EX POST PAPER

Prevention of radicalisation in Germany

Introduction

This paper is a brief introduction to the prevention of radicalisation in Germany. After the current state of play of different radical ideologies, a short insight on German policy is given, followed by a summary from the sessions on radicalisation during Deutsche Präventionstag, held on 6-7 June in Magdeburg. Finally a few examples of prevention programmes will be presented.

Radicalisation

The post-was history of radicalisation in Germany shows various waves of movements from different ideologies varying from right-wing revisionist feelings in the initial phase of the 4 allied sectors that later became BRD and DDR to the current riots near asylum seekers facilities. In the seventies left wing extremism manifested itself with the Rote Armee Fraktion. In the beginning of this century Islamist inspired extremism became apparent, starting with the cell around Mohammed Atta in Hamburg that was involved in in 9/11 bombing, to the current foreign fighters.

As some form of radicalisation was present over time Germany put many efforts in dealing with the phenomenon both when it comes to research as to programmes for civic education, prevention and deradicalisation.

Right-wing extremism
According to official sources the potential group of right-wing extremist is about 22,000 persons of which almost half is considered 'violence orientated'. Apart from a general hatred against democracy, Antisemitism, Xenophobia and Revisionism (referring to the 3rd Reich) are important aspects that can be distinguished.[i]. The number of right-wing extremist offenses increased in 2015 with 35%, to almost 23.000. Societal polarisation and violent acts related to the migrant and refugee crisis are also visible: illegal acts and violence against asylum seekers facilities grew sharply. Violence/offenses are mostly executed against police and left-wing activist. [ii]

Left-wing radicalisation
The left-wing extremist potential is found among 28,000 citizens of whom 7,600 violence orientated. The group consists of autonomous movements, anarchists and Marxists-Leninists.

Main areas of actions are anti-fascism, anti-racism, anti-capitalism, anti-gentrification and anti-militarism.[iii]

Islamist radicalisation

On May 31st Minister of Interior De Mazière stated that 810 Germans left as Foreign Fighter and that some more than 250 already have returned. He warned for the danger of the returnees as 'they have learned to hate and kill' although he also acknowledged that 'some experienced so much cruelties that they will never use violence again'[iv]. About 100 persons were confirmed dead. 20% percent of the Foreign Fighter, 12% is converts. Most of them are coming from North Rhine –Westphalia and Hesse, considerable numbers from Bavaria, Hamburg and Berlin. Two-thirds were known to the police prior to departure. Although Germany ranked second when it comes to absolute numbers of Foreign Fighters the number of people leaving per million is quite low (9) compared to neighbouring countries. [v]

Looking at the Islamist movement the domestic intelligence service estimated almost 44,000 people to be possible Islamist. The biggest group of them is Millî Görüş (31,000) followed by the Salafi movements (7,000).[vi]

Policy response to radicalisation

Germany is a federal state. The so called "Bundesländer" have autonomy on several fields that are relevant for dealing with radicalisation: f.e. police, prison, education, child protection and employment (job centres). For this reason policy on radicalisation is not the same in the different Bundesländer.

Nevertheless the national level has political significance. Germany tends to have an active role when it comes to forbidding organisations. This doesn't only apply for groups like *Blood and Honour* that are illegal in most European Member States. Extreme-right political parties faced procedures to forbid them as well (like for example the NPD). The same applies to religious groups or cults like *Scientology* and *Gülen*.

As foreign policy is the domain of the federal state, so is the policy on Foreign Fighters. Germany's counter terrorism legislation criminalises:

- Incitement;
- Offences related to support, recruitment, and membership of a terrorist organisation;
- Preparing, encouraging or carrying out of a "serious violent offence endangering the state". The latter includes the providing or receiving of terrorist training.

New amendments concerning Foreign Fighters and expanding preparatory offences entered into force in mid-2015, criminalising the travelling abroad, to receive terrorist training and introducing a separate section on the financing of terrorism.[vii] The old and new legislation have repercussions for preventive work with radicalised persons and their families before, during and after their outward journey.

The national level plays a significant role for the prevention of radicalisation as well. The ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is commissioning (pilot) projects preventing the above mentioned forms of radicalisation under the name "Demokratie Leben!" (Live democracy!) that runs from 2015 to 2019. In 2016 there is a budget of 50 million euros available, for 2017 this will be doubled because of the rise of extremist activities. [viii] The national budget is often matched with budget from the Länder and/or local communities. More information can be found on www.demokratie-leben.de .

Another national initiative is the Federal Agency for Civic Education (German: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung or bpb). Founded in the early fifties of the last century to promote the democratic system after an era of totalitarian

regime, from the sixties onwards prevention of radicalisation like for example working at antisemitism that was increasing at that time. Project very often are not specifically focused on radicalisation directly however making people aware of societal tensions and polarization. In recent years the target group became increasingly children adolescents and young adults.[ix]

Radicalisation on DPT

Although on the Deutsche Präventionstag (DPT) held in Magdeburg on 6 and 7 June of this year had 'Ethics in Prevention' as central theme the attention for Radicalisation was present both in in the programme as on the information market on which organisations presented their interventions.

Islamist radicalisation

Lower Saxony presented its recent efforts on prevention of violent Islamist extremism. The Ministry of Justice initiated the Working group on Islamist radicalisation (AGiR) after the attacks in Paris and Copenhagen showed that part of the perpetrators radicalised in prison. The group of experts working in the field of prosecution, prison and probation is tasked to look for finding, testing and developing interventions and approaches. They are cooperating with stakeholders within and outside Lower Saxony, among which NGO's providing interventions. One of the first results is an exit programme for Islamist extremist and a training for staff in a youth prison.

The Crime Prevention Council (LPR) of Lower Saxony is a forum for common efforts to prevent crime and increase the citizens' feeling of security. The underlying philosophy is that for investigating and countering the causes of crime effectively, shared responsibilities and strategies of society as a whole were required. Most Länder have a LPR that are also supporting local councils. Within this framework Lower Saxony now also started working on Islamist radicalisation by offering expertise by an expert (who is also part

of AGiR). There was already a infrastructure for right wing extremism. Aspects of the work will be: prevention of Islamist extremism, involvement of religion to stop extremism, countering islamophobia and inclusion of refugees.

The German Forum on Prevention of Criminality and the University of Bielefeld are working on an inventory and categorisation of current programmes on Islamist Radicalisation. For every intervention following data are collected:

- Target group (like individuals or groups, in society or prison);
- Level of prevention and radicalisation (from general awareness to disengagement);
- Vision of intervision on root causes;
- Use of intervention tools and methods;
- Use of definitions in order to get clear picture of goals.

Results will be published this year.

Both the actions in Low Saxony as the research are still in an initial phase. Therefore it isn't yet possible to report results or even effects.

Right-wing extremism

Given the longer tradition on right-wing extremism some more results were presented on this field. In the period 2012-2014 The German Youth Institute (DJI) did research on interventions regarding prevention of joining right-wing extremist groups and exit facilities. The results were published in the report 'Einstiege verhindern, Ausstiege begleiten'[x].

As results some basic principles for interventions were formulated:

- Be critical towards radical/extreme thoughts however accept the person;
- Look for/ try to understand the things youngsters are looking for;
- Invest relationship between youngster and professional. Access is key and change is a long term process;

- Act comprehensive, not limited only to ideology, also deal with psychological, social and health issues (f.e. addiction and violence). Help people to build up a new live;
- Every case is unique;
- Involve social contexts: they can be helpful or part of the problem.

Also set of prerequisites evolved from the research:

- Qualification of professionals is key. They should be experts on extreme right and have skills on f.e. non-violence and psychotherapy;
- Work in teams. This increases chances that a youngster relates to at least one professional. For professionals it enables intervision;
- Work in a multi-agency setting. This is time consuming and should be taken into account when shaping a project;
- Continuity is key to gain/maintain trust. Change of contact person can change a project.

Within studies on right-wing there is an increasingly attention for gender aspects. As Silke Baer stated this is needed as women don't tend to be seen as possible perpetrators. They are 'softening' the image of the scene and meanwhile important pillars under new groups and communities.

Looking at the role in right-wing extremist movements women are underrepresented in violence. When it comes to hate crime their participation is 50%. Both traditional (being the very female, submissive girlfriend or bystander) as modern (ideologically driven female warrior however not to independent) pathways can be seen.

Gender is also part of a thematic warzone. Women are responsible in keeping the race clean. Man in building civic resistance: we have to defend our women against rape, also being strong on sexual abuse of children.

Motivations for women entering radical environments can be biographical. Some might have having a history with violence or come from a family tradition of radicalisation. As most of the youth centers are very male orientated girls mostly radicalise on other places. [xi]

When it comes to exit from the right-wing scene exit work Stefan Sass stated exit is a process taking to following three steps: creation of exit motives, acting, resocialising.

The motive to quit mostly is growing by years and eventually one trigger moment/live event causes the final step. All people in exit programmes have a negative scene experience. They came in with high hopes and now experience reality, see controversies or start to disagree with vision. External factors can be family or events related to it. Looking for recognitions, getting over victimship, loneliness or fear can deradicalise people however also keep them in the scene. Very common is the wish going back to normal (get married, have a job).

It is hard to talk about leaving. Showing doubt in the scene will exclude you from the group. Family members tend to be convincing you to leave where you want to make the choice yourself. Thus working with a third independent person (no family or belonging to the scene) is successful. This has to happen at a voluntary basis.

The objective of the exit process is stopping extreme thoughts and violent acts. Steps to work on violence are:

- Risk assessment (what will exit cause);
- Working on debts, violence and other practical issues;
- Resocialisation: actually is rather impossible for most of the target group. Given their past it is more socializing.
- Preparing for place in society and being able to be an independent citizen (also new clothes, getting rid of tattoos).

Further Reading on Prevention Projects in Germany

Given the number of practices on prevention of radicalisation in Germany it is undoable to give a complete overview. The Radicalisation Awareness Network is producing a collection of practices on a regular basis. Please find a summary of the German projects here.

Expert Center on Gender and Right-Wing Extremism
http://www.gender-und-rechtsextremismus.de/

Fair Skills – Youth cultural peer training
http://cultures-interactive.de/home-en.html

Exit work located within the social space
http://www.jump-mv.de

EXIT-Germany
http://www.exit-deutschland.de

Advice Centre Hesse
http://www.violence-prevention-network.de

Acceptance-based youth work with right wing youth groups
http://www.vaja-bremen.de

Denkzeit (Time to Think) Training
http://www.denkzeit.info

How do we want to live? - Peer-workshops based on educational films
http://www.ufuq.de

WomEx – Women/Girls, Gender in Extremism and Prevention
http://cultures-interactive.de/home-en.html

HAYAT - Counselling program
http://www.hayat-deutschland.de

Advice for parents, relatives and other affected persons with regard to Islamism
http://www.vaja-bremen.de

No-Nazi.net
http://no-nazi.net/

What's up? - Peer education in Social Networks
http://www.ufuq.de

IfGG - Coaching for imprisoned parents (part of Praefix R programme)
http://www.ifgg-berlin.de/

The collection as a whole can be found on http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/index_en.html and is available in English, German and French.

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[i] Bundesministerium des Inneren , *Verfassungsschutzbericht* 2014 (2015).
[ii] Bundesministerium des Inneren, *Politisch Motivierte Kriminalität im Jahr 2015. Bundesweite Fallzahlen* (2016)
[iii] *Verfassungsschutzbericht*
[iv] Spiegel Online *'Innenminister de Maizière: Weniger Islamisten aus Deutschland ziehen in den Dschihad'* (31/5/2016)
[v] ICCT, *The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies* (2016).
[vi] *Verfassungsschutzbericht*
[vii] *The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon.*
[viii] Die Zeit Online, *Regierung verdoppelt Ausgaben gegen rechts* (19/03/2016).
[ix] www.bpb.de, *Federal Agency for Civic Education.*
[x] S. Hohnstein, F. Greuel with cooperation of M. Glaser, *Einstiege verhindern, Ausstiege begleiten Pädagogische Ansätze und Erfahrungen im Handlungsfeld Rechtsextremismus.*(2015). German download: http://www.dji.de/fileadmin/user_upload/bibs2016/Hohnstein_Greuel_2015_Einstiege_verhindern_Ausstiege_begleiten.pdf , English summary: http://dji-international.tumblr.com/post/134911589666/preventing-entry-assisting-exit-differentiated
[xi] More on gender-related issues can be found in: S.Baer, A. Posselius and H. Weilnböck, *Aspects of*

gender in right wing extremism and religious fundamentalism. Guidelines for specific sectors of prevention and intervention(2015).