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Extremism and the Prison System.
A Handbook for Practitioners.

Countering Islamist radicalisation

Whitney Hatton

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Acknowledgements

Preface

This *Handbook for Practitioners* was developed in the course of the project *Recognising and preventing Islamist radicalisation (IRev) – Prevention in the Prison System*. The project was co-financed by the *Internal Security Fund of the European Union* and builds on the predecessor and pilot project *Extremism and the Prison System* of the *Centre for Criminology (Kriminologische Zentralstelle e.V. – KrimZ)[1]* based in Wiesbaden, Germany. Its objective is to explore possible forms of de-radicalisation work in prisons and the extent to which detention centres and the conditions prevailing there are to be evaluated as (de-)radicalisation factors.

Recent developments, as much as global political developments in recent years, have prompted the work on this *Handbook for Practitioners*. Given the number of people returning from war zones and those detained for terrorist offences, the prison system faces a major challenge. At the same time, the interest of the public, the media, and of security policy makers in the debate on how to deal with these individuals is strong. A debate that has become necessary not least due to the recent attacks in Dresden, Vienna, or Paris. Practitioners are under enormous pressure to ensure public security. Particularly in view of the prevailing sense of uncertainty and the pressure to take action, a scientific concept anchored in the fundamental rights must be implemented when dealing with and confronting extremist offenders.

„Whenever our efforts to combat extremism and terrorism risk to undermine the moral and normative standards we have set for ourselves, we act in a way that can be described as [...] co-extremism" (p.738)[2]

Against this background, a large number of initiatives have emerged in recent years in the German *Länder* that are dedicated to the prevention of Islamist radicalisation in the prison system. The objective of this publication is to analyse the effects of these individual measures and to embed them in a scientific, holistic understanding of de-radicalisation intervention. The analysis concerns male detainees[3] of both juvenile and adult correctional facilities.

Since by far not all detention centres have concepts or even guidelines

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1   *Leuschner et al. 2017*
2   *Kemmesies et al. 2020*
3   *Leuschner 2017*

for dealing with extremist detainees , this *Handbook for Practitioners* will provide guidance to prison staff to develop a tailored action plan for each individual case. A structured approach is essential to meet the complex task of risk assessment and response. The following chapters will provide a starting point for an overview and for the utilisation of other sources. In view of the limited scope, the information provided can make no claim to be exhaustive. The intention is rather to provide an initial orientation framework based on the current knowledge, with reference to the most important research networks, both national and international.

Wiesbaden, November 2020
Whitney T. Hatton (author)

PART ONE
Sorting first impressions

Content

Starting point

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Starting point

Everyday contact with prisoners puts judicial staff in both a challenging and ideal position. Challenging, because they face political and public pressure. The assignment is to safeguard security and safety: the safety of prisoners, and the security of staff and society as a whole. Ideal on the other hand, because they are in close contact with the target individuals. On this basis, observations and impressions can be gathered. They are the first to notice behavioural changes or questionable statements. This is relevant information that is of utmost importance in the further process. Such close interaction generates an initial impression of the extent to which radicalisation tendencies or extremist views exist among individual prisoners. At the same time, positive changes can be registered also.

Alongside their own professional experience, there is a public, media, and political debate on the issues of extremism and Islamism. Without a doubt a highly emotional debate that needs to be critically evaluated. After all, many questions arise in the wake of this debate: Who is the justice system dealing with? How many Islamist extremists are detained? How many persons have returned from war zones? How likely is it that these returnees will recruit other prisoners? Is the prison a catalyst for or a place that prevents radicalisation? And what can practitioners do? A numerical overview as well as the special characteristics of the detention context are set out below. The aim is to allow for a first assessment of the sometimes vague or unclear initial impression, with the help of objective indicators.

Intervention partners

There are essentially three target groups among detainees that must be considered when it comes to aspects of (de-)radicalisation: First of all, the group of **persons posing a threat to public security**[4], from whom an Islamist terrorist threat emanates. The term is used as an operational concept by German police; it refers to persons who are deemed likely to commit politically motivated crimes of considerable importance. The status as a person posing a threat to public security may, aside from relevant terrorist offences, also be assigned on the basis of intelligence from security authorities, without

4   *"Person posing a threat to public security" is not a legal term stipulated in legislation, but an operational concept of the police. It is particularly relevant in the context of terrorism and refers primarily to criminal offences as defined in Section 100a of the German Code of Criminal Procedure Strafprozessordnung (StPO).*

a criminal offence. In this context, there is also the term of the **relevant person** who is regarded to be willing to participate in or to be open to the aforementioned offences. In order to also include those detainees who do not have delinquent intentions but who are ideologically interested, this group will be more broadly referred to as **sympathisers** in the following. Sympathisers are part of the prison population, which is vulnerable and thus easily approachable for recruitment attempts. The third and last group to be considered are the so-called "**at-risk" individuals**. In their case, there is no problematic mindset to begin with, however, they tend to be highly suggestible in general and are thereby also susceptible to recruitment attempts. They are not always easy to identify, which is one of the reasons for concern regarding unnoticed recruitment and subsequent radicalisation.

Concurrent to domestic terrorism developments, extremist players from abroad must be integrated into German prisons. Ever since many Europeans have followed the call of Islamist terrorist organisations to go abroad, the judiciary has been confronted with returnees from war zones (such as Syria and Iraq). The extent to which these individuals are to be classified in one of the three working categories of person posing a threat to public security,

sympathiser, or "at-risk" individual can be derived from a statement by the German Federal Government at the end of 2019. When asked how dangerous one considers returnees from Islamist combat zones to be, it stated:

„In principle, the assumption must be made that in most cases an Islamist attitude will continue to exist, which under certain circumstances can be mobilised rapidly." (p.15)[5]

It can therefore be assumed that an initial classification as a person posing a threat to public security, or at least as a relevant person, i.e. a sympathiser, is made. Subsequently though, the statement points out that the threat should only be assessed in context of the skills acquired in situ and of the motivation to return. This addendum is in line with the current state of research.[6]

Not all returnees present the same risk and not all returnees are necessarily a person posing a threat to public security or a sympathiser. It must be examined on a case-by-case basis whether a threat exists and how big it is. Individuals, for example, whose primary task was to raise money may present a lower risk than (former) ideological leaders.

5   Deutscher Bundestag 2019
6   Radicalisation Awareness Network 2016a

Case numbers of persons posing a threat to public security and returnees

Europol's annual *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report*[7] shows that the number of arrests in connection with jihadist terrorism has declined further across Europe from 511 to 436, compared to the previous year. Of 21 Islamist-motivated planned attacks, four failed and 14 were thwarted by the security authorities. In Germany, eleven suspects were taken into custody in this context in 2019. These inner-European perpetrators tend to act independently of terrorist groups (such as *al-Qaeda*) and are mostly linked to loose, regional networks.

The number of those categorised as persons posing a threat to public security and relevant persons in Germany is not regularly disclosed. Inquiries to the German Federal Criminal Police Office, *Bundeskriminalamt (BKA)*, however, allow for an estimate to the effect that about 679 persons posing a threat to public security and 509 relevant persons were listed at the end of 2019 in the field of politically motivated crime with a religious background.[8] As of January 2020, 105 of them were held in German penitentiary institutions. Among them were also the convicted returnees from Syria and Iraq with German citizenship. In comparison: In recent years, about 1060 men and women had travelled from Germany to Islamist war zones[9]. One third of them are now back in Germany, more than 250 persons are considered dead. New inquiries show also a declining trend in the number of persons posing a threat to public security. In November this year, 630[10] individuals were included this category. In 2019, a total of approximately 50,589 prisoners were detained in German prisons.[11]

Case numbers of radicalisation and recruitment

There are many catalysts that may trigger people to sympathise with an extremist group. These may include the death of a close relative, experiences of discrimination, humiliation, alienation from society, or a feeling of insignificance.[12][13][14] The resulting high levels of emotional stress and the inability to cope with it can facilitate radicalisation processes. However, the proportion of those who actually join a (radical) group is comparatively low. Considerably

7   *Europol 2019*
8   *Hunold et al. 2020*
9   *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* 13/03/2020
10   *Tagesschau.de* 05/11/2020
11   *Statistisches Bundesamt* 24/10/2019
12   Moghaddam 2005
13   Kruglanski et al. 2013
14   Doosje et al. 2016

smaller even is the proportion of those who become terrorists.[15]

It is, however, decidedly more difficult to determine the number of detainees who are susceptible to recruitment and radicalisation. The concern that detainees may become ideologised in prison and pose a threat after release is generally a frequent topic of discussion. From an international context, there are individual reports of petty criminals who came into contact with Islamist ideology during their imprisonment and who radicalised themselves to a significant extent on site. An example is the attacker of the Berlin Christmas market. An analysis by Basra, Neumann, and Brunner[16] showed that of 79 European jihadists, slightly more than half had been imprisoned, but only twelve could be assumed to have been radicalised or to have started the radicalisation process while detained. It is often difficult to determine where exactly the radicalisation process began. Overall, however, such examples are few in number. In contrast, there are no documented cases for Germany where individuals[17] became radicalised only during their detention. This may also be due to the fact that detained terrorists are poorly regarded among the prison population in countries without a Muslim majority.[18] The likelihood of recruitment and radicalisation depends not only on the prison culture but also on the detention conditions and rehabilitation efforts, as well as on the significance of fundamental and human rights. These factors are known and regulated in German detention centres.

Islamist recruitment in prison is thus not a mass phenomenon.[19]

But even though it is rare, immediate action must be taken whenever there are signs of recruitment by a prisoner. The *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*[20] recommends to regularly review the implementation of the following measures:

• Restrictions of contact with at-risk detainees

• Monitoring of interactions

• Transfers to another prison wing

• Transfers to another prison

It should, however, first be assessed whether and to what extent there actually is a risk of radicalisation through recruitment, using scientifically sound methods. How such an assessment can be conducted will be discussed in the course of this

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15   Feddes et al. 2020
16   Basra et al. 2016
17   Endres et al. 2018
18   Jones et al. 2014
19   Neumann et al. 2010
20   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016a

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Intervention space

The question of how probable it is that recruitment and radicalisation occur is closely linked to the intervention space in detention. It plays a decisive role in working with persons posing a threat to public security, with sympathisers, and with "at-risk" individuals. Detention constitutes a massive disruption of everyday life and the prison becomes the pacesetter of a completely new daily routine. (De-)radicalisation processes thus take place in a completely different environment than they would unconfined. In the context of de-radicalisation, the characteristics of the prison system as a whole, as well as the specifics of individual detention centres, must be considered. They present both challenges and opportunities.

Detention as a challenge

Detention is widely considered a personal crisis situation. The failing previous concept of life and the reduction to the prison space pose a major challenge. Psychological destabilisation is the result. This equally concerns the social framework, through the spatial and emotional separation from friends and family, as it does one's own moral concepts and world views. Loss of autonomy, rejection by the majority

society and the experience of insecurity, discrimination, right up to violence and arbitrariness can be part of the experiential realm of detention. The perception of objective and subjective grievances also plays a role, as does the satisfaction of basal needs. As a result, prisoners often show symptoms of psychological stress.[21] Extremist ideologies and their representatives may, at first sight and from the perspective of the person concerned, appear to be able to remedy this crisis: They provide answers, explanatory models, justifications, and make an enticing offer of social connection. Which is why the susceptibility to recruitment is particularly high upon commencement of the prison term.[22] In addition to the destabilisation caused by the imprisonment, the prison offers the opportunity of a relatively easy first contact. Recruiters are able to identify and contact sympathisers and "at-risk" individuals. Both the personality of the recruiter and that of the person to be recruited are of importance. Contact with so-called charismatic leaders is considered to be particularly fraught with risk.

Spending time in prison can thus be a risk factor for radicalisation and the perpetuation of extremist views. Not least due to the fact that it still remains to be seen whether and to what extent prison is suitable for

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21   *Dienstbühl et al. 2012*
22   *Mulcahy et al. 2013*

de-radicalisation interventions at all. Prison research is subject to certain restrictions. As this is a closed-off area with its own rules and security requirements, access for researchers is difficult already. In addition, the target group is small, which makes it difficult to carry out surveys and statistical analyses.

Detention as an opportunity

Alongside the challenges posed by detention, this specific setting also creates opportunities and chances. As a result, detention can also be understood as a space for development[23] – not only by practitioners, but also by the targeted individuals themselves. When interviewed about their exit reasons, former extremists stated that imprisonment had motivated them to change their views and was in some instances the best thing that had happened to them.[24] One of the reasons is certainly that the penitentiary system provides better opportunities to establish contact. Freed from the persistent influence of the extremist group, the implementation of de-radicalisation interventions is made easier by the fact that the person is now at least accessible. But de-radicalisation processes in detention can also have

an impact beyond the scope of planned interventions. The term *spontaneous de-radicalisation* is increasingly used to describe the exit from a group without the implementation of a formal intervention programme.[25] Beneficial factors hereby are:

De-radicalisation through events affecting society as a whole: These are collective, social phenomena that can be influenced by the prison administration to only a limited extent, if at all. An example is, for instance, increasing pressure from civil society, which rises with entries on sanction lists or the threat of a categorisation as a person posing a threat to public security.[26][27]

De-radicalisation by the own group:[28] Disillusionment plays a crucial role in spontaneous de-radicalisation processes. It can be sobering when differences between one's own idealised ideas and reality become apparent. This disillusionment can relate to group leadership, group members, or group practices. Dissatisfaction with day-to-day tasks or disagreements within the group or with the leaders are common side effects of a fundamental divergence between political goals and operational techniques. This

23   Dahle et al. 2020
24   Horgan 2009
25   Speckhard et al.03/08/2020
26   It should be noted that these can also have a stigmatising effect, which can cause the person to become entrenched in the scene
27   Horgan 2009
28   Altier et al. 2017

issue is particularly relevant for already radicalised prisoners or for returnees from combat zones. For them, the time before imprisonment is often virtually a de-radicalisation intervention. But group processes also have a de- or non-radicalisation potential for sympathisers and "at-risk" individuals, especially in detention. Deterring experiences within an extremist group or during recruitment can prompt impulses for change or even psychopathological processes (e.g. in the form of burnout symptoms).[29][30]

De-radicalisation through intrapsychic development:[31] Frequently, imprisonment – and thus a temporal and spatial separation from the extremist group – or strokes of fate in general can trigger processes of rethinking. Such turning point events have the chance to become a mental development momentum for persons posing a threat to public security, for sympathisers, or for "at-risk" individuals. This can contribute to a change in priorities and to an abandonment of the ideological group and ideology. Such a development can be triggered not only by significant one-off events but also by social ties outside the group, support from the family, and positive encounters with authorities, officials, and fellow detainees. The desire for a quieter life, for a family, or for employment, as well as advancing age can lead to an improvement in the legal prognosis.

Events affecting society as a whole, the disillusioning effect of the extremist group, und intrapsychic development are particularly effective drivers of de-radicalisation.[32] This fact should not create the impression that formal de-radicalisation programmes in detention are worthless compared to *spontaneous de-radicalisation*. As outlined earlier, imprisonment can also be an opportunity. This time for reflection should be filled with meaning in order to reinforce processes such as the disenchantment with the actual group reality or the development of alternative loyalties and relationships.

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29   Altier et al. 2017
30   Horgan 2009
31   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b
32   Ben Slama 2020

Laundry list "Sorting first impressions"

The number of persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals in German prisons is manageable. There are also signs of a declining trend in Islamist-motivated terrorist acts. However, a single undetected case can already have devastating social consequences. At the same time, the daily interaction offers the opportunity for close behavioural observation. These, however, are contrasted by those conditions of the institution prison that promote radicalisation. The objective is to accompany and reinforce development momentums, whether spontaneous or brought about by planned interventions, in order to subsequently minimise the onset of radicalisation and existing extremist ideology. The sweeping judgement that prisons are breeding grounds for radicalisation is untenable given the current state of knowledge – at least in Germany. Detention can therefore be both, part of the problem and part of the solution.

PART TWO
Creating the action plan

Content

Checklist Action Plan

- Intervention team

- Status and needs analysis of the institution

- Risk and resource profile of the detainee

  VERA-2R

  TRAP-18

Objectives and evaluation

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Checklist Action Plan

Laundry List

- ☑ Sorting first impressions
- ☐ Creating the action plan
- ☐ Building an intervention team
- ☐ Ensuring intervention documentation
- ☐ Preparing a status and needs analysis of the institution
- ☐ Creating a risk and resource profile of the detainee
- ☐ Defining objectives and implementing evaluation
- ☐ Choosing the right interventions
- ☐ Selecting the intervention setting
- ☐ Assessing interventions at all levels
- ☐ Putting the action plan into practice by means of interventions
- ☐ (Obtaining the necessary support)

Given the difficulties of risk assessment, a structured revision of first impressions is essential. It serves the purpose to determine the extent to which the initial concern is still valid or can be dismissed. The following sample schedule can serve as a working basis. It utilises the principle of *Integrated Case Management*[33] and is intended to help structure and objectify the process:

Intervention team

The first step after reporting a suspicion of radicalisation is the formation of an intervention team. This has the principal advantage that an objective investigation is possible and the burden of responsibility can be shared. Whenever possible, a multi-professional team should be set up to combine different perspectives and expertise (including personnel from the fields of social work, psychology, religion and church, vocational counselling, sports and arts, and family members of the detained). Ideally, the intervention team should include at least one person who speaks the language of the target person. Due to the limited resources and multitude of responsibilities in correctional facilities, it is not always possible to gather such an array of people on a single case. However, the involvement of just one additional person is already an important step to ensure a high quality of subsequent management.[34]

33   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b
34   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b

To safeguard and communicate the work results transparently within the team, all further steps should be recorded in writing.[35] In the subsequent stages, it is the intervention team's responsibility to attend team meetings on a regular basis and to ensure dynamic risk management.

Status and needs analysis of the institution

Detention centres differ not only due to the federal structures in Germany. The prison landscape is also diverse within the federal states, which can lead to differences in the enforcement practice. The action plan, which is to be developed, must therefore always be adapted to the conditions of the respective institution. At the start, the intervention team should consider, which resources can be utilised. A status and needs analysis of the institution is crucial in order to select the matching set of measures. Here too, the written form can be of help to structure the process in such a way that all available options can be exhausted. The following questions can be helpful:

- Which human resources does the institution have?
- What financial resources does the institution have?

- What in-house assistance is available to staff?
- Have all options already been exhausted?
- Which skills and specialisations are available in the institution?
- Which skills and specialisations are required?
- What external assistance is available to staff?
- Have all options already been exhausted?
- What support and rehabilitation measures are available as in-house assistance to detainees?
- Have all options already been exhausted?
- What support and rehabilitation measures are available as external assistance to detainees?
- Have all options already been exhausted?

Risk and resource profile of the detainee

Due to individual requirements, there can never be exactly the same action plan for two persons posing a threat to public security,

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35   The written form serves, on the one hand, the purpose of quality assurance and can, on the other hand, also be used externally later on. Prison employees thus become (involuntary) data collectors. The collected information is then extracted, usually without reference to its use. It should always be kept in mind that all notes are perspectively used for additional purposes, which are not readily apparent. In this context, Hoffmann and Illgner (2020) raise the question of how much networking is necessary and beneficial.

sympathisers, or "at-risk" individuals. Alongside the circumstances of the detention centres, the individual risks and resources of the respective prisoner must be analysed when planning the set of measures. Not least because intervention measures increase their effectiveness if a scientifically sound risk assessment has been conducted earlier.[36]

To substantiate the initial suspicion, the first step is to **determine the individual risk** of the prisoner. A scientifically proven process should be used to determine whether an extremist and violent ideology is present or whether a person is in the process of becoming radicalised. Whether a detainee shows typical prison behaviour, for example by joining a group for protection, or whether they actually display extremist behaviour, can hardly be separated without such an analysis. Once the question of whether there is a relevant risk potential has been discussed, an **assessment of the level of initial risk** follows. This makes the relevance of high-quality diagnostics even more apparent. Given the limited resources of a detention centre, it is essential to conduct a careful assessment as to who poses the highest risk. Two possible risk assessment tools are *Violent Extremism Risk Assessment Version 2 Revised* (VERA-2R)[3738] and *Terrorist Radicalisation Assessment Protocol* (TRAP-18)[39]. In the following, the two mechanisms are briefly presented. For further instruments and more detailed information, please refer to the online publication of the predecessor project *Extremism and the Prison System* of the *Centre for Criminology[40]* and other relevant publications.[41]

Prediction tool *VERA-2R*

Due to the limited available data in the field of extremism, the ability to assess predictions by means of statistical models is rather restricted. Consequently, the application of other mechanisms, in particular the so-called *Structured Professional Judgement* (SPJ) tools, is required.[42] These permit a more flexible assessment of risk factors and thus offer greater scope for interpretation and application. While this allows for an individual perspective on the one hand, the professional and content-related demands on practitioners are increasing on the other. There is also the need to formulate an individual (clinical-idiographical) explanatory model, from which the probability, nature, extent, immediacy, and severity of a possible relapse can

36   Andrews et al. 2010
37   Pressman 2009
38   Sadowski et al. 2017
39   Meloy et al. 2015
40   Leuschner et al. 2017
41   Rettenberger 2016
42   von Franqué 2013

be derived. A professionally sound application can therefore only be carried out by an appropriately trained person.

VERA-2R is an example of such an internationally established *SPJ*-tool.[43] It deals with the prediction of politically extremist acts of violence. Based on the analysis of specialist literature and expert interviews, 34 risk factors were identified. Their respective characteristics are rated on a three-level scale from *low* to *moderate* to *high*. The 34 items are assigned to the subscales (1) *beliefs, attitudes and ideology*, (2) *social context and intention*, (3) *history, action and capacity*, (4) *commitment and motivation*, and (5) *protective / risk-mitigating indicators*. In a second step, additional indicators are evaluated, which mainly relate to personality and psychiatric symptoms. The overall assessment is then, in conclusion, also rated either *low*, *moderate*, or *high*. *VERA-2R* is specifically designed for an application regarding those who have already been identified as being involved in extremist or terrorist acts.

Assessment scheme *TRAP-18*

In comparison to *VERA-2R*, *TRAP-18* is neither a quantitative measuring method, nor a traditional prediction tool.[44] This means that neither the 18 risk factors should be added up, nor does a fixed threshold value exist, above which a prisoner must be classified as dangerous. *TRAP-18* can rather be utilised to support individual decision-making processes of correctional facilities.

Based on research findings regarding massive acts of violence, *TRAP-18* draws on a typology of behaviours that are understood as warning signs. Eight proximal and ten distal behavioural warning signs are assessed. Depending on the detection of one or more cues, especially of proximal ones, surveillance measures are derived. Again, the decision ultimately depends on the qualifications of the practitioners.

Once the suspicion has been verified and possibly confirmed through a science-based process, the intervention team should turn its attention to the **resources of the detainee**. They are often already queried during the risk prediction process, as both the risks and resources of a detainee should be understood at the end of this stage. The following questions may assist the written documentation:

- What is the individual risk?
- What are the risk-relevant factors?
- How pronounced are these?
- What specific examples can be found?

43   *Sadowski et al. 2017*
44   *Rettenberger 2016*

- Is it a static or a changeable (dynamic) factor?
- What is the relevance of the individual factor for further development?
- Which individual resources are available?
- How pronounced are these?
- What examples can be found?
- Is it a static or a changeable (dynamic) resource?
- What is the relevance of the individual resource for further development?

At this point, it should be noted that the preceding status and needs analysis of the detention centre may also indicate that a professional assessment of the trend towards radicalisation should be commissioned from an external expert.

Objectives and evaluation

Definition of de-radicalisation and disengagement

Now that an overview of the risk situation has been established in the previous section, the objective of the intervention must be determined at this stage. Delinquency and forensic evaluation research shows that measures only become effective when treatment and care goals are specified.[45] For an approximation of the answer as to when the mandate is considered accomplished, definitions[46] and limitations are provided below.

In English language specialist literature, the concept described by the German term *Deradikalisierung* is divided into a cognitive and a behavioural component. This results in the following two-fold English terminology: Firstly, the term de-radicalisation itself, which is seen as a process. It is usually initiated by a so-called *trigger*.[47] Such a trigger can be an encounter, an idea, or an event. The end of the reversal of the cognitive radicalisation process marks the abandonment of extremist ideology. This cannot be observed directly. Secondly, the important milestone of *disengagement* is en-route. German translations of this term refer to demobilisation, detachment, or even dissociation. **Disengagement** is understood as a turning away from observable, violent, and possibly terrorist acts, for example by leaving the extremist group. The relevant difference here is that the ideology is, at least in part, retained.

The two definitions yield practical conclusions for the respective interventions. De-radicalisation

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45   Andrews et al. 2010
46   Radicalisation Awareness Network 2016b
47   Feddes et al. 2020

programmes must always include a cognitive component that relates to ideology. Disengagement efforts, on the other hand, are aimed primarily at the behavioural level. The question of whether to work primarily towards de-radicalisation or disengagement is an ongoing debate in prevention research. Is the aspiration to achieve complete de-radicalisation, there are a number of uncertainties regarding the implementation. For instance, the questions of which alternative attitudes are to be regarded as so obviously more positive that the exertion of influence is justified, which interpretation of religion is considered legitimate, and who is to determine these norms. Moreover, there are legal limits to de-radicalisation as an attempt at re-education.[48] Consequently, all efforts with regard to freedom of expression and religion must be sustained by law. The influence of prisons is also subject to the temporal limitations of the sentence. In summary, it can be said that the cognitive renunciation of extremist ideas is much more difficult to achieve. The impact of de-radicalisation programmes should therefore not be overrated. Previous study results suggest that disengagement at the behavioural level without cognitive de-radicalisation is the norm.[49][50]

It should be noted at this point that the enforcement objective of working towards a crime-free life is already deemed to be met through disengagement.[51] In the prison context, the focus can therefore initially be placed on the intermediate objective of disengagement. This does not mean, however, that cognitive de-radicalisation is relegated to the background. In the best case, detainees change their attitudes and can be reintegrated as completely de-radicalised members of society. Disengaging, respectively not engaging is an important step on the long road to this goal. If the term de-radicalisation is used in the following, it is thus rather disengagement or non-engagement, which is the main consideration.

The practitioners of the intervention team should agree on a common objective. It is important to define in writing, by which characteristics success and failure can be measured. This should include a realistic review of the limitations of the own impact framework. Individual changes cannot be forced but can only be encouraged and reinforced.

Evaluation of the process

Once the work objective has been set, the next step is to establish a regular revision of the progress of

48   Vollbach 2017
49   Bjørgo et al. 2009
50   Horgan et al. 2010
51   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b

the intervention measures. It is of fundamental importance to evaluate implemented measures, since access to verified basic knowledge on the prevention of radicalisation in prisons is currently scarce.[52]

It has still not been conclusively resolved as to what extent detention centres are at all suited for prevention, and existing research hardly addresses indexed, event-related intervention research.[53] This makes it all the more important to ensure the effectiveness, or at least prevent counteracting effects, of the measures implemented. Which results in the recommendation to implement regular risk assessments at intervals of about three months .[54] An example of a procedural instrument for the regular review of the effectiveness of measures is the tool *EvIs - Evaluation Criteria for the Prevention of Islamism*.[55]

It is aimed at participants in intervention programmes to document their progress. *EvIs* is therefore not an instrument for risk assessment, but rather functions as a modular system, which means that it can be adapted to the individual objectives of the measure to be evaluated. Indicators from subject areas such as the individual, dealing with critical life events, social structures, and religion and ideology are evaluated with regard to their relevance on the basis of examples. Their purpose is to indicate a turn towards Islamist extremism, and to monitor to what extent this is subject to change over time. Ideally, a survey should be carried out before, during and at the end of a measure. The resulting trend value provides the basis for the assessment of effectiveness.[56]

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52   Hoffmann et al. 2020
53   Kober 2017
54   United Nations on Drugs and Crime 2016b
55   Ullrich et al. 2019
56   EvIs is available on the website of the National Centre for Crime Prevention free of charge

Laundry list "Creating the action plan"

An intervention team should have been formed by this point and a written documentation of the institution's resources should be available. Based on these, the risk assessment of the detainee should be planned and carried out. This step serves the purpose to review the initial suspicion and vague initial impression. Should this be substantiated, the risk and resource analysis as well as the determination of the intervention objective can inform the planning process for de-radicalisation interventions.

PART THREE
Choosing the right interventions

Content

Guidelines for the work
with extremists
Modelling the Levels of
Approach

- Micro-level

- Meso-level

- Macro-level

Guidelines for the work with extremists

Since working with persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals is rather challenging, various institutions and research networks have formulated guidelines for interactions with extremists. Among them are: as an international authority, the *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)[57]*; a working group of the *Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)[58]* focussing on prison and probation and dedicated to concepts to combat violent extremism, based on practical experience and research findings from across Europe; and at a national level, a multitude of public and civil society providers.[59] These guidelines can help to develop a conducive attitude for the planning of measures and interaction:

- Promoting the well-being and rehabilitation of offenders is the best way to safeguard the security of society as a whole.
- The imperative of security and risk management must not be given priority over human and fundamental rights.
- Not all persons convicted of terrorist acts or sympathetic to extremist ideologies present the same risk.
- Extremist offenders are, like all other people, capable of positive change.
- A person who can adopt radical beliefs and attitudes can also lose them.
- Building a relationship of trust, and respectful, appreciative interaction are of particular relevance.
- Against this background, it is important to be as transparent as possible regarding the interventions and to make clear that participation is voluntary. Withdrawal from a programme must not result in disadvantages for detainees.
- Developing future prospects, especially with regard to social integration, is of utmost importance.

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57   *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Handbook 2016b*
58   *Radicalisation Awareness Network 2016a*
59   Allroggen et al. 2020

Modelling the Levels of Approach

Integrated objective

In substance, the term de-radicalisation calls for a reduction of both, extremist ideology and readiness to use violence. The following is intended to provide a comprehensive collection of measures in the broadest sense, based on relevant specialist literature. These are presented with reference to their sociological relevance. The intervention team can select the most suitable starting points for the individual case from the overview, in order to install and implement the measures in the next step. Should the status and needs analysis of the institution suggest that parts of the set of measures should be outsourced, additional information on this can be found in the last chapter. In the past, the inner-German discourse on de-radicalisation and prevention in prisons was dominated by personalised individual measures.[60] A trend that had been encouraged by extensive governmental project funding.[61] Underlying intrapsychic motives often played a particularly important role, while system-related radicalisation factors tended to be underestimated.[62] The international discourse, in comparison, focuses more on the significance of the detention environment and general prison structures for (de-)radicalisation processes.[63] The *Council of Europe*'s *Guidelines for prison and probation services regarding radicalisation and violent extremism*[64] advocate a *Dynamic Security Approach* in this context, which takes account of these very contextual factors in combating extremism. A background for this are research findings that suggest that, in addition to programme content and characteristics of participants, environmental factors also play a role in the effectiveness of treatment measures in the penitentiary system.[65] In other words: There is a tendency to localise the causes of radicalisation and hereby de-radicalisation approaches primarily in the person concerned. Given the complexity and the multiple causes of radicalisation processes, this understanding is too narrow. On the one hand, the realisation remains that against the background of a wide range of underlying individual motives, it is not possible to have a single, universally valid treatment model. On the contrary, the more precisely tailored to the individual and their individual motives, the more promising it is likely to be. This claim to individualisation

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60   Illgner et al. 2020
61   Jakob et al. 2018
62   Ben Slama 2020
63   Illgner et al. in progress
64   *Council of Europe 2016a*
65   Hosser 2008

is supported by the law enforcement legislation of the *Länder*.[66] On the other hand, however, this also means that interventions must not be solely addressed at the individual level, in the form of isolated individual measures. Attempting to achieve de-radicalisation through a single factor is highly likely to result in a deficient effort. The answer to a multifaceted phenomenon can only be a multifaceted proposal. Consequently, this *Handbook for Practitioners* endeavours to present a blend of individual and structural interventions under the term of de-radicalisation interventions.

Levels of Approach

Taking a holistic view of the issue of de-radicalisation interventions entails the acknowledgement that turning away from cognitive and violent extremism is as multi-causal as turning towards it. This understanding results in three levels of action where interventions can be installed.

Most of the existing programmes started at the **micro-level**. It focusses on the detainees. At the **meso-level**, options for interventions revolve around prison staff as part of the judicial system, and at the **macro-level**, the prison system and its organisational interventions are mapped. All three levels are linked to (de-)radicalisation. The intervention team should align their choice of individual and structural interventions as closely as possible with the resources and needs of the detainee, of staff, and of the specific detention centre.

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66   Laubenthal 2015

Micro-level
Interventions for detainees

Meso-level
Interventions for staff

Macro-level
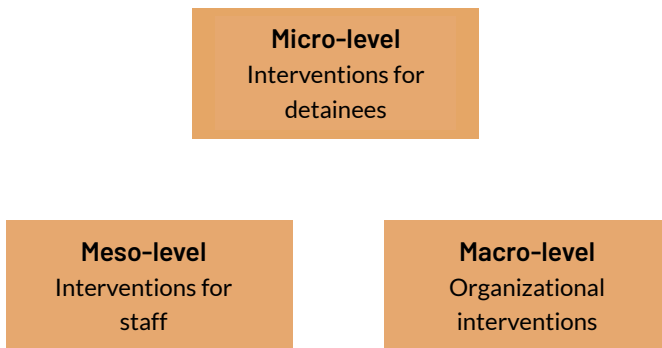Organizational interventions

Figure: Model of the Levels of Approach Representation of the disengagement and de-radicalisation levels.

MICRO-LEVEL

Introduction

Person-centred de-radicalisation efforts are particularly promising when they have an emotional, an ideological, and an everyday component.[67] According to the *UNODC*[68], interventions with detainees should work towards the following key elements:

- To learn how to meet needs in a legitimate way.
- Develop new supportive attitudes and ways of thinking.
- Improve emotional tolerance and acceptance.
- To learn how to express and pursue needs and goals in a legitimate way.
- To demonstrate the deterrent effect of further penalties.
- To establish or intensify the pursuit of a crime-free life.

Intervention setting

The decision regarding the intervention setting should be carefully considered. The choice depends on the objective of the unit, on the person, and on the resources of the institution. In principle, both individual and group measures, as well as a combination of those have their place in de-radicalisation work.

The **group setting** offers a low-threshold opportunity for contact with the prisoners. The group can help create an atmosphere of trust, respect, and personal commitment, especially when dealing with less approachable detainees. These lay the foundations for further cooperation. Group work can also generate personal and interpersonal dynamics that can be harnessed for the intervention objective. For example, in controversial discussions, where different views are presented by participants. The group can provide a corrective element that eliminates the need for a lecturing role of the supervisor, allowing him or her to counteract negative expectations. Another example of positive group effects is that coming into contact with people outside one's own ideology, who may even have been marked as enemies earlier, can help to overcome prejudice. However, group dynamics should not exceed a certain intensity and must be professionally moderated. It is crucial to tap the group's resources in such a way that the prevention objective is achieved.

Many programs in the prevention landscape offer **combined modules**. Group sessions are paired with

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67   *Allroggen et al. 2020*
68   *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b*

one-on-one coaching and individual meetings. Depending on the thematic focus or schedule of the program, one or the other format is utilised. While the group lends itself to joint discussions, exercises and activities, the **individual case setting** with psychotherapeutic approaches, spiritual care or mentoring provides the more flexible and hereby more appropriate format to meet the needs of the individual. Furthermore, participants are often more sincere in an individual setting than in a group.[69]

Principle of rehabilitation

The right of prisoners to rehabilitation is regarded as a central element of the penitentiary system. During enforcement, prisons are obligated to encourage and facilitate a crime-free life post-release for detainees. From a socio-pedagogical point of view, there is a wide range of options available for this purpose, which are regularly applied. In its *Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners*[70], the *UNODC* points out that intervention measures for persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals overlap to a large extent with those to which other detainees are also entitled under the principle of rehabilitation. Many of the factors involved in the de-radicalisation process are addressed by existing support services and rehabilitation measures installed for other reasons.[71] Examples include work and training programmes, courses to promote physical and mental health, and systematic discharge preparation. Taking up efforts against radicalisation therefore means first and foremost to intensify existing rehabilitation measures. Hence, many of the following measures will not necessarily be novel. The novelty value comes from the recognition of their potential in the context of de-radicalisation work. To achieve non- or de-radicalisation, all available means should be utilised, however, without risking a negative impact on the rehabilitation efforts of the rest of the prison population. Excessive care for persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals can lead to them being perceived as a privileged group. Such a special status can lead to hostility or even have a pull towards the extremist group.[72]

Ultimately, existing approaches to rehabilitation work must be expanded to also specifically include aspects of de-radicalisation work. Providing different formats, whether **qualification programmes**, **psychological and cognitive interventions**, **measures for structured recreational activities**,

69   *Radicalisation Awareness Network, 2016a*
70   *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b*
71   *Feddes et al. 2020*
72   *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b*

cooperation with **fellow detainees and mentors,** or a well-considered **transition management**, makes room for the selection of a suitable set of measures for the individual case.

Micro-level interventions

1. Qualification programmes

The heading "qualification programmes" summarises two sub-programmes: **work and training opportunities** on the one hand, and **knowledge transfer** on the other. Both are examined regarding their potential for de-radicalisation.

Work and training opportunities

Work experience, as well as educational and vocational training programmes have a long tradition in the German penitentiary system.[73] This is also a reflection of the importance of professional activity in everyday life beyond the prison walls. Work as an element that adds meaning is an important factor for mental health. Inactivity and boredom are reduced and mental well-being is increased. Work also provides detainees with monetary leeway, albeit limited. Qualification programmes, such as **work** and **educational or vocational training**, promote reintegration and thus mitigate the risk of joining an extremist group.[74] Obtaining educational qualifications or completing vocational training while in the correctional facility is an important step of discharge preparation. It is, particularly in the case of young offenders, essential to offer educational and vocational qualification options based on their interests and skills.[75] In order to teach, promote, and maintain skills for gainful employment after release, **occupational therapy interventions** and **work-related training** are further options.

The number of training opportunities offered during detention is positively linked to a reduction in violence.[76] Meta-analyses also show moderate recidivism-reducing effects of educational and vocational interventions for the period after detention.[77] Work experience, as well as educational and vocational training are thus not a way of preventing future delinquency in every case, but they are one of the many de-radicalisation factors that can have a favourable effect. For ex-offenders, it is of crucial importance that employment outside the penitentiary system can be arranged as part of the transition management process.[78]

73   Theine et al. 2018
74   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b
75   Radicalisation Awareness Network 2019
76   Gadon et al 2006
77   Wilson 2016
78   Wirth 2015

Knowledge transfer

Educational units of any content can be particularly easily integrated into teaching in the juvenile detention system.[79] But also in the adult detention context, efforts should be made in this regard. Acquiring new worlds of knowledge and understanding builds resources against extremist messages. Other positive effects of educational work and knowledge gain are the increase in self-esteem, confidence, and personal status, as well as the emergence of new perspectives.[80]

Historical, political, and cultural education encompasses matters such as the understanding and promotion of democracy, freedom, the rule of law, freedom of expression and religion, and the diversity of society. Current affairs, as well as real-life contents are identified as particularly popular.[81] It is advisable to design interactive sessions that offer an experiential component to the theoretical content.[82]

When dealing with the subject of **religion**, the concept should be designed with a view to universal prevention, i.e. inclusive of all individuals and without a specific target group.[83] This is consistent with the assumption that all people have religious notions, even though they will be of different importance in their lives. Negative, self-reinforcing stigmatisation effects are thus counteracted.

The field of **media education** is becoming increasingly important when faced with digital recruitment campaigns. Despite the limited options in the detention setting, this is an approach that should not be neglected when it comes to arming detainees against propaganda. Online recruitment, which constitutes the decisive instrument in so-called *Extremism 2.0,* has been a part of digitalised daily life for some time now and lowers the entry thresholds to a minimum.[84] Internet search tasks and guided source checks can contribute to a critical perspective when it comes to pictures, videos, or songs.

In all efforts of knowledge transfer, as well as work and training programmes, two factors need to be taken into account:

(1) The very different levels of education in (extremist) prisoners. Many are considered rather uneducated, not, however, leaders and ideologists.

(2) The challenge to point out

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79   For the design of teaching units, please refer to the materials of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) for examples. These are freely available online and are specifically adapted to the subject area of religious extremism.
80   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b
81   Hartlage et al. 2020
82   Groeger-Roth et al. 2020
83   Sponick et al. 2020
84   Violence Prevention Network 2020

different perspectives and to gently initiate thought processes in doing so. A too direct approach can lead to efforts becoming bogged down.

2. Psychological and cognitive interventions

The spectrum of psychological and cognitive interventions exceeds mere psychotherapy by far. This is crucial, as current research does not suggest that terrorists and extremists have higher than average psychopathology scores or are particularly abnormal.[85] Emotional vulnerability and identity or status problems, on the other hand, are common.[86] To lower the recidivism rate and contribute to a more peaceful life in prison, interventions in cognitive-behavioural and learning therapy are suitable options, as they are elsewhere in the penitentiary system.[87] These include, in addition to **psychotherapy**, further measures for personal development. **Resilience promotion**, **identity strengthening interventions**, **competence training**, and cognitive de-radicalisation through **counter-narratives** are among them.

Resilience

A recurring explanation for the fact that some people do not become radicalised and resist extremist propaganda, despite all temptations and eventualities, is the concept of resilience. It refers to the preservation or swift restoration of mental health during or after stressful life events.[88] The German *Federal Centre for Health Education (Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung)*[89] describes resilience as a concept of posttraumatic maturation. Current research results suggest that resilience is dynamic, i.e. modifiable, and therefore trainable.[90] It is therefore not surprising that resilience takes centre stage in many prevention programmes. They are consistent with the approach to strengthen resilience factors, particularly in sympathisers and "at-risk" individuals, to enable them to become and remain resistant to recruitment and extremist ideas. Such interventions are also suitable for persons posing a threat to public security, in order to support their exit and de-radicalisation.

Resilience factors influence the way we think, feel, and interact with others.[91] Substantial research is available on the beneficial effects of the following protective factors, which are to be strengthened within the framework of preventative

85   Ben Slama 2020
86   Hedayah 2013
87   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b
88   Linz 2020
89   Bengel 2012
90   Linz 2020
91   Feddes et al. 2020

measures[92]:

Positive emotions: The regular experience of positive feelings and states such as joy, pride, curiosity, desire, contentment, confidence, cheerfulness, or fulfilment.

Optimism: Defined in accordance with Scheier and Carver[93] as a temporally and situationally stable tendency towards positive perceptions of outcomes that influence further behaviour and contribute to the choice of coping strategies. Low optimism scores among detainees are related to the experience of stigmatisation. High scores, on the other hand, are associated with a willingness to adapt to the community.[94]

Hope: The positive expectation of achieving a goal or having a wish granted. Detainees with little hope of achieving their goals have a higher risk of recidivism.[95]

Self-efficacy: Based on Bandura's *Social Cognitive Theory*[96], self-efficacy refers to the subjective expectation of being able to cope with demands on one's own.

Self-esteem: The individual evaluation of one's own self, according to which one has a fundamentally positive attitude towards oneself, one's own personality and appearance, or not. The topic of self-esteem in the context of detention invites differentiated consideration. Even though some programs follow the assumption that extremists and other detainees have low self-esteem, which they try to compensate for through acts of violence, it is not true in every case that an increase in self-esteem helps prevent violence. Lub[97] points out that inflated self-esteem can also lead to violence and delinquency if personal aspirations cannot be met by legal means. Disappointed expectations can lead to frustration, which in turn can also result in aggression.[98] Instead of increasing self-esteem *per se*, it should be attempted to strengthen the skills and competencies that it is rooted in, so that an appropriate assessment of the self can be achieved.

Locus of control: In relation to Rotter's *Social Learning Theory*[99], the locus of control describes the subjective perception of being able to influence situations. This is an essential factor when prisoners want to actively shape their future and turn their backs on the delinquent lifestyle. The sense of comprehensibility and hardiness also play a role here.

Sense of comprehensibility: Included in this are the three components of

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92   Bengel et al 2012
93   Scheier et al. 1985
94   Moore et al. 2016
95   Martin et al 2010
96   Bandura 1999
97   Lub 2013
98   Endres et al. 2018
99   Rotter 1966

comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness in relation to events[100]. People who evaluate situations and their lives as a whole as meaningful, manageable, and comprehensible exhibit greater resilience.

Hardiness: Hardiness is conceptualised through private and social engagement, locus of control, and the mindset to perceive change as a challenge.

Coping: Depending on situation and requirements, some forms of behaviour can be either beneficial or detrimental to coping with stress or critical life events. Compared to, for example, alcohol or drug consumption, the cognitive restructuring of the event is the more promising attempt at coping in the long term.

Religiousness and spirituality: The current state of research on the effects on mental health is varied. However, there is evidence that religious forms of coping with failure are particularly promising when a deeply religious person must endure extremely high levels of stress.[101] Furthermore, religiousness reduces the frequency of conflict between detainees.[102] More detailed information on religion can be found in this chapter under the subheading

Faith-based interventions.

Social support: Socially isolated individuals have a much higher risk of illness and death than people with functioning social networks.[103] Apart from quantity, the quality of social ties is important when it comes to the objective of de-radicalisation.

Interventions to increase resilience and mental health achieve small to moderate effects. Positive effects are particularly evident in the short term.[104] Resilience interventions are therefore a good addition to the prevention landscape.

Identity strengthening interventions

Many existing programs explicitly address identity development and stabilisation. This may be partly because adequate self-esteem and healthy self-efficacy, both of which are highly relevant factors for mental health, are considered as components of identity.[105] Identity is the awareness of one's own individuality in relation to other people, moreover the certainty of being perceived by others as the same person at different times and in different situations.[106] Above all, however, identity depends on how one sees oneself in the context of society and

100   Antonovsky 1973
101   Dörr 2004
102   Kerley et al. 2006
103   House et al. 2003
104   Linz 2020
105   Pütz et al. 2011
106   Nienstedt 2007

what one hopes to gain from it.[107] These are issues that pose a challenge to extremists, such as persons posing a threat to public security. This is particularly true if they have already been involved in the parallel universe of their extremist group for a long time. Many have to further differentiate and revise their one-sided identity as an extremist, which suppresses the other parts, through new layers of identity. Finding out where they belong is an important and at the same time difficult task for them. Failure to build a coherent identity can lead to negative feelings, which in turn can have a lasting impact on social skills and problem-solving abilities.[108] Identity-forming themes such as origin, culture, religion, and world views are equally significant for sympathisers and "at-risk" individuals.

Psychotherapy

Even though mental disorders are not necessarily related to extremism, there are nevertheless persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals with a psychotherapeutic indication. This results from three possible scenarios, which lead to psychological strain:

- The manifestation of a mental disorder is the cause of the radicalisation process.
- The manifestation of a mental disorder is the result of radicalisation processes, of extremist acts of violence, and/or of witnessing such.
- The manifestation of a mental disorder can eventuate without a reference to extremism.

Based on current literature[109] it can be assumed that mental illness cannot be identified as a clear or even the sole cause of radicalisation processes. Nevertheless, there are certain disease patterns that are of importance. Delusional and autistic spectrum disorders are frequently mentioned in this context, even though they are more common in individual perpetrators where a profound radicalisation is not to be expected.[110] It seems rather that socially relevant and much talked about topics are incorporated into the delusional system, and that these, in consequence, lead to extremist actions.[111]

Of greater significance for violent extremism are mental disorders associated with an increased propensity to violence. These include substance use disorders, narcissistic

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107   Pütz et al. 2011
108   Petermann et al. 2017
109   Misiak et al. 2019
110   Corner et al 2015
111   Allroggen 2020

or antisocial personality disorders, and delusional disorders.[112] While those are never the sole reason for radicalisation of, for example, sympathisers or "at-risk" individuals, they nevertheless cause a lowered psychological barrier for violent behaviour. Coming to terms with mental disorders that are considered to be causal for an already manifested radicalisation or that become relevant in the course of recruitment is an important component of de-radicalisation work. The effects of intramural psychotherapeutic treatment of offenders are assumed to reduce recidivism by up to 15%.[113] Research on mental disorders as a result of radicalisation, on the other hand, is still in its early stages.[114] This also applies to effects of de-radicalisation processes on psychological well-being.[115] With regard to the execution or the direct observation of extremist violence, to date publications have primarily focused on post-traumatic stress disorder. It is evident here, that post-traumatic stress disorders, characterised by the recurring intensive experience of the traumatic situation in so-called flashbacks, can lead to a high level of suffering among those affected. Post-traumatic stress disorders can be treated in the course of psychotherapy.

Under the conditions of a correctional facility, psychotherapy faces a number of challenges. To achieve a long-term effect of the treatment, the motivation for the therapy is crucial. Where there is none to begin with, an attempt can be made to encourage it. The fact that working on cognitive contents, its restructuring, and the practice of alternative interpretations and behaviours requires a minimum of communicative and introspective skills, is an additional complicating factor. In order to nevertheless facilitate the participation in psychotherapy for as many persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals as possible, special expertise is required by the attending personnel. Sometimes it may make sense to wait until the required competencies are available before starting regular treatment. Furthermore, treatment motivation can be promoted through targeted measures. In yet other cases, when the counselling process is substantially affected by the disorder at hand, psychotherapy is a basic prerequisite for further interventions. This must be examined on a case-by-case basis.

Competence training

Competencies are considered to be skills that are applied to obstacles

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112   Nestor 2002
113   Endres 2012
114   Speckhardt et al. 03/08/2020
115   Allroggen 24/03/2020

and problems.[116] They are the result of a cognitive and social learning process and less the outcome of pure knowledge transfer. In addition to social phenomena such as marginalisation or discrimination, individual competencies or their absence are discussed as causes of radicalisation. Consistent with this, it can be seen that particularly interventions aimed at a further development of personal competencies lead to an improvement in the legal prognosis.[117] Accordingly, the aspiration is to strengthen them when working with sympathisers and "at-risk" individuals, but also with persons posing a threat to public security. Competence trainings address affective-emotional, cognitive, and social skills of everyday life, set different priorities, or offer a combination of all levels. It is not uncommon for the training of one competency to create synergies for others. They can be conducted in the course of an existing psychotherapy or as a stand-alone training. Prior to giving examples of competence trainings in the following, the relevance of self-perception and perception by others will be discussed first.

Self-perception and perception by others as a basis

Perception and processing of stimuli are core tasks of the human psyche. In this context, external, environmental impressions are as much subjected to a permanent evaluation process, as are internal physiological processes. This process essentially determines which action strategies are derived. Based on studies on *social information processing*, evidence has been gathered that in some people there are already momentous distortions in the initial perception.[118] An example for this are young people with so-called externalising disorders. They often display a distorted perception of others[119], which can lead to aggression and even to violence. Goren and Petermann[120] assume that in these cases attention is primarily bound by aggressive stimuli and that fewer social stimuli are being analysed in total. As a result, hostility is attributed to another person and the corresponding action strategy is derived. For the ability to exhibit behaviour appropriate to the situation, self-perception and the perception of others must be enhanced and, if possible, cleansed of counterproductive assumptions. When the selection process of the inner and/or outer world is disrupted, the following competence trainings can become more difficult. Addressing self-perception and the perception of others is therefore in itself considered

116   Weinert 2001
117   Dugas et al. 2014
118   Petermann et al. 2017
119   Dodge et al. 1997
120   Goren et al. 2011

a possible de-radicalisation intervention for individuals at the micro-level, which should be given priority where indicated. This involves **strengthening the capacity of perception, classification, and judgement** in the broadest sense.

In addition to a self-perception and perception of others that is appropriate to the situation, there are a variety of other competencies that are of importance in the field of extremism and resistance to recruitment efforts. Based on the most frequent mentions, three clusters emerge[121], from which measures can be selected for an intervention:

Training of social competencies
Social competencies are understood as the skills necessary to successfully manage social interactions.[122] Since they are of fundamental importance for human beings in their everyday contacts and **relationship building**, socially competent behaviour is the subject of many interventions, which are considered to be particularly promising for younger people.[123] When social interaction leaves the familiar cultural framework, misunderstandings and even resentment or hostility can arise. These can be countered with the

help of **intercultural competence training**. They have a preventative effect against prejudice by creating a positive experience of social diversity through meeting others.[124] Exercises on **communication skills and body language** are useful tools to train adequate contact making. Both are skills that play a notable role in conflict prevention. Suarez and colleagues[125] were able to demonstrate positive effects of nonviolent communication training on recidivism rates.

Training of problem solving skills
De-escalation language is a building block of problem solving. Through debates from which no one emerges as the winner or the loser, but where different opinions have to be endured and accepted, persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals learn to **live with controversy** and try out **adopting perspectives** at the same time. During the process of relationship building with prison staff, a close person and their views can also cause a positive disruption for detainees. The competence of **critical thinking** is equally called upon. It can be specifically focused on in an intervention, in order to work towards recognising critical situations early on, and to set de-

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121   *The categorisation of the clusters is one of many possible variants. That is owed to the fact*
       that the concept of competence, including its individual facets, is used very heterogeneously
       in the literature Different terms emerge for the same competencies.
122   *Orpinas 2010*
123   *Groeger-Roth et al. 2018*
124   *Groeger-Roth et al. 2018*
125   *Suarez et al. 2014*

escalative impulses. Increased problem-solving skills yield positive effects on self-esteem, locus of control,[126] and the legal prognosis.[127]

Training of emotional competencies
Appropriate self-perception and perception of others play a particularly important role for training in emotion regulation and empathy. In interaction with others, but also for the identification of one's own motives, it is important to be aware of emotional states. In terms of perspective-taking, it is important to generate emotional understanding towards others and to build up a certain "conflict intelligence" through **empathy**. For one's own emotional world, it is important to manage existing emotions and their intensity to retain the ability to make decisions. Studies have shown that different strategies of emotion regulation can be targeted and trained with prisoners.[128] Anti-aggression training is probably the best known example of existing approaches in detention.
The **regulation of emotions** is also connected to one's own levels of **frustration tolerance** and **self-control**. These competencies are particularly relevant when dealing with praise, criticism, and failure. Their absence becomes particularly

crisis-prone when a positive self-image is lacking, coupled with a poor ability to delay gratification and to persevere in pursuing a goal.[129] As a result, experiences of frustration lead more quickly to an emotional and psychological state of emergency that leaves detainees behind vulnerable. This provides a breeding ground for extremist propaganda and violent spillover. To reduce aggressive behaviour, training on the subject of self-control is suitable alongside units on building frustration tolerance. The overall objective of the training modules is to improve participants' ability to deal with their own emotions, and to facilitate a better understanding of the emotional experience of others.

Counter-Narratives
A classic example of cognitive de-radicalisation are the so-called counter-narratives.[130] As already outlined at the start, de-radicalisation means, apart from disengagement, first and foremost the detachment from ideology. This can only be achieved through confrontation with and delegitimisation of ideological narratives.[131] The persuasive power of the dominant narrative is, in this strategy, undermined by contrasting it with an alternative interpretation.

126   McGuire et al. 2001
127   Todis et al. 2001
128   Brazao et al. 2017
129   Petermann et al. 2017
130   Radicalisation Awareness Network 2018
131   Dovermann 2013

They are considered to have a particularly resounding effect if they are plausible, are presented by a credible person, and are characterised by the same cultural origin as the original narrative itself.[132] The ideal outcome of such a substantiated debate, however, is not to convince, but rather to sow the seeds of doubt. The goal is to demystify toxic narratives. The literature suggests three possible ways in which this can be achieved:[133]

(1) by deconstructing the content of the ideology,
(2) by undermining their credibility, or
(3) by creating positive alternatives.[134]

A narrative approach based on personal experience is recommended for the basic tone of the conversation. Thereby, persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals are prevented from hiding behind their ideology. Waging wars of words at the level of abstract beliefs, however, can lead to a solidification of extremist ideas.

3. Structured recreational activities

Mental and physical well-being can be modulated with the help of structured recreational activities. Inactivity and boredom can be counteracted with activity. Creating recreational opportunities reduces physical violations and escalating situations.[135] Recreational opportunities should also be maintained on weekends and public holidays, as the detention experience is substantially influenced by the recreational and treatment opportunities taken part in. At the same time, they provide the opportunity for positive identity development. Recreational opportunities should be varied and can, for example, include **faith-based content**, **cultural and creative** or **sporting activities**, in addition to qualification programmes. The use of **mentors** is also possible.

Faith-based interventions
The extent to which religion can be considered a factor of radicalisation is called into question rather strongly by the current discourse.[136] It claims that the conventional state of knowledge on the subject of Islam has the effect that a close link is drawn with extremism. As a result, it states, entire population groups are becoming stigmatised and marginalised.[137] The perception

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132   Endres et al. 2018
133   Endres et al. 2018
134   Briggs et al. 2011
135   Bachmann 2009
136   Sponick et al. 2020
137   Githens-Mazer et al. 2010

that extremism is inherent to Islam is contradicted by the observation that radicalised individuals sometimes only have a basic knowledge of the religion.[138] It is important to diversify the little existing knowledge that extremists have[139] about Islam, and not to leave the sovereignty of interpretation to persons posing a threat to public security or to other extremists. Credible and trustworthy people should take this on. Especially in the case of strongly ideologised extremists, their intellectual challenge is a difficult task. One-on-one conversations through **spiritual care**, **religious dialogue** in discussion and prayer groups, and the celebration of **religious festivals** are the building blocks of faith-based intervention. Based on these, religion can be shown as a resource for coping with life crises. The sense of community and belonging are particularly important elements here.

Spiritual guidance: The *RAN*[140] describes the dialogue with persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and with "at-risk" individuals as the golden first rule of intervention work. Extremists want, first and foremost, a conversational partner, with whom they can talk about their concerns and needs - which, in the case of Islamists, often concern their own religion. The appropriate training and experience of the person deployed must be specifically assessed. It is important that they are seen as credible and trustworthy by both, the detainees and public authorities. This is a particular challenge, since it is necessary for the work with prisoners to be perceived by them as independent. In this context, the question is discussed whether, due to their high credibility among Islamist extremist detainees, actors from the non-violent Salafist scene could be considered as counsellors. Depending on the circumstances, the price of disengagement, of the renunciation of violence, could well be the promotion of anti-democratic attitudes, which would no longer justify speaking of de-radicalisation. Whoever is ultimately chosen, the demand is inevitably there. The call for a significant expansion of Muslim prison chaplaincy is therefore frequently voiced.[141] In comparison to the Christian pastoral care infrastructure, it is still poorly anchored in the prison system.[142] It is, for example, not unusual that detainees of Christian

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138   *Ülger et al. 2016*
139   *Marsden 2016*
140   *Radicalisation Awareness Network 2016b*
141   *Sponick et al. 2020*
142   *In Germany, spiritual care in prisons may only be provided by public entities. This includes the major Christian churches. Due to the decentralised organisational structure in micro-groups, the only Muslim organisation to enjoy this status is the organisation Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat. As a result, "Muslim chaplains" lack a duty of confidentiality and, when in doubt, must always testify in court, which*

denominations are able to contact a chaplain at any time of the day or night. Muslim prisoners, among them also persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals, often do not have this opportunity. This is also due to the lack of ecclesiastical structures in Islam.[143] As a consequence, spiritual guidance in the penitentiary system is mainly provided by volunteer imams, while Christian pastoral care is institutionalised and provided by professional clergy.[144] This difference is critical, as perceptions of injustice and resource allocation conflicts are conducive to extremist propaganda.

There is a reasonable hope that an expansion of Muslim prison chaplaincy could contribute to an indirect diversification of religious views, and to a revision of extreme interpretations of Islam. Chaplains can both challenge views and provide access to non-jihadist interpretations. At the same time, spiritual care must not be taken over by the de-radicalisation mandate. Muslim spiritual care must be given its place within the correctional treatment system, but not primarily with a rehabilitation or even crime prevention mandate. The fundamental concept is that of individual, spiritual guidance. Faith-based interventions and spiritual

care should be clearly separated to prevent misappropriation.

Religious practice: Beyond general offers of spiritual care, formats of **religious dialogue** such as **discussion and prayer groups**, but also the **celebration of religious festivals** offer an opportunity for engagement. Places where people with a basic religious interest come together always also lend themselves as recruitment spaces to persons posing a threat to public security. The *UNODC*[145] therefore recommends the implementation of monitoring procedures. There is, however, no reason to fundamentally question the freedom of religious practice, since it is protected by fundamental rights and guaranteed by criminal enforcement legislation. A study on de-radicalisation interventions in the Austrian penitentiary system showed that it was possible to raise doubts about extremist ideology by talking to persons with an Islamic theological background.[146] However, care should be taken in moderated discussion and prayer groups not to create the impression that one interpretation is presented as "true Islam" by the authorities. Islam has many streams and interpretations. This diversity must be acknowledged and at the same time it must be

creates a considerable tension field.
143   *Stelly et al. 2017*
144   *Endres et al. 2018*
145   *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b*
146   *Hofinger et al. 2017*

made clear that each individual bears the responsibility for their own behaviour and interpretation of faith. Suitable topics for formats of religious dialogue are, for example, religion in relation to coexistence, peace, and security.[147]

Muslim prisoners have, to the same extent as members of other religions, not only the desire for spiritual support, but also the need to practise their religion. Examples are the traditional Friday prayer and the festive prayers during Ramadan. There are many positive effects of lived religiousness in the prison system as well. These include the strengthening of self-confidence and discipline, a sense of belonging, and a reduction in aggression and the likelihood of delinquent behaviour.[148][149] The lack of opportunity to practice religion, on the other hand, can influence radicalisation processes negatively.

Fellow prisoners and mentoring

To complement the question of who can provide support to persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and to "at-risk" individuals within the framework of de-radicalisation efforts, another concept is the **listener** scheme.[150] Listeners are suitable detainees convicted of terrorist offences, who are specially trained exiters and who can be called upon to provide support. But also through contact with **fellow prisoners** who are not part of a Muslim community or an Islamist group, the ideological basis of persons posing a threat to public security and sympathisers can be destabilised. Especially when there is a falling-out with close relatives, the social ties with fellow prisoners can be of the greatest influence. In this sense, also civil society **mentors** from the outside can provide support. Both, the individual personality and interpersonal skills, need to be assessed and are crucial in the selection of suitable individuals. In addition, a certain expert status in the subject area is required. It must be ensured that there has been no relationship of any kind between mentor and prisoner prior to their joint working period. In coming to terms with the criminal past, mentors can make an important contribution as representatives of society.

Creative and cultural activities

Creative and cultural programmes such as **arts and crafts**, **theatre,** or **music** should exceed the *Risk-Need-Responsivity objective*[151] by far. Detainees can learn to express

147   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b
148   Spalek et al. 2007
149   Mulcahy et al. 2013
150   Hofinger et al. 2017
151   The RNR principle provides for the alignment of treatment resources along the risk principle, the need principle, and the responsivity principle. However, this results in a fixation on high-risk groups. Particularly when it comes to recreational activities, all

themselves, develop new personal strengths, gain hope and motivation, and build a new facet of identity. Ideally, all this happens in a setting without pressure and external evaluation. Moreover, the energy of the persons posing a threat to public security, of sympathisers, and of "at-risk" individuals is directed towards something other than extremist activities and content.

Art and the discussion of their own creations also foster important competencies. Next to communication skills, it is most notably self-reflection, which is required. This can concern their own past, their own life, or their own feelings. The intention is to create art that has a therapeutic effect and of which the production process already is an important goal. The creative engagement in the course of a theatre play or a piece of music as a joint activity, which is not determined by competition, additionally serves to reduce prejudices.[152] Particularly promising are those encounters that work towards a common goal, such as an artistic piece of work.

Sporting activities
Just like cultural activities, sports should be offered to the greatest possible extent. Sporting activity is also probably one of the lowest threshold measures. Often the first recreational activity after entering prison, physical exercise offers a good opportunity to unwind from daily prison life and loosen up routines. This is an intervention that is particularly accessible for persons posing a threat to public security, as it does not necessarily imply a public declaration of conformity.

Sporting activity can be pursued either in a team or alone. The group provides a social learning environment. Leadership skills, conflict resolution, safety, and health can be addressed. Even individual training offers positive side effects of physical activity, even though there is a certain scepticism towards, for example, weight training equipment in the prison system.

4. Transition Management
The approaching moment of release is a period of considerable tension for those involved, including, but not limited to, persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals. Decisive planning of the correctional transition can provide a remedy here. In the course of the so-called transition management, a spectrum of interventions is available, which are intended to improve the social participation of formerly imprisoned persons. During the **preparations for discharge**, it is important to include the **receiving environment**. Despite the relevance of the issue and despite

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detainees should be given as much consideration as possible in order to ensure positive activities.
152   Aronson et al. 2010

the fact that pre-discharge assistance is prescribed by law, it is not always sufficiently taken up.[153]

Discharge Preparations

For the organisation of a successful transition, at the very latest, cooperation in a multi-professional team is advisable. Such support is needed, as times of transition are always times of psychological vulnerability, which are associated with an increased risk of recidivism.[154] This equally applies to those whose de-radicalisation has been successfully initiated, as it does to the persons posing a threat to public security, the sympathisers, and the "at-risk" individuals who, despite all efforts, have not been reached. Moreover, prisoners released from the prison system, but especially terrorist offenders, face a number of obstacles on the way to social reintegration. The *RAN*[155] identifies three particularly critical factors to be addressed thematically by the intervention team during discharge preparation:

The issue of **stigmatisation**: Offenders who feel they are victims of prejudgement are tempted to see their radicalised identity reconfirmed. In addition, there is often great **distrust of public institutions** and their representatives. It is of crucial importance to set a contrasting example in the interaction, and to work towards a trusting relationship. Without trust in public institutions or at least in independent associations providing assistance to offenders, a heightened perception of injustice on the part of the offender and subsequent social (self-)isolation can occur. A contributing factor to this mistrust is also the fact that **release conditions** for persons from the extremist-ideological milieu are often stricter. For instance, increased monitoring and control by the authorities. Not infrequently, this leads to re-imprisonment, which puts an abrupt end to the attempts at reintegration into society as a whole.

As the release date is approaching, specific day-to-day issues should be resolved. Suitable **housing** and **vocational integration** are important examples of successful transition management. But **psychosocial care** and attachment should also be taken care of, as the time after imprisonment is another critical milestone in de-radicalisation work. Successful moments need to be consolidated, processes that have begun need to be followed up, and failed attempts need to be reinstalled. De-radicalisation programmes in the outpatient setting have higher effect sizes than intramural inpatient

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153   *Dünkel et al. 2013*
154   *Radicalisation Awareness Network 2019*
155   *Radicalisation Awareness Network 2019*

efforts[156] and for this reason alone are an important component of discharge planning. This should be tailored to the receiving environment, according to *UNODC*[157].

Receiving environment

In addition to the reintegration of former prisoners into society as a whole, their personal domain is of particular importance. It represents an important part of the support network. Social reference structures of this kind are a key element of rehabilitation work. It is for a reason that many de-radicalisation programmes place an emphasis on the reinforcement of positive relationships beyond the extremist scene and the detention centre. They are important for the creation of a non-extremist future scenario. Studies show that particularly interventions aimed at creating a supportive social receiving environment improve the legal prognosis.[158]

This may be mainly due to the fact that a massive restriction of social contacts results from joining an extremist group, sometimes in combination with a stay abroad, but at the very latest upon detention. It is not uncommon for prisoners to lose touch with **work colleagues, acquaintances**, and **friends**. The role of the intervention team is to support detainees in maintaining trusting relationships beyond the period of imprisonment and to envisage social connection thereafter.

As previous friendships and contacts are severed during detention, relationships with **fellow detainees** or **prison staff** become more important. There is usually also an intensification of the remaining contact with **relatives**.[159] Involving the family in transition management can therefore be crucial. Especially in juvenile detention, or when offenders return to the parental home, it is worthwhile to arrange support services for the parents. Family counselling is increasingly gaining ground as a stand-alone de-radicalisation intervention. Research has shown that positive changes within the family situation can trigger de-radicalisation processes.[160] However, there is also the opposite effect. De-radicalisation processes are sabotaged and the development and expansion of the receiving social environment is severely disrupted if the relatives themselves show a tendency towards Islamist extremism. It is therefore not only a matter of existing ties, but also and most notably one of their prosocial quality. If extremist ideas are present, the detainee must distance themselves from their family in the long term.

156   *Suhling 2018*
157   *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016a*
158   *Allroggen et al. 2020*
159   *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016a*
160   *Köhler 2017*

Such an undertaking can only succeed if it is completely voluntary. It would also be problematic to formulate this as a goal of interventions.

Laundry list "Micro-level"

At the micro-level of disengagement and de-radicalisation interventions, there are a multitude of interventions that are applicable in the context of detention under the objective of rehabilitation. These include work and training opportunities in the course of qualification programmes, or resilience promotion, identity strengthening measures, and competence training as psychological and cognitive interventions. In the course of structured recreational activities, the social space of prison as well as creative, cultural, and physical activities play a role. And transition management is also by no means a novel intervention. The objective is to understand these existing structures in terms of their de-radicalisation effect, to intensify them, and to expand them to include aspects of radicalisation and extremism. Such additions can be addressed with knowledge transfer, through psychotherapy, wrapped in counter-narratives, underpinned by faith-based interventions, or with the purposeful inclusion of the receiving environment.

MESO-LEVEL

Introduction

By taking the meso-level into consideration, the range of de-radicalisation interventions is extended by an additional facet beyond individual measures relating to specific individuals. This section focuses on the role of officials, first and foremost that of general correctional services staff. Personnel in the prison system play a role in (de-)radicalisation processes for the following reasons:

- Prison staff are often the first to notice extremist tendencies and emerging radicalisation.
- The objective evaluation of this first impression is in their hands.
- The daily contact with persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals creates opportunities to encourage non- or de-radicalisation.
- The significance of the relationships of detainees with fellow prisoners and with officials increases greatly due to the restriction of social contacts during detention.
- Every interaction can be understood as a de-radicalisa-tion intervention.
- Dealing with persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals presents a significant challenge. Furthermore, many demands and expectations put pressure on the staff. In regards to mental hygiene, it is important to provide support.
- The overall detention experience plays a central role in the (de-)radicalisation context.

Opportunities for further training and supportive counselling can be provided in the form of **knowledge transfer**, **competence training**, **supervision**, **individual case guidance**, or modules on **mental hygiene**.

Meso-level interventions

1. Knowledge transfer

On the one hand, prison staff and persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals share the experiential space of detention. On the other hand, the worlds in which they move could not be more different. To enable the smoothest possible interaction between these worlds and to be able to meet the growing challenges, it is important to provide staff with as much support as possible. In this context, the first step is often a comprehensive analysis of relevant contents in order to derive appropriate strategies for action in the next step. Building up expertise is an indispensable building block. It is, for example, common for prisoners of all denominations to turn to their religion in the course of imprisonment. In the least of all cases, this factor implies violent radicalisation.[161] The prejudice that religiousness and extremism are closely linked is still very present, and is making risk assessment rather difficult. Moreover, a false suspicion can quickly become a catalyst for radicalisation.

Without appropriate training and experience, it is practically impossible to tell the difference between the range of Muslim religiousness and Islamist extremism, and even with the appropriate expertise it is still a challenge. On the one hand it is, according to *UNODC*[162], important to understand the threat and to know the narratives of the milieu, and on the other hand to internalise that there are no stereotypical persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, or "at-risk" individuals. General correctional services staff must not be abandoned with this task. All staff who come into contact with the phenomenon of extremism, even remotely, should at least be equipped with basic knowledge on the subject. Those who are in direct contact with persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, or "at-risk" individuals need in-depth specialist knowledge. But here, too, a differentiated view is required. Actively addressing the issue of religious radicalisation can increase sensitivity in this area, but there may also be unintended effects of focusing on a phenomenon that is rather rare in daily prison life. To avoid causing vague and general concern, it is important to discuss the issues professionally and in the context of existing case numbers and statistical

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161 *Radicalisation Awareness Network 2016a*
162 *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016a*

analyses.

Further training on the following topics can be helpful in creating a differentiated knowledge base:

- Religions and their significance
- The distinction between Islam and Islamism
- Cultural sensitivity
- Systemic racism and Islamophobia
- Flight and trauma
- Psychosocial mechanisms of (de-)radicalisation
- Recognising radicalisation
- Dealing with radicalisation and extremism
- Impacts of detention and detention experience on radicalisation
- Other services customised to the needs of staff and institution, where the content is developed by consultation (with external providers)

All knowledge units and following competence trainings can be transferred to the individual teams by multipliers following the train-the-trainer principle, so that as many staff members as possible can benefit. At times, utilising existing expertise within the individual detention centre may be useful. Available teaching materials, for example, can often be of interest to personnel in an adapted version.

2. Psychological and cognitive interventions

In addition to theoretical knowledge, separate modules are needed for practical interaction. Whether in inter-prisoner situations or in direct confrontations between detainees and prison staff, challenging situations are part of the daily work routine. Applying trained skills, from standard contact to escalating extreme situations, contributes to the safety of all involved and therefore has its place in the initial vocational training. Skills can be built up, trained, and maintained within the scope of broadening **competence training**. In addition to the knowledge and the application of suitable action strategies, there is a further challenge for the personnel. As such, long-term work with persons posing a threat to public security, with sympathisers, and with "at-risk" individuals is probably even more demanding, cognitively and psychologically, than work with other prisoners. Helplessness to the point of feeling overwhelmed can result from a frequent lack of motivation among prisoners to participate in treatment interventions, from high demands on interpersonal skills, and from escalating situations. In such moments, an **advisory network** is required, not least in order to

prevent permanent damage to the relationship between personnel and detainees, which is crucial for the (de-)radicalisation process.

Competence training

To successfully cope with daily life in detention, both staff and detainees need social, emotional, and problem-solving skills. The *Council of Europe*[163], for example, explicitly advocates the qualification of law enforcement personnel in the areas of **crisis management** and **mediation**. However, as is also the case in the rest of (de-)radicalisation research, available data on the subject of efficacy is sparse. Another option is to consider surveys with detainees beyond the target group of persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals. Results show that training on mediation techniques, which was attended by both detainees and law enforcement personnel, strengthened the relationships between the two groups. After trainings, interviewed staff members also stated that they would take a greater sense of safety back to their work.[164]

Especially an advanced knowledge of de-escalating communication facilitates two beneficial effects.

Firstly, physical confrontations can be prevented. It has been shown for instance that trained, experienced staff are significantly less likely to be attacked by detainees.[165] They are also more capable of recognising conflicts between detainees and preventing violence. Secondly, staff are provided with the skills to counter ideologised rhetoric and, at the same time, to promote a democratic communication culture.

Guidance

It is not uncommon for public servants in the general correctional services to enter early retirement due to an incapacity for work.[166][167] Moreover, levels of sick leave can be high in enforcement practice, but this can vary greatly from one locality to another. In its report, the *UNODC*[168] emphasises that appropriate support mechanisms are needed for staff to be able to sustain the high level of professional standards and ethical requirements when working with extremists. Team-based peer consulting, reviews of individual cases, and supervision can help to meet the challenges. **Peer consulting** is the lowest threshold approach to counselling and is recommended within the peer consulting team. However, other colleagues can also

163   *Council of Europe 2016*
164   McWilliam et al. 2015
165   Gadon et al. 2006
166   Senatsverwaltung für Justiz Berlin 28/04/2015
167   Landtag Baden-Württemberg 18/07/2019
168   *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016a*

be consulted. Some institutions already have experienced staff in the field of de-radicalisation work. Especially at the beginning of a career in the correctional services, it is valuable to assign mentors who are tasked with supporting new staff members. Formal mentoring enhances the learning process and reduces the likelihood of burnout in the long run.[169]

Reviews of individual cases in the course of law enforcement planning and its continuation are, at the latest, the point at which questions concerning persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals can be placed. In contrast, the introduction of an uninvolved person as part of a clinical **supervision** has the advantage that there are no conflicts of loyalty for either the supervisor or the staff. Supervisors use different methods to moderate the group. Conflicts, requests for help, and unresolved issues are discussed and solutions are generated together. Topics range from the smallest irritations in contact with persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, or "at-risk" individuals, right up to crisis situations. To assist in coping with assaults and traumatic stress, support should be provided beyond supervision, for example

(occasional) psychotherapeutic counselling sessions in one-on-one settings. Offender treatment interventions in general have been shown to be more effective when law enforcement personnel make use of clinical supervision.[170] However, enforcement practice shows that team supervision is not very common.[171] Alongside the question of whether such an offer exists in the first place, the quality of such interventions also plays a role. It can have a negative impact on job satisfaction if supervision is perceived as poor.[172]

In addition to case work support, employees also benefit from training courses on **mental hygiene**. As in other organisations too, this can be addressed through stress management workshops, relaxation techniques, or mindfulness exercises, for example in the course of occupational health management.

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169   Farnese et al. 2017
170   Suhling 2018
171   Jäger 2015
172   Garland et al. 2009

Laundry list "Meso-level"

Behind the targeted promotion of knowledge transfer and psychological and cognitive interventions is the following fact: Every interaction can be understood as a de-radicalisation intervention. Any positive, respectful contact challenges attitudes of "black and white", "evil versus good", or "us and them" of an extremist ideology. It takes a network of support for staff members to achieve the required level of engagement in the long term.

MACRO-LEVEL

Introduction

At the macro level, the perspective is directed at the prison system, represented by the penitentiary administration. For the illustration of potential de-radicalisation interventions, this results in measures at the organisational level. These mark the final building block of a holistic understanding of de-radicalisation.

Radicalisation in prisons is a rare phenomenon according to current research. It is not uncommon though that detention conditions play a significant role, as the entire detention experience has an influence on (de-)radicalisation processes.[173] Individual interventions for persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals that are implemented in isolation from the prison context are therefore unlikely to yield positive results. Specific decisions by the penitentiary administration that affect everyday life, however, have a considerable influence on how prisoners experience and evaluate their time in detention. This includes decisions regarding the **prison regime**, based on housing and personnel management, as well as the fostered **prison climate**. In the end, the **security concept** also plays

an essential role. The significance of all these factors for de-radicalisation work should not be underestimated in any case. Appropriate prison management is crucial in the battle against radicalisation and recruitment. The institution's management should utilise its creative discretion in terms of current research findings. For example, decisions regarding occupancy plans, segregation and grouping processes are not only subject to the laws of the *Länder*, but also to each institution's internal considerations. Correctional facilities have different organisational choices, but they also differ in terms of other factors. Staffing ratios and capacities vary depending on the availability of financial resources, as does existing experience in dealing with persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals. Against this background, the feasibility of the interventions listed below must be assessed for the individual correctional facility. The recommendations should nevertheless be taken into account as far as possible.

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173   *Hofinger et al. 2017*

Macro-level interventions

1. Prison regime

The prison regime, housing and monitoring conditions of a detainee should depend in their stringency on the outcome of the risk and resource analysis. Furthermore, it is important to take into account the findings from the literature in order to create an ideal setting for de-radicalisation work. The planning implications that result from this for **housing and personnel management** are explained in the following section.

Housing management

The housing of persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals can be structured in different ways. The *RAN*[174] formulates the objective to deal with extremists as normally as possible, while avoiding risks to themselves, to fellow prisoners, to staff, or to society. A demand that makes clear what a balancing act this is. Essentially, there are two variants to be weighed up:

- Housing in special wards, either in isolation or with others.
- Housing with other prisoners in the same ward, either in isolation or with others.

Perhaps the most obvious benefit of housing persons posing a threat to public security separately from the rest of the prison population, including sympathisers and "at-risk" individuals, is that it reduces the risk of recruitment. Moreover, specially trained personnel can focus entirely on the supervision and control of such a ward. However, such considerations must not disregard the following points: While segregated housing protects other detainees from hypothetical radicalisation, it considerably weakens the de-radicalisation work with persons posing a threat to public security. Segregation in a "high-risk ward" can result in the reinforcement of the extremist group identity among detainees, and in an increase of access barriers. The elimination of interaction with other prisoners also means the elimination of an important corrective process. Contact with detainees who are not ideologised has proven to be beneficial in previous studies.[175] The *UNODC*[176] also refers to the potential increase in stigmatisation and rejection of persons posing a threat to public security, which in turn makes their integration more difficult. Ultimately,

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174   *Radicalisation Awareness Network 2019*
175   *Hofinger et al. 2017*
176   *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b*

there is no guarantee that segregated housing will not inspire a cult status around persons posing a threat to public security, which in turn inspires sympathisers and "at-risk" individuals to embrace the cause.

From an ethical and human rights perspective, it is most notably solitary confinement that is to be condemned. Known psychopathological consequences range from severe headaches and concentration problems to depression and psychotic symptoms, and even suicidal thoughts.[177][178] It is furthermore safe to say that an excessively harsh prison regime will be exploited for propaganda beyond the prison walls. Overall, there is a widespread rejection of segregated, concentrated housing of persons posing a threat to public security and of other extremists in the literature.[179][180] Too frequent transfers should also be avoided in order not to thwart rehabilitation processes. The *UNODC*[181] advocates, for example, that persons posing a threat to public security who are considered "followers" and "foot soldiers" should be housed together with the other prisoners. For ideological leaders, segregated housing should be considered and intensified surveillance should be implemented. In the interests of normalisation, however, efforts should always be made to integrate persons posing a threat to public security as far as possible into normal prison procedures.

Personnel Management

Three key requirements can be identified for personnel management if it is to have an impact in terms of de-radicalisation: the call for **more personnel**, for appropriate **suitability and qualification**, and for the **strategic use of permanent staff**.

The **increase in enforcement staff** is a lever for countering radicalisation and extremism on two levels. First-ly, to make the detention experience as low-conflict, safe, and stress-free as possible. It is important to prevent frustration and overwhelming demands on both sides so as not to dampen the engagement of the staff or pave the way for extremist ideologies among the prisoners. Secondly, it is only with an adequate number of staff in all areas that specific additional interventions can be planned, implemented, and monitored for effectiveness. It is therefore necessary to determine the extent to which existing staff in the general correctional services and in specialist services are sufficient in number and qualified to take on prevention tasks with regard to radicalisation and extremism. In addition to the correctional services

177   Diewald-Kerkmann 2014
178   Zahn 2016
179   Meinen 2015
180   Radicalisation Awareness Network 2019
181   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b

staff, it is necessary to find personnel from the fields of psychology, education, social work, and religion. The utilisation of external specialists on a fee basis represents an additional option. Then there are victims and their representatives, former extremists, family members, and other relevant persons. Pooling different professions and expertise takes the pressure off staff in places where their capacity is needed elsewhere. The aspiration to unite all relevant knowledge in only one or in a few persons within an institution is neither conducive nor appropriate. The **suitability and qualifications of** staff must be assessed. The staff of general correctional services play a central role in shaping the detention experience and as role models. Corresponding findings from cases where cooperation between staff and detainees fails show that the exchange of law enforcement personnel facilitates a positive change in the extremist ideology.[182] The *UNODC*[183] therefore advocates that law enforcement personnel who are to work with the challenging group of persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals be carefully selected for their integrity, humanity, professional skills, individual suitability, and competence.

The increased demands on person-nel should be acknowledged in the working conditions. This does not only apply when it comes to retaining qualified members of specialist services as **permanent staff**. It has been shown that the establishment of set responsibilities for specific housing sectors helps to prevent violence.[184] This may be mainly due to the fact that a relationship of trust between inmates and staff can only grow from a certain degree of continuity. Knowledge of the characteristics and peculiarities of detainees enables law enforcement personnel to contribute to solutions. Permanently assigned personnel can identify emerging conflicts at an early stage and intervene in a timely manner. This represents a significant advantage with regard to sympathisers and "at-risk" individuals, when it comes to early detection of radicalisation.

2. Prison climate

Correctional facilities differ not only in terms of their structural and staffing infrastructure, but also notably regarding social and emotional factors. The concept of the prison climate encompasses the sum of perceptions and evaluations of all those organisational, physical, social, and emotional characteristics of a correctional facility.[185] The effects of the perceived prison climate are therefore increasingly the subject of

182   *Hofinger et al. 2017*
183   United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b
184   *Bachmann 2009*
185   *Liebling et al. 2004*

research. It has been shown that the willingness of prisoners to participate in treatment interventions depends largely on a positive climate, as do the relationships between detainees and staff.[186] Contentment and health of staff and prisoners are also linked to the climate. A good prison climate increases the chances of successful rehabilitation and can thus determine the success or failure of treatment interventions in a correctional facility.[187]

For law enforcement personnel, the climate is associated with a higher work morale and a lower perception of stress.[188] A high workload is correlated with a poor prison climate, whereas the systematic support of staff members yields positive effects on the climate. It can be noted that excessive demands on staff have negative consequences for the climate. With reference to the chapter on *Psychological and cognitive interventions - Guidance*, it is recommended that penitentiary administrations establish support systems to create the conditions for a non-violent and trusting prison climate. Modulation of the prison climate should be acknowledged as a separate intervention against radicalisation and extremism.

Factors of an unhealthy prison environment

Given the significant effects of the prison climate, the question arises as to what extent a less conducive climate can trigger radicalisation and hardening of extremist ideologies. If this were the case, individual interventions at the micro- and meso-level would be primarily aimed at compensating for the impacts of a self-created, damaging climate. In this case, the organisational and social framework conditions of the penitentiary system would be rather an obstacle to de-radicalisation. Even if this question cannot be answered conclusively, the potential consequences should be given greater consideration.

Discussing the impacts of the prison climate at least broadens the view to so-called problem prisoners. Challenging behaviour, according to the *RAN*[189] can be linked to the prison environment and the prevailing climate. The urge to disobey authority increases especially due to **stress and violence** in detention facilities, due to **overcrowding** and **poor prison management** in general. Research has established the term *identities of resistance* for this.[190] It should be noted that such phenomena play into the hands of Islamism's appeal as an ideology of the oppressed. Other

186   Illgner 2017
187   Guéridon et al. 2018
188   Day et al. 2011
189   Radicalisation Awareness Network 2016a
190   Hamm 2012

detention factors from the literature that are negatively associated with radicalisation include **noise**, **lack of privacy**, **restricted external contact**, **lack of entertainment or opportunities for physical activity**, **ignoring requests**, **inconsistency of rules**, **lack of access to chaplaincy or of the opportunity to practise religion**, and lastly, **perceived racism**.[191] These factors either have a direct impact on radicalisation, or they can be instrumentalised by persons posing a threat to public security for their own purposes.

Factors of a healthy prison environment

We conclude: A positive prison climate is beneficial for both prisoners and staff and prevents the emergence of resistance. The exact design of such a climate is discussed under the term *healthy prison environment*. The *RAN*[192] as well as the *UNODC*[193] emphasise that a healthy prison environment reduces the risk of radicalisation in detention as well as the risk of recidivism after release. Both prisoners and staff benefit from the resulting lower stress levels.

One factor of a healthy prison environment is the **opportunity for personal development**, for example in the form of vocational training and further education or other capacity building. Apart from reducing stress in everyday prison life, such opportunities provide better prospects for release. Another point is to facilitate **contact with family and close relatives**. The frequency, duration, and the framework conditions of visits are important to maximise the beneficial impact. The model places a clear focus on the **trusting relationship between staff and prisoners**, in addition to the relationships outside the institution. Such a beneficial relationship can be created with fair and respectful treatment, a prosocial attitude, reliability, and responsiveness, but also by adherence to professional standards.[194] A **sense of safety** on the part of the detainees and **a reliable structure** also contribute to a healthy prison environment. It is important in this context to make rules transparent in individual cases and, if necessary, to enforce them, whereby reactions to violations must remain appropriate, up to and including disciplinary sanctions. **Professionalism** and **equal treatment of all detainees** is the top priority to ensure a good climate.

3. Dynamic Security Approach

(De-)radicalisation trajectories are closely linked to the issue of security. The term security has also been mentioned again and again

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191   *Illgner 2017*
192   *Radicalisation Awareness Network 2016a*
193   *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016b*
194   *Illgner 2017*

in the course of this *Handbook for Practitioners*. It marks, more than any other term, the dilemma of law enforcement personnel. On the one hand, security and order must be ensured at all times. This demand includes the protection of prisoners from each other and from themselves, but also the protection of colleagues and, last but not least, of society as a whole. On the other hand, in context of the rehabilitation objective, detainees should be given as much freedom as possible.

Guidance on dealing with radicalised prisoners and corresponding security risks is provided by the *Council of Europe*.[195] The *Dynamic Security Approach* provides an integrative model for the combination of a conducive prison climate with the security requirements and the prison regime of the institutions. It consists of the traditional **physical and organisational security measures** such as walls, bars, duty rosters, and regular training. The principle here is to choose the least restrictive security measure under which the objective can still be achieved. Only this could mitigate the tension field between strict interventions to ensure security and the resulting negative consequences for de-radicalisation and rehabilitation efforts. Both housing and personnel management decisions need to be considered here. Moreover, they are inextricably linked to aspects of the prison climate.

The important addition to the traditional security measures is the focus on the **relationship aspect**. As a conducive factor of a positive prison climate, it also has a distinctive role here. Security results most notably from the fact that professional and positive relationships generate more knowledge about the persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals, which in turn leads to an early identification of risks. The improved general atmosphere also contributes to the reduction of conflicts that arise and have to be dealt with. A *Dynamic Security Approach* can, for example, be ensured by establishing a single contact point principle.[196] In this case, the same staff member is responsible for all issues of a prisoner group over a longer period of time, which promotes trust and commitment.

195   *Council of Europe 2016*
196   *Illgner 2017*

Laundry list "Macro-level"

(De-)radicalisation can only be understood in the context of prison regime and prison climate. These contextual factors influence not only whether radicalisation takes place, but also whether it is identified in the first stage and whether de-radicalisation interventions are successful.[197] Appropriate housing and personnel management helps to prevent correctional facilities from becoming radicalisation hotspots. Poor prison management, characterised by stress, violence, and overcrowding, leads to resistance to the institution. In contrast, positive, respectful, and professional interactions between law enforcement personnel and prisoners have a positive effect on the so-called prison climate. A positive climate, in turn, leads to less radicalisation and recidivism. Aspects of the prison regime and prison climate can be combined to form a *Dynamic Security Approach*. This results in an intervention plan that meets the increased work demands with persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals.

197   *Khosrokhavar 2016*

Content

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Quality characteristics of external programmes

De-radicalisation is a process that focusses staff resources on individual cases. At the same time, there is the need to give justice to all detainees. Therefore, it seems more than sensible to utilise external support should the needs and resource assessment come to the conclusion that the existing resources of the detention centre are reaching their limits. On the one hand, the multi-layered services offered by social actors are considered a quality characteristic of German intervention work with extremists in the international context.[198] On the other hand, the field of de-radicalisation work is an ever-evolving, constantly growing, and at times confusing area. It is not always easy to determine which programme is appropriate for the individual case. The selection of suitable programmes should therefore reflect as closely as possible the resources and needs of the institution, of the personnel, and of the detainee. But also scientific standards should be taken into account. The *RAN*[199] provides a number of quality characteristics as a guideline. To ensure the suitability of any externally or in-house designed intervention programme, the following questions should be answered in the affirmative:

- ☐ Is there a sound underlying theoretical concept?
- ☐ Are pedagogical aspects taken into account?
- ☐ Are ethical aspects taken into account?
- ☐ Are the physical conditions taken into account?
- ☐ Are there effective underlying methodologies?
- ☐ Is there provision for continuity in case management?
- ☐ Is there provision for adequate documentation?
- ☐ Is there a clearly defined target group?
- ☐ Is the focus on dynamic rather than on static risk factors?
- ☐ Is the focus on competencies?
- ☐ Is there provision for quality control?
- ☐ Is there provision for an assessment of the intervention objective?

198   *Radicalisation Awareness Network 2016b*
199   *Radicalisation Awareness Network 2016b*

Laundry list "Handbook for Practitioners"

The objective of this *Handbook for Practitioners* was to provide a comprehensive overview of potential impact factors when dealing with Islamist radicalisation and religiously motivated extremism in detention. It was based on the realisation that, in addition to factors anchored in the individual person, the entire detention experience has an influence on (de-)radicalisation processes. Correctional facilities must be considered in their entirety, since their targeted treatment interventions are not only temporally restricted, but they also have a significant impact on the daily life of the detainees.

To assist the assessment of emerging suspicions regarding radicalisation and recruitment, a step-by-step guideline for the development of an action plan has been presented. It begins with the formation of an intervention team, continues with a status and needs analysis of the institution and the creation of a risk and resource profile, and ends with the determination of the intervention objective. The selection of interventions at the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels provides the opportunity to pursue a holistic approach to the treatment of offenders. This often entails an intensification of already existing rehabilitation concepts in combination with interventions specific to radicalisation. The description of measures serves as a starting point for the design of own interventions and methods. Should the need arise, a wide range of programmes from external service providers is available in the prevention landscape. To ensure that interventions have the desired outcomes and at least do not have adverse effects, a regular evaluation is required.

Ultimately, the big challenge is to manage the limited resources in such a way that an overall improvement in the prison climate is achieved. For this purpose, it is inevitable to

- ensure safe and orderly conditions,
- guarantee the fundamental rights of prisoners at all times,
- ensure that day-to-day interactions between detainees and personnel are respectful and professional,
- provide staff with at least a basic knowledge on the subject of radicalisation and how it relates to the detention experience, and
- to adopt a Dynamic Security Approach.

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The German prison system is currently confronted with the challenge of having to deal with persons classified as radicalised Islamists who have either returned from the territory of the so-called "Islamic State" or have otherwise been convicted in the context of Islamist-motivated offences. There is also a recurring debate as to whether or how the specific conditions in prisons contribute to radicalisation. At the same time, many correctional facilities lack concepts on how to manage persons posing a threat to public security, sympathisers, and "at-risk" individuals. *Extremism and the Prison System. A Handbook for Practitioners – Countering Islamist Radicalisation* aims to contribute to an improved understanding of prevention measures, to analyse the impact of individual interventions, and to embed them in a holistic approach. Its objective is to explore possible forms of de-radicalisation work in prisons and the extent to which detention centres and the conditions prevailing there are to be evaluated as (de-)radicalisation factors. In addition to the theoretical part, the handbook includes an interactive component. It provides a guideline for practitioners on the assessment of initial suspicions, the preparation of individual action plans, and the selection of appropriate interventions.