Migration and Cultural Transmission: Making a Home in Iceland

A thesis submitted for a final examination
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology
as an External Student of the University of London

By Nína Rós Ísberg
2010

Abstract

The research is about the assimilation of women immigrants in Icelandic society through domesticity and the home. The focus is on the material practices that act to incorporate 'foreign women' into being Icelandic, accepting the ambivalence and resistances that act to preserve certain emotional attachments to former identities whilst at the same time considering the role of the senses and emotions in promoting knowledgeable, gendered subjects capable of acting in changed circumstances. In particular I look at the experience of immigrant women in making and running a home, bringing up their children and how this experience is materialized in daily activities.

I focus on a group of German women who came to Iceland in 1949 to work, especially in rural areas where cheap labour was needed. Many of them stayed, married and established families and became Icelandic citizens. Immigration policies in Iceland have been strongly assimilationist and therefore the research shows the effects this assimilation has had on the identity of these women and what implications their identities have for understanding Icelandic identity in general. Comparison of this group to another younger one which has arrived in the last five to fifteen years makes apparent the role of domesticity and kinship relations in assimilating immigrant women into the Icelandic society.

The research is carried out according to standard anthropological techniques of interviewing and participant observation. Archival and audio-video material is also used. The material collected is put into historical and social context through a focus on oral history and discussions of current memory work in anthropology and cultural Heritage studies.

Acknowledgements

Various people have helped me along the way in my work on this thesis. It was very helpful to give talks early on in the research process and I want to thank the Centre for Women' Studies at the University of Iceland and the Anthropology Society of Iceland for giving me the opportunity to do so.

My supervisor, Mike Rowlands, deserves many thanks for all the help and advice he has given to me, not to mention the patience. I want to thank him in particular for the opportunity to stay at the Anthropology Department at University College London for a few months, where I presented a draft and benefited greatly from comments and discussions by students and staff.

I would also like to thank the immigrant women, and men, for giving me so generously of their time, for confiding in me and allowing me to use their life stories in my research. I have changed their names as we agreed on and I hope to do their stories some justice and give them a certain voice through this work which I want to dedicate to them.

Finally, I want to thank my parents for their support and last but not least my husband, Samson, for endless patience and loving support.

Table of Contents

Introduction

In October 2008 the entire financial system in Iceland collapsed and three of the biggest banks were taken over by the state. The following days and weeks were filled with uncertainty and fear of what the future might hold. One of the most vivid pictures is of people leaving on the last ferry of the year to Scandinavia, most of them immigrants who had been working in Iceland, leaving for good with their belongings in a car. The reaction of the Icelanders, apart from anger and frustration, was the back to basics approach. People were encouraged to buy Icelandic products which many were especially labelled as such, go back to cooking traditional Icelandic food and generally go back to the good old values. It was thus an ideological nationalistic view of Iceland as a one big family with common roots and shared values which all Icelanders could go back to. The rhetoric of the politicians, mostly taken from the vocabulary of the weather and fishermen's struggle with the sea, also reflected the image of Icelanders as one big family who would get through the difficulties by sticking together like a family should. Even when people soon realized that not everybody was in the same boat, as some seemed to have made it to the shore, the idea of the nation as one did not change and is in fact still present despite bitter conflicts and divisions which have eaten away the trust in the society. Now all Icelanders are to blame for the collapse and have to carry the burden of guilt and shame together like a family whose member has caused a scandal.[1]

The idea of Iceland as a homogenous nation is not out of the blue. It is an island far away from other countries in the North Atlantic with a small population of just over 300,000 who can trace their origins and history back through written records since its beginning. People mainly from Norway, with Celtic slaves, discovered and settled Iceland in the 9th century and established a new society. These origins can also be traced through DNA records which show that Norse men had children with women from the British Isles, be it their legal wives or female slaves. This mixing created Icelanders, although the cultural influence of the Celtic side was always subdued.

[1] The discussion in the media and particularly on blogs have been along this line, both Icelandic and foreign.

The nationalist discourse in the beginning of the 20th century emphasized the image of a homogenous nation reflected in a common language and culture to argue for the cultural uniqueness of Iceland and thus the rights to independence from Denmark who was the colonial power from the 14th until the 20th century (Hálfdanarson, 2001). The uniqueness and authenticity of the culture and people has taken the form of purity. This purity is reflected in people's genes which support written records that go far back, and the language which makes it possible to read these records as it is seen to have hardly changed since the settlement (Thórarinsdóttir, 1999). All this is reflected in the purity of Icelandic nature and its products, a theme common in the modern tourist industry (Grétarsdóttir, 2002).

It can be difficult to fit outsiders into such a world and immigrants in Iceland have been almost invisible during most of the 20th century. The occupation of the British army in 1940 caused upheaval in the society and relationships between foreign soldiers and Icelandic women led to women being accused of betraying their nation and shaming their nationality (Baldursdóttir, 2002; Helgadóttir, 2001). A few years later a big group of German women married Icelandic men and established families without anyone mentioning betrayal. This in itself calls for questions and I started by asking how this was possible.

In 1997 the Icelandic film María was released. It tells the story of a young German woman who after the Second World War went to Iceland to work as an agricultural labourer. She goes to an old fashioned and backward looking farm where the people are unfriendly and she works there for a while. When the farmer tries to rape her she fights him off and runs away to the city. She finally goes back to Germany after having worked for a while in a bar in Reykjavík. Her story is set against the story of her German friend who arrives at the same time but who works on a nice modern farm with nice people. She very soon meets a nice young man, marries him and decides to stay in Iceland. The story is based on the arrival of over 300 Germans in 1949, employed to work on farms by the Agricultural Association of Iceland,[2] around 70% of them women. Various other German women also came at around the same time from 1949 until 1950 to

[2] *Búnaðarsamband Íslands*, The Agricultural Association of Iceland was founded in the 19th century and became with time a state institution. The Farmers Association of Iceland, *Bændasamtök Íslands*, was founded in the 20th century more as a trade union for farmers.

work as domestic workers in homes or in hospitals. Up to half of the group from 1949 stayed on in Iceland (Eiríksson, 2008:147) and many of them married Icelanders and established families.

In many ways this film reflects and has shaped the way in which Icelanders remember this episode in their history in 1949. Although it is well known to many people,[3] at least those old enough to remember, this event had not received much attention before the release of the film but was, if mentioned at all, a footnote or was granted a few lines in various kinds of history books (*Íslenskur söguatlas 3* (The Atlas of Icelandic History), 1993:172); *Búnaðarsamtökin á Íslandi* (The History of the Agricultural Association of Iceland) also allocates a few pages to them (1988:873-4). This absence is rather interesting since this was the first organized big group of foreign labour that came to Iceland. The popular story which people tell is the one of the friend in the film; the German women came to Iceland because there was a lack of women in the countryside, both to work but also to marry. And they married Icelanders to be able to stay so they would not have to go back to Germany where the situation was really bad after the war.[4]

The film shows the urban and the rural as very different from one another and this is reflected in María herself on the one hand and in the Icelanders on the farm on the other. The rural is backward, primitive and the people unfriendly and uncommunicative but at the same time, nature or the wild is healing, giving strength to those who need it which are modern and fairly recent ideas. The urban, on the other hand, is sophisticated and María can find people like herself, modern individuals who she can relate to and talk to. Instead of telling us the story of a German woman staying in a foreign country for a year and how it affects her, it becomes more of a reflection of the Icelandic past, which may not be so far away in years but in terms of life style and thinking, housing and hygiene the distance is far greater. It thus shows a rupture between the past and present, the past represented in the film is really a very foreign country to modern day Icelanders.

[3] During my research I told various people of different educational backgrounds and occupations about it and all of them had heard of the German women who came after the war. Many also recognized one or more German women themselves and told me about them and their story.

[4] The idea of the German women coming to get married is seen eg. in the film by Miriam Halberstam (1999) and in an interview with the author Solveig Eggerz in the television programme *Kiljan* Oct 29 2008.

There has been a growing interest in the story of the Germans both in Iceland and in Germany in recent years. Interviews have appeared in various magazines in Iceland, regional papers and newspapers as well as on radio and television shows. The life stories of five women have been published in an interview book and biographies of two other women have also been published. A romantic novel based on the story was published in 1968 and in 2008 another novel was published in English but by an Icelandic author.[5] The interest in Germany has been even greater. A documentary was made in 1987, another one in 1999 and at the time of my study there were one or two more being made. Various interviews have been broadcast on The North German Radio and interviews in magazines and newspapers have appeared as well.[6] During my research a few letters appeared in the biggest newspapers in Iceland from German students wanting to study the German women asking for assistance. Various people also contacted me and asked me for names and addresses. This interest has to be seen in the context of growing immigration in Germany and an increased interest in German communities in other countries.

Some of my informants were quite happy being interviewed, filmed and photographed; they showed me copies of their interviews in the papers and told me about the presenters they had come to know as a result. In some cases there was a continuing relationship between them; especially German film makers and radio presenters, and letters and photos were exchanged. Often it was the same people who were being interviewed again and again but some had had enough. At least two German writers also came to Iceland, one in 2005 and another in 2006 and interviewed various women for their perspective novels. One of the writers said in a newspaper interview that he had never heard of this migration of Germans to Iceland. "I have read a lot about the years in Germany after the war but never have I encountered one sentence where this migration of Germans to Iceland is mentioned. I was of course very surprised when I found out about this. They were mostly young women around the age of twenty, without university education and without any knowledge of other languages. They left the home into a

[5] See: Guðmundur Frímann, 1968; Eiríkur Jónsson, 1990; Páll Lýðsson, 1993; Valgeir Sigurðsson, 1999; Sólveig Eggerz, 2008.

[6] My informants told me about the German radio shows and their participation both in them and in various documentaries, they also showed me adverts and articles but the film by Miriam Halberstam is the only one which was accessible.

different world on a ship from Hamburg to Reykjavík, this was a trip that lasted a week....In my interviews with Icelanders who got to know the German women to some degree during this time, I have only heard that they have been very hard working, helpful and a great addition to the farm. I have only heard positive things about them and most say that it was a good idea to get them to the country" (*Morgunblaðið*, Aug 9 2006).[7] The journalist writing the story is also surprised that so little has been written about this migration in Iceland. In view of the above about the interviews, documentaries and biographies that are available it is strange to see this reference to a non existing story. As one of my informants put it "we are the lost and forgotten women" but why is that the case? This became another research question.

Migration has been an important topic in anthropology for many years. The central issue has been mobility, thus the focus has been on the reasons why people migrate, what kind of migrants they are, short term or long term, and the effects the migration has had on the sending and receiving communities in terms of employment, social and economic relations as well as the maintenance of these very relations across national borders. As more Eastern European nations join the EU, with its policy of open internal borders for capital and labour, worries have grown in Western European countries that they will be flooded and swamped by migrants from the east. At the same time riots in various countries involving second generation immigrants have also called into question the policies of immigration, be it assimilation or multiculturalism.

Migration has also become an important issue in Iceland as immigration has increased rapidly. This has become a major concern, not least because as a member of the European Economic Agreement (EEA) Iceland has had to open up its borders for labour from Eastern Europe. The main issue here is the lack of control over migrants and migrant labour which has been exercised quite extensively and is crystallized in the fact that the permit of work and thus staying is linked to the employer and not to the worker if s/he is from outside the EEA/EU so losing a job can mean deportation. The EEA agreement thus limits the control the state has had over migrant labour and the migrants themselves.

[7] The translation is mine as everywhere when the original text is in Icelandic.

Since 1996 immigration increased from being less than 2% to more than 8% in the beginning of 2008. This increase, particularly after 2004, is related to a growing economy lacking labour force. Most, or more than 90% of the migrants, come to Iceland to work and these migrants fitted the image of the gastarbeiter, who would go back to their country once the job was done and particularly now in the wake of the crisis. But research has shown that the migrants are a varied group and have established families or brought their family to Iceland and settled down (Thórarinsdóttir, 2009). At the same time internal migration of Icelanders from the countryside to the capital area has increased. The migrants who work in the fishing plants in the villages of today have prevented some of these villages from becoming deserted. There is an interesting parallel between the migrants of today and the story of the Germans. Many of the German women married a farmer or a farmer's son and thus assured the continuity of the farm. "They saved some farms from becoming derelict" as one Icelandic informant put it. The migrants who work in the fishing plants in the villages of today are also repopulating the countryside.

Despite increasing immigration and talk of Iceland becoming a multicultural society it was not until January 2007 that a complete policy on the status of immigrants was put forward by the government. Migration has been seen and responded to as a threat which has to be dealt with and the fear of the foreign has taken on many forms, such as the foreign criminal, manifested in the media. It is also interesting to look at the terminology used for migrants in Icelandic. There seems to be a fairly uncomplicated dichotomy in use between Icelanders and the others, non Icelanders, with fairly clear boundaries between the two groups which are defined, not only by appearance, but also by correct names and accent in spoken Icelandic. The problem seems to be one of finding the right word to describe foreigners rather than deciding who is foreign and who is not. "These people" as they have been called, are sometimes immigrants "*innflytjendur*", sometimes foreigners "*útlendingar*", not to forget a completely new word, new habitant "*nýbúi*", which seems to have taken on a new meaning referring to people racially different from Icelanders.

The German women arrived at the time when immigration policies were strongly assimilationist but growing immigration has opened up a discussion of its history and has

also given their stories a new context as the very first immigrants to Iceland. They thus gain a voice and can give advice to other immigrants and tell them about the difficulties of becoming incorporated into Icelandic society. It is the process of their incorporation which I focus on in my research.

My first research question is: how was it possible that foreign women could become mothers of Icelandic children a few years after Icelandic women were accused of being traitors for having relationships with foreign men? I argue that this was because of the importance played on assimilating the German women, in the sense of them becoming like Icelanders, made Icelandic and as such they did not constitute a threat to Icelandic nationality. I use the work of Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) who argue that women reproduce nations and ethnic groups biologically by having children; culturally by transmitting culture, language and traditions on to their children and symbolically when they have come to symbolize the nation or the land in which they reside.[8] Women participate in making and maintaining the identity boundaries between their group and others and can also become the guardians of the boundaries of these identities. As they point out the construction of the home is of great importance in the social reproduction of culture, including ways of cooking and eating, domestic labour and raising children, out of which a world view is reproduced which becomes naturalized (1989:7-8). Therefore, I am going to focus on immigrant women in the domestic space, the informal and private sphere, as a crucial area of assimilation rather than definitions of citizenship in the public sphere. I will refer to this as incorporation and domestication.

The main questions then revolve around how this domestication takes place, the ways in which foreign women are to become Icelandic and what this means. In order to answer this question I compare the elderly German women who came in 1949 with a group of younger women, who have migrated to Iceland in the last five to fifteen years. I focus on the processes whereby they have decided to stay and settle, how they made home, married, had children and cared for their family, in general how they became a part of the Icelandic society and how the elderly women feel about it now. I argue that this comparison makes apparent the role of domesticity and kinship relations in assimilating

[8] An example is the Icelandic Mountain Woman who symbolizes the land itself but is also the mother of Iceland (Björnsdóttir, 1994).

immigrant women into Icelandic society and that this assimilation is centred on the idea of making the women Icelandic and thus not foreign. Their origins however are never forgotten and they will therefore never be seen as completely Icelandic but most importantly their children are. By making the right kind of home, caring for the family in the right way and taking on obligations towards the kin of the husband the women are in a way absorbed into the family and thus the community. As Yuval-Davis points out assimilation can be seen to be the opposite of racism which is about exclusion and rather than continuing with boundaries of segregation assimilationism renders those who are included invisible and passable (1997:53).

The processes of domesticating immigrant women into Icelandic families have changed since the arrival of the German women in 1949 and the measures are more subtle but nevertheless still exist. This comparison gives also not only voice to this particular group, which see themselves as having been largely invisible and forgotten compared to recent immigrants, but also certain historical depth which is needed in immigration studies in Iceland. The thesis, I argue, leads to a new understanding of the role of the home in Icelandic identity and Icelandic identity in general. This is also the central focus for more general studies of immigration, the subjectivity of being domesticated as an Icelander and the sensory roles of for instance food, furnishings and naming in these processes.

Research methods

The study focuses on a group of German women who came to Iceland after the Second World War as organized labour for farmers through the Icelandic Agricultural Association. I soon realized that there were also other women who had come to work at about the same time without being a part of this organized group and I decided to include them as well in the study. By focusing on one group of ethnically defined women I felt I had a means of recognising the impact of a strong assimilationist policy operating in Iceland at the time on a relatively homogenous group of women. Also my interest lay in the women as in marrying –either intentionally or as it turned out - what happened to make them stay.

My informants include women who worked on a farm as well as in a town for the first year, women who have lived and made their home in the countryside and in towns, and they are both from the Western part of Germany as well as refugees from the Eastern part. The group thus has a varied background but they all have in common that they had come to Iceland to work in 1949, stayed on, established families and all, but one, had married an Icelander. The focus group included sixteen women and a few others were also interviewed once.

I also interviewed a group of seven young women who have come to Iceland in the last five to fifteen years. They are also or have been married to Icelanders and have established families. Most of them are German and they are all of European origin and white. Most of them have come to Iceland because they married an Icelander but some have also come to work and then later married. They all live in towns now and some have lived in small villages. I felt this latter group would act firstly as a kind of control group by comparison to the experiences of the group of the elderly German women. Also there would be some basis for comparison of the immediate experiences of the more recent women even though the question of long term memory would certainly shape the differences in perception of experience. It was a conscious decision to leave out the issue of race.

The research was carried out according to standard anthropological techniques of formal and informal interviewing and participant observation. I spent time not only with the elderly German women but also talking to their children and husbands as well as other friends and family members who remembered their first coming to Iceland. I was particularly concerned to compare the recollections of the elderly women with the interpretations that younger family members and others might give in order to build up something more like family narratives. I also relied on families keeping photographs and objects that might be used to evoke senses of belonging.

I used radio programs as well where various women, also outside of my group of informants, and their daughters had been interviewed as well as documentary films that have been made about their life stories. Various interviews with these women have also appeared in newspapers and magazines as well as in interview biography books. My informants were already in their late seventies and eighties when I started interviewing

them and I focused on their memories of their arrival and their life stories. Therefore a lot of my material is based on memories and I have relied not only on spoken memories but also evidence from diaries, photographs and collections of objects that allow people to locate their identities within more long term patterns of material metaphors.

I also took a lot of photographs of the homes of my informants. However, when it came to using them I faced a dilemma. I had promised anonymity to my informants and using the photographs compromised that anonymity. Even if several of my informants had told their story on radio programs, in a book or a magazine or even in a documentary film I felt I could not betray my promise. Iceland is a very small society and from the photographs it is possible to recognize their home, their children and the farm where they use to live and thus to find out the identity of the person. On various occasions my informants had said "who is going to see this, ... who are you going to show this to, ... you do not need to write this," even if they were not revealing any secrets there were nevertheless things they did not want everybody to know they had said. Therefore I decided against putting any photographs into the thesis in order to protect the privacy of my informants and their families. This was also because I encountered considerable interest in my research and could not count on that the thesis would not be read by the people concerned as has often been the case (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Nevertheless the photographs proved very useful in analyzing the data.

Outline of chapters

The thesis is divided into three main parts: kinship, marriage and names; making a home; and memories of food and caring for the family by providing food. Chapter 1 gives the historical background of Icelandic society in 1949 and the changes that had taken place due to its rapid modernization, population growth, internal migration and urbanization. The development and changes in the law on citizenship are outlined along with the history and recent changes of immigration to Iceland. The reasons for the arrival of the Germans are also described, internal as well as the situation in Germany at the time. The theoretical section gives an overview of the work of Anthias and Yuval-Davis on gender and nationalism which I use to analyze my material, existing research on

Icelandic nationalism is outlined as well as recent research on migration and gender and memory. Finally the regional context of Iceland is outlined.

Chapter 2 focuses on kinship and marriage. Research of kinship in Iceland is discussed; kinship terms, kinship obligations, marriage, the domestic cycle and the rights of illegitimate children are explained and put into an historical context. The relationship between the family and the farm is put into perspective through inheritance and the development of the farm as private property in order to show how the home, farm and family were central and intertwined in the social structure and to outline the power structures in the family. I argue that by marrying in, especially on the family farm, the women were committing themselves to fulfil certain obligations towards the husband and his family. I also show the importance of genealogy in incorporating foreign women into Icelandic families in order to ensure they make Icelandic homes and have Icelandic children. The argument is that the German women were accepted as mothers of Icelandic children, despite foreign blood, because of their domestication through which they were made Icelandic.

Chapter 3 deepens the argument of chapter 2 by focusing on names and how the immigrant women and their children are made Icelandic through names. The Icelandic patronymic naming system and its links to the kinship structure is outlined; it is a part of the Icelandic cultural heritage which is seen to have an unbroken continuity since the settlement in the 9th century and thus is an important part of Icelandic nationalism. The way the state has tried to control naming is outlined and the practices at the private level explored through my material by following the work of Herzfeld (1982) on naming as reciprocity and of Sutton (1997) on names and kinship as part of nationalism.

Chapter 4 on home making puts the home into a regional and historical context, development of housing and the interior is outlined and linked to the modernization of the society and the differences between urban and rural areas. The women's memories of coming into Icelandic homes and of their own home making are explored. These memories reflect their feelings of today towards this experience which they see as going back in time. Their home now is also explored as reflecting their status and identity today. The home is also a symbol of social and cultural values and comparison with the

younger women makes apparent changes in these values to a certain degree, or at least the opportunities to practice them.

In chapter 5 I explore the relationship between food and memory and start by explaining traditional Icelandic food and the changes it has undergone in the 20th century. The women's memories of food recall their first encounter with Icelandic food and the effects it had on them. The ideas of proper food at the time are outlined, how they were taught to cook and finally how the day was structured around meal times. I argue that the teachings of Icelandic food traditions was a way of incorporating the women into Icelandic society, making sure that the food they provided for their families was Icelandic and that by receiving guests in the right way their home was a proper Icelandic home. Comparison to the younger women makes clear that food is not just a personal choice; the demands of the Icelandic spouse and family have to be met. I thus argue that both groups recognize that there is Icelandic food and food traditions which are important and which must be kept, particularly to be taught to children, in order to make them Icelandic.

Chapter 6 deepens the argument of chapter 5 by exploring particularly how the women cared for their families with food every day and then I explore how guests were received and give an outline of how special occasions were celebrated. Receiving guests, caring for a special occasion in the right way and fulfilling social requirements is a way of being included in a group although it can also be a source of anguish with high demands for a particular behaviour and food. I argue that the women were active in the care they gave to their family on a daily basis at the same time as they had to work within a framework set by the social norms and demands made by the in laws. I also argue that the women are active in the making of their past and underline how much they have become a part of the Icelandic society by fulfilling the values of hard work. This is followed by a discussion and conclusion in chapter 7.

Chapter 1 – Historical background

Migration and the making of a new society

Icelandic society was in rapid transition when the German women arrived in 1949. It was becoming a modern industrialized society although remnants of the old peasant society could still be found, particularly in the countryside, both in the households/ paternal authority and in work methods. The landscape surprised many of the Germans, especially the distance between the farms - "there was one little white dot there and then a few kilometres and then the next one" as one of them put it. The land was barren with no trees and it seemed to them almost devoid of human habitation. The agriculture in Iceland was, and still is, based on animal husbandry, herding and grazing sheep and gathering enough hay during the summer for the animals. Considerable amount of land is needed for the grazing and the farms were, and still are, situated far away from each other. There was no cultivation of corn due to unfavourable climatic conditions and short summers.

The farm had been the basic unit of the Old Icelandic peasant society. There were no towns, only small hamlets and villages. The nuclear family was the dominant family type (Rogers, 1993) but a part of the composition of households on the farm were also the workers needed for the labour intensive agriculture as well as the old, the frail and invalids who might have been placed there in the absence of any other institutions that could care for them. The peasant household head had patriarchal powers both over his family and workers. Being a worker on a farm was seen as a necessary stage in the life cycle before becoming a peasant tenant farmer. Workers were not allowed to marry without access to land and therefore did not really form a class as they did not reproduce themselves as such. Their dependent position was more like that of a child than an adult (Hálfdanarson, 2001:65-6. See also Guttormsson 1983).

Workers were bound in a system of semi serfdom,[9] although they could work on different farms they were not free to leave and settle in a village without a special permission from the local authorities which was not granted unless people could sustain a

[9] *Vistarband*.

family. Without such permission and without access to land, the law required people over sixteen to become farm workers, either for their parents or, and usually, somebody else (Gunnlaugsson, 1997).

There was thus massive social and economic control over people's personal lives such as marriage and establishing a family. Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson (1997) maintains that the local authorities had systematically used poor laws to prevent the poor from establishing homes in the towns to maintain a steady supply of cheap labour for the peasants.

Increasing population growth during the last decades of the 19th century put pressures on the limited amount of available farms and increasing number of people stayed as farm workers all their life. They could thus not marry and the high numbers of illegitimate children born at the time are seen as an example of the crisis of the old peasant society (Garðarsdóttir, 1998). The mounting internal pressures caused the old society to crumble from within as people started moving to the growing coastal villages (Hálfdanarson, 2001). Towards the end of the 19th century the old peasant society gave way to a new one based on fishing and the development of a modern economy slowly started. Various legal restrictions on movement of labour and marriage were abolished around the turn of the century and great number of people began migrating from the countryside to the growing seaside towns and villages, which demanded labour for the expanding fishing sector, many of them women.

Ólöf Garðarsdóttir (1998) argues that in the towns the women, single mothers, unmarried women and widows managed to live independent lives and make their own home with their children which in general they could not do in the countryside. And even if they got lower wages in the towns than the men, they were still much higher than in the countryside.

The agriculture had always been labour intensive, particularly during the haymaking in the summer, and mechanization in agriculture only started for real after World War II and particularly after 1950 (*Búnaðarsamtök,* 1988). Once the restrictions on the movement of labour were not effective anymore, the agricultural economy faced seasonal shortages of labour and as more work opportunities developed in the towns, the costs of labour increased. Around the turn of the 20th century ideas of importing foreign

labour were discussed as a solution but very little came of it in terms of supply of workers for agriculture, although some groups of foreign fishermen mainly from Norway and the Faroe Islands were fairly common at the time (Thorsteinsson, 1999).

The migration from the countryside to the towns and particularly to the capital area continued for most of the 20th century. The Second World War and the occupation of Iceland by the British army in 1940 offered job opportunities which led to intensified migration. The sex ratio shows that more women than men migrated from the countryside to the towns and in 1940 there were 31% more men than women between the ages of 15-39 in the rural areas (Eiríksson, 2008). Reykjavík, which had only been a small town in 1901 with 8.5% of the entire population of Iceland, had gone up to counting for 31.5% by 1940 (Hagskinna, 1997:87).

Women had less job opportunities than men and many of them started to work as domestic workers when migrating to towns, seeing such jobs as a starting point and also a good preparation for becoming housewives themselves. Women from the countryside were also sought after as domestic workers because they knew how to work and were used to it. Running a big home was both time and labour consuming as most things, food and clothes were home produced and domestic workers were seen as necessary for at least middle class homes in the towns. Even if such homes had started to buy domestic appliances before World War II the import of various household goods such as fridges and cookers really started after the war. But household goods were expensive and in 1947 worsening trade balance caused restrictions on foreign currency and made imports difficult, severe restrictions on imports followed and were in force for most of the 1950s although a growing local production managed to supply the market albeit at a slower rate (Bernharðsson, 1998).

The mechanization of domestic work was thus fairly slow and took place later in the countryside than the towns. The arrival of electricity as late as the 1950s and even 1960s in some rural areas also prevented the usage of electrical appliances. The homes in the countryside thus needed domestic labour. Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson (1997) shows that many peasants bought their own land in the period from the late 19th century until 1930, and their families became bigger and more complicated as more kin members, older siblings, and parents, both lived with the nuclear family and worked on the farm,

while many non kin workers migrated to the towns. Despite these big families there were still labour shortages in agriculture which increased with intensified female migration to the capital in the 1940s. The war and particularly the occupation by the British army in 1940 brought enormous changes to Icelandic society. All of a sudden there was plenty of work after the depression and unemployment of the 1930s and the financial input had multiple effects in all sectors of the economy. The increase in the service sector meant other kinds of jobs and better paid ones for women who had more choices than just being domestic workers and another type of labour shortage surfaced; the lack of domestic workers for middle class homes in towns. In order to ease the shortage a big group of Danish and Faroese women came in 1945 to work as domestic workers in Reykjavík (Bernharðsson, 1998).

Herdís Helgadóttir (2000) argues that the position of Icelandic women became better with the arrival of a foreign army particularly in relation to work. She claims that the old patriarchal powers were still present in the work place and the society at large and that these powers were broken with the upheaval of the society which the occupation caused, but only to a certain extent. The arrival of a foreign army almost immediately caused criticism of women and demands to outlaw those who would have anything to do with foreign soldiers. As Bára Baldursdóttir shows the discourse on Icelandic women during the war described them as prostitutes and traitors to their country and nation if they had any relationship with foreign soldiers (Baldursdóttir, 2002). Herdís Helgadóttir maintains that these accusations caused a sense of shame felt by other women who even had no relations with the soldiers, including herself and which were very affective to control women for a long time after the war.

The arrival of the Germans

As already mentioned the shortage of labour in agriculture became acute during and after World War II. The increased migration of women from the countryside meant lack of female labour in the rural areas, not only agricultural but domestic as well. The agriculture could not compete with other sectors for workers and there had been ideas of importing foreign labour to solve this problem since the 1890s like Helgi Thorsteinsson

has shown (2001). These ideas included settlement of foreign workers in the Icelandic countryside, to get young and healthy people used to agricultural work, people who were young enough to have families but old enough to want to stay on in agriculture. There was no mention of the fear of mixing with foreigners as they would be few and far between them, they would thus blend in easily. However the people favoured were mainly from Scandinavia and Germany, or of Germanic origins (Thorsteinsson, 2001).

In 1947 the Agricultural Association of Iceland discovered that it was possible to get workers from the city of Lübeck in northern Germany where thousands of refugees were situated who had escaped or been forced to leave their home in the east. Unemployment was high and their living conditions bad. Therefore it was thought to be easy to tempt them with offers of work in Iceland. An Icelandic consul in Lübeck also made access easier. Initially the demands from the farmers were mainly to hire women as domestic workers but also young men for general agricultural labour. The contract of work which the applicants signed stated that they should be of North German stock and between the ages of 20-35 (Eiríksson, 2008:25-26). The Icelandic consul pointed out to the Agricultural Association, before the hiring started, that the refugees from the eastern part were a different sort of people and had not all proved to be adequate, meaning they were not good enough. Many of them were Slavic and Russian and therefore it would be better to get people from a North German stock, they were more like Icelanders and worked harder. It was exactly this image of Germans as hardworking people which played a part in the decision of hiring workers from Germany, "the Germans are acknowledged as hardworking also when considering adapting to new lifestyles and employment in a new environment both as settlers and workers", it said in a letter to the foreign ministry asking for permission to bring German workers into Iceland (Thorsteinsson, 2001:127).

Two men went from Iceland to Germany to choose workers and despite the high unemployment rate found it difficult to hire enough people, particularly women. Perhaps that was the reason why neither the origin of the people nor their age was taken into consideration and about half of those hired were refugees, 48.1% from the western part of Germany and 44.3% from the eastern, the rest was unknown (Eiríksson, 2008:40). In total 314 were hired by the Agricultural Association, 238 women and 76 men (ibid:53).

At the same time there was also need for female labour in hospitals, old people's homes and as domestic servants and quite a few German women went to Iceland between 1948 and 1951 to work. The hospitals had advertized in German newspapers and some women came through personal contact. It is unsure how many of these women stayed but of the group organized by the Agricultural Association almost half or 146 stayed in Iceland (ibid:147).

The British occupying authorities who gave permission for the hiring and the leaving of the people demanded that the Germans would get the same wages as the Icelanders but the contract was in three languages and the wording used referred to particular circumstances in Icelandic agriculture which were not clear to others. The men who hired the people were in reality not bound by any requirements and could hire those they could get and liked the look of. In reality they hired people for up to half the wages that Icelanders got. There was also a clause in the contract saying that the people could be extradited if they gave up the agricultural work without a special permission. In reality then the farmers managed to get workers only by using again the restrictions on labour which had been in force in the 19th century. This was called the slave clause by a leader of the Icelandic trade union who, although being against the lower wages and labour restrictions in principle, thought it better accepting them than having the Germans competing for labour with Icelanders in the towns (Thorsteinsson, 1999:172-3).

The workers of the old peasant society had the title *vinnufólk*.[10] These workers lived and worked on the farm the whole year. With other job opportunities in towns these workers could become seasonal labour, work on a farm for the summer when labour was most needed and get paid in cash. Such workers had another name, *kaupafólk*.[11] They got higher wages than the *vinnufólk* which was explained by the farmers having to take care of the *vinnufólk* during the winter as well when there was little work. *Kaupakona,* a woman who got wages, worked outside in the haymaking and not indoors on the farm. The Germans were *vinnufólk* and got lower wages than the *kaupafólk*. The wages of the Germans were to be half the wages of Icelandic *kaupafólk* which was justified with the reference to them having a place to stay and food for free throughout the year. Sixty years

[10] Literally means people who work.
[11] Literally means people who get wages.

after their arrival the Germans still refer to this fact when asked about the difference in wages and justify it by saying, “well, we got food and lodging for free.”

The Germans give many reasons for the decision to leave and go to Iceland. Most talk of unemployment and poverty, “there was nothing....this was a terrible life”. Some had been looking for work in other countries but most thought it would only be for a year and the change would do them good. Others mention adventures and the possibility of a new future elsewhere, and some were fleeing the personal circumstances they found themselves in. Most of those who stayed in Iceland married and established families. The Icelandic society at the time had a strong assimilationist policy towards immigrants.

Citizenship

Iceland became a sovereign state in 1918 and thus gained the right and recognition to grant its people citizenship and the first law on citizenship was passed in 1919. The main principle in this law as well as the Danish law in force before 1918 is the jus soli or the right of those born in a certain state to become citizens of that state. Iceland became a republic in 1944 and passed a new law on citizenship in 1952 where this changed (nr. 100/1952). The principle of jus soli was taken out and jus sanguinis became more important, that is the right to citizenship through family and blood ties. In order to be granted citizenship certain requirements must be fulfilled such as the length of time living in the country but citizenship could be and still can be, granted by the parliament, if the requirements of the length of stay have not been fulfilled. Therefore there was and is a possibility of a personal and political evaluation by the members of parliament on who gets citizenship before having fulfilled all the requirements.

Before the new law of 1952 foreign women automatically became Icelandic citizens when they married an Icelandic man. After the change in the law they had to apply especially for citizenship just like foreign men had had to do before. Children of a mixed parentage born in Iceland got the citizenship of their foreign mother if she was unmarried and their Icelandic father if they were married. The citizenship of women was thus linked to the husband.

From 1952 until 1995 the law on citizenship stated that a condition of receiving Icelandic citizenship was to agree to change one's names in accordance with Icelandic custom and thus to give up one's previous names. Since 1991 a change of name has not been mandatory for those applying for Icelandic citizenship but people had to add one Icelandic first name to their own which their children could use to make their patronym.[12] This was changed in the law of 1996, it is not mandatory to change one´s names anymore and those who had to change before have the right to take up their previous names.[13]

Recent changes in law on citizenship include that a child born in Iceland becomes an Icelandic citizen if the father is one, even if the couple is not married, and if the child is born abroad the father can apply for Icelandic citizenship on its behalf by providing certificates of paternity before it reaches the age of 18 (law nr. 62/1998). Another recent change in the law is also requiring enough knowledge of the Icelandic language and now applicants must pass a test in Icelandic to be granted citizenship.[14]

Population increase and fertility

Population increase had been slow but steady throughout the 19th century and in 1901 the entire nation numbered 78,500. Despite emigration to North America and Canada in the last decades of the 19th century the population started to increase and continued doing so rapidly in the 20th century. When the Germans arrived in 1949 the population had reached just over 138 000 in total. In 2008 the number had gone up to almost 314 000 of which 8.1% were immigrants (Statistics Iceland, 2009b). The population increase has mostly been internal growth throughout the 20th century as immigrants were not a significant factor in population increase until after the year 2000. The rapidly decreasing infant mortality rate at the beginning of the 20th century accounted for most of this growth. The fertility rate was also high or 2.75 in 1940 and the average 3.7 after the World War II and between 1950 and 1966. In 2005 the average was 2.1, ranking third among the OECD countries following Mexico and Turkey (Statistics Iceland, 2005).

[12] See chapter 3 on names.
[13] The Name law is number 45/1996 but became valid 1st of January 1997.
[14] See subsection 1129/2008 in the law on citizenship 100/1952.

Sigrún Júlíusdóttir argues that such high fertility rate can be seen as remnants of an old way of thinking. Although Iceland lagged behind the other Nordic countries in welfare issues relating to families with children, she nevertheless found a very positive attitude towards having children, preferably two to three, in her study of Icelandic families. There is also a lot of support for unmarried mothers within families which show how important the family values are, so important that she claims having children can almost be seen as a social demand (Júlíusdóttir, 2001:132).

The family and kin have played an important role in welfare in Iceland (Jónsson, 2005) and the development of a welfare society was slower than in other Nordic countries mainly due to the later modernization of Icelandic society. It became more rapid after the World War II like in many neighbouring countries (Ólafsson, 1993) including increased care of mothers and infants and as early as 1935 law was passed which allowed contraceptives and abortion in exceptional circumstances.

Herdís Helgadóttir (2000) claims that doctors only advised married women on birth control and that the social position of single mothers was very much tied to whether they were engaged or not. It was the relationship to the man that mattered, marriage could come later, and illegitimate children had to be seen in the light of the relationship of the parents.[15]

There were thus social and cultural circumstances which helped internal population growth and at the same time there were political ones which hindered people from coming in from outside.

Immigration

In January 2007 the government of Iceland published its policy on immigrants or the Government Policy on the Integration of Immigrants.[16] Various different laws had been issued on visas, immigration and citizenship during the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st but this was the first time a governmental policy had been issued. "The goal of the Government of Iceland for a policy on immigrant issues is to ensure that all residents of Iceland enjoy equal opportunities and are active participants in society in

[15] See Karlsson (1995) in chapter 2.
[16] Ministry of Social Affairs: *Stefna ríkisstjórnarinnar um aðlögun innflytjenda.*

as many fields as possible" (2007:2). The word immigrant or *innflytjandi* is defined as a foreigner who has settled in Iceland for a long period but is born abroad or whose both parents are born abroad or have at some point had foreign citizenship. Immigrants have in common that their first language is not Icelandic.

The policy states that the key to Icelandic society is speaking Icelandic and that "it is the policy of the Icelandic government – approved by the entire nation – to protect the Icelandic language. It is the shared property of the Icelandic nation and contains its history, culture and self-awareness" (2007:6). It also states that a "powerful support of Icelandic language education for immigrants serves the dual purpose of speeding up their integration into society and strengthening the position of the Icelandic language" (ibid:6). The policy also states the core values of Icelandic society, democracy, human rights, joint responsibility (welfare) and personal freedom. These principles are the guiding light in the integration of immigrants into Icelandic society. Equal rights should also be respected "irrespective of sex, religion, opinion, national origin, race, colour, property, birth or other status. Men and women shall enjoy equal rights in all respects" (ibid:6). Equality on the labour market and in general in the society is the underlying theme in the policy but only once does it mention the word multiculturalism "schools's curriculum should aim to prepare students for active participation in a multicultural society" (ibid:4). Each school should have a plan for receiving children who speak a foreign language and valuate their knowledge of Icelandic upon their arrival. The policy thus puts emphasis on the Icelandic language and equality in the society.

The absence of the term multiculturalism in a governmental policy plan is interesting because there has been a growing discussion of Icelandic society becoming multicultural in the last ten years or so but it has mainly been led by those working with immigrants.[17] They have also called for the need of a governmental policy for immigrants but various different councils have their own policy already. The government does not seem to have seen immigration as a problem which needed solving except to tighten border control and regulations concerning permits to enter into the country.[18]

[17] The bishop of the state Lutheran Church said in 2003 that Iceland was not necessarily a multicultural society but many did not agree with him and a heated debate followed in the papers, see Skaptadóttir 2004a.
[18] See law on foreign nationals nr. 96/2002.

For most of the 20th century and until 1995 foreign nationals were around 1.7% of the population in Iceland. Most of the immigrants were from the other Nordic countries and there were no big groups arriving with the exception of the Germans in 1949. After 1995 the numbers started to increase and at the beginning of 2008 this number had gone up to 8.1% (Statistics Iceland, 2009b:1). Increasing demands by the Icelandic labour market was the main reason. The majority or almost 90% of foreign nationals in Iceland are active on the labour market and have come to work, which is quite different to the neighbouring Nordic countries with around 50-60% active on the labour market. The policies of the state concerning immigration have centred on the needs of Icelanders, and particularly the Icelandic labour market. This is also reflected in the higher numbers of male migrants than female during 2004-2008 due to large construction projects but before there had been more women migrants (Thórarinsdóttir, 2009).

The percentage of foreign nationals has been higher out in the countryside than the national average and was so already in 1996, 3.7% compared to 1.8% in the country as a whole as many of the immigrants got jobs working in fish factories in many of the villages. At the same time internal migration has increased as Icelanders have moved to the capital area in search for jobs. There has been a steady internal migration from the fishing villages and the countryside to the capital area for almost twenty years (Statistics Iceland, 2009a:2).

Iceland does not belong to the EU but is a member of EFTA which has an agreement with the EU since 1994, the European Economic Area. This agreement opens up rights to live and work anywhere within the area, as well as free flow of capital and reciprocal access to the inner market and transferral of social rights. As more countries have joined the EU the rights extend to more people and the main concern for many in Western Europe has been the joining of the East European countries. As these countries faced economic problems it was thought their citizens would leave to get jobs elsewhere which is exactly what happened. But the opening up of the borders has also allowed West European countries to get plenty of cheap labour and Iceland was no exception with big projects like a hydroelectric power plant and a growing construction market demanding more man power.

However, this has been followed by a fear of the foreign immigrant; that foreign workers particularly from Eastern Europe could easily come into Iceland, now without a visa, and be prepared to work for a lot lower wages than the Icelanders. They therefore become competitors not only for the work but also undermining the rights of workers which the trade unions have fought for and obtained, including the joint responsibility and equality stated as the core values of Icelandic society in the policy of immigrants above. This fear of foreigners taking over the jobs of Icelanders is not new, nor is the fear of the foreign as can be seen in the discussion of nationalism below. This fear has however materialized itself in articles, blogs and graffiti which cannot be described as anything else than racist and coincided with the enormous increase in immigration in and after 2004.[19]

In 2009 the number of immigrants had fallen to 7.6% as some had left after the crisis of October 2008. In January 2009 Statistic Iceland published for the first time numbers on immigrants classified according to their origins and not just place of birth and citizenship. Counting in this way put the number of immigrants at 8.6% in Iceland, while Denmark and Norway with a lot longer history of immigration have just over 9% (Statistics Iceland 2009b:1; Thórarinsdóttir, 2009). Before this change the foreign nationals had been counted as Icelandic nationals once they became Icelandic citizens, they "disappeared" (Thórarinsdóttir, 2009:21). There has been an increase in the requests for Icelandic citizenship, almost five times more in 2005 than in 1995. Since 2002 it has been possible to have a double citizenship. The overwhelming majority of migrants in Iceland come from Europe, the biggest group comes from Poland with 46% and 11% come from Asia, mainly from the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The first encounter Icelanders had with people physically different from themselves was in 1979 when a small group of Vietnamese refugees came to Iceland. The Asian immigrants stand out but the racialization of the foreigner is taking on a new form, the image of the East European,

[19] This webpage is an example: http://vidargudjohnsen.blog.is/blog/vidargudjohnsen/

with any difference being underlined physical or not.[20] This is also linked to the fear of the foreign criminal which has been manifesting itself not entirely without a cause.[21]

Immigration has not been high on the political agenda. Only one party, the Liberal Party,[22] has aired its views on immigrants, which they describe as a concern for the rights and circumstances of foreign labourers, but what seems to most others to be badly hidden racism. They talk of the danger of Iceland becoming swamped and flooded by foreigners who will not speak Icelandic and not integrate into the society. They had four MPs but did not manage to get any elected in the election of April 2009. It seems that most other parties thought the migrant workers would just return to their own country after the completion of the construction projects and with increased unemployment but it seems that the experience in Iceland is going to be similar to the one in other countries (Thórarinsdóttir, 2009).

Although immigration to Iceland is a recent thing it has to be looked at in an historical light. The image of Iceland is one of a homogenous people culturally, religiously and linguistically. But as shown above the demand for foreign labour and arrival of foreign workers goes way back to the turn of the 20th century (Thorsteinsson, 1999). There has also been a considerable contact with foreigners through the centuries because as an island Iceland was dependent on foreign merchants and history abounds with examples of English, French and American fishermen, Spanish and Norwegian whalers, as well as Danish and German merchants. One has to remember though that if a foreign merchant settled in Iceland his status would have been considerable higher than that of a modern migrant. However, the history and the idea of immigration into Iceland has been invisible and non existant during most of the 20th century which can be seen in the lack of any reference to it in history books as already mentioned. The reason can be put down to the project of nation building and the making of a new republic in 1944 and along with the making of a narrative of Iceland as a homogenous people. Growing immigration in the last fifteen years has opened up the discussion of this history.

[20] This is apparent on blog pages and in jokes. I have also taught about immigration in secondary schools for years and recently my students explained to me the visible differences between Poles and Icelanders in fashion and appearances after I had told them they all looked the same.
[21] There has been increasing number of criminals from the Baltic countries in Iceland, both as carriers of drugs and as gangs of thieves.
[22] *Frjálslyndi flokkurinn*.

The reception of refugees is in stark contrast to immigrants. Refugees are a big proportion of the immigrants in other Nordic countries but this is not so in Iceland which had only received a few groups until in the mid 1990s when a particular programme was started to let chosen groups into the country. This programme is run in cooperation with different councils. The groups of refugees start living in a village or a town in the countryside and the plan is for them to become a part of the community. They get a fully furnished flat which members of the community have put together, jobs and a support family to help them settle. It is thus a very much controlled process and one reviewed with envy by my informants.

Iceland has basically been a fairly closed country for immigrants and almost completely so for refugees. The opening up for foreign workers was in reality a result of the demands of the labour market. The only change in state policy was the opening up of the borders with the EEA agreement and as a result immigration increased and the fear of the foreign became real.

In a survey in 1999 Icelanders were very positive towards immigrants or foreign workers compared to other European countries; they were happy to have them as long as there was enough work for them but wanted them to adapt to Icelandic society and take on Icelandic traditions (Jónsson, 2003).[23] Another survey was done in 2008 which built on this previous one and others done in the meantime. These surveys show that this view is changing and negative ideas about immigrants are surfacing, even if Icelanders are at the same time among the most positive nations in Europe with regard to immigrants. However, most Icelanders still want immigrants to fully assimilate into Icelandic society by taking up Icelandic customs and traditions and give up their own.

The researchers draw the conclusion that Icelanders seem to believe in the assimilation of immigrants, that immigrants should become like Icelanders, and point out that this view is not in line with public policy which has put more emphasis on multiculturalism. They also raise the necessary question whether these positive attitudes go hand in hand with economic gain from immigrants and will change with rising unemployment (Önnudóttir & Sigurjónsson, 2008).

[23] This survey was a part of European Values Study and has been going on since 1999. The article uses the word foreigner, foreign worker/ immigrant interchangeably.

As already outlined above the immigration policies of the Icelandic state were assimilationist with regard to citizenship for most of the 20th century. The emphasis was on guarding the homogeneity of the nation, on immigrants becoming like Icelanders by changing their names and even "disappearing" statistically. The policy of assimilation has been criticized in Iceland like in many other Western countries. Instead there has been an ongoing discussion on multiculturalism, the recognition and acceptance of cultural difference, and of integrating immigrants into the society as equals (Parekh, 2000; Modood & Werbner, 1997).

The Icelandic governmental policy towards immigrants from 2007 is in this direction. However, as the survey from 2008 shows, most Icelanders want immigrants to become like Icelanders, take up Icelandic customs and traditions and give up their own, thus to fully assimilate. I am concerned with the informal and the domestic sphere more than questions of citizenship and civil rights. I nevertheless look at the immigration policies of the state at the time of the arrival of the Germans and how they changed from being assimilationist to becoming more sensitive to a multicultural society, with particular emphasis on the name law. Then I focus on the domestic sphere and the experiences of the immigrant women of settling and establishing family in Iceland and how they experienced pressures from people around them to become like Icelanders. This is a kind of informal 'assimilation' as these are ways of making the women and particularly their children Icelandic and not hybrid in any way and I refer to this as domestication. The comparison of the two groups underlines the changes at the public level which now focus on integration but also point out how various things in the informal domestic sphere have not changed much.

Theoretical overview

Theories on gender and nationalism

Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1989) in their study of gender and nationalism point out the importance of the role of women as the biological reproducers of the nation and how the role of the mother has been symbolized in nationalist ideas of women. Since women have children they reproduce the nation. Therefore it matters who is the father of

the children, and women have the responsibility of choosing the right sort of fathers, of the right nationality and true members of the nation. They also claim it is very important in nationalism, or the building of a national project, that women's sexuality is controlled so their children will have the "right" father. Women are also seen as the reproducer of culture and as socializers of children, teaching them the culture of their nation or ethnic group. They are thus responsible for the correct upbringing of children and that they get the right socialization. Women are also guardians of culture and right conduct and this is often their main sphere of power. I find this very useful when looking at migrant women marrying in and establishing families.

Yuval-Davis claims that nationalist projects which focus on genealogy and origin tend to be more exclusionary with more control of marriage, procreation and sexuality (1997:22). She also points to the importance of identity narrations of origin to exclude strangers (ibid:48) and Iceland has such an identity narration repeated for Icelanders and foreigners alike.

The narrative of Iceland

Iceland was discovered and settled in the late 9th century by Norsemen or Vikings, it is customary to put the date at 874, and the country was fully settled within sixty years. The Book of Settlement, *Landnámabók*, written in the first half of the 12th century is an account of the settlement, the 430 or so settlers, their kin and descendents, where they settled and some events of their life. Norway was at the time divided into small kingdoms and many of the settlers had left because of the actions of King Harald who wanted to unify Norway and succeeded in doing so around 900.[24] The Vikings brought their families and livestock with them and also some slaves, mainly Irish. The new community founded a parliament in 930, *Alþingi*, which was directed by chieftains who had both legislative and judicial power. The executive power rested with the people themselves. In 1262 following decades of civil strife the chieftains found no other way but to submit to the Norwegian king to bring peace to the country. As Norway and Denmark were unified

[24] The fact they did not accept the tyranny of the king has been seen as a sign of individualism and love of independence, see below. Historians have argued for various others reasons for the migration from Norway such as lack of land.

into one crown in 1380 Iceland became subject to Denmark and remained so until 1944, obtaining home rule in 1904 and sovereignty in 1918. The period between 1262 until 1904 is seen as a period of degradation due to poverty, natural disasters and foreign rule. The time between 930 and 1262 is the so called Commonwealth in Icelandic history; a period of independence. From about 1100 until 1350 the Sagas were written in the Icelandic language which has been almost unchanged until today. They mainly tell of people who lived in the period from the settlement until after the acceptance of Christianity in 1000.[25]

Icelandic Nationalism

This narrative of Iceland shows certain issues which have been important in the nationalist discourse since the late 19th and early 20th century. Research on Icelandic nationalism and identity has for the most part been done by historians who have studied the basis of nationalism and the claims for independence. Guðmundur Hálfdanarson (2001) argues that being Icelandic was seen as primordial or essentialist as it was put forward by the nationalists of the 19th and 20th century who saw the independence struggle as a struggle of a unified nation for its natural rights.[26] He also points out that since Iceland is an island, the language is homogenous and religion has not caused internal strife since the reformation in the 16th century it is understandable that Icelanders today, even historians, see their nationality as given or primordial (ibid:17).[27]

"Nationalism served as a natural principle for a political mobilization that had the conservation of the Old Icelandic order as its main goal. As Iceland was a 'peasant society', the interests of the peasant class were the national interests, and the national culture was essentially a peasant culture; the countryside and the peasantry preserved the language and mores of the Icelandic nation, while the towns and fishermen represented foreign corruption and moral degeneration" (Hálfdanarson, 1995:774). Guðmundur Hálfdanarson argues that the upper strata of the peasant society of the 19th century fought

[25] The Sagas include epic poems, accounts of kings, holy men and family feuds.
[26] The independence struggle was fought with words, there were no protests or armed combat. According to Hálfdanarson independence was simply the outcome of Icelanders being ready to take over the running of the Icelandic state from the Danish.
[27] See eg. Smith 1986 and Gellner 1983 on nationalism.

against any changes to its structure because of fear of losing labour force to the coastal villages. The negative ideas of corruption, laziness and bad morals were associated with the hamlets and the foreign, as the foreign was in the hamlets in the form of foreign merchants and fishermen. He claims that the nationalism made people look bound together due to common language and culture, but when it came to the political rights it excluded everybody except the richer upper strata of the farmers and government officials (ibid:765). The common culture and language thus hid social, economic and gender differences. Underneath the surface of unity there was a fight for two kinds of ideas of the future organization for Iceland. On one hand there was conservatism or traditionalism which believed Iceland was best off preserving the traditional farming society and on the other hand liberalism which wanted to build up a new society based on individual freedom. This dual vision of the future is what Guðmundur Hálfdanarson believes to be the key to understand Icelandic national consciousness and had great influence on Icelandic politics and social consciousness until the end of the 20th century (2001:47).

Sigríður Matthíasdóttir argues that obtaining home rule in 1904 caused a change in the national consciousness of the Icelanders (2004:43) which was influenced by German nationalist ideology of the 19th century put forward by Johann Gottfried Herder. She claims there were two main themes in Icelandic nationalism. One is the idea of the restoration of the Commonwealth or the Golden Age, which was the ideological base on which Icelandic independence struggle was built in the early 20th century and the other one is the biological nature of the Icelandic nation which is similar to a living organism formed by the Icelandic language (ibid:47-48).

The important role of the language and the Sagas were crystallized in the demands made by the Icelandic committee working on a new treaty between Iceland and Denmark in 1918. It claims that by protecting the language, the key to the Sagas, a common heritage of the other Nordic countries has been protected as well as special nationality, traditions and culture. A special language and special culture give the Icelanders historical and natural right to full independence. It is the language, the literature and the culture which give Iceland its uniqueness, separates it from other countries and links it to the past as well as the future (Hálfdanarson, 2001:197).

Being Icelandic is not only about language it is also about gender. Sigríður Matthíasdóttir claims that "the identity of the Icelandic nation was constructed as something close to the modern individual and masculine ideal" (2004:371) including attributes like independence and need for freedom, autonomy, democracy and reason. She claims that this identity, the true Icelander, was only ever acquired by middle-class urbanized men who had the power to construct the ideal as well as the new nation-state. The attributes of the true Icelander were in contrast with the ideal of the nation as an organic whole reflecting the tension between the modern and the traditional which peaked in the interwar years (Matthíasdóttir, 2004; see also Ásgeirsson, 1988).

However, the people of the countryside who were seen to be the core of the national culture and preserve the true Icelandic values, culture and language, never acquired the identity of the true Icelander, as these attributes could not reach its full potential in the environment of the countryside (Matthíasdóttir, 2004:49). "The irony of the Icelandic nationalist discourse was that the true core of the Icelandic culture was rooted in the capital" (ibid:372). The women were not included either. Their role was to secure the future of the Icelandic nation through their status as housewives and mothers and the so called 'housewife ideology' became intertwined with the conservative nationalism and traditionalism (ibid:372-4). At the same time women were also described on various occasions as too weak to protect the Icelandic nationality, which became all too obvious when they had close relations with foreigners. One of the main thinkers of Icelandic nationalism in the beginning of the 20th century maintained that the biological mixing of the two groups or races that settled in Iceland, Norse and Celtic, resulted in a new special Icelandic nationality or race, being born (Matthíasdóttir, 2004:49; see also Karlsdóttir, 1998).[28] And it was up to women to protect this Icelandic race.

Nationalism and Purity

The occupation of the British army in 1940 led among other things to relationships between Icelandic women and foreign soldiers, 'the situation' '*ástandið*' as it was called. During the World War II women who had anything to do with foreign

[28] *Þjóðerni* means ethnic origin although it is also used for nationality. When *kyn*, which can refer to kin and race, is used interchangeably it becomes clear that the meaning is race.

soldiers were seen as traitors to the national cause, their children as lost to other countries (Helgadóttir, 2000).[29] Inga Dóra Björnsdóttir (1994) argues that this has to be understood in the context of the 19th century Icelandic nationalism which mainly categorized women based on the role of mothers. In the national discourse a woman, the Mountain woman, *fjallkonan*, symbolizes Iceland as land. Such a symbol is filled with subjective meanings and moral attributes such as loyalty. These attributes were projected over on to real women who then became traitors when having relationship with foreign men. Unnur Karlsdóttir points out that underlying and a part of these attitudes towards Icelandic women and foreign soldiers was also the idea of women being a so-called biological resource of the Icelandic nation which was necessary for both present and future as they would give birth to "pure" Icelandic children provided they would not go beyond the Icelandic race regarding paternity (Karlsdóttir, 1998:110-111).

When Iceland became a republic in 1944 the project of the nation building began. After having joined NATO in 1949 an American basis was set up in Iceland in 1951 despite opposition which divided the nation politically. But it also underlined certain themes in Icelandic nationalism. The American basis was isolated as there was not to be any relations between Icelanders, particularly women, and American soldiers, and there was also an unofficial ban for a long time, although never recognized, on there being black soldiers. Valur Ingimundarson claims that this was done both because of the opposition to the US basis but also for the protection of the nation, that is to prevent mixing (Ingimundarson, 2002:361).

With growing tourism and international interaction the image of Iceland and Icelanders has changed. Tinna Grétarsdóttir claims that "rather than the culture or the language it is the nature which separates Icelanders from other nations" (2002:393). She claims that the Icelanders are presented as a unique and authentic nation, its inhabitants as pure descendents of Nordic and Celtic people. There is a strong relationship to nature and by renewing it the nation explores its innermost nature. Arnar Guðmundsson (1997) also points to this strengthening of the idea of the Icelander as a child of nature, a hunter and a man. The opposition is made female, urban and foreign. The Icelanders work hard,

[29] Some of them were of course lost since their mothers moved to the US or the UK with their soldier husband.

it is a part of their nature, and the work is good, macho and makes you tougher. The emphasis is on the uniqueness of Iceland and Icelanders, its authenticity and purity (see also Thorgerður Thorvaldsdóttir, 2002). It is therefore more difficult now to become Icelandic; gaining citizenship is not enough since it is a question of blood.

The ones that do get Icelandic citizenship are also controlled through the language. Hallfríður Thórarinsdóttir (1999) argues that the policy of purification of the Icelandic language and the fight against foreign "stains" or *slettur* for most of the 20th century has meant that many people openly correct the speech of others while others may even hold themselves back for fear of speaking incorrectly. She claims, following Gísli Pálsson, that the idea of there being one and true version of Icelandic has served to conceal differences in speech which have been shown to relate to class (Pálsson, 1979; Thórarinsdóttir, 1999).[30] This language policing in turn leads to the silencing of those who are most likely to make mistakes, immigrants. The language is thus a way of making class distinctions and also boundaries between who is Icelandic and who is not.

Migration theories

Migration is far from new, as Castles points out it has always been a key factor in colonialism, industrialization and nation-building (Castels, 2002). Since the 1980s there has been an increase in international migration and it is now widely recognized that population mobility is inextricably linked to the other flows that constitute globalization, and that migration is one of the key forces of social transformation in the contemporary world (Castles, 2002; Bommes & Morawska, 2005).

Women make up around half of the world's migrants but were absent for a long time from studies of international migration which assumed the traditional migrants to be men who were later followed by wives and children. These studies emphasized the push and pull model, which was dependent on neo-liberal economic theory and which saw migration primarily as a result of a rational economic decision. Women migrants were seen as family dependents and not as actors in their own right (DeLaet, 1999; Bock, 2006; Anthias & Lazaridis, 2000). Various studies on women migrants make apparent the

[30] This is interesting because of the notion of Iceland as a classless society which is a part of the nationalism of the centre right.

complex reasons for their migration which include among other things economic incentives, family reunions and the possibility to greater autonomy (DeLaet, 1999). Feminist analysis in particular has shown the double oppression women experience in the labour force as immigrants and women (Moch, 2005).

Recent focus in migration studies has been on mobility, transmigration and transnationalism; "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Glick Schiller et al., 1995:48). This view has come about as a reaction to the earlier emphasis on assimilation and integration in migration studies but has been criticized (eg. Portes, 2003).

Recently however there has been a return to a redefined concept of assimilation, "to what could be called a 'soft' assimilation, one that believes in adaptation over the long run without annihilating all difference" (Green, 2006:245). According to Green the concept of assimilation was criticized for "the idea that immigrants would assimilate to the host culture and that they would lose their initial identities in order to do so" (ibid: 250). As she points out the shift in interpretation in social sciences has moved from an "emphasis on structure" to "one on individual agency" and the older literature on assimilation "was grounded in a belief in the integrative structures of the countries of arrival, whereas the ethnicity literature developed within a context of increasing attention to individual (and group) agency, expressed as continuity with imported forms of cultural expression" (ibid: 252).

As Anthias points out there have been attempts to overemphasize the role of structures and constraints showing women as victims instead of emphasizing their agency (Anthias, 2000:35). However, it is important to analyze the constraints women have encountered, they may be seen as definers of ethnic boundaries and this may lead to conceptions of desirable sexual or gender behaviour and one way is to conform to the principles of sexual purity (ibid:34). This can lead to strong controls over their sexuality which is exactly what Icelandic women experienced during the World War II.

Gullestad (2002:46) argues that the "egalitarian individualism" of which Western societies are said to be characterized by is particularly pronounced in the Nordic countries (eg. 1984, 1992). She has studied the relationship between egalitarianism,

nationalism and racism in Norway and argues that equality received as sameness ('imagined sameness') underpins a growing ethnification of national identity. This process she claims, needs to be understood in terms of boundaries which are like invisible fences built between the majority population and incoming groups, and relationships which are based on common ancestry and cultural sameness but also on the cultural content which includes metaphors of the home and family and references to territory and generalized kinship. She goes on to argue that the egalitarian logic is one of the reasons why the perceptions of incompatible cultural differences have quickly entered the general common sense (2002:59-60).

I find these approaches very useful in analyzing my material. I focus on the processes of settling in but it is important to keep in mind the continuing and complex social relationships which the migrant women have with their families abroad. However, at the moment I am not using a new concept of 'soft' assimilation. I am more concerned with the assimilationist pressures exercized at the informal domestic level as they come across in their memories and their individual agency in the face of such pressures than with structural constraints although it is also important to keep them in mind.

Immigration to Iceland has come about fairly recently so research in this field has a short history. Most of the immigrants to Iceland have come as labour and not as refugees which makes it different from other Scandinavian and West European countries. Most of the research on immigrants has focused on their experience as workers and on the formation of Iceland as a multiculturalist society (Skaptadóttir, 2004), there has also been research into the educational system (Ragnarsdóttir, 2007).

Memory

Popular culture portrays memories like photographs in a photo album arranged in a time sequence and can like them fade with age (Kirmayer, 1998:176). This Western view of memory as frozen or framed images is linked to the technology of films and photographs and the storage of the images they produce according to Lambek (1998:238-239). In anthropology memory has not been seen as having a passive nature, like stored images waiting to be retrieved, but "as an interaction between the past and the present" (Sutton, 2001:9). Lambek and Antze argue that "memories are produced out of

experience, and in turn, reshape it" (1998:xii). This means according to them that memory is linked to identity. Instead of being fixed, identity "lies in the dialectical, ceaseless activity of remembering and forgetting, assimilating and discarding" (ibid:xxix). The narrative shapes our memories, it is not a fixed text or an end product, but through telling and retelling we edit it and reinterpret it. "There is a dialectical relationship between experience and narrative, between the narrating self and the narrated self. As humans, we draw on our experience to shape narratives about our lives, but equally, our identity and character are shaped by our narratives (ibid:xviii).

For Hoskins (1998) the storytelling itself is also a formative process. By telling their life story people "fashion their identities in a particular way, constructing a 'self' for public consumption" (1998:1). Through narrating their story people connect parts into a coherent whole making a "unified image of the self out of the disparate, messy fragments of daily experience" (Hoskins, 1998:5). Kirmayer argues as well that memories are worked and reworked out of which we construct a story and that instead of the memories being stored in the right time order "it is the narrative structure which gives the temporal sequence" (Kirmayer, 1998:176).

My material was partly narratives constructed for public consumption as they appeared in newspapers, magazines, books and films. It also became apparent that the women who had been active in appearing on radio shows or telling their story to others had a 'public' version of their story, a version which followed a strict temporal sequence. It was an edited version which I heard some of my informants repeat to others. Although I would claim to have managed to take their stories apart I nevertheless must take the responsibility for co-editing or co-creating their story through the ethnographic interviews following the claim Hoskins makes that an ethnographic interview "is a complex dialogue, a co-creation of a narrative" partly structured by the questions and reactions of the interviewer (1998:1).

I recognise that I have made certain assumptions about the translation of personal memories and the particular patterns of remembering and forgetting involved, into a collective memory that might be attributed to the group of German women as a whole. I follow Connerton (1989) here in asserting that it is almost impossible to imagine social groups that do not have a means of translating personal into group memories. In the case

of the two groups of women I have studied, they are very different in certain respects. The women who came from Germany in 1949 all shared clearly a traumatic experience of war and in particular varied experiences of the last days of World War II. Knowing what happened to many German women in the former Eastern Germany during this period, it was never possible to get a direct account of 'trauma' but it is clear that part of the experience of coming to Iceland and 'becoming Icelandic' involved a considerable 'forgetting 'on the parts of certain of my informants. "What one has forgotten, I have no interest in recalling, there are various things that have happened" said one of my informants and thus pointing to the active part of the forgetting process.

What is also clear is that the recent exposure of this group of women to public attention through radio and newspaper reports has led to them forming a certain 'received narrative' that to some extent they now all share. Photos and objects provide different insights to narratives than written texts like letters and diaries where public consciousness is made more explicit. So I am combining the explicit and the implicit.

They therefore form a collective memory both through the kinds of forgetting that they have experienced but also through the active and more recent remembering that has led to a more conscious understating perhaps of what it means to be Icelandic through the rather classic sense of exploring German 'otherness'. The group of more recent women immigrants are much less cohesive and concerned with remembering in this way. More individualised, they are also more unconstrained by the sense of collective identity. But this was perhaps an assumption I started with and perhaps the main question I wanted to pursue was precisely how a 'politics of belonging' in Iceland still focused on a strong pressure to assimilate.

Iceland in a regional context

Iceland is a part of the Nordic countries[31] but it is does not belong to Scandinavia and as a result is often not included in work relating to Scandinavia. This is possibly due

[31] The Nordic countries are Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Scandinavia refers to Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and sometimes Finland is included as well in various studies.

to the fact that is some respect Iceland is different from its neighbouring countries despite closeness in culture and history (Löfgren 1980).

Gullestad claims that the anthropology of Iceland is different to the anthropology of Scandinavia in the sense that it is mainly anthropology at home, native anthropology, and also because many outside observers have been interested in Iceland unlike the rest of the Nordic countries (Gullestad, 1990). In constrast the anthropology of Scandinavia is "anthropology of insiders and of outsiders who have settled in" as she puts it in a review article (1989), Scandinavian anthropologists study other cultures within their own as well as immigrants to their own country. At the time of Gullestad's article there were no such studies in Iceland as immigrants were almost invisible if present at all. Since then with increased immigration Icelandic anthropologists have studied both migrants as well as gone to study in various different countries.

However, the Nordic countries are comparable in many respects, although they are not the same on many levels. They share similar culture and interwoven history, have a similar model of a welfare state as well has having cooperated for over thirty years mainly in cultural and political matters but also more importantly in having similar legislation in for instance family law (Bradley, 1990). It is thus appropriate to compare Iceland and the other Nordic countries when it comes to matters like kinship, family and the home.

Chapter 2 - Kinship and marriage

This chapter is about kinship and marriage in Iceland. Research on Icelandic kinship is outlined and the main kinship terms explained and its use shown with examples from the material. Marriage is put into historical and regional context with examples of the experiences of the German women. The domestic cycle and its development is outlined and the rights of illegitimate children. The relationship between the family and the farm or place is put into perspective through inheritance and the development of the farm as private property. A historical overview is given to show how the home, farm and family were central and intertwined in the social structure and to outline the power structures in the family.

The farms in the countryside were seen to be the cradle of the nation, language and culture in nationalistic discourse for a large part of the 20th century and the increased migration to the towns was referred to as "fleeing from the countryside" and a "wound of the nation".[32] A young couple taking over a farm in the 1950s also had to physically build a new one. The policy of the state was to increase the population of the countryside which was in line with the nationalist importance attached to the home and family in the countryside. Therefore in the 1950s money was coming into the countryside to buy machinery, building houses and for cultivation (Magnússon, 1993:151). This was in stark contrast to the development in Reykjavík with severe housing shortages and difficulties in financing the building of new houses (Bernharðsson, 1998).

The experience of my informants of marrying in, making their own homes and the kinship obligations that entailed underline the way the German women were incorporated into their Icelandic family in order to ensure they made Icelandic homes and had Icelandic children. The kinship obligations include those of children toward parents and foster parents. The farm was often passed on to one of the children but the siblings who moved away continued having ties to the farm, sentimental or as a sense of duty, and this was reflected in the work they did on the farm in the summer. The farmer and his wife had obligations towards the siblings of the husband, to provide them with food and shelter when they visited and sometimes the siblings´ children would stay throughout the

[32] *Flóttinn af landsbyggðinni* and *þjóðarmein.*

summer couched as labour. The couple taking over the farm also had to care for the elderly parents and their adult children who did not move away but lived on the farm and worked there. Never quite mentioned but implicit in all of this are the obligations of respecting the name of the farm and the kin, doing things the way they had always been done before.

In this chapter I will argue that by marrying and settling in, especially on the family farm, the women were committing themselves to fulfil certain obligations towards the husband and his family. By marrying the man was securing a position of respect for himself in the community, he became an adult in the old sense and also a complete individual in the eyes of his neighbours. He also secured himself the free labour of his wife on his farm and home. By having children he also secured the continuation of his family and kin, and often the continuation of the family farm and name.[33]

A foreign woman marrying in at the time gained certain rights although she also had to give up others. At marriage a woman would automatically become an Icelandic citizen until the change in law in 1952, and after that despite having to apply for it, citizenship was secured for her and her children. However they also needed to be assimilated at the local level. I will argue in this chapter that this assimilation took place by overtaking and fulfilling obligations towards the husband's kin. It is in the role as a mother and housewife, the home maker that the foreign woman was made to become and became Icelandic. An important part of this was also having enough knowledge of the husband's family, getting to know and being able to use the correct kinship terms, and explain complicated kinship relationships, as well as to pass on this knowledge to the children. There was pressure for the children to become Icelandic despite their mother being German. There are also examples of this in the experience of the younger women.

Despite the rejections of foreign blood or foreign soldiers as fathers of Icelandic children during the World War II,[34] the foreign blood of German women in 1950s was accepted. This was possible because of their domestication through which they were made Icelandic. As Yuval-Davis (1997) has argued women are considered more flexible

[33] The continuation of names has to be considered within the Icelandic naming traditions, see chapter 3.
[34] See chapter 1 on historical background.

when it comes to national identities even if they are the guardians of those same boundaries.

Genealogy

When I first started interviewing my elderly informants many of them used objects to aid their story. They brought a map and showed me their hometown in Germany as it was before the World War II and how they had fled towards the end of it from the eastern part to the west from the approaching Russians. Others had books with photographs of their old town which had been destroyed in the war and brought out photo albums of their family. Most, however, showed me a book with information about the husband's family, its genealogy and history.

As we talked about the farm Frida[35] fetched a book on the local history of the community to show that the family of her husband had lived on the same farm since "seventeen hundred and something." This was a book which had been compiled by a local historian.

Anna got out a book on the region where she used to live with her husband. It listed all the farms and farmers who lived there at the time of the publication in 1985 as well as mentioning the previous farmers. As we looked through the book she told me how her husband was related to the people pictured there and recalling her first trip with her future husband on a bus through the region. "Every time the bus stopped there was a cousin or some relative who he had to chat with and introduce me to. By the time the trip was over I was dead bored of all these people." The book was published by the Agricultural Association of the region.

Jón, the widower of Olga, took out a genealogy book when asked about his family. As I looked through the book which traces the family of his great grandparents and all their descendants, he told me the story of various members of his family. This book and similar ones have been compiled by professional genealogists or interested amateurs belonging to the family.

[35] All the names have been changed.

Gisella brought a book of professional painters to show me information about her late husband.[36] Such books are both common and popular and list those who have graduated in any particular profession in Iceland up to the publication of the book. There is a photograph of the person and information is given on each person's education, career and personal life, the spouse and children, and previous spouse and illegitimate children, foster children and adopted children if there are any. Information on the parents and siblings, and sometimes the grandparents is also included. These books are usually published by the association of the relevant trade or profession.

These are just four different types of books published in Iceland on genealogy, local history and personal information regarding a particular group of people. These types of books have a long history but have become more and more common in the last thirty years or so. The market has grown with economic prosperity, more buyers and lower publishing costs, but there has also been a growing interest in kinship ties, which can for instance be seen in the endless family reunions held every summer where three, four and even up to five generations get together on the sole basis of being related to each other. The books are sometimes published as a result of such gatherings or they help to identify the ones you are related to if in doubt. This implies that a lot of importance is being placed on kinship in Iceland.

Kinship in Iceland

According to Marianne Gullestad (1989, 1997) the centrality of kinship and family in Scandinavia has not been reflected in anthropological studies in the area with a few exceptions (eg. Boholm, 1983; Frykman & Löfgren, 1987; Gullestad, 1984, 1992; Gaunt, 1997). She claims that this is not due to its lack of importance in people's daily life but suggests that the native anthropologists both take kinship for granted as well as it being "thought to be of minor importance to modern secularized academics" (1997:217). In this respect Iceland differs from the other Nordic countries.

Icelandic kinship has been studied by various, mainly American anthropologists beginning with Lewis Morgan and his Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity (1871)

[36] Her husband was a professional house painter.

who saw it as frozen in time and marked that "the insulation of the Icelandic Teutons would tend to preserve their form of consanguinity from foreign influence" (1871:37, cited in Rich, 1989:54).

Most have concentrated on the kinship as it appears in the Icelandic Sagas and the law of the same period; the Sagas written in the 13th century take place in the period from 900 until just after 1000 with the kinship terminology going back much further (Hastrup, 1981; Barlau, 1981). Kinship studies of modern Iceland have also emphasized the historical material and the continuity of the importance of kinship as kinship terms have changed hardly at all (Barlau, 1981). It is mainly this kinship terminology which has been of interest as different terms can be used for different relationships, the system is bilateral and the terms account for from which side of the family any person comes. The terminology is very complex and is not easily explained by the models available in kinship studies (Rich, 1989:76).

There are a few basic terms which are used to explain close relationships, almost all gender specific, and most other terms are a combination of these to describe the relationship in question in more detail. The family or *fjölskylda* consists of father, *faðir*, and mother, *móðir*, with their children, *börn.* In daily speech the term *fjölskylda* can also be extended to include more that two generations, grandparents, their children and grandchildren even if they do not live together. It is only comprehensible from the context which group is being referred to. The parents, *foreldrar*, may have a son, *sonur*, and a daughter, *dóttir*, who together are siblings, *systkini*. Brothers, *bræður* and sisters, *systur,* also have grandparents for which there does not exist one term but two, grandfather, *afi*, and grandmother, *amma*, although the relations can be specified by using father's mother and father, *föðuramma* and *föðurafi*, and a mother's father and mother, *móðurafi* and *móðuramma*. Great grandparents are *langafi* and *langamma* and to go further back *lang* is added the same way as great, great great grandparents are *langalangamma* and *langalangafi*. There are also special terms for father and son, *feðgar*, father and daughter, *feðgin*, mother and son, *mæðgin*, and mother and daugther, *mæðgur*.

They have not been lost to literary usage like Rich (1976:16) claims but are quite common in daily life like Pinson argues (1979:193).[37]

In order to describe other relations these terms are put together in various ways where the first term takes the genitive form, a father's sister and brother are *föðursystir* and *föðurbróðir*, and a mother's brother and sister are *móðurbróðir* and *móðursystir*. The same happens with sister's son and daughter, *systursonur* and *systurdóttir,* and brother's daughter and son, *bróðurdóttir* and *bróðursonur*. Further relationships are also described in the same way although a father's brother's daughter becomes the *dóttir föðurbróður* and the same with similar relations. The old words describing these relationships are not being used anymore giving rise to considerable debate (see Pinson, 1979 and Rich, 1976). The children of siblings are *systkinabörn,* and can be expressed in a more specific manner, children of brothers, *bræðrabörn*, daughters of brothers, *bræðradætur*, and sons of brothers, *bræðrasynir.* The same goes with the children of sisters. Grandchildren are *barnabörn*, children of children, and the line is made longer by adding *barna*, *barnabarnabörn* are great grandchildren. They can also be described in more detail as son's daughter, *sonardóttir* and daughter's son, *dóttursonur*.

However, there are also terms which can be applied to any relative, outside of the immediate family, without specifying how they are related to ego, *frændi* for a man and *frænka* for a woman can be a niece or nephew as well as siblings of grandparents. These terms are the ones most used in daily speech while the more descriptive ones are used when somebody wants to explain the relationship in more detail. But the descriptive ones are also common even when no explanation is needed or called for.

All of these terms are only used for blood relatives and not for people who marry into the family. The family of in-laws, *tengdafjölskylda*, consists of parents in law, *tengdaforeldrar*, mother in law, *tengdamóðir*, or mom in law, *tengdamamma,* father in law, *tengdafaðir*, or dad in law, *tengdapabbi*, as well as daughter in law, *tengdadóttir*, and son in law, *tengdasonur*. The terms for sister in law is *mágkona*, and brother in law *mágur*, and there are also special terms to describe the relationship between ego and the

[37] In the daily sports bulletin on Icelandic state television on July 23rd 2009 the commentator, a man in his 20s, interviewed a mother and daughter playing together in a golf tournament and asked: "How is it going for you *mæðgur*?" In one of the daily newspapers a heading read "*Mæðgin* at the top in Eyjum", Morgunblaðið 30th July 2009.

spouses of ego's sister and brother in law, *svilkona* is married to ego's *mágur* and *svili* to ego's *mágkona*. An in marrying uncle or aunt is never referred to as a relative, *frændi* or *frænka*, but as a spouse of relatives. There are also terms for foster child and foster parents, *fósturbarn* and *fósturforeldrar*, adopted child, *ættleitt barn*, step children and step parents, *stjúpbörn* and *stjúpforeldrar*. The terms specify the gender of the person apart from the terms for children and siblings and the terminology clearly states how people are related be it consanguinal, affinal or fictive ties.

Rich (1976) argues that there have been changes in the kinship terminology in modern Icelandic society, there is a "centrifugal trend in conceptualizing relationships", and the terms used for relatives or *frændfólk* have been broadened to include people linked through marriage or affines as well as fictive kin. He argues that the kinship system in Iceland developed from central focus on the kindred, as in the rest of Scandinavia, to a focus on the individual and that this has continued into the modern society. This allowed for flexibility and individual volition as in the system the personal ties were stressed.

I disagree with Rich that the kinship terms are changing to include affines and fictive kin but this does not mean that they are not included. On the contrary, they are included in counting and describing a particular family, in books on genealogy and in family gatherings but as people linked through marriage and not as kin. Fictive kin are a bit different. When referring to somebody who has taken part in a family's life as an active participant, for example a stepfather, he will be included in genealogy accounts but the blood father will also be named. This is usually the case even if the child in question has been adopted.[38] Although one can refer to a stepfather as one's father it is known and commented on that the relationship is not one of blood. The blood ties are with the family of the biological father. But the social kinship ties can be extended to the family of the stepfather. Thus fictive kinship ties can and are included in the term *frændfólk* but always with the knowledge and the comment on the nature of the blood ties. This in turn calls for considerable genealogical knowledge.

[38] This has been the practice in various genealogy books published in the last years. See also Tomasson 1976 for genealogy books published in 1970 which described these relationships in detail.

This becomes even more complicated today when divorce and remarriage have increased. The modern day family very often consists of a woman and her children, her husband and the children they have together, joined regularly by his children. There are thus new fictive links to be made and kept in check, a complexity which calls for a new understanding of relationships and kinship or relatedness (Carsten, 2000).

Pinson (1979) disagrees as well with Rich on the inclusion of affines but argues that there are strong patrilineal descent principles underlying Icelandic kinship which have persisted despite modernization, and have even become stronger, which is reflected in the fact that the consanguineal and the affinal ones have separate terminologies. She claims that in modern Iceland the precise genealogical relationships are not only known, but also described, and traced with these very descriptive terms when people are talking about and describing family connections. I agree with her on this point and I have found the same in my material, my informants referred to various relatives using these descriptive terms when we looked through photo albums and talked about the family.

The terms outlined above are all and truly alive, also in daily speech and used by the women, young and old alike. Frida told me a story of a family encounter. "Then my *mágkona* and my *svili* came from Reykjavík, ... I had been asked to babysit because my *mágur* and my *svilkona* still lived upstairs then." The preciseness of terms is also apparent. In obituaries of some of the German women this becomes clear. One writes that his wife told him stories of G "*frænka*", the woman in America who was Icelandic but still German and not her *frænka* but grandmother, but still not. Another writing about the same woman says: "G "*frænka*" as we called her... was in reality my stepgrandmother even if I called her *frænka* as she was married to my grandfather."[39] Another obituary of K, an Icelandic man married to the German woman C, states the children of the deceased as: 1) E daughter of C, adopted daughter of K.[40] Even if terms like *frænka* can and are used in daily speech for fictive kin these relationships are explained by referring to blood ties.

Pinson claims that the word *ætt* is "the key to the Icelandic psyche" (1976:189). The *ætt* or kin, which excludes affinal kin she claims, refers to patrilineal groups, the

[39] The brackets are in the original text.
[40] *Morgunblaðið* 22 th Sept 2001, 9th of Dec 2006. Obituaries of ordinary people written by friends and relatives are very common and appear daily in the biggest newspaper, *Morgunblaðið*.

male line of descent is stressed and the women are only connection points between the males, a model following Lévi-Strauss. These patrilineal groups are defined by genealogies which Pinson classifies into different categories according to how far back they go. They also form an endogamous region of the country or a segment of such a region whose members meet periodically. She claims that the *ætt* can be a named patrilineage "defined by a fictitious genealogy written down in this century, which traces an individual's ancestry through men as far back as thirty-two generations to "royalty" in the British Isles or Scandinavia" (1976:189). Such genealogies, ultimately, define Icelandic citizenship or political identity (ibid: 195).

Another genealogical category, Pinson claims, is named after a farm or a male ancestor. These accounts date from the 17th century and go over sixteen generations. They are very common in Icelandic households she claims and contrary to the fictitious ones, generally believed to be accurate, not least because of the existence of records for this period. There is a tie with locality or place as the genealogies have names referring to a district, a valley, a fjord or a farm. Each individual is said to be descended from a particular area and "it is his point of origin regardless of where he has spent his life" [*sic*] (ibid: 191).

I disagree with Pinson's argument on there being strong patrilineal descent principles and so do both Rich (1980) who claims that Pinson is pressing the material to fit the theory and Barlau (1981). Barlau argues that what to Pinson seems like an overemphasis on men in the family charts she uses is due to their stronger position of wealth and power in the society and that although women do make important connection points to such individuals they are by no means weaker than through men. I agree with Barlau on this but I also want to mention certain points about the genealogies Pinson refers to. Although some of them go as far back as thirty-two generations or further they are not considered accurate, they are fictitious and are treated as such.[41] When Pinson claims that these genealogies ultimately define Icelandic citizenship or political identity it needs to be studied how these genealogies came about around the mid 20th century within

[41] This type of genealogies does exist and can go as far back as to the kings of Uppsala in Sweden who were thought to be descended from the Norse gods (ca. 400-600 AD). Boasting about this would cause ridicule.

an atmosphere of nationalism and the establishment of a new republic. Pinson does not refer to this context she just seems to take the genealogies for granted.

The other genealogies are much more important, the ones believed to be accurate.[42] They are very common and have become more so in the last thirty years as mentioned above. They trace the kin from particular ancestral parents and may have the name of the farm where they lived, first names or family names are less common.[43] The depth of these genealogies varies, they do not all start in the 17th century as Pinson claims although many go as far back as records make possible while others start with a certain couple and trace from there, that can be six or seven generations. Although these genealogies start with a couple who lived in a particular place their descendants do not claim to come from that place and that particular place is not people's place of origin as Pinson argues (Pinson, 1976:191). The claim people make is to be of the kin, *ætt,* which then is identified either with a place or a person's name.[44]

A person basically comes from the place where s/he was born and grew up and sometimes the parents´ place of origin is included as well, particularly if they have moved as adults into a new area. Claiming to be from the parents' place of origin can be an introduction, a connection point to others from the same place used to establish a relationship of informality and a way to seek a third person known by both parties, a very common way to start talking and getting to know each other in Iceland.

An important point here is of course that not everybody was of a kin and one could be without a kin, *ættlaus*. A person who did not have anybody important in one's family, if the kinsmen were not highly regarded could be *ættlaus* and their kin not worthy of being counted and known. This is an old term and rapidly falling out of use as it is obviously elitist and genealogies have also been considered elitist, belonging only to those wealthy enough for kin to matter in terms of inheritance but kin also mattered for economic security as shown below. Nowadays genealogy is for everybody and everybody gets included, also those who would have been *ættlaus* not so long ago.

---

[42] It is necessary to underline that the fictitious ones are not thought to be inaccurate in the first few generations, not until they stretch quite far back.
[43] Examples are *Reykjahlíðarætt*, the kin of the farm *Reykjahlíð*, and *Briemsætt*, the kin of *Briem* which is a family name, see ch. 3 on names. *Jóelsætt*, the kin of *Jóel* has the first name of the ancestral man but was invented by the one who compiled the genealogy.
[44] See below on mobility of people.

The importance of kinship is not just in books, on the shelves and to be shown when someone asks. It is a topic which keeps coming up in conversations both with the old as well as young women. Despite claiming that the genealogy is very complex the older women know a great deal about the family and kin of their husband and do not have to look it up in a book. Both Frida and Anna gave an account of a considerable depth relating their husband's family to people I should know or at least know of. Their children also know a fair amount although they did not go into such length explaining the family tree to me. However, as the families can be very big there is not always close relationship between kin. "There is no relationship, it is just known", Anna said when talking of how her husband is related to a former prime minister of Iceland in the third generation. Her daughter also finds unknown relatives: "My daughter was at the school where she works and then of course talk started on where are you from, I am from so and so and you, and then of course they turned out to be related to each other." The relationship can change with death. Marta complains about the lack of relationship to her dead husband's family, she says that when the husband dies his family does not want to know anything about the wife who remains, claiming that this is the experience also of Icelandic women, the relationship deteriorates. For the other women it is basically their own family, their children and grandchildren that make up the kin group.

The younger women also have access to and knowledge of genealogical books although they do not seem to have as deep knowledge as the older ones. But the knowing of family ties gives one a place on a kind of a social map which people refer to in order to know who one is. This is bilateral and horizontal more than vertical. The lack of such a reference point can turn out to be difficult claims Luisa: "I think it is difficult for foreigners to get into families and in small communities where there is nothing happening, but of course the Icelanders think there is a lot happening because they go to confirmation parties and Christmas parties where only the family comes together and does not invite other people usually. I know that people find it very difficult not to go there. I am of course in a big family so it is easier for me. ..... The social life revolves a lot around the family here. .... People are curious to know who is related to whom, it is totally lacking when a foreigner comes into a family, then you lose half of the discussion of who is related to who.....When someone in the family here has a girlfriend then there is

always the story of what family she comes from.... I had a boyfriend at home and I knew nothing, I did not know his parents names, I knew something but I was not interested but here it is just right away when kids start dating yes, can I introduce you to my mum and dad and go to a Christmas party and like. (Do you know who is who when these things are being discussed?) Oh yes, yes much better than my husband, I have got it all sorted out."

Hanna lived for a year with a family on a farm before meeting her Icelandic husband. "I feel this is still sort of my family here, like someone was talking about the south, I have a friend who has relatives in X, yes, yes, I know this one and this one and on that farm and I know this pool and, like, the area. This is a very fine feeling for me that I belong somewhere in this country. .... It is difficult to get into a close relationship with Icelanders. Then if you meet someone to talk to then it is often asked where do you come from and they often hear, yes you are not from here. But if you say yes but I have been there and I have been before and I lived out in the country in this place, yes then it is like it gets people started, it is like you are not so foreign (*framandi*) but you have roots and know people. Then one is like more one of us (Icelanders) ...It is obviously so much in Icelanders to find some sort of a connection point and if this is some distant relative somewhere or then if one has something in common, the common origins are sought or something like that. Then I always say this is my family here in Iceland, I am from the south."

Hanna's husband has a genealogy book of his mother's line of the family and information about his father's line on a computer file. The way information operates in the case of Hanna is in many ways typical of what others had to say. It is her mother in law that spreads the news in the family, Hanna says it is women's business, men have nothing to do with this and they are not interested. Her husband says he is not interested; men are interested in other things. They know more about who has bought himself a new tractor or something about the farm. "It is the national sport to trace genealogy" says the husband. So while Hanna knows what is happening on the horizontal level he is well read on the vertical level of his own family.

There is an ideal Icelandic family according to the young women. Helga made excuses for her family in law and said various times "they are a bit special". She wants

them to get together more often, meet up and do things together "like you hear other families do" and as a result she is a bit lonely. "It is a bit difficult to get into an Icelandic family, meet these women privately but they have a network around themselves. They are in all sorts of sewing clubs and have their own families, have enough doing their own things, to let some new women come into their lives."

Hanna also complains about lack of relationship in the family. Before they were married her husband was often in touch with his brother but after she came into the picture they meet less, "you were helping him, now you have no contact" she says to her husband. "What, we meet once a year, I think that is normal" he answers. Hanna claims his brother has no time because he is busy tending to the family of his wife.

The contact within families seems to be along gender lines to a certain extent, at least in some cases. Berta has two sons and one daughter. She talks lively about her relationship with her daughter, but mostly about her two granddaughters who now have children of their own. Berta looks after these children, they sometimes stay over, she has helped with the cleaning of their flats when they were studying and has baked for them for Christmas. From her account it is the ideal family that Helga was longing for, yet she hardly mentioned her sons. "They are with their wives", she says.

Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson (1988) has pointed out that the nature of land ownership in 19th century Iceland and the density of tenants made people have to move frequently. This is according to Magnússon (1990) a very important finding, as it shows that people living in fairly isolated rural areas were used to moving from place to place and adjusting to new environments. This brings into question the argument of Pinson about endogamous patrilocal groups which are supposed to extend far back.

Icelandic anthropologists have not studied Icelandic kinship and have left it to historians who have studied the family and household mainly in the 19th century and up to 1930 (Gunnlaugsson, 1993, 1997; Garðarsdóttir, 1999). The modern family has also been studied quite extensively by social workers (Júlíusdóttir, 1995, 2001).

Kinship obligations

In Iceland people were required by law to help their closest kin when in need, if they could not do so it became the responsibility of the local authorities where they lived.

The poor laws, the main bulk of which originates at least from the year 1096, were used to break up families if necessary up to the beginning of the 20th century, separate married couples and placing them and their children as workers on other farms if they could not sustain their own family in the foreseeable future. The separation of the spouses was to prevent any more children. The fear of having to provide for more people than could be sustained seems to have reigned (Gunnlaugsson, 1997).

Around the turn of the century various legal restrictions on movement of labour and marriage had been abolished and the development of the 20th century welfare society slowly started. "Old ties of paternalistic welfare were replaced by more liberal social legislation, based on individualistic ideas of self-help, prudence and hard work" (Jónsson, 2005:250). However, the Icelandic welfare system seems to have been more inclined to self-help, "the Icelandic welfare system was less committed to social equality than that in the other Nordic countries, resting instead on a social policy which emphasized market solutions and self-reliance (with a great deal of family support), not on a socially defined minimum level of living based on a social right" (Jónsson, 2005:265). Guðmundur Jónsson explains this with late modernization and industrialization limiting the abilities of the state to undertake the task, the weakness of the political left compared to the other Nordic countries and the relative strength of a centre-right party which has managed to combine the consensus seeking independence struggle with a middle class liberal ideology and different values of Icelandic culture praising a strong work ethic, a strong ethos of self-help or self-reliance and other values which he sees as being more reminiscent of American-style individualism than the pro-welfare attitudes prevailing in the Nordic countries. He does not explain further the importance of kinship ties despite the quote above but it seems that the obligations of kin played an important part in the way the welfare system was thought of and regulated.

Recent studies show that families in modern day Iceland are worse off than in the other Nordic countries despite having more children. Sigrún Júlíusdóttir has found that while the structure of the formal state support system is weaker in Iceland than in the other Nordic countries, the informal support system is stronger, particularly with regard to the work done by families, especially women, to look after children and care for the

family and is also shown in more frequent relations between grown members of families (Júlíusdóttir, 2001:63).[45]

Marriage

The marriage pattern in 19th century Iceland was very similar to the other Nordic countries, a pattern of high ages at marriage and a high proportion of never-married (Carlsson, 1977, cited in Rogers, 1993). Marriage was the basis for forming a family, the economic unit in the peasant society and access to land, owned or rented, was necessary to be able to marry and have a family. Most people did not own their land but rented it for a year at a time and then often had to move on to another farm. Children of these farmers had neither land to inherit nor special rights to farm the land their parents had rented. It was only among the landowning classes that intermarrying was used to prevent divisions of the land and to make alliances between wealthy and landowning families. Marriage as such was for most however based on economic and social decisions rather than on personal choices, such as if the spouse was thrifty, hardworking and loyal and had means enough to support a family (Gunnlaugsson, 1997).

People who did not have access to land could not marry, nor could they go to a town or a village and settle there. In order to do so a special permission was needed which was not granted unless people could sustain a family. Without such permission and without access to land the law required people older than sixteen to become farm workers unless they could work for their parents. Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson, historian of family and household in Iceland, maintains that the local authorities systematically used poor laws to prevent the poor from establishing homes in the towns to maintain a steady supply of labour for the farmers. The poor laws were meant to secure general order in the society, prevent the landless poor from roaming the countryside, securing farmers with enough supply of cheap labour and make sure the poor did not marry, and thus did not have children, without access to land. If families were separated because of poverty the marriage was not made invalid but the secular local authorities had legal powers to hinder, ban and stop poor people from marrying and living a private life in the sense of

[45] Research published in 1993.

having a family and children. Such ban was in practice until the beginning of the 20th century (Gunnlaugsson, 1997).

There was thus massive social and economic control over people's personal lives such as marriage and establishing a family. Towards the end of the 19th century, the old peasant society gave way to a new one based on fishing which needed mobile labour force and the law restricting movements of people, marrying and establishing a home, were finally abolished in 1894. Growing demand for labour from the seaside towns meant opportunities for this group of people, the majority of which were women, because of an unfavourable sex ratio. Ólöf Garðardóttir (1998) argues that life in the towns offered opportunities for people, especially women, unmarried or widowed, to lead an independent life because of wage labour whereas wages on the farms were usually in kind. This included making their own home with their children and becoming heads of households which was not possible in the countryside. The acceptance of various practices such as engagement being considered commitment enough and children born out of wedlock can very easily be related to these circumstances.

According to Gullestad (1992) the Norwegians of the late 20th century put emphasis on individualism, independence and self-sufficiency. Equality is likewise important and is defined as sameness. This notion of equality has also become to be a factor in marriage, at least in the last thirty years. In marriage the spouses should be two similar and equal persons, although ideas about gender roles are easily found under the surface. The respectability of a woman is tied to the way in which she keeps a home, takes care of her children and manages her sexuality whereas the respectability of a man is related to whether he has a steady job or not. The idea of marriage is one of romantic love with high expectations of intimacy and sexual gratification.

This can also be said of modern day Iceland (Rúdólfsdóttir, 1997). There are no studies in Iceland on the making of the home but various on the family.[46] Sigrún Júlíusdóttir claims that women but also men, in families, seem to live by very solid ideas of certain values attached to marriage and family. These values she claims are related to old ideas of responsibility, self-reliance and loyalty inside the family as well as outside. Inside the family this takes the form of a common project of raising the children and

[46] But see Eggert Þór Bernharðsson (1998) on the home in Reykjavík.

economic and emotional well being of the family. To the outside it appears as unselfish workload and adaptability, a pattern she calls, to keep quiet, endure and accept (Júlíusdóttir, 2001:67).[47]

Another more recent study conducted on the expectations and views of Icelandic men found that men think, or at least describe, their home as an equal project of the spouses, although when asked most admit that their wives might not agree with this and that the home is the main responsibility of the woman (Gíslason, 1997). The men see themselves very much as family men, contrasting themselves with their fathers, who either were not present because they were always working, or because they were not emotionally open. When contrasted with the findings of Sigrún Júlíusdóttir there seems to have been a change in the attitudes of Icelandic men in the late 20th century. This is also a great change from the patriarchal 19th century pattern which was still very much in place in the 1950s Icelandic countryside.

The household and the farm

One of the things that surprised many of the German women when they arrived in Iceland was the distance between the farms in the countryside. In their own country they were used to agricultural villages surrounded with fields. In the words of Anna: "when I came to Iceland then I imagined that the countryside in Iceland would be somewhat similar to the countryside at home, a village, a church, a school and the local pub and the houses around and the fields surrounding. Then when we were on the way from Reykjavík to Akureyri there was one little white dot there and then a few kilometres and then the next one, what I had imagined did not exist, then perhaps a church in between. So this was of course completely different than the countryside and agriculture at home."

The agriculture in Iceland was based on animal husbandry, herding and grazing sheep and gathering enough hay during the summer for the animals but there was no cultivation of corn due to unfavourable climatic conditions and short summers. Considerable amount of land was needed for the grazing and the farms were thus usually fairly far away from each other which led to a relative amount of isolation in a society

[47] My translation.

where transportation was only on foot or horseback. This distance between the farms is still the same today although the isolation has been broken by modern transport and communication.

The basic unit of the Old Icelandic peasant society was the household which was also the farm. The family itself was made up of the peasant, his wife and their children and the nuclear family was the dominant family type (Rogers, 1993). The household counted as well with any necessary workers and the old, frail and invalids that might have been stationed there in the absence of any other institutions that could care for them. These people outside the immediate nuclear family might have been kin, but not necessarily so and were not counted as fictive kin either. If they were kin they were counted as such. They were however, a part of the household who worked together and ate and slept in one and the same house. The workers only had a contract for a year and could then move on provided they had another place secured.

As already mentioned the means to marriage was land and the workers on a farm had no access to land, they could thus not marry and establish their own families. Being a worker on a farm, often away from home, was seen to be a preparation for one's future as a peasant and a housewife which everybody was in theory destined to become. In this sense being a worker was seen as a stage in the life cycle and not a class position. The workers were not counted as a separate class but in the same position as the peasant's children (Guðmundur Hálfdanarson, 2001:65-6; Loftur Guttormsson, 1983).

In the middle of the 18th century a special law (*tilskipun um húsaga*) had been issued which legalized the patriarchal power of peasants over their family and workers on the farm, it set strict rules on the upbringing and disciplining of children and the obedience and diligence or industriousness of the workers (Hálfdanarson, 2001).

Guðmundur Hálfdanarson argues that the Old Icelandic society was very traditional and changed very slowly; there was strong discipline and patience towards whatever happened without any revolt against authority. The peasants had the same right to discipline their workers as their own children. The world of the farm was thus organized as a big family with parents on top and children below. However, quite a few of these "children" were not kin and would not become kin despite living there all their

life. That does not exclude any feelings of closeness and fondness there might have been between members of the household (Hálfdanarson, 2001:65-66).

As outlined above most peasants rented the land and had to move around from one farm to another. During the latter half of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th it was made possible to peasants to buy land and become landowners when land belonging to the state was sold off and by 1930 60% of them had done so (Gunnlaugsson, 1997:37). A special state fund was set up to provide peasants with loans for the necessary funding and the ones who had rented land also had priority to buy that land over other prospective buyers (*Búnaðarsamtökin* á Íslandi, 1988:246-7, 237). Increasing population growth during the 19th century and limited amount of farms resulted in more people becoming farm workers. As the old society crumbled and demand for labour from the coastal towns grew more and more people moved from the countryside.

Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson (1997) argues that the domestic cycle went through considerable changes as people migrated from the rural areas to the towns. In the towns families became smaller and there were more nuclear families with just parents and their children, there was no need for agricultural workers and only better off households had domestic workers. But in the countryside the families became bigger and more complicated. This was partly due to the competition of labour force between town and countryside which meant that many non kin workers migrated to the towns while kin members, older siblings, and parents, stayed and lived with the nuclear family and worked on the farm. Lack of available farm land had also led children to stay at home, and Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson suggests that the growing private ownership of land created stronger ties to the land and offered both the possibility and put pressure on grown children to take over the farm from their parents. He shows in his research that there are bigger rural homes and families in 1930 than fifty years earlier and there were also more single young people in the countryside than in the towns (ibid:39). He wonders if the change in ownership of farmland may explain the romantic ideas of "independent people" who cultivate their "own" land which appear in many Icelandic novels during the first half of the 20th century as well as the difficulties the grown children of farmers had

in having to choose between the countryside and the town, a well known theme in literature of most of the 20th century (ibid: 37-39).[48]

Having grown children living longer at home led to a complicated power structure as it meant that the farmer and his wife could be both the parents of their own young children and at the same time the grown children of the elderly couple in the home and siblings of other adults who had the same rights to ownership of the land (see Óskarsson, 1996). Therefore the handing over of power was not clear, often steered only by the frailty or death of the elderly. This could lead to blurring of the boundaries where exactly one generation took over from the next. The parents could refuse to divide the land between the heirs thus leaving the real farmer, usually their son, unable to take any decisions regarding the legal side of the farm. This could also mean that the farmer's wife, even if she did all the domestic work, was not necessarily in charge of the household, what things to do, how to do them or control the usage of the domestic space. Marriage as such was not enough to give a couple rights over the farm if it remained legally a property of the parents.

All the children had equal rights to inheritance, including the farm, after their parents according to law from 1850 and the first born or the eldest son did not have any more legal rights to inherit the farm. The parents could however decide on whether to sell the farm to one of the children or divide it between all or some of the children.

There is substantial material that points to sons more commonly taking over the farm from their parents than daughters. The daughters married away and at least one son stayed behind and took over the farm. In Anna's community all the farms had been taken over by sons around the same time as she was establishing her own household, except for one according to her neighbour. On one farm a sister and brother had farmed together. Several of my informants have the same experience, their husband had stayed at home on the farm with one brother or more while the sisters left and married elsewhere, the majority of them moving to towns. The statistics on the sex ratio in the countryside

[48] There are many examples of both. The "romantic" idea of owning one´s own land is crystalized in *Sjálfstætt fólk* (Independent people) by Halldór Laxness, 1934-35, which is nevertheless very critical of the whole idea. *Land og synir* (Land and sons) by Indriði G. Thorsteinsson, 1963, shows the strong feelings of duty and betrayal when choosing between staying on the farm or going to the town. This has to be seen as a part of the nationalism at the time. However books written by women, as well as by poorer men, do not have this tension after 1940 but instead stress the countryside as a difficult place where life was not good, eg. Ragnheiður Jónsdóttir, 1954 and Ólafur Jóhann Sigurðsson, 1955.

reflect this migration pattern, in 1940 there were 31% more men between the ages of 15-39 in the rural areas than women and 26% in 1950 (Eiríksson, 2008). Marriages had been delayed in the old society because of lack of accessible land but were, in the middle of the 20th century, delayed or did not take place because of lack of women or their unwillingness to marry in the countryside.

The domestic cycle in modern Iceland has different stages than is the norm in Western Europe according to Rich (1978). Instead of starting by getting married, the Icelandic couple gets engaged, lives with the parents of either one and often has children before getting married, what he calls the engagement family. Rich claims that these patterns have not changed significantly with industrialization. Although marriage symbolizes economic and jural independence he says engagement is associated with procreational rights resulting in high premarital birth rate. Living with the parents is mainly to save money until the couple can afford a place of their own. Rich claims this is widespread and has deep historical roots, and is linked to the fact that the engagement is a commitment enough for people and is socially acceptable (Rich, 1978:173). This is in accordance with the findings of Björn Björnsson who also found that cohabiting couples married later and even in the same ceremony as the christening of the first born (Björnson, 1971, cited in Karlsson, 1994:139-40).[49]

Björg Einarsdóttir claims that in "the 19th century people got engaged before getting married and rarely did people live together without being married, they got engaged before. Having children out of wedlock was badly seen and people hurried to get married or get engaged if they were expecting a child" (Einarsdóttir, 1984:73.) This is also found in 19th century Sweden where couples engaged to be married, were seen to be married by most people and if they had children they were granted the same legal status as legitimate children (Rogers, 1993:296).

The relatively high percentage of illegitimate births in Iceland in the 20th century, in comparison to the other Nordic countries, has been shown to be related to this different pattern of family making, children being born during cohabitation which takes place before or instead of marriage. Kristinn Karlsson shows that of the illegitimate births registered in 1961-65 as 25.7% only 12.3% was born outside of cohabitation. In 1986

[49] This is also called "the Icelandic order" of things. See Grímsson & Broddason, 1970.

when the definition of cohabitation was changed this number fell to a further 9.3% of a total of 52.3% birth outside of wedlock (Karlsson, 1994:133).

Herdís Helgadóttir studying women in Iceland before and during the World War II claims that the engagement family was a result of tax law making it too expensive to marry if the man's job was seasonal or not secure. Instead people got engaged, and were allowed to have sex and children without others being shocked. A ring engagement became a socially acceptable commitment. However, she points out that without the marriage the children were officially illegitimate and if the engagement ended they also became illegitimate unofficially and they and their mothers thus vulnerable to stigmatization by neighbours (Helgadóttir, 2001:36).

Children

Premarital sexual permissiveness and tolerance of illegitimacy has a long history of being different and higher in the Nordic countries than in the rest of Europe and even more so in Iceland. Tomasson wants to explain this with Iceland being less affected by Evangelical Protestantism and lack of religious fanaticism (Tomasson 1976). As shown above the rate of illegitimacy had been quite high but fell dramatically when the definition was altered in 1986 to exclude children born in cohabitation (Karlsson, 1994:133).

At various points over the last 100 years or so the legal rights of illegitimate children have been changed to make their position better and eventually more equal to legitimate ones. Legally, fathers have had pay a bit for their children's keep since in the late 19th century but have also been able get out of it. In 1921 and 1947 these rights were strengthened, the age of the children was raised to sixteen and the support mediated through the Social Services. The child support age was changed to eighteen years in 1981.

Although illegitimate children had been able to inherit their father to pay for their keep since 1890 this changed in 1921 and children could inherit their father and his relatives if the father had acknowledged the paternity or a judgement had been passed

declaring him the father. This was changed in 1962 when the legal status of children as heirs became completely equal irrespective of them being legitimate or not.

The law passed in 1947 strengthened the status of illegitimate children. Single mothers were given complete parental powers over their children but they had had to share these powers with the stepfather if they married. In 1921 the main rule was established that illegitimate children should stay with their mother, which made the mother's legal position much better than had been previously. The committee's report on the bill in parliament declared that "according to nature's law the mother ought to have more right to bring up her children than the father" (Björgvinsson, 1995:49). Single mothers had not always been able to keep their children. Ólöf Garðarsdóttir (1998) claims that the reason for women being the majority of those who migrated to Reykjavík in the beginning of the 20th century was because there they could live their own life with their children instead of risking having them taken away and fostered elsewhere as was customary. Changes in the law in 1981 were to make the position of the father better vis-à-vis the mother, especially if they had not been married or cohabiting. The position of the father in such cases is something which is still debated and fought over.

According to the law on citizenship from 1952 an illegitimate child became automatically an Icelandic citizen if the mother was Icelandic citizen but not if she was a citizen of another country. If the father was not an Icelandic citizen a legitimate child did not become an Icelandic citizen, even if the mother was one, and had to apply especially for citizenship. The rights to citizenship came through the mother if the child was illegitimate but through the father if it was legitimate. This was changed in 1998 and a child having Icelandic father and born in Iceland to a foreign mother got automatically citizenship and if born abroad got one with certificates of the paternity.

Working on a farm

The German women came to Iceland in order to work, mainly as domestic workers on farms. As mentioned above there had been a steady increase in the migration from the countryside to the towns since the turn of the century and women had made up a big proportion of that migration. This resulted in the sex ratio in the rural areas being

unfavourable for the men. There was a lack of people and particularly a lack of young women in the countryside after World War II as had also been the case for quite some time before. Some of the young men stayed behind to take over the farm of the parents but the young women left and married elsewhere. The sexual division of labour was quite pronounced at the time and the lack of women meant lack of female labour in the rural areas. This was particularly so where there was no woman on the farm or the housewife was getting elderly. The need was mainly for domestic labour and the main work of the German women was indoors although they worked also outdoors. The workers of the old peasant society had the title *vinnufólk, vinnumaður* for a man and *vinnukona* for a woman. These workers lived with and were a part of the household on the farm throughout the year. With more job opportunities it was possible for workers to work on a farm for the summer when labour was most needed, get paid in cash and work seasonal work in the winter. Such workers had another name, *kaupafólk, kaupamaður* for a man and *kaupakona* for a woman. *Kaupafólk* got higher wages than the *vinnufólk* which was explained by the farmers having to take care of the *vinnufólk* during the winter as well when there was very little work. *Kaupakona* worked outdoors in the haymaking and not indoors. The Germans were *vinnufólk*, workers who lived in the household with the family throughout the year and got lower wages than the *kaupafólk*. Workers, neither *vinnufólk* nor *kaupafólk*, were regarded nor became to be seen as kin no matter how long they stayed and lived on a farm.[50] And as workers they were paid for their work. In order for *vinnufólk* to be included in the family and kin of the farm, marriage or at least cohabitation was needed.

As already mentioned engagement and a child, even children, was and still is common before marriage, the so-called engagement family. Due to lack of female labour in the rural areas unmarried farmers often got housekeepers to take care of the domestic work on the farm. It seems to have been quite common for a farmer and a housekeeper to

[50] My uncle, a farmer, had a worker who for years worked and lived on his farm. He took part in most things the family did, Christmas and celebrations but he was never counted as kin although the family cared for him.

see "if they could reach an understanding" after the housekeeper had done paid work for some time.[51]

After the first two years of working in Iceland Marta became a housekeeper for a single farmer who lived with his brother and father in a new house on their farm. They had a housekeeper and when the brother got engaged to her the farmer wanted to have a separate household and got himself his own housekeeper. After the first year the farmer wanted to marry Marta but she could not as she was already married, but her husband had gone missing in the war. Once she got the certificate declaring him dead she married, a week after she had received the letter. She was already pregnant with twins but as she puts it "we did marry before the children were born."

Olga arrived in June and got married in November the same year. When she moved out and into her own house a few years later her mother in law got a housekeeper who later started a relationship with Olga's brother in law. They had a daughter but only got married when the daughter was twelve years old. Olga does not really approve of this. "They did not tell anybody about it when they got married, oh well there is no harm, there is no point in talking about it."

In 1949 it was not necessary anymore to marry in order to start a family on a farm but it made a difference to the status of my informants. When foreign women got married they automatically became Icelandic citizens until the law on citizenship changed in 1952.[52] After that they had to apply especially for citizenship like men had had to both before and after 1952 (Eiríksson, 2008:145). Marriage for the Germans was important to secure their position and allowed them to stay in the country. In an obituary of a German woman an Icelandic friend of hers says that she married an Icelander, whom she soon afterwards divorced, in order to stay in Iceland.[53] Cohabitation, although widespread and socially acceptable for Icelanders, did not secure in any way the position of the immigrant woman, neither her civil not economic rights. She would have had the custody

[51] Marrying the housekeeper seems to have been common according to some sources, a trial period instead of engagement to see if a couple would get along. See Helgi Thorsteinsson, 2001 and Pétur Eiríksson, 2008. Helgi Thorsteinsson quotes a farmer who in his biography claims that it was common for women to work as housekeepers on farms with the understanding that she and the farmer would see if they could reach an agreement, ie. start living together as man and wife or get married. I know of various marriages that have started in this way but there are no studies or statistics on this.
[52] See chapter 1.
[53] *Morgunblaðið* 4th of May 1999.

of any children born in the relationship and the children would have inherited their father but she would not have had any rights to the property of the man (Erlendsdóttir, 1988).

Marriage was thus important and necessary for the legal and economic status of the German women and their children but instead they had to give up various rights, not least their loss of German citizenship upon marrying a foreigner (Breger, 1998). Marriage for the men was important because they secured themselves the unpaid work of a wife, sex, care and children, thus the continuation of the farm, family and name as will be shown in chapter 3, in short the unpaid work for the domestic reproduction (see Oakley, 1974).

Marrying

"They came to be able to have a family" an Icelandic woman answered when asked what she believed to be the reason why the German women came to Iceland. She was their age, an employer of three German women and a close friend to one for many years. Her view was that since there had been a shortage of men in Germany the women had seen going to Iceland as a possibility to establish a family and not so much because they were looking for a job, their main reason was the lack of men in Germany.

This explanation for the German women leaving their home country appears in many ways, both at the time of their arrival and in latter day stories and popular culture.[54] The daughter of Ilse is not convinced but tells the story she heard in Lübeck when she lived there in the 1970s. "Everybody in Lübeck knew the story of the daughters of Lübeck who had gone to Iceland to marry Icelandic men because the Icelandic women had all gone off with American soldiers." This story almost takes on heroic character as the German women sacrificed themselves for the continuation of the Icelandic nation by marrying Icelandic men at the time when the Icelandic women betrayed their own nation by marrying American soldiers. They thus did more than their share.

In the account of some of the women, marriage was not something they organized but rather the result of circumstances and not least fate, the men took control at the last moment or decided everything. Marta was still waiting for news of her missing husband

[54] See Pétur Eiríksson 2008:21-22. The film Maria 1997 and Miriam Halberstam: Deutsche Frauen fur Island 1999.

and although she did not expect him to return so many years after the war, she would have left Iceland to meet him if he had, "he was my first love" but her Icelandic farmer put some pressure on her, "well, he wanted to marry."

Hildegard worked for a year and got to know a young man but they were only friends. When she was about to leave and was packing her things her friend came to see her and asked her not to leave, but to stay and become his wife. She was very surprised, "I had no idea" but she stayed and married him.

María met her husband at a dance, "that was enough, my destiny was sealed." They lived far away from each other but met regularly for some months. Towards the end of the year he asked her if she was going to stay. "And this led to him asking if I was going to stay in this country but I said no, I was going back to Germany, I was not going to stay any longer. But he said no, no, you have to stay. And that just was it, I ... just... we... like that." They got engaged and later married, "I was very much attracted to him, he was a fine looking man."

My informants experienced the engagement family described by Rich. The couples got engaged and the woman moved to her husband to be and her parents in law few months before they got married, thus forming an engagement family although they all got married before they had children. Many also lived with the parents in law until they got their own place.

Erika's husband wanted them to live together for a year on his farm before they got married. "We were engaged (with a ring) and late S[55] wanted me to experience one year here on the farm, also what the farming was like over the winter which was of course very sensible." As a result her family in Germany broke all contact with her. It was only after she got married that they started writing to her again. "It went down so badly with the family in Germany that they just stopped writing to me because I was not married. But it all looked well when we had gotten married, then my blessed family woke up. It was during the time in Germany when it was totally unthinkable to live together unmarried but that has all changed now." Living with a man without getting married was unthinkable for her family but fits into the pattern of Icelandic society. Others seemed to

[55] Her late husband.

think this was alright Erika says, her sister in law who was living with them on the farm did not have any objections.

But generally these couples got married fairly soon. If engagement was socially acceptable in Iceland and for Icelandic women like Rich claims, it seems that it was not socially acceptable for the German women. They got married and some needed to in order to convince their German family of their status. Many of my informants married after a year but some married earlier than that.

Ilse arrived in June 1949 and got married two months later in August. Her daughter thinks it was because her mother had started a relationship with her father and wanted to secure her position and it turned out that she was already pregnant. A month later the couple went to Germany where they had a big white church wedding in her home town and their pictures appeared in the local newspaper. Having two weddings was not legally necessary but they had had a civil wedding in Iceland. Big wedding parties were also not really the done thing in Iceland at the time and most of the Germans did not have a big wedding. But Ilse was from a well off middle class family in the Western part of Germany, whereas many of the other women were either refugees or from a lower class and could not afford a big wedding.

Some women comment on having taken up their husband's patronym in order to ensure their German families that they were really married. This is contrary to Icelandic tradition although common for foreign women marrying in at the time.[56] Anna says her mother would not have believed that she had gotten married had she not taken on her husband's patronym and Berta says the same. They both got married in 1950 well before the changes in the law on citizenship which demanded taking on an Icelandic name. So did Erika but she, however, did not take her husband' patronym and she never did, "I did not need to" she says.

Marriage as a part of the life cycle is reflected in the story Frida tells of her wedding, almost as something she was pushed into. The priest in the community was retiring. He had christened and confirmed her husband and he also wanted to see him married. It was to be his last job in the congregation where he had been a priest for fifty years. He just arrived and demanded to marry them. "And I say no this is too early, it is

[56] See chapter 3 on names and naming.

not a year since I arrived in Iceland (she laughs) still we had gotten engaged. But because he christened my old man and confirmed him, because he was retiring, had moved all his things and all that to Reykjavík, but he just really wanted to marry us in the community so we just said yes." Her husband was also to take over the farm were his family had lived from a long time. Seeing him complete previous life stages and having been the one to take him through them was perhaps on the priest's mind. "And what were we to do? We had no clothes, Sunday best, or like that to get married. So we went to town on the Thursday, I got myself a wedding dress and he a suit, dark suit. Then we went on the Saturday and it rained, it poured, Jesus, it has never been like it, the whole day. Then we just went and got married or he married us and we went back home, had coffee and like and around five then we just went into the small room, then we were just in the small room, where the bathroom is today or became later and changed clothes and went to the cow shed to milk, that was just the wedding." There was no big party but the relatives from the next farm came and they had coffee and cakes.

Marrying was thus important for the German women not only because of the legal and economic questions but also because of social status not least towards their own family. It was more complicated for the Germans to go back to their family in Germany with an illegitimate child who perhaps got no support from its father, than for an Icelandic woman who had her own family to go back to or look for support, as well as the possibilities to seek financial support from the father.

Another feature common to my older informants in the beginning was the "I was so lucky, I married such a nice man", therefore there is no need to talk to me I have no juicy story to tell. There are stories about the German women having been brought to Iceland as potential wives for farmers who could not marry. There was both gossip and comments made to the women themselves. Some were quick to marry but usually they were married after the first year. Another informant talked of the way two women had come into his community and married middle age men, asked what people had thought of them he said: "people were very pleased, they totally rescued them." The idea of women rescuing men from being bachelors is also one heard today. Both the husbands of Hanna and Sofie were in their thirties when they got married and had not lived with a woman before. "They were so pleased that the boy had finally gotten into firm hands" says

Hanna of her family in law. “They were very pleased. The man was, when we got to know each other thirty two or three, and had not lived with a woman. They had started worrying quite a bit about him so they simply were very pleased when I came along because finally the lad had gotten something”, says Sofie.

The older women talk of the way their husband was the breadwinner so they never had to worry about bills and were allowed to buy whatever they wanted, but the women also took control themselves over money matters, nothing was to be bought until all the debts had been paid. Hanna and Sofie were not only seen as rescuers, they literally rescued their husbands. Both supervised turning their tiny bachelor’s flat into a home and took control over other aspects of life. “I cleaned out his wardrobe and threw away old shirts he had had for a long time, and he was so pleased that some woman just arrived who would take care of his clothes and would take control of his life” says Sofie.

Settling

The experiences of my older informants echo the findings of Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson (1997) in relation to the family members living on the farm and the children taking over from the parents. They also have stories of kinship duties related to and focusing on the farm of the family. Marrying into a family seems to have meant taking over certain obligations, particularly relating to caring for the parents in law but also for any siblings that might still have been living and working on the farm.

One of the things Rich finds in the study of the domestic cycle in modern Iceland is that many couples live with the parents in law when they get engaged and before being able to buy their own place (Rich, 1978). In 1994 a study of families in Iceland found that 27% of couples, married or engaged, started living together in the home of the parents or parents in law and a further 11% in a property belonging to parents or parents in law (Júlíusdóttir et al., 1995). The experience of my informants was similar in the early 1950s, the couples started their home in the house of the parents in law or their property, especially so in the countryside but also in towns. The domestic cycle and marrying in are important in the towns as well as the countryside. Several of the German women married a man from a town or they moved to a town once they got married.

Berta moved to her husband to be and into the house of his parents in the town of X in June 1950 and they got married in November the same year. They started to live together immediately after her arrival, in a small room in the house of the parents in law and lived there for three months. Shortly afterwards a flat was made in the basement which had been an office for the family firm, "then we went into a flat with two rooms downstairs and were there for six years, had three of my children there. .....Then we started building a house and moved in ´57 into a big house (bungalow)." Her husband worked in the company of his parents which he and Berta later took over. Berta worked as a housewife, not only in her own home but also for her mother in law who was frail and periodically ill, and she effectively ran the home for her the six years she lived in her house, "baked, ironed and did everything." Her mother in law also had a maid who had lived with them for a long time, "she was like a grandmother to my husband" but she was clumsy and could not do everything necessary for a home. Despite these obligations Berta did set limits to kinship duties. Her brother in law bullied her and called her ugly names like Nazi whore. She and her husband tolerated it for the sake of the parents although they agreed that it was not acceptable. The parents had also tried to reason with the other son but in vain, so when they died Berta and her husband cut all ties with her brother in law. "We just closed the home, either my marriage or brother." It was her husband's only brother but his marriage proved stronger. Once she had had enough and gave him a healthy blow to the jaw. "Then I said to my husband that I had had enough, now I would go home. Then he said this does not work, my parents in law tried hard to make things work, to leave me alone and it sort of worked. But then when they were dead we did not have to be considerate to anyone, then we just cut off all ties completely." The kinship obligations seem to be of highest importance to the parents in law, siblings come second and circumstances decide how much the women can and have to tolerate from them. Berta's brother in law did not live with them, so shutting him from the home was not too difficult. He could also be bought out of the family firm, half of which belonged to him.

Berta is not alone with such a story of bullying from somebody closely related to her husband. She says her friend has the same story. Olga did as well according to her daughter but she says she has always understood the animosity as being a result of

another brother wanting to marry her mother, it was rivalry between suitors. Helena also experienced nasty comments from her sister in law who tried to control her in various ways, "I do not know what, I think she thought I was a Nazi or something."

Frida came to work on a farm looking after the children of a young family who lived upstairs in a big farmhouse. Downstairs lived the parents of the man, and they were also the farmers and owners of the farm. Despite living in the same house they had two separate households. Frida married a year later, the brother of the man she worked for and a son of the farmers. The parents had prepared another farm fairly close by for their son, the man Frida had worked for, and he and his family later moved there. But in the meantime Frida and her husband lived in a small room in his parents' home and were a part of their household. They had had two children and were still living in the small room but could use another small room for a living room. When her brother in law moved out Frida and her family moved upstairs. Her mother in law died a few years later and her father in law continued living downstairs for another eight years and often had a housekeeper. Frida and her family lived upstairs in a rather small flat with a growing family, five children before moving downstairs. She looked after her father in law along with his other daughter in law who previously had lived upstairs. "Then I always had to go downstairs and give him his dinner and clean the flat as well.... And then also my *svilkona* who lived in H[57] and she also came sometimes and her kids and washed the floor and like." The obligations of caring for the parents in law fall on the daughters in law, even if they move out so long they are within reach. But the father in law was the owner and he controlled the farm. When Frida arrived the farmhouse was old and the houses for the animals even older. They wanted to build up the farm but were not allowed to because the old man did not want to have any depts. "I tell you we built all of this up now, ... but we were not allowed to while my *tengdapabbi*[58] was alive. It was not allowed to owe money, if he was buying a tractor or machinery or something he had to pay cash. There was no debt.... We were not allowed to build and nothing like a new cow shed. We were not allowed to, look it was just, yes, and he wanted to mend it and like but not build.

[57] The farm they had moved to.
[58] Dad in law.

But when he was gone[59] then we started to build the cow shed and the barn and then the farm house." The parents in law had also stopped them from going to Germany after they got married. Frida went alone as the parents did not allow her husband to go, "he had gotten his passport and everything.... they were worried we would not come back....we were not allowed to go." The parents in law tried to control their lives, "and one of my sisters in law also, she was just, she was sometimes so bad." She accused Frida of having come only to lure her brother into marriage in order to get control of the farm.

However, there had not been a big competition among the siblings to take over the farm. The family had lived there for a long time and Frida's husband was meant to take over the farm from his parents, nobody of the other siblings wanted to do so. He wanted to become a carpenter but he was not allowed to. One of his brothers went to university and the other was a farmer on another farm, so her husband had to stay at home and take care of the family farm. His two sisters went to home economics school and worked elsewhere. Another sister who never married also lived on the farm and worked there during the summer and for relatives elsewhere during the winter. Frida had to care for her husband's siblings who came to visit every weekend in the summer with their family, as well as the sister who lived there and never married. Even if these people helped on the farm it meant Frida had to feed them and care for them.

In Frida's home there was also a woman who was slightly retarded, but with only a very few homes for retarded people she was placed on a farm, her brother lived on a farm close by but could not or would not have her so she lived with Frida for two years and Frida got paid for her keep. The woman worked without getting paid, she was in reality cheap labour and remains of an older system where those too weak to look after themselves or work were nevertheless made to work to earn their keep.

Frida's son was told he was to take over the farm from his parents and he did. Another son got the farm of his father's brother. As the sons got the farm they built a house for Frida and her husband so they could stay longer on the farm but they had planned to move to Reykjavík. She could not live in the big farmhouse she and her husband had built as she and the daughter in law did not get along, "we did not get along,

[59] Meaning when he was dead.

the daughter in law down there[60] and me. There was no use trying." Her three daughters all left home and live elsewhere. Her eldest son who did not marry was also farming on the family farm. The pattern from the father's family repeats itself in the next generation.

Marta married a farmer who had been living with his father and brother on their farm. The brother moved away but the father still owned the farm and had not wanted to divide it. They were not allowed to do anything while he was alive. He lived with them until he died six years later. His other children who lived on other farms did not want to have him and he did not want to be anywhere but at home on his own farm. "There is a different way of thinking now, nowadays old people are put into homes but I had to take care of him along with the children." Marta had twins and enough to do and the old man was constantly calling out and complaining about the toddlers. He criticized her for the food she prepared and showed her disrespect in many ways, "he was very difficult, I often cried because of him." He went into hospital for a while but as he got better he planned to go back home but caught pneumonia and died. "He came back but only in his coffin, God has seen that I could not take anymore." The relatives of her husband often visited them and Marta had to take care of them and feed them. She is bitter because of having to do all this work for relatives but also for her own children. Now they do not visit her or care for her in the way she cared for them. She compares them to a *frændi*[61] of her husband, grandchild of her husband's brother who lived with them from the age of nine until fifteen. He now lives abroad but always visits her when he comes to Iceland.

Her daughter had become a mother at an early age and Marta had raised the child. When Marta and her husband gave up farming and moved to Reykjavík the granddaughter wanted to move with them but Marta refused. It was time for the mother to take on her responsibilities and Marta had already raised her own children. When they moved their son took over the farm. Her husband wanted to build a house for them on the farm and go on living there but Marta refused. Nevertheless she was a lot there because her son was always calling and asking for assistance, his wife was having a baby or she

[60] Her new house is higher in the land than the old house where she used to live.
[61] Male relative.

was ill. “I was almost a *vinnukona*[62] the first year and I was not going to be a *vinnukona* for my daughter in law.”

Erika started to look after the home and cooking when her first daughter was born, “then I was of course indoors.” Before that her sister in law had attended to the domestic chores and Erika had been outside. Later Erika looked after her sister in law when she got old and ill and her husband until it became too difficult. “Once an old farmer said to me, you have brought shame upon many Icelandic women, you have done so well. It was especially the three years that S was ill and he thought I did well in those years. And there have been many difficulties, the illness of my sister in law here in the home. She was manic depressive, those were very difficult years. (But you took care of her?) Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, until, well, the last months then she was in the old people’s home.” Erika says it was what was expected of women, to look after relatives and she had also promised her husband that he would not have to go into an old people’s home, but “he was so ill, he was so paralysed I could not handle it anymore.”

Erika was young when she moved to her future husband and had nothing; she entered into the home of somebody else. She does not like that now. “Yes that is the thing, and that should no stranger do, I have always told my daughters that if they are to be married, to more than anything live apart, not to move into an established home, it is just not good enough. (Did you not have a say in the home?) Not a say the first year. Somehow I was just in the home and participated in everything that was being done. ...I got of course, I was, when I got pregnant and my daughter was born in September then it came little by little.”

Ingeborg met her husband when she was working on a farm after having worked in a small town as a nanny for the first year. He was a farmer’s son and had been working on his parents’ farm. When they got married they started living on a farm belonging to his uncle. After a year they moved to a small town very far from this rural community. Ingeborg claims it was a chance to get on in life, there had been both mice and ghosts on the farm, “it was not nice.” Her husband says he believed he had more to offer her than a work on a farm and had therefore asked her to marry him, moving house to the town was a part of that, there had been possibilities there. His uncle’s farm had been “impossible”

[62] Domestic worker.

and he confirms the account of mice and ghosts, "there was something there." Their daughter has heard the stories of the horrible farm, "it was just something really horrible, and yes it was just something really primitive. There was no water and full of mice and terribly cold and ghosts and it was really terribly difficult, difficult land and something, hard times." She believes her mother met prejudice in her father's family because of being German and that her father felt bad about it. Also that he was betrayed of his share of the inheritance from his parents despite having worked for them for years. Since he had been working for years on the farm he must have been entitled to something or he had wanted to become a farmer. He was already thirty years old when he got married but another brother got the farm from the parents. Despite legal equality to inheritance between siblings a farm can be taken over or sold to a son or daughter before the death of the parents and thus does not need to be divided among the other children who get money instead. The daughter claims her father lost out of his share to his brother. "Something happened there, somebody got betrayed, I think they left because of that, that there was nothing for them to do anymore there in the countryside."

This business has affected her relationship with her paternal family. She does not know them very well. They went there for a visit when she was eight and again when she was twelve. It was a long journey to the farm of the grandparents. And there are not especially good relations between the siblings and their children and the cousins. "No, there is no relationship and not now, one does not know especially well these nephews and nieces of dad, these people were not visiting (us)." She knows their names and what they do, and a little less about the children of her first cousins, "but one still knows who they are. But in this family there are not really any family reunions, have not really been to many confirmation parties, not any really."[63]

Having children

Some of the German women had children in Iceland with another man than they later married. Marta had been married in Germany and had had a child who died. Her German husband had gone missing during the war. She already had a child with an

[63] A confirmation is traditionally a big party and is often used as a chance to invite relatives who are not in contact regularly, uncles and aunts of the parents and their children.

Icelander when she went to work for the farmer who later became her husband. She did not tell me about this child born out of wedlock for some time. Another German woman had told me and claimed Marta did not want to talk about this since it was not considered good in Germany to have a child out of wedlock. Finally she told me the whole story when we had known each other for some time. It was almost like a confession on her part, like she felt she had to tell me although I had never asked her about this child. Her daughter has the name of Marta's husband as her patronym but her biological father is recognized.[64] Her relatives wanted her to go back to Germany after two years of working in Iceland but she decided not to because of the child. It would have been hard for her she said, they would have said she could also have gotten an illegitimate child in Germany. She was also worried that the man would not continue paying toward the support of the child if she had left the country. "He did not stop paying but if I had gone abroad then perhaps, ... it is just then it would not have been enforced (the payment)." She was worried about her reputation as a single mother in Germany, and her prospects and possibilities of getting a job and caring for the child were not very good, particularly not without the payments from the father of the child. Marta says she married for love, or at least fondness and also a bit of pressure from her husband, "then G wanted to marry", "there was more on his part than mine, I was fond of him because he was a very good man and there was never any bad words and never any telling off and never fights." He also accepted her child and she recalls the first Christmas on the farm and her small daughter called him daddy and how happy he had been about it.

There are more examples of the social acceptance of children born out of wedlock. Jutta was already pregnant when she left Germany and arrived on the farm in Iceland. Anna, her friend and neighbour, says that many had wondered about what she was doing. But she had been made to feel welcome and the child had been accepted by the family on the farm who later became her family in law, "not everybody would have done that" says Anna and sees this as an example of what a good community they had lived in.

[64] This child's daughter, Marta´s granddaughter was once my student and drew up her family tree of four generations as a project. In it only the biological father was registered, ie not the foster father, and only a part of the information about his parents, "my grandmother did not know", the girl said.

Carla, like Marta, had a child out of wedlock with an Icelandic man after the first year. She did not want to go back to Germany either, despite being alone in Iceland and having friends and relatives in Germany. Carla went to Germany in 1950 to visit but returned. She had been offered marriage by an Icelandic man, accepted and established a family with him in order to provide for herself and her son, something which other German women criticize her for and say she did not marry for love. Frida claims she knows through others that Carla had admitted never having loved her husband. In her old age Carla spends most of her time reminiscing about her fiancé who died towards the end of the war. She has taken down pictures of her husband and put up pictures of the fiancé instead. She has in a way organized a lot of her life around the memory of her fiancé.

But although there is at least some social acceptance of children born out of wedlock it was still better to be married to secure the livelihood of these children as well as the social status of the mother.

With marriage there were also rights of the father's family to the children. Erika had once thought of leaving her husband and taking her children with her. "Yes, it happened once but it all got better again, I just said I was gone with the children. But then it was law that existed here in Iceland that the men had the right to the children, it was of no use for German women to take the children along with them. One example was known where the woman had left with a child and the man followed her and took it away from her and then she committed suicide. Yes this happened here in the first year. So one was a bit scared of taking the children along who were born here in Iceland. But then one slowly matured. (Did you check the law?) I was in, ... we had heard it, whether it was true I do not know but it was being talked about that women were not allowed to take the children along with them."

This is a story also told by the daughter of Ilse although it is just a story and she does not know any names. She also experienced a similar thing herself. She had been to Germany with her mother as a young child with her father's approval and support. When they got back a neighbour said to her father that he should not allow his German wife to leave the country with the child. Fifty years later the daughter still wonders about the story and the reaction of her neighbour. She claims that she met a young man in Germany in the early 1970s who spoke a little Icelandic and later she wondered if he was someone

who managed to escape with his mother. Since these two German women lived a great distance apart from each other is it possible to wonder if this story was widespread. As outlined earlier the law favoured the mother if it came to divorce, it was considered to be more natural for children to stay with the mother. In the case of foreign women it is not clear what happened. These women were Icelandic citizens and thus should have had the custody of the children but it remains unclear if they encountered any different attitude than Icelandic women. There is a known example from 1962 when a German woman divorced her Icelandic husband and left the country with her children. But there are also known examples of women who left their children behind when they divorced their Icelandic husbands and left the country.

Conclusion

It is possible to argue that the German women married fairly quickly to secure their position but the Icelandic men were also securing their own position, not least with regard to the children. Children born in marriage could not so easily be taken out of the country; as such matters had to be settled as a part of a divorce. If the children left the country they might be lost forever to the father's family. Children from a former relationship were welcome, not least because they could be added on as fictive members and the family made bigger which was good for the kin. Marriage also meant that the man secured himself not only the free labour of the woman but she also had to undertake the caring for his family, his parents and siblings in line with the requirements of sexual division of labour and obligations of kinship. A German woman did not bring anything into the family in terms of land or property. They did not bring their family's connections and relatives into the marriage because the family in law was not easily accessible being far away in Germany. The children of Icelandic women were accessible and counted as part of the father's family despite breakups and divorces. Cohabitation was also a loss for women in case of breakups because they had no claim on the estate of the man. However, the importance of the mother's family and kinship ties with both the mother's and the father's families and thus a bilateral kinship system is clear and ideas of patrilineal and patrilocal kinship groups are a bit far fetched but probably based on stronger position of

men in the society as Barlau claims (1981). The little there is of anything resembling patrilineal system can be found in names which is the topic of chapter 3.

Chapter 3 – Naming and cultural transmission through names

> "Erlendur looked in the yellow pages of the phonebook and stopped when he found a name which he liked in the column Heart specialists: Dagóbert. Erlendur liked the name instantly and decided to make him his doctor. He had not been with him for five minutes when his patience ran out and he asked about the name. "I am from the Western fjords" said the doctor who seemed to be used to this question. I am pretty much at peace with it. My cousin envies me. His name is Dósóþeus." (Harðskafi, 2007:180)

The above extract from a recent book by Arnaldur Indriðason, now an international best seller of crime novels, might seem meaningless to a non Icelandic speaker, the references and implications of the scene might be missed altogether. Perhaps the names above all sound and look strange anyway. But to Icelandic speakers these names and the extract contain a lot of information. First of all they are all first names, there are no surnames. The names Dagóbert and Dósóþeus are not typical Icelandic names but they are not foreign either. They are made to fit Icelandic pronunciation and they are located firmly in the Western fjords, an area with a reputation of strange names which most seem to have come from the Bible. Names such as these are strange enough for people to comment on them. Implicit in this is an expectation of what a name should look like and sound like to be Icelandic and that they can and should be accounted for if they are not entirely so.

It is usually very easy for native speakers of Icelandic to see and hear if a name is Icelandic or not, from the way it is written as well as the pronunciation, where the stress always falls on the first syllable. If a name is not thought Icelandic or it is thought to sound strange, questions will be asked and explanations given, for instance that the person is from another country. Many "foreign" names, from the Bible for instance, have been adjusted in this respect and are thus considered Icelandic.[65] Some names which adjust do provoke questions though, mainly because they are not common. Such is the case with the names of some of my informants like Ursula which can quite easily be adjusted by writing it in the correct way according to pronunciation by adding accents, Úrsúla. Even if a name applies to the grammatical rules and the rules of pronunciation it can still be recognized or questioned as "foreign" by the unfamiliarity of the name. This

[65] For instance Rakel, Pétur and Jón (Rachel, Peter and John).

unfamiliarity is explained by reference to origin, some names are strange[66] and can perhaps come from certain parts of the country where strange names are used, they can be modern and fashionable, and they can be foreign in some way.

Names give various information and Icelandic ones reveal the gender of the person; they can indicate regional background like the example in the beginning and origin and nationality.[67] However, names do not reflect marital status. The only changes that names underwent until 1991 were when a foreigner was granted with Icelandic citizenship and had to change his/her name to an Icelandic one. Now when this has changed there is a question if the very act of immigrant women using their own names and not taking up their husband's upon marrying is just another way of assimilation, ie. by abiding to the Icelandic name rules.

Names and naming has been an important topic for a long time in anthropology, not least how names are used for the classification of people (eg. Lévi-Strauss, 1966; Mauss, 1985 (1938)). Anthropologists have also been interested in the power of governments to register its subjects and how other dominant groups have the power to name subjugated people, as well as the power to de-name others (eg. Benson, 2006). It is precisely in the naming and in the names themselves which the power of names lies (Bodenhorn and Vom Bruck, 2006:6) and even if the linguistic meaning of names does matter (as can be seen in my material below) one has to take the social context into consideration as Herzfeld (1982) points out.

Bodenhorn and Vom Bruck argue that naming cannot just be reduced to politics alone nor is it just about classification (Bodenhorn and Vom Bruck, 2006:3). They argue that the act of naming implicates children into a social matrix and through the name they will become entangled in the life histories of others (ibid: 3). They also argue that the names "carry capacity to not only delineate the boundaries of social status but also to bridge them" (ibid: 3). Names can fix and also detach. "The potential for the name to become identical with the person creates the simultaneous potential to fix them as

[66] Such is the case with Elfriede. She changed her name to Elfríður which fits perfectly but it is not used in Iceland and so it does not really exist and sounds strange.
[67] Clarence Glad has a very foreign looking name but grew up in Iceland and speaks fluent Icelandic. He says he repeatedly gets asked how come he speaks such good Icelandic. His name makes people classify him as a foreigner.

individuals and as members of recognized social groups. It is their detachability that renders names a powerful political tool for establishing or erasing formal identity, and gives them commodity-value" (ibid: 4).

Herzfeld (1982) claims that the commemorative naming practices in Greece are about reciprocity. In exchange for commemorating a name there is thought to be some gain, either material or spiritual, to the recipient of a name. However, having the same name does not make the person the same as the namesake, it is a metaphorical relationship. Instead of seeing the naming practices as a set of constraints upon people it is something which people actively use, thus the idea of reciprocity means there is room for agency in naming practices instead of it simply being forced from the top down.

Sutton (1997) claims that names and kinship are important in order to understand nationalism, its power and how nationalism uses custom, ideology and practice at the local level. He argues that names are not just a way of establishing continuity between the past and the present but that they can also establish continuity between the present and a national past. Following Stewart (1991, cited in Sutton 1997) he points out that when a child receives a name from a grandparent it is the grandparent that is remembered, not some great grandparent in the distant past from which the name came in the first place. He sees a link between the way the commemoration works at the level of the family and at the national level.

"Thus at the individual level it is a weak form of commemoration because the person commemorated is in fact soon forgotten. At the genealogical level, however, it is a strong form of commemoration because names of ancestors are preserved through the generations. This means that naming is about both short- and long-term continuity: the direct relationship between the grandparent or other relative and the child, and the much vaguer history of the name repeated down through the generations that connects the living person with an unknown ancestor in the distant past. But this is also an analogy for the way that continuity with the ancient past is conceived: one's relationship with one's grandparent becomes the prototype for one's relationship with unknown ancestors in the ancient past" (Sutton, 1997:423). By looking at nationalism at the local level people emerge not as passive but active participants in the construction and acceptance of nationalist ideologies (Sutton, 1997:416).

I want to look at names and name giving in Iceland by using these ideas. There is a long tradition of naming after kin which is still alive, although changing somewhat, but the reciprocity that Herzfeld talks of is apparent in my material, be it in terms of affect, inheriting small objects or being seen as special in some way. The traditions of name giving in Iceland are very linked to the kinship structure and are a part of the Icelandic cultural heritage which is seen to have an unbroken continuity since the settlement of Iceland in the 9th century. Iceland is also seen to be the only place where the patronymic naming system still prevails and as such is the keeper of tradition, all of which makes an important part of Icelandic nationalism. In particular I want to look at how the giving of Icelandic names to immigrant women and their children is used to remake boundaries, detach people from their background and fix them onto a new social matrix in order to incorporate them into the family which is also Icelandic society in a nutshell.

In this chapter I want to explore how foreign women and children of mixed marriages were, and still are, made Icelandic through names and naming. Foreign women marrying Icelandic men acquire a certain status through changes in their names whilst their children are made Icelandic by restricting the names that can be given to them in order to follow Icelandic law and tradition. Naming is not just a private matter but a public one. From 1952 until 1995 the law on citizenship stated that a condition of receiving Icelandic citizenship was to agree to change one's names in accordance with Icelandic custom and thus to give up one's previous names. This was changed in the law of 1996[68] and the whole system was made much more flexible but it nevertheless carefully outlines what is and what is not allowed.

A Name Committee has been in existence since 1991 and has the sole power of deciding what names can be accepted and which ones will be rejected. It also makes a list of approved names which people can consult. Priests of the state Lutheran church are instructed to oppose name giving which do not comply with the decisions of the Name Committee, as well as chairmen of others congregations. If a child is registered at the National Registry Office the office will refuse to register a name which has not been allowed by the Name Committee.

[68] The Name law is number 45/1996 but became valid 1st of January 1997.

However, names and naming are not just about politics or state invention as Bodenhorn and Vom Bruck point out (2006). There are other sorts of relationships realized through names at play and these are as likely to emerge from local family practice and kinship idioms as being imposed top down by the state and its institutions (ibid:3).

The experience of my informants reflects the invention and intervention of the state through the law on names and a comparison of the two groups, the women who came in 1949 and the more recent migrant women, shows clearly the changes that have been brought about, both in relation to their own names as well as those of their children. My material also shows that in the more private sphere of family and friends the names of the women are changed, assimilated and adapted to Icelandic custom and pronunciation and thus made to look and sound more Icelandic. This takes place irrespective of the law on naming and comes from the social pressures of family and friends, it is not imposed by the top nor does it ever get to that level at all. There is thus a discrepancy at the two levels of formal state led naming codes and informal naming practices.

Despite the changes in the law on names allowing immigrants to keep their names when becoming Icelandic citizens, I argue that these informal naming practices still continue and are an important basis for the assimilation of immigrant women into Icelandic social and kinship networks. I also argue that the naming of children was and continues to an extent, to be about the making and consolidation of kinship relationships which become apparent in referring to and addressing relatives as well as in matters of inheritance of objects aside from the legal distribution of property.[69] Therefore it is important that the children have names which make and strengthen these relationships.

In the case of immigrant women it can however become problematic if they are not allowed to give names from their own family or names from their language. By comparing the two groups I will show that while the immigrant women are assimilated into the community by name changing, they make sure at the same time that through naming practices their children can participate in family relations both in Iceland and Germany. They can use allowed names which are similar to names from their own family

[69] Children have equal rights to inheritance, birth order or name does not have any effect. This refers to personal objects given while people are either still alive or passed on much later by an intermediary.

or names that fit and are used in both languages. Even so both my elderly and younger informants make sure their children have decisively Icelandic names.

First it is necessary to look at the naming system in Iceland, how names are given, what are Icelandic names and what the law say about them before going on to see how this is reflected in the ethnography.

The Icelandic naming system

In Iceland it is the first name that matters not the surname. One can have one or two first names and be called either names or both of them, but a person will always be referred to by the first name or names and not by a surname. Public records are arranged alphabetically according to people's first names and not surnames. Instead patronymic naming system is used which is made by adding son (*son*) or daughter (*dóttir*) to the genitive form of the father's first name. If the father's first name is Jón the genitive form is Jóns and the patronym is thus Jónsson or Jónsdóttir. Since the new name law of 1996 it is also possible to use the mother's first name and indeed both parents' first names if desired. If the parent has two first names it is possible to choose which one of the two is used as a patronym but the most common is to use the first one.[70] Siblings therefore, depending on whether they are male or female, have different endings in their last name, usually called father's name in Icelandic, *föðurnafn*, and also *kenninafn* to make it gender neutral, but it is not a surname. Women do not take up their husband's name upon marrying, instead they carry on using their patronym or *kenninafn* throughout their life. Therefore in most families everybody has different last names, husband, wife, son and daughter, except siblings of the same sex.[71] If people are asked "what is your name?" they will say their first name. This is not followed by "what is your surname?" but "whose daughter are you, whose son are you?" in order to get further information.

There are also a few surnames which are passed on to children. There are two kinds of surnames, names that Icelanders have made themselves and names brought by immigrants. In the 17th and 18th centuries some men of means and education wrote their names in Latin and some have survived as surnames, for example the first name Þorlákur

[70] If a man's name is Jón Halldór Gíslason his sons can be Jónsson or Halldórsson.
[71] Siblings of the same sex can also have different last names, see previous footnote.

became Thorlacius, which is still used as a surname. In the late 19th and early 20th century various new surnames were invented and often referred to the place of origin of the person in question, the farm, the valley or the region (eg. Laxness, Blöndal, Norðfjörð).

Other surnames came to Iceland with immigrants, mainly from Denmark and Germany, particularly in the 19th and early 20th century. Although Iceland was emerging as a modern urbanized society it was still very much based on agriculture and industry was poorly developed. Many of the immigrants were men who had the specialization and knowledge needed which gave them status in the society, such as merchants or bakers. Others came as employees of companies and later set up their own business.[72] They continued using their own original names and as men they could pass their surname on to their children. Their Icelandic wives could choose whether they wanted to take up the surname of their husband or not.

There was thus an increasing use of surnames around the turn of the 20th century and in order to understand this it is necessary, as Hallfríður Thórarinsdóttir (1999) points out, to keep the emerging class order in mind. The emerging Icelandic upper and middle classes were small and wanted to associate themselves with the modern elite in Iceland and Denmark. In Reykjavík it seems to have been customary for middle and upper class women around the turn of the century to take the patronym of their husband and use it as a surname, thus Mrs Jónsson if the husband was Jónsson, a practice which was unheard of before. At the same time, and well into the 20th century, Icelandic women marrying Icelandic men with surnames very often took up the surname of their husband although they did not have to as they could continue using their patronym.

In 1912 two members of parliament put forward a bill for a new name law which would make it easier to change and make up new names. One of the main ideas in their bill was that Icelanders should take up the custom of using surnames like in other countries and stop using patronyms. The taking up of surnames was seen as a sign of being modern. They even supplied a list of place names and how they could be changed into surnames. They also had a list of names from the Icelandic Sagas which could be used as first names, and a list of new names to be used for places, farms and as surnames. But this idea of changing the naming system and taking up Icelandic surnames was

[72] There are many examples of such names, eg. Berndsen, Johnson, Bernhöft, Kaaber.

rejected. Instead it was made illegal to take up new surnames but the usage of the old surnames mentioned above was allowed to continue. The main idea behind the ban was to preserve the old custom of the patronymic system so that it would not be lost and with it a part of Icelandic culture and heritage, a cultural practice which can be traced back to the settlement of Iceland in the late 9th century, and actually much further back to common Nordic or even Germanic origins. The ban also has to be seen in relation to growing nationalism at the time which stressed the historical continuity of the Icelandic culture.[73]

Icelandic names

The history of Icelandic first names[74] is well recorded (eg. Kvaran & Jónsson, 1991; Pálsson, 1981). These authors argue that the main bulk of Icelandic names have Nordic origins, and come from the pagan faith which was practiced in Iceland and Scandinavia until the year 1000 when Christianity took over. New names came with Christianity but older ones do not seem to have been excluded despite the obvious pagan references in many names such as Thorsteinn (the stone of Thor, one of the main gods). Some Danish, German and English first names were taken up and used in the period from 900 until 1300 but changed to fit Icelandic pronunciation and spelling. Hermann Pálsson says of such names "that usually they assimilated so well to the Icelandic language that in no way is it easy to recognize them from native names" (Pálsson, 1981:9). This idea of assimilation beyond recognition surfaces repeatedly again and again in the whole discussion about names in Iceland as well as in practice.

Various changes took place in the 19th century, included giving two first names to the same person which was practically unheard of in the census from 1703 (Lárusson, 1960:3). Another important feature was the growing nationalism which can be seen in the usage of names known in the Icelandic Sagas but which had not been used before (Lárusson, 1960:9).[75] Names of settlers and heroes became common but also the names of heroes and heroines of popular literature as Guðrún Kvaran points out (1991). She also

[73] The concern over surnames is further outlined below.
[74] When talking about names I am referring to first names.
[75] Ólafur Lárusson points out that various names from the sagas were not in the census of 1703, such as Ingólfur, Skarphéðinn, Njáll, but were in use in late 19th century and are still common names.

talks of the importance of bad names, if the character in the story was seen as bad his or her name did not become popular.[76] This leads to wondering if it is the name that makes the person or the person who makes the name. Both indeed seem to have happened. There were further changes in the 20th century with a short period during the World War II when English and American first names appeared but they did not become widespread.

In the latter half of the 20th century the use of old first names originating in the Icelandic Sagas have become more and more common, people have even gone out of their way to find different names which have not been used before.[77] Fashion has become increasingly more important and certain names can almost be linked to certain years. Having two first names is now very widespread and by different combinations of these two names new variations are achieved.[78]

There have been big changes in the last few years which can be seen in the most common names of the under five years olds, whether two are combined or only one used, and they are quite different than the most common names in the population as a whole. This is clear when lists of the hundred most frequent first names of these groups are compared. While in the older male population the names Sigurður, Guðmundur, Jón, Gunnar, Ólafur, Magnús are the most frequent, for the under five are Kári, Dagur, Bjarki, Alexander, Daníel and Sindri. The older names are still on the list but a lot further down. The same can be said for the women's names. The under five have the names Sara, Freyja, Andrea, Katrín, Birta and Rakel as the most frequent while the older ones are called Guðrún, Sigríður, Kristín, Margrét and Ingibjörg. Although fashion has undoubtedly had a say in the decision of names before as can be seen from the combination of names, the names most frequently used for the older ones are ancient and mostly of Nordic origins. The names of the under five are from the Sagas, like Kári, Sindri and Freyja, recently invented ones like Dagur and Birta and "imported" ones like Alexander and Andrea, which have become much more popular in recent years.

[76] There are various examples of this. Mörður was a liar and a deceiver in one of the sagas and the word *lygamörður* derives from his name, meaning a lying deceiving person. Nobody was named Mörður until the mid 20th century. Gróa was a gossiping storyteller in a novel published in 1850, and there were not many named Gróa for a long time after that.

[77] Draupnir is an example; it was the ring of Óðinn (Wodin) the mightiest god in Norse mythology.

[78] Fashionable name combinations for the under five in the year 2008 according to Statistics Iceland include Andri Snær, Sindri Snær, Mikael Máni and Alexander Máni for the boys and for the girls: Eva María, Anna María, Sara Lind and Sara Dögg.

It is of course easier to pronounce Daníel, Viktor or Andrea for non Icelandic speakers, whereas Guðríður can be a bit of a tongue breaker and this has influenced the choices made by some of my informants when naming their children. However, the changes in the first names cannot be explained because there is an extended family of non Icelandic speakers to take into consideration. Media personalities, international ones as well as Icelandic, fashion and trends are all big factors and it has also become more common to choose a name out of the blue and because it is nice and not because it belongs to anyone in the family.

Naming children

In Iceland children are usually not given names right after birth, instead they get their first name when they are christened a few months old. A child has to be given first name and registered at The National Registry Office not later than within 6 months of their birth.[79] But until the christening the name usually remains a secret, only revealed when the minister asks the person holding the baby: "what is the child's name going to be?" This custom is very widespread and common although naming shortly after birth also happens. Such naming is often followed by a christening later or a non religious naming ceremony which is a recent phenomenon. Surnames are not given as explained above; instead children use patronyms or matronyms unless their parents have surnames which they pass on to their children.

In daily speech to christen (*skíra*) is synonymous with giving a name. A parent will be asked if the baby has been christened yet or what his or her name is, but not if it has been named already. To say a child has been named means that it has not been christened, although this does not exclude christening in the near future. But parents who say they have named their child may also add that they did not christen their child and perhaps offer the explanation that they do not belong to any church or congregation. Luisa did exactly this when she was talking about the names she gave to her children, "we went to the registry office, they were not christened, as we do not belong to a church." However christening is the norm, it is what everybody does and an occasion for

[79] This was a new addition in the Name law of 1996. Before there was no legal limit and children were even christened at the age of six because the parents did not get around to doing it until then.

a family gathering. It was even considered strange not to christen one's child although now it has become acceptable. The christening ceremony can take place at home, in a private service in a church or a chapel as well as a part of an ordinary, although especially announced Sunday service. Afterwards there is usually a party, coffee and cakes are a standard and at least the immediate family is invited.

There is a certain ceremony called shortened christening (*skemmri skírn*) which refers to when a child is christened soon after birth in case it might die. It seems to have been the custom in earlier times according to Thorsteinn Thorsteinsson who mentions that the old custom of christening children immediately after birth or in the following days has long been abandoned (Thorsteinsson, 1961:7). This was probably due to the high infant mortality rate as children who died without being christened were not saved for the final judgement day. Stillbirths and children who died soon after birth were usually put into a coffin with somebody else, not necessarily a relative. Now it has become the norm for such children to get christened and get names, their own grave and gravestone.[80] Christening is obviously of religious importance as the child is taken into and made a member of the congregation and as such it is given a name which is blessed.

Naming children after kin

Naming children after the grandparents or other relatives was and still is very common. Hermann Pálsson, writing in 1960, says that when names are decided the old and good custom of giving children names after their grandparents or other relatives and friends is usually what counts the most (1981:13).

Ólöf Garðarsdóttir has found that in the early 19th century Iceland, this custom was very common particularly with the oldest children. The oldest sons were often named after the paternal grandparents, a practice also found in other societies with patronymic naming systems. The names of the maternal grandparents were also given. The naming of younger children was much freer and they were even given unusual names. She claims this was an attempt to preserve the patrilineage without explaining that any further. The names can be repeated in every second generation and in this way particular names are

[80] Frida's granddaughter lost her baby. "She lost the baby this spring, or well she was gone 22 weeks and well, he was buried and all." (See Layne, 2006 for comparison with the United States).

kept within the family, both the father's as well as the mother's family. If a boy is named after his maternal grandfather and he names his daughter after his mother, her name will be repeated and can thus live on.[81] She claims that naming children after grandparents and other relatives was a way to make an important link to the past as well as reinforce kinship ties or preserve good relations with close relatives (Garðarsdóttir, 1999). She also points to the widespread practice of necronymic naming, if a sibling or a close relative had died shortly before the child was born, it was thought appropriate to give their name to the newborn baby and she cites accounts that stress the importance of such naming in Iceland, at least in the old peasant society (ibid:304).

Although more people now choose names "out of the blue" for their children as already mentioned the custom of naming after kin, living and dead, is still widespread.[82] This is also reflected in the fact that people ask questions about names, where it comes from, if it is in the family of the person and if s/he is named after somebody in the family or a friend.[83] A child can also have two first names, one which is chosen especially for it and another which links it to a family member.[84]

When two people have the same name they are *nafnar/nöfnur* (mascul./fem. plur.). The terms can be used as a form of addressing somebody, one can say to another *nafni, nafna* (mascul./fem. sing.) if they have the same name or when referring to them when talking to others. They share a name and do not have to be related to each other, there is thus a kind of a relationship, albeit a weak one, which can go beyond family or blood based on the name itself. Such a relationship has much stronger meaning though if it is based on family or friendship. The importance of this is made clear by Hildegard

[81] If the mother's name is Guðrún Jónsdóttir and she names her son Jón, he in turn names his daughter Guðrún then the daughter's name is also Guðrún Jónsdóttir. The exact name can not be passed down through the female line only.

[82] A popular blogger ran a quiz on her blog in 2008 and the first question was: are you named after somebody? Many answered and said they were named after their grandparents and some after friends of their parents. The blogger herself (Jóna Ágústa) was named after the best friend (Jón Ágúst) of her father who committed suicide at the age of 20, http://www.jonaa.blog.is/blog/jonaa. A name can also be made up from two names, one of the answers said she was named after both her grandmothers, Guðrún and Sigríður and her name was Sigrún. Parts of both names have been added together to make a new name, but one which is also a common name. See also Garðarsdóttir, 1999.

[83] This comes regularly up when first meeting somebody with a "strange" name, see beginning of the chapter. In 2008 a small column started in the daily newspaper *Fréttablaðið* under the heading of "My name". Various people were asked about the meaning of their name, and where it came from, if they were named after somebody and reactions to their name.

[84] See eg. "My name" in *Fréttablaðið* 11th Aug 2009. "I was named after my maternal grandmother whose name is Unnur. My other name is out of the blue in the hippy spirit of those years."

when talking of her granddaughter and *nafna* Hildur. She talks more about her than the other grandchildren. Hildegard as a name is not allowed by the Name Committee but Hildur is a sound and ancient Icelandic name. Frida also refers to her granddaughter as *nafna*, "yes, Fríða, well my *nafna*", who is studying German in the school but refers of her other grandchildren as she, he or the boy.[85]

Although the tradition of naming children after their grandparents is becoming weaker it is common that they get at least one *nafni/nafna* in the family, one grandchild who is named after them.[86] Luisa gave her son a name from her home country and her family in law asked if it was her father's name. "(Did anyone say he should be named after his Icelandic grandfather?) No, no, there is someone named after the grandfather, this is a big family. But they did exactly ask if this was the name of my father."

One can be *nafni/nafna* with another person on first name only but to have the same first name and the same patronym is to be complete or whole, *alnafni/alnafna,* and if children are named after their grandparents this can repeat itself in every 2nd generation as already mentioned. All of the siblings in one family can name their own children after the grandparents but there will only be one who can be *alnafna* with the grandmother and another one who can be *alnafni* with the grandfather giving the way the patronymic system works.[87] If a person is named after the grandparent and has children there is certain pressure to name the child after its grandparents to create an *alnafni/a.* If not it may cause resentment but one which should not be shown towards the parents of the child and also one which is not openly discussed except with close friends.[88] A name can

[85] Sutton mentions that grandparents on Kalymnos are particularly attached to grandchildren named after them, that they are like something they have left behind or they see their names being perpetuated (Sutton, 1997).

[86] The mayor of Reykjavík was asked about his recently born grandson in May 2007 in a newspaper interview and if he thought the child would get his name. He answered that it did not matter as times had changed and besides he had already got a *nafni* in the family, the implications being that he did not need another one.

[87] This may have led some like Pinson (1979) to conclude that Icelandic kinship is patrilineal.

[88] Two examples: a). In 1980 a neighbour of mine who had two first names was not very pleased when his daughter named her son after him but used only the former one of the two names and then chose another name to follow. "Since she was naming after me why didn't she name after me completely?" he said.
b) In 2007 in a party of a group of cousins one of them talked about having become a grandmother for the first time. Her son did not give his daughter the name of his mother. She said she was upset and a bit angry about it but that she would never say anything to her son: "Of course I wanted *nafna*, but I had said to him that I did not want him to shorten my name or change it in any way, either my name as it is or not at all". Another cousin commenting on this said that she was shocked, the amount of time this woman had spent on her son, doing everything for him, he had lived with her for years as an adult and the least he could do was

die within a family if no one continues carrying it but this will not lead to anything except it may be seen as a pity (*leiðinlegt*). However, many choose a name from their extended family even a few generations back. So a name that has died can also be resurrected. To name a child after somebody is to remind one of (*minna á*) a particular person and to keep a part of him or her alive through the name. Naming after dead relatives and friends also continues being common although perhaps not considered as important as before with changes in recent years and fashion becoming more important as listed above. However, it is clear that despite fashion it is still seen as very important to name after close kin and thus remember them as well as reciprocate for their affection and care.

On her blog a woman wrote about her reaction when her son named his baby son after his brother who died in an accident at the age of seventeen. When the baby was born she and her husband had told their son that there was no pressure on their behalf for him to name his son after his dead brother as they wanted the young parents to choose a name freely. But when the baby got the name of their dead son they were delighted and surprised which indicates changes in the earlier norm and even pressure of not insisting on naming after dead relatives. "Our S would be twenty three now if he had lived. We did not get the opportunity to see him grow to become an adult. Now we get another opportunity to see S grow up."[89] The grandson carrying her dead son's name is seen by the woman as representing partly the dead boy, through the name she can see him grow up again or at least imagine it is him by saying his name to a living person of their own flesh and blood.[90]

---

to give his daughter her name. She herself has three children and gave a part of her mother's name as a latter name to her older daughter but the other names were out of the blue. Her son though got her father's name. Her husband's name is the same as her paternal grandfather. So by coincidence her son is the *alnafni* of his maternal grandfather due to having the same looking patronym. The group also talked about another cousin who is named after his grandfather but who did not name any of his sons after his father, thus not producing a *alnafni*. His sister said: "my dad had been struggling to keep the name going (of his father) and then he just gives his sons some foreign sounding names." The sons are named Daníel, Viktor and Alexander. Interestingly the name of the father of the cousins came about because his mother liked it and not because it had a history within the family.

[89] http://roggur:blog.is/kristindyr/entry/364068, written 13.11.2007, downloaded 8th of Aug. 2009.

[90] See Sutton on Kalymnos who says that "people who have named children after their siblings talk about their great pain, and how it was eased by the fact that soon after the sibling's death, they could "hear" the name being spoken again" (1997:422).

Naming does not matter in terms of inheritance since all children have equal rights to inherit their parents. Naming can matter however, when giving away to grandchildren objects belonging to the grandparents. It is common that a grandchild bearing the same name as a grandparent will be given objects which belonged to that grandparent. The grandparents can give these objects away while still alive or decide who will receive which objects after their death. But there is also often an intermediary who is usually the child of the older person and the parent of the grandchild. It is often these people who decide who gets what and does so after the death of the grandparent. The objects can be small personal items of sentimental value kept as a reminder of the grandparent but it can also be objects of value, for example furniture, books and jewellery. If these objects have been in the possession of an "intermediary" they have already formed a part of an inheritance and can be given away freely without any legal restrictions. This type of giving can be referred to as being nice (*skemmtilegt, gaman*) because the child has the same name. It can also be said that the child benefits from the name (*njóta nafns*) and is therefore given the objects. It is thus really the people who decided the names in the first place who get to distribute objects according to names and relationships. In a way they can be seen as receiving in return for what they gave, they gave the name and instead get to distribute objects and thus linking them to names.

Despite legal equality the tradition of sons taking over the farm from their father does surface in relation to names. Marta's son is *alnafni* of his paternal grandfather. Her husband wanted him to take over the farm which had belonged to the grandfather before and the son also wanted to become a farmer. Marta however did not want this to happen, she was sure he would not succeed as a farmer. But her husband had his way, "he wanted it very much, well he was the *alnafni* of his grandfather." Any reservations Marta had about this were not taken into account. The son married a woman who was "impossible" who spent all their money and they ended having to sell the farm, something which Marta still regrets.

The importance of having exactly the same name does not involve the possibilities of becoming a German citizen or inherit anything as it is described by these informants. It seems to be tied in with remembering, keeping the name alive for the sake of remembering or else it will be forgotten and with it the ties to the other side of the

family. The name can call for inheritance as in the case of the daughter of Erika who lives in Sweden. When she got married to a Swedish man she wanted to marry in an Icelandic national costume and her mother had it made for her by a talented seamstress. To make the costume complete decoration and buttons made of silver are necessary. The daughter, M, had the same name as her paternal grandmother, "when M got married, she came here to Iceland and she married a Swede. Then she had gotten the silver after her grandmother, her name was M, and then a national costume was made for her." The inheritance which is quite valuable in this case goes with the name and not to someone closer to home and who might keep the objects in the region, let alone the country.

One issue to consider when choosing a name is whether it can be shortened into a nickname, which is not liked by everybody. Nicknames are very common and can even be inherited. They are a shorter version of a name and the same nickname can be used for different names.[91] A nickname is often a term of endearment, the word for nickname *gælunafn*, means name of endearment. It can also be a child's version of its own name and nicknames like Didda or Systa refers to sister. Such names are sometimes reserved for family and friends and even if used by others might get disregarded as the person becomes as adult. This is however not always so and a man in his eighties can still be known as Lilli which means the little one or Bróí referring to brother or Dídí and Dódó for women.[92] In the 1930s such nicknames, which ended in *–í* or *–ó*, became popular and were called non names (*ónöfn*) by the Icelandic writer Halldór Laxness, meaning that they were ugly (Kvaran et al., 1991). However, nicknames tend to stick and sometimes people are generally known by their nickname, their full name even unknown to some.

The Name law

People cannot use any name they please. There is a special name law that describes in detail what is and is not allowed. The law on citizenship from 1952 declared that anyone who wanted to become an Icelandic citizen had to change his/her name so it would fit into the Icelandic naming tradition and the patronymic system. This meant giving up one's own name and taking an Icelandic first name as well as a last name if the original one could not be assimilated. This was changed in the new law passed in 1996.

[91] For instance the nickname Bogga for Björg, Elínborg, Sveinbjörg etc. (Kvaran et al., 1991:51).
[92] These are actual examples.

Children were also allowed to use their mother's name instead of the father's and to have a matronym instead of a patronym (Law on names nr 45/1996).

When naming a child the name itself has to comply with the names accepted by the Name Committee. The main requirements are that the name has a history of use in Icelandic, that it has received "citizenship" in the language (*hafi öðlast þegnrétt í málinu*). The first name law were passed in 1925 and attempts had been made to change it in 1955 and 1971 but in vain. It was not until 1991[93] that they were changed but received considerable criticism and were changed again in 1996. The main critique of the law prior to 1991 was, according to a declaration by a conference of the state Lutheran church in 1986, that "names have changed a lot, old names disappeared and new ones replaced them. Some of the new names are questionable, are even ridiculous and can be a burden for those who carry them. The name is a part of the personality of each individual and everyone has close and strong personal and emotional ties with his/her name. Therefore names should be given with care. Clearly this is not always the case. There is little control and hardly any coordinated rules" (Law on names 45/1996). Before the Name Committee was formed in 1991 the priests were responsible for making sure the children would not be given names that could bother them in the future, (*vera þeim til ama*) or make them being ridiculed. The law from 1996 make priests and other leaders of congregations responsible for not giving names to children which are not allowed by the Name Committee (Law on names 45/1996).

Although the law from 1925 stated that anyone granted Icelandic citizenship had to change his or her name to an Icelandic one this was not strictly followed, and not until with the law on citizenship in 1952 which were much stricter. Since 1991 a change of name has not been mandatory for people applying for Icelandic citizenship but people had to add one Icelandic first name to their own which their children could use to make their patronym. This was changed in 1996 and since then all who are granted Icelandic citizenship can keep their names unchanged and those who have had to change them in the past are allowed to take up their old names (Law on names 45/1996).

[93] People did not necessarily follow this law to the full, as the argument following the original bill in the parliament states, and this was one of the arguments for changing the law in the first place.

The name law of 1991 clarified various issues, but also made some things stricter, although perhaps unintentionally, which called for a change in the law in 1996. On both occasions there were heated discussions in parliament, the media and among the public, discussions which resurface somewhere every time the Name Committee makes a decision on names. There are various things that come out of both the old and the new law as well as the discussions taking place in the parliament, as the bill for the 1996 law was proposed, and in the society at large, that point to the importance of names in Icelandic society and how they are linked to ideas of cultural continuity. The main ideas are all linked in one way or another except the issue of gender equality. It is safe to say that Icelandic society was simply ready in 1996 to accept the idea of children using their mother's names just as well as their father's and that surnames could be passed on through the female line as well as through the male line. In 1991 a proposition regarding this failed in parliament. The fact that kinship is bilateral and the mother's line is just as important as the father's no doubt plays a role in its general acceptance, as well as liberal views on single mothers and widespread gender equality, but this issue was also never seen as something alien to the Icelandic name system or thought to destroy it in any way. There was also and still is the tradition to use the mother's first name for children if the father is not often at home which is the case with fishermen.[94]

The only concerns the authors of the bill had were that such a change of name should not be something taken lightly or used as revenge but to be carefully considered. The rights of the child are important here and if it is not old enough it is the custodial parent who decides what name the child uses. The minister of justice can give special permission to allow a child to drop its father's name and take on for instance the mother's name instead even if the father does not agree with it, but only if it is considered beneficial for the child. If a child does not have a registered father it is also allowed to use the maternal grandfather's name instead but since the law was changed using the mother's name has become quite common and accepted.[95]

[94] This is often used with nicknames. A boy named Jón Halldórsson has his father´s name. If his mother's name is Kristín and she is called Stína the boy can be known as Nonni Stínu or Nonni the son of Stína.
[95] The parliamentarian committee discussing the bill in 1995 argued for keeping the possibility of using the grandfather's name when there was no registered father. This was based on the experience of related institutions which claimed that single mothers believed that it was not a satisfying solution for their

One of the main aims of the law in 1996 was to increase freedom of name giving and to secure equality of the citizens, both Icelanders and those who were originally from other countries. It seems to have been seen as a matter of human rights as such to allow foreigners to keep their name on becoming Icelandic citizen, both in parliament and the wider society and most, if not all, agreed with the importance of doing away with any inequality. However, it was not straight forward and although not complicated in itself, involved many other things which caused heated debates and still do. The name law of 1991 moved names as a category from the ministry of culture to the ministry of justice which indicates the change of seeing names as a part of civil rights and not a part of culture. This law also clearly outlined how names should be given and the requirements names had to fulfil. According to this law first names had to be Icelandic or have tradition of being used in Icelandic which in a way defines what is considered to be a name and in effect thus forbid the using of foreign names, irrespective of whether they could be written according to Icelandic spelling and pronunciation or not. This was thought to be too strict because it made it almost impossible for new names to come into the language.

The law of 1996 changed the definition of what kind of names was allowed, a first name had to be able to take the genitive ending or to have tradition of use in Icelandic; the name cannot break the rules of the Icelandic grammar and should be written according to rules of spelling in Icelandic unless there are other traditions for writing it differently. According to this the definition of an Icelandic name is a lot wider than before as many names can take the genitive form. Therefore there is scope for foreign names to be introduced. This idea of names being able to take the genitive form is meant to secure that new names do adapt to the rules of Icelandic, at least up to a point, and do not endanger the Icelandic system of declination. The names also have to follow the rules of pronunciation in Icelandic.[96]

The law of 1996 does not define what a name is, only what requirements are needed to suit the rules of Icelandic grammar. This has the consequences that names can

---

children to use matronyms, particularly not for their sons. They feared their sons would suffer for it, both at school and also later in life.

[96] This means that someone cannot be called Jean pronounced according to French or English because these sounds do not exist in Icelandic.

get accepted which are grammatically correct but in meaning and appearance are "silly" which remind one of the non names or *ónöfn* of the 1930s mentioned above. There is a concern that children might be given ugly or silly names and this might make their life a misery. The law states that a name should not be a burden for a child. It is interesting in itself that the law believes it to be necessary to protect children from such names. But what kind of names is being referred to? One of the things discussed in the parliamentarian committee is the meaningless row of letters which, if they take a genitive ending, have to be considered a name even if it does not have a history or tradition in Icelandic. Many Icelandic names are made up of two halves which can be taken apart and added to other halves and thus different names made both male and female.[97] This cannot be done with a meaningless row of letters. Another thing is obviously foreign names which are now allowed if they abide by the rules.

The committee acknowledges in its report that changing the rules of the first name allows for names which many believe are not desirable and who see it as being the result of allowing new names which do not have tradition in Icelandic. However, the committee believes that it is fairly dubious that the state should make strict rules in these matters although it is necessary for there to be rules so the equality of the citizens is secured. But the committee has faith in people's taste and thus believes it unlikely that they will give their children meaningless names which are "silly" or look "funny" even if it is not forbidden by the law. "Silly" names are for instance names which distort meaningful Icelandic names, eg. Skunnar instead of Gunnar and "ugly" names are ugly because of their meaning, eg. Hel (Hell) or Skessa (Troll). The report does not refer to foreign names as being silly or ugly but they surface in the discussions.

One MP was deeply shocked when he did not find a certain name on the approved name list. This name he said had been used in his region for centuries "and it is actually named in the Book of Settlements."[98] He finds it odd, "I am so conservative that I find it

[97] Arn- can be the beginning of male names like Arngrímur, Arnfinnur, Arnmundur; and female names like Arnhildur, Arnheiður. The latter half can get a new first half: Hallgrímur, Guðfinnur, Vilmundur as male names, and Gunnhildur and Ragnheiður as female names. These halves all have both history and meaning in Icelandic. Despite having the same endings it is clear to an Icelandic speaker which ones are female names and which ones are male.

[98] The Book of Settlements *Landnámabók* lists the settlers of Iceland in the 9th and 10th century, their settlements, descendents, important events and family history into the 12th century. Believed to be written in the first half of the 12th century it is found in manuscripts dating from the 13th century.

ridiculous that such a traditional Icelandic name should not be on the list." He then takes examples of other names on the list such as Betúel, Edgar, Sesar, Agða, Anglea, Anja and Bódel. All of these names are "foreign" sounding and the implications are that foreign names are being allowed when Icelandic ones are not.

Names and tradition

There are certain and strict rules on what names are allowed to be used, apart from the ones taking the genitive ending. The names are divided into old and new ones. The old ones have come into Icelandic before 1703.[99] The tradition of a name is considered broken if the name does not appear in the census of 1845 or 1910 or later. But the tradition of old names is considered to have gained a cultural status and thus the tradition has not been broken. A name gains particular cultural status, almost sacred, if it appears in widely know Icelandic Sagas as a personal name which does not break the rules of the Icelandic language system.

Young names are names that come into Icelandic after 1703 and have gained tradition if there are at least twenty Icelanders who carry the name. The smaller this group gets is balanced out by the people who carry the name being older. If there are very few who carry the name and it appears in the census of 1845 and 1910 the tradition is considered unbroken, also if no one carries the name now but it appears in the census from 1845.

It is considered very important to prevent that new names will be invented which really are non names, or that traditional names be changed so that it goes against the traditional way of writing them. However, if names already exist which break this rule they will be allowed to continue.[100] The correct names are thus ones with history and tradition and should not be changed into something different.

The law states that a girl should be given a female name and a boy a male name. It is obvious to Icelandic speakers whether an Icelandic name is female or not, but it is not so with new foreign names and thus it is up to the Name Committee to decide. Names

[99] The first census was carried out in Iceland in 1703.
[100] The name Guðmundur is thus not allowed to be changed into Guðmund, but Erling is allowed although the correct way would be to write Erlingur. Based on this Zóphanías is allowed although in pronunciation there is no difference to Sófanías.

that are traditionally male but grammatically could be female, and vice versa, cannot be given to the other sex.[101]

Although many claim that it is up to the parents to decide the name of their child and should be totally free to do so, there is another kind of distress that seems to lurk underneath. This is the fear of "silly" names; the silly names are both modern names as well as foreign ones.[102] Lists of "silly" names have circulated on the Internet and most of these names are a recent invention but there are also foreign names which have been allowed, including names like Romeo, Venus, Bambi (male) and Kristall (male).[103]

Strange names are not a recent invention and many MPs named examples from particularly the 19th century of names which no one would consider using today. But they also referred to names which have a long history and tradition within the same family and kin. As one of them said "some names were used only in certain regions. From the first name one could even see from what part of the country the person was, even if it was not rare." He takes his own father's name as an example and claims that anyone carrying that name is related to him in the 5th or 6th generation (Law 45/1996: discussion 1995: Hjörleifur Guttormsson).

The danger of surnames

As mentioned above it has been forbidden to take up a new surname since the name law of 1925.[104] However, several people did do so and were not made to change it. The name law of 1991 legalized all surnames which existed at the time in the National Registry but banned any new ones and the law of 1996 repeats that ban.

The parliamentarian committee who made the law of 1996 says in its report that it is better to educate people than ban certain names. Name is one of the most important

[101] The name Sigurður is a male name and although Sigríður behaves the same grammatically it cannot be given to a boy, thus a boy cannot be named Sue or Alice. The name Blær used to be a girl's name, it is a masculine noun with a feminine meaning, a soft breeze, and there is one Icelandic woman with this name. Now the Name Committee has decided that it is a male name and cannot be given to a girl.

[102] The silly name par excellence is no doubt Vísa Skuld meaning visa card debt which no body carries but can according to the name law.

[103] See http://vovo.blogcentral.is/sida/1997140/. 13.2.2008. Downloaded 4th of Aug 2009. "Dæmi um kjánaleg nöfn að marga mati." (Examples of silly names according to many).

[104] Law nr 54/1925, parag. 3.

parts of a person's self identity and the rights of the parents are the most important but nevertheless some naming traditions are such that they touch on important interest of the society no less than private interest and then the rights of the law maker increases. One of such issues is the patronymic naming system. Surnames are seen as dangerous to the cultural interests of Icelandic society which has the duty to protect the tradition of patronyms (and now matronyms).

The committee argues against surnames by pointing to cultural continuity. Icelanders are the only Nordic nation that has managed to protect and continue with the very ancient custom of using father's or mother's name instead of surnames. This ancient custom gives Icelanders a special position and is closely tied to their feeling for history, culture and independence which can be seen for instance in the fact that the names of people today are similar to the names of their ancestors and as they have been for centuries. These names show the unbroken continuity between Icelandic culture and language, a continuity which can hardly be found elsewhere in the world. Besides being ancient and special the Icelandic patronymic naming system has the advantage that women do not lose their names upon marrying. The Committee argues that since names are an important part of people's idea of self one of the attributes of the Icelandic patronymic naming system is to strengthen women's self image and therefore make their position better in society. All studies of women's lives and genealogy are made easier because in all documents women appear as independent individuals. It would therefore be a great and irretrievable loss if Icelanders would lose their important inheritance which the patronymic system is, they have the duty to themselves, their descendents and the world to try as hard as they can to protect this inheritance (Law 45/1996: report).

The Committee fears the increasingly growing numbers of surnames in Iceland which come into the country, particularly with children of foreign men and Icelandic women, so much that the patronymic system is seen to be in danger. It even lists many surnames which have been around for decades in Iceland as "non Icelandic." If nothing is done about this there will not be many decades before the pool of last names of Icelanders will be mainly surnames which on top of it will be mostly foreign or look quite foreign. Allowing Icelandic surnames would prevent the terrible destiny of Icelanders only having foreign sounding surnames but the fear is that if surnames are allowed they

might make patronyms disappear slowly which has been shown to be the experience in other countries (Law 45/1996: report).

This led the committee to come up with a new category of names, the middle name. By using a middle name it is possible to have the surname as a part of one's complete name and also have patronym. The middle name was thought to deal with all of the above mentioned problems, allowing people to keep surnames in the family at the same time as it would protect patronyms. With strict following of name registration there would be little danger in people using middle names as surnames. The middle names were thus thought to reinforce the Icelandic custom of patronyms and the idea of the committee was that all surnames would eventually be turned into middle names, putting an end to all surnames. There proved to be hard resistance in the society of dropping old surnames all together and they continue to be allowed. In order to resist foreign surnames Icelanders are not allowed to use the surname of their foreign spouse, but foreigners can take up the patronym of the Icelandic spouse. However, foreign parents are allowed to pass their surname on to their children. The position of a foreigner who becomes an Icelandic citizen is thus that s/he can keep his/her name as well as changing it to fit with Icelandic name rules. Both men and women can take up the patronym of their Icelandic spouse and adjust it to their gender.[105] (Law 45/1996: report).

The idea of the middle name which became a part of the new name law was criticized both in discussions in the parliament and in the media because this was thought to go against the Icelandic naming system all together. The main worry was that people would take up middle names and slowly start using them as surnames.

The minister of justice claimed there was a dispute between basic human rights and the will of keeping Icelandic traditions. There were basically two positions fighting: conservative position which fought for the protection of the language against not wanted foreign influences and liberal position which can hardly tolerate any limits to people's freedom to choose names for their children (Law 45/1996: discussion: Thorsteinn Pálsson).

[105] It was seen to be alright if a woman called herself Jónsson but it was out of the question of a man to be called Jónsdóttir. Now a man marrying an Icelandic woman can call himself Jónsson if his wife is Jónsdóttir.

The Name Committee

Since 1991 a Name Committee has been appointed by the minister of justice. It is made up of three individuals appointed by the department of philosophy, and thus basically of Icelandic, and the department of law of the University of Iceland and the Committee of the Icelandic language. The purpose of the Committee is to register all first names and middle names that are allowed according to the name law and making it public, both to the general public, as well as to all priests and other heads of congregations. It also settles disputes on names, decides on the correct spelling as well as allowing or banning new names. Appeal is not possible although people who are not happy with their verdict can complain to the Ombodsman of the parliament. The decisions of the Name Committee are made public and are all accessible on the webpage of the ministry of justice along with the list of allowed and forbidden names.[106] There is also a list of adjusted Icelandic version of several foreign names which the Committee has decided on, after being asked to by people carrying those names. The decisions of the Name Committee have been popular news since it was established and are an endless source for ridicule and outbursts of anger as can be seen in many blogs.

Renaming Germans

My elderly informants who married before the change in law in 1952 automatically became Icelandic citizens and thus did not have to change their names. Erika got married before 1952 and did not have to, "I did not need to," and she even used her German surname all her life. Another German woman in her neighbourhood did however because she married after 1952, "when Milla got married she had to change the name." The way the first name was changed depended on how different it was. The spelling was for instance changed and accents added, instead of Ursula the name was written Úrsúla, Icelandic letters put in for pronunciation, Gerda became Gerða and the endings were adjusted, instead of Brigitte the name became Brigitta. If the name was completely different from Icelandic names it meant a completely new name for the

[106] See http://www.rettarheimild.is/mannanofn

person. Kurt took up the name Kári which can be argued to be a close resemblance and Gunther became Gunnar.[107]

The surname also had to be put aside. As German women they were used to the idea of changing surnames upon marriage and taking on the name of their husband and this is what many of them did irrespective of when they got married. The patronym of Gisella's husband was Jóhannsson and she took his name. "When I got married, I met my husband so early, after two months. Then I do not have to change my name. My name is Gisella Jóhannsson but before it was Giselle Maria Müller but I sign all papers as Gisella Jóhannsson."

Some women took up the Icelandic tradition of patronyms. They used their German's father's first name, assimilated that to an Icelandic name if necessary and added daughter. They in fact made their own patronym and assimilated thus to the system. The daughter of Wilhelm became Vilhelmsdóttir and the daughter of Paul became Pálsdóttir. These women can be said to have gone far in adjusting their names and ideas of names to the Icelandic system and giving up the idea of sharing a name with their spouse. The few German men who stayed on in Iceland also took on an Icelandic patronym based on their father's German name as they became Icelandic citizens after 1952. Their Icelandic wives did not take up their name however but continued to use their own Icelandic patronym as was customary. As outlined above it was out of the question for some women to use the Icelandic tradition of patronyms as their families in Germany would not have believed they were married had they not shared a name with their husband.

Despite the law and irrespective of when they got married several women had their names changed and adjusted by others when they arrived. Some names remained thus unchanged officially but were shortened into a nickname or changed to fit Icelandic pronunciation and tradition. Margrét[108] recalled when she arrived on the farm where she was to work for the first year and her employer was there to meet her. "Then she asks me to come home and then she looks at the suitcase to know my name and my real name in

[107] When Vietnamese refugees came to Iceland in 1979, the first refugees since a group of Hungarians in 1958, they were given new Icelandic names based on resemblance of their own names.
[108] Irrespective of changes to their names I will refer to my informants by the name they use themselves now.

Germany I was called Grete. Then she says Margrét, yes, yes, I say that is my name and my name is Margarete. Yes, yes, I say that is my name because I thought Grete was so old fashioned (she laughs). Then I regretted it later because there are so many called Magga,[109] there were so many of them." She later talks of how she was called Magga and did not like it. "It was much worse being called Magga" it was worse than the old-fashioned Grete but she was herself to blame she says. She talks with joy of how her old name is being used again in her new social life with the elderly after her move from the countryside to the city. There is another Margrét in her group so she is called Gréta[110] which is also an adjustment of her name. Her German friend Helena says she always called her Margrét, but that Margrét's husband often called her Magga, so did her neighbour and her husband's sister in law. She was generally known in her community as Magga. The nickname Grete was essentially her name, although a nickname, whereas Magga was a completely new name with no reference at all to the name Margarete.

Nicknames can be terms of endearment, as said above, or shortening of a name. Hildegard is called Hildur by some although she did not have to change her name. Her employer during the first year always called her Hildi "my Hildi, my Hildi she would say." Many of my informants refer to their children using nicknames. But nicknames needed adjustments as well as shown in the case of Margrét. Hanna is another example. Her name is Marta Johanna and she did not have to change it as it also exists in Icelandic. She had always been called Hanie in Germany but once in Iceland she was told that it meant rooster in Icelandic and she could not be called that name, she would be called Hanna. She changed her name and, as she put it, "I was Hanna í Seli for 50 years" (Hanna of the farm Sel).

When people have changed their name according to the law and even taken a patronym, one would think they had assimilated to the Icelandic system. However, some names are more Icelandic than others. The names Franz, Úrsúla and Elfríður stand out and are questioned. They are not a part of the known common name pool and their unfamiliarity makes them sound foreign, the difference was even greater sixty years ago. Only those who have changed their name altogether or have names that sound "right" are

[109] Magga is a common nickname for someone named Margrét.
[110] Gréta is another common nickname for someone named Margrét.

not questioned, Kári Friðriksson and Helga Pálsdóttir are examples of Icelandic sounding and looking names. They are well known names and widely used.

After the name law was changed in 1996 my informants, along with other originally foreign citizens gained the right to change back to their original names and take up their surname again. Most of them have not done so but Gisella wants to and to use her old name along with the patronym of her husband. Keeping her husband's name as well is for her children she says as her husband is dead. "Why should I not be allowed to use my name which is Nordic when the Poles can have Polish names, Asians with their names", a point which is also heard from others, the difference between their status and circumstances as immigrants versus the immigrants of today. But Karla Jónsson does not agree with this, her name is Jónsson because her husband was Jónsson she says, she cannot take up her old German name.

(Not so) Cosmopolitan identities

The younger women have a different experience than the older ones. The law has changed and now they can keep both their first name as well as their surname if they become Icelandic citizens. The younger women have not stopped using their own surname upon marrying and some of them have not even become Icelandic citizens. The ones who have still continue to use their own names, both first name and surname.

Sylvia was going to take up the name of her husband when they got married. She did not like her own German surname and had always thought that one day she would get rid of it. She liked the patronym of her husband, Kristjánsson, but she changed her mind two weeks before they got married. "I had thought about it and thought it was corny because I had got to know this system and I thought OK, I am the daughter in law of Kristján not his son. I started to think in an Icelandic way and did not want this anymore. But it could cause problems in Germany. I remember we missed a place at the day care centre because F's[111] name is Hjaltadóttir, because her name was not on the doorbell and the letter did not arrive and I always had to be, I could not get a parcel or a letter that arrived for him unless having the marriage certificate because I could not proof that I was

[111] F is her daughter.

his wife. In the end I photocopied the certificate and had it in my wallet." She does not want to give up her name even if she marries which is in accordance with the Icelandic custom, not the German one, and she adopts this custom even while living in Germany and even if it causes her problems. She started to think in an Icelandic way and did not want this anymore as she says and of course the result is that her children will also be named according to the Icelandic naming system.

All the women, young and old, come from countries where it is customary for women to drop their surname upon marrying and use the husband's surname instead. When they marry in Iceland they all keep their surname and thus adopt the Icelandic tradition where women do not loose their name with marriage. Even if their name sounds and looks very different from an Icelandic name they adopt the custom. It might make them stand out and apart from Icelanders but in fact it makes them more assimilated, by adapting to and accepting the tradition they are doing what other women do in Iceland. Nevertheless their names do get changed but not officially. Instead it is the pronunciation that changes and the names are adjusted so they sound more Icelandic.

Sabine was asked if she was ever called Sabína.[112] "Yes always, and at first I thought that, when people were speaking English to me in the beginning and still said Sabína, then I corrected it always and said no, my name is Sabine. But immediately when I started to speak Icelandic myself then I fell into this, because it is so difficult to keep on stressing one thing differently when one speaks Icelandic because it flows. I fall into it myself saying Sabína because it fits me. (What do you think about this?) At first I was a bit offended, this is my name and I want to have this name. I corrected people but as soon as I started to speak Icelandic then I thought it so obvious and I do not find it offending." She is called Sabína in her work where there are people from various countries and she introduces herself more and more often as Sabína and she feels alright about that, "it changed for me." Her name officially is Sabine and when there have been interviews with her in the newspapers or on the radio because of her job, her name is always written and pronounced Sabine.

[112] The difference is that in German the stress falls on the second syllable where as in Icelandic it falls on the first as well as the ending has been changed.

Suzanne has the same story. She is always called Súsanna[113] but says that it does not matter because if she says her name correctly on the phone people will just say "what?" As we talked about this she said her name various times and always with the Icelandic pronunciation.

Passing names on to children

As mentioned above it was common to name the children after the grandparents or use names from the family. The tradition of naming the children after the grandparents was also known in Germany in 1949 when the elderly German women came to Iceland. Some women had children before the law on citizenship was passed in 1952 and some gave their children names from their German family. Frida gave her first born in 1951 the name of her father in law and her brother who had died in the war, his first name was Icelandic and the second one was German, Gunther. All her other children got Icelandic names but her daughter claims that all her siblings have names from the German family, all translated or the Icelandic equivalent used.

It is exactly this translation and assimilation which seems to have been more common than giving completely German names to the children, which was forbidden anyway after 1952. In some cases it was easier than others. Seeing the German name Waltraut being the equivalent of the Icelandic name Valborg takes more imagination than when names could be used without changing them. Berta gave her daughter the names of her grandmothers; the first name is after the Icelandic grandmother and the second after the German one, the name she always uses, and as it is also an Icelandic name it did not have to be changed.

Anna says some women wanted to give their parents' names to their children and it was difficult for them since it was not allowed, "but it was easy for me, my parents' names were Friðrik and Margrét." She uses the Icelandic version of the German names Friedrich and Margarete. And these are the names of her oldest children followed by two children who carry the names of her parents in law. It was difficult to figure out who was who in the beginning because of the names she says, all the men in her husband's family

[113] This is the same as in the previous footnote.

had the same names over and over again, "It was just Jón Jónsson and Jón Jónsson again and again.... Thank God my children have started christening other names." But Anna kept the tradition and named one of her sons Jón after his father and paternal grandfather. She is also very pleased that her great granddaughter carries her name.

Marta named the children she had with her Icelandic husband after her parents in law but she had a daughter before her marriage with another man in 1951 and named her after the company she worked for at the time. She says it was because the employer had helped her out. The older women thus also gave names out of the blue. But more often than not they were carefully considered. Karla had a son in 1951 before she got married and named him after the doctor of the hospital where she worked in Iceland and thought very highly of, so highly that she was reading his biography once when I visited her and not for the first time she said. The second name of her son is the name of her fiancé who was killed during World War II off the coast of Iceland and whom she claims was the reason why she came to Iceland in the first place, to be close to his grave.

Berta's eldest son got a name from the Bible because they liked the sound of it. It was the idea of one of her husband's employee. She did not like the name of her father in law and her husband did not like the version of the German name she had in mind which was after her grandmother. But the second son got the names of both grandfathers, the German name came first and exists in Icelandic although a little foreign looking, Richard, instead of the more Icelandic Ríkharður. The youngest son got the name of his father and Berta's relative who had died at an early age. Everybody in her family carrying that name had died young. They were going to change that she says, she and her husband, but it did not work. Her son died in a car accident twenty four years old. "We were going to defy (destiny), but it was not to be", she says calmly.

Names thus have a certain power which takes on various forms. But names also are a way of establishing closeness and seem to be able to hinder it as well. Frida's daughter says she is the only one of her siblings not carrying a name from the German side, instead she is named after her Icelandic grandmother. She wonders if this is the reason for her mother's unexplained outbursts of anger towards her when she was a child, "perhaps my mom was mean to me because I was not named after someone in her family." She claims that after the birth of her baby sister her mother did not notice her

anymore, she would only give attention to her baby girl and her brother who carried the name of his German grandfather. He was the one Frida loved the most and who was allowed everything, was spoilt in a way. Frida's daughter is not interested at all in her German side and in fact detests everything having to do with Germany "it is so much German something" she says in a negative tone when talking of anything related to Germany.

Tomas's daughter also sees emotional importance in her name. She is named after Icelandic relatives but she is the only one in her group of siblings that is interested in her German links and family. "It would have been better if I had been named after my German grandmother, I can feel I am related to them (the German side) unlike my sister who is named after her." The older daughter of Ingeborg thinks her mother did not dare to give her the name of her maternal grandmother because it was not Icelandic. Instead she gave her a name which was a close resemblance. Her mother later said to a German friend of hers, "I did not want them to be different from others." But her daughter wishes she had had the courage to do exactly that, "I wish she had named me after my grandmother."

The eldest daughter of Anna is named after her German grandmother. When the law on names was changed in 1996 Anna could use her German surname again and her daughter got the right to use her mother's surname. She dropped her Icelandic patronym and uses her mother's German surname instead which makes her *alnafna* of her German grandmother. She just says she did it because she wanted to and it was alright to drop her father's name "it was alright I wanted to use the other name." She could do it and wanted to be *alnafna* of her grandmother. Anna does not think much of it, "well, that is what she wanted." One of Anna's sons has also giving her surname to his children but as a middle name. Some children have taken up their mother's surname as a middle name. Gerda's daughter who was adopted by her mother's Icelandic husband now uses both her patronym and the name of her German father as a middle name.

The elderly women like Anna above do not have much to say about the taking up of German surnames but Karla has clear views on this. Her children cannot take up her German surname even if the law allows it. Her children are Icelandic and use their patronym thus they are called *dóttir* and *son*. It would not be Icelandic otherwise. Although

she has taken her husband's patronym as surname it is not Icelandic for her children to do so and to be named Jónsson or use a German surname.

The children of the elderly German women have been given names which are Icelandic and all have patronyms which fit into the Icelandic naming system. It is thus very difficult if not impossible to detect any difference between their names and the names of those who do not have mixed parentage. They have become, through the names, completely Icelandic in sound and writing of their names.

Children's names: assimilation at the private level

Talking to the younger women it becomes apparent that some changes have taken place, particularly with regard to tradition. Helga says that her children are not named after anyone in the family because it is not that way in Germany. "It was in the olden days in Germany but it is not like that anymore. I remember that my eldest sister and my eldest brother they are named after grandmother and grandfather but then it just stopped and now people just choose names out of the blue." However, there is still the idea of a *nafna,* at least on the Icelandic side. "Actually if our second child had been a girl then we would have named her after my mother in law." Her name would have been alright she says, "and then she would have had exactly the same name as her."[114] Her second child was a boy and she did not want to give him the name of either her father or her father in law and she says she did not experience any pressure to do so.

Sylvia's husband had promised his father to name his first daughter after his paternal grandmother but Sylvia said no. "There was a bit of a clash between us. H[115] had promised his dad that when he would have the first child, the first girl, he would name her after grandmother whose name is Guðríður and I refused to have a child with a name that I could not pronounce" she laughs. "He did realize this but he was still a bit offended how people took this, mainly in my family, everybody just laughed. Like everybody laughs in Germany when they hear the name Guðríður, it is just impossible to pronounce. To begin with he laughed as well but he was a bit offended."

[114] She would have been *alnafna* of her grandmother because Helga's husband is named after his maternal grandfather.
[115] Her husband.

The younger women express the need for the names, which they give their children, to be accepted both in Iceland and in Germany. Helga's two sons have a first name that can be pronounced in both languages, although her elder son Davíð is David in German, but has a second name which is Icelandic and almost impossible to pronounce for Germans. "It is a very Icelandic name. It was like this, my husband thought Örn was such a beautiful name and wanted it as the main name but I just said no, it is out of the question that he will be called Örn. Of course no one can pronounce it out there (in Germany) and then we decided to have it as a second name." When asked if they had found names that fitted German pronunciation she agrees.

Sylvia also gave names to her children that could be pronounced in both languages. The name of her first born is not from the family, asked about it she says: "it was of course very exciting because we felt it was important to find a name that fitted in with both languages, which did not clash with anything. We spent a long time looking and thinking as it could not have any special letters and should fit in with both German and Icelandic. Fjóla[116] was because it did not clash with anything. (What about the ó?) Yes, that was not supposed to be a problem, it is easy to pronounce. When I say what her name is people say oh, yes, Viola. I just thought it was cool, a bit foreign like, but I always had to say no, with Fj. She always said herself my name is Fjóla with Fj." Her two younger children are "of course absolutely secure" as she puts it as they have names that exist in both languages. "That is what we mainly thought, it should be the same. I did not want to have it like my friend who is English and has children whose names are Davíð and Stefán and are then called David and Stephen in English, I did not want that. I wanted it to be exactly the same."

Sylvia's first child was born in Germany and therefore the family anticipated problems when registering her. They wanted their daughter to have her own patronym according to Icelandic tradition. Her husband went to the town hall ready for battle while Sylvia was still in the hospital with the new born baby. But he met a nice official who just looked up the rules in a book and saw that if one parent was foreign they could register their child according to the law of that parent's country so the child was registered as Hjaltadóttir.

[116] Her daughter.

Their battle began once in Iceland. Since Sylvia has a German passport her children could have one as well but the German embassy did not want to accept the Icelandic patronym and in the German passports the children were registered with both their own patronym and the one of their father.[117] Sylvia and her husband took on the system and fought the case all the way to Berlin where it went back and forth for months. Finally they had victory and their youngest child is the first one to have a German passport with her own patronym only, something which Sylvia is very proud of. As the children of my other informants were born in Iceland this problem has not arisen and they all use their Icelandic patronyms.

Sofie adopted a daughter from China and she has a first name which goes in both Icelandic and German and a second name which is her original Chinese name.[118] It seems to be common for parents who adopt children to keep one name like a token of their origin. The first name was out of the blue she says, but inspired by a teacher she once had and liked whose name was Hanna. But she did not like the H too much and "then Anna was left which I think is very pretty and a nice name, a name which cannot be shortened, it is an international name." Her grandmother's name was also Anna but that did not influence the decision. "If my grandmother's name had been Maria then she would not have been given the name Maria but only Anna. It comes from there and then I asked my husband how it was, if she had been completely Icelandic or we had made her ourselves then her name would be Anna Margrét because Margrét is the name of the aunt of E.[119] But because she is Chinese she will get a Chinese name instead. ..... and my husband agreed. ..... It is also very important that it goes in both Icelandic and German, it has to be like that, and there would be no point in calling her Thorgerður. One simply has to take into account that she has two home countries." Although Sofie does not follow the tradition of naming after kin, her husband would have if circumstances had been different.

Luisa gave her daughter a name which was "a decisively Icelandic name" (and the boy?) "His name is Damian, yes Damian and he is dark, he looks more foreign and his

[117] This means that the oldest is called Fjóla Hjaltadóttir Kristjánsson.
[118] Children who have one foreign parent can, since the name law of 1996, have one name that is not Icelandic nor is it necessary that it can take the genitive ending. It is the same for adopted children.
[119] This woman was like a mother to E, the husband of Sofie.

name is Damian. (Is he picked on because he is dark?) No, it was so funny when we were choosing a name for him then people were so worried that he might get teased about the name but no one is teasing him." Her daughter sometimes gets teased by rhyming her name to unrelated things, "but you see there was no one teasing him." She talks about how she got the name accepted by the Name Committee since it is obviously not Icelandic. "I knew exactly what conditions I had to fulfil so I was careful not to have a name with some letters that were not Icelandic letters like c or z and also that it would be easy for people to pronounce and also it had to be able to take the genitive form. We did not even have to do anything, we went to the registry office, they were not christened, as we do not belong to a church, and announced the name in the registry office and the registry office sent it to the Name Committee. Then this name went straight to the Name Committee and then we just got an answer, it took ten days, it did not take long, then it was just done. And we did not need to do anything. (What did the family in law think?) They thought it a somewhat strange name and had to hear it and then they just learnt it and just, people know how to pronounce it correctly. Icelanders pronounce it correctly and just no one thinks it is strange." The family in law did however ask if she had named her son after her father, "they did exactly ask if this was the name of my father, but his name was K and I would not have been able to give him that name because it has a sound that Icelanders cannot pronounce."

Úlrika had a different experience from Luisa with naming her son. She followed an old tradition of naming within her husband's family to preserve it but was not allowed to have her way with the second name of her son. His name is Einar Patrekur. She liked the name Patrek and Einar comes from the family of her husband, B..., whom she has divorced. "It was always like this Einar B...son and B... Einarsson and something like hundred years back in time. The last Einar B...son got cancer when I was pregnant and it was just if it will be a boy then his name will be Einar. B.. is also a fairly rare name in Iceland. B.. was the last B.. because the others were dead and the other descendants were girls and the name did not survive so this was just the last chance to keep the name in the family. So this is why my Einar is called Einar. (Did you agree with this?) Yes, I agreed with Einar but I did not agree with the National Registry. When I wanted to christen Einar Patrek, in my home it is Patrek, I was not allowed to do that, I had to christen him

Einar Patrekur, but I never call him Einar Patrekur, he is Einar Patrek.[120] But he is written Einar Patrekur and I was a bit angry about not being allowed to control the name of my child, just the National Registry refused to register it. I do not know if it is still like this because there have been changes and now there are always new and new permissions but at that time I was not allowed to. I was also offered to change my name to an Icelandic name." Úlrika's son was born before the changes in the name law but the name Patrek is now on a list of approved names with the National Registry.

Conclusion

Names and naming are an important tradition in Iceland which stretches as far back as the settlement of the country and even further back. This firmly justifies the claim made by the state that the naming system should be protected and refers also to the one of the main themes in the claims for independence, continuity and unbroken historical tradition sealed with the Icelandic language of which names and naming are an important part, so important in fact that the civil rights of foreigners applying for an Icelandic citizenship have been sacrificed to protect it. Even if the law has changed, the opinion of the law maker is that the surname which is identified as a foreign custom should disappear in the future, the new category of the middle name was invented in order to "clean" Iceland of surnames. At the level of the state the main changes in the new name law are allowances for difference and hybrid versions of names officially, particularly so with first names. At the same time the fact that immigrant women can keep their surname upon marrying into Icelandic society does not just allow foreign names but also strengthens one of the factors of the patronymic naming system, that women's names do not change upon marrying, which is one of the things which the law believes needs protection. At the private level the first names of immigrant women are simply changed if they do not fit Icelandic requirements, irrespective of permission by the Name Committee, the pronunciation is changed so their names can be uttered and referred to in the right way according to spoken Icelandic. There is thus discrepancy between the state

[120] According to earlier name law it was not allowed to use names without the correct Icelandic endings as it was thought to erode the tradition of Icelandic names, in this case the ending was –ur for a male name. Patrekur was thus allowed and not Patrek and the spelling Patryk has been rejected by the Name Committe.

and the private level. I would argue that this is one way of accepting and assimilating women into the society, by fixing an "Icelandic" name to them new boundaries are made where they are on the inside.

Other changes that have taken place are that the immigrant women can now give their children names which come from their own country along with an Icelandic name instead of having to adjust their names completely or find Icelandic names like the older women had to do. They can thus give their parents' names to their children if they wish to do so. But the young women go out of their way to make sure the names can be used in both countries, in fact not endangering Icelandic names at all. They have also kept the tradition of naming after kin to a certain degree, if it is a long tradition which one cannot refuse like Úlrika or if naming after kin means *alnafna* like Helga. Naming after grandparents is a kind of obligation, where you give thanks to your parents for having brought you up; you reciprocate by giving your children their name. But there are not official requirements for this. They are emotional and at the private level. Mostly the young women name out of the blue in order to make their children names sound right in Icelandic while not making allowances for names alien to German. They are thus assimilating their children into a society where hybridity is not really accepted despite being legally allowed. By doing so they are making a position for their children in Icelandic social matrix and trying to get them entangled into a German matrix as well.

I have looked at the way names and naming is used to assimilate immigrant women and how the argument of historical continuity is used to justify strict rules and regulations on what names people are allowed to use in order to be Icelandic. But power from below is as much as power from above, both when the names are uttered and changed in the pronunciation as well as the social pressure materialized in the idea of "silly" names. There is thus a question whether despite legal change there have been any real changes in accepting foreign names in Iceland.

Chapter 4 – Making a home

When visiting the elderly German women for the first time I would write down the description of their home. Many of these descriptions say it was a typical Icelandic home. What that exactly meant I was not sure of until I came into a home of a German woman who had been married to a German man, "this was a German home", she said and the difference was obvious. It lacked what I saw as homeyness. There were hardly any pictures on the wall, the family pictures were half hidden in a corner and it was somehow devoid of what I expected to be there, it lacked something which could not be explained by poverty. It was just somehow too orderly. I had the same feeling when coming into the home of Hanna. I was shocked, it was not a home. It was chaos, and it did not have anything to do with the badly organized puzzles and toys or just stuff everywhere. Most of the furniture is old school furniture from the school where her husband works and it does not go together. She explained, without me asking, that having nice furniture did not matter to her. She rather wanted to have time and money to do other things. These two homes lacked what was familiar to me and what I considered proper. They were simply not Icelandic homes.

The Icelandic word for home, *heimili,* also means household and refers to a place where one lives and the home which one has made there. It is also used to refer to the running of the home, *heimilisrekstur,* and the people who live there, usually the family, *heimilisfólk*, but can include others who also might live there. *Heimili* is also used for official buildings like an old people's home, nursing home, *elliheimili, hjúkrunarheimili,* and in official speech by politicians, *heimilin í landinu,* the homes/households in the country. The word house, *hús*, refers to the structure itself, the outer shell and inner walls.

In daily speech people usually refer to being at home, *heima,* in my home, *heima hjá mér,* and going home, *fara heim.* The words *heima* and *heim* are also used when referring to other places, such as one's parents' home and Iceland in general.[121]

[121] This is crystallized in the way air stewardesses address passengers in Icelandic when landing in Iceland: "*Velkomin heim"*, welcome home. Immigrants have referred to this as giving them a special sense of belonging when they have learnt enough Icelandic to understand the phrase.

The couple living in a home are *heimilisfaðir* or the father of the home/household, and *húsmóðir,* the housewife or mother of the house, these are somewhat formal terms although *húsmóðir* is more common. There is also the term *húsbóndi,* the master of the house which can also mean boss. The latter part of the word, *bóndi,* also means farmer. As outlined in chapter 2 on kinship the farm was a fairly isolated world quite a distance away from other farms where the *húsbóndi* and *húsmóðir* were in charge and controlled their family and workers. They were not only the employers of the workers but metaphorical parents and even had parental authority over them in the old peasant society.

Kirsten Hastrup (1990) claims that the home is both public and private in Iceland. And in a way this is true. In the countryside and in villages there are no communal places to meet except the main store. While the home is very private one is nevertheless expected to invite guests into the home and provide them with food or refreshments. Although things have changed in the city it is still considered important to invite people home. A lot of the family social life, if not all, takes place in the different homes of the family members. The same goes for a lot of the social life between friends.

People are supposed to open up their home to others and to show the way it has been organized and decorated and through it they show their status. This is also done through decorations in the windows and by not closing the curtains. Others are supposed to be able to see into the flat, up to a point, but if the curtains are always drawn there will be comments, it is as if one has secrets to keep.[122] One's privacy thus in a way becomes public.

In this chapter I want to explore how the Germans made a home in Iceland. Firstly I will look at the memories they have of their first experiences of houses and homes. Having to live in the home of others touches the very being of oneself, both emotional and physical, such as privacy, personal hygiene and cleanliness. Norms relating to these things differ both culturally and temporally and can be experienced as infringement on

[122] A house on my street is referred to as the ghost house by the children in the neighbourhood because the curtains are always drawn.

one's person and body. I want to show how the memories reflect their feelings of today towards that experience and the image of the past in the "backward" countryside.

The Germans made their home in a rapidly changing society, both with regard to the physical structure of the houses as well as the available commodities to furnish a home. Although affected by import restrictions their relationship to Germany opened up other choices which enabled them to get different things for their home. Yet it is exactly this difference which underlines their position as immigrants in the society. Although immigrants might be allowed to be foreign at home (see also Garvey, 2002:152) I want to argue that the immigrant women marrying in had to make an Icelandic home. Such a home is seen to be a "proper" home into which you can invite guests and kin and care for your family in a proper way. This sort of home is based on middle class ideas similar to the ones seen in Sweden (Frykman & Löfgren, 1987; Löfgren, 1984) and not based on a nationalist ideal of an Icelandic home in the countryside.[123] The idea of the proper home is also reflected in the home of my informants today. Not only do their homes "fit" the image of what an Icelandic home of elderly people should look like, reflected in my descriptions of them in the beginning, but it is also through the objects and furniture that the story of their life is told, or at least their version. My young informants underline the changes which the society has undergone and also how important the norms relating to the home still are. Although there is freedom as to the kind of home a person might want, they experience pressures to conform to the norms. It is not quite certain what the norms are and that in a way is a source of frustration to them. I want to look, not only at the way they make their homes, but also at the way they construct their identity, or their biography, through the making of the home and the story of the home now.

The home has been seen in traditional anthropology as the domestic space within the house, the house on the other hand refers to the physical structure which has been firmly located in a particular place. The relationship between the house and the family led Lévi-Strauss to come up with the concept of "house society" giving way to studies which link kinship with the study of the home (eg. Carsten & Hughes-Jones, 1995). Another line of study has looked at how the structure of the house is reflected in the symbolic life

[123] See chapter 1 on nationalism and the importance of the home in nationalist discourse.

of its inhabitants and how the home is the site of the private as opposite of the public domain (Bourdieu, 1970; Vom Bruck, 1997).

As Blunt and Varley point out the home is a much more complex and a multi-layered concept than just a house (Blunt & Varley, 2004: 3). The house is not necessarily a home and the personal relations tied up in a home extend far beyond the house (Blunt & Dowling, 2006: 3). They go on to define a home as "a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings, and the relations between the two" (ibid: 2-3). I want to follow the idea of home as not just a place but an image, location and space (Blunt and Dowling, 2006) and by adding the historical context I want to show the house and the home as a dynamic figure and a site of mobility and change (Miller, 2001), both in a social and historical context but also a site which reflects mobility in their own life and changes in their life story. I am not concerned with the effects of transnational mobility on belonging or feeling at home, if they feel more at home in one place than another and how a place becomes a home (eg. Brah, 1996; Rapport & Dawson, 1998). It is rather the social and cultural forces which are at work when a home is made by immigrants in an Icelandic society which I am concerned with and how this is manifested materially in the home as well as how they tell their biography through the objects.

Giddens argues that self-identity is best understood in terms of an ongoing biography which by allowing active revisions achieves coherence (Garvey, 2001:56; Giddens, 1991). He claims that the inner world of a person interacts with the outer material world sorting out attributes and integrating them into a whole, forming a person's identity through the ability of keeping a particular narrative going (Giddens, 1991: 54 cited in Garvey, 2001: 56). Making and keeping a home is in the same way an ongoing project which calls for future planning and money saving, just as Garvey argues for redecoration, it "is an ongoing process of self-definition through which continuous revision is a necessary factor" (Garvey, 2001:56). The making of a home is based on an ideal which people work towards but the ideal is not fixed but fluid and shifting.

There is a class difference in the home making and different styles and taste in furniture like Gullestad points out (1992). Making and decorating the home is an ongoing project through which the family creates and recreates itself as well as its members as individuals. The home gives meaning to life as well as telling the life story of the family.

The home making is fundamentally women's work, they are aesthetic and emotional specialists, "a female hand is needed to turn the house into a home" (Gullestad, 1992: 83) even if men can be good at it. The idea of a nice home is an aesthetic one and "it is through aesthetics that a vision of a moral order is created and expressed" (ibid: 79).

This is in accordance with what Löfgren (1990) argues for Sweden, that in the latter half of the 20th century the home making has changed into an ongoing project, which despite considerable sums of money being spent on it cannot just be seen as a result of market manipulation but a site of creativity, an identity formation, that it is through redecorating, fixing and planning the home that the family is repaired and renovated.

Gullestad argues that in Norway the home serves as a key symbol, "suggesting and justifying a complex set of cultural categories, values and relations." She also claims that it is through the home and the decoration of the home that the Norwegians express themselves "as gendered human beings belonging to specific social classes and reference groups." Although the home is highly gendered it is also highly shared as a cultural symbol (Gullestad, 1993:131). I believe this is also true for Iceland.[124]

There has been an increased interest in home decoration in Iceland in the last ten to fifteen years with special magazines and television programmes as it has in Western Europe and the US (see Clarke, 2001). These obviously affect people's ideals but as Clarke argues the ideal has become an internalized vision of what others might think of one. Instead of being directly affected by the neighbours or copying them it is the internalization of the ideal which "objectifies the vision the occupants have of themselves in the eyes of the others and as such it becomes an entity and process to live up to" (Clarke, 2001:42). This is useful when looking at what the young immigrant women have to say about making a home now. Their experience shows the continuing importance of conforming. There is plenty of choice in furniture as other consumer goods and they can choose how their want their home to look like. Yet they experience pressures to conform. They also complain about the lack of visiting and never really experience the direct pressure of keeping up with the Joneses. They are thus in a similar situation as Clarke (2001) outlines for her informants. The ideal of the home has been interiorized and the

[124] See Rúdólfsdóttir (1997) on the importance of women and home in Iceland.

pressures along with it. They are really complaining about the lack of space for creativity and identity formation which the redecoration of the home offeres according to Löfgren and Gullestad.

The home in a regional and historical context

Scandinavian researchers emphasize the importance of the home and its central position in their societies. This is for instance reflected in the amount of money spent on furnishing the homes. Löfgren (1997) claims, that according to statistics, the Swedes spend more money on furnishing for the home than any other nation in Europe. Gullestad makes the same argument for Norway (1992).

The centrality of the home is a recent phenomenon according to Frykman and Löfgren (1987) who trace the history of the formation of the middle class in Sweden and how middle class values became seen as national values. Among the most important ones was how the home became the centre and a refuge from the outside world, where a man could be himself and enjoy intimacy with his family. The home was both a place of intimacy as well as a public sphere for receiving visitors but the boundaries between the two were clearly drawn with different rooms having different functions (see also Davidoff and Hall, 1995).

The home also became a place where boundaries between class, gender and age were defined. It was the role of the woman to create the home in the correct way and make it into the shelter the man could return to after a working day. Children were to be in nurseries and to stay away from their parents' bedroom and their father's study. The running of the home relied on a number of domestic servants that came from the working class. The whole idea of home making also became a moral matter and a part of civilization which the middle class saw as important for the working class to incorporate. The making of a home, order, cleanliness and the correct usage of the rooms all became things that the working class essentially lacked and had to be taught according to the middle class (Frykman & Löfgren, 1987).

This is also what happened to a large extent in Iceland although at a bit later date. Emphasis on a proper home, hygiene and nutrition in order to create a strong and healthy

nation was a part of the Icelandic nationalist discourse. Both the middle class and the working class were small but growing; and a lot of the teachings were directed not least towards the rural population which was idealized in the nationalism and the narrative of the making of Iceland. Sigríður Matthíasdóttir (2004) claims that this ideology of conservative nationalism was widespread in Icelandic society between the two wars, it saw the nation as a whole and homogenised collection of people that belonged more than anything in the countryside (ibid:125).[125]

The main advocates of this ideology however were educated people who had no intention of living anywhere but in the city. The growing class society and increased internal migration posed a threat to this ideology. The migration created a pool of female rural migrants in the towns from which domestic servants could be drawn into the homes of the middle class. At the same time the homes in the countryside had to rely more on family labour as outlined in chapter 2.

The backwardness of the countryside

In the imagination of Icelanders the nation has only recently, sometime in the 20th century, moved from a period of backwardness to modernity which is reflected in saying that "we have just emerged from the turf huts." This refers to the fact that people's houses were for centuries built of turf and stones with the inside made of wood, scarce in a country with virtually no trees. The making of a new and modern society in the 20th century involved building better houses made of more durable material, imported timber and later of concrete.

The idea of backwardness is reflected in the memories of my informants. Many of them are originally from towns and cities in Germany and were used to certain standard in housing, such as bathrooms, toilets, running water and electricity. In many cases the farms they went to did not have these facilities. Latrines were common, water had to be fetched from a nearby river and electricity came as late as 1965 on some farms. The Germans describe this experience as a shock. Going to an Icelandic farm was like going back to old times, catching the remains of the old ways of living. The difference is

[125] As Sigríður Matthíasdóttir points out there has been little or no research on the perceptions towards the Icelandic lower classes after the middle class started to be formed (ibid:141).

underlined by many saying, “it was completely different then, you cannot compare it to now.” There is a great divide between then and now which is bridged slowly with electricity, modern appliances and less physical work in the house but it is phrased as then in the olden days and now today, in the words of Frida: “There was no toilet there, there was just a latrine outside and that was the same on most farms in the olden days. Or I call it the olden days.” We were then in the olden days but we have become now, modern and better presumably. But the Germans draw the distinction of having been modern when they arrived and it is quite clear in their accounts. The Icelanders of today also talk of the backwardness of the olden days as they have moved to the position of seeing the past from afar and rank it just as backward, or even more so, than the Germans.[126]

My informants were surprised by the houses as well as the lack of facilities indoors. Helena went in the beginning to a farm made of turf and although the people were nice to her she thought it was terrible. She wondered “how people could live in such a house of turf” where although she had her own room she could hear the sound of mice in the night. There was no electricity and no running water. She demanded to go to another farm and once she was there “it was completely different....this was completely new, a timber house and everything fine.” There was running water, toilet, electricity and geothermal hot water for washing and bathing.

There was a concrete house on the farm where Frida was to work but still she was shocked when she arrived. “I was shocked, Jesus God almighty, what house is this? You should have seen it, dead, dead old, just terrible to see.” Despite the house being old it was nothing compared to the houses two other German women moved to after they got married in Frida’s community. The housing was dreadful she says, one of the women lived next door to the hens’ house with the hens walking in and out, the living room, kitchen and everything was together in one room. In the house of the other woman the people lived above and the cows were kept downstairs.[127] This was not so on Frida’s farm and she is still shocked when she talks about it, “it was just absolutely awful. ... I can tell you that, I know, I saw it with my own eyes what it was like, my God.”

[126] The reaction of Icelanders to the film Maria was that it had happened in a distant past, see Introduction.
[127] This was a common arrangement in old turf houses particularly for people of little means.

Karl was well received on the farm where he was to work and he liked it there "it was not a turf house but an old house." But there was a huge difference from the farm in East Prussia where he came from. He was used to there being tiles in the sheds for horses and cows. "Look the houses here (in Iceland) they were just shacks, they hung together on a few wooden sticks and a few corrugated iron plates on top and turf to keep the iron in place. (What did you think of it?) I thought it was somehow so back in time that one did not understand it. It was as if people had forgotten to live here or I don't know. It did not matter what it was. Houses for the sheep or even a house to live in, the old turf houses, they simply were not dwellings for human beings."

Housing in Iceland

Very few old houses or buildings of any kind have survived in Iceland due to the perishable building material used. Drift wood could be used in some areas for building but most timber for houses had to be imported (Ágústsson, 1987:322). In the latter half of the 19th century increasing number of timber houses was constructed in the growing towns, often with corrugated iron on the roof or on the entire house as protection against the rain. In the countryside the main building material was still turf, stones and wood which had been the building techniques since the Viking age and had developed in Iceland for a thousand years. A few houses were built of cut stone and just before the turn of the 20th century concrete began to be used, the material which has since been the main building material in Iceland (Ágústsson, 1998). The changes from the old style to new ones were gradual with timber and even concrete houses being insulated with turf and many of the houses built of little means in the first half of the 20th century did not last. The need for better housing was thus present on many farms despite there being a concrete house. This is echoed in the words of an Icelandic architect in 1939 who said that a new settlement had started. Iceland was like an unsettled country, everything was left to be done. Every farm had to be rebuilt completely (Baldvinsson, 1939:30).[128]

[128] This is from a book on Houses and Domesticity with articles written by architects, furniture designers and writers, an example of educating the general public about the way houses should be on the outside and inside.

The old farmhouse made of turf had one main living room, *baðstofa*, where people slept, ate and worked together. There was no privacy, except maybe for the married couple and the houses were cold, damp and difficult to keep clean, often with turf walls and floors, especially rooms not meant for living in, such as storage rooms. The new houses of timber and concrete introduced different ideas of how to use the space within the house, with separate rooms for separate functions which made privacy possible. They were also easier to keep clean and maintain. When the Germans came to Iceland the old style turf houses, and newer houses with separate rooms but made of both timber and turf or concrete and turf were still in use on some of the farms, or 12% of all the houses in the countryside in 1950 (Eiríksson, 2008:76).

Some of my informants went to very modern farms, like Berta who went to a very fine farm with a concrete house with three floors and all the amenities she was used to. María stayed on a farm where the couple ran a service for those who were travelling during the summer. The house was made of concrete and it had running water, toilet and electricity. Tómas noticed the turf houses on his way to the farm, "but I came to a modern farm and got a room just like at home, there was a bathroom and I had my private room and there was electricity, a diesel run motor, used for the fridge and like. The farm was big and he was a good farmer."

The modernization of the agriculture

The future of farming and agriculture had been a debated topic both in parliament and the wider society since before the turn of the 20th century. The migration from the countryside to the seaside towns meant less available labour force at the same time as agriculture continued being very labour intensive. But the agriculture also lacked investment for cultivating fields and ways to increase productivity with less man power, as well as for building new houses. With the Progressive Party[129] in government which sought most of its following to farmers this changed and more money was put into agriculture (Magnússon, 1993:151; *Búnaðarsamtökin*, 1988). In 1930 a special bank was established which was to finance and offer loans to farmers, not least for building new

[129] *Framsóknarflokkur*.

houses on their farms. Law on new farms, *nýbýlalög*, in 1936 and the establishment of a new institution[130] in 1946 was to enable people to move to the countryside and make a living on a farm with agriculture being the main source of income. It was meant for the making of new small farms as well as the dividing up of older bigger farms and rebuilding the countryside with new houses (*Búnaðarsamtökin*, 1988:252-254).[131] A special institution was also established in 1941 which was to provide designs for new houses. Farmers could choose from a few standard designs and later designs were made to suit each one individually. Most farmers got their house designs from this institution (ibid:493).[132]

The modernization of the agriculture started for real in the 1950s and the countryside was changed with heavy machinery, ditches dug, fields drained and new houses built. The idea was not only to modernize the agriculture and increase productivity but also to strengthen the countryside. By protecting the family run farm the industrialization of farming on a large scale had been hindered (*Íslenskur söguatlas 3*, 1993:32). The Germans caught a glimpse of the old society and then actively participated in the modernization and rapidly changing landscape of the countryside.

Karl started to work on the building of a new farm house the day after he arrived. He loaded big rocks onto a wagon pulled by horses which were used for the foundation of the house. There were no tractors or machines on the farm, only horse power used and not all the fields were properly cultivated.[133] The next year the first machines arrived to the region where he worked and a year later he got a job working on these machines. He had more than enough work, as labour force was lacking, and is still delighted by the thought "we could work as much as we wanted." He went around the region from farm to farm digging ditches and bases for new houses as well as flattening fields. Anna lived in a different part of the country but has a similar story. Her family in law and her neighbours also used horses until they bought a tractor in 1952.

[130] *Landnám ríkisins*, the Institute of State Settlement.
[131] See law nr 25/1936 and nr 35/1946.
[132] *Teiknistofa landbúnaðarins*, The Design Institute for Agriculture.
[133] This refers to the fields not having been flattened, the frost causes the forming of small mounds "thufa" which makes haymaking difficult and results in low yields.

The housing policies in Reykjavík

Reykjavík was full of migrants from the countryside who faced severe housing shortages. The depression of the 1930s had set back all state or municipal projects including building houses. This lasted until the British occupation in 1940 which only made matters worse with more demand for housing. This meant that substandard housing was used and people even built shacks to have somewhere to live. The army constructed its own houses for the soldiers, so-called portable bow huts, *braggar*. These were made available for people to live in from 1943. They were badly built in the beginning and became known for being cold and damp. Although the bow huts built by the American army were better,[134] living in bow huts was generally looked down upon but was often the only available housing for migrants and those who were worse off, people were even considered second class and could be recognized by the smell the dampness left on their clothes (Bernharðsson, 2000).

In the late 1950s Berta's parents came from Germany to visit their daughter. They had been asked to go and see a German woman living in Reykjavík by her mother. They found her living in a bow hut with her children. Berta says her father was upset by this, "if I had found you living in such conditions I would have taken you back home" he told her. Although a refugee herself she had married into a well off family in Iceland and had no problems with housing. Marta also knew of a German woman living in a bow hut and talks of this as an example of those who did not fare well in Iceland in contrast to her who had enough and reached a certain standard in life. Tómas lived for a while in a bow hut before getting a flat, "the flat was fine, well not the first one, that was a bow hut."

Despite the housing shortages building houses for the general public was slow after the World War II, there was not enough money allocated to it and the city was also governed by a political party which firmly believed in owner occupied housing.[135] The acute lack of housing was met with building many small houses and it was made easier for people to build their own houses. In the late 1950s and 1960s the building of big apartment blocks eased the housing shortage (Bernharðsson, 1998:307-323).

[134] The Americans came to Iceland in 1941 to take over from the British army which left to fight the war elsewhere.
[135] *Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn*, Independence Party.

There was thus a difference in the availability of finance for the rebuilding of the countryside and in the capital. The population increase of Reykjavík led to rapid changes in its landscape as houses were built in new areas where there had been fields and pasture before. At the same time as a new republic was founded ideologically a new society had to be built materially, both houses to live in and buildings for institutions and companies. The society was in rapid transition, materially and ideologically and the Germans who lived in towns participated and lived this transition, living in bow huts, lacking good housing and building their own.

The Interior

In her study of interior decoration and design of Icelandic homes between 1918 and 1930 Arndís S. Árnadóttir (2006) claims that changes in the interior came a lot later to Iceland than to Scandinavia and the rest of Europe. One of the aspects of educating and modernizing the general public was the campaign for better and cleaner housing which was also meant to be prettier and more practical. Ideas about the interior of these same houses, along the lines of the conservative nationalism mentioned above, were also put forward, mainly that homes in the countryside were different than the homes in the towns. Although the drawing room for visitors with various decorative objects was an accepted part of the upper and middle class life in the towns, it was seen to be non Icelandic in the countryside by various critics. They wanted such a room to be used daily, like the main room in the old houses had been, *baðstofa,* and to look more like an Icelandic farm should (Árnadóttir, 2006:61-2). It was thus not just the impracticality of not using the drawing room daily as the working class had been criticized for in Scandinavia (Frykman & Löfgren, 1987) but also that it did not look like the proper Icelandic farm room. Following the middle class model of the drawing room the outcome on the farms was seen by some to be lacking in taste, crystallizing the underlying conflict between foreign influence and the advocates of national and cultural heritage whose policy it was to make the homes more "Icelandic" (Árnadóttir, 2006:57). In a book on Houses and Domesticity published in 1939 an Icelandic architect claims that with the disappearance of the old turf houses the links between the past and the present had been torn and people's taste and opinions had gotten confused. Therefore the farmers had

wanted houses which did not suit the rural and farming life and had constructed houses like the ones in the towns (Baldvinsson, 1930:30).

In 1928 a competition was organized in furniture design for more national or "Icelandic" style to make the homes better. Very few entered (only three) and there was no demand for the ones which were advertized for production. Instead the people of the countryside as well as the towns continued to buy imported furniture or domestic production in the same style (Árnadóttir, 2006:61).

Arndís S. Árnadóttir also shows, following Baudrillard and his theory on the system of objects, that the dining room gained a particular status in the towns and that there was domestic production of dinner tables and chairs along with various decorative tables with different functions to be used in the dining and drawing room by the 1920s. There was also local production of bedroom furniture, matrimonial beds and wardrobe in the same style.

Furniture had also been imported during the first half of the 20th century but in 1947 worsening trade balance caused restrictions on foreign currency and made imports difficult. There was general lack of goods, unemployment and decreasing national production. As a result severe restrictions on imports was introduced and for the most of the 1950s there was little import of household goods as other things were considered more important. The domestic goods that were imported were expensive. This continued until the 1960s and then gradually the restrictions were lifted. After that and more noticeably when the free trade agreement with Europe (EFTA) came into force in 1970 the domestic production had to compete with cheaper foreign goods and gradually a lot of local production lost in that battle. The local production of carpets and textiles for the furniture manufactured in Iceland also suffered the same fate as well as most of the clothing and shoe industry (Bernharðsson, 1998).

The import of various household goods such as fridges and cookers really started after the World War II but there was difference between town and countryside when it came to electrical appliances as there was no electricity in many rural areas so the appliances could not be used. There was local production of cookers and had been since before the war and *Rafha* cookers were found in multitude of Icelandic homes.

The fashion in furniture in the early 1950s was antique like and heavy (sometimes referred to as English style) and people wanted to have a sofa and two to three chairs or a settee, standing lamp, polished coffee table and a carpet to be able to invite guests into the drawing room (Bernharðsson, 1998:115). As the drawing and dining room became one (Madigan & Munro, 1999) the different functions was underlined by arranging the furniture in such a way as to make that very distinction. In the mid and late 1950s lighter furniture became more popular. It was produced in Iceland following Danish ideas and designs (Bernharðsson, 1998:118) and in line with the Scandinavian design of light furniture (Löfgren, 1984) although most of it was teak and not pine. The manufacturer and furniture shop *Víðir* was a leading brand name producing furniture for the living room and the bedroom. Generally people had to pay for furniture in cash and paying in instalments only became a reality in the 1960s (Bernharðsson, 1998:122). This gives the necessary context for the way the immigrant women made their own homes.

Coming into another home

An historian who interviewed many of the elderly German women some years ago told me they had all said the same thing to him when asked about first arriving in Iceland, "oh my god the dirt everywhere."[136] The idea of lack of cleanliness and hygiene goes with the idea of backwardness mentioned above as well as the project of nation building and cultural reform (Burke, 1996 in Shove, 2003; see also Shove, 2003 and Drazin, 2002).

The image of a German woman sweeping the floor of an old style *baðstofa* which appeared in a magazine in 1950 is along these lines. The drawing shows a modern dressed woman on high heels shovelling out dirt in a wooden wheel barrow with a dog underneath the bed, a symbol of lack of hygiene at the time.[137] The text which appeared along with it says that the Germans who ended up in homes that were worse or "not as good"[138] complained about the lack of cleanliness, particularly on farms where there were

[136] Eiríksson, personal communication.
[137] Dogs spread a hydatid disease and although having been eradicated at the time, having them indoors on a farm was seen as very unhygienic.
[138] *Lakari*.

no women.[139] This "not as good" is a soft way of saying worse in economic, social and cultural matters. However, cleaning and hygiene do not always seem to mean the same thing for all of the women. Karólína complains about not understanding the Icelandic way of cleaning the whole house before Christmas like she had to do the first year. She was used to spring cleaning and then to paint or put chalk on the walls and not to wash them entirely like she had to do in the home where she worked. In her mind it was old fashioned to clean everything instead of painting, but it was not the cleaning or the lack of cleanliness which was the issue. Cleanliness was thus not just about hygiene, it could draw social boundaries (Douglas, 1984/1966) and it "had social power because of the moral implications and therefore could be a standard of judgement (Bushman & Bushman, 1988:1228 cited in Shove, 2003:100).

Cleanliness was one of the things needed for the project of nation building and was put forward through the home economics schools and the most influential cookery book published in the late 19th century.[140] An Icelandic woman, the same age as my elderly informants and who had been to a home economics school, had the same cleaning routines as she was used to from her home on a well to do farm. On Saturdays the whole house was cleaned from top to bottom. "It was of course a lot of work because we did not have vacuum cleaners by then" she says of the time when the Germans arrived.

The amount of cleaning is what many remember, not the lack of cleanliness. María had to do everything, "I was of course the maid and I had to clean everything." So was Marta. When she arrived on the farm the first job she got was to clean the entire house. "The housewife waited with all the spring cleaning until the domestic worker arrived. And I am not going to describe what it was like having to clean everything. The kitchen was the worst because the house was heated with coal and when the cooker was opened to add coal then there was always a cloud of soot and everything was black above. And the ceiling was washed with salmiak. Do not ask what my hands looked like and my eyes, my eyes hurt so much. She said I had to wash it with salmiak you cannot get it off otherwise because the soot gets stuck on the ceiling. And then of course all the cupboards had to be cleaned and everything tidied upstairs. The entire month of June was

[139] The picture first appeared in the magazine *Spegillinn* 1950 (Eiríksson, 2008:99).
[140] See chapter 5 on food and memory.

used for cleaning. The haymaking had not started nor the shearing of the sheep. She waited with the task" (for Marta to arrive). It is the amount of work and the difficulty not least of having to do most of it alone which sticks out. The lack of bathroom also affected her through the cleaning. On the farm there was an old blind man who used a chamberpot which he insisted on empting himself, and on his way from his bedroom he had to walk through the living room with it, spilling some and "I had to clean it.... But it is an experience to end up in circumstances like these. I have never seen anything like it again. Look, there it was unique. In the eyes of a foreigner of course who is used to a big city to go into something like this, the changes are extreme, not just the weather but just everything, the food and everything." Marta later on her own farm had to deal with her old father in law who lived with them. She had curtains in the house with "lovely blue corn flowers" printed on them which she had brought from Germany. Her father in law blew his nose into them after using snuff. The horror with which she recalls the behaviour of these two men is in line with her memories of being in a situation out of her control. She could not set any boundaries and even if she could, like in her own home, her father in law invaded them. This is also in line with the story she tells of her life, it was her fate and there was nothing she could do about it.

Anna on the other hand has another story which is based on "I did not have to work more than others. I was just one of them." In Anna's memory the farm she worked on for the first year was just a homely warm home, an old house but a clean one. The farmhouse where she stayed was in many ways typical of the farms of the period, made of concrete. "On the ground floor there was the kitchen, the laundry room and a big storage. There was also the entrance to the cow shed which was attached[141] and the pantry. Upstairs there was a living room and three bedrooms one of them was later changed into a bathroom. There was no bathroom because there was no running water, but just a bathing tub in the laundry room. It was like that in many places in those days. Later when their son got married they built a bedroom and a living room on top of the cow shed. In the attic there was a storage room. ....They showed me the whole house right away and it was like coming into another world. I was not raised in a big city but there was electricity and running water and

[141] Even if it was so in this case it was not typical for the cow shed to be attached to farm houses not made of turf.

cleaning facilities (for bathing and toilet). To come there was like coming to the other side of the moon, no running water. ...On the farm there was a latrine apart in the cow shed and everything and that was no problem as such. ... She[142] showed it to me immediately and I knew I could go there....Then one thought, oh well it is only for a year. It was like this in the countryside and the water was fetched to the river. ....And that was not all, there was also apart beside it a bowl of water, soap and a coarse towel and a jug so one could wash one's hand. This was perhaps unique in those days. My boss had of course been in Copenhagen and like, so the hygiene there was quite good considering." The cleaning facilities were a lot better for Anna than for her friend despite the change. "Like I said it was a big change and it was even worse for Inge because she was born and raised in Berlin." Her friend Inge had gone to another farm where there was only a single farmer and there were no bathroom or toilet facilities. "Inge could not understand that there was no water toilet there, no running water." They had decided to laugh at everything, "and I think it saved us because the change was so great that I really doubt that we would have been able to tolerate it if we would not have been able to laugh at it." In her account the cleanliness on the farm and of her boss as well as the knowledge of her boss is the main thing for Anna, she was lucky in every aspect, despite the lack of running water and toilet, the latrine she had to use was cleaner than what others had to use. She wants to portray a very positive image, not least of her employers, but she is nevertheless still shocked at the lack of cleaning facilities. But she wants to give the image of her as accepting and able to cope in difficult circumstances, she survived the war and she could survive this new and strange life. Even if it was tough on her it was more difficult for others.

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter Karl described the old houses of turf as not fit as human dwellings but he liked the farm house he himself stayed in, "it was not a turf house but an old house. I got this fine room in the attic and everything was so, I just thought that everything was sort of just romantic, nice and homelike, particularly homelike." He was well received and has fond memories of staying on the farm, people were nice to him. His description is a reminder of the sharp contrast in housing, particularly in the countryside between the better off and those worse off.

[142] Her boss.

The difference was even clearer to Berta. She came from a middle class family in Germany "where there was everything." The farm she stayed on for the first year was extraordinary and she counts herself lucky to have worked on such a good farm and to have come into such an elegant home. "It was an exemplary farm. It was to show how a farm should look like. This was a very unusual home, there was even a window made of ebony which the Danish king gave the couple, black, a very beautiful window." There were three fine living rooms which were all filled with Danish furniture.[143] "But downstairs was just of course sort of ordinary countryside home and in my room there was just one bed and no wardrobe I think." However, this unusual farm was not so different from what she was used to from her grandmother's house in Germany. "Then Icelanders were poor in general. I was just so lucky to go to such an elegant home." And it was a very splendid home, "it was just like here with furniture like here. ....It was a grand home, a grand farm." The home on the farm was so fine that it resembled her home today as well as her grandmother's home of the past.

The big difference was with some of the neighbouring farms. She often visited her German friend who worked nearby. "That was completely different"... but it was also "ordinary, normal, very same as the rest of the other farms, they were just ordinary poor people. ...It was a poor home like homes in the countryside were. A relative of J[144] lived there in the countryside, I felt like coming into a doll's house, the living room was tiny, and wallpaper on (the walls) came off in parts, very few furniture, there was just poverty everywhere, there was nothing, some places earth floor."

Establishing a home

Once the elderly women got engaged most of them moved in with their husband to be. The location of the home they made in the beginning depended on the position of the husband. If he was a farmer's son who was going to take over from his parents or a farmer himself, the couple did not take over the entire home until the parents in law were too old to run it or had died. As mentioned above the Germans participated in the making of the new rural communities of the 1950s, building new houses and making new farms.

[143] Danish furniture refers to antique style furniture.
[144] Her husband.

But until they had either their own house or complete control over the home they had to live in small and restricted space controlled by others, usually the mother in law. The couples started off like an engagement family[145] by getting a room for themselves in the house of the parents in law and stayed there until more rooms or a flat was available, or a new house was built. The stay in the room varied and could take from several months up to years with usually a child or two having been born before they moved into a bigger place. The couples who moved to towns also started off living with the parents in law provided they had a place to offer.

Although living in a small room the rest of the house was also the home of the young couple and they cooked and ate together with the parents in law. Once they got a bigger space, two rooms or a flat, they formed another and a separate household, cooked and ate separately. They also made a living room to receive guests and this underlined their separateness and independence from the parents in law, the making of a new home. The furniture came little by little for the home. They all started with beds, things for the kitchen, a table and chairs. Bedrooms, kitchen and a bit of a living room in this order, are the rooms which got the most attention. Many got furniture from neighbours and relatives in the beginning and then later with a better financial status new things were bought, a settee, a coffee table and a buffet for the living room along with a dinner table and chairs.

Making a home in the countryside

When Anna got engaged to her future husband she moved to his parents' farm and they started living together in a small room until they had their first child. "The first year we were in one room in the home of my father in law and after F[146] was born we got two rooms in the basement which were next to each other and were used for storage and they were decorated as rooms. We ate of course, were a part of my mother in law's home." Anna and her husband were a part of his parents' household until they got a space big enough to be divided up into different functions. They ate in the beginning with the parents in law but Anna soon started to cook for her family once they had moved into bigger rooms in the basement although she had to do the baking upstairs in the kitchen of

[145] See chapter 2 on the Icelandic domestic cycle.
[146] Her first child.

her mother in law as there was no oven downstairs. They got married two months after Anna moved in so it was not the marriage that made the difference to the establishment of a separate household but the possibility of cooking and eating separately, having a separate household also meant making her own home.

The two rooms had different functions. The smaller room was a nursery and the bigger room was a bedroom, living room and a kitchen although "it cannot be said to have been a living room, one did not see much difference." They had beds, chest of drawers, wardrobe, a cradle for the new born baby and a small kitchen with a table and chairs. They had bought the beds and her husband had made a few things himself because he was a talented carpenter although not qualified as such.

They decided to become farmers themselves and started to build a house four years later on one third of the farm land belonging to the parents in law which they got as a part of the inheritance of her husband. "Then we got or the parents in law handed over one third of uncultivated land of the farm because we needed to have land to be able to build and establish a farm.... In 1954 we started building. We had thirty sheep, three children and then just the willpower to become independent. Then we moved into the house in 1955 in the autumn." The husband and two of his friends, young men who were also building a family house for themselves, worked together on the building of the houses.

They got a loan for the house and the farm on the basis of it being a new farm and got the design from the Design Institute for Agriculture.[147] Her husband could choose from a few housing designs but she was busy doing other things, "I was having the children of course," so she does not remember what they were like, "but we probably discussed it, like we did all things." The house was two floors, downstairs there was the kitchen, hall, bathroom, laundry and pantry, bedroom of the married couple, dining room and a living room. Upstairs were the bedrooms of the children but in the beginning they slept in the living room as the upstairs floor was not ready. It took time to build the house and not everything was ready in the beginning.

Moving into her own house was a great change for Anna. "I was like a queen to get into my own house; I could close the door after me and everything." Being able to

[147] *Teiknistofa landbúnaðarins*.

close the door of her own home meant she could protect her privacy and control her domestic space. She does not talk of the relationship she had with her mother and sister in law when she was living with them, "it was alright" she says but her neighbour and a close friend of her husband maintains it was hard, "it was difficult for her living there with them, I think so."

Anna and her husband had very few belongings to begin with. "This was very hard; the living rooms were empty to begin with. We had the beds, the matrimonial bed and the beds for the children and a table and a wardrobe made by B[148].... That was enough to keep the linen and clothes. Divan which was very popular in those days. Just a table and then chairs, one can say it was the most necessary things." The necessary things to make a home were furniture of the bedrooms and the kitchen, the possibility of sleeping and eating together, as well as a wardrobe to maintain order of clothes and linen. These things were however not enough as they were in fact only "the most necessary things." In order to make a home other things were needed which they got little by little.

Anna laughs at the thought of having felt like a queen since they had nothing but "the necessary things" but it was the slow making of the home which made them happy, unlike she says the young people of today who just demand to get everything right away. An example she mentions on several occasions is the kitchen. Her husband made a fitted kitchen which was only meant to be temporary but lasted thirteen years. They could not afford a new kitchen until then and since it lasted this long it was fine. The building and financing of the farm came first and all the money went into cultivating the land, building the house and houses for the animals so an old kitchen was the least of their worries. Furniture which was not made by the husband only came a lot later. "Then one did not make so much demands like one does now, one had to make sure not to cross the line (financially).... There were so many other things that had to be done..... We were not bothered although the living rooms were empty at first....We were very happy, I remember when we could buy, our first settee was not very much like, very simple, and the first coffee table and the first big cupboard. One got so happy with each item it gave one a special joy." The slow making of their own home is what made them happy, much more so than getting everything right away. Making a living room took time and the

[148] Her husband.

furniture needed to make such a room was a settee, a coffee table and a big cupboard which made the room complete and allowed them to receive visitors. When they discovered a furniture shop in a nearby town which accepted the wool of their sheep as payment[149] they started getting more items and every item made them particularly happy because they only got them very slowly.

Frida also made a home in the countryside as she continued the farming on the farm of her parents in law and lived for many years in their house. She says she was a bit scared when she saw the old house on the farm where she was to work. There was no bathroom although there was running water and the latrine was in the cowshed. There was no electricity, all the washing was done by hand and the laundry was rinsed in the nearby river. The inside was alright she says and for the first year she worked as a domestic servant for her future brother in law who lived with his own family in a flat upstairs. A year later she got married to the son who was to take over the farm. The family had lived there for various generations and her husband had been told by his parents that he was meant to take over the farm even if he did not want to, "he wanted to become a carpenter but he was not allowed to."

After the marriage Frida and her husband started living in a small room in the home of the parents in law. "We were downstairs in one small bedroom just in the beginning, three years. Then the oldest child was born. It was a bit cramped." Her brother in law moved a few years later with his family to another farm which his father had let him have and Frida and her husband moved upstairs. It was a small flat with a living room, two bedrooms, one big and another small one and a kitchen. There was no bathroom at the time but they started putting one in downstairs. The flat was very small as they had two children by the time they moved upstairs. A bit later on they got an extra living room downstairs which was much better says Frida because the one they had was so small. But the telephone was also in the living room and that was a nuisance.

When her father in law died eleven years later they moved downstairs and into his home. She had had seven children by then while still living upstairs. Her father in law had continued living in the main flat after the death of his wife nine years earlier and

[149] They sold all the meat and wool to a co-operative like all farmers did at the time. This shop was however not a part of that co-operative.

although he sometimes had a housekeeper Frida often went downstairs to look after him, cook for him, clean and provide for his guests. After the death of her father in law they had the whole house for themselves and there was plenty of space. “Then we moved downstairs and changed everything and then there was space upstairs and the kids could sleep there.” They redecorated the old house and also made it more spacious by removing walls. But it was still the old house Frida had come to in the beginning. Her father in law had been in charge of financial matters of the farm although his son had taken over as a farmer and he had not allowed them to take any loans for building new houses. After his death they built a new house. “We were not allowed to do anything while my father in law was alive. It was not allowed to be in debt..... But when he was gone we started building the cow shed and the barn, I guess we started building in ´87 the new house and moved in 1989, then my husband turned seventy and we moved in before celebrating his birthday.” The house they built was big with four bedrooms upstairs and a bathroom and a hall, and downstairs a living room, dining room and a big kitchen, laundry and pantry. It is a big house and her son and his wife who were taking over the farm were also living there at the time they moved in. Five years later they moved out and into a small house which their sons had built for them on the farm. Frida and her daughter in law did not get along. They lived there for a while and then moved to the city into a flat for the elderly where there are various facilities and an organized social life.

When Frida was making her home she did not need to buy many things as she and her husband received most things from relatives and friends. “You know what? I am telling you that for many years we did not buy a single item for the flat upstairs. We got everything given for here and there. Yes, the wardrobe and the beds were gifts. The cradle was from my brother in law.” They also got the matrimonial bed, divan, a couch, chairs and a table for the living room. Her parents in law gave them furniture, her sister in law, other relatives, neighbours and friends. When they moved downstairs they lacked furniture for the whole house as it was a much bigger space than what they had before. They had been given a settee and an old buffet and bought four chairs for the table which was an antique piece that had been in the home for a long time. There were also other things they could use from the parents in law, “we had this and that or my parents in law had everything downstairs.” Frida really moved into the home of her parents in law and

took it over and there were not so many things she needed to buy. Some things needed to be modernized like the kitchen and her brother in law made things for it, a table and a bench. But in reality it is only recently that Frida has started to buy furniture for her house. "The first table we bought, that was twelve years ago, this table right here for his 70th birthday then we moved into the new house and then I also bought the cupboard for the living room. We did not have a cupboard like that before." Frida bought new things for her new house for instance for the kitchen, a new cupboard for the living room, and when she moved from the farm house into the smaller house she bought a new settee and a new bed. Since she moved into the flat she has bought a new settee, a coffee table and a new bed. The older furniture went to her children and grandchildren and some were left in the farmhouse. "Do you not think the kids got some of it? Yes my dear, yes yes yes.... And the bed is still down there (in the farmhouse), the last bed, the bed we were in before moving."

Helena moved into the home of her future parents in law after working on another farm for a year. She got married in September in 1950 and as a wedding present got three cows from the parents in law. This was the start of their farming, but they continued living in the home of the parents in law, until moving into their own new house which they built. They got a few sheep from a neighbour and with the cows and the sheep established themselves as farmers on half the land of the farm of the parents in law. They started in one room in the house of the parents in law but it was very crowded with her eleven year old son who had come from Germany and a new baby. When they moved into the new house the relatives of her husband gave them a lot of furniture. He had a big family and all the siblings came with items for the house, furniture, carpets and curtains and things for the kitchen. Her sister in law brought a lamp, chairs and a table which had been used in a summer house, the siblings and half siblings of her husband gave them pots and pans for the kitchen, the parents in law gave a coal cooker and her former employer an oil lamp as there was no electricity until 1958. Other furniture came little by little. She got a settee as a gift when she turned forty from the family in law and still has it. She was also given a chair and a cupboard one Christmas. She has a cupboard with glass shelves which her brother in law made and gave them. Her sister in law brought carpets and curtains for the house and in general the home seems to have been put

together in the same way as Frida's, with gifts of old and new things from relatives, friends and neighbours. Helena bought some extra sofa bed though for all the visitors that came in the summer.

Making a home in the countryside was in a way for Frida and Helena a strengthening of kinship ties materialized through the furniture they received. The home in the countryside, the farm, was also a centre for the extended family as already outlined in chapter 2 and it was important to be able to fulfil the obligations of receiving kin and other guests.[150] It also reflects their life story. Anna often mentions how lucky she was in every respect and how happy she was with her husband. They bought the furniture together and worked together at making the home. Even if her husband had to work a lot away from the farm it is the togetherness she centres on. The making of the home is not only cooperation of the couple but also a shared cultural symbol like Gullestad argues (Gullestad, 1993:131). The cultural values reflected in the memory home making of Anna are thrift and not crossing the financial boundaries, values which she believes have all but disappeared in the modern society. Similar issues surface also with Helena and Frida but their accounts centre on the kin relationships. Their homes were not made through cooperation with their husbands or at least they never talk of it. Their home was the result of an extended family putting together their resources to make a home for a new couple. The values of helping your family and working together are the values which both of them view with a certain nostalgia. But the importance of conforming to social norms is also important and that only becomes visible when different circumstances surface.

Bringing things from Germany

As foreigners the German women did not bring any property like land into the marriage. But they were given and inherited objects like furniture from their parents and family in Germany or had already things there which they could bring and use to establish their new home. They were all used to a kind of dowry and most had started a collection of towels and linen in their bottom drawer while they lived in Germany.

[150] See chapter 6 on receiving guests.

Wedding presents like big pieces of furniture were also common. The war changed all this and some like Erika lost everything when their house was destroyed. The refugees from the East had to leave all this behind when they fled along with all the furniture of the family, some of which they had been told they would get later. In this way the position of the refugee women and others who were not refugees is different. However, the main difference in their position once in Iceland is the economic status of the family they marry into and whether they live in the countryside or the towns. This becomes evident in the beginning when they are making their home.

Berta was a refugee who had nothing when she came and she did not get any furniture from her parents as they had no money when she got married. "They could not do so, not follow the German tradition. It is a German tradition to give the entire dining room pieces. My mother got fitted kitchen and a cupboard and everything from her parents, but there was nothing, there was no money." Her grandmother had collected bed linen to give her when she would get married but everything had to be left behind. "The only thing they took when they fled my mother and grandmother was the fabric for my confirmation dress." Berta did not see her mother until three years later and never used the fabric.

Others who lived in and close to Lübeck could bring their belongings to Iceland once they had decided to get married. Many of my informants went to Germany after becoming engaged or married to visit their parents and brought back their belongings and things for the home. Helena had cups and plates she brought back, a collection of things she had received as presents at Christmas and birthdays from friends and relatives. There was for instance what she calls *sammeltassen,*[151] cups and saucers which go together but do not necessarily have the same pattern and were given to her one at a time. Many of my informants had this kind of *sammeltassen* which they have either given away or still store in a glass cupboard in their living room. Gisella also has such cups. "These cups are from Germany in the olden days when I was at school and my friend would come on my birthday. This is a saucer and a cake dish and then she would fill it with confectionary and with a bow, these were gifts. Yes this is since I was a kid at school." She had a big trunk in Germany full of various things for the home, dinner service, coffee service,

[151] German: cups that go together.

linen, silver ware and towels and brought it to Iceland in 1952. Erika also had *sammeltassen*, "When I got married then it was customary in Germany that the family always gives this *sammeltassen* or small plates and things (cups and saucers) and it was twelve pieces. I took it with me to Iceland and it all got here unbroken but then I gave it to my daughter when she graduated as a doctor, then I gave it to her." Helena also had a kind of dowry, friends from school and relatives gave her presents at Christmas and birthdays which were destined for her future life as a housewife such as towels and linen. She had enough and brought it all along with her on the first trip to Germany in big wooden boxes. She still has many of these things but many of the fine glasses she had were destroyed in a strong earthquake a few years ago.

There is, however, a difference between the ones who bring small objects like cups and maybe towels back with them and those who had large pieces of furniture to make a home. The difference becomes clear with Olga and Ilse. Olga had been married before and had all the furniture necessary for a household, a matrimonial bed, wardrobe, dining table and chairs and a buffet. She also had towels, linen and table cloths. She had collected some of this before but mostly they were things she had bought for her first home. She had them sent to Iceland once she had decided to marry. They became a bit of a wonder in the neighbourhood and aroused interest and questions about where she had gotten them and what wood they were made of. People came to visit to admire the furniture according to her daughter. There was particularly a big buffet in the living room which drew people's attention; it was made out of wood which people had not seen before. They were also surprised by the fact that this woman who came from the war ridden area had all these things, as the group of Germans was very much pictured as refugees who had lost everything in the Icelandic media at the time.[152] "They were surprised at how much I had. This was unknown in the countryside, silver. Many things were broken after the move. That was painful." Olga's neighbours were not used to this kind of furniture except on extraordinary farms like the one Berta came to as mentioned above. Olga married into a fairly well off family compared to other farming families in the region and lived on a big and good farm. She added to the reputation of her family in law and the farm by making the home so fine and has many certificates in the form of a

[152] See eg. *Morgunblaðið* 10th of June 1949.

wooden or porcelain plaques on the wall in the living room to show how well she and her husband have managed the farm and been outstanding in the running of it in the community and the region.

Ilse had similar experience with the furniture and the surprise of the neighbours. She was an only child of a well off middle class family and got quite a lot of furniture from her parents that she brought to Iceland, such as a buffet, a piano, a dining table and chairs. This also aroused great curiosity in the community and her neighbours came for a visit to see the furniture even if not saying so, according to her daughter. The buffet was big and dominating in the small farm house and is now in the home of her daughter, used to keep some of the *sammeltassen* she got from her mother. However, the status of Ilse's husband was not high in the community and they were not financially well off. So although she herself was highly regarded by her neighbours her home did not get similar status like Olga's.

The curiosity of the neighbours underlines how different their homes were from what others had. This sort of furniture, common in middle class homes in towns, could only be found on a few well off farms, like the exemplary farm Berta went to, a farm to show how farms should look like. The neighbours did not have furniture of this kind and thus both Olga and Ilse went beyond the norms regarding making homes in the countryside, they were showing off.

These norms included not wasting money, and not spending too much on furniture, again thrift like for Anna. This was the experience of Erika with her husband who did not want to spend money on furniture or think it necessary. "He somehow totally lacked, or he did just not see" the need to buy furniture or domestic appliances, he was conservative and did not have it in himself to buy things like a fridge. But he was like the other men in the communtity according to Erika and did not want to waste money. Erika did not get any dowry or collected bed linen and towels when she got married, as both her mother's and father's side of the family had lost everything in the war. There was not much furniture on the farm of her husband when she arrived compared to what she was used to, "there was nothing there." She inherited an antique buffet from her paternal grandfather in Germany which had been in the family for long and that changed the home for the better, "then there was furniture in the home." Even if she only acquired it various

years after her marriage she still sees it as the only real piece of furniture she had. It was only later on in her life when she started working and earning her own money that she could start to buy furniture for the home and the first thing she bought was a fridge.

Making a home in a town

Making a home in a town differed in many respects from the countryside mainly because of amenities like sewage and electricity making electric appliances possible. Even if a couple started living in the home of the parents in law they did not take it over with time but moved to a separate flat or house. Contrary to Anna who had "nothing" in the countryside Berta had "everything" in the town.

Berta moved to her husband to be and into the house of his parents in the town of X in June 1950 and they got married in November the same year. They started living together in a small room in the house of her parents in law and stayed there for three months. Shortly afterwards a flat was made for them in the basement and later they built their own house. Her husband was a carpenter and worked in the carpentry company of his parents which they later took over. The parents in law were fairly well off and there was nothing lacking in the house, "I just felt like a queen here when I got married, I married into a well off family." She had everything for the home, "when I started to make my home I had everything. It was a complete home." Her husband made many things like the matrimonial bed, bedside tables and a dressing table which her parents in law paid for and gave them as a wedding present. She still has these items in her bedroom. She also got wedding presents like silver forks, teaspoons, cake knifes and chandeliers for the living room. Her husband also made beds for the children, the fitted kitchen and chairs and her brother in law, also a carpenter, made a round table and gave them. It was their first piece of furniture and she still has it. When her first child was born she had everything, wardrobe, bed and chest of drawers for the child all made by her husband. Her husband and his brother also went to Reykjavík and bought a settee for them. She did not go along but was pleased with it, it was in the rococo style she likes but "there was not much selection any way." It has been upholstered three times and now she has given it to her granddaughter.

They lived for seven years in the flat and then moved into their new house. The main floor had a big kitchen, dining room and a living room, a big matrimonial bedroom, and a bathroom. It had three rooms in the basement and three upstairs. Moving into a bigger house meant that they lacked furniture and Berta laughs at the way they made up for it. They used a divan as a sofa in the living room and she made new furniture from old by cutting the legs of the kitchen table and making it into a coffee table which she filled with plants. She went to Germany in 1958 and bought two big cupboards one of which she has given to her daughter. They also bought chairs and a teak dining table which she has given to her granddaughter. It was fine furniture, "it would not have survived all those years if it had not been fine. .... I always bought a lot abroad, when others bought clothes then I bought dinner service, everything for the home, I have still got this dinner service. ...I have a lot of stuff I bought abroad, teaspoons and forks. I always bought a lot of stuff, I have always done that." It was cheaper abroad and there was more selection and she could also ship it back home as they had a friend who worked on a freight ship. Through this connection she also managed to get carpets from England.

From the start she embroidered pictures to hang on the walls and crocheted small table cloths for decoration. She embroidered two big wall tapestries, one is in the store room and she still laments that she threw the other one away. Berta says that once in the new house they added little by little to the home and did not buy a lot since her husband made so many things. "We bought this for us. I always preferred buying little by little." They lived for fifteen years in the house and then moved to Reykjavík where they built another bigger house. She needed more furniture for the living rooms and managed to get the very last settee in the rococo style she likes manufactured by the furniture maker, *Víðir*. When her husband died twenty years later she sold the big house and bought a smaller flat which she redecorated before moving in. She likes it but it is a bit cramped because she has a lot of furniture but does not want to get rid of any of it.

Berta's story is one of success. She married into a well off family and could always buy what she wanted and also bring big objects from Germany because of personal connections. This success is reflected in the home, the quality of her furniture, the work and care she has put into making decorations and not least the ongoing project which she and her husband had for making the home. Their home was cooperation where

the man provided and the woman made the home but with his active participation through making the furniture.

The home was fully furnished in the beginning but many things were bought through the years and added, this is not a story of redecoration, it is a story of gathering. It is not least in this gathering that her success is shown; she came to Iceland because she was a poor refugee, "I would never have left my parents and gone off to a foreign country had I not been poor." Her home shows her success as an immigrant.

Gisella also made a home in a town. She moved in with her husband after the wedding into a basement flat in a house belonging to her parents in law who had built it. There they stayed for five years. They lived in two separate houses until in 1966 they started to build their own house where they lived for thirty years. Beds and a wardrobe are necessary to start a home she says and for their first home her husband had a sofabed, a cupboard and paintings he had made himself. He also made a coffee table and a chest of drawers. They only had a divan in the living room and she tried to make it into a sofa, "but we did have a coffee table." After she got married she went to Germany and brought back quite a lot of things for the home which she had kept there and also things she bought. She had dinner service, coffee service, bed linen, towels and silver ware. She went for many summers to Germany, worked for the family company and used the money to buy for the home. She proudly claims she never bought anything in Iceland, "well, except some bed sheets perhaps" but all towels and linen was bought in Germany. There was more selection and things were cheeper than in Iceland. The first settee she bought in the furniture shop *TM*, the second one in *Valhúsgögn*, her youngest daughter has it now. Her grandchild is asking for the settee she has now and she is contemplating getting herself a new one. She has also given her children the matrimonial bed, the table for the phone, the kitchen table and chairs, glasses, dinner and coffee services and desert bowls.

The domestic cycle of moving house

My informants have gone through various stages of moving house which correspond to the stages of the domestic cycle. Anna started living in two rooms in the

basement of the farm of her parents in law. A few years later she moved into her own house on her own farm which her husband and his friends in the community had built. They lived there for almost thirty years and then moved to a nearby town into another house. When her husband died she moved to Reykjavík where most of her children live and bought a flat which she shares with her youngest son.

Gisella started living with her husband in 1950 in a flat owned by her parents in law where they stayed for five years. They had difficulties finding another house so she and her daughter went to Germany and stayed with her mother for half a year. When she got back her father in law had bought a summerhouse for them close to the city. Her brothers in law helped them to put the house in order and they later built an extension and added rooms. They lived there for five years and paid back all the money they owed to her father in law. They also started building their own house which took six years. Her husband, a craftsman, built a lot of it himself. He also got other craftsmen he knew to work on it in return for him working on their houses. They lived in this house for thirty years. Then they sold it and moved into a smaller flat. After two years Gisella decided to divorce her husband and they moved into two separate flats in the same building. Three years later her husband died and she moved into a small flat for the elderly.

The stage which most of them are in now, being an elderly widow, is for the women from the countryside characterized by sizing down and moving to the city. They have had to give up farming for the sake of old age or illness or because their husband has died. The selling of the farm and buying a flat in the city takes a toll of them all. Selling a farm is not always successful and usually has only raised enough money to buy a fairly small flat in the city. They have moved from a fairly big house where there was plenty of privacy into a small flat often on a housing estate where they have to put up with neighbours living close by. The status or even the lack of status this entails is perhaps not obvious to all or denied. Berta is shocked on behalf of her friend who lived on a big farm, in a big house and had a big family and has now moved to the city, “and now she says she is happy in this small flat, it is tiny, just one room and a living room.” Berta lived in big houses most of her married life and moved to a smaller flat after the death of her husband but it is still big enough for a family of four.

The home now

Access to Icelandic homes is not difficult. It was very easy to gain access to the homes of my informants and they usually offered to show me their homes. If they did not and I asked to see more than the living room and the kitchen it was more than welcome, both to have a look and to take pictures.

When coming into a home of one of the older German women there is a lot of decorative objects everywhere in different form. There are various pictures on the wall, statues and plants in the windows, lamps and lights arranged to give a cosy light and somewhere in a prominent place there are photos of the family. Coming into the small flat of Frida there are almost immediately on the right photos of all her grandchildren on their confirmation day and on the left her children on their wedding day. This takes up a considerable space on both walls in the small corridor. In the living room in a prominent place above the sofa there is a painting of the farm where her husband is from and where they lived for almost fifty years. Next to it is also a photo of the farm. In the corner there is a photo of her eldest son who died a few years ago with a candle on the table in front of it. Framed certificates from the women's association making her an honorary member and a poem for her husband when he turned eighty are also displayed on the wall in the living room. Other photos of the family, parents and siblings are in the bedroom. She bought a new settee when they moved in recently and although her husband has gone into a nursing home and is not likely to come back she has also bought a new bed for them. Her home has the most necessary objects on display to show who she is and who she is related to, her parents, parents in law and siblings. Her status as a mother and grandmother is also apparent right away through the pictures of her children and grandchildren at the most important rites of passage, confirmation and wedding. Her relationship in the community are also visible and her home throughout her life, the farm and thus also the work of her husband and herself during their lifetime together.

Marta is a widow and has lived for several years in a basement flat which she moved into with her husband when he had to give up farming for health reasons. Her flat has many rooms and each room has a certain role. The kitchen is open and spacious and it is here she invites guests and serves them refreshments. There is a cupboard half of which has glass doors and is full of dolls in different national dresses. Marta has collected them

for many years. There is also another glass cupboard full with miniature bottles which she has collected and bought every time she has gone abroad. Friends have also given her both bottles and dolls when they have visited. On the walls there are photos of her and her husband and a few of her children when they were little but the photos are not big and they are not in a prominent place. These are much more snapshots than the formal photos of Frida. On one wall Marta has various wooden objects some of which are from Romania where she is originally from. The stories being told in the kitchen, of her family in Iceland and her family in Romania are followed and deepened in the other rooms. In the living room there are more wooden objects on various shelves in a corner and take up a sizable amount of the wall space. The various decorative objects in the room are mostly related to her sister abroad, pictures her sister has painted or dolls she has made and given to Marta. On one of the walls there is, like in Frida's flat, a painting of her farm, right above the easy chair where she usually sits. The family pictures are in another room all lined up on a cupboard which also keeps some of the dolls in national dresses. There are also books which her children have given her at Christmas and birthdays. Formal photos of her children are kept in here, on their wedding day or the grandchildren on the confirmation day. There is also a shrine on one wall to her son who died at the age of two. In her bedroom there is another shrine, photos of her mother, both her husbands and her little son decorated with crucifixes and plastic flowers.

Unlike Frida, Marta still has many of the furniture she bought for her home and has not renewed them. Frida's flat shows her as a mother and grandmother with secure links into her farming community. She talks of how well she was received, and how people want to talk to her about her coming to Iceland. She talks of the entreprises of her children and what she makes in the recreational classes for the elderly she goes to three times a week between visiting her husband in the nursing home.

Marta however is all alone. Her husband is dead and she blames the medical staff for his death. Her children do not visit her and she talks of her plight of the first few years in Iceland and now when she is old and alone. Her life is difficult and it is related to an unfriendly neighbour and the lack of care for the elderly in the society, "how can Icelanders do this?" she usually adds to her criticism of the behaviour of her neighbour, the doctors or society. She wants to underline her roots abroad and her family of origin,

herself as an individual. The objects that surround her everyday, in the bedroom, the living room and the kitchen refer to her origin in Romania and her siblings and their children as well as to her as an individual. The painting of the farm is the place which she worked for and built with her husband, it was their project together. She was happy with her husband and when the children were little. The dolls and the miniature bottles are not just objects, every one of them is a story of the trip abroad when it was bought or of the friend who came to visit. The pictures of her children and her role as a mother and grandmother are kept away in a separate room.

The home of younger women

My younger informants live in very different social and economic circumstances than the elderly women. There is plenty to choose from for decorating the home, both objects as such as well as the entire style or the look of the home. The society of today also highly values individualism which can find its outlet in the decorating of one's home (see also Garvey, 2002 for Norway). There are also similarities between Iceland and Sweden as described by Löfgren (1990).

In the last ten to fifteen years or so there has been a noticeable change with growing interest in home decoration in Iceland reflected in television programmes visiting people's homes, special magazines and extra sections of newspapers dedicated to home decoration,[153] following the same trend in Western Europe and the US (see Clarke, 2001). These obviously affect people's ideals but as Clarke argues the ideal has become an internalized vision of what others might think of one. Instead of being directly affected by the neighbours or copying them the ideal is internalized. This is useful when looking at what the young immigrant women have to say about making a home now.

Housing nowadays in designed to be very open spaces, there is a flow from the kitchen, dining room and living room and it becomes an open space divided only by partial walls (Madigan & Munro, 1999). This for instance is what Luisa did in renovating her recently bought house. She tore down walls and opened everything up. Only the bedroom area is apart. Frida's new flat is also of this kind. The home is thus almost all

[153] The programme *Innlit/útlit* has been running for some years. The two daily newspapers *Fréttablaðið* and *Morgunblaðið* have regularly special sections on the home and decoration.

visible at ones when guests arrive. Most of the elderly women used to live in houses with designated areas which could be closed off including the living room into which the guests would be invited. This room was a better room with nice furniture and kept clean and tidy (Frykman & Löfgren, 1987). Now everything has to be clean and tidy before guests are allowed (Madigan & Munro, 1999).

Helga would like to meet her family in law more often and that people would just drop by. But she experiences a lot of pressure of having to clean the whole house and have everything tidy before having people over for a visit. The whole thing takes on a formality she would like to get rid of and she claims she does not experience when she goes to Germany and visits her friends and family. Her brother in law and his wife occasionally invite them for a dinner and then the amount of work and care put into making the home ready for visitors becomes obvious. Everything is clean and tidy, the food all made at home and the table decorated and Helga feels she has to live up to these standards before inviting people to her home so she does not do it a lot. Helga's home however can be described as fine and fashionable.

Hanna complains about the lack of visits she receives. Her family in law do not visit enough and she does not have many friends. She however complains about the pressures she experiences of having to have the home fine and fashionable, "everything has to be so fine.... there is so much pressure to be the same, everybody has to have the same things." Hanna lived for a few months on a farm and there was a fine living room but the rest of the home was not as fine. "I did not quite think it looked poor but the living room was noticeably fine." She is used to farms to be neat but "to come into a home where things are torn, used, everything old" was a surprise to her. The homes of the people in the city are different. "If I go now to visit the children in the pre-school (of her children) then it is obvious that everything is incredibly cool, real fashion homes. I always feel that no one lives there it is almost sterile. Or people who do not have a lot and have to use whatever there is. We are in between." She buys cheap furniture in IKEA and other low budget stores and other things in Germany, bed linen, towels and things for the kitchen, "I buy a lot abroad." She also gets furniture for free like the tables and chairs in the dining room. "These are old chairs from the school of my husband. The classroom was refurbished and we got these. I do not think it matters. The look matters for those

who are fashionable, also the clothes for the kids in the pre-school, it is to show off....perhaps they think it is cool but it lacks homeyness." She believes her own home has homeyness which she also experienced in the home on the farm, these two homes are similar in a way she says although reluctantly, "yes perhaps rather like, various things from different places." Helena complains about the pressures of having to have a fine home but she does not have such a home. She and Sofie, another young woman, state that they want to go against the tide and make their homes according to their budgets, "I want to spend my money on other things" says Sofie.

The experience of the young immigrant women shows the continuing importance of conforming with regard to the home, not only furbishing it in the way so it looks right but also in cleaning it so it can be opened up to visitors. There is plenty of choice in furniture as other consumer goods and they can choose how their want their home to look like. Yet they experience pressures to conform. They also complain about the lack of visiting and never really experience the direct pressure of keeping up with the Joneses. They are thus in a similar situation as Clarke (2001) outlines for her informants. The ideal of the home has been interiorized and the pressures along with it.

Conclusion

The home is very central in Icelandic culture and society today as it was and still is a setting for social life, similar to Norway (Garvey, 2002; Gullestad, 1984). It would be easy to make the argument that it is the Icelanders that spend much more money on the home than anybody else in Europe, including the Norwegians and Swedes. This is something which my informants keep referring to. The elderly women talk of the demands of the younger generation which wants everything right away, whereas they got things "little by little." It is in the very process of slowly acquiring things which they see as both the happiness and the essence of making the home, in the process of putting it together. As Gullestad points out it is the women who make the home and the home is a highly shared cultural symbol (Gullestad, 1993:131). The idea of what a home should look like is reflected in the memories of my elderly informants and in telling their life story they use and refer to the objects in their home which reveal their relationship to

other people, not least relationships and obligations to kin and family in law. Icelandic homes did not all look the same and there was difference between rural and urban areas and class position. But the cultural values that the home stood for were the same, thrift and not showing off, hospitality, inviting people into the home, caring for them and feeding them.

My younger informants complain that they do not get an opportunity to live up to the values of hospitality because visits require a lot of work and nobody really has time to drop by. They also experience pressures to conform to a powerful ideal of a modern Icelandic home in the material sense, "everything has to be so fine," the furniture has to be new and fashionable. This ideal is set in magazines and television programmes and it is this ideal which I want to argue, following Clarke, is internalized by the younger women and to which they compare themselves.

Chapter 5 - Food and memories

In this chapter I want to explore the relationship between food and memory. Food is a central element in domesticity as it involves sharing by all family members, as well as caring in preparing and giving food, mainly by women for their husband and children. Food is also essential for our survival but not everything edible is food. There are culturally specific ideas of what is food and what is not, or non food and even if non food can nourish us it also has a real or at least imagined potential to harm us or make us feel ill and as food is put into the body it becomes a part of the body.

There is a substantial anthropological literature on food such as classic structuralist analysis by Lévi-Strauss (1970) and Mary Douglas (1971), the relationship between food and the body (Strathern, 1988; Lupton, 1996) and food and memory (Sutton, 2001). In anthropology food is about commensality, it makes good boundaries, and can be used to exclude and include people in terms of class as well as ethnicity. Food can also make for kinship boundaries and the food shared with family and kin "physically creates one" as Carsten has shown for the Malays (1995, cited in Sutton 2001:5). As Lupton points out food and eating are very emotional experiences that can both be associated with negative as well as positive feelings and are central to people's subjectivity and their sense of being distinct from others (Lupton, 1996:36). She also points to the important relationship between memory and food, especially the emotional dimension as memory is embodied through taste and smell (1996:32).

There is also a considerable body of literature on gender inequality in relation to food (eg. DeVault, 1991; Charles, 1995; Murcott, 1995; Charles & Kerr, 1988). As DeVault points out making family meals are not just about "cooking" but "feeding", providing food which satisfies the needs of the family (DeVault, 1991:39-40). Various researchers have found that the women are strongly influenced by the preferences of their husbands when it comes to what to prepare (eg. Murrcott, 1983; Charles & Kerr, 1988; DeVault, 1991). The women I interviewed referred to their husbands' wishes only in passing but instead stressed the importance of making nutritious food and the importance of not wasting food. Husbands' preferences were attended to on special occasions according to them but it is nevertheless clear that the food provided is to fulfil certain

demands. In their account however, they stress their own decisions and active part in the food preparations. It is this active voice they have which I want to attend to and not ideas about dominance and subordination in the marriage. DeVault points out that although, as some have suggested, the role of food providers give women certain amount of power gender asymmetry can still exist (see eg. O´Laughlin, 1974 in DeVault, 1991:232-3).

I am however, not interested in the gender asymmetry as such and will therefore not dwell on this point but start by exploring the memories my informants have of food and making food. I am not interested in seeing the food preferences of the women as ethnic food, rather I am interested in the boundaries that food can make, not only who eats together but also how the preparation of food, consuming and offering it to others creates boundaries or includes people in a group. The food preferences and their comments now about food can be seen as a way of resistance to the changes that they had to undergo when becoming housewives in Iceland.

In order to look at this I start by examining their memories of food when they came to Iceland after having been near starvation in post war Germany. I go on to explore their memories of getting to know Icelandic food and the effects the food had on them. Then I outline what was considered proper food at the time, what they had to learn to cook and finally how the structure of the day was organized around food.

In this chapter I start with the idea that there is something called Icelandic food which is seen to be different from food elsewhere. This food is thought of as good and healthy because of its nutritious content, and its consumption is seen as important for the well being of Icelanders. [154]

The idea of there being Icelandic food has not changed despite differences in the processing, cooking and availability of food with the development of modern urban society. But the categorization of food as traditional or modern, everyday or special has changed somewhat and various types of food and different dishes, which used to be everyday food, are now seen as a part of Icelandic heritage which needs to be protected and promoted. These changes came with the modernizing of the society in the first half of

[154] Icelandic food, *íslenskur matur* is generally referred to and understood in daily and official speech. See eg. Jón Þór Pétursson, 2009.

the 20th century and again towards the end as travelling, the media and immigrants brought new ideas and expectations into Icelandic society and changed people's food choices and diet.

I want to explore the memories of the elderly German immigrant women concerning food as they came into and became a part of Icelandic society. They were confronted with different food and different ways of preparing it when they arrived and upon marrying they were taught how to process and cook Icelandic food for their families as well as providing food for kin and guests. I want to argue that the teachings of Icelandic food traditions was a way of assimilating the women into Icelandic society, making sure that the food they provided for their families was Icelandic and that by receiving guests in the right way their home was a proper Icelandic home.

However, learning how to process and make food and preparing meals every day is not about passive assimilation, on the contrary many of the women recalling the past express their agency in different circumstances shaped by where they lived and available and accessible resources at the time. They express their active role in deciding what and how to cook, talk of their cleverness and resourcefulness with regard to food as well as underline what they see as their superior knowledge of cooking to the Icelandic women.

Comparison of the older group to the younger women immigrants makes clear the changes that have taken place in the society with regard to food. The younger women cook whatever they like, the cosmopolitan food of modern life and they can choose, as can everybody else, from a wide variety of consumer goods from different countries. However, food is not just their personal choice; the demands of the Icelandic spouse and family have to be met. There is a certain way of offering food to others which is done in a special way, Christmas food for instance is framed by traditions which seem difficult to get out of, yet attractive to keep up and there are also ideas of what food is proper food for the family. I thus want to argue that both groups recognize that there is Icelandic food and food traditions which are important and which must be kept, particularly to be taught to children, in order to make them Icelandic.

Traditional food

The food in Iceland can roughly be divided into three categories: traditional food, which is essentially food processed and preserved before modern techniques; ordinary food which was everyday food for most of the 20th century and still is for many, heavily influenced by Danish cuisine; and the modern food of today, influenced by immigrants and globalization.

Hallgerður Gísladóttir (1999), in her study of Icelandic food traditions, argues that environmental circumstances in Iceland affected the way food was preserved traditionally, the most important being the lack of trees and thus of firewood which meant hardly any local production of salt. Instead the main way of preserving food was using whey, which made the food go sour. Smoking was also common but in the absence of firewood manure was used. Sheep was the main meat supplier and used entirely. The sheep was slaughtered in the autumn and the meat had to be preserved for the rest of the year. As cheap imported salt became more available it was used for preserving meat and fish, and salted meat became a part of everyday food, as well as salted fish which also became an important export in the 19th and 20th centuries.

A cold climate prevented the cultivation of corn which had to be imported and bread only became a big part of the diet towards the end of the 19th century, the daily bread before being dried fish. As people did not have any ovens they made their bread on the stove and it was flat and thin to make the most of the ingredients.

It is the food preserved in whey before the common usage of salt which is seen to be the traditional Icelandic food. Various parts of the sheep smoked or preserved in sour whey, dried fish and flat bread made on a stove all of which basically speak of shortage and lack of other means of preservation. Some of this food is now fairly expensive as it requires a considerable amount of time to prepare and some of it is even difficult to get.

The traditional food, now seen as a part of Icelandic heritage, is kept alive by a festival in January and February called *Þorrablót*[155] which has its roots in nationalistic circles at the end of the 19th century. In the beginning it was to celebrate the pagan gods, which had been worshipped until the year 1000, the golden age in Icelandic history. Later

[155] *Þorrablót* derives from the month *Þorri* according to the Old Icelandic calender, starts in late January until late February. *Blót* means worship of a pagan god.

on it became an opportunity for people from the countryside who, having settled in towns, could get together, meet friends and eat the food from home. The traditional food was becoming rare in the city when it was made popular in 1958 by a restaurant in Reykjavík which offered selection of it to customers served in a trough, a replica of troughs on display in the National Museum. Since then the festival and the consumption of traditional food has gone together and are both widespread and popular (Björnsson, 1993). This festival can be small and take place in people's homes or be a big dinner dance. This traditional food can be purchased in most supermarkets at the time of the *Þorri* and many workplaces offer some of this food to their employees once during this period.

Many people will not eat this food on a daily basis, but will include it in their diet at this time of the year without going to a festival, while others only eat it in particular festive surroundings. Some of the traditional food is available and consumed all year round but other is only available during the month of *Þorri*. Smoked lamb is for instance the traditional Christmas dinner but is also considered fit for any other celebration. It is either the main meal or used on top of traditional bread as a part of a buffet of cakes and bread. In the last few years, as a part of strengthening Icelandic heritage, this food is offered to children in the pre-schools who invite their fathers or grandfathers along.[156] Each year pictures of the small children and their reaction to the food appear on TV and in the national newspapers.

The eating of some of the food is put across almost as an act of heroism or masculinity, as it includes rams testicles, cured shark[157] and sour whale. The eating of such food has been used to show the courage and also the stuff that Icelanders are made of. The comment "I prefer the shark" from a five year old really shows a strong person ready to face the difficulties of life, somebody who can eat that kind of stuff can stomach anything. Eating shark in an annual feast abroad also becomes a matter of being Icelandic or not. I have myself several times heard the comment, "what, are you not Icelandic?" if I have refused to try it. Being Icelandic thus is the one who dares and can eat such food, as the food strengthens your body and thus your Icelandicness.

[156] The month *Þorri* starts on a day named *bóndadagur* or the day of the farmer, it can also mean the day of the husband. It ends on the day of the woman, *konudagur*.
[157] Shark is buried in the ground and then air dried for weeks and becomes cured, a bit similar to cheese.

The playing with disgust is also generally used in the tourist industry, presenting tourists with shark and Black death, the Icelandic schnapps, is widely practiced and in a joking manner. It becomes a matter of who dares and who is strong, not of happily eating away a new thing. Interestingly the men have to eat it, women can say no but the men are dared to have a go. Foreign visitors are expected to refuse or be shocked at the smell and the taste of the shark, they are not made of the real stuff and they are not and cannot become Icelandic.

However, shark having a rather strong smell is sometimes outlawed from the homes of modern Iceland. People eat it at traditional food parties and in restaurants which offer such traditional food, but when on offer in ordinary shops it is sealed so it does not smell. Other food play on the visual side, the singed sheep heads being the most popular, having featured in at least two Icelandic films[158] and representing the traditional and exotic side of Icelandic culture.

Some of the traditional food is thus used to make boundaries between Icelanders and outsiders, some visually but also in terms of actually eating it. If you can eat this food you have what it takes to be Icelandic. There is of course a long way from this attitude to this food being a part of every day diet and reflects more than most things on the changes taking place in eating habits in Iceland in the last century or so.

Bread and cakes

As bread became more common and flour cheaper and more accessible in the 20th century, sweet cakes along with bread became the standard for a coffee break. On special occasions the tables were full of extraordinary cakes, something which make Hallgerður Gísladóttir wonder if there is a connection between the lack of cakes and bread in earlier times and the over the top presentation, offerings and consumption later on (1999:19). Cakes and bread were home made as bakeries were only in Reykjavík and other fairly big towns and their products were not available elsewhere.

[158] In the film Cold fever (1995) by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson the Japanese tourist, who is the lead character, gets drunk and has a long conversation with a singed sheep head. In Jar City (2006) by Baltasar Kormákur the main character Erlendur, who is from the countryside and a bit old fashioned, eats singed sheep heads regularly. The camera dwells on how he digs into the eye socket of the sheep with his knife. The intention to disgust is obvious.

For a special occasion *kaffiborð,* coffee table, a buffet of cakes of all sorts was and still is very common. For most of the 20th century it was the standard in various parties such as baptisms, funerals, confirmations, and ordinary family reunions and still is to a large extent. Cooked food has been reserved for more private gatherings and weddings. Offering cold buffets at confirmations parties became popular in the 1970s and 1980s and as cooked food has become more international, it is offered at other opportunities as well such as graduations. But the cakes have kept their status for celebrations, particularly the main cake, decorated cake in honour of the person who is giving the party. Baptisms, confirmations, graduations, birthday parties as well as weddings, feature a cake which is decorated with the name of the person and the date of the party. Often there is also another cake, a kind of pyramid made of macaroons, *kransakaka*. Both of these types of cakes are originally from Denmark. The cakes are positioned in the centre of the coffee table like a centrepiece and the rest of the cakes ordered around them. These cakes are generally bought in a bakery since making them and not least decorating them is quite a skill. Very often the rest of the cakes are home made, by the person throwing the party and family and friends if necessary.

Thus on special occasions traditional food, except for smoked lamb, is not eaten but cakes are consumed. However, the cakes cannot really be relegated the status of traditional cakes. It is rather the very fact that cakes are eaten and made at home which is traditional. It is only cakes and bread especially made for Christmas which can really be called traditional.

The daily consumption of home made cakes and bread has almost ceased, as cakes resembling home baked ones are commercially produced and widely available in supermarkets. Home baking of bread and cakes is now reserved for those who have the time and give that extra care to feeding their family.

Food changes and education of women

The rise of modern urban society and consumerism introduced different ways of preserving and cooking food. Electricity made fridges and freezers possible, and modern cookers and processed food changed the way food was preserved and thereby eating

habits. This change however did not occur at the same time throughout the country as many places in the countryside did not get electricity until very late. Rising nationalism in the first half of the 20th century saw nutrition and cleanliness as essential for the homes to raise good and strong Icelandic children and the role of women was important as carers and mothers.

As Sigríður Matthíasdóttir (2004) has shown the status of women was important in the nationalistic discourse in the first half of the 20th century. Debates about the future of Icelandic society as modern or traditional also focused on the importance of the home and the role of the housewife, particularly in the countryside (2004:115).[159] Strong emphasis on the so-called housewife ideology and the nationalistic role of women, particularly in the 1920s and 30s, led to the establishment of several schools for home economics for women and some of the women's colleges that already existed were changed into such schools as well. Most of them were situated in the countryside to strengthen the rural areas which was in accordance with the policy of the state at the time. The education of future housewives was also meant to strengthen the rural culture. Sigríður Matthíasdóttir points out that the main objective was for every young woman to learn nationalistic home economics. Another strong feature of these schools was the strong emphasis on the teaching of Icelandic. As future guardians of the Icelandic rural culture, the women had to learn the essence of that very culture, the key to which was seen to be the language (2004:332-5).

In reality many poorer women did not have the opportunity to go to these schools. However, it was considered a good preparation for a future housewife to have worked as a domestic worker in "good homes" (Guðmundsdóttir, 1995; Erlendsdóttir, 1980).

A few cookery books were published in the early 20th century and became very popular and widespread. The book which was found in most homes was published in 1888 and included chapters on nutrition, cleanliness and how to run a home.[160] It also provides useful information on how to eat politely. One of the writers of these books and

[159] The home was in the 19th century constructed as a place which required women's domestic activities. See eg. L. Davidoff & C. Hall 1995 and discussion in DeVault 1991.

[160] *Kvennafræðarinn* (The Women's Instructor) was written by a headmistress of one of the women's colleges. The ethnology department of the National Museum in Iceland has sent out questionnaires to elderly people since 1960 to gather information about various traditions in daily life, including food and the use of cookery books.

also a teacher of home economics went around the country and taught cookery courses in the beginning of the 20th century (Gísladóttir, 1999:49-50).

Despite nationalistic emphasis on Icelandic food culture, particularly in the discussions and writings around the establishment of schools of home economics, the food itself had changed. Being a Danish colony there was plenty of Danish influence in Iceland particularly among the élite, not least regarding food. Some of the teachers at the women's colleges and home economics schools had studied in Denmark and the cookery books had many Danish recipes. The traditional food which had been processed at home changed and became heavily influenced by Danish cuisine. This food is commonly referred to as ordinary Icelandic food, the food of everyday and what Icelanders would call proper food. Nowadays it is also sometimes referred to as food of the home, *heimilismatur*.[161] The food was mainly lamb, fish and occasionally fowl. Pork was not commonly available and chicken was not considered food until the 1960s and 70s. Potatoes were a stable and swedes were also very common and grown widely. Any other vegetables were not widely available and had to be grown at home or were only available in areas were they could be grown in green houses. Fruit was under strict import restrictions and were imported only before Christmas. The daily meal was meat or fish with boiled potatoes and some sort of gravy or melted butter. This was often followed by a desert like a sweet soup.

Modern food

The modern food of today is different from these two categories of traditional and ordinary food, not just because of preserving and cooking but also because of different ways of thinking about food, eating, health and well being. This difference is related to general shifting trends in nutrition, stressing foodstuffs which were scarce or unavailable in Iceland until late 20th century and also to the influence of travelling, media and immigrants bringing new ideas and expectations into Icelandic society.

[161] The terms *heimilismatur* or *venjulegur íslenskur matur* (ordinary Icelandic food) are quite commonly used when talking about food. There is more frying and boiling of food with rich and heavy sauces than with the lighter food often preferred nowadays, particularly by people who do not have physically hard jobs.

The availability of cheap travels to Southern Europe around 1970 probably changed people's ideas about both food and wine (Bernharðsson, 1998). Immigrants, particularly Chinese and Thai, have also made a considerable contribution to the fast food market. However, the food does not stop being Icelandic despite borrowing recipes from elsewhere, but instead of stress on different methods of preserving and cooking the importance is placed on the origins of the ingredients. Icelandic food today is thought to be healthier than before, because of modern ways of processing, but also because of the ingredients used. The emphasis has therefore moved from the way food is cooked to what is cooked or from form to content so to speak.[162]

Increasingly Icelandic food has been presented and marketed as pure, the ingredients being produced or caught straight from pure nature which echoes underlying themes in Icelandic nationalism.[163] This notion of purity and the goodness of Icelandic agricultural products make them superior to imported products, according to popular notion and are thought to be in danger if Iceland is to become a member of the EU, which is thought to mean uncontrolled import of foreign food.[164] Apart from the real danger of spreading of animal diseases, unknown to Iceland because of the geographical and long term isolation of the country, becoming a member of the EU can also be risky for Icelandic agriculture in terms of competition, agricultural imports becoming cheaper for the consumer than home production. Although a lot of food is imported, Icelandic food and ingredients are often thought to be better for the sake of being Icelandic.[165] Much emphasis is put on the products almost being organic as well as the self sustainability of both the agriculture and fishing. This becomes all the more important when these products are exported and sold at a high price for these very attributes.

Icelandic food is thus not just traditional food but everyday food and its content has changed to fit a modern diet, nevertheless the category still exists. It still remains

[162] See Jón Þór Pétursson, 2009, on the importance of the authenticity and purity of Icelandic food.
[163] See ch. 1. The purity is used in marketing of Icelandic food and is also seen in marketing of food from the other Nordic countries.
[164] This is a commonly heard argument among leaders of the farmers´association which is against the EU. This fear of other people's food is also known in the UK (see Lupton, 1996:26).
[165] Icelandic industry has battled with the notion of the general public that foreign goods are better than Icelandic, and there have been several campaigns on "Buy Icelandic". The conviction that Icelandic food products are better is linked to ideas like cleaner soil, no or little use of pesticides and drugs in meat and dairy production, clean air, and sustainable agriculture where sheep roam around free in the highlands.

important today to eat Icelandic food for the wellbeing of Icelanders, as consuming food originating elsewhere can in some instances be a threat to one's health. Medication and pesticides are among the reasons named as polluting factors of foreign food such as vegetables, meat and dairy products. Local products are purer and healthier while there is no such discussion on goods not produced in Iceland like coffee.

Remembering food

Food is prominent in the memories of my informants. For most of them it is not the Second World War which was the worst period in their lives but the years following up until 1949 when they part for Iceland. Towards the end and after the war it became difficult to get food and memories of shortages and rationing are very much alive, the food "was water with cabbage and cabbage with water." The food shortages are an important factor in their decision to go to Iceland. The Germans experienced abundance of food coming to Iceland and dwell at great length with the memory of the first meal and their state of near starvation and under nourishment.[166] Iceland was a place of abundance, both in terms of the share quantity of food on offer and also in relation to waste, mainly wasting of food which was considered non food in Iceland. But it was also a place of scarcity since it lacked the variety of vegetables and fruit the Germans were used to.

It was on the ship taking them to Iceland that the Germans came into contact with food which they had not known for several years. But many of them were seasick most of the time and could not eat anything and thus a lot of the food had to be thrown overboard. Anna "was devastated when I saw it, of course there was nothing but luxury food prepared and most of it went overboard."

The memories of travelling to and arriving on the farm where they were to work also centre on food. Anna had to travel a long way. Towards the end of the journey, she and four others who were going to be in the same region were received with a "wonderful meal" at one location by members of the community and coffee and cakes in another. Another woman who was in the same group also remembers this, "there a wonderful meal was waiting for us." Olga stopped in a big town close to the farm where she was

[166] There was some rationing in Iceland as well of imported goods, but overall there was enough food since most of it was home produced (Bernharðsson, 1998:141-146).

going to work, along with many other Germans who were to be in the same region. There were lots of people receiving them "and we got this fine food there, oooh, and so much that we could not finish it and we thought it was bad to leave the food on the plates."

Anna still remembers her first meal on the farm. "I always remember vividly my first night on the farm. It was freshly caught trout and homemade rye bread, potatoes of course and I had a slice of rye bread and then of course Icelandic butter. I went like this just touching the slice with the knife and V[167] took the slice of me and buttered it. The butter was as thick as the slice." But after the food shortages of the previous years she just felt nauseous at the sight of such fatty food.

Karólína spent most of her wages on Danish pastry. She worked in a town and met up with two other girls after lunch on their day off, having just finished eating. "We went straight to the bakery, bought some Danish pastry and ate it. Then it was time for coffee break, then we were invited to A[168], and then it was coffee break and then we ate as well. Yes and then was at some point dinner and then at night we could eat again. One was always eating. We were insatiable".

Food is everywhere in their memories and underlines its importance as the shortages have left a mark on all of them. They mostly talk of food when talking about the post war years and going to Iceland. They talk of the lack of food and how to get it, steal it if they had to, exactly how much or how little there was and how it was divided within their family. The first thing many did once they got their wages was to buy food items like coffee and sugar and send to Germany to their families.

Food and well being

The abundance of food once they got to Iceland was not enough to make them feel better. The food was different from what they were used to and it did not always agree with them. The memories vary and seem to reflect their feelings today of settling in Iceland as well as their general well being.

Helena recalls this great difference in a joking manner although it is obvious that she was deeply shocked. At first she went to a very old fashioned farm but only stayed

[167] The housewife and her employer.
[168] The home where one of them worked.

for one week and demanded to stay in another more agreeable place. She talks a lot about how awful this experience was, although the people were friendly she felt isolated and no one could speak to her. She also found the food shocking. She had been walking in Reykjavík on the first day of her arrival and saw in a shop window singed sheep heads with the trade mark SS which was and still is a known butcher. She believed it was the Nazi sign SS and thought the sheep heads to be dogs' heads. When she was served this on the farm she felt disgusted. "And this I got at G[169], I do not eat this, not dogs' heads. They laughed, then he came with dry fish and I thought what is this hard as glass with butter, I do not eat this. They laughed, (and said) this is fine food and expensive food and good food..... Oh God help us, when I saw the singed sheep heads and the dry fish."

On the farm she went to in the end and stayed for a year she was happier and things were more to her liking. The couple she worked for could speak English and a bit of German, the home was modern and as they were farmers of horticulture there were vegetables on the table regularly. After one year she moved to the farm of her future husband and the food there was traditional. She dwells on the encounter with this old food and it affected her greatly, she got ill, "I was ill in the stomach after I got here, I think it was the food, fatty food, strong coffee, I had ulcer." From the first Christmas she spent with her husband and his family she remembers only singed sheep heads, horsemeat and salted cod. There was too much salt and not enough fresh meat and the fresh meat was just "lamb, lamb, lamb, nothing but lamb." She missed vegetables and other meat especially pork. "I missed a lot cabbage, this is what I wanted with roasted pork, it was not possible to grow this here, at least not outside, maybe in a green house. This I missed a lot, we ate it in the autumn when the cabbage had frozen with smoked pork. It was not possible to have it here. There was no pork, only lamb and lamb."

There was no electricity on her farm until 1958 and thus there was no freezer or fridge so the meat was only fresh in the autumn when the lambs were slaughtered. Most of the meat was salted as well as the fish. "This was unknown out there[170], one could always buy fresh, could fry and boil and fry it." She wrote to her parents and they sent

[169] The farm she went to in the beginning.
[170] Out there means abroad and refers here to Germany.

her special jars to preserve meat. “Then one had at least fresh meat on Sundays.” She prepared the meat in all sorts of different ways cooked it and preserved in the jars.

She was not at all happy about things in the beginning in Iceland. Everything was different and not the way she was used to. She suffered from homesickness for the first few years. She says she did not want to learn Icelandic or indeed do things in an Icelandic way. Her parents were not happy about her life either but she told them she was happy. She lived in the farmhouse with her parents in law and sister in law and the house was crowded. She and her husband only had one bedroom and had to share the living room and kitchen with her parents in law. “And this you accept” she says her mother told her, “yes, everybody is nice, everybody works together, what more can you expect” she answered her mother. She emphasizes the community spirit at the time, everybody worked together and everybody helped each other out. She got a lot of help from relatives and friends building the farm and putting the home together and she is grateful for all they did to help her.

However, the food made her ill and she had to spend considerable time with her sister in law in Reykjavík to see a doctor. She tried to persuade her husband to move to Reykjavík but in vain, “he just wanted to be out there in the countryside”. At her sister’s in law she could get fresh meat and go to supermarkets so the food was better there, it suited her better. She and her husband later had a poultry farm and they also fished a lot in nearby lakes so she managed to have different and fresh food. Finally things got better and today things have changed and there is no homesickness. “I do not want to be any other place than here, I came young into H[171] and I will die as a member of H, he said so as well our mayor, you have become a member of H he said to me”. And it is in H where she wants to be buried when she dies.

The feelings towards the food have changed as well. Now she eats the traditional food she hated so much in the beginning. Indeed it is her favourite and her family complains about it. “This is the best food I eat now, dried fish and singed sheep heads” and her family say to her, “you always buy singed sheep heads. Yes, I say, it is good to eat with bread and *skyr*.[172] I prefer getting half heads or whole ones and nipple at it, not

[171] The community which she still lives in.
[172] Icelandic type of yogurt.

the paté."[173] Now she does not have to worry about the preserving anymore or the lack of variety, everything has changed and it cannot be compared to what it was like before, "now one can get everything in shops."

Marta also relates bad experience to food. Her health now is a consequence of the first year in Iceland, as her whole life is a result of the first year, she was going to go back to Germany and not stay in Iceland but it was destiny "it was meant to be."

She got very ill the first summer on the farm where she worked and still has problems with her digestion, which she relates to her experience of near starvation in Germany and her first year in Iceland. "Then comes this heavy food also old food for example there was so much sour things, black pudding, and the lamb all so fat and I was just the whole summer with diarrhoea and they[174] did nothing about it." She was not happy during the first year, "I was unlucky" she says as an explanation for her experience. She was the maid on the farm and had to work hard, much harder than her employers and she was not used to that having lived in a city and mainly done secretarial work before. She was also sent to work on another farm and the employers took her wages which was the old way of treating agricultural workers. She wanted to buy herself a new coat. Her boss had a new coat which she did not want and made Marta take and pay for. This was possible since her employers controlled her wages and simply did not pay her the agreed amount to recuperate the money for the coat. She deeply resents them for this behaviour. She also had to process food in a traditional way and recalls how she had to singe legs[175] of lambs and clean them for two weeks and in the end she had nightmares about them. "There was not much food on this, after I started my own household then we threw this away if we slaughtered lambs. We did not think there was much meat on it, we threw it away except of one year old sheep there was something there." She thinks her employers were stingy and therefore tried to use everything for food. "I never ate it, it was disgusting and I thought it was disgusting. The same with black pudding, fortunately my employer cleaned the sheep stomachs, I thought it was disgusting, I just vomited when I was to go to, I went to the cow shed and was to clean the sheep stomachs." The sheep stomachs were stuffed with the black pudding. Marta

[173] Paté is made from the meat of the head and mixed with jelly.
[174] Her employers.
[175] The front legs were singed.

relates this old way of preserving food, as well as using everything that can be eaten, to the stinginess of her employers who made her work hard which affected her health and the rest of her life. The pointless processing of food which is hardly any food becomes a kind of metaphor for their stinginess and her bad treatment.

She could not tolerate the food on the farm, "I was saved by an American woman who came on a visit and was a relative of the woman upstairs. I said I cannot stand on my feet, I have so much diarrhoea." She then got sent to a doctor and got medication. She still resents her employers for not intervening and helping her.

On the farm there was an old man, a half blind father of her employer and although talking about it in a joking manner she was disgusted by the ways he behaved in relation to food. If there was a serving plate full of meat he touched all the pieces of meat with his hands. "To tell the truth I did not want to eat this meat after he had touched them all but there was no use telling him not to do it he did it anyway. .... He was always scared he would not get enough to eat. I do not know what he was thinking. But I was glad when the year was over." Few months later she was working in a home in Reykjavík. It was more like what she was used to, there was electricity and electric cooker. The food was different as well. There were grocery shops and supermarkets and more to choose from and also more vegetables.

But after a few months she went to a farm in the countryside to work as a housekeeper for a single farmer whom she later married. Then she had the chance of cooking to her liking and she made quite a bit of Icelandic traditional food. She proudly recalls how she introduced her husband to food he was not familiar with, ram testicles, food which was eaten in the part of the country where she had worked but was not known where she later lived. Her husband and children got used to eating this food and liked it. Marta also made black pudding but always disliked it. "It is not surprising, I am from a city, I was never on a farm as a child and there are no lambs sausages out there,[176] blood sausages were made and they were smoked and liver sausages and like but no sheep stomachs like this." The memories tied to making of the black pudding overwhelm any likeness there might be with food from her home region while food, which is completely different like the rams testicles but actively introduced, is embraced. During her period as

[176] Abroad in Germany and her home region.

a housewife on a farm she looked well after her family in terms of food she says. She made sure her children got all the essential vitamins in the food and did not waste anything. She also made German food when she wanted to and had all the necessary ingredients. And she cultivated the vegetables she needed and would grow in her garden. She resents her father in law who lived with them for some years who criticized her for giving vegetables to her children, "he said I made them eat grass."

Today she suffers from digestive problems and diarrhoea. She keeps referring back to her experience of lack of food in Germany but more so to the fatty and old food she got the first year in Iceland. She claims she still suffers from the effects of this diet. But even if she ate similar food on her own farm for forty years she never suffered because of that. On the contrary, that was a happy time where she was in control of the circumstances and the food and could care for her family and make sure they lacked nothing.

Anna could not eat fatty food after the post war food shortages and "today still I cannot eat fatty food" but that is as far as the effects of the change in diet has had on her. She remembers the first night on the farm and her employer had given her a slice of bread which had been very generously buttered. "I just shook my head I could not tolerate things like that. My stomach just turned and I felt nauseous, I could not eat such fatty food." When asked about the food she stresses the important nourishing qualities of the diet. In contrast to Marta Anna was lucky, "yes as I say then I was especially lucky compared to what I have heard for instance what Marta has been saying then I have just been very lucky." She missed there not being any vegetables or fruit except at Christmas and there was no pork and chicken was not thought fit for human consumption. What she missed the most was fruit "and I looked forward for many years like a kid to Christmas to get apples and oranges which were available only at Christmas in those days." Despite the period of hunger after the war she was in good health. "Even if I had not had much to eat before I came, but it was so strange regarding that, the doctor told me as well that it was obvious that I had had all the best you can think of as a child." The food in Iceland did not do her any harm. Her employer cultivated a bit of vegetables and potatoes and she did as well after she was married. She is more concerned about the nutritional value of

the food. "But there were so many things that gave nutrition it was the milk, the *skyr,*[177] black pudding which at first I thought was very strange food. I found sour black pudding fine but fresh black pudding I have never thought of as anything special. But it was of course a great source of iron, it is no festive food but one got the vitamins which one needed. Cod liver oil I have never been able to take except as capsules. So I recovered and I was not made to work too hard physically. My employer and I worked equally at everything."

The farms where Marta and Anna worked are in the same region and the only real difference was between the statuses and age of the farmers. Marta's employers were a bit older while Anna's employers were educated and the housewife had even worked in an Icelandic elite home in Copenhagen. Anna is concerned in all of her accounts to give a picture of herself and her life as a person who has come to terms with herself and her destiny, she was lucky, she had a good husband and now in old age she has the good fortune of having her children around her who care for her. Marta on the other hand is bitter about her past and present. Her children hardly ever come to visit her and are not interested in her life, have no time for her. She is bitter about the first year and her experience there and the fact that no one cared for her when she was ill. Anna compares herself to Marta and talks exactly about the fact that there are so many people around her who care for her and how grateful she is for that. The only comment Marta makes about her family is that they have enough on their own hands and do not have time for her.

Proper Icelandic food

The food in Iceland was not just different in taste, the composition of the main meals was not quite like the proper meal the older women were used to from Germany. Most informants remember the food as too salty, too fatty and prepared in an old fashioned way. They also underline the difference which the lack of vegetables and fruit was for them. "It was of course the worst that could happen to us Germans was that when we came here there were no vegetables, no fruit and thus no vitamins. And you got so much of that

[177] Yogurt.

abroad and that was the worst that could happen to us was not to get any fruit" says Frida echoing the view of most if not all of my informants.

The cooking was also too simple when compared with German food according to many of the women. Helena did most household chores where she worked the first year but not the cooking. "I said immediately I am not going to cook, I do not know this, this is too simple for me just potatoes in a saucepan and meat and like and then done. I say this I do not know, no she[178] then just wanted to cook, I take care of the kids and everything indoors."

Berta also stresses the difference and the lack of what she was used to from Germany. "It was not known, minced meat and like when I came to Iceland. It was just salted meat, smoked sausages and lamb, horse meat. .....Yes I thought it was very strange to make sweet white sauce so I wrote home to my mum, my mother at home, and my parents that there were smoked sausages here on the dining table with milk pudding and potatoes. I thought the white sauce was milk pudding because it was so sweet." Berta was the housekeeper and took care of the cooking on the farm where she worked during the first year although she was very young, "what do you think an eighteen year old knows?" Despite being so young the cooking was no problem "I did not find it complicated, it was much more complicated cooking German food, we, look, with all these vegetables. Everything here was just fish in a saucepan and potatoes boiled and butter with it or something. It was no problem cooking in the old days, how difficult do you think it is to put sausages in a saucepan?"

Karólína had been to a home economics school in Germany although she could not quite use the knowledge she gained from it until after she got married because the ingredients and the food traditions were so different she says. Once in Iceland she worked as a maid in a home in a big town. "This was completely, completely different." She took care of most of the food except for the lunch. "The food was of course completely different to what I was used to and I did not know some things. I did not know smoked sausages and I did not know horse meat and not smoked lamb. (What did you do then?) I just put enough potatoes on the pan and horse meat in between. And there were no

[178] Her employer.

vegetables, well they[179] were happy, there was none, it was unknown. Look, here you have a little bit of potatoes and if there is tiny bit of vegetables, all the rest is meat. And I thought this was terrible but I did it. (What did they say about your food the people in the household?) Nothing, it was alright. Yes, yes I had learnt cooking and some I knew. I took what there was and mainly it was heated up at night."

The main meal at lunchtime consisted of fish or meat with potatoes and some sort of sauce which could sometimes be sweet but apart from potatoes there were not really any vegetables. The cooking was simple and often the meat and fish was in a way processed or salted and sausages ready made and smoked so it only had to be boiled.

Of all the mealtimes during the day lunch was the most important one and was generally made by the housewife and only occasionally by the maid. Most women, who as domestic workers did most of the indoor chores as well as working outside, did not cook the food or at least not the main meal at lunchtime. "At lunch the housewife took care of the meal but everything else was mine, in the mornings, coffee break and supper" says Karólína. The dinner was less important than the lunch and leftovers from lunchtime could be heated up as dinner.

Learning to cook Icelandic food

The older women were used to more varied ways of cooking as well as plenty of shops in Germany, where fresh food products were easily accessible. Their knowledge of cooking and food was based on such circumstances. Once in Iceland those who worked and later married, particularly in the countryside, had to learn how to process food as most of the dairy products had to be processed at home, such as cream, *skyr*, butter and even cheese, and some of the meat was also preserved at home. The shops were in the towns and although trips were made regularly there was not always the wide selection of products which they might have wanted. There was of course a better selection in Reykjavík but many lived a long way away and only occasionally went to Reykjavík. Most of the vegetables had to be grown at home and fresh fruit was only imported before Christmas. Various spices were not available and were often sent by their family in Germany.

[179] The people in the household.

Learning to cook Icelandic food was thus necessary in order to know how to use the ingredients available. However, the women were not passive in their learning. They claim they taught their mother and sisters in law how to make various dishes and how their knowledge changed food habits in their family. Sometimes this new knowledge was given openly but could also be a kind of deception in order not to upset anybody.

I want to argue that it was seen as necessary that the women would offer Icelandic food to their husband and children and therefore had to learn it, irrespective of whether they knew how to cook before. Teaching how to cook varied and was not always done in a particularly organized way and it does not seem to have been always at a highly conscious level. Cooking and offering food was also something to be observed, social norms which the women were supposed to notice, internalize and make their own. If not they would get comments, even told off and it was pointed out to them. It was usually the mother or the sister in law who taught the German women how to make and preserve food and it seems to have been the in laws who corrected their behaviour and not so much the husband. However, it seems that it was the husband and the men of the household who needed to be pleased with the food.

María was very young when she moved to the farm of her husband. There her mother in law was essentially the housewife and she continued living with the young couple for a few years. María says she knew nothing about cooking and processing food before and did not bring any knowledge or recipes into her household. She stresses the importance of the teachings of her mother in law and how clever she was and good at making everything, food as well as handicrafts, she had been a fine housewife. "My mother in law was especially good at making food, everything about housework she knew very well." María had to learn everything, "I even made cheese in the beginning, the first year." She worked very hard all her life on the farm and says she felt the pressure of expectations from the community without it ever being said, but she felt a kind of envy from others because she and her husband were doing well. "I was of course an outsider as well and perhaps they thought that I could not work and accomplish a lot. But one did show that one could do something. But this was of course crazy amount of work, I admit that."

Erika did not know anything about running a home or how to cook when she moved to her future husband and she was even younger than María. Her sister in law took care of the food and the house and it was not until Erika had a baby and had to stay indoors to take care of it that she started to cook and thus gained the status of a housewife. Her sister in law attended very well to all the domestic chores and taught her indirectly but most of it was trial and error. "One saw how this was done and was getting recipes from here and there and was trying." Her sister in law helped her with processing from milk, butter and *skyr* had to be made at home. Erika tried to make cheese when her sister in law was away for a few weeks "and little by little I sort of learnt everything about milk." However she had to get it right, making *skyr* for instance was difficult and she had to make sure that the milk was exactly the right temperature. If not it would curdle in the wrong way and not be nice to eat. She says she was told when this happened, "one got to hear complaints if one did not get it right." Despite that she was not quite told how to do things or how things should be it was rather that she "saw" how things were done elsewhere and decided that she should do things the same way. She claims other women learnt from her and copied things for example how she cooked cabbage. Mainly though it was her use of red currents she got of the bushes in her garden. She made a kind of hot pudding out of the currents which she claims others were not familiar with. She recalls a prominent man in the region visiting her and she gave him this pudding as a desert for lunch "and he had never tasted it. But his home was well known there were such quantities of red currents there, it was not used, the rhubarb was used but not the red currents."

Anna got to know how to process the food and cook on the farm where she worked the first year. After she moved to her husband she managed herself. "I could read well enough so I could bake following a recipe." The first year she lived in the same house as her parents in law and ate with them. Then she and her husband got two rooms in the basement. "We moved down in the autumn and then I was sort of a part, really good" (she laughs). She knew how to cook by this time and her mother in law lived in the same house. "I could have asked her if I had wanted to but I did try to do it myself. But it was no problem if I did ask." Her mother is law did not check on her she says, "but I learnt of course how to make black pudding and melt lard and all that. It just came by itself." The

teaching was not conscious and the learning perhaps not either, it just happened by observing and doing she says. When talking about it Anna admits that she had to learn processing the food but she attributes it more to her employer during the first year than her mother or sister in law. She knew already how to cook before she arrived in their house.

Helena knew how to cook before she arrived, "it was different from what one was used to from home." Her mother in law and sister in law taught her to make Icelandic food. "I said no, this is too simple and one cannot eat this for weeks, one has to have a change. Close by on a slope there was a small part of land where M[180] had potatoes and then I added celery and leek, these are soup herbs." She criticizes the food and brings in something of her own. Her mother in law did not tell her how to do or not to do things, "as long as he did not complain" but her husband sometimes went to his mother's house for a bite she says.

Frida also learnt to make Icelandic food from her mother in law and sister in law and her husband's sister in law whom she worked for during the first year, "I just started learning from them, from what they had to eat." She knew how to cook before she arrived "of course" she says, she had been working on a farm before going to Iceland and then she saw a thing or two which the cook did and she learnt by observing. She says she could not have German food, the food the Icelanders ate did not exist in Germany and therefore she could not cook it. "For instance rice pudding, we did not have a lot of that abroad either, look, which the Icelanders ate a lot in earlier times. And porridge and *skyr* and all that and lamb and that, it was not known abroad." In Germany it was common to cook pork and also use intestines and blood from the pig to make blood puddings but Frida insists it was so different that she could not use her knowledge from Germany in Iceland. "Look for instance blood pudding or liver sausages this is all completely different at home, abroad in Germany than here. ..... I could not make it here. There were no equipment or like here".

Frida knew some things she could teach her mother and sister in law and her husband's sister in law. "I always baked Berlin buns before New Years Eve, and I bake it still today, always before New Years Eve. ..... As soon as I got married then I started always baking apple pancakes. They were crazy about them (the kids)." She says she did

[180] Her sister in law.

not get any assistance from women in the neighbourhood when she was starting her own home. “No no, nothing, that was not done. ... I just did not need any assistance. Like I say it was my husband’s sister in law, she was often telling me this and that at first, or after I got married. And then my mother in law, I cannot say otherwise.” Frida stresses the difference between the two countries and due to this difference she could not use her knowledge from Germany. However, when it comes to things that are different yet possible such as special things, sweet things, she knows more. She has something to offer which makes them “crazy” and they all like the different food she makes for her family.

Gisella knew how to cook before arriving in Iceland and did not have to learn in the first year. Once married her mother in law taught her to make Icelandic food. She also taught her to cater specially for her husband who was brought up on a good diet. “Also when one wants to make meat balls, she says to buy beef minced meat because my father in law never wants mixed minced meat. My husband is not raised up on such things, he does not want ready made and mixed minced meat, such flour based yuck. Then my mother in law made a ring like into a bowl, mashed together and took out one fourth and filled it with potato starch and something like that. Then one puts spices in and adds an egg into it, and then you make meat balls.” But Gisella was not passive in all of this. “I taught her how to make a sauce. She just threw out the juice from the sauce, I said this was the best there is. She always had a bottle of food colouring. I have never in my fifty years of marriage bought a bottle of food colouring. One browns the meat first and one uses this brown with onion and all that but never potato starch. Then I use flour and then later it was available ready made and one just took a whisk and stirred it. My kids say mom, make, if I am invited, make a sauce you can always make such a fine sauce. I taught them, sometimes it succeeds and sometimes not.” Her mother in law taught her to make Icelandic food and Gisella taught her to make German food. “My mother in law taught me to make Icelandic food, I did this like this, something Icelandic and German like on the side but my husband thought, when I did something German like, he thought it was better, the German food I made. He was very happy with such food.”

The employer of Marta during the first year wanted her to grow vegetables and she did. She knew only a little bit but in comparison with her employer who knew nothing she became almost an expert. “She asked if I knew anything about horticulture, I

said yes, I knew how to sow but it was difficult to plough the plot and I sowed. In the middle of the summer when we were not working in the hay but the weather was good then the housewife said well, the weather is good, are you not going to go and clean the weeds in the vegetable plot and the flower garden? Often it was eleven already I was working from seven until eleven at night the whole summer. When the milking was done at night then the weather was often so good that she could not tolerate to see me unemployed so I was to go and pull the weeds out and the harvest was good. I sowed carrots, swedes and cabbage, turnips and kept everything in good condition. I laughed so much. A year later before I left I sowed again but she could not be bothered to pull out the weeds. And I asked, I met one of the kids from upstairs, I asked how the gardening plot was? And they went crazy laughing and said the farmer cut everything down and fed it to the cows, there was nothing but weeds in the garden and you could not see the vegetables. I sowed but of course it has to be kept going because vegetables do not grow once weeds have started growing."

Susanna tells of how her mother Olga cooked hens when they were not thought to be food and got away with it with a little help from her future mother in law. Shortly after Olga arrived on the farm where she worked the first year and later lived for the rest of her life, hens were slaughtered to make way for new ones. The carcasses were thrown into a hole in the ground and covered but Olga dug them up and cooked them. Her mother in law was very reluctant to taste this because it was not eaten normally. But when she got hungry she tried it and had to admit that it was pretty good. Olga had white sauce with the hens but the mother in law put food colouring into the sauce so it became brown and did not tell anybody about it. The food was put on the table, no one knew that they were having hens in brown sauce and ate it quite happily. Olga did not tell anybody about this until much later. The next time hens were slaughtered the mother in law told Olga that she should get the hens before the carcasses were thrown away. But the men would not have been happy about this "my father's brother thought it was ridiculous to eat hens" and although her father was happy with all the food Olga cooked he did not like hens or chicken says Susanna.

The food structure of the day

The mealtimes were different than the women were used to and the day was really organized around food. According to Anna the Icelanders were always eating. "I was shocked at the eating by Icelanders when I came so much that I thought in the beginning that they did not do anything but eat. There was coffee[181] in the morning, when people got up there was breakfast and then coffee at ten. Then there was lunch, then coffee in the afternoon and then supper, then coffee at night. But this was perhaps not so incomprehensible because people worked a lot of course, hard work and therefore they burnt quite a lot. But one was baking endlessly, *kleinur*,[182] Danish pastry, cinnamon buns (was there a lot of sweet things?) usually there was buttered as well, usually bread with *rúllupylsa*[183] or *mysuostur*[184] if one had enough milk one would make *mysuostur*." This was different from Germany where cakes were baked for Sundays and then on special occasions, birthdays, Christmas and Easter but not on a day to day basis. People would just have a slice of bread and marmalade, "we often just had an apple or something between meals." There were not regular coffee breaks with cakes and sandwiches. "One was at school, then there was lunch, then one had an apple or something and then there was supper. One was not always eating."

More than fifty years later Hanna, who now has her own family in Iceland worked on a farm for the summer and experienced the same daily mealtime structure. On one hand things were more relaxed than in Germany, especially with regard to work hours and what to do. On the other hand there were strict rules about the hours of mealtimes. "What I thought was that there was a different rhythm. I know this from Germany. One has to get up early, everybody starts working at eight. I do not know if this was because it was summer holidays. But I just turned up in the kitchen at eight, mom[185] was in the dressing gown, yes are you up, I just what? Do I not have to start working now? Then there was breakfast at nine, everything easy going like. Then we look at what you will do, oh yes just clean up the kitchen. They all went to bed so late. Then after a week I started

[181] Coffee, *kaffi* or a teabreak means a small meal, bread or open sandwiches and cakes with coffee and milk for the children.
[182] *Kleinur* are a bit like doughnuts.
[183] Rolled sausage used as topping on bread.
[184] Cheese made of whey.
[185] She refers to her employer as mom.

taking it easy as well. Then I often went to bed at twelve and got up at nine. And then this meal rhythm, breakfast at nine and at twelve is lunch, half past three is coffee, at six is cooked dinner and evening coffee between eight and nine. I have never known this so structured, how much it goes by the clock. Still in old people's homes and hospitals lunch is always at twelve on the dot and in most homes, at least out in the countryside. I think this is a complete rhythm of the day which is followed."

This rhythm seems to have somewhat disappeared nowadays in the towns. Sylvia, a younger informant, complains about the lack of discipline of the Icelandic children as so many of the women do. One of the complaints is that they do not seem to have to go home at any particular time to have dinner. A friend of her daughter does not go home when her own children are to have dinner and when Sylvia asks the answer is no. "My daughter is to be at home at seven and once I asked a girl when she was to be home and she did not know what it was, had never heard anything about that she needed to go home." There does not seem to be any particular time for dinner, rather people eat when they are at home. This lack of structure is also a source of complaint by the younger women particularly if they get their children's friends in the house at mealtimes. The main meal in modern day Iceland is the dinner and family life revolves around dinner time or at least that is the ideal around which things are organized, such as the main news on the radio and television.[186]

Conclusion

The older German women who arrived in 1949 link the traditional Icelandic food with a world which is old and very different to their own modern Germany which they came from and were raised in. The food becomes an example of how far back in time going to a farm in Iceland was for them. The memories of seeing, tasting, smelling and consuming Icelandic food reflect their feelings of a very different food culture and the food becomes a metaphor of the change they experienced.

[186] The main news at night on the national radio was for many years at seven o'clock and on national television at eight as people generally had their dinner at seven. Some years ago following a research into changing habits of families the times were changed to six and seven respectively because the working day had shortened and many people had their dinner at six. Other radio and television stations organize their news around the programmes of the national radio and television.

The way food constructs boundaries is apparent in the way they remember the first encounter with Icelandic food and how different they see themselves as having been at the time. They knew better and even if they had to learn to cook with different ingredients and in different circumstances, they still had superior knowledge of cooking than their Icelandic mother and sisters in law. The changes that the society was going through at the time are reflected in the difference between the urban and rural examples. The German women came into a society in transition which is reflected in the variation in the food they experienced. The memories of seeing the traditional food, consuming it and making it becomes a channel of memories of feelings and thus the food becomes a metaphor of well, or no so well, being. Memories of learning to make food in very different circumstances becomes a way of seeing oneself as an active person, one that can cope with these new circumstances and who knows more about food and cooking than the Icelandic women. They are thus not passive young women who can be moulded but active women who bring in new knowledge and could teach the ones that taught them.

Chapter 6 – Food and care

In this chapter I will deepen the argument on the importance of food with ethnography on the care the women gave to their families on a daily basis, the food they prepared for them every day. Then I will go on to explore how guests were received and give an outline of how special occasions were celebrated.

Oakley (1974, in Murcott, 1995) claims that women value the feeling of autonomy involved in housewifery, but as Murcott argues just because women express enjoying being their own boss does not mean "that their conditions of work can be analysed in terms of a high degree of autonomy." On the contrary "the cooking is not directed by the woman herself, but is subject to various sorts of control." She specifies three different types of control. First there is the idea that certain food fits certain occasions. Second that food should be ready at certain time. And thirdly the preferences of those who eat the food, the family and kin the woman cooks for,"these kinds of control in the domestic provision of meals find their counterpart in the industrial concerns of quality control, timekeeping and market satisfaction" (Murcott, 1995:97).

As mentioned above various research finds that women are influenced by the preferences of their husbands when it comes to food (see Murcott, 1995; Charles & Kerr, 1988; DeVault, 1991). This is not clear with regard to my informants who rarely ever refer to the wishes of their husbands but rather acknowledge the social norms operating at the time coming through demands or complaints made by in-laws or simply as something which they experience or "see".

My informants stress their own decisions in making food and providing for their family and why they made the choices they made. They did not all have the same opportunities and refer to that, as well as the restrictions made by the lack of ingredients. But when there are restrictions they are not victims but express their active role in deciding or accepting the circumstances. Their view of themselves is usually as the head of the household, the one who takes the decisions and who knows best. This does not mean they do not provide food to please their husband but they do not talk about it openly. According to them their husbands never complained about the food or told them what they wanted to eat, but they did not always like the amount of vegetables the

women wanted to prepare. The women however stress the need to teach their husbands to eat vegetables instead of giving it up or put the blame on the fact that vegetables were hard to come by in Iceland at the time.

I want to argue that on the one hand the German women were active in the care they gave to their family on a daily basis and that they decided what to prepare. On the other hand they had to work within a framework set by the social norms and demands made by the in laws. Receiving guests was a way to show that you belonged to the group and that you were included and behaved as others would do as well. Being included and becoming one of a group is a process, but in the end one is acknowledged by compliments on just how well one has done in fulfilling the requirements for fitting in. Receiving guests and fulfilling social requirements can also be a source of anguish, not only because the demands are different and strange, but also because they are just overwhelming in terms of work and effort which needs to be put in. Caring for a special occasion is ambivalent because the demands can be higher and stronger for a particular behaviour and food, but at the same time is can also be the time when the women have an opportunity to do the extra something for their families.

Many of my informants say they already knew how to cook when they came to Iceland and that they did not need to be taught. They also claim that they knew much more about cooking than their Icelandic mother and sisters in law. They are fairly critical of the food which was offered on a daily basis and tried to offer their own family more balanced diet and less salty food than was on offer and also more vegetables.

They all stress their active part in deciding how to feed their family. They knew how to feed them, some knew quite well how to cook, most learnt very easily and many could also teach their mothers and sisters in law how to do things in another and a new way. Their view reflects the idea that they cared for their family in a better way than their in laws, using their skill and knowledge to the outmost.

Meals are about making a home and a family, but have to be planned in advance and do not just happen automatically as DeVault points out (1991). Making food every day is also a conscious effort and takes a conscious planning, even some time into the future, especially when food has to be preserved and processed to last the whole year. My

informants do not make a lot out of this planning, although given the circumstances on a farm and the availability of food products, it was needed. They do not make a lot of the need to fulfil preferences of husband and children either, apart from feeding them in the right way to make sure they got a nutritious meal. They learnt "little by little", not only to cook if they did not know that already but also to plan and work in new circumstances, "it just came." This fits with what DeVault finds in her research with her informants dismissing the thinking involved in their work saying "it is just routine to me" (DeVault, 1991:57). As DeVault points out, this shows that at the same time as the work is almost denied and made invisible, it also draws out just how much thought there is really put into the work. It becomes a natural part of every day life.

My informants had to start a new life with a whole new set of rules and norms. Some had already been housewives and mothers in Germany and others had had to look after their family before going to Iceland. Changing and adapting took therefore longer until they could say "it is just routine to me." Feeding a family in new circumstances with new ingredients did require even more thinking and planning than otherwise. It meant they had to work even harder at obtaining the standard they wished for, to fulfil the requirements which were not made just by them but also by the social norms in the community and demands in the family about what kind of food and what kind of meal they would offer to their families.

The popular image of the older German women is one of hard working women who knew new and better ways of doing things, particularly around the house and also horticulture. They are, and were, bestowed with knowledge of cleanliness and cooking thought not to have been present before, which is in line with the Icelanders' view of the time of their arrival as being a very backward and distant past. This view can be seen in obituaries of German women and introductions to accounts and interviews with them in magazines and newspapers. It is also heard from Icelanders of the same age and who remember when they came as well as from younger people who have been told about them.

This view is echoed in the image the German women have of themselves as being very hard working and working harder than the Icelanders. Working hard is highly valued in Icelandic society (Ammendrup, 1998) and is also underlined by other groups of immigrants as a way of being accepted into the society as well as demonstrating their

importance for Icelandic society. Icelanders, particularly their employers also use this as an explanation of their acceptance and their value to the society but this has also been used to demand more work from the immigrants, for instance to work overtime and long hours (Skaptadóttir, 2003).

This very idea and belief of having worked hard, harder than others, gives them a certain status of power allowing them to say I did my bit and I did more than others, I have done my bit, *ég hef staðið mig*. The term *að standa sig* is used a lot by my informants as well as in daily speech. It means that the person in question has not only done what is expected of him/her in sometimes rather difficult circumstances but more and even better.

I want to argue that the picture they give of themselves when talking about the care they gave to their families and the food they cooked has an element of this idea. They did their bit, they do admit the amount of work was high and that there were a lot of demands from the next of kin but above all they did their bit and as such were active in their household. They are thus active in the making of their past and underline how well they have assimilated and become part of Icelandic society by fulfilling the work ethic.

Daily food

If the food was as simple as many of them claim and as completely different as outlined in the previous chapter then what did the women cook for their family on a daily basis? What was the proper food they themselves prepared when they made their own home? Not everybody could cook German food or indeed expresses the desire to do so but when asked they commonly explain it was impossible because of lack of ingredients or everything was too different for their knowledge to be put to use. "But German food, you could not always buy what was necessary, no asparagus and long beans and all the fruit" says Karla who did try sometimes.

Frida for example could not cook German food, "No, no, no, no,[187] I could not do that." However, her husband claims she did. He says Frida had sometimes German food for a change and he liked it, "German food is good." He did not like the vegetables very much but learnt little by little to eat it. Frida really liked it though and after they got

[187] The more repetitions there are the stronger the meaning. Saying no, no, no, no, means absolutely not and yes, yes, yes, yes, means of course, it goes without saying.

married they cultivated various kinds of vegetables and sold potatoes and swedes to others. Even if the husband was not keen on vegetables it is Frida who makes the choice. Even so she could not just have anything she liked. The right ingredients were lacking and she did not quite know how to use what there was instead. She just observed what the people in the household had to eat and did similar things. “Then I just had fish and I had meat and just this and that.” She made and offered traditional food such as black pudding and singed sheep heads, “yes, yes, yes, yes, I did it all. I just stopped making it, I just buy it ready made. What should I do, why should I make so much? Earlier on I made a lot, a lot of it.” Since she and her husband gave up farming and their son took over she has stopped processing food she can easily buy in the supermarket, something she used to do a lot of at home.

Frida had a big family, apart from her own six children she looked after several children who stayed over the summer and some even stayed up to a year. There was a big group to feed every day and she had to make sure she had enough for everybody. She had a big freezer and made arrangements to buy meat from the slaughterhouses and she got fish from a fisherman, who as a boy stayed at the farm with her over the summer. “He still brings me fish I do not have to pay for it.” She knows how to get the best deals and how to organize the provisions in the best way for her household.

Despite what her husband says for Frida the daily food she made for her family was not German, it lacks all the necessary elements to be German. She talks a lot about how different the food was from Germany and how little she could do to cook any German food on a daily basis because of that difference. She emphasizes the difference in everything, the food and the shock she had when she first arrived and saw the old house where she was going to stay. She did however not live very far from Reykjavík and could have bought there the various ingredients lacking for her cooking. This is what some other women did like Karla who got pork in Reykjavík.

Frida emphasizes the lack of things, the difference and the impossibility of offering what she would have liked to offer. Instead of German food she baked a lot of German cakes. She maked special pancakes for the children in the summer, “always once during the summer I made apple pancakes, I chopped apples in the dough and made pancakes and they just liked it so much they just went crazy.” On New Years Eve she

also made Berlin buns, “every year I always made them...they liked it so much.” On special occasions she makes German food. And in contrast to the lack of every day there is the great difference of the special occasion, so different that it is almost unbelievable.

Anna did not make German food because the ingredients were lacking and also because of lack of choice for financial reasons, “it was like this, one just had what there was.” The winters could be difficult and they were sometimes cut off for days because of snow and could not go to the nearest town. “No one was thinking about it if there was no cinnamon or something people just lived off what they had.” The lack of cinnamon seems to have stuck in her mind as she repeats this exact sentence in various interviews. Cinnamon is mainly used for baking such as cinnamon buns but also with sugar to sprinkle on rice pudding. Rice pudding and rice pudding milk were very common as every day food and are not quite the same without the cinnamon. Her mother in law cultivated lettuce and radishes and she got some from her and after Anna married she cultivated swedes and potatoes and lettuce herself. Later she could get tomatoes and cucumbers cultivated in green houses in a nearby region. She missed the vegetables though in the beginning and particularly the fruit which she did not get except before Christmas because of import restrictions. But her attitude is that she made the food which was there and available and there was plenty of it, although some of it was seasonal like fresh fish and wild fowl. She gave her family the same food as everybody else had in the community, it was good and there was plenty of it. It was the fresh food she missed the most. “The worst thing about not having the electricity was not having fresh food.” When she finally got electricity in 1967 and had to choose between getting a fridge or a washing machine she chose the fridge. “Not everybody understood that”, she says laughing as she had already seven children at the time. “But having fresh food mattered more to me.” This is really as far as she goes in underlining any difference in food. She is very accepting of her life and longs for old times back in her community where life was simple and people honourable. Now she lives in Reykjavík where people spend too much money on material things and waste food. The food is not even as good as it used to be. The quality of the lamb is different and it does not taste as good as back in the good old days.

Helena stresses the lack of variety of food and she grew tired of always eating the same, salted meat and salted fish. “One has to eat different things.” There was no

electricity until much later and therefore the meat was only fresh in the autumn when the lambs were slaughtered. The meat was salted and kept in barrels during the winter in special hut "which was good and still is" for storing food, that is where the salted fish and the potatoes were kept as well. Her sister in law had an old fashioned fridge which operated on frozen water and when they could use it they had fresh meat until Christmas. It is the freshness of the meat that means a lot to her, "one had meat but the worst thing was that it had to be kept salted. This is not known abroad one could always buy fresh". Therefore she cooked meat in various different ways and preserved in jars which her parents had sent to her, "then it was fresh when it was opened.....At least one could have fresh meat on a Sunday." Usually she cooked German food she says, "I thought it was better like and the meat was not too salty. It is not good to eat too much salt." She also grew vegetables. Her sister in law had a small patch of land where she grew potatoes and Helena added celery and leek, "these are soup vegetables, just the carrots would not grow well enough." She also went to the farm where she had worked the first year and bought vegetables from them. "I got vegetables there, it was inside, tomatoes and cucumbers and they had everything. There one could get leek, they had that. Now one can get everything in the shops."

Helena was used to and preferred different food than her family in law. She complains about the monotonous diet of salted meat and salted fish and lack of vegetables and she also got ill due to the food. She could buy vegetables grown in green houses in her neighbourhood. She could and did change the diet of her family to suit her own demands better than the diet of her in laws. I asked her if she had had her own little revolution going and she said yes and laughed. Helena gives the image of herself as knowing more about food than her in-laws and thus she is very much is charge of her own cooking. She is in her account of her memories very resistant to anything she calls "Icelandic" and openly says she did not want to do things in an Icelandic way or even learn Icelandic. In all her accounts she comes across as a person who somehow ended up where she did but was not going to put up with any more difficulties than necessary. The first thing her husband said when I met them was "she is not Icelandic that one" and although it was said in a joking manner it was apparent that she had made that very clear. She went on to tell me about the first farm she went to and her first encounter with

Icelandic food. It was obviously a tale she had told many times and her friends who were present with her husband knew the tale and laughed.

Many claim they mixed German with Icelandic food. This is what Marta did. For her it was also important to have nutritional balance in the food she offered to her family. She had rice or pearl sago pudding as a desert when she cooked fish and soups made of berry juice or milk when she had meat to have balance in the diet. She made whatever there was and mixed German food with Icelandic ingredients. She also cultivated various types of vegetables, radishes, carrots, swedes and turnips. She recalls with pride when asked about German food, that once when a niece of her husband stayed with them the girl did not want to eat anything except swan soup which was a German recipe. This was thickened milk soup decorated with whipped egg whites. She did not have electricity but an old stove heated with a type of coal which was a bit tricky. She however learnt how to manage it very well and use it to the outmost, cooking different things at the same time and using it to dry the nappies over night when the children were little. She is proud to have been able to run her household on a tight budget and still make sure her children got, not only enough to eat, but also nutritious and balanced meals, which she made by combining the knowledge she already had from Germany with what she go to know in Iceland. She introduced her husband to ram testicles which he did not know, although traditional Icelandic food it was not common in his region. He only just remembered various ways of using every bit of the sheep such as the brain but Marta used the brain of calves and fried it like it was done in her home country.

Gisella lived in Reykjavík all her life. She is a very proud cook and often made German food. She did like her mother had done. Her mother had taught her how to make food. “I always liked it, when it was my confirmation I baked my own cakes myself. I liked baking so much already.” Her granddaughter who carries her name was also interested in baking and wanted to become a professional baker but her digestive problems prevented that. She talks at great length about things she used to make and brings out her cookery books which she has had since she started her own home. She mixed German and Icelandic food together, “I did it like this, something Icelandic and German with it but my husband thought, when I did something German, he thought it was better the German food I made. He was very pleased with this kind of food. (Did he

not ask for Icelandic food?) No, not at all, not at all, he was just pleased with steak and meat and everything like that, but when he did not come for lunch some days I just made something special." When her husband did not come for lunch there was a chance for her to cook what her children called frying pan dish which was pasta and potatoes fried together and they called German. She also had a special edition of porridge, "and German porridge, they did not like Icelandic porridge. It was always half milk and half water and a chunk of butter into it and afterwards milk as well, not salt. The children really liked this but O[188] never did like porridge because he ate so much of it at his mothers, it was just shovelled into his mouth and therefore he never wanted to eat porridge but if he does not come for lunch then just mom lets make German porridge or the frying pan dish." She claims her husband liked her food but she made sure not to offer food which he did not like when he was at home. She kept in mind what he did not like when she was cooking, which is in line with what others have found on the way the preferences of the husband influence the choices women make when preparing food (see DeVault, 1991).

Karólína is quite different from the other women as she married a German man whom she divorced later and although he went back to Germany, she has lived all her life in Iceland. They were fairly poor and grew potatoes and carrots for themselves and also sold to others. They also grew cucumbers and beans for themselves. "It was only for us, it was a bit of a luxury. We had lettuce and everybody was so surprised what sort of cabbage these Germans were eating. And also, there was an old farmer and he slaughtered all his hens. Oh these Germans they ate these hens but they did not die (she laughs). I just boiled them long enough. (Did Icelanders not eat hens?) No, we were some strange animals here then yes, we ate cabbage or grass and old hens." She cooked German food, "but it was not eaten. I did not do it until my youngest child was gone and now cook German food for me. (Did you cook Icelandic food for the children?) Yes probably, is that not sausages and white sauce, fish and this and that and meat mixture[189] or meat balls in the oven, or yes and so on." She cooked food which was different from what was the norm and obviously got comments from people even if she was not married

[188] Her husband.
[189] Minced meat mixed with flour or potatoe starch to make for instance meat balls.

into an Icelandic family. She lived in a very small village and knew everybody there and everybody knew her and thus they seem to have felt the right to criticize her.

Ingeborg lived in a small village far away from her husband's family. She was educated and innovative and since they did not have a lot of money she had to improvise when it came to food. She used a lot of vegetables she cultivated herself and also wild plants which no one else used. She used pulses and grains and Icelandic ingredients in a completely new way such as putting blood pudding into tins so it was always fresh. She does not really want to talk very much about the reaction she got in the village but her daughter recalls that they were thought to be very strange in the village. "They said we ate grass" she remembers the other villagers saying to them because they had lettuce and used dandelions in salads.

Baking the daily bread

When the older women started their own household, and for most of their married life, they had to bake regularly both bread and cakes for their family, as well as for guests who could drop in anytime. Bakeries were only in bigger towns and cakes were not available in supermarkets. It was simply the done thing to bake your own cakes. Housewives out in the countryside did not go so often to towns that they could have fresh bread every day but with electricity and freezers it became possible to buy ready made bread and freeze it. Baking was what everybody did and they had to learn how to bake and offer similar things as other housewives. Cakes and bread was offered in the coffee breaks, *kaffitími*, in the morning between nine and ten and in the afternoon between three and four. Some also offered cakes in the evening as *kvöldkaffi*.[190]

In an ordinary *kaffitími* there would be bread, ryebread, traditional thin flat bread or white bread used for open sandwiches or buttered bread with various things on top such as *rúllupylsa*[191] or *mysuostur*.[192] Although the bread and the toppings would keep separately, buttered bread would not keep for long. But the sweet things that were on offer could keep for weeks. The harder the cakes the longer they keep. Not all of them

[190] Coffee break in the evening.
[191] Rolled sausage.
[192] Cheese made of whey.

were cakes though. The most common ones were *kleinur* which are small pieces of sweet dough twisted and deep fried, a bit similar to doughnut but a bit harder; Danish pastry so called but which has little in common with the variety from bakeries, rather hard with jam in the middle and cinnamon buns filled with sugar and cinnamon which do not have much in common with the buns bought in a bakery and are also rather hard. *Jólakaka*[193] is the only real cake and is the softest of them, a bit similar to Madeira cake but the flavourings can vary and dried fruit can be added such as raisins. All of this, except for the home baked Danish pastry, is now mass produced and can be bought in most supermarkets. They are also regularly on offer in coffee breaks in work places as well as on the table of ordinary families.

Anna had many children and did not have the time to visit other homes but people came to see her. There was always something to offer with the coffee. "One always had something. But one was baking endlessly, *kleinur*, Danish pastry, cinnamon buns." This was different from Germany where cakes were baked for Sundays and then on special occasions, birthdays, Christmas and Easter but no on a day to day basis. People would just have a slice of bread and marmalade, "we often just had an apple or something between meals." There were not regular coffee breaks with cakes and sandwiches, "there was lunch, then one had an apple or something and then there was supper." The cakes were reserved for special occasions and Sundays in Germany but were a part of the daily diet in Iceland. For Frida it was the same. She had many mouths to feed and it was a lot of work. "I baked every weekend my dear, always *jólakaka* or *kleinur* or fancy cakes. I was always, look, though I do not do anything today." Although Frida says she could not cook German food she baked German cakes. "I baked an awful lot of German cakes and like, I just had a book."

Karla also baked a lot when she lived on a small farm out in the countryside. She had a German cookery book and a cake book with lemon cakes and Madeira type cakes which was customary to have in Germany. She made Danish pastry but differently to what they were like in the bakery. "When I was living in G[194] I could not go to the shops and say I am going to buy Danish pastry. I just made an ordinary dough and put jam in

[193] Christmas cake is the exact translation.
[194] The name of her farm.

between and made a roll and then I put pink icing on top and the children said they were the best Danish pastry" she says laughing.

Anna learnt from her first employer to make *kleinur* and then she just used a recipe. "It is not such a big deal, like, 250 gr sugar and margarine and so forth, some flavouring. *Kleinur* one had to make sure not to have them too fine; they would get saturated with fat. It came, it just came." The *kleinur* are something one would get in almost every home. A distinct smell is associated with making *kleinur* as they are deep fried. They are remembered by many Icelanders as a part of their youth, particularly the smell which would fill not just the home but the streets and anticipated what was in store when the children got home. *Kleinur* are not that easy to make and thus are an example of the trouble taken to care for the children. Now they are just as popular but hardly anyone makes them at home, they are readily available both in bakeries as well as supermarkets.

Some of the German women struggled to make *kleinur* like Erika and Anna and had to practice many times before getting the hang of it. Karólína stopped trying making them after many attempts. It was too expensive trying and failing again and again she says. As she married a German man she never had an Icelandic family in law and there was no one who taught her how to make them. She had been to a home economics school in Germany during the war and knew how to cook but baking was a different matter. "I had my own recipe but the Icelanders baked much better and more expensive. Look, I was raised and studied during the war. They[195] did not really like these cakes of mine. There was not enough content, it was too dry and, well.... (So you had to follow the Icelandic recipe?) Yes, well, when I think about it now I suspect that I did not learn very much in the school because there was never anything to have." Karólína's cakes are too dry and were not liked in the home where she worked. However several of the Icelandic cakes and sweet things are a bit hard and dry. Karólína baked a cake which in her recipe was dry but was supposed to be soft according to the Icelanders. It was not the dryness or the lack of content as she says that was the problem but the fact that the wrong cake was dry.

[195] The Icelanders in the household where she worked.

Baking according to expectations

Baking was also a part of the communities' social life, many women joined the Women's Association in their community and their fundraising often centred on selling coffee and cakes at special events which the members made at home. Such an occasion was both an opportunity to show who belonged to the group as well as compare the ability of each woman in this field of baking and thus her status as a housewife.

Susanna mentions as an example of how well her mother Olga was received and thought of in the community, that whenever there was a reunion of some sort and a coffee table with fine cakes was offered the other women would comment. "It is obvious that Olga has been a part of this, this is Olga's work." The status of Olga as a housewife is known in the community; her work exceeds that of others and is acknowledged as such. She is known in her community as being exceptional in all her work on her farm. In her living room there are platters made of wood and porcelain which she and her husband have received from the Farmer's Association and the local council as recognition or as a price for their good work. They have for instance exceeded in breeding sheep, being the best farmers and having the neatest farm on several occasions. There is no price for baking the best cakes but as Sutton (2001) claims, following Turner (1989, in Sutton 2001), although food is perishable, exchange does not only include material objects, the reputation of the giver also circulates. In order for that to be possible the exchange or the giving needs to be witnessed by others. The reputation and the good name of the person is not just important in the present, it is one's future reputation which is important (Sutton, 2001:45). Sutton uses the argument made by Munn (1986, in Sutton, 2001) for the Gawan on ties between the gift and memory, and claims that "the gift binds time by projecting forward a potential future remembrance of the giver" (Sutton, 2001:46). By providing and giving food to others and particularly food which is seen to be good and even better than that of others, Olga is securing her future reputation which is reflected in the words of her daughter many years after the giving. She remembers what people said about her mother when she provided food, cakes and coffee, for the community in such a way that it merited their admiration. The community witnessed her work and spoke about it, thus making sure she would be remembered as a person with a good name.

It matters however what kind of food is offered, who does it and in what circumstances. Anita the daughter of Ilse is still cross with her Icelandic father's family who was fairly big and powerful in her community. She believes they were opposed to her German mother although she is not quite sure why. But she remembers what she sees as a rejection of her mother when her cakes were rejected. "I still remember how offended we were, my mum and I, when they rejected her cakes." Her mother's cakes were rejected from a coffee table arranged by the Women's Association of which her father's sister was in charge. "I don't know why, maybe they thought they were poisonous." Rejecting the cakes is a way of excluding Ilse from the group, her food is no good and cannot be served to people, perhaps it did not look the right way, or her cakes were not thought to taste good and thus would not be liked by others, perhaps the in laws wanted to put her in her place. But it also closes the opportunity for Ilse to be remembered in the future for her gift at the time. Rejecting her cakes denies her the opportunity to build up a reputation for giving food to others. According to Battaglia (1991, in Sutton, 2001) by preparing food carefully, one is projecting the self into the food and that is "meant to inscribe a memorable impression on the receiver" (Sutton, 2001:47). Instead of being remembered for her cakes the rejection is remembered and still causes pain and bad feelings. Anita talks of her father's family in very negative terms, she has not come to terms with what she sees as a bad behaviour towards her mother, one that excluded her from the community. Even if that is not quite what Ilse's neighbours think. According to one of her women neighbours who worked with her she was a fine worker, a fine housewife and highly regarded in general in the community. Nevertheless the point remains that when her sister in law rejected her cakes she was in a way excluding Ilse from the group.

Baking the right sort of cakes and offering them to family and guests alike is very much a matter of being included in a community. Learning how to do so can take time but is important to be a part of both family and community.

Erika experienced the pressure to perform well as a housewife and to know how to bake different sorts. She did not know how to cook or bake when she moved in with her future husband and at first her sister in law took care of the cooking or until Erika had her first baby, "no, I knew nothing, no, it somehow I just followed recipes and like." It

was difficult for her because there was no one to help her and teach her and the homes and thus the housewives in the community were compared with regard to what was offered to guests. "Then I was always of course trying to, like it was always being talked about, going to other farms, it was so *myndarlegt*[196] there and good cakes and everything so fine. I tried of course (she laughs) always to follow this too by learning to bake and do things. It was always being talked about here before, how fine things were but I have not yet been to all the homes here in the region." She is not sure now if everything was as fine as her husband and his sister made it sound like when they talked about it after having been somewhere. "Coffee was always offered wherever people came. Yes, yes it was thought to be very fine to have three, four, five different sorts of cakes and like. It was the fashion here then. (Were you trying to do the same?) Yes, I was trying to do so but I did not succeed for a long time to make *kleinur* (laughs). I somehow got the hang of it. But I just say this because there are many things one has to learn." It was fashionable to have many sorts of cakes to offer to guests and she did not want to be less than others. "I started baking all sorts and one always had bread (sweet and buttered). (Were the other housewives supposed to have this the same way?) Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, (did you experience it as pressure) Yes it was so, (who put this pressure on you?) I just saw it. I thought to myself that since I was a housewife in a home that I needed really to do this as well." All the other women in the community did the same. And Erika seems to have got it right, at least an Icelandic woman who was brought up in the same community puts Erika in the same group as the other Icelandic housewives, "She was a fine housewife, the home was very fine, she baked and things like that. It was just like an ordinary home in the sense that she baked a lot, there were always cakes and such on the table." Erika goes along with this in her comparison of another German woman who lived in a village close by. She did not bake like others, "she was always saving money and never used what was supposed to be in the recipe" and her cakes were not good because they were not what they were supposed to be like. The Icelandic woman mentioned above agrees with this view on the German woman in the village. "She was always apart somehow,

[196] *Myndarlegt* can mean handsome, fine, lavish, something which is good and requires work and money to be accomplished.

never did have a role, she did not fit in." The fitting in can be attained through the baking in the right way and the right sorts to have on the table if people visit.

Visits and guests

In the absence of any public place where people meet and socialize except for the common supermarket, people's homes have become the centre of socializing outside of work hours. This has changed in the last decade or so, especially in the capital area and larger towns, where coffee bars and pubs are turning into meeting places during the day as well as places to go to for a night on the town. However, visiting people's home is common, both formally by invitation, and dropping in unexpectedly which is very widespread although much more so in the countryside than in the city. Friends and family can visit each other informally but strangers only with an invitation. However, if strangers have some sort of a relationship to the people or to the place where they live, for instance knew their parents or their ancestors used to live there, which is really only out in the countryside, then a visit without an invitation is alright. It has, however, become the custom to let people know in advance and ask if it is alright to visit before dropping in, although it is not seen so important out in the countryside as in the city.

It is common to hear complaints from the older generation and not just my informants, about the lack of time people have for one another, nobody drops in anymore, particularly not in the city. This is often explained as a part of modern life, people have too much work and everybody is busy, everybody has enough with his or her own things, and therefore there is no time to drop in on relatives or friends.

Dropping in unexpectedly means that the host needs to have time to sit down and chat and should also offer the guest a cup of coffee at least. The offering of cakes, or something to go with the coffee, is not necessary when a visit is not organized but if nothing is offered to eat with the coffee an excuse is often given, "I am sorry I have not got anything to go with the coffee." The expectation that guests will be invited into the home and food and drink offered to them is manifest in many ways. Even if a host is told "you do not have to make an effort for me" which really means that you do expect at least the host to think of some effort, it may be followed by "she did not even offer me a cup of coffee" (he might get away with it) later on to others, or "one was not even invited to

go inside." What is offered and how it is offered can become a part of someone's reputation and being stingy with guests is frowned upon. The whole idea of a party or refreshments offered being *myndarlegt* or fine and lavish relates to the idea of both work and money being invested in the effort. But it matters that there is a relationship beforehand or beginning of a relationship. A stranger showing up on somebody's doorstep because his mother used to live in the house cannot expect to be invited in for a coffee though he might be invited in to have a look. But if a stranger has announced his arrival it is usually expected he will receive coffee and refreshments unless perhaps if he is a salesman. There is also a marked difference between town and country. People in the towns do not have the time to make the effort while people in the countryside are expected to do so. However, when an invitation is formal or the guest arrival is known in advance, then it is necessary to offer refreshments and even elaborate cakes.

Cakes became popular when ovens and enough imported flour made it possible to bake cakes and bread at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th as outlined in the previous chapter. The end of the scarcity seems to have resulted in abundance of cakes as Hallgerður Gísladóttir claims (1999). This tradition spread around the country and can be seen as a sign of modernity, not only did the home have an oven but the housewife also knew the right etiquette in offering cakes to visitors. She might have been to a home economics school so there was knowledge as well as the financial means to receive people in the right way. There was a small but growing middle class in the towns along with a tiny elite but the better off farmers in the countryside can be categorized as belonging to the middle class. Not least because of their economic and political position as outlined in chapter 1.

During the Second World War with the occupation of the British and later the Americans there was all of a sudden enough work, money and imported goods in Iceland and this plenty is reflected in the fashion of cakes. So called war cakes *stríðsterta* became popular, which contrary to what it might have meant for the German immigrants, in Iceland it means a big cake of different layers, often a sponge, with lots of cream and

decoration such as tinned fruit on top and in between the layers and if anything too much decoration. Such cakes were mainly reserved for special occasions, visits or parties.[197]

Guests were generally offered sweet cakes and biscuits whether there was a party or they had just dropped in. There had to be something to eat with the coffee, *eitthvað með kaffinu*, and such cakes and biscuits were always homemade because there was no mass production. Anna had many children and did not have the time to visit other homes but "people went around to other homes and had cups of coffee when there was time, but it was not, I did not go around a lot or like." There was always something to offer with the coffee. And Erika has the same story. "Coffee was always offered wherever people came."

The guests were neighbours and friends, even kin living in the neighbourhood and they were offered the same cakes and sweet things as the family would consume every day along with special cakes or biscuits reserved for guests and special occasions. During the summer the number of visits would increase because of kin living in towns visiting the farm of their parents. Usually the siblings of the farmer came to visit and stayed for some time or if they lived fairly close they would visit regularly at weekends. Frida lived close to the city and there were guests every weekend, she was always baking and preparing food. But they also came to help out on the farm in the summer when there was a lot of work involved in the haymaking and also in assisting in the household.

Helena's sister in law S often came and baked, helped with food preparation and clothes making, her brother in law also visited often and helped with the outdoor chores, building houses and the haymaking. They brought their children who also helped. "There were always a lot of guests in the summer. There were sometimes fifteen or eighteen people apart from us.....S was baking at weekends and everything and brought with her from Reykjavík and that was a lot of help because I needed to work outside and she said this is no good I have to help here, in the haymaking and everything. The kids went to work in the haymaking, I was outside and my husband and everybody was helping. Everybody was there, another sister in law and a friend from the next farm and my father

[197] These cakes were ridiculed in the novel *Kristnihald undir Jökli* (Under the Glacier) in 1968 by Halldór Laxness where one of the characters is a woman who only offers plenty of over decorated cakes at any time of the day to her guest who does not get anything else to eat even if he asks because she finds it distasteful to offer fish to guests. Her name *Hnallþóra* became a synonym for an over decorated cake.

in law. My mother in law looked after the coffee and like. Then my sister in law was inside with me. This is what I liked here. One could go to the neighbour and yes, yes of course I will help you. I say instead I will help you when you need. Then they just left and one helped them. This was no problem, there was always such a good relationship on the farm."

The constant visiting is both a source of joy and annoyance. Marta has both kinds of memories. The relatives of her husband came a lot and she had to cook and bake for them. "Germans are precise and they let you know if they are coming to visit. I often got upset by Icelanders, once we were working in the haymaking and then people came without letting know, it is not like this abroad". However there are also nice memories attached to the visits. "I could let you see my guestbook.[198] It was always popular to visit me. (Did they visit quite a bit your neighbours?) Yes, we all helped each other, if there was something wrong, it did not matter. If a cow could not deliver or especially after the kids could ride a horse, always gathering sheep for the neighbours, they were almost like sheepdogs. Because we were, no one is perfect, this is not always perfect. The day always comes when someone needs help. (Was it easy to get help from them?) Yes, this is not like here in Reykjavík." The life on the farm in her memory is a place where everybody helped each other and a community spirit reigns. Today she lives alone and her children hardly visit her. Her neighbour upstairs is encroaching on her part of the garden and is generally a nuisance. Her life on the farm is also the part of her life which she does not associate with disease resulting from food. Instead she relates food on the farm to things pleasant and positive, how active and clever she was. She explains in detail how she had to deal with her old fashioned cooker which could be a bit tricky and really how much of an expert she had become in doing so and feeding her family in the best way.

Karólína sees the visiting also as a chore but reacted in a different way. She married a German man whom she later divorced and lived in a small village all her life. There, like in most other small places or farms in Iceland it was customary never to lock the front door. Reflecting on it she is not sure how and if she fits into Icelandic society and is rather alone. "To start with of course when the kids were little and I was younger,

[198] Guest books are very popular, particularly with the older generation. They are meant to be signed by every visitor with the date of the visit and often a personal comment and thanks for the reception. I was regularly asked to sign guestbooks when interviewing my informants.

then of course it was always open here and then there were a few acquaintances. But it is so typically Icelandic, look, they don't knock, they enter, is anyone there? After I started working in the fish factory you know, I was dead tired at weekends. And then most of the kids had gone, the youngest one was at home. Then I started to have it like at home in Germany to have closed, locked. If somebody wanted to come then he could just knock, please. Look, not, are you not at home? Do you have coffee? I was dead tired. I had enough with myself and not to mention after I got ill. I fell a sleep whenever and imagine this small house. The toilet is just by the entrance and all of a sudden you have an acquaintance in the entrance. I just locked and strangely enough after the women knew I had the door locked, well it just disappeared, they did not come anymore. (Not even to knock?) No." She did not visit others a lot. "They came to me and I could go, oh yes of course yes, yes but I did it very rarely. No, I was not used to such things from home. Look, this was at home,[199] well, people did not turn up uninvited for a visit. There was a party or they were invited and it was not "are you at home, is the coffee hot?" This is not known where I am from and I probably end like this. And I really do not care so much." The informality of visiting in a small place is still widespread as it is in the countryside. Karólína saw it as prying and impudent when Marta sees it as a network of helpful neighbours which she misses in the city.

Visits and receiving guest could also be partly formal. On the farm where María lived there was a church owned by the farmers, María and her husband, unlike most other churches which are owned and managed by the state Lutheran church. A mass was held once a year in the summer in the church and afterwards María, following the tradition of her mother in law, offered all the guests in for coffee and cakes. "It was so because there was a church there, when there was a mass in the church then one gave everybody coffee who came to the church (mass). And I had to clean the church as well and iron the *rikkilín,*[200] you know what that is and that was just all my work." María took care of the coffee for the church comers. "Always it was the custom here. What do you think they would have said if I would have stopped? That is the way it is. Sometimes even fifty people attended, I did not have to bake a lot for us before Christmas, it (the baking) was

[199] She is referring to Germany as home.
[200] A special collar used by priests.

mainly for guests." She put together tables in her living room and filled them with all sorts of cakes and had coffee on a separate table. She became quite ill in her later years and had operations and her daughters told her that this was getting to much work for her and that she did not enjoy it anymore so she should give it up and she did. "But can you believe that there were so many people who had always (come), who did not go to church anymore because I had stopped giving coffee?.....They just did not understand that it had all of a sudden stopped. It was of course seen to be very nice when people had been to mass to then go into the farmhouse (home). Then they could chat and have coffee. (Did nobody offer to help?) There was one woman who...there was not a lot of such things. It was just considered the done thing, it was just considered more than the done thing. Then just more people came. On the 90th anniversary of the church then priests and deacons and more, the bishop and then I gave them lunch, lots of them came for lunch. Then there were all sorts of occasions when I gave them coffee." This was a considerable amount of work for her. "One does not think it is a lot while one does it and enjoys it, but there is a lot of work involved around all of this because one also had to do more. (And then you had your children?) Yes, four at the time and then I of course had to make sure they were clean and the house had to be in order as well. It was not enough just to have, everything had to be in order, and sometimes I worked well into the night. When it was over and the people had gone then I was so tired that I would just fall a sleep, sitting down, sometimes standing" she says laughing.

María's house was a bit bigger than other houses in the community and she got electricity before most others but she was also thought to be able to receive guests and house parties. Two days after she got electricity she was asked to house the children's Christmas party for the community. She had just managed to get everything in order after the work of the electricians to celebrate Christmas with her family but her decorations could only stay up for two days.[201] "Then it was only two days which I had my living room in order, then I had to clear everything out to house the children's party. (Did you never consider just saying no?) No, it did not enter my mind."

[201] Traditionally Christmas decorations are left for 13 days or until the 6th of January.

Visits and guests to younger women

The availability of ready made cakes and biscuits has increased, particularly in the last twenty to thirty years and it is not necessary to bake at home anymore. The custom of offering homemade cakes is changing and it has become more common to offer ready made cakes, sweets or other fashionable refreshments to guests.

The common things to offer, like *kleinur* and *jólakaka*, are now more associated with older ways and with the countryside, whereas in the city no one has time to bake anymore and offers instead completely different things which have been seen in fashionable recipe magazines and are based on a cosmopolitan life.

Young women talk of the work involved in baking and they are not prepared to spend their time baking a lot. Baking is more reserved for special times such as Christmas or formal invitations, while at children parties one can get away with using ready made cake mix. Instead of being a part of everyday life and diet, baking has been given the status of an enjoyable past time of the family and especially mother and children. Baking and home made cakes has thus changed from being a part of an everyday diet, to another status, reserved for special occasions, be it for quality family time or formal invitations of friends and family. Baking a cake oneself and offering it to guests and family is thus an indication of extra care and trouble taken to prepare for the people who consume it.

The younger immigrant women do not bake as a chore but as a choice. Hanna is very concerned to have a healthy diet. She bought a grinder to grind her own corn and she bakes a lot of sour dough bread which "cannot be bought in the bakeries here or proper bread, not sponge." She thinks the bread in the bakeries in Iceland is like sponge and not good enough so she spends her time making it from scratch so it will be more like what she is used to from Germany and she believes to be healthier.[202]

Most of the women buy cakes or sweet things if they need them but also realize that bought things are not enough to impress or give the right message. Helga thinks that there is a lot of pressure to have everything home made when people are invited for coffee or dinner. She dislikes this and wants things to be more informal so she could just drop in and other drop in on her. The sister in law of her husband invites them sometimes

[202] Various bread is available in Iceland which is made following traditions from Denmark and Germany.

and everything is very nice and home made. "Then it is said oh, oh how *myndarleg*[203] you are. If one goes to the bakery and buys buns, slices them and puts on the table then nobody is going to say that one is *myndarleg* (she laughs). I try to be the same. I wish this was different. People could just drop in and would come more often. When I go to visit my friends in Germany then it is different, just normal homes, not very fine. I did go once to one of them who knew that we were going to come, it was arranged but she did not even have biscuits. She said I thought I had biscuits. Then we just went to the bakery and bought something. I was shocked. I thought this was too much. She knew that we were coming." Helga would like things to be different and not so much pressure on performance but she still believes in a certain standard which is to be able to offer something to guests when you know they are coming. She feels the pressure of having the home always clean and ready for inspection which it cannot be and thus it is important for guests not to arrive unexpectedly.

The hospitality has changed according to Helga's experience. It is not anymore about dropping in unexpectedly at anytime and have coffee and perhaps have some cakes and help out instead. It has become a matter of status and putting on a show for the guests, of outdoing the others. It does not matter if it is kin or friends, what matters is to have the home nice and clean, making the food oneself and reach the status of being *myndarleg* or fine in the role of the host.

Baking different sorts of biscuits before Christmas is very traditional but becoming less frequent, destined for family time during December and not so much for guests. It is a tradition that lives on longer in the countryside than in the city. Úlrika tried to outdo other women when she started her own household in Iceland. She lived in a small village in the countryside for the first years after she arrived in 1991. When she got married and had her child she was at home in the beginning and baked a lot. There were a lot of guests visiting her, dropping in and she had home made biscuits to offer them, "the coffee was maybe simple but there were always biscuits." Other young women in similar circumstances in her village were also baking although looking back she thinks she might have baked more than any of the others. She was trying all sorts and ended up baking

[203] *Myndarleg* means here fine, lavish, somebody who puts in time, money and effort into preparing for and receiving guests and is generous.

around fifteen different sorts of biscuits. “The others had around five.” The biscuits were for Christmas and if they were not consumed she put them into the deepfreeze. When she realized she still had them in May she decided to go to the duck pool and feed the ducks with the rest of the biscuits with her young son. She laughs at this memory “I just wanted to try and everybody was giving me recipes” and she explains that probably she was overdoing things a bit.

Daily cosmopolitan food

The younger women make the food they want to make and have as well all sorts of ingredients to choose from in the shops. They can cook German or Asian food and whatever takes their fancy. Helga cooks a lot she says: “I cook an awful lot every day (laughs) what I cook? I mix things a lot, I cook a lot of Asian food; Thai food I cook a lot because we like it so much but the children do not like it. But then I cook, I can cook pizza and pasta.”

Cooking is an important part of organizing and making a family as DeVault (1991) points out, it is an important part of caring for the family. Sofie did not know how to cook when she started living with her husband ten years ago and neither did he. They worked a long day and ate out a lot or had a take away. But when her husband’s teenage sisters lived with them for some months she felt the need to cook for them proper food. “I do not cook myself if I do not necessarily have to. We often go out to eat but I made an effort for the girls to be a model housewife and like. And then I tried various things. .... (Did you feel you had to put in an extra effort in the domestic chores when the girls were here?) The girls? Yes, not a question about it, one does not take on two teenage girls and then just let’s go out for a hamburger. No, I do not think its right, no it is not right. I did not care if I cooked every day and now when I have the baby I am always cooking, really every day. But in between I did not go into the kitchen except for having breakfast, I am not much of a housewife, and I will never be one, I will do it if needed but no.” A couple can eat out but once there are children it is a family and a family needs to be cared for, cooking and providing proper food is a way to care for a family. The proper food is home cooked, not ready made and bought like hamburgers.

This is also what Murcott finds in her study. "Home is where proper eating is ensured" and proper food is cooked dinner which is important for the family's health, welfare, and happiness. Cooking is important when one is married and it is the role of the woman, an ideal housewife cooks her own food (Murcott, 1995). It is not any cooking though, it is important to follow rules and although cosmopolitan food is on the table most days, on special occasions there has to be Icelandic food which they all know what is.

Hanna describes her food as "a bit European." She always makes food for her husband and two children and thinks a lot about the nutritional value and wholesomeness of the food. To her it is also important not to waste food. She explains that her father is of the post war generation and therefore she probably has inherited his ideas. Icelanders waste food, throw it away and do not know how to use it properly. "This is perhaps a bit German which I took up from my friend. I keep all leftovers of food. We were cooking together on New Years Eve and there were six big potatoes and lots of vegetables and she was going to throw it all away. Why are you throwing this away? Yes, I cannot be bothered to keep it. Give it to me (I said). Then we had a pizza the next day and potatoes au gratin and it lasted for almost a week the leftovers which I just used. I do not think it is correct to throw food. Perhaps this is a bit German this way of thinking. My dad is a post war child and used everything and thought food was important, one does not throw food away, one should have respect for what one eats. I think this is good and do this as well. (Is it different in Iceland?) So much is thrown away (here)."

She says her husband complains that he does not get enough potatoes. "Otherwise he never complains, he thinks there is not enough of salted meat. I do not know how to cook that, and it is expensive as well." She does not like the traditional Icelandic food. "What I do not want to buy and have in my fridge is singed sheep heads and shark and all that disgusting food. My old man[204] gets a small box of shark on the *bóndadagur,*[205] he really likes shark. I tell him to take it to work and not to have it in the house. He does that, he is always really happy about the box."

[204] She refers to her husband as *kallinn* or the old man.
[205] *Bóndadagur* is the first day of the month *Þorri* when the traditional Icelandic food is consumed.

Helena does not like the traditional Icelandic food but buys some for her husband to eat away. But nevertheless all the young women cook something called Icelandic food according to tradition as they say. However, what they refer to as tradition is the daily food of the older women. The salted meat which the older women had too much of is now a part of an Icelandic tradition.

Sofie says she cooks "ordinary Icelandic food" and food she knows from back home and whatever she can think of. However, she also refers to Icelandic food, the salted meat and bean soup, a dish which is traditionally eaten on Shrove Tuesday and meat soup which is eaten all year round but mostly so in the autumn. "Of course I have that."

Helga who is so cosmopolitan also cooks Icelandic food, "for example I follow these traditions here in Iceland. Shrove Tuesday then there is salted meat and bean soup, on *bolludagurinn*[206] I have buns, I completely follow this."

Úlrika is from Poland and claims she does not cook anything typically Polish. "I do not cook anything especially Polish, one thing I do which is really Polish is salmon like my mother does in cream baked in the oven. But it is the only thing that I do. I just eat lamb like the Icelanders and chicken. ... I eat everything except the sour food which I find disgusting, I do not eat that, I do not eat shark or skate. What else? Yes, not rams testicles or singed sheep heads, I do not eat such things. But all ordinary food I eat. (Do you make any Icelandic food?) Meat soup four to five times a year and bean soup on Shrove Tuesday."

Conclusion

My informants remember caring for the family by cooking and providing food with pride. They felt they were in a stronger position than their in laws when it came to food, as they were used to more variety of ingredients and more complicated cooking. This gives them power in their accounts and they portray themselves as active and in charge of caring for their families. But this does not necessarily mean that they had real power because there were and still are various constraints on food choices. Apart from

[206] *Bolludagurinn* is the Monday before Shrove Tuesday, large quantities of cream buns are consumed, some bake their own but traditionally they are bought in the bakery.

the obvious ones like the selection on offer, there are the ones which relate to social norms and demands made by family and neighbours. Guests and kin also had to be cared for and the care in terms of receiving visitors and providing them with food became visible and public. The reputation of how one receives visitors and the comparison with others are also certain constraints because they make the norms apparent and at the same time the fact that they are not fulfilled if that is the case.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

In the preface to an interview book with five of the elderly German immigrant women, the biographer says that the German girls [sic] who settled in Iceland and married Icelandic men have assimilated remarkably well into Icelandic society, and that "their children are Icelanders" (Sigurðsson, 1999:8). Implicit in this is that the women themselves are not Icelandic, at the same time as their children are no half Icelanders but complete ones.

In this thesis I have focused on how immigrant women have been incorporated into Icelandic society by comparing two groups of women migrants, a group who arrived in 1949 and a younger group who has arrived in the last five to fifteen years. I focused on the processes where by they have decided to stay and settle, how they made home, married had children, in general how they became a part of Icelandic society and the role of domesticity and the home in this incorporation.

In the Icelandic nationalist discourse the purity of the blood and the Icelandic race are important. During the World War II Icelandic women were heavily criticized for having relationships with foreign soldiers, if they had children with foreign men the Icelandic race would be in danger because of mixing and pollution. The German women were accepted as mothers to Icelandic children in the 1950s because, according to Yuval-Davis (1997), women are considered more flexible when it comes to national identities. Sigríður Matthíasdóttir (2004) has also argued that the true Icelander was really a man, an individual with masculine attributes. Following this I argue that it was possible to accept German mothers because they could be made Icelandic through domestication.

The domestication of immigrant women in the informal and private sphere is centred on the idea of making them Icelandic and thus not foreign, including them within the Icelandic cultural boundaries which at the same time make them almost invisible but passable like Yuval-Davis claims (1997:53). Although they will never become completely Icelandic in the sense that their origin is never forgotten, they are Icelandic enough for their children to be completely Icelandic. They are in a way absorbed into the family and thus the community. This takes place through the family and the home. It is in

the role of a mother and housewife, the home maker that the foreign woman was made to become and became Icelandic.

The assimilationist policies of the Icelandic state affected the immigrant women marrying in 1949 and 1950 and they lost certain rights by becoming Icelandic citizens. Some of them had to change their names, they could not give German names to their children, and they also lost their German citizenship. There was however, also assimilation at the informal and private level and I have argued that this partly took place by fulfilling obligations towards the husband's kin. Through marriage the German women not only secured their legal and economic status and became citizens, they also committed themselves to overtake and fulfil certain obligations towards their husband and his family. An important part of this is the knowledge of the husband's family, knowing the kinship relationships and to be able to describe them using the correct kinship terms, as well as explain and pass on this complicated kinship knowledge to the children.

This brings to mind the argument of Pinson (1976) who argues that the kin is the core of the Icelandic psyche. As Yuval–Davis points out the primordialist view in nationalism sees the nation as a natural extension of family and kinship relations (1997:15). The Icelandic nationalism is based on primordialist ideas like Guðmundur Hálfdanarson has shown (2001). It is therefore easy to make the argument that all Icelanders are like one family only divided into lineages like Pinson suggest. It is certainly the image that seems to appear when one parent is foreign. However, the importance of kinship ties with both the mother's and the father's families and thus a bilateral kinship system is both known and becomes clear when genealogies and their meaning is looked at closer. There are no patrilineal or patrilocal kinship groups, instead there is a complex web of relations which call for a considerable knowledge. This knowledge is important to be able to situate other people on the social matrix which one gets entangled in by marrying into another family.

There are remains of patrilineality in the naming system but more than anything it speaks of the importance of continuity and the preserving of traditions. As Sutton (1997) argues names are not just a way of establishing continuity between the past and the present but they can also establish continuity between the present and a national past. In

looking at names and name giving in Iceland it becomes clear that the traditions of name giving are very much linked to the kinship structure and are a part of the Icelandic cultural heritage. Iceland is also seen to be the only place where the patronymic naming system still prevails and as such is the keeper of tradition, all of which makes an important part of Icelandic nationalism which stresses that a special culture and language give the Icelanders historical and natural right to independence.

It is considered very important to prevent the invention of new names, which really are non names, and changes to traditional names which go against the traditional way of writing them. The correct names are the ones with history and tradition. By giving Icelandic names to immigrant women and their children boundaries are remade, renaming people means they can be detached from their background and fixed onto a new social matrix (Bodenhorn & Vom Bruck, 2006). In so doing it becomes possible to incorporate them into the family which is also Icelandic society in a nutshell.

Naming is not just a private but also a public matter reflected in the law from 1952 which required foreigners to change their names for Icelandic ones upon receiving citizenship. Despite changes in the new name law from1996 it is nevertheless carefully outlined what is and is not allowed. Along with informal pressures on names, in the ways they are changed in the pronunciation as well as in the idea of "silly" names, it really remains a question whether, despite the new law, there have been any real changes in accepting foreign names in Iceland.

The experiences of my informants reflect the invention and intervention of the state through the law on names and also that in the more private sphere of family and friends the names of the women are changed and adapted to Icelandic custom and pronunciation and thus made to look and sound more Icelandic. This takes place irrespective of the law on naming and comes from the social pressures of family and friends. There is thus a discrepancy at the two levels of formal state led naming codes and informal naming practices.

Despite the changes in the law on names allowing immigrants to keep their names when becoming Icelandic citizens, I argue that these informal naming practices still continue and are an important basis for the incorporation of immigrant women into Icelandic social and kinship networks. I also argue that the naming of children was and

continues to an extent, to be about the making and consolidation of kinship relationships. It can however become problematic if immigrant women are not allowed to give their children names from their own family or names from their language. My material shows that while the immigrant women accept names changes as a way into the community, they make sure at the same time that through naming practices their children can participate in family relations both in Iceland and Germany. Despite changes in the law my younger informants make sure their children have decisively Icelandic names. The children of the elderly German women all have Icelandic names and patronyms according to the Icelandic naming system. It is thus very difficult if not impossible to detect any difference between their names and the names of those who do not have mixed parentage. They have become, through the names, completely Icelandic in sound and writing of their names. This idea of assimilation beyond recognition surfaces repeatedly again and again in the whole discussion about names in Iceland as well as in practice. This is also what has made immigrants invisible for most of the 20th century; they have "disappeared" officially so to speak.

My thesis show that not only was there a sizable group of immigrants in Iceland but also that the assimilation was very strong at the private level as well as the public level. I also show that the question of how and if foreigners can become Icelanders goes way beyond the mere technical question of becoming an Icelandic citizen. It is an ongoing process which takes place in the private domestic sphere and is about doing the proper things in the proper Icelandic way as well as about certain social knowledge. Despite talks of multiculturalism for some years and a very liberal appearance of Icelandic society there are still very strong assimilationist patterns of behaviour and thought when it comes to foreigners and particularly so at the informal level.

The home is important in Icelandic culture and society, a setting for social life, similar to Norway (Garvey, 2002; Gullestad, 1984). Women make the home, as Gullestad points out, and the home is a highly shared cultural symbol (Gullestad, 1993:131). The idea of what a home should look like is reflected in the memories of my elderly informants and in telling their life story they use and refer to the objects in their home which reveal their relationship to other people, not least relationships and obligations to kin and family in law. Icelandic homes did not all look the same and there was and is

difference between rural and urban areas and class position. But the cultural values that the home stood for were the same, thrift and not showing off, hospitality, inviting people into the home, caring for them and feeding them. I have argued that the immigrant women made an Icelandic home. Such a home is seen to be a "proper" home into which you can invite guests and kin and care for your family in a proper way. The idea of the proper home is also reflected in the home of my informants today and it is through the objects and furniture that they tell the story of their life.

My young informants underline how important the norms relating to the home still are. They are however, not quite certain what the norms are and in a way it is a source of frustration to them. They complain that they do not get an opportunity to live up to the values of hospitality while also complaining about experiencing pressures to conform to a powerful ideal of a modern Icelandic home in the material sense where everything has to be so fine, an ideal they have internalized and compare themselves to (Clarke, 2001).

The memories of the older women are all the more important now because of the increase in immigration which means a re-evaluation of themselves as immigrants and as contributors to the history of Iceland, a history which they have been denied, mainly because of how strong the assimilation in reality was. These women, who were 'lost and forgotten', have gained a voice in a society that wants to listen, in a context where difference is real and important. In such a context it is important to take apart the often fairly superficial story offered by the media.

Some of the women have told their stories to various reporters and biographers, others were telling their story for the first time to me. The interest of the media, radio and newspaper interviews have helped in the shaping of a 'public' narrative which the women share up to a point, a collective memory of sorts, and which they also use to define their own story against. The storytelling in the media thus becomes a kind of a formative process (Hoskins, 1998) and also offers the temporal sequence for their own narrative (Kirmayer, 1998) necessary for easy consumption. The editing that the story undergoes in the media, as seen in the film María and the documentary film by Miriam Halberstam, offers a point of view which many Icelanders as well as some of the children of the women seem to accept, as at least the story of other German women if not the one they

know. As such the media story has more to say about the way Icelanders view their own past than about the German women.

In my thesis however I go beyond this 'public' narrative and show the active nature of their memories. By collecting the memories of their everyday experiences and using objects which provide a different insight into their lives, it becomes clear how they form and reconstruct their narrative by remembering and forgetting and thus how experience produces and reshapes memories (Lambek & Antze, 1998). I therefore get a picture of the identity of the women which goes beyond the 'self' constructed for public consumption in the edited version of the narrative although I have to take the responsibility of co-creating their story through the ethnographic interview (Hoskins, 1998).

An important part of this is to focus on the material culture of the home, of collecting stories of objects and photographs and particularly so of the food and memories linked to food making and consumption of food. By looking at the experiences of food, a new method of investigation and separate from the reliance on language and documentation, the informal and hidden is revealed, and thus I approach the subjectivity of being domesticated as an Icelander and show the importance of the sensory roles in these processes.

The autochthonous person versus the stranger and boundary making between groups are well known themes within the anthropological literature. It is becoming more and more important to investigate these issues in Iceland with growing immigration but also with growing intolerance towards immigrants. The central issues in migration studies have been mobility, the reasons for migration, the effects it has on the sending and receiving communities and the maintenance of social and economic relations across national borders. Increased migration and tensions within various Western countries have also called into question the policies of immigration, both assimilationism and multiculturalism.

Migration has also become an important issue in Iceland as immigration has increased rapidly and most research has focused on the mobility. As a part of the European Economic Agreement (EEA) Iceland has open borders for people from the European Union. This limits the control the state has had over migrant labour and the

migrants themselves. Surveys on attitudes in Iceland towards immigrants show that they are changing and negative ideas are surfacing. Despite being among the most positive nations in Europe with regard to immigrants most Icelanders want immigrants to fully assimilate into Icelandic society by taking up Icelandic customs and traditions and give up their own. There is thus a discrepancy between this view and the public policy which has put more emphasis on multiculturalism as the researchers point out (Önnudóttir & Sigurjónsson, 2008).

It is thus clear that migration is an important issue in Icelandic society, and of interest and relevance to the anthropology of Iceland. The immigrants are not leaving despite the current crisis, and the question becomes one of how Icelandic society has adapted, or not adapted to this. My thesis focuses on migrant women who stay, settle and establish families by marrying into the local community. Therefore it draws out different experiences than the traditional focus on mobility. This is a new focus at least in Iceland and offers a new perspective on the migrants' experience. It is clear that the incorporation of migrant women in the domestic sphere means that a great deal of control is exercised over them. This control is not least possible because of them being women. Thus it is also an issue of gender. Further research on the different experiences of men and women is needed and particularly to address the immigrants' experience of becoming a part of Icelandic community at the informal and private level.

I argue that immigrants and women in particular have been partly absorbed through kinship relations into the society. This has made them pass as Icelandic enough for their children to be completely Icelandic which was what really mattered. The purity of the blood was less important than the membership of children to any one family or kin group. As a result it becomes a question which needs to be addressed whether and then what kind of boundaries exist between Icelanders and immigrants who have no kinship entrance into Icelandic society. While the assimilation was about disappearance of difference, the new ways of keeping track of immigrants after they receive citizenship can be seen as making of a new boundary, underlining the difference and keeping track of who is really Icelandic. This is something which policy makers need to be sensitive to.

I also argue that the idea of the foreigner in Iceland is constantly being reclassified, that new boundaries are being drawn and redrawn and that these boundaries

have changed as Iceland has become more multicultural. But instead of becoming a truly multiculturalist society, different shades of foreignness are being developed. The foreigners will never become truly Icelandic, despite gaining citizenship. Although state citizenship appears to be equal it relies on rules and regulations of immigration as Yuval-Davis points out (1997). And as immigration grows 'invisible boundaries' become more potent. Gullestad argues that the focus on ancestry and cultural sameness implies an invisible fence for the acceptance of 'immigrants' as unmarked citizens who 'belong' in Norway (Gullestad, 2002:59). These invisible fences are real in Iceland in the form of strange or 'silly' names, foreign accent and incorrect Icelandic (Thórarinsdóttir, 1999) as well as the natural origin of the Icelander (Guðmundsson, 1997). And as the fences become more and more invisible there is also danger of growing ethnification of national identity like Gullestad claims for Norway (2002) and therefore potential conflicts between different groups.

Bibliography

Following Icelandic tradition, as explained in chapter 3, I refer to Icelandic authors giving their full name but they are listed in the bibliography by their patronyms.

Ammendrup, María J. (1998) *Vinnuviðhorf Íslendinga*. MA thesis in Sociology. University of Iceland. Reykjavík. (The work ethic of Icelanders).

Anthias, F. & G. Lazaridis (eds) (2002) *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe.* Oxford & New York: Berg.

Anthias, F. (2002) "Metaphors of Home: Gendering New Migrations to Southern Europe." In F. Anthias & G. Lazaridis (eds) *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe.* Oxford & New York: Berg.

Appadurai, A. (1986) "Introduction: commodities and the politics of value." In A. Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ágústsson, Hörður (1987) "Íslenski torfbærinn." In Frosti F. Jóhannsson (ed.) *Íslensk þjóðmenning I. Uppruni og Umhverfi*. Reykjavík: Bókaútgáfan Þjóðsaga. (The Icelandic turfhouse).

Ágústsson, Hörður (1998) *Íslensk byggingararfleifð I*. Reykjavík: Húsafriðunarnefnd ríkisins. (The Icelandic architectural heritage).

Árnadóttir, Arndís S. (2006) "Fagurbætur á heimilum. Frá baðstofu til stássstofu 1918-1930." In *Þriðja íslenska söguþingið 18.-21. maí 2006. Ráðstefnurit.* Benedikt Eyþórsson & Hrafnkell Lárusson (eds). Reykjavík: Sagnfræðingafélag Íslands. (Redecoration of homes in Iceland between 1918-1930).

Ásgeirsson, Ólafur (1988) *Iðnbylting hugarfarsins. Átök um atvinnuþróun á Íslandi 1900-1940.* Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands. (The Revolution of Thought).

Bahloul, J. (1999) "The Memory House: Time and Place in Jewish Immigrant Culture in France." In D. Birdwell-Pheasant and D. Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds) *House Life: Space, Place and Family in Europe.* Oxford: Berg.

Baldursdóttir, Bára (2002) *"Kynlegt stríð: Íslenskar konur í orðræðu síðari heimsstyrjaldar."* In Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir (ed.) *2. Íslenska söguþingið 30. maí - 1. júní. Ráðstefnurit I.* Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, Sagnfræðingafélag Íslands. (Discourse of Icelandic women during WWII).

Baldvinsson, Thórir (1939) "Heimili sveitanna." In *Húsakostur og hýbýlaprýði*. Reykjavík: Mál og menning. (The homes in the countryside).

Barlau, S. B. (1981) "Old Icelandic Kinship Terminology: An Anomaly", *Ethnology*, vol. 20, No. 3. pp. 191-202.

Basu, P. (2002) *Homecomings. Genealogy, Heritage-Tourism and Identity in the Scottish Highland Diaspora*. PhD thesis University College London.

Benson, S. (2006) "Injurious Names: Naming, Disavowal, and Recuperation in Contexts of Slavery and Emancipation." In B. Bodenhorn and G. Vom Bruck (eds) *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bernharðsson, Eggert Þór (1998) *Saga Reykjavíkur I-II.* Reykjavík: Iðunn. (History of Reykjavík).

Bernharðsson, Eggert Þór (2000) *Undir bárujárnsboga. Braggalíf í Reykjavík 1940-1970.* Reykjavík: JPV Forlag. (Life in bow huts in Reykjavík 1940-1970).

Birdwell-Pheasant, D. & D. Lawrence-Zúniga (eds) (1999) *House life: Space, Place and Family in Europe*. Oxford: Berg.
Björgvinsson, Davíð Þór (1995) *Barnaréttur*. Reykjavík: Bókaútg. Orators. (Legal rights of children).
Björnsdóttir, Inga Dóra (1994) "´Þeir áttu sér móður´. Kvenkenndir þættir í mótun íslenskrar þjóðernisvitundar." In Ragnhildur Richter & Þórunn Sigurðardóttir (eds) *Fléttur*. Reykjavík: Rannsóknastofa í kvennafræðum. Háskólaútgáfan. ('They had a mother'. Feminine attributes in the formation of Icelandic nationalism).
Björnsson, Árni (1993) *Saga daganna*. Reykjavík: Mál og menning. (The History of Festive Days).
Blunt, A. & A. Varley (2004) "Geographies at home", *Cultural Geographies* 11:3-6.
Blunt, A. & R. Dowling (2006) *home*. London and New York: Routledge.
Bock, B. (2006) "Gender and Migration: An Overview." In B. Bock & S. Shortall (eds) *Rural Gender Relations: Issues and Case Studies*. Wallingford: CABI Publishing.
Bodenhorn, B. and G. Vom Bruck (2006) "'Entangled in Histories': An Introduction to the Anthropology of Names and Naming." In B. Bodenhorn and G. Vom Bruck (eds) *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Bodenhorn, B. and G. Vom Bruck (eds) (2006) *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Boholm, Å. (1983) *Swedish kinship*. *Exploration in Cultural Processes of Belonging and Continuity.* Gothenburg Studies in Social Anthropology. University of Gothenburg.
Bommes, M & E. Morawksa (eds) (2005) "Introduction." In M. Bommes & E. Morawksa (eds) *International Migration Research. Constructions, Omissions and the Promises of Interdisciplinarity.* Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate.
Bourdieu, P. (1979) *Algeria 1960: the disenchantment of the world, the sense of honour, the Kabyle house or the world reversed.* Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Bradley, D. 1990: "Marriage, Family, Property and Inheritance in Swedish Law", *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 2. (Apr., 1990), pp. 370-395.
Brah, A. (1996) *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge.
Breger, R. & R. Hill. 1998: *Cross-Cultural Marriage*. Oxford & New York: Berg.
Brynjúlfsdóttir, Ólöf (1996) *Íslenskur ríkisborgararéttur 1944-1996. Viðhorf til veitingar ríkisfangs, þróun laga um íslenskan ríkisborgararétt og nýir íslenskir ríkisborgarar á tímabilinu.* BA thesis in History. University of Iceland. (Icelandic citizenship 1944-1996).
Buchli, V. (2003) *The Material Culture Reader*. Oxford: Berg.
Búnaðarsamtök á Íslandi 150 ára. Afmælisrit Búnaðarfélags Íslands 1837-1987 I-II (1988) Hjörtur E. Þórarinsson, Jónas Jónsson, Ólafur E. Stefánsson (eds.). Reykjavík: Búnaðarfélag Íslands. (The Icelandic Agricultural Association 150 years old.)
Carsten, J. & S. Hugh-Jones (eds) (1995) *About the House: Lévi-Strauss and Beyond.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Carsten, J. (2004) *After Kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Carsten, J. (ed.) (2000) *Cultures of Relatedness*. *New approaches to the study of kinship.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Castels, S. (2002) “Migration and Community Formation under Conditions of Globalization”, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 36, No. 4, Host Societies and the Reception of Immigrants: Institutions, Markets and Policies (winter), pp. 1143-1168.
Charles, N. & M. Kerr (1988) *Women, Food and Families*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Charles, N. (1995) “Food and family ideology.” In S. Jackson and S. Moores (eds) *The Politics of Domestic Consumption.* London & New York: Critical Readings.
Chevalier, S. (1998) “From woolen carpet to grass carpet.” In D. Miller (ed.) *Material Cultures. Why some Things Matter*. London: UCL Press.
Chevalier, S. (1999) “The French two-home project: materialization of family identity.” In I. Cieraad (ed.) *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic space*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
Chevalier, S. “The Cultural Construction of Domestic Space in France and Great Britain”, *Signs*, vol. 27 no. 3 (spring), pp. 847-856.
Cieraad, I. (ed.) (1999) *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic space*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
Clarke, A. J. (2001) “The Aesthetics of Social Aspiration.” In D. Miller (ed.) *Home Possessions*. Oxford: Berg.
Connerton, P. (1989) *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Davidoff, L. & C. Hall (1995) “’My own fireside’: the creation of the middle-class home.” In S. Jackson & S. Moores (eds) *The Politics of Domestic Consumption.* New York & London: Critical Readings.
DeLaet, D. (1999) “Introduction: The Invisibility of Women in Scholarship of International Migration.” In G. Kelson & D. DeLaet (eds) *Gender and Immigration*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
Devault, M. L. (1991) *Feeding the Family. The Social Organization of Caring as Gendered Work.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
Devault, M. L. (1997) “Conflict and Deference.” In C. Counihan & P. Van Esterik (eds) *Food and Culture Reader*, 2nd ed. 2008. New York & London: Routledge.
Douglas, M. (1971/1997) “Deciphering a meal.” In C. Counihan & P. van Esterik. (eds) *Food and Culture Reader*, 2nd ed. 2008. New York & London: Routledge.
Douglas, M. (1984/1966) *Purity and Danger*. London & New York: Routledge.
Drazin, A. (2002) “Chasing Moths: Cleanliness, Intimacy and Progress in Romania.” In R. Mandel and C. Humphrey (eds) *Markets and Moralities.* Oxford & New York: Berg.
Eggerz, Solveig (2008) *Seal woman*. Denver CO: Ghost Road Press.
Einarsdóttir, Björg (1984) *Úr ævi og starfi íslenskra kvenna. Útvarpserindi I-III*. Reykjavík: Bókrún. (Of lives and work of Icelandic women).
Eiríksson, Pétur (2008) *Þýska landnámið*. Reykjavík: Sögufélagið. (The German settlement).
Erlendsdóttir, Guðrún (1988) *Óvígð sambúð*. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókamenntafélag. (On law of cohabitation).
Erlendsdóttir, Sigríður Th. (1980) “Í vist.” In *Konur skrifa til heiðurs Önnu Sigurðardóttir*. Reykjavík: Sögufélag Reykjavíkur. (In domestic service.)
Forty, A. & S. Kuchler (eds) (1999) *The Art of Forgetting*. Oxford: Berg.

Frímann, Guðmundur (1968) *Stúlkan úr Svartaskógi*. Reykjavík: Ægisútgáfan.
Frykman, J. & Ö. Löfgren (1987) *Culture Builders. A Historical Anthropology of Middle-Class Life.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
Garðardóttir, Ólöf (1998) "Þáttur kvenna í flutningum til sjávarsíðunnar við upphaf þéttbýlismyndunar á Íslandi." In Friðrik H. Jónsson (ed.) *Rannsóknir í félagsvísindum*. Reykjavík: Félagsvísindastofnun og hagfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands. (Women's role in migration to growing towns in Iceland in the beginning of the 20th century).
Garðarsdóttir, Ólöf (1999) "Naming practices and the importance of kinship networks in early nineteenth century Iceland", *The History of the Family An International Quarterly*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 297–314.
Garvey, P. (2001) "Organized Disorder: Moving Furniture in Norwegian Homes." In D. Miller (ed.) *Home possessions*. Oxford: Berg.
Garvey, P. (2002) *Decorative Order: Normativity and Transgression in the Norwegian Home.* Unpublished PhD thesis. University College London.
Gaunt, D. (1992) "Review: Family and Household in Iceland, 1801-1930. Studies in the Relationship between Demographic and Socio-Economic Development, Social Legislation and Family and Household Structures" by Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson. In *The English Historical Review*, vol. 107, No. 424, pp. 748.
Gaunt, D. (1997) "Urban clannishness and the nuclear kin: trends in Swedish family life." In M. Gullestad & M. Segalen (ed.) *Family and Kinship in Europe*. London & Washington: Pinter.
Gellner, E. (1983) *Nations & Nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the late Modern Age*. Oxford: Polity Press.
Gísladóttir, Hallgerður (1999) *Íslensk matarhefð*. Reykjavík: Mál og menning. (Icelandic food traditions).
Gíslason, Ingólfur V. (1997) *Karlmenn eru bara karlmenn*. Viðhorf og væntingar íslenskra karla. Reykjavík: Skrifstofa Jafnréttismála. (Men are just men. Values and expectations of Icelandic men).
Glick Schiller, N., L. Basch & C. Szanton Blanc (1995) "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration", *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Jan.), pp. 48-63.
Green, N. (2006) "Time and the Study of Assimilation", *Rethinking History*, Vol. 10, No. 2, June, pp. 239 – 258.
Grétarsdóttir, Tinna (2002) *"Sýndarsýningin Ísland."* In Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir (ed.) *2. Íslenska söguþingið 30. maí -1. júní. Ráðstefnirit I.* Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, Sagnfræðingafélag Íslands. (The Cybershow Iceland).
Grímsson, Ólafur R. & Þorbjörn Broddason (1977) *Íslenska þjóðfélagið. Félagsgerð og stjórnkerfi.* Reykjavík: Örn og Örlygur. (The Icelandic society. Social and political structure.)
Guðmundsdóttir, Margrét (1995) *Aldarspor*. Saga Hvítabandsins. Reykjavík: Skákprent. (The history of the Women´s Association Hospital "White Ribbon").
Guðmundsson, Arnar (1997) *"Átökin um 'Íslendinginn':Drög að nýrri sjálfsmynd Íslendinga."* In Guðmundur I. Guðmundsson & Eiríkur K. Björnsson (eds) *Íslenska söguþingið 28.-31. maí. Ráðstefnurit.* Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands,

Sagnfræðingafélag Íslands. (The fight over the Icelander: draft for a new self identity for Icelanders).
Gullestad, M. (1984) *Kitchen-table society*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
Gullestad, M. (1989) "Small Facts and Large Issues: The Anthropology of Contemporary Scandinavian Society", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 18, pp. 71-93.
Gullestad, M. (1990) "Review: Materials for a Discussion of the Ethnography of Iceland. The Anthropology of Iceland" by E. Paul Durrenberger; Gísli Pálsson, *Current Anthropology*, vol. 31, No. 4. pp. 467-468.
Gullestad, M. (1992) *The Art of Social Relations*. *Essays on Culture, Social Action and Everyday Life in Modern Norway*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.
Gullestad, M. (1993) "Home decoration as popular culture. Constructing homes, genders and classes in Norway." In T. del Valle (ed.) *Gendered Anthropology.* London: Routledge.
Gullestad, M. (2002) "Invisible Fences: Egalitarianism, Nationalism and Racism", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* N. S. 8, pp. 45-63.
Gullestad, M. & M. Segalen (eds) (1997) *Family and Kinship in Europe*. London & Washington: Pinter.
Gunnlaugsson, Gísli Ágúst (1988) *Family and Household in Iceland 1801-1930: Studies in the relationship between demographic and socio-economic development, social legislation and family and household structures.* PhD thesis, Uppsala. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell Internation.
Gunnlaugsson, Gísli Ágúst & Loftur Guttormsson (1997) "Að treysta böndin? Hjónavígslu- og skírnarvottar í íslensku samfélagi á fyrri hluta 19. aldar." In Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson *Saga og samfélag. Þættir úr félagssögu 19. og 20. aldar*. Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands. (Securing the ties? Best men and godparents in Icelandic society in the first half of the 19th century).
Gunnlaugsson, Gísli Ágúst & Loftur Guttormsson (1993) "Household Structure and urbanization in three Icelandic fishing districts 1880-1930", *Journal of Family History* 18 (4), pp. 315-340.
Gunnlaugsson, Gísli Ágúst (1997) *Saga og samfélag. Þættir úr félagssögu 19. og 20. aldar*. Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands. (History and Society. Social History of the 19th and 20th centuries).
Guttormsson, Loftur (1983) *Bernska, ungdómur og uppeldi á einveldisöld*. Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, Sögufélag. (Childhood, youth and upbringing during the 17th and 18th centuries).
Hagskinna (1997) *Sögulega hagtölur um Ísland. Hagstofa Íslands*. Guðmundur Jónsson & Magnús S. Magnússon (eds). (Historical Icelandic Statistics).
Halbwachs, M. (1992) *On collective memory.* London: University of Chicago Press.
Hálfdanarson, Guðmundur (1986) "Börn, höfuðstóll fátæklingsins?", *Saga,* 24, pp. 121-146. (Children, capital of the poor?).
Hálfdanarson, Guðmundur (1995) "Social distinctions and national unity: on politics of nationalism in nineteenth-century Iceland", *History of European Ideas,* Vol. 21, No. 6, pp. 763-779.
Hálfdanarson, Guðmundur (2001) *Íslenska þjóðríkið – uppruni og endimörk*. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag og ReykjavíkurAkademían. (The Icelandic state – origins and limits).

Hammersley, M. & P. Atkins (2007/1983) *Ethnography. Principles in Practice*. 3rd ed. London & New York: Routledge.
Hastrup, K. (1981) "Kinship in medieval Iceland", *Folk* 23, pp. 331-344.
Hastrup, K. (1990) *Island of Antropology: studies of past and present Iceland*. Odense: Odense University Press.
Helgadóttir, Herdís (2000) *Konur í hersetnu landi: Ísland á árunum 1940-1947*. MA thesis. University of Iceland. (Women in an occupied country, Iceland 1940-1947).
Helgadóttir, Herdís (2001) *Úr fjötrum. Íslenskar konur og erlendur her*. Reykjavík: Mál og menning. (Icelandic women and a foreign army.)
Herzfeld, M. (1982) "When Exceptions Define the Rules: Greek Baptismal Names and the Negotiation of Identity", *Journal of Anthropological Research*, vol. 38, No. 3 (Autumn), pp. 288-302.
Hirsch, M. (1997) *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press.
Hodgkin, K. & S. Radstone (eds) (2003) *Contested pasts: the politics of memory*. London: Routledge.
Holzman, J.D. (2006) "Food and Memory", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 35, Oct. pp. 361-378.
Hoskins, J. (1998) *Biographical Objects. How Things Tell the Stories of People´s Lives*. New York & London: Routledge.
Hoskins, J. (2006) "Agency, Biography and Objects". In C. Tilley et al. *Handbook of Material Culture*. Oxford: Berg.
Howes, D. (2005) *Empire of the Senses. The Sensual Culture Reader*. Oxford & New York: Berg.
Indriðason, Arnaldur (2007) *Harðskafi*. Reykjavík: Vaka-Helgafell.
Ingimundarson, Valur (2002) *"Sögulegt minni og pólitískt vald."* In Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir (ed.) *2. Íslenska söguþingið 30. maí -1. júní. Ráðstefnirit I.* Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, Sagnfræðingafélag Íslands. (Historical memory and political power).
Íslensk mannanöfn (1915) Lög, nefndarálit og nafnaskrár. Reykjavík: Gutenberg. Stjórnarráðið. (Icelandic name law of 1915).
Íslenskur söguatlas 3, saga samtíðar 20. öldin (1993) Árni Daníel Júlíusson, Jón Ólafur Ísberg & Helgi Skúli Kjartansson (eds). Reykjavík: Iðunn. (Atlas of Icelandic History Atlas).
Jochens, J. (1991) "Review: Family and Household in Iceland, 1801-1930: Studies in the Relationship between Demographic and Socio-Economic Development, Social Legislation, and Family and Household Structures", by Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson, *The American Historical Review*, vol. 96, no. 3. pp. 895-896.
Jónsdóttir, Ragnheiður (1954) *Ég á gull að gjalda*. Reykjavík: Helgafell.
Jónsson, Eiríkur (1990) *Lífsstríðið. Æviferð Margrétar Róbertsdóttur úr Þriðja ríki Hitlers til Þorlákshafnar*. Reykjavík: Fróði.
Jónsson, Friðrik H. (2003) "Afstaða Íslendinga til útlendinga." In Friðrik H. Jónsson (ed.) *Rannsóknir í félagsvísindum IV*. Reykjavík: Félagsvísindastofnum Háskóla Íslands. Háskólaútgáfan.
Jónsson, Guðmundur (2005) "The Icelandic Welfare State in the Twentieth Century", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 26, Vol. 30 (1), pp. 251-267.

Júlíusdóttir, Sigrún (2001) *Fjölskyldur við aldahvörf*. Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan. (Families at the turn of the century).
Júlíusdóttir, Sigrún, Friðrik H. Jónsson, Nanna K. Sigurðardóttir og Sigurður J. Grétarsson (eds) (1995) *Barnafjölskyldur. Samfélag, lífsgildi, mótun.* Reykjavík: Félagsmálaráðuneytið. (Families with children. A research of the life of parents and children in Iceland).
Karlsdóttir, Unnur (2003) "Maður íslenskur. Hugmyndir á fyrri hluta 20. aldar um samband íslensks þjóðernis og kynþáttar." In Jón Yngvi Jóhannsson, Kolbeinn Óttarsson Proppé & Sverrir Jakobsson (eds) *Þjóðerni í þúsund ár?* Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan. (An Icelander. Ideas in the first half of the 20th century of the relationship between Icelandic nationality and race).
Karlsdóttir, Unnur B. (1998) *Mannkynbætur. Hugmyndir um bætta kynstofna hérlendis og erlendis á 19. og 20. öld.* Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun, Háskólaútgáfan. (Eugenics in Iceland in the 19th and 20th centuries).
Karlsson, Kristinn (1995) „Fjölskyldur og heimili á Íslandi, breytingar síðustu áratugi og sérstaða Íslands." In *Fjölskyldan. Uppspretta lífsgilda*. Reykjavík: Landsnefnd um ár fjölskyldunnar. Félagsmálaráðuneytið. (Families and home in Iceland. Report on the Family ed. by the ministry of Social Services).
Kirmeyer, L. J. (1998) "Landscapes of memory: Trauma, Narrative, and Dissociation." In M. Lambek & P. Antze (eds) *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. London: Routledge.
Kvaran, Guðrún & Sigurður Jónsson frá Arnarvatni (1991) *Nöfn Íslendinga*. Reykjavík: Heimskringla. (Names of Icelanders).
Lambek, M. (1998) "The Past Imperfect: Remembering as Moral Practice." In M. Lambek & P. Antze (eds) *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. London: Routledge.
Lambek, M. and Antze, P. (1998) "Introduction: Forecasting Memory." In M. Lambek & P. Antze (eds) *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. London: Routledge.
Law on foreigners: 96/2002.
Law on Icelandic citizenship: 100/1952. Revision: 62/1998. Subsection 1129/2008.
Law on Institute of State Settlement: 35/1946.
Law on instruction for women on contraception and abortion: 38/1935.
Law on names: 54/1925.
Law on new farms: 25/1936.
Law on names: 45/1996. The first bill with explanations and comments: http://www.althingi.is/altext/120/s/0073.html, downloaded Oct 26 2009.
Laxness, Halldór (1934-35) *Sjálfstætt fólk*. Reykjavík: Vaka-Helgafell. Ed. 1991.
Laxness, Halldór (1968) *Kristnihald undir jökli*. Reykjavík: Vaka-Helgafell. Ed. 1990.
Layne, L. (2006) "´Your Child Deserves a Name´: Possessive Individualism and the Politics of Memory in Pregnancy Loss." In B. Bodenhorn and G. Vom Bruck (eds) *The Anthropology of Names and Naming.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Lárusson, Ólafur (1960) *Nöfn Íslendinga árið 1703*. Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag. (Names of Icelanders in 1703).
Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966) *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidenfield & Nicholson.
Lévi-Strauss, C. (1970) *The Raw and the Cooked*. London: Jonathon Cape.

Lupton, D. (1996) *Food, the Body and the Self*. London: Sage Publications. Repr. 1998.
Lýðsson, Páll (1993) *Lífið er tilviljun. Ellinor á Seli rekur lífsferil sinn.* S.I.: Ellinor Kjartansson.
Löfgren, Ö. (1980) "Historical Perspectives on Scandinavian Peasantries", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 9, pp. 187-215.
Löfgren, Ö. (1984) "The Sweetness of Home. Class, Culture and Family Life in Sweden", *Ethnologia Europaea* XIV, pp. 44-64.
Löfgren, Ö. (1990) "Consuming interests", *Culture & History*, 7, pp. 5-45.
Löfgren, Ö. (1997) "Scenes from a troubled marriage", *Journal of Material Culture* 2 (1), pp. 95-113.
Madigan, R. & M. Munro (1999) "´The more we are together´ Domestic space, gender and privacy." In T. Chapman & J. Hockey (eds) *Ideal Homes?* London: Routledge.
Magnússon, Magnús S. (1993) "Efnahagsþróun á Íslandi 1880-1990." In *Íslensk þjóðfélagsþróun 1880-1990*. Guðmundur Hálfdanarson & Svanur Kristjánsson (eds). Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands. (The Economic Development of Icelandic Society 1880-1990).
Magnússon, Sigurður Gylfi (1990) "Review: Family and Household in Iceland 1801-1930: Studies in the Relationship between Demographic and Socio-Economic Development, Social Legislation and Family and Household Structures" by Gísli Ágúst Gunnlaugsson, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 188-190.
Marcoux, J. S. (2001) "The Refurbishment of Memory." D. Miller (ed.) *Home possessions*. Oxford: Berg.
Matthíasdóttir, Sigríður (1995) "Réttlæting þjóðernis. Samanburður á alþýðufyrirlestrum Jóns Aðils og hugmyndum Johanns Gottlieb Fichte", *Skírnir* 169, pp. 36-64. (The justification of nationality. Comparison between the lectures of Jón Aðils and ideas of Johanns Gottlieb Fichte).
Matthíasdóttir, Sigríður (2004) *Hinn sanni Íslendingur. Þjóðerni, kyngervi og vald á Íslandi 1900-1930*. Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan. (The true Icelander. Nationality, gender and power in Iceland 1900-1930).
Mauss, M. (1985/1938) "A category of human mind: the notion of person: the notion of self." In M. Carrithers, S. Collins & S. Lukes (eds) *The category of the person: anthropology, philosophy, history*. Transl. W.D. Wells. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
McCracken, G. (1989) "´Homeyness´: a cultural account of One Constellation of Consumer Goods and Meanings." In E. Hirschman (ed.) *Interpretive Consumer Research*. Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.
Miller, D. (2002) "Accommodating." In C. Painter (ed.) *Contemporary Art and the Home*. Oxford: Berg.
Miller, D. (ed.) (2001) *Home Possessions*. Oxford: Berg.
Ministry of Social Affairs /Félagsmálaráðuneytið (2007) *Stefna ríkisstjórnarinnar um aðlögun innflytjenda*. www.felagsmalaraduneyti.is/media/acrobat-skjol/Stefna_um_adlogun_innflytjenda.pdf. (Government's policy on the integration of immigrants). Downloaded: 24/1 2007.
Moch, L. P. (2005) "Gender and Migration Research." In M. Bommes & E. Morawksa (eds) *International Migration Research. Constructions, Omissions and the Promises of Interdisciplinarity.* Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate.

Modood, T. & P. Werbner (eds) (1997) *The Politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe.* London & New York: Zen Books ltd.
Murcott, A. (1995) "´It´s a pleasure to cook for him´: food, mealtimes and gender in some South Wales households." In S. Jackson and S. Moores (eds) *The Politics of Domestic Consumption.* London & New York: Critical Readings.
Nafnabókin okkar (2000) (ed.) Nestor/Herbert Guðmundsson. Reykjavík: Muninn bókaútgáfa. (Book of names).
O´Laughlin, B. (1974) "Mediation of Contradictions: Why Mbum Women Do Not Eat Chicken." In M. Zimbalist Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds) *Women, Culture and Society.* Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.
Oakley, A. (1974) *The Sociology of Housework*. New York: Pantheon Books.
Ólafsson, Stefán (1993) "Þróun velferðarríkisins." In Guðmundur Hálfdanarson & Svanur Kristjánsson (eds) *Íslensk þjóðfélagsþróun 1880-1990*. Reykjavík: Háskóli Íslands. (The Development of the Icelandic Welfare Society).
Önnudóttir, Eva Heiða & Njörður Sigurjónsson (2008) *Kynþáttahyggja og viðhorf til innflytjenda á Íslandi. Könnun meðal íslenskra ríkisborgara á kynþáttahyggju og viðhorfum þeirra til innflytjenda á Íslandi.* Bifröst: Rannsóknamiðstöð Háskólans á Bifröst. (Racism and public opinion towards immigrants in Iceland).
Óskarsson, Hermann (1996) *„Tilvistarvandi fjölskyldunnar í nútíma samfélagi", Lesbók Morgunblaðsins* 9th of March 1996. (The existential problem of the family in a modern society).
Pálsson, Gísli (1979) "Vont mál og vond málfræði: um málveirufræði", *Skírnir* 153, pp. 175-201. (Bad language and bad grammar: on bacteriology of language).
Pálsson, Hermann (1981) *Nafnabókin*. Reykjavík: Mál og menning. Ný útg. Íslensk Mannanöfn frá 1960. (The Book of Names).
Parekh, B. (2006/2000) *Rethinking Multiculturalism*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Parkin, D. (1999) "Mementoes as Transitional Objects in Human Displacement", *Material Culture Journal*, 4(3), pp. 303-320.
Perks, R. & A. Thomson (eds) (1998) *The Oral History Reader*. London & New York: Routledge.
Pétursson, Jón Þór (2009) Hugfóður. Matur – náttúra – hefð – staður. MA thesis in Ethnology. University of Iceland. (Food for thought. Food, nature, tradition, place).
Pinson, A. (1979) "Kinship and Economy in Modern Iceland: A Study in Social Continuity", *Ethnology*, vol. 18, vo. 2, pp. 183-197.
Pinson, A. (1985) "The Institution of Friendship and Drinking Patterns in Iceland", *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 58, no. 2, pp. 75-82.
Portes, A. (2003) "Conclusion: Theoretical Convergencies and Empirical Evidence in the Study of Immigrant Transnationalism", *International Migration Review*, Vol. 37, No. 3, *Transnational Migration: International Perspectives* (Fall), pp. 874-892.
Radstone, S. (ed.) (2000) *Memory and Methodology*. Oxford & New York: Berg.
Radstone, S. & Hodgkin, K. (eds) (2003) *Regimes of Memory*. London: Routledge.
Radstone, S. (2005) "Reconceiving binaries: the limits of memory", *History Workshop Journal* 59, pp. 134-50.
Ragnarsdóttir, Hanna (2007) *Collisions and continuities: ten immigrant families and their children in Icelandic society and schools.* PhD thesis, University of Oslo.

Rapport, N. & A. Dawson (eds) (1998) *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement.* Oxford: Berg.
Rich, G. W. (1976) "Changing Icelandic Kinship", *Ethnology*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 1-19.
Rich, G. W. (1978) "The Domestic Cycle in Modern Iceland", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol. 40, no. 1 (Feb), pp. 173-183.
Rich, G. W. (1980) "Kinship and Friendship in Iceland", *Ethnology*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 475-493.
Rich, G. W. (1989) "Problems and Prospects in the Study of Icelandic Kinship." In E. Paul Durrenberger & Gísli Pálsson (eds) *The Anthropology of Iceland.* Iowa: University of Iowa Press.
Rogers, J. (1993) "Nordic Family History: themes and issues, old and new", *Journal of Family History*, vol. 18 (4), pp. 291-314.
Rúdólfsdóttir, Annadís Gréta (1997) *The construction of femininity in Iceland*. Unpublished PhD thesis. London School of Economics.
Shove, E. (2003) *Comfort, Cleanliness and Convenience*. *The Social Organization of Normality*. Oxford: Berg.
Sigurðsson, Ólafur Jóhann (1955) *Gangvirkið*. Reykjavík: Heimskringla.
Sigurðsson, Valgeir (1999) *Ný framtíð í nýju landi*. Reykjavík: Skjaldborg.
Skaptadóttir, Unnur Dís (2003) "Mótun margbreytileikans á tímum hnattvæðingar." In Friðrik H. Jónsson (ed.) *Rannsóknir í félagsvísindum IV*. Reykjavík: Félagsvísindastofnun Háskóla Íslands. Háskólaútgáfan. (Multiculturalism in the time of Globalization).
Skaptadóttir, Unnur Dís (2004a) "Fjölmenning á ferð og flugi." In Úlfar Hauksson (ed.) *Rannsóknir í félagsvísindum V*. Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan. Félagsvísindastofnun Háskóla Íslands. (On multiculturalism).
Skaptadóttir, Unnur Dís (2004b) "Mobilities and Cultural Difference." In Valur Ingimundarson, Kristín Loftsdóttir & Irma Erlingsdóttir (eds) *Topographies of Globalization. Politics, Culture, Language.* Reykjavík: Háskólaútgáfan.
Smith, A. (1986) *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
St George, R. (2006) "Home Furnishing and Domestic Interiors." In Tilley, C. et al. *Handbook of Material Culture*. Oxford: Berg.
Statistics Iceland. Hagstofa Íslands (2005) *Konur og karlar 1975–2005.* Reykjavík. Hagtíðindi Félags- heilbrigðis- og dómsmál 90. árg. nr. 48, 2005:1. (Women and men in Iceland 1975–2005).
Statistics Iceland. Hagstofa Íslands (2009a) *Búsetuþróun 1988-2007.* Reykjavík. Hagtíðindi: Mannfjöldi 94. árg. nr. 19, 2009:2. (Migration patterns 1988-2007).
Statistics Iceland. Hagstofa Íslands (2009b) *Innflytjendur og einstaklingar með erlendan bakgrunn 1996–2008.* Reykjavík. Hagtíðindi: Mannfjöldi 94. árg. nr. 4, 2009:1. (Immigrants and persons of foreign background 1996–2008).
Statistics Iceland. Hagstofa Íslands (2008) *Nöfn í þjóðskrá*. (The Names in the National Registry). http://www.hagstofa.is/Pages/38.
Strathern, M. (1988) *The gender of the gift*: *problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Strathern, M. (1992) *After Nature: English Kinship in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sutton, D. E. (1997) "Local Names, Foreign Claims: Family Inheritance and National Heritage on a Greek Island", *American Ethnologist*, vol. 24, no. 2 (May), pp. 415-437.
Sutton, D. E. (2001) *Remembrance of Repasts. An Anthropology of Food and Memory.* Repr. 2006. Oxford & New York: Berg.
Thórarinsdóttir, Hallfríður (1999) *Purity and Power: The Policy of Purism in Icelandic Nationalism and National Identity*. Unpublished PhD thesis. The New School for Social Research, New York.
Thórarinsdóttir, Hallfríður (2009) *Staða innflytjenda á erfiðleika tímum – raddir og viðhorf.* Rannsókn MIRRA – Miðstöðvar InnflytjendaRannsókna ReykjavíkurAkademíunni. MIRRA. Rauði Kross Íslands. (The position of immigrants in times of crisis).
Thorsteinsson, Helgi (1999) "Vinnuaflsskortur og erlent verkafólk á Íslandi 1896-1906." *Saga* XXXVII, pp. 141-177. (Lack of labour and foreign workers in Iceland 1896-1906).
Thorsteinsson, Helgi (2001) *Útlendingar í íslenskum sveitum. Hugmyndir um skipulegan flutning erlendra manna til vinnumennsku og landnáms á Íslandi 1890-1960.* MA thesis in history, manuscript. University of Iceland. (Foreigners in the Icelandic countryside, 1890-1960).
Thorsteinsson, Indriði G. (1963) *Land og synir*. Reykjavík: Iðunn.
Thorsteinsson, Thorsteinn (1961) *Íslensk mannanöfn. Nafngjafir þriggja áratuga 1921-1950*. Reykjavík: Bókaútg. Menningarsjóðs. (Icelandic names 1921-1950).
Thorvaldsdóttir, Thorgerður (2002*) "Hreinlegur uppruni / upprunalegur hreinleiki."* In Erla Hulda Halldórsdóttir (ed.) *2. Íslenska söguþingið 30. maí -1. júní. Ráðstefnirit I.* Reykjavík: Sagnfræðistofnun Háskóla Íslands, Sagnfræðingafélag Íslands. (Pure authenticity/authentic purity).
Tilley, C. et al (2006) *Handbook of Material Culture*. London: Sage.
Tomasson, R. F. (1976) "Premarital Sexual Permissiveness and Illegitimacy in the Nordic Countries", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Apr.), pp. 252-270.
Tomasson, R. F. (1980) *The first new society*. Reykjavík: Iceland Review.
Tonkin, E. (1992) *Narrating Our Pasts. The social construction of oral history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Vom Bruck, G. (1997) "A house turned inside out. Inhabiting Space in a Yemeni City", *Journal of Material Culture*, vol. 2 (2), pp: 139-172.
Wilford, R. & R. L. Miller (eds) (1998) *Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism*. London: Routledge.
Yuval-Davis, N. & F. Anthias (eds) (1989) *Woman – Nation – State*. London: Macmillan Press.
Yuval-Davis, N. (1997) *Gender and Nation*. London & Thousand Oak CA: Sage Publications.

Documentary films:

Halberstam, Myriam (1999) *Feißig, gesund, ledig: gesucht 1949: Deutsche Frauen für Island.* NDR, Aktuelles & Zeitgeschehen. (Hardworking, healthy, single: looked for in 1949. German women for Iceland).

Heimisson, Einar (1997) *María*. Íslenska kvikmyndasamsteypan.

Radio programmes:

Einarsdóttir, Kristín (2004) *Slæðingur*. RÚV. (Interviews on the National Radio with German women and their daughters).

Web pages:

Arnarsson, Arnar Daði (2008) http://vovo.blogcentral.is/sida/1997140/, 13.2.2008. Downloaded 4th of Aug 2009.

Dýrfjörð, Kristín (2007) http://roggur:blog.is/kristindyr/entry/364068, 13.11.2007. Downloaded 8th of Aug. 2009.

Gísladóttir, Jóna Ágústa (2008) http://www.jonaa.blog.is/blog/jonaa. Downloaded 2008.

Gudjonsen, Viðar Helgi (2009) http://vidargudjohnsen.blog.is/blog/vidargudjohnsen/ downloaded 19th Oct 2009.

Name list approved by the Name Committee: http://www.rettarheimild.is/mannanofn