the pupils as to what is highly valued in society.

The global IT society, without borders, is characterized today by a constant flow of information, capital and communication. It is a society that is not bound by national borders. It is a continent open to all. It is open to all without regard to ethnicity, citizenship, religion, social class, gender, age (Castells, 1998; Ohmae, 2000; Lahdenperä, 2002). Consequently children and young people not only interact with and are influenced by, the values of the local community but also become members of different communities, both local and global.

The Swedish NC states, amongst other things, that the school shall:

promote understanding for other people and capacity for insight... and that the internationalisation of Swedish society and the increasing mobility over national borders places strong demands on people's capacity to live with each other and realize those values which are a part of multiculturalism. Awareness of one's own common cultural heritage, and participation in it, provides a secure identity that is important to develop, together with a capacity to understand and become part of other's conditions and values. The school is a social and cultural meeting place that has both a possibility for and responsibility to strengthen this capacity among all who work there (SOU, 1992:94. Commission of Enquiry on the NC 1992 and Lp094 and Lpfö98) (author's translation).

The Swedish NC may be read and interpreted in many ways. Some may read it as if it were "genuine Swedishness" which should prevail at school, whatever that may be. The Curriculum also contains a number of contradictions, as does the Education Act in relation to the NC. On the one hand, teaching in school is regarded as being non-confessional while, on the other hand, provisions have now been introduced to permit the founding of various types of independent schools, including schools with a confessional direction. In addition, it is stated that the school shall promote and imprint in the pupils those values upon which society rests. One interpretation may be that pupils should be provided with knowledge and opportunities to reflect and engage in dialogue, on the basis of

the multiculturalism and pluralism that is found in Sweden today.

In England in the mid-1990s, the SCAA (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority) set up The National Forum for Values in Education and the Community with the aim of establishing a forum for discussions as to the extent that a consensus might exist with regard to common core values in school and in society.

The NC speaks of the importance of one of the goals in a school curriculum being "to work in collaboration with families and the local community, including church and voluntary groups, local agencies and business".

The school curriculum should promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and

in particular, develop principles for distinguishing between right and wrong. It should develop their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of their own and different beliefs and cultures, and how these influence individuals and societies. The school curriculum should pass on enduring values, develop pupils' integrity and autonomy and help them to be responsible and caring citizens capable of contributing to the development of a just society.

It should promote equal opportunities and enable pupils to challenge discrimination and stereotyping. It should develop their awareness and understanding of, and respect for, the environments in which they live, and secure their commitment to sustainable development at a personal, local, national and global level. It should also equip pupils as consumers to make informed judgements and independent decisions and to understand their responsibilities and rights.

The school curriculum should promote pupils' self-esteem and emotional well-being and help them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the community. It should develop their ability to relate to others and work for the common good.

It should enable pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change and adversity.

It should prepare pupils for the next steps in their education, training and employment and equip them to make informed choices at school and throughout their lives, enabling them to appreciate the relevance of their achievements in life and society outside school, including leisure, community engagement and employment. (Ofsted, Better Education and care, Strategic Plan 2005-2008, November 2004.)

As stated in chapter one, compulsory MP schools in Sweden are often inaccurately portrayed in the media as being entirely Muslim. This is not the case, since these schools comply with the NC and teach subjects that are equivalent to those

7. The school curriculum: comprises all learning and other experiences that each school plans for its pupils. (The NC is an important element of the school curriculum).

taught to pupils in the local municipal schools. However, over and above the obligatory syllabus, the MP schools also usually provide (i) additional lessons in Swedish, and (ii) teaching in additional subjects, such as Arabic language and/or Islam. Nonetheless, the pupils are still taught the subject religious education in a similar manner to that found in municipal schools. That is to say, they learn about Christianity and other religions.

The citizens shape regulations and laws. Some norms are considered to be sufficiently important to be formalized as rules. The most important rules are further formalized as legislation. Laws are meant to reflect the value system of society while they also influence practical activities. It is often stated that in Sweden we live in a multicultural pluralistic society. At the same time, citizens continue to live in part according to old norms even though they are no longer relevant, while there is also a lack of new, more appropriate norms, more adapted to the new reality.

In Sweden, it is customary for the religious representatives for Muslims to adapt their religious practices to conditions in Sweden (Otterbeck, 2000).

The earliest Islam is considered to provide the norms. But this does not imply that Muslims today are to exactly imitate what was done then, but rather to make use of modern technology and new ideas in a manner analogous to that found in the earliest time (Otterbeck, 2000: 44) (author's translation).

Otterbeck (2000) indicates the difference between "Islam as a norm and Islam as an empirically observable phenomenon," "verbalized norm and actual norm".

In an increasingly complex reality, there is no one norm that is completely applicable to any given situation. As in most philosophies of life, there are more general instructions in Islam, what are known as moral principles. One example of such a principle is what is known as the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you". This principle is derived from ancient human wisdom and similar formulations are found in Jewish, Christian and Islamic beliefs and, in a more general form, in the various world religions (Koskinen, 1995; Hedin and Lahdenperä, 2000; Orlenius, 2001).

2.6.2. Negative norms and positive norms

While a negative norm consists of a prohibition, a positive norm provides encouragement or decree. Historically, the culture of schools in Sweden and the UK has been dominated by negative norms, that is to say, prohibitions, what one is not to do. Schools and the church have been more concerned with rearing children than in nurturing them. Through their rearing, children are to learn to restrain from engaging in undesirable behaviour. Laws and rules are to be found for every situation and determine the course of every-day activities in detail. Children are expected to learn to abide by the rules that governed adult work and to obey and not question. Schools of today use almost exclusively

positive norm formulations.

For most of those Muslim children who have previously lived in countries outside of Europe, their encounter with positive norm formulations in Sweden pose a problem. Large numbers of them have grown up with negative norm formulations. It is confusing for them when they meet positive norms in pre-school and school. Like many immigrant families, some of the Muslim parents interpret the use of positive norms in school to mean that schools in Sweden are without norms.

2.6.3. Intrinsic values and instrumental values

There are intrinsic values and instrumental (extrinsic) values. Examples of instrumental values include career, money and power. That is to say, those instruments that an individual uses to attain that which the individual considers to be good and valuable for himself/herself. Intrinsic values are things that have a value in themselves. They may include well-being, security, freedom, democracy, and so on. Some values, for example knowledge, may have both intrinsic and instrumental values. There are values, for example, health, freedom, security and job satisfaction, which are good for the individual himself/herself or for a certain group and there are values, such as community, love, friendship, democracy and peace, which constitute values in the relationships between individuals and groups. With regard to negative values in relationships, these include harassment, envy, threats, discrimination, and so on (Koskinen, 1995).

Siv Their (1999) describes three main values which have emerged and been confirmed through research on working life:

(i) values with regard to survival and life-support provisions, (ii) values with regard to living standards (exterior world) and (iii) values with regard quality of life (interior world).

The head who holds values relating to survival and provisions as a driving-force will be focused on maintaining tradition since security, routines, provisions are that which are important while change might well be viewed as a threat to internal security. Here the issuing of orders, preferably written directives, might be used to steer in order to reduce the risk of anything going wrong. The motives are different with regard to the head who is driven by values concerning living standards (exterior world). For this head, financial growth is important. The motivation to work is underpinned by the person achieving a better post, higher status and more financial rewards. A high achievement attribute. Important to follow trends. Calls for goals that are possible to measure in quantitative terms.

Where life quality (interior world) is the dominant driving-force for the head, it is important that the duties are seen as having meaning. Here there is often engagement in various social issues, such as the environment and peace. Challenges are welcomed and involve a critical attitude both with regard to work and outside work.

2.6.4. Teaching on ethics and values

A teacher at all times, through the approach adopted towards pupils, communicates values, both explicit and implicit (Colnerud, 2004). Colnerud distinguishes three means by which values are communicated and which are all needed in school; *moral instruction* (different types of remonstrations), *moral conversation* (teacher and pupils discuss and take stances on various moral issues) and *moral interaction* (where the teacher listens to pupils and wins their confidence and acts as a role-model for the pupils). In the view of Colnerud (2004) of these three means, it is moral instruction that is used too excessively.

As stated above, the school also constitutes a social meeting place where children and adults from a variety of different backgrounds and experiences are able to meet. It is the responsibility of the school to determine the extent to which the opportunities that such a meeting place provides are to be utilized: to take stock of positive encounters, but also to be able to teach about conflict and conflict resolution. More recent research on democracy has seen the development of a deliberative democratic view, the centre of which is communication and dialogue. The concept of deliberative dialogue is used to describe those discussions where the participants have the opportunity to express and consider their own opinions attitudes and those of others: discussions where different opinions and values are brought up and where they may be contrasted. Deliberative dialogue always implies tolerance and respect for the other sides of the argument, learning to listen to the arguments of others, the aspiration with regard to reaching agreement or at least to reach temporary agreement. Deliberative dialogue may be regarded as being the fundamental constituent of democracy (Englund, 2000).

If the teaching on ethics and values is to have more permanent effects in the school, it is of considerable importance that those adults who work in that school have themselves considered these issues in depth beforehand. That is to say, that they have been provided with opportunities to discuss and reflect on how their own viewpoints, their own opinions on existential issues, may influence their fulfillment of their roles as principal, teacher or role-model with regard to various norms in the school (Brattlund, 2004).

It is through self-reflection that one is able to consider what it is one stands for and it is through dialogue and discussion that one is able to examine how others view various issues concerning values. For Karlsson (2003) reflection means to intentionally draw attention to something in order to create distance to that which is habitual, such as routines and actions. Through reflection, the educator is able to make various courses of action visible and thereby move away and modify behaviour and routines that are habitual.

According to Dewey (1999), reflection arises in concrete situation. This includes occasions where the educator attempts to understand both the child and the situation. Such situations demand different solutions and ideas that are based on experience and responsibility.

Learning is rather a process where we move through a grey zone between that which we know and that which we do not know, through posing questions, testing our way forward and, based on the information we have obtained, to adopt what has been found, based on the evidence, to be a possible solution or explanation for the problem we have been dealing with (Karlsson, 2003:54) (author's translation).

The educator may be considered as playing the role of the guide who is showing the way. "There can be no development of knowledge for that educator (or researcher or some other seeker of knowledge) who for some reason is unwilling to make this "leap" into the partially unknown. Such a person remains in the position of continuing with that which is already known and certain" (Karlsson, 2003:54). The author continues: "Those who follow routines thereby approve of that which is normal praxis as constituting the complete measure of that which is possible" (Karlsson, 2003:54).

According to Roth (2003), "deliberative education" is not equivalent to pupils gaining value-neutral knowledge, nor is it concerned with social training through being able to carry out a variety of different forms of decision-making, such as the class committee, the pupil council, and so on. Individuals and groups with different cultural, social and religious communities all live within the European community. Value communities grow up in different countries and transnational boundaries. This is true of not only religious values, but also cultural, political, social, linguistic and moral.

In a similar manner, individuals from different backgrounds and communities meet in the school. Children, young people and adults meet in the school. Here various conceptions meet with regard to how a good life is to be lived and with regard to what is right and what is wrong, what is false, what is beautiful and what is not. Knowledge and values are not restricted to individuals but also live through various communities. General statements might therefore be experienced as being offensive (Roth, 2003). Roth (2003) claims that an important prerequisite for a deliberative dialogue to be possible is that "an individual enjoys a moral and legal right to democratically consider knowledge, values and norms" (Roth, 2003:18) (author's translation).

One of the points that Roth makes is that mutuality be seen in moral terms. That is to say, to have the moral right to consider that which he/she considers to be meaningful. In a deliberative dialogue, individuals present themselves as displaying solidarity with each other. The purpose of this principle is to protect the right of those individuals actively participating in such dialogues to be recognized. These forms of mutuality are seldom, if ever, encouraged in schools and other teaching situations. In Roth's view, what happens in schools is rather the reproduction of questions and answers that have already been prepared in advance. According to Roth (2003), democratic dialogues may be defined as communicative rationality. "They are not, in other words, to be a means to persuade the other to eventually share the same values and knowledge as one

self. Rather they are characterized by their orientation towards understanding of each other's differences and to constitute a common striving to provide common decisions with democratic legitimacy" (Roth, 2003:24). Deliberative dialogues imply "a process of legitimating decisions, one that is mutual, oriented towards understanding, and reached through argumentation, by which means knowledge, values and norms are evaluated in a spirit of solidarity rather than merely being confronted with each other, and thereby the decision is motivated by the stronger argument and not merely through habit, tradition, unwarranted authority, manipulation, money, power or violence" (Roth, 2003:28). (author's translation)

2.7. International Agreements

In both the Swedish NC for the Compulsory School (Lpo 94) and the NC for Preschool (Lpfö 98) the importance is underlined of providing pupils with the necessary knowledge both to be able to participate in a more multicultural and pluralistic society and to meet the situation of increased mobility of people, goods and services over national borders. The European Union provides the opportunity to seek support for different forms of project that aim to expand and deepen cooperation between schools, teachers, teacher trainers and researchers from different countries. This also applies to projects that aim to provide knowledge about other cultures and faiths. At the same time, teaching is expected to entail respect for different cultural backgrounds.

Sweden and the UK are signatories to a number of the fundamental documents in the form of international treaties and conventions. One of the implications of this is that Sweden and the UK have undertaken to provide knowledge about these documents in schools. These documents also constitute the basis for the formulation of provisions in a range of curricula and course plans. Teachers and principals are expected to take cognizance of the following documents:

- UN Declaration on Human Rights (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948).
- UN Convention on Children's Rights (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989).
- UN Recommendations on education for international understanding, cooperation, peace and teaching about human rights and fundamental freedoms (adopted by the UN General Conference in 1974).
- UN Declarations and recommendations on teaching related to environmental issues (adopted by the UN Conference of Ministers in 1977).

The Declaration on Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN in 1948, constituted the lowest common denominator with regard to what countries of the

world could agree on. Various rights are then enumerated in the Declaration: the right to the freedoms of thought, conscience and religion; the right to social security and economic, social and cultural rights; the right to education and employment; the right to seek and receive refuge from persecution in other countries. By drawing up a variety of further conventions, the UN has drawn up a series of documents, such as the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, that are to a greater extent legally binding on the signatories than in the case of the Declaration on Human Rights.

Over and above the UN documents and agreements, there is also a European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, which was drawn up by the member countries of the Council of Europe in 1950. All members of the Council of Europe are thereby bound by the provisions contained in the Convention. The rights enumerated in this European Convention include: “the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, expression, assembly, association”. It is also stated in the Convention that states are to impose “a ban on discrimination and inhuman and degrading treatment”.

With regard to the UN, attention should also be drawn to the Declaration on the abolition of discrimination against women, the Convention on women’s political rights and the Convention on the abolition of all types of discrimination against women. The UN has also adopted documents containing special provisions for children, such as the Declaration on Children’s Rights (1959) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Further, the UN has also adopted documents with provisions for the particular protection of minorities, such as immigrants, national minorities and indigenous peoples.

2.8. Integration and assimilation

In my opinion, the debate on MP schools had far too often been centered on those opponents to these schools who had argued in favour of pupils (with immigrant backgrounds) becoming assimilated into Swedish society while the law-makers were propounding integration. Some of the supporters of the integration of pupils had at the same time been equating this with assimilation. A short review is provided below of the history concerning the frame-work of immigration, integration and assimilation in Sweden.

Measures to facilitate the adaptation of immigrants to Swedish life were first introduced in the 1960s. In 1969, the Swedish Riksdag adopted legislation to regulate immigration (Act 1968:142, Committee Report 1968: StatsU196 and Government Communication 1968:405). This legislation stipulates that: “immigrants are to have the opportunity of the same standard of living as the indigenous population.” The presumption was that those who intended to settle

permanently in Sweden should be assimilated⁸ into Swedish society as soon as possible. This presumption was subsequently brought into question. On the basis of the Official Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Immigration (Official Report 1974:69), the Riksdag in 1975 adopted legislation (Act 1975:26, Committee Report 1975UinU6, Government Communication 1975:160) stipulating policies which have been summarized in three goals: equality, freedom of choice and cooperation. These policies deviated from prior policies of assimilation. The new policies aimed to guarantee that the cultural and language backgrounds of immigrants should not only be recognized but also be facilitated. A number of specific measures were introduced such as mother tongue/first language tuition, financial support for various cultural activities such as the production of literature in languages other than Swedish, the import of books, radio and TV programmes and information materials in various languages. In addition, information material about immigrants was produced aimed at Swedish people. Responsibility for the reception of refugees was transferred, in the 1980s, from The National Labour Market Administration (Arbetsmarknadsverket – AMV)⁹ to the Swedish Immigration Board (Statens invandrarverk), now Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket), and local authorities. Through “a whole-of-Sweden” strategy, a much greater number of local authorities in the country were to become involved in the reception of refugees as mobility was increased among those who had been granted asylum.

At the same time, the Government replaced the use of the concept multicultural with the concept of diversity, ethnic, cultural, religious and language diversity. In the Act 1975:26, it was presumed that the concepts ethnic diversity and cultural diversity also included language diversity and religious diversity. The concept of diversity may also refer to the shifting experiences of life on the part of immigrants. There is overlapping in meaning of the concept of ethnic diversity and of cultural diversity, and they are sometimes used interchangeably. In the Act, the Government assumes that “the ethnic background or ethnic affiliations of an individual can just as well be Swedish as, for example, Sami, Finnish, Kurdish, Muslim and so on” (Government Bill 1997/98:16:19).

The concept of *integration* is defined in the Government Bill (1997/98), where a number of different aspects are taken up, such as (i) it being distinct from assimilation, (ii) an expression of the ambition with regard to the goal of equality, and (iii) a collective term for the ambition and measures taken on the part of the state and local authorities to realize immigration policies. The concept of integration may refer to a goal that is to be attained or to a process. Processes of integration may be found at both the level of the individual and the level of

8. Assimilation: the process whereby an individual or a minority abandon their own culture. To internalize – to become completely integrated with the values, norms and traditions of the dominant culture. It is by this means that the original cultural differences disappear. (Brante, T. Andersen, H. & Korsnes, O. (2001) Sociologiskt Lexikon. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur)

9. AMV now consists of the National Labour Market Board (Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen – AMS), which is the central authority, as well as 20 County Labour Boards and approximately 325 local public employment services (1997).

society, and certain features may be assigned to it, such as cultural, social or economic aspects.

It is also stated in this Government Bill that the state should not stipulate general goals with regard to the integration of each individual. "Integration at the level of the individual ought to be regarded as a project the content and goal of which is to be determined by the individual themselves." (Government Bill 1997/98:16:22) On the other hand, the state may stipulate goals in various areas through, for example, the use of educational policies, and thereby carry out policies that facilitate the attainment of their goals by individuals.

Therefore, integration must be a question of opportunities to be included in larger entities without detracting from one's own cultural and ethnic identity. However, there has to be a certain level of adaptation whenever people come together.

The processes of integration are mutual in the sense that everyone is participating and share responsibility for these encounters, and all must make a contribution. The issue of integration is not confined to being about or for immigrants. In a society this is ethnically and culturally diverse, individuals need to complement each other and contribute in a mutual manner with their respective competence and experiences of life in order for the potential resting in diversity to be realized and utilized.

Therefore, segregation, voluntary or imposed, is as undesirable as imposed assimilation. The processes of integration are continually ongoing. The precise manner in which this happens and how they develop is dependent on a large number of factors, often in conjunction with each other. The circumstances, wishes and ambitions of each individual play a very large part, as do their opportunities for supporting themselves. Nevertheless, it is equally important that society reflects openness, respect and tolerance and that the institutions of the majority in society are developed on the basis of the diversity that exists in society. (Government Bill 1997/98:16: 23) ("author's translation")

It is also pointed out that the public sector not only has responsibility, in its activities, "to realize the ambitions enshrined in the policies for integration, but also a particular responsibility for setting a good example." (Government Bill 1997/98:16:27)

Sweden has become a multi-religious country during the course of the last two decades whereby the major global religions are now to be found in the religious communities.

In an ethnically and culturally diverse society, there ought to be a preparedness to meet the various religious interests and wishes of people, even when these do not correspond to one's own. Openness and respect with regard to religions and systems of belief other than one's own, is a natural consequence of the

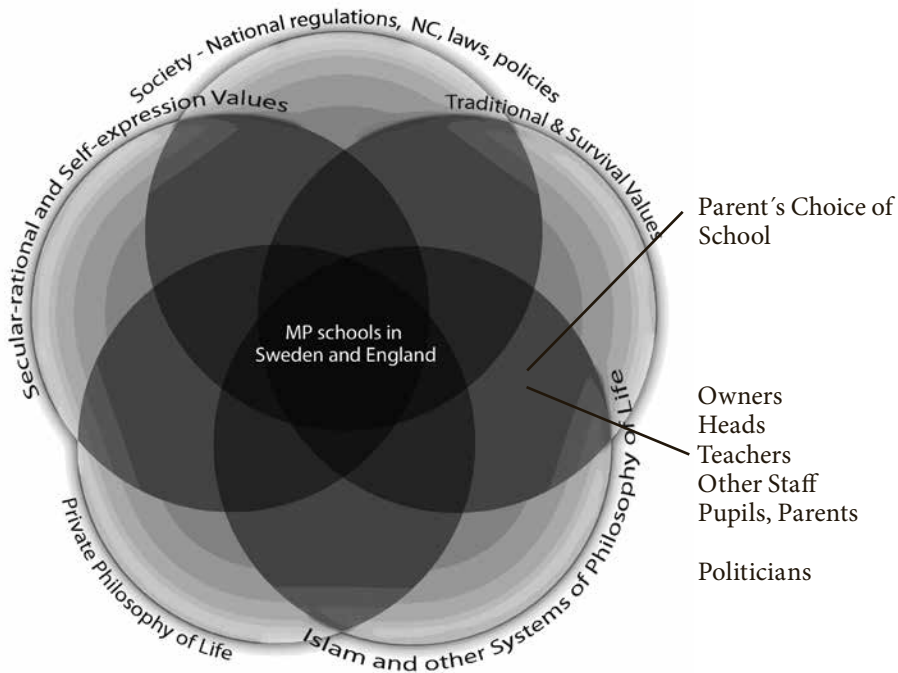
guarantee of religious freedom under Swedish constitutional law (Government Bill 1997/98:16: 68) (author's translation)

Appropriate arenas in which to meet are prerequisites for integration. MP schools, like many other schools with a non-Muslim profile, constitute such an appropriate arena, where people from various backgrounds, Muslims and non-Muslims, those with roots in Swedish society and those with roots in other European countries and elsewhere, are able to meet and collaborate in a common work environment. The purpose of their work is to together provide the fundamental knowledge in core subjects, such as languages, Mathematics, History, Natural Science, and Social Studies that are subjects the future generation requires. Their aim is to provide pupils with the necessary knowledge both to be able to participate in a society with ethnic, cultural, religious and language diversity and to meet the situation of increased mobility of people, goods and services over national borders.

Below a Map is presented over the aspects and concepts which have been most important for the empirical analysis.

Muslims employed in any MP school have a variety of different private philosophies of life and they work together with non-Muslims also having a variety

Figure: 2.2. Mapping the Interactions Between different fields and values involved in MP schools in Sweden and England.



What Role of God and National Curriculum in School life?

of different private philosophies of life.

The two MP schools in Sweden and the two in England have been designed on the basis of the framework determined by Swedish, respective English, society within which it has been permitted for MP schools to be established. MP schools are under an obligation to confirm respectively to Swedish or English national regulations and those fundamental values of society which are reflected in the NC, laws, policies and UN documents and agreements and European Conventions.

Schools are pluralistic forums for children and adults, who have various national backgrounds and a variety of philosophies of life and carry with them secular rational values and values of self-expression, traditional values and survival values, and who have Islam as their religion or some other system of philosophy of life.

Various values in a school may be re-evaluated and melted or blended together.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This is an ethnographical oriented qualitative research study where the methodology adopted is characterized by the close proximity to the object being investigated. Since this area of research is relatively recent and since there has been no previous knowledge with regard to the working methods of these schools together with the focus of the study being (read on the previous part about aims and objectives of the study).

This thesis contains a case study of two MP schools in Sweden and, by way of contrast, I carried out a case study of two MP schools in England. Bereday (1967) (in A.R. Trethewey, 1976) describes two different forms of comparison: *balanced* comparison and *illustrative* comparison. The aim of a balanced comparison is to obtain “matched or balanced data from each of the countries being compared” (Trethewey, 1976:74) while an illustrative comparison “involves drawing examples of educational practices in different countries to illustrate points of comparison suggested by the data” (Trethewey, 1976:74).

It is particularly interesting to contrast the case of England with that of Sweden. Sweden has been selected because my own background is in Sweden which implies that my prior understanding of school culture, school policies and debate with regard to MP schools in Sweden is qualitatively different from my prior understanding of school culture, school policies and debate with regard to MP schools in England. England was selected because it has been possible to find MP schools there which do not receive financial support from the state and which are not regulated to a similar extent as are grant-aided schools.

For the purposes of the research, every effort has been made to view from the inside the situation of those individuals who form part of the study and to observe their environment from their own perspective. Through these attempts to maintain such an internal perspective, the ambition had been to gain a more profound understanding of those values that were dominant in these schools at the time of the field studies. Nonetheless, it has also been considered important to maintain the ability to switch from this internal perspective to an external

perspective – to be able to both understand and to explain.¹⁰

The consequence of this approach has been to participate as much as possible in everyday life in the schools and the situation in which each school was found to be in at the time of this field work. Such empathetic experience of the world as perceived by each individual has formed the basis for understanding and interpreting each individual's own descriptions of their own philosophy of life in relation to encounters with the NC in Sweden or England.

My own background is in Sweden which implies that my prior understanding of school culture, school policies and debate with regard to MP schools in Sweden is qualitatively different from my prior understanding of school culture, school policies and debate with regard to MP schools in England. No completely balanced comparison between Sweden and England has been made since the case of Sweden is described in greater detail. However, there is a more balanced comparison with regard to some factors or dimensions while this is not the case with others. The latter function more as "illustration or contrast" (Bereday (1967) in Trethewey, 1976; Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2007).

My own pre-knowledge, gained through my educational and professional background, as a social worker, refugee coordinator, teacher in upper secondary education and adult education and supply teacher in primary schools, head of an upper secondary schools and Folk High Schools,¹¹ and initiator and head of an Art school for young people and manager of development work in education, and research assignments, together with other relevant personal experience, although strictly-speaking not objective, has nonetheless been of immense importance to the present study.

This study is built on information, knowledge and experience from: (i) my field studies carried out in two MP schools in Sweden (1998) and two such schools in England (1999), (ii) my participation in a collaborative project, which ran for two years between 2000 and 2001, between the Institute of International Education, Stockholm University and four MP schools, (iii) my participation in a EU project where the Institute of International Education collaborated with teacher training colleges in Milan and Madrid, (iv) my participation in a research project on educational strategies among Muslims, coordinated by the Institute of International Education, Stockholm University, and in collaboration with researchers and post-graduate students from Sweden, England, Germany, the Czech Republic, Greece, Iran, Afghanistan, Egypt, Somalia and Japan, (v)

10. Holme and Solvang (1997) refer to Enerstvedt (1971) who claims that one at all times should be able to switch from an insider to an outsider perspective, between understanding and explaining a phenomenon.

11. "A characteristic feature of the Swedish Folk High Schools is, among other things, their freedom to develop the content and direction of their own courses. This means that they diverge from ordinary schools in many ways. There is no centrally established, standard curriculum for the Folk High Schools, each school makes its own decisions regarding teaching plans within the limits set by a special ordinance. The overall object of the Swedish Folk High School is to give general civic education. The Folk High Schools receive financial support from the state."

prior studies in this area (viii) my commission (2004-2007) as a consultant in school management and school development from SIS (Sw. *Sveriges islamiska skolor*), the national interest organization for Islamic schools in Sweden, and (ix) from my appointment at RUC- *Mälardalen* – the Regional Development Centre for the Counties of Södermanland and Västmanland, at the Teacher Training Department at Mälardalen University College (2003-2009-).

Table 3:1 Prior findings, information, knowledge and experience on which the present study builds

	<i>Sweden</i>		<i>England</i>	
Field studies	School A 1998	School B 1998	School C 1999	School D 1999
Experience from my appointment at DURUC – the Regional Development Centre for the Counties of Sörmland and Västmanland, at the Teacher Training Department at Mälardalen University College (2003–2007).	Experience and knowledge concerning the general problems that schools in Sweden at large are working with.			
Media reports, articles and political debates, 2001–2006	Analysis based on the media reports concerning two documentaries broadcast by Swedish Television, “In the violence of the school” (20030508) and “In the violence of the school 2” (20040512).		Media reports on MP schools.	

Kvale (1997:91) has defined three key questions in the planning of interview research:

- what: to acquire pre-knowledge with regard to the object that is to be research.
- why: to clarify the purpose of the research
- how: to obtain information about various interview techniques and analysis, and to determine which are the most appropriate in the circumstances.

One can appear to be open (until one no longer wishes to hear), since we are all a product of society. But it is impossible to be totally open. Each and everyone has their own *habitas*.

As the interviewer and observer, it is my intention to produce a picture of reality, a picture that I am able to understand, a picture which is compatible with my pre-understanding of reality. It should also be a picture that I am able to transmit to others – as a result of my research. Nonetheless reality as it is today is much more complex than the somewhat simplified, dogmatic pictures that might be presented in a thesis. Even if the interviewer has attempted as far

as possible to obtain honest answers, that which the interviewee states is still limited in terms of time and space. Just as a teacher, a teaching team, or a whole school has both good days and bad days, weeks, months or years.

By adopting the qualitative form of interviews, it has been the intention to allow space for the individual being interviewed to be able to influence the direction of the conversation. However, an interview guide, based on the research questions, current values and a number of specific questions, has been available in order to ensure that all intended issues are illuminated during each interview. Both informant interviews and respondent interviews have been used (Filstead, 1970; Holme and Solvang, 1997).¹²

The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the point of view of the interviewee, develop the consequences of people's experiences, revealing the world they live in rather than scientific explanations. Knowledge is built up through the qualitative research interview: it is a matter of collaboration, an exchange of points of view between two people in conversation on a subject that is of common interest. The interrelationship as a basic tenet is clearly expressed in the word "interview," which has its origin in the French word *entrevue* – between two views, two points of views (Kvale, 1997: 9). (author's translation)

In order to investigate how heads, teachers and other staff deal with the encounters between the values derived from Islam with the values which permeate the NC in Sweden and England, respondent interviews have been carried out with all the staff at the two schools in Sweden and at the two schools in England.

The case studies also involved the analysis of various documents, relevant literature, research reports, and so on, together with national curricula, local syllabi, and textbooks. Interviews were carried out with school heads, teachers, other staff, pupils, parents, those legally responsible for the schools and various specialists in the field of Islam and education, researchers, politicians (in Sweden) and others who were important to the schools. Use has been made of interview guides, questionnaires and unstructured observations of processes in the classroom, at staff meetings, conferences for teachers and parent teachers.

The work environment (in school C and school D) included both the indoor and the outdoor environment and a variety of pupil work, posters which included those listing Muslim codes of behavior were photographed to facilitate analysis.

Since MP schools constitute a relatively recent area of research, this dissertation provides an initial description of the schools that have participated in the

12. Filstead, 1970; Holme and Solvang;1997 distinguish between informant interviews and respondent interviews. Respondent interviews are carried out with those who are participants in that which is being investigated, while informant interviews are carried out with those who are on the periphery, but who nonetheless have significant things to say about that which is being investigated.

study. This description includes their organizational structure, the decision-making process, the norms and values in the school, the Muslim ethos of the school, and the dress codes for the pupils and staff together with the types of music, literature, arts, and films that are deemed to be not acceptable and the type of Muslim textbooks, materials, tapes and films that are used in the school. This is followed by a review of the understanding and stance towards issues concerning the Muslim ethos of the schools on the part of pupils, parents, school management, teachers and other staff, those legally responsible for the school and (in Sweden) politicians. The reason for having conducted interviews with local authority politicians in Sweden was that the local authority has the right to monitor (public control) the activities of independent schools that are located within their municipality. When an application to establish a MP school has been received by the National Agency for Education, the Agency invites the local authority in which the school is to be located to make a submission describing any possible reasons for the application not to be granted. A second requirement was that the selected schools should not be familiar to me. A further requirement was that the schools offered education which was equivalent to the general compulsory education provided by schools in Sweden and England respectively. Each individual was interviewed on two or three separate occasions which allowed time for returning to points raised in the earlier interview and for further clarification of certain points (On average, the length of time for the interviews with teachers and other staff was ninety minutes, divided up in two or three separate sessions).

Unstructured observations (through seeing, hearing and asking,) were made in order to get a grip on what was really happening.

In order to increase variation, it was considered important that the selected schools be located in different local authority areas.

In all 101 individuals (59 in Sweden out of which 6 pupils participated in a group interview and 42 in England) were interviewed plus 68 letters.

Letters were received from a total of 68 pupils. A total of 17 pupils in Sweden and 51 pupils in England wrote letters. All pupils in year 6 in school A participated in the group interview. The reason for the large discrepancy between the two countries with regard to the number of pupils who wrote letters (including those who participated in group interviews) is the significant difference in the number of pupils across the classes. This discrepancy between the two schools in Sweden and the two schools in England is reflected in chapter ten where the section concerning the two schools in England is much more extensive than the section on pupils in the two schools in Sweden.

Every effort had been made at each interview to make full notes regarding all responses. Some of the statements reproduced in this thesis have been edited with regard to word sequence. The interviews in Sweden were carried out in Swedish with one exception, an English-speaking teacher in school B who was unable to communicate in Swedish and who was therefore interviewed in English. The statements from schools in Sweden that have been cited here have

been translated by the author from Swedish to English. The interviews carried out in England were conducted in English.

Table 3:2 Number of those interviewed and those who wrote letters

	<i>School A in Sweden</i>	<i>School B in Sweden</i>	<i>School C In England</i>	<i>School D In England</i>
No. of pupils Interviewed or who wrote letters.	6 (group interview)	17 letters	28 letters	23 letters
No. of Parents interviewed	4	3	3	4
No. of heads interviewed	1	1*	1	1
No. of teachers interviewed	10/10	14/14	17/17	9/9
No. of other staff interviewed	4 (incl. one trainee)	2	3	1
No. from the school owners interviewed	4 **	1 ***	2	1
No. of politicians in Sweden interviewed	4	5		

* There was also a part-time assistant head at School B and who was also a part-time teacher

** Chairperson was also head of the school. 2 of the members of the board were teachers at the school and one of board members worked as a member of the other staff at the school.

*** Chairperson was also head of the school

Except with regard to ethical considerations, no gender distinctions are made with regard to the reporting of quotations. Since the schools are relatively small, the pupils and staff all know each other and in addition, in the two schools in England there was only one male member of staff at each school, the possibility would arise that making any such distinction would compromise the requirement to ensure anonymity

3.2. Selection of schools

The study was to be concerned with the manner in which heads, teachers and other staff dealt with the encounter between Muslim values and those values to be found in the NC in Sweden and England respectively. The field studies included structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews with heads, teachers, parents, those legally responsible for the school, politicians and others who were of significance to the school. It also included participant observation of staff meetings, parent meetings, lessons and various types of groups. Three weeks of field study were carried out in each school in Sweden and England, in 1998 and 1999 respectively. The field studies for this thesis were carried out over

a limited period of three weeks in each school. The field study in school A in Sweden was carried out over three weeks in May, 1998 and in school B in Sweden over three weeks in September-October 1998. In the case of school C and school D in England, the field studies were carried out over three weeks in each school during September-November 1999. Consequently, the results reported here do not necessary tell us about the manner in which these schools are operating today. The nature of the framework for this study has not permitted any opportunity to seek feed-back from the heads and staff in terms of comments on the description of their schools offered here.

Considerable restrictions were placed on the selection of MP schools to be included in this study because the number of such schools was very small and the resources available for carrying out field work were limited. The schools were first approached by letter, asking the school leaders/owners if they would be willing to participate in the study. Subsequently, I presented the research project for the staff who then approved participation, together with the head, those legally responsible for the school and the parents.

During breaks and observations in the classroom, group interviews were held with pupils in years 6 in School A, when they answered questions about (i) why they had chosen this MP school, (ii) how they felt about being a pupil at this school, and (iii) their dreams of the future. These questions were answered by letter by pupils in year 5 and year 6 in School B, School C and School D. That the questions were dealt with in a different manner in School A from that used in the other schools was because the pupils in School A wished to answer by means of group interviews. Since the number of pupils was relatively small, they did not feel entirely secure that their answers would otherwise remain anonymous.

The two schools in England were selected at random from the list of all MP schools in Britain. Both schools conformed to the NC in England. One school received subsidies from the state while the other did not do so.

On receiving a positive response, a time was set for a preparatory visit. The two planning days were carried out on 28 June and 4 July, 1999. At the first meeting at School C, the structure of my future field study was discussed with the head, teachers and other staff. The first meeting at School D was with the head alone who subsequently informed the teachers and other staff of my requirements with regard to the field work. The field work was carried out in School C from 18 October – 5 November, 1999 and in School D, from 8 November – 26 November, 1999. During evening and weekends I interviewed representatives for the Muslim community and researchers in the field of education and Islamic studies. I was also invited to attend a Mosque, where I both listened to a lecture, on education and Islam and on the situation of Muslim schools in the UK, and held a lecture on the education system in Sweden and on the situation of the MP schools. I was also invited to visit (i) a sixth-form school for Muslim girls, (ii) a school which the Church of England was running but where the head was a Muslim with a pupil body which included Christians, Muslims, Jews and Hindus and where each religious confession had been provided with space for

their particular symbols and ceremonies, (iii) a Catholic school where pupils included both Christians and Muslims, and (iv) an information and contact meeting for Muslims and local authority employees. At the latter, I listened to various lectures concerning the situation for Muslims in the UK and the local circumstances for School C. I also had the opportunity of watching a video of Prince Charles, on a large screen, giving a speech in support of Muslims in the UK.

The thesis has been influenced by my pre-understanding of what is implied with regard to running a MP school as well as a school which does not have a Muslim profile. Through my commission as development manager for the regional development centre of a teacher training department, my participation in collaboration projects under the auspices of The Swedish National Agency for School Improvement (*Myndigheten för skolutveckling*), and work as manager for a number of projects concerned with school development and series of seminars where the target groups have included directors of education, heads and development managers in a number of local authorities, I have gained valuable insights with regard to those problems and requirements with regard to development to be found in schools around the country generally. During the course of these duties, I have taken cognizance of the cuttingedge research in the field of school development. Furthermore, during the period 2002-2004 I have been a member of the municipal council in the local authority where I live for the Social Democrats and during this time I was also a substitute member of the local authority committee for children and schools, thereby gaining additional experience and knowledge concerning the general problems that schools at large are working with and those problems which could be more specific which could be said to be associated with particular schools such as MP schools.

With regard to issues involving the situation for Muslims in Swedish society, as a member of the board of the Swedish Committee against Islamophobia¹³ (*Svenska kommittén mot Islamofobi*), I am actively involved in matters concerning inclusion, exclusion, integration and so on. This Committee has existed since the spring of 2005. The board includes both Muslims and non-Muslims. The Committee has the aim of working freely and independently, without any ties to political or any other organizations or financial interests, and to collaborate with other groups in Sweden that are active in similar areas.

3.3. The cognitive circle and the normative

The model of the process of qualitative research which best explicates the one used in the present study is that proposed by Holme and Solvang (1997), a model which they in turn have derived from the description by Lyngdal and Rønning (1974) of the interactions that exist between the researcher and the subject being

13. *Islamophobia*: fear/phobia with regard to the religion of Islam and its believers, Muslims, and in part campaigns against Islam and Muslim which are based on this fear. (Larsson, 2005)

investigated. This particular model is based on:

an analytical distinction between understanding one which is purely of values and one which is purely factual with regard to the phenomenon we are studying. These factors are intertwined in the concrete research situation into a unity, this being the precondition for the researcher to be able to investigate the phenomenon in question. (Holme & Solvang, 1997: 95) (author's translation).

The point of departure for the model is the researcher's pre-understanding and prior prejudices (where this term is not to be understood in a pejorative sense). My pre-understanding is that understanding which I, as a researcher, conducting research and which are derived from, for example, education, experience or research.

On the other hand prior prejudices are those subjective views, grounded in society, which I, as a researcher, hold with regard to that on which I am carrying out research. It is impossible to free oneself from subjective frames of reference. Therefore it is not possible to claim that the pre-understanding derived from the background of the researcher will, in a real sense, be objective (Holme & Solvang, 1997).

Pre-understanding and understanding

The thesis has been influenced by my own pre-understanding and understanding of what is implied in running an independent MP school as well as an independent school which does not have a Muslim profile. According to Sandberg and Targama (1998), understanding is subjective and is created by each person from their own experiences. Understanding is formed through the interaction of two processes. Through

own experience plus reflection (often through interaction with others) contribute to the creation and modification of patterns of understanding and through social interaction, where we absorb or "inherit" the patterns of understanding of others.

Understanding is an individual phenomenon but concordance with regard to the understanding of others results in our being able to regard it as a collective phenomenon (a culture). Understanding steers the interpretation of information and factual knowledge and therefore does not change easily through further knowledge. Understanding is largely non-reflective but it is possible to make it visible. Understanding functions as the "prison of thought" when understanding is firmly established. It is not possible to transfer understanding – it has to be created by each individual themselves (Targama, 2007: 507) (author's translation).

Concepts such as a Muslim school, Islamic school and /or a MP school are given different content based on the understanding and pre-understanding of

each individual.

Understanding steers how we filter those contexts which others have. Listening is directed by fears/interpretations of what is said. Journalism selects elements and constructs a comprehensive image. That which we select varies from individual to individual and one's understanding. Homogeneous groups risk being tied down to homogeneous understanding. With regard to the debate on MP schools, the understanding of the opponents to these schools had become focused on weaknesses while those who are in favour of these schools had, on their side, become focused on the strengths, the potential of these schools.

Shortcomings with regard to understanding are not dealt with through more knowledge, but rather through the framework of a person's knowledge. We do not discover processes of understanding ourselves. We are not even able to see our own patterns of understanding (Sandberg and Targama, 1998). Sandberg and Targama (1998) describe how direct experiences and influences from ideas, such as information and education, might influence out understanding in two ways:

in part through enriching, refining and confirming current understanding, that is to say, strengthening competence, or through bringing current understanding into question and contribute to reassessment and change of it, that is to say, renewal of competence (Targama, 2007: 507). ("author's translation").

Further, Sandberg and Targama, 1998 state that we as people have inbuilt defense mechanisms as protection and which guard out established understanding.

The case studies also involved the analysis of various documents, relevant literature, research reports, and so on, together with national curricula, local syllabi, textbooks and interviews. Use has been made of interview guides, questionnaires and unstructured observations of processes in the classroom, at staff meetings, conferences for teachers and parent teachers.

3.4. Ethical considerations

With regard to the issue of anonymity, the ambition concerning the field studies has been not to name the schools, school heads, teachers, other staff, pupils, parents, politicians and other experts.

Except with regard to ethical considerations, no gender distinctions are made with regard to the reporting of interview responses. Since the schools are relatively small with limited numbers of pupils and staff and, in addition, in the two schools in England there was only one male member of staff at each school, the possibility would arise that making any such distinction would compromise the requirement to ensure anonymity.

The condition imposed by the schools was for interviews not to be recorded on tape. Therefore it has not been possible for me to record the interviews in

that way but by using notes for the responses instead. Through being able to meet the interviewees on more than one occasion during the field studies, it has been possible for them to be provided with feedback from some of the notes taken of their responses.

The interviewees are denoted as follows:

Through-out the thesis, the two MP schools in Sweden who have participated in the study are denoted as School A and School B and the two MP schools in England are denoted as School C and School D.

AH = School A, Head.

AT = School A, Teacher (All teachers in the school from year 1 to year 9, for example, class teacher, language teacher, gymn teacher, handicrafts teacher as well as assistant teacher)

AO = School A, Other staff (Also includes a trainee)

Apu = School A, Pupil

Apa = School A, Parent

AP = Local authority A, Politician

BH = School B, Head.

BT = School B, Teacher (All teachers in the school from year 1 to year 9, for example, class teacher, language teacher, gymn teacher, handicrafts teacher as well as assistant teacher)

BO = School B, Other staff (also includes a trainee)

Bpu = School B, Pupil

Bpa = School B, Parent

BP = Local authority B, Politician

In Sweden, additional heads are included from School E, School F and School G

EH = School E, Head.

FH = School F, Head.

GH = School G, Head.

The two MP schools in England that have participated in this study are denoted as School C and School D.

CH = School C, Head.

CT = School C, Teacher (All teachers in the school from year 1 to year 6, for example, class teacher, language teacher, gymn teacher, handicrafts teacher as well as assistant teacher)

CO = School C, Other staff

Cpu = School C, Pupil

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Cpa = School C, Parent

DH = School D, Head.

DT = School D, Teacher (All teachers in the school from year 1 to year 6, for example, class teacher, language teacher, gymn teacher, handicrafts teacher as well as assistant teacher)

DO = School D, Other staff

Dpu = School D, Pupil

Dpa = School D, Parent

LH = School L, Head of one school with a Christian profile, a Catholic school in England.

Chapter 4

Independent Schools in Sweden and England

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, a short historical background is presented of those values that are stated in the NC in Sweden and England. This is followed by an account of Religious Studies as a subject in Sweden and England. This chapter contains a summary of; the conditions for approval to be granted for the founding of an independent school in Sweden and a voluntary aided school in England and categories of schools and number of schools by their status and religious character.

4.2. Historical background of ethics in the national curriculum in Sweden

Under the provisions of the Church Act of 1686, priests of the church became formally obliged to provide education. Priests were assigned to monitor the level of knowledge by arranging catechetical meetings with parishioners. Through the Conventicle Edict of 1726, catechetical meetings became mandatory, leading to an increase in literacy across the entire population.

In Sweden, elementary schools were founded from 1842 onward. Up until the beginning of the twentieth century one of the primary functions of the elementary schools had been to instil religion and morals, a belief in God and the Christian way of life, in the pupils. The pupils were expected to learn obedience and not to question. Over and above teaching general knowledge, schools were also to reproduce the values of society (Orlenius, 2001; Richardson, 2004).

There were considerable changes in Swedish society. These changes in society included popular movements such as the Labour movements, Free Church movements and Temperance movements. In 1909, men over the age of 24 were granted the franchise while women were granted this right in 1921. The Free Church denominations “did not accept their children being taught according to the doctrines of the Church of Sweden” (Almén, 2002:62). Consequently

religious unity in schools was lost. The Swedish authorities resolved this issue by maintaining a unitary school system. The NC for elementary schools of 1919 was drawn up in such a manner for it to be acceptable to all Christians no matter what denomination they belonged to. The result was that teaching was concentrated on the study of the Bible, particularly of the New Testament and the history of Christianity. It was no longer permitted to use the small Catechism of Martin Luther as a text book.

School unity was defended out of fear of a segregated society. If all parents could trust the same school then all youth could be educated in the same milieu, sharing a rich common frame of reference, having childhood friends with background formed by other opinions and perhaps also by other conditions. This fear and this dream were important factors behind the evolution of “the Swedish model”, and most Swedes share them, even those who today find faults within that model. Even those today starting “free schools” (on a larger scale allowed since the early 1990s) mostly argue against segregation and for these schools as a new means to create community and new connections between people (Almén, 2002:63).

Schools were to retain their fostering role, but this was now no longer expected to only provide support for religious and social subservience. One concrete measure was for the number of lessons devoted to purely Christian studies to be cut by half and the content of this subject was broadened to be of a more general Christian character, where Luther’s Small Catechism was replaced by biblical history. As early as the seventeenth century, Comenius¹⁴ had argued in support of a community school for everyone, something which Fridtjuf Berg (1851-1916), the Swedish liberal politician and elementary school teacher, had subsequently adopted as one of his educational and political goals (Richardson, 2004).

The earliest independent schools in Sweden with an ethnic or confessional profile were founded in Stockholm and include The German School (Tyska skolan), founded in 1612, St Erik’s Catholic School (1795) and L’école française (Franska Skolan) (1862).

The post-war Commission of Enquiry on Schools was set up in 1946, under the chairmanship of the Ecclesiastical Minister at the time, Tage Erlander (later to become Prime Minister). He perceived the primary purpose of schools to be to teach pupils to be good people, to vaccinate them against religious and political oppression. The Commission stressed that the teaching of subjects alone would not provide sufficient knowledge of the world. They introduced the concept of orientation, orientation in time and space together with orientation

14. Comenius Johann Amos (1592–1670) was a Czech theologian and educator who considered that all children should receive schooling and that teaching should be based on the mother-tongue of the child (rather than Latin). In his view, learning would be facilitated by combining text and pictures (Nationalencyklopedin, 2009).

in life (Orlenius, 2001).

As a result of the various reforms of the national curricula during the 20th century, the aims of religious instruction in schools in Sweden have been transformed from indoctrinating children into Christianity and ethics based on Evangelical Lutheran church, to where confessional features had been abandoned in favour of a more neutral, objective, factual and general orientation in religious education from 1962 onwards. This latter form of religious education does not allow pupils to be influenced in favour of any particular religion or opinion. All education in schools is now to be non-confessional. Nonetheless, schools today are not in fact neutral. Although Sweden has become a secularized society, many symbols and actions that are of Christian origin persist, even though they are not generally regarded or defined as such, but rather as cultural and traditional features (Borevi, 1997).

In 2000, the Swedish church was separated from the state and was thereby freed from being a state organization. Sidenwall (2004) writes in an article in *Svenska Dagbladet* that the issue of church and state is not yet dead but rather has been transformed, and “discussions about the respective roles of the state and the religious communities, the meaning of religious freedom together with common values in society and the limits of tolerance will no doubt continue.”

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the number of refugees arriving in Sweden from Muslim countries increased. As the first Muslim groups of refugees began arriving in Sweden, the image broadcast by the media was of an Islam that was ruthless, undemocratic, and oppressive to women (Samuelsson, 1999; Sander and Larsson, 2001). This image engendered apprehension, among the general public, politicians and the Christian establishment. During the preparatory phase before the introduction of the new curriculum in 1994, politicians proposed that it was necessary for this document to preserve the ethics enshrined in the Christian tradition and western humanism, while at the same time avoiding any depiction of Muslim refugees as a threat to these values, and that these ethics were to be mediated and taught in schools in Sweden. Some people, both Muslims and non-Muslims, were of the opinion that this proposal could be interpreted as implying that Swedish society, together with the rest of the western world, was now considered to represent ethics that are based on Christianity and western humanism. That these ethics were far more civilized than those that Muslims and refugees brought with them. Some felt there was a subtext in the proposed formulations for the new NC whereby Swedish and other western cultures were represented as being superior to others.

The fundamental values in the NC (Lpo 94) are divided into: (i) “basic premises, primarily democracy”, (ii) “those values or ideals of life which are to be reflected in the work of schools” and (iii) “those virtues which schools are to impart” (Hedin & Lahdenperä, 2000:14).

Certain principles were proclaimed and established in the immigration policy in Sweden that came into force in 1975, such as: “full equality between immigrants and Swedes, freedom of cultural choice for immigrants and cooperation

and solidarity between the Swedish majority and the ethnic minorities.” (Nielsen, 1995:82). Emphasis was placed on integration.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the issue of religion and the value foundation of schools were intensively discussed in Sweden. In part as a response to increased immigration and subsequent increasing tendencies towards xenophobia and racism, it was considered important that respect for the value of each individual, the inviolability of human life, the freedom and integrity of the individual, the equal value of all humans, gender equality, and solidarity with the people who are weak and vulnerable should be particularly emphasized in schools (NC, Lp094). This was considered to be in accordance with those ethics that are enshrined in the Christian tradition and Western humanism (this wording was later omitted from the NC for Preschool, Lpfö 98) and that this was to be implemented through education whereby each individual would be able to gain a sense of justice, generosity, tolerance and responsibility. The debate and attention that Lp0 94 attracted was intensive and resulted in many people becoming aware of it.

The concept of fundamental values was introduced at the time the NC (Lp094) was being drawn up. On the other hand, the role of schools in the upbringing of pupils has always been present, together with the duties of schools with regard to imparting knowledge. Fundamental values are to permeate the whole school. The background was a desire to prevent such problems as harassment and ethnic problems (Lidensjö & Lundgren, 2000).

In a more long-term perspective, the occurrence of harassment must be seen as a warning signal which not only tells us something about the children and young people involved but also something about the climate that exists in the school. In part this implies, for example, that harassment has direct negative effects on personal development and learning and in part that the occurrence of harassment may be the consequence of negative social and learning environments themselves. (Skolverket, Dnr 2000:1613 p. 33)

In 2006, Masoud Kamali, was appointed as one of the members of the Commission of Enquiry into Power, Integration and Structural Discrimination, initiated by the government at that time. Kamali proposed amendments to the fundamental values of schools. He stated that “the discourse on fundamental values is an unclear discourse which in some cases is used to reproduce culturally racist preconceptions in schools” (SOU 2006:40, p 38). In the introduction to their report, Lena Sawyer and Masoud Kamali write, concerning structural/ institutional discrimination within the educational system, that “there is a dilemma within the discourse on fundamental values in schools and in declarations about democracy and the practical implementation of those values. This is based on the established us-and-them thinking where pupils from immigrant backgrounds are regarded as “objects to be changed” who “lack” the necessary properties to be able to be active in a democratic society and to be able to absorb

“fundamental Swedish values” (SOU 2006:40, p 15).

The ethics informing the Swedish NC are not specifically Christian or Western but are universal ethics, which are shared with other cultures and religions (Hedin & Lahdenperä, 2000).

Norberg (2004) problematizes the relationship between the fundamental values in the NC, defined at a central level, and their concretization at the local level – the manner in which they are given form by teachers in everyday practices. Despite all the activities concerning fundamental values, it is still the values, knowledge and experience of the individual teacher which tend to influence and direct the intuitive actions of the teacher.

Norberg demonstrates how teachers find it easier to relate conflict-filled situations to moral dilemmas compared to standardizing actions which are carried out in silence. Situations where stereotypical gender roles are reinforced and the influence of pupils is impeded are both examples of actions which standardize and thereby do not conform to the duties of the teacher.

Together with imparting knowledge, the duty of the school has always been to be involved in the upbringing of each generation in accordance with the values in society that are current. The duties of the school with regard to upbringing and the democratic values enshrined in the NC came increasingly to the fore in the debates on education during the course of the 20th century. Schools and pre-schools were the targets for a range of national measures to reinforce deeper knowledge of activities concerning fundamental values and opportunities to develop such work with them.

Norberg (2004) describes the importance of establishing a space for deliberative conversations, that is to say, conversations where the manner in which fundamental values are to be given form in practice are interpreted and concretized from a variety of perspectives, in order for it to be possible for fundamental values to be mediated by all actors in pre-schools and school. Norberg stresses that it is not only the conversations between adults and children that are of importance but that opportunities are to be made available for critical discussions among staff where individual and collective values may be challenged.

4.3 Historical Background of Ethics in the National Curriculum in England

Historically, the school system in the UK has consisted of various types of schools. The British government has not always wanted to be responsible for these schools but rather it has been left to various churches and charitable organizations to look after the business of founding and running schools (Walford, 2004). The first charity school was started in 1698 by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK). The primary purpose of the school was to be a counter-measure to the perceived increasing immorality in the country, to educate and reintroduce the poor children to morality and religion. Thereafter

a number of schools were established under the auspices of Christian churches (Walford, 2004; Gillard, 2007).

The first state-funded school was established in 1802. It provided an apprentice education. In 1816 and 1818 two Parliamentary committees attempted to introduce a national education system. But both attempts failed because an agreement could not be reached with the Church of England. The Church of England wanted control over all new school systems. But they encountered resistance and protests from other churches, such as the Roman Catholic Church and other Protestant churches. Another attempt was made to introduce a national education system in 1833 but that also failed. However, on this occasion, state funding was approved for the first time, a grant to support (i) the Church of England's National Society for the Education of the Poor and (ii) the Non-conformists' British and Foreign School Society. In 1847, the Committee of the Roman Catholic Poor Schools received grants. In 1856 a Department of Education was created to control funds (Walford, 2004).

The 1870 Education Act sets up a *dual system* of education, two kinds of school: church- and board schools. Board schools could decide whether they wanted to include religious teaching or not. But there were few board schools that tried to exclude religious teaching. Board schools receive money from local taxation and the churches receive money from central government (Kay, 2002).

Prior to 1900, the following were the most important alternatives; (i) private tutoring in the home with a private instructor, for those families able to afford this, (ii) grammar or other fee-paying schools, (iii) schools in workhouses and (iv) charity schools or dame schools for poor children (Walford, 2004).

During the second war 1939-1945 there was public support for religion in schools. "A Gallup poll carried out in 1944 in Britain demonstrated that 56 % of the population agreed that "religious education should be given a more defined place in the life and work of schools" and "this was despite the fact that scarcely any schools had availed themselves of the right to they had gained in 1870 to dispense with religious instruction" (Murphy, 1971: 115, in Kay, 2002:17).

At the end of World War Two sufficient political will existed to ensure the introduction of compulsory education for all children, the creation of a more equitable education system in which all children, regardless of the family's social and economic circumstances, were to have the opportunity to study up to, and including, secondary education. The 1944 Education Act established a nationwide system of free, compulsory schooling from age 5 to 15 (Kay, 2002).

The 1944 Education Act divided responsibility for education among three levels central government, which was to set national policies and allocate resources; the local education authorities (LEAs), which were to set local policies and allocate resources to schools; and the schools themselves, whose school head and governing bodies would set school policies and manage the resources. In the 1944 Education Act "the dual system was strengthened; church schools within the dual system could choose either controlled or aided status; religious education was made up of two components, collective worship and classroom

instruction; schools provided by the churches became known as voluntary schools; schools not provided by the churches became known as county schools” (Kay, 2002:16). The schools in the dual system were similarly funded and administered through LEAs. The Act thus categorized church schools as voluntary ‘aided’ (where the church had greater control) or ‘controlled’ (where the LEA had greater control). Aided schools have a greater degree of freedom when comes to school worship and religious education and were offered 50 per cent of their building costs from state funds; controlled schools 100 per cent. Controlled schools have a reduced degree of freedom allowed and religious education with the exception of school worship. The state would pay all maintenance costs for both types of school (Kay, 2002).

In England, public services have been characterised by a model whereby national policy frameworks are implemented locally in different ways in order to meet local circumstances and needs. The partnership model is an attempt to strike a balance of power between central government, local government, individual institutions, education professionals and the community, in order to reflect economic and political imperatives. In education the partnership model involves the public, private (for profit) and voluntary (not-for-profit) sectors. The model involves providers, and parents, pupils and the community, as participants, with parents and community members being involved in school governance. The voluntary sector was the primary provider of education until the late 19th century. The state took over the major responsibility during the 20th century.

Two or three types of school were developed through the local education authorities (LEAs). The school a pupil was to attend was determined through the examination system and the confessional persuasion of the pupil and the school. It was considered necessary to integrate as many of the Church schools as possible into the state maintained sector in order for all pupils to be provided with the opportunity to study at the secondary level. Secondary schools were divided into three categories: “voluntary controlled, voluntary aided and special agreement.” The difference between these categories was related to the degree of control and amount of state funding received.

The 1980 Education Act stipulates the details regarding the procedure for establishing a voluntary-aided school. In England there still are all-girl schools and all-boy schools. The Head of State, is also Head of the Church of England.¹⁵ This guarantees the church certain privileges, public subsidies and religious education.

Between 1979 and 1997, the Government introduced changes affecting the nature and scope of partnerships between educational stakeholders. The main responsibility for the work of the school was transferred, through the Education

15. “Church of England is not, strictly speaking, a state church but a church “established by law” and that the United Kingdom does not have a written constitution but there exist measures with a constitutional value.” (cf Lyall-David Mc Clean, 1995, Ferrari Silvio, 2003).

Act 1988, from the LEA to the Governing Body.¹⁶ It formally widened participation in school management to include elected representatives of the parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, and nominated members of the community and also members who represent specific local interests (for example, voluntary or business groups) or who have special expertise. The Government involve the private sector in state education. This has taken place through the Government having “made provision for existing independent schools, which meet the relevant criteria, to become part of the maintained sector, and encouraged promoters to establish new foundations or voluntary-aided schools where there is a demand” (TeacherNet, 1995–2006¹⁷).

4.4. Independent Schools in Sweden

In Sweden, policy concerning independent schools changed radically at the beginning of the 1990s. The policy changed “from a situation of strong regulation and control, low subsidies and less than one percent of primary school pupils in private education – to more favorable conditions of deregulation and large subsidies for private education” (Daun, Brattlund & Robleh, 2004:187).

Municipalization of schools implied the decentralization of state responsibility for schools to local authorities. Teachers who were formerly state employees thereby became employees of the local authority. The funding to each independent school was also increased. Pupils now had the opportunity to choose a school, to choose a local authority school or an independent school.

Since the introduction of local authority funding for independent schools in 1991, the total number of independent schools has increased from about 90 to about 635 in the school year 2007–2008.

The Ministry of Education and the government are responsible for drawing up proposals with regard to the goals and objectives of education, including the National Curricula for Compulsory Schools and the Upper Secondary Schools, and subsequently such proposals are to be approved by the Riksdag. The basic principle central to the education system in Sweden is that “everybody should have access to an equivalent education, regardless of their gender, ethnic or social background, or place of residence” (SMES, 1997:7). At the level of the state, the SNAE oversees the attainment of national goals, as prescribed in the current NC, whereby they assess the level of achievement of pupils in grades 5 and 9 through nationwide testing. During the 15 years since the first MP school was opened (1993–2008), there have been considerable changes in the procedure for processing applications from those who wish to found an independent school and for funds to be granted. These changes include greater clarification as the criteria for independent schools have become more comparable to those which

16. [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/a-z/GOVERNING %5FBODY_ba.html](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/a-z/GOVERNING%5FBODY_ba.html)

17. TeacherNet, Department for Education and Skills, UK ©Crown copyright 1995–2006. <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/>

apply to municipal schools. In the school year 2005/2006, approximately 8 % of all pupils who were obliged to attend compulsory school were enrolled at independent schools. 11 % of the latter schools are those with a confessional profile. (Skolverket: <http://www.skolverket.se/sb/d/379/a/961>, 22 February 2007. Accessed 20080119)

A new type of oversight was introduced at the beginning of the 1990s, over and above the nationwide testing of pupils, whereby the work of schools is reviewed in a broader manner by inspectors from SNAE. In addition, the new national curricula for the compulsory schools and the upper-secondary schools have been implemented since 1994.

With the return of the Social Democrats to power in 1994, the level of subsidies to independent schools was reduced from 85 percent to 75 percent of the cost per pupil attending a municipal school. Since 1997, the level of these subsidies has been determined by local authorities, on the basis of the general costs per pupil of all the schools in the local authority area. Founding of new independent schools is conditional on their not implying any “essential organizational or financial difficulties for education” in the local authority concerned (Education Act Ch. 9:6). The level of subsidies to both public and private schools in a local authority area, are to be set by each local authority whereby, “... subsidies to private school should be determined in regard to the schools’ responsibility and needs of the pupils and according to the same principles as public Primary schools” (SNAE). Independent schools receiving such subsidies are not permitted to charge fees.

4.4.1. Conditions for approval as an independent school in Sweden

The terms and conditions for being granted approval as an independent compulsory school in Sweden are as follows:

- that the education offered provides the knowledge and skills which, in kind and level, correspond in all essentials to the knowledge and skills that the compulsory schools are to provide (The Swedish Education Act 1996:1206, Ch 9 §2)
- that the school be open to everyone, with the exception of those pupils who would entail significant organizational and financial hardships for the school if the school were to admit them (The Swedish Education Act 1996:1206, Ch 9 §2)
- that the school has a minimum of 20 pupils, exceptions may be made if there are special reasons for this (The Swedish Education Act 1996:1206, Ch 9 §2)
- that the school complies with all regulations regarding enrolment and management of the school, as laid down by the government (The Swedish Education Act 1996:1206, Ch 9§2)

- that the school participates in the national standardized tests in Mathematics, Swedish and English language (Ordinance on Independent Schools 1996:1206, Ch 1 §6)
- that the school offers mother-tongue tuition (Ordinance on Independent Schools 1996:1206, Ch1 §5).
- that the school provides school health care (The Swedish Education Act 1996:1206, Ch 14 §7)
- that the school complies with the rules regarding official secrecy (The Swedish Education Act 1996:1206, Ch 16 §16), and
- that the school, in the case where it is a school for children with special needs, provides the pupils with the support they require (The Swedish Education Act 1996:1206, Ch 9 §2).

All independent schools are subject to oversight on the part of the state authorities and to supervision on the part of the local authority concerned. All independent schools draw their pupils from the whole country and are financed by subsidies from the local authorities in which the pupils are resident.

From 1 June 2004, any school which wishes to relocate from one local authority area to another is required to make a new application for recognition and the right to subsidies. This application is to be lodged before 1 April in the calendar year in which the school plans to relocate.

Tests and other materials regarding the national tests are either optional or mandatory for the school to use. Thus, diagnostic materials in Swedish and Mathematics up to the fifth year and materials for Swedish, English and Mathematics for years 6 to 9 are optional for the schools (The 1994 Compulsory School Ordinance – *Grundskoleförförordning 1994:1194* Ch 7 §10.1)

It is stipulated in the Swedish Education Act SFS 1997:1212 (Ch 9 §2) that the values and objectives of an independent schools must be in compliance with the fundamental values and general objectives of the local authority compulsory schools. This implies that MP schools are prohibited from adopting any specialization or content that deviates from the fundamental values of Swedish NC.

In order to be offered employment in a compulsory school, the prospective employee is required to provide a copy of his/her extract from the criminal records registry pursuant to Section 9, paragraph 2 of the Swedish law, 1998:620.

4.4.2. Schools with a confessional direction

It is stated in the NC for Compulsory Schools (Lpo 94) that “teaching is to be non-confessional” and that “the school is to be open for differences in understanding and encourage these to be put forward. It is to stress the importance of taking personal positions and allow opportunities for these. Teaching is to be factual and comprehensive.”

Confessional schools are not to be permitted in the public or independent

sector of education. On the other hand, it is stated in the Education Act, Chapter 9 §2, that independent schools are permitted to have a confessional direction. This particular formulation has been adopted as a result of international agreements: “a requirement that teaching in an independent school should be non-confessional is not in line with Sweden’s international commitments” (Bill 1995/96:200). However there is a requirement that schools with a confessional direction comply with those general aims and values that are applicable to schools in the public sector. Teaching in these schools is not to include;

any indoctrinating or tendentious features in any of the subjects. The right of pupils to factual and comprehensive teaching of good quality is never to be subordinated to the right of parents to choose teaching which is in accordance with the parents religious or philosophical convictions. (Bill 1995/96:200) (author’s translation)

This applies to all subjects, including religious education, since it is stated that the teaching of any particular confessional specialization in an independent school is not permitted whereby it would

replace that teaching which is provided in the subject Religious Education ... The teaching in Religious Education in a school with a confessional direction, as in the case in all other teaching, is to be factual and comprehensive, in accordance with the requirements of the National curriculum as well as being open to different understandings, tolerance and opportunities for taking a personal position ... No matter what specialization has been adopted by the independent school, in reality it is obliged to be open to different understandings, promote those fundamental values stipulated in the Education Act and the National curriculum and clearly reject whatever is not in accordance with those values. (Bill 1995/96:200) (author’s translation)

The subject of Religious Education in Sweden

With regard to Religious Education as a subject, Björilin (2006:27) describes three approaches to be found in Europe and the USA concerning this subject’s role in schools. These three are as follows:

- a) The subject is not to be taught within the framework of the state school system; schools are not the proper place for this, for example, in the USA and France.
- b) It is to be taught as an obligatory subject, in a confessional form, in the state school system, for example, Finland, Germany.
- c). It is to be taught as an obligatory subject, in a non-confessional form, for example England, Sweden.

In approach a), religious beliefs are to be excluded from teaching in schools. In b), beliefs and teaching are permitted on condition that during the lessons in Religious Education, the pupils are grouped in accordance with their religious affiliation. Those who do not have any religious affiliation may also participate in lessons concerning issues of vital importance and ethics. According to approach c), all pupils are taught together irrespective of their beliefs.

Schreiner (2002, in Björlin, 2006:28) focuses on the goal of the teaching of Religious Education. He presents three basic approaches:

- a). education *into* religion
- b). education *about* religion
- c). education *from* religion.

According to approach a), teaching will lead the pupils to adopt a particular point of view. This approach is found in the teaching of Religious Education in a confessional form.

In Sweden, Religious Education is an obligatory subject in all compulsory schools, and thus has also to be taught in MP schools. The regulations regarding dispensation for not providing Religious Education were recinded in 1997. The motivation given in the Bill (1995/96:200:66f) for this decision was that it was felt to be necessary to reduce, by all possible means, tensions between people from different countries, cultures and religions. Activities in school must be designed in such a way that it is possible for every pupil to participate. Therefore dispensation with regard to such teaching, on the basis of special circumstance, is to be granted only in very exceptional instances.

According to the NC for the Compulsory Schools, the subject of Religious Education is

to provide the pupils with the opportunity to gain knowledge about, and stimulate reflection on, different religions and outlooks on life, creating a basis for the pupils' own standpoints. Every pupil is entitled to a factual and comprehensive education about religions and outlooks on life. The objective of Religious Education as a subject is to increase the pupils' knowledge about religions and different outlooks on life, providing them with the opportunity to work through their own reflections and questions regarding existential and ethical problems.
(SNAE 1996:61) (author's translation)

The subject, Religious Education, includes knowledge about various religions and philosophies of life. Teaching is adapted to the particular ages of the pupils and the different years. For example, teaching includes the large world-religions, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

4.4.3. Schools with a Muslim profile in Sweden

The number of independent schools in Sweden has been steadily increasing since 1992, when a new system for public funding of independent schools was introduced.

During the spring term of 1998 there were ten schools in Sweden founded by Muslims. These ten schools had adopted various directions, either confessional, general or linguistic/ethnic, that is to say, they are schools with an Islamic, linguistic, cultural or general profile. The schools provide education at all levels of the compulsory school. All the schools receive state funding. During 2008 there were 22 MP schools in Sweden. Geographically, the MP schools are located in the larger and medium-sized towns, from Malmö in the south up to Stockholm, Uppsala and Luleå (Start autumn 2008).

The SNAE has before 2006 stipulated six distinct directions for independent schools, from which those legally responsible for the school were able to choose. There was also an opportunity for the latter to state any profile they wished the school to adopt. The six distinct directions stipulated by the SNAE are general, special education, confessional, linguistic/ethnic, profile in a particular subject and others. Over and above these there are a number of schools categorized as international and also national boarding-schools.

From 2006 there are only three directions: General, Waldorf and Confessional. In principle, when an application for approval and the right to subsidies is under consideration, the direction chosen for the school concerned is of no significance. Information is intended for the individual who is considering applying to a school with a particular direction. The school is to state/motivate in the application under which direction the school is to be classified. However, the SNAE reserves the right to determine the classification. In addition, when submitting an application, the school is to state whether the school is to adopt a specific profile, for example, a Muslim, a particular pedagogy, or linguistic/ethnic or subject direction. http://www.skolverket.se/content/1/c4/09/64/ansok_GR_2006.doc

The author's statistics below are based on (i) statistics from the National Agency for Education on schools with a confessional direction and with a Muslim or Islamic profile, (ii) schools with a general direction which have adopted an Islamic, Muslim, Arabic language, general or value-based profile and (iii) schools which have been founded by Muslims and which are targeted at Muslim families in particular and where parents and staff understand the school to be one with a Muslim profile.

Numerically, there are a relatively small number of pupils attending MP schools and they constitute only a small proportion of the total number of schoolage Muslim children in Sweden. The majority of schoolage Muslim children attend a local authority school or some other form of independent school.

In 1998/1999, the time for the field studies there were 56 schools with a confessional direction. In October 2003, the total number of independent schools with



Figure 4.1: The 22 MP schools are found in the following counties (2008):

BD Luleå = 1 school (start autumn 2008)

AB Stockholm County = 7 schools

(2=statistik:SKOLV)

C Uppsala County = 2 schools (1=statistik: SKOLV)

U Västmanland County = 1 school (1=statistik: SKOLV)

T Örebro County = 2 schools (1=statistik: SKOLV)

E Östergötland County = 2 schools (1=statistik: SKOLV)

G Kronoberg County = 1 school (1=statistik: SKOLV)

OPR Göteborg and Bohus County, Älvsborg County and Skaraborg County = 2 schools (1=statistik: SKOLV)

N Halland County = 1 school

M Malmöhus County = 3 schools (1=statistik: SKOLV)

The figures reported above with regard to the number of MP schools in Sweden are in part based on statistics proved by the National Agency for Education and in part from statistics collected by the author. The statistics from the National Agency for Education state that there are 9 compulsory schools with an Muslim profile. The statistics gathered by the author indicate that there are 22 schools with an Muslim profile. (Statistics from the National Agency for Education)

a confessional direction, or the equivalent, was 81. Of these, 56 schools had adopted a Christian profile, 22 had adopted an Islamic, Muslim, Arabic language, general or value-based profile, while 3 schools had adopted a Jewish profile.

In the school year 2003/04, 5751 pupils attended an independent compulsory school with a Christian profile, 1693 pupils attended an independent compulsory school with an Islamic or Arabic language profile and 172 pupils attended an independent compulsory school with a Jewish profile.

In Sweden, between 1992 and September 1999, the total number of instances where approval for running independent compulsory schools having been granted but which were subsequently revoked is 153. These schools had adopted a variety of different directions, including some MP schools. The total number of schools having had approval revoked is 100 since, in some cases, the same school had reapplied, more than twice in some instances, for approval. The motivations for revoking approval have included difficulties in enrolling sufficient numbers of pupils in order to start up on the agreed date, unable to obtain suitable premises, or difficulties in recruiting appropriate staff.

Table 4.2: Number of independent schools with a confessional direction or equivalent (data from October 2003). SNAE, press release 12 May 2004.

<i>Direction/profile</i>	<i>No. of Compulsory Schools(CS)</i>	<i>Pupils in Compulsory Schools</i>	<i>No. of Upper-Sec-Schools (USS)</i>	<i>Pupils In USS</i>
Confessional/Islamic	10	924		
Confessional/Jewish	3	172		
Confessional/Christian	56	5 751	3	660
Linguistic-Ethnic/ Arabic	7	769		
General Islamic	1	87		
General Values	1	17		
General linguistic	3	391		
<i>Total</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>8 111</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>660</i>

Two primary MP schools have had their approval revoked on the recommendation of the National Agency for Education. Both these instances occurred in the mid-1990s, one of the reasons being apparent financial and administrative mismanagement. One of these subsequently re-opened under the auspices of another Muslim association.

The teaching received by pupils attending School A and School B in Sweden complied with the NC for compulsory schools. The pupils have been taught the same set of subjects as are taught to pupils in the local authority schools: Swedish or Swedish as a Second Language, Mathematics, English, Arabic, Social Sciences (Civics, Religious Studies, History and Geography), Natural Sciences (Biology, Physics and Chemistry), Music, Art, Domestic Science, Physical Education and Health, Textiles and Wood- and Metalwork and Domestic Science. During the time allocated for local optional subjects at the school, one to two hours of instruction per week were given over to Islam. In addition, both schools have increased the number of lessons in Swedish language. School A has, furthermore, additional instruction in Islam and Arabic. School B had extended mother-tongue instruction and added a cultural orientation subject. With the exception of the subjects of Islam and the cultural orientation subject, instruction at the two schools was of a non-confessional nature, that is to say, instruction was not adapted or confined to an Islamic viewpoint.

4.5. Independent Schools in England

The United Kingdom consists of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The nature of the Union means that there are some separate statutes,

laws and conventions in the four constituent parts. In the case of education, separate legislation exists for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.



Figure: 4.2. The United Kingdom

During 2008 there were about 130 MP schools (Primary and secondary schools) in UK (62 Primary schools). In England five MP schools are state aided. Four of those schools are Primary schools (AMSUK. 2008).

Local authorities (LAs) are responsible for public spending on schools. Schools used to be the responsibility of local education authorities (LEAs), but these are no longer distinct from the rest of the local authority. Money is distributed directly to schools. Local authorities have a more strategic role in the school system and are less involved in the day-to-day running of schools.

All publicly-funded schools have a governing body. These are made up of parent representatives, the head teacher, serving teachers, governors appointed by the local education authority and members of the local community. They are responsible for academic matters, school discipline, the appointment and dismissal of staff and admissions for some types of school. In practice, much of this comes down to head teachers. Governing bodies take a largely strategic role. They will set the aims and objectives for a school and monitor progress. They are also responsible for implementing the recommendations of inspection

reports and are required to make these reports and their action plans available to parents. The majority of school funding comes from central government and is known as the Dedicated Schools Grant. Local authorities are responsible for distributing this money to the schools in their area. This is done in consultation with 'school forums', whose members include councilors and representatives of local schools.

Subsequent to the adoption of the Education Reform Act 1988, four Key Stages were established in the NC. These are:

Key Stage 1: five to seven years old

Key Stage 2: seven to 11 years old

Key Stage 3: 11 to 14 years old

Key Stage 4: 14 to 16 years old

In the later version of the NC from 2000, a further level was introduced, the Foundation Stage, for 3 to 5 year-olds.

By law, all children are obliged to attend full-time education from the age of 5 years to 16 years. In the state school system education is divided into various stages.

Primary education consists of infants (5 to 7 years) and juniors (7 to 11 years). The two stages may be combined in one primary school or divided into an infant school and a junior school.

Subsequent to the adoption of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, from 1 September 1999, there are four new categories of school, namely 1) *Community*, 2) *Foundation* 3) *Voluntary Controlled* and 4) *Voluntary Aided* which replace the former five categories of mainstream state school: county, controlled, special agreement, aided and grant-maintained (GM). These schools work in partnership with other schools and with LEAs. They receive funding from LEAs.

The different categories of school in England are defined on the basis of the following: the body which is responsible for employing staff, the body in charge of admissions and the body which owns the land and buildings.

Community schools: These were previously known as county schools. It is the LEA which employs school staff, owns the school lands and buildings and determines the arrangements for admitting pupils.

Foundation schools: Many of these were formerly known as grant maintained schools. The school's governing body is responsible for employing the school staff and has the primary responsibility for admissions. The school land and buildings are owned by the governing body or a charitable foundation.

A new type of foundation school involves setting up a trust. With regard to trust schools, one of the main differences is that the trust is responsible for appointing the school governors.

Voluntary-aided: Many of the voluntary-aided schools are church schools. The governing body is responsible for employing the staff and determining the admission arrangements. The land and buildings are normally owned by a

charitable foundation.

Voluntary-controlled: These are almost always church schools and the land and buildings are almost always owned by a charitable foundation. However, unlike voluntary-aided schools, the LEA is responsible for employing the school staff and for determining the arrangements for admissions.

Independent schools are fee-charging schools. They are known as private schools and sometimes as ‘public schools’, even though they not operate within the state sector. They are not obliged to teach the NC although most of them do so in order for pupils to be eligible to be entered for the same public examinations as all other pupils. Independent primary schools fall into two categories: *pre-preparatory*, for ages 2 to 7 years, and junior or *preparatory schools* to ages 11 to 13 years. The ‘prep’ school is devoted to preparing pupils for the Common Entrance Examination, which is a requirement for entry to many independent secondary schools.

Most Muslim profiled schools are quite small, averaging about 150 pupils. About three per cent of Muslim pupils attend Muslim Schools. The fees vary from £100 to £4,200 per year (EUMAP, Open Society Institute¹⁸, 2005).

Special Schools catering for children with Special Educational Needs.

Early Years Centres are funded through the Education and Leisure Directorate (TeacherNet, Department for Education and Skills, UK 1995–2006.)

Table 4.3 Maintained Primary Schools in England. Number of schools by religious character. January 2005 and 2007.

	No Religious Character	Church of England	Roman Catholic	Methodist	Other Christian faith*	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other	Total
England 2005	11 350	4 468	1 713	26	51	29	3	1	1	17 642
England 2007	11 106	4 441	1 696	26	58	28	4	1	1	17 361

* Includes schools of mixed denomination or other Christian beliefs

Source: Department for Education and Skills (DfES). (2005) and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). (2008). Annual Schools Census

18. EUMAP, a program of the Open Society Institute (OSI), monitors the development of human rights and rule of law standards and policies both in the European Union and in its candidate and potential candidate countries. The OSI, a private operating and grantmaking foundation, aims to shape public policy to promote democratic governance, human rights, and economic, legal, and social reform. On a local level, OSI implements a range of initiatives to support the rule of law, education, public health, and independent media. At the same time, OSI works to build alliances across borders and continents on issues such as combating corruption and rights abuses.

Table 4.4 Maintained Primary Schools in England: Number of schools by their status and religious character.

	<i>Community</i>	<i>Voluntary Aided</i>	<i>Voluntary controlled</i>	<i>Foundation</i>	<i>Total</i>
No Religious Character	10 726 (2,799,440)*	15 (2,470)*	43 (8,400)*	322 (99,210)*	11 106 (2,909,510)*
Church of England	0	1 956 (361,960)*	2 446 (396,520)*	39 (8.840)*	4 441 (767,320)*
Roman Catholic	0	1 696 (404,350)*	0	0	1 696 (404,350)*
Methodist	0	2 (420)*	24 (4,070)*	0	26 (4,490)*
Other Christian faith	0	28 (6,180)*	29 (5,130)*	1 (220)*	58 (11,540)*
Jewish	0	28 (8,690)*	0	0	28 (8,690)*
Muslim	0	4 (1,150)	0	0	4 (1,150)*
Sikh	0	1 (300)*	0	0	1 (300)*
Other	0	1 (330)*	0	0	1 (330)*
Total	10 726 (2,799,440)*	3 731 (785,840)*	2 542 (414,130)*	362 (108,270)*	17 361 (4,107,680)*

* Number of pupils in January 2007

Source: Annual Schools Census

4.5.1. School admissions

All children between the ages of 5 and 16 years are entitled by law to a place at a state school.

In order to be assigned a place, application is to be made to the school. Should a school have received a greater number of applications than the number of places available, their over-subscription criteria are to be used to determine which of the applications are to be accepted for entry to the school. In these cases, the criteria usually include the distance a child lives from the school and whether or not the child has any siblings already attending the school. Some schools also reserve a proportion of the total places for applicants who are members of a specific religious confession (faith schools) or for applicants fulfilling certain requirements with regard to general academic ability (grammar schools) or for applicants with a particular aptitude in a certain subject (specialist schools). Other schools which are over-subscribed assign a proportion of places by a lottery system.

Before February 2007, as in the case of other non-municipal schools in

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England, MP schools were permitted to select those pupils they wished to enroll and refuse places to those they did not wish to accept. In February 2007, a new admissions code was introduced which all maintained schools are obliged to follow when determining their admissions criteria when over-subscribed. The aim of one of the new provisions is to prohibit schools (except boarding schools) from holding personal interviews with applicants and their families. The overall aim of the new code is to attempt to make admissions procedures fairer.

In the UK, two broad aims for the school curriculum are reflected in Section 351 of the 1966 Education Act. These aims require that “all maintained schools provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society
- Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.” (NC online: “About the NC. Values, aims and purposes.” http://www.nc.uk.net/nc_resources/html/valuesAimsPurposes.shtml)

In the NC of 1990, Citizenship was introduced as a cross-curricular theme. For Key Stages 1 and 2, Citizenship is a non-statutory area in the NC

All National curriculum subjects provide opportunities to promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Explicit opportunities to promote pupils’ development in these areas are provided in religious education and the non-statutory framework for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship at key stages 1 and 2. A significant contribution is also made by school ethos, effective relationships throughout the school, collective worship, and other curriculum activities. (NC online: “About the NC. Values, aims and purposes.” http://www.nc.uk.net/nc_resources/html/valuesAimsPurposes.shtml)

The 1996 Education Acts defines a school as a unit in which there are more than five pupils of compulsory school age. The majority of children coming from Muslim families in the UK attend community schools or Church schools. Islamia School in London was opened in autumn 1983 and was the first MP school to be granted recognition by the government. (http://www.islamfortoday.com/yusuf_islam.htm (Islam for today 2007)

The school applied several times for state funding, but its applications were turned down, time after time, despite much lobbying and campaigning by local Muslims. There was a growing sense of injustice among the Muslim community as Christian and Jewish schools seemed to have no trouble getting state funding, while not ONE Muslim school in the whole of the United Kingdom was being funded (<http://www.islamia-pri.brent.sch.uk/about.html>).

Finally in 1998, fifteen years after the school was founded, the government finally granted it state funding (<http://www.islamia-pri.brent.sch.uk/about.html>).

Geographically, the MP schools are all located in the larger and medium-sized cities. Eighty per cent of all Muslims living in the UK reside in Greater London, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, and East Midlands.

4.5.2. Conditions for approval as a Voluntary-Aided School in England

Any religious community may open a school and be eligible for public funding. There are two possibilities for receiving public funding: (i) through voluntary contributions; financing through local organizations and (ii) through subsidies; state financing. The decision is made by the Minister. The Minister makes decisions on a case by case basis. Five schools have been recognized since 1998. These schools had existed for some years prior to obtaining the “privilege” of subsidies. They were granted state financing because their pupils had produced good academic results. They had even been exceeding those of public schools (Maréchal, 2003).

“*Maintained Schools* must follow the NC. Non-maintained schools and home-schoolers are under no such restriction.” (AMSS UK, 2004:17).

“*Voluntary Controlled Schools* and *Foundation Schools* must follow the LEA Agreed Syllabus for RE. Meanwhile, *Voluntary-Aided Schools* may have a “religious character” in accordance with the school’s Ethos Statement but do not need to follow the LEA Agreed Syllabus for RE. The Voluntary-Aided model is therefore the one used by faith communities to obtain state funding and the Muslim community is keen to see that this facility is not restricted or removed in future.” (AMSS UK, 2004:18).

The 1944 Education Act introduced the current dual system of schools with a religious character and those without a religious character. This Act required every state-aided primary school to begin the day with collective worship on the part of all pupils, and with religious instruction in every such school. Religious instruction continues to be given in both fully maintained and state-aided voluntary schools. There are opportunities for religious training beyond daily worship and minimum required instruction. The offering of religious instruction has in many schools become non-denominational. In areas of high non-Christian immigration, consideration may be given to alternative religious provision.

Part 10 of the Education Act 2002 requires that all independent schools must be registered with the Department for Education and Skills. Applications for registration by new schools must be made before a school begins to operate and admit pupils.

What Role of God and National Curriculum in School life?

Regulations made under the Education Act 2002 set out a range of standards that all independent schools in England must satisfy as a condition of registration. The regulations *cover*:

- The quality of education provided,
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- The welfare, health and safety of pupils
- The suitability of proprietors and staff
- The premises and accommodation
- The provision of information and the way in which complaints are handled.

These standards will be examined before an application for registration is approved and thereafter during the regular 6-yearly cycle of inspections that all independent schools will be required to undergo to ensure they continue to meet the standards for registration. The 2002 Act provides for action to be taken where schools do not meet the standards” (Department for Education and Skills, 2006).

MP schools have some possibilities to be Voluntary-Aided schools. To found MP schools in the maintained sector, proposals from independent promoters will be considered of grounds, including:

- provision of a good standard of education
- delivery of the NC
- the appointment of qualified staff
- equal opportunities for girls and boys
- competent management and viable finance
- suitable buildings for the school
- the extent of parental demand and the need for new places in an area
- cost implications” (Department for Education and Skills, 2006).

Planning permission for the founding of a Muslim school has in some cases taken decades to achieve.

Oftsted have set out guidelines for school inspectors who will be engaged in the inspections of some of the types of non-association independent schools. Included in these guidelines is information and guidance for inspections of Muslim schools. The guidelines for inspectors contain general information on MP schools as well as advice with regard to attire and rules of etiquette for inspectors when visiting Muslim schools.

- “It is important for inspectors to be aware of and respect religious sensitivities.

- Female inspectors are advised to wear a trouser suit or longer skirt and jacket to cover their arms. This is to show respect but is also for practical purposes. In some Muslim schools pupils sit on the floor for lessons and meals. A chair will often be provided for visitors, but it is not always practical when sharing a meal, talking to children and looking at their work. Female inspectors are also recommended to carry a scarf in case they enter the prayer room or a mosque when they will need to cover their head.
- There is usually no physical contact between males and females who are not part of the same family. Muslim men do not usually shake hands with women, or women with men, so the best policy is not to offer your hand unless one is offered first to you.
- In some all-girls' schools, men are usually not employed as teachers, nor do they go into areas of the school used by women. This is certainly the case in girls' boarding schools. Such schools should only be visited by female inspectors. It is possible for female inspectors to visit boys' boarding schools, but it is advisable for them to be accompanied by a male colleague" (Ofsted, 2007:22-23).

The Muslim Parents Association

In 2001, the Muslim Parents Association in England was established in response to a demand for an association to represent parents' views in MP schools and a platform where parents could raise their concerns, inquiries and questions. The point of departure for the work of the association is the following quotation:

"...Pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents." (The 1944 Education Act, Section 76)

The Muslim Parents Association (2003) (homepage: "Muslim girls wins county' top student award by examination board, Edexcel" – <http://www.muslimparentsassociation.co.uk/>) has drawn attention to a 16-year-old girl who was nominated in 2002 as the Country's Top Student by the examination board, Edexcel. This pupil had arrived in England in 1990 from Lebanon. As an immigrant to England, without knowing any English, after 12 years in England she had succeeded so well as to be nominated for this award. The MP school which the girl had attended also attained considerable positive publicity which has in addition given encouragement to other MP schools.

Those schools which are not in receipt of state financing charge school fees. There is considerable variation in the level of these school fees. Parents have pointed out that the fees have increased in many schools over the last ten years, from ca £800 per annum upwards, to the most expensive MP school, where parents are to pay ca £4,000 per annum. (i bid.). Many Muslim parents do not have the financial resources to be able to pay school fees for their children (unless it is voluntary aided) and therefore, in practice, do not have the possibility

of choosing a MP school for their children should they wish to do so. Schools which do receive state funding are not permitted to charge school fees. Thus they do not have school fees available as one of the criteria for selecting pupils. Any school fees necessarily function as an instrument of selection since only those children with parents with the necessary financial resources are able to pay such fees.

Nonetheless, MP schools in England still have the right to apply some of criteria of selection in their procedure for selecting perspective pupils. For example, school D, which is state-aided, carried out interviews with those children and their parents who had applied for entry to the school. Important criteria for selection included giving priority to pupils who had received an Muslim upbringing at home and those who were from a secure and functioning nuclear family.

4.5.3. The subject of Religious Education in England

Muslim educationalists consider that Islamic education must be included as part of an integrated syllabus or curriculum (Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), 2004).

Many Muslim profiled schools, particularly at primary level, are concerned about the pressure on time allocation created by compliance with the NC. Many Muslim profiled schools would like to devote time to the teaching of Arabic, Koran studies and a related understanding of Islamic practices. But because the time allocation under the NC is determined centrally, this goal is difficult to achieve. Muslim educationalists therefore encouraged the Government to seek greater devolution of decisions on educational provision to front-line providers (Association of Muslim Social Scientists and other groups, 2004).

Although Religious Education is not one of the subjects included in the NC in UK, all schools are required by law to provide pupils with instruction in this subject as part of the core curriculum. Special provisions exist for confessional schools and voluntary-aided schools. Each Local Education Authority (LEA) has established a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Its purpose is to provide support for effective provision of Religious Education in schools. SACRE includes representatives from different groups, such as local religious groups, teachers' unions and LEA. The local syllabus that has been agreed upon is largely framed in order for it to be adaptable to the main religions of the area. This local syllabus is to reflect the predominantly Christian religious tradition in England. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education classes and any of the daily communal religious practices the school may hold (RE Online, 1994).

Knowledge acquired by pupils is described in the Ofsted report 2001/02, *Religious education in primary schools*. In schools where attainment in RE is high,

pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are aware that religious texts have a special status for believers and recall orally or in writing popular stories from religions. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the key events in the life of Jesus and others, such as Muhammad, and their importance to believers. Similarly, young pupils' knowledge of the facts of key celebrations and places of worship develops by the end of Year 6 into a more sophisticated understanding of how events and places express key beliefs.

The aims, curriculum, resources and pedagogy of RE embrace the values at the heart of inclusion, notably respect for all. The teaching of religions in itself does not promote respect, but when teaching exemplifies openness and sensitivity to differences in beliefs and practices then RE plays a part in creating an open and accepting atmosphere in the school.

In teaching pupils to learn from religion, teachers encourage them to recognize the diversity of faith and culture in British society, to respect the right of people to be different and to see through outward differences to the person beneath. Through well-managed discussion, pupils enjoy the opportunities to discuss and share their ideas, beliefs and traditions. However, this has to be planned carefully. The wrong choice of visual material or the misuse of artifacts can arouse pupils' mirth rather than interest and disdain rather than respect (Ofsted, 2002).

Chapter 5

School A and School B in Sweden

5.1. Introduction

In 1993 the first independent primary MP school was started in Sweden. Some of the resistance that Muslims have experienced since then, when applying for approval for the establishment of MP schools, has reflected a concern that these schools would increase segregation in society. In addition, some of the politicians who normally propagate the establishment of independent schools, in line with the policy of their respective parties, nonetheless occasionally express uncertainty with regard to schools with a confessional direction, particularly MP schools.

Opponents of such schools enthusiastically claim that municipal schools, in contrast to schools with a confessional direction, are a meeting place for pupils with different religions and cultural backgrounds who thereby are able to learn to respect each other and “Swedish culture” and “Swedish values.” However, the experiences of the Muslims participating in this study, with regard to municipal schools, have been entirely different to this. In their view, only the values of the majority culture were found in the municipal schools which they had encountered or had experience from as a pupil/student or an employee.

Pupils attending MP schools are children and young people who were either born in, or who have recently migrated to, Sweden. Some of these youngsters have either experienced war themselves or have parents who came to Sweden at some time as refugees, students or for marriage. For some of the pupils, their MP school has been their first encounter with Sweden, with Swedes, the Swedish language and those values that are given expression in the Swedish NC. The staff, both non-Muslim and Muslim, who teach the pupils at these schools have completed teacher training either in Sweden or abroad. Some of the teachers and other staff have their background and roots in Sweden or some other Nordic country, while others are originally from various countries in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. At School A and School B, the total composite language competence of the staff (consisting of all languages each teacher claims to speak) consisted of the following: Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian, English, Arabic, French, German, Spanish, Kurdish, Somali, Farsi, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and Greek.

The MP schools in Sweden, in compliance with the provisions under the Swedish Education Act, which requires that schools employ qualified teachers as far as possible, and on the basis of each school's own requirements, have recruited a high proportion of non-Muslim teachers. Consequently, these schools have become multicultural meeting places for people from different religious, cultural, political and linguistic/ethnic backgrounds.

As stated above, the schools that have participated in this study are described through-out as MP schools. They are not Muslim schools but rather Swedish compulsory schools which adhere to the Swedish NC but which have also adopted a Muslim profile. Although one of the schools, School B, had not adopted an explicitly Muslim profile, parents had placed their children in the school under the impression that it was in fact a MP school since those who had founded the school and the head, together with all the pupils attending the school, were Muslims. Over and above teaching the obligatory subjects for a compulsory school, the School B also provided tuition in such subjects as Islam and the Arabic language as well as providing opportunities for celebrating Muslim festivals and ceremonies. The Parents at the school gives possibility to communicate on issues concerning Islam with the staff of the school. School lunches were served in accordance with Muslim rules and in addition, the school had set aside a room where children and adults could gather together for prayer.

5.2. School A in Sweden

5.2.1. Background

School "A" began operations in the autumn term of 1996. By the spring term of 1998, the school had 84 pupils in grades 1-6. The school had adopted a confessional direction, with an Arabic language and Islamic culture profile. The head of the school was a Muslim and had been one in the group who had taken the initiative in starting the school. The body legally responsible for the school was a foundation and the school was housed in temporary premises, located in an area in a larger city that was not densely populated by immigrants. The school shared Physical education and health facilities with a municipal school. All the pupils, except one, were Muslims. The pupils traveled from various parts of the city to and from the school, either on the school's own bus¹⁹ or on the public transportation system.

The staff of the school consisted of nine Muslims and six non-Muslims. The aim of the foundation legally responsible for the school was to setup a day-care centre, a compulsory school, an after-school centre and an adult education centre. The foundation stated further that the aim was to "run basic and further education and to facilitate the upbringing of Muslim children, whereby

19. The school charged a fee of 300 SEK per child per annum for use of the school bus. Families with two children were charged 500 SEK and those with three children, 600 SEK.

particular attention is to be paid to Islamic culture and the Arabic language” (From the decision by the SNAE, 1996)

It is the ambition of the school to maintain education of high quality, create a safe learning environment and to promote the integration of pupils into Swedish society. The board of the foundation also acted as the board of the school. The foundation consisted of four people, all work at the school, as the head, two teachers and one running the school office. The head acted as chair of the board.

In their leisure hours, the school head and a number of the Muslim staff worked as leaders for various leisure-time activities for children and young people. The purpose of these voluntary activities was to support the integration of the youngsters into Swedish society by encouraging them, during their leisure hours, to enter into various pursuits together with other, non-Muslim youngsters in the local authority.

Playground duties were largely the responsibility of the staff from the after-school recreation centre²⁰ and the head. Teachers ate lunch together with their class. A restaurant supplied the school meals. The school staff served the meals in the premises of the leisure-time centre. The pupils took turns to wipe off the tables.

In the application for approval for the school, the foundation stated that the head was to possess educational qualifications and “to represent the direction of the school with regard to Islamic culture and the Arabic language.” With regard to the teachers, the goal was that they should hold Swedish teacher qualifications, or the equivalent, and that those who did not hold these were to have appropriate knowledge of the subjects and practical teaching experience together with properly-documented knowledge of the Swedish language.

It was the intention of the school to adhere to the Swedish NC and to be open for all children to attend, not only Muslim children. Should there be a greater number of applicants than vacant places, then the date of receipt of the application was to be decisive. However, those applicants with siblings already attending the school would be given priority as would applicants from children attending the foundation’s pre-school. The local municipal council in the local authority in which School A was intending to be located had been allowed to submit a statement with regard to the application to start School A to the SNAE. But the local authority informed the SNAE that they would refrain from submitting such a statement regarding the application.

20. *The after-school recreation centre* (childcare for schoolchildren) is an educational group activity for enrolled children for the part of the day when children are not in school and during school holidays. It is for children up to and including the age of 12 years who attend school (preschool class or compulsory school). Municipalities are required to provide childcare for school-aged children whose parents work or study, or for children with a particular need for this form of care. As a rule, leisure-time centres are open year-round. Open hours are adapted to the work- or study hours of the parents, or to the needs of the child. Leisure-time centres are often integrated within the school. This integration can apply to staffing, premises and/or the educational program.

In 1998, the SNAE carried out an inspection of the school. During this inspection, the SNAE identified a number of shortcomings with regard to accounting and that in the documentation that had been submitted, a number of unidentified debit items had been included which made it impossible to assess accurately the financial stability of the school. The SNAE therefore requested the school to submit the accounts for the budget year 1996/97. Those legally responsible for the school submitted these accounts within the time limit set together with clarification with regard to the manner in which the foundation was dealing with the deficit in the budget. Subsequently the SNAE, on the basis of these submissions, declared that the school continued to adequately meet the requirements for the approval of an independent school for the compulsory education of children. This implied that the school continued to enjoy the right to receive subsidies from the home local authorities of the pupils.

5.2.2. The decision-making process in School A

A schematic summary is provided below of those in the school who participate in the decision-making process with regard to different issues.

Table 5:1 Decision-making process in School A in Sweden 1998.

<i>School A</i>	<i>How does the decision-making process function?</i>
Recruiting staff:	Head, teachers and parent representatives
Premises:	The foundation has major responsibility for the premises, but staff consulted with regard to design and the interior.
Pedagogical issues:	Head together with teachers and other staff
Financial issues:	Foundation and the head. Staff participating with regard to purchase of teaching materials and the budget for school visits, etc.
Pupil issues:	Pupil welfare group, including the head, school nurse, school doctor and the teachers concerned. Pupil council once a week. Parent advisory council
Profile of the school:	The foundation which started the school.
Issues concerning the values and rules that are to apply in the school:	The head, the teachers, other staff and the pupils.

There was more or less agreement among the staff as to those who were expected to participate in the decision-making process with regard to different issues. The attitude of the staff towards the school management was largely positive as it was towards the organization, administration and the psychological aspects of the working environment. On the other hand, the attitude towards the school premises was largely critical on the part of the staff, as was that of the school management, who all agreed that they were too cramped. Some of the staff was

also critical of the testing of pupils each month. In their opinion, the tests were given too frequently which proved stressful to both pupils and teachers. Discussions were taking place with regard to reducing the number of tests. Both pupils and staff hoped they would soon be moving to other, larger, premises. The head was in constant contact with those responsible for premises at the local authority to seek assistance in finding larger premises. Those legally responsible for the school are also considering the possibility for building their own premises.

5.2.3. Pupils and Parents

Most of the pupils before starting in the school had lived for a number of years in Sweden and attended a Swedish pre-school and /or day-care centre. Parents and children stated that they had primarily chosen School A for the security offered by the Muslim profile and that the school was considered to be a good school of high quality. During one lesson per week, each class held a meeting, together with the teacher, to discuss their common interests. The pupils had their own letter-box in which they could place notes about the issues they wished to take up at these meetings. There was also an active parent council whose members were familiar with the Swedish NC and the activities of the school. The school collaborated closely with the parents. The parent council considered that they had ample opportunity to exercise influence over the school. They were of the opinion that the most important duty for the school was to integrate pupils into Swedish society. The parent council recounted that they were working on outreach to all parents with information and to encourage the parents to participate in the Personal development dialogues, together with their children, and to attend parent meetings and other common activities. For those parents who required assistance, they helped with understanding and responding to information from the school such as the weekly newsletter. The school was open to all, both Muslims and non-Muslims. The pupils had one of the following languages as their mother-tongue: Swedish, Arabic, Kurdish, Bengali or Somali. The pupils received no tuition in their mother-tongues. However, tuition was provided in the case of Arabic as a means for being able to understand the Koran. Since none of the pupils lived in close proximity to the school, they either traveled by public transport or with one of the school buses. Almost all pupils traveled in this way to school.

5.2.4. Staff

There were a total of fifteen people employed at the school – the school head, eight teachers, four other staff (one kitchen assistant/driver, one secretary, one cleaner and one trainee) together with two teaching assistants/staff at the after-school recreation centre. The staff of the after-school recreation centre worked both there and in the school. Five of the eight teachers were teacher-trained. The total staff included nine women and six men, with an average age of 36 years.

Table 5.2 School A in Sweden 1998

	<i>School A</i>
Type of School	Independent school with a confessional direction, with Arabic language and Islamic culture profile. Grades 1-6
Year of Start	1996
Subsidies from the home local authorities of the pupils.	Yes
Pupils	84
Staff (total)	15 (+ a school nurse and a doctor – part-time)
Staff born in Sweden	6
Teachers	8 (+2 teaching assistants)
With teacher training	5
Other staff	4 (including 1 trainee)
School head	1
Muslim staff (total)	9
Non-Muslim staff (total)	6
Female staff (total)	9
Male staff (total)	6

Six of the teachers and two of the other staff were born in Sweden (as were their parents) and eight of the other nine having migrated to Sweden as refugees and the ninth having migrated to Sweden together with the parents. Of these nine, four were born in Lebanon, three in Gaza in Palestine, one in Tunisia and one in Norway. Nine of the staff had worked at the school since it opened in 1996, one began in the spring term of 1997 and three were employed for the autumn term of 1997. The trainee began in the spring term of 1998.

Five of the teachers worked at class-teachers, two teachers worked as teaching assistants, two teachers were subject teachers in Arabic and Religious Studies and one was the Physical Education and Health teacher.

Fourteen of the staff worked full-time and one worked part-time (75 %). The school had signed a collective agreement with the Swedish Teachers' Union (*Läraryrskombundet*), National Union of Teachers in Sweden (*Lärarnas Riksförbund LR*) and the Municipal Workers Trade Union (SKTF, *Kommunaltjänstemannaförbundet*) and the employers organization was the Employers Association KFO (*Arbetsgivarföreningen KFO*).

The head had obtained qualifications in business economics abroad and had previously worked in Sweden as an auditor and as a teacher of French. At the time of the field work, the head was attending university courses for school heads and planned eventually to take the national course for school heads.²¹

21. The national course for school heads was run by a number of universities on behalf of the Ministry of Education. The course ran for two or three years and was carried out as distance education so that anyone taking the course was able to both study and continue working as a

The school had reached an agreement with the local authority whereby they were able to call on the services of a part-time school nurse who also worked in one of the local authority schools. A school doctor, whose main duties were carried out in the local authority schools, worked a certain number of hours in School A. When necessary, the school was also able to call upon the services of a school psychologist.

5.2.5. Finances

The pupils in school A resided in two different local authorities.

All MP schools (like all other schools) in Sweden receive subsidies from the home local authorities of the pupils. In its first year, the school received subsidies at a level of 75 % of that which had been received by the local authority schools which was paid by the various home local authorities of the pupils. This level was eventually raised to 85 % and subsequently, in 1998, to 100 %. The total budget of the school in 1998 was between 3.5 and 4 million SEK. The cramped nature of the school premises restricted the number of pupils that could be admitted. A strong demand from the parents was that the school should give priority to running small classes in order that each pupil would be provided with the best support possible. It was also stipulated in the constitution of the school that the size of each class was not to exceed 25 pupils.

5.2.6. Curriculum

The work of the school adhered to the NC. All teaching was carried out in Swedish except the tuition in Arabic. The pupils studied Arabic and Ethics as Elected Language and Pupil Options respectively, as stipulated in the NC. The school had increased the total number of lessons in Swedish as a Second Language, English and Arabic compared to the minimum stipulated for compulsory schools under Appendix 3 of the Education Act.

The school monitored the outcome of the teaching through monthly tests. The outcomes for each pupil were subsequently sent home to the parents for counter-signing. The head held a personal interview with each pupil after each test. The Personal Development dialogues were held once a term by each teacher and the pupil together with parents, which is the rule set by the NAE.

head at the same time. The course was tied to the work of the head and the prerequisite was that one was already employed as a head or as a deputy head.

5.3 School B in Sweden

5.3.1. Background

School B started in the autumn term of 1994. The school was run by a limited company. In the autumn term of 1998 the school had 120 pupils in grades 1 to 9. The school had strengthened the mother-tongue tuition and added the subjects concerned with cultural orientation. The goal of the school was that pupils would be able to integrate into Swedish society without shedding their own cultural identity. In order to attain that goal, all pupils in grades 1 to 6 were taught the subject of Intercultural Studies and all pupils in grades 7 to 9 were taught the subject of International Studies.

In August 1995, extended approval for the school was granted for grades 7 to 9.

The school was located in permanent premises after having previously to move three times. The school was located in the suburb of a major metropolis in an area that is not densely populated by immigrants, an area that lies between an older residential area of detached family homes and an industrial area.

The head of the school was a Muslim and the deputy a non-Muslim. The school head was one of those who had been legally responsible for the application to found the school. The pupils came from all over the metropolitan area. Most of them traveled to school by public transport. In the autumn term of 1998 the staff of the school consisted of eleven Muslims and seven non-Muslims.

The premises of the school consisted of a two-storey building that had previously been used for industrial purposes. The first premises had consisted of a section in the local authority compulsory school but these were over-dimensioned and became too expensive. The school had then moved to other, temporary, premises in another area but these proved to be too cramped. Consequently, the school had yet again to seek appropriate premises which resulted in the move to the present ones.

All pupils were served lunch in the school dining-room which consisted of a large room which functioned as an indoor courtyard. Access to several classrooms and a Physical education and health facility was from this courtyard. The school had signed an agreement with a local restaurant for the supply of the lunches, prepared according to Islamic regulations. The lunch break was staggered for different classes and each teacher ate lunch together with the class. But the time allowed for each sitting was rather short and consequently both teachers and pupils felt stressed eating lunch. The level of noise during the lunch breaks was also experienced as being very loud. The pupils took it in turn to wipe off the tables. The school also served breakfast to those pupils who wished to have it. The argument in support of this was that many of the pupils had to travel some distance to school and either did not have time or did not feel like eating at home before leaving for school. There was also a room set aside for prayer in the school.

5.3.2 The decision-making process in School B

A schematic outline is presented below showing who was expected to participate in the decision-making process on various issues. There was considerable uncertainty among the staff in this regard. The union representatives were of the opinion that school head was not knowledgeable about the work of the unions and those regulations and laws that are applicable with regard to employers and employees. At the time of the field-work the local union representatives were being given substantial support and backup from the national and regional union offices with regard to clarifying their role for the school head.

A schematic summary is provided below of those in the school who participate in the decision-making process with regard to different issues.

Table 5.3: Decision-making process in School B in Sweden 1998.

<i>School B</i>	<i>How does the decision-making process function?</i>
Recruiting staff:	Head, sometimes the director of studies
Premises:	Head, director of studies, the teachers
Pedagogical issues:	Director of studies
Financial issues:	Head and director of studies draw up budget. Head, director of studies and finance officer
Pupil issues:	Director of studies and class teacher
Profile of the school:	Head
Issues concerning the values and rules that are to apply in the school:	Head, director of studies (teachers and some of the other staff)

There was a certain degree of criticism among the staff with regard to the manner in which staff were recruited – that it was too rapid, that there was a lack of planning and that other employees did not participate in the selection process. There was also some criticism as to the manner in which budget matters were dealt with, including the view that the school had not reached the required maturity to deal with the budget. In particular, they considered the budget was under-financed and therefore could not be carried through. The staff expressed criticism of the fact that the director of studies, who was charged with dealing with educational issues, did not have access to financial resources. The staff was generally critical of the school management, particularly with regard to the issues of organization, management, administration and work environment.

The head of school B participated in the everyday work of the school to only a very limited extent. At the same time, it was the head alone who determined whether any additional resources were to be made available for teaching purposes, for any individual pupil or for some other part of the activities in the school. The head had delegated most of the responsibility for the everyday running of the school to the director of studies. But this was delegation with many reservations. The assistant head was not familiar with the content of the school

budget and was not given any authority with regard to finances. His style of leadership was open and democratic but without any real power to determine the course of events since his was a subordinate position in a hierarchical management system. He had only recently taken up his appointment at the time of the field work and lacked any previous management experience. On the other hand he had long experience as a teacher in a local authority school. The staff were pleased with his appointment at the school but nonetheless pessimistic about any possibilities he might have in reality to implement measures with regard to those everyday problems confronting the school, particularly in those areas where additional resources might be involved.

5.3.3. Pupils and parents

The majority of the pupils attending School B were either from Iraq or from Somalia. Some of the pupils had one parent with a Swedish background. Many of the pupils were recent arrivals to Sweden. Only children with Muslim parents were attending the school although the school was officially open for all children, non-Muslim as well as Muslim. In the event of their being more applicants than free places, priority was given to those with siblings at the school and according to the date of application. Parents and children in School B stated they had chosen this school primarily for the security offered by the Muslim profile and that the school had a good reputation of high quality.

Once a week the pupils were formally provided with the opportunity to exercise influence through the class councils and the pupil council. In the class councils, the pupils took up questions and proposals that were then taken further to the pupil council for further consideration. Issues of a more practical nature were taken up in the pupil council, such as class outings, equipment in the playground, and so on. At least one class teacher, and sometimes the head, participated in each meeting of the pupil council.

According to the report of 1999 from the inspection by the SNAE, the pupils considered that they had very little possibility of influencing the content and form of the teaching.

There were considerable differences with regard to facility in the Swedish language within each class since some of the pupils were recent arrivals in Sweden while others had been born here. In reality, such a situation would have required more individualized teaching which the teachers considered not to be possible in practice. Since a many of the parents and pupils had only recently arrived in Sweden, they did not have any previous experience of Swedish schools. Consequently, the teachers had to allow both the pupils and parents sufficient time in which to understand the Swedish NC and the teaching methods which they used. In addition, many pupils did not have any experience of Swedish pre-schools and therefore they had not received the normal preparation for starting school. The importance of training motor skills and mobility through play was something new for many of the parents and something many had difficulty in

accepting. Some of these parents therefore wished to have the pupils taught in the “right way,” that is to say, in the way they themselves had been taught at school. There the teacher had been a figure of authority who communicated knowledge to the pupils and where pupils were expected to sit still and quiet, and pay attention in order to hear and take in new knowledge. These parents were used to a view of knowledge where the teacher enjoyed unlimited power to communicate factual knowledge and Muslim values to the pupils.

Cooperation with parents was something the school wished to improve. The parent meetings and the Personal Development dialogues to which parents were invited were not well-attended. The class teacher sent a weekly newsletter home to the parents to keep them informed on the current situation of their child. Each year the school organized an information meeting for parents which, according to the head, were well-attended. Some parents preferred to have direct contact with the head rather than turning to their child’s class teacher. The pupils came from eight different home local authorities. Most pupils traveled by public transportation and this service was paid for by the school.

5.3.4. Staff

The staff of the school consisted of the school leader, the director of studies with certain teaching duties, a finance officer employed part-time, eleven teachers and two teaching assistants also working as staff at the The leisure-time centre, one kitchen assistant and one caretaker/cleaner. There was also a trainee who taught computer studies. The trainee was paid by the Employ-ability Institute (*Arbetsmarknads institutet* – AMI – a regional organ of the Swedish National Institute for Working Life – now discontinued). The male staff was in majority in school B.

Number of teachers with teacher training in school B was five of eight teachers.

On occasion, the head consulted a non-Muslim who had previously held the post of head at the school for three terms and who had many years of experience as a head at local authority schools. Playground duties were carried out by the staff of the leisure-time centre together with teachers who had a rolling schedule for this purpose.

The school had a contract with a doctor who visited the school for one day every fortnight. They also had a contract with a psychologist who was called in as required. There were also a number of volunteers who helped out with various activities in the school. Several of the staff expressed some concern that they most often were not informed in advance when such volunteers were to be present or who they were.

19 people were employed at the school. Two of these were born in Sweden (as were their parents). 14 of the staff were not born in Sweden, seven of whom had migrated as refugees, two as a result of marriage, two for the purposes of study, one together with the migration of the parents and two as tourists. Their

Table 5.4 School B in Sweden 1998

	<i>School B</i>
Type of School	Independent school with a general direction, with ethnic, Arabic language, and Arabic culture profile. Grades 1-9
Year of Start	1994
Subsidies from the home local authorities of the pupils.	Yes
Pupils	120
Staff (total)	19 (+ a part-time school nurse and a part-time doctor, a consultant together with a number of volunteers).
Staff born in Sweden	2
Teachers	11 (+ 2 teaching assistants)
With teacher training	4
Other staff	4 (including 1 trainee)
School head and the director of studies	2
Muslim staff (total)	11
Non-Muslim staff (total)	7
Female staff (total)	8
Male staff (total)	11

countries of origin were as follows: four born in Iraq, two in Iran, two in Egypt, one in Syria, one in Somalia, one in Bahrain, one in France, one in Norway and one in Finland.

Those legally responsible for the school had also been granted approval to start another school in a different area of the city. It was planned that this school should open for the autumn term of 1998. However, this school had found it difficult to recruit sufficient number of pupils therefore the school did not open. Those pupils and staff who had already been recruited were offered places at School B. This action resulted in some stress and strain at the beginning of the new school-year at School B. Sections of the planning for the autumn term which had been drawn up by the school management and staff before the summer holidays had to be changed. The staff who had been involved in the planning process for the new school did not have the time or opportunity to deal with their sense of disappointment that the new school was not to open. Rather, they were expected to accept a different work-place and to immerse themselves in the culture of school B. The staff at school B, who had already earlier been involved in three moves since the opening in 1994, were required to rapidly adapt to the arrival of a group of new pupils and a group of new colleagues. Both the school leader, the director of studies and the staff were well-aware of the causes of this situation of tension and conflict.

One of the reasons these conflicts became transparent was when the staff interpreted the school rules in different ways. Some of the non-Muslim staff

considered that the head paid more attention to the Muslim staff and that Muslim colleagues reported to the head when any of the staff raised criticisms about the school management. Some of the staff who did not speak Arabic were critical of those Arabic-speaking staff who spoke to each other in Arabic even when there were non-speakers present in the room. Some of the Muslim staff considered that a number of the non-Muslim staff were not interested in their ideas and views. The work-rooms of the school management and most of the staff were situated along a narrow corridor. Each work-room was used by three to five people. Many of the staff were convinced that this working environment “with a narrow corridor and many closed doors” had a negative effect on cooperation among the staff as a group. Furthermore, the premises had inadequate noise isolation. For example, anyone sitting in the staff room/conference room, next door to the office to the director of studies, would find it difficult to avoid overhearing any conversation taking place there.

The unanimous perception of the staff (Muslims and non-Muslims) of school B was that they had received a negative reception in the local community and from local authority officials on whom the school depended. The local authority officials who have been responsible for ensuring the implementation of the decision reached by the Riksdag had in practice worked to prevent this implementation. Teachers and staff at school B were of the opinion that individual local authority officials had allowed their own private views of opposition to MP schools to direct their actions. Through the application of negative norms and special policies which had only been applied to a MP school, these officials had acted in an insulting and condescending manner towards the school and its staff, pupils and parents. The staff at school B felt that, even at the very first meeting, officials in the local authority where they had first been located wished to “educate” the school leader and the staff. That these officials presumed that the school leader and staff lived by other, undemocratic, norms and values and were assumed to be totally ignorant of how a Swedish school functioned.

Negative norms were dominant in school B. The staff were divided between those concentrated on negative norms and those who wished to promote positive norms. Those who wished to “educate” pupils, attempted to do so through imposing rules as to what the pupils were permitted to do, prohibitions, everyday life regulated in detail, teach pupils to abstain from inappropriate behaviour, to obey adults and not question. Those who wished to promote positive norms, wished to attempt to “educate” pupils through encouragement and rewards. Some of the staff who promoted negative norms with regard to pupils also tended to adopt negative norms to “educate” colleagues. One teacher in School B related that, in a group of pupils, having abandoned a policy of positive norms, which for that teacher had been the most natural, and instead had used negative norms, the class had calmed down and become better able to concentrate. Subsequently, the teacher had step by step returned to positive norms and everything had gone well.

At school B, the staff was critical of the psycho-social working environment

at the school. The causes of the difficulties were described as follows:

- i. differing views with regard to negative and positive norms,
- ii. the shortage of financial resources
- iii. shortcomings with regard to the Swedish language among the staff,
- iv. the head and staff did not discuss the direction and profile of the school which gave rise to confusion as to what was to be applicable.
- v. communication difficulties with the local authority officials,
- vi. large discrepancies in the level of knowledge of the pupils in each class and where pupils lacking language skills in Swedish were together with pupils who had appropriate language skills in Swedish,
- vii. the physical environment at the school which staff considered induced stress,
- viii. a lack of both administrative and educational management,
- ix. and a very small number of teachers with teacher training.

During the period of the field work, the school management and staff were intensively engaged in coming to grips with the issues described above.

5.3.5. Finances

The pupils in school B resided in eight different local authorities. Naturally, the greater number of local authorities that had been involved, the more administrative work this had implied which had also compounded the fact that there were variations in the level of the subsidies the local authorities calculated they should pay for each pupil attending the schools.

During the autumn term of 1998, the school was confronted by serious financial difficulties. According to the head, some of these difficulties arose from the fact that almost all pupils were receiving mother-tongue tuition and were studying Swedish as a Second Language which required additional resources. The subsidy from the local authority which was intended to cover these expenditures was paid retroactively once a term. These expenditures therefore strained the liquidity and budget balance of the school. The school was awaiting approval from the local authority to also open an after-school centre. According to the head, the total budget of the school in 1998 was 8.7 million SEK.

5.3.6. Curriculum

The school adhered to the Swedish NC (Lpo 94). All teaching was carried out in Swedish except for mother-tongue tuition (Somali and Arabic) and for Intercultural Studies for grades 7-9, which was taught in English. The pupils were taught the following subjects: Swedish or Swedish as a Second Language, Mathematics, English, Arabic, Social Sciences (Civics, Religious Studies, History and Geography), Natural Sciences (Biology, Physics and Chemistry), Music,

Art, Domestic Science, Physical education and health, Textiles and Wood- and metalwork and Home economics. The pupils studied Arabic and Ethics as their Elected Language and Pupil Options, as stipulated in the NC. The aim of the subject “Intercultural Studies” was to provide teaching about “their own culture in comparison to other cultures.” “Knowledge about the history, culture and nature as well as the conditions of life of one’s own people.” In practice the main focus of the subject was on Islam. During the inspection of the school carried out by the SNAE in 1999, the teaching of the subject Intercultural Studies was criticized for its focus on Islam. The school subsequently modified the content of the course.

With regard to the subjects, Swedish, English and Intercultural Studies, the school had increased the number of teaching hours, compared to the hours in the schedule for compulsory schools provided in Appendix 3 of the Education Act. Teaching hours were redistributed and reduced for the subjects, Art, Textiles and Wood- and metalwork and Social Sciences. This is permissible within the framework of “school options” and “pupil options.” The school participated in the national tests in Swedish, English and Mathematics.

5.4. Norms and values in School A and School B in Sweden

The teaching of pupils in school A and school B in Sweden conformed to the NC for compulsory schools. In addition, both schools had increased the number of hours dedicated to teaching the Swedish language. Furthermore, school A has added the teaching of Islam and Arabic while school B had increased the teaching hours for mother-tongue tuition and added the subject, Intercultural Studies. With the exception of the subjects, Islam and Intercultural Studies, all teaching in the two schools was non-confessional, that is to say, it was not adapted or limited to a Muslim viewpoint.

Parents and pupils in school A and school B had chosen these schools primarily for the security offered by the Muslim profile. They did this despite the fact that one of these schools, school B, had officially a linguistic/ethnic direction and not a confessional one. A strong common incentive among the Muslim and non-Muslim staff working at these schools was that they wished to improve the Swedish language skills of the pupils and thereby assist them in attaining better grades. This implied that they be provided with a solid foundation for their subsequent studies in grade 7 or in one of the various tracks in the upper-secondary school. The MP schools are with various directions regarding their confessional nature and their general or linguistic/ethnic direction, that is to say, schools with an Islamic, linguistic, ethnic or general profile. The schools provide education at the various levels of the compulsory school. The head (HS:1), who was a participant at the Collaboration Course at Stockholm University, describes as follows his view as to why MP schools are required:

It has become apparent that Muslim children have, to a greater extent than was previously thought to be case, not fared very well in the “normal Swedish” school. One cause of this is that Muslim children often find their actions and traditions questioned by the adult world. This brings about an unsound process of identity development and in the worst cases, severe disturbance in the development of personality as well as a generally negative image of the society of the majority. Furthermore, the lack of a feeling of belonging makes a natural process of integration impossible. Therefore our goal is to assist the pupils in a harmonious development so that on the basis of their individual characteristics, each young person is given a helping hand in becoming a useful member of society. (author’s translation)

The two MP schools in Sweden, in 1998, were located in the larger and medium-sized towns, in local authorities in strong financial positions and in some which were confronted with budget difficulties. The MP schools have attempted to establish contacts and networks with the local community and other, non-Muslim, schools. To some extent this has succeeded but in most cases the schools have received little or no response. On the contrary, those working in these schools have felt that certain sections of the local community, particularly politicians, public officials and some journalists, actively oppose the integration efforts of the schools. This opposition has been expressed either as attempting to make the MP schools invisible or that they be painted black. The heads, teachers and other staff at the schools that have participated in this study each had their own private philosophy of life. They were individuals who were brought up in different ways, with their own experiences of life and work experience. One teacher described School B as “a little UN,” because the staff and pupils were all originally from a large number of different countries which, as in the case of the UN, demanded diplomacy and patience from each individual in the course of the day to day work.

5.4.1. The Muslim Ethos of the Schools

The respective profiles of the schools were normally defined when the schools were being started and they have been given more detailed expression in the local educational plans. There was often a degree of uncertainty among both the Muslim and non-Muslim staff as to what the Muslim profile really stood for. The staff have generally not participated from the beginning of any discussions regarding the profile of the school. Both the Muslim staff and the non-Muslim staff, however, after working at the schools for some time and after a few “transgressions,” had learned where the limits of acceptability had been drawn. Compared to school A, the Muslim profile of school B had been much more pronounced even though officially it did not have an explicit Muslim profile or even a confessional direction.

At the same time, non-Muslim staff stated that they had experienced that

Muslim colleagues themselves can actually have different perceptions of what is and what is not permitted according to Islam. The Muslim staff had in their turn been influenced by the opinions of non-Muslim staff and their reactions to the Muslim profile of the school. Non-Muslim staff stated that one of the reasons for accepting employment at the MP school had been their wish to work in a school with greater diversity – ethnic, cultural and language diversity. All staff wished to provide the pupils with the best possible teaching so that all pupils were to be given a solid foundation for further education in later years, at the upper-secondary school and in higher education. Some of the non-Muslim staff were practicing Christians and shared their experiences of religion with their Muslim colleagues. They stated that it had not been a problem being a non-Muslim working in a MP school. They considered the school to be a secular school and that, through the multiculturalism in the school, the pupils had been learning to deal with differences and diversity. The pupils were able to discuss sensitive issues because of the varied background of the staff who were from various ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

The staff reported that, on starting school, some pupils had held a variety of negative prejudices regarding non-Muslims. These were pupils who had previously attended a local authority school and who had been badly treated by non-Muslim pupils and/or staff. When these pupils had found the staff at the MP school, with their various backgrounds in different countries, Muslims and Christians and non-believers, who collaborated closely, had made a significant impact on them. One member of staff related that initially some of the children had been “particularly fixated by pigs” and that should they eat pork or ham, they would surely end up in hell. They had reacted particularly strongly when the non-Muslim staff ate pork or ham, had been afraid that their teacher, who they had grown to know and like, would end up in hell. Some of the children had also been concerned about the information that some of the staff were cohabiting without being married. As these and similar reactions had increasingly seen the light of day, the staff had begun to discuss more seriously how they were to deal with these issues. The staff reported that through close collaboration with all staff and their private philosophies of life, bonds of friendship had been established together with greater tolerance for others and various differences. This was an approach that the staff at the two schools wished to carry further to their pupils.

With regard to Sex Education, the girls and boys at school A and school B in Sweden were placed in separate groups. The school doctor and the school nurse at each school took charge of some sections of the teaching of this subject. The head AH:1 said:

Many Swedish people think that that we hate Sex Education, but it is wrong – it is necessary to be able to talk about everything. To be able to talk openly about various issues. To talk about everything.

The subjects Music and Art were timetabled for the pupils in school A. The pupils learned various Swedish children's rhymes in Swedish, English and Arabic. They also sang children's songs from their home countries. Teachers sometimes played the guitar and drums as accompaniment.

Attempts had been made by a teacher in school B to use music and dance during Physical Education but this had met with severe criticism from parents. The school had always tried to walk a tight rope whereby they wanted to avoid actions contrary to the wishes of parents since there was always the risk that parents would withdraw their children from the school. For example, one year the school had tried to organize Christmas activities but only half of the children took part.

The pupils in school A were either born in Sweden or had lived in the country for a number of years before beginning school, while many of the pupils in school B were recent arrivals to Sweden as refugees. Also, unlike school A, conflicts had arisen between school B and parents as the latter had considered that the content of the teaching was too secular. Many of the parents who had placed their children in school B had only recently arrived in Sweden and therefore did not have any basic knowledge about Swedish society and the secular nature of schools in Sweden. On enrolling their children in school B, they had been under the impression that Islam would be an integral part of all teaching and therefore reacted strongly when they had eventually realized this was not the case. Some of these parents considered that the school had been acting contrary to Muslim norms. The school was engaged in providing parents with information about the Swedish NC.

5.4.2. Dress Codes for Pupils and Staff

Some of the non-Muslim staff in the schools in Sweden had been informed, when being hired, that they would be expected to dress appropriately, that is to say, no low-cut blouses or shorts in school. Some had received this information from the school management, others from Muslim colleagues. Yet others had received no such information about a dress code.

At times, in Sweden, there have been intensive discussions about the wearing of the *hijab* in school and at places of work. The discussions had become even more intense in October 2003 when two students had arrived at a local authority upper-secondary school wearing *niqab*. The teachers reacted immediately and the school management and the two pupils had been able to reach a compromise whereby during lessons and at tests and on occasions when there were identity checks, their faces would be uncovered. Subsequently, the head wrote to the SNAE seeking ex post facto support for this course of action and for guidance for the future. The SNAE had investigated the issue and decided to support the actions of the school in prohibiting pupils from wearing either *niqab* or *burqa*.

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Even if it is apparent that *burqa* is a confessional expression, this is over-ridden by the educational duties of the school (SNAE, 2003).

The statement from the SNAE continued:

... it is not to be recommended that a prohibition be declared without there also being discussions about values, equality and democratic responsibilities. Here the school is to propound the values on which Swedish society rests. The school is to respect the girls and their confessional expression but the girls must also learn to respect how their actions are viewed by Swedish society (SNAE, 2003).

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In an interview in a daily national newspaper (*Dagens Nyheter* 24 Oct 2003), the chair of the Discrimination Bureau in Stockholm, The Discrimination Bureau (*Diskrimineringsbyrån*) is an independent, private bureau to defend human rights and fight discrimination. It is a combination of a private legal practice and a charity.²² Juan Fonseca commented on this decision on the part of the SNAE. He stated that the Discrimination Bureau was prepared to go to court in order to defend the right to wear *burqa*. In the same article, a spokesperson for the Somaya Women's Shelter²³ considered that the decision of the SNAE to defend the right of schools to prohibit girls from wearing *burka* might also be extended to those who choose to wear *hijab*. Karima Lindberg, the head of the Somaya Women's Shelter, states in the article that she considered it to be a positive decision whereby girls are prohibited from covering their faces indoors during lessons but added that it was not possible to agree with the interpretation of religious freedom by the SNAE in stating that *burqa* and *niqab* do not have religious significance. She continued by stating that those who choose to wear *burqa* or *niqab*, do so for religious reasons and that it is not possible "to write on one's interpretation of one's religion on one's nose." The decision of the SNAE

22. The Discrimination Bureau (*Diskrimineringsbyrån*) is an independent, private bureau to defend human rights and fight discrimination. It is a combination of a private legal practice and a charity.

23. Somaya Women's Shelter (*Systerjouren Somaya*) is a charity which is run as a shelter for women and girls. Its activities include providing support and advice to women and girls who are being threatened, physically or psychologically, or who have been raped. The headquarters are in Stockholm and the target group are largely women in Stockholm.

is applicable in all schools in Sweden. Since some of those participating in the debate have also agitated in favour of the prohibition of all *hijabs*, according to Muslim parents this will imply that even more Muslims will decide to place their young in a MP school.

Not all Muslim girls and women in the MP schools wore the hijab. Both the Muslim women who did wear the hijab and those who did not do so claimed that they found support for their decision in the Koran. For many people in Sweden, the hijab has become equated with media images of oppressed women or oppression or the maltreatment of girls from Muslim dictatorships (Samuelsson and Brattlund, 1996). The school management in the two MP schools in Sweden claimed that the schools had not pressured girls into wearing a hijab and that nobody else had done so. It has been up to the girls to decide themselves. Some of the girls at school A and school B did wear a hijab while others did not do so. On a number of occasions at school B some of the girls wearing a hijab had taunted those who did not do so.

5.5. Summary

There were a number of differences between the two schools. While the body legally responsible for the school A was a foundation the school B was run as a limited company. School A began operations in the autumn term of 1996. By the spring term of 1998, the school had 84 pupils in grades 1-6. School B started two years earlier in the autumn term of 1994. School B had the spring term 1998, 120 pupils in grades 1 to 9.

As stated above, the schools that have participated in this study are described through-out as MP schools. They are not Muslim schools but rather Swedish compulsory schools which adhere to the Swedish NC but which have also adopted a Muslim profile.

More pupils in school B compared to school A were recent arrivals to Sweden as refugees. Also, unlike school A, conflicts had arisen between school B and parents as the latter had considered that the content of the teaching was too secular. Many of the parents who had placed their children in school B had only recently arrived in Sweden and therefore did not have any basic knowledge about Swedish society and the secular nature of schools in Sweden.

While school A had adopted a confessional direction, with an Arabic language and Muslim culture profile, school B, had not adopted an explicitly Muslim profile, but parents had placed their children in the school under the impression that it was in fact a MP school. It was in school B, compare to school A, a very small number of teachers with teacher training. While in school A the number of female staff was higher than the number of male staff, it was the opposite in school B where the number of male staff was higher than the number of female staff.

Chapter 6

School C and School D in England

6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the schools in England that have been included in this study and, for the sake of simplicity, these two schools are here referred to as school C and school D. The topics covered include the decision-making process, the norms and values of the schools, their Muslim ethos and policies with regard to the dress codes for pupils and staff, the types of music, literature, arts, and films that are regarded as not being acceptable, by the schools and those types of Muslim textbooks, texts, tapes and films that are used by the schools.

Field work was carried out in school C and school D during a six-week period in October and November, 1999. Interviews were carried out with the heads and all staff at both schools. The pupils wrote letters in which they described how they felt about being a pupil at their school – that which they felt to be positive and that which they felt to be negative – and their dreams for their future.

The Muslim families came from a wide diversity of ethnic backgrounds. The background of most of them was in Pakistan, Bangladesh or India.

School C was an *Independent Muslim co-educational* day-school. The school had been started in 1993 in response to parents' requests and demands for a Muslim-profiled school. 180 pupils attended the school, from age three to eleven. There was a preschool section that was funded by state grants while the rest of the school did not receive any state grants. The school adhered to the NC even though, as an Independent School, they were not compelled to implement it in full although required to take cognizance of it. They did not participate in the local education authority's school district curriculum for Religious Studies. Religious Studies in this school was largely focused on Islam.

School D was a "Voluntary Aided School" with an Muslim character. There were 119 pupils from age four to eleven. The school, which was funded by state grants, was started in 1992. This school did not participate in the local education authority's school district curriculum for Religious Studies. As in the case of many other confessional schools, this school was permitted to draw up their own curriculum for the subject Religious Study and could, therefore, choose to focus mainly on teaching about Islam.

6.2. School C in England

6.2.1. Background

School C was located in a suburb of a large town. The school had moved into their premises in 1994. Starting with a play-group in 1991, by 1999 there were 180 pupils from age three to eleven. The school was run in conjunction with an Islamic High School for Girls. The owner of the school was an Muslim school trust, which in all was in charge of three schools. 18 teachers worked at the school, 11 of them holding teaching certificates. Although teachers in independent schools are not required to have gained qualified teacher status, it had been considered to be of importance by the school to recruit as many as possible who were qualified teachers. The school was accredited by the Independent Schools Council and was subject to inspection by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI)²⁴ who conducted inspections under a government-approved framework. The various subjects taught were largely similar to those found in non-profiled schools with the exception of Music, Art and Religious Study.

All pupils were required to wear the school uniform which was to be purchased by the parents. The younger pupils, both boys and girls, wore dark green track-suit trousers and long-armed jumpers. Some of the girls in year one and year two wore *hijabs* while others did not. From year three upwards, the girls wore dark-green skirts, blazers and white *hijabs*. The boys wore dark green trousers, jumpers, blazers and ties with white stripes together with white shirts.

Since the fees the school charged were relatively high, the pupils were largely drawn from families with high incomes. However, there were some parents who temporarily did not have the means to pay the fees and who therefore received assistance from other Muslims through different stipendium. Several of the teachers and other staff stated during the interviews that they would be pleased to have their children attend this school but they were not able to afford such high school fees.

The pupils were permitted to bring a packed lunch from home, otherwise lunch was provided through the school at a cost of £1.25 per day. The pupils lived in an area of 30 miles radius round the school. Most of the pupils were driven to the school by their parents.

The majority of the pupils spoke English and over and above English, Urdu, Punjabi, Arabic, Bengali and Kurdish were spoken. Tuition in Arabic and Urdu was provided in the school and at age five, they may opt for tuition in French or Urdu. The head reported that at least 85-90 % of the pupils were born in England and that about 60 % of the parents were born in England. The school followed

24. ISI inspections report on all the same broad aspects as the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspections, but with differences relating to the fact that independent schools are not subject to all the national legislation covering maintained schools. They are designed to reflect in as broad and balanced a way as possible the full range of what the schools provide. ISI inspection teams do not include a lay inspector (ISI, 2000).

the NC with regard to such subjects as English and Mathematics. Over and above such subjects, the pupils were provided with tuition in Arabic for two hours per week, Koran studies for two hours per week and Islam for 1-1.5 hours per week. The head considered that this was not sufficient and therefore plans were afoot to increase these hours. The school had subject co-ordinators.

6.2.2. The decision-making process in School C

At the time of the field study, there was no local board at the school. The head was responsible for the day-to-day running of the school, including the budget, curriculum, rules and so on. The school made an appointment to confer with the trustees as required, for example, when repairs became necessary.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) committee met once a month. The committee consisted of ten representatives for parents and three for the staff. Anyone who was interested was able to stand for election to the committee.

Most of the funds for the school were provided by the trustees. Parents were encouraged by the school to assist in running extra-curricular activities for children and the PTA was active here and in organizing various fund-raising activities. All parents were automatically members of the PTA.

A schematic summary is provided below of those in the school who participate in the decision-making process with regard to different issues.

Every morning, a five minute staff meeting, or “Daily Staff Briefing,” was held. “All members of staff must attend promptly. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action” (Staff Handbook 1999). The head chaired these meetings and the primary purpose was the exchange of information. Once every fortnight, a one-hour staff meeting was held during the lunch break. In addition, one meeting per week was held after school to deal with issues concerning the different subjects. Once a month, for one hour after school, all staff attended Islamic inservice training, which both Muslims and non-Muslims were expected to attend. Finally, each half-term one full subject co-ordination meeting was held.

Teachers kept a record of all lessons taught in school and their weekly plans were expected to be kept up-to-date and to be submitted to the head. The aim here was to facilitate the work of the teaching staff. The school organised inservice training for staff members for a minimum of five days per year.

The school followed the English school calendar but over and above that, two Muslim festivals were celebrated, *Eid-al-Fitr* at the close of *Ramadan* and *Eid-id al-adha* after *Hajj*.

6.2.3. Pupils and Parents

The pupils had family roots in Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Middle East and a variety of African countries. The majority of the parents were academics. One group of parents was in England to pursue post-graduate studies. According to the head, about ten percent of the parents were not employed.

Table 6.1 Decision-making process in School C in England 1999

<i>School C</i>	<i>How does the decision-making process function?</i>
Recruiting staff:	A committee from among the trustees.
Premises:	A building committee from among the trustees, one of whom inspects the maintenance work and estimates the cost.
Pedagogical issues:	Head makes the decision. Some questions the head takes up first with teachers and/or the trustees.
Financial issues:	The School Administration: Head and trustees. Annual budget and meetings with trustees.
Pupil issues:	Head and the staff.
Profile of the school:	Head and staff and trustees.
Issues concerning the values and rules that are to apply in the school:	Head and staff and trustees.

6.2.4. Staff

A total of 20 persons, 19 females and one male, worked in the school together with three or four volunteers. Of these 20 staff, 15 were Muslims and five non-Muslims. Of the 18 teachers in the school, 11 held teaching certificates. An additional male, whose salary was paid by the trustees, came to the school a few times each month to work on the accounts. The collective language competence of the staff (defined as all the languages that one or more of all the staff were able to speak) consisted of the following languages: English, Arabic, French, Spanish, German, Malay, Pushtu, Gujarati, Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Kurdish and Farzi. The head had gained a teaching certificate for teaching in secondary schools and she had previously taught in school C.

Eleven of the staff employed at the school were born in the UK (where the parents of five of these were born outside the UK). Nine of the staff were not born in the UK, where one of them had migrated with parents, one as a result of marriage, four as a result of partner's studies and three for their own studies. The staff born outside the UK consisted of two born in Kurdistan, one born in Pakistan, one in Burma, one in Singapore, one in Iraq, one in Egypt, one in Algeria and one in Switzerland.

6.2.5. Finances

School C, unlike school D, did not receive any financial grants from the state. Therefore School C was dependent on the school fees that each pupil was charged. These school fees had a segregating effect. Only those parents with relatively high incomes were able to send their children to school C. On the other hand, teacher CL:11 considered that the fees per term were low compared to other independent schools. Basically, the trustees travelled to the Middle East to seek donations. In addition, members of the Muslim community gave funds.

Table 6.2 School C in England 1999

	<i>School C</i>
Type of School	Independent Muslim co-educational day school.
Year of Start	1993
State Aided?	No
Pupils	180
Staff (total)	20 + 3 - 4 volunteers
Staff born in UK	11
Teachers	18 (13 full-time and 5 part-time)
With teacher training	11
Other staff	6
School head	1
Muslim staff (total)	19
Non-Muslim staff (total)	5
Female staff (total)	23
Male staff (total)	1

6.2.6. Curriculum

School C followed the NC and carried out standard testing even though, as an Independent School, it was not compelled to do so. However, adoption of this policy made it possible for the pupils to sit national examinations. They did not participate in the local education authority's school district curriculum for Religious Studies. Religious Studies in this school was largely focused on Islam. School C had discontinued the teaching of Music since there were differences of opinion about this subject among the Muslims (the trustees, the staff and the parents). They were not able to agree which music was permissible to teach and which was not from an Muslim perspective.

6.3. School D in England

6.3.1. Background

The field study at school D in England was carried out over three weeks in November 1999. School D was a voluntary aided MP school, having at that time a total of 119 pupils between the age of four and eleven in classes ranging from reception classes to year 6. The school had originated in 1989 as a study group when the present head had been providing tuition at home for the children in the family and those of friends, a total of five pupils. More families expressed an interest in their children joining in this tuition which gave rise to requests for a school to be started. The school was founded in 1992 and, from 1997, had

been state aided.

The school was located in an industrial area, on a busy road, in a large city. When the school started in 1992, they had been housed in other premises, two streets away from their present ones. The trustees had later bought larger premises but at the time of the field study these were not ready yet for occupation. In September 1992, when such an expansion into a school was being planned, the head set up a trust to run the school, which subsequently opened with 30 pupils, and by the end of the year, with 110 pupils and a further 500 potential pupils on the waiting list. The pupils were resident in different parts of the city and were brought to school by car by the parents.

According to the head, in 1999 there were 47 different mosques in the city and one method by which information about the existence of school D had been disseminated was through these mosques. The head considered that it was important that the school did not show any favouritism with regard to these mosques and that all were to feel welcome at the school. Representatives from all the mosques had therefore been invited to participate in the biannual review of the Islamic curriculum.

The school followed the general calendar for schools in England but in addition celebrated two Muslim festivals: the *Eid-al-Fitr* at the close of *Ramadan* and *Eid-id al-adha* after *Hajj*. This involved making up the six missed days of teaching in other ways. The policy of the school was to adhere closely to the schedule for holidays issued by the local education authority, thereby co-ordinating with other schools in the area and therefore making it possible for holidays to be spent with sisters and brothers attending other schools and with mothers and fathers to plan holidays for the whole family at the same time.

The school premises being used at the time of the field work were exceptionally cramped, with congestion in the corridors and staircases. There was no separate staff room. There were two small group rooms available over and above the classrooms which were used both for group work and as classrooms. One of these small rooms was also used for staff meetings and as the staff dining-room for either packed lunch or lunch bought through the school. During the lunch break, the second of these group rooms was used to take delivery of the lunches ordered from outside by the school, one member of staff would then check which pupils had ordered lunch and what they had ordered. These lunches arrived in the form of "lunch packages" and were unpacked onto plastic trays to be further distributed to the classrooms. This lunch usually consisted of sandwiches with various fillings, soft drinks, crisps and a small piece of chocolate.

The pupils were taught in two languages, English and Arabic. The pupils spoke English at school.

6.3.2. The decision-making process in School D

A Governing body managed the school. It included representatives elected by parents and representatives elected by teachers.

A schematic summary is provided below of those in the school who participate in the decision-making process with regard to different issues.

Table 6.3 Decision-making process in School D in England 1999

<i>School D</i>	<i>How does the decision-making process function?</i>
Recruiting staff:	A staff committee of the head, the governors from the trustees and from the local education authority
Premises:	Governors and head – any proposal reviewed by local education authority or DfES
Pedagogical issues:	The head makes the decisions but teachers and/or trustees consulted first on some questions
Financial issues:	Approved subject to the trustees meeting their share of costs
Pupil issues:	Head and staff
Profile of the school:	Head, staff and trustees
Issues concerning the values and rules that are to apply in the school:	Head and staff

6.3.3. Pupils and parents

Most of the pupils had their roots in England or in Pakistan. The pupils lived in different parts of the city. Most of the pupils were driven to the school by their parents. School D selected the pupils they wished to admit. The school was in compliance with the regulations that apply to state-aided schools which prohibit the charging of fees. This permitted all children and parents, no matter what their incomes, to apply to the school. The head carried out this selection of pupils by interviewing the children, parents, and parents and children together during the review of the applications.²⁵ The head was able thereby to reject applications from children who she thought did not fall within the Muslim parameters of the school. The school made every effort to select those children (read parents) who they assessed to be appropriate with regard to the fundamental Muslim values of the school. They rejected children of parents who did not fully share the Muslim views of the school with regard to upbringing and who did not rigorously strive to provide their children with a Muslim upbringing that was in line with the values of the school.

25. "A new admissions code was introduced in February 2007 and all maintained schools must follow this when setting their over-subscription criteria. One of the new rules is to stop schools (except for state boarding schools) from interviewing potential students and their families. The aim of the code is to make admissions fairer" (BBC, 2008).

6.3.4. Staff

There were five full-time teachers at the school, including the head, and two part-time teachers and 2.5 assistants. For a minimum of five days per year, the school organised in-service training for staff members. The school had ten employees, five of whom were born in the UK (two of which had parents born outside the UK): Of the five born outside the UK, two had migrated to the UK with their parents, two as a result of marriage and one because of the partner's studies. Of the five not born in the UK, two were born in Pakistan, one in Bangladesh, one in Kenya and one in Egypt.

6.3.5. Finances

The salaries of all teachers, except those employed to teach the Koran, were paid from funds provided through the state subsidy (DfES) received by the school. The salaries of those responsible for teaching the Koran were paid from funds provided by the trust. Inspection with regard to teaching of the NC was carried out by the DfES. The trust was responsible for inspections with regard to the teaching of Islam but was not normally required to submit a report. It was intended that when the school moved into the new premises, the DfES would then meet 85 % of the daily running costs of the premises and the trust would meet the remaining 15 %.

The head reported that the school had received financial support from an Muslim organisation based outside England when these new premises had been purchased.²⁶ However, there had been no particular conditions attached to this other than a notice-board be erected outside the school with information about the support that had been received.

6.3.6. Curriculum

School D adhered to the NC. Music as a subject was focused on developing singing skills – no musical instruments except drums were used. In Art, it was not permitted to draw and/or represent people or animals. However, this was permitted in the preschool class (for educational purposes, for example, to demonstrate what an elephant looks like).

The school did not participate in the local education authority's school district curriculum for Religious Studies. As was the case with most other schools with a confessional profile, the school was permitted to draw up its own syllabus for Religious Studies and was therefore able to focus largely on Islam.

An Education Plan was drawn up for each pupil. These individual education plans made transparent the progress of each pupil towards goals and any possible special measures the pupil might require.

²⁶ School D were at the time waiting for the completion of the adaption of the new premises in order to be suitable for teaching purposes.

Table 6.4: School D in England 1999

	<i>School D</i>
Type of School	Voluntary Aided School with an Muslim character
Year of Start	1992
State Aided?	Yes
Pupils	119
Staff (total)	10 (including full-time and part-time staff) + one person who was employed as required to provide computer support
Staff born in UK	5
Teachers	7 (5 full-time teachers including head and 2 part-time teachers and 2.5 assistants)
With teacher training	5 including head (2 part-time teachers held non-English teacher certificates)
Other staff	3
School head	1
Muslim staff (total)	8
Non-Muslim staff (total)	2
Female staff (total)	9
Male staff (total)	1

6.4. Norms and values in School C and School D in England

There are types of music that are not acceptable at school C and school D in England.

Here they can develop all the skills of singing but not music, only drums. Literature regarded as pornographic is not used.

In Art, drawing human or animal figures is not acceptable, but it is acceptable in a reception class, if a teacher is teaching what an elephant looks like. But no naked figures, pictures, films.

The pupils wear school uniform and the staff are to be modestly dressed. No tight-fitting trousers or miniskirts.

The value system is very basic, the A B C of Islam. In the view of some parents, we teach too little Islam while other parents think we teach too much.

Here at school, we take the view that everything is correct and sitting arrangements are organised carefully. It is possible for boys and girls to sit together in the classroom in Year 1 and Year 2. In Years 3 – 6, girls and boys do not sit together. Earlier we had separate classes for boys and girls. (DH: 1).

Both school C and school D adhered to the NC, even though school C was not required to do so as it was not in receipt of any financial support from the state.

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They both also carried out standard testing, which enabled their pupils to sit for national examinations. However, with regard to the teaching of Music as a subject, there were elements which were not acceptable to the schools.

Music is a grey area, some can say it is good music and others that it is bad music. Modern music which is about love and so on is not suitable. Because there are different opinions we do not use such music. We are allowed to not have music. They use no other instruments than drums (CH:1).

The following describes the manner in which school C and school D deal with pupils who are misbehaving:

- i. on the first occasion, the teacher talks to the pupil,
- ii. on the second occasion, the teacher takes the pupil to another member of the staff,
- iii. on a third occasion, the pupil is sent to the head and then told to write lines about not making trouble again,
- iv. on a fourth occasion, parents are called in to the school,
- v. on a fifth occasion of troublemaking, the school talks with the parents and suspends the child for between one and four days,
- vi. on a sixth occasion, the pupil is expelled from the school.

The system of punishments included verbal reprimands, warnings, “house points,” being given lines, cleaning the playground, detention and cancellation of playtime. The school had not drawn up any written plan for dealing with harassment or bullying but a policy had been agreed verbally through discussions with the staff. The school had a system of “house points” (but not in the pre-school class, where “smiley faces” were used). Should pupils be making trouble, the staff may take away privileges regarding things the pupils liked to do.

In the case of school C, the school rules and norms were presented in the “Parents Handbook.” Among the issues covered by the rules presented in the “Parents Handbook” are holidays, absence, lateness, merits, conduct, discipline, appearance, and school trips. These rules might be considered to be generally applicable even though some of them have their basis in Islam.

The school regards discipline as an important part of the child’s moral development. Children will be expected to behave in a manner becoming a Muslim. Respect for each other and the teacher is stressed and bad behaviour will not be tolerated. Parents are considered partners in this process and the school will not hesitate to contact them should the need arise. Physical punishment is not used at the school and children are encouraged to develop self-discipline and an awareness of Allah (Parents Handbook, School C).

In school C, should a pupil misbehave, a teacher could deal with this through

one or more of the following approaches: (i) speak with the pupil and remind the pupil of the rules that apply, (ii) assign extra homework, (iii) give the pupil lines, (iv) place the pupil facing the walls with hands on head for a few minutes.

In School C with regard to appearance, the following rules are to be found in the “Parents Handbook:”

1. There will be a daily/weekly inspection of school uniform.
2. Nails should be short and without nail polish.
3. If hair is beyond shoulder length then it must be tied back.
4. *Hijab* is highly encouraged from the age of 7 years as a preparation for when *hijab* becomes a compulsory part of the school uniform from the age of 9 years.
5. Children must wear uniform at all times unless otherwise notified and-uniform must be clean and pressed.
6. From the age of 5-9 years girls and boys are free mixing is discouraged.
7. From the age of 9 years – no free mixing

There were rules and regulations in school C and school D regarding the appropriate behaviour for women and men, girls and boys: (i) women and men were not to shake hands, (ii) from age 9, boys and girls were to sit at separate desks on the instructions of the teacher, (iii) girls were instructed to only play with girls and boys only with boys, and (iv) a woman should not be alone with a man or a girl should not be alone with a boy. Another rule at school C was that a woman or a girl was not to sit alone in a room (protected from view) with a man. Therefore there was a window in the door into the office of the headmistress whereby it was possible for those outside to openly see who was in the room.

Women do not shake hands. No physical contact. Not to be close to others, you and I are not sitting or staying close. Women must wear *hijab*. Some cover a lot more than others. Not to stare at a woman when talking with her – because of sympathetic respect for the environment – not compulsory (DH:1).

Pupils under 13 or 14 years of age were not required to fast during *Ramadan*, but were allowed to do so if they so wish. There was also a rule that parents were to collect their children from school by 15.30. If a parent arrived later than this they were fined for every 15 minutes delay

Prayers were held with the pupils in school C twice a day. Each morning there was an assembly for the pupils. During this assembly, all pupils were expected to read a *surah* from the Koran. One of the teachers would relate a story about the prophet Muhammad. One of the pupils would lead the prayers, an assignment which circulated between the boys in the school. The boys and girls prayed together, with the boys gathered at the front of the assembly and the girls behind them at the rear.

Every Friday, a weekly assembly was held for all pupils at school C where

each class in turn took responsibility for acting a drama in front of the assembly which in some way had something to do with Islam. The head handed out certificates of achievement and announced the particular class that had won the class challenger and class trophies.

In the school, use was made of the History of the Prophet, Koran recitations and Muslim songs on tape and videos about Islam.

6.4.1. The Muslim ethos of the schools

The Muslim ethos of school C is described in the Staff Handbook (1999). All members of staff, regardless of their personal beliefs, were expected to be aware that school C was a Muslim school. As such, the school aimed to encourage each pupil to discover their full potential and to develop it within an Muslim framework. The school had high expectations for the pupils, not only academically but also in terms of Islam, with regard to standards of behaviour, appearance and courtesy both inside and outside of the school.

The Staff Handbook at school C clarified that in an Islamic school, the spirit of Islam should be at the heart of all aspects of school life. The Islamic elements could not be separated from other elements. Islamic elements should pervade all aspects of the curriculum to some degree. The staff/pupil relationship was important and should be based upon respect and trust. The relations of staff to each other and that of pupils to their peer groups were equally critical (Staff Handbook 1999).

There were also rules, in the form of number of points, which staff were encouraged to follow and which are reproduced in full below:

Where applicable staff should:

- Show a willingness to contribute enthusiastically to the formal teaching of their subject.
- Ensure that some form of vocal prayer should occur at the start and the end of the day. A pupil should do this if the teacher is non-Muslim.
- Give enthusiastic support to fund-raising for charitable causes sponsored by the school.
- Participate in extra curricular activities.
- Try to incorporate Islamic values into the delivery of the curriculum.
- Support pupils in developing their Islamic personality.

In School D quotations from the Koran were displayed in the corridors, stairways and classrooms. The school rules and norms were displayed on the walls of each classroom in school D together with the class rules and below the different versions of these from two classrooms are reproduced.

1. Speak politely and quietly to others. 2. Work quietly and well. 3. Always listen when the teacher is talking. 4. Respect your elders. 5. Respect other people's things. 6. Help to keep the school and classroom tidy. 7. Walk in the classroom.

1. Sit quietly on the carpet with legs crossed and arms folded. 2) Put up your hand. Do not shout. 3) Wait your turn patiently. 4) Never hurt anyone OR as punishment, miss play-time.

High up on the left hand side of the whiteboard a round head had been drawn with eyes and a smile. Below this "smiley," the teacher had listed the names of those pupils who, during the day, had behaved well – followed the class rules, worked well and so on. On the opposite side of the whiteboard there was an equivalent face but with a sad face. Through-out the day, the names of pupils who had neither behaved well nor worked hard were listed under this face.

Muslim terminology constituted the norms in school D and were displayed in each classroom.

Teachers in School D used a variety of texts to be recited by pupils. The walls of the various classrooms, corridors and group rooms were decorated with the work of the pupils. Some of this work were texts taken from the Koran and from the history of Islam. There was also a poster showing the "99 Names of Allah." Most of these names are derived from the Koran and *Hadith* in which the various characteristics of Allah are propounded. The pupils learned to recite these 99 names of Allah during which they used a string of 33 pearls or stones.

Hanging in one of the corridors in school D were objects used for the *salah* – prayers that Muslims offer to Allah and which most commonly refers to the five daily ritual prayers in Islam – a prayer mat, a compass, prayer beads, s and *kufi* cap for boys. On the wall of one of the two small group rooms was posted *Furqan* (the meaning of this word is to distinguish between good and bad) in english.

Child for *Furqan*:

Manners, Responsibility, Respect, Good Muslims, Cleanliness, Obedience, Sharing, Kindness, Tidiness, Behaviour, Sensibility, Truthful, Caring, Helpful, Honesty,

Controlling the tongue, Controlling *Nafs*, Loyalty, Faith in Allah, Loving, Friendly, Intelligence, Uniform. Success, Grateful, Thankful, Understanding, Righteous, Smiling, Happiness, Bright, Charitable, Confidence, Forgiving, Courage

In one classroom were listed "Values that please Allah."

At the two study schools there were both non-Muslim and Muslim books for children. The Muslim books were based on Islam and had the aim of offering a moral message. This literature is distributed in many countries and is available in book-shops in both Sweden and England who specialize in Muslim

literature.

6.4.2. Dress codes for Pupils and Staff

Pupils in both case schools wore school uniforms. The family was expected to buy the uniform themselves. Girls wore hijab as did the Muslim women who worked in school C and all women, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who worked in school D.

In school C there were written rules in the "Staff Handbook" with regard to the dress code for Muslim and non-Muslim staff.

Every Muslim in the school must adhere to the dress code of Islam whilst on the school premises or participating in school activities. This means covering everything except the face and the hands. Therefore clothes should be full length.

Clothes must also be loosely fitting and not transparent. Trousers cannot be worn, unless worn within a *Shalwar-kameez* set and the scarf must be fastened under the chin. It will also be preferable for *Jibabs* to be worn. Noticeable make-up must not be worn at any time (Staff Handbook, School C, 1999).

Salwar-kameez is the traditional dress worn by various peoples of South Asia. *Salwar* are loose trousers and the *kameez* is a long shirt.

In the case of non-Muslim staff in School C, the following rules with regard to dress code were to apply:

Dress should be modest, and should reach at least mid calf. Loose trousers may be worn. Garments should not be sleeveless or have low neck-lines. Blouses must have a sensible sleeve and skirts must not have splits. Jeans must not be worn. The clothes should be opaque and loose fitting.

Failure to adhere to this dress policy will result in the members of staff being asked to return home and come back suitably dressed. (School C, Staff Handbook, 1999)

6.4.3. Summary

There were quite a number of differences between the two schools. The fundamental difference was that one school was state-financed while the other was not.

Both schools selected prospective pupils for the school from among the applicants. In the case of school C, the high term fees operated as an automatic selection procedure whereby children with parents who did not have sufficient income to pay these were excluded. These high fees prevented those teachers who wished to enroll their own children from doing so. School D carried out a selection with regard to those who were to be given places from among those applicants. The school did not charge fees, in accordance with the regulations

applicable to state-aided schools. At the same time there was no legal prohibition which prevented the school from making their own selection of pupils from among the applicants. The head carried out this selection of pupils by interviewing the children, parents, and parents and children together during the review of the applications. The head was able thereby to reject applications from children who did not fall within the Muslim parameters of the school. The school made every effort to select those children (read parents) who they assessed to be preferable with regard to the fundamental Muslim values of the school. They rejected children of parents who did not fully share the Muslim views of the school with regard to upbringing and who did not strive rigorously to provide their children with a Muslim upbringing that was in line with the values of the school.

There were differences between the two schools with regard to the terms of employment for non-Muslim staff. Contrary to the case of school C, school D expected/demanded that non-Muslim female staff would also wear scarves. In addition, non-Muslim teachers in school D to begin the first lesson of the day by reading Islamic texts together with the pupils.

There were very few members of staff at the two schools in England who were not Muslims. Those non-Muslim staff working at the schools were practicing Christians.

Chapter 7

State, Politicians, Owners of Schools with a Muslim profile

7.1. Introduction

In this chapter, a number of comparisons and contrasts are drawn between school A and school B in Sweden on the one hand and school C and school D in England on the other hand. This chapter includes a comparison of state regulations with regard to schools with a confessional direction and the attitude of local authority politicians in Sweden to MP schools and the attitudes of the owner with regard to school D in England.

In the Islamophobic discourse created through the debate on MP schools, these schools have most often been accused in general terms for acting in breach of the law and for not conforming to the NC in Sweden and England respectively. Usually these schools have been described as homogeneous institutions with one single determining understanding/point of view where it was not permitted to hold other views. Therefore, it has been considered to be of great importance in this chapter to not only make visible the differences and similarities between the schools in Sweden and England, but also those between each school in each country respectively. Equally important has been the importance, through quotations, to make visible the differences and similarities in understanding and points of view between the interviewees in each school. The large number of verbatim quotations is motivated by the fact that here it is values that are the subject being considered and therefore it is very worthwhile to make diversity visible, that is to say, how various individuals, on the basis of their own private philosophy of life, respond and the nature of the support for their response.

7.2. State regulations in Sweden and England with regard to schools with a confessional direction

The MP schools in Sweden and England have been run in compliance with relevant national regulations, NC, laws and policies that were applicable in the respective country. Consequently there are differences with regard to their

Muslim profiles between the two schools in Sweden (school A and school B) on the one hand and the two schools in England (school C and school D) on the other. In Sweden, one of the most secularized countries in Europe, it has not been permitted to integrate Islam (or any other religion for that matter) into the various subjects taught in school. While the MP schools in England have been permitted to integrate Islam into all teaching.

After the introduction of reforms in education in Sweden in 1990, it had become practically possible for schools with a confessional direction to be granted state funds. Before these reforms had come into force, there had only been a few schools with such a direction in Sweden and, therefore historically, there had been no regulations with regard to any specific church whereby any religion was favoured more than any other.

In England, on the other hand, there has been a long tradition whereby the Church of England and the Catholic Church have run their own schools while being granted funding from the state. This had resulted in the Churches and Christians having gained certain advantages and special status in comparison to Muslim organizations and Muslim individuals who had attempted to gain state funding in order to run their own MP schools. There had been a certain proportion of Muslim parents who had not been satisfied with state schools and therefore, like many other dissatisfied parents in England, they had either taught their children at home or enrolled them in schools run by the Church of England or by the Catholic Church. The latter had often been the case either when there had been no MP school in the vicinity or where the local MP school had not been in receipt of state finances and therefore had charged fees beyond the means of the parents. There have been many reasons why Muslim parents had chosen to enrol their children in a school with a Christian profile. The school head (LH₃₁) of one Catholic school in England reported that many Muslim parents had chosen a Catholic school largely because of the educational success of the school and also because these pupils and their parents had felt secure and respected as Muslims there.

Through the introduction of opportunities for schools with a confessional direction to be started up with the right to be granted local authority/state funding, Sweden, had ensured the continuation of both religious freedom and a secular system of education. Some regulation has been maintained through the state system of monitoring and inspection with regard to schools with a confessional direction, to ensure that they remained on the "secular highway" and to prevent collisions or ending up in the ditch.

In Sweden, several of the staff at MP schools considered that the authorities tended to be more positively inclined, in practice, towards municipal schools compared to MP schools. They felt that part of this unfair treatment had been demonstrated in those cases where some of those municipal schools which had not been run in full compliance with the law and requirements with regard to quality, had not been issued with any notice to the effect that they might be required to close down and therefore they had avoided being confronted with

negative publicity and had not ended up being splashed all over newspaper hoardings.

There is a general requirement in Sweden that schools should, as far as possible, strive to only employ teaching staff who are qualified teachers. This requirement implies that schools are expected to seek applicants who hold teaching certificates. Any member of the teaching staff who it had been found necessary to employ but who was not a trained teacher have had to be contracted for a maximum of one term at a time. Nonetheless independent schools have employed quite a number of unqualified teachers but this has also been the case with regard to municipal schools. Therefore there were teaching staff at both school A and school B in Sweden who held teaching certificates while others were not trained teachers. Both schools explained that they had made effort to attract first and foremost teachers holding teaching certificates. The majority of teachers working at school A and school B were non-Muslims and all the class teachers in both schools were non-Muslims.

In England, unlike Sweden, the relevant regulations have been adapted with regard to the employment of teachers at "independent schools having a religious character" whereby such a school has been permitted to give priority to teachers who shared the tenets or religious denomination of those who own the school.²⁷

According to Statutory Instruments no. 2037 from 2003 in England, *the Independent Schools (Employment of Teachers in Schools with a Religious Character) Regulations 2003* PART 5A

(2) Preference may be given, in connection with the appointment, promotion or remuneration of teachers at the school, to persons -

(a) whose religious opinions are in accordance with the tenets of the religion or the religious denomination specified in relation to the school under section 124B(2), or

(b) who attend religious worship in accordance with those tenets, or

(c) who give, or are willing to give, religious education at the school in accordance with those tenets.

According to the Education Act in Sweden, a school is expected to act in an objective manner and thereby not influence children in any particular direction. Thus, for example, no MP school has been permitted to adopt a rule which stated that it was to obligatory for all pupils to participate in prayers. Nor have the MP schools in Sweden been permitted to exclude from consideration applications from any pupil in such a manner whereby priority would have been granted to applications from Muslim families. Places at all schools in Sweden, no matter who the ultimate owner, are to be open to all prospective pupils, without regard to the religious, political or social attributes of the families. With regard to the application system, schools have only been permitted to use date of application,

27. Section 60 and 69 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Maintained schools – foundation or voluntary schools which have a religious character)

priority for siblings and geographical proximity of the home as principles of selection. The parents and pupils in the two schools in Sweden had chosen a MP school precisely because they had understood the school to have such a profile. It has not been permitted in Sweden for pupils to be excused from the subject teaching in Religious Studies, Music, Art or Sex Education. But since the NC in Sweden defines goals of aspiration and goals to be attained but has not stated the manner in which these are to be achieved, each school and teacher have been free to determine the content of the teaching and the means by which the pupils were to achieve the stipulated goals for each subject in the NC. This has enabled each school and teacher, together with the pupils, to choose the methods and content of teaching for themselves as long as this would eventually result in the pupils reaching the stipulated goals.

According to the syllabi and curriculum, the owners of the school and the school itself were to determine the timing (year, term) and distribution of the stipulated number of teaching hours across the various years with regard to where any subject, for example, Music, will appear during the years of compulsory schooling. The only stipulation in the NC has referred to the total number of teaching hours for each subject.

In England, those pupils who so wish may be excused from lessons in Religious Studies, Art, Music and Sex Education. The subject Religious Studies was not being taught at the two schools in England. Over and above the teaching of Islam, they had elected to teach about Christianity as part of English historical heritage in Social Studies. The subject Art had an Muslim profile in both schools, which had implied restrictions such that pupils had not been permitted to draw or paint human or animal figures. The teaching of the subject Music had been limited to the recitation of texts from the Koran and Muslim songs for children. The only instrument permitted had been the drum. The teaching of Sex Education had been limited to information to girls in year six about menstruation.

Under British law, all forms of corporal punishment are prohibited in schools. With regard to the use of corporal punishment in the home, the law had been amended in 2004. The new provisions from 2004 still permit parents to physically chastise their children on condition that this is with restraint and is not so hard that any marks are made or any redness caused on the skin of the child. In school C and school D, any pupil who had misbehaved in class had been asked to stand up in front of the class, facing the wall and with hands placed at head-height on the wall. Such disciplinary measures are prohibited by law in Sweden.

In Sweden girls and boys had not been kept separate from each other in the two schools. During the breaks, the pupils themselves had most often divided themselves up into groups of boys and groups of girls. The pupils had been accustomed to this from home where in everyday life the girls had kept to themselves and the boys to themselves. When the school had organized days for outdoor activities, such as rounders, there had been girls and boys in each team. During prayers (which were optional) girls and boys had been separated.

Among the items that had been included during the teaching of the subject Music in school A and school B in Sweden, the pupils had learned Swedish, Nordic and international children's songs and rhymes in Swedish, English or Arabic. Such instruments as the guitar and drums had been used in school A while in school B it had been largely drums that had been used.

7.3. The attitudes of local authority politicians in Sweden to schools with a Muslim profile

7.3.1. Introduction

The selection of politicians to be interviewed was made on the basis of their local political mandates. They were politicians with responsibility for school policies and general issues in that district in each of the two local authorities in which the two MP schools had been established. They were either councilors or chairpersons of the municipal executive committee or of the municipal council or district committees.

Interviews were carried out with nine local authority politicians from the two local authorities where school A and school B were located. The responses of the politicians reflected their own attitudes towards these issues and were not necessarily in conformity with the policies of their respective political parties at that time. Four of these nine politicians had at some stage visited one of the MP schools located in their municipality.

The politicians' knowledge of MP schools varied considerably. Some of the politicians had learned something of the school through a visit, while the views of others with regard to the activities of the schools were based on third-hand information and/or from the mass media. One of these politician's explanation for not having visited a MP school in the municipality was that no invitation to do so had been extended and that the local authority did not have any powers of oversight.

The local authority area in which school A was located was under Social Democratic control in 1998 in coalition with the Left Party and the Green Party. Two of the three Social Democrats who were interviewed had at the time never visited a MP school. The local authority area in which school B was located was under Social Democratic control in 1998. All three of the Social Democrats who were interviewed had at the time already visited a MP school.

Those politicians who had adopted a positive attitude to MP schools referred to the fact that, from the point of view of the law, everyone, including Muslims, had the right to submit an application for permission to open an independent school. The difficulty, according to some politicians, was the risk of increased segregation which was a general consequence of the introduction recently of the right of each child/parent to choose a school. They were concerned about long-term consequences. The question as to the manner in which Muslims would be

Table: 7.1 Interviews with local authority politicians in Sweden 1998

Politicians	Man / Woman	Age	Party	Visited one of the MP schools
AP:1	Woman	53	Social Democrat, member of municipal executive committee and municipal council, chair of the education sub-committee for schools and pre-schools	No
AP:2	Man	50	Social Democrat member of municipal council	Yes
AP:3	Woman	38	Green Party member of municipal executive committee, municipal council, education sub-committee	No
AP:4	Man	66	Social Democrat, member of municipal council	No
BP:1	Woman	61	Conservative Party member of district committee	No
BP:2	Woman	74	Liberal Party chair of district committee	No
BP:3	Man	43	Social Democrat deputy-chair, district committee	Yes
BP:4	Man	69	Social Democrat chair of municipal executive committee	Yes
BP:5	Woman	55	Social Democrat	Yes

School A: The local authority under Social Democratic control in 1998, in coalition with the Left Party and the Green Party.

School B: The local authority under Social Democratic control in 1998

kommunstyrelse – municipal executive committee

kommunfullmäktige – municipal council

stadsdelsnämnd – district committee

integrated into Swedish society was also brought up. The politicians stated that Muslims were striving to open schools from the pre-school to high school levels. “The most important time for youth.” This, according to some of the politicians interviewed, was something the National Agency for Education took too lightly. Many of the politicians expressed doubts about independent schools with a confessional direction, particularly MP schools. On the other hand, they had no such doubts with regard to schools with some special educational direction or with an environmental direction since they assumed that the pupils would thereby come to be in their “Swedish environment.”

The politician (AP:2) said that it was wrong to use taxpayers money for schools that in practice were not open to all. According to this politician, schools based on language and religion were not open to all. Nonetheless, when a school had been given permission to open, then it should be treated equally.

Several of the politicians believed that there was a demand for these schools on the part of parents because municipal schools had not brought to the fore

the specific attributes of Islam, had not explained Islam, religion, and Arabic culture sufficiently well. "All young people need to feel pride and have a sense of belonging to something" (AP:2). One politician explained that there were several reasons for not being particularly positive towards independent schools. One of these reasons was that when a municipal school was drawing up plans for the coming year, they based their calculations on the grant per pupil they would receive. Sometimes, after these plans and budget, together with class lists, had been submitted, it might be the case that a municipal school would be informed, a few days before the beginning of the autumn term, that a group of pupils who had been included in those calculations, were not after all going to enroll at that school but at an independent school.

Another politician (AP:4) stated the following views:

With regard to schools with a Muslim profile, they attempt to divide people through having their own preschools and school. Muslims no doubt believe that we are real heathens who eat pork. They themselves eat pork when no one is watching them. I know a Muslim who runs a hot-dog stand.

The politician (BP:1) claimed to have divided views about MP schools. She considered it was positive that the opportunity existed to be able to open an independent school. But she also asked herself these questions – Are all independent schools good schools? Are religious, ethnic and political independent schools good schools? With regard to schools with a political direction, this politician did not consider they would be good schools. Her personal experiences included having attended a Sunday school and now worked actively in support of the opening of a Church pre-school. According to her, the motivation for opening a Christian pre-school was to be able to teach the children what was right and wrong. "But consequently I am not in a position to close down MP schools."

The politician (AP:3) considered that, in the long-run, MP schools might lead to segregation and to the creation of confrontations. In the long-view neither individual pupils nor society would gain anything from this. Further, this politician regarded those running MP schools as being very adept at persuading parents to enroll their children in these schools. She felt the parents were easily misled and that there was a high turnover of pupils. She continued:

We have pupils who have moved from these schools. They have been in Years 1 and 2 in a school with a Muslim profile. But this creates difficulties for municipal schools because they are required to channel more resources in order to provide Swedish for these pupils. As far as I am aware, there is no collaboration between schools with a Muslim profile and municipal schools.

The politician (BP:5) said that initially she had asked herself if the existence of MP schools really was a positive thing:

It can quickly become a loaded issue, for example the gender issue and terrorism, therefore I visited a number of schools with a Muslim profile. It was a very intensive learning experience. They told me – that what you view as a step away for society, is the exact opposite for us. I believe that many who use the term integration are really referring to assimilation. These Muslims want to be what we once were. But these citizens, many of whom live in disadvantaged circumstances, have the opportunity, through schools with a Muslim profile, to choose not to be involved with a negative school in some suburb and to improve their life-chances.

7.3.2. Advantages and disadvantages of schools with a Muslim profile compared to municipal schools

One possible advantage of MP schools compared to municipal schools, in the view of some politicians in the local authorities, might be that pupils felt more secure in a MP school and that they had the opportunity to use their own language. That pupils would feel more assured about their identities which could facilitate their encounters with Swedish society. But this is dependent on the nature of the staff at these schools. That they are able to ad-here to the guidelines from the National Agency for Education. That they deliver a message with regard to entering Swedish society in a positive manner.

On the basis of personal experience, the politician (BP:3) claimed that there are several different groups of Muslims. He provided these four definitions of Muslims:

those born Muslim but who do not practice the religion and who do not wish to be regarded as a Muslim, (ii) those born Muslim who claim to be Muslim but who do not practice the religion, (iii) Muslims who regard themselves as Muslim, practice the religion and are respected by others as people practicing the religion and (iv) fanatics.

According to the politicians, one disadvantage of MP schools was the risk that the Muslim children would be isolated. The attitude of the politicians was that municipal schools provided a unique opportunity for bringing people together. That municipal schools lead the pupils towards a more positive attitude with regard to cultural diversity. “Muslims must allow themselves to be integrated.” “There has been a suspicion among politicians that pupils at MP schools have lower linguistic competence.”

In the view of the politicians, it was not a good thing that children from different backgrounds did not meet each other. As an example, one politician brought up the situation where children from a residential area of detached houses were to be moved to a class with children from high-rise blocks. The children were very afraid because they had not met each other before.

Another disadvantage of MP schools was that they may significantly increase

segregation. "If you are going to learn the Swedish language and live in this country, then you must also live with this country. How otherwise is it possible for the children to be lifted into Swedish society?" (AP:4).

Some of the politicians claimed that the parents of the pupils believed that their children would first attend a Swedish school and then eventually together with their families return to the country of origin of the parents, "but in reality 90 % of the pupils remain in Sweden. They have to learn about Swedish society if they are counting on finding jobs" (AP:4). The politicians said they realized that Muslim children attend a MP school because their parents wish to preserve their belief and culture. But this does not make it any easier for the children.

The politician (AP:4) gave the example of an event where a family had physically abused and threatened the life of their Muslim girl because she was associating with a Swedish boy. This politician went on:

A school with a Muslim profile does not lead to such difficulties being overcome.

I wish to spread these thoughts. It is difficult as a politician. These pupils are a lost generation. Become too one-track minded. I am not sure how teaching is carried out at schools with a Muslim profile. Whether they teach about other religions and confessions.

The politician (BP:5) stated that she was not able to identify any particular disadvantages with regard to MP schools.

No matter how you spin it, it is an odd element. Was at first sometime worried that it would be too much of a closed world. Have never come across any religion that constructs schools according to a blue-print.

The politician (BP:1) recounted that she assumed that these schools produced their own teaching materials and asked herself the question:

How much indoctrination takes place? How integrated are schools with a Muslim profile? Previously I was against Islam. But in church I attended a course run by a knowledgeable person on Islam and a Muslim. Now I actually know that it is not Islam which is at fault. The problem is that there are different variants of Islam. It is the fundamentalists who are the Muslims who are most prominent, for example, in Afghanistan.

This same politician wanted there to be more regulation of certain independent schools.

According to the politician (BP:2) one school was late in meeting the requirement to have a doctor associated with the school. It was assumed that this had not been done because the parents at the MP school were not interested in exercising any influence. The politician assumed that this was because they

seemed to perceive that everything was well at the school. This politician further assumed that these Muslim children ought to attend municipal schools, but this did not only apply to pupils at MP schools but also applied, for example, to Finnish children. He went on:

A teacher standing in a classroom and who is not promulgating Swedish culture but rather promulgating his own convictions. It is unhealthy for pupils and for society. Isolation leads to the pupils not learning Swedish in a spontaneous way and thereby not learning about Swedish society.

7.3.3. Why have Muslims opened their own schools?

Some of the politicians answered this question by stating that this was probably in order for the children to be given more education in religion, Islam, and their home-languages. Not because they wished to promote an increased segregation. In his answer, the politician (AP:1) referred to information in the local press:

It is a matter of identification and to promote the security of the pupils, that which they read when filling out the application, in the local press. Municipal schools probably do not meet these Muslim requirements. They are perhaps unaware of the extent to which they are free to practice their religion at municipal schools. They are not satisfied with the Swedish school. The Swedish schools ought to try and meet them half-way. That it is about an identity issue. That they are afraid they will lose their identity and because of the difficulties in entering Swedish society. The goal is to retain Islam. Pass on knowledge of Islam to coming generations.

The politician (BP:5) pointed out that, while she could not speak for all schools, but one of the MP schools had been opened in order to “improve their circumstances in society, to protect Islam so that it would not die out.”

With regard to the question as to which children were enrolled at MP schools, most politicians replied that they were first and foremost children who were Muslim and Swedish children whose parents had converted to Islam. But they were largely Muslim immigrant pupils. One politician said that those parents/children who chose an independent school in the local authority were generally more active, were able to find out about and use their rights, middle class and, at a guess, this was also the case with regard to MP schools. One politician believed that it was only Somali children who attended these schools.

With regard to the question as to who was employed by MP schools, some of the politicians stated that they were aware that both Muslims and non-Muslims worked at these schools. That there were some members of staff with Swedish teaching qualifications. On the other hand, many were uncertain as to whether the Muslim staff had teacher certificates. The politician (BP:5) described a mix of staff, “ethnic Swedish women to Imams. Quite a high proportion of ethnic

Swedish teachers.”

One politician (AP:4) assumed that it was a requirement in order to be given a post that one was Muslim. Another politician (BP:2) believed that the staff were Muslim immigrants to Sweden and who had a teaching background and that parents too worked as teachers.

7.3.4. What Muslim rules are the pupils expected to obey?

The politician (BP:3) explained that not all pupils were required to wear *hijab*, that this was voluntary. That it is the parents’ rule rather than the school’s that a girl wear *hijab*. Pork is not served. That the schools make demands with regard to order and discipline. Proper greetings and to be polite, friendship.

They have social rule, how one is to behave. It is not permitted to shout insults such as “bitch” to the teacher as happens in municipal schools.

The politician (AP:3) said:

To obey Muslim rules. They do not participate in Music. There are fanatics. But when applying to open a school, they agree to abide by the National curriculum and Education Act. Oversight is the responsibility of the local authority and also to follow up on any criticisms made by the National Agency for Education. To check that the school is following Swedish rules.

She continued:

When you read in the papers that the girls wear *hijab*. You hope they are allowed to attend school without it. They have gymnastics separately for the boys and for the girls which I think is strange.

The politician (AP:4):

The girls are not allowed to travel to camp but the boys are.

What Muslim rules are staff expected to obey? In answer to the question as to what Muslim rules the staff at MP schools were expected to obey, several politicians said they did not know. The politician (AP:4) answered:

They are not to deviate too much from the Koran.

The politician (BP:4) answered:

If you are in a schools with a Muslim profile, you would be expected to follow Muslim rules.

7.3.5. Is it possible to combine the NC and the values it enshrines with the Islamic system of values and norms?

One politician (BP:2) claimed that the view regarding women expressed in Islam was not compatible with the Swedish NC (Lp094). The position of women is different. He believed that it is fixed in a way that it is not in the Swedish manner. Another of the politicians (AP:2) said that the National Agency for Education must have considered it possible to combine the NC with the Islamic system of values and norms. The local authority does not take on oversight. The politician (AP:2) said:

But with regard to the head of a school with a Muslim profile in this local authority, the head has a technical education from his home country. A person with that professional background would never have been appointed as head of a municipal school.

The politician (AP:4) believed that it is possible to combine the Swedish NC and the values it enshrines with the Islamic system of values and norms. This politician preferred municipal schools and considered that all pupils ought to feel free in a municipal school and not feel repressed.

Yes, this is an absolute demand. We must meet them half-way. Many Swedish people believe that when these immigrants have moved here, they ought to abide by that which is Swedish. But I believe they have enriched Sweden.

The politician (BP:1) based her answer on one of her own educational experiences:

Having attended a course on Islam, I have understood that there are those who read the Koran as the devil reads the Bible. Women are not forced to wear *hijab* or pray five times a day. I have heard that a two-year old participated in the fast. I hope a municipal school would not allow that. Some in Islam teach that women do not need to study but should stay at home and have children.

The politician (AP:1) did not believe that it was possible to combine the Swedish curriculum with the Islamic system of values and norms.

This I can't believe. Since we work for equality, it can be difficult to accept their view regarding women.

The politician (BP:5) believed that it is possible to combine the Swedish NC with the Islamic system of values and norms. She considered that both MP schools and schools with a Christian profile had been subjected to far more inspection than other schools. No criticisms regarding the Muslim profile itself had resulted from these inspections.

7.3.6. Which school is best for Muslim children?

The politician (AP:1) would prefer that Muslim children attend Swedish municipal schools.

There the school would have within their organization resources to offer to schools with a Muslim profile. As much flexibility as possible. That they collaborated and had Islam/Arabic at certain times. That municipal schools make use of the parents a resource. Where Swedish parents and Muslim parents meet.

To be hoped that Swedish municipal schools catch up and are able to see the motivation and requirements. A school which has room for each child and where prerequisites are created, space for each and everyone's religion and language.

Somewhat concerned about the quality of education at schools with a Muslim profile. I do not believe that competent teachers are interested in working in schools with a Muslim profile, they are more likely to want to continue working in municipal schools.

Some of the politicians were critical of the fact that, after granting permission to a school to open, it took two years before the SNAE carried out the first inspection. They considered that the Agency ought to have done this earlier in order to observe what was taking place on the ground, whether the school management were able to carry out their duties properly and had the appropriate qualifications. In the view of the politician (AP:2), ordinary municipal schools work with these problems in mind. When those working at municipal schools describe their schools, they state that parents are unemployed. He argued that:

It is important, as part of efforts to retain pupils in municipal schools, to take parents into account. Many parents have different educational backgrounds from their country of origin. Teachers and staff with backgrounds in various countries are required in municipal schools and preschools. It is necessary for municipal schools to draw on the collective competence of parents. In Mathematics, the teacher, should there be a group of Arabic-speaking pupils, underscore the roots of mathematics in Arabic culture.

The trend which I am most concerned about is that whereby Swedish parents are unwilling to enroll their children in schools with a high proportion of immigrant children.

I wish municipal schools could be better. It is still the case that pupils are expected to adapt to the school although it should be opposite, that the school adapt to the pupils. There are such considerable differences with regard to the circumstances of the pupils. Municipal schools could be better at taking different backgrounds into account.

The politicians claimed that the best school would be a municipal school which mirrored the diversity as the population at large. Many of the politicians

returned to the description of municipal schools as a meeting-place in Sweden where there is tradition that religion is regarded as a private concern. The politician (AP:2) said:

There is a need to discuss the place of religion in Sweden. Should not be thought that in school there is a pretense that religion does not exist. Difficult to prevent the division of society. Swedes move away from the residential areas where many immigrants live. At the same time, immigrants are reluctant to participate in Swedish society.

The politician (AP:4) claimed that while the traditions of immigrants tend towards stagnation here, they were continuing to develop in their country of origin. He continued:

Difficult to do anything politically. People should be able to live where they wish. Worst are the schools with a Muslim profile. But Swedish municipal schools must also open up. We do have profile classes for ice-hockey, theatre, and so. We have discussed profile classes in languages, why not in Islam? Believe it would be easier to draw them into Swedish society.

According to many of the politicians, the best school for Muslim children would be a school which does not stress religion too much, a municipal school or some other independent school. "Not an ethnic school such as, for example, a Somali school. What would happen to Somali pupils who had stayed in the same class through-out all the school years and then, suddenly, in upper-secondary school, would be together with pupils having other ideological views, such as Jews, Christians, atheists, and so on?" (BP:1)

The politician (BP:3) claimed that "MP schools conserve in some way, are not outward looking." He was convinced that municipal schools would be the best schools for Muslim children. He continued:

I wish to provide information about Islam and accept the three following groups within Islam:

(i) Those born Muslim who do not practice their religion and who do not wish to see themselves as Muslims, (ii) Those born Muslim who claim they are Muslim but do not practice their religion, and (iii) Muslims who regard themselves as Muslims, practice the religion and are respected by others as people who practice their religion.

We have to do away with our prejudices. There are only small differences between Islam and Christianity – 5 % differences, 95 % similarities which unite us. If we are able to make democracy work, that is to say, that Swedish society manages to contain groups of Muslims, the number of schools with a Muslim profile will be reduced. But experiences from other countries are that the number of schools with a Muslim profile is increasing (BP:3).

7.4.The understanding and attitudes of the owner with regard to School C in England

7.4.1. Introduction

Some of the staff in school A and school B in Sweden and school D in England had a seat on the ownership board. At the time of the field-work, a change was being discussed at school A whereby the chair and the board members would be filled by people who did not work at the school. The reason behind this was to attain an ownership board which would be able to act freely without running any risk of finding themselves in a position where there could be a conflict of interest.

That the interviews with the owners of School C (in contrast to the other three schools), is presented separately here is motivated by the School C, unlike schools A, B and D were not funded by government grants. The school was therefore not in the same state control as the other schools. The members of the ownership board in School C was thus able to determine the extent to which they gave the school leadership and staff empowerment and the ability to influence the values and values that would be applicable in the school and thus decide on the framework of the Muslim profile. The members of the ownership board for school C in England did not work at the school. Therefore the interviews with the chair and two members of the board in school C in England are presented separately below. The trustees for school C in England were all trustees for three different Muslim schools. The first of these schools was started up in 1991. Over and above school C, the other two were secondary schools – one for girls and one for boys. The trustees had some contact with the school at least once a day with various people. The trustee (CO:2) said he basically communicated, from time to time, with the head and once a term held a meeting with the teachers.

The trustees had started the school because they wished to provide the pupils with an Islamic, Muslim environment. The pupils would be able to study and practice their religion freely. CO:2 was opposed to controversial subjects such as sex education. On the other hand, he argued that the school should provide high standards. He said municipal schools were not very good, and continued:

My vision is that Muslim schools should be open to others, like the Catholic schools. We hope the government support funding for Muslim schools. To expand, be open to others to enjoy, so we will get more Muslim pupils.

The pupils who attend our schools with a Muslim profile are from different families; poor, middle-class and upper-class and international student families. Families that can pay the school fees. They can be given help for this too. The fees are £4000/year (CO:2).

The trustee (CO:3) said:

In many state schools, pupils do not feel safe and secure. If the pupils do not feel safe and secure in school, they will achieve bad results. That is one reason why Muslims started their own schools, we wanted to make a safe and secure school environment for the pupils.

The trustee (CO:1) said that school C received voluntary donations from private donors, Muslims. They received financial support, over and above voluntary donations, from all over the Muslim world. There were no particular conditions attached to this financial support.

What type of school in England would be best for children from Muslim families? According to trustee (CO:1) a MP school would be the best for Muslim children because municipal schools do not teach Islam. The trustee (CO:2) said this depended on whether the school had an Islamic ethos. Caring about Islamic morals, a school supporting this would be the best “if the school has our morals and values.” The trustees (CO:3) argued that a MP school, but this also would depend on the quality of the school.

What difficulties and conflicts exist in the school? The trustees said that there was a need for state funding for MP schools. The Roman Catholic Church had funding for schools and Jewish schools were funded by the government. It should be the same for MP schools. This has to change. The government was already funding two MP schools.

Another problem was the mass media. The trustee (CO:1) said:

They publicize in a negative light which creates problems, worries for Islam.

7.4.2. Muslim rules that apply in the school

The trustees said that the pupils in school C were expected to abide by the rules and regulations of their religion, to believe in Allah and his Prophet Mohammad, to believe in God and an absolute Islamic system. The girls have to wear hijab. The pupils have to learn about the five principles of Islam, the five pillars. The pupils have to learn to behave well with self-discipline, to observe daily prayers, to wear Islamic clothes, dress. They have to learn to respect other peoples, and not to discriminate. The trustees also said that staff was expected to observe the dress code, Islamic ethos and to abide by the teachings of Islam and its social aspects. The teachers should educate pupils about Muslim scholars and integrate the NC in an Islamic environment. Non-Muslim staff had to dress appropriately, although they were not required to cover their hair, but are otherwise to follow the same dress code.

The trustees hoped that, in the future, school C would have achieved the highest standards possible and attract more pupils. Hoping to be granted some state funding which would allow the school to expand.

7.4.3. What did the trustees see as advantages and disadvantages of a school with a Muslim profile compared to municipal schools?

The trustees listed the follow disadvantages: Lack of resources. That pupils had to pay fees. Lack of day-to-day interaction with pupils from different backgrounds, Muslims and non-Muslims.

Advantages: Strengthen the identity of the pupils. "We don't want our children to loose there identity. They risk problems if loosong their identity" (CO:2).

The trustee (CO:1) said:

Our schools with a Muslim profile are under-funded. The building is a converted office-block etc. Municipal schools offer better salaries, based on our experience. I have visited both municipal schools and private grammar schools.

According to trustee (CO:2) the advantages are:

We develop British Muslim identities. They are a part of society, they are Muslims.

Is it possible to combine the English NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards? According to trustee (CO:1):

Yes, no problem with the basic National curriculum. Music is an optional subject so the pupils can leave that out.

Chapter 8

The School Heads

8.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis and comparison of Muslim *profiled* schools in Sweden and the UK, on the basis of the views of school heads.

In this chapter, a number of comparisons and contrasts are drawn between school A and school B in Sweden on the one hand and school C and school D in England on the other hand. This includes a comparison of the understandings and points of view of school heads the manner in which school heads had dealt with encounters between Muslim principles and ethics and the principles and ethics which permeate the NC.

In the Islamophobic discourse created through the debate on MP schools, these schools have most often been accused in general terms for acting in breach of the law and for not conforming to the NC in Sweden and England respectively. Usually these schools have been described as homogeneous institutions with one single determining understanding/point of view where it was not permitted to hold other views. Therefore, it has been considered to be of great importance in this chapter to not only make visible the differences and similarities between the schools in Sweden and England, but also those between each school in each country respectively. Equally important has been the importance, through quotations, to make visible the differences and similarities in understanding and points of view between the interviewees in each school. The large number of verbatim quotations is motivated by the fact that here it is values that are the subject being considered and therefore it is very worthwhile to make diversity visible, that is to say, how various individuals, on the basis of their own private philosophy of life, respond and the nature of the support for their response.

8.2. Understanding and attitude of the school heads in Sweden and England

The two heads in Sweden had moved to Sweden as adults while the two heads in England had come to England as children. Both heads in England had gained teaching certificates while the two heads in Sweden had not done so.

Table 8.1 The characterisation of head of school A and head of school B in Sweden and head of school C and head of school D in England

	<i>Head for School A in Sweden</i>	<i>Head for School B in Sweden</i>	<i>Head for School C in England</i>	<i>Head for School D in England</i>
Country of birth Age at immigration	He was born in North Africa. Came to Sweden as an adult for marriage.	She was born in North Africa. Came to Sweden as an adult.	She was born in Pakistan. 12 years old when she came to England. The only Muslim pupil in her school when she grew up in England.	She was born in Pakistan. She was 1.5 years old when she came to England.
Professional education and experience	Foreign university qualifications in Business Economics. Previously worked as an auditor in Sweden and has taught French. At the time of the field work, he was participating in a univ. course for head teachers and planned ev. to take the national prof. training program for school heads	Qualifications in Business Economics abroad, and in Sweden had completed 40-week course in adm. development and had studies Business Economics and Swedish at a municipal adult education centre. Before moving to Sweden as adult, she had worked 5 years as an education coordinator and 3 years as a secretary	Had a teaching certificate. Had taken some courses for head teachers. Had started work at School C as a teacher, and after a year she had applied for the post as head.	Head had a teaching certificate. She had taken some courses for head teachers. She had studied Islam for six months at Al-Azhar University, in Egypt. She was participating in a leadership programme for serving head teachers.
Knowledge of languages	Swedish, Arabic, French, English and German	Swedish and Arabic	English, Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi.	English, Punjabi, Urdu and Arabic.

The heads have multilingual competencies and are able to speak from two to five different languages. The heads have often employed staff who have gained a Swedish teaching certificate and with experience of working in Swedish schools and/or educational administration in order to counterbalance the fact that they themselves as heads did not always have sufficient competence in the fields of educational and school administration.

Most often, over and above being heads, they were also chair of the body that owned the school. The heads in Sweden stated that many demands were placed on the head of a MP school in Sweden. In their view, in order to be able to meet the demands placed on the work of a head of a MP school in Sweden, professional training in education and professional training for heads were required together with a broad knowledge of Swedish society. The head should

be well-integrated into Swedish society, with a good knowledge of the Swedish language, history of schools in Sweden, the Swedish Education Act, the NC, sections of the Social Welfare Act, psychology and child development. In addition, a sound knowledge is required of finance, budget issues, taxation, management, employee issues, administration, issues concerning the work environment, general legislation and agreements and the routines for making appointments and dismissals of staff, negotiation routines for employers and union representatives. Knowledge of conflict resolution, equality policy, marketing and information and a facility for collaboration with pupils, parents, staff and the local community. An ability to structure work and lead development of the school towards clearly-stated goals, an interest in activities for the continual improvement in the quality of education in the school. To be aware of new legislation, regulations and policy that might affect the work of the school. To be able to deal with threats and harassment towards the school. To remain calm when confronted by individual journalist and/or opinion leaders who wish to defame the activities of the school without any grounds. At the same time to protect the school and present it as a secure and peaceful place of work for pupils and staff while at the same time being open to critical inspections. In addition, they considered it to be important that a head of a MP school has a deep knowledge of Islam.

In England, together with heads of schools that were state aided, the head of school D was regularly invited by the LEA to attend common educational seminars, conferences and in-service training courses for all heads. In a similar manner, the teachers were invited to attend common in-service training courses.

One head (CH:1) in England stated that “a good leader,” in her opinion, had to be a good manager of people and resources. That a good leader needed to be understanding with regard to his or her staff and see to their needs and to be able to motivate the staff as well. She said that the Prophet Muhammad was her educational role model. She thought of him as a leader and tried to follow his example. She said that “Everything you do should be because of Allah. But after saying that, to see what we were supposed to do from the NC.” “According to the Koran – we are doing everything that we are guided to do – education.” (CH:1.) The head’s vision and ambitions were to have Islamic aims as to what beliefs and practices are to be and, at the same time, provide the pupils with knowledge so they will be able to compete for the same jobs as everyone else. She said that the school followed those basic values and regulations that are formulated in the English NC.

As was the case for other independent schools in the two local authorities where school A and school B were situated in Sweden, heads were not invited to participate in the seminars, conferences and in-service training that these local authorities organized. In addition, independent schools, including those with a Muslim profile, had not been included in some of the school development projects initiated by the Ministry of Education and the Swedish National Agency

for School Improvement²⁸. These in-service courses were reserved for senior education administrators and heads from municipal schools. Similar exclusion also occurred with regard to in-service training, seminars and conferences for teachers and/or other staff.

These resources are to be allocated on the basis of agreement between the Swedish National Agency for School Improvement and local authorities together with other central actors. The Agency has interpreted the directive in such a manner that agreements are to be reached primarily with the owners of the public school system, not independent schools.

Furthermore, the additional resources for various theme days for pupils were most often restricted to municipal school. The in-service courses, seminars and conferences organized by local authorities were most often only offered to those who worked in municipal schools. The heads of the MP school considered that this was a remarkable way of doing things, particularly when one bears in mind that some politicians had frequently claimed that they were concerned that the MP schools would result in the pupils being isolated from the surrounding community and that, during the debates in the media, politicians had also expressed concern that MP schools were not working in accordance with the values enshrined in the Swedish NC.

Some of the heads of MP schools in Sweden considered that this situation might be interpreted as implying that the political leadership and/or the senior officials in the local authorities and departments, who were generally regarded as being opposed to independent schools, particularly those with a Muslim profile, had used their positions to contravene, in practice, a national decision reached by the government and the Riksdag. By excluding MP schools from in-service courses and various development projects for schools to be held in common with municipal schools and other, non-Muslim, independent schools, the politicians and officials responsible have contributed to the exclusion of MP schools from society. While pupils at MP schools have suffered from such exclusion, at the same time, pupils and staff at municipal schools have been denied the opportunity to meet pupils and staff from MP schools.

Several heads of MP schools in Sweden stated that they were convinced that the aggressive campaign that had been conducted against MP schools, would most certainly not have come about if all politicians and all officials had abided by the decisions of the government and the *Riksdag* with regard to allowing MP schools to be established.

28. One task for the agency is to support development initiatives that makes it more possible for young people to get a good education, although they live in an ethnical or social segregated area. A good education opens many future opportunities for young people, according to the brief from the government (Swedish National Agency for School Improvement, 2005).

8.3. Role models for school management in schools with a Muslim profile

Almost all the Muslim heads who have been interviewed in Sweden and England declared that the Prophet Muhammad was the role model for educational management. They have sought support for the manner in which they should act as heads in the Koran and hadith. For the heads in Sweden this has meant in practice that they have in their work striven to be positive, democratic role models for their staff and pupils. The heads have also found support with regard to the importance of life-long learning, where children and adults, girls and boys and women and men are encouraged to seek knowledge. In parallel with their professional work, the heads in the selected schools in both countries have participated in various training courses for heads and in employment law and school administration.

The head AH:1 in Sweden underlined the importance of taking good care of the staff and pupils.

For example, when I am sitting with a teacher, I think to myself that I wish to act towards others as I would that they act towards me. To have patience, to listen and to absolutely not be angry in any way. As a Muslim, I will one day be asked to justify how I have behaved with regard to the responsibilities I have accepted. Not responsibility for children but responsibility for the future of each and every child.

Also he saw no contradiction between the spiritual and the material.

Life is divided into two parts every second. The spiritual – and the material. God is my guardian with regard to responsibility. In practice it is Lpo 94²⁹ which is the determinant. There is no conflict between them. I am very careful to carry out my work well and then more, not to cut corners. In practice my work is steered by laws and ordinances.

One of the heads in Sweden (AH:1) stated that he had consciously refrained from organizing the work of the teachers and their working hours in accordance with the agreements between the local authorities and the unions. He perceived the terms of the agreement with regard to teaching hours and times for attendance at school as too inflexible and too patronizing towards the teachers. He had instead reduced the number of teaching hours for teachers. His reasoning was that the better the staff felt, the better would be the work they carried out.

Three of the four heads who participated in this study have explained their management approach as being based on Islam, on the Koran and various *hadith*.

29. Lpo94: The Swedish NC for the Compulsory School

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The head AH:1 stated:

My guiding-star in my work is God and therefore I try to carry out my work as well as possible.

He had placed considerable demands on himself. He said that as a head he tried to be perfect, the best. At the time of the interview, however, he stated that there were some improvements he wished to make.

I wish to be fair. Even if sometimes harsh measures are required, I wish to be fair, humane. Think about their situation at home. I am an economist and this directs my work, management steering. See, interpret things as if it was a place of work at a company. The whole school is influenced by external and internal events, parents, children the families of the employees, these all of course exert an influence. The goal is to have teachers who are very satisfied. Think about their situation at home, everyday things.

The head BH:1 related with regard to a role model:

A doctor who every day asked the question: What is different day? What shortcomings are there? What have I learned today?

She stressed the importance of being able to delegate duties:

Must get away from being hard. We should consider how much responsibility people are able to take. Not control. As head, we must develop this part of responsibility. I hate policing – that, for example, I have to stand and watch to see if staff are working properly. I want the responsibility of each and everyone to be what steers.

The head DH:1 argued that “a good leader” is a leader of vision, with goals and targets. Leadership styles depend upon the situation one may be faced with. Good communication. As a pedagogical role-model, she had the Prophet Mohammed.

As a Muslim I will develop characteristics as in the case of the holy Prophet Mohammed. More personal qualities rather than leadership itself. Everything I do is influenced by my belief in God. I have the skills that I might deliver to children in line with the National curriculum. Because that is how the ability of a child is measured when they move from one school to another. There are various Islamic rules that pupils and staff have to follow

While it is not possible to definitively categorize the heads who have participated in this study in accordance with Their's (1999) three patterns of values,

nonetheless for the two heads in England the values of quality of life (Muslim values) were the dominant driving force in their work. Equally, for one of the two heads who were interviewed in Sweden, Muslim values were the dominant driving-force in his work, while the driving-force for the other head (BH:1) was dominated by values concerning standards of living.

The Muslim heads are dependent on enjoying legitimacy, the mandate given to heads from the informal aspects of the situation, that is to say, the pupils, parents and staff, on the basis of their personal attributes. If confidence in a head is lacking on the part of parents and pupils, the school will experience difficulties in attracting applications. Further, this legitimacy must exist even where the head and the parents have different opinions and attitudes with regard to Islam and MP schools. In order for a MP school to be able to compete as an alternative school, it must be able to demonstrate for those parents of prospective pupils who have expressed an interest that the Muslim profile is sufficiently prominent while at the same time, when comparison is made with a municipal school, it is has an equivalent, or even higher, quality of teaching.

8.4. Rules and values

The heads in both Sweden and England all agreed that there would be certain advantages if all the staff at their schools were Muslims, since in that case, it would be more likely that all would have similar views on fundamental issues. At the same time, they claimed that the disadvantage in employing only Muslims would be that they would be denied access to “the other view-point.”

The heads of the schools in the two countries considered that it was good for the school to have a mix of both Muslim and non-Muslim staff at the school. If there were only Muslims working at the school, the pupils would not have an opportunity to meet non-Muslim staff. It would not be possible in that case for the school to be a role model, in theory or practice, for the pupils, where adults with various private views of life, as well as with regards to religious staff and non-religious staff, were seen to be able to work together. In the view of the heads, there was no division among the staff between Muslims and non-Muslims. That Muslims and non-Muslims were given equal, not different, treatment. That is was important to be fair. The heads in Sweden and England reported that several of the non-Muslim staff were Christians. They consider that they in some way speak the same language, the language of religion.

The heads claimed that they placed considerable demands on their teachers. That it was important for them to have teachers who were professionally engaged and respectful. Parents have respect for teachers who show respect to their children’s culture and beliefs. That the parents feel particularly secure when the head is a Muslim. The head AH:1 in Sweden stressed that it was important that there were open discussions in the teaching team. That it was the particular responsibility of the head to keep the teaching team united to ward off any risk

of it splitting up into two groups, Muslims and non-Muslims. It is important that the members of the teaching team feel secure with each other and able to take up and discuss sensitive issues.

One head described experiences from being the head of a Swedish compulsory MP school where the majority of the teachers and other staff were not Muslim. He talked about personal encounters with the staff where it was of considerable importance to be able to meet and see each person as an individual and personality. That he was very pleased and proud that so many competent and enthusiastic people had applied to work at the MP school. His staff included people with various views of life, some Muslim, some Christian or atheists and some who did not have any specific expressed view of life at all. The staff consisted of a group of people who had a great deal in common. They were curious and had applied to the MP school because they had wished to work in an international environment "on their home ground." They were driven by a desire to work in international conditions and together with colleagues with backgrounds in different countries to be enthusiastic teachers and positive adult role models for the pupils.

8.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the school with a Muslim profile compared to the municipal primary school?

The heads in school A and school B, in Sweden considered that the municipal schools had not, generally speaking, been able to live up to the commitment of being a school for everyone. That the municipal schools need to gather more information about Muslim children and basically change the existing negative image of Muslim children and not deny children their rights. As an example, one of the heads mentioned that the municipal schools have proclaimed that it is permitted to wear *hijab* in school while in reality some have reacted in a negative manner towards girls and women who are wearing the *hijab*.

The heads in Sweden who have participated in this study considered that, generally-speaking, municipal schools had not succeeded in becoming schools for everyone. That municipal schools needed to obtain better information concerning Muslim children and in general abandon their negative attitude towards such children and not deny them their rights.

In England, the advantages of a MP school, compared to a municipal primary school was the one and only reason why the head DH:1 had opened such a school in order to teach her own daughter. She was concerned with quality but most important that one feels confidence in being Muslim. She did not feel that there were any disadvantages as long as both the pupils and parents remained happy, for the correct reasons, with the school they had chosen.

Confidence – confident that they would be able to fulfil whatever ambition they had. First one must be a Muslim, like being a Muslim. It is in order if parents have chosen the school because they wanted their child to be a Muslim. But it is not a good reason if they only wish to keep their child away from what they feel are bad things (drugs, boy friends and so on). We have interviewed every one who has applied for a place at our school. The interview has been held with both the parents and child, including about their attitudes. Try to get to know their behaviour, not necessarily about the child's knowledge. How the child and adults behave when they are together. If they came from an Islamic background and if the child show respectful to the parents, sharing, use good language and interact with children. Practices are changing, family brake-downs, divorce. How they see life. Not easy but better than not having any interviews at all. (DH:1)

The head CH:1 said that one advantage with a MP school was to do with the Islamic issues. The pupils learn how to act and behave. They do not need to go to special lessons in the mosque in their free time, after school. The disadvantages she thought were to do with pupils becoming isolated and insulated from the community. Where the family at home mixed with other families and where the parent had work outside the Muslim community, these difficulties could be alleviated.

8.6.What are the problems and conflicts in the School?

The heads in school A and school B, in Sweden considered that society at large was dominated by strong economic interests which generally influenced children and young people in a negative way. Where success was defined in terms of financial and material values. Where selfishness and one's own success at the cost of the well-being of others had become a strong driving-force. The heads said that the MP schools were striving to foreground other values – Muslim values – as also formulated in the NC: “The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between men and women and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the school should represent and impart” (The Swedish NC Lp094).

The greatest danger to society is selfishness (AH:1).

In England the head DH:1 stated that the biggest problem was to recruit teachers.

Particularly if we wish today to employ only Muslim teachers we would not be able to do that because there are not enough qualified Muslim teachers out there.

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According to the Governors, the school head has to be a Muslim.

In England the head CH:1 said that problems arise in the school because different parents have varying views on Islamic issues. Some parents are strict. They do not allow the children draw human figures. The school does not teach Music but others want Music to be taught. Some parents want more teaching of religion. But some years ago, school C had sent out questionnaires to parents to ask them if they wanted more hours of teaching about Islam and the Koran. A majority of the parents had answered that they were happy with the teaching of Islamic subjects as it was, therefore the school had not increased the number of teaching hours.

The same head stated that it was permitted for women and men to sit together in a room. "But if he or she does not wish to risk getting a bad reputation or to become the subject of gossip, they should not sit together alone in a room." She claimed that bullying did sometimes occur at different levels and of varying severity between pupils at the school. For example, name calling. She also claimed that no harassment occurred among the members of staff.

The head DH:1 in England described how Islam accepts different sides of life. Everything is touched. Expectations, the way the school wanted the pupils to behave. How the pupils behaved towards each other, towards the teacher, during lessons and in the playground.

The way they learn, take responsibility for doing their best – all these are affected by Islam.

She regarded wearing *hijab* to be obligatory and not something one could compromise over.

Islam is a set of principles to be adopted – in all cultures if we are not careful. British schools are without compromise. They asked – Does it matter if a girl is wearing trousers? Simple when looked at from the point of view of principles. Principles of Islam – covering of head is enough. No room in the principles of Islam where *hijab* can be avoided. Some say it can be overlooked. But we wanted to get away from being so philosophical.

In school D in England, non-Muslim women also wore *hijab*. At their interviews, they had been informed that it would be appropriate for them to wear *hijab* should they be employed to work in the school. The head DH:1 related that one parent had been very angry when the school had employed a non-Muslim teacher. At first, this parent had not realized that the teacher was not Muslim. Since the teacher wore *hijab*, this parent had been convinced the teacher was Muslim.

8.7. How to handle the "multicultural" mix of cultures in schools?

How was the "multicultural" mix of cultures handled in schools (the Swedish NC, the English NC, the ideals of the non-Muslim staff, the ideals of the Muslim staff, the Islamic ideals of the Muslim pupils and their parents) where each culture has its own ideal?

In Sweden the deputy head BH:2 stated that one way he handled the "multicultural" mix of cultures at the school was by striving to treat everyone with respect and understanding.

To treat people in a friendly way. That I do not have any prejudices. I treat them with equality. At staff meetings, it is usually the Swedish teachers who speak. Usually the others do not say anything. Once the meeting is over, then the Arabs begin to ask questions or make suggestions (BH:2). (author's translation)

Participant observation at a staff meeting in school B in Sweden showed the following during the meeting, the staff sat in a double semi-circle. The non-Muslims sat in the first row and Muslims in the second row. During the meetings, several people on this second row attempted to speak but the deputy head, who was chairing the meeting, did not notice them since his attention was largely focused on the non-Muslim staff and the head.

According to the heads, teachers, other staff and parents, MP schools in Sweden had undergone considerable change from the time when they had been founded up until the time of the field studies. Not least this had affected the Muslim profile. One of the heads in Sweden claimed to have experienced some embarrassment with regard to some of the Muslim values which, when one of the first MP schools was founded in Sweden, were in circulation among the staff and head at that school at that time. As an example, he described how in the beginning a conflict had arisen between a Muslim educator and a non-Muslim educator concerning the propriety of drawing or painting snowmen. The class teacher had allowed the pupils to draw and paint snowmen which they subsequently put up on the classroom walls. A Muslim colleague, together with a number of parents, had reacted negatively to this and taken the pictures down from the walls. This turned out to be a significant starting point for a thorough discussion among the head, staff, parents and pupils based on the NC.

It is important to bear in mind that when the first MP schools had been founded in Sweden, there was a lack of practical experience both among those who founded the schools and the state authority granting the applications (the National Agency for Education). There had been, therefore, considerable uncertainty as to what areas of freedom of action were to be sanctioned for these schools with regard to the framework for the confessional dimension and the Muslim profile.

Some of the MP schools had run courses and various informal educational

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activities for parents concerning the NC. The schools had also provided in-service training for staff concerning the NC.

In England, the school head CH:1 had sometimes found it easy and sometimes difficult to handle the "multicultural" mix of cultures in schools.

Not too bad. Muslim schools are Muslim schools. All have to follow rules. Parents with different views – said we do not follow specific schools of Islam. Follow the Koran and basic *Sunna*. Quite nice to have a mix of feedback and opinion from among parents. I do not bother – others wanted only Muslim staff because it make it easier if they are Muslims they can prepare the children for praying (CH:1).

The school head in school D in England found it difficult to compromise.

From the Islamic point of view, it is clear, Islam gives respect to all cultures, races and faiths. The school is reached by cultures in term of families as well. For some Muslim parents – even if they have Islamic standards at home – some of them can find it difficult to cope with the practice of Islam. But we cannot compromise about Islam (DH:1).

The school follows Islam and basic values and regulations that are formulated in the English NC.

Different Islamic aspects, different sides of life: Rules how to behave with each other, with the teacher, in lessons and in the playground, the way they are to learn and take responsibility for doing their best. All these are affected by Islam.

Our knowledge is Islam. Some parents wanted us to only teach the Koran. Difficult for me to understand that, better we are living here. Not practice as a culture because cultures disappear but religion – it is easy to panic that it will be viewed as conforming more to a Western Society (DH:1).

She also argued that there is little to do to integrate Islamic knowledge and facts. As a whole way of life, try to approach life as total integration. When teaching the English NC, the school had seen that it had two options. One option was that we could have used all of one book, Islam or another option which would have been to reflect conciliation.

We follow a small proportion of Islam with conciliation. The National curriculum does not specify what books you must use. We do not only use books which are Islamic (DH:1).

8.8. What type of school is best for Muslim children?

In Sweden the head BH:1 responded as follows when asked which school she felt was the best school for Muslim children:

The best school is the one that best meets the needs of the Muslim children, it is the school where the children are seen as an asset and not as a problem. (BH:1)

In Sweden, BH:2 considered that the Swedish municipal school was best for Muslim children. Although it might provide greater security to attend a MP school in Years 1-6, from Year 7 they should attend a municipal school.

In England the head (DH:1) said a Muslim profiled school is the best school for Muslim children.

Along with the National curriculum, there is a need for time to be available to learn about Islam, to pray, and to be able to dress as Muslim – feel comfortable in being a Muslim at a school with a Muslim profile.

The deputy head/ the director of studies BH:2 in Sweden mentioned security as an important guiding rule at the school.

It is true that the curriculum sets the direction, the goals, but it does not provide you with any guarantee of becoming a happier and more secure person. A humane school, as a base. The sense of security that is formed facilitates learning for everyone, also for the weak students. (author's translation)

The heads in Sweden who have participated in this study considered that, generally-speaking, municipal schools had not succeeded in becoming schools for everyone. That municipal schools needed to obtain better information concerning Muslim children and in general abandon their negative attitude towards such children and not deny them their rights. As an example, one of these heads mentioned that the heads of municipal schools might well state that it is permitted to wear *hijab* but in practice a large number of them have acted negatively towards female Muslim pupils and women who do so.

In England the head (DH:1) said a Muslim profiled school is the best school for Muslim children.

Along with the National curriculum, there is a need for time to be available to learn about Islam, to pray, and to be able to dress as Muslim – feel comfortable in being a Muslim at a school with a Muslim profile.

The head CH:1 responded to this question by stating that any school with

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Table:8.2 Summary the views of the heads.

<i>Head</i>	<i>What guides your work at the school God or the English NC or what?</i>	<i>Do you have any educational, ideological or personal role model you emulate?</i>	<i>Is it possible to combine the NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards?</i>
<i>The head AH:1 in Sweden</i>	The guiding-star in my work is God and thereby I attempt to do as good a job as possible. Every second, life is divided into two parts. The spiritual and the material. God is my guide with regard to responsibility. In practice, it is the NC, the Education Act and various regulations which steer. They are not in conflict with each other.	The Prophet Muhammad. As a Muslim, I will one day have to answer for the responsibilities placed on me. Not responsibility for all pupils but for each and every pupil and their future.	Yes. They are not in conflict. I am very conscientious about doing a good job and preferably a little more than that, not cheat. In practice my work is steered by law and regulations. With regard to education, what approach can I take in order that the pupils both learn and feel comfortable?
<i>The head BH:1 in Sweden</i>	Obviously God is involved, which implies that I try to do as good a job as possible.	My educational role model is a person who was a doctor who everyday asked the question: What is different today? What is lacking? What have I learned today?	Yes, I do believe there is not any conflict at all. The NC is law and not something which one can claim to adapt to become something else. It is more important to transmit Swedish culture. Islam a part of our culture which we can add to the Swedish NC.
<i>The deputy head/ the director of studies BH:2 in Sweden</i>	Security, of course the NC provides guidelines, goals but no guarantee that one will be happier in life. One feels secure in a school such as this one. A humane school. A basic feeling of security which creates, facilitates learning. A school for all, including the weaker pupils – to feel happy.	I have both a positive and negative educational role model. The negative role model is the head of a municipal school who was spineless and of whom the pupils were afraid and who was not able to reach uncomfortable decisions. My positive role model is a head at a municipal school who had the ability to make people feel happy.	Where there is a will, there is a way to reach a resolution without anyone being humiliated or tramping on anyone's toes. Society does not thrive from having sub-groups with their own rules. There are many goals which unite people from different parts of the world. It is perhaps not possible to attain complete equality in the short term. It is not possible to decide other people's will, another person.

Head	What guides your work at the school God or the English NC or what?	Do you have any educational, ideological or personal role model you emulate?	Is it possible to combine the NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards?
<i>The head CH:1 in England</i>	Everything you do should be because of Allah but after saying that see what we are supposed to do from the NC. According to the Koran we are doing everything that we are supposed to do – education.	As positive educational role models to emulate. I think about other head teachers I meet and see what the meaning is. You try to head the model yourself. Thanks to the Prophet Muhammad as a leader, try to follow him as an example.	Everything you do you can bring Islam into it. The values are not so different.
<i>The head DH:1 in England</i>	Everything I do is influenced by my belief in God. Cannot compromise about Islam. Have the skills that I might deliver to children in line with the NC because that is how a child's ability is measured should they move from one school to another.	As a Muslim and a head, I wish to develop the attributes of the holy Prophet Muhammad and therefore he is a positive role model.	More comfortable with using the word understanding or developing critical thinking. That which helps children to put forward views for themselves. My personal view is that if children are helped to think critically, they are also helped to be better Muslims – a lot of people will disagree with me, they do not ask questions. I have established contacts with the heads of a Jewish school, a Church of England school and a Catholic school. We work in a similar area.

positive values and teaching about Islam is the best school. The head DH:1 considered that a MP school would be best. A school that; adhered to the NC and give pupils possibility to learn about Islam, to pray and dress as a Muslim.

8.9. Is it possible to combine the National curriculum and its basic values with Islamic values and standards?

In Sweden the head AH:1 and the head BH:1 and deputy head BH:2 in Sweden believed that it was possible to combine the Swedish NC and its fundamental values with the system of values and norms of Islam.

In England the head CH:1 considered that Islam could be brought into

everything they did. She considered the values in the NC and in Islam were not so very different.

The head DH:1 said, that for her part, she would rather "talk about an understanding of values than combining values."

The heads, together with the owners of the schools, were of considerable importance with regard to which values were dominant in practice in various schools in Sweden and England. The Muslim heads in Sweden were not of the opinion that the fundamental values in the NC were in conflict with Islam, on the contrary they regarded the general values to be very Islamic.

Most often the owners and heads of school A and school B in Sweden and school D in England were one and the same person. On the other hand, in the case of school C there was a clear distinction. The owners of school C did not work in the school. The staff of school C felt there was a clear dividing line between them and the owners with regard to expectations concerning the Muslim profile of the school. According to the staff this distinction was largely because a large proportion of the staff were born in England or had lived most of their life there and that all of the staff except one were female. Therefore the staff held more secular views about the school compared to the owners, where all the latter were male and had lived only a relatively short time in England. They had recently arrived from societies with a more traditional view with regard to relations between men and women. In addition, they held private views on life which were very different from those held by the staff. Consequently, the staff attempted to walk a tight-rope between their own private life views and the demands and expectations placed on them (by their employers, the owners of the school and parents). There were open discussions among the staff on such issues as values.

8.10. Vision and ambitions of the heads of the case schools

The heads of the four case schools said that their goals were that their school would maintain standards at a high level of quality, that the pupils should attain good results and that the pupils would have a successful future.

In England the head DH:1 entertained a vision of a unified Islamic curriculum for all MP schools in Europe. She wanted the school to move to other premises as soon as possible so that they would have more space available. She wished to help children to see how to be a Muslim and be successful in the society in which they lived. That the pupils should be able to participate in society without losing their own identity or their academic successes. She also said she hoped they would get it right, although it might not yet being a part of a multicultural society. She hoped to help the pupils to understand the thought and spirit of Islam, the Koran and *hadith* and history, to be able to see how Muslims have lived successfully as part of multicultural communities and how important it is

to respect all religions, all cultures. It is necessary to go back in history, to numbers of Muslim communities, to avoid feeling insecure, isolating themselves. She wanted to help the next generation to feel more comfortable.

However she also told that as she looked ahead five years into the future, she would not want to be still working at the school.

When the Governor asked me, I promised to stay until the school was state-funded and until we had moved to another building. I will be able to move. I was interested in developing an International Curriculum. Develop good inspection of RE Islamic studies in England. Some have resources to support the teaching in Islamic schools. We need to establish some system for everybody, not only one or two schools. Training strategies to teach the Koran, RE. You have to change by making movies, video films. Exchange experiences across nations and internationally. I enjoy my job. I have fulfilled an ambition and developed the school. After that I need a brake. You need to get out and get an outlook. I have been with the school for 10-15 years. The criteria we have to follow are different from other independent schools. Time to get out, look at it from outside (DH:1).

The Muslim heads in Sweden who have participated in this study were not of the opinion that the fundamental values in the NC were in conflict with Islam, on the contrary they regarded the general values to be very Islamic.

The vision of the head AH:1 in Sweden was that the MP schools would eventually be absorbed into the municipal schools. This on condition that the municipal schools become serious partners. He pointed out that it was because the municipal schools had not in practice been able to live up to the goals and guidelines stipulated in the NC that he, like other Muslims, had founded a Swedish compulsory MP school.

The vision of the deputy head BH:2 was to have a school organization that worked.

Today I am expected to solve petty problems. Not everyone is clear about their duties. I want an organization where things move forward, which happens only sporadically today. There are many staff here who do not have any important duties. They are here to be on hand if anything breaks or other problems arise, but they are an expensive solution. We are still at the planning stage. There is a great deal of "fireman" activity but a concrete plan of action is needed for solving issues in the long term (BH:2) (author's translation).

The vision of the heads of school A and school B in Sweden was that MP schools would, in the future, be accepted not only on paper but also in reality by the responsible politicians and officials on the state and local level. The wish of the heads was that political decisions which had been made would permeate the actions of the state and local authorities towards MP schools and their acceptance. The

heads of the MP schools regarded this as a very strange arrangement, particularly since in debates some politicians claimed to be worried that MP schools would increase segregation in society and that these schools were not adhering to the NC. The heads regarded this as clear evidence that representatives of the local authorities were not interested in contributing to the creation of natural fora where heads, teachers, other staff, pupils and parents from MP schools could meet with heads, teachers, other staff, pupils and parents from municipal schools. The heads considered that this situation could be interpreted to mean that senior officials in the local authorities were in general opposed to independent schools, particularly MP schools. Both the heads and the staff stated that there were individual officials in the local authority administrations who in practice made things difficult or prevented the activities of the schools when dealing with such matters as delaying payments, answering queries, accepting or denying applications for resources for pupils with special needs and proposals for vacant school premises. That there were examples where individual officials, on their own initiative or together with colleagues, had prepared a “local authority policy” which was to apply only to MP schools. One such example which was taken up concerned a psychological assessment which had been commissioned by a MP school through which it was demonstrated that resources were required since the pupil concerned had special needs. The assessment had been carried out by a registered child psychologist who the school had commissioned. The assessment was not accepted by the responsible local authority official. The explanation was a claim that the policy of the local authority was that such assessments were only to be carried out by a child psychologist commissioned by the local authority. The head of the MP school then contacted the heads of the other non-Muslim independent schools in the local authority to find out if they too must commission the local authority’s own psychologist. It then emerged that these other independent schools had never heard of such a policy. They had commissioned the psychologist themselves. It was clear to the head and staff of the MP school that the newly proclaimed “local authority policy” had arisen in order to only apply to MP schools.

The teacher (BT:13) in school B said he had attempted to establish collaboration with a local authority school:

We asked those at a local authority school if they wanted to play football with our pupils, but they said no (author’s translation).

By denying heads, teachers, other staff and pupils at MP schools the opportunity to participate in the natural fora within the local authority, such as in-service courses, seminars and conferences, the local authority in Sweden has at the same time shown such exclusion to be part of its explicit fundamental values. These “exclusion values” on the part of the local authorities have thereby opened the flood-gates for the general Islamophobia of political groupings. In debates, politicians and local authority officials have often laid the blame at the door of MP schools (together with other independent schools) for the fall in

enrollments at municipal schools and the subsequent reduction in their budgets. A numbers of pupils have chosen to leave municipal schools in order to enroll at a MP school. The heads state that one important reason for Muslim parents removing their children from municipal schools in order to place them in a MP school is that they wished to help them escape from bullying and insults in municipal schools.

Chapter 9

The Teachers and other staff

9.1. Introduction

There are encounters between various actors in MP schools through the NC, state inspections, local authority oversight, the directives from various authorities, and pupils and their parents, teachers, pastoral care staff, other staff and school heads. All staff in a school play a part in transmitting the norms and values enshrined in the NC. At the same time school heads and teachers have a central duty to impart knowledge, norms and values.

This chapter provides an analysis and comparison of Muslim *profiled* schools in Sweden and the UK, on the basis of the views of teachers and other staff. In this chapter, a number of comparisons and contrasts are drawn between school A and school B in Sweden on the one hand and school C and school D in England on the other hand. There is a comparison of the understandings and points of view of teachers and other staff and the manner in which teachers and other staff had dealt with encounters between Islamic principles and ethics and the principles and ethics which permeate the NC.

It has been considered to be of great importance in this chapter to not only make visible the differences and similarities between the schools in Sweden and England, but also those between each school in each country respectively. Equally important has been the importance, to make visible the differences and similarities in understanding and points of view between the interviewees in each school through quotations.

There were differences in the working environments which they shared at these schools, exactly as is the case at other workplaces. At the time of the field work, the working environment was particularly positive at two of the schools that participated in this study. The attribute that characterized these schools was the open and permissive atmosphere. Here the staff was engaged in discussions on concrete practical issues, educational issues and issues concerning values and norms. During the breaks, various teaching subjects were discussed together with issues to do with their leisure time activities, home and children. There were also differences between the schools with regard to the physical environment. At those schools with particularly positive working environments, the staff was provided with a common staff room which in itself

provided the opportunity for more open communication and attitudes. The pace of work for teachers at these schools was also less hectic, largely because the supervision of pupils during breaks was not included on the teachers' timetables. They provided the teachers with more time for meetings with colleagues to discuss educational issues and/or for informal coffee-table discussions and/or to prepare lessons.

The non-Muslims working at the MP schools in both countries related that, ever since taking up their posts, it had been necessary for them to both defend the school and the fact that they worked there. Some members of their families, friends and acquaintances had questioned the appropriateness of a non-Muslim working at a MP school. Such questioning and queries from friends and acquaintances had intensified during instances where Islam, Muslims and MP schools had all made the front-page headlines.

Most of the teachers and other staff stated that they were satisfied with their work. When asked if they believed they would still be working in the school in five year times, most of them replied in the affirmative. Several of the Muslim staff answered yes, but with the addition of: *In sha allah* (God willing).

Those working at school C and school D in England were largely women. On the other hand, those working in school A and school B in Sweden consisted of both men and women teachers and other staff. Many of the Muslims who worked as teachers or other staff at school A and school B in Sweden had migrated as refugees. They reported that their belief in God had helped them transfer some of their painful and traumatic memories of war to another, non-secularized, religious dimension of their lives. One of the results of their daily prayers to God had been to transfer/express their sorrow over close family members and friends having lost their lives or been injured through war. Through prayers they have expressed their worry about the future for themselves and their families in Sweden, a country far away from the country they had been forced to leave and far away from family and friends who remained behind who they will perhaps never meet again. Their belief has helped them, after so many years of struggle and sorrow about all that they have lost, to nonetheless be able to go on and to face, with renewed strength, an engagement in a new future for themselves and their families in Sweden.

There are a number of fundamental differences between the staff at school A and at school B in Sweden. Firstly, the number of staff was much higher at school B and the Muslim staff employed there had been in Sweden a shorter time, many had arrived as adults and many of the volunteers had also lived in the country a shorter time. Many of the Muslim staff had come to Sweden as refugees. The level of language skills in Swedish and knowledge of Swedish society was more limited with regard to a number of the Muslim staff at school B. This was presumably one of the causes of many misunderstandings and conflicts among the staff at school B.

Among the Muslim staff at school A in Sweden there were, on the one hand, those who were born in Sweden and those who had come to Sweden as children

who had attended a Swedish day-care and school, while on the other hand there were those who had come to Sweden as adults. Some had backgrounds as refugees, others had come to study. There were those among the staff who had their own experiences of municipal schools in Sweden. Consequently, compared to school B, there was greater knowledge and experience of municipal schools, the NC and Swedish society among the Muslim staff at school A.

9.2. What are the attributes of a successful head?

Teachers and other staff at the MP schools, school A and school B in Sweden, considered that the attributes of the successful head are that he or she has trust in their staff and provides the staff with the freedom to carry out, and be responsible for, their own work. Furthermore, a successful head creates a positive working environment whereby teachers and other staff members are able to avoid getting caught up in endless discussions about minute details. Another important attribute is that the head must have a profound understanding of Swedish society and the ability to demonstrate respect for that society, not only through mere "theoretical" talk, but rather to be able to demonstrate this through actions and deeds, to be not only determined but also flexible, even "soft." They considered it important that a successful head really works for the best interest of the pupils to ensure that they would have future opportunities to do well in Sweden. Furthermore, teachers and other staff members thought the successful head to be a person who is good at listening to the opinions of the staff with an ability to synthesize inputs and put the ideas of everyone to use, to be straightforward, frank and prepared to reach compromises. He or she must also be a good organizer.

Teachers and other staff members said it was important for the head to get to know the members of the staff while at the same it was also important for him or her to be able to retain a certain aloofness. It was also essential that the head be a person from whom teachers and other staff are able to feel support and with whom they are able to discuss anything and everything. He or she should be able to support a teacher in contacts with parents, particularly where differences of opinion or other problems have arisen. Furthermore, the teachers considered that a head should be well versed in school issues, should have some educational background in field of education and finance, and some practical experience of working with pupils.

A successful head should also be able to pick out those pupils who are experiencing difficulties and to ensure that appropriate support be provided. In addition the head ought to be able to address the various behaviours of pupils equally and thereby avoid treating anybody differently on the basis of quality being preferable to quantity. Furthermore, the head should be appropriately involved in the daily activities of the school, providing support to both the pupils and teachers, prepared to assist with discipline and any misbehaviour

on the part of pupils. Moreover, the successful head ought to be easy to talk to, able to listen to new ideas, to be fair, regarding each person as an individual, to be open, want the best for staff and pupils and not be focused on what is best for him or herself. A successful head is of good character. He or she will see the pupils and their needs. Teachers and other staff who have previously lived and worked in countries where there had been a work organisation that was clearly hierarchical, stated how unfamiliar and difficult it had been for them to adapt to the relatively non-hierarchical work organisation structure found in Sweden. Teacher AT:2 in Sweden states:

It is different to be a head in Sweden compared to my home country. Here in Sweden the organisation is flat. There is no separation between what is above and below.

The successful head should have a sense of presence and control in the school. He or she should be able to work together with “experts” both inside and outside the school with the purpose of providing, in the most appropriate manner, the necessary support to pupils with special needs. The successful head ought to establish educational goals for the activities of the schools, provide clear information and ensure that all concerned feel involved. He or she should have a sociable manner in part to be able to maintain business-like contacts with the local authority and other authorities, in part to keep an informal network of other people outside the school, and in part to adopt a flexible approach in the workplace.

Moreover, the staff considered that a successful head must know when it was not always necessary to be strict. A head should be able to read other people and assess the levels of responsibility they would be able to manage rather than the head feeling he or she must always be controlling them. Furthermore, they considered that it is important to be able to encourage and train the staff in order for them to be able to take on greater responsibilities for certain matters rather than acting as a policeman, checking on and controlling everyone to ensure that everything is being done correctly. A successful head allows responsibility to rule. At the same time, a head needs to have a great deal to offer staff members and to be strong, be able to work together with parents and maintain close contacts with the homes of the pupils. A successful head must have an understanding of the diversity of traditions found among employees and pupils. He or she needs to know the requirements of the pupils and what they want. The head should be very close to the pupils. It is important that all teachers and heads be leaders in a sense, that they are the ones who make decisions. On the other hand, teachers must be teachers and the head the head.

It is important to be punctual – it is not good for teachers or the head to be late. It is important to be a positive role model for the pupils and to have empathy, to be able to sense the way in which staff experience their work in the workplace. To be able to take difficult decisions, be knowledgeable and familiar with the

objectives of the educational plan, as well as being open to development, having social competence and maintain outside contacts with other schools. To be able to communicate with politicians and officials in the local authority and to be effective in making out and communicating their case.

There was a certain difference, albeit very small, in general views between Muslim and non-Muslim staff with regard to successful heads in schools. Muslim staff considered it to be particularly important that the relationship between staff and head be a well-functioning one. A successful head should trust his/her staff and support them by demonstrating respect and trust. The head should have a sensitive ear with regard to his/her staff. Be of exemplary character. Non-Muslim staff considered it particularly important that the successful head be a person who knows his/her subject well and who can offer support to the staff in their relationships with pupils and parents. A person who is of assistance in the practicalities of the work of the teachers, who has experience of working with children and who is involved in the daily life of the pupils.

In Sweden teacher BO:2 considered that the divisions of responsibility between different posts in the school were unclear.

In England, teachers and other staff at the MP schools, school C and school D, considered that the attributes of the successful head include he/she keeping the staff united as a group and being able to listen to them. Support the pupils and staff. He/she must maintain good relationships with parents and have a strong personality, responsible, caring and sympathetic. To be able to negotiate, to be diplomatic, to be organised, to be able to demonstrate assertiveness, are also major attributes. He/she must be able to delegate responsibilities and to be fair. He/she has to be able to understand the individual people around. Everybody should be treated well. He/she must be able to approach each individual in a comfortable manner.

The teacher (CT:7) states:

The relationship here is different when compared to my country. In my country, it is more strict.

A successful head is someone who is involved in all aspects of the school. Sympathetic, understanding towards each teacher and their individual needs. A head who can delegate. They must be aware what is going on at each level of the school. To be able to draw out the expertise from each teacher. To take a lead and make decisions. Listening skills, clear ideas from each one. Good communicator, the ability to see things from various different vantage points. Always have time, to be available as much as possible, not favour anyone. To be fair and know what is going on, to be informed about all things and to be strong. Good organizational skills communications, building good relationships. Support the teachers, good organiser and positive personality. Listen to others and is prepared to take advice. To be able to accept criticism. Compassionate, willing to lead. Willing to take flack.

Teacher (CO:2) in England states:

Knowledgeable about issues related to the community. Long-term vision. Has to be formally qualified. Not to mix emotion with duty. Strong Muslim character. Fair to the teachers. Role model with regard to Islamic values.

However, teacher (CT:11) said:

I do not think a person with PhD is better as a head.

Need a head who is a Muslim and understands the culture. It helps the teacher (CT:15).

9.3. Advantages of a school with a Muslim profile compared to a municipal school

The staff at school A and school B in Sweden considered that one advantage of a MP school was that there, the pupils could learn about Islam. That there were young Muslims in society which not knew so much about Islam. Young people who “dress like Saudi Arabs.” The staff said that young people limit their discussions to clothes, they learn about parts but do not see the whole. Pupils in a MP school are taught about Islam in such a way that they are able to draw the line at extremism. The staff work towards integration. They work against the isolation of Muslims.

School A in Sweden

According to the staff at school A, a further advantage of a MP school was that a great deal was done by the school to provide support to the pupils. These measures of support included having classes with fewer pupils, more teaching time in smaller groups and employing multilingual staff with multi-cultural and intercultural competence. The number of pupils in each class was kept lower in order for each pupil to receive more individual attention from the teacher.

The staff also mentioned another advantage of the MP school compared to the municipal school, i.e. that the school head, teachers, other staff and pupils in a MP school understand Muslim cultures. That the collective competencies of the staff included knowledge of Swedish society and the background countries of the pupils and/or their parents together with Islam. The staff had their origins in a large number of different countries, something that implied a high level of linguistic and cultural competence which had considerable significance in contacts with pupils and parents. They stressed in particular the positive relationships among colleagues as being of considerable value. The staff included Muslims and non-Muslims with roots in Sweden and in many other countries were all able to work well together.

Here the Muslim head with an immigrant background was the leader for a heterogenous group of staff. This implied that also at the management level there was to be found personal experience of the effects of migration to a new country with a different language and culture.

A further advantage of a MP school which the staff brought up was access to a prayer room for those pupils who wished to take part in prayers. Yet another advantage was that pupils and parents who had recently arrived in Sweden respectively England came into contact with Muslim families, Muslim and non-Muslim staff who were integrated into Swedish respectively English society. This facilitated the possibility for pupils and parents to take up what they considered to be difficult issues with regard to their encounters with Swedish respectively English societies and the respective school systems. Not all Muslim parents practiced Islam but may still have wished to enrol their children in a MP school. They said that they wanted their children to respect adults and that they should not learn foul language. This was a significant contributing factor toward positive collaboration between teachers and pupils.

The teacher (AT:1) said:

The same things are taught in the Swedish municipal schools, but the pupils are unable to follow it. Here the pupils learn that there is no difference between people, black, Arab, Swedish and so on (author's translation).

The staff pointed out that pupils in a school with Muslim profile were able to relax since, for example, they no longer needed to explain why they did not eat pork or why they wore *hijab*. Another advantage was that pupils were not exposed to harassment and abuse. They learned more about Swedish respectively English society. A means for creating an identity before setting out to defend oneself, confront being in the middle. To teach pupils that which is Islam and tradition.

School B in Sweden

According to the staff at school B, a further advantage of a MP school was that the pupils are not subject to harassment and the girls were not called Easter witches. That those working at the school were able to assist the pupils and encourage pupils to be proud of their backgrounds/identities. That staff and pupils learn to know each other. Everyone knows everyone else.

The teacher (BT:3) explained as follows:

Irrespective if it is a pupil in Year 9 or Year 1 who are breaking a rule, I am able to react. Or, for example, to look after a pupil in Year 1 who needs comforting when waiting for a parent to arrive by reading a children's story.

A further advantage taken up by the staff was that the school assisted the process of integration and that pupils with special needs received more teaching

support.

In municipal schools almost nothing is done to assist the process of integration. That which happen in municipal schools I would not call integration, but disillusion, they are disillusioned (BT:6).

That which works particularly well at school B is that those pupils with special needs receive more special education than they did previously in municipal schools (BT:7).

Another advantage, pupils who have migrated to Sweden did not feel so alone in a MP school. Language is of considerable psychological significance.

According to the teacher (BT:8),

Two new pupils – they were so happy. They have far to travel to school, but they want to attend this school because having friends is so important (BT:8).

The pupils and their parents feel more secure, more sociable in this small world, not bullied. They know that the staff have extensive knowledge and long experience with regard to the culture and langue of pupils. The food is *halal*. Helps them with regard to the home and the school – adaptation of food. Swimming is no problem in a school with a Muslim profile. Pupils learn to swim in girl groups and boy groups.

It might work well here but the primary difficulty is language. As a parent wishing to enrol my child, it is important to understand that the child knows the language. It is better if the pupil knows a little Swedish before enrolling. But it is difficult for a pupil to first attend a municipal school for a year and then begin here. There are disadvantages with municipal schools. I know pupils/families who report that their children have been bullied at a municipal school (BT:13) .

It is positive for pupils who have recently migrated to Sweden. It is positive for those whoonly speak Arabic (BO:1).

School C in England

In England the staff in school C saw as advantages that pupils were aware of religion, they learned from an Islamic perspective and pupils may take part in prays and obey the fast. They educate pupils about morals in a Muslim context. Another advantage they mentioned was to work with other Muslims and Muslim parents. “You know everyone in the school.” According to the staff at school C, a further advantage of a MP school was that such schools were more friendly, had better control of pupils, safe environment and give opportunities for the pupils to learn about their religion and culture.

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Experience from municipal schools is that there are different values among the staff. Some of this was difficult for a Muslim to listen to (CT:13).

Good morale, structural side. They believe in God. In municipal schools they do not do that. In a Christian school there is more caring feel about the school (CT:14).

According to the staff at school C, a further advantage of a MP school was that studying Islam was good for the pupils. It was not sufficient to learn about culture and Islam at home. The curriculum is not contrary to Islamic beliefs. That all are working towards the same goals. That the pupils do not feel isolated, more unity.

You do not pick up ideas from just anywhere. In municipal schools, they are not clear about morals (CT:4).

School D in England

According to the staff at school D, one advantage of a MP school was that pupils were in an Islamic environment all day. A MP school was able to help the pupils to identify with a group of Muslims which were teaching about Islam. Pupils were provided with knowledge both about Islam and the NC. They had the opportunity to pray. They were provided with everything necessary at school and therefore did not need to attend a Koran school in evenings or at weekends.

This school is important for the Muslim community itself. Islamic awareness. Trying to breed good Muslims. In a school with a Muslim profile, Muslims pupils heard about their own religion. But in municipal schools they did not do so. Pupils learned about their religion (DT:4).

Muslim teachers are able to be their role-models. Because here all have the same culture, the same background, the same religion. All doing the same thing (DT:1).

9.4. Disadvantages of a school with a Muslim profile compared to a municipal school

School A in Sweden

In Sweden the staff at school A regarded disadvantages of a MP school to include the little contact the pupils had with Swedish pupils, pupils with Swedish as their mother-tongue. There were various opinions among the staff with regard to disadvantages of attending a MP school compared to a municipal school.

These different views included: pupils at the school who had previously attended a municipal school had expected that the school would celebrate Swedish festivals, that this was the age at which pupils consolidate their identities and a religion might constrict this, to be first and foremost a child, a person and it depends on how a religion was transmitted to children, that religion was very much an individual matter, difficult to absorb in a neutral manner, that the child might be put in some category, that it might so limit the child that life became difficult, that it might be the case that only immigrant children were enrolled at MP schools.

One disadvantage is that the only Swedish the pupils hear is from me and the other teachers. (author's translation) The teacher (AT:8) declared: It is difficult to say since ours is a newly-opened school, in its fourth term. But one thing is that the pupils live in different parts of the town. They did not know each other. It has taken time for them to learn to know each other. It would have been easier if the pupils had lived in the same area. Some of the pupils were to attend preparatory classes to learn Swedish. We have pupils who have previously attended municipal schools but who still do not know Swedish very well. Some of the parents have expected us to take over parental roles but we do not take on the responsibilities of the home (AT:7).

The pupils lived in their own small world, with little contact with Swedish and consequently have a lower level of integration.

They do not have the possibility to watch how Swedish children pack their lunch-box when they go for a picnic. They need to meet other Swedish children (AT:4).

Those pupils who have previously attended a Swedish municipal school have been Swedified. They ask – can we not take part in the Lucia Parade, make Easter and Christmas decorations, celebrate Advent – they miss all that, it is a conflict, embarrassing. Some have a Christmas tree at home, contrary to Islam. But some still have one and consequently the others believe it to be wrong (AT:5).

The teacher (AO:2) pointed out:

At a school such as this one, where almost all the pupils are immigrants, more pastoral care is required since many of them migrated here as refugees who have previously experienced many difficult things.

The teacher (AO:3) was of the opinion that:

The only disadvantage is that there are so many immigrant pupils and not enough of them are able to speak Swedish. But on the other hand, in municipal

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schools, the pupils forms groups such as Kurds, Swedes and so on. Many of the parents are not practicing Muslims. It is important to separate out that which belongs to Islam per se and that which is specific for to the culture. Distinguish that which is found in Sweden – to live in that society were one is.

The staff at school A stated that there were no disadvantages with regard to MP schools specifically but rather those that were associated with independent schools generally. That independent schools did not have the same possibilities as municipal schools since it was necessary for independent schools to purchase services which was not the case with regard to municipal schools. For example, if the school required an investigation to be carried out, such as a psychological assessment, then the school had to commission and pay for this service. On the other hand, with regard to municipal schools, there were special resources available such as pastoral care, psychologist and doctor at some centre within the local authority concerned.

The teacher (AT:9) claimed that

There are no disadvantages. Perhaps that the pupils do not have any Swedish school friends.

School B in Sweden

At school B, the disadvantages described by the staff included: the particularly vulnerable position of MP schools, for example, when a teacher was absent, since the level of knowledge of the pupils varied considerably, that pupils in Year 1 began to learn two languages – Swedish and Arabic. There was so much the pupils were required to learn.

The teacher (BT:6) stated:

Since most of the pupils are from very difficult social background, this is a negative aspect. They do not learn Swedish properly, sufficiently well and quickly enough.

We live in Sweden, we have to learn Swedish. The pupils speak Arabic during the breaks (BT:8).

Pupils are free within their religion but do not know how they should react with regard to other religions. Muslim pupils in municipal schools are bullied more often. In a mixed school, the Muslim pupils and non-Muslim pupils might be more open with regard to views of each other. At present they have a different view of Swedes, that all Swedes eat *haram* food. You eat pork, I don't want to be with you.

There is a difference between their views and mine. It is strange to be separated from each other during some of the most significant years and then together.

The pupils need more Swedish teachers. Swedish language is important, Swedish culture and tradition. I believe they have too little of those (BT:12).

A further disadvantage described by teachers in school B was that parents most often took direct contact with the head rather than first taking up with the teacher concerned the points of view they wish to put forward with regard to teaching or the situation in the classroom.

Parents demand a great deal and complain that the teacher is no good (BT:4).

In addition, the staff described as a disadvantage that the working environment in school B was less good in comparison to other schools in the vicinity. The teacher (BT:7) pointed out that

It is over-crowded and there are no suitable places to play such as a football pitch.

At the time of the field work, the level of noise in certain classrooms in school B was very high. Pupils found it difficult to concentrate and the teacher spent a considerable amount of the teaching time in attempting to persuade pupils to concentrate on their work. The explanation offered regarding the cause of the disturbance in several classrooms was that many of the pupils in these classes were refugees who had arrived in school B recently from abroad. They bore traumatic experiences with them and were unable to speak Swedish. Therefore considerable additional resources were required in order to be able to organize teaching in smaller groups than was considered by the school to be financially viable at the time. Teachers for special needs and greater access to psychologists were required. The school head of the school had requested more resources from the local authority concerned to be able to provide adequate support to pupils with special needs but without success.

The teacher (BT:5) described this as follows:

The pupils do not know what peace and quiet is. They spin round on their chairs, there is a lot of noise. At the same time, when we in the evening phones to the homes of the pupils, it is also noisy in their homes. It is hard to keep them calm. Have heard that there are also disturbances at municipal schools but a step more serious. Here one has to keep checking all the time.

The vast majority of the staff were very critical of the relevant officials in the local authority. They considered that their at school B, was treated unfairly in comparison to the municipal school and other independent schools. That there was an attitude, an opposition, on the part of those officials from the very start, towards the MP school.

Some of the non-Muslim staff related that, on different occasions, when

meeting representatives from the local authority, they explicitly stated that they hoped they would be able to close down school B. These local authority officials could rarely remember the name of school B but referred to all MP schools as “Islamic schools.” These members of staff went on to state that these local authority officials regretted that the government and the *Riksdag* had made the decision to allow the establishment of MP schools.

The teachers and other staff said that one disadvantage with the MP school was that resources were limited. That there was a shortage of financial resources. There was a lack of material resources such as computers and staff resources such as teachers for pupils with special needs, and so on.

As mentioned before many of the pupils attending this school and their parents had come to Sweden as refugees. Parents and their children bore various traumatic experiences and found it difficult to concentrate on learning the Swedish language. The school had requested additional resources from the local authority to be able to better support the language development of the pupils. The staff claimed that the resources received by the school were a long way short of that which they had a right to be granted, according to the law. Teachers and other staff at school B were convinced that had they been a municipal school, their application for addition resources would have been granted in full. Teachers and other staff said that even if the pupils, instead of attending this school, had attended their local municipal school, it is highly likely that they would not have had any classmates who had Swedish as their mother-tongue.

The teacher (BT:1) claimed:

There are the same difficulties at the municipal schools in residential areas with a high density of immigrants – that there are no Swedish pupils, pupils who have Swedish as their mother-tongue (author’s translation).

We live in Sweden, we have to learn Swedish. The pupils speak Arabic during the breaks (BT:8).

Pupils are free within their religion but do not know how they should react with regard to other religions. Muslim pupils in municipal schools are bullied more often. In a mixed school, the Muslim pupils and non-Muslim pupils might be more open with regard to views of each other. At present they have a different view of Swedes, that all Swedes eat *haram* food. You eat pork, I don’t want to be with you.

There is a difference between their views and mine. It is strange to be separated from each other during some of the most significant years and then together. The pupils need more Swedish teachers. Swedish language is important, Swedish culture and tradition. I believe they have too little of those (BT:12).

According to teachers and other staff, a MP school does not have access to any of the backup resources in the local authority. A municipal school, on the other

hand, has the advantage of access to the whole of the administration in the local authority as well as the expertise while independent schools have to take care of all issues that arise on their own.

The staff also claimed that earlier there had been a problem at the school when school materials such as books and pens had disappeared. Eventually it emerged that it was some pupils who had come to the school directly from abroad who had taken these things and hidden them in various places round the school. The explanation for them doing so was that previously collected pens and books, and other things, to save for emergencies. These pupils, who bore terrible war experiences with them, who had lost their homes, who had witnessed how members of their families had been killed, had collected things because they had been afraid that when war came these objects would disappear. One of the teachers had spoken with these pupils and promised that if the pens were to run out, the teacher would fetch more.

School C in England

The disadvantages taken up by the staff at school C in England confronting MP schools was that school C risked isolating the pupils from the community. Especially that the school did not teach pupils about other religions.

The teacher (CT:4) said:

You don't know what is going on outside. It is dangerous being too isolated. Not knowing what is going on around you.

Maybe the pupils do not know enough about life outside the school (CT:13).

The teacher (CT:10) proposed:

Not necessary to separate one religion in one school. The Pupils need to meet other ideas. At one point pupils have to go out into society. It can be a shock for them later.

Another disadvantage that some teachers described was that girls were strongly encouraged to wear *hijab* and were not to have their arms showing, which hinders them when playing netball. In summer they got very hot as they had to keep their arms and legs covered.

Still another disadvantage that the staff talked about was that outsiders looked at school C as only teaching the Koran and Arabic. Even Muslims do so. A further disadvantage was that there was a lack of basic resources. They were on a larger scale in municipal schools. They possibly had more facilities and were more able to do different things. Since the funding for school C in England was not through state funding they had limited resources.

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We don't have a wonderful state ... we need books, materiel resources. But we are building up (CT:3).

An additional disadvantage taken up by the staff at school C was that there were greater pressures from parents on teachers. Also they considered that the MP school did not provide teaching in Music to be a disadvantage.

I am not sure if I can see any disadvantages. Maybe we do not teach music, but I do not like it myself. I am not sure it is a disadvantage (CT:14).

School D in England

In school D in England most of the teachers and other staff stated that they were not aware of any disadvantages with regards to a MP school compared to municipal schools. Yet, some of the disadvantages mentioned were that school D did not teach anything about other religions and that pupils did not meet pupils who had other beliefs than Islam.

The teacher (DT:3) thought the disadvantage was:

Probably that they did not mix with pupils with other faiths and they do not learn about other religions. We do so, but not in detail.

The pupils do not get knowledge about other religions. We live in a multicultural society, it is important to know about others (DT:9).

9.5. Muslim rules in school for staff and pupils

Unlike school A and school B in Sweden, there were written Muslim rules in school C and school D in England which were defined as being Islamic and to which staff and pupils were expected to abide. The women and girls in school A and school B in Sweden were able to choose themselves whether or not to wear *hijab*. *Hijab* was not worn by all Muslim girls and women. Both those women who wore *hijab* and those who chose not to do so claimed to have support for their choice in the Koran.

School C in England

The Muslim rules/school policy in school C in England to which all were expected to abide included dress providing complete cover, wearing hijab, looking simple but smart, appropriate behaviour, speaking appropriate language. Non-Muslim staff were also expected to wear full-length skirts and not tight trousers. They were to wear modest clothes, not too tight, not sexy.

The teacher (CT:7) described the rules as follows:

To wear *hijab*. In the playground or in the classroom, we have to tell them what Islam says about that. We are leaders for the pupils, so we have to show them what the rules are. I did not wear *hijab* before. Our choice, not many women in my home country wear *hijab*. My husband did not like it at first. I wear *hijab* also after school now.

As a women You are not to wear jeans or trousers, because the pupils follow us. Muslims wear long, wide and comfortable clothes, good and suitable for praying. It is not possible for a women and a man to sit together alone in a room. But if they keep the door open, it is possible.

Celebration of birthdays is a problem for some. Because the Prophet Mohamed did not celebrate birthdays. I do not celebrate. We asked scholars so we have just to follow those rules. In the beginning it was a problem.

Muslim teachers and other Muslim staff must wear *hijab*.

According to the teacher (CT:1)

Staff here have to wear *hijab*. I started wearing *hijab* here. We do not have celebrations. I found it hard. In my home country we celebrate different days and also our birthdays. We do not draw faces. Rules from parents not to draw. It makes work hard.

The teacher (CT:6) stated that rules implied

Not having differences or thoughts on various rules. Not to accept behaviour that was not accepted in England or under Islamic rules. Junior girls more aware of *hijab* and modest clothes. Both boys and girls follow Islamic way of preparing for prayers.

The teacher (CT:17) stated

The staff in school C follow "The Staff Handbook." For dress, everything must to be covered, except hands and the face. Not to wear transparent clothes. Trustees here are always men. Men do not sit down and talk. It is not an easy atmosphere. Men do not laugh. I do not understand that.

While the teacher (CT:8) stated:

In School C, the staff said that if women and men are dressed appropriately they may sit in a room, but not one woman together with one man. During parents evenings, fathers may come and discuss with the door open. The head had a glass window into her office so that anyone in the corridor would be able to see in to her office.

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Boys and girls may sit together up until the age of 10. I wanted to separate them a little more and not let them play together. I wanted to see more separation after Year 5.

The teacher (CT:9) said rules covered

Dress, wearing *hijab*. No Christian celebrations or parties, Halloween, magic. Subjects like science are difficult because we talk about bodies. We do not dance and do not have Music as a subject. We sing Islamic songs with drums.

The teacher (CT:10) mentioned that:

Not all Muslims wear *hijab* outside school, but in school they must.

If there had been more male staff at school C in England, the school would have provided one staff room only for women and one staff room only for men. It was not permitted for a woman or girl to sit alone with a man or boy. Doors should be open. The staff said that when the pupils were older, they did not wish to sit together.

Generally, the school encouraged the fathers of pupils to talk with a female teacher even though this implied that they (a woman and a man) might be sitting alone in a room. The school arranged such meetings in such a way that they took place openly with the door to the classroom remaining open or in a room where there was a clear view from outside. According to the staff this was an important measure to protect the man and the woman from all suspicions that anything improper was taking place.

The teacher (CT:1) stated that:

It should be possible for women and men to sit together one to one in a room. But I do not know how it is in society. From the parents here, it seems to be very strict. It should not be like that. Islamic society is special. Before I did not think about Islamic rules like the ones here.

School C separated boys and girls from 9 years of age, even in the classroom. Girls and boys were not allowed to dress in front of each other in the school.

We don't like boys and girls to be too free with each other. Do not touch each other (CT:4).

In school C it was made clear from Year 5, from the age of 9 to 10, that boys and girls were not to sit together. Teachers claimed that this was not problematic because boys and girls did not wish to sit together. Boys would regard it as a punishment to have to sit with a girl.

We try not to mix women and men or girls and boys. Islam teaches us that it is not ethical to do so. You may have to sometimes sit together to have a good chat but then you have to have a colleague with you (CT:6).

She also stated that

As Muslims we do not sit close together. We are not sitting alone together, a man and woman. Boys and girls can sit together in a room, but not when they come to the Muslim High School.

The teacher (CT:11) explained:

If we have a Koran teacher, we do not shake hands (man and woman) or stand up. If they are westernized, I wait to see what they are going to do.

Another rule at school C was not to speak negatively about the English, about Christians.

The teacher (CT:8) stated:

We are open to non-Muslims but some people do not like to be. You have to talk about what Christianity and Jewish religions are.

The teacher (CT:15) said

Each culture. It depends from where I come. Some of the culture changes. Islamic people here translate the Koran. Each one follows the culture of their parents.

The teacher (CT:16) commented that

It is easy to spot any staff who are “very ardent” about Islam and those who are more “liberal.”

School D in England

In school D, not only Muslim women but also non-Muslim female teachers and other non-Muslim female staff had to wear *hijab*.

The teacher (DT:9) stated

We are role-models for the pupils, because of that non-Muslim women must wear *hijab*.

The teacher (DT:2) described the rules as follows:

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We have to dress in an Islamic manner. Women and girls have to wear *hijab* and not wear trousers.

The teacher (DT:10) said:

The girls have to wear leggings during swimming lessons.

And the teacher (DT:3) stated:

We have to respect every one and speak politely and use Islamic language.

The teachers said that when they had a party, men and women did not sit together. When they ended the fast, women were in one room and men in another room. When they had a meeting at the school, men sat on one side. If the trustees visited and had something to say to a teacher, they may have sat alone with the door a little open.

For swimming lessons, boys and girls were separated. One of the teachers related that once she had forgotten a local paper on a table in which there was a picture of a half-naked person. The pupils had one word for it: bad.

The English and the Swedish Muslim Profiled Schools

In the two schools in Sweden, in contrast to the two schools in England, there were no rules which restricted girls and boys or women and men from mixing. On the other hand, at various meetings at the schools, parents and pupils usually separated themselves according to whether they were girls or boys, women or men.

With regard to the professional relationships between the Muslim majority and the non-Muslim minority in the two schools in England, these were quite different compared to those in the two schools in Sweden. Among the reasons for these differences are those which arose from the parameters laid down by the state for these schools. The two schools in England were permitted to integrate Islam into their everyday activities and to establish their own selection criteria for those applying for places. These circumstances also had a not inconsiderable effect on the professional relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims at these schools. Since the two schools in England had adopted a Muslim profile, and since the target groups were Muslim children, together with Religious Knowledge being taught in accordance with their local curricula and largely focused on Islam, there was consequently little space available for the non-Muslim. Nonetheless, there were still considerable differences between the two schools in England.

In comparison to school D, there was more space in school C for the non-Muslim. For example, in school C there were no explicit or implicit requirements that non-Muslim women were to wear *hijab*, whereas in school D there was such a requirement. Among other activities at school C was the regular

bazaar and café. This was an outreach activity involving pupils and parents and the non-Muslims who lived as neighbours to the school.

However, the teacher (CT:5) in school C considered that it was better for the pupils not to be attending mixed groups of Muslims and non-Muslims:

Better the pupil grow up with Muslims than in mixed groups.

Nothing Christian was permitted in school C or school D – not even the Christian calendar.

In comparison to school C, there was a greater field of tension in school D between the Muslim and the non-Muslim which had effects on the professional relationships between the Muslim and non-Muslim staff. It was expected/required in school D that non-Muslim women who worked at the school should wear *hijab*. Furthermore, as was required of the Muslim teachers, they were expected to begin the first lesson of the day by reading together with the pupils from a regular and predetermined Islamic text. This might be interpreted as implying that the owners of the school wished to eradicate part of the non-Muslim features of the school. That it was not advantageous to display a school having a multitude of forms of expression and ideas. On the contrary, bearing in mind the recruitment of new pupils, it was important to show the school as being Muslim with a minimal amount of influence from the diverse and pluralistic society outside the school.

The explanation for non-Muslims having accepted the requirement as described above might in part be the fact that at the time of the field study, it was difficult to find employment as a teacher. The non-Muslim staff at the two schools in England expressed their satisfaction with their work with the pupils and colleagues. At the same time some of them explained that they felt uncomfortable with not being able to fully implement their profession. There was a nagging discomfort with regard to making mistakes and or being misunderstood. That any criticisms might be interpreted as a criticism of Islam and or Muslims. Their terms of employment may in part be interpreted as being highly conditional together with very limited opportunities to give expression to criticisms with regard, for example, to the Muslim profile. Consequently, it was necessary for them to hold back part of their profession and their personalities with the effect that in practice the opportunities were also reduced for pupils to encounter the non-Muslim. Some of the Muslim staff in school C claimed that it was important that the class teachers be Muslim. But on the other hand, there was no restriction on non-Muslim staff working as teaching assistants. They considered it to be important that the pupils largely met Muslim staff who were also able to lead the morning assembly and prayers. In contrast to school C, in school D the class teachers might also be non-Muslims. Teachers who were non-Muslims were expected to lead the Islamic morning assembly and read aloud texts on the Islamic faith together with the pupils.

9.6. What difficulties and conflicts face the school?

In Sweden, the staff at school B stated that there were difficulties and conflicts between the staff at the school.

Teachers speak Arabic with each other so that I do not know what they are talking about – it might be about me. Those of us who speak Swedish are the last to get to know things. That is very uncomfortable. We get to know the things they want us to know, there is no open dialogue (BT:4).

There were also fights between the pupils.

Since the pupils speak Arabic, I don't know what is being said and therefore I don't know who start the fights and who to administer a rebuke. Everyone blames the others (BT:4).

Another difficulty taken up by the staff at school B in Sweden was that some parents kept moving their children, on the smallest pretext; they transferred their children to another MP school and then, after a few weeks, to a municipal school and later back again. The staff at school B felt that some of the officials in the local authority were blocking their work.

The teacher (BT:1) stated:

We are not granted resources for pupils with special needs. There is one local authority official who is blocking our work. That person tries to make hell for us in all possible ways.

The teacher (AT:8) at school A related that one problem was that pupils in the various classes had attained different levels of language competence whereby teaching was made more difficult. He (she) stated:

That the pupils are from different areas means that they do not know each other. The Swedish language is another problem. The pupils are at such different levels. Some of the pupils were born in Sweden, some of them have attended day-care here, while others came to Sweden only a few years ago.

In England the staff at school C and school D described various difficulties in their respective schools. All the staff, except one, were women at school C. The staff were seldom, if ever, involved in issues concerning changes at the school. Some of the staff believed that the explanation for this might have been that all the trustees were men. That they did not take any notice of them. Most of the trustees were from Arab countries or from Pakistan while the staff was largely made up of women who were born and brought up in England. The staff considered that there was not sufficient communication between the head, the

trustees and the teachers. Also, difficulties had also arisen because there were such a range of different ideas among the parents. Some of the staff suspected that a number of parents only came to the school to criticize.

It was also problematical, in the view of several teachers at school C, to be an active member of the union and to act as a representative for the Teachers Union. Because they learn that it is not good to be seen together with a representative for the Teachers Union. One consequence might be that they would risk losing their jobs. The problem was considered to have its cause in that the school was a private one and did not receive any state funding but was dependent on the pupil fees and donations.

A recurrent difficulty was finding qualified teachers and money for funding the school. Conflicts became highlighted when parents were no longer able to afford to pay the fees. The staff at school C were dependent on the goodwill of the parents and the trustees.

The teacher (CT:5) declare:

You cannot please everybody. You must have a school doing what is right.

According to the staff at school C, salaries were much lower in comparison to state-aided schools. Both school C and school D took up the issue that they required larger premises and playgrounds. There was exceptionally high overcrowding in school D. One of the consequences of overcrowding was that the air quickly became stuffy in the classrooms and that both pupils and teachers therefore were more tired. There was no separate staff-room where teachers might have been able to rest for a while or work on their planning. Both the staff and the pupils were hoping that they would shortly be moving to the new premises as promised.

Another difficulty that staff in school C and school D raised was their concern that more fundamentalists would try to get into the school. There was a worry, both among Muslims and non-Muslims, as to what the consequences would be with these people coming in. There was a risk that it would be harder, more strict. The influence of the fundamentalists was that they would demand all in the staff to be Muslims. They would not tolerate that non-Muslims were employed by the school. They would establish stricter rules as to what pupils could and could not do. Rules that were not adapted to the society in which the pupils live.

As the teacher (CT:16) put it:

Where to draw the line in regard to art and Islamic practices. Should we draw faces or not? and so on.

The schools had employed non-Muslim teachers because of difficulties in recruiting Muslims with teaching certificates. Therefore, in school C and school D, there was a mix of Muslim and non-Muslim teachers. The Muslim teachers were in the majority. The non-Muslim staff consisted largely of practicing

Christians. The teacher (CT:6) said:

I can't see the school without non-Muslim teachers. It is nice to have non-Muslims as well. It is nice also for the pupils to see non-Muslims working here.

9.7. Music, literature, art, and photos, pictures and films deemed unacceptable by the school

Unlike school A and school B in Sweden, school C and school D in England had deemed: music unsuitable (except for drums and singing Islamic songs). In the two schools in England, literature, art and photos, pictures and films, were allowed as long as the people who were depicted were dressed properly and not kissing.

The teacher (CT:1) stated

Music is totally unacceptable at school. Have to be careful not to make representations of the human face. These rules have their origins with the parents. We have strict parents.

I was showing a film and in a part of the film they showed people in bikinis, I speedily fast-forwarded the film (CT:4).

We watch educational programmes. Some parents do not want TV to be used at all. But there is also music in the educational programmes but we are not in fact able to change such things. But some of the pupils are not allowed by their parents to watch TV programmes or to take part in the school photograph (CT:2).

Some believe that everything on TV is *haram*. We don't let pupils looking at films showing how a baby is born. Pupils do not need it at their age (CT:7).

It was prohibited in school C and school D for pupils to draw a human figure. The Muslim teachers and other staff stated that it was *haram*. The teacher (CT:6) argued:

Yes, music, all forms of music. Different schools of thought on that issue. Also Arts. To draw a picture of yourself or another is not acceptable. Some Muslims say it is alright, others that it is not. It is acceptable from my point of view because it is educational.

Yes all forms of music and any literature with magic are not allowed. Only Islamic songs are allowed. Any dolls on living form and reproduction are not allowed and drawing humans or creature are not allowed (DT:9).

Birthday cards are not allowed in school. But I don't think it is wrong with birthday cards (DT:2).

One teacher in school C related that when the school first opened, "the teachers drew *hijab* on every woman in books." But now they have moved away from that.

Any pictures with naked people are not allowed at School C. Nor are naked angels, even if they are part of religious pictures. Nothing Christian is permitted – not the Christian calendar (CT:11).

All types of music, all illustrations with kissing are forbidden. We are cutting out all films and books with bad language (CT:12).

Some staff in school C said they tried to take what was good and take away that which was not relevant. The teacher (CT:13):

As a Muslim, I don't feel comfortable teaching about Christianity ...

No Christian literature. No photos of people. No music at all. They are not Islamic (CT:16).

We do not bring in films for Christmas and no violent films ... No pictures of bodies. I do not think they show them (CT:17).

9.8. What type of school in Sweden and England is best for Muslim children?

School A in Sweden

In school A in Sweden, half of the teachers and other staff (a majority of the Muslim staff and two non-Muslims) considered that a school of high quality would be the best school for Muslim children. That the quality of the school was decisive, rather than whether the school had a Muslim profile. At the same time, four members of staff (three Muslims and one non-Muslim) considered that a MP school would be the best school for Muslim children. Three members of staff (all non-Muslim) considered that some other type of school rather than a MP school would be best for Muslim children. A majority of the Muslim staff considered that the best school for Muslim children would be a school having the highest quality, whether it was Muslim or not. A majority of the non-Muslim staff considered that some other type of school rather than a MP school would be the best school for Muslim children.

Table 9.1 What type of school in Sweden and England is best for Muslim children?

	<i>School A</i>	<i>School B</i>	<i>School C</i>	<i>School D</i>
MP school	4(M=3, NM=1)	6(M=3 , NM= 3)	11(M=9, NM=2)	8(M=8)
Other types of school	3(NM=3)	6(M=4 , NM=2)	6(M=5, NM=1)	1(NM=1)
MP school or other types of school. High quality of the school the most important	7(M=5, NM=2)	5(M=4, NM=1)	1(NM=1)	1(NM=1)
No response (not participated in interview or not answered the question)			2(M=1, NM=1)	

M = Muslim

NM = No Muslim

Below are some examples of responses from the interviews in school A:

Teachers and other staff who argued for a school with a Muslim profile.

The teacher (AT:2) said

This school. But should there arise the possibility that a local authority school would pay regard to Muslims and the religious, that would be preferable. But since regard is not paid to the needs of Muslims in this town, a school such as ours is the best choice.

A school with a Muslim profile. But I have not worked in a local authority school. But it is hard that Muslim pupils in the local authority school are often challenged, for example with regard to their food and dress (AT:3).

A few teachers and other staff argued for a school with a mix of pupils, both Muslims and non Muslims.

The teacher (AT:8) was more doubtful:

Difficult question. Since I am a practicing Muslim, I want my children to share in that too. But it is also important that my children do not lose touch with Swedes, have many Swedish friends.

It is positive where a school is a mix of Swedish pupils and immigrant pupils. They come closer to each other at this school. But it is more difficult when they are out at the normal local authority school – as society is today (AO:2).

Teachers and other staff who argued for a municipal school.

The teacher (AT:6) suggested:

The normal municipal Swedish schools. There it is easier for the pupils to join Swedish society..

Teachers and other staff who argued for both a school with a Muslim profile and other types of school.

School B in Sweden

At school B in Sweden, six of the teachers and other staff (three Muslims and three non-Muslims) considered that a MP school, such as school B, would be the best school for Muslim children. At the same time, six teachers and other staff (four Muslims and three non-Muslims) considered that other types of school, with a mix of Muslim and non-Muslim pupils, would be the best school for Muslim children. Five of the teachers and other staff (four Muslims and one non-Muslim) considered that the best school for Muslim children would be a school with the highest quality, whether or not it was Muslim.

Therefore a majority of the Muslim staff did not consider it to be obvious that a MP school would be the best school for Muslim children, unlike half of the non-Muslim staff thought it was.

Some examples of the responses from the interviews in school B are given below:

Teachers and other staff who argued for a school with a Muslim profile.

Believe that this type of school is positive. They adopt Swedish norms and values more easily here (BT:3).

This type of school with more Swedish teachers and a minority of Arabic teachers (BT:4).

Teachers and other staff who argued for Other schools.

The teacher (BT:2) said

Not this school and not the local authority school, but something between.

Other teachers argued that:

I want the children of the future to attend a local authority school since local authority schools have more resources at their disposal (BT:7).

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A school where an attempt is made to mix pupils from the beginning so that they are able to accept each other. A local authority school which is not segregated. Believe it is not positive here. Instead the pupils can study religion in their free-time (BT:12).

A local authority school – if there are not problems in the local authority school. They do not know why girls wear *hijab*. Many girls state that there are many problems in the local authority school. Perhaps things will be better in twenty years times when Swedes understand Islam (BT:14).

Teachers and other staff who argued for a school with a Muslim profile or other types of school. High quality of the school the most important.

The teacher (BT:8) said

A school in which pupils are not sad and where they are able to learn a great deal.

The person making the choice, should have appropriate knowledge about Swedish society. Not only knowledge about Islam. Were I to found a school, it would be one of high educational quality (BT:10).

A school where pupils must be able to feel secure (BT:11).

School C in England

At school C in England, 11 of the teachers and other staff (nine Muslims and two non-Muslims) considered that a MP school, such as school C, would be the best school for Muslim children. At the same time, six teachers and other staff (five Muslims and one non-Muslim) considered that other types of school, with a mix of Muslim and non-Muslim pupils, would be the best school for Muslim children. One of the teachers and other staff (a non-Muslim) considered that the best school for Muslim children would be a school with the highest quality, whether or not it was Muslim.

Therefore a majority (nine of the 14 who responded) of the Muslim staff considered that a MP school would be the best school for Muslim children. A state-aided Muslim school without fees. Half of the non-Muslim staff (two of the four who responded) considered that a MP school would be the best school for Muslim children.

Some examples of the responses from the interviews in school C are given below:

Teachers and other staff who argued for a school with a Muslim profile.

The teacher (CT:13) said

A Muslim high school for girls. They achieve the best results. They are best because they care about Muslims... All values are the same, follow from home to school and from school to home.

schools with a Muslim profile schools like these. Parents who are not so Islam-minded do not worry about hearing about other religions. But it is against Koranic law to hear about other religions (CT:11).

Muslim schools would be the best for Muslim children. There are too many problems in the municipal schools. There the classes are larger and the Muslim pupils are ignored (CT:15).

schools with a Muslim profile. For me, I would have liked to have my own children here but I do not have the financial resources. We do not have to follow the National curriculum, but we do so (CT:17).

Muslim, Islamic school – because other schools cannot teach them much about Islam. A school where attainment is high, at the top. Like education, role models in society. All wanted to have that. Highly educated as a role model in society. High morale provides the grants (CO:1).

Teachers and other staff who argued for Other types of school

I would not say a strictly Muslim school. Their thinking would lead to isolation, not right either. If there could be a local authority school with no religion and if the values help them to be good. Because in short, handle different things. You are alright with the system of Islam. A Muslim school. They would know how to practice Islam. In English schools they do not learn about Islam (CT:7).

Mix of staff, Muslims, non-Muslims, Christians, Hindus etc. And the same mix among the pupils. Integration: keep your own values and go forward together (CT:10).

Teachers and other staff who argued for a municipal school.

The teacher (CT:12) claimed

We need teachers and pupils from different backgrounds. Muslim pupils go to local authority schools with teachers, white middle-class women teaching at local authority schools and private schools.

A local authority school where the pupils are given the opportunity to mix with non-Muslims and to learn about other religions and ways of life (CT:16).

School D in England

At school D in England, eight of the teachers and other staff (all Muslims) considered that a MP school, without fees, would be the best school for Muslim children. At the same time, one of the teachers and other staff (a non-Muslim) considered that other types of school, with a mix of Muslim and non-Muslim pupils, would be the best school for Muslim children. Another of the teachers and other staff (a non-Muslim) considered that the best school for Muslim children would be a school with the highest quality, whether or not it was Muslim.

Therefore all of the Muslim staff considered that a MP school would be the best school for Muslim children. One of the non-Muslim staff did not think so.

Some examples of the responses from the interviews in school D are given below:

Teachers and other staff who argued for a school with a Muslim profile.

The teacher (DT:3) said

school with a Muslim profile is best but sometimes other non-Islamic schools allowed – with choice for the pupils to learn about their religion.

A school like this, a Muslim school (DT:6).

A school with a Muslim profile Islamic with an Islamic ethos for Muslim pupils (DT:8).

Teachers and other staff who argued for other types of school.

A school with small groups of pupils. Give more time to talking together and not only listening to teacher (DT:5).

A school with all religions represented and teachers representing all different religions (DT:7).

Summary

A majority of all staff at the two schools in Sweden did not consider it to be obvious that a MP school would be the best school for Muslim children. On the other hand, a majority of all staff at the two schools in England thought it would be. A majority of the Muslim staff at the two schools in Sweden did not see a MP school be the best school for Muslim children. On the other hand, a majority of the Muslim staff at the two schools in England thought so.

9.9. How are cultural encounters handled in the school?

School A in Sweden.

In school A in Sweden there was a positive working environment at the time of the field studies. There was an ongoing intercultural process. Teachers and other staff expressed the view that they were at the beginning of a process of development through which they were all getting to know each other and each other's views on various issues. Both Muslims and non-Muslims had created a large space for the non-Muslim elements in school A. Although the school had adopted a Muslim profile, teaching in the school was non-confessional. The Muslim profile of the school was largely limited to (i) the lessons given over to teaching about Islam, (ii) the serving of halal food, (iii) pupils being given the opportunity to participate in midday prayers, and (iv) the school permitting the pupils to be absent during Muslim festivals. Rather than there being any significant divisions between cultures and/or between Muslims and non-Muslims in the staff room, the staff talked about there being individual differences. Among the staff as a whole, there was in general long experience of living in multicultural environments. Of the 14 teachers and other staff, 8 were born abroad and 6 were born in Sweden.

Table 9.2 Immigration Backgrounds of the teachers and other staff.

	<i>School A</i>	<i>School B</i>	<i>School C</i>	<i>School D</i>
Born in Sweden or in the UK respectively	6 (M=1,NM=5)	3(NM=3)	6(M=3, NM=3)	2(NM=2)
Born in Sweden or in the UK respectively, with parents who had migrated to Sweden or the UK			4(M=4)	3(M=3)
Not born in Sweden or the UK respectively.	8(M=7,NM=1)	14(M=9, NM=5)	9(M=9)	5(M=5)

M = Muslim

NM = non-Muslim

The teacher (AT:2) (not born in Sweden), with long experience of living in multicultural environments:

All life is full of multiculturalism. There are different religions and different people in society. I do not feel that the situation in the school is anything new. I have lived with various ways of thinking, cultures. There are more than ten different nationalities in the mosque.

I adapt to conditions as necessary, be flexible in different environments. I speak in one way with Muslims and in another with non-Muslims (AT:3) (born in Sweden).

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My understanding is that the pupils are to be brought up to be Swedish Muslims, so I act as I would in a Swedish class in a local authority school. There is some difference in that during the personal development dialogues with the pupils together with parents, I require the use of an interpreter. Everyone adapts to the situation as it is (AT:4) (born in Sweden).

It is positive to learn how others live. We have many pupils who are stateless, Kurdish or from Somalia – these pupils have not had an easy time. Although some of them were born here, the family unease has left its mark on them. Those pupils who are half Swedish are very secure – you can see it on them. Those non-Muslims who work here must be happy here, wish to work here because it is not easy with our immigrant pupils (AT:8) (not born in Sweden).

I don't believe that it is difficult. Everyone has their own ways but we are all people and have grown up with multiculturalism. It would be more difficult without those experiences (AT:9) (not born in Sweden).

I have experienced both sides – brought up in Sweden with a Muslim immigrant background. It is up to the individual. Some have only a limited view while others try to see the whole, possibilities. I try to see the whole. This in fact means one prevents a whole range of problems (AT:10) (not born in Sweden).

All members of the board, except one, are immigrants. Some of the members of the board are familiar with the families. They are aware as to the way these families should be approached. That is knowledge which is a resource to have in the school. For example, when we are writing a letter to the parents, it is not advisable for us to use the word “should” but to use “must” or “ought” because otherwise they will not believe that anything is required of them (AO:2) (born in Sweden).

School B in Sweden.

In school B in Sweden at the time of the field studies, there was problem with the working environment. There were a number of conflicts among the staff at this school. There were divisions between *us* and *them*.

The Muslim staff and the non-Muslim staff in school B worked in a very difficult situation because of various conflicts between them. Consequently, any free space for both the Muslim and the non-Muslim staff was extremely limited. The Muslim and the non-Muslim were in conflict with each other. The school had recruited pupils on the basis that parents had understood it to be a MP school. On the other hand, the direction of the school (on the basis of the criteria laid down by the National Agency for Schools) was a general direction, with a profile that was ethnic, together with Arabic language and culture. While the school did not claim to have a confessional direction, some of the Muslim and non-Muslim staff fell into conflicts with each other because of the

different understandings with regard to the Muslim- and secular parameters of the school. Of the 17 teachers and other staff, 14 were born outside of Sweden while 3 were born in Sweden. Although many of the staff who were born outside Sweden had resided in Sweden for some time, there were a large number of the staff who had little or no experience of schools in Sweden or of education in those schools. In addition, there were several among the staff who did not have an adequate knowledge of the Swedish language which resulted in many misunderstandings among the staff at the school.

The teacher (BT:1) (born in Sweden) said:

I manage it well, with no difficulty in managing different cultures. I have travelled a great deal. Respect, understand other cultures. Some of the pupils have said to me "pity you are so nice but will not get into heaven!" Pupils and staff from the Arabic side have always supported me at times of conflict.

The teacher (BT:3) (born in Sweden) said:

I try to be considerate with regard to those parts which I consider to be particularly valuable. For example, I refuse to accept the common view that all Swedes will end up in Islam's hell, *jahannam* or that sons and daughters are not equally respected and given similar opportunities. With regard to *burqa*, the long pleated gown that goes from the head to the feet – this is exaggerated – adaptations ought to be possible.

The teacher (BT:4) (not born in Sweden) wanted to pull off every *hijab*:

I am not able to accept everything at the moment. Just now I am at the phase of wanting to pull off every *hijab* the girls are wearing. They do have their own culture, but nonetheless they are living in Sweden.

The teacher (BT:5) (not born in Sweden) did not socialize with anyone of the workmates:

I only have superficial work exchanges with the Muslim teachers. I do not socialize with anyone here outside of work. They are educated and have lived in Sweden for some time and know how society here works. There are no culture clashes ... well, they are not punctual. There are some volunteers who speak poor Swedish. I only have positive comments to make about them – Muslims – but it would perhaps be difficult to socialize privately. I only socialize with Swedes.

Islam states that we are not to isolate ourselves. We are to live together as people (BT:7) (not born in Sweden).

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It is a matter of tolerance. I must accept them as they are and vice versa, they must accept me as I am. As soon as this principle disappears, then conflicts arise on both sides (BT:9) (not born in Sweden).

The pupils require twice as much. There are different cultures here, different groups. Pupils must provide help in various ways (BT:10) (not born in Sweden).

I have somewhat higher demands with regard to teaching. Others work too, but they perhaps think more about upbringing than on teaching them, they wish to make them Swedish. But when pupils have high levels of knowledge they will not be isolated. I have not noticed any conflicts with regard to our views and their views as to how the pupils are to be taught. On the contrary, they are better than I am with regard to looking after the pupils. The most important things is that the school provides quality education and gains a good reputation (BT:11) (not born in Sweden).

It doesn't matter to me. Each person has their own values, the humane and behavior towards others. Not values that are based on religion or appearance. The parents of the children who are still here are not very fanatical. If the Swedish Muslim parents had remained, I would probably have had problems – they were more fanatical (BT:12) (not born in Sweden).

It works. There are not so many different cultures here. Almost everyone is from the same culture, the Arabic culture. But we also have the Somali – although there background is also Muslim (BT:13) (not born in Sweden).

We know each other. Families and children socialize together, Shia and Sunni Muslims (BO:1) (not born in Sweden).

It would also be possible to work also in a Swedish municipal school. I don't want to isolate myself (BO:2) (not born in Sweden).

Many Muslims misinterpret Islam and only wish to make money (BO:3) (not born in Sweden).

School C in England

In England some of the staff in school C claimed that non-Muslim people had not wanted to visit a MP school.

Some of the Muslim staff thought the situation had improved by having MP schools, since they had been able to answer questions about Islam. "On the other hand, if you have a Muslim profiled school but a non-Muslim teacher he or she would not be able to answer questions about Islam." (CT:1) (not UK born)

Of the 19 teachers and other staff, nine were born outside the UK and ten

were born in the UK (of which five had parents who were immigrants to the UK). Both the Muslims and non-Muslims in school C had created substantial space for the Muslim elements while the non-Muslim had only limited space. The school had adopted a Muslim profile and the teaching in the school was confessional.

The teacher (CT:1) said:

The question always arises from pupils as to why the non-Muslim teacher is not praying. It must be a hard feeling for her to frequent answer questions about that.

Being a Muslim or non-Muslim does not matter. We have the same main ideas, but wear different cloths – I can't see a problem (CT:2) (not born in the UK).

Somewhat easier here. We can be clear – this is what we believe. Other parents who are particularly strict with regard to Islam have also to accept the mixing of Muslims and non-Muslims. Some of the teachers said they prefer all class teachers to be Muslims. If all class teachers were Muslims and the assistants non-Muslims, they think it would function.

Respecting other beliefs as well. Not calling others, with beliefs other than Islam, bad persons. I think that is going to an extreme. I think as long as Islamic schools are tolerant and so long as you know what you are doing, the school is doing good. Teaching by being a good example. Not only to Muslims. In our school we are open to other schools, still interact, not so isolated. It is also up to the parents. They send their children to a school with a Muslim profile. We do things for everybody. As one example, we organize days when the pupils together with the staff offer food, cakes, snacks for sale. The money they collect is given to a children's hospital. They also give food to pensioners, non-Muslims, living in the neighborhood (CT:4) (born in the UK of immigrant parents).

I found these difficult – to handle cultural encounters in the school. Takes time to learn to get to know each other. Work as a team – to work as one group makes it easy. Then the trustees and parents. That you do your best and love the pupils (CT:5) (not born in the UK).

From the perspectives of what Islam teaches you. You are not to treat anybody, parents, pupils, anyone from the community in a negative way. You can integrate that. You get a clearer view how to tackle that situation as well (CT:6) (born in the UK of immigrant parents).

If they are non-Muslims, they have a religion as well. If they respect us, talk to us, we respect them (CT:7) (not born in the UK).

The teacher (CT:8) (born in the UK) related that if it is something that contradicts

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Islam, history, religion, they compare and if it is something that they find dangerous to the pupils they take it out.

The teacher (CT:10) (not born in the UK) said:

I have got my own ideas. I don't have a need to disagree – I talk about different rules around praying.

The teacher (CT:11) (born in the UK) said that everybody in the school was connected to religion. Some more than others:

But I never discuss religion. The ambition of some parents is for all British people to be Muslims. Rules here are very similar to English local authority schools and other religious schools. Just accept that these are the ways they do it, so long as that does not compromise my religion and principles. They know I am a Christian. Then they are happier with someone who is a Christian, who has a belief in a religion. My children listen to music at home but I can't let my pupil know (CT:11) (born in the UK)

Here they are all Muslim children. If a problem arises, I go to the Islamic coordinator and after that to the head. The coordinator consults a scholar (CT:12) (born in the UK of immigrants).

Take what you can use from Islam and leave what you can't. In local authority schools they provide *halal* meals. Some schools permit *hijab*. Some local authority schools hold Islamic assembly while others are against having Islamic assembly (CT:13) (not born in the UK).

They prefer Muslim teachers. The pupils here are less troublesome compared to local authority schools. I do not think about it, but deal with it as it arises. Most of the time I do not think about that this is a school with a Muslim profile (CT:14) (born in the UK).

No problem because I am teaching Arabic language and my books come from Arabic countries. More problems in English subjects and books (CT:15) (not born in the UK).

I am careful not to introduce other things such as music or dance in case this offends some Muslim sensibilities. One major drawback is that I can't show the children videos of "real" netball matches because all English players wear skirts! (CT:16) (born in the UK).

Sometimes conflicts come about in different areas. I do not do that. Not criticize the family (CT:17) (not born in the UK).

You have to handle different things in separate ways. I wanted to go to another place where I am surrounded with a mix of Muslims from many other countries not only from Asia. You need variation with other types. Here they were starring how I talk. If I talk to a men- is a problem here. Strict here, parents are in control here and some are very backward (CO:1) (born in the UK of immigrant parents).

We have a good advantage we have a unique religion, universal, no problem with ethnic and give respect to all. What we look at is your moral, how you deal with common thing and how you deal with Christians as well (CO:2) (not born in the UK).

School D in England

Of the ten teachers and other staff, five were born outside the UK and five were born in the UK (of which three had parents who were immigrants to the UK). The equal number of staff born outside the UK and those born in the UK was highly likely to have contributed to the extensive knowledge among the staff as a whole with regard to the various frames of reference of the pupils, of English society as well as the countries and linguistic backgrounds of the pupils.

There was a substantial space for the Muslim while the non-Muslim had only limited space. The teaching in the school was confessional.

The teacher (DO:1) (not born in the UK):

Last year we had four non-Muslims, Christians, working here but only two of them work here this year. The non-Muslim women have to wear a scarf. Perhaps the two who left the school last year did so because they felt uncomfortable with that...

We respect everyone's culture (DT:9) (not born in the UK).

Islam came first, adopted the headscarf (DT:8) (born in the UK of immigrant parents).

We follow the Islamic way and explain to the non-Muslims (DT:6) (not UK born).

It doesn't seem to be a conflict. Christians pray when they want and Muslims pray when they want. Non-Muslims are sympathetic to all Muslims. If a conflict arises – means we aren't following the Koran (DT:5) (born in the UK of immigrant parents).

According to my work here I am using my knowledge as a Muslim. Be honest and handling as a proper behaviour of a Muslim lady (DT:4) (not born in the UK).

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I am clear as to what I think is right and wrong. I allow people to have their own beliefs. Some parents think celebration of birthdays can be okay and some parents think it is not okay. I think it's okay. If someone asks me I say it's up to you (DT:3) (not born in the UK).

Normally we come to an understanding of each other through rationale discussions (DT:2) (born in the UK of immigrant parents).

The staff in school D were rather homogeneous as a group. Many of them had roots in Pakistan. Half the staff were born in the UK while the other half were born abroad. Many were either born in the UK to immigrant parents (mainly from Pakistan) or born in the UK to British parents.

9.10. What guides the work at the School? God, or the National curriculum or something else?

What guides the work at the school? Is it the NC itself, is it God, is it the work itself or is the individual him/herself?

There was a considerable difference between the two MP schools in Sweden in 1998 and the two schools in England in 1999 with regard to that which guided the work in each school.

The understanding of teachers and other staff as to what guides the work at the school is presented below together with the various educational, ideological or personal role-models they might attempt to emulate and their responses to the question as to whether it is possible to combine the NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards.

Table 9.3 What guides the Work at the School? God, or the NC or something else?

	School A	School B	School C	School D
National Curriculum	2 (NM=2)	5 (M=1, NM=4)	2 (M=1, NM=1)	1 (NM=1)
God + NC	4 (M=4)	1 (M=1)	6 (M=5, NM=1)	7 (M=6, NM=1)
God	3 (M=3)	1 (M=1)	7 (M=6, NM=1)	2 (M=2)
Myself/ Other	4 (M=1, NM=3)	9 (M=7, NM=1, NA=1)	3 (M=3)	
No answer	1 (NM=1)	1 (NA=1)	2 (M=1, NM=1)	
Number	14/14	17/17	20/20	10/10

M = Muslim

NM = No Muslim

NA= No Answer if he/she is a Muslim or non-Muslim

Most of the staff in the four schools considered that it was possible to combine the respective NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards.

School A and School B in Sweden

Islam was not integrated into the various subjects taught at school A and school B in Sweden. When asked the question: What guides your work at the school, God or the NC or something else? Most of the Muslim staff at school A stated that God guided their work at school, as internal motivation, giver of energy in order to be able to manage their duties. On the other hand, it was the NC which guided the practical, concrete work.

School A

Examples of responses from those teachers *and other staff* in school A who stated that it was *God* who guided their work at school:

The teacher (AT:2) said:

God is the guide for my work at the school. That which one does here in life – one is questioned about on Judgment Day. When one has understood that there is something in the afterlife – effective for the attainment of these things. If one remembers this, all weariness, weakness, is forgotten. One goes on with the struggle.

God! I wish to do that which would please my Creator and abide by the laws laid down for the school. In many cases Swedish law is in line with Islam. There is nothing which contravenes Swedish law (AT:10).

God is the foundation for everything I do. But this also requires that I actively work for that which is best. Then I pray to God for help in attaining this. It is a life-style, I don't think about it, it is always there in the background. I don't do this in order to earn money from it but for the pupils will have something positive for the future. I want to use that which I have for other's best (AT:13).

Example of responses from those teachers and other staff in school A who stated that it was *God, together with the National curriculum*, that guided their work at school:

The teacher (AT:9) said:

My lodestar for work at the school is conscious – God – I do that which I feel is right. Attempt to conform to what is right in the NC for the pupils' best.

Example of responses from those teachers and other staff in school A who stated that it was *other things* that guided their work at school:

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To work with Muslim pupils so that they don't end up on the street with narcotics. If they do not study, they will end up outside of society (AT:14).

School B in Sweden

Most of the Muslim staff in school B in Sweden stated that the duties themselves guided their work. The staff claimed that, since Islam states that there is life after death, and some considered it important to find the energy to work as hard as possible – they believe life after death will thereby be better.

Example of responses from those teachers and other staff in school B who stated that it was *God, together with the National curriculum*, that guided their work at school:

The teacher (BT:1) said:

God and the National curriculum. Free thinking, not indoctrination in the National curriculum. Difficult for pupils who have recently arrived from abroad, from countries and societies which are strictly hierarchical – to be expected to choose, what one is supposed to do, should not do, not influencing their beliefs – I try to reach a balance.

Examples of responses from those teachers and other staff in school B who stated that it was *other things* that guided their work at school:

The teacher (BT:7) said:

The job itself, important to come out and work.

Enjoy helping others. Don't think about saving money. Don't talk about pay but other important things instead. Islam states that there is life after death. Important to work hard – think that it is better after death (BT:8).

To do a good job. I am a work horse. To feel at home here and show what I can do and not be regarded as being strange. That the pupils dare to ask questions which they would not dare to ask in a local authority school, such as those about Islam and the "Big Bang" (BT:11).

Enjoy working and do not wish to not be active. According to Islam, one should work to be able to support oneself. I love the pupils, to teach them to train, to swim, to cycle –not to isolate themselves because of *hijab* (BT:12).

To work with young people – I enjoy that (BT:14).

We have great responsibility for our pupils. I want our pupils to be able to attain something. They need to learn a great deal, not only Swedish but what Sweden means to them (BT:13).

That the school is like a home. Not to isolate themselves. That pupils and staff abide by the Koran both in the family and in school (BT:15).

School C in England

In school C and school D in England, Islam was integrated into all activities at school and the responses of the Muslim staff were that the foremost guide for their work in school was God, followed by the NC.

Examples of responses from those teachers and other staff in school C who stated that it was *God* who guided their work at school:

The teacher (CT:5) said:

I want to follow God and the Koran.

God first. God has given us brains to think with (CT:7).

God. I promise to work at this place and do some good (CT:12).

The other staff (CO:2) said:

I seek help from Allah. Duties, helping, without His help I may fail.

Examples of responses from those teachers and other staff in school C who stated that it was *the NC* that guided their work at school:

The teacher (CT:15) said:

English National curriculum (CT:15).

Examples of responses from those teachers and other staff in school C who stated that it was *God, together with the NC*, that guided their work at school:

The teacher (CT:2) said:.

Allah first – gave me the knowledge to understand the National curriculum. Everything is from Allah.

God comes first. Mainly following the National curriculum. Is possible to integrate Islamic values into most of the National curriculum (CT:4).

God first and then National curriculum (CT:8).

We follow the National curriculum. We believe in God and we bring Islam into the curriculum. We can't go against what said in Islam (CT:9).

God and the National curriculum when it's up to me (CT:10).

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Examples of responses from those teachers and other staff in school C who stated that it was *God, together with teacher training*, that guided their work at school;

Allah first. You know the school itself, school policy and everything. Your teacher training would guide you (CT:13).

Other teachers and other staff in school C stated that *the NC, in an Islamic context*, guided their work at school:

The teacher (CT:3):

Follow the National curriculum, teach from an Islamic point of view.

We have to follow the English National curriculum. Whatever you do, you put it into the context of Islam. Season, autumn. I talk from an Islamic perspective (CT:17).

The following teachers and other staff in school C stated that *other things* guided their work at school:

The teacher (CT:1) said:

Social and life skills. Pupils learn from school. They must learn English, learn to communicate with other children.

To be able to give the pupils a good education both in the English system and in Islamic ways. Good foundation (CT:6).

School D in England

Examples of responses from those teachers and other staff in school D who stated that it was *God* guided their work at school:

The teacher (DT:9) said:

God most important. If National curriculum is against anything to do with God – we do not follow it. Example Music

I think Allah, I believe in that (DT:10).

The teacher (DT:8) in school D stated that *the NC, in an Islamic context*, guided their work at school:

We teach the National curriculum. Islam comes into it as well

Examples of responses from those teachers and other staff in school D who stated that *God, together with the NC*, guided their work at school

The teacher (DT:2):

As much Islamic input. God first. My faith comes first. The English National curriculum – know what I am doing

God and the English National curriculum I think, work together (DT:3).

And the teacher (DT:4):

God and the National curriculum. I follow God first

God. But God has me to follow the National curriculum. I will not do anything without God (DT:5).

God first and then the English National curriculum (DT:6).

The non-Muslim (Christian) staff in school C and school D responded that *God, followed by the NC and special needs*, guided their work in school. The following non-Muslim (Christian) teachers and other staff stated that *God, together with the NC* guided their work at school:

God and the National curriculum (CT:14).

For me God and the National curriculum (CT:16)

Over all God and the English National curriculum fit into that. In my personal life, I follow the norms of the Christian religion. The norms are the same here (DT:7).

The following non-Muslim teachers and other staff stated that *the NC* guided their work at school. The teacher (CT:11) said:

The National curriculum and its values and religious values. We do the National curriculum and integrate Islam into it.

The National curriculum and special needs (DT:1).

9.11. Educational, ideological or personal role-model

Most of the staff working in school A and school B in Sweden stated that they did have an educationalist or a personal educational role model. On the other hand, most of the staff in school C in England, claimed that the Prophet Muhammad, together with *hadith* or some other Muslim, was their role model with regard

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to their work at the MP school. Half of the staff working in school D stated that they did not have any role model to emulate.

Table 9.4 Educational, personal, or religious role-model

	<i>School A</i>	<i>School B</i>	<i>School C</i>	<i>School D</i>
Educational role-model	4 (M=2, NM=2)	5(M=3, NM=2)	5(M=5)	
Personal role-model	1(M=1)	6(M=2,NM=2, NA=1)	3(M=1, NM=2)	3(M=2, NM=1)
Religious role model	2(M=2)		5(M=4, NM=1)	2(M=2)
Follow the example of the Prophet Mohammed	1(M=1)		3(M=3)	
No, don't have any role model to emulate	6(M=2,NM=4)	6(M=5, NM=1)	4(M=3, NM=1)	5(M=4, NM=1)
Number	14/14	17/17	20/20	10/10

M = Muslim

NM = non-Muslim

NA = No Answer if he/she is a Muslim or non-Muslim

School A in Sweden

The teacher (AT:2) had both a personal and a religious role model:

One should not be fanatical and hard but rather flexible. Interpret religious rules in a realistic manner. Not abide blindly to rules that are almost a hundred years old. Many Islamic scholars share my views. This is increasingly the case, even though it is still a rather unusual view today. We who founded the school share this view.

I stick to the Swedish system. It is important that the pupils adapt to Swedish society, to work on the basis of that which I learned during my education in Sweden. I wish to teach the pupils not to be shy or afraid. During my training, I learned that if a pupil asks a question, then one should provide an answer. For example, where a baby comes from. When one has lived in a country where there has almost always been war, one is worried. For example, when the Swedish air force got a new aeroplane and they were so proud of what they had been able to build. But I retrograded emotionally to memories of my home country, I cried all time when the plane flew over our district. I was worried about Sweden becoming involved in war (AT:8).

As a Muslim, I follow the example of the Prophet Mohammed. The morality that all people should follow. There is nothing new in Islam with regard to ethics and morals. The duty of the Muslim is to complete the building of this “house.” There are two *hadith* that state: “The most perfect in believers is the best of you in character ...” “The most perfect believer is the one with best manners!” Pupils want to compete with each other. It is a matter of how we treat and behave towards our fellows that has importance (AT:10).

School B in Sweden

As an educational, ideological or personal role-model to emulate, they had the Prophet Mohammed, or his wife A’isha, or various teachers/educationalists.

However, the teacher (BT:2) had Rudolf Steiner as educational role model,

as well as the educational practices of other educators. Try to find each pupil and adapt teaching to the various levels attained by each pupil.

I have a head as an educational role model who has now retired but who had been The head in charge of mother-tongue teaching in a local authority. She was very popular and competent (BT:9).

A Muslim teacher (BT:11) had a Muslim person as role model.

I have a liberal Muslim as an educational role model. That would be acting in a dictatorial manner. But some of the parents are authoritarian and were surprised when I said to one of the pupils who was refusing to eat: please come and eat if you are hungry! To teach the pupils to taste a little today – to compromise. In this situation, some parents would have wanted me to say: you have to eat so sit there! To do a good job. I am a working-ant. To feel at home here and show what I am able to do and not as someone who is odd. That the pupils feel free to ask those questions that they would not dare to do in the local authority school, for example, about Islam and the big bang.”

School C in England

In England, a Muslim teacher (CT:1) in School C had a Jewish school as an educational role-model:

I have worked in a Jewish school. I liked the way it was disciplined, the rules and methods they used. Some examples, they start each day by asking the 3 and 4 year olds what day or month it was. And asked them how they were feeling.

Ideologically I believe the character of Prophet Muhammad as a role model to emulate (CT:4).

Table 9.5 The National curriculum and its basic values and Islamic values and standards

	<i>School A</i>	<i>School B</i>	<i>School C</i>	<i>School D</i>
Yes it is possible to combine the NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards	6(M=4, NM=2)	10(M=6, NM=1, NA=1)	16(M=12, NM=4)	9(M=7, NM=2)
No it isn't possible to combine the NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards		2(M=1, NM=1)	2(M=2)	
Don't know	3(NM=3)	2(M=1, NM=1)		
No answer		3(M=2, NM=1)	2(M=2)	1(M=1)

M = Muslim

NM = non-Muslim

NA= No Answer if he/she is a Muslim or non-Muslim

As role models to emulate I think on a *Hadith*:

“If You work you have to do your best in it to make Allah pleased from you”
(CT:5).

I have the Prophet Muhammad as positive pedagogical role model to emulate
(CT:8).

The teacher (CT:16) had Jesus Christ as an educational role-model to emulate and for teacher (CT:17) in school C it was Aisha, the wife of Prophet Muhammad. The non-Muslim teacher (CT:14) said she did not have any particular positive educational role model, but took notice of that she did not wish to emulate.

School D in England

In school D, the Muslim teacher (DT: 4) said:

To read more. Pedagogical methods. Try to teach skills, improve my teaching methods, good communicator, good at reciting the Koran – I have a Koran reader as a positive role model to emulate. His way of teaching the Koran. He has tapes for teaching children recitation. Follow proper rules – sound, pronunciation, communication, watching lips.

Two of the teachers in school D had their mothers as a personal- and educational role models.

9.12. Is it possible to combine the National curriculum and its basic values with Islamic values and standards?

The majority of the teachers and other staff in school A and school B in Sweden and in school C and school D in England considered that it was possible to combine the respective NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards.

In Sweden the teachers and other staff at school A and school B tended to consider that it was possible to combine the NC and its basic values with Islamic values.

Yes, why not? In one *hadith*, the Prophet states :

“The search of knowledge is an obligation laid on every Muslim.”

There are many positive features found in other religions and groups. There are common features which can be used and exploited. There is more that unites than divides. We are a resource for society. We help both society and Muslims. The National curriculum is of great assistance (AT:2).

It is difficult to answer whether it is possible to combine the Swedish National curriculum and its basic values with Islamic values and standards – but the differences are not so great (AT:3).

Yes, it is possible to combine the Swedish National curriculum and its basic values with Islamic values and standards. Having worked here now for several terms, I believe this to be so. I don't think there is much difference with regard to views on children with regard to child-rearing and the needs of children (AT:8).

Yes, it is possible to combine the Swedish National curriculum and its basic values with Islamic values and standards. As we attempt to combine them in this school (AT:9).

Yes, but it was difficult in the beginning. Now when I feel more at home, it works out well. For example, the National curriculum talks about free thinking rather than indoctrination (BT:6).

Other teachers and other staff at school B tended to consider that it was not possible to combine the NC and its basic values with Islamic values.

Yes, but only where the Swedish teachers are a majority in the school. This is because the National curriculum does not give the Islamic teacher very much. There are shortcomings in their Swedish. This is a school for Arabic children. It is not possible to combine the Swedish National curriculum and its basic values with Islamic values and standards as long as there are national feelings, Islam in contrast to our values (BT:4).

What Role of God and National Curriculum in School life?

I think it is difficult. The Swedish National curriculum states that one is to be open, show respect for others, but it is difficult to be open towards others than one's own. In a Swedish school, it is possible to talk openly about relations, teenage sex but here that is taboo. There is harassment here where, for example, Arabic children refuse to sit next to a black boy (BT:5).

The views of teachers BT:4, BT:5 and BT:6 were somewhat different to those of the other teachers at school B. The former were more uncertain as to whether it was possible to combine the NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards. Their backgrounds were also somewhat different to those of their colleagues.

Yes. I don't believe there is much opposition between the National curriculum and its basic values with Islamic values and standards (BT:8).

Of course – only to censor the books – especially those books where there are prejudices or simplification. Books which ridicule. One has to forget, but the crusade is still there at the back of the head of many. Not to see people as a threat but see them as being normal. It is totally possible on that day that Svensson can leave children with me and the school with a Muslim profile without fear. This might take a whole generation (BT:9).

There is only conflict between them with regard to sport and swimming. Then boys and girls are in separate groups (BT:13).

I believe there to be many errors in the text-books. Have read about Islam for four years – know there are many errors in the text-books. Islam and the National curriculum have many similar rules. According to Islam, it is not permitted to physically chastise children but many Muslims still do so. There are many who need to learn about rules with regard to children and women. Look, for example, at the Taliban –they do not live as one should, according to Islam (BO:1).

School C in England

In England the teachers and other staff at school C and school D tended to consider that it was possible to combine the NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards. Although school C was not in receipt of state funding and was not required to adhere to the NC, they nonetheless did so. In compliance with the law, they have, however, withdrawn teaching in Religious Education and Music and have not been required to teach issues regarding sexuality and homosexuality.

Yes, like we do here. But not music and dance. We do different sounds (CT:2).

I think so. Instead of listening to music, we listen to the Koran and Music – songs with drums – we relax and feel happy (CT:5).

We assign a special time in the morning for the teaching of Muslim rules. Where we teach them Islamic rules through stories. The literature is in English (CT:7).

If something in the National curriculum is wrong, we do not teach it. I bring Islam into every aspect of teaching. In science telling how Allah made things, where this is wonderful (CT:8).

No requirement to follow the National curriculum but you cannot go around it. We bring it in. But we cannot go against what is said in Islam (CT:9).

Yes, religion is only about religious values. The same question could be asked when it comes to Christianity. Yes, we can combine Islam with it. You can have a humanistic or Islamic view (CT:11).

Not in History. The National curriculum is not open about other countries. It is very narrow. Does not take in other parts of the world (CT:13).

It seems to be possible – although there is no teaching about other religions which I consider a drawback (CT:15).

One of the non-Muslim teachers said she would love to be able to teach the pupils about the Christian religion. On the other hand, (CO:1) said:

The values are totally different, I think.

Another member of staff (CO:2) believed there were advantages in not being a state-aided School:

The National curriculum is a part of Christian values. I hope we do not try to become a state-aided school.

School D in England

Yes it is possible. For example, literature and factual texts. You must investigate whether you have killed off Islamic values or not (DT:2).

I think so ... nothing against human values. Music – only using classic music, song and rhythmic (DT:5).

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Yes, we do it here. Following Islamic ethics but not over-dramatizing the human. Not teaching about other religions (DT:8).

Yes, except for Music. Following all the National curriculum. Not teaching about other religions (DT:9).

Children get knowledge about Islam as well as the National curriculum (DO:1).

9.13. Discussion

Cultural encounters were handled differently in the two schools in Sweden and the two schools in England. In School A there was an ongoing intercultural process. Teachers and other staff expressed the view that they were at the beginning of a process of development through which they were all learning to know each other and their views on various issues.

The Muslim staff and the non-Muslim staff in school B worked in a very difficult situation because of various conflicts between them. The Muslim and the non-Muslim were in conflict with each other in school B. The school had recruited pupils on the basis that parents had understood it to be a MP school. On the other hand, the direction of the school (on the basis of the criteria laid down by the SNAE) was a general direction, with a profile that was ethnic, together with Arabic language and culture. While the school did not claim to have a confessional direction, some of the Muslim and non-Muslim staff fell into conflicts with each other because of the different understandings with regard to the Islamic, Muslim and secular parameters of the school.

The Muslim dominated in the two schools in England. The non-Muslim staff were expected to abide by the Muslim code of dress that applied in the schools. One of the implications of this in school D was that non-Muslim staff were expected to wear *hijab*. Some of the Muslims did not feel comfortable with the Muslim parameters established by the owners of the school. They wished to see their school more adapted to English society.

The staff in both schools in England censored that which they interpreted as being *haram*. Some of the staff in school C considered that the parents were stricter than the staff with regard to the Muslim profile of the school.

Intrinsic values, Muslim values, were dominant in school C and school D. This also corresponded to the expectations of the parents. The head, teachers and other staff in these two schools stated that it was God who guided their work at the school. That God came first, followed by NC. That it was the will of God that they adhere to the NC. "I will not do anything without God". God first, followed by the English NC. In addition, most of the non-Muslims who worked in these schools also stated that it was God who guided their work at school.

The atmosphere among the staff in school A in Sweden and in school C in

England was particularly positive. Part of the explanation for this positive atmosphere, according to the staff, was that everyone in the school felt they were respected no matter what private philosophy of life they held. That there was an attitude of acceptance for anyone with deviant views. The physical working environment had also played a part. There was a common staff room at these schools, where the staff could meet at various times during the day. Although the staff rooms were cramped, especially in school A, they had the advantage that various educational conversations and meetings were taking part, which all members of staff could go in and out of. Educational conversations continued all the time, in a team spirit, where teachers and other staff were able to assist each other and provide each other with useful ideas about literature and various activities, for example, prior to a study visit. It was an atmosphere of acceptance where the staff felt that it was permitted to make both positive and negative criticisms.

The initiative to open school A was taken by the head and some of the staff who, at the time of the field studies, were working as teachers or other staff at the school. The fact that several of the staff had been involved in starting the school has probably contributed significantly to the strong engagement on part of the staff in the school. It was claimed that an additional factor with regard to the positive working environment that regular breaks were placed in the teachers' schedules which made it possible for them to have time for themselves or briefly confer with colleagues during the time the pupils were having their break. The head had arranged for the staff to be largely free of supervisory duties during the breaks. Rather the staff from the after-school centre and the head took care of this on a rolling schedule. The teachers regarded this as being useful. It provided the teachers with a valuable pause when they could prepare for their next lessons and/or time to meet colleagues and/or have a coffee break.

Also in school C in England, there were specific staff to supervise the breaks. Their only duties were to take care of the breaks. Thereby the teachers could meet and discuss educational issues and/or have a coffee break. In addition, various study evenings were arranged at school C where the staff informally studied various subjects. At the time of the field studies, the subjects that the teachers at school C were studying included Islam. The staff were divided into groups on the basis of their pre-knowledge. Both Muslims and non-Muslims stated that they appreciated these studies. The teachers were also coordinators for various subject areas. The common studies and system of subject coordinators were also claimed to have contributed to the positive working environment.

The working environment for the staff at school B in Sweden and in school D in England was more stressful. Part of the explanation, according to the staff at school B, was that not everyone on the staff knew each other. At the time of the field studies, the school had recently move to new premises. Previously, there had been two work groups, from two different areas of activities of the school in separate areas of the town. Another problem was that there was considerable uncertainty with regard to the profile of the school. There were different

understandings among the staff with regard to what Muslims values are to be dominant in the school.

The working environment in school D was stressful because of: premises that were too cramped with inadequate ventilation, a cold school-yard which consisted of a small area of asphalt, no separate staff room and too few opportunities for staff to have a break from their work, that the pupil breaks were supervised by teachers and teaching assistants which implied difficulties for teachers to have regular breaks and/or for meetings with colleagues.

Chapter 10

Parental and pupil choice of school

10.1. Introduction

The field studies carried out at the four schools indicates that the main reason for parents and children having chosen these schools had been because the Muslim profile generated a sense of security. This was so even in the case of the one school which had adopted a linguistic/cultural profile rather than a confessional direction. In all cases the parents had explained that they had chosen a MP school largely in order to feel more secure that their children would not be exposed to bullying, insults or discrimination.

Many of the interviewed Muslim parents, as well as some of the pupils and Muslim staff had come to Sweden as refugees. These were children and adults who had experienced war and who had been exposed to different forms of violence and oppression. Some of the parents and children had still born the burden of difficult traumatic experiences. These parents had above all else tried to create a secure environment for their children. Some of the children had previously attended a municipal school in Sweden, while others had started directly at a MP school. Some of the Muslim parents who had previously sent children to municipal schools had stated that subsequently, after having transferred them to a MP school, they had then felt much more secure for their children. They had also felt that as parents in a MP school they had been offered more opportunity to participate in the education of their children and that they had received better treatment from the school management and staff than had been the case at the municipal school.

The results from the field studies in both countries show that the reason for parents and children for having chosen a MP school had not only been to strengthen the children's knowledge of Islam to facilitate their becoming Swedish and English Muslims respectively. The choice of an independent MP school had also been made because they had wanted their children to escape from bullying and negative stereotypes and racist attitudes to which they had been exposed when they had been attending municipal schools. This negative experience when attending municipal primary schools had been something that many of the girls, in particular, had experienced. Some of the staff, Muslim women in particular, who had previously worked as teachers in municipal

schools had also stated that they had suffered experiences of being exposed to bullying and harassment by non-Muslim colleagues.

The independent MP schools had not attracted their pupils through being value-neutral. On the contrary, this had happened as a result of parents and children having specifically perceived them as independent MP schools. It had been important for the majority of these schools to adopt a strategy for recruitment that consists of being as clear and explicit as possible with regard to their Muslim profile. Although the two schools, had been required to adopt the commitment of being open to all applicants for places in order to be granted the necessary approval as independent primary schools, it had mainly been Muslim children who had enrolled in them. School B had however made efforts to recruit other categories of pupils.

Some of the interviewed parents in Sweden said that Muslim parents are pro-active with regard to finding and selecting a MP school for their children. They visit the school they are interested in talking to both staff and pupils, asking questions with a sensitive ear to the nature of the atmosphere in the school. The local education plan for the school is often the first important source of information for prospective parents in their initial approach to a school, but subsequently it is such aspects as the quality of the school together with trust in the governing body of the school and school management. The quality may be assessed through any available quality report that is available, although it is the opinions of other parents at the school that carry the greatest weight where the school has a good reputation.

In one case, school B, the school had been concerned about being perceived as a primary MP school. They had wished to portray themselves in the local community as a non-confessional school with a direction which officially had been registered as having a general direction with a linguistic/ethnic, Arabic language and cultural profile. But this had at the time of the field study been perceived, both inside and outside the school, as a MP school. This had given rise to some confusion, both internally and externally. A number of conflicts had arisen in the school because some of the staff, parents and pupils had acted as if the school did actually have a Muslim profile. At the same time, the staff had been required to conform to an internal policy whereby they were not to discuss Muslim values in relation to the teaching in compliance with the NC since the school had not been designated as having a Muslim profile or even a confessional direction. There had been different opinions among the Muslim staff as to what, according to Islam, was to be permitted, recommended, unacceptable, or objectionable, that is, what was to be regarded as a duty and what was to be prohibited.

Some of the Muslim staff had an insufficient knowledge of the Swedish language which resulted in various misunderstandings and communication problems with other colleagues. This situation had contributed to this school having experienced difficulties in bringing up, discussing, and solving the conflicts that had arisen there. The school management, on the one hand, had wanted

the school to be perceived as a school with a profile, but a non-Muslim profile. On the other hand, parents and children had chosen the school for four main reasons that were important to them: (i) parents and children had perceived the school as having an explicit Muslim profile, which perhaps had been at best only implicit; (ii) that the school was owned by a Muslim who was also the chairman of the governors and headmistress; (iii) the school employed Muslim teachers; and (iv) all the pupils enrolled at the school were Muslims. This school had attempted, but without success, to expand recruitment of pupils include also pupils with non-Muslim background.

10.2. To be a pupil at a school with a Muslim profile

Pupils at all four schools, except those at school A, wrote letters. In school A, at the request of the pupils, group interviews were held instead. The pupils had appreciated being asked to write letters/take part in interviews and to be asked to describe their school.

Pupils who had participated in this study tended to report that, in a MP school, they felt more at ease and self-confident than they had done previously in a school that did not have a Muslim profile. They felt they were able to feel more secure in their school and therefore better able to concentrate on their school work. Those pupils who had previously attended local authority schools, where they had been exposed to bullying and harassment, stated that they felt much more secure in a MP school.

The views of the pupils regarding their schools and norms and values have been found to have been positive in all four case schools. Almost all the pupils had stated in their letters/interviews that they enjoyed attending their schools for the following reasons (not in order of preference): that the school was one with a Muslim profile, that they had many friends there, that the school was a good one and that they were not exposed to bullying, discrimination or insulting treatment. The pupils had stated that they felt secure in their MP school.

10.3. Pupils in School A and School B in Sweden

Pupils attending these two schools have roots in various parts of the world. Some of them have grown up in Sweden, others have earlier moved from country to country, others were born in some part of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the US. They are from families that may have very different financial, social, cultural and linguistic circumstances. As with some of the teachers and school leaders, the pupils and their families are Muslims and therefore have Islam as a common frame of reference. Their first encounter with Swedish society is likely to have been bewildering, even frightening, for some of them. Superficially it might appear to them that they have arrived in a Sweden without norms. The

contrast is particularly marked for those who are from countries having a social system that strictly controls its citizens, societies where, for generations, everyday life, for women and men, has been strongly regulated through strict rules. Rules and legislation that are described as Islamic and which gain legitimacy through the religious Islamic convictions of the citizens. In Sweden they meet a society where the everyday life of citizens is also regulated by norms and values shaped over several generations. But these Muslim families may meet rules and laws in Sweden which are in direct contradiction to those they have learnt earlier and regard as being legitimate.

The most dominant reason for *parents and pupils* in school A and school B having chosen a MP school was that Arabic was taught in the two schools and in addition, in school B, Somali pupils were given mother-tongue tuition in Somali. Further reasons were that at both schools there were staff who were able to speak both Swedish and the mother-tongues of the pupils, that *halal* food was served, that a prayer room was available and that pupils were taught about Islam within the framework of the school. Another reason was that they would thereby get away from discriminatory and insulting behaviour and harassment and bullying in municipal schools.

In large part, the pupils who were attending the two schools in Sweden lived in segregated residential areas. The vast majority of the population in these segregated areas have their roots outside Sweden and are segregated in terms of socio-economical factors. The pupils travel to school by public transport, by school bus or in their parents' cars. Should these pupils have chosen not to attend a MP school but chosen instead the local municipal school, they would have been placed in classes where the other pupils also had roots in other countries. They would have been in classes where few, if any, of the other pupils had Swedish as a mother tongue.

Many of the pupils who had previously attended a municipal school, related that they now felt more secure in a MP school. In the Muslim profiled school they felt secure and confirmed, and their private life philosophies were not heaped together with generalized images of Islam and Muslims in the media, which were negative and threatening, they felt more open to participating in both internal and external dialogues with other pupils and adults. In accordance with Herlitz (1999) the pupils appreciated that, in attending a MP school, they did not need to adopt any pretences but could be that which they really felt from inside they were. That there was a place for their private views on life. That it was acceptable to raise all kinds of questions and queries and put forward critical points of view and to challenge. Consequently, they could participate in the lessons more openly and more actively.

Pupils in the two schools in Sweden were very keen on their gymnastics and sports lessons. There was no separation into girl sports and boy sports. Consequently both girls and boys played football.

For most of the pupils dreams for their future were related to careers, as doctors, dentists, business people or teachers. Many also wished to be able to work

with computers in the future.

10.3.1. Pupils in School A

Generally speaking the pupils in school A were happy to be in their school. However, they were not happy with the school buildings and regarded them as being too crowded. They hoped that they would be moving soon to a new and larger building.

One of the pupils (Apu) who participated in the group interview at school A had chosen this school primarily to escape from the harassment to which she had been exposed as a pupil at her former school, a municipal school.

In this school I am not bullied or called a witch (Apu).

The pupils regarded themselves as Swedish Muslims. They had relatives and friends with roots in many different countries across the world.

10.3.2. Pupils in School B

Several of the pupils who wrote letters in school B had chosen a MP school to escape from the harassment and abuse to which they had been exposed at their former school, a municipal school.

In the municipal school, most pupils bullied the Muslim girls who were wearing *hijab* and when I was attending a municipal school, I was quite a small person so they always bullied me and I felt like an outsider. Most municipal schools usually insist that Muslim girls swim in the pool together with the boys and it is forbidden in Islam to swim with boys but it is not forbidden in Islam to swim but then boys with boys and girls with girls. When I started at this school I felt much better than I did in the municipal school, you are not forced to do anything here and no bullying either and there is a difference in the teaching here compared to the municipal school and I think it is much better teaching here than in the municipal school.

They take good care of the pupils in this school. If a pupil is not working very well or is not so clever, they come and say why the pupil is not so clever or not working so well. They take very good care of us (pupils). That is why I am able to study here (Bpu:4).

I started in this school because there was no Arabic in my municipal school and because there were so many problems in my municipal school (Bpu:1).

I started in this school because I wasn't used to Swedish schools (Bpu:13).

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What is good about this school is that it is not a school like other schools where there is fighting almost every day (Bpu:17).

So that I can learn Swedish, Arabic, English and Mathematics at the same time. And because there is a prayer room. And there are many other children who speak the same language as I do. It is the same thing as in the Swedish school except the prayer room, in the Swedish school there is no prayer room. The teachers are as kind as the teachers in the Swedish schools (Bpu:10).

I think school is good. Fun, good and enjoyable (Bpu:6).

It is OK to be a pupil here, but I don't like people fighting with me or my brothers and sisters in school but still think it is a good school (Bpu:16).

A number of pupils had come straight from abroad to school B. Pupil Bpu:8 was one such pupil.

After three days from arriving in Sweden, I wanted to go to the school which we should go to but I did not know which school that was or where it was. Then we saw some pupils who traveled by bus each day. We intended to ask them where they were going. They replied that they traveled to _____. The day after we traveled with them on the bus. They traveled to _____ where the school was. We decided this was good for us (Bpu:8).

Generally-speaking the pupils in school B were satisfied to be in their school, although there were some critical comments.

It is both positive and negative. What is good about this school is that everyone here is a Muslim and understand each other but what is negative is that there is no order.

... some of the pupils make nuisances of themselves and do not listen to the staff but still there are also pupils who are kind and listen to the staff (Bpu:3).

This school has been both positive and negative. In the first year, it had been a good school but now it is only average. Boring sometimes. We don't have outings. The whole year it has only been work that has counted and bad food (Bpu:5).

It is no fun when teachers get mad at me and the others. You can't always do as you want. You have always to be obedient if you don't want teachers to get angry. You are not to hit each other, but you are not allowed to talk to each other either in school. That isn't much fun (Bpu:8).

10.4. Pupils in School C and School D in England

The most dominant reason for pupils in school C and school D in England for having chosen a MP school was that they would thereby be attending a school where Islam was integrated into all teaching and that all assemblies, for example for prayers, were time-tabled for all pupils. In addition there were common rules that the school had defined as being Islamic rules covering pupils' dress, relationships between boys and girls and the behaviour of pupils.

The pupils described the Muslim norms that were applied in their school.

Pupils in School C and School D expressed positive views about their own future and wished to continue on to higher education so as to one day enter their "dream profession.

10.4.1. Pupils in School C

The attention of the pupils in school C was totally focused on my being from Sweden. They wanted to know many things about what it was like for children in school in Sweden. What I thought about their school and about England. Compared to the pupils at school D, they were much more open and talked spontaneously about themselves and the school. What was good and what was less good about the school.

I like this school because it follows our religion. Good things about this school are that you can pray, you can play different kinds of sports like rounders and football during breaks and lunch (Cpu:26).

I did not know anybody from this school, but I soon made friends (Cpu:10).

Being a pupil in School C can be really horrid – and it can be really nice. I think all schools are like this (Cpu:1).

I think that my school is doing really well, although some people think that the school is not doing well, because our school is a private school. At least this school is still better than my old school (Cpu:14).

It's exciting and I am glad my parents told me to come to this school. Over here I can learn more about my religion Islam. Because it is a Muslim school. It has brilliant teachers. It will be very sad when I have to leave. I have made many friends since I have been here. I am looking forward to the next year to come. Being a pupil here is enjoyable. I never get bored. I have easy access to help if I have any trouble (Cpu:16).

What Role of God and National Curriculum in School life?

My school is a private Muslim one. The school has its own uniform and PE kit³⁰. The boys and girls are separated from each other for games and swimming (Cpu:4).

It is quite different from other schools because they do praise and you learn about Islam. And the girls have to wear scarves to cover their hair (Cpu:4).

I like the fact that I'm close to other Muslims like me. I'm glad that we do Koran and Arabic in this school and that we don't sing carols in this school (Cpu:6).

I think the school is OK but the rules are a bit silly like no chocolate allowed or chocolate biscuits. And I would like to have more Islamic work than English work. I think the teachers are OK. I would like to have Islamic reading books and some English books and I would like more time for sports (Cpu:18).

I like this school because it follows our religion. The good things about this school are that you can pray, you can play different kind of sports like rounders and football at break-time and lunch (Cpu:26).

In my school the good things are that in the morning in assembly the teacher asks everyone to read a *surah* from the Koran. The teachers also say stories of the Prophets so we know more about Islam. It is a very friendly atmosphere (Cpu:22).

I like the school when we do some painting, IT and games. I also have started liking the school a bit because of a brilliant teacher. This week she has started a magazine and we have to think of a name for the magazine (Cpu:11).

Various systems of rewards were used in the two schools in England to encourage pupils to obey the school rule. For example, in school C, those pupils who were particularly polite and helpful towards visitors who came to the school were awarded special points. The pupils competed individually and as a class, and girls against boys, to collect points for good behaviour. This included working well, doing homework, being polite and being a good school-mate. Those pupils who had collected the most points were mentioned at the Friday assembly. Prizes in the form of sweets would be awarded to individual pupils and the "class of the week" was awarded the *class trophy*.

It is a great opportunity for me to be in this school and not just for me but everyone else who is and who has been and who will be in our school. We have various occasions when the whole school gets together. We have a weekly assembly where a class does a play about Islam. The head-teacher gives out certificates

30. PE kit: Physical Education equipment of clothes m.m. School Uniform – PE Kit

of achievement and announces which class won the class of the week and the class challenge (Cpu:9).

The pupils in school C were involved in voluntary work of various kinds. These included contact between the school and a children's hospital located in the same town as the school. The pupils wrote letters and sent drawings which they had made to children in the hospital. All the pupils were involved in collections for support to children in the hospital. The school organized various "Open House" activities. Pupils and parents made donations such as bread and preserves to be sold there. The school also ran a café in connection with the "Open House." Pensioners who lived in the vicinity of the school received special invitations on these days. They were also invited to a snack. According to the staff at the school, all these neighbours near the school were non-Muslims. The school had good contacts with the neighbours who consisted largely of pensioners. Some of these pensioners lived under straitened financial circumstances. Therefore on certain holidays, the pupils handed out baskets of food to the pensioners. Since the school did not receive funds from the state, some of the income from the "Open House" was used to purchase school materials.

The school is a good place because they give donations to the people who are needy. They give the rest of the money to orphans in homes and to buy equipment that we need such as computers, soft footballs, skipping ropes, soft tennis balls (Cpu:17).

The pupils in school C had pointed out that relationships between girls and boys were strained. Some of the boys felt that the teacher showed favour to the girls and some of the girls believed that the biggest problem in the school was the boys. The classes were mixed, with both girls and boys. In Years 5 and 6 the girls sat together, two by two at their desk, and the boys were seated in a similar manner. Where there were mixed desks, with both boys and girls, there was space between them. Physical lessons were divided between the boys and girls. During the break times too, games were organized boys only or girls only such that girls only played with girls and boys with boys.

I really like the school but the only thing that spoils the school is the boys. In our class boys are bad and are show-offers (Cpu:2).

I like going to this school, but there are disadvantages like the boys in my class, they won't leave you alone! They are always up to something! I am happy to go to a Muslim school (Cpu:13).

The thing I don't like about my school is that there are more girls than boys in our class. I don't like that the girls have put a netball pitch over our football pitch (Cpu:21).

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The teachers are horrible to the boys and nice to the girls sometimes (Cpu:6).

The teacher has done things like a class challenge or boys against girls challenge which has made the school much better (Cpu:11).

Pupils in school C talked about the demands put on pupils at a MP school.

Every one has to wear the correct uniforms. The girls wear *hijab* – they have to in Years three, four, five and six. It is a fee-paying school. They teach us the subjects from other schools like English and Maths. We also do Arabic, Koran and a choice of Urdu or French. The juniors read the prayers (Cpu: 8).

When you are new you feel strange but as a Muslim we should look after them, which is exactly what we do and if you do that you will have lots of friends, unfortunately occasional falling-out happens which is sad to see. And there is bullying which is extremely horrible (Cpu:9).

The good things about our school are that Muslims are able to practise their religion freely. Our school allows us to pray. We are given certificates for good work in assembly. Girls wear *hijab*. We have Arabic and Koran lessons twice a week. We have a few days off for *Eid* (Cpu:12).

The pupils regarded themselves as English Muslims. They had relatives and friends with roots in many different countries across the world. In a letter, one pupil (Cpu:14) describes life in England in the following way:

I am writing to tell you what it is like to be a pupil in England. I think that living in England is very nice – the amount of Muslim Schools is growing. I am very much looking forward to High School. I would never want to live in any other country apart from England, because all my family and relatives live here, apart from some who live in Pakistan (CPU:14).

Pupils in school C were very keen on their gymnastics and sports lessons. In school C, there was some separation in that girls played netball while boys played football.

We do netball, rounders and, best of all, swimming. The boys do everything the same except for netball. Instead they do football. Some children do karate after school (Cpu:8).

For most of the pupils in school C, dreams for their future were related to careers, as doctors, dentists, business people or teachers, or to becoming professional footballers.

I think there are not enough sports activities. I want to be a professional footballer like Henrik Larsson when I grow up (Cpu:22).

I dream that I want to be a Stomach Surgeon and look in people's Stomachs (Cpu:7).

When I get out of School C I would like to go to a Muslim school. I would like to get a good education to get a good job (Cpu:5).

I want to be an engineer for aeroplanes when I grow up (Cpu:21).

When I grow up I would like to be a police-woman because you can have lots of adventures, or be an air-hostess because you can travel the world free and get paid a lot. But if I could change my mind about being one of those things, I would choose to be a poet (Cpu:27).

Some of the pupils stated that they would like have work which involved helping children and families in poorer countries and to work for peace in the world.

When I grow up and become an adult I would like to be a doctor because I would be able to get lots of money and give it away to charity or poor people who need money very fast for clothing or food. And Allah said "Those who are very kind to poor people will go to paradise *Insha Allah* (Cpu:24).

10.4.2. Pupils in school D

I came to this school because the girls do not bully you here. We came here because they do not wear mini skirts and no scarf but we came here so that we do not wear mini skirts but wear long skirts and a scarf. At the beginning there was no boys allowed in the school in years 3/4 and 5/6 and that's why my dad said for us to come to this school and now boys are allowed in Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 that is how it changed (Dpu: 7).

Things I like are reading our *salah* (prayers), and that you do not get any racist remarks. If we did hear someone say such things, it would be dealt with (Dpu:17).

I like this school because it teaches us many things and the school is Islamic. All the teachers are kind to us and we respect them (Dpu: 18).

I like this school because I do not have to worry about my prayers because we read them in school (Dpu: 14).

As is the case in many other schools in England, in school C and school D, the

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wearing of the school uniform was obligatory for all pupils and for girls this included the wearing of a long skirt and *hijab*. The pupils in school D were somewhat critical of the fact that wearing *hijab* was obligatory. Pupils were also somewhat critical that there was so much that was forbidden (*haram*).

What I don't like is that you have to wear *hijab*. I don't like it that you have homework every single day. I don't like it that people say everything is *haram*. People like that get on your nerves (Dpu: 8).

One girl in school D was critical of the fact that there were both boys and girls in her class.

I think girls should be in a separate room and the boys should be in a separate room (Dpu:16).

One pupil in this school described the way Islam was an integral part of teaching as follows:

I really like this Islamic school because it is always fun. In all the lessons we do things about Islam and I never want to leave this school (Dpu: 9).

Pupils in this school talked about the demands put on pupils at a MP school.

All of my friends are very good Muslims. It is very hard to be a Muslim. You have to work very hard to please Allah (S.W.T³¹). You must pray five times a day. And read the Koran daily (Dpu: 11).

The pupils regarded themselves as English Muslims. They had relatives and friends with roots in many different countries across the world. The pupils were very keen on their gymnastics and sports lessons. There was some separation in that girls played netball while boys played football. The pupils dreams for their future were related to careers, as teachers, vets, doctors, dentist, police, lawyer, actor, artist, shop assistant, *haqizy* (a woman who learns all of the Koran by heart), business people or teachers, or in becoming professional footballers. Many of the pupils in school D wished to be able to work as a teacher, with computers in the future.

I will be a police officer or a teacher (Dpu:20).

31. S.W.T: When writing the name of God (Allah), Muslims often follow it with the abbreviation "SWT." These letters stand for the Arabic words "Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala," or "Glory to Him, the Exalted." Muslims use these or similar words to glorify God when mentioning His name (<http://islam.about.com/od/glossary/g/swt.htm>).

I want to be a vet because I like animals – that’s why I am trying hard so I can become a vet (Dpu: 17).

I would like to be a teacher, in an Islamic school. I want to be a teacher because I can teach other children about Islam so they can benefit from the teachings (Dpu:14).

I would like to become a teacher, I do not have any particular reason why. Or I would like to become a lady who learns all of the Koran by heart (Dpu:13).

During one of my classroom observations in school D, I observed a lesson on Islam. Here the pupils were taught that as Muslims they would all enter Heaven while non-Muslims would wind up in Hell. The pupils turned and pointed at me in embarrassment. The pupils appeared to be surprised that I, a non-Muslim, was in the school. During a number of other visits to classrooms, several girls came up to me and touched my hair. Some of them asked me why I was not wearing *hijab*. From their reactions, it appeared that these pupils did not have any contact at all with children and adults outside of their own Muslim group.

There was an obvious possibility that pupils in school D would view the minority in the school, the non-Muslim staff (who at the same time were the majority in the rest of society) as less than full members of the teachers group in the school. Since the pupils belonged to the Muslim majority in the school, there was a strong possibility that the “we” and “them” mentality reflected in the fundamental values of the school would lead them to believe that, as Muslims, they had a higher status than the non-Muslim staff and, subsequently, all non-Muslims. In addition, there was also the possibility that the pupils were not permitted to meet other Muslim children and adults who held more moderate views than those that found expression in the fundamental values permeating practices at the school. This was a particularly strong possibility bearing in mind the admissions policy of the school, where the head interviewed parents and children in order to select those applicants whose parents held the “correct” Islamic values. Thus, the opportunities for those Muslims on the staff who wished to work on the basis of a wider view of society were very restricted and as were the opportunities for them to establish contacts between the school and the non-Muslim society.

10.5. Parents understanding and attitudes

In Sweden, a total of seven parents were interviewed for this study. A group of four members of the parents association were interviewed in school A and three interviews with parents were carried out in school B. In England, seven parents from school C and school D were either interviewed or answered questions by

letter. Over and above these formal interviews, more spontaneous conversations have been held at parent meetings and when parents were visiting the school.

10.5.1. Expectations of parents with regard to the school with a Muslim profile

The expectation of parents in school A and school B was that children in a MP school would learn to respect their parents and teachers, and the rules of society. The parents were convinced that since the MP school was a relatively small school, the children would be better looked after. According to the parents, the children felt it was fun to be a pupil at a MP school. The parents' expectation was that at the school the children would learn about Islam in a correct way.

That it would not be like it was in the municipal school that my children were misinformed about Islam (AP).

One parent (BF:1) stated that his expectation was that School B would be similar to other schools in Sweden but with more teaching of the Arabic language. As in the case of this parent, several other parents in School B had come to Sweden as refugees.

In the parents' experience, it had often been difficult for teachers to adapt the teaching to the needs of all pupils since they came from such a variety of backgrounds and had reached such different levels in the various subjects.

The representatives from the parent association at School A considered that it was important for the school to stress teaching and that the school did not develop into a "play school." They were of the opinion that there was plenty of time for play after school. The parents pointed out that on the day society judged Muslims as Swedes, they would have good possibilities of finding knowledgeable representatives, ambassadors for Sweden, among Muslims. Muslims have natural links with different countries with extensive knowledge of languages and cultures.

The children are Swedish Muslim ambassadors (AP).

In addition, the parents considered that politicians must recognize Islam as a religion in Sweden and that they must put themselves in the position of those with the background of immigrants, where many have war experiences and realize that many are not in a position to "struggle and struggle again" to make progress in the Swedish social system. They must understand that immigrant children require more help than other children in Sweden. In their opinion, children who do not have ability, have very little fighting spirit. One parent related that it can be difficult for well-educated parents to make their children understand that they must work hard at school when they themselves as parents are unemployed, even though they might well have qualifications, such as

a university education.

Among those parents who came from abroad direct to school B were some who had been surprised or disappointed that the school had not integrated Islam into various subjects. School B was their first encounter with the secular Swedish school system. These were parents who had arrive in Sweden straight from countries and environments where they had not come into contact with non-Muslims. One parent (BP:2), who had recently arrived in Sweden as a refugee expressed the following expectation about school B:

That my child will not read or hear about Christianity, Judaism or Hinduism (BP: 2).

The parents at school C and school D expected the school to provide sound, correct Islamic education and facilities for their children. That the school teaches Islamic studies, the Koran and develop Muslim habits and attributes in the child.

To facilitate formation to a truly Islamic individual who can go on to contribute security and make the world a better place to live in. To propagate Islamic monotheism, in order for my child to forsake all false deities, in order to worship his one creator alone (CP:1).

That it provides sound, correct Islamic education for our children, making it different from the normal state school (CP:2).

Parents' expectations with regard to school management in both countries were that they would ensure that high moral standards, truth and justice would be maintained. That efforts would be made to maintain reasonable standards and academic achievement. Parents expected that school management, teachers and other staff would be good Muslims and set a good example. They expected them to set a good example, to be role models, and that pupils would regard them as upright, honest, hardworking people.

10.5.2. Parents expectations with regard to Muslim rules and values

Parents in school C and school D expected the pupils to abide by such Muslim rules and values as truth, justice, kindness to parents, to have good manners, to be kind to the poor and oppressed, and to animals and so on. To pray five times a day, to observe the fast, learn Arabic and the Koran and so on. One parent (CP:1) expected the pupils to ultimately feel that they have to answer to God alone.

To keep the problems of this world in perspective. The most important thing is to do the right things for the sake of God alone and not for any gain in this world, monetary or otherwise (CP:1).

Parents in school C and school D expected the school to teach Islamic morals and manners; to teach the pupils not to lie, steal and so on; to respect teachers, parents and other people in authority; to pray and carry out *wudu*.

10.5.3. Parents choice of school

Parents in school C and school D in England explained their choice of a MP school by stating that they felt Islamic ideas would not be learnt in other settings and felt it would have been difficult for their children to truly integrate into a non-Islamic environment. They considered that young children have found it difficult to determine that which is correct and that which is not correct from the point of view of Islam and would likely descend into confusion as a result of contradictory ideas from school and from home.

Some of the parents said that in certain respects they were satisfied with the school of their choice, but not in all. The parents group communicated with the school by holding regular parent-teacher (PTA) meetings.

Most of the pupils attending school C and school D were born in England. In addition, some of the parents had also been born in England. Some of the parents who had come to England as adults had learnt English at school in their home country. Therefore they had some knowledge of English on their arrival in England.

The experiences of parents at school B in Sweden were that it was often difficult for the teacher to adapt teaching to the needs of all pupils since the children had such different histories of schooling. There were a *significant number of* pupils in school B who had only recently arrived in Sweden as refugees. They could not speak Swedish when they began school. In addition, many pupils did not have any prior experience of preschool and/or school in Sweden. This was true both of the more recent arrivals in Sweden and those pupils who had lived in Sweden for some time but had not attended a day-care or preschool in Sweden. A *significant number of* the pupils in school B were from Iraq. For many of the pupils and their parents the encounter with the Swedish alphabet was something new. They were used to the Arabic language and to read from right to left. It required much effort to learn Swedish and to read from left to right. In addition, many of the pupils who had arrived recently bore with them serious traumatic experiences from war which compounded these difficulties with regard to effective learning.

Pupils who attended school A were either born in Sweden or had lived in Sweden for a number of years. Many had previously attended a pre-school in Sweden. None of these pupils had come directly from abroad to this school. One of the pupils in school A was a non-Muslim. The parents had chosen a MP school because they were dissatisfied with the municipal school.

Chapter 11

Summary and Concluding Discussion

11.1. Introduction

The aim of this study has been to gain a better understanding of: those principles and ethics that have dominated four MP schools, two in Sweden and two in England, and the manner in which heads, teachers and other staff have dealt with the encounters between Muslim principles and ethics and the principles and ethics in the NC in Sweden and England respectively.

11.2. Free Space for that which is Muslim

Those values that dominate the four MP schools, two in Sweden and two in England were a combination of secular – rational values and self-expression values together with traditional values and survival values. Staff and pupils encountered in the two MP schools in Sweden and the two in England a mix of secular and traditional values. The state regulations together with the private life philosophies of the owners of the school, the school management, teachers, other staff, pupils and parents all had influenced the values that were dominant in the MP schools at the time of the fieldwork.

The two MP schools in Sweden were dominated by secular – rational values and self-expression values and were more secular when compared to the two MP schools in England. Most of the teachers were non-Muslim while most of the teachers in the MP schools in England were Muslim. The two MP schools in England were strongly influenced by traditional values. The school management, staff and pupils were expected to adhere to traditional values during the school day while out of school they often lived according to more secular-rational values and self-expression values.

The fundamental reason for the great difference between the two MP schools in Sweden on the one hand and the two schools in England on the other lies in the parameters which had been established in these countries as the conditions for being permitted to establish and run a school with a confessional direction (See the Map in chapter 2). Since the schools in both countries had conformed to the relevant legislation and framework in their respective countries with regard

to MP schools, they had therefore developed in different directions. While the two schools in Sweden were in receipt of state funding and therefore were required to be secular, the two schools in England did not have such requirements placed on them by the state. With regard to the free space for that which is Muslim in the two schools in Sweden and the two schools in England, there had been changes over time.

In the case of Sweden, this free space (the space outside the National Regulations in, the Map in chapter 2) was a matter of the schools having the possibility of teaching Islam to the pupils for one or two lessons each week, of serving *halal* food, to provide time and a place for those pupils to pray who wished to do so and to divide the boys and girls into separate groups for swimming lessons and gymnastics. On the other hand, the schools had not been permitted, for example, to require girls to wear hijab (or to prohibit them from doing so). Nor had they been permitted to require Muslim women employed at the school to wear hijab (or to prohibit them from doing so). Self-determination and individual freedom are strictly protected under Swedish law.

There was considerably more free space in the two schools in England for the Muslim aspects, whereby they had been able to introduce their own rules as deemed to be appropriate to each school concerned. The schools were permitted to determine for themselves the extent to which Islam was to be integrated into all activities in the school, in the various subjects and during the break. Therefore, unlike the case of the two schools in Sweden, it had been permissible for these schools to require that girls wear *hijab*, to adopt rules which prohibited girls and boys from sitting next to each other, to play together during the breaks, to sit together in a room alone with the door closed, to have gymnastics together, and so on. In a similar fashion, these schools could also place such requirements on the staff with regard to dress and behaviour.

Hypothetically-speaking should the two MP schools in England have applied to open equivalent schools, with state financing, in Sweden, they would have had their applications rejected. The grounds for this would have been that they would not be considered to be in compliance with the NC in Sweden and the requirements stemming from this that (i) teaching be non-confessional, (ii) that such rules as those requiring pupils and staff to wear s are not permitted, (iii) that it is presumed that all pupils will participate in Music, Art and Religious Education lessons, (iv) that there be no norms and rules regulating the mingling of girls and boys and/or women and men.

Should the two MP schools in Sweden, have applied to open equivalent schools, with state financing, in England, they would probably have had their applications rejected since as yet only four MP primary schools are in receipt of such state financing. In the UK, it is politicians in the government who determine when state financing is to be granted. Those schools who had been granted state financing no doubt only achieved this because at that time, politicians had been subject to pressure for some time from Muslim groups. The demands of the latter were that MP schools should be granted similar rights to finance as

those enjoyed by Christian and Jewish schools. This had been a political move, where the politicians wished to demonstrate good will by meeting the demands from the Muslims by granting state financing to MP schools.

Also hypothetically-speaking, should school A and school B have been granted state financing in England, they would most probably have found it very difficult to recruit pupils. It is most likely that Muslim parents in England would have regarded school A and school B as two secular schools, compared to school C and school D, and therefore would not be able to provide the morality and discipline that they would have been expected to do. The parents would also have reacted to girls and boys, of all ages, playing and mingling freely together. In addition they would have also reacted to Muslim girls and the Muslim women employees at a MP school deciding for themselves whether or not to wear a hijab.

11.3. Selection of Pupils

There were significant differences between the two schools in England. The fundamental difference was that while one school received state financing, the other did not do so.

Both schools selected the children who were to be accepted as pupils at the school. In the case of school C, there was automatic selection in that the level of term fees determined that those pupils with parents who were able to pay the high term fees would have places. These high fees also prevented those teachers who wished to enroll their own children in the school from doing so. School D selected the children they wished to accept as pupils. In accordance with the regulations applicable to state-aided schools, the school did not charge fees. Consequently, this made it possible for any children and their parents, whatever their income, to apply to the school if they wished to do so. On the other hand, there were no regulations which prohibited the school from selecting prospective pupils.

Through selection, the school wished to accept children (read here also parents) whom they assessed as being worthy with regard to values of the school. The children whose parents were assessed as not completely conforming to the views on Muslim upbringing, according to the values of the school, were rejected.

11.4. Private Philosophy of life

As is the case with all other citizens, the Muslims and non-Muslims who were working at MP schools have their own personal histories and private philosophies of life. There were Muslims, Christians and those who defined themselves as non-religious among the staff who had participated in this study. The

majority of the teachers in the two schools in Sweden were not Muslims, while the majority of the teachers in the two schools in England were so. The psycho-social work environment for those who worked at these schools varied exactly as is the case for other workplaces. The work environment at two of these four schools, school A and school C was particularly positive. These two schools were especially remarkable in that there was an open and permissive atmosphere. What they had in common was that they could see opportunities and express hope for the future and curiosity with regard to their work at the school.

The heads, teachers and other staff who were working at MP schools did not form a homogeneous group with regard to views on any encounter between Muslim values with the values enshrined in the Swedish curriculum and English curriculum respectively. With regard to the issue as to what steered the work in the school, everyone had their own formulation based on their own private philosophy of life. As is the case for all other citizens, their private philosophies of life had been influenced, to various degrees, by impulses from others in the school and others outside of the school and by various ideas together with political and other ideological trends in society, locally, nationally and globally. Worldwide contacts had been maintained through the Internet and various services on the mobile telephones which had resulted in individuals with various private philosophies having been able to meet regularly and exchange experiences.

Heads, teachers and other staff at the four case schools had acted in compliance with the NC and on the basis of various private philosophies of life and within a field of action where the boundaries and parameters had been determined by the educational policies and regulations regarding the educational system of the respective countries together with the financial resources provided by the public sector (see the Map in chapter 2) .

According to the heads, teachers, other staff and parents, the two schools in Sweden had undergone considerable changes since the time of their founding up until the time of the field studies.

11.5. Network that is worldwide

In debates, the MP schools in Sweden and England had most often been accused of increasing segregation in society and of being places where there was a risk that pupils would be indoctrinated. But on the contrary, the two MP schools in Sweden and the two MP schools in England are to be regarded in a global and national context as being well-integrated into society. Through constituting a meeting place for pupils and staff with different languages and countries of origin, and given the pupils and staff have a network that is worldwide, these schools have been on the cutting-edge of expectations as to what a school should be today and tomorrow. Many of the pupils and staff have contacts with other

children and adults in Sweden, England and the rest of Europe and countries beyond Europe.

The four schools had adapted themselves to the NC, laws and policies at that time current in the respective countries. This had resulted in the two schools in Sweden and the two schools in England differing somewhat from each other with regard to their Muslim profiles. In Sweden, one of the most secularized countries in the world, it has not been permitted to integrate Islam (nor any other religion for that matter) with the various subjects being taught. On the other hand, for the schools in England this has been permitted.

11.6. Motivation

The staff at the four schools had found motivation in their work from Islamic, Christian, religious or non-religious convictions. The local school plans had been dressed in Muslim or non-Muslim language, according to the educational policy parameters in Sweden and England respectively. Consequently, the MP schools in Sweden might be described in a linguistic dress that was secular, hardly noticeable as Muslim while the MP schools in England might be described in a language dress that was clearly Muslim.

11.7. The “secular highway”

In Sweden, the opening of the possibility of founding schools with a confessional direction together with the granting of state funds, had ensured both religious freedom and a perpetuation of a secular school system. The state has maintained control, through state monitoring, whereby it has been possible to ensure these schools would keep to the “secular highway” and not become involved in crashes or end up in the ditch. But the education authorities, though having focused on issues of state control, have failed to take in useful information regarding the experiences gained by Muslims and non-Muslims at MP schools through their pioneering activities within the Swedish educational system. That is the space free for a Muslim profile was very different in the two countries. One of the consequences of this was that in Sweden it has not been permitted to integrate Islam into the various school subjects while in England this has been permitted.

The two case schools in Sweden may be described as being two secular MP schools where, in the lessons known as the school’s elective subjects, and over and above the teaching of Religious Studies, provided two hours teaching on Islam. It was education about Islam. The two case schools in England may be described as two schools with a confessional direction where Islam was integrated into the teaching and other activities in the school. It was education into Islam.

11.8. The reason why parents and children had chosen a school with a Muslim profile

During the field studies, both in Sweden and England, it transpired that the reason why parents and children had chosen a MP school was not only to strengthen the children's knowledge of Islam and become Swedish and English Muslims respectively. The choice of such a school had also been made because they wanted their children to escape from the bullying and negative stereotypical or racist attitudes to which their children had been exposed as pupils at the municipal schools. This negative experience from the municipal primary schools was something that some of the girls in particular had experienced. Some of the staff, in particular Muslim women, who had previously worked as teachers in municipal schools also stated that they had experienced exposure to bullying and harassment by non-Muslim colleagues.

It has considerable significance for the development of the identities of young people that in school they not be exposed to violations of their rights. In Sweden, in the NC (Lpo 1994) it is stated that attitudes with regard to tolerance and generosity are important and fundamental features of the duties of the school with regard to the upbringing of the pupils. At the same time, it has been shortcomings with regard to just tolerance and generosity in local authority schools which has caused Muslim parents to remove their children from them. It has also been easier for them to communicate their critical points of view to the head and teachers in a MP school.

Several parents stated that they had been able to learn more about school system and NC in Sweden in the MP school than had been the case in the local authority school in which the children had previously been enrolled.

Since the schools in Sweden and England conformed to the NC in their respective countries, the schools with a confessional direction and a Muslim profile in Sweden scheduled 1-2 hours per week as the free choice subject/profile subject for Islam as a subject and/or Arabic language tuition. Therefore the pupils studied Islam and had Arabic tuition over and above the subjects designated in the NC (including Religious Studies as a subject). As was the case in many other schools in England, the wearing of the school uniform was obligatory for the pupils. For girls, the uniform included the wearing of *hijab*.

With regard to the professional relationship between the Muslim majority and the non-Muslim minority in the two schools in England, this was different from the two schools in Sweden. One of the reasons for this difference is to be found in the parameters which the state established for these schools. It was possible for the two schools in England to integrate Islam into the everyday activities of the school and to establish selection criteria for prospective pupils. This circumstance also had a not insignificant effect on the professional relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims at these schools. There was only very limited space for the non-Muslim features since the two schools in England had a Muslim profile and Muslim children were the target group together with

their own local curriculum in Religious Education which was largely focused on Islam.

One difficulty that staff in the two schools in England raised was their concern that more fundamentalists would try to get into the school. There was a worry, both among Muslims and non-Muslims, as to what the consequences would be with these people coming in. There was a risk that it would be harder, more strict.

The fundamental stance evolved by pupils is influenced by the manner in which they are treated in their surroundings (in the family, in school, in the community and other collectives of which the pupils might be members). Whether or not pupils and parents feel they are treated with respect in school is of considerable significance for the positive development of the pupils as individuals. Where pupils and parents are confronted in school with what they consider to be hostile attitudes towards their own central values, for example with regard to their private philosophy of life, there is a considerable risk that conflicts will arise. It is possible that such conflicts may either be open or remain concealed within those who feel they have been humiliated. Some of the pupils and parents who participated in this study report that they chose to change from a municipal school to a MP school because they felt they had not been treated with respect by the staff and the other, non-Muslim, pupils. In the MP school they felt more at ease and self-confident. The pupils felt more secure and therefore better able to concentrate on their school work.

11.9 Politicians

Only four of the nine politicians in Sweden who were interviewed had previously visited a MP school in their own local authority. Therefore five politicians did not have any prior first-hand knowledge of the MP schools which had been established in these two local authorities. Nevertheless, their views concerning these schools were overwhelmingly critical and negative.

11.10. Owners of the schools

The heads, together with the owners of the schools, were of considerable importance with regard to which values were dominant in practice in the two schools in Sweden and the two schools in England.

Although it is only a small number of pupils, and a small proportion of all Muslim children, who attend MP schools in Sweden and England, these schools are an important symbol for Muslims, even for those who themselves do not have any children attending one of them. The schools symbolize for them that they are, as religious Muslims, an important and integral part of Swedish and English society respectively. Those Muslims who had established and run

independent schools in Sweden have stated that they had seldom, if ever, felt there had been that positive curiosity which otherwise was so common among politicians, the general public and the media when any new activity was to be started or had just begun. If there had been any such positive interest from the very start with regard to these schools, it would have generated important contacts and networks between MP schools and the municipal schools. In the view of the heads, the right of local authorities to conduct the oversight with regard to independent schools had largely resulted in one-sided reviews of their activities with the sole purpose of merely finding fault which then would be reported back to the authority responsible for regulatory oversight, the National Agency for Schools.

Muslim educationalists, through having founded MP schools, have demonstrated in a concrete manner their engagement in issues regarding the upbringing and education of children and young people. The founding of compulsory MP schools in Sweden and England has made visible the interest and participation of Muslim citizens in the development of society. In my view, to be able to found and run an independent MP school of quality, has required that the persons concerned have been well-integrated in society.

11.11. The school heads

Three of the four Muslim school heads who have been interviewed in Sweden and England declared that the Prophet Muhammad was the role model for educational management. They have sought support for the manner in which they should act as heads in the Koran and *hadith*. For the heads in Sweden this has meant in practice that they have in their work striven to be positive, democratic role models for their staff and pupils. The heads have also found support with regard to the importance of life-long learning, where children and adults, girls and boys and women and men are encouraged to seek knowledge. In parallel with their professional work, the heads in the selected schools in both countries have participated in various training courses for heads and courses about employment law and school administration.

Statements by heads of the four schools to the effect that the Prophet Mohamed was a role-model for them might possibly be regarded as frightening to any reader who assumed that Islam represents a different ethic to the general ethic encompassed by the NC. But it is in fact an ethic which a Muslim might regard as an Islamic ethic and which a Christian might regard as a Christian ethic.

The heads of the schools in the two countries considered that it was good for the school to have a mix of both Muslim and non-Muslim staff at the school.

For the two heads in England the values of quality of life (Muslim values) were the dominant driving force in their work. Equally, for one of the two heads who were interviewed in Sweden, Muslim values were the dominant driving-force in their work. The heads in schools A and B in Sweden considered

that society at large was dominated by strong economic interests which generally influenced children and young people in a negative way. Where success was defined in terms of financial and material values. Where selfishness and one's own success at the cost of the well-being of others had become a strong driving-force in society. The heads said that the MP schools were striving to foreground other values – Muslim values – as also formulated in the NC: “The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between men and women and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that the school should represent and impart” (The Swedish NC Lp094).

The Muslim heads of schools considered that they had particular responsibilities: in part, those responsibilities that all heads have in relation to those on whose behalf they are employed (the state, the local authority, the owners of the school together with the pupils and their parents) but also the responsibility not to be confined to those they worked for on earth but also to be answerable to God. Their belief in God provided them with support and trust in their duties as head of school and they were at the same time fully convinced that on the Day of Judgment they would be answerable to God.

The heads, together with the owners of the schools, were of considerable importance with regard to which values were dominant in practice in various schools in Sweden and England. The Muslim heads in Sweden were not of the opinion that the fundamental values in the NC were in conflict with Islam, on the contrary they regarded the general values to be very Islamic

The heads of the four case schools stated that their goals were that their school should maintain standards at a high level of quality, that the pupils should attain good results and that the pupils would have a successful future.

The school heads demonstrated basic trust in Swedish society and English society respectively. Had this trust been absent, it would have been highly unlikely that they would have founded a MP school.

11.12. Teachers and other staff

A majority of the staff at the two schools in Sweden considered that it was not obvious that a MP school would be the best school for a Muslim child, while a majority of the staff at the two schools in England thought it would be.

Cultural encounters were handled differently in the two schools in Sweden and the two schools in England (see especially the overlapping fields in the Map in Chapter 2). In School A there was an ongoing intercultural process. Teachers and other staff expressed the view that they were at the beginning of a process of development through which they were all learning to know each other and each other's views on various issues.

School B in reality had formally adopted a general direction (in accordance with the criteria set down by the National Agency for Schools) with an ethnic,

Arabic language and culture profile. While the school had claimed that it did not have a confessional direction, some of the Muslim and non-Muslim staff had come into conflict with each other because of their different views regarding the Islamic, Muslim and secular parameters that were to be implemented in the school.

The Muslim staff dominated in the two schools in England. The non-Muslim staff were expected to comply with the Muslim code of dress that applied in the schools. One of the implications of this in school D was that non-Muslim staff were expected to wear *hijab*. The Muslim staff were not a homogeneous group with regard to the Muslim values and beliefs. Some of the Muslims did not feel comfortable with the Muslim parameters established by the owners of the school. They wished to see their school more adapted to English society. The staff in both schools in England censored that which they interpreted as being *haram*.

11.13. Advantages and Disadvantages of a school with a Muslim profile

According to the staff at school A, one advantage of a MP school was that a great deal had been done by the school to provide support for the pupils. These measures of support had included having classes with fewer pupils, more teaching time in smaller groups and employing multilingual staff with multicultural and intercultural competence. The number of pupils in each class had been kept lower in order for each pupil to receive more individual attention from the teacher. According to the staff at school B, a further advantage of a MP school was that the pupils were not subject to harassment and the girls were not called Easter witches. That those working at the school were able to assist the pupils and encourage pupils to be proud of their backgrounds/identities. That staff and pupils learned to know each other. Everyone knew everyone else.

In England the staff in school C saw as advantages that pupils were aware of religion, they learned from an Islamic perspective and pupils may take part in prayers and obey the fast. Clear about morals. Educate the pupils in an Islamic manner. Another advantage they mentioned was to work with other Muslims and Muslim parents. "You know everyone in the school." According to the staff at school C, a further advantage of a MP school was that such a school was more friendly, had better control of pupils, safe environment and gave opportunities for the pupils to learn about their religion and culture. No discipline problems, small classes and have times and places for prayer. You were with college-educated groups of people, had the same values in the staff-room.

According to the staff at school D, one advantage of a MP school was that pupils were in an Islamic environment all day. A MP school was able to help the pupils to identify with a group of Muslims who were teaching about Islam. Pupils were provided with knowledge, both about Islam and the NC. They

had the opportunity to pray. They were provided with everything necessary at school and therefore did not need to attend a Koran school in evenings or at weekends.

As far as disadvantages are concerned, in Sweden the staff at school A regarded disadvantages of a MP school to include the little contact the pupils had with Swedish pupils, pupils with Swedish as their mother-tongue. The pupils lived in their own small world, with little contact with Swedish and consequently a lower level of integration. According to teachers and other staff in school B, a MP school does not have access to any of the back-up resources in the local authority. A municipal school, on the other hand, has the advantage of access to the whole of the administration in the local authority as well as the expertise while independent schools have to take care of all issues that arise on their own.

The disadvantages taken up by the staff at school C in England confronting MP schools was that school C risked isolating the pupils from the community. Especially that the school did not teach pupils about other religions. One disadvantage that some teachers described was that girls were strongly encouraged to wear *hijab* and were not to have their arms showing, which hinders them when playing netball. In summer they got very hot as they had to keep their arms and legs covered. Another disadvantage that the staff talked about was that outsiders looked at school C as only teaching the Koran and Arabic. Even Muslims do so. A further disadvantage was that there was a lack of basic resources. They were on a larger scale in municipal schools. They possibly had more facilities and were more able to do different things. Since the funding for school C in England was not through state funding they had limited resources. Another disadvantage taken up by the staff at school C was that there were greater pressures from parents on teachers.

In school D in England most of the teachers and other staff stated that they were not aware of any disadvantages with regards to a MP school compared to municipal schools. However, some of the disadvantages that were mentioned were that school D did not teach anything about other religions and that pupils did not meet pupils who had other beliefs than Islam.

11.14. What guides the work, Role Models and Values

Since the schools are situated overlapping field in the Map, the staff were asked the question:

What guides your work at the school, God or the NC or something else?

Most of the Muslim staff at school A stated that God guided their work at school, as internal motivation, giver of energy in order to be able to manage their duties. On the other hand, it was the NC which guided the practical, concrete work. Most of the Muslim staff in school B stated that the duties themselves guided their work. The staff claimed that, since Islam states that there is life after death, and some considered it important to find the energy to work as hard as

possible – they believe life after death will thereby be better.

In England, in school C and school D the response of the Muslim staff was that their first guide for their work in school was God, followed by the NC.

Most of the staff working in school A in Sweden stated that they did not have any role model to emulate or that they have an educational- or a personal role model to emulate. Most of the staff in school B in Sweden stated that they did have an educationalist or a personal educational role model. None of the Muslim- or non-Muslim staff in school B stated that they have a Religious role model or follow the example of the Prophet Mohammed. On the other hand in England the staff in school C stated that they either did have an educationalist or a personal educational role model or a Religious role model or claimed that the Prophet Muhammad was their role model. Half of the staff in school D in England claimed that they don't have any role model to emulate and half of the staff claimed that they have a personal educational role model or Religious role model to emulate.

The majority of teachers and other staff in school A and school B in Sweden as well as school C and school D in England considered that it was possible to combine the NC and its basic values with Islamic values and standards.

Intrinsic values were dominant for heads, teachers and other staff at school A in Sweden and those in school C and school D in England, while for heads, teachers and other staff in school B instrumental values were dominant. Values concerning living standard were the dominant driving force for the head of school B. Intrinsic values, values regarding life qualities. Muslim/Christian/secular values – were dominant in school A. In school B there was a field of tensions between the individuals who had instrumental values as the driving force for their work and those individuals who were driven by intrinsic values. These tensions were increased by the expectations of the parents that the school would in practice adopt a Muslim profile and where the Muslim staff would represent a common basic set of values, and where parents presumed that the engagement of the head and staff in the school was based on substantial idealism, intrinsic values, Muslim values.

Intrinsic values, Muslim values were dominant in school C and school D. This also corresponded to the expectations of the parents. The head, teachers and other staff in these two schools stated that it was God who guided their work at the school. That God came first, followed by NC. That it was the will of God that they adhere to the NC. "I will not do anything without God". God first, followed by the English NC. In addition, most of the non-Muslims who worked in these schools also stated that it was God who guided their work at school.

11.15. Pupils and parents

According to the 1994 NC in Sweden, attitudes such as tolerance and generosity are to be important fundamental elements in the carrying out the school's

duties with regard to upbringing. At the same time it is exactly the lack of tolerance and generosity in the municipal schools that has lead a number of Muslim parents to remove their children and place them in an independent MP school instead.

The most dominant reason for *pupils* in school A and school B having chosen a MP school was that Arabic was taught in the two schools and in addition, in school B, Somali pupils were given mother-tongue tuition in Somali. Further reasons were that at both schools there were staff who were able to speak both Swedish and the mother-tongues of the pupils, that *halal* food was served, that a prayer room was available and that pupils were taught about Islam within the framework of the school. Another reason was that they would thereby get away from discriminatory and insulting behaviour and harassment and bullying in municipal schools.

The most dominant reason for *pupils* in school C and school D in England for having chosen a MP school was that they would thereby be attending a school where Islam was integrated into all teaching and that all assemblies, for example for prayers, were time-tabled for all pupils. In addition there were common rules that the school had defined as being Islamic – rules covering pupils' dress, relationships between boys and girls and the behaviour of pupils.

The expectation of *parents* in school A and school B was that children in a MP school would learn to respect their parents and teachers, and the rules of society. The parents were convinced that since the MP school was a relatively small school, the children would be better looked after. According to the parents, the children felt it was fun to be a pupil at a MP school. The parents' expectation was that at the school the children would learn about Islam in a correct way.

Parents in school C and school D expected the pupils to abide by such Muslim rules and values as truth, justice, kindness to parents, to have good manners, to be kind to the poor and oppressed, and to animals and so on. To pray five times a day, to observe the fast, learn Arabic and the Koran and so on. Parents in school C and school D expected the school to teach Islamic morals and manners; to teach the pupils not to lie, steal and so on; to respect teachers, parents and other people in authority; to pray and carry out *wudu*.

The views of the pupils regarding their schools and norms and values have been found to have been positive in all four case schools. Almost all the pupils had stated in their letters/interviews that they enjoyed attending their schools for the following reasons (not in order of preference): that the school was one with a Muslim profile, that they had many friends there, that the school was a good one and that they were not exposed to bullying, discrimination or insulting treatment. The pupils had stated that they felt secure in their MP school.

11.16. Adapted the practices of Islam to circumstances as they existed in Sweden or UK.

Muslims and Christians working at the schools in Sweden and England considered themselves to be part of a meaningful context, given by God. They were striving to find a link, a connection between life as a Muslim or a Christian and everyday life, work and leisure. Here religious principles as well as non-religious principles constituted important “guidelines.” The Muslims working at the two case schools in Sweden had more secularized opinions with regard to their views on the relationship between religion and everyday life. They had adapted the practices of Islam to circumstances as they existed in Sweden. In a similar way, the Muslims working at the two case schools in England had adapted the practices of Islam to circumstances as they existed in UK.

Compared to those working at the two schools in England, Muslims working at the two schools in Sweden had more secularized opinions with regard to their views on the relationship between religion and everyday life. They had attempted to adapt the practices of Islam to circumstances as they exist in Sweden. The two schools in England had adapted to the framework of educational policies that were currently applicable in England. Where the school had received state funding, there had been rules for pupils and staff which had been defined as Muslim by the school. These rules had included the requirement that non-Muslim staff wear *hijab*. However school C, which was not in receipt of state funding, did not have a rule whereby non-Muslim staff were expected to wear *hijab*.

Those Muslims and non-Muslims who worked at these schools in Sweden and England may be regarded as realizing the “model of integration” the Swedish respectively UK. They have taken steps to meet, work together, to agree and disagree, clash and then meet again – they have simply participated in a process where there have been no guarantees.

There is a considerable risk that Muslims who found MP schools will continue to be marginalized in the secular society such as Sweden. The extent to which MP schools in Sweden and England will become integrated is not a matter which it is possible for the schools themselves to determine but also depends on the extent to which the rest of society can utilize the strengths and willingness that exists in these schools.

It might be claimed that those who had taken the initiative in founding the MP schools participating in this study, had also taken their responsibilities as members of society particularly seriously. They had been innovative and creative and, being so, they had chosen to take a position of opposition to isolation and marginalization

Development processes are not linear. With regard to values, it is only possible to know what these looked like at a certain point in time. The field studies for this thesis were carried out over a very limited period of time. Consequently, the results presented here only relate something about the values which were

dominant in these schools at the time of the field studies.

11.17. Proposals for future research

The goal of this study has been to investigate the extent of any agreement between the MP schools and the values that had been dominant among heads, teachers and other staff in some MP schools in Sweden and England. For the latter, field studies have been carried out in two MP schools in Sweden and two such schools in England.

It would be of considerable interest to carry out follow-up research from this study in order to be able to provide more documentation to events over time. What values are dominant in the schools today? As far as possible, to follow-up the pupils who had participated in this study – to establish how their lives have turned out. It would also be of considerable interest to carry out a study on the Islamophobic discourse that has arisen from the debate on MP schools in England and some other countries in Europe, in comparison to the current situation in Sweden. That is to say, a comparative study in several countries to establish similarities and differences. In addition it would be of interest to carry out a comparative study of schools with different confessional directions.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide to the school head

I Background

1. Name (code)
1. Male Female
2. Age
3. Nationality
4. Position
5. Educational background
6. Do you have a teacher's certificate? If yes, from what country and what year?
7. Do you have a head teacher's certificate? If yes, from what country and what year?
8. Are you working as a teacher? If yes, what subject(s) do you teach?
9. Were you born in England? (in Sweden?). If not, in what country were you born? How long have you lived in England (in Sweden?). What countries have you lived in? Did you come to England (to Sweden) as a refugee?
10. Do you speak, read and write English (Swedish)?
11. What other languages do you speak?
12. Are you a Muslim? If yes, which group?
13. What is your professional experience?
14. When did you become a head teacher at the Islamic school?
15. Why did you become a head teacher at the Islamic school?
16. How did you become a head teacher at the Islamic school?
17. Do you have children? Are they in the Islamic school? If yes, why? If not, why not?

II About the school

18. When was the Islamic school set up?
19. Where is the school located? (Type of area, building)
19. How many pupils are there in the Islamic school? What ages? How many grades? How many classes? How many pupils are there in each class?

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20. How many teachers are working at the school?
21. How many of them work full time and how many work part time?
22. What is the number of staff at the school?
23. How many of them work full time and how many work part time?
24. Terms of employment (On-going employment, salary contributions, project employment, trial employment, etc.)
25. What is the total budget of the school?
26. Who is the owner of the school? (Type of organisation, foundation, company, etc.)
27. What is the local school organisation/plan?
28. Are the head teacher and/or members of the school represented in the School Board?
29. Does the school receive any support from associations, groups, organisations, or private individuals from inside and outside of England (of Sweden)? If so, what type of support does the school receive (financial, ideological, practical, or other)? Is the support associated with any particular conditions?
30. What languages do the pupils speak?
31. Do the pupils receive education in their mother tongue?
32. Do the pupils live close to the school? If not, how far from school do they live? How do they travel to school?

III Rules and values

33. In your opinion, what characterises a good leader?
34. Do you have any pedagogical, ideological or personal role model to emulate?
35. What advantages do you see with an Islamic school compared to state or municipal primary schools?
36. What disadvantages do you see with an Islamic school compared to state or municipal primary schools?
37. What is your knowledge of Islam?
38. What is your knowledge about English (Swedish) school laws and the NCL? What does the curriculum say about the responsibility of the school for: standards and values, student responsibility and influence, home and school, the school and its surroundings?
39. What Islamic rules do you have to follow in the Islamic school?
40. Are there rules that you think are difficult for you to accept or to follow (Islamic, cultural, English, in the curriculum...)? If yes, what are they?
41. Are there rules and regulations in the school regarding the behaviour of women and men, girls and boys? If yes, what are they?
42. What occupations do you think are most suitable for girls?
43. What occupations do you think are most suitable for boys?
44. What knowledge do you think is important for girls to master?

45. What knowledge do you think is important for boys to master?
46. Are there types of music, literature, arts, and photos, pictures or films that are not acceptable at school? If yes, what types and why?
47. Are there any rules for what pupils and staff can or cannot wear in school? If yes, what type of rules?
48. What festivals do you celebrate at the school?
49. What school holidays do student celebrates? Why?
50. What guides your work at the school? God or the English (Swedish) NCI or something else?
51. Which Islamic textbooks, texts, films, tapes and videos does the school use?

IV Attitudes

52. What image do you think the pupils have of you?
53. What is your vision and ambitions as a head teacher at the school?
54. How do you want to carry out your vision and ambitions in your job as a head teacher?
55. What do you know about the home country of pupils and staff, their culture and language?
56. What do you know about the views of pupils and staff on Islam?
57. Do the pupils have any knowledge of the basic values and regulations that are formulated in the English (Swedish) School Law and the NCI?
58. What do you know about the knowledge and views of the staff regarding fundamental values and regulations that are formulated in the English (Swedish) School Law and the NCI?
59. In your opinion, what type of school in England is the best for Muslim children?
60. In your opinion, what are the problems and conflicts in the Islamic school?
61. Is it possible for women and men to sit together in teachers' room and staff rooms, at conferences, in the dining room, in the assembly, etc. If not, why not? What happens if it is done according to Islamic and/or cultural traditions?
62. Is it possible for boys and girls to sit together in the classroom, dining room, assembly etc. ? If not, why not? What happens if it is done according to Islamic and/or cultural traditions?
63. What do you think about the student centred teaching and learning model that is implemented in the English (Swedish) school? Do you think this could also be applied to your school? Please explain briefly.
64. Is it possible to combine the English (Swedish) NCI and its basic values with Islamic values and standards? If yes, how? If not, why not?
65. Look ahead five years into the future, describe your work at the Islamic school. Are you still there as a head teacher/teacher? If not, why not?

What has happened? If you are no longer at the school, but if you visit the school at that time, please tell me what you see?

V Organisation

66. Do you like your job here in the Islamic school? If yes, explain. If not, why not?
67. Do you feel that you receive respect and attention for your ideas and experience from the head of the School Board, staff, students, parents and so on? If yes, how? If not, why not?
68. How do you formulate objectives, strategies and plans in order to improve the work at the Islamic school?
69. How do you support and motivate all the staff members in their efforts to improve the work?
70. How do you communicate your questions about quality and quality development to the staff?
71. 73, How do you communicate questions about quality and quality development with the head of the School Board or owner of the school?
72. How are the basic values, rules and visions of the school formulated?
73. How does the decision-making process function? In the school and in relation to the Board/owner of the school, with respect to: 1. Recruiting staff. 2. Building matters. 3. Pedagogical questions. 4. Financial issues. 5. Student issues. 6. Profile of the school. 7. What values and rules should be in force in the school.
74. Do you have any plan for delegation? If yes, how does it function? If not, why not?
75. How do you handle the budget? (Routines, decisions and so on).
76. In your school how do you handle pupils who are noisy, restless or difficult or case troubles?
77. How do you help pupils who have various problems in school, e.g. reading and writing difficulties?
78. Have you been in a situation where you had to solve problems with pupils who were troublesome? What happened? How did you solve it?
79. Does bullying occur between pupils at the school? If yes, how do you solve such problems?
80. Do you have a plan for how to handle problems with bullying? If yes, how does it function? If not, why not?
81. Does bullying occur between staff members at the school? If yes, how do you solve such problems?
82. How do you organise the in-service training of staff members?
83. Do you receive the in-service training you need? If yes, in what subjects have you received training? If not, why not? In what subject do you need more education?
84. How do you handle the culture mix situation in your school (the English

(Swedish) NCI, the ideals of the non-Muslim staff, the ideals of the Muslim staff, the ideals of the Muslim children and their families and the ideals of Islam), where these cultures have their own ideals?

85. Do you have any communication with the parents? If yes, how does it function? If not, why not?

Appendix 2

Interview guide to the teacher/staff

1. Name (code)
2. Male Female
3. Age
4. Nationality
5. Position
6. Educational background
7. Do you have a teacher's certificate? If yes, from what country and what year?
- 8.
9. Are you working as a teacher? If yes, what subject(s) do you teach?
10. Were you born in England? (in Sweden?). If not, in what country were you born? How long have you lived in England (in Sweden?). What countries have you lived in? Did you come to England (to Sweden) as a refugee?
11. Do you speak, read and write English (Swedish)?
12. What other languages do you speak?
13. Are you a Muslim? If yes, which group?
14. What is your professional experience?
15. When did you become a teacher/staff at the Islamic school?
16. Why did you become a teacher/staff at the Islamic school?
17. How did you become a teacher/staff at the Islamic school?
18. Do you have children? Are they in the Islamic school? If yes, why? If not, why not?

III Rules and values

35. In your opinion, what characterises a good leader?
36. Do you have any pedagogical, ideological or personal role model to emulate?
37. What advantages do you see with an Islamic school compared to state or municipal primary schools?
38. What disadvantages do you see with an Islamic school compared to state or municipal primary schools?

39. What is your knowledge of Islam?
40. What is your knowledge about English (Swedish) school laws and the NCI? What does the curriculum say about the responsibility of the school for: standards and values, student responsibility and influence, home and school, the school and its surroundings?
41. What Islamic rules do you have to follow in the Islamic school?
42. Are there rules that you think are difficult for you to accept or to follow (Islamic, cultural, English, in the curriculum...)? If yes, what are they?
43. Are there rules and regulations in the school regarding the behaviour of women and men, girls and boys? If yes, what are they?
44. What occupations do you think are most suitable for girls?
45. What occupations do you think are most suitable for boys?
46. What knowledge do you think is important for girls to master?
47. What knowledge do you think is important for boys to master?
48. Are there types of music, literature, arts, and photos, pictures or films that are not acceptable at school? If yes, what types and why?
49. Are there any rules for what pupils and staff can or cannot wear in school? If yes, what type of rules?
50. What festivals do you celebrate at the school?
51. What school holidays do student celebrates? Why?
52. What guides your work at the school? God or the English (Swedish) NCI or something else?
53. Which Islamic textbooks, texts, films, tapes and videos does the school use?

IV Attitudes

54. What image do you think the pupils have of you?
55. What is your vision and ambitions as a teacher/staff at the school?
56. How do you want to carry out your vision and ambitions in your job as a teacher/staff?
57. What do you know about the home country of pupils and staff, their culture and language?
58. What do you know about the views of pupils and staff on Islam?
59. Do the pupils have any knowledge of the basic values and regulations that are formulated in the English (Swedish) School Law and the NCI?
60. What do you know about the knowledge and views of the staff regarding fundamental values and regulations that are formulated in the English (Swedish) School Law and the NCI?
61. In your opinion, what type of school in England is the best for Muslim children?
62. In your opinion, what are the problems and conflicts in the Islamic school?
63. Is it possible for women and men to sit together in teachers' room and

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staff rooms, at conferences, in the dining room, in the assembly, etc. If not, why not? What happens if it is done according to Islamic and/or cultural traditions?

64. Is it possible for boys and girls to sit together in the classroom, dining room, assembly etc. ? If not, why not? What happens if it is done according to Islamic and/or cultural traditions?
65. What do you think about the student centred teaching and learning model that is implemented in the English (Swedish) school? Do you think this could also be applied to your school? Please explain briefly.
66. Is it possible to combine the English (Swedish) NCI and its basic values with Islamic values and standards? If yes, how? If not, why not?
67. Look ahead five years into the future, describe your work at the Islamic school. Are you still there as a head teacher/teacher? If not, why not? What has happened? If you are no longer at the school, but if you visit the school at that time, please tell me what you see?

V Organisation

68. Do you like your job here in the Islamic school? If yes, explain. If not, why not?
69. Do you feel that you receive respect and attention for your ideas and experience from the head of the School Board, head teacher, staff, students, parents and so on? If yes, how? If not, why not?
70. How do you formulate objectives, strategies and plans in order to improve the work at the Islamic school?
71. How do you support and motivate all the pupils in their efforts to improve the work?
72. How do you communicate your questions about quality and quality development to the staff?
73. How do you communicate questions about quality and quality development with the head teacher, the head of the School Board or owner of the school?
74. How are the basic values, rules and visions of the school formulated?
75. How does the decision-making process function? In the school and in relation to the Board/owner of the school, with respect to: 1. Recruiting staff. 2. Building matters. 3. Pedagogical questions. 4. Financial issues. 5. Student issues. 6. Profile of the school. 7. What values and rules should be in force in the school.
76. Do you have any plan for delegation? If yes, how does it function? If not, why not?
77. How do you handle the budget? (Routines, decisions and so on).
78. In your school how do you handle pupils who are noisy, restless or difficult or case troubles?
79. How do you help pupils who have various problems in school, e.g. reading

and writing difficulties?

80. Have you been in a situation where you had to solve problems with pupils who were troublesome? What happened? How did you solve it?
81. Does bullying occur between pupils at the school? If yes, how do you solve such problems?
82. Do you have a plan for how to handle problems with bullying? If yes, how does it function? If not, why not?
83. Does bullying occur between staff members at the school? If yes, how do you solve such problems?
84. How do you organise the in-service training of staff members?
85. Do you receive the in-service training you need? If yes, in what subjects have you received training? If not, why not? In what subject do you need more education?
86. How do you handle the culture mix situation in your school (the English (Swedish) NCI, the ideals of the non-Muslim staff, the ideals of the Muslim staff, the ideals of the Muslim children and their families and the ideals of Islam), where these cultures have their own ideals?
87. Do you have any communication with the parents? If yes, how does it function? If not, why not?

Appendix 3

Interview guide to the parents

I Background

1. Name (code)
2. Male Female
3. Age
4. Nationality
5. Position

10. Were you born in England? (in Sweden?). If not, in what country were you born? How long have you lived in England (in Sweden?). What countries have you lived in? Did you come to England (to Sweden) as a refugee?
11. Do you speak, read and write English (Swedish)?
12. What other languages do you speak?
13. Are you a Muslim? If yes, which group?
14. What is your professional experience?

97. What expectations do you have on the Islamic school?
98. What expectations do you have on school leaders? Teachers/staff?
99. What Islamic rules and values do you expect the Islamic school to teach its pupils?
100. Why did you choose the Islamic primary school for your children?
101. Why did you not choose a state/municipal school for your child?
102. Are you satisfied with the Islamic school and the education that your child receives? If yes, please comment. If not, why not?
103. Does your child have any English-speaking (Swedish-speaking) friends?
104. Do you communicate with the school? If yes, how? If not, why not?
105. Does the parents group communicate with the school? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Appendix 4

Intervjuguide to politician

1. Namn
2. Man Kvinna
3. Ålder
4. Nationalitet
5. Position
6. Partitillhörighet
7. Vilka politiska uppdrag har du?
8. Utbildningsbakgrund
9. Vad är din yrkeserfarenhet?
10. Är du född i Sverige? Om inte, i vilket land är du född? Hur länge har du bott i Sverige? I vilka länder har du bott i? Vad var anledningen till att du kom till Sverige?
11. Vilka språk kan du tala?
12. Är du muslim? Om ja, vilken grupp?
13. Hur länge har du varit politiskt aktiv?
14. Vilken inställning har du till friskolor?
15. Vilken inställning har du till islamiska friskolor?
16. Vilka fördelar ser du med den islamiska skolan jämfört med den kommunala grundskolan?
17. Vilka nackdelar ser du med den islamiska skolan jämfört med den kommunala grundskolan?
18. Har du besökt någon friskola? Om ja, vilken/vilka? Vilket intryck fick du? Om inte, varför?
19. Varför har muslimerna startat egna skolor här i kommunen? Vilken är målsättningen med dessa skolor?
20. Vilka barn går i de islamiska skolorna?
21. Har du varit inne i någon Moskélokal här i kommunen? Om ja, berätta om dina intryck. Om nej, varför?
22. Vilka arbetar i de islamiska skolorna?
23. Vilka islamiska regler måste barnen följa?
24. Vilka islamiska regler måste personalen följa?
25. Har du varit i någon av kommunens egna kommunala grundskolor? Om ja, var den skolan eller de skolorna belägna i någon av de invandrartäta

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bostadsområdena? Vilket intryck fick du?

26. Är det möjligt att kombinera den svenska nationella läroplanen och dess värdegrund med det islamiska värde- och normsystemet? Om ja, hur? Om inte, varför?

27. Enligt din åsikt, vilken typ av skola är bäst för muslimska barn?

28. Se fem år framåt, beskriv. Har antalet friskolor ökat eller minskat? Finns de islamiska skolorna kvar? Har antalet islamiska skolor ökat? Hur vill du att det ska se ut om fem år?

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