Ten little Lithuanians
and 'Other' stories:
'Othering' the foreign national in the
Icelandic mainstream discourse

Jón Gunnar Ólafsson

Leiðbeinandi: Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir

Jón Gunnar Ólafsson
280380-5719

Félagsvísindadeild
Háskóla Íslands

Útdráttur

Í þessari ritgerð er leitast við að varpa ljósi á hvers vegna og hvernig útlendingar hafa verið mótaðir (e. *constructed*) sem ógnandi staðalmyndir í ráðandi orðræðu á Íslandi. Færð eru rök fyrir því að til þess að skilja þessa mótun sé nauðsynlegt að fjalla um hana í víðu fræðilegu samhengi og einnig í tengslum við tiltekna orðræðugreiningu. Í fræðilegu umfjölluninni er sýnt fram á vankanta á kenningum tengdum eðlishyggju og bent á að sjálfsmynd (e. *identity*) er ekki eðlislæg, heldur óstöðug og mótuð í orðræðu. Jafnframt eru sett fram rök sem sýna að til þess að móta „eðlilega" sjálfsmynd sé nauðsynlegt að móta „óeðlilega" staðalmynd er byggist á vissri „óeðlilegri" hegðun. Þessi röksemdafærsla er skoðuð í samhengi við sjálfsmynd íslensku þjóðarinnar (e. *Icelandic national identity*) og sýnt er fram á að hin erlenda staðalmynd mótar og viðheldur „eðlilegu" íslensku sjálfsmyndinni. Í framhaldi er framkvæmd orðræðugreining á umfjöllun um útlendinga í íslenskum prentmiðlum árið 2007 og sýnt hvernig umrædd mótun á sér stað. Í greiningunni kemur fram að mótaðar hafa verið staðalmyndir tengdar skipulagðri glæpastarfsemi, nauðgunum og slagsmálum, og tengjast þær allar karlmönnum frá Austur-Evrópu. Ólíkt „eðlilegu" Íslendingunum virðast *þessir menn* nauðga á hrottafenginn hátt (stundum hlæjandi), slást líkt og vopnaðir villimenn og stela miklu magni af vörum úr búðum. Fræðilega umfjöllunin og orðræðugreiningin eru því næst nýttar til þess að færa fyrir því rök að ráðandi orðræða á Íslandi móti sjálfsmynd sem er of einföld fyrir heiminn eins og hann er í dag, vegna þess að sjálfsmyndin byggist á úreltri tvíhyggju. Jafnframt er sýnt fram á að hún útiloki vissa einstaklinga frá „eðlileika" sökum gallaðs „ákvarðanatökuferlis".

Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to examine why and how foreign nationals have been constructed as threatening stereotypes in the Icelandic mainstream discourse. It is argued that in order to understand the stereotypical construction, a broad theoretical framework is needed, as well as a specific discursive analysis. Within the theoretical realm, essentialist theories are problematized, and a constructivist line of thinking is introduced which sees identity as discursively constructed and unstable. Furthermore, it is argued that in order to construct a 'normal' identity, an 'abnormal' stereotype associated with certain 'abnormal' behaviour is discursively required. This argument is subsequently linked to the Icelandic national identity, and it is illustrated that the stereotypical foreign national serves the discursive purpose of constructing and maintaining the 'normal' Icelandic identity. Once this has been argued, the coverage of foreign nationals in the Icelandic mainstream print media in 2007 is discursively analyzed in order to show how this is taking place. The analysis illustrates how 'abnormal' stereotypes linked to organized crime, rape and fighting are constructed in relation to Eastern European men. Unlike the 'normal' Icelanders, *these men* appear to rape in a brutal way (sometimes whilst laughing), fight like armed savages, and steal vast amounts of merchandise from shops. The theoretical debate and discursive analysis subsequently allow for a discussion problematizing the Icelandic mainstream discourse. It is argued that the current notion of the Icelandic national identity is too simplistic for the contemporary world since it is based on an outdated dichotomy and, furthermore, that it excludes certain individuals from 'normality' due to a flawed 'decision-making process'.

Formáli

Þessi ritgerð er unnin sem 15 eininga (30 ECTS) lokaverkefni í meistaranámi í alþjóðasamskiptum við stjórnmálafræðiskor félagsvísindadeildar Háskóla Íslands. Leiðbeinandi var Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir, aðjúnkt við stjórnmálafræðiskor, og fær hún þakkir fyrir góða og gagnrýna leiðsögn, hvatningu og síðast en ekki síst þolinmæði. Hugmyndin að umfjöllunarefninu kviknaði fyrir þó nokkru síðan og hefur vinnuferlið verið strangt en gefandi. Ég ákvað að skrifa ritgerðina á ensku vegna þess að hún fjallar m.a. um útlendinga og staðalmyndir og fannst mér því líklegt að fleiri en þeir sem kunna reiprennandi íslensku gætu haft áhuga á efninu.

Ég vil þakka Arash Mokhtari fyrir margar gagnlegar ábendingar, og jafnframt fá Kristín Loftsdóttir, Birgir Guðmundsson, Hallfríður Þórarinsdóttir, Lisa Blackman, Linda Rós Alfreðsdóttir og Einar Sigurmundsson þakkir fyrir hjálpina. Helga Ólafs aðstoðaði mig við fjölmargt og fær bestu þakkir fyrir hjálpsemina og einnig fyrir ansi mörg áhugaverð samtöl um efni ritgerðarinnar. Einnig vil ég minnast á samnemendur mína í alþjóðasamskiptum, en þeir veittu ómetanlegan stuðning og voru ávallt reiðubúnir að hlusta á vangaveltur um verkefnið.

Vinir mínir hafa reynst mér vel og þá helst Linda Dögg Hlöðversdóttir, Jóhanna Friðrika Sæmundsdóttir, Auður Alfífa Ketilsdóttir og Salka Guðmundsdóttir. Fjölskyldunni þakka ég stuðninginn og þolinmæðina og þá sérstaklega Söru Guðmundsdóttur, systurdóttur minni. Ég hef unnið að ýmsum verkefnum tengdum innflytjendamálum á Íslandi og vil þakka öllum þeim sem ég hef kynnst í gegnum þá vinnu. Margt sem ég lærði í verkefnavinnunni nýttist mér við gerð ritgerðarinnar. Að lokum vil ég sérstaklega þakka samnemanda mínum og vinkonu, Oddnýju Helgadóttur, fyrir félagsskapinn, öll skemmtilegu samtölin, og síðast en ekki síst fyrir að aðstoða mig við að finna titil á ritgerðina. Að tengja orðræðuna um Litháa á Íslandi við umræðuna um tíu litlu negrastrákana fannst mér afar viðeigandi.

Table of contents

1. Introduction

Could he really lift an entire house with just one hand? Somebody even said that he could do it with just one finger. She was breathtakingly beautiful and always seemed to be taking care of children. Was that really her job? She definitely looked pretty on television whilst holding the kids. He was so strong and powerful and she was so beautiful and kind. They should have been husband and wife. We all thought so. The Icelandic Viking and his blonde beauty queen.

As a kid growing up in Iceland in the 1980's, I remember the time when Jón Páll Sigmarsson and Hólmfríður Karlsdóttir (Hófí) seemed to embody the perfect Icelandic national identity. They were a popular topic of discussion at school and we constantly swapped stories about them. I wanted to be just like Jón Páll. So did most of my friends. The girls thought Hófí was amazing. Jón Páll knew how to put on a show when he was competing and would often declare loudly that he was an Icelandic Viking. He was incredibly muscular and could easily have been a 'hero' in one of the Icelandic Sagas. Hófí would perhaps have been the perfect female companion for Jón Páll in the olden days. She was so stunning and would have taken care of the kids whilst he was beating up people and keeping the family 'secure'.

These two individuals seemed to be so *purely* Icelandic. Their identities appeared to confirm the popular story that strong Vikings only took beautiful women with them to Iceland. It could be argued that the exaggerated gendered discourse surrounding Hófí and Jón Páll presents us with examples of particular national identity stereotypes, and they are thus a fitting starting point, since stereotypes in relation to the Icelandic national identity will play a central role in the subsequent discussion. However, the argument presented in this dissertation differs drastically from the Viking and beauty queen 'historical' narrative – which I did in fact believe in when I was a kid and wanted to become the world's strongest man.

It could be argued that much has changed in Iceland since the 1980's. One noticeable change concerns the increase of foreign nationals living in Iceland. I have on numerous occasions seen reports in the media that have focused specifically on numbers, i.e. detailing the constant increase of foreign nationals in Iceland. What has also been prevalent is the emphasis on the nationality of those who come here. These aren't just our 'cousins' from the Nordic countries. For example, many people from Eastern Europe have decided to come to Iceland and this fact has been highly visible in the media.[1]

A few years ago I started to get the sense that negative news reports regarding foreign nationals, especially those from Eastern Europe, were on the increase. Furthermore, I felt I had begun to notice negative stereotypes associated with foreign nationals in Iceland. This wasn't based on academic research – it was simply a feeling. I have worked in the Icelandic media and consider myself somewhat of a 'news junkie', and therefore believed that some change really had occurred in the media coverage in Iceland. More recently, the issue of negative representations of foreign nationals in the media appears to have gained some prominence. I have, for example, attended several conferences where this topic has been debated. Based on the discussions that took place there, it is clear that not everyone shares the same opinion regarding this matter. Some appear to feel that no negative stereotyping whatsoever is taking place, whilst others point out that much of the coverage related to foreign nationals is negative. What struck me as rather odd about these discussions at the time was that they quickly became polarized, and people often appeared to be basing their opinions on feelings, perhaps a few examples, but not in-depth research. Subsequently I realized that this was of course exactly what I had been doing.

Therefore I decided to familiarize myself with the academic research which had been conducted in Iceland in relation to his issue. To my surprise, I found that no one has systematically investigated the possible negative stereotypes related to foreign nationals in the Icelandic media.[2] This realization led me to the decision that my dissertation would focus on this topic. What is presented in the following

---

[1] This is a generalized point, mentioned in relation to the subsequent in-depth discussion. It could thus be argued that specific examples are not required here in the introduction.
[2] This does not mean that nothing has been studied in regards to the media and foreign nationals in Iceland. However, I was unable to locate academic research similar to this dissertation. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

pages is therefore an original contribution to the academic field. Since the possible negative stereotyping of foreign nationals in the Icelandic media has not been investigated before, it could be argued that this piece of work will shed new light on the topic. This particular point will be discussed further in the concluding chapter, where the limitations of this original research will also be debated. It could be argued that this is an important topic to investigate. As will become apparent, it is possible to argue that negative stereotyping in the media can lead to xenophobic attitudes in Iceland, i.e. the 'message' in the media can be viewed as productive in relation to society in general.[3] If one does believe, as I do, that these types of viewpoints should not be welcomed in Iceland, it could be argued that studying the media coverage is an important task. It is difficult to fight against something that one does not know or understand.[4]

It was necessary to begin this discussion within the 'basic' mainstream realm since the research idea was born in this realm, in relation to originality and importance. However, an introduction within the academic realm is also required, since this dissertation deals with points and terms that aren't usually discussed in the Icelandic mainstream discourse. As will be subsequently illustrated in Chapter 2, the essentialist[5] view of identity proves problematic, i.e. the idea that identity is based on some pregiven ahistorical essence. The argument presented here is anti-essentialist and focuses on how identity is discursively constructed in society, and therefore changeable and unstable. Furthermore, as will be shown in the development of the theoretical framework, a 'normal'[6] identity can only be constructed if it has an 'abnormal' opposite identity. In relation to the abnormal, a certain stereotype will be introduced, i.e. the 'Other' stereotype. As will be illustrated, the Other serves a productive role by discursively constructing the normal in a privileging dichotomy by being its opposite abnormality. The theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 will allow for the argument that

---

[3] This will become apparent in relation to the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2.

[4] The way my personal views have possibly impacted this dissertation will be addressed in the conclusion.

[5] All theoretical terms briefly mentioned here will be explained in detail in Chapter 2.

[6] Many terms, such as 'normal', 'abnormal', 'truth', 'us', 'them' and 'we', will be discussed on numerous occasions in relation to constructivist arguments. As will become apparent, it is never my argument that this *really* means normal, abnormal, truth, etc. However, to avoid the excessive usage of quotation marks, they will only be used the first time a particular constructivist term is introduced. Thus, for example, the terms normal and abnormal will from now on appear without quotation marks.

because identities are never stable, they constantly need to be discursively maintained. This is where the term 'Othering' comes into the picture. It refers to both the construction of the Other and the constant re-emergence of this stereotype, since it is needed not only to construct, but also to maintain the normal unstable constructed identity.

This brief discussion of academic terms enables the introduction of the research points examined in the dissertation. Even though much has yet to be explained, the basic constructivist line of thought has been introduced. Anti-essentialism is a crucial starting point with regard to the examination of the direction taken here, as will become clear. The specific aim of the dissertation is to investigate *why and how the foreign national has been Othered in the Icelandic mainstream discourse. Once this investigation is completed, *the Othering discourse will be problematized since it is too simplistic for the contemporary world and, furthermore, because it excludes certain foreign nationals from normality.* These particular areas of focus were chosen since they collectively enable one to understand why and how the contemporary national identity in Iceland is constructed and maintained, and furthermore why this identity proves problematic. It could be argued that the possible stereotyping of foreign nationals in the Icelandic media can't be examined without an understanding of this particular identity construction and maintenance in the problematic mainstream discourse, as shall become apparent.

The *why* will be addressed in the theoretical discussion. Firstly, in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework will be developed with an exploration of the relevant literature, and the topic thus situated in an academic context. The constructivist argument introduced will firstly focus on individual identity, and certain examples regarding gender and sexuality will be utilized in order to highlight differences between essentialism and constructivism. Subsequently, this argument will be broadened from the individual to the collective. As will become clear, it is possible to argue that the nation is a discursively constructed imagined community, situated on the normal side of the dichotomy previously mentioned. This will lead to the argument that the Other is not just discursively necessary in relation to individual identity, but also needed in order to construct the normal in a collective normalizing dichotomy. Once this has been introduced, it will be possible to illustrate why the foreign national has been Othered in the Icelandic

mainstream discourse. The Other stereotype is not a negative distortion of some pregiven reality, as is commonly heard when dealing with criticism of how 'minority groups' are sometimes represented in the media. Rather, the Other foreign national stereotype is given a productive role in the Icelandic mainstream discourse. The Othering discursively constructs and maintains the normal collective identity, i.e. in this case the Icelandic national identity.

The *how* will be addressed in Chapters 3 and 4. After the development of the theoretical framework has tackled the issue of why the Othering is taking place, the how will enable one to understand what kind of assumptions are associated with normality and abnormality in the Icelandic mainstream discourse, i.e. in relation to the Icelandic national identity and foreign nationals. In Chapter 3, the original contribution of the research will be discussed, and the specific focus on the Icelandic mainstream print media in 2007 explained and justified. Building on the framework it will be possible to explain why the mainstream media can be utilized as an example of the mainstream discourse in general. The method used in the research will be introduced and the subsequent analysis explained. In Chapter 4, the Other foreign national stereotypes located will be introduced and analyzed. They are: *the Other foreign rapist, the Other foreign fighter* and *the Other Lithuanian organized criminal.* The analysis will enable an illustration of how the Othering is taking place in the Icelandic mainstream discourse. It will become apparent that certain abnormal behaviour is linked to foreign nationality, and the common discursive absence enables an analysis of how normality is linked to the Icelandic national identity.

As will be explained in Chapter 5, the Other foreign national stereotypes located are all linked to danger, and furthermore it could be argued that they are part of a bigger discursive picture that allows one to understand foreign nationals in Iceland as problematic. The bigger picture referred to here is the general 'discursive formation' being debated. This term is shown to refer to discourses that focus on the same object, share the same style, support a strategy, a common administrative or political course, or pattern in a particular society.[7] In relation to the theoretical framework, it will be possible to argue that the Icelandic

---

[7] Hall, 2001: 73. Thus it is not the argument here that all discourses associated with foreign nationals in Iceland are being debated. The focus here in the general sense is on foreign nationals and problems as presented in the mainstream discourse. The 'dangerous' stereotypes located are part of this particular discursive formation.

mainstream discourse in general is based on essentialist principles. The national identity is viewed as being natural, unique and fixed, and foreign nationals 'entering'[8] the nation can thus be seen as problematic. The broad discussion in Chapter 5 focuses on a problematization of the Icelandic mainstream discourse, i.e. it will be argued that the Othering discourse is too simplistic for the contemporary world and furthermore that the excluding element proves problematic. In relation to the idea of simplicity, it could be argued that the discourse doesn't 'allow' the complex identity construction needed in the contemporary world, as will become apparent. Since certain foreign nationals aren't considered normal in the Othering discourse, it is possible to argue that it is excluding. Not all foreign nationals are excluded from the normal side of the dichotomy, and those that are accepted become discursively invisible on the normal side. The 'decision-making process' in relation to normality and abnormality proves problematic as shall become clear. After it has been illustrated why and how the Othering takes place, and the discourse subsequently problematized, it will be possible to argue that there is a need to abandon the Othering discourse since a new way of constructing identity is needed.

As emphasized in the main body of the dissertation, it is often difficult to think of identities as being non-essential since the mainstream discourse continually 'teaches' us that identity is essential. This is an important point to bear in mind when examining this research. Our general sense of the world and ourselves is being problematized here. For example in relation to foreign nationals in Iceland, the link between national identity and certain behaviour is continually constructed in the mainstream discourse. Thus it is simple to criticize certain arguments here by emphasizing that people are in fact *really* coming to Iceland from Eastern Europe and committing crimes. However, the focus in this dissertation is not on this issue. It is never argued that people coming here from Eastern Europe are not committing crimes in Iceland. The emphasis is on the problematic abnormalizing excluding discourse that links acts to the foreign national identity in order to construct the normal Icelandic national identity.

---

[8] As will be discussed, the Icelandic mainstream discourse is problematic, since it doesn't always clearly illustrate who is living here, who is visiting for a long time, who is simply a tourist, etc. The term 'entering' is used here since it could apply to all, and is thus fitting in relation to the mainstream discourse.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Examining a single conventional school of thought is unsatisfactory – developing a credible framework

As discussed in the introduction, the argument developed in this chapter can be associated with constructivism. However, as illustrated in the following subchapter, this is an umbrella term, and it proves too broad for the specific theoretical discussion needed to develop a framework that will prove credible when utilized in relation to certain arguments presented in the dissertation. A detailed terminology linked to the broad term constructivism will therefore be introduced. As will become apparent, there is a need to examine various theories and debates, and they can't all be located within a single established 'conventional' academic discipline.

For clarity, in order to understand the direction taken here in regards to 'International Relations' theory generally, it is possible to argue that the framework developed focuses on constitutive theories as opposed to the explanatory kind. As Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater (2001) point out, explanatory theories attempt to identify trends and patterns, for example in relation to war.[9] As the name suggests, these theories focus on explanation. The subsequent discussion in this chapter illustrates that it could be argued that explaining what is happening 'out there' is too simplistic. As will be shown in the utilization of examples in relation to essentialism, it is problematic to view 'reality' as already there, fixed and stable, ready to be explored. Constitutive theories, on the other hand, do not take reality as a given. They focus on the idea that "it is possible to understand and interpret the world only within particular cultural and linguistic frameworks."[10] Thus it is impossible to view the 'space' we live in as fixed and unchangeable.

As is suggested here, it is possible to link the framework subsequently developed to a generalized description of constitutive theories. However, as

---

[9] Burchill and Linklater, 2001: 15-16.
[10] Ibid.: 17.

mentioned earlier, the theories and debates discussed in this chapter can't all be located within a single conventional academic discipline. For example, the focus will be on theories regarding the Other stereotype, the unstable 'nature' of identity, the Cartesian subject, a historically and culturally specific 'truth', the nation and national identity. Many of the points discussed here can be found 'within' numerous disciplines and schools of thought, some considered rather 'unconventional'. For example, certain theories subsequently introduced can be associated with 'Cultural Studies'. So what is this 'discipline' *specifically* focused on in relation to culture? As Chris Barker (2000) states, Cultural Studies "is a multi-disciplinary or even post-disciplinary field of inquiry which blurs the boundaries between itself and other disciplines."[11] This blurring of boundaries, heterogeneity as opposed to homogenization, is often linked to the term 'postmodernism'. Like Cultural Studies, it proves rather difficult to define. As David Morley (1996) argues, even though it is widely used within academia, it remains unclear "what the phenomenon actually amounts to."[12] This is interesting in relation to the field in which this dissertation is written. As Chris Brown and Kirsten Ainley (2005) point out, defining the multi-disciplinary International Relations is a tricky business and "no simple definition is, or could be, or should be, widely adopted."[13]

So how does one go about developing a theoretical framework, reviewing the relevant literature, and situating the topic examined in an academic context when the theories and debates needed for examination can be located in numerous theoretical disciplines, some lacking clear boundaries? It would be convenient to ignore the complexities and simply develop a framework based on general arguments found in a conventional discipline somewhat linked to the topic examined. However, rather than take this problematic and theoretically flawed route, the author has instead decided to present a credible review of the relevant literature. The notion of clear fixed boundaries in regards to the topic examined will be theoretically problematized once essentialism has been abandoned. It would therefore not be credible here to focus on a homogenous academic realm with fixed boundaries. The way the theoretical framework is developed ensures

---

[11] Barker, 2000: 349.
[12] Morley, 1996: 50.
[13] Brown and Ainley, 2005: 7.

the achievement of a comprehensive discussion of the academic context and background regarding the topic examined. This would not be possible within a single conventional discipline, i.e. since none include all the components needed for this framework.

Since the theories and debates discussed here can be associated with numerous disciplines (i.e. some unconventional) it could be argued that it proves impossible to introduce certain points in relation to specific disciplines. This leads the author to the conclusion that the best way to present the discussion in this chapter is to introduce the theories and debates without a specific link to a particular discipline. Developing a theoretical framework through an exploration of the relevant literature is often presented in a simplistic, systematic manner, through a specific navigation of a conventional academic realm. However, as emphasized, this simply isn't possible here due to the nature of the theoretical framework needed.

This won't become a broad disorganized discussion, since the focus will solely remain on the points needed to review the relevant literature, situate the topic in an academic context and to develop the original theoretical framework. The theories and debates will be introduced in an order which proves discursively sensible for the establishment of the framework. General points will be explored and specific areas expanded in relation to the necessary arguments. Certain theories utilized were originally introduced in relation to topics not specifically addressed here, such as gender. For theoretical clarity, it will prove necessary to introduce these theories in their original context before subsequently linking them to the topic examined in the dissertation. As will become apparent, one of the arguments presented focuses on the 'fact' that a single fixed meaning doesn't exist. Rather, what we understand to be true is unstable, and constantly constructed and maintained in a discursively normalizing and abnormalizing privileging dichotomy. Thus it proves theoretically impossible to offer a 'correct' definition of concepts related to the topic presented here. The framework developed doesn't allow it. Instead, what we understand to be real is a construction of the opposite of something else, as shall become clear. This argument proves key to understanding why the foreign national has been Othered in the Icelandic mainstream discourse, and will furthermore be utilized in the general discussion later in the dissertation.

2.2. Who am 'I'? Entering the constructivist realm – becoming acquainted with the productive Other stereotype and one's own supposed normality in the process

Identity is central to the topic of this dissertation and it proves necessary to examine differing theories of this concept in order to develop the theoretical framework. As Paul Gilroy (1997) argues, we live in a world where identity matters. "It matters both as a concept theoretically, and as a contested fact of contemporary political life."[14] Remaining solely within the theoretical realm for the time being, it is a fact that the concept has proved immensely popular within academia in recent years. It has been the topic of many debates in numerous areas of study, and it can harness an exceptional plurality of meanings.[15] Due to the vast amount of material available in relation to the concept it proves impossible to present an overview of everything related to it here. This isn't a problem, since many of the academic debates aren't relevant with regard to the topic and therefore don't need to be included in the framework.

The tension between essentialist and non-essentialist perspectives on identity firstly needs to be explored, since it situates the arguments presented here. As Diana Fuss (1989) points out, essentialists in general terms believe "in true essence – that which is most irreducible, unchanging, and therefore constitutive of a given person or thing."[16] In relation to identity, this implies that there is a fixed ahistorical pre-social essence that determines a person's identity. This line of thinking can, for example, be found in the concept of human nature. As Lisa Blackman (2001/2004) argues, this concept encompasses the essence taken to define the human subject. It can be linked to "biological, neurological and even genetic dispositions."[17] Nikki Sullivan (2003) points out that the mainstream discourse linked to identity is based on essentialist assumptions – i.e. ways of being in the world, desires, gestures and tastes are viewed as "the expression of an innate, autonomous, and unique core, an 'I'."[18] As will become apparent, this mainstream view of identity is important in regards to the topic examined here.

Non-essentialists have a rather differing view of the world. What they are interested in "are systems of representations, social and material practices, laws of

---

[14] Gilroy, 1997: 301.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Fuss, 1989: 2.
[17] Blackman, 2001: 70.
[18] Sullivan, 2003: 81.

discourses and ideological effects."[19] The umbrella term constructivism is often used when generally describing anti-essentialist views, and this term shall be used here in relation to the arguments presented. As noted earlier, the terminology will become more specific, but it will be discursively linked to the constructivist strand of thinking. The umbrella term will prove helpful in emphasizing the differing views between the binary schools of thought previously discussed, i.e. in general terms. It is thus utilized here.[20] As the name suggests, constructivism focuses on the idea that identity is *constructed*, and not based on some pre-given unchanging essence. In order to understand how this occurs, constructivists argue that there is a need to look outwards, to language, culture, history and systems of representation.[21]

The argument developed here is on the constructivist side of the dichotomy. It could be argued that essentialism proves too simplistic and highly problematic as an explanatory theory, since it fails to adequately explain identity formation. A simple example regarding heterosexuality and homosexuality illustrates the problem with the essentialist line of thinking. The reason sexuality is specifically utilized as an example is due to the fact that it can be related to certain constructivist arguments regarding identity, needed in the development of the framework. Once the arguments have been introduced with regard to sexuality, they will be connected to the topic specifically examined here.

Louis Crompton (2003) presents an essentialist view of homosexuality when he argues that the history of civilization reveals "how differently homosexuality has been perceived and judged at different times in different cultures."[22] This argument might not be seen as problematic in the mainstream western discourse since the contemporary idea regarding homosexuality seems to echo the essentialist line of thinking.[23] The homosexual is born into a 'heteronormative' society and discovers that he is different from the norm. This difference can't

---

[19] Fuss, 1989: 2.

[20] For clarity, when referring to the anti-essentialist arguments after the framework has been developed, i.e. in the subsequent chapters, the arguments will be introduced simply as constructivist. Once the detailed points have been explored in this chapter, it could be argued that it is sufficient to refer to the arguments in general terms, as shall become clear.

[21] Blackman, 2001: 73.

[22] Crompton, 2003: xiii. Other academics, such as John Boswell (1980) and David F. Greenberg (1988) have also examined how homosexuality has been perceived in the past.

[23] This isn't surprising, i.e. not when examined in relation to the previously mentioned point presented by Sullivan in regards to the fact that the mainstream discourse related to identity is based on essentialist ideas.

possibly be due to a socially constructed identity, since society 'teaches' the individual to be heterosexual. The 'coming out narrative' is based on the confession of this supposed discovered true inner unchanging essence.[24]

The other popular narrative associated with homosexuality, i.e. the 'liberationist narrative', is also based on the essentialist view of identity. It focuses on how homosexuals have gradually come out of hiding in society and been liberated by fighting for rights based on their identity.[25] The discourse associated with gay pride is linked to this narrative, and the idea of gay liberation can be associated with 'identity politics'. As Kathryn Woodward (1997) points out, this type of politics "involves claiming one's identity as a member of an oppressed or marginalized group as a political point of departure and thus identity becomes a major factor in political mobilization. Such politics involve celebration of a group's uniqueness as well as analysis of its particular oppression."[26] The constructivist framework being developed here problematizes this type of politics, since it is based on an essentialist view of identity. As Didi Herman (1993) points out, the idea is that homosexuals "constitute a *fixed* group of others who need and deserve protection."[27]

It could be argued that this mainstream view of homosexuality, i.e. one which is based on the popular essentialist narratives introduced, proves problematic. As will be illustrated, this argument needs to be examined through a certain type of historical analysis. David Halperin (1990) argues that "redescribing same-sex sexual contact as homosexuality is not as innocent as it may appear: indeed it effectively *obliterates the many differing ways* of organizing sexual contacts and articulating sexual roles that are indigenous to human societies."[28] Thus the 'historical' argument presented by Crompton previously is problematic. Jonathan Katz (1995) agrees with this line of thinking and argues that heterosexuality and homosexuality are in fact recent western *constructs*, and that contemporary

---

[24] This is only a brief example in the discussion; one which is necessary in order to present a specific argument. It could therefore be argued that this narrative does not need to be examined in detail.

[25] This narrative is similarly only needed as a brief example and will therefore not be discussed further.

[26] Woodward, 1997: 24.

[27] Herman, 1993: 251. Emphasis added. This idea can also apply to other 'minority groups'.

[28] Halperin, 1990: 46. Emphasis added. I won't examine this point with specific examples here since they aren't necessary for the development of the framework. See Halperin (1990) for a discussion.

western society functions on a normalization of heterosexuality. Sex for pleasure between two consenting adults, i.e. one male and one female, is the norm. However, according to Katz, this was *not* the case in the nineteenth century. During the second part of this century, various sexologists started to challenge the Victorian reproductive ideal by a new different-sex pleasure ethic. Katz argues that the sexologists needed to publicly rationalize their own private heterosexual practices (for pleasure). They did so by linking heterosexuality with eventual procreation and thus found an opposite Other.[29] It was fine to have nonprocreating sex, as long as one knew that he[30] could (eventually) have procreating sex. As Katz states: "The fixed nonprocreating homos assured nonprocreating, pleasure seeking heteros of their difference – and their own mature, fully blossomed, *normal sexuality*."[31]

Certain poststructural arguments need to be introduced in order to explain how this construction of sexuality occurred. In general terms, poststructuralism rejects the idea of an underlying stable structure and sees meaning as being constructed, unstable and constantly in process. It is "anti-humanist in its decentring of the unified, coherent subject as the origin of stable meanings."[32] Reverting back to sexology, Janice Irvine (1990) points out that it is currently used as "an umbrella term denoting the activity of a multidisciplinary group of researchers, clinicians, and educators concerned with sexuality."[33] However, Joseph Bristow (1997) illustrates that sexology initially designated a science that developed a descriptive system which classified everyone as a particular sexual type.[34] As Jeffrey Weeks (1985) argues, these definitions were not just about sex and sexuality, but rather focused on "*the truth of our individuality, and subjectivity, in our sex*."[35] Thus, as noted by Ken Plummer (1981), homosexuality "became a diagnostic category used to *identify a species of person*."[36]

---

[29] As discussed in the introduction, the Other is central to the arguments presented in this dissertation. This stereotype will be examined later in this chapter.

[30] 'He' is written here because women were not discussed in relation to heterosexuality during this period.

[31] Katz, 1995: 82. Emphasis added.

[32] Barker, 2000: 18.

[33] Irvine, 1990: 2.

[34] Bristow, 1997: 13.

[35] Weeks, 1985: 95. Emphasis added.

[36] Plummer, 1981: 59. Emphasis added.

The points raised by Weeks and Plummer are relevant in relation to why certain *behaviour* becomes linked to one's *identity,* which is necessary to understand in order to answer the why discussed in the introduction. This will become apparent after an exploration of certain arguments presented by the 'famous' poststructuralist Michel Foucault (1972/1980/1988/1998). His views on homosexuality will be utilized here as an introduction to a subsequent general discussion of his theories[37] – which will lead to a more specific poststructural debate regarding identity. This debate proves necessary for the development of the framework, as will become clear.

Foucault argues that sexuality as we know it today is not natural, but rather discursively constructed. He echoes the views of Katz previously mentioned when he argues that in the late nineteenth century, male heterosexuality became a marker for normality whilst everything else was considered abnormal. All the possible deviations were carefully described, such as the sexuality of men who wanted to have sex with other men. As Foucault states: "It was time for all these figures scarcely noticed in the past, to step forward and speak, to make the difficult *confession* of what they were."[38] He argues that the confession does not reveal a pre-discursive 'truth'[39] but rather that "the confession became one of the west's most highly valued techniques for producing truth."[40] The coming out narrative previously discussed is an example of this, i.e. relation to this argument.

As Foucault argues, same-sex desire had not necessarily been a marker for a person's identity in the past. This changed in the west in the nineteenth century. What occurred was not simply the construction of homosexuality – but rather the construction of *the homosexual.* A new identity was discursively created:

> The nineteenth century homosexual became a personage, a past, a
> case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life
> form, and a morphology with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a
> mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his total composition
> was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him: at
> the root of all his actions because it was their insidious and

---

[37] Not all of his theories but those relevant here.
[38] Foucault, 1998: 38-39. Emphasis added.
[39] I.e. since it doesn't exist, as shall become apparent in the subsequent discussion.
[40] Foucault, 1998: 59.

indefinitely active principle; written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away.[41]

How was it possible to construct a new identity? Foucault's arguments present one with an anti-essentialist framework drastically different from the mainstream essentialist line of thought previously introduced. As will become apparent, the discussion regarding sexuality can be broadened and contemporary western views of identity in general will, as a result, be seen as culturally and historically specific.

Foucault argues that there is no one ahistorical universal overarching truth. Instead, truth is historical and regulative, and what counts as true is a historically specific *discursive construct*. Discourses never consist of one statement, one text, one action or one source.[42] Each society/epoch 'decides' which discourses are true. These discourses divide up the social world in certain ways, i.e. in regards to what is viewed as good and bad, right and wrong, normal and abnormal, etc. As Foucault states:

> Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regulatory effects of power. Each society has its own regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisitions of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.[43]

Instead of a historical analysis in search of a universal truth, Foucault proposes a genealogical analysis, or a 'history of the present' – an analysis that does not focus on true essence but instead examines the interaction between knowledge, discourse and power. The argument that sexuality is a discursive construct is part

---

[41] Ibid.: 43.
[42] Foucault's notion of discourse will be examined in more detail in the next chapter in relation to discourse analysis. A more in-depth discussion is not necessary here with regard to the framework.
[43] Foucault, 1980: 131.

of Foucault's *larger contention* that modern western subjectivity is an effect of power. For Foucault, power is not something that is simply held or used by particular individuals. It is a complex flow and a set of relations between different groups and areas of society, which change with circumstances and time. He states that "power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength that we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society."[44] It is important to understand here that power can be *productive*. The notion that power is purely repressive must be abandoned. As Foucault argues, power "induces pleasure, it forms knowledge, it produces discourse; it must be considered as a productive network which runs through the entire social body much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression."[45] Power, knowledge and discourse are mutually supportive according to Foucault; they directly imply one another.

The framework now introduced allows one to understand that, for Foucault, modern reason can be viewed as a historically specific discourse that has *normalized* a certain image of universal humanity. It could be argued that this mainstream discourse isn't really universal, since it has focused on culturally specific heterosexual white male-centred 'European' ways of being.[46] As will become apparent, sexuality is not the only 'area' in which it has proved 'necessary' to 'locate' (i.e. discursively construct) certain *abnormal behaviour* that is subsequently linked to the truth of our *identity* in the mainstream discourse created in relation to the Enlightenment. Before the focus shifts to this 'identity abnormalization' with regard to the Other stereotype, there is a need to examine another poststructural argument. As previously emphasized, poststructuralism sees meaning as not just constructed, but also *constantly in process*. It could thus be argued that identities are never stable. It proves necessary to introduce this theory in the construction of the framework and in relation to the arguments in the subsequent chapters. The emphasis will now briefly shift to the unstableness of gender, since the 'identity as a process' argument utilized here was originally introduced in relation to gender. As mentioned earlier, it proves necessary for

---

[44] Foucault, 1998: 93.
[45] Foucault, 1980: 130.
[46] See for example Morley (1996) for a discussion.

theoretical clarity to introduce arguments in their original context before subsequently linking them to the topic addressed in the dissertation.

Judith Butler (1993/1997/1999) argues that the subject is not a pre-existing metaphysical journeyer. It is rather a 'subject in process' constructed in discourse by the acts it 'performs'. According to Butler, categories that serve the contemporary 'heterosexual matrix', such as 'man' and 'woman', are socially constructed 'acts'. For Butler, gender is not something that one 'is', but rather something that one 'does'. It "is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being."[47] Like Foucault, Butler argues for a genealogical analysis, i.e. an analysis that does not focus on the assumption that a universal ahistorical truth exists, but rather enquires into the constitution of historically specific truths, socially permitted behaviours and ways of being. Reverting back to gender, Butler states that a political genealogy of gender ontologies will deconstruct gender "into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender."[48]

Butler problematizes the sex/gender dichotomy and argues against the common assumption that sex and gender exist in relation to one another. The argument first put forth by feminists regarding the idea that sex is related to our natural biology whilst gender is culturally constructed turns out to be problematic. According to Butler, sex is also constructed and performed, since it is always already gendered in a world where the sex/gender dichotomy is perceived as truth. The normalization of heterosexuality keeps the binary oppositions of female/male and femininity/masculinity in place. Sex is always already a gendered category in the heterosexual matrix. Without compulsory heterosexuality, the supposedly natural binary would be in trouble. As Butler states:

> Gender can denote a unity of experience, of sex, gender, and desire, only when sex can be understood in some sense to necessitate gender – where gender is a psychic and/or cultural designation of the self – and desire – where desire is heterosexual

---

[47] Butler, 1999: 43-44.
[48] Ibid.: 44.

and therefore differentiates itself through an oppositional relation to that other gender it desires. The internal coherence or unity of either gender, man or woman, thereby requires both a stable and oppositional heterosexuality.[49]

Although Butler is often quoted specifically in relation to gender, her theory of 'performativity' can in fact be understood as a theory of identity in general, and will be utilized in this way in the framework developed here.[50] Acts and gestures learned in society are repeated over time to create the *illusion* of a stable inner identity core. When Butler argues that the subject *does* the identity rather than *is* the identity, she is not simply arguing that one is playing a part one has chosen. Performativity is a *pre-condition* of the subject, and as a result, can't be equated with performance. The self is constituted in and through actions, and Butler therefore argues that "gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed."[51] The repetition of norms is the key to understanding who we are. This repetition "enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject."[52]

It could be argued that it was necessary to present these poststructural theories[53] in some detail for two reasons. Firstly, they present a departure from the mainstream view of identity and it is therefore perhaps difficult to take them seriously. As Annamarie Jagose (1996) argues, identity is a highly naturalized cultural category. One "always thinks of one's *self* as existing outside all representational frames, and as somehow marking a point of undeniable realness."[54] By entering the anti-essentialist poststructural realm, the mainstream essentialist notion of identity has now been problematized, and it could thus be argued that these theories should be taken seriously. Secondly, once this is the case, it is possible to expand on the framework introduced in a theoretically satisfactory manner, which would not have been possible without an in-depth examination of the theories.

---

[49] Ibid.: 30.
[50] As pointed out, in order to introduce it in a theoretically satisfactory manner it is necessary to discuss the theory firstly in relation to gender, i.e. since this discussion introduces the components necessary for the framework.
[51] Butler, 1999: 33.
[52] Butler, 1993: 95.
[53] I.e. which can be placed under the umbrella term constructivism more generally.
[54] Jagose, 1996: 78.

The theoretical framework developed thus far allows one to argue that identity is discursively constructed. It is not based on some ahistorical pre-discursive true inner essence, but rather created through historically and culturally specific discourses. Furthermore, identity is unstable and in order to constantly 'do it', certain acts are repeated within a highly regulatory frame. As Stuart Hall (1992/1996a/1996b/2001) points out, there is no coherent stable self, despite the fact that we might feel that it exists. This is "only because we construct a comforting story or 'narrative of the self' about ourselves."[55] However, these narratives are always fictions since they focus on a coherency that doesn't exist. In relation to the unstableness, Hall argues that we are constantly 'becoming'. Identities are thus "points of *temporary attachment* to the subject positions which *discursive practices construct for us.*"[56]

As mentioned previously, it could be argued that sexuality is not the only realm in which certain abnormal behaviour has been located (i.e. discursively constructed) and subsequently linked to identity. The framework now in place allows for the discussion to expand to the discursive privileging dichotomy and the productive role of the Other stereotype, i.e. points necessary to understand in regards to the identity normalization and abnormalization taking place in the contemporary western mainstream discourse. It could be argued that the 'rational' Enlightenment mainstream discourse previously mentioned is based on the Cartesian subject. As Hall argues, this subject was *constructed* in the historically specific discourse associated with the Enlightenment. It "was based on a conception of the human person as a fully centred unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action, whose 'centre' consisted of an inner core. … The essential centre of the self was a person's identity."[57] As will become apparent, the subsequent discussion regarding a privileging dichotomy is wholly based on the notion of this subject. The Cartesian subject is linked to the famous words of René Descartes, i.e. 'I think therefore I am'. By accepting this statement as true, it could be argued that the rational conscious individual subject was placed at the heart of western philosophy. The mind is seen as having rational capacities that allow it to experience what is 'out there' in a

---

[55] Hall, 1992: 277.
[56] Hall, 1996a: 5-6. Emphasis added.
[57] Hall, 1992: 275.

reality 'waiting' to be understood. However, the framework developed so far enables one to argue that a dichotomy between mind/body was in fact *discursively constructed*. An inner thinking rational self, existing outside of all systems of representation,[58] was *not simply discovered*.

As Nick Crossley (2001) points out, 'Descartes' Ghost' leaves us with the notion that "human beings are said to be made up of two distinct 'substances', one of which extends into space and obeys the laws of physical determination, whilst the other, a strictly non-spatial and invisible substance, thinks."[59] It could be argued that the mind/body dichotomy *privileged* the (cultural) mind and left the body simply as a crude (natural) biological matter. As Chris Shilling (2003) states: "The most influential philosophical thought tended to examine the body only insofar as it interfered with the supposedly transcendent powers of the mind."[60] By utilizing the framework now in place, it is possible to argue that the contemporary western mainstream rational discourse is based on privileging dichotomies that have their roots in the mind/body dichotomy; for example culture/nature, men/women, rationality/passion, heterosexuality/homosexuality, white/black, sane/insane, etc. Here the left side is the privileged normal side. As will become apparent, this side can only be discursively constructed in relation to the abnormal Other stereotype which is *always* on the losing side of the dichotomy. The focus now shifts to this stereotype.

As one recognizes from the mainstream discourse, information based on supposedly stereotypical representations is usually seen as biased, and it is believed that these types of representations can subsequently lead to prejudiced attitudes and beliefs. Stereotypes are thus seen as being based on information which is *inaccurate* and cultivated through misinformation and ignorance. As Lisa Blackman and Valerie Walkerdine (2001) argue, stereotypes are frequently utilized to refer to "representations that circulate in the media of those groups in society who exist outside the mainstream. Because of their marginal status, the assumption is made that *we* only gain knowledge about these minority groups through the media and other forms of pedagogy."[61] This assumption often leads to the demand of a more *realistic* representation of these minorities, i.e. "to

---

[58] I.e. as discussed in relation to constructivism previously.
[59] Crossley, 2001: 10.
[60] Shilling, 2003: 179.
[61] Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001: 17.

counteract these distortions and provide us with informed knowledge and an accurate reflection of reality."[62]

The framework developed allows one to argue that this popular and common demand proves problematic. The stereotype is *not* a misrepresentation or a distortion of some pre-given essential fixed reality.[63] Instead, it is given a "*productive role* in which the 'Other' as a sign repeatedly signifies in a particular way."[64] As Nikolas Rose (1996) argues, the normal can only gain a sense of self discursively by *not being the abnormal*. The abnormal thus constructs the normal. The focus in contemporary western society has not been on normality. As he states:

> Our vocabularies and techniques of the person, by and large, have not emerged in a field of reflection on the normal individual, the normal character, the normal personality, the normal intelligence, but rather, the very notion of normality has emerged out of a concern with types of conduct, thought and expression deemed troublesome or dangerous.[65]

This emphasis on abnormality can be linked to the Other stereotype. To revert back to Hall, he argues that one's sense of self isn't possible "without the dialogic relationship to the Other. The Other is not outside, but also inside the self, the identity."[66] The supposed abnormality of the Other becomes the opposite of normality in the self. The framework developed allows one to argue that the Other is discursively 'utilized' in the mainstream Cartesian discourse to *construct and constantly maintain* the normal identity. It isn't enough to construct an Other stereotype once – it has to be discursively maintained due to the unstable 'becoming of identity' previously discussed. The construction and maintaining of the Other will be discussed here as Othering, as mentioned in the introduction.

---

[62] Ibid.
[63] I.e. since this reality doesn't exist.
[64] Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001: 152. Emphasis added.
[65] Rose, 1996: 26.
[66] Hall, 1996b: 345.

To revert back to the example of sexuality,[67] certain sexual behaviour was discursively constructed as Other in the nineteenth century, as previously emphasized. This behaviour was linked to a person's identity and has subsequently been maintained as Other in the mainstream discourse, through the essentialist narratives mentioned earlier – in relation to coming out and liberation. As Blackman and Walkerdine argue, this sexual Othering is part of a bigger mainstream discursive pattern: "As with race, madness and criminality, the 'Othering' of sexuality became part of wider processes of subjectification concerned with confirming, producing and maintaining a particular image of the human subject as normative."[68] As discussed, the supposedly normal subject is strikingly similar to a white male heterosexual 'European'. Any difference from this normative subject is discursively linked to the Other, i.e. in order to construct and maintain the current mainstream discursive Cartesian truth.[69]

With regard to the arguments now introduced, it could be argued that the Other always contains certain 'sets of fears', i.e. fears linked to a possible threat to the normal discursive mainstream stability.[70] By linking 'threatening behaviour' to Other *identities* it is possible to 'locate' the behaviour in a way 'we' comprehend, and hopefully this enables 'us' to understand it and control it. In relation to crimes, for example, Foucault argues that we judge the criminal *more* than the actual crime:

> When a man comes before his judges with nothing but his crimes,
> when he has nothing to say about himself, when he does not do the
> tribunal the favour of confiding to them something like the secret
> of his own being, then the judicial machine ceases to function.[71]

In the contemporary western mainstream discourse, a link between crime and identity is thus present. However, Foucault points out that this hasn't always been the case. As with sexuality, the truth changed in the nineteenth century. Before, it was the criminal act itself and not the individual that was judged. The punishment

---

[67] In order to illustrate a particular Othering.
[68] Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001: 169.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.: 155.
[71] Foucault, 1988: 151.

was often linked to the act. Therefore, if a thief had stolen with his or her hands, the punishment involved the hands being cut off.[72]

The particular Othering examined in this dissertation focuses on fears linked to a supposed threat to a normal shared collective identity, i.e. the Icelandic national identity. The framework already developed here will now be utilized to broaden the scope from the *I* to a particular version of *we*. This proves necessary due to the nature of this particular Othering.

2.3. Who are 'we'? Home is where the newspaper is

The problematization of the mainstream essentialist view of identity does not simply apply to specific individual identities. This can furthermore be examined with regard to collective group identities. It could be argued that one of the most prominent ways in which we are discursively constructed is in relation to our *nation*. Similarly to the definition of postmodernism discussed earlier, there is no consensus within the academic realm as to how the nation should be defined.[73] Thus the discussion regarding the nation won't begin with an introduction of a 'correct' definition. Rather, the debate will illustrate differing arguments concerning the nation and national identity in relation to the previously examined essentialist/constructivist dichotomy. Thus the framework will be developed further, i.e. with the discussion of collective identities – which proves necessary, as will become clear.

The outdated and problematic ideas presented by the eighteenth century German thinker Johann Gottfried Herder need to be mentioned, since they will later be linked to the *contemporary* Icelandic collective national identity. Herder's starting point is rather basic, i.e. language has made us human. Language can only be learnt in a community, it is synonymous with thought and man's language capacity defines who he is.[74] According to Herder, no language is the same. This implies that if language is thought, which is only possible to learn in a certain community, each community has its *own specific way of thinking*. Language does thus not express certain universal values, but rather "it is the manifestation of *unique* values and ideas."[75] Each nation is unique and, furthermore, the nation is

---

[72] Ibid.
[73] See for example Özkirimli (2000) for a discussion.
[74] Breuilly, 1993: 57.
[75] Ibid. Emphasis added.

natural. As a result, it is *unnatural* to disrupt the development of a particular nation. Mixing natural unique nations together would result in an unnatural community. Herder argues that this type of mixed community would *never* be a true nation, i.e. since it is neither natural nor unique, but rather simply "different human species and nations under one spectre."[76]

This idea can be linked to essentialist naturalist primordialism. As Anthony Smith (1995) states, this view "regards human beings as belonging 'by nature' to fixed ethnic communities, in the same way that they belong to families."[77] In relation to the previous discussion of essentialism, it should perhaps come as no surprise that nations have a 'natural fixed frontier' according to this line of thought – and furthermore "they have a specific origin and place in nature, as well as a peculiar character, mission and destiny."[78] This essentialist view of the natural unique nation has (unsurprisingly) been endorsed by many nationalists.[79] As discussed in the previous subchapter, it could be argued that mainstream identity narratives are associated with essentialist views.[80] In regards to the nation, it is possible to point to the 'true common national history' as a dominant essentialist narrative. This type of history focuses on the nation's struggle for self-realization, which is presented as a compelling story. As Umut Özkirimli (2000) points out, the "'essence' which differentiates any particular nation from others manages to remain intact despite all vicissitudes of history."[81]

If one believes this naturalist essentialist view, it is not difficult to see how Others entering[82] the nation in some way could be seen as a threat, i.e. since they don't share the same natural essential *fixed* unique national collective identity. They don't belong within the shared community since they are different in an Other way. The threat perceived will always be linked to their abnormal *Other national identity*, since it differs from the normal national identity – which supposedly has its roots in an unchanging natural essence. Without this identity differentiation, the threat wouldn't make discursive sense in the Cartesian

---

[76] Cited in Breuilly, 1993: 59.
[77] Smith, 1995: 31.
[78] Ibid.: 32.
[79] Ibid.: 31. Nationalism will be discussed in relation to theories on the constructivist side of the essentialist/constructivist dichotomy.
[80] As discussed with regard to the narratives surrounding homosexuality.
[81] Özkirimli, 2000: 70.
[82] As discussed in the introduction, the term 'entering' is used due to definitional problems in the mainstream Icelandic discourse. This point will be discussed further in the next chapter.

mainstream discourse, as illustrated in the framework previously developed. This supposed 'Other identity threat' to the nation will be prominent in the subsequent discussion. As will become clear, it is necessary to address certain problems regarding this threat, and this discussion will continue in Chapter 5, i.e. after the discourse analysis has been concluded.

As previously illustrated in the problematization of essentialism, identities are not fixed but rather discursively constructed. They are never stable and one is thus constantly performatively becoming. As a result, it is evident that the essentialist naturalist primordial fixed collective identity notion proves problematic. The natural national identity is not so natural after all. For example, essentialism proves too simplistic to explain how people have been able to move from 'their' nation, settle elsewhere and even 'choose' to assimilate to their new home and have thus perhaps lost much of the identification with their supposed natural unchanging fixed identity.

It could be argued that the idea of 'hybridization' in the contemporary globalized[83] world illustrates problems with the naturalist way of viewing collective identities. As Jan Scholte (2005) points out, the significance of contemporary globalization "has lain not in eliminating nationhood, but in substantially complicating the structure of identity."[84] It could be argued that the emphasis on 'the one fixed nation' in regards to collective identity affiliation is becoming too simplistic in the contemporary 'global world'; people can now "experience a *hybrid* sense of self that encompasses a melange of several nationalities and nonterritorial affiliations."[85] As Nikki Sullivan (2003) illustrates, hybridity has possibly enabled "'mixed race' people to describe themselves, for example as neither Australian nor Asian, nor as a simple amalgamation of the two, but rather as a sort of '*third term*' which belongs to both and simultaneously neither."[86] These arguments regarding the complication of identity in the contemporary world are crucial for the subsequent discussion, since they will be

---

[83] Globalization is yet another term which has proved difficult to define within the academic realm. Since the focus here is on contemporary identity, the term is mentioned because it can be utilized to draw attention to increased travel and global "connections between people." (Scholte, 2005: 59). Thus the idea is not to present a 'correct' definition but rather to emphasize certain changes that have occurred in relation to 'global connections'. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

[84] Scholte, 2005: 255.

[85] Ibid.: 5. Emphasis added.

[86] Sullivan, 2003: 73. Emphasis added.

linked to the 'weakening' of the *normal national/Other foreign national* privileging dichotomy (which produces the normal national identity). This weakening of the dichotomy proves key to understanding the increased importance of the Other foreign national productive stereotype in Iceland, as will become apparent in Chapter 5.

As stated, it could be argued that identities are becoming more complex in the contemporary world, and furthermore it is possible to argue that "a hybrid identity can give strong emphasis to several types of being and belonging, with the result that, for instance, national loyalties, religious bonds, and gender solidarities could compete and conflict."[87] However, for theoretical clarity, it is important to emphasize that it can prove problematic to think of identity as a combination of many differing and competing essentialist 'base' identities. The argument here is not focused on these types of identities, since essentialism has been problematized. As previously argued, identity is a constant *discursive process*, and can as a result not be viewed as a bunch of cubby holes stuffed with fixed nationality, race, sex, class, etc.[88] Thus the argument here is that the discursive process is becoming more complex – and that old established ways of viewing identity are becoming problematic.

Since identity can be viewed as a discursive process, it is possible to argue that national identity has in fact always been an unstable performative discursive construct. This particular type of collective identity is linked to a large community of individuals with supposedly shared identities, and it is necessary to understand how this can take place on such a grand scale, i.e. in order for the following discussion to make sense. The theories subsequently presented will illustrate the national identity discursive construction in relation to the framework already introduced, and this discussion will complete the framework necessary for this dissertation. Furthermore, this will link into the discussion in Chapter 3, i.e. in terms of the type of research material chosen.

With regard to the argument that identities are historically and culturally specific, it now proves necessary to shift attention to the emergence of specific forms of *communication*, i.e. in order to understand the construction of the national identity. Benedict Anderson (1991) argues that the nation is an 'imagined

---

[87] Scholte, 2005: 252.
[88] Sullivan, 2003: 71.

political community', i.e. "imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."[89] As he states:

> It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. … The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. … It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. … Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.[90]

The framework developed thus far enables one to understand how identity can be discursively constructed and maintained, but how was it initially possible for so many to feel that they shared the same identity? Here the focus shifts to *print capitalism*. According to Anderson, the mechanized production and commodification of books and *newspapers*[91] allowed vernacular languages to become standardized and disseminated. This enabled the discursive creation of a national consciousness. A common language was not the only thing constructed. A common recognition of time in the context of modernity proved essential to the discursive construction of this historically and culturally specific identity.

Anderson's example of the newspaper proves useful here – both theoretically and in relation to the specific research chosen. As he points out, the front page of

---

[89] Anderson, 1991: 6.
[90] Ibid.: 6-7.
[91] Emphasized in relation to the subsequent example and research.

the newspaper presents various stories. So what connects them together? Most of them happen independently, i.e. the actors are not aware of each other. The arbitrariness of the stories and the juxtaposition "shows that the linkage between them is imagined."[92] And how is it imagined? First, by calendrical coincidence. The date on the front page of the newspaper provides the necessary connection. "Within that time, 'the world' ambles sturdily ahead."[93] For example, if Mali disappears from the front page of the newspaper after being present there for several days, we don't for a minute believe that it has disappeared in 'reality'. As Anderson points out, the *novelistic* format of the newspaper assures the readers "out there that the 'character' Mali moves along quietly, awaiting its next reappearance in the plot."[94]

The second imagined link is related to the simultaneous mass consumption of the newspaper. The paper is like an extreme version of the book, a sort of everyday bestseller. We know when the particular editions will be read, and this takes place in privacy, in the lair of the skull. "Yet each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion."[95]

Thus the newspaper encourages us to imagine the simultaneous occurrence of events across wide tracts of time and space, and this has contributed to the concept of the nation and to the place of nations within a spatially distributed global system. This theory furthermore enables one to understand that *the media* continues to contribute to the construction and maintaining of the national identity.[96] It is now clear how it is possible to discursively construct a national identity, but this identity must include something. Since all nations are supposedly unique, it could be argued that each collective national identity needs to be constructed as unique.

As Michael Billig (1995) points out, if people are to relate to their national identity they must know what that identity is. This is where *nationalism* comes

---

[92] Anderson, 1991: 33.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.: 35.
[96] However, in Chapter 5 Anderson's theory will be further utilized in order to illustrate how the emergence of new 'global' technology and media is discursively problematizing the constructed homogenous nation and national identity.

into the picture. In a constructivist sense it can be seen as a discourse that constantly shapes our consciousness and the way we constitute the meaning of the world. It determines our collective identity by producing and reproducing our nations and us as 'nationals'. Billig introduces the term 'banal nationalism', which focuses on ideological habits that enable the reproduction of nations. He argues that these habits "are *not removed from everyday life*."[97] Billig's focus on everyday life in relation to nationalism is in stark contrast to much of the mainstream work on nationalism – which sees it mainly "associated with those who struggle to create new states or with extreme right-wing politics."[98] He argues that in the 'established nations'[99] there is constant 'flagging', i.e. reminding of one's nationhood. Billig points out that this reminding is so familiar that it doesn't consciously register as reminding. Thus he states: "The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion: it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building."[100] Various other symbols of the nation, such as coins and bank notes, become a part of our everyday lives. These reminders of nationhood turn the background space into a national homeland space.[101]

In relation to the 'national media' specifically, Billig's concept of banal nationalism allows one to argue that it isn't necessarily the 'obvious' stories regarding nationalism (i.e. for example on 'independence day') that discursively reproduce the national identity. Rather, it is the everyday stories that tell us in subtle ways (perhaps not always so subtle) that we are supposedly unique nationals. Like the present author is suggesting, Billig argues that the national identity can't be constructed without the Other. The Other foreign national stereotype can be seen as discursively productive in relation to the nation, i.e. in "distinguishing 'them' from 'us', thereby contributing to 'our' claims of a unique identity."[102] It could thus be argued that the national imagined community cannot be discursively constructed without the Other imagined communities. With regard to the previous discussion of Cartesian privileging dichotomies, the unique normal

---

[97] Billig, 1995: 6. Emphasis added.
[98] Ibid: 5.
[99] The established nations are those "that have confidence in their own continuity, and that, particularly, are part of what is conventionally described as 'the West'." (Ibid.: 8).
[100] Ibid.: 8.
[101] Ibid.: 43.
[102] Ibid.: 81.

nation is on the privileged side and is discursively constructed in relation to the Other nations. This allows one to understand how the national and the foreign national are discursive opposites.

Billig argues that familiarity in the language constantly reminds the supposedly unique us that we share a national identity. Like Anderson, Billig focuses on the newspaper in this regard. Home news is separated from foreign news. The home "indicates more than the contents of the particular page: it flags the home of the newspaper and of the assumed, addressed readers."[103] We know how to navigate our newspaper, since it is familiar territory. "As we do, we are habitually at home in a textual structure, which uses the homeland's national boundaries, dividing the world into 'homeland' and 'foreign'."[104] Thus we are at home in our homeland, and in the world of many Other homelands.[105]

The construction of the theoretical framework required for the topic examined in this dissertation has now been completed, as will become apparent in the subsequent chapters. The theories and debates found in the relevant literature previously discussed have enabled the author to situate the research in an academic context and to illustrate the theoretical background of the topic examined. Furthermore, important debates concerning the topic, in regards to essentialism and constructivism, have been highlighted. As shall become clear, an understanding of these two general schools of thought in relation to identity proves necessary, i.e. in order to answer the points mentioned in the introduction. Once the discourse analysis has been completed, it will prove essential to revisit the theoretical realm to debate various points which can't be discussed fully at this stage, since the analysis has not been completed.

With the framework developed, it is now possible to argue that the Icelandic national identity is not fixed and natural, but rather an unstable discursively constructed collective identity in a performative becoming sense. According to the framework, the Icelandic nation is an imagined community – and all the 'real' Icelanders believe that they share the same identity. This identity *can't be discursively constructed without an abnormal Other outsider* as discussed with regard to the Cartesian mainstream discourse. As emphasized in relation to

---

[103] Ibid.: 119.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.

essentialist naturalist primordialism, the Other could be seen as a threat to the national identity if he[106] were to enter the nation in some way. However, from a constructivist perspective, the Other is viewed rather differently. The arguments presented in this chapter allow one to theoretically comprehend *why* there is a need to Other the foreign national in the Icelandic mainstream discourse. Without the Other, there can be no Icelandic national identity. Thus the Othering of the foreign national serves the specific discursive purpose of constructing and maintaining the normal Icelandic identity in a Cartesian privileging dichotomy. The why will be revisited and summarized later, after the analysis has provided further information.

As emphasized earlier, the important point to understand in relation to the Other stereotype is how certain supposed abnormal *behaviour* is discursively linked to the Other *identity*. As will become apparent, it could be argued that the analysis presented in this dissertation shows that this is precisely what is occurring in the Icelandic mainstream discourse in relation to foreign nationals. The 'dangerous' threatening behaviour previously discussed in regards to the Other has been located and, as will become clear, it can be understood more generally as problematic. Before this will be discussed in detail, the original research conducted here will be situated and explained, and the method utilized will be introduced. As subsequently illustrated, the research and method are linked to certain theories already introduced in the framework in relation to constructivism.

---

[106] 'He' is used here since the threat will be focused on male Others.

3. Research and method

3.1. Research: An original study of the media in Iceland – utilized as an example of the mainstream discourse

As discussed in the introduction, this dissertation is an original contribution to the academic field. A similar piece of work has not been produced in Iceland, and hopefully some new knowledge regarding the topic of investigation will thus emerge. This point will be discussed further in the concluding chapter. Before the focus specifically turns to how the research was conducted, i.e. how the material was gathered and analyzed, it is necessary to discuss the emphasis on the media, as will become clear. After this brief discussion, the focus on the Icelandic mainstream print media in the year 2007 will be explained and justified. As pointed out earlier, the research is linked to the framework developed, and it proved necessary to begin with the theoretical debate – without the framework the subsequent discussion would not make sense, as shall become apparent.

As illustrated in Chapter 2, it could be argued that the emergence of the capitalist printing press enabled the discursive construction of a new type of collective identity, i.e. the national identity. Since this occurred, many would probably state that the influence of the media in the west has increased. It could be argued that with the emergence of a standardized mass popular culture there began an evolution which has changed western society as a whole. It has started to evolve from an industrial production society into a postindustrial service society, whilst much raw production has moved to the poorer regions of the world. Western society is, as a result, more focused on producing information rather than things. The ever-increasing emphasis on 'information technology' of various sorts has enhanced the role of the media in the world according to this line of thought.[107] As Dominic Strinati (1995) points out, it could be argued that we in the west are now living in a media-saturated society where the mainstream media influences all other forms of social relations. "The idea is that popular culture

---

[107] See for example Barker (2000) for a discussion.

signs and media images increasingly dominate our sense of reality, and the way we define ourselves and the world around us."[108]

When discussing the method later on, it will be emphasized in relation to the framework developed that the mainstream discourse isn't isolated, i.e. simply found in one social 'space' such as the media, but rather that it is everywhere in society and constructs and maintains the historically specific dominant truth. However, this doesn't mean that the influence and visibility of certain social spaces can't increase or decrease. Reverting back to Blackman and Walkerdine, they point out that the mainstream media has become increasingly important in the contemporary western world and that *the truth presented in the mainstream media references a wider system of meaning, i.e. the mainstream discourse of a particular society.* As they state: "The media is viewed as part of a wider apparatus, reproducing and producing, through the particular organization of signs embodied within the media text, wider cultural values and beliefs."[109] The framework developed allows one to argue that the media isn't distorting the real but rather "playing a part in actually *producing and framing* the way in which people come to understand their social world."[110] Certain media narratives are discursively constructed in order for us to make sense of our 'reality'.

As discussed in the introduction, the initial idea (born in the 'basic' mainstream realm) regarding the research focused on possible negative stereotypes of foreign nationals in the Icelandic media. However, as has been illustrated, the scope of this dissertation is more broad,[111] since it is argued that the possible stereotyping of foreign nationals in the Icelandic media can't be examined without an understanding of why and how the Icelandic national identity is constructed and maintained, and why the mainstream discourse proves problematic. Thus it is argued that a 'simple' analysis of the media (i.e. without a more broad connection to society as a whole) would have been insufficient in regards to understanding the stereotyping, as will further become apparent in the last two chapters. However, the analysis of the media does play a crucial role in this dissertation. Since the historically specific truth found in the Icelandic

---

[108] Strinati, 1995: 224.
[109] Blackman and Walkerdine, 2001: 20.
[110] Ibid.
[111] As emphasized in the move from the mainstream realm to the academic realm in the introduction.

mainstream media is part of the bigger discursively constructed truth found in Icelandic society, the media can be utilized as a representative example of the mainstream discourse in general, i.e. as emphasized in the previous paragraph. In relation to the earlier argument regarding the possible increased prominence of the media as a social space in the contemporary western world, it could be argued that it is an interesting and important space to investigate.

The subtitle of the dissertation refers to the mainstream discourse, and it is indeed the topic of investigation in the broader academic sense. However, it proves impossible to examine all of Icelandic society in relation to the Othering of the foreign national in this piece of work. One would, for example, have to talk to every single person and examine every single thing said regarding the topic. It is therefore necessary to use a representative example, i.e. in this case the media. Other spaces within society can obviously also be explored and utilized as examples,[112] but due to the limits of the dissertation it could be argued that it is best to focus on a specific space. If this was not done, it might perhaps be rather difficult to present clear findings, since the final product would most likely be a disjointed and problematic discussion. If one tries to examine too much, one perhaps ends up with very little. Hopefully, the final product will prove useful for those interested in this line of research precisely because the author didn't try to examine too much.[113]

Since it could be argued that the media is becoming increasingly dominant in the contemporary western world, it shouldn't perhaps come as a surprise that it is an 'area' that academics find increasingly interesting.[114] As previously stated, this dissertation is an original contribution to the academic field, i.e. in regards to Iceland. However, this does not imply that research focused on stereotypical foreign nationals in the media isn't taking place in other countries. On a worldwide scale, the representation of foreign nationals in the mainstream media is in fact a hot topic, and it would be impossible to offer a complete examination of all the discussions here. In order to illustrate how visible this debate has become, it is worth noting as an example that this media representation was one of the main topics discussed at the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

---

[112] Since they are part of the same historically specific mainstream discourse.
[113] This will be discussed further in the concluding chapter.
[114] See for example Barker (2000) for a discussion.

World Congress in Moscow last year (2007). The IFJ points out that journalists now face the task of writing about societies that have drastically changed in recent years. Now, "intolerance is on the rise, with racism and xenophobia re-emerging as powerful perils and anti-foreigner political parties gaining in popularity."[115] The media's role in coping with these changes is being observed by the IFJ on a global scale. Generally, the conclusion is that rather than raising awareness, "helping fight prejudice and engendering inter-community understanding, a large percentage of the mainstream media has helped to stoke the fires of intolerance and racism."[116] The focus in the media is often on negative stereotypes according to the IFJ – outsiders who can bring problems to the community that they enter.[117]

It could be argued that this assessment presented by the IFJ is somewhat general, since the focus is for example not on the mainstream media in small countries such as Iceland. So how could one find a more specific example that might give one a clue as to what type of media coverage is taking place in Iceland?[118] A comparison between Iceland and the other Nordic countries is frequently made, since Iceland is supposedly similar to these countries in some ways. It could thus be argued that media representations in a Nordic country might give one a clue as to what is taking place in Iceland. The IFJ argues that newspapers *across the globe* are guilty of providing a stereotypical view of the foreign national,[119] but has this been the case in a Nordic country specifically?

As an example, the Norwegian academic Elisabeth Eide (2003) points out that newspapers and other news media focus on the abnormal, as well as the deviant and conflict-laden. The ordinary law-abiding citizen does not appear to be particularly newsworthy, and neither is a lasting peace or 'good news' in general. As she states: "If this media logic prevails, the Other will tend to be interesting as long as she is different and the representation of the Other as different (and deviant) will tend to overshadow the Other as non-Other, as part of 'we'."[120] Based on her own studies of newspaper coverage in Norway she points out that *the Other is often seen as a threat or a problem.* In this regard the focus is usually on the *male Other*, and crime is frequently the main area of focus. The Other is

---

[115] International Federation of Journalists, 2007: 7.
[116] Ibid.: 8.
[117] Ibid.
[118] That is without conducting one's own research.
[119] International Federation of Journalists, 2007: 9.
[120] Eide, 2003: 80.

often seen as mass, a sort of non-individual.[121] This can be achieved discursively by linking the male Other mainly to his collective national identity. The individual is still an individual, but only recognizable on a mass-basis, i.e. as part of a group. He is thus not a *unique* individual. This fits in with what is seen in news coverage in Norway according to Eide, since minorities are more often represented without full names and occupation, i.e. as opposed to the normal majority.[122]

Since the IFJ points out that the mainstream media often presents stereotypical foreign nationals, and furthermore because this seems to be the case in neighbouring Norway, one might expect to find Other foreign national stereotypes in the Icelandic mainstream media. As previously stated, the piece of work presented here is an original contribution to the academic field,[123] but this does not mean that nothing has been written about foreign nationals in the Icelandic media. However, it could be argued that the material previously produced in Iceland differs drastically from this dissertation.

Before I embarked on this research, I talked to Icelandic academics who are currently working on research related to immigrants and foreign nationals in Iceland, and discovered that no one has examined the foreign national in Iceland in the way I am doing here; that is, discursively analyzing the media in search of Other foreign national productive stereotypes associated with the discursive formation focused on problems,[124] and furthermore linking this research to the broader Icelandic national identity points mentioned earlier. Even though the material produced in Iceland so far is vastly different from this dissertation, it needs to be mentioned since it situates the research from an Icelandic perspective and, furthermore, it assisted me in deciding which material to choose for analysis.

The company 'Creditinfo Ísland' scans all media coverage in Iceland by using specific keywords such as 'foreigners'. For the years 2006 and 2007 it has compiled reports listing all mainstream media coverage in Iceland which relates to

---

[121] Ibid.: 91.
[122] Ibid.: 95. As will become apparent in Chapter 4, this emphasis on the mass non-individual identity is also prevalent in the Icelandic media as regards the foreign national. Further Nordic examples will not be discussed here. It could be argued that it is unnecessary to focus on more examples since this brief discussion is mainly meant to give one an idea as to what might be taking place in Iceland.
[123] This will be discussed further in the conclusion.
[124] This discursive formation was mentioned in the introduction and will be discussed later.

immigrants[125] and foreign workforce. This is the only systematic piece of 'research'[126] that has been carried out in relation to the foreign national and the mainstream media in Iceland. The focus is on charts and numbers in the overview of the media coverage, and news reports are coded in relation to general topics, such as education, housing and crime. Furthermore, a code is given to imply whether the news report is positive, negative or neutral. It is not possible to access the media material in this data set, i.e. the actual news reports. There is no emphasis placed on presenting a discursive analysis of certain reports, and therefore one can't know what specific kind of stereotyping might be taking place based on this coded data set.[127]

Even though these reports differ drastically from this piece of work, they did help guide me in the focus of the research presented in this dissertation. There was a substantial increase in news reports regarding criminal matters in 2007 as opposed to 2006, i.e. up from 4.5 % (45 stories) to 19.8 % (302 stories).[128] I found this extremely interesting in relation to the threatening Other discussed previously, and thus decided to focus solely on the possible Othering taking place in the year 2007.[129] As previously stated, I would argue that there is a need to limit the scope of the research produced in a dissertation of this size in order to (hopefully) present clear findings. There is such a vast amount of material produced in the media each year that I concluded that it would be best to limit the research to one year. Furthermore, I decided to focus solely on the print media, since it was dominant when it came to news reports regarding the material of interest to this research. In total there were 1,525 reports published in relation to immigrants[130] and foreign workforce, and 1,009 of them were in the mainstream print media.[131]

---

[125] As shall be discussed, I initially intended to focus on 'immigrants' but found it a problematic concept to use here. I therefore disagree with this particular usage of the concept.

[126] As discussed subsequently, this is not academic research but rather a coded data set.

[127] Creditinfo Ísland (2006/2007). The Creditinfo Ísland reports on this topic were discussed in the media, and articles have been published that summarize the findings and discuss positivity and negativity in relation to foreign nationals and the media. See for example Guðmundsson (2007). These articles can be seen as part of a generalized discussion (in the mainstream realm) and are thus drastically different from the systematic discourse analysis presented here.

[128] Creditinfo Ísland (2007).

[129] That is, the Othering related to the discursive formation focusing on problems which will be discussed later.

[130] See footnote 125.

[131] Creditinfo Ísland (2007). I.e. in Morgunblaðið, Fréttablaðið, Blaðið/24 stundir, DV and Viðskiptablaðið. The possible limitations of the research will be discussed in the conclusion.

After the focus area had been chosen, I examined all the 1,009 reports and discursively analyzed them in relation to the discursive formation of interest here. This process took several weeks and became rather complex after I realized that my initial approach was flawed. This will be addressed subsequently when discussing the discursive method. The focus was solely on the mainstream print media, i.e. *Morgunblaðið*, *Fréttablaðið*, *Blaðið/24 stundir*, *DV* and *Viðskiptablaðið*. The smaller regional papers were not analyzed since the aim was to link the research to the *mainstream national discourse*, as discussed. The focus was on news reports and news features, since they covered the incidents of interest in relation to supposed threats and problems. Magazines were therefore not analyzed, since they aren't part of the daily news cycle. I did examine the sections in the newspapers that don't focus on 'hard news', i.e. 'lifestyle', 'culture', etc., since they are part of the national newspapers. However, I didn't find anything worthy of note. While foreign nationals weren't necessarily invisible, the Other stereotypes discovered were not present in these sections.

It could be argued that *DV* and *Viðskiptablaðið* are somewhat different from the other papers and should perhaps not have been included. *DV* presents stories in a sensationalized tabloid style, but it is included since it is a national paper and thus a part of the mainstream discourse. As will become apparent, I noticed numerous similarities between the reports in *DV* and *Fréttablaðið*. I would therefore argue that *DV* is clearly discursively relevant here. *Viðskiptablaðið* focuses on business stories, but it also includes 'regular news'. I thus examined reports in the paper, but none of them ended up contributing to the Othering based on my analysis. However, for purposes of clarity it is necessary to point out that I did examine the paper. I gained access to the material at the National and University Library of Iceland[132] and shall now explain how I analyzed it.

3.2. Method: Foucauldian discourse analysis linked to interpellation and absence

Reverting back to the work of Michel Foucault, it has been shown how his theories problematize the notion of universal truth. Instead of examining the print media searching for this type of truth in relation to the foreign national, I have analyzed the *discourse* surrounding the foreign national in Iceland. Foucault did

---

[132] Landsbókasafn Íslands – Háskólabókasafn.

more than simply introduce a theory which has enabled the theoretical problematization of the essentialist view of identity. The Foucauldian framework can also be utilized as a *method* – which will enable me to illustrate *how* the foreign national has been Othered in the mainstream Icelandic print media (and thus in the Icelandic mainstream discourse more generally as discussed). Certain points regarding Foucauldian discourse will now be introduced. These arguments were not presented in Chapter 2 since they are directly linked to the method and research. It is thus more fitting to present them here. Since the foundations were introduced in the development of the framework, the discussion of the discursive method does not prove theoretically problematic.

As the framework enables one to comprehend, Foucault argues that there is no pre-discursive subject. This is of importance to the subsequent analysis. As he states: "One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say, *to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework.*"[133] The subject is constantly constructed and maintained in discourse. When one speaks of discourse in a Foucauldian sense, what is being referred to is "a group of statements, which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment. … Discourse is the production of knowledge through language."[134] As Foucault argues, discourses "*systematically form* the objects of which they speak."[135] Thus, Foucault's theory of discourse is not simply a linguistic concept, since it overcomes "the traditional distinction between what one *says* (language) and what one *does* (practice)."[136]

As previously discussed, Foucault argues that at certain historical moments discourses regarding specific topics (such as foreign nationals in Iceland) count as truth. What is important to point out with regard to the subsequent analysis is that a discourse never consists of one isolated text or source. The same discourse, characteristic of the way of thinking, or the state of knowledge at any one time, will appear across a range of texts, and as a form of conduct, at a number of different sites within society. What is presented in the media thus cannot be viewed as an isolated discourse existing outside of the wider system of

---

[133] Foucault, 1980: 115. Emphasis added.
[134] Hall, 2001: 72.
[135] Foucault, 1972: 49. Emphasis added.
[136] Hall, 2001: 72.

representation. The media can therefore be utilized as an example of the Icelandic mainstream discourse more generally, as previously mentioned, and now introduced specifically in relation to the Foucauldian discursive method.[137] As mentioned in the introduction, when discourses focus on the same object, share the same style, support a strategy, a common administrative or political course or pattern in a certain society, they are a historically specific discursive formation.[138] This term is important to the understanding of the Othering located in the analysis in more general terms. The broader context will be of focus in Chapter 5, where it will be argued that a discursive formation emphasizing *certain* foreign nationals as *problematic* exists in the Icelandic mainstream discourse.

Wetherell, Taylor and Yates (2001) point out that like "all scientific investigations, the study of discourse is about the discovery and theorization of pattern and order."[139] As Frank Mort (1987) argues, under specific historical conditions discourses exhibit a systematic organization. "Foucault's discourse theory is based on *a method which scans texts to bring to light their discursive coherence.*"[140] This is precisely what I have done here. My analysis has focused on locating discursive themes and patterns in relation to the foreign national in Iceland. I have discovered certain areas in which the foreign national is Othered in the Icelandic mainstream print media. After analyzing all the material previously discussed, it became clear that the Othering is visibly linked to danger, which isn't surprising when keeping in mind the framework developed in Chapter 2. Certain *behaviour* is emphasized in the reports, such as group fighting, and this behaviour is linked to the foreign national's Other *identity*. It appears as though the Other abnormality becomes an explanation for behaviour, as discussed earlier. The Other is judged, not the act.

In relation to the framework presented, it could be argued that journalists aren't simply innocent messengers. They are not reporting some pre-given reality but rather contributing to the construction of a mainstream discourse that abnormalizes certain behaviour, as previously explained. Judith Butler's notion of 'interpellation' is helpful in understanding how journalists can discursively construct the subjects of their stories. Butler argues that we are 'put into' our

---

[137] It could be argued that this is necessary for theoretical clarity.
[138] Hall, 2001: 73.
[139] Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001: 5.
[140] Mort, 1987: 6. Emphasis added.

subject positions through certain 'speech acts'. These acts aren't necessarily spoken words – they can also be written and read. Interpellation is a performative utterance, i.e. it constitutes the subject in the act of naming her/him. This is linked to the previous argument regarding Foucauldian discourses. An utterance is formative "precisely because it initiates the individual into the subjected status of the subject."[141] Instead of addressing a pre-existing subject, "the address is a name which *creates* what it names, there appears to be no "Peter" without the name "Peter"."[142] Thus for example describing a foreign national as a *savage* (as shown in the next chapter) in a report is not simply an innocent utterance.

Furthermore it could be argued that it is necessary to analyze the themes that are *missing* in relation to the Othering of the foreign national, since this gives one an idea as to how the Icelandic national identity is being constructed. As previously discussed, the Other is productive, since it constructs the normal through what it is *not*. As Lisa Blackman argues, performative acts and enactments of identity "can be analytically read from silence and absence as much as the more traditional focus upon those themes that repeatedly occur."[143] It could thus be argued that an analysis which only focused on recurring themes would be incomplete. As I shall for example argue in the next chapter, the emphasis on the Other foreign national as an extremely violent rapist also tells us something about how we believe normal Icelandic men rape. This isn't mentioned in the news reports, but it is possible to discursively analyze through the discursive themes and the discursive absence.

I have now illustrated that it can be argued that by analyzing certain recurring discursive themes, one can identify how a specific discursive truth regarding a topic is constructed. Furthermore it is necessary to examine what is missing, in order to understand how the normal identity is being constructed, as discussed in relation to the normal/Other dichotomy. The discourse analysis in the next chapter will focus on three Other stereotypes that I have located in relation to the foreign national in the Icelandic mainstream print media in 2007. They are: *the Other foreign rapist, the Other foreign fighter* and *the Other Lithuanian organized criminal.* Later on it will become clear why I chose these particular names. As

---

[141] Butler, 1993: 121.
[142] Butler, 1997: 111. Emphasis added.
[143] Blackman, 2004: 229.

discussed in Chapter 5, in relation to the framework developed, discourses regarding other possible Other stereotypes were located, but they didn't present a clear discursive pattern and accordingly weren't included.

Firstly I begin by focusing on a few reports in some detail in order to analyze the Other abnormal discursive themes present in relation to each particular stereotype. The visible themes are furthermore linked to the discursive absence, i.e. with regard to the normal Icelandic identity. The Foucauldian discursive method focuses on language, but not on a specific reading of every single word in a report. The idea is to locate a pattern that enables one to see how something is viewed and talked about. This is precisely what I have done in the analysis. Thus for example I focus on a headline if it is relevant to the discursive theme, but this isn't always the case. Furthermore, images are discussed if they are relevant to the Othering, since images can be viewed as discursive in a Foucaldian sense. After the themes have been analyzed, other reports are mentioned briefly in order to show that the stereotype discussed is in fact a part of a prominent mainstream discursive pattern.

Regarding the subsequent analysis it is necessary to point out that this is *my analysis.* The discursive themes located are based on my understanding of the topic and my arguments in relation to the theoretical framework developed. The next chapter needs to be read with this in mind. I do not claim this to be the one correct way of analyzing the media coverage. As Wetherell, Taylor and Yates point out, "the identification of pattern always depends on theory and prior assumptions. It is never a neutral exercise."[144] This point will be revisited in the conclusion where I emphasize the possible limitations of this dissertation.

Initially, I intended to discursively analyze the reports in relation to *immigrants*, not foreign nationals. The research plan was developed with this in mind, and the newspapers were all scanned firstly with the intent on finding discursive themes related to immigrants. This way of conducting the analysis soon proved problematic. I would argue that the Icelandic mainstream discourse doesn't 'allow' it. Often, reports don't mention whether someone is simply visiting the country as a tourist or if the individual has settled here temporarily or permanently. The common discursive theme usually present simply emphasizes

---

[144] Wetherall, Taylor and Yates, 2001: 396.

the foreign nationality. Thus the focus of the research shifted, and I scanned the reports again, locating themes in relation to the foreign national.

I wanted to focus on immigrants because they present an interesting dilemma in the us/them dichotomy. When does one stop being them and becomes us? Can this ever happen? In the discussion in Chapter 5, I will link this point to the problematic mainstream discourse in Iceland. It could be argued that the emphasis on *certain* nationalities is related to a particular type of Othering occurring in the discourse. Why, for example, when discussing foreign nationals, is the focus hardly ever on rich westerners? Are they not a dangerous threat? The focus on certain foreign national identities in relation to problems will be linked to the construction of the Icelandic national *pure* identity.

4. Discourse analysis: The Other foreign national

4.1. The Other foreign rapist: Beware! He may laugh whilst he brutally rapes you

Whilst analyzing the material discussed in Chapter 3, it quickly became apparent that the foreign national identity features prominently in news reports regarding rape. What is interesting here, in relation to the framework developed, is the fact that certain Other abnormal behaviour appears to be linked to the Other national identity. An Other type of rape seems to exist according to the discursive themes present in certain news reports, and as will become clear it could be argued that what is being suggested is that this Other rape is much worse than the supposedly normal rape committed by Icelandic men. The Other national identity is the key to understanding the Other abnormal behaviour in the mainstream discourse as previously theoretically introduced, but in the subsequent analysis it will become clear how this 'identity/behaviour' link is constructed in the Cartesian mainstream discourse. The Othering allows us, i.e. the supposedly normal people, to 'understand' that we are normal because we are not like *them*. We behave in a normal way because we *are* normal.

On the front page of *Fréttablaðið* on November 15th there was a news report about a woman who had been raped, and the reader was to be left in no doubt that Icelanders had nothing to do with the crime. The report states that the victim has filed charges against two Lithuanian men being held in custody.[145] The headline reads: *A brutal act of violence*.[146] According to the report, the woman met the two Lithuanian men at a nightclub. Later, the men viciously attacked the woman and subsequently raped her in an alley, according to the woman's testimony to the police, which the paper quotes. The report emphasizes the brutality of the attack,

---

[145] For clarity, it is worth noting that the analysis here is solely focused on the information provided in the reports at the time of publication (and the discourse is as a result analyzed in the present tense). Thus if further information became available later, for example in relation to custody or sentencing, it is not included unless it appears in another report. The 'actual real world incidents' are not being analyzed here, but rather how they are discursively presented in the reports.

[146] Hrottafengið ofbeldisverk.

and ends by stating that the men *laughed* at the woman whilst they were raping her, and also after they finished.[147] The focus on laughter is an interesting point in a discursive sense. Why is it deemed newsworthy that the men laughed? Could it be that this is something that foreign men do when they rape?[148] When a longer version of a report is to be found inside the paper (as is the case here), the front page information can be viewed as a 'teaser', i.e. emphasizing the main news points of the report. It could thus be argued that the Other national identity, the brutality of the rape and the laughter are considered to be very important points in this story.

In the longer version inside the paper, it is mentioned prominently in a sub-headline that both men have been working in Iceland for some time. They had therefore been living amongst us before allegedly committing the brutal rape. This appears to be relevant in relation to the rape since it is mentioned here – and again it is emphasized that this was a brutal attack. After the Other rape is discussed in the report, a narrative is constructed regarding various recent rape incidents in Reykjavík. This narrative begins with a focus on another rape reported to the police on the same weekend that the Lithuanian men are suspected of brutally raping the woman (whilst laughing). The discourse surrounding this rape is rather different than the themes linked to the Other incident. Like the woman discussed earlier, this one had been at a nightclub and after leaving the club a *man* allegedly raped her.[149]

It could be argued that what needs to be explored here is the discursive absence. There is no mention of the man's nationality in the report. The discursive 'rule' in the Icelandic mainstream discourse allows one to conclude that this was thus most likely an Icelandic man. Usually if a person's nationality isn't mentioned it means that the person in question is Icelandic, i.e. normal in relation to the arguments here. There is no mention of what the man specifically did to the woman, even though the newspaper quotes a police report, just like it did in the Other case. Why is it deemed relevant in only one instance to discuss acts in detail? Is it just coincidence that this happens to be in the Other case? Since nothing is mentioned 'out of the ordinary' in relation to the second case, the

---

[147] Fréttablaðið, 2007a.
[148] This point will be discussed further later in the analysis. The focus on laughter is mentioned here in order to highlight the link between behaviour and identity being discursively constructed.
[149] Fréttablaðið, 2007b.

reader can draw his or her own conclusion based on the discursive rule. An Icelandic man probably raped the woman in a normal way.[150] That is, he didn't brutally rape and laugh at her. He *just* raped her.

Subsequently, various other recent rape incidents in Reykjavík are discursively linked together in the report. What all these incidents have in common in this constructed narrative is that they are mentioned briefly without the inclusion of any nationality. Furthermore, there is no mention of an abnormal Other behaviour, such as laughter.[151] Thus the discursive absence allows the reader yet again to draw the conclusion that these were most likely normal non-Other incidents.

As illustrated in Chapter 2, ideas of normality in the west have been constructed according to careful descriptions of the abnormal. The focus has mainly been on the abnormal in the Cartesian mainstream discourse, and normality has been discursively linked to what the normal is not, i.e. the abnormal. It could be argued that the themes present in relation to the Other rape allow one to see how the Other foreign rapist is used as a productive Other stereotype in a dichotomy in order to construct a normality in relation to the Icelandic identity. The emphasis is on the Other abnormal behaviour, i.e. the brutal rape and the laugher – whilst the normal behaviour is not detailed in the other cases. We know what is normal, since it is based on the opposite of the careful description of the abnormal. Hence there is no need to focus on a description of the normal in the discourse. For example, it could be argued that the emphasis on the laughter creates a discursive link between the Other identity and the laughter. It is thus suggested that it is abnormal to laugh whilst raping – or after one is finished. If the foreign national is indeed Othered in relation to rape, as is suggested here, there is a need to illustrate how this normal/Other dichotomy is constructed in other reports. It could be argued that it is not sufficient to simply focus on this one edition of *Fréttablaðið*. That is, because the mainstream

---

[150] It is important to understand that I am not claiming that this was an Icelandic man. I have no idea if it was, but it doesn't matter in a discursive sense since the analysis is focused on the productive aspect of the Other stereotype and not the 'actual rape'. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the argument here isn't that a pregiven reality is being distorted. Rather, the emphasis is on the mainstream discursive construction of identities in a Cartesian dichotomy based on supposed abnormal and normal behaviour.

[151] Fréttablaðið, 2007b.

discursive Othering should visibly be a part of a broad discursive pattern if it is taking place.[152]

The 'brutal rape incident' was also present in *DV* on November 15th. The news report was featured prominently on the back page with the headline: *Raped the woman and laughed at her*.[153] Like the report in *Fréttablaðið*, this one begins by emphasizing that the suspects are from Lithuania. The sub-headline focuses on the Other national identity and furthermore that this was a brutal rape. The emphasis on the brutality and the foreign identity illustrates a similar discursive pattern, i.e. in relation to the previous discussion. However, the report in *DV* presents us with much more detail – quoting a police report just like *Fréttablaðið* did.

The *DV* report states that the men attacked the woman in an alley in downtown Reykjavík. One of the men, which the woman describes as the larger one, pushed her up against a car, hit her in the face and pulled her hair. Whilst he was doing this, the other man pulled her pants down, and together the men subsequently ripped all her clothes off. The larger man attempted to insert his penis inside her vagina and the report states that the woman felt much pain when the man was doing this. The other man also attempted to insert his penis into the woman's vagina, and the larger one tried to insert his penis into her mouth. The graphic details continue after this description, with the news report stating that the larger man pushed his penis up against the woman's face until she was forced to open her mouth. The other man subsequently sat on her face. Like the report in *Fréttablaðið*, this one emphasizes that the men laughed at the woman during and after the rape. The laughter was obviously also featured prominently in the headline.

I found it rather difficult to read these graphic details and to write them here, but I would argue that they are discursively relevant in the analysis of the Othering taking place in regards to rape. Again the emphasis is on the brutality, but unlike the report in *Fréttablaðið* discussed earlier, this one illustrates in detail what supposedly occurred, which further illustrates the brutal aspect of the rape and thus gives one a more 'insightful' idea of how the abnormal behaves, i.e. as constructed in the mainstream discursive truth. Even though the report differs

---

[152] As discussed in Chapter 3, and this discursive pattern will furthermore be addressed in Chapter 5.
[153] Nauðguðu konunni og hlógu að henni.

somewhat from the one in *Fréttablaðið*, mainly with regard to the emphasis on detail, it could be argued that the same discursive themes are present in the reports. They both prominently emphasize the Other foreign nationality of the alleged rapists, they both state that this was a brutal rape and furthermore that the men laughed at the victim. It is deemed newsworthy to pay particular attention to what the men did, and it could be argued that the behaviour is discursively abnormalized through the prominence it is given in the reports, i.e. in relation to the Other foreign identity. It is possible to argue that if the men's nationality was not mentioned, the discursive themes would be very different since it would not be possible to link the behaviour to a foreign identity. However, the nationality is indeed prominent and it could thus be argued that a link between the Other identity and the Other behaviour is constructed in the news reports.

Fréttablaðið continued to discuss the brutal rape case over the following days. A report published on November 20th states that the men are to remain in custody for some time. Even though this is a small report it still manages to include certain discursive themes previously on display in relation to the Othering. The first sentence states that the men are from Lithuania and it also emphasizes that the rape was extremely brutal.[154] Three days later, another small report yet again emphasizes that the men come from Lithuania and that the rape was brutal. This time, it is stated that both men have been convicted of crimes in Lithuania, i.e. theft, robbery and blackmail.[155] It could be argued that this new information contributes to the discursive link between their Other behaviour and their Other identity. They have committed Other crimes in their Other country before, and accordingly it shouldn't perhaps come as a surprise that they have now committed an Other crime in Iceland. In order to avoid further Other crimes in Iceland, it is thus 'necessary' that the normal people recognize the Other, i.e. in terms of identity.[156]

This brutal rape case is also briefly mentioned in news reports in *Morgunblaðið*. The reports don't focus on the exact same themes that have been previously discussed, but it could be argued that the coverage is discursively similar to the examples illustrated. The emphasis is on the men's foreign

---

[154] Fréttablaðið, 2007c.
[155] Fréttablaðið, 2007d.
[156] It could be argued that this is discursively suggested in the link constructed between the identity and the behaviour. This point was introduced in the theoretical discussion in Chapter 2.

Lithuanian nationality, which is discursively necessary in relation to the foreign national identity Othering, as discussed. A short news report published on November 15th states that the men will remain in custody after being charged with rape. The first sentence stresses that the men are from Lithuania and subsequently it is pointed out that the woman claims the men violently assaulted her and later raped her.[157] A similar report was published five days later and points out that the men are to remain in custody longer than initially stated. Once again, it is emphasized that the men are from Lithuania, and furthermore that they are charged with assaulting the woman and raping her.[158]

The themes present here in relation to the rape seem to imply that the men did more than 'simply' rape the woman. The constant inclusion of the 'extra violence' is interesting. Isn't rape also violence? Is it a less of a crime to *just* rape a woman? The foreign men clearly did more than just rape according to the discursive truth. A subsequent report in *Morgunblaðið* on November 23rd echoes the points mentioned in *Fréttablaðið* on the same day.[159] Firstly, it is once again stressed that the men are from Lithuania. Subsequently, it is stated that according to the staff at the nightclub where the men had been earlier in the evening, they were incredibly rude and aggressive, and it is emphasized that both men have a criminal record.[160]

Based on my analysis of all these reports, it could be argued that the men's nationality is seen to be vitally important with regard to this alleged crime. Every single news report mentions that the men are from Lithuania. As previously discussed, it could be argued that their Other national identity is linked to their Other behaviour. This behaviour is a brutal violent rape (not a normal rape) mentioned in *Fréttablaðið* and *Morgunblaðið* and discussed in detail in *DV*. Furthermore, *Fréttablaðið* and *DV* emphasize that the men laughed at the woman whilst raping her and after they finished. The themes located in these reports present a discursive pattern that allows one to argue that the foreign national is Othered when it comes to rape.[161] Other brief examples further illustrate that these

---

[157] Morgunblaðið, 2007a.
[158] Morgunblaðið, 2007b.
[159] I.e. relation to the men's prior criminal records.
[160] Morgunblaðið, 2007c.
[161] I.e. in relation to the framework developed.

aren't isolated themes in the Icelandic mainstream discourse.[162] The Other national identity appears to be vitally important to our understanding of those who rape and aren't Icelandic. I would argue that this is the only plausible conclusion that one can arrive at, given the prominence of this identity in the news reports. Why would it be included if it isn't relevant?[163]

A report in *Fréttablaðið* on March 20th focuses on an alleged rape that took place in the basement of Hótel Saga. Once again, the reader is to be left in no doubt that the alleged rapist is not an Icelander. The first sentence states that the suspect is an eighteen year old Polish boy, and the victim's visible injuries are stressed in the sub-headline. It could be argued that the focus on the injuries can be related to the violent theme previously discussed. It is deemed newsworthy that the suspect has been living here for some time and that he initially came here with his parents.[164] *Blaðið*, *DV* and *Morgunblaðið* all published reports on the same incident on this date, March 20th. The reports in *Blaðið* and *Morgunblaðið* don't mention that the suspect is from Poland, but they both state that he is foreign.[165] Again there are similarities between *Fréttablaðið* and *DV*; the latter's report mentions that the suspect is an eighteen year old Polish boy.[166] Subsequent reports emphasize that the boy is Polish or foreign.[167] It could thus be argued that the foreign identity is seen to be relevant to the rape.

Various other reports focused on the Other national identity in relation to rape in 2007. The lack of space makes it impossible to mention them all here. As emphasized in Chapter 3, it could be argued that it isn't necessary to discursively analyze every report, since I have already illustrated the discursive themes related to the foreign national identity. Due to the fact that several reports have been discussed in relation to these themes, it could be argued that the Othering isn't isolated but rather part of a pattern in the mainstream discourse.[168] Other incidents that were reported in the Icelandic print media in 2007 include an alleged rape involving Polish men in the town of Selfoss,[169] foreign men in Selfoss (the same

---

[162] They won't be analyzed in detail since the themes have already been shown in several reports.
[163] As viewed in the discursive mainstream truth in Iceland.
[164] Fréttablaðið, 2007e.
[165] Morgunblaðið, 2007d and Blaðið, 2007a.
[166] DV, 2007b.
[167] Morgunblaðið, 2007e; Morgunblaðið, 2007f; Fréttablaðið, 2007f and Fréttablaðið, 2007g.
[168] This point will be discussed further in Chapter 5.
[169] Fréttablaðið, 2007h; Morgunblaðið, 2007g and DV, 2007c.

incident)[170] and another incident involving a foreign man in the Westman Islands.[171]

It could be argued that a report in *Fréttablaðið* on November 17th illustrates clearly some of the general assumptions made in regards to the Other and the Other type of rape. As I have been highlighting in the analysis, the inclusion of the foreign nationality in the reports is not some random occurrence, but rather a part of a discursive pattern. After completing my analysis I found it interesting to come across this report, since it seems to confirm the analysis I have presented, i.e. the focus on the link between behaviour and identity. The headline reads: *Foreigners take over the drug world*[172] and the report discusses how foreigners have apparently brought organized crime to Iceland. This topic will be discussed later in relation to another Other stereotype. What is of interest here is the general discursive link constructed in relation to rape.

The report quotes Brynjar Níelsson, a Supreme Court Attorney, and he begins by stating that organized crime has now been brought to Iceland. Subsequently he points out that this means that a new and previously unknown *mindset* is behind crimes in Iceland. This is one of the drawbacks of opening up the country according to Níelsson. What is subsequently included in the report is interesting with regard to the discursive links emphasized earlier in the analysis. It is pointed out that three Polish citizens are in custody in relation to a rape incident in Selfoss. In the next sentence it is emphasized that two Lithuanian citizens are currently in custody as a result of a rape incident, and the sentence after focuses on the fact that the Icelandic police is currently searching for a foreign citizen in relation to a rape incident. A discursive link is constructed between all these rape incidents, which is evident in the subsequent comments made by Níelsson. The journalist quotes him as saying that these rape incidents are *as cruel as they could possibly be*. Furthermore, Níelsson states that *these men* have a different mindset than the one found in Iceland, for example *in the way they view women*.[173]

It could thus be argued that what is being discussed here is clearly not simply behaviour. The focus is on *who these men are and how they think*. This is linked to their behaviour, i.e. in this case rape. Who *these men* are makes them behave in

---

[170] Morgunblaðið, 2007h.
[171] DV, 2007d.
[172] Útlendingar taka yfir fíkniefnaheiminn.
[173] Fréttablaðið, 2007i.

a different abnormal Other way. 'The expert'[174] chosen by the journalist has explained everything. Thus, *even though much peril may lie ahead, at least the Icelandic nation can rest assured that it knows who the dangerous rapists are.*

4.2. The Other foreign fighter: Beware! He might hit you with a fire extinguisher in a battle field, and he won't be the only savage present

It could be argued that the Othering of the foreign national is not just linked to rape. I have located certain discursive themes that are present in relation to fighting. The Other national identity appears to be often discursively linked to group fighting in particular, and is presented as a mass non-unique identity, i.e. as discussed in Chapter 3. Again as illustrated with regard to rape, the emphasis is on extreme violence, and in relation to group fighting the violence appears to be taking place either inside an Other space, i.e. an apartment where no Icelanders live, or close to it. If the Other fighting does take place away from this space, the Othering themes are usually present, i.e. the extreme violence and the group non-unique identity. It should perhaps come as no surprise that since the fighting is linked to groups, usually found in small spaces, the Other is sometimes discursively linked to parties, alcohol and/or drugs. Clearly alcohol and drugs aren't solely linked to the Other individual in the mainstream discourse, but it could be argued that in this case, drugs and alcohol are specifically linked to the Other stereotype in a certain way, as will become apparent.

The front page of *DV* on November 8th has a large picture of a knife and a fire extinguisher, and the headline reads: *A bloody fight in a stairway*.[175] Above the headline a large font sentence reads: *Poles fought with sharp weapons and fire extinguishers*.[176] Below the headline it is stated that a party that took place in an apartment where more than ten Poles live ended in a bloody fight. Apparently, the stairway looked like a *battle field* after the fighting ended. Furthermore, it is emphasized that the neighbours (i.e. the normal people (as will become apparent)) are frightened and have been complaining about the noise coming from the apartment (i.e. *them*).[177] As discussed, when a report is teased on the front page

---

[174] 'Expert opinion' can be seen as discursively important in regards to the production of truth. (Foucault, 1980: 131).
[175] Blóðug átök á stigagangi.
[176] Pólverjar börðust með bitvopnum og slökkvitækjum.
[177] DV, 2007e.

and presented in detail inside the paper, the main news points are usually emphasized on the front page. In this particular teaser, the foreign national is discursively linked to many of the same Others, and they as a group are linked to an extremely violent fight likened to a battle field. It could be argued that a dichotomy between the Icelanders and the Polish is discursively constructed, and it is further developed inside the paper.

The full report begins by emphasizing that a large number of Poles live together in an apartment. According to the report, the Poles fought with knives and fire extinguishers in the stairway outside their apartment after a party celebrating the birthday of two of the 'inhabitants'.[178] It is stated that the information regarding the party is actually based on information obtained from *them*. It is interesting that no one is quoted here and it appears as though this information didn't come from an individual. Does this mean that the group speaks as one? This is worthy of note since later in the report an Icelander is quoted, and he does appear to be a unique individual. Before he emerges it is mentioned that the police has many photos showing the bloody stairway. Again it is stated that the Poles fought with fire extinguishers and knives, and this time blunt objects are also mentioned.

Þorsteinn I. Hjálmarsson, introduced in the report as one of the *inhabitants*, witnessed the fight and states that the stairway looked like a battle field after the fighting was over. Furthermore he emphasizes that the inhabitants (i.e. us (as discussed later)) are constantly afraid. Hjálmarsson has no problem explaining why this is. It is due to the simple fact that *they* are always drunk on the weekends. This time the drunken escapades ended in a group fight in the stairway. The report subsequently focuses once more on the fact that the men fought with fire extinguishers and other weapons, this time in a quote from Hjálmarsson. This has now been mentioned five times in the report, excluding the large picture previously discussed, which covers most of the front page. Subsequently, Hjálmarsson is quoted as saying there was blood all over the walls (this had already been mentioned), and he also states that the inhabitants are constantly terrified, and even afraid to go out on weekends. This is because *they* behave like *savages* according to Hjálmarsson. He furthermore stresses that old people and

---

[178] As will be argued, Poles aren't discursively 'accepted' as inhabitants here.

families live in the building, i.e. Other to the male young(ish) Poles living together.

After this information has been presented, it is stated that the Poles are in Iceland working for the company Lauffel, and that the company rents the apartment. According to the inhabitants of the building, there have been as many as twenty Poles living in the apartment, which consists of four or five rooms. It could be argued that the report is referring to Icelanders when discussing the inhabitants. This is interesting in a discursive sense. Are the Poles not also inhabitants? Do *they* not live in the building as well? It could be argued that a discursive dichotomy is being carefully constructed in the report, and appears to focus on 'the normal non-violent Icelandic inhabitant who is not simply a youngish single male / the abnormal violent Pole who is apparently a non-inhabitant as well as a young(ish) single male'. Subsequently the report states that an emergency meeting was held in the building after the fight, and that the inhabitants intend to press charges. Hjálmarsson states that the situation has been serious for some time: "We the inhabitants have almost been held hostage in our own homes because we have feared the savageness."[179]

It could be argued that an Other productive stereotype is constructed in this report. The emphasis is on the incredibly violent nature of the Poles, which is for example evident in the five instances where the weapons are mentioned. Furthermore, the blood in the stairway is mentioned more than once and so is the battle field comparison. The quotes from Hjálmarsson regarding savageness further add to the discursive theme. It could be argued that the violent savage behaviour is discursively linked to an Other identity, and this identity appears to exist in relation to a group, as seen in the emphasis on the Poles as one group, i.e. many of the *same* Others – not unique individuals. This is for example illustrated in the idea that information is obtained from *them* and in the quotes from Hjálmarsson. The unique Icelander appears as an individual with a name contrasting the unnamed group of dangerous Others.

It is possible to argue that all the themes present in the report collectively suggest that the abnormal foreign fighter behaves in a manner very unlike that of the normal Icelandic unique inhabitant. As was apparent in the case of the Other

---

[179] DV, 2007f. "Okkur íbúunum hefur nánast verið haldið í gíslingu á okkar eigin heimilum af ótta við villimennskuna."

foreign rapist, the careful inclusion of the abnormal behavior in relation to the foreign identity discursively links the two together, thus emphasizing our ideas of normality, i.e. behaviour that is not the focus of the report but is the opposite of the abnormal behaviour. In this case, the Other foreign fighter is constantly part of a group – a group of non-individual Others. The Other fighter even lives as part of the group in an Other space. He behaves like a savage, appears to drink whenever possible and fights in an incredibly brutal and violent way. This is unlike the normal civilized Icelandic inhabitant, who is a unique individual and doesn't fight like a savage in a battle field. He may fight, but he probably won't. However, if he does, it will most likely be in a normal non-savage manner. The Icelander doesn't live in an Other space, he lives in a normal non-suspicious familiar space.[180] As noted earlier in the development of the framework, 'small points' (such as the discursive linking of the word 'inhabitants' to Icelanders) can also be seen as part of a particular Othering. The Pole is constructed as one of many de-humanized non-unique Others, and thus can't be viewed as an individual unique inhabitant, i.e. like the normal Icelander. It could be argued that the inclusion of this type of seemingly 'innocent' usage of a word is a part of the overall Othering discursive theme, and it fits the arguments presented by Billig discussed in Chapter 2 in relation to everyday reminding of who *we* are.

As discussed earlier, in order to credibly present an Other stereotype in the mainstream discourse, it is necessary to demonstrate that it is part of a bigger discursive pattern, and not simply confined to a single report. A headline in *Fréttablaðið* on June 25th reads: *On a respirator after a fight involving weapons.*[181] The report begins by stating that a thirty-something Lithuanian man is in hospital with a broken skull after being beaten on the head with a blunt object in his home. It goes on to stress the fact that six Lithuanian men have been arrested in relation to the incident. Like the previous 'Pole fight', this one also started at a party. However, unlike the savage fight in Hafnarfjörður, this one actually took place inside the Other apartment – not outside in the stairway. The Other space in question is in Breiðholt, according to the report. One of the six

---

[180] I.e. it could be argued that these points with regard to the Icelander, are the general construction in the discursive absence in relation to normality – with regard to this specific Other stereotype.
[181] Í öndunarvél eftir vopnuð átök.

suspects was stabbed in the back with an unknown object at the apartment, but isn't seriously injured.[182]

Even though this report isn't as graphic as the *DV* report regarding the Poles, it nevertheless includes many of the same discursive themes. There isn't as much detail in the report regarding the Lithuanian group, since it is shorter, but once again the emphasis is on the Other group, weapons, the Other space and the brutality of the fighting. The report discusses the six suspects *and* the victim as *the Lithuanian seven*, which illustrates well 'the group of the same Others' focus in relation to the Other identity. The victim is linked to the suspects via his Other nationality. Again, the emphasis isn't on what the individuals did, but rather the focus is on the group activity. The one difference here is that two of *them* are singled out when it comes to injuries. However, it could be argued that this doesn't change the group identity previously discussed, since this identity focuses on what the Other *does*, i.e. behaviour. The victims (probably) didn't injure themselves. With regard to the 'main victim', his broken skull stresses the brutality of the violence committed by the group, which is further implied by the inclusion of the discussion of weapons and the second injury – as well as what caused it, i.e. the unknown weapon. It could thus be argued that the themes present in this report are similar to the ones previously discussed, even though the report differs in style and length from the *DV* report. However, the Lithuanian story isn't quite finished.

What is interesting is that the next day in *Fréttablaðið* the reader is notified that *the Lithuanian six* (i.e. minus the victim) have been released. The headline reads: *The Lithuanian six not the guilty parties.*[183] This is a day after the newspaper discursively linked their Other nationality to the crime. Now all of a sudden they (i.e. the group) are innocent. The report briefly mentions what happened, i.e. that the victim was beaten on the head with a blunt object, resulting in a broken skull, and furthermore it is stated that one of the suspects was stabbed. The report goes on to stress that *the Lithuanian six* were in fact only present at the party and didn't have anything to do with the attack. However, the report points

---

[182] Fréttablaðið, 2007j.
[183] Litháarnar sex ekki sökudólgarnir.

out that *another group of men, also from Lithuania,* is believed to have started a group fight at the party.[184]

It could be argued that this follow-up story is interesting in a discursive sense and further illustrates the Othering of the foreign national as an Other foreign fighter belonging to a group of the same Others. It is stated that one group of Lithuanian men is innocent and another one is apparently guilty. Again, a group appears to have been acting, not individuals. The discourse presented allows one to understand that a group fight broke out at a party that appears to have been *an Other Lithuanian group party* in Breiðholt. Weapons were involved and some of them are even unknown. The brutality was such that one member of the group had to be taken to hospital with a broken skull. And obviously in relation to the absence, the discourse suggests that Icelanders don't seem to have been present. These themes are strikingly similar to the previous Other Pole fight, in that the emphasis is on the Other national identity, the Other space, the weapons, the brutal violence and the Other male group.

As previously mentioned in relation to the savage Pole fight, alcohol appears to have been present, and as one 'knows' from the mainstream discourse, the stereotypical version of a Pole is often related to large quantities of alcohol.[185] As will be discussed later, organized crime is discursively linked to Lithuanians in the mainstream discourse. Hence it is perhaps unsurprising to discover the fact that organized crime related to drug dealing makes an appearance in the discourse surrounding the fighting Lithuanians. In a short report in *Blaðið* on July 11th it is stated that witnesses who were present at the party in Breiðholt won't talk. The report points out that nothing seems to suggest that the fight is related to drug dealing. Subsequently it is mentioned that the men involved are all from Lithuania.[186] If there is nothing that suggests that the fight is linked to drug dealing, then why is this even mentioned? It could be argued that the emphasis on the drugs is discursively linked to the Other Lithuanian identity. This won't be discussed further at this point, since it is also linked to the third stereotype analyzed later. However, it could be argued that it was necessary to mention the link between Lithuanians and drugs, since the Other fighter can be split in two

---

[184] Fréttablaðið, 2007k. A short report was also included in DV on June 26th that emphasizes the Lithuanian six's innocence (DV, 2007g).
[185] I.e. as for example the discourse has 'taught' the present author.
[186] Blaðið, 2007b.

when it comes to drugs and alcohol, as will be stated in the summary regarding this stereotype.

As was done with the rape stereotype (after it had been shown that the stereotype is not just present in one report), it is important to mention further examples in order to illustrate that the pattern is widespread in the mainstream discourse. The following examples won't be analyzed in detail as discussed in Chapter 3, since the discursive themes have already been analyzed in several reports. The emphasis on the broad discursive pattern will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Another case involving a Lithuanian group emerged in *Fréttablaðið* and *DV* on August 13th. I illustrated earlier, in regards to the brutal rape incident (involving Lithuanian men), how these two papers seemed to focus on similar news points, and this is again the case in relation to this particular Lithuanian group. The headline in *Fréttablaðið* reads: *Fled from armed attackers in his underwear*[187] whilst the headline in *DV* reads: *A Lithuanian arrested in his underwear*.[188] The discursive themes previously introduced in relation to the Other foreign fighter are present in both reports. The story in *Fréttablaðið* begins by stating in a sub-headline that men armed with a blunt object attacked a man who was asleep at a party. He subsequently fled the apartment in his underwear. What is interesting here, in relation to the Other space previously discussed, is the fact that the sub-headline emphasizes that no residential housing is listed on the street where the party was held.[189] It could be argued that this further contributes to the Othering of the space where *they* live. It is abnormalized, i.e. in relation to 'Icelandic apartments' that are located on normal residential streets.

The report begins by focusing on the fact that when the police found the man he was only in his underwear. This is the third time this has been mentioned; this information is also present in the headline and sub-headline. Subsequently one arrives at a common theme: the foreign national identity. Firstly it is mentioned that the man is from Lithuania and furthermore it is stated that the man claims to have been attacked by *three Lithuanians*. When police officers arrived at the scene of the crime (i.e. the Other space), those present tried to keep them from

---

[187] Flúði vopnaða árásarmenn á nærbuxunum.
[188] Lithái handtekinn á nærbuxunum.
[189] Fréttablaðið, 2007l.

entering. Once they did finally manage to enter, it became clear that two rooms had been completely wrecked. Later a fight broke out between the police and the suspects, when the Lithuanians refused to leave the apartment. Furthermore it is emphasized that all the suspects are young males and again it is pointed out that no residential housing is on the street where the party was held.[190] As is apparent with regard to the earlier detailed analysis, the themes of the Other national identity, the Other male group identity, the Other space, the Other weapons and the Other violence are all present here.

The discursive themes are also apparent in the short report in *DV*, i.e. all except the focus on the weapons. It is stated that the victim and the suspects are all from Lithuania and furthermore there is emphasis on the victim's face having been covered in blood. This was as a result of a fight which had broken out between the men. The report goes on to stress that when the police entered the apartment it became clear that the men had gone berserk.[191]

I managed to locate various other reports where certain similar discursive themes are present. Every single theme is not always present, but there are consistent discursive similarities that allow one to argue that this is a part of the same discursive Othering.[192] It shouldn't come as a surprise that the themes aren't always all present, since some reports are short and perhaps focus on specifics, for example following up on an incident. However, as discussed, it is clear that the discursive Othering isn't possible without the mention of the Other nationality, and it therefore always needs to be present in the reports. For example, an incident involving a group of Polish men and a victim who ended up at a petrol station covered in blood was reported in the print media,[193] an incident involving a group of foreign men attacking a bouncer was mentioned in a report,[194] as was a threatening group of Lithuanians.[195]

The themes analyzed in the 'fighting reports' allow one to argue that the Othering in relation to fighting is part of a broad mainstream pattern. The foreign national's Other identity is discursively linked to his Other way of fighting, i.e. behaviour is linked to foreign identity – as was the case in relation to rape. It

---

[190] Ibid.
[191] DV, 2007h.
[192] I.e. in relation to the framework developed.
[193] DV, 2007i; Fréttablaðið, 2007m and Morgunblaðið, 2007i.
[194] Fréttablaðið, 2007n.
[195] DV, 2007j.

could be argued that the emphasis on group identity constructs the foreign national as Other, since he is constructed as non-unique, always belonging to a group, and thus not constructed as a unique individual who can act on his own. The de-humanizing and de-civilizing discursive themes previously illustrated allow one to understand that who these men are makes them behave the way they do.[196] *These men* seem to come from Poland and Lithuania and are extremely violent group fighters, perhaps even savages. This differs from the normal civilized Icelander. Furthermore, Poles appear to abuse alcohol and Lithuanians are linked to drugs. This all appears to be very dangerous. However, *just as we now know who the Other rapist is and we understand the secret of his very being, we can rest assured that we now know and understand the foreign fighter. It could be argued that this is a good thing, since he does appear to be rather scary.*

4.3. The Other Lithuanian organized criminal: Beware! He might steal from your store and this won't be just some ordinary amateur theft

Unlike the other two Other stereotypes analyzed, the Other organized criminal appears to be mostly linked to one particular foreign national identity in the mainstream discourse, the Lithuanian national identity. Another difference lies in the fact that longer news features are also discursively linked to this organized criminal, as well as shorter news reports which have been the focus of this chapter thus far. In the longer features there is sometimes much emphasis placed on explaining the broader context, i.e. organized crime linked to some sort of mafia. It could be argued that the Other organized crimes, related to the Other Lithuanian national identity, are discursively linked to this broader context. As will be discussed, a discursive narrative is constructed which 'situates' the crimes committed by Lithuanians. Accordingly, it is necessary to first focus on the wider discourse, in order to understand the context in which the Other Lithuanian organized criminal has been constructed in the mainstream discourse. Subsequently the focus will turn to the 'actual' stereotype construction in the shorter news reports. In relation to the Other Lithuanian organized criminal stereotype, a vast amount of material was produced in the print media last year specifically linked to theft. This appears to be the dominant crime related to the

---

[196] According to the truth presented in the mainstream discourse.

stereotype in the mainstream discourse. One would perhaps have thought beforehand that this would have been drugs,[197] but according to my analysis that is not the case.

The focus here is therefore on the Other Lithuanian organized criminal who steals. Not surprisingly, with regard to the previous productive stereotype discourse, he does this in an Other way. The Other crime is an abnormal highly organized theft and furthermore it is Other in relation to the sheer amount of 'things' that the Lithuanian organized criminal takes. This is apparently a lot more than what the normal unorganized Icelander would steal. The organized crime is discursively linked to the Other identity, as was the case with the Other stereotypes previously analyzed. As shall become clear, the themes discussed earlier, in relation to the group non-unique mass identity and the Other space, are also present here.

It is helpful to begin by revisiting the 'expert opinion' of Brynjar Níelsson, since he succinctly sums up certain assumptions that are made about the Other organized criminal. In the previously quoted report in *Fréttablaðið* on November 17th, Níelsson states that foreign criminals are much more organized than the Icelanders. The Icelandic criminals appear to be very disorganized according to our expert, since they do things very randomly.[198] *Fréttablaðið* seems to value Níelsson's input, since he is also quoted in a long news feature titled *The Lithuanian Mafia – The Root of the Problem.*[199] The purpose of this feature appears to be to 'teach' Icelanders about this mafia. It is stated that the Lithuanian mafia operates in countries across Europe, and thus our small country is only one part of the chain. After certain points regarding the mafia have been explained, Níelsson presents us with his 'psychoanalytic' take on things, as he did in relation to the Other rapist. He states that *the moral standard of many of these criminals is lower than what we have come to know in Iceland.* As he does in the previously discussed report, Níelsson points to the organizational aspect in the feature article. According to him, a new type of foreign behaviour is emerging in Iceland in relation to crime.[200] Again, Níelsson appears to be linking foreign nationals to

---

[197] I.e. in relation to what one has been 'taught' in the discourse regarding Lithuanians.
[198] Fréttablaðið, 2007i.
[199] Litháíska mafían – rót vandans.
[200] Fréttablaðið, 2007o.

certain specific criminal behaviour – and the title allows everyone to see who we are dealing with here, i.e. Lithuanians.

It could be argued that another feature published in *Fréttablaðið* focusing on the same issue, i.e. the Lithuanian mafia, furthermore contributes to the construction of the narrative surrounding the Lithuanian criminal in a broad context. The feature discusses how certain Lithuanian criminals, who are serving time in Iceland, organized their trip to the country via the travel agency Jetis. According to the feature, the Lithuanians managed to obtain tickets and passports through this travel agency. It goes on to state that a previously published feature (the one discussed quoting Níelsson) illustrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that organized crime is now a reality in Iceland. Furthermore, the report stresses that the Nordic countries have alerted authorities in Lithuania that they are worried about the number of crimes that can be traced to Lithuania. Possibly in order to illustrate the vast research conducted, it is stated that according to over twenty sources, it is clear that it will prove difficult to do anything to tackle the situation if authorities in Lithuania are unwilling to act against criminal organizations and drug manufacturers.[201] Subsequently it is emphasized that Icelandic police officers are worried about foreign nationals who have entered Iceland. People we might know nothing about.[202]

It could be argued that these 'teaching news features' present one with an easy to understand discursive narrative regarding Lithuanian criminals, a narrative not specifically linked to a single case. The Other Lithuanian organized criminal has thus been discursively situated within the Icelandic mainstream discourse in a broad context. As a result, terms such as 'the Lithuanian mafia' make discursive sense. Now that this broad context has been briefly introduced, the attention shifts to theft in particular, i.e. the analysis of the third and final Other stereotype found.

Specific 'Lithuanian crimes' can be linked to the general narrative surrounding Lithuania as presented in the mainstream discourse, as will be shown. The focus now turns to fourteen Lithuanians arrested in relation to theft in Reykjavík.

---

[201] As discussed, the focus here will be on the Lithuanian thief, but drugs are clearly associated with the Lithuanian mafia in the broad context, which is discussed here first.
[202] Fréttablaðið, 2007p. A similar (i.e. in a discursive sense) feature appeared in DV on June 29th (DV, 2007k). I won't focus on it here since it deals with the same topic, and the aim here isn't an in-depth analysis but rather, as discussed, it is necessary to illustrate the broad context in order to subsequently present the stereotype. Blaðið furthermore focused in general terms on how organized foreign criminals are coming to Iceland (Blaðið, 2007c and Blaðið, 2007d).

Morgunblaðið discussed this case in its reporting and also linked it to the broad context, in relation to theft. In a front page news report on October 5th it is stated that foreign gangs of thieves that come to Iceland solely to steal are a growing problem. According to shop owners and police officers, these gangs steal vast quantities of merchandise and are extremely well organized. Subsequently *the Lithuanian fourteen*[203] are discursively linked to these foreign gangs of thieves. It is stated that fourteen Lithuanians were arrested for grand theft and that an unprecedented amount of stolen goods was seized when their apartments were searched. The report puts emphasis on foreign thieves being only twenty percent of thieves in Iceland – yet eighty percent of stolen goods are linked to 'foreign theft'.[204]

It could be argued that in this report, the Lithuanian national identity is discursively linked to this more general discourse regarding foreign gangs of thieves. The broad discourse presented in the report firstly enables one to 'understand' the situation more generally, and subsequently *the Lithuanian fourteen* are introduced as a specific example relating to 'the foreign gangs of thieves general discourse'. The information present in this report allows one to see which specific themes are linked to the Other Lithuanian organized criminal, as introduced at the start of this sub-chapter. The focus is on the organization and the vast amount of stolen goods. Furthermore, the group non-unique identity is prevalent again. The group appears to act as one and it hides the stolen goods in the Other space.

Morgunblaðið again presented the general discourse regarding foreign gangs of thieves a few days later. In a report on October 10th, Bjarni Kristinsson, the managing director of Skífan and BT, states that 'these dudes' steal vast amounts of merchandise. For example, they might try to steal a few laptops at once. Gunnar Ingi Sigurðsson, the managing director of Hagkaup, has a similar story to tell. The thieves targeting Hagkaup are after beauty products and Sigurðsson states that not so long ago, goods worth ISK 750.000 were stolen from two Haugkaup stores. After this general discussion regarding what thieves in Iceland seem to be up to, *the Lithuanian fourteen* are once again introduced. There is no

---

[203] I will analyze this case shortly, but first it is necessary to understand the context in order to present a thorough analysis of the third Other stereotype.
[204] Morgunblaðið, 2007j.

direct connection made between them and thefts in Haugkaup, Bónus or BT, and yet the Lithuanians are mentioned directly after the interviews with the managing directors. It could thus be argued that the Lithuanian national identity is discursively linked to the general discussion of grand theft. The report states that the arrest of *the Lithuanian fourteen* illustrates the problem that shop owners now have to deal with. It is mentioned that according to the information available regarding the case, it appears to be related to organized crime. Furthermore, it is stressed that the Lithuanians came to Iceland solely to steal.[205] The focus in the analysis now shifts to news reports not 'visibly' linked to the general narrative, i.e. those that don't appear to 'teach'. As will become apparent, the themes present in these reports fit the general pattern illustrated as applies to organization, vast amounts of stolen goods, the group non-unique identity and the Other space.

Fréttablaðið discussed the case concerning *the Lithuanian fourteen* in a news report on October 4th. The headline reads: *Suspected of intending to take the goods out of the country.*[206] The sub-headline emphasizes that fourteen Lithuanians are in custody suspected of organized theft. The Lithuanian identity is thus discursively presented in the sub-headline and linked to organized crime. The group identity is also present. The men appear to be fourteen of the same as opposed to fourteen unique individuals. The next sentence focuses on the fact that a vast amount of goods was discovered when two places were searched.[207] The same discursive themes are thus present here, i.e. in relation to the pattern linked to the general gangs of thieves discourse previously discussed. The themes are all to be found in the sub-headline, before a single word of the main text has been examined, which perhaps illustrates how dominant this stereotype is in the mainstream Icelandic discourse.

In the main text it is emphasized once again that the Lithuanians are being held by the police and suspected of organized theft. The report goes on to mention that the police believe the men intended to send the goods out of the country to sell in Lithuania, a point linked to the organizational discursive theme of this particular theft. According to the report, the men all know each other, and have been living in two apartments in Reykjavík, seven in each. Here the emphasis is

---

[205] Morgunblaðið, 2007k.
[206] Grunaðir um að ætla með þýfið úr landi.
[207] Fréttablaðið, 2007q.

69

once again on the group and the Other space, i.e. where *the group lives*. In this case, we see that the group is split in two, but individuals are never mentioned. The report states that the police searched these two apartments and found the stolen goods there. According to assistant chief constable Ómar Smári Ármannsson, it is highly unusual to find such a vast quantity of goods in any one place. He states that the quantity found gives shop owners the incentive to improve anti-theft measures.[208]

As shown, the same discursive themes are thus also present in the main text. Worthy of note is some extra information, which is not a part of the main report. This 'extra text' begins with the question: *Organized crime?* And what is being referred to here? The previously published features in *Fréttablaðið* regarding the Lithuanian mafia discussed earlier. It is stated that these features focused on organized crime in Iceland. As was the case with the reports in *Morgunblaðið*, *the Lithuanian fourteen* are here discursively linked to the broad discursive context.[209]

In follow-up stories in *Fréttablaðið*, *the Lithuanian fourteen* become *the Lithuanian thirteen*. In a report on October 5th, the discursive themes introduced are once again prevalent. The headline reads: *Nine Lithuanians in custody*.[210] The sub-headline focuses on the vast quantity of goods seized, as well as ISK 500.000. The sameness in regards to the Lithuanian group identity is apparent in the report. A brief narrative is constructed which details who has been arrested, who is in custody, who is not allowed to leave the country and who has been released. *Fourteen Lithuanians* have been arrested. *Nine Lithuanians* are now in custody. *Four Lithuanians* are not allowed to leave the country. *One Lithuanian* has been released. As could be argued, the emphasis is on the Other national identity *sameness*, as previously analyzed. The Lithuanians are all the same and they can thus be recognized as Other. Subsequently the focus shifts to the vast quantity of goods, as has already been emphasized in the sub-headline. The report states that it is believed that the men were solely stealing from shops. Furthermore, it is stated that one of the men had a flight booked out of the country and it is believed that he intended to take the stolen goods with him to sell in Lithuania.[211] It could be argued that this point is linked to the organizational discursive theme

---

[208] Ibid.
[209] Though not in the 'actual' main report.
[210] Níu Litháar í gæsluvarðhaldi.
[211] Fréttablaðið, 2007r.

discussed. If plans had already been made for the selling of the goods, it is possible to see how these criminals are far from disorganized.

The case of *the Lithuanian thirteen* (minus one Lithuanian who was released) is briefly mentioned twice in *Fréttablaðið* in early November. A short report on November 2nd begins by pointing out that *the Lithuanian thirteen* will not be allowed to leave the country due to the ongoing investigation. Subsequently it is emphasized that the quantity of stolen goods was vast and that it is believed the Lithuanians solely stole from shops.[212] A report on November 6th is virtually identical to the one published four days earlier. It begins by emphasizing that *the Lithuanian thirteen* won't be allowed to leave the country due to the ongoing investigation of the grand scale theft. Here it is stated that the items stolen are around 300 in total, and it is stressed that they were found in the apartment that the Lithuanians were living in.[213] In earlier reports the focus was on two apartments, but here only one is mentioned. It could be argued that these virtually identical short reports furthermore illustrate that the discursive Othering is *maintained*, as was discussed in Chapter 2.

The previously discussed reports in *Morgunblaðið* focused on the broad context and subsequently discursively linked *the Lithuanian fourteen* to the foreign gangs of thieves as shown. However, the paper also presented a more specific 'conventional' news report regarding the topic, where one finds the same discursive themes previously analyzed. The report begins by stating that fourteen Lithuanian men in total have now been arrested and are suspected of organized grand theft. Furthermore it is emphasized that the men have not been working in Iceland on a regular basis, which leads the police to suspect that they have come to the country solely to steal. Thus they are professional thieves – which is discursively linked to the organizational discursive theme located here in the analysis. This is the focus of the headline, which reads: *Professional thieves in custody*.[214] Ómar Smári Ármannsson, the assistant chief constable quoted in a previously analyzed report in *Fréttablaðið*, is also quoted here. He states that in light of the vast quantity stolen from Icelandic shops, the focus should turn to

---

[212] Fréttablaðið, 2007s.
[213] Fréttablaðið, 2007t.
[214] Atvinnuþjófar í haldi.

71

improving anti-theft measures.[215] This is the same issue he mentioned in the previous report and can be linked to the organizational theme. The foreign thieves appear to be 'better' thieves than the Icelanders, i.e. in terms of organization, and thus it makes sense that the anti-theft measures might not prove adequate, since they have been focused on stopping disorganized amateur Icelandic criminals.

The report's emphasis subsequently shifts to the goods themselves, which were found at the apartments, i.e. the Other space. The report illustrates the vast quantity by stressing that two police officers who started examining the stolen goods in the morning had not finished late that afternoon. As mentioned in a previously analyzed report in *Fréttablaðið*, it is stated here that one of the men had booked a plane ticket to Lithuania and that the police suspects he intended to take the goods with him.[216]

It could be argued that the analyzed reports regarding 'organized grand thieves' illustrate a specific discursive pattern which leads to the construction of the productive Other Lithuanian organized criminal stereotype. As shown, every single report focuses on the Lithuanian national identity and it could be argued that it is presented as a group non-unique identity. The Lithuanians appear to be the same, and they are part of a group. This group steals vast quantities of goods as emphasized in all the reports. Furthermore, the link to the organizational discursive theme is present, in relation to the theft itself and the planned selling of the goods. Both *Fréttablaðið* and *Morgunblaðið* emphasize that it is believed the stolen goods were to be taken to Lithuania, which can be linked to the broader context of organized crime previously discussed in the news features. Once again the apartment appears as an Other place, this time not as a place of fighting but rather as a place for hiding stolen goods.

The Othering allows the normal Icelanders to recognize the Other Lithuanian organized criminal, since it is now clear that he is a non-unique man, always part of a group of the same non-unique Others (even lives with them), is incredibly organized and steals vast amounts of merchandise. As shown, it is discursively suggested that Icelandic shop owners need to be wary of this highly organized criminal. This is because the anti-theft measures were designed for the amateur Iceland individual thief. The analysis of the absence allows one to conclude that

---

[215] Morgunblaðið, 2007l.
[216] Ibid.

the disorganized Icelandic unique individual might attempt to steal something inexpensive in a random manner. As discussed at the beginning of this sub-chapter, this is precisely what the expert Brynjar Níelsson suggested. A vast amount of material was published in the print media in 2007 in relation to the Other Lithuanian organized criminal,[217] and this fact allows one to argue that the examples utilized here are part of a prominent discursive pattern in the mainstream discourse, as was the case with the other two stereotypes.

As illustrated in relation to the framework developed in Chapter 2, the analysis presented does not focus on the 'the actual incidents' covered in the reports. I am not arguing that men from Lithuania didn't really rape in a brutal way or that men from Poland didn't really fight with knives and fire extinguishers. The analysis is focused on how these events are 'covered', i.e. the discourse surrounding them. It is possible to argue that the representative examples utilized here show *how* the foreign national has been Othered in the Icelandic mainstream discourse. Certain *behaviour* is carefully abnormalized and discursively linked to a broad collective foreign national *identity*. It could be argued that this Othering enables the construction of the normal Icelandic identity in a discursive dichotomy, as discussed in Chapter 2.

As shown, the foreign national appears to rape in an abnormal brutal way, sometimes even whilst laughing. The foreign national also appears to fight in an abnormal way. He is constructed as a non-unique group mass Other. The group lives together in an Other apartment, fights (i.e. the group) in an extremely violent way, usually with weapons and often inside or close to the apartment. As illustrated, drugs are linked to the Lithuanians whilst the Poles appear to drink a lot. The Other organized criminal is solely linked to the Lithuanian identity and, as discussed, the emphasis on the group identity and the Other apartment is also present in relation to this stereotype. The Other criminal appears to be incredibly organized and he steals vast amounts of merchandise.[218]

---

[217] See for example Blaðið, 2007e; Blaðið, 2007f; Blaðið, 2007g; Blaðið, 2007h; DV, 2007l; DV, 2007m; DV, 2007n; DV, 2007o; Fréttablaðið, 2007u; Fréttablaðið, 2007v; Morgunblaðið, 2007m; Morgunblaðið, 2007n; Morgunblaðið, 2007o and Morgunblaðið 2007p. Since this stereotype differs from the other two in the fact that the broad discursive pattern is introduced in special 'teaching' features and reports, it is unnecessary to mention other examples in order to illustrate the broad pattern. It could be argued that the pattern is clearly present in 'the Lithuanian mafia narrative'.

[218] As discussed, the stereotypes can be viewed as part of a broad discursive mainstream pattern, and even though each theme analyzed isn't present in every single report (for example the laughter

As argued in relation to the Cartesian dichotomy, the emphasis on abnormality enables the discursive construction of normality, and as illustrated in this chapter, the Icelandic identity can be seen as the opposite of these abnormal productive 'dangerous' stereotypes. The emphasis now shifts to a broader discussion, which is needed in order to illustrate the problems with the contemporary Icelandic mainstream discourse, i.e. in relation to simplicity and exclusion, as introduced earlier.

---

related to rape) the stereotypes can be seen as productive in a national identity dichotomy as long as the foreign national identity is present in relation to some of the themes located; that is as understood with regard to the framework developed. The limits of the findings will be addressed in the conclusion.

5. Discussion: Problematizing the mainstream Othering discourse – a need to abandon the simplistic excluding dichotomy

5.1. Nationality as an explanatory factor – broadening the debate in relation to Othering

As discussed, the three productive stereotypes previously analyzed were discursively located in the material examined. After developing the theoretical framework and introducing the method and research, it is possible to argue that these Other stereotypes were discursively dominant – i.e. in relation to the foreign national in the Icelandic mainstream discourse in the year 2007, according to the representative example used here, the Icelandic mainstream print media.[219] It is important to understand that this does not mean that other types of Otherings weren't taking place in relation to the foreign national in the mainstream discursive truth in 2007. As many living in Iceland most likely know, various stereotypes have been produced and are maintained in relation to foreign nationals (such as those from certain Asian countries), but in this particular case the research conducted did not produce an array of differing stereotypes. The discursive themes located in the analysis and the framework utilized here only enabled the introduction of the stereotypes presented in Chapter 4. Other discursive themes related to the foreign national in Iceland were for example only located in a few reports, or didn't present a clear discursive pattern. As previously discussed, it must be possible to illustrate that the discursive themes show some sort of general pattern and aren't isolated, i.e. in order for them to be analyzed with regard to the construction of a discursive stereotype. It is therefore clear why these other Other points weren't included in the discourse analysis.

---

[219] That is, since they were the only three located. It is important to understand that this is in relation to the previously introduced discursive formation debated here, which is focused on foreign nationals and problems as presented in the mainstream discourse. The debate will subsequently be broadened in relation to this discursive formation.

The reason the possible other Others are mentioned here is the fact that the debate will now be broadened. This is necessary in order to problematize the Icelandic mainstream discourse as it relates to the Othering of the foreign national in general terms. Without this type of general assessment, it would prove theoretically problematic to discuss the research findings here. This is because the print media utilized as an example is representative of the mainstream discourse in general. What is being discussed here is therefore not the media as such, but rather the mainstream discourse, as emphasized in Chapter 3. The discourse analysis now completed has produced examples necessary for the general debate, since the analysis illustrates how the productive dichotomy is discursively constructed in the mainstream realm, i.e. how our ideas of normality and abnormality in relation to nationality are born. It could be argued that the analysis backs up the theoretical argument emphasizing why the Othering is taking place, and is thus a necessary part of this project. If it would not be shown that the Othering is indeed taking place, and how this is occurring, the previous discussion in Chapter 2 and the subsequent debate would simply be a theoretical exercise lacking research to back up the arguments presented.

This is not to suggest that theory isn't important. It plays a crucial role here, as seen in Chapter 2 and in the link between the theory, research and method. In order to understand why the Othering is occurring specifically in relation to nationality and why the discursive link to the nation proves problematic, it is necessary to discuss certain points from a broad general perspective in relation to theoretical arguments, as shall become apparent. The why was obviously addressed in the development of the theoretical framework, but it wasn't possible to conclude the debate in Chapter 2, i.e. since the 'real' analyzed examples had yet to be presented. Certain arguments used in the development of the framework will now be revisited and utilized to problematize the mainstream discourse in regards to simplicity and exclusion, as mentioned earlier. Some new points will be introduced in this debate. The fact that the discourse related to foreign nationals is more diverse than the analysis in this dissertation suggests doesn't prove theoretically problematic, since the Icelandic mainstream discourse is not presenting a new *type* of truth. What is being debated in the broad realm is a Foucauldian discursive formation, as discussed in the introduction and in Chapter 3, i.e. when discourses refer to the same object, share the same style, support a

strategy, a common administrative or political course, or pattern in a certain society.[220]

As emphasized in Chapter 4, the Other stereotypes located and analyzed were linked to danger. The discursive formation discussed here more generally includes danger but could be summed up more broadly in terms of problems, as shall become clear once the essentialist line of thought has been revisited. The Icelandic mainstream discourse surrounding certain[221] foreign nationals has taught for example the author of this dissertation that they (i.e. only certain foreign nationals) can prove problematic for Icelandic society. This is evident with regard to the Other crimes previously discussed, but it could be argued that this also applies to areas such as culture.[222] In order to understand the general problematic aspect, it is necessary to briefly discuss the Icelandic language, since it leads one to the mainstream essentialist argument necessary to make sense of foreign nationals as problems.

What happens if foreign nationals in Iceland don't want to learn our *pure* language? What are we then supposed to do? Speak English? It could be argued that the discursive link between the Icelandic language and the Icelandic national identity is strong. The mainstream discourse teaches one from an early age that Icelandic is the key to understanding our past, and furthermore to understanding who we are. If we lose our pure language we lose who we are. We won't be able to relate to the past and thus will lose our sense of self, i.e. according to this discursive line of thought. It is therefore important that we not only keep speaking Icelandic but also that it remains uncontaminated. If Icelandic becomes some sort of fusion language, for example with many English words, we might not be able to relate to our unique literary heritage and then where will we be? To revert back to the essentialist ideas of Herder discussed in Chapter 2, he argues that each nation is unique and furthermore that it is natural. Language makes us human and the unique language of a particular natural nation links *all the individuals* of that nation together. As Guðmundur Hálfdanarson (2004) points out, Herder's outdated ideas regarding the nation still appear to dominate the Icelandic

---

[220] Hall, 2001: 73.
[221] Who they are will be discussed later.
[222] As will become apparent later, even though it may appear as though all foreign nationals are excluded in relation to Icelandic culture, it could be argued that the exclusion only applies to certain foreign nationals. The Other stereotype in Iceland proves important in this regard as will be discussed subsequently.

mainstream discourse. That is "the view of the unified nation that, in some magical manner, fuses all its individual members into one metaphorical person."[223]

The essentialist line of thinking has previously been problematized, but as illustrated in Chapter 2 it still dominates the mainstream discourse surrounding identity, for example in relation to homosexuality. This is the dominant identity view, and it is therefore necessary to understand how foreign nationals entering[224] Iceland in some manner fit into the essentialist view of the Icelandic nation and the national identity. Can foreign nationals for example settle here permanently? Will they fit in? Since it could be argued that the Icelandic mainstream discourse as it relates to the nation is based on the Herderian idea of the one natural metaphysical person, outsiders entering Iceland can clearly be seen as a problem. They might be here, but do they really belong here? Should they really be here? Can they ever belong? It is possible to argue that their very being here is problematic since the (impure) outside identity might threaten the supposedly unified pure uncontaminated Icelandic national identity. Foreign nationals can never *truly* be a part of the nation since they don't share the same past the way all Icelanders do, according to this mainstream line of thought. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, nations are natural and unique according to Herder, and thus *shouldn't be mixed together*. From the dominant essentialist point of view, the idea of having foreign nationals entering the nation in some manner is problematic, since they don't belong and could contaminate the Icelandic national identity. How could they possibly understand us when they can never know what we have been through in the past, i.e. all together as one nation?

Even though this is the dominant idea in the Icelandic mainstream discourse, it proves problematic as emphasized in relation to the constructivist arguments introduced previously in the development of the theoretical framework. The nation is not natural, but rather discursively constructed. Furthermore, the national identity is thus a discursively constructed collective identity. As mentioned, the Foucauldian discursive formation discussed here in general terms concerns problems and foreign nationals. It is now possible to understand why this

---

[223] Hálfdanarson, 2004: 137.
[224] As previously discussed, the Icelandic mainstream discourse is problematic since it doesn't always clearly illustrate who is living here, who is visiting for a long time, who is simply a tourist, etc.

formation has been constructed. Since the Icelandic mainstream discourse is based on essentialist Herderian ideas of national identity, the discursive truth can only envision foreign nationals entering the nation in relation to problems. The essentialist foundations of the discourse don't allow anything else as has been shown. However, problems *also* arise in relation to foreign nationals entering a nation if one takes a constructivist view of identity, as is the case here. The discursive constructivist problems found need to be addressed since they are the key to understanding the problematic 'nature' of the mainstream Icelandic discursive truth as it relates to national identity.

The foreign national entering Iceland can pose a problem to the performative discursive dichotomy construction of the Icelandic national identity. As previously discussed, the Icelandic national identity is on the normal side of the dichotomy and the foreign national outsider on the Other abnormal side, i.e. the productive side that discursively constructs the normal Icelander. Certain examples of this were shown in the previous chapter. So what happens if the foreign national is no longer an Other outsider? What happens if foreign nationals living in Iceland begin to discursively become more like the 'real' Icelanders? This could perhaps happen if they for example managed to learn the language, made many Icelandic friends, worked with Icelanders and had children who would attend Icelandic schools. What happens discursively to the *normal Icelandic national identity / the Other abnormal foreign national outsider* dichotomy if the Other foreign national 'moves' to the normal side of the dichotomy? In theory, if the foreign national is no longer an abnormal Other outsider, the dichotomy breaks down since the normal pure Icelandic natural identity can no longer be produced. As previously pointed out, this is because it is discursively necessary for the normal to have an abnormal Other.

Here we arrive at a problematic point concerning contemporary Icelandic society. As theoretically argued and illustrated through discourse analysis, the Icelandic mainstream discourse *continues* to construct a pure Icelandic national identity even though many foreign nationals have now entered the nation. The author has met many foreign nationals who are indeed attempting to fit in, for example by learning the language, making Icelandic friends and raising children who speak fluent Icelandic. So how is it possible to continue to performatively construct a pure Icelandic national identity if the abnormal Other has already

arrived on the normal side? It shouldn't be discursively possible. The answer, as shall become apparent, is *exclusion*. Furthermore, the productive Other stereotypes need to be discussed in relation to this exclusion. In order to illustrate the argument being developed, it proves helpful to present an example related to contemporary 'Icelandic culture'. It is logical to turn to culture in this discussion, since its importance should now have become clear. As Chris Barker (2000) points out, "nations are not simply political formations but *systems of cultural representation* through which national identity is continually reproduced as discursive action."[225]

5.2. Pure Icelandic culture: Who is present?

In order to understand the exclusionist aspect as it relates to culture, it is necessary to briefly discuss certain outdated elitist views on culture. After they have been introduced and subsequently linked to contemporary Icelandic culture (i.e. as it is understood in the problematic essentialist mainstream discourse) it will be possible to argue that Icelandic culture resembles an excluding elitist type of culture. However, the argument as it relates to cultural exclusion will subsequently be problematized, since it doesn't appear to apply to *all* foreign nationals. This is where another type of exclusion comes into the picture. For clarity, this exclusion as theorized here will be referred to as a *double exclusion*. Furthermore it will prove necessary to link this theory developed by the author to the productive Other stereotype.

Promoting Icelandic culture abroad is one of the main purposes of the Icelandic Foreign Service.[226] It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs has a special 'cultural policy'. Having examined the policy, it could be argued that there is one crucial point missing, i.e. what exactly is Icelandic culture? It is apparently *unique*, but a more specific definition is absent.[227] It is possible to see how the promotion of Icelandic culture abroad could be viewed as positive for the Icelandic nation. For example, the policy emphasizes the upswing in tourism, and trade is also a factor.[228] However, it could be argued that this promotion isn't positive for the nation as a whole, since not everyone is

---

[225] Barker, 2000: 197. Emphasis added.
[226] Utanríkisráðuneytið, n.d.
[227] Ministry for Foreign Affairs, n.d.
[228] Ibid.

included in this culture. What is being promoted is not Icelandic culture, but rather an *excluding* 'pure culture'.

The nineteenth century English poet Matthew Arnold (1960) introduced influential elitist ideas regarding culture which fit into this discussion. He argued that culture is "the best that has been thought and said in the world."[229] Arnold was highly critical of working class culture – which he didn't actually refer to as culture – but instead discussed the apparently disruptive nature of the working class by using the term anarchy. Culture, according to Arnold, had an important social function, which was to police the uncultivated masses.[230] It was clear that only a select few could be people of culture, i.e. those that 'needed' to be in charge of the masses.

The English literary critic F. R. Leavis (1998) was influenced by Arnold's work and wrote extensively about the cultural crisis of the 1930's. The argument that culture should be for the privileged few (not the masses) was presented by Leavis and his followers, Leavities, during and after this supposed crisis. The elitist view of culture first presented by Arnold continued to dominate the English mainstream discourse well into the twentieth century.[231] Leavis saw popular mass culture as an inferior culture of standardization, i.e. compared to the 'real' culture. The important upper class minority needed to keep all great traditions alive, and to set the standards of taste. The masses and their popular culture were apparently unable to do this. Leavis was on a rescue mission and he perhaps felt that he was running out of time. As he wrote: "For Matthew Arnold it was in some ways less difficult. I am thinking of the so much more desperate plight of culture today."[232]

To the present author, this view of culture is blatantly excluding, since it *denies access to many people.* One could argue that this exclusion is highly problematic in terms of decision-making. Why are Arnold and Leavis allowed to decide who has access and who hasn't? And how exactly do they determine what is and isn't culture? Does this, for example, involve going through every book that could perhaps be seen as 'worthy', and subsequently it is decided whether it is

---

[229] Arnold, 1960: 6.
[230] Ibid.: 76.
[231] See for example Strinati (1995). I am focusing on western theories of culture here, which fit into the arguments presented. I acknowledge that there are certain limitations to focusing only on western ideas. However, a more versatile in-depth discussion is not needed in order to present the necessary arguments as they relate to contemporary mainstream Icelandic culture.
[232] Leavis, 1998: 13.

indeed worthy? And how does one define worthy in relation to culture? Here we have located another problem, i.e. who should decide what is worthy of being included today? Arnold and Leavis certainly can't, since they are no longer alive. It could thus be argued that these outdated elitist views of culture are problematic in regards to the exclusion and decision-making linked to it. The emphasis now shifts to contemporary Icelandic culture, i.e. as viewed in the mainstream essentializing discourse with regard to the pure Icelandic national identity. One could argue that this culture has much in common with these problematic excluding views.

The exhibition *Pure Iceland*, which opened at the Science Museum in London on January 20th 2006, focused on Icelandic nature, technology and science, and furthermore on *culture* and how it is (apparently) connected to the pure Icelandic nature. A press release from the Science Museum prior to the opening stressed the fact that objects, exhibition captions and display panels were to be mostly absent. As it went on to state, the whole exhibition was instead going to be presented as an experience in which the Icelandic atmosphere was to be conjured up through sound and projection.[233] According to the press release, the exhibition was to be full of stories about Iceland, and much emphasis was to be placed on the pure nature and how it has affected the Icelandic culture. These stories were to be "presented by a renowned company of Icelandic actors using the traditional Saga storytelling against a gigantic backdrop of mud volcanoes, lava cones and sea."[234]

As Ari Trausti Guðmundsson (2006) points out, *similar* (pure) exhibitions focusing on contemporary Iceland have been popular in recent years, such as at Expo 1998 in Lisbon, Expo 2000 in Hanover and in Paris in 2004.[235] Following on from the previous argument regarding discursive formations, it could thus be argued from a constructivist perspective that the exhibition in London can't be viewed simply as an isolated 'introduction' to Icelandic culture. Rather, one could argue that it is part of a bigger constructing mainstream discursive pattern, since it is one of several similar exhibitions. Pure Iceland can thus be utilized as a representative example, in regards to mainstream views of Icelandic culture. This is similar to the utilization of certain news reports in the last chapter. If the reports

---

[233] The Science Museum in London, 2006.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Guðmundsson, 2006.

were part of a bigger discursive picture they could be used, and all those linked to the three Other stereotypes fit this criteria. In relation to the exhibitions focusing on Iceland, it is possible to discuss only one since it is a part of a mainstream discursive pattern. More than one exhibition could obviously be introduced, but this isn't an in-depth analysis (as was the case in the previous chapter). Rather, Pure Iceland is simply discussed here briefly in order to illustrate a point in the argument being developed.

The author had an opportunity to visit the Pure Iceland exhibition in London and subsequently wrote a news report about it for *Morgunblaðið*. It could be argued that this exhibition discursively participated in the construction of the pure Icelandic national identity in a privileging dichotomy, and it is thus possible to see it as a representative example of the essentialist mainstream discourse being problematized here. Icelandic culture, as presented in this exhibition, was linked to the *pure* nature and the *common* Icelandic past. Actors dressed in (traditional) wool and sporting Viking helmets greeted the guests. Moss, northern lights, stars and volcanoes were part of the surroundings. The actors for example informed the guests about elves, Vikings and old Icelandic poetry, and performed various short scenes from the famous Sagas. Furthermore, guests were able to access information about old Icelandic literature, elves, Vikings, nature, etc. via multimedia presentations. Around the computers one could see texts from Hávamál in English.[236]

As Barker argues, symbolism surrounding "national identity narrates and creates the idea of origins, continuity and tradition."[237] The cultural emphasis at the exhibition was very much on old traditions and the origins of the nation. There were many contemporary aspects present as well, but they were mainly related to 'natural pure technology' as opposed to culture. Thus the focus on continuity was there, i.e. there was a link from the past to the present technological society, but it is interesting to note that the Icelandic nation appears to possess groundbreaking new pure technology and scientific skills whilst simultaneously focusing on old 'traditional' pure culture.

It could be argued that the discursive themes present at the exhibition illustrate a connection to the essentializing mainstream Icelandic national identity discourse

---

[236] Ólafsson, 2006.
[237] Barker, 2000: 197.

and the excluding problematic view of culture previously discussed. A decision has been made in regards to what Icelandic culture supposedly is. Who has made this decision? The author certainly wasn't asked his opinion on the matter. This culture is *excluding*, since foreign nationals living in Iceland are not included in it.[238] The focus is on the common past and the purity, i.e. the normal side of the discursive dichotomy previously discussed. It thus makes discursive sense to exclude the foreign nationals. If they would be included, would it have been possible to call the exhibition *Pure* Iceland?

5.3. The double exclusion and the importance of the Other abnormal productive stereotype in Iceland

As the theoretical framework developed here allows one to argue, it isn't enough to simply exclude foreign national outsiders in order to construct and maintain the pure uncontaminated Icelandic national identity. The Other needs to be *discursively visible* if the normal is to be continually performatively constructed. This is where the importance of the Other foreign national stereotype located specifically *in Iceland* becomes an issue. If the Other is outside of Iceland he isn't problematic and is simply discursively linked to his Other nation, since this is where he is. One is, for example, used to seeing this type of Othering in the 'foreign' section of the newspaper. This fits the argument presented in Chapter 2 regarding the national imagined community. In Iceland, we need to be able to spot the foreign national since he can possibly pose a threat to the pure identity. We are able to recognize him through his Other type of behaviour, as previously discussed in the development of the theoretical framework and illustrated in the discourse analysis. The important point to stress here is that this behaviour *has to be linked to his Other national identity*, i.e. if it is to serve the productive purpose in the dichotomy discussed here. For example, if the behaviour would simply be linked to gender or age, the Other wouldn't be Othered in relation to the national identity. By discursively linking a certain type of abnormal behaviour to his Other national identity *visibly* in the mainstream discourse, the problem with foreign nationals entering Iceland becomes discursively resolved, i.e. the abnormal can

---

[238] It could be argued that this culture is also excluding in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Iceland. Where are they? Furthermore, women were not prominent in the exhibition. The focus in this debate is on foreign nationals but similar arguments could be made in relation to other exclusions.

continue to construct the normal. The Othering is thus taking place both abroad and right here in Iceland. However, this point is more complex and will thus be discussed further.

The framework allows one to understand that the discursive construction of Other productive stereotypes in Iceland (i.e. excluding those that are located in Other countries) was not necessary when foreign nationals 'stayed away' from Iceland. However, as Hálfdanarson points out, the homogeneity of the nation is rapidly declining. He thus states: "It is most unlikely that Iceland will be able to live in its imagined cocoon forever."[239] However, this doesn't mean that the pure nation isn't trying to stay in the cocoon. As previously emphasized, identities are never stable, and it accordingly proves necessary to constantly Other the foreign national in order to performatively construct and maintain the pure Icelandic national identity. It is possible to argue that with increased immigration and travel, as well as the advent of various 'global' communication technologies,[240] it is becoming increasingly difficult to discursively maintain the pure homogenous Icelandic identity. The nation isn't as isolated as it once was, but the mainstream discourse appears to be stuck in the past and continues to construct the pure traditional identity.[241] From this perspective it is possible to understand just how important the Other productive stereotype in Iceland is. If the Icelandic mainstream discourse would solely rely on the Other stereotypes overseas, the Other foreign nationals living in Iceland would be allowed to move to the normal side of the dichotomy resulting in the disappearance of the traditional pure identity.

As the reader has most likely noticed, it could be argued that the Othering discussed here does not apply to all foreign nationals. It appears as though Icelanders only see the Other in certain foreign nationals. Those from rich western countries for example seem to be mostly excluded from the Othering in the discursive formation.[242] This is particularly interesting given for example the

---

[239] Hálfdanarson, 2004: 140-141.

[240] They will be discussed further in the next sub-chapter.

[241] As for example the discourse present in the exhibition Pure Iceland suggests.

[242] As shown, no Other stereotypes related to rich westerners were located in the analysis. However, as emphasized in the conclusion, it could be argued that the research presented here is too small for broad generalized arguments regarding *all* possible stereotypes. Being familiar with the Icelandic mainstream discourse the author finds it difficult to think of any Other stereotypes related specifically to westerners in this particular discursive formation. Thus it is possible to argue that they *seem* to be mostly excluded from the Othering. As discussed, it could be argued

visibility of people from Western Europe in Iceland. It could be argued that the Icelandic pure national identity is not so pure after all. We appear to accept certain foreign nationals on the normal side of the dichotomy, but not everyone can join us there, because some need to be the productive Others. The foreign nationals who remain on the abnormal side thus face a *double exclusion*. Firstly they are excluded alongside all foreign nationals from the mainstream discourse and secondly they become the Other by being excluded from the acceptance into the normal culture in a discursively *invisible* manner. Instead of being invisibly included they are made discursively visible in the mainstream discourse as the Other. It could be argued that this further illustrates that the Icelandic culture as presented in the mainstream discourse resembles earlier elitist cultures, i.e. since it is not 'just' excluding all foreign nationals but rather it is decided which foreign nationals are worthy of inclusion, and those who aren't deemed worthy are excluded. In relation to the framework developed and the examples presented, it is possible to argue that the mainstream Icelandic culture is *xenophobic*, i.e. in relation to certain foreign people. This might be viewed as a rather extreme argument but the author would argue that case has been made. We don't treat all those who come here in the same manner, and appear to view some foreign nationals with fear and dislike, as previously illustrated. The rich westerners are perhaps fine, but not the Others.

In response to this argument, some would probably point out that the reality does in fact show that people coming here from Eastern Europe are committing more crimes than those from other areas. This is a common truth presented in the Icelandic mainstream discourse.[243] However, this is not the issue being discussed here. It has *never* been suggested in this dissertation that people from Lithuania, for example, do not come here and commit crimes. They have in fact done just that, as has often been shown in the mainstream discourse. What is the issue here is the problematic abnormalizing excluding discourse, as stressed in the introduction. When discussing the topic examined in this dissertation with friends and colleagues, the author often found that people questioned why a person's home city or region wasn't mentioned instead of the nation. If it is so relevant to

---

that certain stereotypes do exist in relation to Asians in Iceland, but they weren't located in the research conducted. In regards to other areas of the world, people from Africa, Australia or South-America aren't particularly visible in Iceland and therefore aren't discussed here.

[243] As for example seen in the analysis presented in Chapter 4.

the story where a person comes from, wouldn't a more specific piece of information prove more valuable? The answer of course is clear. The productive stereotype discursively created in relation to certain abnormal acts serves the purpose of constructing the Icelandic *national* identity. Not for example the specific identity of those living in Reykjavík.

5.4. The pure traditional national identity is too simplistic – the third way is the charm?

The argument presented here enables one to conclude that if all foreign nationals in Iceland are to be included on the normal side of the dichotomy, there is a need to abandon the current view of the Icelandic national identity. One could argue that this would be a positive development, since this identity is based on a problematic essentialist notion of a natural unique nation and a xenophobic excluding culture. As previously emphasized, problems arise regarding the decision of who should be included and who shouldn't. Who can make this decision? And how is the decision reached? Aside from the problematic excluding point, it could also be argued that there is a need to abandon the pure traditional national identity because it is too simplistic for the contemporary world, as shall now be discussed.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, it is difficult to think of identities as being non-essential, since essentialist discourses are continually linked to identity. To revert back to Gilroy, who was quoted at the beginning of the debate regarding identity, he states that it is important that we try to "remember that the thresholds between sameness and difference are not fixed: they can be moved; and that identity-making has a history, even though its historical character is often concealed."[244] It could be argued that if we open our eyes to the contemporary possibilities regarding identity formation, elements are to be found that could possibly assist in the construction of a new type of identity. In order to explain this, it is necessary to revert our attention back to communication technology and its link to identity construction.

As discussed in relation to Anderson's theory of the imagined community, the construction of the national collective identity was made possible through print capitalism, i.e. on a national level. Much has changed in the world since the

---

[244] Gilroy, 1997: 303.

national imagined community first became a reality. With the spread of the Internet and other new communication technologies, it could be argued that a new type of social 'space' has emerged. National identity is usually linked to traditional geographical space, but what happens if a new way of envisioning space is entered into the equation; a space that isn't necessarily linked to a 'standard' geographical location? Do new ways of constructing identity become possible as a result?

As Hálfdanarson points out, new global communication technologies "*efface cultural boundaries,* making it ever more difficult to sustain belief in the particularity of national cultures."[245] These cultural boundaries are therefore clearly not fixed to traditional geography. Scholte argues that the new technologies have enabled a supraterritorial global space – which cannot simply be understood through the 'world is getting smaller' argument. As he states: "Whereas this older trend towards shrinking the world occurred *within* territorial geography, the newer spread of transplanetary simultaneity and instantaneity takes social relations substantially *beyond* territorial space."[246] This is because "place is not territorially fixed, territorial distance is covered in no time, and territorial boundaries present no impediment."[247] It is helpful to think of this in relation to the national/international dichotomy, which is now becoming problematic. A person in Iceland can for example have a conversation with a friend in Japan every day via the Internet, whilst perhaps never speaking to his or her next-door neighbour.

It could thus be argued that new technologies enable people to communicate in a way that moves beyond the national/international dichotomy. This particular dichotomy is central to the current way of discursively constructing our notion of reality in regards to the nation and the space 'outside' of the national border. So what does this new way of communicating mean for the future of the unique national identity? As Scholte argues, the global field is "a social space in its own right. The globe, planet Earth, is not simply a collection of smaller geographical units like regions, countries and localities; it is also itself a specific arena of social

---

[245] Hálfdanarson, 2004: 134. Emphasis added.
[246] Scholte, 2005: 62.
[247] Ibid.

life."[248] If this notion of a new global space is linked to Anderson's argument of the imagined community one could argue, using the framework developed, that an evolution started via the communication technologies that firstly resulted in the *national* imagined community, i.e. via the print media. What the new global media is now enabling is a more *global* supraterritorial imagined community. The constructivist view allows one to conclude that this might lead us on a new path in regards to identity, since our national collective identity is linked to the national imagined community. What sort of identity could be linked to the global imagined community?

It is possible to argue that the growth of 'global relations' has resulted in an increase in supraterritorial identity construction. Many aspects of one's identity have obviously for a long time been viewed as nonterritorial, such as age and gender, but it could be argued that the emergence of an increased 'global consciousness' has opened up new possibilities to construct nonterritorial identities. As John Sinclair *et al.* (1996) point out, people are communicating in relation to various 'taste cultures' (music, film, fashion etc.), and this has led to complex interactions within the global imagined community since "identity and cultural affiliation are no longer matters open to the neat simplification of traditional nationalism."[249] Michael Gurevitch (1996) states that new patterns of communication are extremely complex. They impact "in myriad ways on the ways people and societies know, perceive and understand the world and conduct relations with one another."[250] As Gilroy argues, the technological acceleration "means that individual identity is no longer limited to forms of immediate physical presence established by the body. The boundaries of the self need no longer terminate at the threshold of the skin."[251]

It could be argued that supraterritorial affiliations now touch more people more intensely than ever before. "As transworld spaces have spread, more persons have placed important aspects of their social bonds in nonterritorial as well as (and to some extent instead of) territorial groupings."[252] The author acknowledges that nonterritorial identities aren't taking over from the territorial – the examples

---

[248] Ibid.: 61.
[249] Sinclair et al., 1996: 187.
[250] Gurevitch, 1996: 685.
[251] Gilroy, 1997: 314.
[252] Scholte, 2005: 240.

presented in this dissertation clearly show that territory is still a major part of discursive identity construction today. Furthermore, since much of the focus in this debate is on exclusion, it is of course necessary to mention that many people, especially in the poorer regions of the world, have no access to this new technology. However, it isn't necessary for nonterritorial identities to be taking over completely in order for them to be relevant here; the argument presented is focused on the possible problem that new identity possibilities are creating with regard to the simplistic traditional ways of viewing identities in the national identity/foreign national dichotomy – i.e. where a traditional version of geography is essential as illustrated in the national/international dichotomy. As Scholte points out, "identities in a more global world are *too multiple and overlapping* to make sustainable 'us'/'them' divisions into discrete communities."[253]

It could thus be argued that the contemporary world is too complex for the pure traditional Icelandic national identity. The constructivist argument developed here has already allowed the author to argue that this identity *excludes* certain foreign nationals from normality, based on problematic xenophobic decision-making. Furthermore the global discursive reality now enables one to see that this identity is *too simplistic* for the normal Icelanders and invisible yet discursively accepted (western) foreign nationals (i.e. as discussed in relation to the discursive dichotomy). It could thus be argued that this problematization shows a need to abandon this simplistic identity and instead embrace the new contemporary reality. By abandoning the excluding dichotomy the problems discussed here could possibly be resolved. It would not be necessary to constantly exclude certain foreign nationals as Others, since there would be no need to hold on to the problematic constructed purity, and furthermore the identity would not need to rely on a simplistic, outdated version of space. As opposed to the old ways of viewing identity in a first space (national) or second space (international), it could be argued that we should embrace a new third space way of viewing identity.

As emphasized in this dissertation, it is not easy to think of identity outside of our essentializing mainstream discourse, and therefore this idea of a third way might seem somewhat ludicrous. Is this even possible? Well, one could also ask: Is it still possible to hold on to the pure traditional identity? It could be argued that

---

[253] Ibid.: 253. Emphasis added.

it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a homogenous national identity in an ever-changing complex diverse world. In order to do this, certain foreign nationals need to be excluded and Othered in relation to negative generalizing stereotypes, and it is also necessary to rely on a simplistic version of space while ignoring certain new ways of viewing global communication. Is this really the best discursive possibility? The stated aim of this dissertation was not to present a new identity for all those living in Iceland. The focus here has been on theoretical arguments and a discursive analysis that collectively lead to the conclusion that the contemporary mainstream discourse is problematic, and it could thus be argued that it is necessary to attempt to construct a new type identity, in order to move past the simplistic excluding Othering dichotomy.

6. Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the aim here was to investigate why and how the foreign national has been Othered in the Icelandic mainstream discourse. Once this was completed, the Othering discourse was to be problematized since it proves too simplistic for the contemporary world and because it excludes certain foreign nationals from normality. This has now been achieved.

The why was answered within the theoretical realm. The development of a broad theoretical framework not based on a singular conventional academic discipline enabled the utilization of theories and concepts from various schools of thought, in order to illustrate the why in a theoretically satisfactory manner. Had a more narrow framework been developed, it would have been impossible to introduce all the necessary components, and the theoretical argument would thus have been flawed. For example, the Other, Butler's notion of performativity, the constant becoming, the imagined community and Foucault's notions of discourse and truth can't all be located within a single conventional area of study.

After essentialism had been problematized it was possible to offer an alternative theory of identity. As stressed, the ideas regarding identity explored in opposition to essentialist theories could be situated under the umbrella term constructivism. However, the terminology became more specialized in regards to the specific points examined in the development of the framework. After certain anti-essentialist arguments had been explored it became possible to argue that identity is not based on some true unchanging essence, but rather constructed in historically and culturally specific discourses. Furthermore, it was argued that identity is performative in discourses. Unlike the essentialist emphasis on the unchanging essence, the argument presented illustrates how identities are unstable and thus always becoming in the discursive truth, as emphasized. After this had been introduced, it was possible to focus on the Other stereotype. As discussed, normal identities can't be discursively constructed unless they have an opposite

abnormal Other. We are always becoming in relation to our opposite. The concept of Othering was subsequently introduced, and as illustrated it refers to both the construction and the maintaining of the Other in the dichotomy – which leads to the construction and maintaining of the normal.

Since essentialism was problematized it was possible to argue that the Other stereotype can't simply be viewed as a distortion of a pregiven reality; as is commonly heard with regard to criticism of how 'minority groups' are often depicted in the mainstream. The idea that a more 'correct' and 'fair' representation is needed is therefore flawed, i.e. in relation to this theory. Once the Othering constantly taking place in a privileging normal/Other dichotomy in relation to singular identity had been introduced, the argument was broadened. As previously stressed, it is also possible to envision collective identities, such as national identities, as essentialist. However, since the essentialist school of thought had already been problematized it was possible to argue that the national collective identity is discursively constructed and thus unstable. Certain theories were subsequently introduced in order to understand how it is possible to think of oneself as part of such a grand collective identity. The focus turned specifically to the emergence of print capitalism and the national imagined community. As discussed, it is possible to argue that the mechanized production and commodification of books and newspapers enabled the discursive construction of a national consciousness. Furthermore, it was possible to construct the national identity with regard to a common recognition of time in the context of modernity, as discussed in relation to this argument.

Once the broad theoretical framework had been developed it was possible to illustrate why the foreign national has been Othered in the Icelandic mainstream discourse. In order for the Icelandic national identity to be constructed and maintained as the normal identity in the discursive collective dichotomy it has to have an opposite Other, and the foreign national is constructed as the Other in this dichotomy. Thus *the foreign national is Othered in order to construct and maintain the Icelandic identity in the mainstream discourse.* Our understanding of the normal national identity is based on the idea of what the identity is not, i.e. the abnormal foreign national.

After the why had been answered, the how was the next issue of investigation. As previously emphasized, it was necessary to begin with the development of the

theoretical framework since the research and method are connected to the theoretical argument. Had the theory not been examined first, the particular research material chosen and the method selected would not have made sense. After introducing the argument that the media can be used as a representative example of the mainstream discourse in general, the originality of the research was stressed and the particular focus on the mainstream print media in 2007 justified. Subsequently, the Foucauldian discursive method was introduced and linked to interpellation and absence. Once all this had been achieved it was possible to begin the actual analysis, which enabled me to show how the foreign national is Othered in the Icelandic mainstream discourse.

As illustrated, three Other foreign national stereotypes were located, i.e. *the Other foreign rapist, the Other foreign fighter* and *the Other Lithuanian organized criminal.* The analysis specifically focused on how they were discursively constructed in relation to the normal Icelandic identity, which was usually discursively absent, but 'really' it was present as the normality as one now understands in relation to the framework developed. When the Icelandic identity was present (i.e. not discursively absent) in the reports, for example in the emphasis on 'inhabitants', it was discursively normalized in relation to abnormality. Thus the normalization and the absence served the same purpose, i.e. being the visible or invisible normality when it came to the careful description of the abnormal Other.

As discussed, the stereotypes located can all be linked to danger and furthermore they can be seen as part of the bigger discursive formation focused on certain foreign nationals and problems. As regards rape, it could be argued that the Other identity is linked to a brutal 'extra violence' (sometimes laughing) version, as previously shown in detail. This Other rape is discursively constructed as abnormal and thus allows one to 'recognize' the supposedly normal rape committed by Icelanders. The Other identity is furthermore linked to extremely violent group fighting, and here it could be argued that the identity is Othered as a non-individual (sometimes savage) de-humanized mass identity as discussed. This abnormalization constructs the Icelandic identity as the normal in a unique individual non-savage way. As shown, one might argue that the Other identity is also linked to Other organized crime. In this particular case it appears as though this Othering only applies to the Lithuanian identity. The crimes committed by

Other Lithuanians are constructed as much more organized than those of the amateur Icelanders. Furthermore, according to the discourse, the Lithuanians steal vast amounts, and it could be argued that they are also constructed as a mass non-individual identity as shown. By utilizing the findings in the analysis it is possible to answer the how. *The foreign national is Othered in the mainstream discourse by being discursively associated with certain behaviour which is abnormalized in relation to the visible and/or invisible normal Icelandic identity.* This fits the theoretical argument developed surrounding the normal/abnormal Othering dichotomy previously discussed in relation to the why.

With the examination of the why and the how, it was possible not only to argue but also to show that the foreign national is Othered in the Icelandic mainstream discourse.[254] So what does this mean? After completing the main investigation, the findings were discussed in general terms, and as illustrated it is possible to problematize the Othering discourse because it is too simplistic for the contemporary world. As emphasized in the discussion, it could be argued that the national/international dichotomy doesn't enable the inclusion of various new ways of communicating in a global space. By utilizing the theoretical framework it was possible to link this argument to the imagined community and to illustrate that what is perhaps emerging is a new type of global imagined community. As stressed, it is not the argument here that new identities are completely taking over from the classic territorial version, but rather that they complicate the discursive reality and thus enable one to argue that *it is too simplistic to construct identity in a territorial dichotomy, i.e. based on the national and international (and as a result the national and foreign national). This is precisely what the Othering dichotomy is based on and thus it is possible to argue that the identity constructed and maintained in the Othering mainstream discourse is too simplistic for the contemporary world.*

Furthermore, the Othering discourse was problematized in the discussion because it could be argued that it is excluding, since it abnormalizes certain foreign nationals and 'forbids' them from moving to the normal side of the dichotomy. This problematization can be linked to the early version of elitist culture, as illustrated. It is possible to argue that this exclusion is problematic in

---

[254] That is based on arguments put forth here in regards to theory, research, method and analysis.

terms of decision-making. Who should decide who is normal and who isn't normal? And how does one determine normality in Iceland? As discussed, one might argue that those from Western Europe are seen as normal in the mainstream discourse but those from Eastern Europe are not. But what about those, for example, who used to live in East Germany? Were they abnormal and have now become normal? And what about Southern Europe? Where does that fit in? This decision-making appears to lead one to a problematic xenophobic realm with no clear answers. As illustrated, *it is possible to argue that the Othering discourse excludes certain foreign nationals from normality based on xenophobic decision-making which proves problematic.*

Thus these four points, i.e. 1) the why, 2) the how, and the problematization in relation to 3) simplicity and 4) exclusion, have now been investigated and debated. The answers presented enable me to argue that the aim of the dissertation, as set out in the introduction, has now been met. So what can one learn from this? As previously stated, I would argue that what I have shown is that we need to abandon the Othering dichotomy and the problematic normal pure Icelandic identity it discursively constructs and maintains. If we don't, it could be argued that we will continue to abnormalize certain foreign nationals as Other in a problematic essentialist discourse, and furthermore be unable to construct identities 'fitting' for the contemporary global world. It was not the aim here to show how new identities can be constructed, but it could be argued that by knowing what *shouldn't be done* (i.e. what has been problematized here) gives us clues as to how to move forward.

Furthermore, I would argue that more can be learnt from this original piece of research. As stated previously, the possible negative stereotyping of foreign nationals in the Icelandic media has not been systematically studied before, and it could therefore be argued that the discursive analysis conducted is an important original contribution to the academic field. As mentioned in the introduction, the general argument presented here is that the stereotyping of foreign nationals in the media can't be examined without an understanding of why and how the contemporary national identity in Iceland is constructed and maintained, and why it proves problematic. As shown in the analysis, one could argue that the stereotyping isn't simply random but rather part of a bigger discursive picture. Certain assumptions are made in relation to normality and abnormality, and these

are linked to the Icelandic and the foreign. The specific emphasis on the why, the how and the problems allows one to understand why the stereotyping is taking place, why it proves problematic and how the stereotypes are constructed. Thus the research path chosen here, as set out in the introduction in relation to the Icelandic national identity, enables one to understand the topic from a broad perspective. It could be argued that a simpler path, focusing mainly on the discursive analysis, might have enabled one to locate the stereotypes presented here. However, I would argue that the broad emphasis in this dissertation gives us a more in-depth understanding of why the stereotyping is taking place, as well as the problems related to it. As mentioned in the introduction, the possible negative representation of foreign nationals in the Icelandic media has recently been debated at various conferences, and hopefully this original dissertation, i.e. not just the analysis but also the broad theoretical arguments, can be utilized in this debate.

When producing a piece of work like this one might argue that it is impossible for one's views to remain completely separated from the arguments. As emphasized for example in relation to the discourse analysis, the patterns located were based on *my analysis*. Someone else would perhaps have read and analyzed the reports differently, but I attempted to present all the material as accurately as possible. 'Belonging' to a minority group myself, i.e. the 'gay group', it is perhaps possible to argue that I am more aware of Othering than a heterosexual man, since I am 'situated' on the abnormal Other side of the heterosexual/ homosexual dichotomy, as discussed in Chapter 2. I believe I became interested in Othering because of my minority 'status', and thus it clearly impacted my decision to focus on Othering in relation to foreign nationals here. Furthermore, my idea to focus on exclusion was a result of my strong views against xenophobia. I have been brought up in a particular constructed 'politically correct' norm and this is where my views are formed. However, instead of simply criticizing this exclusion based on my feelings, I realized that there was a fundamental problem in regards to decision-making. This can be linked to early elitist ideas of culture – ideas which many probably find laughable today. My views and identity thus clearly impacted the decision to focus on the stereotyping of foreign nationals and how I approached the topic, i.e. from a broad perspective, as previously discussed. In relation to the dissertation in general, arguments

presented were backed up with examples or theories and therefore weren't simply my opinions.

It could be argued that the research presented here is too narrow. That is, the findings here do not enable me to make generalized arguments regarding *all* foreign national stereotypes in Iceland. For example, as discussed in Chapter 5, no Other stereotypes were located in relation to Asians even though I am aware that they exist in the mainstream discourse. Since the analysis was limited to the print media and to one year only, it is impossible to argue that the three stereotypes located are the only stereotypes associated with foreign nationals in Iceland. A piece of research focusing on several years should perhaps be one of the next steps in regards to this topic. The narrowness of the research presented here doesn't mean that it was pointless. It could be argued that it is a good starting point, and hopefully academics interested in this topic can build on it, i.e. both the theoretical debate and the analysis.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the arguments presented here are too constructivist. As Blackman points out, constructivism "leaves out the issue of how actual people engage with particular kinds of understandings and practices in the relationships they form with aspects of their own selfhood."[255] One of course can't do everything in a dissertation, and I would argue that the utilization of constructivism can open our eyes to the problematic essentialist line of thought. The arguments presented here need to be understood with this in mind. I have utilized constructivist arguments and managed to problematize some of the basic fundamental truths surrounding us, and argued that they need to be abandoned. As illustrated, this wouldn't have been possible without arguing that truth is changeable, which is an argument associated with constructivism, as previously discussed. Thus, even though constructivism can be criticized for being too simplistic, its utilization proved necessary in the production of this original piece of research. It could also be argued that in the broader global sense, the conclusion reached (made possible by constructivist arguments) is rather important.

As emphasized, it is possible to argue that we need a new third way of viewing identity, outside of the Othering national/international dichotomy. I would argue

---

[255] Blackman, 2001: 89.

that this point has implications for the world as a whole. If we abandon the main focus on traditional national identity and embrace a more global identity perhaps it will be easier to deal with various pressing 'global problems', such as global warming and poverty. If we are focused on the world as a whole, as opposed to mainly our national interests, it could be argued that it *should* be easier to get us all to work together. The debate presented in this dissertation can thus be understood in relation to a much bigger picture, but the conclusion is the same. It could be argued that the national/international dichotomy needs to be abandoned in order to construct identities more fitting for the contemporary world.

Bibliography

Anderson, B. (1991), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London and New York: Verso.

Arnold, M. (1960), *Culture and Anarchy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barker, C. (2000), *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage.

Billig, M. (1995), *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage.

Blackman, L. (2001), *Hearing Voices: Embodiment and Experience*, London and New York: Free Association Books.

Blackman, L. (2004), 'Self-Help, Media Cultures and the Production of Female Psychopathology', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol 7, No. 2.

Blackman, L. and Walkerdine, W. (2001), *Mass Hysteria: Critical Psychology and Media Studies*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave.

Blaðið (2007a), *Ungur maður í varðhaldi*, March 20th, p. 2.

Blaðið (2007b), *Vitni tjá sig ekki*, July 11th, p. 6.

Blaðið (2007c), *Glæpamenn í felur til Íslands*, June 27th, front page.

Blaðið (2007d), *Burðardýrin þegja*, June 27th, p. 4.

Blaðið (2007e), *Áframhaldandi gæsluvarðhald*, October 11th, p. 4.

Blaðið (2007f), *Gæsluvarðhald staðfest*, October 17th, p. 2.

Blaðið (2007g), *Fjórir áfram í farbanni*, November 6th, p. 4.

Blaðið (2007h), *Lithái í farbann*, November 7th, p. 4.

Boswell, J. (1980), *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Breuilly, J. (1993), *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Bristow, J. (1997), *Sexuality*, London and New York: Routledge.

Brown, C. and Ainley, K. (2005), *Understanding International Relations*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Burchill, S. and Linklater, A. (2001), 'Introduction', in S. Burchill and A. Linklater (eds.), *Theories of International Relations*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Butler, J. (1993), *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, London and New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1997), *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, London and New York: Routledge.

Butler, J. (1999), *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London and New York: Routledge.

Creditinfo Ísland (2006), *Innflytjendur: Greining á umfjöllun fjölmiðla árið 2006*, Reykjavík: Creditinfo Ísland.

Creditinfo Ísland (2007), *Greining á umfjöllun um innflytjendur og erlent vinnuafl í dagblöðum og ljósvakamiðlum á árinu 2007*, Reykjavík: Creditinfo Ísland.

Crompton, L. (2003), *Homosexuality and Civilization*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Crossley, N. (2001), *The Social Body: Habit, Identity and Desire*, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage.

DV (2007a), *Nauðguðu konunni og hlógu að henni*, November 15th, back page.

DV (2007b), *Grunaður um nauðgun*, March 20th, back page.

DV (2007c), *Tveir af þremur farnir úr landi*, December 18th, back page.

DV (2007d), *Nauðgun í Vestmannaeyjum*, September 24th, back page.

DV (2007e), *Blóðug átök í stigagangi*, November 8th, front page.

DV (2007f), *Slógust með hnífum og slökkvitækjum*, November 8th, p. 2.

DV (2007g), *Árásarmenn enn ófundnir*, June 26th, p. 2.

DV (2007h), *Lithái handtekinn á nærbuxunum*, August 13th, back page.

DV (2007i), *Bjargvættir á bensínstöð*, March 6th, p. 4.

DV (2007j), *Litháar herja á rauða riddarann*, November 30th, p. 4.

DV (2007k), *Leikvangur alþjóðlegra glæpahringja*, June 29th, p. 15.

DV (2007l), *Tveir í gæsluvarðhaldi á Hverfisgötunni*, October 5th, p. 4.

DV (2007m), *Búðareigendur varir um sig*, October 31st, p. 2.

DV (2007n), *Litháar í farbanni*, April 13th, p. 6.

DV (2007o), *Litháar áfram í varðhaldi*, October 16th, p. 2.

Eide, E. (2003), 'The Long Distance Runner and Discourses on 'Europe's Others': Ethnic Minority Representation in Norwegian Feature Stories', in T. Tufte (ed.), *Medierne, minoriteterne og det multikulturelle samfund: Skandinaviske perspektiver*, Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet.

Foucault, M. (1972), *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London: Tavistock.

Foucault, M. (1980), 'Truth and Power', in C. Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, London and New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Foucault, M. (1988), 'The Dangerous Individual', in M. Foucault and C. Kutzman (eds.), *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1998), *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality: 1*, London, New York, Victoria, Ontario, New Delhi, Auckland and Rosebank: Penguin Books.

Fréttablaðið (2007a), *Hrottafengið ofbeldisverk*, November 15th, front page.

Fréttablaðið (2007b), *Meintir nauðgarar náðust á myndavél*, November 15th, p. 6.

Fréttablaðið (2007c), *Gæsluvarðhald var framlengt*, November 20th, p. 4.

Fréttablaðið (2007d), *Eru dæmdir afbrotamenn*, November 23rd, p. 6.

Fréttablaðið (2007e), *Ber við kynlífi með hennar samþykki*, March 20th, p. 4.

Fréttablaðið (2007f), *Rannsóknin langt komin*, June 7th, p. 2.

Fréttablaðið (2007g), *Piltur ákærður fyrir nauðgun*, June 14th, p. 2.

Fréttablaðið (2007h), *Fjórði maðurinn handtekinn*, October 31st, p. 2.

Fréttablaðið (2007i), *Útlendingar taka yfir fíkniefnaheiminn*, November 17th, p. 10.

Fréttablaðið (2007j), *Í öndunarvél eftir vopnuð átök*, June 25th, p. 2.

Fréttablaðið (2007k), *Litháarnir sex ekki sökudólgarnir*, June 26th, p. 2.

Fréttablaðið (2007l), *Flúði vopnaða árásarmenn á nærbuxunum*, August 13th, p. 2.

Fréttablaðið (2007m), *Segir menn hafa rænt sig*, March 6th, p. 4.

Fréttablaðið (2007n), *Sleginn í höfuð með spýtu*, October 15th, p. 2.

Fréttablaðið (2007o), *Litháíska mafían – rót vandans*, June 28th, p. 16.

Fréttablaðið (2007p), *Litháíska mafían – milliliðir og úrræði*, July 2nd, p. 12.

Fréttablaðið (2007q), *Grunaðir um að ætla með þýfið úr landi*, October 4th, p. 2.

Fréttablaðið (2007r), *Níu Litháar í gæsluvarðhaldi*, October 5th, p. 2.

Fréttablaðið (2007s), *Litháarnir sitja enn í farbanni*, November 2nd, p. 4.

Fréttablaðið (2007t), *Um 300 þjófstolnir munir*, November 6th, p. 11.

Fréttablaðið (2007u), *Skal framseldur til Litháen*, October 30th, p. 4.

Fréttablaðið (2007v), *Stálu vörum fyrir rúma milljón*, November 23rd, p. 4.

Fuss, D. (1989), *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference*, London: Routledge.

Gilroy, P. (1997), 'Diaspora and the Detours of Identity', in K. Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference*, London, Thousand Oaks and Delhi: Sage.

Greenberg, D. F. (1988), *The Construction of Homosexuality*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Guðmundsson, A. T. (2006), 'Sýningin Pure Iceland í London stendur út apríl', in *Morgunblaðið*, February 9th, p. 47.

Guðmundsson, B. (2007), 'Harðduglegir Pólverjar, harðvítugir Litháar og negri í Þistilfirði', in *Blaðamaðurinn* (3), Reykjavík: Blaðamannafélag Íslands.

Gurevitch, M. (1996), 'The Globalization of Electronic Journalism', in P. Marris and S. Thornham (eds.), *Media Studies: A Reader*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hall, S. (1992), 'The Question of Cultural Identity', in S. Hall, D. Held and T. McGrew (eds.), *Modernity and Its Futures*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hall, S. (1996a), 'Who Needs Identity?', in S. Hall and P. Du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London: Sage.

Hall, S. (1996b), 'Ethnicity: Identity and Difference', in G. Eley and R. G. Suny (eds.), *Becoming National: A Reader*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hall, S. (2001), 'Foucault: Power, Knowledge and Discourse', in M. Wetherell, S. Taylor and S. J. Yates (eds.), *Discourse Theory and Practice*, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage.

Hálfdanarson, G. (2004), 'Discussing Europe: Icelandic nationalism and European integration', in B. Thorallsson (ed.), *Iceland and European Integration: On the edge*, London and New York: Routledge.

Herman, D. (1993), 'The Politics of Law Reform', in J. Bristow and A. R. Wilson (eds.), *Activating Theory: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Politics*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

International Federation of Journalists (2007), 'Ethical Journalism to Combat Intolerance', in R. Cohen (ed.), *Making News for Democracy: Decent Work and Quality Journalism*, Belgium: International Federation of Journalists.

Irvine, J. (1990), *Disorders of Desire: Sex and Gender in Modern American Sociology*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Jagose, A. (1996), *Queer Theory*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Katz, J. N. (1995), *The Invention of Heterosexuality*, New York, London, Victoria, Toronto and Auckland: Dutton.

Leavis, F. R. (1998), 'Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture', in J. Storey (ed.), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Iceland (n.d.), *Cultural Policy*. (Collected at: http://www.mfa.is/foreign-policy/culture/ on July 24th 2008).

Morgunblaðið (2007a), *Gæsla staðfest í nauðgunarmáli*, November 15th, p. 2.

Morgunblaðið (2007b), *Gæslan framlengd*, November 20th, p. 2.

Morgunblaðið (2007c), *Eiga sakaferil að baki*, November 23rd, p. 9.

Morgunblaðið (2007d), *Í gæsluvarðhaldi vegna nauðgunar*, March 20th, p. 10.

Morgunblaðið (2007e), *Fallist á gæsluvarðhaldskröfu*, March 24th, p. 4.

Morgunblaðið (2007f), *Áfram í gæsluvarðhaldi*, May 12th, p. 2.

Morgunblaðið (2007g), *Hæstiréttur staðfestir farbann*, November 9th, p. 2.

Morgunblaðið (2007h), *Þrír sæta farbanni*, November 2nd, p. 2.

Morgunblaðið (2007i), *Kærði rán*, March 6th, p. 6.

Morgunblaðið (2007j), *Aukvisar eru þeir ekki*, October 5th, front page.

Morgunblaðið (2007k), *„Við þurfum virkilega að passa upp á búðirnar"*, October 10th, p. 4.

Morgunblaðið (2007l), *Atvinnuþjófar í haldi*, October 4th, p. 2.

Morgunblaðið (2007m), *Teknir fyrir stórfellda þjófnaði*, March 23rd, p. 4.

Morgunblaðið (2007n), *Fara um rænandi*, April 3rd, p. 10.

Morgunblaðið (2007o), *Tveir Litháar í farbanni vegna þjófnaðarbrota*, April 12th, p. 16.

Morgunblaðið (2007p), *Enginn hefur játað aðild*, October 6th, p. 2.

Morley, D. (1996), 'Postmodernism: The Rough Guide', in J. Curran, D. Morley and V. Walkerdine (eds.), *Cultural Studies and Communications*, London: Arnold.

Mort, F. (1987), *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830*, London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Ólafsson, J. G. (2006), 'Búkolla baular í vísindasafninu í London', in *Morgunblaðið*, January 20th, p 38-9.

Plummer, K. (1981), 'Homosexual Categories: Some Research Problems in the Labelling Perspective of Homosexuality', in K. Plummer (ed.), *The Making of the Modern Homosexual*, London, Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland and Johannesburg: Hutchinson.

Rose, N. (1996), *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power and Personhood*, Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

Scholte, J. A. (2005), *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Shilling, C. (2003), *The Body and Social Theory*, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage.

Sinclair, J., Jacka, E. and Cunningham, S. (1996), 'New Patterns in Global Television', in P. Marris and S. Thornham (eds.), *Media Studies: A Reader*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Smith, A. D. (1995), *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Strinati, D. (1995), *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, London and New York: Routledge.

Sullivan, N. (2003), *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

The Science Museum in London (2006), *Pure Iceland Exhibition to open at the Science Museum*. (Collected at http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/about_us/press_and_media/press_releases/2006/01/371.aspx?keywords=shortly on July 23rd 2008).

Utanríkisráðuneytið (n.d.), *Menningarmál*. (Collected at: http://www.utanrikisraduneyti.is/utanrikismal/menningarmal/ on July 24th 2008).

Weeks, J. (1985), *Sexuality and its Discontents: Meaning, Myths and Modern Sexualities*, London and New York: Routledge.

Wetherell, M.,Taylor, S. and Yates, S. J. (2001), 'Introduction', in M. Wetherell, S. Taylor and S. J. Yates (eds), *Discourse Theory and Practice*, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage.

Woodward, K. (1997), 'Concepts of Identity and Difference', in K. Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference*, London, Thousand Oaks and Delhi: Sage.

Özkirimli, U. (2000), *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave.