



Islamic Radicalisation among Muslims in Denmark. A Policy-oriented Empirical Study

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Names and concepts like Islamists, fundamentalist Muslims, radical Muslims and Muslim terrorists are in contemporary Denmark and Europe used indiscriminately and often synonymously with unspecified contents. Assuming that the scientific community's distinguished role is to equip electives with knowledge and insights that will enable them to address compelling social issues, it is nevertheless striking how little

empirical knowledge is available on the forums and networks where Islamism is the cognitive and ideological common denominator for the creation of a world view that is hostile to the principles of peaceful coexistence.

Quite astonishing, when considering that Islamism is designated as the primary enemy of the democratic world, the omnipresent threat, and when, at the time of writing, at least two major wars are being fought against Islamism (in Afghanistan and Iraq). A vast number of billions drained from the Western state funds are being invested in national and international security.

The aim of this project is to provide empirical knowledge about factors that characterise the processes of radicalisation among young Muslims, e.g. from faith to politics, from religion to ideology, from civic society to the enemy.

The project's key empirical questions to be answered are:

1. Which processes characterise the movement from "normal", cultural or religious Muslims to radical Islamists, mainly from the group of young Danes with an immigrant background from third countries?
2. What motivates this process?
3. How can we identify radical Muslims?

The study will seek to examine Islamism as a sociological process. This includes the use of sociological methods to answer the above key issues. The project is characterised by being oriented towards policy reforms in its design and purpose; at the same time it follows the ambition to contribute to the development of an empirically supported theory on Islamism. (The latter theory development goals will be followed in later phases, in cooperation with its other national and international partners and is thus not part of this study which confines itself to the clarification of the above-mentioned empirical questions.)

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Biographies:

Shahamak Rezaei is an associate professor at the Department of Society & Globalisation at Roskilde University, Denmark. Shahamak studied Economics at Aalborg University, Denmark and obtained his PhD in Business Administration from the University of Southern Denmark.

He has special expertise in network analysis, quantitative analysis, small enterprises research, ethnic businesses, migration and labour market relations. From 1998-2000, he conducted, data-wise, the most comprehensive research project in the field of ethnic entrepreneurship in Denmark at the Danish Center for Small Business Research, University of Southern Denmark. In 2001, he submitted his PhD dissertation with the title of "Business Dynamics Amongst Immigrants: Self-Employment and Network Relations – Blockage or Initiator of Socio-Economic Mobility?"

Shahamak Rezaei has recently focused his studies on the role of immigrants in the socio-economic development of host societies and on labour market structures. One of these studies was conducted in Denmark, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden in the period of 2002-2005 and the results are submitted to the grant giving authorities, i.e. the Danish Ministry of Employment & Danish Ministry of Immigration. At the moment, he is appointed as country expert and conducting his research in connection to two projects initiated by the European Commission. Some of Shahamak Rezaei's recent publications are: "The Marginalization of Globally-Born Businesses: Ethnically Divided Trade in Hamburg and the World Economy" in *MIGRATION – A European Journal of International Migration and Ethnic Relations*, 2008 (in press); "Breaking out: The Dynamics of immigrant owned businesses" in *Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(2), 94-105, 2007; "Denmark", together with Marco Goli, in Triandafyllidou, A., & Gropas, R. (eds), *European Immigration: A Sourcebook* (p. 71-86), UK: Ashgate Publication, 2007.

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Marco Goli is an assistant professor at the Copenhagen College of Social Work. He holds a PhD from the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen. Marco Goli is involved in comparative research programmes at national and international (EU) level. The main focus of Dr. Goli's comparative empirical and theoretical research is: The relationship between the market, the welfare state, civic society and the available alternative strategies towards socio-economic mobility in different discursive and institutional settings. Currently Dr. Goli is lecturer at the Copenhagen College of Social Work and very recently a leading member of two comparative projects within the framework of the Danish government's "The Strategic welfare Research Programme", one on employment policies and one on social entrepreneurship in deprived urban areas in Denmark. Some of Marco Goli's recent publications include "Non-discrimination mainstreaming – instruments, case studies and ways forward", report made for the EU Commission (2007); "The Voice of Exit – Towards a Theory of Democratic Inconsistency" in *Journal of Social Sciences* 3 (2): 60-68, 2007 ISSN 1549-3652 © 2007 Science Publications; "Evaluering af Nyvirk" (Evaluation of Nyvirk), Århus kommune, 2007, together with Shahamak Rezaei.

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The contract about conducting the "survey" about "Islamic Radicalisation among Muslims in Denmark – A Policy-oriented Empirical Study" has been signed directly between Aarhus University (CIR) and Catinét. It will be composed by Marco Goli and Shahamak Rezaei. A nation-wide survey will be carried out, including interviews with 1,200 respondents in Denmark.