



# DIIS REPORT

## **ANTI-DEMOCRATIC AND VIOLENCE-PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTS IN DENMARK THAT SUBSCRIBE TO ISLAMIST IDEOLOGIES**

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

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som bekender sig til islamistisk ideologi. Hvad ved vi?*  
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## Indhold

Background	4
Summary	5
Purpose and introduction	9
Delimitation and clarification of concepts	11
Central concepts	11
Conceptual framework	12
Empirical basis	14
Anti-democratic environments in Denmark	18
Ideological background	18
Types of environments	20
Contacts and conflicts	24
Recruitment strategies and recruitment potential	28
Violence-promoting environments in Denmark	31
Ideological background	31
Cases and environments	33
Contacts and conflicts	38
Recruitment strategies and recruitment potential	41
Conclusions	43
Literature	48

## **Background**

As part of its political programme, the Danish Government has ordered a mapping of the challenges with extremism and anti-democratic groupings in Denmark, so as to be able to target the preventive effort at those areas and groups where Denmark faces concrete challenges. Among other things, this mapping process will include investigations carried out in selected local areas based on qualitative and quantitative surveys, as well as more comprehensive studies analysing selected forms of extremism and anti-democratic groups in Denmark. Initially, a status report/mapping of the existing research on extremism and anti-democratic groups has been requested, in order to provide an overview of the specific challenges existing in Denmark, and to indicate where in the country these challenges are particularly prevalent. Thus, the present research report is the result of a concrete commission from the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration.

## Summary

This report gives an introductory overview of what the current research has so far been able to document about anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies. It does not map or give a complete description of such environments in Denmark, as the present body of research is far from adequate for this. Instead, the report is an attempt to gather existing knowledge and identify its results and limitations, so as to provide a basis for future work.

As the report is concerned with both anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies, it sets out by establishing a conceptual framework that distinguishes between the many different ways in which it is possible to act on the basis of a given set of views. Distinctions are made between private and public actions, between political and apolitical, between democratic, anti-democratic and violence-promoting actions, and finally between legal and illegal actions.

Violence-promoting environments are defined as environments which actively seek to promote the use of violence. Such environments are engaged in illegal actions. Anti-democratic environments are defined as environments which actively seek to counteract democracy, for instance by preventing others from participating in democratic elections. Such environments are engaged in actions which are legal.

In a democratic society it is crucial that there is room for disagreement and debate. That is why, throughout this report, a clear distinction is maintained between views and actions, and between legal and illegal actions.

The public concern with terrorism as well as anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies has increased considerably after 2001. However, these phenomena have a longer history – also in Denmark. In 1985, Denmark became the target of several bombs. The group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility, but when four men were subsequently convicted the group was not attributed responsibility<sup>1</sup>.

Since then there have been numerous terrorism cases which have involved individuals subscribing to Islamist ideologies. These cases have either taken place on Danish soil,

<sup>1</sup> Andersen & Elbæk, forthcoming

been targeted at Denmark or Danish interests abroad or involved individuals with an affiliation to Denmark. The cases can be divided into five different types:

- Cases before 2001
- Danish cases
- Cases involving individuals travelling to Denmark
- Cases involving Danes in other countries
- Cases targeted at Danish interests abroad

Research indicates that, for several years, there has been a violence-promoting environment in the Greater Copenhagen area<sup>2</sup> with which several terrorism cases have been connected. There is no basis for establishing whether similar environments have existed in other parts of Denmark, but there have been terrorism cases in several other parts of the country.

Today, there are also several different types of anti-democratic environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies. While these environments largely have the same ideological background and share key issues and enemy images with each other and with the violence-promoting environments in general, they also disagree, for instance in relation to where and when an Islamic state should be established, who has authority and not least what constitutes feasible and legitimate means of action. Consequently, conflicts occasionally occur between the environments.

The anti-democratic environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies can be divided into four different types:

- The classical environments, which follow a single religious authority and primarily orient themselves towards other countries
- The national environments, which do not follow a single Sheikh and orient themselves towards Denmark as well as other countries
- The activist national environments, which do not follow a single Sheikh, primarily have a Danish orientation and interact offensively with the Danish society
- The hierarchical environments, which consist of organisations that are primarily oriented towards other countries

Generally, transnational aspects can be found in both the violence-promoting and the anti-democratic environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies.

<sup>2</sup> Hemmingsen, 2008, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Crone, 2008, 2009, 2010

Thus they tend for instance to have contact with like-minded groups abroad, who provide inspiration and with whom they arrange mutual visits.

In the same way, there is a level of contact between like-minded environments in Denmark. Occasionally animosity can flare up between them, and environments which collaborate with each other at one point might soon after end up fighting each other.

Most of these environments make use of the internet, and some of them are very good at it. Websites, internet forums and social media such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter are being used to disseminate viewpoints, show video clips of activities, invite people to physical events and give room for discussions. The purpose of all this is to draw attention to the environments and attract new supporters.

Research indicates that it is generally individuals who make contact with the environments, actively choosing or rejecting membership, rather than the environments actively recruiting select individuals. Thus, individuals tend to join the environments through self-selection rather than as a result of recruitment in a narrow sense. Some individuals will affiliate themselves whole-heartedly with a specific environment, while others tend to 'shop around' among different environments. This applies both to anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments.

In practice, the boundaries between these different environments are fluid. The same individual may shift environments over time, or be part of several environments simultaneously, just as the same individual may belong to a violence-promoting environment in certain situations, and to an anti-democratic or democratic environment in others. There are even examples of individuals within these environments who have previously been affiliated with right-wing or left-wing extremist environments.<sup>3</sup>

The key point is that nothing is static or definitive. This means that, in practice, it can be extremely difficult to define and delimit the various environments precisely.

<sup>3</sup> Hemmingsen, 2010





## **Purpose and introduction**

This report has been prepared for the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, with the purpose of gathering the existing research-based knowledge about so-called violence-promoting and anti-democratic environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies. The report draws on existing research-based publications in the field, combined with parts of the author's own research which has not previously been published. In conjunction with this report, another report on environments that subscribe to right-wing and left-wing extremist ideologies has been prepared.

The report does not seek to map or give a complete description of the environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies. The existing research in this field is far from adequate to carry out such a task at this point. Instead, the report is an attempt to collect the existing knowledge and identify its results and limitations, in order to provide a foundation for future work.

Since the 9/11 attacks in 2001, the bombings in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005, and not least with the emergence of a series of Danish terrorism cases since 2005, there has been an increased focus on countering and preventing terrorism in Denmark. Among other things, this has led to law reforms and the implementation of efforts to minimise the risk of individuals or groups resorting to terrorism.<sup>4</sup>

But in recent years the focus has been extended to also include environments which share certain views with groups that resort to terrorism, although the environments themselves cannot be directly linked to terrorism. This includes for instance the so-called anti-democratic environments which actively seek to counteract democracy, for instance by trying to prevent others from voting at democratic elections.

Despite the backgrounds or motives for adopting such an extended focus, it entails certain challenges.

While terrorism or violence-promoting activities constitute criminal offences under Danish law, anti-democratic views or activities as such have not been considered criminal acts until now. An example of this is the organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir. On several occasions it has been suggested that Hizb ut-Tahrir should be banned in Denmark,

<sup>4</sup> For further details, see e.g. Hansen, 2011

but in 2004 the Director of Public Prosecutions ruled that there is no legal basis for imposing such a ban. This ruling was confirmed in 2008, after the then spokesman of the organisation, Fadi Ahmad Abdel Latif, had been convicted of violating section 266 b of the Danish Criminal Code.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, extending the focus to also include anti-democratic environments presently constitutes a grey area, where fundamental questions about democracy, its inclusiveness and freedom of expression may easily arise.

It is not within the scope of this report to engage in a detailed discussion of these challenges, but as the report concerns both violence-promoting and anti-democratic environments, it is necessary to clarify the concepts that are used and provide a conceptual framework for the phenomena being discussed. Consequently, the following section introduces the report's delimitation and conceptual framework, and clarifies the central concepts being used.

The remainder of the report is divided into two main parts. The first part deals with anti-democratic environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies, while the second part concerns violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies. At the request of the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, each part will cover the following topics:

- The ideological background for the environments in Denmark, including enemy images and political key issues
- A description of the environments in Denmark and where they can be found geographically
- A description of the organisation of the environments, including any internal rivalry or collaborations
- A description of the environments' activities and international contacts
- A description of the environments' recruitment strategies and recruitment potential

<sup>5</sup> The Director of Public Prosecutions, Denmark, 2008

## **Delimitation and clarification of concepts**

In order to discuss these phenomena in a meaningful way, it is necessary first to establish a common conceptual framework. Consequently, various concepts used in this report are introduced below, along with the frameworks within which they are to be understood, as well as the knowledge on which the report is founded.

### **Central concepts**

*Political* is used in this report to denote attempts to influence how society should work and how other citizens should behave. The report draws on the British political scientist Andrew Heywood's definition of politics as: "the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live".<sup>6</sup>

*Islamism* is used in this report to denote a political interpretation of Islam which is characterised by a wish to regulate and govern society according to principles found in Islam. Thus, Islamists wish to some extent to integrate political life with their interpretation of Islam. As we are dealing with interpretations, there are obviously many and very diverse perceptions regarding which principles are salient and how they should be incorporated into the political life. Accordingly, there are many different versions of Islamism. Some Islamists wish for instance to incorporate their interpretation into already existing democratic systems, while others want to replace democracy with other systems of government.

*Salafism* is not used in this report, but as the term appears in some of the material on which the report is based, it is necessary to account for its multiple meanings.

The concept of Salafism is subject to debate, not least among researchers and Muslims. It is derived from the Arabic expression *as-salaf as-salih* (the Pious Predecessors), which alludes to the Prophet and the first generations after him who practised Islam. Salafism represents an endeavour to emulate these early generations. However, there is no consensus as to how this should be construed, which has resulted in different understandings of what Salafism is. Among researchers, it is common to use Wiktorowicz's typology from 2006. Wiktorowicz operates with three types of Salafism:

<sup>6</sup> Heywood, 2002

1. Purist Salafism refrains from an engagement in politics, and generally tries to distance itself from everything and everyone else. Purist Salafists are mainly concerned with disseminating the religious practices of Salafism and opposing other practices. They emphasise that the religious scholars should have the monopoly of authority.
2. Political Salafism tends to focus on the contemporary world. Political Salafists are engaged in politics and openly criticise what they see as an un-Islamic political establishment. They seek to implement Salafism in the political system, in order to change the societies top-down. This type of Salafists see the purist Salafists as being out of touch with the world.
3. Jihadi Salafism, like the political Salafism, finds that it is necessary to engage in contemporary society. However, this type of Salafists believe that it is necessary to use violence in order to change anything. Jihadi Salafists are generally critical towards the Purist Salafists, seeing them as lackeys to a corrupt establishment<sup>7</sup>

*Anti-democratic* is used in this report to describe environments which actively seek to counteract democracy, for instance by preventing others from participating in democratic elections. It does not suffice to oppose democracy. The opposition must translate into concrete actions counteracting it.

*Violence-promoting* is used in this report to describe environments which actively seek to promote the use of violence. Under the Danish Criminal Code (Section 114), supporting, prompting and advising others to use violence constitute criminal offences on a par with carrying out a violent act as such. Consequently, the wider concept of *violence-promoting* is more apt than commonly used terms such as *violent*, *militant* or *extremist*.

### **Conceptual framework**

In a democracy it is crucial that there is room for differences of opinion and debate. Therefore it is important to distinguish between views and actions, and between legal and illegal actions.

As this report is both concerned with anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies, a categorisation of the many different ways in which it is possible to act on the basis of a given set of views is useful:

<sup>7</sup> Wiktorowicz, 2006

Private		Public				
A-political		Political				
Acting within a private sphere. Sharing one's views with others, but without trying to influence how society should work or how others should behave. E.g. in relation to child rearing, career choices, education, lifestyle, etc	Acting in the public sphere without trying to influence how society should work or how others should behave. E.g. through arts, etc.	Acting in the public sphere, within the boundaries of law and democracy. Seeking to influence how society should work and how others should behave. Critical towards democracy, but working to preserve it in the long term.	Acting in the public sphere, within the boundaries of law and democracy. Seeking to influence how society should work and how others should behave. Critical towards democracy and striving to have it replaced by another form of government in the long term.	Acting in the public sphere. Seeking to counteract democracy directly, but working within the boundaries of the law. Trying to influence how society should work and how others should behave.	Acting in the public sphere. Seeking to influence how society should work and how others should behave by supporting, encouraging or resorting to violence.	Violence-promoting
		Democratic				Anti-democratic
		Legal acts				Illegal acts

The present report is exclusively concerned with environments that espouse the types of behaviour listed in the last two columns: violence-promoting environments which commit illegal acts under Danish law, and anti-democratic environments whose activities are legal under Danish law.

In practice, however, the distinctions between these different environments are blurred. The same individual may move between various environments over time, or be part of several environments simultaneously. There are even examples of individuals who, at different stages in their lives, have been affiliated with both right-wing, left-wing and Islamist environments,<sup>8</sup> just as the same individual may be associated with a violence-promoting environment in certain situations and an anti-democratic or democratic environment in others.

The key point is that nothing is static or definitive. This means that, in practice, it can be extremely difficult to define and delimit the individual environments precisely.

### **Empirical basis**

Particularly since 2005 there has been much focus on anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies in Denmark, and several research projects have been launched. These projects have generally been concerned with generating the empirical data which have been lacking, not just in a Danish but also an international context.<sup>9</sup> While the research has made great progress in this short time-span, it is still largely explorative and in its early stages.

As with research on other illegal or disliked phenomena, research on anti-democratic as well as violence-promoting environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies is faced with major challenges, as it is extremely difficult to gain access to existing data and generate new data. Consequently, the primary focus has been on gaining access to and generating data, and not necessarily on this data being representative.

As a result, the focus in the existing research may not give a true and fair picture of where in Denmark or in which environments the biggest challenges are to be found. For instance, there is an overrepresentation of data from the Greater Copenhagen area, but this does not necessarily mean that this area has been or is the most relevant place to examine.

<sup>8</sup> Hemmingsen, 2010

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. Khosrokhavar, 2009; Ranstorp in Jackson, Smyth & Gunning, 2009; Silke in Jackson, Smyth & Gunning, 2009; Silke, 2001; 2004; Horgan in Silke, 2004

None of the studies claim to be representative, and none of them make any explicit conclusions in relation to geographical location or whether similar environments can be found in other places. In order to establish a true and fair picture of issues such as the prevalence, geographical location and distribution of these phenomena, and of how the surrounding communities respond to anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies, more knowledge must be generated.

The purpose of this report, however, is to collect and provide an overview of the existing knowledge, so as to pave the way for the continued work and research in this area. Thus, what follows is a brief introduction to research-based publications that deal specifically with anti-democratic as well as violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies. These publications constitute the primary basis for this report:

- Andersen, 2011, *Terrorisme som permanent krise: 9/11 i Danmark* (Terrorism as permanent crisis: 9/11 in Denmark). Book chapter which, among other things, deals with terrorism and its role in Denmark before and after 2001
- Crone, 2011a, *Hjemmedyrket terrorisme. Trussel eller skrøne?* (Homegrown terrorism. Threat or illusion?) Book chapter which, among other things, deals with the international aspects of Danish terrorism cases
- Crone, 2011b, *The World Almanac of Islamism: Denmark*. Encyclopaedia article which, among other things, describes different types of Islamism in Denmark
- Crone & Harrow, 2011, *Homegrown Terrorism in the West*. Journal article which, among other things, discusses the transnational aspects of terrorism in the West.
- Hemmingsen, 2011a, *Salafi Jihadism – Relying on Fieldwork to study Unorganized and Clandestine Phenomena*. Journal article which, among other things, discusses the challenges in connection with carrying out fieldwork in disliked or criminal environments.
- Hemmingsen, 2011b, *Whose courtroom? Observations from terrorism trials*. Book chapter which, among other things, discusses the role of court cases on the environments linked to three Danish terrorism cases.
- Hemmingsen, 2011c, *Individualiseret terrorisme* (Individualised terrorism). Book chapter which, among other things, deals with the development of violence-promoting environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies.
- Jensen & Østergaard, 2011, *Ekstremistiske miljøer med salafi-grupperinger i fokus* (Extremist environments, with a focus on Salafi groupings). Report which,

among other things, examines an anti-democratic environment that subscribes to Islamist ideologies.

- Sinclair & Østergaard, 2011, *Muslimske organisationer i Danmark 2001-2011. Debat og reaktioner siden 11. september 2001* (Muslim organisations in Denmark 2001-2011. Debates and reactions since 11 september 2001). Book chapter which, among other things, deals with the consequences of the 9/11 attacks in the US in 2001 on Muslim organisations in Denmark.
- Sinclair, 2011, *Hizb ut-Tahrir and Notions of Home*. Book chapter which, among other things, investigates sense of belonging among members of Hizb ut-Tahrir.
- Crone, 2010, *Dynamikker i ekstremistiske miljøer* (Dynamics in extremist environments). DIIS working paper which, among other things, deals with group dynamics in violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies.
- Goli & Rezaei, 2010, *House of War. Islamic Radicalisation in Denmark*. Report which, among other things, discusses factors contributing to the acceptance of violent means.
- Hemmingsen, 2010, *The Attractions of Jihadism. An Identity Approach to Three Danish Terrorism Cases and the Gallery of Characters around Them*. PhD thesis which, among other things, examines the environments related to three Danish terrorism cases, and the motivations for engaging in such environments.
- Kühle & Lindekilde, 2010, *Radicalization among Young Muslims in Aarhus*. Report which, among other things, examines an environment with anti-democratic aspects in Aarhus.
- Sinclair, 2010, *The Caliphate as Homeland: Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain*. PhD thesis which, among other things, investigates Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain, focussing on the members' sense of belonging.
- Taarnby & Hallundbæk, 2010, *Al-Shabaab. The Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe*. Report which, among other things, examines the role of the Somali organisation al-Shabaab in Denmark.
- Crone, 2009, *Der blæser en vind fra Orienten – salafisme og jihadisme på nordlige breddegrader* (New winds from the Orient – Salafism and Jihadism in Northern latitudes). Journal article which, among other things, discusses the ideological basis of the environment linked to three Danish terrorism cases.
- Change Institute, 2008, *Studies into violent radicalisation: The beliefs, ideologies and narratives*. Report which, among other things, deals with the prevalence of global Islamist movements in Denmark.



- Crone, 2008, *Jihad uden kanon. Fra al-Qaeda til al-qaedisme?* (Jihad without a canon. From al-Qaeda to al-Qaedism?) Book chapter which, among other things, discusses the ideological basis of the environment linked to three Danish terrorism cases.
- Hemmingsen, 2008, *Glostrup-sagen, 2. akt: Terror uden handling?* (The Glostrup case, part 2: Terrorism without action?) Book chapter which, among other things, discusses Danish terrorism cases and various challenges in connection with the Danish counter-terrorism legislation.
- Olsen, 2008, *Radikalisering i danske fængsler – Hvad sker der, og hvad kan der gøres?* (Radicalisation in Danish prisons – What is happening, and what can be done?) DIIS brief which, among other things, examines relationships between the religious conversion of prison inmates and radical forms of religiousness.
- Sinclair, 2008, *Globale drømme, nationale virkeligheder. Hizb ut-Tahrir i Danmark og Storbritannien anno 2008* (Global dreams, national realities. Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark and Britain in 2008). Book chapter which, among other things, looks at the differences and similarities between Hizb ut Tahrir in Denmark and Britain.
- Precht, 2007, *Home grown terrorism and Islamist radicalisation in Europe. From conversion to terrorism. An assessment of the factors influencing violent Islamist extremism and suggestions for counter radicalisation measures.* Report which, among other things, examines the existing research on violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies.
- Taarnby Jensen, 2006, *Jihad in Denmark. An Overview and Analysis of Jihadi Activity in Denmark 1990-2006.* DIIS working paper which, among other things, examines developments in violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies.

In addition to the above publications, this report also draws on an extensive body of international research that deals with anti-democratic as well as violence-promoting environments subscribing to Islamist ideologies in other countries. For an introduction to this research, the reader may for instance consult: Hemmingsen, 2010; Price & Schmid, 2010; Ranstorp, 2009 and [http://www.nyidanmark.dk/da-dk/Integration/demokratisk\\_faelleskab\\_og\\_forebyggelse\\_af\\_radikalisering/forskning\\_undersogelser\\_og\\_erfaringer/forskning\\_undersogelser\\_erfaringer.htm](http://www.nyidanmark.dk/da-dk/Integration/demokratisk_faelleskab_og_forebyggelse_af_radikalisering/forskning_undersogelser_og_erfaringer/forskning_undersogelser_erfaringer.htm)

## **Anti-democratic environments in Denmark**

This section focusses on anti-democratic environments which actively reject and seek to counteract democracy, for instance by attempting to prevent others from participating in democratic elections.

Various environments fall within this category, and they appear to have quite a lot in common. To some extent they share ideologies, enemy images and political core issues, they exist in proximity to each other and many of their followers tend to 'shop around' between them. Thus there is a level of competition between these environments, but at the same time they disagree on significant points and are sometimes in direct conflict with each other.

Different views, for instance on where, how and when an Islamic state should be established, and who has the highest authority, often cause division among them.

### **Ideological background**

The perception that Muslims are victims of injustice and oppression in a global as well as a Danish context constitutes a general theme in these environments. Wars and violent conflicts across the world are linked with conflicts and challenges in Denmark, to paint an overall picture of a general adversarial relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, where Muslims are seen to be superior to others but currently victimised.

This is construed and portrayed as the result of a world order currently dominated by capitalism, multiculturalism and man-made rules and systems, such as democracy, where decadence and double standards are seen to prevail. The critique is also aimed at what is seen as amoral behaviour, including sexual promiscuity, the dissolution of traditional family structures, a culture of hedonism and homosexuality.

As an alternative to this, the Islamic state – or the *Caliphate* – is seen as the ultimately just and good society.<sup>10</sup>

In order words, what spurs these environments is a harsh critique of the existing world order and a wish for revolutionary changes.

<sup>10</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011; Hemmingsen, 2010

However, opinions differ when it comes to defining the long-term goals and how to attain them. For instance, some groups – including Hizb ut-Tahrir – maintain that in the long term, the Caliphate should be introduced in countries where a majority of the population are Muslims,<sup>11</sup> while others believe that it should be implemented all over the world and within a shorter timeframe. These differing views will be described in more detail in the following.

In addition to seeing the World Establishment as an enemy, these environments describe both non-Muslims and Muslims who “emulate the West, e.g. by not rejecting a Western way of living, multi-culturalism, integration and participation in elections”<sup>12</sup> as enemies. But also in this regard there are differences, which will be described further in the following.

Generally there is a tendency to divide the world into *us* versus *them*, something that is strongly emphasised in speeches and written publications. But in other contexts than the carefully prepared speeches and written materials, the world view is much more varied. In practice, the ideologies as well as the enemy images are constantly subject to debate and therefore anything but static. Both are constantly being discussed and developed, just as they may undergo changes in connection with concrete events. Furthermore, there is a difference between the carefully prepared products, such as speeches and publications, and more casual conversations, for instance.

Examples of this can be found in the environment which Jensen & Østergaard have termed the “Tawhêd forum”. The name has been constructed in order to anonymise and protect the researchers’ informants, and there is no environment in Denmark which calls itself the “Tawhêd forum”. It is not possible to determine exactly what environment this name refers to, and consequently this report will also refer to it as the “Tawhêd forum”.

In the forum’s speeches and internet literature, there is a total rejection of democracy as a form of government, and clear attempts to prevent others from participating in the democratic processes. In other words, the “Tawhêd forum” is an anti-democratic movement, judging by its speeches and writings. But when it comes to the individual participants, Jensen & Østergaard detect a more nuanced picture:

<sup>11</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011

<sup>12</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011:24 (the above quote is translated from the Danish source text)

“In conversations and interviews, however, a more pragmatic view of democracy emerges, where the notion that Islam and democracy may be compatible is not utterly rejected. The issue with democracy seems rather to be in the way it is implemented in Western countries, where it does not live up to its ideals”.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, individuals who associate themselves with the “Tawhêd forum” are not necessarily anti-democratic – at least not all the time. When they appear to be anti-democratic, their rejection may be explained by a dissatisfaction with the way in which democracy is put into practice, rather than a fixed idea that Islam and democracy are incompatible, or that the democratic ideal as such is wrong.

Such nuances and changeability in opinion are highly characteristic of all the environments with which this report is concerned.

### **Types of environments**

Overall, it appears that four different types of anti-democratic environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies can currently be identified. These four types are similar in many respects, not least with regard to their ideologies and enemy images, and when it comes to attracting potential followers there is a certain level of competition between them. But at the same time there are major differences between them, and sometimes they are in direct conflict with each other.

#### *The classical environments*

The classical type of environments have existed in Denmark at least since the 1990s. They are more traditional than some of the other environments. Thus, they only follow one Sheikh and remain loyal to him, and the followers do not frequent other environments. They also follow traditional ways of assigning authority and credibility, with age automatically eliciting respect, and opinions of individuals educated at traditional Islamic universities carrying great weight.

These environments tend to be loosely organised, and they generally refrain from engaging in the Danish society or interacting with the public. They are anti-democratic in the sense that they will for instance seek to prevent others from participating in elections, but they are generally not interested in the Danish society and are primarily oriented towards other countries. Thus they tend to focus on conflicts in the Middle

<sup>13</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011:19 (the above quote is translated from the Danish source text)

East and on injustices committed against Muslims in a global context, as well as on the implementation of the Caliphate in countries with a majority of Muslims.

An example of this type of environment is the environment affiliated with Sheikh Abu Ahmad, which among other things publishes materials through its website *islamiskundervisning.com*.

### *The national environments*

Since 2008 another type of environments has emerged.<sup>14</sup> This new type of environment has quite a lot in common with the classical environments, and appears to some extent to have grown out of these. However, there are crucial differences. In contrast to the classical environments, the national environments are more concerned with a Danish context, and are more preoccupied with Danish issues than problems in the Middle East, for instance. Some find that the Caliphate should be implemented all over the world, including in Denmark,<sup>15</sup> while others do not believe that this is realistic or desirable.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly to the classical environments, the national environments tend to have a rather loose and informal organisational structure. There is no formal leadership, rules or memberships, and there is not a declared hierarchy. Rather, these environments are comprised of young people who seek knowledge by following the tutoring of different Sheikhs. They often have their own premises to which they invite various guest speakers, and thus they do not follow one specific Sheikh loyally.

Some individuals will consistently attend regular, weekly events, but most are more loosely affiliated. These environments organise public lectures, where the guest speakers may or may not be Islamic scholars, as well as conferences and celebrations in connection with religious festivals. Thus they focus less on traditional religious education as a source of authority. They also distribute missionary pamphlets at mosques and in the streets of Copenhagen. In addition to this, they organise private lectures, where the speaker has to approve the attendants in advance, and they manage various websites and use social media such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Sinclair & Østergaard, 2011:164

<sup>15</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011

<sup>16</sup> Kühle & Lindekilde, 2010

<sup>17</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011

The previously mentioned environment, the “Tawhêd forum”, which is based in Copenhagen and has existed since 2008,<sup>18</sup> belongs to this category of anti-democratic environments, as does the environment from Aarhus which Kühle & Lindekilde<sup>19</sup> refer to as *the ASC-milieu*.<sup>20</sup>

### *The activistic, national environments*

Recently, yet another type of environments, which also focus more on a Danish context has emerged. These environments have a more activistic profile and a more unambiguous desire to establish a Caliphate in Denmark, than the national environments. In addition, they have a more public profile, and are for instance willing to appear in the Danish media and arrange public demonstrations. One example of this type of environment is the group named *Kaldet til Islam* (“the Calling to Islam” - subsequently referred to as “the Calling”), which attracted some attention in the Autumn of 2011.

In connection with the Danish general election in September 2011, the Calling started a canvassing campaign in the Greater Copenhagen area, where they agitated against participating in the election. Soon after, representatives of the group informed the press that they had implemented so-called “Sharia zones” in the residential area of Tingbjerg in Copenhagen. By seeking to introduce Sharia in Denmark, the Calling openly broke away from other types of anti-democratic environments in Denmark. In any account, their media stunt led to conflicts, which will be described below.

The Calling appears to be more organised and coordinated than both the classical and the national types of environments. When they announced in the Autumn of 2011 that they had established Sharia zones in Tingbjerg, several named individuals appeared in the media as the group’s spokespersons, and subsequently the group has organised conferences to present their views. Video clips documenting the above events, including the Calling’s canvassing in the streets of Copenhagen, are accessible at their website,<sup>21</sup> which is professional and visually coherent in its appearance.

In line with the previous types of environments, the activistic, national environments rely very much on the internet, and especially on the social media, to disseminate

<sup>18</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011:8

<sup>19</sup> Kühle & Lindekilde, 2010

<sup>20</sup> The *ASC-milieu* is an abbreviation of the *Arab-Somali-Covert-milieu*.

<sup>21</sup> *kaldettilislam.com*

their views. But in addition to this, the activist, national environments seek more than any of the other environments to communicate with the surrounding society, and not just with their followers.

One thing that all three types of environment have in common is that they express disapproval of others who do not share their views. Thus, they show their contempt for Muslims who engage in democratic processes or who follow other denominations, such as Shia Islam. Such individuals may be labelled as infidels (*kufir*), and the environments thus engage in what is termed *takfir*.

### *The hierarchical environments*

In addition to the three types of environments mentioned above, Hizb ut-Tahrir Scandinavia must also be considered anti-democratic. However, Hizb ut-Tahrir differs from the other types of environments in significant respects.

First of all, Hizb ut-Tahrir appears to have a considerably more organised and hierarchical structure than the other types of environments.<sup>22</sup> Hizb ut-Tahrir is an international organisation, which was established in the Middle East during the 1950s, and which has since spread to many parts of the world. Thus, today they have branches in more than 40 countries, and all the organisation's branches are being run consistently and uniformly.<sup>23</sup> The organisation is built up around an international leader, and below him there is a network of national leaders, each of whom heads a national management committee. At the level below the national committees, there are then various local committees and finally, there are numerous study groups. The whole organisation appears very hierarchical and regimented.<sup>24</sup>

There are also examples of Hizb ut-Tahrir members who have travelled from country to country, in order to disseminate the organisation's ideologies and promote further activities. This was for instance the case with Maajid Nawaz, a British citizen who came to Denmark in 2000 to assist the Danish division of Hizb ut-Tahrir.<sup>25</sup>

Secondly, Hizb ut-Tahrir is less condemnatory towards others and does not, for instance, engage in *takfir*.

<sup>22</sup> Sinclair, 2010

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

Finally, Hizb ut-Tahrir also seems to be more involved in the public debate in Denmark than some of the other environments – although the Calling may be trying to adopt a similar strategy. Hizb ut-Tahrir for instance takes part in public seminars, participates in public debates with academics and others, organises public events and issues publications.

Even though Hizb ut-Tahrir is more visible in the Danish public debate than the classical environments, the organisation – like the classical environments – primarily orients itself towards other countries than Denmark, and strives for the introduction of the Caliphate in countries with a majority of Muslims.<sup>26</sup>

### **Contacts and conflicts**

Like-minded environments in various parts of Denmark and in other countries are often in contact with each other. Thus, the environment in Copenhagen, which Jensen & Østergaard have studied, has for instance contacts with environments in the cities of Odense, Aarhus and Aalborg.<sup>27</sup>

But as mentioned previously, the different environments are also competing and sometimes in direct conflict with each other. According to Jensen & Østergaard, within the “Tawhêd forum” there is animosity towards Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is seen as a deviant group, “although it appears that the forum is in stiff competition with them”.<sup>28</sup>

Jensen & Østergaard also mention an on-going conflict between the “Tawhêd forum” and environments in Denmark which follow the Saudi Sheikh Rabê al-Madkhali. Although these environments reject democratic participation, they do not actively counteract democracy, and they do not dissociate themselves from the surrounding society in the same way as the “Tawhêd forum” does. Thus they co-operate for instance with the authorities in connection with crimes, which is one of the reasons for the enmity.<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, they are also being repudiated by the Calling, who portray Al-Madkhali as a dog on their website.

As mentioned, when the Calling declared in public that they had established “Sharia zones” in the residential area of Tingbjerg in the autumn of 2011, and informed the

<sup>26</sup> Sinclair, 2010

<sup>27</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011

<sup>28</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011:16 (the above quote is translated from the Danish source text).

<sup>29</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011



press that they were working on establishing other zones across Denmark, it gave rise to conflicts.

In December 2011 Abu Ahmad, who belongs to a classical type of environment, published an article in which he argued against the idea of implementing the Caliphate or Sharia in a country where a majority of the population are not Muslims.

This led to reactions from individuals affiliated with the Calling, and on 31 December 2011 Abu Ahmad gave a speech entitled “Advice to our brothers from the Calling”<sup>30</sup>, where he elaborated on his article and addressed the reactions of the Calling.

From Abu Ahmad’s speech it appears that representatives of the Calling had accused him of insulting God and called him a “so-called Sheikh” who was a laughing stock. In response, Abu Ahmad calls the representatives of the Calling young and ignorant, and he portrays himself as a father who must reprimand his children. He further argues that believing that Sharia could or should be introduced in Denmark is a sign of ignorance.

In his speech Abu Ahmed also explains that he and the Calling have previously worked together, and that in September 2011, they held a joint conference on democratic participation, when Munida (the youth division of Wakf, the Danish Islamic Community) had invited the British Sheikh Haitham al-Haddad to give a talk on the importance of Muslims participating in democracy.

Abu Ahmad stresses that, on previous occasions, he has confronted Wakf (the Danish Islamic Community) on the question of democratic participation, and Hizb ut-Tahrir on other issues, and he makes it very clear that he deserves respect for his knowledge, experience and age.

Abu Ahmad also attacks an individual named Omar Bakri for being as deluded as the Calling. Following Abu Ahmad’s speech, he and Bakri have engaged in a debate, which is also accessible to the public at *islamiskundervisning.com*.

***British connections***

Omar Bakri was instrumental in establishing Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain but he left Hizb ut-Tahrir in 1996 to form the organisation al-Muhajiroun. Al-

<sup>30</sup> Published at *islamiskundervisning.com*

Muhajiroun was formally dissolved in 2004, but it continued its activities under other names.

When Omar Bakri left England for Lebanon in 2005, his position was taken over by Anjem Choudary. Over the years, Choudary has called his group by various names, including Al-Ghurabaa, London School of Sharia, Islam4UK and Islam against Crusades. These have continually been banned in Britain, but Choudary has nevertheless been able to manoeuvre in this hostile environment. One of his strategies is to operate simultaneously with several names for his group.

This means that when one group is banned by the authorities, Choudary can continue his activities under another name and not be delayed by having to acquaint his followers with a new name. Thus, when his group Islam4uk was banned in January 2010 he continued his work under the name of Sharia4uk.

According to himself, Anjem Choudary launched a campaign in Britain in the summer of 2011. Here various areas were proclaimed to be “Sharia zones”, and yellow posters carrying the message “You are entering a Sharia-controlled zone. Islamic rules enforced” were put up.<sup>31</sup> The posters declared that drinking alcohol, gambling, listening to music and smoking, among other things, were banned.

Choudary willingly appears for interviews to explain his views and visions for a Britain with parallel societies. Originally, Choudary has a law degree from England, but today he considers himself a Sharia judge. He abstains from taking on criminal cases, but does deliver rulings in civil cases, for instance in connection with matrimony and divorce, succession law and family disputes. In probate cases, wills are typically drawn up according to Sharia guidelines and subsequently registered at a British court, while in most of the other types of cases a settlement will be sought without involving the state. Choudary generally tries to persuade members of his local community not to involve the British state in any matters, and he is keen to offer advice on how best to tackle the authorities and not attract their attention, for instance by avoiding registration and not participating in elections.<sup>32</sup>

In relation to the “Sharia zones” in Britain, Choudary has explained that the purpose is to influence select Muslim and non-Muslim communities across the country, and to

<sup>31</sup> Daily Mail, 2011

<sup>32</sup> Politiken, 2007

plant the seed for an Islamic emirate. The deployment of street patrols in the declared Sharia zones was a way of ensuring that the imposed rules were observed.<sup>33</sup>

### *Back to Denmark*

The individuals who appeared in the Danish media in connection with the establishment of “Sharia zones” in Tingbjerg, Copenhagen, presented themselves on different occasions as representatives of different groups, including Ahl us-sunnah wal-jammah. Similarly, on the Calling’s website<sup>34</sup> reference is made to names such as sharia4dk, dawah, Iummah4dk and Iummahfordk.

This leaves the impression that the same individuals represent different groups, or alternatively that the same group has several names. Considering that Anjem Choudary openly expressed his sympathy and enthusiasm for the Danish initiative to declare certain areas in Tingbjerg as “Sharia zones”, an endorsement which the Calling made a link to on its website, and considering the similarities in the choice of strategies and names, it seems probable that the Calling has some level of collaboration with Choudary, or at least draws inspiration from his activities. Thus it also seems likely that the Calling has adopted Choudary’s strategy of using several names for the same group simultaneously.

The environment which Jensen & Østergaard refer to as the “Tawhêd forum” has also to some extent had connections with both Anjem Choudary and Omar Bakri. Jensen & Østergaard note:

“It has not been possible to find concrete data about an existing international collaboration, but in various virtual media there are references to environments in London, in the form of links, audio files with speeches and invitations to participate in internet conferences, e.g. with Omar Bakri and Anjem Choudary, who are known from the now banned organisation al-Muhajiroun. There may also be connections with the London School of Sharia, with which Bakri and Choudary are also affiliated. Thus there are links to the school, and one of the Sheikhs associated with the “Tawhêd forum” was educated there.”<sup>35</sup>

As pointed out, conflicts occur between different anti-democratic environments which to a large extent share the same ideological background, enemy images and

<sup>33</sup> Daily Mail, 2011

<sup>34</sup> *Kaldetilislam.com*

<sup>35</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011:10 (the above quote is translated from the Danish source text).

political core issues. These conflicts partly concern concrete issues, such as where, when and how to pursue the long-term goals, but they also very much revolve around the question of who has power and authority.

The conflict between Abu Ahmad and the Calling is clearly a conflict about where, when and how Sharia and the Caliphate should be implemented. But it is also a conflict about who has the power and authority to make decisions and speak on others' behalf. As is evident from the relationship between Abu Ahmad and the Calling, different environments may collaborate at one point and fight each other at another. As is also clear from the above, different Danish environments may have contacts with the same foreign environment.

### **Recruitment strategies and recruitment potential**

In recent years the internet has, not surprisingly, been used more and more as part of these environments' activities. Social media such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter are used along with websites, chat forums, etc., for disseminating viewpoints and inviting followers to offline events.

Such offline events may for instance be public or private gatherings where scholars, although not necessarily with a traditional Islamic education, are invited to give talks. In this connection speakers from other countries are also invited to Denmark.

The internet is also used to disseminate longer or shorter speeches by well-known individuals from Denmark or abroad, discussions, contributions, etc. by lesser known individuals, as well as audio and video clips of for instance street canvassing activities. The street canvassing often consists of stopping passers-by and sometimes distributing written materials to disseminate one's message. Either the canvassing simply takes place in the street, where both Muslims and non-Muslims are approached, or it takes place outside mosques in connection with Friday prayers, in which case it is primarily targeted at Muslims.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, all the environments make an effort to attract new followers by drawing on existing networks, encouraging established supporters to invite their friends along to some of the regular weekly events.<sup>37</sup> All these activities are open events where

<sup>36</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011

<sup>37</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011; Sinclair, 2010

new participants are welcome. In addition to this, some of the environments offer lectures, to which access is more restricted and the participants have to be approved by the speaker.<sup>38</sup>

In other words, there is no shortage of invitations and opportunities to join these environments. Still, only a limited number of people seem to join them, at least whole-heartedly. At the same time it appears that when new followers do join the environments, it is a result of self-selection rather than targeted recruitment.

Jensen & Østergaard thus describe how individuals tend to “shop around” between the different environments. While doing so they may be critical, for instance towards authorities within the environments, and personal sympathies or differences may play a decisive role when deciding whether to participate whole-heartedly in a given environment.<sup>39</sup> Often the environments comprise a small core of individuals who are actively and whole-heartedly part of the environment, and then a larger group of followers who sometimes participate in events but who also frequent other environments as well as completely different social contexts.

There are relatively few figures to document the size and extent of these environments, but in relation to the environment described by Jensen & Østergaard, it is estimated that 40-50 male and 20-30 female followers attend its weekly reminders, which constitute the activity with the largest attendance. Of these, only 20-30 are estimated to be regular participants, while the rest are loosely affiliated or will only participate in a single event.<sup>40</sup>

It is estimated that Hizb ut-Tahrir Scandinavia has 100-200 active members in Denmark,<sup>41</sup> but can attract 1,000-1,200 people to their public meetings.<sup>42</sup>

It is not possible to say anything conclusively about the recruitment potential of these environments, but according to Jensen & Østergaard a Sheikh notes that there are “more Salafi followers today than just 5 years ago”,<sup>43</sup> and they provide the following explanation:

<sup>38</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011

<sup>39</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011: 32-33

<sup>40</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011:9

<sup>41</sup> Sinclair, 2010

<sup>42</sup> Crone, 2011b

<sup>43</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011:28 (the above quote is translated from the Danish source text).

“Other Muslim leaders outside the Salafi circles also point to a societal change where large parts of the Danish society have become black-and-white or polarised, which is also reflected in the Muslim groupings, especially in the growing number of Salafi followers.<sup>44</sup>

In other words, the Danish society is seen to have become more polarised and divided, and this is found to affect the citizens, so that they also follow this tendency and begin to associate with environments that offer a simplified, black-and-white world view. If this is correct, the recruitment potential of these environments is linked with the development in the surrounding society.

<sup>44</sup>Jensen & Østergaard, 2011:28 (the above quote is translated from the Danish source text).

## **Violence-promoting environments in Denmark**

Apart from anti-democratic environments, Denmark has over the years seen the emergence of smaller groups or environments which have purposely advanced a violence-promoting agenda. These are the topic of this section.

### **Ideological background**

The ideological background, enemy images and political core issues of the violence-promoting environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies are largely identical with those found in the anti-democratic environments. The main difference is how the environments act on the basis of their world view.

Thus, the violence-promoting environments also subscribe to the general view that Muslims are victims of injustice and oppression in Denmark as well as globally. Wars and violent conflicts across the world are linked to conflicts and problems in Denmark, to create an overall picture of a general adversarial relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, where Muslims are seen as superior but currently victimised.

As in the anti-democratic environments, this is construed and portrayed in the violence-promoting environments as the result of a world order currently dominated by capitalism, multiculturalism and man-made rules and systems, where decadence and double standards prevail. Also in these environments, the critique is aimed at what is seen as amoral behaviour, including sexual promiscuity, the dissolution of traditional family structures, a culture of hedonism and homosexuality. As an alternative to this, the Caliphate is seen as the ultimately just and good society.

On closer inspection, there are differences between the anti-democratic and the violence-promoting environments. However, these differences resemble the internal differences between the various anti-democratic environments, and they also exist internally among the various violence-promoting environments. One example is the way in which the various anti-democratic environments either focus on a Danish or an international context, as described in the previous section. Such differences are also found in the violence-promoting environments, where they also lead to discussions and conflicts.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Hemmingsen, 2010

Thus, we are dealing with ideological variations among different types of anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments, rather than clear ideological differences distinguishing violence-promoting environments from anti-democratic environments.

The distinction between violence-promoting and anti-democratic environments is primarily based on analyses of which actions the environments are willing to tolerate or resort to as a means of getting from status quo to a better future. However, the existing research gives no grounds for concluding that there is a causal relationship between anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments or between certain ideologies and certain modes of action. On the contrary, Crone concludes:

“With regard to the role of the espoused religion or ideology, there is nothing to suggest that any theological or ideological immersion will gradually result in a wish to resort to violence or terror. In fact, the most recent terrorism cases in Denmark seem to indicate otherwise. Thus, a wish to do something in response to a situation which is seen as unjust, or a wish to make a difference in the world may be what spurs a person’s involvement in an extremist environment that subscribes to a certain ideology. But the ideological engagement is seldom the primary or the decisive factor.”<sup>46</sup>

If we take a closer look at one of the individuals convicted in the Danish Glasvej case, who among other things travelled to Pakistan and returned home with recipes for making explosives, we see an individual who had searched for a long time for an arena to act out his ambitions for a violent engagement.

As part of his search he had frequented different environments with varying ideologies and different takes on which types of action would be justifiable. Thus, during his trial the young man explained how, in Denmark, he had both looked up Hizb ut-Tahrir, Abu Ahmad and the group of individuals associated with the Glostrup case. Later, he had travelled to Pakistan to find contacts, and in the summer of 2006 he was planning to go to Lebanon to participate in fightings there. In 2007 he had met certain contacts, via the Red Mosque in Pakistan, who let him copy recipes for making explosives and facilitated a stay in Waziristan. During the entire trial he explained that he had been driven by a fascination with weapons and a need for thrills and action<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Crone, 2010:5 (the above quote is translated from the Danish source text)

<sup>47</sup> Crone, 2010; Hemmingsen, 2010



The same kind of pragmatic approach, fuelled by a desire to participate in combat, is found in Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane's account of how he ended up in Guantánamo.<sup>48</sup> Abderrahmane explains how, in 1998, he initially wanted to go to Kosovo to take part in the fightings against the Serbs, and the following year wanted to go Chechnya to fight there. To find contacts who could help him to go to Chechnya, Abderrahmane started frequenting a mosque in Aarhus, and with time he became affiliated with a group of Algerians who made him focus on Algeria instead.

He subsequently went to Algeria, to make contact with the GSPC,<sup>49</sup> but according to his own explanation he did not succeed. In 2001 Abderrahmane managed to make contacts in London who could facilitate an involvement in armed combat. However, he was surprised to realise that they did not want to send him to any of the countries that he had been concerned with until then, but to Afghanistan. According to his own explanation, Abderrahmane accepted the offer because his objective was to engage in combat, and he was willing to make compromises to attain that goal.

### **Cases and environments**

After the 9/11 attacks in the US in 2001 and the bombings in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005, terrorism – and especially the type of terrorism which is justified by references to Islamist ideologies – has attracted an increasing amount of attention. This does not mean, however, that it did not exist before. Terrorism has a much longer history, also in Denmark. This also applies to violence-promoting environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies.

So far a number of terrorism cases have taken place in Denmark, been targeted at Denmark or Danish interests abroad, or involved individuals affiliated with Denmark. Some of these cases can be linked with the existence of violence-promoting environments, while others may represent more isolated incidents. The cases can be divided into five different types:

#### *Cases before 2001*

In 1985 two bombs went off in Copenhagen, one by the offices of the American airline Northwest Orient, and one next to the Jewish synagogue. A third device did not

<sup>48</sup> Davidsen-Nielsen & Seidelin, 2004

<sup>49</sup> Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC) was an Algerian group which changed its name to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2006

explode, but was found in the one of the canals of the inner harbour of Copenhagen. One person was killed and 32 injured as result of the explosions.

Following the attacks the group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attacks, but when four men were convicted of them in 1989, the group was not attributed responsibility. To this day the details of the attacks are unclear.<sup>50</sup>

In the early 1990s, several individuals who were either suspected or had been convicted in other countries of terrorism resided in Denmark. Thus, the Egyptian Talat Fuad Qassim, also known as Abu Talal, who had been convicted of participating in the assassination of President Anwar al-Sadat in Egypt, was granted political asylum in Denmark. Here he enjoyed freedom of movement and, among other things, spent his time propagandising at Friday Prayers in a Mosque in the Copenhagen district of Nørrebro.

Talat Fuad Qassim was friends with the Danish-Moroccan Said Mansour, who was convicted of encouraging terrorism in 2007. In 1993 the two appeared in a joint interview, where they expressed their sympathy with the Egyptian Omar Abdel Rahman, also known as “The Blind Sheikh”, whom Said Mansour had invited to Denmark on several occasions since 1990 as a guest speaker.

Like Talat Fuad Qassim, Omar Abdel Rahman had been under suspicion of participating in the assassination of al-Sadat, but in contrast to Qassim, Rahman had been acquitted. Nonetheless, he had been expelled from Egypt, and therefore went to Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet Union. When the war was over, Rahman travelled to the US and was allowed entry, although at the time, he figured on the United States’ list of terrorists. While staying in the US, Rahman participated in the planning of the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center, where six people were killed and more than 1,000 injured. Rahman was convicted of this attack in 1995, and currently serves a 240-year sentence in the US.<sup>51</sup>

A few months after the 1993 World Trade Center attack, three Egyptian men set fire to a house near the Danish city of Aarhus. At first it appeared to be a simple crime of passion, where the three men claimed that the owner of the house was partly to blame for one of the men having been left by his wife. However, in connection with

<sup>50</sup> Andersen & Elbæk, forthcoming

<sup>51</sup> Skjoldager, 2009; Taarnby, 2006

the investigation the Egyptians' homes were searched, and this aroused the interest of both the Aarhus Police and the Danish Security and Intelligence Service.<sup>52</sup>

In the three men's homes, the police found chemicals which could be used for making explosives, a bomb manual, materials containing threats against Westerners, a hand-drawn map of the area around the Israeli embassy in Copenhagen and an address book with the contact information for several of the individuals who had been involved in the World Trade Center attack. Moreover, in connection with the trial in the US, it turned out that fingerprints of two of the three men arrested in Denmark had been found on passports and papers belonging to some of the accused. These two men could also be linked to Talat Fuad Qassim.<sup>53</sup>

All three men were charged, in a case that subsequently became known as the Egyptian case, and they were all convicted of arson, but not of anything else. Subsequently, two of them have apparently returned to an anonymous existence, but the third Egyptian was suspected of participating in an attack on tourists in Egypt in 1996, and four years later he was arrested in Pakistan on suspicion of being a member of al-Qaida. His whereabouts since then are unknown.<sup>54</sup>

Talat Fuad Qassim disappeared in Croatia in 1995. He is believed to have been the first target of CIA's rendition programme, and the assumption is that, following interrogation, he was handed over to Egypt for execution.<sup>55</sup>

### *Danish cases*

In October 2005 several individuals were arrested in the Greater Copenhagen area, in what was to become known as Denmark's first terrorism case after the amendment of Section 114 of the Danish Criminal Code, which concerns terrorism.

In Denmark the case was labelled the Glostrup case, but elsewhere it was referred to as the Sarajevo case, because the Danish arrests were the result of arrests made in Sarajevo. Here a Swedish citizen, a Turkish citizen with residence in Denmark and two Bosnian citizens were arrested on suspicion of planning terrorism. Three of them were later convicted of planning terrorism, while the fourth individual was

<sup>52</sup> Andersen, 2011; Skjoldager, 2009; Taarnby, 2006

<sup>53</sup> Andersen, 2011

<sup>54</sup> Skjoldager, 2009

<sup>55</sup> Andersen, 2011

convicted of illegal trade in arms. The two men from Denmark and Sweden had had contacts with various individuals in Denmark, and among the individuals arrested in Denmark, four were charged with planning terror. In February 2007 one of them was found guilty.

In April 2007 Said Mansour, who had attracted attention since the 1990s, was convicted of encouraging others to commit terrorism. Among other things, Mansour was linked to the Glostrup case, and this connection played a significant role in both cases.

In September 2007 several individuals were arrested in the Greater Copenhagen area, in what quickly became known as the Glasvej case. During the trial it emerged that the accused had been in contact with several of the individuals involved in the Glostrup case. In October 2008 both of the accused were found guilty of attempted terrorism.

In November 2007 another individual was arrested in the Greater Copenhagen area, suspected of planning an act of terrorism to help two of his friends, who at the time were detained in connection with the Glasvej case, to escape from prison. The accused was acquitted in November 2008.<sup>56</sup>

Thus all these cases from Copenhagen are linked, and it would appear that a violence-promoting environment has existed in the Greater Copenhagen area over a longer period of time.<sup>57</sup>

Based on the available material, it is not possible to determine if there have been similar environments in other parts of Denmark. However, there have been other cases outside of Copenhagen.

In September 2006, for instance, several individuals were arrested in Odense, in what became known as the Vollsmose case. In November 2007 three of these individuals were found guilty of attempted terrorism.

On 1 January 2010, an individual was arrested after breaking into the home of Kurt Westergaard, one of the Danish cartoonists involved in the cartoon crisis, armed

<sup>56</sup> Hemmingsen, 2010

<sup>57</sup> Hemmingsen, 2008, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Crone, 2008, 2009, 2010

with an axe and a knife. In February 2011 he was convicted of attempted terrorism. At the time of his arrest, he had ties to Aalborg as well as Copenhagen.

Apart from these cases, which have all been tried at the Danish courts, there has been the so-called Tunisian case, which is surrounded by a certain degree of mystery. The case concerns two foreign citizens who resided in the Aarhus area. The authorities suspected them of planning a terrorist attack on the cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, and consequently they were administratively expelled from Denmark. However, one of the suspects refused to leave the country, and the case resulted in extensive debate about and scrutiny of the practices of administrative expulsions and exceptional leave to remain, as well as of preventing the disclosure of information. As the charges against these suspects have not been tried at an open trial – although the courts have ruled on the issue of whether their expulsion from Denmark was legitimate – it is not possible to say anything conclusive about this case.

Another somewhat unique case is that of Slimane Hadj Abderrahmane, who – according to himself – was arrested in Pakistan in 2001 and subsequently transferred to Guantánamo, where he was held until being handed over to Denmark in 2004. As mentioned above, Abderrahmane has openly explained how, while he was living in the Aarhus area, he started to search for contacts who could facilitate his involvement in armed combat.

#### *Cases involving individuals travelling to Denmark*

In addition to the cases involving individuals residing in Denmark, there have also been cases where individuals have been suspected or convicted of travelling to Denmark from other countries to carry out attacks. In September 2010 a Belgian citizen, Loris Doukaev, was arrested in Copenhagen after causing an explosion in a hotel, and in May 2011 he was convicted of attempted terrorism.

In the US the American David Headly confessed to planning a terrorist attack against the Danish newspaper Jyllandsposten, which published the cartoons that triggered the cartoon crisis. His intention was to carry out an attack similar to that in Mumbai in November 2008, which Headly also confessed to having planned. In 2011 Headly testified against Tahawwur Rana, who was convicted of participating in the planning of the attack against Jyllandsposten.

In January 2012 three individuals in Oslo, Norway, were found guilty of planning an attack against Jyllandsposten.

In December 2010 a group of Swedes were arrested in the Copenhagen area and Sweden, also on suspicion of planning an attack on the building housing the newspapers of Jyllandsposten and Politiken. In June 2012 four of the men were convicted of attempted terrorism.

#### *Cases involving Danes in other countries*

There are also instances where Danes have been suspected of planning or carrying out terrorist attacks in other countries. Thus, a Danish citizen was suspected of carrying out a suicide attack in Mogadishu, Somalia, in December 2009, and in 2007 another Danish citizen was arrested in Ethiopia on suspicion of being involved in fightings in Somalia.<sup>58</sup>

Another example is the Sarajevo case, with which the Danish Glostrup case was linked. In the Sarajevo case a man residing in Denmark was convicted of planning terrorism in Bosnia.

#### *Cases targeted at Danish interests abroad*

Finally, the 2008 bombing of the Danish embassy in Islamabad represents a type of case where individuals with no apparent affiliations to Denmark attack Danish targets abroad.

### **Contacts and conflicts**

As is the case with most anti-democratic environments, violence-promoting environments tend to be rather changeable, fluid and unorganised phenomena, without any clear hierarchies or anything resembling formal membership.

“Such environments are seldom well-structured or organised with an appointed leader and clear rules. Instead they consist of a loosely defined circle of individuals, who are friends or just hang out with each other. These types of environments are constantly changing, as some individuals drop out while others join them. This is what the American researcher on terrorism Marc Sageman refers to when using the term “a bunch of guys” (Sageman 2004).”<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Taarnby & Hallundbæk, 2010

<sup>59</sup> Crone, 2010:5 (the above quote is translated from the Danish source text)

Obviously, when it comes to actual groups planning concrete attacks, there is a much higher level of organisation, where roles are assigned to the various members and only those directly involved in the activities have knowledge of the plans.<sup>60</sup>

While several of the anti-democratic environments actively communicate with the surrounding society and try to disseminate their views through the internet, publications or events, violence-promoting environments are, for obvious reasons, far more closed and secretive. At the same time they are extremely cautious about becoming involved in activities which could attract any unwanted attention.

However, in connection with some of the terrorism cases from the Copenhagen area, it emerged during the trials that those involved in the environments have, among other things, offered moral as well as financial support to individuals accused and convicted of terrorism and their families around the world.<sup>61</sup>

Several of the Danish terrorism cases have been connected. Thus, the individuals charged in all the cases from the Greater Copenhagen area knew each other, and they were moving in the same circles. All of these cases have also had links to other countries.

The Glostrup case originated in arrests made in Bosnia, and had links to individuals who were later arrested in Britain and the US, among other places. Several of the individuals implicated in these cases also had contact with Omar Bakri in London.<sup>62</sup>

Said Mansour, who, among other things, has been convicted of encouraging others to commit terrorism, also had a wide range of international contacts, for instance to Omar Abdel Rahman and Talat Fuad Qassim, just as his propaganda materials have been found all around the world.<sup>63</sup>

One of the individuals convicted in the Glasvej case had, as previously mentioned, travelled to Pakistan to find contacts who could facilitate his involvement in combat, and after his return to Denmark he was continually in contact with individuals

<sup>60</sup> Hemmingsen, 2010

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Skjoldager, 2009; Taarnby, 2006

abroad, while covering his tracks through an ingenious use of e-mail accounts and mobile phones.<sup>64</sup>

In fact, the vast majority of terrorism cases in the West which have involved individuals or environments subscribing to Islamist ideologies have had transnational aspects, either in the form of contacts to like-minded environments in other countries or in the form of international travel activities.<sup>65</sup>

Like several of the anti-democratic environments, violence-promoting environments have conflicts with other environments, including Hizb ut-Tahrir and Shia-Muslim environments. Internal conflicts and power struggles may also occur within the environments. Thus, in connection with the Glostrup case trials it emerged that there was a high level of distrust between two of the individuals involved, both of whom accused the other of wanting to take charge and of not being discreet enough, just as several individuals had been involved in a violent clash with a Shia-Muslim group.<sup>66</sup>

Just as there are many who 'shop around' among the different anti-democratic environments, there are also individuals who 'shop around' between anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments. Many may for instance have attended meetings at Hizb ut-Tahrir and followed the tuition of various Islamic scholars, before becoming involved in violence-promoting environments, and some continue their search for information or contacts in different contexts. Consequently, being part of a violence-promoting environment cannot be described as a static state.<sup>67</sup>

Just as the individuals in and around the "Tawhêd forum" are not necessarily – or always – anti-democratic, even though formally the forum has an anti-democratic agenda, the individuals in and around the violence-promoting environments often take a much more nuanced, pragmatic and doubtful approach in practice than what is prescribed in the environments' slogans and ideologies.<sup>68</sup>

Being part of a violence-promoting environment is not a constant, definitive or irreversible state. Nuances and changeability prevail in violence-promoting environments as well as in anti-democratic environments.

<sup>64</sup> Hemmingsen, 2010

<sup>65</sup> Crone & Harrow, 2011

<sup>66</sup> Hemmingsen, 2010

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Ibid



## Recruitment strategies and recruitment potential

As in the case with anti-democratic environments, joining violence-promoting environments is typically a result of self-selection rather than recruitment in a narrow sense.

Since trust is a decisive factor, already existing networks, friendships, etc. play an important role. However, in connection with the planning and preparation of concrete actions, other individuals may be involved, for instance to help acquire materials, without being let in on the plans. Thus, such individuals may unwittingly participate in something that can get them into serious trouble later on.

Propaganda and guidance from organisations engaged in terrorism are relatively easy to come by nowadays, not least via the internet, and trials have shown that many of the individuals convicted of terrorism have been in possession of such materials. In some cases they have also produced materials themselves.<sup>69</sup>

It is clear that materials depicting humiliations or injustices against Muslims play a very influential role, when individuals decide to engage in violence-promoting environments. Various forms of documentation from conflict areas is repeatedly mentioned as a motivational factor. Such documentation may have been produced specifically for propaganda purposes or may for instance stem from ordinary television programmes, but in any account, the violence-promoting environments offer a framework for venting one's frustrations and finding inspiration for ways of acting on them.

The violence-promoting environments provide closed forums where individuals who have been invited may attend lectures and discussions, and at the same time they constitute very close-knit social networks where those involved are willing to do almost anything for each other.<sup>70</sup>

Taarnby & Hallundbæk<sup>71</sup> point to the possible existence in Denmark of networks which are directly involved in recruiting individuals for the Somali group al-Shabaab. Drawing on second-hand sources from other countries, they describe how charismatic individuals contact young people with the intention of enrolling them in al-Shabaab.

<sup>69</sup> Hemmingsen, 2010

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

<sup>71</sup> Taarnby & Hallundbæk, 2010

These individuals may for instance visit youth clubs, where they show video clips from YouTube encouraging young people to devote themselves to their religion, or they may spot young people in or around mosques and subsequently meet with them in shopping centres, cafés, etc., where they appeal to the youths' nationalistic feelings and sense of adventure, and eventually facilitate visits to Somalia.

However, Taarnby & Hallundbæk stress that, even in such scenarios, it is very much the youths themselves who take the initiative and engage in the process, and that, consequently, self-selection plays just as important a role as recruitment.

Based on the available material it is not possible to assess whether such recruitment networks with an affiliation to al-Shabaab actually exist in Denmark, and if so, where they operate or how they function. Nor is it possible to assess whether they would exist separately from, or as part of other violence-promoting environments.

As to the question of how widespread violence-promoting environments subscribing to Islamist ideologies are in Denmark, no assessments have been made which are accessible to the public, and based on the available material, it is impossible to say anything accurate about their recruitment potential.

The task of carrying out such assessments should also be left to the Danish authorities.

## Conclusions

The purpose of this report has been to give a brief overview of the existing research into anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies. Consequently, the report does not seek to map or give a complete description of such environments in Denmark, but attempts instead to gather the existing knowledge and identify its results and limitations, so as to provide a basis for future investigations.

As the report is concerned with both anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies, it initially establishes a conceptual framework for distinguishing between the many different ways in which it is possible to act on the basis of a given set of views. Distinctions are made between private and public actions, between political and apolitical, between democratic, anti-democratic and violence-promoting actions, and finally between legal and illegal actions.

Violence-promoting environments are defined as environments which actively seek to promote the use of violence. Such environments are engaged in actions which are illegal. Anti-democratic environments are defined as environments which actively seek to counteract democracy, for instance by preventing others from participating in democratic elections. Such environments are engaged in actions which are legal.

In a democratic society it is crucial that there is room for disagreement and debate. That is why, throughout this report, a clear distinction is maintained between views and actions, and between legal and illegal actions.

Within the past decade there has been a lot of focus on anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies in Denmark, and several research projects have been launched. These projects have particularly been concerned with generating empirical data. However, as is generally the case with research into illegal or disliked phenomena, research in this field is faced with major challenges, as it is extremely difficult to access existing data and generate new. Consequently, the primary focus has been on gaining access to and generating data, and not necessarily on representative data.

As a result, the focus of the existing research may not give a true and fair picture of where in Denmark or in which environments the biggest challenges are to be found.

For instance, there is an overrepresentation of data from the Greater Copenhagen area, but this does not necessarily mean that Copenhagen has been or is the most relevant place to examine.

None of the existing studies claim to be representative, and none of them draw any explicit conclusions concerning geographical location or whether similar environments can be found in other places. In order to establish a true and fair picture of issues such as the prevalence, geographical location and distribution of these phenomena, as well as the surrounding communities' response to anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies, more knowledge must be generated.

Based on the existing research, the general picture is that anti-democratic as well as violence-promoting environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies have played a role in Denmark for a number of years.

Already in 1985 Denmark became the target of bombs, for which the group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility. When four men were later convicted of the attacks the group was, however, not attributed responsibility. To this day the details of the attacks are unclear.<sup>72</sup> Since then there have been several terrorism cases involving individuals subscribing to Islamist ideologies. These cases have either taken place on Danish soil, been targeted at Denmark or Danish interests abroad, or involved individuals with an affiliation to Denmark. The cases can be divided into five types:

- Cases before 2001
- Danish cases
- Cases involving individuals travelling to Denmark
- Cases involving Danes in other countries
- Cases targeted at Danish interests abroad

Research indicates that, for a number of years, there has been a violence-promoting environment in the Greater Copenhagen area,<sup>73</sup> to which several terrorism cases have been linked. There is no basis for establishing whether similar environments have existed in other parts of Denmark.

<sup>72</sup> Andersen & Elbæk, forthcoming

<sup>73</sup> Hemmingsen, 2008, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Crone, 2008, 2009, 2010

Since the 1990s, different types of anti-democratic environments that subscribe to Islamist ideologies have existed in Denmark. Traditionally, such environments have primarily concerned themselves with conflicts in other parts of the world, and focused on the establishment of an Islamic state in countries with a majority of Muslims.

However, in recent years new types of environments have emerged which are more oriented towards a Danish context and which are more involved in issues relating to Denmark. Some of these environments are committed to introducing an Islamic state in Denmark, while others do not find this realistic or desirable. The anti-democratic environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies can be divided into four different types:

- The classical environments, which follow a single religious authority and primarily orient themselves towards other countries
- The national environments, which do not follow a single Sheikh and both orient themselves towards Denmark and other countries
- The activist national environments, which do not follow a single Sheikh, primarily have a Danish orientation and interact offensively with the Danish society
- The hierarchical environments, which consist of organisations that are primarily oriented towards other countries

To a large extent, the various anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments share the same ideological background, core issues and perceived enemies. The perception that Muslims are victims of injustice and oppression in a global as well as a Danish context, constitutes a general theme in these environments. Wars and violent conflicts across the world are linked with conflicts and problems in a Danish context, to create an overall picture of a general adversarial relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, where Muslims are seen as superior but currently victimised.

This is construed and portrayed as the result of a world order currently dominated by capitalism, multiculturalism and man-made rules and systems, such as democracy, where decadence and double standards are seen to prevail. The critique is also aimed at what is seen as amoral behaviour, including sexual promiscuity, the dissolution of traditional family structures, a culture of hedonism and homosexuality. As an alternative to this the Islamic state, or the *Caliphate*, is seen as the ultimately just and good society.

In other words, what spurs these environments is a harsh critique of the existing world order and a wish for revolutionary changes.

Apart from seeing the World Establishment as an enemy, these environments describe both non-Muslims and Muslims who “emulate the West, e.g. by not rejecting a Western way of living, multi-culturalism, integration and participation in elections”<sup>74</sup> as enemies.

There are, however, also disagreements between the different environments, for instance in relation to where and when an Islamic state should be established, who has the authority and not least what constitutes feasible and legitimate means of action. Therefore conflicts occasionally occur, and environments which collaborate at one point in time might soon after end up fighting each other.

Generally, transnational aspects can be found in both the violence-promoting and the anti-democratic environments in Denmark that subscribe to Islamist ideologies. Thus they tend for instance to have contact with like-minded groups abroad, who provide inspiration and with whom they arrange mutual visits. In the same way, there is a level of contact between like-minded environments in Denmark.

Most of these environments make use of the internet, and some of them are very good at it. Websites, chat forums and social media such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter are used to disseminate viewpoints, show video clips of activities, invite people to offline events and provide a setting for discussions.

Research indicates that it is generally individuals who make contact with the environments, actively choosing or rejecting engagement, rather than the environments actively recruiting select individuals. Thus, individuals tend to join the environments through self-selection rather than as a result of recruitment in a narrow sense.

Some individuals will affiliate themselves whole-heartedly with a specific environment, while others tend to ‘shop around’ among different environments. This applies both to anti-democratic and violence-promoting environments.

In practice, the boundaries between the various environments are fluid. The same individual may shift environments over time, or be part of several environments

<sup>74</sup> Jensen & Østergaard, 2011:24

simultaneously, just as the same individual may belong to a violence-promoting environment in certain situations, and an anti-democratic or democratic environment in others. There are even examples of individuals within these environments having previously been affiliated with right-wing or left-wing extremist environments.<sup>75</sup>

Nuances and changeability constitute a common factor. Being part of a violence-promoting environment is not a constant, definitive or irreversible state.

<sup>75</sup> Hemmingsen, 2010

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