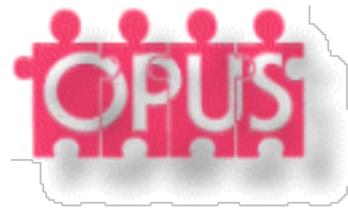


## **AN ORGANISATION FOR PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIETY (OPUS)**

### **Denmark and the World at the Dawn of 2015 Report of a New Year's Listening Post**



Encouraging The Reflective Citizen

### **Part 1. THE SHARING OF PREOCCUPATIONS AND EXPERIENCES.**

In this part of the Listening Post participants were invited to identify, contribute, and explore their experience in their various social roles, be those in work, unemployed, or retired; as members of religious, political, neighbourhood or voluntary or leisure organisations, or as members of families and communities. This part was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives', that relating to the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.

### **Part 2. IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES**

In Part 2 the aim was to collectively identify the major themes emerging from Part 1. From several presented these have been drawn together under the following interrelated themes:

#### **Theme 1: Displacement of feelings – not least the aggressive ones**

Denmark is a war faring nation. We are taking part in a long distance war and are bombing the so-called Islamic State which is inhabited by fanatical, evil and violent men. One participant found himself shouting to the car radio when an interviewer suggested that a peace researcher had to be out of his mind when he recommended starting a dialogue. If a person wants to become a politician in Denmark, she or he must be prepared for being verbally denigrated in the social media by more or less anonymous people.

Two eight-year old boys were suspended from school because they had shown their dicks to a girl. The fear of terror and paedophilia lead to disproportionate counter measures: men dare no longer touch other than their own kids and the intelligence service abolishes civil rights in their attempts at defending them.

The media create our internal images of a dangerous and violent world. It is surprising when you visit other countries and find that apparently life is lived in peaceful, quiet and unobtrusive ways. Politicians compete for setting limits to asylum seekers and immigrants. The picture of the world outside our national borders is not a world of exciting possibilities, but a place where violence, poverty and religious

extremists continue their ruthless acts and threaten to flood our borders. Lawyers, political scientist and economists feel bullied and excluded at workplaces and at programs dominated by doctors and psychologists.. There is no genuine helpfulness. Volunteers help in order to improve their CV. A father, who has tried to get into a dialogue with the management at his son's school, increasingly orients himself towards becoming a war faring person. A participant's mother received a bill of collection of 120 kr. (about 6 pounds) for an unpaid telephone bill, sent to her demented father who had not used his phone for years. It felt pleasurable to fight for your rights against the whole system in this case.

**Hypothesis:** In a culture where demands of recognition, positive thinking and psychology are widespread and where relations are increasingly dealt with on the internet, anger and aggression are excluded from normal social intercourse and show themselves in societal cracks as chicane of politicians, children, the old, the marginalized or in fights against the evil which fortunately happen to be far away in foreign countries.

## **Theme 2: Digitalization and manualization**

Employees in the social sector do something good for their clients on the sly which the management accepts as long as they fly low under the radar. There are still vulnerable children and poor families who live outside the digitalized world. If they do not answer their letters in the e-box, some of their help will be withdrawn.

The daughter of a demented father had to rely on her earlier education as a social worker in order to get anywhere when trying to get her father into a nursing home. The son of a mother in her 80s has fought in vain against the social authorities as his mother gets confused because she is addressed by a first name which she has not been using for years, but the IT system cannot be readjusted to the name she has been called instead.

However, digitalization also offers really smart solutions – two clicks on your lap top and there is a box with organic meat and vegetables on your door step. In fact, the government also tries to rescue the welfare state through IT solutions.

## **Part 3. ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION**

In this part of the Listening Post the members were working with the information resulting from Parts 1 & 2, with a view to collectively identifying the underlying dynamics both conscious and unconscious that may be predominant at the time; and, developing hypotheses as to why they might be occurring at that moment. Here the members

were working more with what might be called their 'psycho' or 'internal' world. Their collective ideas and ways of thinking that both determine how they perceive the external realities and shape their actions towards them. The resulting analysis has been distilled into the following **hypothesis**:

One could fear that employees in the increasingly digitalized and manualized world will give up thinking for themselves and let absurd and alienating processes pass if only they are in accordance with the manual and the program. Empathy and common sense erode while the world is turning into a theatre of the absurd. It is especially the disadvantaged people who will have to pay for this as they cannot fight for their rights.

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