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Combating Extremism
and Terrorism

## Identity Challenges and the Risks of Radicalisation in High Security Custody

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The research drawn upon in this article began in January 2009 and was completed in March 2011. It was a repeat of an exploratory study carried out at HMP Whitemoor in 1998/9 which found very positive relationships at the establishment and resulted in the publication of 'The Prison Officer' which described the characteristics of role model prison officers.<sup>2</sup> The current study was requested by the Home Office and NOMS in 2008 following a report from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons which described apparently 'distant relationships' between staff and prisoners at Whitemoor, an apparent decline that was a matter of concern and interest.

The study was largely qualitative, based on observation, informal interviews and conversations, a 'dialogue' group, and in-depth one to one interviews with 36 prison staff and 52 prisoners, though a detailed quality of life survey was also completed with 159 randomly selected prisoners and 194 staff.

Whilst the research did not set out explicitly to explore relationships between Muslim prisoners and others, the role of faith and in-prison conversions to Islam, or the risks of radicalisation, these became important themes in the research because of their prominence in staff and prisoner experience at Whitemoor.

Individuals are generally considered to be more receptive to religious ideologies during periods when their self-identity is questioned, placed under strain, or threatened with annihilation<sup>3</sup>.

The system would say 'OK, this person's come in a Christian, he's become a Muslim. Why are these people becoming Muslim, what's so catching on about this, what's this wild fire?' But you have to understand ... There's people that have come to prison and become Muslim, they're a much better person than they was before, but there's also those that are in there for the wrong reasons. They're in

there just to feel within that community. You wouldn't see them praying or reading the Qur'an any time, you wouldn't even see them going to Friday prayers... And then you'll have other individuals that are really devout [and] will not try to push that devoutness onto another prisoner. [And then] another prisoner that's... devout [but] pushing his beliefs on people, but behind his door he's doing whatever he's doing. So it's all different, it's fragmented, [sometimes] it's manipulated and used for different purposes (Prisoner).

I think a lot of people use Islam as a way of expressing their anger towards society, expressing maybe their own anger towards incarceration. A prisoner.

There's obviously people that turn to Islam in prison not because they believe in God, not because they believe in Islam and they want to follow the true faith, but because they're angry at society and ... [it] makes them feel good, because in their own way they're part of something that is attacking the very society that's incarcerated them, and I think psychologically that might give people a bit of a kick... maybe it's more about politics than religion (Prisoner).

## **Key Findings**

The study found that there was a new problem of relatively young prisoners serving indeterminate sentences, sometimes facing 15-25 year tariffs, coming to terms with and finding a way of doing this kind of sentence:

Them first three years of being incarcerated, you know, I think I wasn't coping very well with my emotions (Prisoner).

<sup>1.</sup> We are deeply grateful to Helen Arnold, who was part of the research team, and with whom we are writing other and fuller accounts of this research. We are also grateful to Deborah Kant for assistance with the literature review, amongst other things, and to Monica Lloyd for her unwavering support.

<sup>2.</sup> Liebling, A. and Price, D. (2001; 2nd edition 2010) The Prison Officer, Leyhill: Prison Service (and Waterside Press).

<sup>3.</sup> Maruna, S., Wilson, L. and Curran, K. (2006) 'Why God is often found behind bars: Prison Conversion and the Crisis of Self-Narrative', Research in Human Development, 3: 161-84.

Many of the prisoners interviewed seemed to be in a state of almost psychological 'paralysis'<sup>4</sup> as they contemplated (or tried not to contemplate) the reality of a 15 year 'plus' tariff. A high proportion of the interviewees (14 of 52) were appealing against their conviction or the length of their sentence. They were aware of the high numbers of indeterminate sentence prisoners who had been recalled to prison, which added to their feeling of being a very long way from release. Their position — often within a few years of receiving a very long sentence, and in the highest possible security category — was beyond words. Their lives 'on the street' had been violent and turbulent, the

sentence unexpected, and the route out seemed difficult to navigate. They were more aware of issues of class, discrimination, exclusion and disadvantage, than prisoners the authors had spoken to 12 years earlier. *Imprisonment was far more than the physical deprivation of liberty'. It meant the deprivation of freedom of thought, action, and identity's*.

Prisoners experienced new restrictions placed by the prison on finding available ways through their 'existential crisis'. Outside activities had been curtailed (for example, by a 'public acceptability test') and

long term prisoners at the earliest stage in long sentences were not a priority for available courses. A 'risk climate' meant that routes into work, education, art, music, or other meaningful activities were difficult. Prisoners wanted to be acknowledged 'where they were' — as more than their 'past action'. They were often on a complex trajectory of reflection and review and wanted support in this process. The only place where activity had not been curtailed (some said) was at Friday prayers. There were good reasons for the prison to have protected and enhanced faith-related provision for Muslim prisoners, but this Service-wide development came at a time when some other services and activities were reduced. Staff-prisoner relationships were more distant — a mutual process of distancing related to the changing composition of the prisoner population, an emphasis on conditioning rather than relationships, and fewer cultural reference points, or common ground, with staff. Prisoners brought more oppositional 'street culture' and frustration with them into prison due to changing social conditions and sentencing practices.

These new conditions meant that prisoners were looking for hope, recognition, friendship and meaning at a difficult stage in their sentences, and in an environment in which there were few avenues available for meeting these needs. There were, meanwhile, new tensions between prisoners, including some inter-faith rivalry and conflict, and much anxiety expressed by (for

example) older, disgruntled White-British prisoners about the growing Muslim population and number of in-prison conversions to Islam. The higher proportion of Black and minority ethnic and mixed race prisoners, and the high numbers of Muslim prisoners, were disrupting established hierarchies. Muslim prisoners talked about feeling alienated and targeted, and some non-Muslim prisoners regarded them as representing risk and a threat to a 'British-White-Christian-Secular' way of life. There was considerable fear and some violence in the prison.

There were tensions relating to fears of 'extremism' and 'radicalisation' in the prison.

## Fears and risks of radicalisation

Around 150 prisoners in prisons in England and Wales are held for 'extremist offences', with a further number under supervision<sup>6</sup>. About two thirds of these are convicted under the Terrorist Act for al-Qaedainspired offences. There are fears that the presence of these offenders in prisons will lead to the radicalisation of 'vulnerable' prisoners who are exposed to their influence. These concerns (e.g. of 'radical extremists infiltrating the prisons of England and Wales to recruit members') are well documented in the media.<sup>7</sup> They

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<sup>4.</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5.</sup> Liebling, A., Arnold, H. and Straub, C. (2011) 'An exploration of staff-prisoner relationships at HMP Whitemoor: 12 Years On', Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge.

<sup>6.</sup> Spalek, B., El-Awa, S. and Lambert, R. (2008) 'Preventing Violent Extremism in Prison: Key Policy and Practice Issues', Prison Service Journal, 180: 45-54.

<sup>7.</sup> For example, 'Extremist Muslim prison gang radicalising inmates, say warders' (Tibbets, G. The Telegraph, 10/10/08, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/lawandorder/3172312/ Extremist-Muslim-prison-gang-radicalising-inmates-say-warders.html); 'Our prisons are fertile ground for cultivating suicide bombers', (Dalrymple, T. The Times, 30/07/08, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest\_contributors/article549567.ece); 'Muslim convert 'recruits' inmates' (Chidzoy, S. BBC News, 20/06/08, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/cambridgeshire/7464736.stm).

have led to active intelligence-gathering and a number of tailored interventions with influential individuals in prisons. The high security estate holds the majority of prisoners convicted or suspected of terror-related offences. Staff and senior managers are aware that they are dealing with serious potential risks to safety.8 Extensive media-coverage about al-Qaeda-inspired terrorism in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan (read and sometimes discussed by staff and prisoners on wings) increases this fear and contributes to the 'othering' of Muslims and Muslim prisoners by the public9), by staff, and by policy makers. These issues have affected the treatment of all prisoners, because the risks posed are real (rare, but 'posing vivid danger'10):

Obviously the majority of these prison officers live in the outside society, they watch the news, they see all this stuff about terrorism and all this propaganda that's on within the media, and then they come into work and they're faced with the very terrorists that the media are talking about and things like that. Obviously they have the preconceived notions and biases that the majority of society have, and then they come into prisons and come

face to face with these people and obviously a lot of it is them exercising their own feelings out on Muslims as a whole and exercising their own biases out on Muslims as a whole (Prisoner).

The presence of an omnipresent but 'diffuse threat' leads to generalised suspicion and mistrust. Staff and prisoners were 'on the alert' and were in fear of violent attacks by a small number of Muslim prisoners inspired by TACT offenders. This fear was abstract (but a number of incidents, at Whitemoor and elsewhere, gave it edge). This meant constant staff vigilance as to any information that could be useful in preventing expected attacks, resulting in stress and tension, and obvious relief when 'key players' were moved elsewhere:

R: The ones like [name] are the extremists, the activists. The mood on the wing changes

Literature, p 19. University of Cambridge, (unpublished report).

when they're here because everybody wants to be near them, everybody wants to do things for them. I: Why is that? R: because they don't want to go against what he stands for or who he is, but once he's gone everybody breathes a huge sigh of relief and they can get back to normal with the day-today goings on, and you can see that from the attitude of the prisoners on the wing (Officer).

The power balance had shifted, so that 'being a Muslim', or encouraging conversion, was a new way of making staff feel uncomfortable, and unsure of themselves (Officer).

> I think now there's sort of more of a fear. If I was a prisoner and wanted to be bullying and intimidating, then I would love other people to think that my gang was so widespread that every single prisoner was, you know, loyal to me and about to do my bidding, so if they can create that culture of fear then that's excellent for them (Officer).

Staff and prisoners needed to communicate with and know each other at a time where this

seemed more difficult than ever:

I think staff are starting to understand more and I think when we started having terrorists, al-Qaeda terrorists, the old threat of somebody being taken hostage and their head being cut off, that was a big issue and it scared a lot of people, but I suppose it could happen but it's just hype, you know? And once we break down these barriers, we start talking to the prisoners, start understanding their culture, start understanding that about Muslim prayers, about, the clothes they wear, what you can and can't do, respect for that religion (Officer).

It was more difficult in this study to determine how much power individual prisoners had, and whether or how they accumulated this power (for example, in how

has also risen, see Kant, D., supervised by Liebling, A. and Arnold, H. (2009) The Experience of Muslim Prisoners: A Brief Review of the

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Although the current majority of terror-related prisoners are al-Qaeda inspired extremists, the number of right-wing radical offenders

Prison Media Monitoring Unit (2006) March Bulletin, p 20. Cardiff: The Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (see: http://www.jc2m.co.uk/pmmu.htm).

Padfield, N. (2002) Beyond the Tariff: Human Rights and the release of life sentence prisoners, Cullompton, Devon: Willan Publishing.

organised a manner). According to staff, organisational hierarchies from the outside could be transferred by TACT prisoners inside:

You've got your proper al-Qaeda members. They're the top dogs, they are the recruiters. There will be a hierarchy of people and they're right at the top. They don't do the dirty work, they don't do the assaults. They will get people below them and they're adored because they're so high up, they're so dangerous, they're so evil, and then you'll get people down the bottom that, kind of, wonder what it's like and then you'll get the people that have to do it and there'll be a whole pyramid of people that are prepared to do the job. They're right at the top. Genuine Muslims I think there's probably a very, very low per cent (Officer).

Staff and prisoners offered theories about the top dogs that mainly consisted of assumptions about how terrorists operated in general. When probed on the specific character traits, behaviour and ways of interaction between, for example, TACT prisoners and staff, there was a consensus that interaction was deliberately civil and polite:

I: And have you had experience of dealing with some of the more radicalised extremist prisoners? R: No, he doesn't really mix with staff, and not with females especially. I have dealt with him once on a query and he was polite to me, but it's only been the once. You can see them physically but they don't come to your attention (Officer).

I've had conversations, philosophical conversations about religion and all things like that but I know who to talk to and who not to. I wouldn't talk to somebody who was really extreme. Having said that, there is a guy who is quite well-educated, well there's two guys that are quite well-educated, apparently they were at University before they got arrested, and they're both meant to be quite high up in the Muslim hierarchy, as far as this place is concerned, and, you know, they're intelligent, you can talk to them (Prisoner).

There were 'strategic demonstrations' of highly compliant behaviour that prisoners with terrorist backgrounds had been specially trained for:

We know exactly who it is, but we can't do anything about it because the people who are in charge of those people who run it are polite; their cells are immaculate, they don't challenge us, they don't do anything wrong, they go to work, they play the game perfectly because they get lower people to do their acts for them. So they're untouchable, almost. There's nothing on them, because on paper they are perfect prisoners, they're playing the game, [they] do what they're told, clean and tidy, their hands are clean (Officer).

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Communication between individuals was constrained, apparently by religious doctrines:

Three or four years ago I noticed it. Before that, when I was at Long Lartin it wasn't such a big thing because they were isolated; the fanatical path. You had Muslims before but it wasn't a fanatical thing, you know? I mean I've even heard people telling people not to speak to non-believers (Prisoner).

I haven't personally heard it myself, but I've heard people preaching, talking, in a way that I would have to pull someone up on, I would say 'hang on, what you're saying is wrong'. 'No it's not!' So, we have conflict. I decided to stay away from that kind of thing before I got into conflict with people (Prisoner).

Mutual communication was replaced by fearful silence, and second hand accounts and speculations about the inner lives and agendas of terrorist offenders prevailed. Prisoners 'high up in the hierarchy' were seen to be withdrawing from relationships with staff and other prisoners. Unless relationships could be used as a tool to realise strategic interests, extremist prisoners had no interest in them — they were 'taking cover':

Especially the extreme people; they're not daft. They're university-educated and that, so they know social skills, they know how to manipulate social skills (Prisoner).

What was clearer was the awe in which some high profile prisoners were held by younger prisoners, and the lack of clear reasoning about this sense of status or its meaning: leadership qualities were attributed to some prisoners by those looking for guidance. Those 'with trainers'11, with influence, or with charisma, were appealing.

There was resistance by most prisoners to extremism, even if there were also risky periods in their

prison careers (early on, for example) and vulnerabilities of many kinds (for example, lack of meaning, feelings or unfairness) precipitated by the environment. The problem for staff was being alert to signs of radicalisation or extremism without alienating the majority of ordinary Muslim prisoners:

> I'm not... unaware of the problems of radicalisation in prison, right, but I think these guys are so unaware of what radicalisation is and what Islam is, that if you have any sort of religious appearance outside, you're a threat. You're radicalised, you're dangerous and I think that's done out of malice, as well as, sometimes, just ignorance. I would say it's more towards the malice side of it (Prisoner).

There were some risks that in a new climate of risk and constraint, longer sentences,

younger prisoners, distant relationships and some political disaffection, the risks of radicalisation were raised. Vulnerable individuals were being held in a riskcreating environment. The following prisoner put this starkly:

You take a bunch of people who are already disenchanted with life. They have no real sense of identity. They go into crime because that's who they're with, OK? To those people who have no sense of belonging, the nine-tofive isn't going to work for them. They have no connection to the world, so they basically tell the world to f... off and do their own things. Drugs, joy ride in cars, whatever. They get their thrills somehow, OK? So you take these people who have no sense of belonging, no sense of connection. Take them out of society and stuff them in a box. You haven't addressed the issue. Along comes somebody who says, 'yes, this is how you can belong. This is how you could have worth. This is how you can show the rest of the world how they got it wrong'. Bam; bomb in your

shoe, onto a plane, boom. figure out how to get it to desire because they think it's somebody or something

They aren't smart enough to work. But they have that the way that they can prove to the world that they are (Prisoner).

There was an awareness and understanding on the prisoners' side about the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, and about how a prison environment (a place of risk and vulnerability) could mirror the community and potentially lead to longer-term radicalisation:

Some people come in here with agendas and they try very much to get other people to follow that agenda. So now the prisoners are suffering and the prisoners are being pressured, but when these Mullahs get the power they're accumulating now,

sooner or later they're going to turn it on the system, so they, kind of, have to care, to be honest. This society as I can predict is going to suffer for what they're doing in this prison. Because some of these people are coming out... when they've gone through all this mad brainwashing, I've known people who I was friends with and they don't talk to me again or don't communicate with me in the way they did because they have different ideas from what they had in the past, so I can see what's going to happen in the future (Prisoner).

I could kind of see why they're trying to do, why they're trying to get a grip on the book

understanding on the prisoners' side about the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, and about how a prison environment (a place of risk and vulnerability) could mirror the community and potentially lead to longer-term radicalisation

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<sup>11.</sup> Trainers as footwear are a status symbol in prisons.

situation because there's a lot of radical-like authors out there that preach a lot of stuff that isn't really Islamic. It is Islamic, but it's misinterpreted and twisted to justify certain things. It can then lead to misinterpretation, lead to people getting the wrong idea, and then obviously acting in the wrong ways as well (Prisoner).

Officers could see that the nature of new prison sentences, and some changing prison conditions, could expose prisoners to hatred or dogma:

Prisoners can become radicalised. I mean, we've got prisoners on here who weren't

Muslim when they were sent to jail but are now being linked to all sorts of possible assaults and bullying and pressuring and, you know, I think they can be warped by it quite easily, 'cause they've got no escape from the doctrine or the dogma of what they're believing in. And if you're having some con that's continuously, relentlessly, you know, at you every day about, for example, the hatred of the West and of Western civilisation, if you've got someone every convincing you, and all the rest of it, then eventually you are going to succumb to it. And some of these guys

have had specific training in how to convince people of this stuff. But yeah, I think they have, some have, become radicalised since being inside (Officer).

On the other hand, the population contained many seekers, looking for meaning, purpose, forgiveness, love, care, hope, and guidance. They were ready to hear about new ideas, alternative life-concepts and ideologies, and to adopt them:

Well [sighs] these terrorists and these people that claim they know about Islam, what they say is, no matter what crimes or whatever you've committed when you're outside, once you come to prison and you convert to Islam, everything that you've done before is forgiven. That's what they say and I think that's one of the main attractions to people. I

think if you commit murder and you believe in God, and you come to prison, you know that you've committed a crime that's one of the worst crimes you can commit. So if you've done that and then you come to prison, it's playing on your conscience so then you need to actually find the religion and ask for forgiveness and stuff like that because, you know, you fear God, but I think what these so-called terrorists are doing — they're preying on those sort of people (Prisoner).

Some staff (and prisoners) expressed a fear that 'prison is where the extremism of the future' might originate; it was a long-term and cumulative process

that might 'start here'. The prison was described by some prisoners as 'a recruiting drive for the Taliban'; with extremists trying to convert and radicalise the vulnerable. It was difficult to disentangle fact from fear. Conversion to Islam was often seen (and therefore treated as) 'the first sign of risk'. This was frustrating for Imams, and for devout Muslims. Conversion to Christianity (or Buddhism) did not 'set off alarm bells' ... often the opposite, as many prisoners said to us throughout the study.

Most of the very limited evidence, or examples of, radicalisation arising in the interviews or in observations were indirect ('it happened to a friend of mine in the next door

cell — I could tell by the material he was reading, things he was saying', and 'prisoners receive help when they get here — for years before the pressure starts'). One prisoner (from Afghanistan) described in detail the pressure he was under to keep his 'anti-Taliban' attitudes to himself ('What you guys are teaching is unacceptable'). This public dispute led to a major fight at Friday prayers. This incident divided Muslims.

Not all those looking for comfort were prone to change allegiances or religious denomination:

I believe in God. At the moment the most close religion to me is Islam. Due to the fact that some of the beliefs are more suited to my views. From where I was standing, you don't use violence, you try and strengthen your weaknesses if you have them, you try and be good to people in general. But then you get some people with extreme views and they

take things out of context, so in a way it opens your eyes to interpretation. Because they take things out of context to what suits them, they pick and choose it, and a lot of that goes on in prison. In some situations you have no choice. When you see people get stabbed and stuff, sometimes a person could be in a situation where he had no choice but to say yes (Prisoner).

Some sympathy was expressed for the feeling of pressure that might precede the adoption of an extreme ideology:

It does happen in prison. I think the way that

prisoners are treated in prison doesn't help the situation. They make it more likely to listen to somebody with extreme views because young lads, if they seem to be let down by the system, if they seem to be unfairly treated, then you get somebody who will say 'well look, look at these people, they're this/that, that blahblah', and they're somebody stereotyping constantly. And sometimes they force theirself on people, so that makes them strong. If you've got a prisoner in a prison and there's loads of people with extreme views (Prisoner).

An environment that was perceived as a continuation and extension of a life dominated by feelings of alienation, misrecognition and unfairness offered fertile ground for cultivating hatred of the state or society.

Influential individuals emerged 'out of the woodwork' in an environment in which opposition was acceptable:

**R:** This guy, thinking he's a scholar, like, when he come in six month ago in this prison, like everybody, look at him, he become a new leader. You understand? **I:** What qualities does he have that make him a leader?

Here, in prison, you just spread hatred against the British government, against non-Muslims, that's it, you are leader. (Prisoner)

An environment that was perceived as a continuation and extension of a life dominated by feelings of alienation, misrecognition and unfairness offered fertile ground for cultivating hatred of the state or society. This position influenced some prisoners.

Others saw their situation differently, feeling that putting the blame on anyone but themselves was 'no way forward'. They might still be 'vulnerable' (to extremist or fanatical religious views), because they were also finding their way through their sentence, and were grateful for guidance. This kind of guidance (or modelling) was not available elsewhere:

The only people who have tried to offer religion to me have been people that are in prison for terrorism. But they weren't in the least bit aggressive about it, and they were willing to talk about their faith in a sort of, quite a sensible way. This is, one of the things I've found, that the people I'm told are raving

fanatics, the ones that I've met have been anything but.

They're devoutly religious and they're prepared to potentially either kill or die for that religion, but they aren't on a personal level 'bad people' (Prisoner)

They're actually, I suppose, far better people than many of the inmates within the prison system, based on personal experience. So I could see why they could be influential and charismatic, because obviously if you're a young person and there's lots of them in the prison system, a person of this kind could potentially be quite a good mentor, where that would lead of course

[inhales] ... (Prisoner).

What made prisoners vulnerable to fundamentalist or radical religious views was the notion of filling a void. Most of those who toyed with the idea, or who felt tempted to convert to Islam (it is important to stress that these processes were a long way from radicalisation) did not consider themselves to be typical candidates. What charismatic Muslim key-players were capitalising on when advertising or propagating their faith was, apart from fear and pressure, the need individual prisoners felt to find an identity and a meaning in (prison) life. According to prisoners' accounts, they targeted prisoners who seemed lost or who were in search of something transformative, who were ready to change or re-invent themselves. These prisoners were 'open to what was on offer', and

religious leaders offered themselves as trustworthy guides:

**R:** When the religions come into any life, then people are blind. They are just following blindly. **I:** Do you think that if anything else came up that would be similarly attractive or offering the help they are looking for, or the care, do you think they would follow that? **R:** No, no. You know why? Because religion promises you, unseen [gifts] (Prisoner).

Monotheistic religions based on blind obedience and trust of the unseen, were prone to misuse or misinterpretation and were attractive in the prison setting. Those who spoke convincingly about their faith or ideology, and who modelled strength, self-control and forbearance, gained followers who relied on them as a source of trust and knowledge. Hamm<sup>12</sup> showed in his two-year US study that the presence, behaviour and influence of Muslim prisoners varied according to the qualities and social conditions of the prison, so that in 'overcrowded maximum-security institutions like New Folsom Prison, where there are few rehabilitation programmes; a shortage of Chaplains to provide religious guidance to searchers; serious gang problems; and more politically charged living areas', the conditions for radicalisation were present. In a contrasting prison with many meaningful activities on offer, a prisoner-led Islamic Studies Programme acted as both a rehabilitation programme and as a counterweight against Islamic extremism.<sup>13</sup>

The appeal of faith, and the appeal of conversion to Islam in particular, were new and powerful themes at Whitemoor at the time of our return study. These were complex themes, since conflicting assumptions about, as well as presentations of, faith were found. Fears relating to 'radicalisation' were widespread, but there were many positive manifestations of conversions to Islam at Whitemoor. Most of the faith related activities were related to power, identity and survival. The main motivations for turning to faith were: sense-making, searching for meaning, identity, and structure; dealing with the pains of long-term imprisonment; seeking 'brotherhood'14/family; or 'anchored relations'; seeking care and protection; rebellion (Islam was 'the new underdog religion'); and sometimes, coercion. From our experience it rarely involved extreme perspectives that could be described as radicalised.

Most significant, there was insufficient provision of, or support for, the most positive manifestations of spiritual or personal development for prisoners in general at the time we were there. Hamm's findings are significant in suggesting that decent, participatory (we might say, more legitimate) prison environments (as well as legitimate prison sentences) can act as a counter-weight to radicalisation by virtue of their intrinsic legitimacy and their better opportunities, relationships and regimes. Conversely, the erosion of positive relationships and regime activities may pose risks, including the risk of radicalisation.

<sup>12.</sup> Hamm, M. (2009) 'Prison Islam in the Age of Sacred Terror', British Journal of Criminology, 49, 5: 667-685.

<sup>13.</sup> Ibid

<sup>14.</sup> The term 'brotherhood' here meant belonging to the group. It had no broader meaning and was not linked to any specific organisation.