

European Platform of Deradicalisation (EDNA):

EDNA editing and interview analysis - guidelines for editing, producing, and contextualizing of EDNA narratives

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Foreword - regarding interviewing and narrativity

As a matter of course, all audio editing in EDNA is highly dependent on the quality of the audio materials that have been generated through interviewing according to proper techniques of in-depth narrative biographical interviewing and specific EDNA interviewing. Hence, EDNA editing while being specific in view of the envisioned employment and impact of the audio materials on clients of future interventions, cannot be successfully done with material that has not been generated by narrative biographical interviewing. Notably interview materials that have been conducted in a more journalistic or template-based manner of questioning cannot be properly worked with in EDNA editing. Hence, a high degree of narrativity (in the sense of in-depth narrative biographical interviewing) is the precondition for EDNA editing to take place.

In reference to interviewing it is worthwhile mentioning that biographical narrative interviewing and EDNA interviewing basically adhere to the same guidelines and principles. As a slight technical difference to biographical narrative interviewing the EDNA interviewing has the objective to help render the interviewee's articulations or issues/experiences as explicit and elaborate as possible in the course of interview. This is done so that the EDNA editing procedures may then all the more easily pick up on the issues and narratives which promise high impact on the listener/ client. After all the main objective of EDNA interviewing is not to conduct reconstructive transcript analysis for purposes of social research (as is the case in biographical narrative interviewing). Rather the main objective is to use selected audio passages from the interviews in direct intervention measures of prevention and deradicalisation as a tool of facilitating the clients' processes of distancing from and exiting violent extremist attitudes.

For instance, EDNA interviewing in the first place foresaw that the interviewer would paraphrase and clarify what the interviewee has expressed more than is usually the case in biographical interviewing. This is done in order to achieve maximal clarity in the produced audio passage. However, in the course of gaining interviewing and editing experience it has increasingly turned out that this conceptualized difference between biographical and EDNA interviewing was less valid than originally anticipated. The specific EDNA techniques of working towards maximally explicit and rich expression of the client's issues/ experiences proved to be not as necessary and effective as was expected. In some instances they even seemed counter-productive in that any interviewer's moves towards explication and clarification would naturally interrupt the interviewee's flow of narration to a certain degree. Moreover, measures of cutting/arranging passages and of writing short summaries of them proved sufficiently effective for facilitating an easy and impactful listening process on the part of the client. Hence, in terms of interviewing it was concluded that getting training in and observing the rules of narrative biographical

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interviewing is a sufficient methodological precondition for generating high quality EDNA material and that biographical and EDNA interviewing follow pretty much the same methodological guidelines.

Hence, EDNA editing is basically restricted to modes of *cutting* and *arranging* audio passages from the interviews; the potential impact of these passages is then supported by providing *short summaries* of the passages on the website. These summaries will allow the users, i.e. the practitioners of off-line prevent and derad interventions, to orient themselves as to which audio passage they deem helpful with certain interventions/ groups of clients and at certain moments and situations in the process of the intervention.

EDNA editing and summary writing is, in the first place, *theoretically informed* by current knowledge about the factors of radicalizing and deradicalising. This means that the method of extracting and editing short audio passages from the interview recordings to be presented on the website tool, will follow empirically evidenced assumptions of what helps to deradicalise/ rehabilitate a client – i.e. help her/him to distance her/-himself from life styles of expressing and enacting attitudes of group superiority/ inferiority in hostile, hateful and violent ways. Here the EDNA work has profited from existing fundamental and intervention research – especially from research which was recently conducted in the context of the RAN Derad working group (cf. HW 2013 “The Narrative Principle: Good Practice in Anti-Hate Crime Interventions, within the Radicalization Awareness Network”).

At the same time, however, EDNA also generates new knowledge on de/-radicalisation itself. In the course of EDNA editing the interview materials are extensively analyzed in an open-process “abductive” method which is open to new insight and conclusions about processes of radicalization and/or rehabilitation/ personality development. The EDNA procedures may thus add to the current knowledge in that the materials of the various case studies will in their own right produce specific insights as to how the course of personal development into and out of violent extremism went and what the pull and push factors were.

Hence, the EDNA method of analyzing, editing and systematizing the audio passages in view of presenting them to the user on the EDNA website is both theoretically informed (deductive) and generates new insight (inductive, deductive). The EDNA approach is thus also an innovative method of practice research – while its foremost objective is to produce materials for direct intervention work in off-line settings of prevention and deradicalisation.

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Guidelines for editing, producing, and contextualizing of EDNA narratives

In this perspective, the audio passages which are extracted from the interviews should be edited/ cut in a way that ...

... the demand on the clients' assumed attention span is not overly strained (which meant, in the first instance, to aim for audio passages of an average length of 2 minute).

... the audio passage focuses on particular mini narratives – and on a point or issue within them – which is deemed (by deductive or inductive conclusion, cf. above) to be important and effective for triggering and facilitating processes of self-awareness building, rehabilitation (deradicalisation) and personal development.

Such issues may be “experiences of violence, denigration, and neglect/ disregard in the family” or “restrictive gender role attitudes” according to the systematic webpage “Themes of Derad Narratives”. However, the mini narratives/ issues may also be gained inductively from analyzing the interview materials themselves (without reference to existing research). This is, for instance, the case with (at least) two formers rightwing extremist with issues/ themes of “mental media, text/film and music interaction” which have proved to function as a powerful factor of facilitating processes of distancing and exiting from extremism and hatred. The passages are then edited – as mini narratives – in a way that highlights key aspects of the issue – i.e. give more detail of what it meant for this interviewee to have experienced “disregard in the family”, issues around “restrictive gender roles” or in terms of his/her media usage.

... the emotional aspects of this issue as presented by the interviewee are sufficiently highlighted through the editing, following the assumption that the emotional aspect is important for the audio narrative's impact on the listener. Interviewees usually refer to personally important issues more than once, in various passages and in different manners during the interviews; this may also be supported through the interviewer's way of asking narrative questions about what appears to be an issue. The cutting and editing of these passages should be aware of where in the interview these issues are expressed in more emotional manners and where they are expressed in more factually detailed manners – and arrange accordingly so that the emotional charge is not lost in the passage (or series of passages on the issue).

... the cognitive coherence is observed, too (while the emotional aspects are emphasized). The editing should thus avoid any lack of information which would weaken the coherence

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and consistence of the audio passage in itself. This, naturally, has its limits in the actual interview material and in how the person/ presents her/his experience orally. However, in practice it was found that both arranging the order of passages and writing the passage summaries – which is an important part of the EDNA editing procedure – often is quite helpful to assure the logical coherence of the passage since bits of factual information which support easier context understanding can be given in the summary in brackets even if they are not explicitly mentioned in the passage but appear in other relevant sections of the interview. Moreover, interviewer paraphrasing which might have been done in this interview section, may further support the coherence of the passage (also see point beneath).

... One particular means of EDNA editing in which one may place a particular emphasis on a passage's main issue is to cut it in a way that a key expression is put at the beginning and/or the end of the passage – and may also be reflected in the heading of the written summary by direct quote. Moreover, the editing may enhance this emphasis through overlap. This means that the passages overlap for about 10- 20 seconds and a key expression is given both at the end of one passage and at the beginning of the following passage thus appearing prominently in two different but consecutive audio passages. This was done frequently in the EDNA case presentations.

As to the arrangement of the edited interview passages in a particular order – in which the whole corpus of passages is presented in two different sections/ subpages of the EDNA website tool:

The EDNA website tool provides its materials/ audio passages in two different kinds of contexts/ structure and on two different subpages of the website tool – (A) the case-oriented section on “the persons” (interviewees) and (B) the thematic/ systematic section on “themes” (relevant for de-/radicalisation processes).

This has been implemented in order to make the material more readily usable for practitioners and for train-the-trainer workshops. The “themes” section thus responds to the practitioners' need to select and prepare certain themes/ aspects (across the audio passages from all interviewees and from all different groups of interviewees, as formers, their parents and practitioners). The “person” section, in turn, lends itself to working in more extensive settings which allow for focusing on an entire case history/ “person” and engage with this case over several sessions of the intervention.

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As to the structure of the EDNA tool's "person"-section:

The "person"-section is preceded by the extended summaries of all individual cases in which a roughly one-page long narrative description is given of each interviewee's accounts.

The structure of each case will be determined by the order in which the audio passages and their titles are presented on the webpage. In view of presenting the audio passages on the "person"-section of the website in an easily accessible manner it is, in the first instance, advisable to arrange the passages in the order in which the narrative account of the person had produced them during the course of the interview. This order will also be shaped by the interviewing technique which ought to proceed in a narrative biographical and open process technique asking for the earlier biographical experiences to be given first – while, however, not interfering in any way with the order in which the interviewee then proceeds to give her/his personal account.

Still, the chronological order (according to the natural flow of the interview) can – and should – also be rearranged and changed according to certain criteria in order to optimize the usability. Firstly, the passages will be arranged and grouped according to the general phases of life history (parents/ grandparents, childhood, youth, adulthood etc. in which the phases of radicalization and rehabilitation will be introduced as a phase of particular significance). This could mean to differ from the chronological order of passages quite a bit in cases in which the interviewee has chosen a pathway in his/her narrative presentation which deviates from the general life history phases, which for instance was the case with Moritz (who started his life history at the age of 16 which later on proved to be significant in terms of the guiding principles of his life history development).

Yet, the re-grouping of the passages according to general life history phases is by no means compulsory. There may be good reasons for presenting the passages in the actual order they came up in the interview (regardless of the general order of life phases) – which again was the case with Moritz (who started his life history at age of 16 because this was the separation from his family/ divorced parents and the onset of his radicalization in he rightwing extremist subculture).

In addition, the passages may also be arranged and grouped according to particular topics/ issues (hence not only according to general life history phases). These topics/ issues are such that they characterize the interviewee's case history and are relevant in view of a possible deradicalising impact of these topics/issues on the part of the listeners (for whom these passages are provided in a structured off-line intervention delivered by a facilitator who had attained access to the restricted EDNA tool). Hence there is a thematic and systematic structure applied in part already in EDNA's "person"-section (while the

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“theme”-section will then give a systematic and more holistic perspective – across all interviews and all different groups interviewees).

In this way (according to the phases and/or to topics and issues) the audio passages from an individual interviewee are ordered in chapters; and chapter headings are given for making the order maximally visible. The editing of the passages from the second and third (and any following) interview will then be arranged according to these chapters (unless an entirely new aspect surfaces in these interviews which does sometimes happen), i.e. the passages on certain life phases and/or topics and issues will be put next to each other. The chapters in themselves will be ordered in a dynamic manner which takes into account how the single passages refer to the phases or topic/ issue and which order may best reflect how the interview presents the issues/ phases in factual and emotional respects. The editing/ arrangement of passages thus reinforce the usability and potential impact on the listener.

Hence, the order of chapters and the phrasing of the chapter titles (under which a number of passages/ narratives are subsumed) already gives a certain profile of the individual case history (aside of the given extended narrative summary of the case). In a sense it provides the particular gestalt of the case – which will most likely be different with formers, parents and practitioners – and with each individual. For instance with Moritz (a former rightwing extremist young man) the order of chapters is:

- Life history I – the making of a rightwing extremist,
- Life history II – childhood/ youth,
- Life history III – more on the older brother and family,
- Times of radicalization,
- The phase of distancing/ rehabilitation,
- Exit factors,
- There is no such thing than 100% deradicalisation,
- The function of media, music, literature.

Whereas the order of chapters in the Juliane case (deradicalisation practitioner working in prisons) has a more straight forward structure:

Biography of a theatre pedagogy and Anti-violence trainer

How do Juliane's working methodology take effect

Institutional obstacles and rivalries – in juvenile prison, school etc.

Hence the particular gestalt of these individual case profiles is immediately graspable for the user of the EDNA tool already through the order and headings of the chapters under which the edited audio passages are then subsumed. To further support the users' orientation on the level of chapters, a brief section "Keywords – What is going on in this chapter" is given under the chapter heading and above/ before the single audio passages. In this section keywords and key phrases on the topics and issues of this chapter are provided in bullet point fashion (in lieu of a chapter summary). This is designed to make easily visible for the user at one glance which topics and issues the passages of this chapter will touch upon.

The audio passage summaries

Quick orientation and overview on the EDNA tool is further supported on the chapter level through the order in which the single audio passages appear in each chapter. Each audio passage is given a passage heading/ title – and a passage summary is provided in order to resume the narrative account which the interviewee gives in this passage. The summaries are written in a way which aims at being factually precise, close to what was expressed, balanced and simple and appealing in its wording. To this end, verbatim quotes in quotation marks are used frequently.

Ideally, all summaries – when read as a continuous text – equal a short story or serial which presents the case on the whole, while it also provides the opportunity for the user to deepen his/her reading experience through listening to the audio passage which the individual summaries refer to.

However, in the earlier cases the emphasis was less on the readability of the case as a whole but on the chapters as a systematic part of the case (the Sabine case for instance). The emphasis on the chapter then entailed that some passages were given twice in two different chapters of the case. This seemed advisable quite frequently since many passages are relevant for more than one topic/ chapter. In the Sabine case for instance there were passages in the chapter "emotionality and gender issues" which were important also for the chapters in "family history". In this case roughly 10% of the passages were repeated. In the later cases it was decided to keep the repetition of passages at a minimum for the sake of readability of the case material on the whole and

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leave the efforts to provide a systematic order entirely to the “theme”-section of the EDNA tool.

EDNA – also an innovative tool of qualitative social/biographical research

One additional reason for providing such relatively elaborate and transparent order of passages and quite comprehensive summaries in the “person”-section of the EDNA tool was the intention to also provide an innovative tool of qualitative social and biographical research – and a tool of disseminating and making accessible research products to wider audiences.

EDNA as innovative tool of qualitative social and biographical research was designed to produce and provide the case materials in a manner which is as comprehensive, differentiated and accessible as possible so that it may generate new hypotheses for further research on this topic. Hence, while the case materials’ primary objective is to be a helpful tool for practitioners in their direct educational or rehabilitative interventions with at-risk young people, they may also serve as methodologically generated data which lend themselves to further in-depth research with young clients from milieus of violent extremism.

EDNA at the level of “themes” – as to the structure of the “theme”-section:

The majority of audio passages from the interviews with all interviewees (but not all passages) are also put onto EDNA’s second subpage – the section on “themes” and issues – on which they are brought into a systematic order. This has been done in order to make the material more readily usable for practitioners of first-line work (and of train the trainer workshops). Practitioners often feel the need to swiftly pick and chose material according to certain themes which they recurrently encounter in their work with the target group of young people vulnerable to or involved in violent extremism. Hence, the “themes”-section allows the practitioners to make a tailor-made selection of audio passages which pertain to certain themes/ aspects (across the interviews with all interviewees and from all different groups of interviewees, as formers, their parents and practitioners).

For instance, a practitioner of a prevention or deradicalisation measure might find her/himself in certain situations of the intervention process that her/his clients would

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profit from addressing the topic of “chronic strain in familial relations” since these clients seem to have issues of this kind in their biography. Or else the practitioner may have reason to address the topic “restrictive gender roles” (sexism, homophobia) because it came up in the intervention process – or because it has generally been found to be highly impactful in this kind of interventions (since the implicit concepts of manliness and femininity have proven to be highly relevant in preventive interventions around violent extremism). In these instances the practitioner may go to the respective “themes”-section and pick firsthand narrative audio passages from the given selection – which were assembled from various different interviewees’ reference to the theme.

The themes on the EDNA “themes”-section were defined in a dynamic open-ended (inductive) fashion along the way of interviewing different persons from different target groups around violent extremism and along the way of the on-going analyses of these interviews. The simple and pragmatic assumption was that the issues which the interviewees brought up in the course of an open-process narrative interview must in some way be relevant for the issue – and hence have value for settings of preventive work. With each new interviewee the “theme”-section would not only grow but could in principle also receive some new themes – hence become more comprehensive and richer as a systematic tool.

However, the identification of the EDNA “themes” is also at the same time *theoretically informed* by current knowledge about the factors of radicalizing and deradicalising, as was said above about EDNA in general. Hence, formulating the “themes” will also follow empirically evidenced assumptions of what helps to deradicalise/ rehabilitate a client – i.e. help her/him to distance her/-himself from life styles of expressing and enacting attitudes of group superiority/ inferiority in hostile, hateful and violent ways. Hence, in the dynamic process of formulating the EDNA “themes” inductive/ “abductive” and deductive procedures work together.

Whether or not the EDNA’s “themes”-section can also be an instrument of research (as is the case with the “person”-section) and thus inspire and inform further fundamental research (aside of being first and foremost a tool for practitioners of prevention work) – remains to be seen.

Contextualizing EDNA narratives through secondary informational materials

In the beginning of the project there still was the thought that it could be helpful to also bring a comprehensive selection of educational and informational material to each

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interview – or to the EDNA website tool in general – in the form of annotations or secondary media products which supplement and expand on what the interviewees have referred to. Even more, although this was not yet part of the project application the team was pondering whether an EDNA interview could not possibly also be the center piece of a comprehensive media file in which all sorts of media products and educational input could be provided which pertain to the topic in a wider sense.

Yet, aside of such measure being very work intensive it was also found that the narrative approach itself does not lend itself to the concept of a comprehensive media platform. Since such platform exceeds the basic concept of a data base of narrative audio passages. Moreover it does not recognize that fact that a personal narrative account is a particular sort of text/ medium in its own right which does not mix well with nor does it need any additional supplementary materials to be employed in rehabilitative intervention. Plus, the narrative approach resulted from the very experiences of many firstline practitioners that the impact of media input in interventions of prevention and deradicalisation should not be overrated and that prevention and deradicalisation is a kind of process that needs direct face-to-face relations work (in one-on-one or in group settings) and is best based on personal narratives and subjective accounts (as opposed to documentary, educational, informational, argumentative, fact based etc. input). Hence, cross the board, firstline practitioners' experiences suggested to adopt what has then been called the 80-20 principles (HW 2013b), meaning that 80% of the effort and means need to go in to the off-line activity – which in turned means to not focus too many resources on media input and comprehensive media platforms:

“When applied in an intervention, the video or audio materials should always be carefully embedded in a systematic off-line intervention process. Toward that end the media intervention must be both systematically prepared beforehand and elaborated in depth afterwards. The point is to enable viewers to develop, personalise, acknowledge, and reflect upon their subjective reactions to such testimonials, and to express them within the group process of the intervention. Here a 20-80 principle seems advisable, i.e. 80% resources go into the off-line sector of any such intervention”

Hence, good media products for prevent and derad interventions would first and foremost be those that are aware of the limited function they can have as a media text in the complex task of conducting successful interventions with at-risk and difficult to reach groups of young people. In the wake of these observations another far reaching conclusion was drawn as to the scope and self-understanding of media projects in the area of CVE (which did not seem to already be in place with most current media initiatives).

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“The procedures of producing the media narratives should be designed as counselling interventions for the different interviewee groups, i.e. they need to be maximally participative vis-à-vis those that agreed to cooperate in generating narrative material to be used in deradicalisation work. Such a project would no longer act as a ‘media project’. It would not emphasize on the main objective to collect interview material and create from it a ‘tool of on-line intervention’. Rather the project would present itself as simple – off-line – counselling or rehabilitation intervention, specifically targeted to different stakeholders around extremism and hate crime. The only specificity of it is that it also – as an aside – offers the opportunity to produce narrative self-documents/ testimonials and provides training in basic skills of narrative interviewing, video/audio editing and post-production, thus training basic media competencies.”

Going back to the original thought on the part of the EDNA team to provide a media platform with a comprehensive mix of pertaining media products alongside with the interviews, the conclusion was drawn to keep any secondary material at a minimum. Such minimum could be brief explanations of terms and issues which the interviewees refer to in the interviews without further elaborating on them and which might not be immediately clear to all EDNA users.

The “intro”-section before each interviewee’s case file

On the “person”-section / webpage, each interviewee’s case material is preceded by an “intro”-section. Usually these intro sections comprises of about three to four intro passages. Each of these intro-passages is composed of various smaller audio sequences of the interviews which are edited in a succinct and abbreviated manner.

These “Intros” / introductions are designed to serve two functions – and they follow the overall impetus of EDNA editing which EDNA on the whole is dedicated to.

The basic impetus of EDNA editing

EDNA’s basic impetus is as follows: As opposed to styles in which many testimonials/ interviews are edited and produced in the field of preventing violent extremism and group-focused hatred, the EDNA deradicalising narratives are not edited in any “gripping”, “compelling”, “fascinating” or even “sensational” manner. EDNA editing/ production does attempt to not follow such intentions of having an effect/ impact by the sheer shock or intrigue quality of their contents (violence/ hatred, suffering, guilt/

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innocence, tragedy, possibly redemption etc.). On the contrary, the impetus of EDNA editing is to render both the in-depth personal aspect and the complexity of violent extremism as a multi-layered biographically engrained phenomenon and to also make visible the root causes. Hence, the impetus of EDNA editing follows the assumption that only such material – with an in-depth personal and biographical substance – will be effective in the work with the target groups of young people which are most important in view of CVE and are therefore at the same time quite difficult to reach through any more mainstream testimonial discourse.

Only the intros are produced with an inherent appeal and are directed towards the potential users of the EDNA material – i.e. to the facilitators of the EDNA based off-line intervention. Specifically, the intros are designed to appeal to these practitioners to become aware of and recognize the power and sustainability of EDNA’s narrative approach. The intros do so by providing a sort of audio-summary of the case by a cut of some key sequences from its interviews.

Hence, overall, the two functions of the “intro”-sections are:

(1) In addition to the extended biographical summary which is given as narrative text, the intro passages should help to portray the interviewee/ case in a brief and concise manner. It should thus assist and support the user to engage with the material and employ it most fittingly into her/his intervention work of awareness raising, prevention or rehabilitation.

(2) Also the intro passages should help to make the material more readily usable for practitioners and for train-the-trainer workshops in specific and theme-oriented ways. The intros should thus also help to introduce the “themes”-section of EDNA and respond to the practitioners’ need to select and prepare certain themes/ aspects and character profiles.

The “intro”-section of the Moritz case serves a particular experimental function. It is more extended than the other cases. With Moritz there are seven “intro”-sections. This has been done in order to provide another and different kind of editing and presenting the EDNA audio passages and thus provide an opportunity to try out other forms of uses in interventions.

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