



Objectives

The project's general objectives may be summed up as follows:

- to elucidate diverse representations of Iceland as part of the North, the function of such images in the present and their historical emergence.
- to study images in general: their nature; different definitions of images as a phenomenon; the functions they serve; and not least their connection with hegemony. Is their role negative, or can they also serve a positive and constructive function? How is the dialectic between self-images and images of alterity configured? To what extent do structural constraints influence the emergence and form of images?
- to study the idea of the North, how it has evolved and changed and what function such ideas serve.
- to promote research in this area of study in Iceland and to incorporate images of Iceland and its closest neighbours into the current theoretical discourse on images and the North.

Research project description

The research project *Iceland and Images of the North* illuminates Iceland's role as an important part of the circumpolar world through the analysis of various representations of Iceland as part of the North, the function and use of such images in the present and their origins in the past.

The project is a cooperative, interdisciplinary and international undertaking on the part of researchers in the humanities and social sciences.

Contact

Further information about the project is available on the group's web page www.inor.is, and the leaders of the project may be contacted at the following e-mail addresses:

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Iceland and Images of the North

REYKJAVÍKURAKADEMÍAN





The field

Cultural identity and images have emerged as one of the most challenging issues in the social and cultural sciences. The reason for this is that the state of the world has changed radically in the past two decades. In some places, nationalist movements have intensified and new borders have been created, while in other places borders have opened. Globalization now extends to all corners of the world. These circumstances and upheaval change the self-images of groups and nations and their attitudes toward each other. New lines of conflict emerge. This changed world provides an occasion for thorough re-examination of cultural, historical, political and economic aspects of society. It is for precisely this reason that the research group on Iceland and Images of the North (the INOR group) regards it as important to promote research on images of Iceland as a part of the North.



The group

The INOR group is an interdisciplinary group of over twenty Icelandic and non-Icelandic scholars who have in recent years conducted research on images of Iceland and the North in the present and past with the goal of analyzing the form which these images assume, their function and dynamics. This group includes representatives of most fields of the humanities and social sciences, in many instances individuals who are leading experts in their fields. The group has also brought about extensive collaboration with research groups and scholars involved in similar projects in neighbouring countries.

The project is funded mainly by the Icelandic Research Fund's Grant for Excellence, but also supported by the University of Québec à Montréal, Hólar University College and the Reykjavík Academy, where many of the participants are based.

While participants will publish their research findings individually, the project's main results will be published in a collection of research papers with an extensive introduction and accompanying DVD. The project leaders are Sumarliði R. Ísleifsson (The Reykjavík Academy) and Daniel Charrier (University of Québec à Montréal).

The research

The INOR group's aim is to make a substantial contribution to research on diverse aspects of images of Iceland as a part of the North, taking into account the changing role of the North in global, geo-political and environmental discourse. It focuses on two main areas: First, it addresses certain aspects of contemporary self-images and images of Iceland and Icelanders as a part of the North: how have these emerged and changed and where are they heading? Secondly, it focuses on central issues in the historical emergence and evolution of Icelandic images of the North, for it is not possible to achieve an understanding of contemporary stereotypes without such a study. Four areas relevant to representations of Iceland in a Northern context are explored specifically: the status of Iceland in an international context; culture and society; the relationship between people and nature; and, finally, the use of images by the Icelandic tourist industry.

