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GEFÖRDERT VOM

Radikalisierende **Räume**

Project description “Radicalization and Space”

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Project “Radicalization and Space”

Between October 2020 and September 2024, the collaborative research project “Radicalization and Space” is funded by the BMBF and based in the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence of the University Bielefeld (IKG) and the Department of Social Services of the University of Applied Sciences Münster (FH Münster). The project is based on multiple previously conducted studies and preliminary works regarding radicalization and space, among them MAPEX (funded by the BMBF), “Vulnerable for Radicalization?” (funded by Core NRW), and scientific research projects as well as separate non-project-bound works.

The objective of the project “Radicalization and Space” is to assess whether spatial constellations play a role in relation to the susceptibility to radicalization processes with a focus on Islamist radicalization. Furthermore, a practice strategy will be developed to implement prevention and intervention methods against radicalization for community-oriented social work practice. This strategy is meant to prevent the establishment of radicalized groups on the local level as well as provide an operational framework of action which is supposed to help contain a further spread of already residing radical groups. Therefore, basic scientific findings (context effects regarding the susceptibility to radicalization) will be interlinked with a code of practice (strategy of spatial orientated prevention).

To achieve this in the course of the project, three quarters of three German cities will be closely analyzed using extensive ethnographic studies and surveys. All three quarters show a similar social structure, they have an above-average poverty rate and are ethnically diverse. The quarters differ in the form of the locally residing neo-Salafist scene. Whereas the scene is barely visible in the first quarter, in another one the quarter is used as a starting point of trans-regional activities and in the third case, the scene is distinctively noticeable and active. The names of the cities and the quarters concerned will (at first) not be indicated.

The empirical framework consists of the coordination of multiple substudies. The IKG holds the responsibility for the ethnographic study. One project team member will move into each relevant quarter for one year to examine the locally active neo-Salafist scene. The goal is to investigate their day-to-day life as well as their interaction within the city society. The FH Münster is responsible for the postal and digital interviews, which will be conducted in various languages. With a minimum of 3000 interviews in each city, differences on the neighborhood level can be revealed. This population survey will be combined with an online survey containing all social and cultural institutions of the cities. The systematic inclusion of the organizational ecology makes it possible to work out its impact regarding the susceptibility to radicalization. Structured interviews with experts and service users of the different quarters as well as participatory observations and the analysis of evaluation reports of the institutions concerned will be used to develop the practice strategy. Specifically, the perspective of Muslims belonging to a small-time criminal environment (e.g. drug dealers) on the neo-Salafist scene will be analyzed, to illustrate connections or distinctions. Another substudy located at FH Münster and affiliated to the project “Radicalization and Space” emerged during this still young project period. For the development of an operational framework for action, this framework has to be embedded in the citywide prevention strategy. A few communes have already developed concepts of action for the prevention of radicalization (e.g. Würzburg or Hamburg). Those concepts will be collected and systematically evaluated in order to draft a universal proposal of an action strategy. If the resources allow, the professionals involved in developing the concept of action will also be interviewed and if applicable will establish a guideline for the development of communal concepts of action.

Substudy	Description
Ethnographic study of the day-to-day life of neo-Salafists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze how the daily life of neo-Salafists is embedded in the examined quarters - Evaluation of the interaction between the Salafist scene and the city society
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation of official statistical data - Population survey (each city min. n=3.000) - Online survey with all social and cultural institutions
Development of quarter-specific prevention strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structured interviews with experts and (non) service users
Ethnographic study of the small-time criminal environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examination of connections or distinctions between criminal groups and the neo-Salafist scene
Analysis of communal concepts of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of communal concepts of action regarding radicalization prevention - Development of a guideline for the formulation of communal concepts of action

Impressum

Prof. Dr. Sebastian Kurtenbach

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