Roskilde University

Politisk ekstremisme i Danmark

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Publication date:
2012

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (APA):
Larsen, C. H. (2012). *Politisk ekstremisme i Danmark*. Roskilde Universitet. http://sm.dk/nyheder/2012/nye-rapporter-om-ekstremisme-i-danmark-08-05-2012

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POLITICAL EXTREMISM IN DENMARK

- A pre-investigation for mapping of right-wing and left-wing extremism

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For the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration
April 2012
ISBN: 978-87-7546-404-3

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BACKGROUND

The government programme states that a mapping should be launched which identifies the challenges related to extremism and anti-democratic groups in Denmark, so as to be able to target preventive efforts specifically at the areas and groups presenting concrete challenges. The mapping will comprise investigations of selected local areas based on qualitative and quantitative studies, as well as more comprehensive studies analysing selected forms of extremism and anti-democratic groups in Denmark. Initially, a status report/mapping will be produced on the basis of existing research on extremism and anti-democratic groups in order to provide an overview of the 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.

PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this status report is to create an overview of the challenges related to right-wing and left-wing extremism in Denmark. The report will form part of a more comprehensive mapping launched partly with a view to concretising and targeting the preventive effort. The present report is based on existing and ongoing research in the area. It is a concrete and fact-based report which aims to identify where in present-day Denmark extreme political problems exist – and what kind of issues the Danish society is facing as a result of this. The report is not a mapping or an exhaustive account of the right-wing and left-wing extremist environments, but rather an attempt to establish a knowledge base which may serve as a foundation for such an investigation. Thus, the report reflects existing research on political extremism in Denmark, which is still relatively limited in scope. Consequently, the report also reflects the researcher's own observations and analyses of current developments in political extremism. Furthermore, the future mapping will be based on a quantitative investigation.

In a democratic society, there are many good reasons to closely monitor extremist trends which have an anti-democratic aim, and which use or encourage the use of extremist measures as part of a political struggle. A principal and very concrete reason is that when it develops into criminal acts - i.e. violence against persons, vandalism and threats - political extremism results in direct and concrete costs for society in the form of police investigations, criminal proceedings, etc. Another reason is that political radicalisation, particularly of young people, may have serious social and financial consequences for their future lives, e.g. due to a lack of social relations and problems gaining a foothold in the labour market. These factors, together with the further radicalisation and social isolation caused by the individual's exclusion from society, are difficult to value in money terms. But there is hardly any doubt that the costs imposed on society as well as on the individual are considerable. Last but not least, extremist political groups aim to undermine and ultimately overthrow the existing social order. But on the other hand, extremist political groups are also a fundamental democratic condition, emanating from the social, economic, ethnic or religious tensions characteristic of most modern Western societies. Therefore, extremist political groups not only act in response to each other, but also in response to the established political system, and they constantly seek to adapt their activities and ideologies to the fields of tension that exist both nationally and globally.

Therefore, the aim should be to develop a preventive effort involving all the relevant authorities, in order to prevent extremist political actions, and in this way avoid future tragedies such as the terrorist attack in 2011 committed by the right-wing extremist Anders Breivik.

However, to a large extent we also need to accept radical political views, no matter how repellent they may seem, as a fundamental condition of our democratic society, as long as these are not inconsistent with the law. Defining this balance is primarily a political task. The hope is that this preliminary report may furnish some of the facts and issues which need to be taken into consideration in order to make the right decisions in this area.

POLITICAL EXTREMISM – CONCEPT AND DELIMITATION

The present report consciously focuses on extremism and not radicalisation in relation to the parties, groups and individuals described. The aim is to delimit the field of what can reasonably be considered problematic in terms of democracy. The term radicalisation also covers political groups and individuals who wish for a radically different society, but who do not necessarily use or support the use of extreme methods, e.g. political violence, to achieve their goals. Therefore, this report draws a line between the concepts of radicalisation and extremism in order to distinguish between radical views and extremist political action. In particular, after the Al Qaeda terrorist attack on 9/11 2001, there has been shift in the use of the concepts radicalisation and extremism to the extent that they are often used interchangeably (March 2011). Germany, with its special history, makes a distinction in its constitution between radicalisation on the one hand, which is defined as a radical criticism of the existing social order, but which has no anti-democratic aim and intention, and extremism on the other hand, which is anti-democratic, anti-liberal and anti-constitutional, and which can therefore be made illegal according to the German constitution (Mudde 1996; Ignazi 2006; March 2011).

In practice, however, it is difficult to distinguish between radicalisation and extremism, because the boundaries between political activism within and outside the scope of democracy are often blurred, with many grey areas (Backes 2010). The application of the concept of extremism in relation to the categorisation and delimitation of extremist actions versus radical views is therefore a complex discussion with considerable implications for our democracy. Consequently, the delimitation in relation to the parties and groups described in this report is not definitive and should not be seen as an indication that these groups or parties openly support or use political extremist measures. It is, however, an indication that they have or have had political contact with groups or individuals who resort to or support political extremist actions. Consequently, it makes no sense to only investigate political extremism in relation to extremist actions. Extremist political players are therefore included to the extent that they are not only radical, but politically extreme, i.e. anti-systemic or opposed to the fundamental values and institutions of our liberal society (Satori 1976).

As a democratic society, and not least in relation to the freedom of speech, we need to accept both radical and extremist views to a large extent. However, if they are in violation of the laws of a country or the legal and human rights of its citizens, extremist political actions are a problem which any democratic society needs to take seriously and put a stop to with preventive efforts and reactive measures. In line with the Danish Security and Intelligence Service's (PET) definition, political extremism is defined here as being characterised by the use of violent and undemocratic

methods to achieve political, ideological or religious goals. However, since PET's conceptual framework is based on extremism alone, without delimiting it in relation to radicalisation (PET 2010, 2011 and 2012), it seems appropriate to extend the conceptual framework. One possible approach could be to reserve the term radicalisation for groups who accept democratic methods such as free elections, but who ideologically reject democratic values such as pluralism. In line with this approach, the term extremism is conversely reserved for groups who reject democratic methods as well as democratic values (Backes 2010). However, as also appears from the present report, the field of investigation is really a grey area where most parties and groups move freely between radicalisation and extremism. Therefore, the future mapping of these environments will involve complex considerations with respect to the delimitation of the field of investigation.

Political extremism is characterised especially by the use of political violence. This includes street riots, violence against persons, sit-ins, political vandalism, bombings, threats, harassment, and hate crimes, including racist or physical assaults on ethnic, religious, political or sexual minorities (Karpantschof & Mikkelsen 2008). These forms of political violence have, to varying degrees, a destabilising effect on a contemporary and multi-cultural global society, such as Denmark. Political extremism thus often clashes with the duty of society to protect specific social groups against assaults from other groups.

Society's intervention in connection with political extremism is complicated. It involves value-laden and much-debated concepts and phenomena which are not associated with an unambiguous use or conceptual framework in the research (Backes 2010). Thus, there are good reasons to continue discussing the application of the concept of extremism, partly because such classification leads to considerable political and social isolation affecting not only individuals and groups, but also the framework of our democratic society as such. In the worst case scenario, intervention in extremist political groups may accelerate the radicalisation process. Concretely, the aim is therefore to find a balance where society and its citizens are protected against attacks from extremist political groups, but where the freedom of speech and assembly are not restricted to an extent which may be detrimental to democracy. The tolerance of differing political views is precisely what puts the democracy to the test. Defining the limits is a major political responsibility, but it is also a necessity in a global age where religious and political extremism are fundamental conditions.

Anders Breivik's terrorist attack was a tragic reminder that even a well-functioning society such as Norway cannot protect itself against extremist political actions solely through police and intelligence work. An efficient preventive effort which can keep extremist views from developing into extremist actions is just as important. Today, political extremism is characterised by mainly coming from the inside. Unlike militant Islamism, it is not a threat which primarily comes from the outside. Rather, it is rooted in solid Danish political environments which seemingly do not attract

the same kind of attention as militant Islamist environments. But as illustrated by Anders Breivik's terrorist attack, and most recently the uncovering of a neo-Nazi terrorist cell in Germany, the political extremism and terrorism is not second to Islamist terrorist groups when it comes to brutality.

Historically, the Danish parliamentary democracy has almost from the start been characterised by extremist, extra-parliamentary wings and groups who have left their marks on the development and limitations of our democracy (Karpantschof & Mikkelsen 2008). This also applies to present-day Denmark, where both the extreme right wing and the extreme left wing comprise groups and parties who, with varying intensity, challenge the ground rules of our liberal democracy. This makes for a dynamic and variable political process where varying groups striving for varying political and ideological aims use extreme measures to influence the established political system. Despite being part of a global society, with ideology, politics and culture constantly undergoing deep changes, it still makes sense to divide political extremism into traditional extreme right-wing and extreme left-wing blocs where historical ideologies such as communism, fascism, Nazism and anarchism form the basis of extremist political groups' activities and perception of the surrounding world.

RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM IN DENMARK

RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES, ENEMY IMAGES AND POLITICAL KEY ISSUES

Based on Danish Security and Intelligence Service's (PET) definition of right-wing extremism, what characterises right-wing extremist groups and individuals is that they either use or support the use of various undemocratic and extreme methods aimed at influencing the established political process. The two primary political trends are National Socialism and right-wing nationalism. The latter is a mix of ultra-nationalism, anti-Islamism and biological and cultural racism. It is not a uniform political trend, but rather a movement comprising a changeable mosaic of ideological trends and groups growing out of existing organisations. Right-wing nationalism emanates from a variety of different and extreme interpretations of liberalism, conservatism and fascism. Often, the right-wing nationalist universe consists of a combination of several of these ideological fundamental elements. Common to the National Socialists and the right-wing nationalist groups is, however, that they share a xenophobic enemy image with aversion of specific ethnic groups as well as religious and sexual minorities, who are subjected to threats and violent attacks. Thus, the groups share an enemy image which may be referred to as the multi-ethnic society.

To this should be added significant political enemy images, where left-wingers in particular are characterised as "cultural Marxists" and "cultural radicals", and left-wing parties and groups are considered "traitors" who are detrimental to the country. In this perception, certain members of the political elite have made allowances for Islamism and immigration, which has undermined the Danish nation and its people. Resistance to the multi-ethnic society is therefore considered a legitimate duty, but often there is no precise definition of the concrete nature of such resistance. Consequently, there is also disagreement internally on the goals and the means. Some right-wing extremists are preparing themselves for a future racial war or war against Islam, which in their opinion is bound to come, whereas others are more extreme and wish to incite such a conflict. However, believers in a right-wing utopia generally share the wish to create an ethnically cleansed Denmark, i.e. a mono-ethnic, mono-cultural and mono-religious society for white and Christian Danes. The goal is a utopian society which is seen to have existed in a time before immigration and globalisation. Thus, the right-wing extremist movement, ideology and enemy images are not only causally related to the national political development in Denmark, but should also be seen in light of the global changes bringing political, economic and social uncertainty. All of these factors

have an impact on the conceptions of the world and identity formation processes of groups and individuals.

RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST ENVIRONMENTS IN DENMARK

In this report, the right-wing extremist groups are divided into two main categories, each of which is characterised by specific ideological, political and organisational features:

The right-wing nationalist trend consists of extremist national-conservative, national-liberal, ultra-nationalist and anti-Islamist groups who are collectively referred to as right-wing nationalists. The views in this environment are characterised by strong nationalism, anti-Islamism, racism and hostility towards immigration and anything “un-Danish". Common to the extremist groups and parties described in this report is that they are or have been home to right-wing extremists who are prepared to use extreme and undemocratic methods. Alternatively, they use or support, directly or indirectly, the use of such measures. The right-wing nationalists generally wish for democracy to be maintained, but in a form which is reserved for white Danes, whereas ethnic minorities, particularly if they have a Muslim background, should be deported or at least deprived of their democratic rights. The right-wing nationalists do not agree among themselves as to the extent of militant methods to be used in this ethnic cleansing, but all of them are more or less actively engaged in efforts to create the conditions for an ethnically cleansed Denmark. Thus, these groups are de facto anti-democratic.

The National Socialist movement is blatantly anti-democratic, anti-Semitic and generally racist. The National Socialists find their ideological inspiration and enemy images in Hitler’s National Socialist Germany and Mussolini’s Fascist Italy. The aim is a strong, racially pure dictatorial Führer State. The National Socialist ideology embraces the use of violence, which is considered the right of the strongest. Therefore National Socialists also use political violence to the extent that this is possible and beneficial for the ultimate political goal. National Socialists generally disagree with the right-wing nationalists on the role of democracy and on the issue of anti-Semitism.

Concretely, these two primary movements on the extreme right wing overall comprise the following groups and parties: Danmarks Nationalsocialistiske Bevægelse – DNSB (the National Socialist Movement of Denmark), Danmarks Nationale Front – DNF (Denmark’s National Front), Danskernes Parti (the Danes’ Party), Danish Defence League – DDL, Stop Islamiseringen af Danmark – SIAD (Stop Islamisation of Denmark), Vederfølner and White Pride. In addition there

are a number of smaller groups, associations and parties which need to be considered in the future mapping.

The National Socialists – DNSB and Danskernes Parti

The National Socialist Movement of Denmark (DNSB) is the oldest existing party on the extreme right wing in Denmark. The party is anchored in a traditional, strongly anti-democratic form of National Socialism modelled on Hitler's German dictatorship as the practical and ideological ideal. The National Socialists work for a revolutionary upheaval which will pave the way for at racially pure dictatorial Denmark modelled on Hitler's Third Reich. Today, DNSB is primarily an ideological political party, but from time to time it has attempted to mobilise on the streets. This mobilisation has been met with considerable counter-demonstrations which have forced the party to carry out many of its outward activities under police protection. Thus, the National Socialists' attempts to break out of their political isolation have not been successful. The resistance against National Socialism not only comes from political opponents on the left wing; it is deeply rooted in the Danish population, who generally dissociate themselves from National Socialism due to its criminal history and the Nazis' occupation of Denmark.

In the 1990s, DNSB had some success in drawing public attention to the party. From time to time, the party was able to attract sub-cultural movements such as hooligans and skinheads, and the party's public manifestations were further highlighted through alliances with like-minded National Socialist groups from Sweden, Germany and Norway. However, the success was short-lived, as not only external pressure, but also growing internal disputes damaged DNSB. Internally, the party had problems controlling the new groups of Neo-nazi hooligans and skinheads. This meant that violent neo-Nazi groups such as Blood & Honour and Combat 18 established themselves and challenged DNSB's traditional National Socialism. The conflict manifested itself for instance in an internal dispute over financial resources which divided the National Socialist movement and resulted in a crisis still affecting the environment today.

Combat 18 no longer exists and Blood & Honour is unimportant in a Danish context. DNSB has been further weakened after several young leading members breaking with the party in 2011. This division was a result of the change of leader where Esben Rohde became the party's new leader. Esben Rohde has previously been convicted of threats of violence and an unsuccessful attack on South Africa's then president.

Under the leadership of the leading National Socialist Daniel Carlsen, a group of young members formed the media-conscious and modernised Danskernes Parti (the Danes' Party). The formation of this party can be seen as an indication of National Socialists trying to break out of many years

of political isolation. Nazi symbolism has been removed from propaganda material, and the party has a broad appeal to other right-wing extremist groups, one of the aims being to settle the ideological disagreements between the right-wing nationalists and National Socialists. Externally, the focus is, for instance, on selling National Socialism on soft political values such as the environment and animal welfare, which have traditionally been an ideological component of National Socialism. Furthermore, the party seeks to attract dissatisfied voters who wish for a more rabid immigration policy than what the parliamentary right wing is offering. Daniel Carlsen has been active in various other groups, including the right-wing nationalist association Vederfølner. The current situation is that the new party has had limited political success. The party is primarily active in Jutland and is associated with right-wing extremist circles in Central Jutland. The development of the party should be seen in light of DNSB's political crisis and as an attempt to sell National Socialism in a new package. It is an open question whether Danskernes Parti will eventually take over DNSB's former leading ideological and organisational role on the extreme right wing, and whether the party will be successful in bridging the gap between right-wing nationalists and National Socialists. Under all circumstances, however, the formation of Danskernes Parti illustrates the changes characterising the extreme right wing these years.

Danmarks Nationale Front

Like Vederfølner, Danmarks Nationale Front – DNF (Denmark's National Front) is one of the significant groups on the extreme right wing. The group is an off-shot of Dansk Front (Danish Front), which was closed down in 2007. DNF has a right-wing nationalist profile, but is home to both right-wing nationalists and National Socialists. The group is strongly racist and extremely militant. The group's former leader, Lars Agerbak, who used to be a left-wing extremist squatter, was remanded in custody in January 2011 after a search, and charged with a number of criminal offences, including illegal possession of firearms. This case confirms the image of DNF as a militant right-wing extremist group. DNF has close connections to Russian neo-Nazi parties, including the Slavic Union, which is considered to be extremely violent. DNF has been trained in the use of weapon in Russia, which has caused the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) to increase its focus on the group. Furthermore, the group has close contacts with German neo-Nazis and with Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD). In the summer of 2011, a Danish family with a father of Indian descent were assaulted on the beach (Knud Strand) close to the town of Skive in Jutland. According to witnesses, German neo-Nazis visiting DNF took part in the assault. A member of DNF has subsequently been charged in the case. DNF is primarily active in Zealand and the area around Copenhagen, but members also come from other parts of Denmark. The group's activities also include distribution of magazines and posting of stickers, primarily in the Greater Copenhagen area. DNF's members are also active in a range of hooligan groups and use football stadiums as a platform for recruiting new members. The group is also a player in

clashes with the extreme left wing, e.g. in connection with the clearance of "Ungdomshuset" ("the youth house") in the Nørrebro district of Copenhagen, where extremist members of the group deliberately got involved in fights. Consequently, DNF is often a target for attacks from the extreme left wing, particularly Antifascistisk Aktion – AFA (Anti-Fascist Action). The group's websites have also sometimes been under attack by political hackers.

Vederfølner

Vederfølner is a right-wing nationalist, anti-Muslim association, which is an off-spring of the right-wing extremist environment in Aarhus and internal power struggles in the right-wing extremist group Dansk Front. Some of the members of the group are also affiliated with the violent and right-wing extremist hooligan group White Pride. On the outside, Vederfølner tries to work from a political basis which is less extreme than for instance DNF, and particularly tries to recruit young right-wing nationalists who are not attracted to National Socialism. For this reason, Vederfølner is competing with DNF. Vederfølner is not only a product of internal disputes, but also of external pressure on the right-wing extremist environment in Aarhus. This pressure was partly a result of the increasing right-wing extremist violence against political opponents and ethnic minorities and political vandalism against left-wing parties and their strongholds. This political violence, committed particularly after the turn of the millennium and instigated by a group of persons affiliated with Dansk Front and White Pride, reached a level which caused the police, municipal authorities, SSP (preventive co-operation between the social services, schools and police), PET and the local media to engage in a coordinated preventive effort. This preventive intervention against radicalization in Aarhus was an consequence of the "Police against terror"-initiative, which was established after the London-bombings in 2005. This multi-sectorial cooperation, between East-Jutland Police and the municipality of Aarhus, aims to prevent radicalization, both political and religious. This external pressure contributed to an internal dispute concerning the open affiliation with National Socialist symbolism and ideology. Subsequently, Dansk Front was closed down and Vederfølner was formed. However, the association still has close collaboration with other right-wing nationalist and National Socialist groups, and a considerable number of members are affiliated with more than one group. Vederfølner has its strongest position in Aarhus in East Jutland, but has also gained a foothold in other provincial towns, primarily in Jutland and Funen. Vederfølner is an important player in the creation of a right-wing extremist youth culture, e.g. in material arts clubs and other cultural initiatives which may influence young people and attract them to the right-wing extremist movement. Today, Aarhus and the surrounding area is a stronghold for the right-wing extremist movement. Thus, according to PET's most recent registration of hate crimes, East Jutland comes in second, only surpassed by the Copenhagen Police, when it comes to recorded hate crimes (PET 2011). Aarhus and Central Jutland thus constitutes a challenge in the effort against right-wing extremism. This

Kommentar [CHL1]: 'Partly' tilføjet

Kommentar [CHL2]: Tilføjet

then means that Aarhus is also the place where concrete experience with successful preventive efforts can be obtained and evaluated.

Anti-Muslim groups – Danish Defence League and SIAD

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the resulting global wars and conflicts have gradually affected the enemy images and ideologies on the extreme right wing and thus changed the balance of power between the groups. The traditional National Socialist groups, which originally constituted the backbone of the extreme right wing, have come under pressure from the right-wing nationalists and anti-Muslim groups and parties (anti-jihad groups). These groups have adapted to the global conflicts and enemy images characterising the international society today. Thus, the initiative has shifted from the traditional strongly anti-Semitic, National Socialist groups to strongly anti-Muslim and right-wing nationalist groups. Consequently, the traditional racism which makes up the ideological core in the National Socialist movement has been surpassed by the belief that the culture and religion of the Arab World is inferior to that of the Western World. This is referred to as cultural racism.

The same tendency is also seen on the extreme right wing, where the Danish Defence League (DDL), which was formed in 2010, is the most evident example of the new movements. DDL is a strongly anti-Muslim, ultranationalist group, which by using a proactive media strategy, including social media, and militant street activism has been successful in appealing to individuals already organised in right-wing extremist movements as well as attracting new members who have not previously shown fascination of these environments. As is generally the case with the anti-Islamist groups, DDL has grown out of tendencies from other Western countries, particularly Great Britain and the US. Thus, DDL functions as a sub-division of a larger international movement, in this case the English Defence League (EDL). In recent years, EDL has attempted, by means of targeted violent demonstrations, to incite ethnic and religious conflicts in selected areas where there is a high concentration of Muslims and ethnic minorities. In Denmark, DDL has used a similar strategy, for instance after a rape case in the town of Gullestrup in November 2011. However, so far the group has not been able to mobilise sufficiently and trigger the same level of commotion as in Britain, where EDL's leader Stephen Lennon, among others, has been sentenced to prison after inciting violence and riots.

DDL is not only part of an international network of right-wing extremist and anti-Muslim groups, but also collaborates with other like-minded groups in Denmark. DDL's first leader, Bo Vildbrand, who was arrested after a vandalism attack on a mosque in the town of Nakskov and charged under section 266b of the Danish Criminal code prohibiting racial statements, used to be active in the group Stop Islamiseringen af Danmark – SIAD (Stop Islamisation of Denmark). SIAD is part of the international network Stop Islamisation of Europe (SIOE). SIOE and SIAD believe that the

Western World is at war with the Arab World, and that Islam poses an immediate threat to the survival of the Western World. Based on this enemy image, they are pursuing a goal of expelling Islamists and fighting Islam all around the Western World. Both DDL and SIAD seek to form alliances with the extreme right wing in the US, and they actively sympathise with the extreme right wing in Israel, which is seen as a safeguard against Islam. The latter alliance gives rise to an ideological conflict with the National Socialist groups, who are generally strongly anti-Semitic. Despite its short existence, internal divisions and disputes have characterised DDL from the beginning. After the most recent division, the group has in actual fact been split into a number of fractions which, besides DDL, include Danske Defence League and the most recent offspring Dansk Modstand (Danish Resistance).

Overall, the extreme right wing in Denmark is a changeable environment where the extreme groups and parties often change name to reflect political or organisational innovations, or cease to exist, and where there is a considerable in- and outflow of activists. Yet, the fundamental right-wing extremist ideologies are relatively stable, although the balance of power between the groups is constantly changing. The environments are under persistent external pressure – from the authorities, legislators, media and political opponents. Additionally, there is the internal pressure caused by ideological and political power struggles and financial and organisational limitations. These factors influence the group's possibilities of mobilising and recruiting members, and communicating their political message publicly. In conclusion, right-wing extremism in Denmark does not currently pose a direct threat to our democracy, nor do the environments possess the ability to mobilise larger groups and commit coordinated political violence. However, smaller groups on the extreme right wing are occasionally and often spontaneously able to use threats or actual violence against political opponents or vulnerable minorities. Thus at present, the extreme right wing is mainly a challenge in relation to maintaining public order and protecting the legal and human rights of vulnerable ethnic, religious, homosexual and political minorities.

ORGANISATION, RIVALRY AND COLLABORATION

As previously described, there is an ideological divide between the National Socialist and right-wing nationalist groups. Many of the political groups growing out of existing organisations should be seen in light of this disagreement. Leading forces on both sides have made repeated attempts to bridge the gap between the right-wing nationalist and National Socialist fragments of the movement by forming new associations, parties and groups. So far these attempts have not been successful, partly because of external pressure on the groups. Despite the division, the disagreements are really of minor importance. In practice, many of the same persons are affiliated with both factions and engage in extremist political activities on both sides. The groups and their members are highly flexible and mobile, and they are often active in several contexts and have

personal relations across the ideological divide and political disagreements. For instance, Danskernes Parti (the Danes' Party) is clearly an attempt to bridge the gap between the two factions. Despite recurrent disputes concerning the prioritisation of e.g. anti-Semitism versus anti-Islamism; National Socialism versus a right-wing nationalist understanding of democracy or even fundamental discussions about political goals and means, the groups collaborate very closely and participate in each others' social events and external activities. This is not least due to the limited size of the environments and the social and political isolation caused by the condemnation and pressure of the surrounding society.

Typically, young right-wing radicals find current inspiration in the most extreme neo-Nazi groups, such as Combat 18 and Blood & Honour, and historical inspiration in the war fought by Danish Nazis on the Eastern front during World War II. However, not all of the young right-wing radicals become fully radicalised. One of the reasons could be the considerable social costs involved in coming forward as a right-wing extremist National Socialist. Conversely, it is easier to hide in the crowd of right-wing nationalists without this having the same type of consequences for a person's career, family life and other social relations. Last, but not least, many right-wing nationalists consider National Socialism to be a German, and therefore an un-Danish ideology which is very different from the special Danish right-wing extremism with its national-conservative and anti-revolutionary views.

There is a geographical division of power which not only concerns the relationship between the extreme right wing and the extreme left wing, but also divides the extreme right wing internally. Unlike the situation for a number of criminal gangs, this is not a consequence of concrete agreements to share the power between different areas, but rather the result of the relative strength in local areas. Today, Vederfølner is mainly visible in Jutland and Funen, whereas DNF is primarily represented in Zealand and Lolland. DDL has recently challenged this state of affairs by establishing "divisions" across Denmark, most likely in order to attract members from Vederfølner and DNF. Again, it should be emphasised that many right-wing extremists are active in several groups or change group frequently.

For the National Socialists the picture is more blurred. Throughout the 1990s, DNSB tried to gain a foothold in several towns in Jutland, but without success, and the group is still based in the town of Greve in Zealand. The few members of the group are not really a factor locally. The break-away faction in Danskernes Parti has focussed its attention on Central Jutland, in particular the Central-Eastern area.

ACTIVITIES AND CRIMINAL ACTS

Based on the Danish Security and Intelligence Service's (PET) report from 2010 on crimes potentially motivated by extremism, it seems that things are going in the wrong direction. PET writes about the development that: "(...) the total number of criminal offences in 2010 possibly motivated by extremism has increased from 306 in 2009 to 334. This is an increase of 9%, which should however be related to the fact that the number of crimes assessed as having a doubtful extremist motivation has increased from 131 in 2009 to 195 in 2010". Thus, there is a substantial increase in the number of criminal offences motivated by extremism. PET's figures are probably not an accurate description of the scale of the problem. First of all, the recording of hate crimes has so far relied on reports from the individual police districts. Several cases have indicated that such reporting has not always been sufficient. In 2009, the system was changed, and PET now retrieves the information from the police registers itself, and consequently is no longer dependent on reports from the police districts. The problem remains that PET is reliant on the police describing criminal acts motivated by extremism in order for PET to be able to subsequently retrieve this information using specific search words. A fictitious example could be that an assault motivated by racism is not reported as a racist assault, but simply as an assault. The relatively high numbers for crimes with doubtful extremist motivation underlines this problem.

A more complex issue concerns whether hate crimes are reported and thereby registered on a scale which provides a representative picture. An important initiative is the City of Copenhagen's "stop hate crimes" campaign (www.stophadforbrydelser.dk), which aims to increase the focus on hate crimes and encourage victims to report them. An essential precondition for a targeted mapping of extremist political environments in Denmark and a stronger preventive effort is that this is based on statistically reliable data.

Unlike many other European countries, Denmark has generally stayed clear of severe right-wing extremist terrorist acts. For historical reasons, particularly countries like Germany and Italy have been exposed to right-wing extremist acts on a larger and more severe scale, e.g. political assassinations, bombings and politically motivated property crime. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern Europe and Russia have experienced explosive growth in right-wing extremist crimes. In the period from 2004 to 2010 alone, at least 450 people were killed by Russian right-wing extremists. In Scandinavia, particularly Sweden has been subjected to right-wing extremist crimes, with several police officers, trade unionists and left-wing activists being killed by neo-Nazis. Furthermore, in 2010 a Swedish man was charged with five counts of attempted murder and one murder, and the motive was probably racist. In the summer of 2011, Norway became part of these sad statistics when anti-Islamic right-wing extremist Anders Breivik killed 77 people in a meticulously planned massacre.

In Denmark the development has been less severe. The most significant incident took place in 1992, where a powerful bomb exploded at the offices of Internationale Socialister (International Socialists) in Søllerødgade in Copenhagen. The bomb ravaged the office and killed 29-year-old Henrik Christensen, who had previously been active in the anti-racist union "Fællesinitiativet mod Racisme" ("the Joint Initiative against Racism") The killing remains unsolved, but there are strong indications that the perpetrator was to be found in the right-wing extremist environment. A more recent bombing case involved a Danish member of the neo-Nazi terrorist group Combat 18. PET and the police arrested the extremist before the bomb caused any damage, but while he was being arrested, the man shot and injured a police officer.

Generally, the criminal activities of the extreme right wing have become less severe and more spontaneous, but this does not necessarily mean that they have become less violent than shown in the examples above. Basically, however, what characterises the environments is their fascination with weapon and violence, and consequently young right-wing extremists are often charged with illegal possession of firearms. The acquisition of the ability to use weapon and the dedicated attempts to get hold of them, either legally or illegally, pose a particular problem because such weapon can form part of defensive as well as offensive confrontations with the extreme left wing. As illustrated by recent years' gang warfare, weapon not only poses a threat to those involved in the conflicts, but also to the general public. Anders Breivik's terrorist attack moreover showed that legal weapon is also a problem in relation to political extremism.

However, the most prevalent form of violence rarely involves firearms, but rather striking weapon or no weapon at all. Particularly in Aarhus, the extreme right wing has committed violent assaults on political opponents and random individuals of other ethnic background. The racist assaults are often spontaneous, whereas the assaults on political opponents appear to have been coordinated. The violence is probably driven by the wish to force political opponents and ethnic minorities out of town. In Germany, neo-Nazi groups associated with NPD have attempted for years to drive particularly ethnic minorities out of provincial towns in Eastern Germany, and thus create what the neo-Nazis refer to as "nationally liberated zones". As a result, the streets in a number of Eastern German provincial towns are controlled by right-wing extremists. However, it is impossible to say with certainty to what extent the extreme right wing in Denmark consciously try to use the same strategy.

The fight between the extreme left wing and the extreme right wing not only involves physical violence, but also more sophisticated methods. Thus, veritable intelligence work plays a major role on both sides. This work involves active gathering of information about parties, groups, individuals and developments on the other side. On the extreme right wing, there is focus on preparing a legal battle with political opponents, which is supposed to take place after the

proclaimed racial war and the clash with Islam. The goal is to prosecute ”traitors”, including named politicians and cultural personalities, similar to the legal proceedings after World War II. Furthermore, the information gathered by specialised groups is used actively for harassing and threatening political opponents or exposing them on right-wing extremist websites and blogs. One of the groups assumingly conducting intelligence work on the extreme right wing is Junikredsen (the June Circle). However, judging from the group's blog, it is relatively inactive today. Generally, the right-wing extremists' intelligence activities have been fairly short-lived, but often they re-emerge under new names and in new forms.

From time to time, attempts have been made to infiltrate parliamentary parties and associations. In the period from 1999 to 2003, 18 members of the Danish People's Party and the party's youth organisation were excluded due to their extremist affiliations. These attempts to infiltrate the party have failed primarily because the Danish People's Party have been aware of them and have excluded right-wing extremists from the party. On the other hand, this policy has generated considerable hostility towards the Danish People's Party in right-wing extremist environments, and the formation of Danskernes Parti is a direct countermove. Other groups, such as SIAD, have openly declared war against the Danish People's Party and proclaimed that they will run against the party at the next general election. Thus, the extreme right wing has largely been unsuccessful in their attempts to infiltrate the parliamentary right wing in Denmark. This is different from the situation in Sweden, where right-wing extremists have been more successful in their infiltration strategy.

At street level, the groups' activities, which are often carried out by new members as a kind of schooling when they enter the environment, typically involve posting of stickers with extreme political messages, racist graffiti and hanging up banners, e.g. at football matches. A significant source of public disorder is the right-wing extremists' joint organisation of turmoil in connection with football matches. The following fights with the police and with other hooligan groups are used as battle training to reinforce the unity of the group, and to assess new members. As mentioned previously, alliances with like-minded right-wing extremists beyond the Danish borders also play an important role for the groups' self-perception, unity and activities. To this should be added financial assets from the sale of right-wing extremist propaganda material, such as music and clothing, which is banned in a number of other Western countries. International events with a political, social and cultural aim also play an important role. Danish right-wing extremists often participate in right-wing marches and concerts in Britain, Germany and Sweden, and in this connection reinforce their alliances with the groups in these countries. In the same way, right-wing extremists from other countries participate in Danish events, e.g. memorial marches for the Nazi war criminal Rudolf Hess. As mentioned above, DNF, among others, has close connections with Russian right-wing extremists. The Danish Defence League is looking more to American right-

wing extremist groups, who possess considerable financial resources, and furthermore shows solidarity with right-wing extremist groups in Israel. All these factors point towards an uncoordinated alliance policy, where personal relationships and financial incentives govern the nature of the alliances. In particular, contacts with Eastern European and Russian groups are worrying, because of these groups' access to weapon and their ability and readiness to use it.

RECRUITMENT IN RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST ENVIRONMENTS

Essentially, political extremists are people who are extremely dissatisfied with the existing society, i.e. the political system, cultural trends or a mix of it all. Consequently, extremist political movements are basically fortified by economic, social and political tensions. The rapid and fundamental changes to the Danish society brought about by globalisation influence in particular young people's political identity and their social and financial opportunities. Therefore, international events are quickly transmitted to the extreme right wing, where particularly the conflict with Islam, e.g. the Muhammad cartoon controversy, has become a mobilising force.

Whereas in the 1990s, the extreme right wing was basically a protest movement opposed to immigration and the presence of refugees, it has now increasingly become a protest movement against Islam as a religion and a culture. At present, the extreme right wing is thus characterised by cultural racism which interacts with traditional biological racism. Therefore, right-wing extremist groups are now able to recruit members from a broader political segment of sympathisers who do not necessarily see themselves as racists or right-wing extremists in a traditional sense, but rather as anti-Islamists, for instance. The right-wing nationalists have thus surpassed the National Socialists, and now constitute the main challenge when it comes to right-wing extremism. In practice, the recruitment strategies of the right wing extremist groups have not changed significantly compared with the 1990s. Members typically come from competing groups, and to the extent that entirely new members are attracted, it seems that they are usually recruited from hooligan groups in Danish football stadiums, or that they are young and dissatisfied members coming from more moderate right-wing parties and associations. Other investigations also suggest that personal experiences of clashes with young people of other ethnic background may be a factor when youths become involved in extreme right-wing groups (Lyng 2010).

After the turn of the millennium, the development of right-wing extremist environments has also taken place in the province, or what is commonly referred to as "Udkants-Danmark" (peripheral Denmark). This is partly because the extreme left wing has monopolised the political agenda in the streets of Copenhagen, leaving no room for the extreme right wing to mobilise. The extreme right-wing groups have similarly monopolised the streets of Aarhus, and at the same time occasionally

succeed in mobilising in smaller provincial towns, such as Odense, Svendborg and Nakskov. This geographical division of power and polarisation is promoted not only by internal political and strategic choices in the groups, but also by social dynamics. Thus, existing research on right-wing extremism suggests that the recruitment basis is primarily found among young people from the working class and lower middle class. Thus, problems caused by social and economic factors in certain areas also play a role. Yet, the extreme right wing not only consists of disadvantaged individuals. Often, the movement is led by a core of so-called resourceful activists who consciously seek to exploit social, ethnic or religious conflicts to recruit and radicalise youths with disadvantaged backgrounds.

In Germany, right-wing extremist environments affiliated with the National Socialist NPD party have, for a number of years, consciously targeted their recruitment strategies at the province, focussing particularly on Eastern German towns with serious social problems. The left-wing extremist groups, on the other hand, are primarily present in the larger German cities. There are strong indications that parts of the extreme right wing in Denmark aim for a similar strategy, focussing particularly on provincial towns in Jutland and Funen. The relative success of right-wing extremists in Aarhus seems to have become a model for a similar effort in other Danish provincial towns. However, Danish right-wing extremists have neither the strength, nor the financial or organisational resources to match equivalent German groups, and therefore it is doubtful whether they currently have the potential to gain a foothold in other Danish towns to any significant degree.

Occasionally, and particularly in connection with the gang warfare, rumours have circulated about collaboration between criminal gangs, i.e. outlaw motorcycle clubs, and the extreme right wing. However, there is no reliable proof to back up the theory that such systematic collaboration should take place. Yet, there is assumed to be sporadic traffic of young right-wing extremists who change over to the outlaw motorcycle clubs, which share more or less the same values in relation to masculinity and violence, but where the activities yield a more direct reward in the form of social recognition and cash. Although it has not yet been subject to an investigation, there have been concrete examples of this. For instance, a former leading gang member of Combat 18, who was sentenced to 8 years' imprisonment in 1997 in connection with a bombing case where he shot and injured a police officer, later on became a member of the outlaw motorcycle club Bandidos, and later again of Hells Angels.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE ROLE OF THE INTERNET

Political extremists typically operate outside the established political system. Consequently, promoting extremist political messages depends on access to the general public, e.g. through the

media. The digital information revolution which has given large parts of the world's population access to information on the web and different social media has also presented extremist political groups with the possibility of getting their political messages across to the broader public – not least young and politically inexperienced users – in a fast and easy way and at low cost.

This dark side of information technology manifested itself for instance when Anders Breivik organised and carried out his terrorist attack in the summer of 2011. There are strong indications that Breivik not only made efficient use of digital media to spread his manifesto. In the years preceding the terrorist attack, he found much inspiration for and confirmation of his enemy images through right-wing extremist and anti-Muslim websites. A subsequent network analysis carried out by the British newspaper the Guardian showed that in his manifesto, Breivik had found inspiration in hundreds of right-wing extremist and anti-Islamist websites, blogs, and discussions forums, including the strongly anti-Muslim Danish websites Uriasposten and Snaphanen. Thus, Breivik's terrorist attack also revealed a new type of political web-extremism where hateful views can be realised in practice. Related to this, the extremist dark side of web-media has manifested itself in recent years' school shootings. The only connection between the massacres committed by very young people, for instance in the US, Germany and Finland, is the inspiration found via digital media and social media. Anders Breivik is an example of a person who can be characterised as self-radicalised, i.e. a person who has undergone a radicalisation process where an extremist political identity has been formed by means of extremist media. This process often occurs without society having a chance to interfere. These lonely wolves pose an important threat in relation to political extremism today.

Social media such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as blogs and websites, make up a platform where particularly young people develop their political identities. Thus, a person can construct an extremist political identity without being confronted with the same kind of social sanctions or restrictions which would usually result from a more traditional involvement. Right-wing extremist groups exploit this potential, although they take different approaches to the possibilities it offers. Right-wing nationalist websites, blogs, discussion forums and social media are typically open to outsiders, and attempt to attract new members who can be influenced to support extremist ideas. In contrast, the National Socialists usually work with closed forums aimed at members who have already been recruited and are receiving political schooling on these sites (Lyng 2010). In connection with the preventive effort, it is helpful that most of the extremist political websites are freely accessible to researchers and authorities who wish to monitor the development for the purpose of making a preventive and reactive effort. On the other hand, unless the sites are directly threatening or expressing racist views, intervention in relation to extremist political websites is a problematic issue. An important issue is the regard for the freedom of speech. Another factor is that these websites function as a kind of political laboratories, particularly for young people who

can experiment with political activism and identity formation. Many young people will move on to democratically acceptable political activism, or simply disappear from the political fringe without having ever conducted extremist political actions.

LEFT-WING EXTREMISM IN DENMARK

In this report, the left-wing extremist parties and groups are divided into a communist trend and an anarchist trend, each with their own distinctive ideological, political and organisational characteristics and traditions. However, the anarchist and anti-Fascist movements are assessed to be most important for the investigation of current left-wing extremism, and consequently the emphasis is on a tentative description of these. Today, the militant left-wing extremist environments predominately consist of groups inspired by anarchist and libertarian views, and to a far lesser extent of communist groups. Belonging to the anarchist environment, including syndicalism, are also groups supporting individual causes who play a major role in today's political violence statistics. These groups typically position themselves around a politically extreme understanding and use of activism related to e.g. animal rights, environmental issues, pro-immigration and anti-fascism, which means fighting the extreme right wing. The activists in these groups rarely share a homogenous ideological conceptual framework pointing towards a specific societal model. More often, their common identity is rather based on what they are opposed to, constructing an anti-systemic and political counter-culture.

The groups and individuals are defined as standing politically to the left of the parliamentary left wing, and as using or supporting the use of extra-parliamentary methods, including personal assaults and political vandalism. Today, by far the majority can be defined as belonging to the radical, but not to the extreme left wing. Most members of the extra-parliamentary left-wing groups are radical in their social criticism, but not extreme in the sense that they support or exercise political violence. Therefore, extreme left-wing groups and individuals using extreme methods are often isolated from the radical left wing, which generally considers extreme political methods to be wrong and detrimental to the broader political struggle. Historically, communists have been opposed to what they refer to as "individual terrorism", whereas anarchists usually support such methods as "the propaganda of action". Consequently, left-wing extremist terrorist groups such as Rote Arme Fraktion are often defined as terrorist groups inspired by anarchist views.

An investigation of left-wing extremism should therefore focus on groups inspired by anarchist views who typically carry out spontaneous actions in smaller groups/cells or on their own. The most extreme left wing has always been, and is still, fundamentally at odds as to what is acceptable in terms of goals and means. Therefore, individuals who are prepared to use political violence are typically affiliated with smaller cells which are not openly part of the larger left-wing radical organisations, associations and groups. However, they are closely connected in political and personal networks. Thus, left-wing radical groups who disassociate themselves from political

violence and left-wing extremist groups who use extreme and undemocratic methods often count some of the same members. Furthermore, political violence is usually one of many tools in a toolbox also containing more moderate methods, such as demonstrations, blockades and sit-ins. Thus, the left-wing radical environment is a grey area when it comes to extreme political actions and views. Overall, political violence is usually committed by anti-systemic groups inspired by anarchist thoughts and ideas, while individual left-wing radicals often act relatively spontaneously in response to individual political cases, experiences or more vague international developments.

LEFT-WING EXTREMIST IDEOLOGIES, ENEMY IMAGES AND POLITICAL KEY ISSUES

In order to understand the current left-wing extremist trends, it is necessary to have a prior understanding of the fundamental change processes which have shaped the radical as well as the extreme left wing since the end of the Cold War.

The onward march of the extreme right wing all over Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall can be seen as a reaction to the rapid and fundamental changes brought about by globalisation in all European welfare states. The extreme right wing has consistently translated complex social, economic and political changes into a narrative of mass immigration, influx of refugees and consequential threats against Christian and national values. In contrast to this, the extreme left wing, which is still suffering both politically, ideologically and in terms of identity from the deep crisis triggered by the fall of the Wall, has tried to mobilise a response to the distributional issues caused by the negative social and economic costs following from the globalisation. The enemy image is a relatively indefinable, unjust, neo-liberal and imperialist world order, where the enemies are IMF, NATO, EU and the US as a superpower. Another enemy image is the national political elites, which are seen as puppets in a world order which is in fact controlled by big multinationals.

Globalisation has generally forced the radical left wing to a complex reassessment of the balance between national and international. In particular, globalisation has brought continuous restrictions on the national political and economic scope for action, which has made it difficult to adapt traditional communist and socialist conceptual frameworks to the contemporary global society. The ideological crisis and the crisis of identity were particularly visible in the 1990s, where the British sociologist Anthony Giddens, among others, noted that: ”The hopes of radicals for a society in which, as Marx said, human beings could be ’truly free’ seem to have turned out to be empty reveries” (Giddens, 1994).

However, the situation has changed along with the international economic crisis. This crisis, including the crisis in the EU, has given new impetus to radical political and economic theories. Particularly in Southern Europe, the extreme left wing has been successful in mobilising in response to the crisis, which underlines the relationship between structural crises and extreme political movements' ability to act and mobilise support. The reaction has so far been more moderate in Northern Europe where the crisis has by no means been as severe as in Southern Europe. Still, it seems that the many years' onward march of the extreme right wing is now followed by a left-wing extremist offensive as a political response to the crisis. Furthermore, the Occupy Wall street movement in the US and the Arab Spring have had a mobilising effect on the extreme left wing in Europe.

This also means that Europe is facing a whole new reality where a prolonged international economic and political crisis will most likely be followed by an equally long upturn in political extremism, with both right-wing and left-wing extremist movements and parties challenging the liberal democracy. The extreme right wing as well as the extreme left wing are depending on the lack of ability or willingness in the established system to solve concrete political, social and economic problems. These complex phenomena are rooted in the complex dynamics related to globalisation, and thus the national politicians have limited influence on the fundamental development. Consequently, there is nothing to suggest that the extremist political groups will ease their pressure on the neo-liberal economic system, and thereby the liberal democracy, in coming years – on the contrary.

What distinguishes the radical left wing from the extreme left wing is first of all that the latter takes revolutionary action in its efforts to overthrow the existing social order. The enemy is capitalism and the state, which is considered to be repressive and latently fascist. In practice, left-wing extremists associate this enemy image with the police, who are regarded as the extended, and repressive, arm of the state. Therefore, left-wing extremists often make targeted and spontaneous attacks on the police in connection with actions and demonstrations. The left-wing extremist groups often have libertarian-anarchist views, and political violence is considered a legitimate means of fighting the enemy images described above. The squatters' movement of the 1980s (in Denmark known as the BZ-movement) can be characterised as generally having an anarchist or libertarian-socialist orientation, and the Autonomous movement of the 1990s was clearly an anarchist movement, both organisationally and in practice. According to the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), the activities carried out by these groups have usually been related to anti-militarism, anti-globalisation, anti-racism, opposition to xenophobia, support of animal welfare, climate and environment, integration and migration policy, and solidarity with and active support for revolutionary movements outside Denmark.

The political violence emanating from the extreme left wing is often spontaneous and disorganised, and the political goals are usually not very clear. The organised political extremism of previous times, where e.g. "Blekingegadebanden" ("the Blekinge Street Gang") committed a number of highly professional robberies in Denmark, has been replaced by disorganised and spontaneous political extremism. An example of this is the pending case concerning an arson attack at the Danish Police Academy, which was apparently planned and carried out by five young left-wing extremists who were neither organisationally connected, nor had they any clear political goal or a political base of support. Rather, it seems that the extremist actions were an outlet for the anger that broke out in the left-wing extremist environment after the clearance of "Ungdomshuset" ("the youth house") and the mass arrests during the COP-15 climate summit in Copenhagen. Yet, it is still too soon to say whether this case is an indication of more political violence coming from the extreme left wing in Denmark. Recent experience from Southern Europe shows, however, that the environments are very much aware of signs of political and/or economic crisis, and are generally willing to use extreme measures in their political struggle.

Particularly the political opponents on the extreme right wing, whose potency and visibility grew considerably throughout the 1990s, have been a unifying enemy image for the extreme left wing. The militant fight for the public space has been seen as a political struggle for survival. The major systemic struggles between communism, fascism and liberal democracy in the 1930s have become a systemic conceptual framework which is used on both sides to legitimise political violence against political opponents. In a Danish context it seems, however, that such violence and harassment have reached a stable level, where it is not a growing and acute problem.

LEFT-WING EXTREMIST ENVIRONMENTS IN DENMARK

Anarchist and libertarian environments

Anarchist trends, including syndicalism, constitute the core of the extreme left wing in Denmark today. Anti-systemic groups and individuals who are fundamentally opposed to parliamentary democracy are part of this trend. Left-wing extremists usually consider political violence as a legitimate tool in the battle to overthrow the existing social order. With the exception of a short period of time following the First World War, anarchists have historically had very little political influence, and consequently they have not been able to challenge the democracy in any significant way. There is an important schism between the anarchists' focus on "the propaganda of action", which historically has most often developed into terrorism and political violence, and the socialists' and communists' focus on the organisation of the working class to prepare it for a revolution which can only take place under the right objective circumstances. The anarchists have

traditionally been under attack from the other left-wing groups, and generally have not had any strong support either on the broad left wing or in the labour movement. Anti-systemic political violence and extremism are an integrated part of the anarchist ideology and activities, and therefore, these groups are of special interest for the mapping of political extremism in Denmark.

Due to the anarchists' fundamental opposition to hierarchies and organisation in traditional parties and associations, their own environments are fluctuating and highly changeable, with sub-cultures and countercultures blending with political culture. Consequently, there is also a grey area where the boundaries between youth culture and extremist political culture are blurred. An example of this is the old and the new youth house, where some of the activities were (counter)cultural, whereas others had an anti-systemic political orientation. Other gathering points for the groups have been radical culture houses and homes such as "Folkets Hus" ("the People's House"),"Bolsjefabrikken" ("the Candy Factory") and "Bumzen" ("the Bum"), which have provided a setting for practising both political and cultural activities without interference from external authorities.

It is likely that a considerable part of the political violence taking place in connection with demonstrations, etc., emanate from groups and individuals inspired by anarchist views. Usually, they are not permanently organised in regular political parties or associations, and consequently, as researchers we do not have very much knowledge about these environments. In connection with political violence, there is a tradition for establishing action groups prior to specific actions. The groups established for these purposes are usually short-lived, and include only very few individuals who are part of a closed circle. Typically, these groups are the instigators of extremist political actions in response to current political issues, such as militant feminism, pro immigration and refugees, anti-racism, anti-fascism, animal rights, veganism, squatting, environmental issues, etc. To this should be added semi-permanent groups, communities and initiatives such as Queer Jihad, the Autonomy Community, etc.

What makes the nature of left-wing extremism even more complex is that there is no clear dividing line between the radical and the extreme left wing, as is also characteristic of the extreme and the radical right wing. The activists usually have a broad range of political tools and methods to choose from according to the nature of the case which the action or demonstration concerns. Also, a typical extreme left-wing activist may be a peaceful activist, protester or member of a peaceful association on one day, and the next day, the same person may take part in militant actions or use extreme methods. The balance between peaceful and militant methods changes constantly, and depends on the internal balance of power and discussions of goals and measures. Furthermore, the environments are under external influence and pressure from the media, the police, parliamentary political players and others.

To illustrate the trends on the left wing, the following sections will provide brief presentations of the overall groupings who are particularly significant for the extreme left wing today. This presentation should not be seen as an indication that all these groups declare themselves as politically extreme or use political violence as part of their activities. Rather, the groups form part of a network which includes political extremists, and where radicalisation processes are going on. The three examples below are thus far from giving a comprehensive description of the grey area between the radical and extreme left wing, where numerous, mainly small and momentary groups and individuals, also play a role. Whether and to what extent these should be mapped is, however, a political decision, which should be made prior to an actual mapping of political extremism.

Antifascistisk Aktion

Antifascistisk Aktion – AFA (Anti-Fascist Action) is a central left-wing extremist group in the anti-fascist environment. The group was established in 1992 in response to the bombing which killed Henrik Christensen, a young left-wing activist who was a member of the International Socialists (IS) and active in ”Fællesinitiativet mod Racisme” (“the Joint Initiative against Racism”). The bombing remained unsolved, but there are strong indications that neo-Nazis were behind it. The formation of AFA came at a time when right-wing extremist political and racist violence was on the rise in Western and Eastern Europe. AFA was established as a countermove from the extreme left wing, and its immediate goal was to expel the extreme right wing from the public space, partly by means of violent measures. This was a reflection of similar developments in other countries where AFA divisions emerged on the same background. From the start, AFA was a left-wing extremist group who used political violence as an essential tool in its political activities. Even though the group was rooted in the old squatter movement, it soon became a key player in relation to the broad autonomous movement which also emerged in the 1990s, and whose success was a response to the challenge from the extreme right wing.

As AFA has always used criminal methods, the group is extremely closed and concerned with security. New members are only admitted after a security assessment and a practical assessment of their reliability and usefulness. New members are typically recruited from other groups and associations on the extreme left wing. It is therefore a very small and elitist group which places heavy demands on individual members’ commitment in terms of planning activities and making sacrifices. The members of the group usually play a key role during large anti-racist demonstrations and are responsible for organising bus trips, e.g. in connection with counterdemonstrations against the annual Nazi demonstrations in Salem and Dresden. Due to its targeted attacks on right-wing extremists, AFA has become a notorious and dreaded opponent, and

the extreme right wing has retaliated with various militant counteractions, including armed punishment squads, guards and attempts at infiltration and registration.

Today, AFA is still a very central player in the secret war between the extreme right wing and the extreme left wing, but the group no longer has the same visibility and level of activities as in the years right after the turn of the millennium. This is partly because the Danish Nazis no longer pose the same threat and are not able to mobilise support to the same extent as in the 1990s. Also, the autonomous movement no longer exists, and consequently the group's primary recruitment basis has disappeared. Last but not least, the extreme left wing has taken a more moderate path after the turn of the millennium, where e.g. civil disobedience is preferred over directly violent means of action. As a result of this, AFA no longer has the same raison d'être or potential for recruiting motivated members. In recent years, the group has therefore tried out other more peaceful measures. These include the group's own "preventive programmes" which aim at keeping young people from becoming involved in right-wing extremism, as well as "exit programmes" helping young people to leave right-wing extremist environments. However, it is not clear how these initiatives are weighted compared with the group's more heavy-handed methods. Furthermore, the group has focus on web media as a supplementary anti-fascist battlefield. In the summer of 2011, a search conducted by the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) and the police resulted in a number of presumed group members being charged with hacking, registration of personal data, etc. It must be assumed that AFA is still a central player in the violence going on between the extreme right wing and the extreme left wing, and that the conflict with the right-wing extremist environments particularly in Aarhus is not over yet.

Libertære Socialister

Libertære Socialister – LS (Libertarian Socialists) is the most important and most visible representative of the anarchist trend in Denmark. The group describes itself as "(…) a federation of independent local groups seeking to promote the fight for libertarian socialism: a stateless socialist society of councils based on federalism and direct democracy". Furthermore, LS defines itself as anti-capitalist, socialist, libertarian and revolutionary. LS is affiliated with the international Anarkismo network, which is an international manifesto and collaboration between anarchist groups across national border. During the COP-15 climate summit in 2009, when the group had just been established, all the LS protesters were arrested. The group declares itself as a militant group encouraging the use of methods such as blockades, sabotage and direct action. Nationwide, the group has approximately 300 members, and it has divisions in Copenhagen, Aarhus and Aalborg. The members of the group carry out many of their activities on the web, e.g. on the highly popular discussion site "Anarkistisk Debatforum" ("the Anarchist Discussion Forum"). LS typifies a group comprising both left-wing radical and left-wing extremist activities

and members, and it is therefore a good example of the considerable grey area characteristic of these environments.

Socialistisk Ungdomsfront

Socialistisk Ungdomsfront – SUF (the Socialist Youth Front) is not a left-wing extremist group, but can rather be characterised as a radical political youth group. Yet, SUF is an important example of a radical political group which, like the Danish People Party's youth organisation, Dansk Folkepartis Ungdom, may be a stepping stone to more extremist political groups for some youths. SUF defines itself as a socialist and revolutionary group which holds that: "(…) we need a socialist revolution. We want to take away the privileges and power from the rich people – overthrow capitalism – to create a socialist democracy where people "on the floor" run our society. Ordinary people, people like you and me, should be in charge of their own lives. Such a revolution is possible if the majority of the population goes out and demands the power to control the daily lives and society we have been part of creating." SUF is loosely affiliated with the parliamentary party Red-Green Alliance (in Danish, Enhedslisten) in the sense that they are not officially the party's youth organisation, but in effect they function as such in a number of areas. The affiliation with a parliamentary party has not been unproblematic, and in 2011, SUF was divided into Enhedslistens Ungdom, which, despite its name, is not the youth organisation of the Red-Green Alliance, and the remaining part of SUF. The group currently has approximately 1,500 members, and its activities include activist methods, such as demonstrations, blockades and propaganda. However, SUF's basic democratic structure also accommodates for members who use less peaceful methods or move on into more extremist groups where such methods are accepted. One of the persons involved in the terrorism case where five young left-wing extremists are charged with attempted arson at the Danish Police Academy is a former member of SUF. Thus, the group illustrates the complexity of preventing political extremism, both politically and in practice. The radicalisation process which makes some young people move from radical and democratically acceptable youth organisations into extremist groups is not something which affects the majority of young people. Rather, the radical groups are used as a place where young people can "play around" with democracy and develop their political identity.

Communist parties and groups

In the post-war years, a considerable amount of the political violence has emanated from the extreme left wing. From the end of the 1960s, where a new radical activist movement emerged to the left of the parliamentary left wing, and up until the end of the Cold War, where these trends became less significant, the rate of political violence was relatively high in Denmark (Mikkelsen & Karpantschof 2008). The most extreme example was "Blekingegadebanden" ("the Blekinge Street

Gang"), which is the closest Denmark has ever been to having a genuine left-wing extremist terrorist group. The extreme communist groups and parties where primarily inspired by the Maoist trends emerging to the left of Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti – DKP (the Communist Party of Denmark) during the Cold War. This changed at the beginning of the 1990s with the end of the Cold War, and the collapse of Communism triggered an acute crisis – a crisis which present-day communist parties, to the extent that these still exist, have yet to overcome.

Throughout the 1990s, where the extreme right wing was growing rapidly all over Europe, the situation was quite the opposite for the extreme left wing. Since the fall of the Wall, the communists have been concerned with finding a new ideological and political position and identity which is in keeping with the times and with the globalisation that came in the wake of the Cold War, and which can lead the communist movement out of its crisis. The two present-day communist parties, Kommunistisk Parti (the Communist Party) and Kommunistisk Parti i Danmark (the Communist Party in Denmark), which are both situated to the left of the parliamentary left wing, are radical in their social criticism and ideology. However, the parties are not extreme in their political work, and in practice both parties support the parliamentary left wing and use parliamentary methods in their political activities. In addition, the communist movement includes a number of Trotskyist parties and groups - International Socialists (IS) being the most significant one - which are all generally characterised by the same balance between radicalism and extremism. Fundamentally, what characterises the European communist left wing of today is that the parties have moved from left-wing extremism to left-wing radicalism. Furthermore, political processes have increasingly moved towards the political centre, which has forced the communist parties to adjust their politics to practical political alliances with the parliamentary left wing and the trade unions. Another challenge has been to win souls in a continuously shrinking Danish working class which have undergone substantial changes, economically, socially and in terms of identity, since the fall of the Wall. Generally, the majority of the European communist parties have down-graded the extreme, utopian and revolutionary politics in favour of a more moderate, pragmatic and radical political agenda (March 2011).

In continuation of this, the Danish communist parties have primarily been concerned with discussing the welfare state, i.e. their struggle is mainly reactive and largely takes place on parliamentary conditions or by means of demonstrations and blockades. The parties are trying to regain their political and organisational momentum, partly in relation to the trade unions and partly in relation to younger target groups. Furthermore, the communists are working actively to challenge legislative initiatives related to the war against terror. In particular, the new anti-terrorism legislation introduced with the "anti-terror package" is considered a threat to the possibility of showing solidarity to militant movements beyond the Danish borders. Furthermore,

attempts are made to form a peace movement against Danish participation in wars and conflicts, but so far these have largely been unsuccessful.

The general picture shows that the communist parties are not using extreme or undemocratic measures in their political work. Consequently, these parties are not currently relevant for the mapping of political extremism. They stand for radical social criticism, but they do not carry out extremist actions, nor do they wish to admit members who do, since this is considered detrimental to the broad political struggle. However, there is no guarantee that this will also be the situation in the future. The ongoing economic crisis, particularly in Southern Europe, has given new impetus to radicalisation and to reinforcing the extreme left wing, including the communist movement. This has led to a considerable increase in political violence and left-wing extremism in these countries, but whether this tendency will spread to Northern Europe is still an open question. Fundamentally, the extreme left wing is definitely more anti-capitalist than anti-democratic at present, but on the long term, a radical socio-economic redistribution is implicitly also an attack on the liberal democracy. The communist parties in Denmark largely consider political violence in a Danish context as a legitimate political tool to the extent that legal political work can no longer be carried out, e.g. if that parties and their activities are banned.

ORGANISATION, RIVALRY AND COLLABORATION

The left-wing extremist groups are usually organised according to anti-hierarchical principles where a flat structure is aimed for. In fact, the groups are often subject to informal hierarchies with a core of experienced activists acting as the informal leaders. These key persons are often also associated with other groups, associations, initiatives and individual political cases. Consequently, they are experienced activists who have typically been part of the environment for several years, and frequently the police or PET has been keeping an eye on them. In a highly changeable environment with a lot of members coming and going, these key persons ensure that the environments adapt to the changing political agendas and that experience is passed on to new generations of activists. Also, these central activists usually take the initiative to public manifestations, both the peaceful and the less peaceful ones. Typically, the leading activists are resourceful young people aged 20 to 30 years, who appear to be well-functioning and showing social engagement. However, their world view is often shaped by experiences of confrontations with the police and the state. Frequently, this type of activists withdraw from the extremist political environments when they get a job, start a family or finish their education, and they will then often involve themselves in moderate or radical political associations, parties or organisations.

The international perspective and the contacts with like-minded international groups play a major role on the extreme left wing. Left-wing extremists consider themselves as part of a larger struggle for justice in an unjust global world order characterised by inequality, greed and abuse of natural resources and human beings. Organisationally, the groups support each other pro-actively, e.g. in connection with fights for squatted houses. When ”Ungdomshuset” (“the Youth House”) was cleared, left-wing extremists from a range of other Western countries joined the fights to keep the house. Also, when larger demonstrations are arranged in connection with EU and climate summits, the activities are carefully coordinated between the groups and across borders, e.g. with the setting-up of support groups assisting with accommodation, legal support, etc. This is something which requires a high degree of organisation, coordination and effort. Consequently, such activities are often carried out by ”full time activists”, who do not necessarily use extreme methods themselves, but who collaborate with groups and individuals who do.

A particularly militant faction, where international collaboration plays a major role, is the anti-fascist movement, including not least the AFA. Since fascism is considered a permanent feature of the capitalist society, and because the right-wing extremists work across national borders, the anti-fascists collaborate closely on international level to coordinate actions targeted at right-wing extremists. For example, Danish anti-fascists participate in annual demonstrations against Nazi manifestations and marches in Sweden and Germany, usually leading to clashes with the police as well as with right-wing extremists. By the same token, Danish right-wing extremists also participate in these fights, and the commotion is really an extension of the fights going on in the streets in Denmark. The international manifestations are a way of recruiting and assessing new activists, and in this way violence is used actively as a mobilising factor. The trips abroad are thus used to influence new activists in their creation or reinforcement of enemy images, and the fights are a central factor in the radicalisation process typically characterising an anti-fascist activist.

The extreme left wing is not currently marked by major divisions or rivalry, and certainly not to the extent characterising the radical and the extreme left wing during the Cold War. Ideologically, there has always been a fundamental dispute between, for instance, anarchist and various communist environments. But as mentioned previously, the communists no longer have the strength of previous times, and consequently, the disputes between different ideological positions on the extreme left wing have also more or less lost their importance. To the extent that the disputes remain, they often concern internal discussions regarding goals and means, and in particular the use of political violence versus civil disobedience is a recurrent matter of disagreement. Another division has been seen in the groups engaged in intelligence work, but it is assessed that a combination of person issues, discussions about renewal and disagreement on working methods trigger the formation of new groups, rather than ideological issues.

ACTIVITIES AND CRIMINAL ACTS

The Danish Security and Intelligence Service's (PET) most recent report on efforts against political extremism (PET 2011) gives an account of a number of criminal offences and charges related to the left-wing extremist environment. In the most serious case, five young people have been charged with violation of section 114 of the Danish Criminal Code concerning terrorism. According to PET, four of them, aged 20 to 23, have been arrested for attempted arson at the Danish Police Academy. They have also been charged with several other counts of politically motivated criminal offences. This is the most severe case for many years, but it is not unique in nature. In 2005, a similar arson attack was carried out against the private home of the then Minister for Integration, Rikke Hvilshøj. A group by the name of "Aktionsgruppen Grænseløse Beate" ("the Action Group Borderless Beate") claimed responsibility for the attack, but the individuals responsible for the action have still not been apprehended. The past 20 years have seen a range of similar cases of arson and vandalism actions mainly related to the area of immigration and refugees. In 2006, Julius Børgesen, who was then spokesman for the right-wing extremist group Dansk Front ("Danish Front), was imprisoned for having encouraged an arson attack against former Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen. Such vandalism actions, which are often carried out in spite of considerable risk of person injury, are primarily a left-wing extremist form of action belonging to the category defined as political violence.

However, unlike the situation in many neighbouring countries, the extreme left wing in Denmark has not traditionally launched targeted attacks on leading politicians or other prominent persons in society with the explicit goal of assassinating or injuring them. Yet, there have been examples of less violent attacks, such as the attack in 2003 on former Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who was covered in paint by two left-wing extremist activists in protest against Denmark's involvement in the war against Iraq.

Violence against persons is, however, a staple ingredient in the war between the extreme right and the extreme left wing. Little is known about the actual scale of this violence, since it must be assumed that many instances of violence go unreported to the police and therefore are not included in the hate crime statistics. Yet, violence against persons is relatively common in connection with trials, football matches, political manifestations and targeted attacks against leading extremists from the opposite political wing. E.g. in 2005, members of the right-wing extremist group Stop Islamiseringen af Danmark – SIAD (Stop Islamisation of Denmark) were attacked with iron bars. Similarly, the extreme right wing has launched numerous very brutal attacks on left-wing activists in Aarhus. One of the victims was a city council candidate and former spokesman for Antiracistisk Netværk (Anti-racist Network), who was assaulted in 2008 and subsequently needed stitches and reconstruction of his teeth. Another serious attack took place in 2010, where a 17-year old left-

wing extremist was attacked and badly injured by a large group of right-wing extremists. 21 people affiliated with White Pride were subsequently arrested. Although attacks of this nature are serious and not unique, they still have not reached a level where it makes sense to talk about an actual spiral of violence. Also, the violence has not reached the levels seen for instance in Sweden and Germany, where neo-Nazis have committed a number of political assassinations. However, in a democratic society, political violence should also not be ignored or categorised as gang-related crimes. The violence implies a constant risk of escalation which may develop into an actual spiral of violence. A spiral of violence would have a mobilising and radicalising effect on a much broader segment of people than the few extremist individuals and groups who are actively involved in this kind of violence today.

Another important issue related to political violence against persons is that the left-wing extremist groups use intelligence-like working methods, i.e. registration of personal data about political opponents. This intelligence war between the two wings has been going on since the 1960s and is thus not a recent phenomenon. As this is primarily an area which falls under the responsibility of PET, it will not be dealt with in detail in this report. However, it should be noted that there are a number of associations and groups on the extreme left wing, and also on the extreme right wing, who keep an eye on the opposite wing. Traditionally, the association Demos has collected information about the extreme right wing and published the information in newsletters. In the years following the turn of the millennium, the research group Redox emerged. In the summer of 2011, Redox published a report on an alleged secret right-wing extremist network by the name of ORG. Subsequently, the Danish Data Protection Agency intervened and removed the site from the web, because it was in violation of the Danish Act on Processing of Personal Data. In March 2010, a leading member of AFA was arrested by the police and charged with violation of the so-called "lenient terrorism section" of the Danish Criminal Code. According to PET, the person arrested was a leading figure in AFA, and he was held in solitary confinement for having being involved, over a several-year period, in violent attacks on right-wingers, illegal registration of data and hacking in connection with obtaining information about addresses and other personal data concerning right-wingers. Some of the information concerns assaults on persons registered in the database. The man was also charged with violence and violation of the Danish Firearms Act.

RECRUITMENT IN LEFT-WING EXTREMIST ENVIRONMENTS

At present, there are no in-depth investigations of recruitment on the extreme left wing. Consequently, there is also no quantitative and research-based description of young left-wing extremists' social background, mobility and geographic origin. By observations of trials and through the media, interviews and websites, it is possible, however, to get an impression of the

contours. The typical left-wing extremist activist does not come from a disadvantaged background, but has in fact often grown up in a resourceful home, with middle-class, sometimes upper-class, parents who commonly have a medium-cycle or long-cycle higher education and affiliation with the labour market. The typical young left-wing extremist is studying either at a higher education institution or an upper-secondary school, and does not have a history of social problems or conflicts with the law. However, the strong social communities at the extreme left wing also attract disadvantaged young people who carry a burden of psychological and social problems, sometimes in combination with substance abuse and a criminal record. This group is not trendsetting or dominant in the environments, according to the researcher's own observations, but it is less resistant to pressure from its surroundings and is thus potentially more vulnerable to unfortunate radicalisation.

Radicalisation is a gradual process, with young people usually starting their activist careers in moderate or radical youth organisations or associations. The fact that some of them move towards extremist political groups, whereas others do not, can be explained by various radicalisation theories constituting a comprehensive research area on its own. Basically, however, an individually oriented explanatory model holds that some people are more susceptible to radicalisation than others. Another explanatory model focuses on structural conditions as decisive factors in radicalisation, e.g. the experience of injustice coming from society's condemnation of certain political activities or a concrete experience with the police or political opponents.

Last but not least, left-wing activists are generally very much alert to international developments. Thus wars, conflicts, suppression and crises in the globalised world are an important factor in left-wing extremists' identity formation processes, world view and selection of methods.

The political conflicts in Palestine and other places thus directly influence the radicalisation of young people who respond politically to global injustice.

Our knowledge about mobility between the politically extreme wings and groups or towards religious extremism is also limited. Yet, existing knowledge suggests that there is fairly little mobility between the political extremes, although there have been examples of people going from one extreme to the other. It seems, however, that such traffic primarily goes from the extreme left wing to the extreme right wing, and not the other way. Generally, young political extremists stay loyal to only one wing, but they often change their group affiliation or are affiliated with several groups at the same time. Most often, young people leave the extremist environments when they are in their late twenties, i.e. when they are at the end of their youth. At this time of many young people's lives, the price of being involved in extreme political activities has become too high considering their level of responsibilities and the nature of their relationships with society. In other

words, the life as political extremist has become incompatible with their family life and professional career. The people who stay in the environments despite this price are the ones who are most extremist and ideologically conscious. This residual group poses the greatest challenge in terms of the extremist political environments.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE ROLE OF THE INTERNET

In line with the general trend in society, social media and the web play an increasingly important role in extremist groups' communication and their presence in the public space. Today, most left-wing radical and left-wing extremist groups and parties have their own websites, blogs and discussion sites. In addition, there is a myriad of group sites and initiatives, e.g. on social media such as Facebook. The principle of free speech offers the possibility of making political propaganda for extreme ideologies, and this is widely exploited within the framework of the law. Leading right-wing extremists are fairly often charged with violation of the so-called anti-racism section of the Danish Criminal Code, whereas it is relatively unusual that left-wing extremists are charged individually for violations of the law related to their use of digital media. Yet, especially in recent years there have been cases which can be related to politically motivated hacking of computers belonging to political opponents. In other European countries, this kind of political hacking is more common, and typically hits authorities as well as opponents on the extreme right wing. An example is the so-called "Nazi-leaks", where German hackers have published lists of German Nazis affiliated with the NPD as well as their sympathisers and contributors. This kind of cyber attack has become an increasingly important part of the struggle between the extreme right wing and left wing.

The intelligence services are keeping a close eye on this digital struggle. In January 2012, the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) announced that it would set up a special task force responsible for monitoring extremism on the web. The increased focus on this area is a result of Anders Breivik's terrorist attack, which was very much a product of Breivik's interaction with right-wing extremist websites and discussion blogs, including several Danish sites. As already described, left-wing extremists' use of digital media is concentrated around a range of discussion sites, blogs and websites which can typically be categorised as left-wing or left-wing radical, but which are also used by more extreme individuals. For instance, the five left-wing extremists charged in the case concerning the arson attack on the Danish Police Academy made use of digital media ranging from the discussion site of the Danish daily newspaper Information to sites propagating extremist views such as "Anarkistisk Debatforum" ("Anarchist Discussion Forum"). Much of the discussion going on in the grey area between the radical and the extremist individuals and groups is usually mediated by open and moderate left-wing sites, such as the news portal

Modkraft.dk, which is currently the most important of the radical left-wing media. Yet, essentially the digital media are undergoing constant and rapid change.

Generally, the scope for controlling extremist groups' use of digital media is limited – without the risk of legislative initiatives embarking on a collision course with the principle of free speech. Even the neighbouring countries Germany and Sweden, where legislation on extremist groups is stricter than in Denmark, have major problems with fighting political extremism in cyberspace. If the authorities shut down a website through a sever, the same website will often reappear shortly after on a new server, typically located in a place where it falls outside the scope of the national laws and EU legislation in this area. Essentially, the question is also to what extent it makes sense to intervene in this type of extremism. Most often, political extremism in cyberspace is an outlet for expressing extremist views without these being followed up by extremist actions. However, Anders Breivik's actions were a painful reminder that this is not necessarily the case. With respect to digital media, political extremism is operating in a significant grey area, both legally and practically, with the most important player being the intelligence services conducting surveillance and intervening.

SUMMARY

In view of the future mapping of challenges related to extremism and anti-democratic groups, the present pre-investigation has sought to establish a foundation of knowledge that this mapping can build on, based on the concrete task specification from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration.

Fundamentally, political extremism in present-day Denmark is both complex and changeable. This complexity is characteristic of the extreme right wing as well as the extreme left wing. Although from a theoretical and research perspective it is possible to draw a dividing line between what can be characterised as radical groups working within the limits of democracy, and extremist groups and individuals who cross these limits, in reality the boundary between the different types of groups is much more blurred. In real life, democratically acceptable political activities and extremist political action fuse together in a grey area where certain individuals and groups make use of democratic methods on one day and resort to extreme methods the next. This adds considerably to the complexity of preventive efforts and regulatory intervention in relation to political extremism. Basically, our understanding of the groups and intervention in their activities is inseparably bound up with our fundamental reflections on democracy and freedom of speech and assembly. Therefore, it is not up to the researchers to recommend or make decisions in this area. This is solely a political responsibility.

Concretely, the report is a pre-investigation of a number of central areas, including developments, ideologies and enemy images on the extreme right wing and the extreme left wing, as well as the environments' internal organisation, rivalry and collaboration and also their recruitment strategies and criminal activities. A final area of investigation is the use of modern information technologies, such as social media and the internet, in extremist political environments.

With respect to the extreme right wing, the report concludes, based on threat assessments from the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET) and the terrorist attack committed by right-wing extremist Anders Breivik in the summer of 2011, that there are extremist groups and individuals, also in Denmark, who are willing and able to use political violence as part of their political activities. However, based on an investigation of a range of specific groups, the extreme right wing appears fragmented and isolated, and incapable of posing a threat to our democracy at present. Occasionally, however, it does pose a threat to certain ethnic and religious minorities and to its political left-wing opponents. Very generally, the most violent groups also present a challenge to public order, and to the legal and human rights of individual citizens. Today, the right-wing extremist environment is split into a right-wing nationalist and a National Socialist bloc. Traditional ideological differences and disagreement on means and goals, combined with frequent

internal disputes and divisions, make the extreme right wing a changeable and diffuse environment. The current trend on the right wing is a strengthening of the extreme right-wing nationalist groups at the expense of the traditional National Socialist environments. Anti-Islamism plays a central role in the groups' activities, whereas traditional anti-Semitism is no longer of major importance. Furthermore, there has been a shift away from traditional biological racism as the fundamental ideological element, towards cultural racism fuelled by international developments such as the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Muhammad cartoon controversy.

An area which gives rise to particular concern is the extreme right wing's violent clashes with the extreme left wing. These fights, which have primarily taken place in Aarhus in the last ten years, imply a risk of further escalation of the political violence leading to more severe radicalisation of the environments and their recruitment basis, which often consists of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Today, the right-wing extremist movement is primarily active in the provinces, and particularly Aarhus and Central Jutland have experienced problems with political violence emanating from specific groups. Aarhus has thus gained valuable experience which can be used as a basis for future preventive efforts against right-wing extremist groups and individuals. The dispute between right-wing extremists and left-wing extremists may have reinforced this geographical development where the extreme right wing is primarily active in the provinces, whereas left-wing extremist groups have a strong position in Copenhagen and the surrounding area.

A specific area where extremist political groups and individuals have increased their presence and level of activities is in the digital media. Particularly discussion blogs and social media such as Facebook and Twitter play an increasingly important role. Whether to consider this a problem and thus an area of special attention in connection with the future mapping depends on the political intention. Essentially, the political work performed by the extremist groups through digital media is protected by the freedom of speech and basic democratic rights. Also, it may be worth considering whether it is better to let these groups and individuals express their political views openly, because they can then be confronted in a democratic way. To the extent that extremist political groups express themselves through digital media, this is also an indication that they do not necessarily carry out extremist actions. Conversely, it should not be ignored that to some extent, the right-wing extremist Anders Breivik formed his enemy images and prepared his atrocities by means of complex interaction with digital right-wing extremist media. This particular issue calls for additional research.

The second area of investigation in the pre-investigation report was the left-wing extremist environments in Denmark. Similar to the situation on the extreme right wing, the extreme left

wing currently comprises environments and individuals who are willing to use extreme methods in their political struggle. Unlike during the Cold War, where extreme communist groups such as "Blekingegadebanden" ("the Blekinge Street Gang") emerged, present-day left-wing extremism is primarily characterised by anarchist-oriented groups and individuals. For the most part, the environment is disorganised, and the political goals are unclear, or even non-existent. Furthermore, the environments are characterised by spontaneous actions and a constant in- and outflow of activists, thus making the groups changeable and constantly in a state of transformation. Consequently, there is a considerable grey area on the extreme left wing, where radical views meet extreme methods. There is thus an ongoing discussion of what is justifiable in terms of goals and means in the political struggle. Left-wing extremists performing extreme political actions and using political violence are typically organised in smaller cells isolated from the broader and more radical left wing. For example, five young left-wing extremists were arrested in 2011 in connection with a presumed arson attack against the Danish Police Academy. They are now charged with violation of section 114 of the Danish Criminal Code concerning terrorism.

An area of special concern involving the anti-fascist faction of the extreme left wing is the political violence targeted at the extreme right wing. This violence is part of the struggle for the streets between the two political extremes, and it involves a constant risk of escalation manifesting itself in a spiral of violence or further radicalisation of groups and individuals in the area around the most violent groups. The struggle between the two extremist wings should not be categorised, or disregarded, as ordinary gang crime, but should be considered a special focus area in terms of political extremism associated with specific problems and dynamics.

Overall, the extreme left wing has undergone a gradual transformation after the end of the Cold War, which can largely be ascribed to the fundamental change processes in the Danish society brought about by globalisation. Left-wing extremist groups and individuals are affected by the globalised world outside Denmark, which means that wars, conflicts, suppression and crises in the global society are an important factor in left-wing extremists' identity formation processes, world view and selection of methods. Thus, the political conflicts in Palestine and other places directly influence the radicalisation of young people who respond politically to global injustice. Extremist political actions are typically instigated by groups who respond to current political issues, such as feminism, pro immigration and refugees, anti-racism, anti-fascism, animal rights, veganism, squatting, environmental issues, etc.

Many of the social and political issues which form the basis of extremist political groups are rooted in developments which are taking place outside Denmark, but which actively influence local and extremist political environments' developments, enemy images and political scope of action. Consequently, political extremism cannot be considered an isolated national problem.

Especially experience and investigations from other Western European countries should be included in a larger investigation of political extremism in Denmark. For a number of years, countries like Norway, Sweden and Germany have been working actively with preventive programmes aimed at keeping political extremism and radicalisation from developing, and with so-called exit programmes helping particularly young people to disassociate themselves from extremist environments. Various authorities, including the Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), municipal authorities, SSP (preventive co-operation between the social services, schools and police) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration already work actively with these tools, but a future mapping will no doubt provide a strong basis for further evaluating and improving these initiatives.

Essentially, politically extreme movements are a permanent factor in any democratic society. They stem from concrete social, economic and political issues, and usually offer simplified solutions to complex problems rooted in an ever-changing globalised world. Extreme political views are therefore also a basic condition which any democracy based on freedom of speech as a central value has to tolerate to a large extent. On the other hand, a democratic society cannot tolerate extremist political actions threatening the democracy or the legal and human rights of its citizens. Consequently, defining a balance which respects both of these interests is a political responsibility. A central discussion concerns the extent to which political extremism is a problem which calls for intervention. And if it does, what is the goal of considering it a problem of such a scale? The Constitutional Act of Denmark and the Danish Criminal Code already contain provisions which may be applied to prevent cross-border political extremism. The future mapping and investigation of the nature and scale of political extremism in Denmark will no doubt provide a basis for such crucial political deliberations and decisions.

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