ПОЛИТОЛОГИЯ

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THE PROBLEM OF RADICALIZATION AND TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN PRISONS[1]

Recent observations and events demonstrate that prisons serve as safe-haven for radicalization of the criminals and further development of terrorist networks. The traditional penitentiary system shows helpless when it comes to imprisonment of extremists. The article examines the problem of radicalization among the incarcerated in places of confinement. The author touches upon the following questions: What do radicalism, radicalization and de-radicalization mean? How does radicalization take place? What stages does the process of radicalization flow through? What are de-radicalization measures taken by the governments? To what extent are these measures effective? The research demonstrates that while the traditional penitentiary system only exacerbates the process of radicalization of terrorists we still do not have a universally applicable and effective alternative yet.
Keywords: *prison radicalization, terrorism, terrorist recruitment, extremism, counter-radicalization*[2]*.*

Introduction

Over the past decade it has become a common belief that prisons are very favorable places for religious radicalization to flourish. The shocking events of January 2015 that endowed European cities with blood and horror have only reinforced such an apprehension. Two of the three gunmen who carried out the Charlie Hebdo attack in January 2015 had first met both each other and a dangerous al-Qaida-linked militant in the country's largest jail Fleury-Mérogis in 2005. Two of the suicide bombers in the Brussels attacks, brothers Ibrahim and Khalid el-Bakraoui, had spent time in Belgian prisons for offenses that included armed robbery and carjacking. The list goes on, and what unites almost all of these young man is that none of them had any links with terrorist organizations before serving time in places of strict regime.

Radicalization and terrorist recruitment in prisons in general are not new phenomena. Prisons have always served as places for recruitment and headquarters for ideological extremists, where the masterminds developed extremist ideologies and recruited others into their teachings. Sergey Nechaev, a Russian nihilist and one of the founding fathers of Russian revolutionary terrorism in XIX century whose deeds served as a basis for Dostoevsky to write Demons, spent 10 years in prison where he proselytized the inmates and converted them into his followers and the

guard into his agents through whom he kept in touch with and guided his "People's Will" party [1. P. 73]. Felix Dzerzhinsky, a revolutionary and the founder of Cheka (the Soviet secret police forces), which immediately gained fame for mass summary executions conducted particularly during the Russian Civil War, served 15 years in jail where he got acquainted with radical revolutionary ideas before he soaked hands in blood during and after the Russian revolution [1. P. 74]. The list goes on and on.

Despite being historically an actual issue "prisoner radicalization" still lacks thorough theoretical development. This phenomenon is not fully explored and is very complex to be well understood. It is difficult to learn the process of radicalization in prison in particular because of the very limited information researchers can obtain to develop the necessary methodology. Also the process of radicalization is not sequential; it flows without a certain consistent pattern which makes it almost impossible to coin a theoretical apparatus. Furthermore, radicalization does not inevitably lead to terrorism. Many radicalized inmates do not accept jihadist or other violent ideology, preferring to follow their own path. Finally, it is hard to create a theoretical background for prisoner radicalization when there is no a commonly accepted consensus on the definition of "radicalization".

This paper starts with defining what is "radicalization" and what is "radicalism". Then, it will analyze the process of radicalization in prisons. Finally, it will conclude with examining what methods are some countries using to tackle this problem and to what extent they are effective.

Defining the concepts of radicalism and radicalization

There is no universally accepted consensus among academicians and politicians regarding the definition of radicalization. Thus, the concept of radicalization is by no means solid and clear, lacking a generic definition which could be used across all disciplines. According to Oxford English Dictionary "to radicalize" means: 1) to cause someone to become an advocate of radical political or social reforms and 2) introduce fundamental or far reaching change; while "radicalization" is defined as "The action or process of making or becoming radical, esp. in political outlook" [2]. Nevertheless, such a definition of radicalization is vague.

Many scholars and political institutions have their own definitions of radicalism. According to The United Kingdom Home Office radicalization implies "The process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then join terrorist groups" [3. P. 41]. This is an extremely subjective and even, to a certain extent, dangerous definition. It automatically stamps a terrorist label to all sort of radicalism.

In contrast, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police provides a more tolerant definition of radicalization: "the process by which individuals – usually young people – are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views. While radical thinking is by no means problematic in itself, it becomes a threat to national security when Canadian citizens or residents espouse or engage in violence or direct action as a means of promoting political, ideological or religious extremism. Sometimes referred to as 'homegrown terrorism', this process of radicalization is more correctly referred to as domestic radicalization leading to

terrorist violence" [4. P. 1]. This definition is better since it acknowledges that radicalism is by no means equal to or synonym of terrorism.

A publicist and political philosopher T. Fraihi brings a definition that is considered to be inclusive and very close to radicalization. According to Fraihi: "Radicalization is a process in which an individual's convictions and willingness to seek for deep and serious changes in the society increase. Radicalism and radicalization are not necessarily negative. Moreover, different forms of radicalization exist. This concentration on the individual is indicative of the focus of expert and government concern" [5. P. 135]. It is very important that Fraihi outlines that radicalization is not negative by nature; it has various forms and it is not always a precursor to terrorism.

With such heterogeneous definitions it is hard to ignore the fact that the concepts of radicalization and radicalism are problematic. A look through historical roots of these phenomena helps us better understand radicalization. The term "radical" became widespread in 19th century. It often referred to a political agenda advocating thorough social and political reform. "Radical" also implied representing or supporting an extreme section of a party [6. P. 1]. In the course of history the concept of radicalism has changed significantly. Many political parties that, in the 19th century called themselves 'radical', were 'radical' mainly on their advocating republicanism rather than royalism. Some radicals were arguing for the establishment of a democratic system in which the privilege to vote was not connected with property or gender. Most of them were reformists. In the mid and late 19th century "Radical" was even as honorable and respectable as liberal. Moreover, some of the radical demands of 19th century such as women's franchise, secularism and democratic government have become mainstream entitlements today. However, the content of the notion of "radical" has changed dramatically. While in 19th century "radical" was associated with liberal, progressive, anti-clerical and democratic, the contemporary meaning of radical has shifted to completely opposite implications: anti-liberal, regressive and fundamentalist. Thus, we shall never forget that in the past two hundred years, people labelled 'radicals' have been both non-violent and violent and their radicalism has been both illegal and legal.

Dr. Alex Schmid from The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) describes the concept of "radicalism" in terms of two main elements reflecting thought/attitude and action/behavior respectively: "1) Standing for drastic political change, based on a belief that the status quo is unacceptable while at the same time a fundamentally different alternative seems to be available to the radical; 2) The means used to ensure the game-changing radical solution for government and society can be non-violent and democratic (encouragement and reform) or violent and non-democratic (enforcement and revolt)" [7. P. 679].

Such a description of radicalism seems to be the most inclusive one in relation to other definitions that one can come across with. This definition is less overwhelming and helps us distinguish radicalism from other notions, such as terrorism and extremism.

The process of radicalization

Ahmed el-Houmass, a practicing Muslim and a well-built guard at Fresnes (one of France's biggest jails), describes an occasion of a newly converted inmate: "His name was Stephane. His parents were doctors. He was top of the class. He

parted his hair at the side. You know the type. But then he mowed down a little girl when drunk-driving and got five years [8. P. 17]."

According to El-Houmass when Stephane arrived at Fresnes he suffered from so called prison shock: "During the first two weeks he was weeping like a baby". One day an Algerian detainee called Mohamed approached Stephane in the prison yard and asked why he was crying. It was the start of Stephane's journey. As the ex-guard puts it, "Mohamed was promising him forgiveness for what he had done. Stephane was in two minds. His parents were Catholic. They would not take it kindly. But Mohamed gave him books and CDs." Two weeks later Stephane had converted and was growing a beard [Ibid. P. 18].

Usually, when a person is incarcerated he suffers from emotional trauma which makes him vulnerable to recruitment. Emotionally and physically weak a detainee becomes easy to be spotted and brainstormed by the recruiters. All start when these impressionable detainees enter into contact with the "preachers". We do not have information whether Stephen became radical at the end since he was soon transferred to another prison after his parents had been informed about his conversion. Also, his conversion does not necessarily mean he was to become a terrorist. Yet, Stephen was given a trigger. The end of his journey largely depends on the Algerian guy's intentions.

Opinions on the process of radicalization differ. Some researchers assert that radicalization cannot be described by a sequence of fixed stages while others believe that radicalization has series of stages with terrorism being the final destination. In 2009 there was a study published by the Intelligence Division of the New York Police Department (NYPD) which suggests four stages of radicalization: pre-radicalisation, self-identification, indoctrination and jihadisation. These four stages are described as a 'funnel' through which ordinary individuals' religious beliefs become progressively more radical and this once ordinary individual becomes a terrorist [9. P. 19].

According to the research, the first stage, pre-radicalization, occurs when detainees are placed in circumstances that make them susceptive to extremism. It may be related with either intrinsic motivations (the result of a personal trauma, experiences of discrimination or alienation) or extrinsic motivations (any external factor such as economic, political, religious, or social deprivation) [Ibid. P. 22]. The second stage, self-identification, occurs when the individual associates him/herself with a certain extremist cause and fundamentally changes his/her religious beliefs or behaviors. The help of recruiters reinforces the process of radicalization. The third stage, indoctrination, sharpens this mindset and readiness for action. It occurs once a convert has accepted the radical ideology but may be unsure or unfamiliar with how to participate. This stage also includes becoming an active participant. The final stage is engaging directly in terrorist activities (which can be violent or nonviolent).

The authors of the research outline that "these stages do not have chronological order and sometimes individuals may skip stages, quickly reaching more violent actions". It also means that individuals do not necessarily reach the final stage escaping full radicalization. Besides, even if they are totally radicalized they won't necessarily engage in terrorist attacks: "Commitment is constantly calibrated and re-recalibrated. Some drop out along the way. A component of our counter-

recruiting strategy must be to always offer a safe way back from the edge" [9. P. 83].

Although well organized, this description of radicalization process has some flaws. Firstly, it presumes that radicalization can be divided into concrete stages. This can hardly be true since radicalization occurs without a certain consistent pattern. Two individuals may reach the final level by different paths, different motivations and driven by different goals. Secondly, this model lacks a full understanding of psychological, organizational, and social processes that lead people into radicalization and their continuation towards committing acts of terrorism. Finally, the authors of the report assume that every form of radicalization is negative and it necessarily leads to terrorism, which is, considering the facts noted above, by no mean accurate.

Considering the facts stated above, there are two forms of radicalization in prison. First – radicalization by infection: when the radical inmates spread violent ideology through proselytizing and conversion of the mentally weak and impressionable fellow inmates. Second - self-radicalization: detainees' beliefs sharpen under the influence of the circumstances in which they serve time (enhanced interrogation, hatred, anger, etc.). Both of these forms have chaotic process with no particular stages.

The occasion of Stephen mentioned above is a common example of radicalization by infection. As for the second – self-radicalization – it is common for the individuals who were imprisoned for their involvement in extremist groups. Often these individuals come to jail hesitant and leave it as professional terrorists – more determined, violent, and resolute. The former leader if Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) Abu Musab az-Zarqawi achieved an overwhelming success in building huge authority and developing a huge extremist net during his imprisonment in Jordan [10. P. 43]. As a representative of an influential clan of Bani Hasan az-Zarqawi, by employing the authority of his clan, strengthened his influence inside the bars. Having proclaimed himself the supreme preacher, he beat those who didn't hesitate to ignore his commands, including the detainee who wrote a criticizing article about Zarqawi in the prison's magazine called "Sauka" [10. P. 48]. As an unskilled debater Zarqawi pumped up muscles using the back-stick of his bed and oil jerry-cans filled with stones. In prison Zarqawi overshadowed authority of his fellow jihadist Al-Maksidi who was the ideologue of AQI and Zarqawi's teacher. Al-Maksidi helped Zarqawi strengthen his ideological base and together they coined fatwas and religious orders that later were published in internet [11. P. 33]. According to a former official from Pentagon and a specialist on fight against terrorism, Richard, the prison made with Zarqawi the same as it did with Whitney Bulger, the head of a criminal organization in Boston: "We sent him to the Harvard of American penitentiaries. He was a wily criminal who had a little IQ and put together some good streams of income. He comes out of the pen with great street cred that helped him form his own gang, which ran Boston for four or five years. Same with al-Zarqawi. Prison was his university" [Ibidem].

The same could be told 20 years later about the current leader of IS Abubakr Al-Baghdadias as fellow ISIS inmates recounted his similar leadership qualities and maneuverability with the guards at Camp Bucca, the US-run detention facility in southern Iraq.

De-radicalization or counter-radicalization measures taken by governments

Before we consider de-radicalization and counter-radicalization techniques we must be more precise about the definitions of these two phenomena. The UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Working Group on Radicalization and Extremism that lead to Terrorism adopted a definition of de-radicalization provided by John Horgan, which describes it as "programmes that are generally directed against individuals who have become radical with the aim of reintegrating them into society or at least dissuading them from violence" [12. P. 2].

Almost over thirty countries have presented various de-radicalization programs aimed at de-radicalizing both inside and outside the prison. There are two types of de-radicalization efforts: (1) individual ideological de-radicalization, using psychological and religious counseling to produce a change of mind, and (2) collective de-radicalization, using political negotiations to obtain a type of change of behavior (e.g. cease fire, de-commissioning of arms) [6. P. 40]. For prison de-radicalization only first approach is applied. An example for the first approach would be the efforts undertaken by the government of Singapore while the second approach has been utilized in Egypt. There are also combinations of the two models, such as in the Indonesian approach. Studies on de-radicalisation programmes exist for both the Western world and for Muslim majority countries [Ibidem].

According to Dr. Alex Schmidt national de-radicalization programmes have often multiple goals. Their objectives have been summarized by Bjorgo and Horgan in 2009:

Reducing the number of active terrorists;

Reducing violence and victimization;

Re-orientating ideological views and attitudes of the participants;

Re-socializing ex-members back to normal life;

Acquiring intelligence, evidence and witnesses in court cases;

Using repentant ex-terrorists as opinion builders;

Sowing dissent within the terrorist milieu;

Providing an exit from terrorism and 'underground' life;

Reducing the dependency on repressive means and make more use of more humane means in counterterrorism;

Reducing the economic and social costs of keeping a large number of terrorists in prison for a long time;

Increasing the legitimacy of the government or state agency [Ibid. P. 41].

Among these rehabilitation programmes the one from Saudi Arabia sometime was claimed to be relatively successful. This programme was forged and developed under Mohammed Nayef, a close relative of the late Crown Prince Nayef, and focused on de-radicalizing and rehabilitating captured jihadists as well as radical prisoners [13. P. 32]. The programme, which lasts from 8 to 12 weeks, has processed over 4,000 radical inmates, releasing nearly half of them to society since 2003. It is very expensive programme that includes psychological counseling, religious re-education, vocational training, sports and arts therapy. It also includes helping the 'rehabilitated' extremists to find jobs and even wives. The post-release phase of the programme involves intense surveillance of the former extremists [6. P. 43].

To what extent the Saudi method is efficient? According to initial Saudi claims, of those detainees who proceeded through this programme only 10–20 percent had been rearrested for recidivism. However, such a claim seems to be fantastic. In fact, an unknown but not unsubstantial number of the graduates of the Saudi de-radicalization programme reportedly fled to Yemen and re-joined al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula cells [14; 15. P. 85]. At one point, the Saudi authorities admitted that 10–20 percent of those released may have returned to their initial activities [14. P. 1]. According to Jeff Addicott, Director of the Centre for Terrorism Law in Texas, the true number is more likely to be 30–40 percent [16]. Thus, we may not surely say that Saudi rehabilitation programme is flawless and effective. It also depends on the way the Saudis and the rest understand what "rehabilitation" actually is. Where it starts and where are its boundaries? Nevertheless, the Saudi de-radicalization programme is a significant achievement: losing 10–20 percent of detainees is still better than letting all of them radicalize in prisons.

Also, there are some states where the radicalization is challenged by isolation and physiotherapy. Such a program was recently introduced in France when investigations showed that the masterminds and implementers of Charlie Hebdo terrorist attacks in Paris turned radical during their time in jails. According to this programme the detainees are place in "dedicated units". They will be supervised by a larger number of specially trained wardens, and receive visits by psychologists, sociologists and historians (to argue against their unrealistic ideas about medieval caliphates). The daily routine for those individuals will involve theatre workshops, political discussions, as well as lessons that include reading and writing for the less literate, foreign languages for the intellectually developed. Those who refuse to engage in rehabilitation will be expelled back to the less welcoming corners of the prison [8].

Although challenging radicalization by isolation with its intellectual aspects seems far reaching, in fact, it has some unexpected consequences. First of all, isolation of the most radical inmates may even exacerbate radicalization. Isolated from others but brought together, a bunch of radical individuals may sharpen their ideas as a result of close interaction. There will always be some individuals with robust beliefs that survive ideological and intellectual filtration and who may help the fellow inmates maintain radical outlook. Moreover, since the radical extremists are more prone to taking actions, isolation is a chance for them to coin new operations for the future. Most of the huge terrorist plots carried out by Al-Qaida proved to have been coined by their masterminds during their close interaction in prisons.

Thus, none of the employed counter-radicalization and de-radicalization strategies showed to be inclusive and universally effective. Also, we do not know how to fight radicalization in prison since there is a lack of up to date empirical data. There is only a small number of cases that serve ground for the whole literature on this issue. Therefore, it is very difficult to draw universally applicable conclusions regarding counter-radicalization [17. P. 40].

Conclusion

Despite being a phenomenon with long history "prison radicalization" is still surrounded by a large number of unsolved problems such as defining the concept of radicalization, providing a solid distinction of radicalization form extremism and terrorism, collecting empirical data, and building integrative theory. Also, without

a proper theoretical apparatus the understanding of prisoner radicalization seems hopeless. As a result, most important questions - What are the fundamental reasons for radicalization? Does a particular logic exist in the process of radicalization? Where is the most appropriate place to contain terrorists? How to hinder radicalization in prisons? What measures should be taken to combat radicalization? – still remain with no all-encompassing response.

The process of radicalization is by no means strictly sequential. It may develop both spontaneous as well as according to a series of stages. At the same time, radicalization does not inevitably end up with terrorism. Some detainees after radicalization manage to choose their own path avoiding contact with extremist groups. There are a millions of followers of Salafism who live a peaceful life without engagement in terrorist organizations. Moreover, radical is not necessarily bad or terrorist. Some of the history's most pivotal changes were brought by radical minds, starting with Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, and not ending with Martin Luther, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Gloria Steinem.

The traditional penitentiary system faces a deep collapse when it comes to dealing with detainees accused of terrorism. Experience shows that prison becomes a safe-haven for terrorists where they easily radicalize, recruit and train new members, organize plots and develop networks. De facto prison becomes a training base for terrorists, except for it is the government who pays for security and food supply. The methods of rehabilitating the radicalized individuals employed in different states instill some hope but yet they haven't achieved much. The Saudi rehabilitation programme, though showing some shift, is too expensive for the majority of states to afford. De-radicalization by isolation, in its turn, may even be more dangerous. Some commentators believe that isolating the radicals will only exacerbate their radicalization.

We do not know how to fight radicalization in prison since there is a lack of up to date empirical data. There is only a small number of cases that serve ground for the whole literature on this issue. Therefore, it is very difficult to draw universally applicable conclusions regarding counter-radicalization. Besides, it is not easy to collect empirical data since researchers face difficulties in contacting the radical inmates. Thus, encouraging more empirical researches, particularly interviews with detainees, staff-members and families could be helpful in understanding and developing effective strategies. In addition, even though prison radicalization is nowadays mainly concerned with Islamic fundamentalism, there are also other radical ideologies flourishing in prisons (far right-wing extremism). Therefore, intelligence agencies, the police, policy-makers and researchers should widen their focus to include all forms of violent and extremist ideologies.

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THE PROBLEM OF RADICALIZATION AND TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN PRISONS

Experience has shown that prisons are very favorable places for ideological radicalization and terrorist recruitment to flourish. Observations demonstrate that the majority of the active terrorists had no links with terrorist organizations before serving time in prison. Going to jail for some minor offenses such as robbery, ordinary and psychologically weak individuals leave it as professional and confident extremists. Radicalization and terrorist recruitment in prisons are not new phenomena. Prisons have always served as places for recruitment and headquarters for ideological extremists, from the anarchists, and Marxists to the contemporary jihadists. However, despite being historically an urgent issue "prisoner radicalization" still lacks a thorough theoretical development. This phenomenon is not fully explored and is very complex to be well understood because of the very limited empirical data, the lack of necessary methodology and the complexity of the phenomenon. The process of radicalization is not sequential; it flows without a certain consistent pattern, which makes it almost impossible to coin a theoretical apparatus. Besides, radicalization does not inevitably lead to terrorism. Many radicalized inmates do not accept jihadist or other violent ideology, preferring to follow their own path. Finally, there is no commonly accepted consensus on the definition of "radicalization", which makes it difficult to create a theoretical background for prisoner radicalization. This paper starts with defining

the phenomena of "radicalization" and "radicalism". Then, the process of radicalization in prisons is analyzed. Finally, the paper concludes with examining what methods some countries are using to tackle prison radicalization and to what extent they are effective.

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