Designing-out Radicalisation
Designing-in Community Cohesion

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The Urban Environment: Mirror and Mediator of Radicalisation?

| Things as symptoms, effects, mirrors of social conditions |
| Things as agents, causes, mediators of social conditions |

The urban environment as mirror...
The urban environment as mediator ...
The urban environment as mirror …

- The urban environment as seismograph?
- ‘Reading’ the UE for cues requires interpretation
- The correct interpretation requires local knowledge
- With local knowledge you don’t need a seismograph
- PLUS: Radicals are probably smart enough not to leave material / visual traces

The urban environment as mediator …

- The urban environment …
- … is not a neutral container; it can “do” something
- … has a silent socialising and normalising effect
- … can accentuate as well as alleviate the situation
- Is this social engineering and manipulation?
- Yes if we try to ‘trick’ people into harmony
- No if we operate with more nuanced concepts

Inspiration from STS, environmental psychology, CPTED:

- Preventing versus Attracting
- Enforcing versus Enabling
- Corporeal versus Symbolic
On the ground ...

Ethno(-religio)(religious) polarisation
Amsterdam

Eyes on the street

Attracting the ‘other’ section of the population

Strengthening collective identity of tolerance

Platforms for dialogue
Making alternatives more attractive

Ethno-religious-political ‘radicalisation’
Beirut

Facilitating friendly encounters

Synchronised de-provocation

Money is colourblind?

Big gesture reconciliation
Careful orchestration of neutrality

Right-wing extremism
Berlin

Demonstrating the presence of alternative discourses

Demonstrating the presence of ordinariness

Providing safe havens

Providing harmless distraction
Building resilience

Facilitating friendly encounters

Elasticity

Stewartstown Road Regeneration Project
Belfast

Before I

Before II
Prevent verbatim

- Neither the continued disruption of terrorist attacks nor protective security will alone provide a long term solution
- The application of some of the principles of crime prevention to the world of counter-terrorism
- Dissuade people from turning to ... violent extremism
- Stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
- Challenging the ideology
- Disrupting those who promote ... 
- Supporting individuals at risk
- Increasing resilience of communities
- Addressing grievances

Built environment issues
Conclusions

- We certainly cannot “build” peace just with clever design, ...
- But the urban environment (UE) can be one of many factors in radicalisation processes – and in de-radicalisation processes – and must therefore not be neglected.
- The UE can be the nucleus of discussions about reconciliation
- Design process at least as important as content of design
- Enrol the UE in de-polarisation / de-radicalisation efforts

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