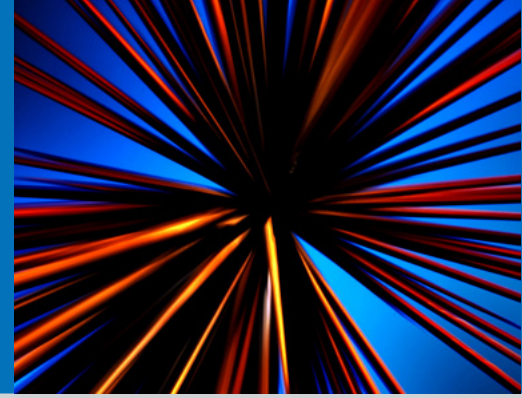


MARC Research Profile

The Urban Environment: Mirror and Mediator of Radicalisation?



This project rests on the assumption that societal polarisation and even radicalisation is not an a-spatial or a-material phenomenon. It takes place in streets, apartments, parks and is materially reflected in fences, buildings, territorial markers etc. But these artefacts also influence people's perception and behaviour like the decision for/against a certain playground, where to hide in case of trouble and the likeliness of meeting 'others'.

In short, social conditions and urban environments co-evolve. A systematic assessment of this assumption would help a wide range of actors – who were proactively involved in the research process – to create cities that facilitate amicable encounters between different groups, thereby tackling some of the conditions of stereotypisation, polarisation and potentially even radicalisation.

We mapped existing knowledge about these dynamics and investigated the situation in four cities: Belfast, Beirut, Berlin and Amsterdam. Our research pursued the following questions:

- How does polarisation become materially imprinted in cities?
- Are certain design features (buildings, infrastructure, public spaces etc.) particularly conducive to the generation or acceleration of polarisation?
- Is it possible to facilitate friendly encounters between polarised social groups through the provision of shared spaces?

Outputs included several contributions to the professional press, over 20 presentations, a number of papers in peer-reviewed journals and a special issue of the Journal of Urban Technology on "The Architecture of War and Peace." We also created an exhibition which toured to all case study cities as well as Manchester, Exeter and London. It can be ordered for display in other locations. See <www.youtube.com/brandrg>.

Website

www.manchester.ac.uk/marc/radicalisation

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Funding

£208,000, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Arts and Humanities Research Council, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, RES-181-25-0028

Duration

September 2007 to June 2010

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