The Narrative Principle: Good Practice in Anti-Hate Crime Interventions, within the Radicalisation Awareness Network

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No form of antisocial conduct threatens to corrode the fabric of liberal democratic regimes more than the hate crime. Verbal and physical attacks on targeted groups, motivated by political or religious worldviews that disdain universal human rights, undermine the civic philosophy on which liberal and non-violent societies are founded. Unfortunately, in contrast to crimes like sexual offenses and domestic violence, which have been studied extensively by scholars and which we have devised methods for preventing, research on hate crimes is still in its infancy. We do not yet know very much about how to steer at-risk youth away from developing group-focused enmity and the exclusionary proclivities that they foster, ranging from discrimination and bullying to violence and terror. What may be worse, we do not know how to oppose and effectively defuse violent, extremist messages in the internet and in the culture at large: i.e., to create deradicalizing narratives. Nor do we know very well how to deal with existing fictional narratives centered on these issues (cf. footnotes 6 and 7 below). Thus, we find it difficult to avert and defuse the debilitating effects of illiberal ideologies on the body politic.

The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), which was established by the European Commission in September of 2011, ten years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, recognizes that while it is necessary to bolster intelligence and security networks in order to counter hate crimes, violent extremism, and terrorism, that strategy in and of itself is insufficient. Public safety requires that we embed intelligence and security functions into civil society at large, by raising awareness of the problem and by developing sophisticated, effective techniques for preventive measures

with at-risk groups and for intervening with would-be offenders. Accordingly, the RAN – as an umbrella organization composed of local actors, professional intervention practitioners, research experts, policy makers, and civil society groups – incorporates diverse perspectives and operates across a variety of social arenas. The intention here is to increase community strength and resilience in the face of the challenge posed by extremism. By design, the RAN is divided into a number of working groups, which currently include Community Policing, Deradicalization and Exit Interventions, Inner- and Outer European Dimension (Diasporas), Internet and Social Media, (Mental) Health Services, Prevention (Early Interventions), Prison and Probation Services, and Victims of Terrorism. The collective aims of these working groups are to exchange experiences, knowledge, and good practices, and to draft policy recommendations for the EU and its member states.

Early on, during the RAN's preparation phase, it was understood that specialized social entrepreneurs and independent practitioners from grass-roots organizations have vital roles to play in delivering anti-hate crime messages to the public, conducting anti-extremist interventions, and training staff members. These non-governmental field actors

Cecilia Malmström, a member of the European Commission, attends the inaugural event of the Radicalizsation Awareness Network

frequently share the same cultural background as their clients. Moreover, they are often able to access even the most at-risk and hard-to-reach environments, and to penetrate the language, habits, and cultural narratives of radicalized individuals. As such, they are in a better position than government officials to build relationships of mutual trust and confidentiality with clients. Trust and confidentiality, in turn, are indispensable in facilitating deradicalization. Thus, it is not surprising that NGO practitioners often have achieved better rates of success at lower cost than governmental bodies, which tend to lack access to and respect among disenfranchised, radicalized communities, and may even sometimes unwittingly "exacerbate division" (EC Combating Radicalization 14781; January, 2005). Hence, as early as 2009, the EC's Stockholm Program stated that the "[k]ey to our success [in deradicalization] will be the degree to which non-governmental groups … across Europe play an active part" (17024/09).

To that end, the RAN decided to establish "Derad," a working group on deradicalization, exit interventions and hate-crimes prevention that comprises experienced first-line practitioners from various EU Member States.[1] These individuals have many stories to tell concerning the different contexts of their work, the methods and strategies they have employed, their successes and failures, and the levels/ lacunas of public awareness in the national media and partisan discourse, in light of the ever-present risks of populism and sensationalism. Some of these individuals are engaged in training and quality management, and/or are willing to contribute to a "good practices" approach that is designed to be transferable and adaptable to different working areas and EU member states. The Derad group is concerned with violent extremism of all kinds, whether motivated by religion (e.g., cult violence), politics, ethnic issues and

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1   Adding to the RAN work are the "Women/Girls in Extremism" project (WomEx/EU), conducted by Cultures Interactive (CI, Berlin) and two projects conducted by the Violence Prevention Network (VPN, Berlin): "European Network of Deradicalization" (ENoD/ EU), which establishes profiles of good-practice approaches, and the "European Platform of Deradicalizing Narratives" (EDNA/ EU), which collects deradicalizing narratives for the Internet.

other forms of ideology, or gang codes of conduct. Its working definition of violent extremism and/or terrorist radicalization fits any individual and/or organization that supports attitudes contrary to accepted principles of human rights, civil liberties, the constitutional order and the rule of law. Such individuals or organizations hold world-views full of resentment and encourage their followers to embrace an unyielding in-group out-group distinction. They also foster conduct grounded on basic ideologies of superiority/entitlement, as well as separation/discrimination/exclusion. Sometimes those ideologies give an aura of legitimacy to group-focused hostility, hate crimes, and violence. Typically, such organizations aggressively recruit young people und draw them into a condition of enthusiasm and obedience as well as dependency and fear. Thus far, the Derad working group has gathered many deradicalization practitioners, mostly from NGOs. However, the group also includes statutory first-line prevention practitioners working in prisons, probation agencies, sometimes even in intelligence services and community policing.

As a first step, the Derad group conducted international practitioner workshops with some forty participants each, as well as smaller focus groups and individual interviews with colleagues from numerous European countries. Derad also drew substantially on recent intervention research.[2] In the wake of all this preparatory work, the group has finally issued the first draft of its "Good Practice Guidelines/Principles" and

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2   That research includes the TPVR project (EU/"Towards Preventing Violent Radicalization"), conducted by the London Probation Trust in conjunction with its German partner, the Violence Prevention Network (2009-11); the LIPAV project (EU/"Literary and Media Interaction as Means of Understanding and Preventing Adolescent Violence and Extremism"), conducted by Cultures Interactive; governmental "Federal Model Projects" (including VPN and CI, among others); and the Belfast-based CHC project (EU/"Challenge Hate Crime"), conducted by NIACRO (Northern Ireland Association for Care and Resettlement of Offenders) in affiliation with German partner VPN. The results were effectively reconfirmed by the following sources: the Copenhagen conference, "Tackling Extremism: Deradicalization and Disengagement" (2012), which was organized by the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration (http://www.strategicdialogue.org/Tackling_ Extremism_-_Conference_Report.pdf); "Preventing Extremism: A Danish Handbook Series," the OSCE recommendations reports on anti-Semitism and discrimination against Muslims (2008/10); and Saskia Lützinger, "The Other Side of the Story: A qualitative study of biographies of extremists and terrorists" (2012).

"Policy Recommendations," which will be summarized below. Although roughly half of the European member- and candidate-states have been involved in articulating these principles, the process of putting together full-fledged profiles of particular approaches and organizations is still in its preliminary stages. In anticipation of many more such profiles, we will consider later in this article the work of two NGOs that seem to reflect the formulated principles in their deradicalization activities.

In the spirit of the Innovation Union initiative[3] and of "Europe 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth,"[4] "EU policymakers have recognized the importance of societal challenges"[5] and have committed themselves to ensuring "that research being undertaken is translated into products and services which serve to address societal challenges." In this sense, Derad will strive to transform expert and practitioner knowledge into products, guidelines, and training materials that support those who do first-line work in preventing hate crimes and violent extremism.

The overarching principles of good practice in hate-crime prevention and deradicalization, as stated here, are assumed to apply across societal milieus, EU member states, and group-focused varieties of hatred and extremism. Furthermore, good-practice interventions should be applicable in any institutional setting in which deradicalization efforts are needed: prisons, probation offices, schools, youth clubs, community institutions, etc. The description provided below will be organized into two sections, one pertaining to the interventions themselves along with their methodological components and the other to the desirable structural or contextual factors surrounding them. It will be followed by a discussion of two Berlin-based organizations that exemplify good-practice interventions: Cultures Interactive and the Violence Prevention Network.

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3   http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?pg=why.
4   http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF.
5   http://i3s.ec.europa.eu/commitment/13.html.

1. Components of good-practice interventions

1.1 Building trust and relationships

Good-practice interventions succeed in conveying respect and building personal trust in order to be able to challenge the individual's beliefs and thereby facilitate personal change. These interventions provide a safe and confidential space for establishing sustainable working relationships between clients and practitioners, and among the clients as a group in their own right. The latter is a highly demanding task, since it involves winning over a type of person who is profoundly alienated from authorities and from society at large, and who therefore tends to be suspicious and volatile, perhaps even possessing a paranoid mind set. Yet, building personal trust, which includes establishing confidence and guaranteeing confidentiality, is by far the most important – indeed, utterly indispensible – prerequisite for any good-practice approach to prevent and/or work-through hate crime, extremism, as well as small- and large-scale terrorism. Unless this all-or-nothing prerequisite has been met, an intervention will only have a limited capacity to challenge and confront clients, and to facilitate changes in their personal attitudes and behavior.

A trust-based working relationship is substantially different from the fraternizing comradeship among buddies, fellows, homeboys, etc. that typically exists in adolescent groups, but sometimes (counter-productively) develops between social workers and their clients. The existence of a trustful work relationship always rests on the twin elements of support/respect and confrontation/critique. Moreover, in such a relationship, there is always an agreed-upon objective that gives the joint work effort its focus (e.g., the client's development of certain desired skills).

It is crucial to note here that in good practice, building trust between clients and practitioners is predicated upon the talents of the personal facilitator, which can be developed by training in specific skills. Moreover, good practice rests upon one pivotal contextual factor that will be elaborated further below: namely, the requirement that independent, non-governmental practitioners from outside the institution are involved,

and that their work is accompanied by visible trust between statutory and non-statutory actors.

1.2 The narrative mode and the life-world as foci

In their methodology, good-practice practitioners generally focus on facilitating narrative exchange, as opposed to argumentative or ideological discussion. Narrative exchange means that conversations between clients and practitioners revolve around sharing personally lived-through experiences, events, and encounters that – subjectively perceived – comprise autobiographical memories and carry an emotional charge. It involves a dialogue between life-worlds that results in the establishment of a personal relationship. For these reasons, narrative exchange and trust-building are both closely linked and interdependent. Conversely, exchanges carried out in the "argumentative/rational mode" tend to focus upon theories, opinions, and ideologies rather than divulging and sharing personal life experiences. They fuel debate, but do not by themselves create trust and understanding.

Hence, successful anti-hate-crime practitioners are able to nurture in clients the capacity to engage in narrative exchanges with others, and to recount emotionally significant memories and observations that may harbor potential interpersonal and/or social conflict. In more concrete terms they are often able to:

- encourage the client to cultivate the capacity for telling stories, i.e., narrating subjectively significant personal experiences. Furthermore (and always proceeding with caution), practitioners can often induce the client to bring into the open whatever positive or negative emotional charge these experiences may carry.
- help the client to actively listen to and respect comparable narratives told by other people – in fact, to "co-narrate them." In other words, the anti-hate-crime practitioner may encourage and teach the client to assist the story-telling processes of others in informal social situations.
- instill an appreciation for personal or familial experiences and the value of recalling and recounting them.

This focus on narrative and on trust-based storytelling may sometimes unearth feelings of embarrassment, shame, insecurity, fear, or helplessness, on the one hand, and aggression or hostility, on the other. Of course, these affects have frequently been instrumental in generating acts of hatred and violence, so they must be handled with great caution. The emphasis on narrative will bring to light experiences of personal ambivalence, contradiction, and internal conflict as well as experiences that can facilitate compromise, all of which will have to be acknowledged.

By contrast, so-called "extremist narratives" usually lack genuine narrative quality; that is, they rarely convey much first-hand experience. In fact, extremists instinctively avoid narratives proper, preferring to engage in argument and debate. That way, they can sidestep or suppress the narrative level of exchange. It is for this very reason that good-practice approaches strive to narrativize opinions and contestations by exploring the areas of personal experience that, consciously or not, fuel them. Enhancing and deepening the narrative quality of an interaction should facilitate personal change, development, and deradicalization in the client.

1.3 Emotional intelligence

Good-practice deradicalization interventions highlight emotional, as opposed to cognitive, learning and intelligence. More specifically they seek to foster the acquisition of what might be termed "conflict intelligence": the ability to handle conflict in productive ways. Accordingly, such interventions do not emphasize educational topics or intellectual issues as such. Instead they focus on the subjective – and most often conflict-laden – dimension of a topic and on "identity issues." Emotional learning needs to be the main focus here, because the prejudice and hostility that fuel conflicts and hate crimes are primarily guided by affect, even though they sometimes may wear cognitive or ideological masks.

1.4 Voluntary participation and the incremental buy-in

In good-practice anti-hate crime and deradicalization interventions, participants enroll on a voluntary basis only. Such programs work best with those who are genuinely motivated to take part. Hence, participation must be freely chosen, rather than assigned, coerced, or mandated, and dropping out must neither be held against clients nor go on their records in any way. Under those ground rules, the dropout rate tends to be minimal, usually around three to five per cent. By the same token, only modest forms of incentives – if any at all – should be offered to potential participants. Still, the principle of voluntary participation by no means rules out motivational one-on-one conversations and mentoring. Those forms of encouragement can help support clients once they have expressed possible interest in taking part in deradicalization programs and undergoing personal transformations.

1.5 Group-based interventions

In some good-practice approaches, the most significant phases of the work take place in and with the group. Here, attention is paid to the group dynamics and the relationships that the participants develop with one another. In principle, no one-on-one intervention can possibly be as effective and profound in its deradicalizing impact as a group-work approach.

However, good-practice group-work approaches always have to make sure not to exceed an appropriate level of intensity. If and when the need arises, practitioners should offset and balance group work with pedagogical exercises and supplementary one-on-one sessions. This tactic is especially crucial whenever the client makes the transition from one institution or stage of life to another (prison, probation, community, school, employment, etc.).

1.6 Open-process, participatory approaches and methodological flexibility

Good-practice methodology is based on "open-process interaction." This approach builds upon and explores participants' concerns and reactions as they emerge during the group interaction process, while the facilitators confine themselves to making suggestions. There is no strict syllabus, fixed session plan, or established toolbox to govern interventions; rather, they are characterized by methodological flexibility and eclecticism. Open-process, participatory, and exploratory interaction is indispensable for building trust, respect, and personal commitment with client groups that are difficult to engage.

Clients who come from sub-cultures in which group-focused hatred and violent extremism are the norm will hardly change their attitudes and behavior simply because they are told or taught to do so, or because they have passed through a cognitive-behavioral training program having a particular modular structure. Instead, the participants should explore the issues that have arisen on account of their behavior and offenses, even though and precisely because they may not be used to doing that. Typically, these will involve issues of prejudice, extremism or harassment, often arising from the clients' personal histories. The point is to encourage them to take these steps in their own way rather than being taught or persuaded to do so.

1.7 Likely topics and issues of open-process anti-hate-crime work

If the aforementioned methodological principles of narrative group work have been put into place, and the group members have gradually committed to this process, the following topics and issues are likely to come up in conversations, and/or may be suggested easily by facilitators:

- commonly shared and/or individual issues of biography and social circumstance.
- experiences of unstable family conditions, dysfunctional parenting, and chronic relational stress at home (of which clients are often hardly

aware). These phenomena quite frequently encompass deprivation, denigration, and violent victimization, although clients tend to belittle or deny the impact of such experiences. Moreover, some clients may report abuse of alcohol and drugs as dysfunctional coping strategies in their families.

- one's own patterns of behavior within the group work intervention itself. For example, some clients may try to establish power relationships by claiming superiority over, denigrating, or trying to subdue other group members.
- events or experiences within a clique of peers who serve as a surrogate family upon which clients may become highly dependent.
- experiences of being personally recruited by radical organizations.
- friendship and loyalty versus dependency and subjugation.
- gender issues such as manliness, sexual attractiveness, homosexuality, etc.
- matters of politics or religion, in which participants discuss and reflect on their commitments and beliefs. They may have to confront the simplified thought-patterns and pseudo-logical explanations that underlie their conduct. Here too, geopolitical conflicts as portrayed in the media may come to light during group discussions.
- fictional media narratives, and how they affect the thoughts and actions of certain individuals.[6]

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6   The particular option to work with fictional narratives has certain methodological ramifications. See www.weilnboeck.net: the FP7 projects (in DG research), "Media/Trauma Therapy" (MTT), 2005 to 2007 EU DG Research/Marie-Curie-Actions, FP 6, EIF No. 23953, and "Media/Cultural and Violence/Extremism Prevention" (LIPAV), 2008 to 2011 EU DG Research/Marie-Curie-Actions, FP 7, ERG No. 203487. See also the following articles, all by the present author and available on his website: "Provincializing Trauma: A Case Study on Family Violence, Media Reception, and Transcultural Memory," originally in *Journal of Literary Theory* (6:1, 2012), pp. 149–175; "Towards a New Interdisciplinarity: Integrating Psychological and Humanities Approaches to Narrative," in Sandra Heinen and Roy Sommer (eds.), Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), pp. 286-309; "Mila – eine Fallrekonstruktion der qualitativ-psychologischen Literatur- und Medien-Interaktionsforschung (LIR)," originally in *Psychotherapie und Sozialwissenschaft* 10:2 (2008), pp. 113–146; and "Die Anwendung der Gruppenanalyse in der Kulturvermittlung: Trauer-Abwehrarbeit in einer Sitzung des Gruppenanalytischen Literaturseminars uber Judith Hermans 'Hunter-Tompson Musik,' originally in Arbeitshefte Grunnenanalyse 28. Themenheft: Kultur und Gruppenannalyse (2/2002).

- most importantly, the violent act narrative, in which the client tells of having played the role of perpetrator or victimizer, committing acts of hatred, denigration, and violence against others.

Group sessions devoted to the discussion of violent acts that participants have committed will be especially intense, both narratively and emotionally. Moreover, they will sometimes be linked to their putative opposite: experiences of victimization and denigration. Research and practitioner experiences both clearly indicate that what is needed here is a frank, highly detailed, emotionally honest exchange about such incidents.

Conversely, cognitive-behavioral training programs with modular structures are not well suited to supporting open-process, exploratory, narrative exchange and to developing personal capacities for (co-)narrative interaction – at least as such programs are currently implemented in many sectors of intervention work. To the contrary, cognitive-behavioral approaches often enable facilitators and clients to avoid direct (co-)narrative interactions altogether. They evoke obedience rather than helping to induce a personal transformation on the part of the client.

1.8 Civic education: political debate over perceived and real injustices

Narrative-, emotional-, and life-world-oriented exchanges prevail in good-practice approaches, and rightly so. However, matters of civic education and political debate should not be neglected, even though we should recall that talking about ideology or morality to clients with fundamentalist leanings does not work well. The reason is that ideology and morality were not what originally motivated their antisocial conduct. Instead, those elements were, more often than not, layered on top of pre-existing violent and extremist dispositions to justify actual conduct.

Still, ideological beliefs and the simplistic attitudes and opinions that often accompany them are in fact internalized as someone becomes an extremist. Facilitators need to probe into how such beliefs got embedded in the individual's personal history and how he or she became invested

in them emotionally. Instead of aiming to win arguments, on the level of cognition and attitudes, one may aspire at best to sow "seeds of doubt." For this group of clients, doubts, questions, and ambivalence are not yet generally accepted as viable options of thought.

Aside from ideological beliefs, particular attention needs to be paid to perceived grievances and injustices, whether real or imagined, that participants may bring up in the course of conversations. Such grievances need to be acknowledged and fleshed out by a more in-depth narrative exchange. At the same time, it is crucial to remember that mainstream society and its official representatives may have frequently – even systematically – acted in high-handed ways that did abridge people's rights.

1.9 Pedagogical exercises emphasizing personal responsibility

There are a variety of traditional methods used in educational group settings that help to illuminate what democracy and human rights might mean in actual practice. "Diversity training," "anti-bias work," and similar approaches – if not imposed and/or overdone – can enable the members of a group to work through their racist, exclusionary, or discriminatory tendencies. These approaches may help to foster a value system in clients consistent with the requirements of a liberal society, while simultaneously enhancing clients' prospects for responsible citizenship.

1.10 History, (youth) culture(s), and fictional narratives

By the same token, interventions derived from good-practice narratives and directed against hate crimes always have an intrinsically temporal dimension, albeit perhaps a fairly straightforward one that does not entail the systematic teaching of "history lessons." History (in the limited sense intended by the interventions) suggests that things develop over time and that their outcomes depend on certain formative, real-world circumstances. But above all, history in our context teaches that lives and outcomes can be changed, at least in principle. Hence, it is vital that the starting point of interventions be the biographies of individual clients,

as nested within their family histories. Once those matters have been elucidated, practitioners may turn their attention to history in the broader, socio-political sense.

Furthermore, good-practice approaches must take cultural factors into account, since these too provide a context that shapes people's behavior. Accordingly, groups may introduce and work with media narratives, whether drawn from fiction, film, music, or websites, in an effort to encourage the participants' own creativity and reflection. As is well known, young people are generally attracted to youth-cultural activities. They are also avid consumers of media productions, especially fictional narratives that provide entertainment and/or involve issues of identity.[7]

2. Good-practice intervention programs in context

2.1 Independent outside practitioners

As suggested above, with regard to the formal setting of interventions, the ideal facilitator of the deradicalization process has non-governmental status and comes from outside the institution of the client (whether it be a prison, a probation office, a school, etc.). It is essential that facilitators

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7   As already alluded to in footnote 6, the humanities' fields of literature, culture, and media studies may have a bigger role to play in practical approaches to extremism and violence prevent interventions than is generally realized – or deemed opportune – in these fields. For instance, Fiction Narrative Interaction Research (FIR) is a novel methodological design of humanities research. While investigating processes of cultural/aesthetic interaction, FIR also aims at developing new schemes and tools that are applicable in both media/culture teaching and preventive social interventions, thus crossing over and synergizing putatively far-apart academic and administrative areas (e.g., EU-DG Research, DG Justice, and DG Home Affairs). The FIR design enables the humanities to approach, in an empirically rigorous manner, the twofold-question of: (a) What are people actually doing, in mental, biographical, developmental, and social terms, when they read/view books, films, songs etc., i.e. when they interact with fictional narratives of their personal choice? (b) What do specific fictional narratives actually "do": i.e., what emotions do they evoke in readers, and what sorts of interactions do they facilitate, by virtue of their forms and contents? These questions – and the FIR design – may well be brought to bear on topics of violence and extremism prevention and thus assist in developing impactful methods of intervention (as planned for a project proposal to the European Research Council 2014).

be able to act with a certain degree of independence and thereby provide a safe and confidential space for participants. It is likewise essential that facilitators are perceived by their clients to enjoy such independence, so that trust- and relationship-building can succeed.

Independence and confidentiality are the dual requirements of good-practice anti-hate-crime work. Without them, an intervention has little chance of long-run success, and may even have adverse effects. This is true for two reasons. First, radicalized individuals – especially those who are institutionalized – are unlikely to trust an employee whose reports and decisions can affect their fate. Second, people who agree to participate in state-of-the-art interventions stand to experience profound personal changes, ones that evoke deep-seated emotions and sensitive, even painful, memories. The experience can be compared to undergoing psychotherapy. For good reasons, it is not permissible for patients to be counselled by practitioners who have existential power over them: job superiors, caregivers, family members, and the like. Anti-hate-crimes practitioners must have the independence and the authority to provide a secure and confidential atmosphere in which clients can speak and interact freely.

2.2 Institutional support for outside practitioners

However, good practice, as provided by independent practitioners, relies heavily on the institution itself. For an intervention to succeed, the institution needs to be on board. It must understand the good practice approach and actively signal both its high esteem for the incoming facilitators and its readiness to support, secure, and continue their work. For this purpose, institutional staff members need to be educated about the complexity of anti-hate-crime and deradicalization work. Statutory employees and institutional leadership should be encouraged to request appropriate consultancy and staff training from the independent practi-tioners and/or their organizations.

2.3 The relationship between NGOs and the state

The EC's 2009 *Stockholm Program* states that the "key to our success [in de-radicalization] will be the degree to which non-governmental groups … across Europe play an active part." Practitioner organizations, mainly NGOs and civil-society groups, clearly need stable sources of funding if they are to carry out the Program's goals. It is essential, both for reasons of principle and reasons of financing, to set up legal and budgetary structures that make it easier for independent practitioners to engage in the interventions mandated by governmental institutions.

One obvious desideratum is to provide a degree of professional and vocational security for non-governmental practitioners' organizations. For that to happen, society must become more resilient and develop more effective ways to prevent young people from getting involved in extremist milieus and violent activities. That step, in turn, presupposes a degree of trust between governmental and non-governmental organizations. Individuals who are involved in extremist or terrorist activities typically view the state as an enemy. To them, the state is an entity that abuses and distrusts its own citizens. In order for deradicalization efforts to succeed, there must be an appearance of trust between statutory and civil community actors as well as support for and confidence in outside practitioners.

2.4 Practitioners' intervention styles

Whenever narrative and open-process exploratory interactions are the preferred approach (whether in one-on-one or in group exchanges), practitioners should develop intervention styles designed to foster strong working relationships. In particular, practitioners should signal trustworthiness, authenticity, curiosity, institutional independence, and respect for the client. They ought to evince a critical attentiveness that is simultaneously accepting yet confrontational. The point is to maintain a basic distinction between the client's personhood, which will be accorded respect, and the client's offensive behavior and extremist opinions, which will be probed and questioned.

2.5 Practitioner training, professional assistance, and quality management

To be successful, deradicalization approaches must rely on professional facilitators who possess relevant skills and knowledge on the level of both personal attitudes and methodological practices. Hardly anyone has ever been able to implement state-of-the-art methodology simply by reading case studies. We need to institute a "train the trainer" program, assisted by a pool of experts having both a deep understanding of what strategies work and significant experience in implementing those practices and in adapting them to different circumstances.

2.6 Party-political and media discourses

Public discourse on hate crimes, violent extremism, and human rights exerts a strong influence on deradicalization work done with at-risk individuals. It is therefore indispensable to pay heed to the ways in which representatives from governments, political parties, media outlets, and other public institutions portray victims, perpetrators, interventions, prejudices, and possibly-mainstream extremist views. Currently, within the overwhelming majority of EU member states, incidents of group-focused hatred, extremism, and terrorism are often neglected, covered up, or manipulated by populist and partisan interests for their own ends. Moreover, the media tend to treat these problems as sensationalist fodder instead of adopting intelligent strategies for preventing and resolving them.

In this respect, the least that a deradicalization intervention can and should do is to acknowledge and discuss these public discourses, and to highlight the duplicities of mainstream, allegedly non-extremist media narratives that are in fact populist and/or sensationalist. In addition, it would be helpful if political parties could agree on a code of conduct cutting across partisan lines, providing guidelines or rules on how best to depict extremist actions and attitudes in public discourse. Such code would apply – in however slightly different ways – to representatives of governments, political organizations, and the media.

2.7. Involvement by third parties

In addition to engaging independent specialists from outside a given institution, good practice also frequently relies on another third-party element. Carefully chosen members of different groups within civil society should be invited to enter the institution as interlocutors, commentators, and witnesses with special experiences. So, for example, good-practice guidelines would call upon so-called "formers" (those who have abandoned violent lifestyles), as well the victims and survivors of extremist acts (although certain methodological cautions are appropriate for this group). It can also be useful to ask respected or charismatic r epresentatives from the community or mainstream society to play a role within the institution. Family members, especially, may contribute to deradicalization processes in certain cases.

To be sure, the practitioners themselves will have to think through, prepare for, and mediate the participation of third parties in deradicalization work. Also, the presence of the third parties must be carefully embedded in established intervention protocols.

In general, however, it seems desirable that the risk-averse perspective that has characterized most statutory counter-extremism and prevention activities should be supplemented by a perspective that is both more inclusive and less driven by security concerns. Bridges need to be built across the chasm separating binaries such as "civil vs. public," "statutory vs. non-governmental," "professional vs. volunteer," "national vs. local (or international)," and "East vs. West" (cf. the Copenhagen Convention of 2012, footnote 2).

2.8 Testimonials and 'deradicalizing narratives'[8]

Some approaches attempt to use audio-visual testimonials and – yet to be properly defined – "deradicalizing narratives" The sources of such materials include "formers" and their families, moderate community voices, social workers or field experts, and the victims and/or survivors of terrorist acts and hate crimes. We should acknowledge that the methodology for developing deradicalizing narratives is still in its early stages. Considerable thought must be given to the techniques that will be used: interviews, post-production of the AV material, and ways to embed it in off-line intervention programs. Clearly, not every testimonial or narrative actually will have a deradicalizing effect upon every kind of at-risk individual at every moment in the process of personal development. Also, when a process of deradicalization is set in motion, it may still fail and even backfire. Apart from that, and pending current fundamental research,[9] it seems beyond question that any such audio-visual testimonials should meet three basic criteria.

First, they should be largely in "narrative mode" in the sense delineated above: "sharing certain experiences one has personally lived through." This implies that the individual who testifies should provide a full account of interactions and events as subjectively perceived; i.e., the report should be saturated with details, personal involvement, and emotion. That will signal that the testimony is trustworthy and will help to foster mutual trust. In other words, such testimonies should not concentrate on opinions, thoughts, ideologies or theories, let alone "counter-arguments" (see section 1.2). Instead, well-designed video productions will narrativize such opinions and ideologies by exploring the personal experience that, consciously or not, fuel them. In that way they should facilitate self-reflective thought and authenticity in emotion.

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8   Cf. Harald Weilnböck, "Do we really need 'counter narratives'? And what is a 'narrative' anyway? – Current misunderstandings about and solutions for building an approach of 'deradicalizing narratives' interventions," EDNA and ENoD website (forthcoming).

9   Within the ISEC project, "European Platform of Deradicalizing Narratives" (EDNA, by VPN, Berlin).

Second, video materials should also be carefully embedded in a systematic off-line intervention process. Toward that end they must be both systematically prepared beforehand and elaborated in depth afterwards. The point is to enable viewers to develop, personalize, acknowledge, and reflect upon their subjective reactions to such testimonials, and to express them within the group process of the intervention.

Finally, video testimonials should be designed expressly for the purpose of deradicalization and anti-hate-crime interventions. They should not be exploited for use in some other context. For example, they should not be used for purposes of media sensationalism, or misappropriated by political actors for their own ends, such as to stoke populist emotions. At the same time it would be unwise to use such testimonials to drive home ethical lessons within mainstream society, such as that a person should adhere to certain values, and pass moral judgments on others. Finally, the testimonials should avoid catering to the special interests of different interviewee groups (e.g. victims' rights lobbies).

By and large, the content and form of a deradicalizing testimonial should conform to the spirit of the intervention principles themselves. For example, such testimonial would deal with a variety of experiences and circumstances, including the following:

- how the individual fell into and subsequently disengaged from violent extremism;
- the difficulties that may have accompanied the exit intervention, including whatever complications may have arisen with family members, peers, co-religionists, etc.;
- incidents in which the individual may have been a perpetrator and/or victim of hate speech or hate crimes;
- cultural and media products (whether documentary or fictional) that played a role in the individual's personal evolution (cf. footnotes 6 and 7);
- the individual's erstwhile and current social or political grievances;
- allegedly non-radical, yet potentially extremist, attitudes within mainstream society;

- the personal backgrounds, experiences, and motivations of deradicalization experts, as well as those of the family and community representatives who have been affected by their work.

Interviewing and postproduction methods will usually determine the kind and degree of narrativity that a testimonial can achieve. There are certain criteria that contribute to a testimonial's believability and emotive power. These include the following elements:
- the degree of detail and completeness found in the account (e.g., what triggered an episode or incident, what the actor intended to accomplish, what transpired and with what results, and how the actor subjectively evaluated it);
- the extent to which incidents are successfully placed within autobiographical and wider-world contexts;
- the account's consistency, as judged by psycho-linguistic criteria;
- the personal affect and range of emotional expression displayed by the story-teller;
- the degree of introspection and self-awareness in evidence;
- the amount of expressed reality-checking, personal ambivalence, and/or conflict;
- the field-specific credentials of the narrator;
vthe interactive quality of the interview process, as evaluated according to the principles laid out above (see footnote 6, 2008).

In short, interviewing and postproduction methodologies follow the very same principles as good-practice interventions themselves: they proceed in an open-process, narrative, and relational manner; allow for emotional investment and ambivalence; occupy a confidential and exploratory space; and involve both trust and challenge. Conversely, deradicalizing strategies based on crafting arguments against extremist messages tend to be non-narrative in character and to have little transformative effect.

2.9 Cross-institutional, long-term support relationships and change-management

Successful disengagement from extremism is facilitated by the existence of required stable practitioner and mentoring relationships that persist when the client leaves an institution and enters a new sphere of life. Non-statutory, non-governmental practitioners who can move easily among different social sectors are obviously in a good position to provide such mentoring.

The necessity for cross-institutional coaching may be most evident in the case of imprisoned clients. Here an inmate's deradicalization practitioner should already be in place during his or her time in prison; the relationship developed there should be retained in the early stages of the ex-offender's reintegration into the community, assisting the client with change management. However, the existence of a stable, on-going support system is also important for clients making other types of institutional transitions, such as the transition from school to workplace.

By the same token, interventions have to be long-term and be accompanied by visibly strong institutional and societal commitments. Project-style interventions of a short- to middle-term duration may even be counter-productive, since they can enhance frustration and distrust on the part of clients, most of whom tend to be volatile and to have scant experience in commitment and responsibility. Here, only long-term and resilient mentoring relationships will suffice to create the interpersonal trust and respect that set the stage for successful deradicalization.

2.10 What doesn't work: pure anger management and cognitive-behavioral training

Having explored the issue of what methods and strategies are most likely to work in facilitating deradicalization, we next turn to the question of which approaches have little effect, or possibly even adverse effects.

Academic research and practitioner exchange workshops agree on the shortcomings of two commonly touted alternatives: fully modularized cognitive-behavioral training programs (CBT), and pure anti-aggression or anger management programs (AM). CBT approaches generally do not support open-process, exploratory, and participatory exchange. On the contrary, they may unintentionally serve the function of deterring direct (co-)narrative interaction between facilitators and clients and among clients in the group. Often they end up producing compliance without conviction, a "let's-get-it-over-with" attitude that does not truly engage the individual or issue in personal change. Anger management (AM) courses, for their part, often tend to be superficial in the sense that they do not probe into biographical issues such as the genesis, function, and targets of an individual's aggression. Unless CBT and AM techniques are carefully embedded into a solid methodological framework of open-process, relationship-based, and narrative intervention work, their effectiveness will suffer, and they may actually turn out to be counter-productive.

3. Examples of good-practice approaches in anti-hate-crime and deradicalization work

As we have seen, the most successful approaches to deradicalization are open-process, exploratory interventions. Methodologically speaking, they are narrative and relational in their focus, and are based on trust and challenge. Offering confidentiality and commitment, they are best delivered by skilled, specially-trained non-governmental practitioners who are empowered to act independently within and across statutory institutions and are proactively assisted in their interventions by the institutional staff. Open-process approaches share a number of character-istics. They:
- focus on the development of emotional intelligence;
- occur within group settings;
- touch upon biographical, familial, gender-related, and power issues;

- employ advanced civic education and fictional or cultural texts;
- include representatives of the family, the community and civil society;
- combine both accepting and confrontational modes of interaction; and
- are accompanied by state-of-the-art quality control.

The "European Network of Deradicalization" website (ENoD),[10] which is being constructed by the Violence Prevention Network and liaises closely with the RAN initiative's Derad working group in Brussels, will soon be able to supply profiles of deradicalization efforts throughout Europe that utilize, or are in the process of developing, good-practice approaches. In the meanwhile, we can profit from the examples provided by two Berlin-based NGOs: Cultures Interactive and the aforementioned Violence Prevention Network.

3.1 Cultures Interactive

Cultures Interactive (CI) is a non-profit association dedicated to "violence prevention and intercultural education." Although the group occasionally works in Poland and the Czech Republic, its efforts are concentrated in towns and rural communities in eastern Germany and in inner-city districts of Berlin that suffer from high degrees of social tension.

Methodologically, CI has developed a youth-cultural approach to promoting human rights awareness and democratic values and responding to violent extremism and hate crimes. It delivers both prevention and deradicalization interventions, depending on the context and the target group. CI works with issues of neo-Nazism and similar extremist ideologies, radical Islam and jihadism, everyday racism and xenophobia, and other forms of group-prejudiced, exclusionary and violent behavior, especially on the part of at-risk young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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10 http://www.european-network-of-deradicalisation.eu.

The CI approach combines civic and historical education with peer-taught workshops in various youth-cultural practices and styles as well as psychologically-based, open-process interactions, the so-called "We-Among-Ourselves-Group" (WAOG). The civic education modules feature exercises in team-building, diversity training, and anti-bias courses, as well as work in gender awareness and anger management. Meditation techniques are also incorporated into the program. As is the case with the WAOG, group discussions often highlight documentary and fictional media narratives (films, TV, songs) chosen by the young people themselves.

The youth-cultural workshops draw on diverse forms of creative expression, including rap music, slam poetry, break-dancing, comic and graffiti art, skateboarding, techno-disc-jockeying, as well as film and digital music production. Conducted according to principles of informal peer learning, these workshops sometimes incorporate historical materials as well as materials relevant to civil society today. The urban youth-cultural practice workshops enable CI to reach out to individuals who are alienated from traditional pedagogical institutions and approaches, and are therefore difficult to engage by any other approach.

The "We-Among-Ourselves-Group" tries to promote self-awareness by applying principles derived from psycho- and socio-therapeutic casework. Under the guidance of a facilitator, participants enter a voluntary, confidential, and open-process setting in which they can converse about experiences and issues that emerge in the group as a whole. Here they discuss their life experiences as well as thoughts and ideas they may have entertained in certain situations. Those discussions may be prompted by the civic-education and youth-cultural modules. Only the most basic rules of mutual respect and protection are obligatory here. Ideally, the facilitator plays a maximally non-directive role; only when necessary does he or she help the group to focus on emergent topics, organize conversational turn-taking, summarize or clarify the session dynamic, or solicit observations and insights gained in the process. Common discussion topics include the youth culture, leisure-time activities, friendships,

interpersonal conflicts, instances of violence, betrayal, or delinquency, displays of loyalty and assistance, and above all, issues of gender and identity. Quite often family matters come up, as do experiences participants have had in orphanages, pediatric psychiatry, juvenile detention, or prison.[11]

CI has recently instituted and tested a youth-cultural "train the peer trainer" initiative, the Fair Skills training program, designed to help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to become facilitators of youth-cultural workshops. Fair Skills emphasizes soft skills, as formulated by the "European Framework of Key Competences." These include "social and civic competences" (i.e., "interpersonal and intercultural skills"), "critical thinking," "constructive management of feelings," and "cultural awareness and expression" (EC Recommendation 2006/962/EC). The training is given in three intensive one-week courses, followed up by close supervision on the job.

CI works in different settings, offering one- or two-day workshops in schools and youth clubs located in disadvantaged rural, small town, or inner-city areas. Building on such workshops, CI conducts community conferences and open-space discussions for young people and their local representatives as a way of promoting youth participation and social cohesion. For example, its current Federal Model Project, "Deradicalization Guidelines for Youth Workers," develops programs, tool kits, and principles for social workers and youth centers in deprived areas where youngsters are attracted by right-wing extremism. Similarly, CI's WomEx initiative, an EU applied research project on "Women/Girls in Extremism", examines the roles that girls and women play in extremism and what we can learn from practitioners that work in anti-hate-crime and

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11 Harald Weilnböck, Silke Baer, and Peer Wiechmann, "Hate Crime Prevention and Deradicalization in Environments Vulnerable to Extremism: Community Work with the Fair Skills Approach and the We-Among-Ourselves Group," originally published in Zeitschrift des Informations- und Dokumentationzentrums für Antirassismusarbeit in NRW (February, 2012); soon to be available at www.weilnboeck.net and www.cultures-interactive.de.

deradicalisation settings with girls and women, and investigates good-practice gender methodologies. Stakeholders in these initiatives include teachers, social workers, police officers, public administrators, youth clubs and associations, and local media outlets. They receive instruction and training about right-wing-extremism, fundamentalism, and hate crimes, and how to deal with them.

3.2 The Violence Prevention Network

The Violence Prevention Network (VPN) has developed a particular group intervention approach for incarcerated juveniles convicted of hate crimes rooted in Neo-Nazism, Islamism, or some other violently prejudiced ideology. Two specialized non-statutory practitioners from outside the prison system facilitate the program. These practitioners also cooperate to deliver staff training in the institution. Ex-offenders, family members, and civil society representatives are brought in for special sessions to support the process.

The VPN program focuses on issues of personal biography, upbringing, peer-groups, gender, and delinquency, with special emphasis on dysfunctional family dynamics and incidents of violence, abuse, or disrespect in the client's past. Young offenders are encouraged to explore the connections between past events and their own readiness to act out violently and to hold extremist attitudes in regard to politics or religion. In addition, modules of civic education and political and/or religious debate form a significant part of the intervention.

The VPN's approach puts a premium on not reducing the young adults to their status as criminals. On the contrary, each participant is taken seriously and respected as someone with his own history, conflicts, and potential for personal development. At the same time, the violent act that he committed is systematically analyzed and confronted, as are the illiberal, undemocratic, and anti-human-rights attitudes that helped to motivate it.

Once sufficient trust is established within the group, the central element of the program can be employed: the so-called "violent act session," in which every participant strives to reconstruct the actions, feelings, and thoughts that transpired during the course of his crime. These sessions are highly demanding for the group and the facilitators alike. Perhaps surprisingly, confronting the inhuman brutality, the ghastly injuries, and the hateful fantasies and actions bound up with the crime's commission often proves to be an overwhelming experience for the offenders themselves. But the participants assist each other in this regard, without letting anyone off the hook too easily. In the aftermath of the violent act sessions, most of the individuals in the group are able to accept their responsibility and build a new sense of self and of empathy with others, thus paving the way for a future that is free from violence and hatred.

Most importantly, although the process unfolds within the context of, and with the help of, the group, it is always accompanied by one-on-one sessions. The fellow inmates who also committed hate crimes and/or racist acts of aggression have proven able and willing to support the process of respectful but intense questioning of the other program participants, as well as themselves. Participants join on a voluntary basis only, after having had some prior interviews. They are offered only modest inducements, such as opportunities to play football together. Just as they are not required to engage in the program, it is not noted on their official records if they choose to drop out. The dropout rate, however, happens to be very low (around 2%).

Civic education – i.e., interrogating the participants' neo-Nazi, fundamentalist, or otherwise extremist beliefs and helping them to adopt attitudes that are more tolerant, liberal, and respectful of human rights – remains an absorbing and challenging task throughout the whole of the intervention. However, the group work described above makes the task decidedly more achievable. Pedagogical exercises, role-playing about how to deal with situations of conflict, provocation, and insult, and the crafting of autobiographical narratives all assist in this process, as do sessions with carefully chosen family and friends in the prison.

After the training program, a change-management module is employed. This module features developing resource and risk analyses, recruiting helpers from the offender's family or the larger community, and building up a local support network. Post-release coaching, which may take up to twelve months, is provided by one of the two facilitators to each ex-offender, in order to assist him to make the transition from prison to the larger society. A central goal here is public protection: i.e., reducing the rate of recidivism, which for hate crimes is generally estimated at around 76%. The logic behind this is that working with perpetrators will decrease the number of victims and the amount of damage and social costs.

In EU member states, many additional approaches toward deradicalization and hate-crime prevention have been developed, mainly by NGOs. These approaches and organisations soon will be made public through the "European Network of Deradicalization" (ENoD) and through resources provided by the Radicalisation Awareness Network. That, in turn, should improve our capacity to formulate sound policy recommendations for preventing and averting violent extremism.

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