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## 8. Living conditions among immigrants

- The proportion of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents living in detached houses has doubled over the last ten years.
- Two out of three immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents own their own home.
- Almost half of the immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents live under cramped housing conditions, whereas only one out of ten in the whole population live under such conditions.
- Religion plays a more important role in the lives of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents than in the population at large.
- There is a considerable degree of diversity in religious activity between different countries of origin, but also between people with similar religious beliefs.
- Six out of ten consider it easy or very easy to practise their religion in Norway.

In 2008, Statistics Norway published findings from a living conditions survey among immigrants and persons born in Norway with immigrant parents (Blom and Henriksen 2008). A similar living conditions survey was conducted simultaneously on a special sample of young im-

migrants aged 16-24 years who immigrated before the age 5, and persons born in Norway with immigrant parents also aged 16-24 years (Løwe 2008). The aim of these two surveys was to gain more knowledge on the living conditions of these groups. Statistics Norway has conducted extensive living conditions surveys on representative samples of the population since the 1970s. Surveys targeted at the whole population do not cover a sufficient number of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents to provide relevant descriptions of the differences in living conditions among different immigrant groups. In addition, there is a considerable non-response rate among newly-arrived groups to the country with little or no knowledge of the Norwegian language and with limited contact with the Norwegian society.

### 8.1. Third living conditions survey among immigrants

This is the third survey targeting immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents conducted by Statistics Norway. The first survey was conducted in 1983 (Støren 1987), and included foreign nationals from United Kingdom, Turkey, Pakistan, Vietnam and Chile. The second survey was carried out in 1996 and excluded immigrants from United Kingdom but added new groups such as those from the former Yugoslavia (excluding Bosnia-Herzegovina), Iran, Sri Lanka and Soma-

lia. In the third and most recent survey, the eight groups from the 1996 survey were included, along with immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq.

Most of the analyses of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents carried out by Statistics Norway are based on register data (Østby 2004a and 2004 b, Aalandslid 2007, Henriksen 2007 and Daugstad 2006 and Mathisen 2006). The central national population register is a register of all individuals in Norway, and when linked to other registers it is possible to analyse the differences between immigrant groups and also between immigrants and the whole population with regard to demographics, the labour market and education, for example. However living conditions also includes dimensions not covered by administrative registers. In the third living conditions survey among immigrants the following are examples of topics analysed and published (Blom and Henriksen 2009): background and ties with country of origin, family and friends in Norway, housing, religion, education, work and work environment, income and expenses, childcare, Norwegian language skills, threats and violence, participation in organisations and perceived discrimination. The survey also included questions on health, and this topic was covered in a

special report (Blom 2008). Of all the topics covered in the survey, we have limited the topics in this chapter to housing and religion.

## 8.2. Housing and living conditions

Living conditions are affected by factors such as the type of dwelling people live in, whether they own their home or not, the size of the dwelling relative to the number of people living there and the standard of the building. Ideally, the different types of dwelling and different forms of ownership can be perceived as a hierarchy, with freehold detached houses at the top and private bed-sits or municipal rental accommodation at the bottom. In this kind of model, it is primarily the housing seeker's financial resources that determine where in the hierarchy he or she ends up. Normally, as a household's economy improves, they move up the housing hierarchy. Although the hierarchical dimension identifies a central aspect of the housing market, there are several other factors that also affect the individual's choice of dwelling. Household size, dwelling size, personal preferences and expectations of the individual's future life path all serve to add nuance to the picture. In urban areas, young, single people often prefer to live in a small dwelling close to the centre of town, whereas families with children

### Comparison between immigrants and the population as a whole

In this chapter we compare housing conditions among immigrants and for the population as a whole. In order to do this, the same questions from the living conditions survey among immigrants and from general living conditions surveys are used. The 2004 living conditions survey asked a cross section of the population questions on housing type and home ownership. By comparing findings from the two surveys we can analyse the differences between immigrants and the whole population. In order to ensure that differences in immigrants' settlement patterns around the country, as well as differences in distribution by sex and age do not impede comparison of the immigrants' responses with the responses for the population as a whole, we have chosen to weight the results for the population as a whole so that they have the same distribution by sex, age and geographical location as the immigrants (the ten nationalities together). It is thus not relevant to explain any differences between the immigrants and the population as a whole by referring to differences in the composition of the two populations in terms of these three dimensions.

often prefer large detached houses with a garden on the outskirts of town.

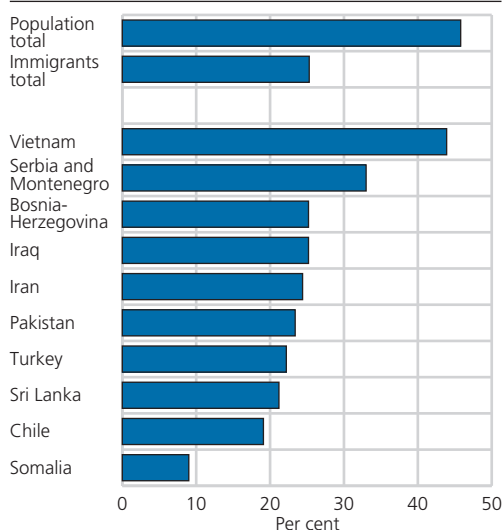
In addition to being a status indicator and an investment in periods with rising house prices, the dwelling also forms the material frame around the lives of its occupants. Dwellings that are in a poor condition and have a low standard in terms of lighting, heating, sanitary conditions, cleanliness and structure will have a negative effect on the quality of life of the inhabitants. In this chapter we will describe and compare the housing types occupied by immigrants and persons born in Norway with immigrant parents, the ownership and if their homes are cramped compared to the homes of others.

### 8.3. Most people from Vietnam live in detached houses...

When asked in the survey Living Conditions Among Immigrants 2005/2006 abo-

ut the type of dwelling they lived in, 45 per cent of the respondents answered «Large building with a lot of apartments», which in practice means a block of flats or tenement building. The percentage of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents living in a block of flats was largest among people with backgrounds from Turkey, Pakistan and Somalia, at between 50 and 60 per cent. These are groups of immigrants that tend to live in urban areas, predominantly Oslo (Henriksen 2007). Among the various categories of housing, «detached house» came in second, at 25 per cent on average for all immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents. People with a background from Vietnam and Serbia and Montenegro – who tend to live all over Norway (Henriksen 2007) – had the highest share of people living in a detached house, at 44 and 33 per cent respectively. Somalians were the least represented in the category «detached house» at 9 per cent (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1. Proportion of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents living in detached houses, aged 16-70, by year and country background



Source: Living Conditions among Immigrants 2005/2006 and Survey of Living Conditions 2004, Statistics Norway.

Compared with the situation for the population as a whole, the differences in type of housing remain apparent even if we «neutralise» the differences that are due to the fact that immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents have a different regional distribution to the rest of the population. According to the 2004 Survey of Living Conditions (cross section), the proportion of people living in a detached house in the population as a whole is 46 per cent, i.e. 20 percentage points higher than among the immigrants (25 per cent). At the other end of the scale, a smaller proportion of the general population lives in a block of flats (just over three out of ten). With regard to living in a terraced/row house or a house containing two, three or four apartments, there is less of a difference between the immigrant sample and the population as a whole.

Table 8.1. **Home ownership among the population as a whole and among immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, aged 16-70, by year and country background. Per cent**

Eie-/disposisjons- form til bolig?	The popula- tion as a whole	Immigrants and persons born in Norway to immigrant parents									
		Total	Former Yugo- slavia	Tyrkia	Iraq	Paki- stan	Viet- nam	Sri Lanka	Soma- lia	Chile	
	1995	1996									
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>
Owner occupied	52,6	22,0	27,2	22,2	22,0	25,2	20,0	19,1	2,9	23,2	
Housing cooperative or housing company	18,8	32,4	18,5	42,8	18,0	48,0	31,8	32,6	4,5	32,7	
Rents or has the right to use the dwelling by some other arrangement	28,7	45,7	54,4	35,0	60,0	26,7	48,2	48,4	92,5	44,1	
Number of people (N))	3 567	2 552	335	257	295	298	355	387	310	315	
	The popula- tion as a whole	Immigrants and persons born in Norway to immigrant parents									
		Total	Bosnia- Herze- govina	Serbia- Monte- negro	Tyrkia	Iraq	Iran	Paki- stan	Viet- nam	Sri Lanka	Soma- lia
	2004	2005									
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>
Owner occupied	56,0	45,3	60,1	49,3	47,1	22,7	40,7	49,4	63,4	58,9	6,5
Housing coope- rative or housing company	19,5	17,8	7,8	14,6	16,2	4,5	23,7	36,4	15,3	26,1	8,6
Rents or has the right to use the dwelling by some other arrange- ment	22,5	36,5	31,5	35,1	36,7	72,0	34,8	14,3	20,7	15,0	84,1
Don't know	1,9	0,5	0,6	1,0	-	0,8	0,7	-	0,6	-	0,8
Number of people (N)	3 015	3 053	333	288	297	357	270	308	314	353	245

Source: Living Conditions Survey Among Immigrants 2005/2006 and Living Conditions Survey 2004, Statistics Norway.

Since the question concerning type of dwelling was also included in the survey Living Conditions Among Immigrants 1996, we can look at developments over time in this respect. The figures indicate that the proportion of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents living in a detached house has risen, while the proportion living in a block of flats or tenement building has fallen. On average for all the national groups, the proportion

living in a detached house has doubled from 13 to 25 per cent, whereas the proportion living in an apartment block has dropped from 60 to 45 per cent. This trend suggests that the people concerned have more money now – and this financial progress is probably a result of their having been in Norway longer.

#### 8.4. ... and more own their own homes

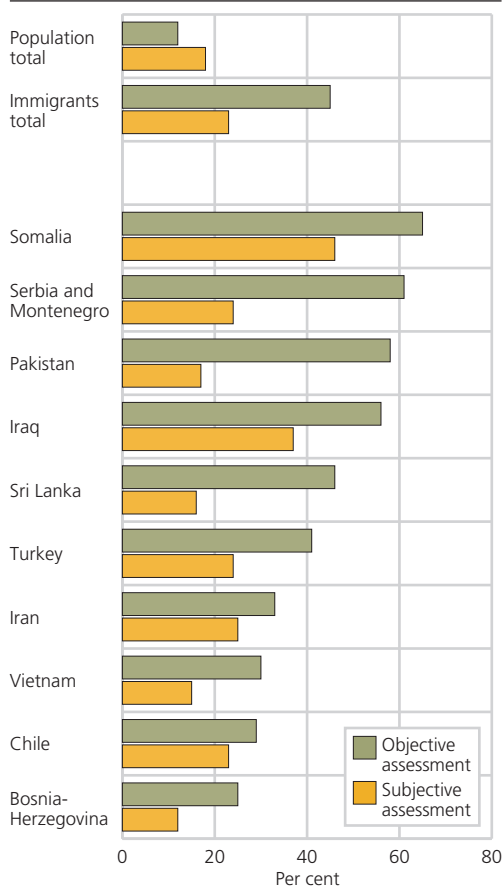
To the question in the 2005/2006 survey on whether they own the home they live in, 45 per cent of the interviewees said that they own their home. This is double the share in 1996, when on average 22 per cent of the immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents stated that they owned their home. The largest increase in home ownership was found among Vietnamese and Sri Lankans from two out of ten in 1996, to six out of ten years later. Whereas renting was most common in 1996, our data show that home ownership has now moved up to first place.

#### 8.5. Almost half of immigrants live in cramped conditions....

One characteristic of the home that has a direct impact on living conditions is the size of the dwelling in relation to the number of people who live there. However, the definition of what constitutes a sufficient number of rooms for a given number of people is historically and culturally determined. Most of us have heard tales of families of ten living in two rooms and a kitchen in the period between the two world wars. Nowadays, we define a household as cramped if the dwelling has fewer rooms than household members.

Using this definition, 45 per cent of the population in the ten groups of immigrants live in cramped conditions (figure 8.2). There is a large variation among the groups, from six out of ten from Somalia and Serbia and Montenegro to three out of ten from Iran, Vietnam and Chile and one in four from Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the population of Norway as a whole, only 12 per cent on average live in cramped conditions according to these criteria. This percentage has remained fairly stable since 1995. By contrast, the table shows that the percentage of immigrants and

Figure 8.2. Subjective and objective assessment of the size of the dwelling among the population as a whole and among immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, aged 16-70, by year and country background. Per cent



Source: Living Conditions among Immigrants 2005/2006 and Survey of Living Conditions 2004, Statistics Norway.

Norwegian-born to immigrant parents living in cramped conditions has sunk by an average of 10 per cent from 1996 to 2005. The decline in the percentage of people living in cramped conditions has been largest among people with backgrounds from Vietnam, Turkey and Pakistan.

**8.6. ... but far fewer think their home is too small**

The fact that the perception of overcrowding varies between cultures and communities is clearly illustrated in figure 8.2. When asked whether their home is the right size, too small or too large, 18 per cent of the population as a whole state that it is too small. This is 6 percentage points higher than the results yielded by the objective criteria for overcrowding. By contrast, only 23 per cent of immigrants and persons born in Norway to immigrant parents on average think their home is too small. This share is 22 percentage points lower than the share that live in cramped conditions according to the objective criteria.

**8.7. Religion and integration**

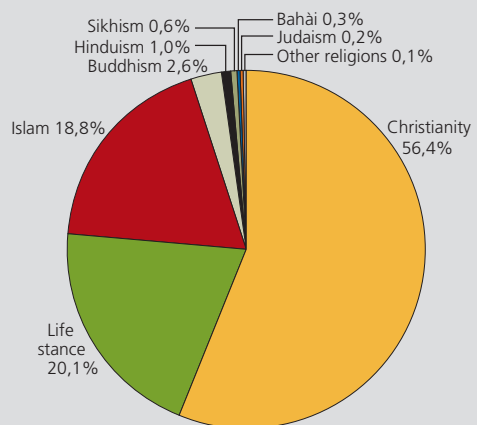
The Norwegian Constitution states that all inhabitants shall have the right to freely practise their religion. However, The Evangelical-Lutheran religion is the official religion of the State. Although many of the respondents in the living conditions survey among immigrants have a religion other than the state religion, the majority states that it easy or very easy to practise their religion in Norway. Among the ten immigrant groups covered in this survey more than 6 out of 10 were raised as Muslims.

Religion and religious practice are topics that usually belong to the private sphere, in the sense that individuals are free to believe in what they choose. The fact that immigrants have different religious convictions than the majority population may pose a challenge for the authorities and for the people belonging to a religious minority. With an increase in diversity and membership of religious communities outside the Church of Norway (see textbox), the «neutral state» can be challenged. In Norway, implementation of the obligatory school subject «Christian education,

**Membership of religious communities outside the Church of Norway on the rise**

Increased immigration over the last 30 years is one of the reasons for the rise in the number of members of alternative religious and life-stance communities outside the Church of Norway. In 1971, approx. 100 000 people were members of religious and life-stance communities other than the Church of Norway, whereas at the beginning of 2006 almost 400 0000 people, or roughly 8 per cent of the population, stated they were not a member of the Church of Norway. Christian congregations outside the Church of Norway had a total of 216 100 members and constitute 56 per cent of all the members of alternative religious and life-stance communities. The largest is the Roman Catholic Church with more than 45 000 members, followed by Pentecostal congregations with almost 40 000 members. Islam is the religious community that has seen the greatest growth. In 1971, there was almost no one registered in Muslim religious communities, but in 2006 they had almost 72 000 members – almost 19 per cent of all the people registered. The Norwegian Humanist Association was the largest life-stance community by some 20 per cent, with 77 200 members.

**Members of religious and life-stance communities outside the Church of Norway 2006**



Source: Religious and Life Stance Communities outside the Church of Norway 2006, Statistics Norway.

religion and lifestyle» (KRL) in primary and lower secondary schools and the debate surrounding the right to wear religious headwear are manifestations of the fact that religious minorities and philosophical communities feel their freedom of faith is being compromised.

Since the terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid and London, religion and religious practice have been the subject of much debate. The authorities and the general public in many European countries fear acts of terrorism by Islamic fundamentalists. As a result of increasing scepticism towards Islam, more Muslims are experiencing discrimination (the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2006).

### 8.8. Religiousness in the population

The ordinary surveys of living conditions contain little information about religion and religious practice in the population as a whole. The exceptions here are the survey of people's values (1996) and the Culture and Media Use Survey, which include questions on participation in meetings of religious and philosophical communities (Vaage 2004). The European Society Survey (ESS) is conducted in more than 20 countries with varying topics. In 2006, the respondents were asked about religious activities and the significance of religion in their life. The questions in ESS use a slightly different scale than in the Survey of Living Conditions among Immigrants, but using ESS as our source we can make a few simple comparisons of the significance of religion in the population of Norway as a whole with the immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents in the survey of living conditions.

In the survey of living conditions among immigrants, the respondents were asked about the religious faith they were brought

up with and whether they still adhere to the same religion. The survey also provides an indication of how important religion is in the immigrants' lives, their religious activity, and how easy or difficult it is for them to practise their religion in Norway.

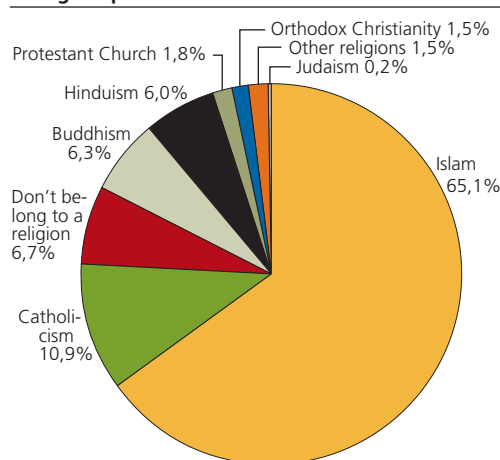
### 8.9. Most Muslims in the sample

Islam and Catholicism are the two most common religions among the ten groups included in the survey. On average for all the national groups in the survey, more than six out of ten were raised as Muslims, while one in ten were raised as Catholics. Hinduism and Buddhism are two other major world religions that are relatively poorly represented in our sample, at roughly 6 per cent each. Another 6 per cent state that they were not brought up with a religion.

### 8.10. Tell me where you come from and I'll tell you what you believe...

There is a huge variation in faith among the different national groups. Among

Figure 8.3. Religion the interviewee was brought up in. Per cent



Source: Living Conditions among Immigrants 2005/2006, Statistics Norway.

those with backgrounds from Pakistan and Somalia, almost all were raised as Muslims. A large majority (nine out of ten) of the immigrants from Iraq and Turkey were also raised as Muslims. Seven out of ten among those with backgrounds from Iran were raised as Muslims, but half of the Iranians in Norway state that they do not adhere to this religion today.

There is also a relatively large proportion of Muslims among those with backgrounds from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro, at 66 and 77 per cent respectively. In Serbia and Montenegro, orthodox Christianity is the most common religion adhered to by an estimated 65 per cent of the population. However, in our sample, only some 10 per cent of the immigrants from Serbia and Montenegro are Orthodox Christians. The reason for this relatively large difference is that the majority of the immigrants in Norway from Serbia and Montenegro are refugees from the Kosovo province, where most people are Albanians and Muslims. Among immigrants from the former Yugoslavia, we also find a sizeable group who state they were raised without a religion. The immigrants from Chile are an exception, with Catholicism as the dominant faith. More than eight out of ten Chileans in Norway were raised as Catholics. Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents from Vietnam and Sri Lanka have a more varied religious background than the other immigrant groups in the survey of living conditions. Five out of ten Vietnamese were raised as Buddhists and three out of ten as Catholics. Immigrants from Sri Lanka are predominantly Hindus (seven out of ten), but two out of ten are Catholics.

Our sample has a higher proportion of Muslims than in the immigrant population as a whole as the number of Muslim

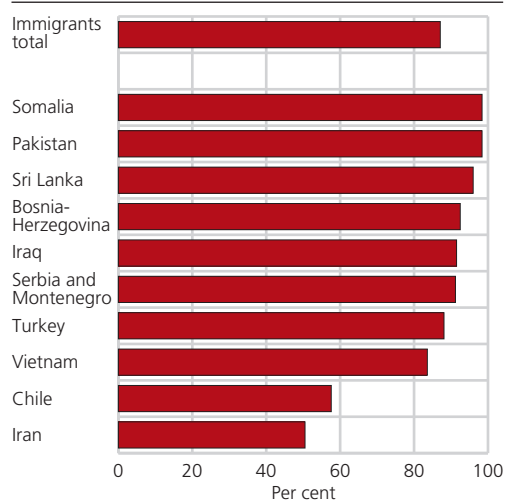
countries among the top ten immigrant countries is relatively high.

### 8.11. Do they still belong to the same religion?

The immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents who were brought up with a religion were asked if they still belonged to this religion. The purpose of asking this question was to find out whether many change their religious conviction after settling in Norway, or if they continue to practise the religion they were brought up with (figure 8.4).

Seven out of eight say that they have kept the religion they grew up with, but there is a large variation between the national groups. Roughly half of all the Iranians say that they no longer belong to the religion they were raised with. This must be seen in the context of the fact that many Iranians in Norway are secular and have fled from a religious regime. Chileans also tend to have a relatively high drop-out rate, with four out of ten saying that they no longer

Figure 8.4. Do you belong to this religion today? By country background. Per cent



Source: Living Conditions among Immigrants 2005/2006, Statistics Norway.

belong to the religion they were brought up with. Among immigrants from Serbia-Herzegovina, Turkey, Iraq and Vietnam, approximately one in ten have abandoned their childhood faith, compared with only 1-2 per cent of immigrants from Somalia and Pakistan.

### 8.12. How important is religion in your life?

In the survey, the respondents were asked to rank how important religion is in their life on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means «not important at all» and 10 means «very important». 5 was taken as the midpoint on the scale. This scale must be taken as running from secular to religious, where a score of 1 means the respondent has a secular world view, and 10 means that religion is a very important part of the person's life. In the survey, one in ten immigrants say that religion is not at all important in their life, while four out of ten say that religion is very important. Roughly one in ten place themselves in the middle of the scale (figure 8.5).

Iranians are the most secular immigrant group, with 40 per cent saying that religion is not important to them. Around 25 per cent of the immigrants from Chile and Bosnia-Herzegovina say the same, compared with just under 20 per cent of the immigrants from Serbia and Montenegro saying that religion is not important in their lives. Somalians represent the other extreme, with nine out of ten saying that religion is very important. A total of 65 per cent of Pakistanis state that religion is very important, whereas slightly less than 50 per cent of Turks and Sri Lankans chose 10 on the scale.

Figure 8.5 shows the mean score for how important religion is for women and men with different national backgrounds. If we look at the immigrant population as a

whole, the mean score is 6.9, and in all the groups, women claim to be more religious than men: 7.3 compared with 6.6 respectively. The gender difference is greatest among Iraqis and Sri Lankans. Immigrants from Somalia and Pakistan are the most religious with an average score of 9.8 and 9.0 respectively, while immigrants from Iran, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and Chile all have a score of 5 or less and are thus the most secular of the immigrants in the survey.

### 8.13. Religiousness in the population as a whole

As already mentioned, there is no directly comparable data on the importance of religion in the ordinary surveys of living conditions that cover the entire population. However, we can gain an overview of the importance of religion for all Norwegians by looking at the data from the European

Figure 8.5. Ranking how important religion is in your life. 1 = not important at all 10 = Very important. By country background and sex



Source: Living Conditions among Immigrants 2005/2006, Statistics Norway.

Society Survey (ESS). In the ESS in 2006, the respondents were asked to plot themselves on a scale from 0-10, where 0 indicated that they are not religious and 10 indicated that religion is very important in their lives. The scale used in ESS is thus slightly different from the one we used in our survey of living conditions among immigrants, where the lowest score was 1. The survey showed that roughly 15 per cent of the Norwegian sample stated that they were not religious (score 0); and with a mean score 3.5 (calculated into a 10 point scale), the population of Norway was ranked as one of the least religious populations in Europe. The corresponding scores in Sweden and Denmark were 3.2 and 3.9, while Cyprus and Poland were the most religious nations with average scores of 6.4 and 5.9 respectively.

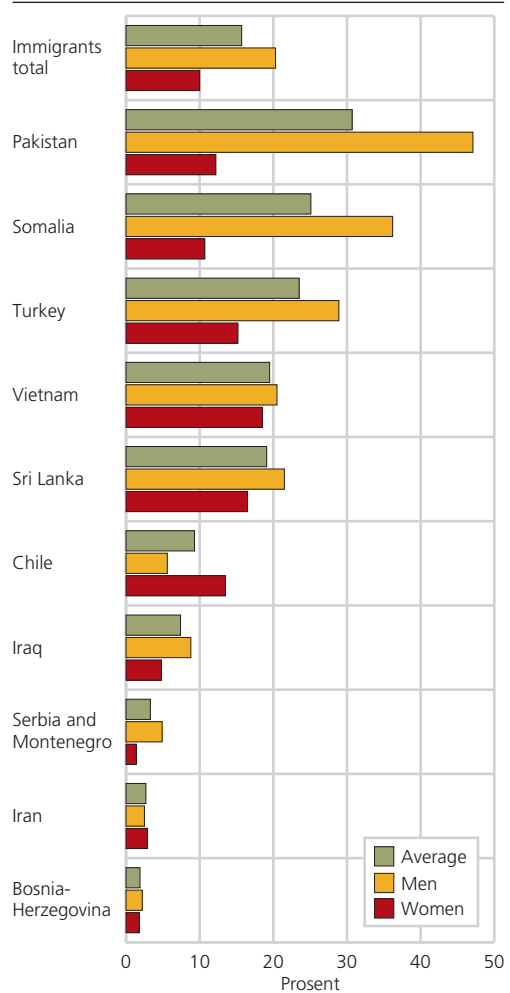
The average score for the ten immigrant groups in our survey was 6.9 per cent. This indicates that religion is generally more important to immigrant groups in our survey than in the population as a whole.

**8.14. Religious activity**

The question on how important religion is in immigrants' lives revealed that immigrant women are slightly more religious than their male counterparts, but this difference is not reflected in religious activity. On average, men in our survey attend 20 religious gatherings or prayers arranged by a religious community a year (this does not include baptisms, confirmations, weddings or funerals). By contrast, immigrant women attend half as many gatherings on average: 10 a year. On average, immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents attend 15 religious gatherings in a year. In the total population, the average is four religious meetings in a year (Vaage 2004).

However, there is greater variation in the degree of religious activity among the national groups than between women and men (figure 8.6). While Bosnians go to the Mosque a couple of times a year, Pakistanis go on average 30 times a year. Somalis and Turks are also frequent Mosque-goers, with an average of 25 visits a year. It

Figure 8.6. Over the last 12 months, how many times have you attended religious gatherings or prayers arranged by a religious community? By country background and gender. Number



Source: Living Conditions among Immigrants 2005/2006, Statistics Norway.

should be pointed out that there are major differences between men and women among Pakistanis, Somalis and Turks, with men being far more religiously active than women with the same background. On average, Pakistani men go the Mosque 50 times a year, Somali men 35 times and Turkish men just under 30 times a year, whereas women with the same background attend religious gatherings 12, 11 and 15 times a year respectively. Religious activity is lower in the other national groups, and the gender differences are smaller. Women with a background from Chile stand out here in that they are more religiously active than men with the same background.

Different settlement patterns may also serve to explain some of the huge differences we see in religious activity. While Pakistanis, Turks and Somalis are largely concentrated in Oslo, and many Turks also live in Drammen, Bosnians tend to live all over Norway. For Iraqis, among whom a relatively large proportion state that religion is very important in their lives, duration of residence may help explain the surprisingly low level of religious activity. Many Iraqis have come to Norway quite recently as refugees, and it often takes some time for recent arrivals to establish a religious community or move to a place where there is a Mosque where they feel at home.

### 8.15. Faith and life

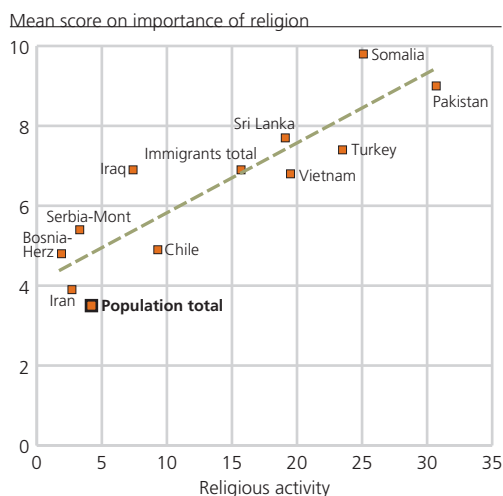
If we look at the two dimensions of religious activity and the importance of religion in the individual's life together (see figure 8.7), we find a clear correlation between faith and life. People who say that religion does not play an important role in their life are also less religiously active.

The findings here indicate that people from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and

Montenegro and Iran, most of whom were raised as Muslims, are more secular than Muslims with backgrounds from Pakistan, Somalia and Turkey. They are less religiously active, consistently state that religion plays a minor role in their life, and many no longer believe in the religion they were raised with.

In the Survey of Living Conditions Among Immigrants 1996, the respondents were also asked about degree of religious activity, but were asked to choose between six predefined groups of frequency of religious activity. It is therefore not possible to compare the results directly. However the figures from 1996 do reveal that Iranians also attended the fewest religious gatherings at that time, along with immigrants from the former Yugoslavia (as it was known at that time, and did not include Bosnia-Herzegovina). Then followed Sri Lankans, Somalians, Chileans and Vietnamese. In 1996, the Somalians were a relatively new refugee population in Norway,

Figure 8.7 **Religious activity and the importance of religion, by country background**



Source: Living Conditions among Immigrants 2005/2006 and Culture and Media Use Survey 2004, Statistics Norway; and European Social Survey 2006.

and they appear to have become more religiously active as a group over time, which supports the theory put forward concerning Iraqis in the last paragraph. As in 2006, Pakistanis and Turks were most active in 1996 in terms of attending religious gatherings and organised prayer meetings.

According to the Culture and Media Use Survey from 2004, the population's average level of religious activity, measured in the number of religious gatherings attended, was just over four meetings a year. The average level of religious activity measured in number of gatherings attended is thus three times higher for the immigrants in this survey than in the population as a whole.

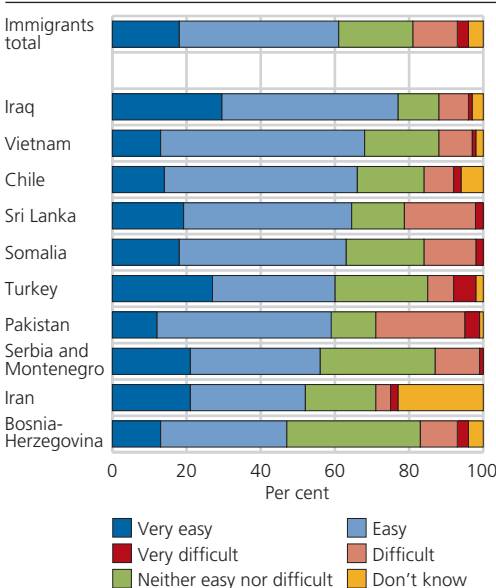
### 8.16. How easy is it to practise a religion?

On average for all the national groups, slightly more than 60 per cent believe that it is easy or very easy for them to practise their religion in Norway (figure 8.8). Roughly 20 per cent think it is neither easy nor difficult, while 15 per cent think it is difficult.

At 30 per cent, the Pakistanis have the highest proportion of people who think it is difficult to practise their religion, followed by Somalians and Sri Lankans with around 20 per cent. It is interesting that so many immigrants from Sri Lanka, who are not Muslims, report that it is difficult to practise their religion. Sri Lankans are one of the national groups that experience least discrimination in other areas, such as in working life. For the other national groups, the proportion finding it difficult to practise their religion is around 10 per cent. Among Iranians, more than 20 per cent do not know whether it is easy or difficult to practise their religion in Norway. In light of the other findings about the immigrants from Iran, it may be pertinent to take this as indicating that many Iranians are not religious and therefore do not have any opinions on this matter. All the other groups have a much lower share that do not know.

The answers concerning how easy or difficult it is to practise their religion in Norway tend to indicate that it is generally easy to practise a religion in Norway. Nevertheless, we must not overlook the fact that more than a quarter of the immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents from Pakistan think it is difficult or very difficult to practise their religion in Norway.

Figure 8.8. Difficult or easy to practise a religion in Norway? By country background. Per cent



Source: Living Conditions among Immigrants 2005/2006, Statistics Norway.