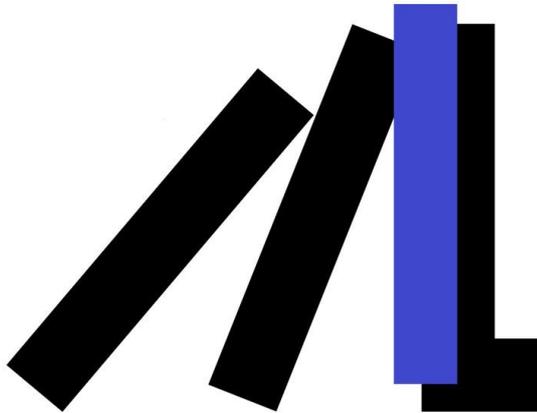




AFFECT



IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF BELGIAN DE-RADICALISATION POLICIES UPON
SOCIAL COHESION AND LIBERTIES

RADICALISATION IN THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT

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Fabienne BRION & Emmanuel-Pierre GUITTET

Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A rather important part of the literature dedicated to radicalisation within the prison environment is largely based on the **underlying assumption** that prison and prison's experience are essentially a crucial place and moment in the causal and mechanical chain leading to extreme violence.

Path to militant activities is a long and complex one, involving the coalescing of a range of factors where one's experience of incarceration might be of paramount importance. Yet, if **the experience of jail can surely push someone over the edge, it can also discourage someone from taking any further action.**

Quite surprisingly, **recent studies on prison radicalisation rarely intersect with the huge body of knowledge developed within conventional penology.** It essentially relies upon very limited information, and therefore equally questionable analysis, about what a prison's environment is on one hand, and how inmates deal with it on the other.

Most of the time, **very little is said about how the individual did in prison, who they interacted with, and the nature and development of their beliefs, spiritual or otherwise.** It seems obvious to suggest that gaining an authentic understanding of prison radicalisation requires a thorough insight into these individuals' **prison experience**, but also their **pre and post-incarceration experiences.** Yet it is precisely this exactness that has eluded the vast majority of studies thus far. Furthermore, literature on staff-terrorist offender relationships and **the effects of special incarceration policies upon prison staff is still scarce.**



INTRODUCTION

The last decade has seen an impressive surge of academic literature dedicated to radicalisation and a multiplicity of research programmes aimed at developing alternative ways of engaging with the issue, evaluating strategies and suggesting policy directions¹. Almost inevitably the role of prisons became a key focal point, especially within the European context where former convicted criminals conducted attacks². It is often argued that serving time in prison may radicalise inmates, and it is a regular alarmist assumption in the media and among certain scholars alike, that prisons may serve as “school for violent extremism and terrorism”³. As such, prisons are very often called “incubators for violent extremism” or “hotbeds for terrorism” and the duo radicalisation/prison certainly

became a key focus point among researchers and policymakers alike⁴.

This finger-pointing towards prisons as a prerequisite in order to explain extreme violence has spread quite rapidly up to the point that prison radicalisation is largely portrayed nowadays as one, if not as the most serious threat. Every single European Member State has warned to the seriousness and urgency of the threat that every prisoner could radicalise and that every radicalised inmate could become a potential terrorist recruit⁵. The issue of prison as a particularly favourable environment for violent entrepreneurs became even more salient with the issue of “returnees” since they are systematically prosecuted upon their return from Syria and place in pre-trial detention⁶.

These policy concerns have been certainly reinforced by a rather ordinary yet powerful narrative on prison as a specific criminogenic space, encouraging criminal behaviour among inmates. One could say

1. GUITTET, Emmanuel-Pierre, *Radical, Radicalism, Radicalisation: From Words to Deeds?*, AFFECT Research Paper, RP/04/2018/EN, septembre 2018. GUITTET, Emmanuel-Pierre, *Two decades of Research Reports on Radicalisation* (AFFECT Research Paper, forthcoming)

2. GUIBERT LAFAYE, Caroline, BROCHARD, Pierre. La radicalisation vue par la presse-Fluctuation d'une représentation. *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique*, 2016, 131(1), pp. 1-24

3. CUTHBERTSON I.M. 2004, “Prisons and the Education of Terrorists”, *World Policy Journal*, vol.21, no.3, 2004, pp. 15-22.

4. NEUMANN, Peter R. *Prisons and terrorism: Radicalisation and de-radicalisation in 15 countries*. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), King's College London, 2010

5. IRWIN, Nathan. The complexity of responding to home-grown terrorism: radicalisation, de-radicalisation and disengagement, *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 10(2), 2015, pp. 166-175

6. RENARD, Thomas, COOLSAET, Rik. Returnees: who are they, why are they (not) coming back and how should we deal with them? Assessing policies on returning foreign terrorist fighters in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, *Egmont Paper*, 101, Brussels, Egmont Institute, February 2018. GUITTET, Emmanuel-Pierre, *Foreign Fighters under International Law* (AFFECT Research Paper, Forthcoming)



that it is a fairly natural response given the thorny history of prison and the conditions within that particular institution⁷. Quite truly, and over the time people have used their time behind bars to develop political positions, writing manifesto⁸, increasing other inmates political or religious awareness and recruiting them into their mode of thinking⁹. In the same way, it is fairly reasonable to say that prisons are rather harsh and hostile environments.

However, and despite being a popular topic, there still remain significant gaps in our understanding of how the prison experience initiated an uninterrupted sequence of events that led ultimately to one's engagement into violent activity¹⁰. How prison is supposed to set an individual irreversibly down the path of radicalisation and violent activism and therefore what are the radicalising effects of prison, if any? What are the irrefutable evidence of the dangers of prisons and their capacity to breed violent activists?

7. ARTIERES, Philippe et Pierre LASCOUMES (dir.), *Gouverner, enfermer. La prison, un modèle indépassable ?*, Paris, Presses de Science Po, 2004

8. DEAREY M. *Radicalization: The life writings of political prisoners*. New York, Routledge, 2010. GREADY, Paul. Autobiography and the 'power of writing': political prison writing in the apartheid era." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 19, no. 3 (1993): 489-523.

9. FELDMAN, Allen. *Formations of violence: The narrative of the body and political terror in Northern Ireland*. University of Chicago Press, 1991.

10. BULINGE, Franck. La radicalisation en prison: mythe ou réalité?. *ESSACHESS-Journal for Communication Studies*, 2016, 9(2), pp. 173-195. JONES, Clarke R. Are prisons really schools for terrorism? Challenging the rhetoric on prison radicalization. *Punishment & Society*, 16(1), 2014, pp. 74-103.

Assessing the nature of an individual's prison experience, including the role it may have played in that individual's subsequent terrorist behaviour, is likely to be, quite obviously, shrouded in a certain degree of mystery or ignorance.

First of all because prisons and correctional facilities are, by nature, risk averse and security-focused environments where no-one enters effortlessly¹¹. Secondly, prison research is both time consuming and requires considerable psychological adjustments. Thirdly, violent "extremist" offenders are not so easily accessible. They may be reluctant to talk openly or may not be allowed or willing to be interviewed at all¹².

This paper is an attempt to provide an up-to-date assessment of how 'prison radicalisation' has been analysed so far and how it is understood but also, in some respects, misconstrued. The above notwithstanding, it should be noted that it is not being suggested that prison radicalisation in its various forms is not an issue of considerable importance or that recruitment attempts, successful or otherwise, do not occur. The unquestioning and repeated acceptance of supposedly major cases by governments

11. FERREL, Jeff, HAMM, Mark S. (eds.). *Ethnography at the edge. Crime, Deviance and Field Research*, Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1998. BOSWORTH, Mary, CAMPBELL, Debi, DEMBY, Bonita, FERRANTI, Seth, SANTOS, Michael. Doing Prison Research: Views From Inside, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(2), 2005, pp. 249-264. SCHLOSSER, Jennifer A. Issues in interviewing inmates: Navigating the methodological landmines of prison research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 14(8), 2008, pp. 1500-1525.

12. BRION, Fabienne, GUITTET, Emmanuel-Pierre. *Interviewing inmates: practical, ethical and methodological challenges*. AFFECT Research Paper, (forthcoming)



and analysts alike¹³, however, has concealed just how poor the available evidence of their prison radicalisation actually is.

If countering radicalisation in prison is certainly a challenge, one should be extremely cautious not to reduce the issues at stake within a narrow view of what detentions and probation systems are and how they work from a place to another, but also to consider how these different institutions affect inmates' experiences and behaviours. Actually, detention and probation centres might be a key pre-condition for reducing risk around radicalisation inasmuch they are keen on contributing and reinforcing their rehabilitation and reintegration's missions. Finally, and certainly more importantly, one should also consider that those convicted or on remand for terrorist-related offences but also those considered to be at risk of radicalisation in prison and probation contexts constitute a relatively small-size population¹⁴.

Given the vast amount of publications and the breadth of relevant issues, this research paper is to be viewed as a synthesis of some of the dominating themes and views in the literature and as an attempt to identify knowledge gaps that would deserve further attention.

13. Most of the publications dedicated to the issue relies upon the "stories" of a rather limited number of high-profile cases such as Richard Reid, Kevin James, Levar Washington and Jose Padilla.

14. The numbers of individuals monitored over concerns linked to violent extremism are subject to fluctuation from a detention and probation centre to another. Yet, and all things considered, they are still a small-size population. See BRION, Fabienne, *Prevention de la radicalisation dans les prisons. Situations et défis en Belgique* (AFFECT Research Paper, forthcoming)

IMPRISONMENT AS A TIPPING POINT?

The fact that recent attacks across Europe have been committed by individuals with a criminal past has prompted authorities and researchers to focus their attention on prisons as possible radicalisation spaces but also to develop new strategies in order to prevent and to deal with radicalisation in prison¹⁵.

As Hamm and Jones underline well¹⁶, these concerns are often based on limited information about prisoner radicalisation and, as mentioned previously, on a limited number of "positive" cases. The fear that terrorist offenders are determined to turn prisons into training grounds for militant activities is yet to be proved actually. As Jones pertinently concludes,

"prison radicalisation and recruitment for Islamist militant groups are more the exception than the rule and, when

15. MULCAHY, Elizabeth, MERRINGTON, Shannon, and BELL, Peter James. The radicalisation of prison inmates: A review of the literature on recruitment, religion and prisoner vulnerability. *Journal of Human Security*, 2013, 9(1). TRUJILLO, Humberto M., JAVIER JORDÁN, JOSÉ ANTONIO GUTIERREZ, and JOAQUIN GONZALEZ-CABRERA. Radicalization in prisons? Field research in 25 Spanish prisons. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21(4), 2009, pp. 558-579.

16. HAMM, Mark S. *The Spectacular Few: Prisoner Radicalization and the Evolving Terrorist Threat*, New York, New York University Press, 2013. JONES, Clarke R. Are prisons really schools for terrorism? Challenging the rhetoric on prison radicalization, *Punishment & Society*, 16(1), 2014, pp. 74-103.



*prison radicalisation has occurred, the chances of these inmates then being recruited into a terrorist group are slim. In addition, once released, the relationship between these individuals committing acts of terrorism and their time in prison is tenuous at best*¹⁷.

At the core of this concern about potential radicalisation in prison, there is a double and interlocking assumption that contributes to mar our understanding of the situation and of its prospects. First, the belief that it takes only one determined inmate to commit an attack upon his/her release might not be entirely wrong but leads to construe prison and detention centres as one of the biggest reservoir of potential violence, especially if one considers the growth of the incarcerated population among most European Member States. This calculation reflects a broader precautionary governmental process where the rising cultural prevalence of risk have indelibly transformed our understanding of past, present and future through categories of induction and probabilistic reasoning on the danger to come¹⁸.

The second issue is found in the use of prison itself; does it capture a coherent set of practices and situations across the range? The underlying assumption that prison is a dangerous and toxic place where ordinary criminals meet extremists resulting in more deadly forms of violence is actually much more based on collective representations of what prison is

supposed to be rather than based on reality¹⁹. Much of these considerations that make imprisonment and the prison environment as a tipping point in the understanding of the path to radicalisation, is largely hypothesised and based on general assumptions about prison and on how inmates are supposedly behaving.

Needless to say that prison is a micro-world with formal and informal social rules that differ partly from the everyday world outside. Prison is a restricted environment in which people cannot fully control their lives and have limited choices in everyday life. Rarely do people ever find themselves with such a total lack of resources or point of reference. Prison is based mainly on power and control relationships in which roles are clearly defined. As Kaminski rightly observed, prison life is ritualised; officially through prison regulations and unofficially through the different prisoners' forms of socialisation²⁰. However, prisons are not entirely separated institutions ruled exclusively by special mechanisms and relationships, since macro-mechanisms and structures of the overall society are very often directly reproduced.

But when considering the issue of radicalisation in prison, rare are the studies that actually pay attention to the various types of prison environment, and how prison regimes, inmate cultures and prison conditions interact. The assumption that prisons are ideal

17. JONES, op. cit, p. 95

18. GUITTET, Emmanuel-Pierre, BRION, Fabienne. The New Age of Suspicion, in, EKLUNDH, Emmy, GUITTET, Emmanuel-Pierre, ZEVNIK, Andreja (eds.). *Politics of Anxiety*, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2017, pp.79-99.

19. SOBANET, Andrew. *Jail sentences: Representing prison in twentieth-century French fiction*. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2008.

20. KAMINSKI, M. M. Games prisoners play: Allocation of social roles in a total institution, *Rationality and Society*, 15(2), 2003, pp.189-218



incubators for crime, and therefore by extension for radical behaviours, does not do justice to the diversity of prison environments (correctional facilities, juvenile detention, ...) and to the different types of prison regimes across our countries and beyond²¹. There are huge differences, not only in terms of capacity, but also in terms of conditions and management, between Karachi Central jail in Pakistan, the prison of Ghent in Belgium or HMP Berwyn, the largest prison in Wales. There are vast differences between correctional systems, including ways of managing and confining inmates, the standards of incarceration, the objectives of punishment and/or rehabilitation, the degrees of control over inmate populations and the levels of staff integrity and professionalism.

With her seminal study on suicides in prison and her subsequent empirical research into prison life and its impact on prisoners, Liebling aptly highlights how some prisons are more survivable than others²². When analysing prisoners' values and understanding of their environment, she rightly shows that the 'differences that matter' concern interpersonal relationships and treatment, and the use of authority. These differences in perceived fairness and safety lead to stark outcomes for prisoners. The prison environment includes the physical

21. SILKE, Andrew (ed.). *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism. Critical issues in management, radicalisation and reform*, London, Routledge, 2014

22. LIEBLING, Alison, Helen ARNOLD. "Social relationships between prisoners in a maximum security prison: Violence, faith, and the declining nature of trust." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 40(5), 2012, pp. 413-424. LIEBLING, Alison. "Moral performance, inhuman and degrading treatment and prison pain." *Punishment & Society* 13, no. 5 (2011): 530-550

environment and values, relationships, procedures and policies that constitute the day-to-day functioning of a prison.

These factors shape the prison experience and can provide opportunities to reduce both the risk of radicalisation during imprisonment and the risk of reoffending after release into society. Overcrowding, a lack of staff or poor relationships between staff and prisoners, and poor facilities — including poor access to meaningful activities such as education and work — can have a negative impact on prisoners.

There is a long legacy of well-informed studies in penology and in criminology on how inmates, regardless of their offence or their prison environment, are affected by incarceration. A well-established literature which is very often ignored. Especially in regards to the issues of religion and conversion in prison.

PRISONS, RELIGIONS AND CONVERSIONS

After the case of Richard Reid, who allegedly converted to Islam while at Feltham Young Offenders' Institution in West London and then tried to blow up a plane in December 2001 by means of a bomb concealed in his shoe, there has been an increasing interest in Muslim prisoners all around the Western world. As we underlined previously, coinciding with this growing attention has been an alarmist mass media message that prisons are becoming training camps for future terrorists.

Studying the correlation between inmates' conversion in prison and radical religiosity became quite rapidly a central topic of concern. A concern largely



informed by one practical and anxious question; what can we do to reduce the dissemination of radical religious ideas?

This temptation to link prisoners' conversion to Islam with terrorist activities is not only dubious but also pernicious. It leads toward a dangerous and misleading essentialism²³. The main risk of these views, which are mainly based on culturalist approaches and very much simplified versions of identity theories, is to end in reinforcing stereotypes such as the idea that Muslims, particularly men, are more religiously observant than in other monotheistic religion²⁴.

This particular cultural reductionism informs quite a number of publications dedicated to the issue of radicalisation in general and radicalisation in prison in particular²⁵. In such an anxious-driven political environment where Islam is perceived and portrayed within a so-called clash of values, the risk, even in academic studies, is to end in studying these stereotypes instead of the reality. When addressing and assessing Muslim prisoners and the risk of radicalisation, avoiding this process of essentialisation should be of paramount importance. Yet,

23. MARRANCI, Gabriele. *Faith, Ideology and Fear: Muslim Identities Within and Beyond Prisons*, London, Continuum, 2009

24. MORGAN, George, Scott POYNTING (eds.). *Global Islamophobia: Muslims and Moral Panic in the West*. London, Routledge, 2012. SAEED, Amir. "Media, racism and Islamophobia: The representation of Islam and Muslims in the media." *Sociology Compass* 1(2), 2007, pp. 443-462.

25. MAMDANI, Mahmood. Good Muslim, bad Muslim: A political perspective on culture and terrorism. *American anthropologist*, 104 (3), 2002, pp. 766-775. ABBAS, Tahir. The symbiotic relationship between Islamophobia and radicalisation. *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 5(3), 2012, pp. 345-358.

and quite dramatically, it does not seem to be the case in the vast majority of publications dedicated to the issue. As if there was some inevitable path from prison conversion to terrorism on one hand, and as if faith behind the bars could be reduced to one in particular²⁶.

It is fairly well accepted that many prisoners enter detention with little or no religious calling, but over the duration of their incarceration some adopt a faith²⁷. Criminologists have long studied how adopting a faith allows inmates to give purpose and meaning to their prison experience, but also to help them to cope with the harshness of a prison regime²⁸. As Brillet highlights, the religious reference is also a resource for action mobilised for other purposes than spiritual ones²⁹. Farhad Khosrokhavar points toward the same direction in his

26. BERAUD, Céline, Claire DE GALEMBERT et Corinne ROSTAING, *Des hommes et des dieux en prison*, Paris : Mission de recherche Droit et Justice, 2013

27. MARUNA, Shadd, Louise WILSON & Kathryn CURRAN. 'Why God is often found behind bars: prison conversion and the crisis of self-narrative.' *Research in Human Development*, 3(2-3), 2006, pp. 161-184. DAMMER, Harry. The Reasons for Religious Involvement in the Correctional Environment, *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35, 2002, pp. 35-58. KERLEY, Kent R., ed. *Finding Freedom in Confinement: The Role of Religion in Prison Life*. Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2018

28. CHANTRAINE, Gilles, « Ordre, pouvoir et domination en détention : les relations surveillants-détenus dans une maison d'arrêt en France », *Criminologie*, 37 (2), 2004, pp. 197-223. CHAUVENET, Antoinette, « Privation de liberté et violence : le despotisme ordinaire en prison », *Déviance et Société*, 30 (3), 2006, p. 373-388

29. BRILLET, Emmanuel. Un impensé qui fait retour: la religion en prison, entre laïcisation et pluralisation, in, *Actes du colloque Le fait religieux en prison*, organisé par la Direction de l'administration pénitentiaire, Paris, 28-29 octobre 2013, pp.105-116.



study of French prisons where adopting the faith of Islam is a convenient way to get protection and to free oneself from the many dangers of the prison's universe³⁰. Survival in prison is often achieved through strategies and Religion is surely one of those³¹.

Religion as a vector for structuring prison's daily life, as a tool to resist logics of depersonalisation and as a way to gain protection has been studied in great details³². And most of these studies underline the same pattern; faith in prison is less the result of an intellectual or religious commitment, and much more the result of an emotional processes. Religion, indeed, provides prisoners with some psychological, cognitive and social capital with which to face the difficulties of everyday life behind bars. To be part of a group is quite strategic within prison life

and can help to resolve, or ease, everyday issues faced by prisoners. Rituals, such as prayer, help to control emotions and the flux of time, and assembling together, as in the case of a religious congregation, aids the formation of a sense of unity and membership.

Equally, it is recognised that religion and/or ideological commitment can have substantial benefits for inmates, especially for first offenders where incarceration can be a dishearten experience³³. Furthermore and as O'connor and Perreyclear highlights, in their study into the nature of religion in prison setting, is that as religion intensified prison disciplinary infractions declined³⁴.

The above notwithstanding, key to the question is to observe with attention how prison environment and inmates' experiences of religion are intimately linked:

*"the often overzealous surveillance, as well as a lack of possibility to discuss 'controversial' topics even within the institutionalised provision of Islam inside prison, facilitate the imagistic mode of Islamic religiosity and the spreading of spontaneous exegetical reflection, which undermines the work of professional prison imams"*³⁵.

Faith, religion and devotion within prison are, quite unsurprisingly, a multifaceted issue and the impact of the prison

30. KHOSROKHAVAR, Farhad. *L'Islam dans les prisons*, Paris, Balland, 2004; KHOSROKHAVAR, Farhad. *Prisons de France: Violence, radicalisation, déshumanisation: surveillants et détenus parlent*. Paris, Robert Laffont, 2016. BECKFORD, James, Daniele JOLY, and Farhad KHOSROKHAVAR. *Muslims in prison: Challenge and change in Britain and France*. Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2005

31. GREER, K. Walking an emotional tightrope: Managing emotions in a women's prison, *Symbolic Interaction*, 25(1), 2002, pp. 117-39. STRINGER, Ebonie Cunningham. 'Keeping the Faith': How Incarcerated African American Mothers Use Religion and Spirituality to Cope with Imprisonment. *Journal of African American Studies* 13(3), 2009, pp.325-347.

32. SPALEK, B. Muslims in the UK and the criminal justice system', in, *Muslims in the UK: Policies for Engaged Citizens*, OSI/EU Monitoring Programme, Budapest and New York: Open Society Institute, 2004, pp.253-340. EL-HASSAN, S. Working with Muslims in prison - the IQRA Trust, in S. SPALEK (ed.), *Islam, Crime and Criminal Justice*, Cullompton, Willan Publishing, 2002, pp.113-18. BECKFORD, J. and GILLIAT, S. *Religion in Prison*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

33. CLEAR, T. R. and SUMTER, M. T. (2002), "Prisoners, Prison, and Religion: Religion and Adjustment to Prison", *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35: 127-60

34. O'CONNOR, Thomas, PERREYCLEAR, Michael. Prison religion in action and its influence on offender rehabilitation. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35(3-4), 2002, pp.11-33

35. MARRANCI, Op. cit., p. 131



environment is not just symbolic. As Gabriele Marranci aptly suggests, it is the reason why one should appreciate the concept of '*prison Islam*' rather than '*Islam in prison*'. But also and ultimately, one should not fall into the moral panic about prisoners' conversion to a particular faith which reflects a broader sense of islamophobia across our societies and understand the differences and impacts between religion, faith and devotion, from a place to another, from an inmate to another³⁶.

GOVERNING EXTREMIST OFFENDERS

Whereas the very first publications dedicated to radicalisation in prison focused mainly on understanding the risks and dynamics behind prisoner radicalisation, more recently authors have started focusing on more technical challenges, such as risk assessment and classification, management strategies, and rehabilitation and reintegration approaches³⁷.

This new trend within the literature dedicated to incarceration regimes and penitentiary policies on one hand, and to the assessment and de-radicalisation

measures and programmes on the other hand, is certainly a welcoming one.

The management of higher-risk prisoners and the need to prevent violence from spreading in prisons are nothing but new³⁸. They have long been recognised as a difficult problem in prisons but received a renewed attention since 2001 onwards³⁹. If, as underlined previously, such offenders are still relatively rare, when their numbers increase these types of prisoners are usually and quite commonly viewed as a potential impairment to the effectiveness and safety of the prison system. The problem is very often divided in two; is it preferable to integrate terrorist inmates with the mainstream prison population or to segregate them? Which process works better to minimise the risk of radicalising other inmates, reduce recidivism, and promote disengagement and, potentially, de-radicalisation?

There has been enormous uncertainty over what works, really. One of the key challenges when governing higher-risk prisoners is to be able to draw a clear distinction between 'regular' offenders, 'wannabees' and those that can be called 'radicalised' or 'extremists', on one hand, and on the other, to be able to tell if a prisoner is still dangerous or not.

36. BERAUD, Céline, Claire DE GALEMBERT et Corinne ROSTAING, *op. cit.*

37. VELDHUIS, Tinka. *Prisoner radicalization and terrorism detention policy. Institutionalized fear or evidence-based policy making?* London, Routledge, 2016. EL-SAID, Hamed. *New Approaches to Fight Violent Extremism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalisation and Deradicalisation Programs in Muslim Majority States & Western Democracies*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. SILKE, Andrew, *op. cit.*

38. DE VITO, Christian G. Processes of radicalization and de-radicalization in Western European prisons (1965–1986). In L. BOSI, C. DEMETRIOU, & S. MALTHANER (Eds.), *Dynamics of political violence: A process-oriented perspective on radicalization and the escalation of political conflict*, Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate, 2014, pp. 71–91.

39. UNODC, *Handbook on the Management of Violent Extremist Prisoners and the Prevention of Radicalization to Violence in Prisons*, New York, 2016.



One of the most serious questions in this area relates to the effectiveness of prison-based programs which are designed to intervene with terrorist prisoners and to either de-radicalise and/or disengage them from violent extremism. This issue has attracted considerable (and growing) attention but good evidence about what works in this area and how remains scarce⁴⁰.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As we discussed previously, a rather important part of the literature dedicated to radicalisation within the prison environment is largely based on the underlying assumption that prison and prison's experience are essentially a crucial place and moment in the causal and mechanical chain leading to extreme violence⁴¹.

It is often the case that a prison experience on the part of a suspected or convicted terrorist is assumed to have played a role in the development of that person's extremist beliefs and behaviour, even where there may be no compelling evidence to indicate that they even converted whilst in prison. This predisposition, one suspects, finds its roots in general theories of radicalisation based on notions of disaffection, isolation, identity seeking, and counter cultural

40. HORGAN, J. and BRADDOCK, K. 'Rehabilitating the terrorists? Challenges in assessing the effectiveness of de-radicalization programmes.' *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22/2, 2010, pp.267-291.

41. SILKE, Andrew (ed.). *The Psychology of Counter-Terrorism*. London, Routledge, 2011

urges, and the prison environment's capacity to feed, or exploit, these feelings.

As we have underlined, these overly psychological views on radicalisation seriously impede the possibility to analyse the extremely complex relationship between inmates' experiences, prisons' regimes and processes of radicalisation. Path to militant activities is a long and complex one, involving the coalescing of a range of factors where one's experience of incarceration might be of paramount importance⁴². Yet, if the experience of jail can surely push someone over the edge, it can also discourage someone from taking any further action⁴³.

Quite surprisingly, recent studies on prison radicalisation rarely intersect with the huge body of knowledge developed within conventional penology. It essentially relies upon very limited information, and therefore equally questionable analysis, about what a prison's environment is on one hand, and how inmates deal with it on the other⁴⁴.

If one agrees upon the idea that prison is not a static element but a terminal of a larger process of social control which does

42. JOVELIN, Emmanuel. Un radicalisé nommé Khaled Kelkal: parcours, rupture, bifurcation. *Vie sociale*, 2017, no 2, p. 143-156. JOVELIN, Emmanuel. De la délinquance à la radicalisation. L'exemple de Mohamed Merah. *Hommes et migrations*, 2016, no 3, p. 59-68

43. CODACCIONI, Vanessa. Expériences répressives et (dé) radicalisation militante. La variation des effets de la répression sur les jeunes membres du Parti communiste français (1947-1962). *Cultures & Conflits*, 2013, 89, 2013, pp. 29-52.

44. VELDHUIS, Tinka M., and Eelco Jam KESSELS. Thinking before leaping: The need for more and structural data analysis in detention and rehabilitation of extremist offenders. *The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism* (2013).



not imply a mere exclusion from society, then our understanding of radicalisation should implies looking beyond the walls.

Furthermore and most of the time, very little is said about how the individual did in prison, who they interacted with, and the nature and development of their beliefs, spiritual or otherwise. It seems obvious to suggest that gaining an authentic understanding of prison radicalisation requires a thorough insight into these individuals' prison experience.

A prison experience that could not be expurgated from an analysis on staff-terrorist offender relationships and the effects of special incarceration policies upon prison staff. Furthermore – and needless to say that leaving prison can be as traumatic as entering it –, much of the inmates' post-incarceration experiences is also missing or ignored as such. It is precisely this exactness that has eluded the vast majority of studies thus far. Finally, one could not ending such a review without underlining that overcrowding continues to be a severe blight on the record of many European countries in their treatment of prisoners. Strangely enough, this issue is rarely mentioned when studying what radicalisation could be in prison. That is a debate which will take us beyond the parameters of this research paper.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Fabienne Brion is professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain) and coordinator of the AFFECT Research network

Fabienne.Brion@UCLouvain.be

Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet is researcher at the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain) and member of the AFFECT Research network

Emmanuel-Pierre.Guittet@UCLouvain.be



ABOUT AFFECT

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