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Special Edition
**Combating Extremism
and Terrorism**

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Editorial Comment

*'Let us not look back in anger or forward in fear, but
around in awareness.'*
(James Thurber).

How does one address the offending behaviour of terrorists? This was the question facing us, a small group of psychologists in Headquarters, after the events of 7/7 and the 2006 Terrorist Act brought an influx of terrorist offenders into custody. The political science literature gave us some clues about radicalisation but there were few studies based on face to face contact with terrorists themselves. It was evident that we could not begin to develop interventions without understanding the background to their offending.

We were in the privileged position of having direct access to the 'true positives'; those who had embarked on a terrorist pathway and, mostly, completed it. If anyone was going to clarify the routes into terrorism it would be these offenders in custody. Most agreed to talk with us, though some refused and a small number continue to hold out. We can only speculate that those who are the least likely to engage are those who feel they have the most to lose in abandoning their cause or changing course.

On the basis that such offending was politically motivated and different from criminally motivated behaviour we assumed that a different approach was needed. We sought to define terrorism, but discovered that there were many definitions that variously emphasised engagement with ideology, the use of violence, the involvement of others and/or the motivation for the behaviour. We were aware of the phrase *'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter'* and the importance of not pathologising political violence in the context of terrorism when it was undeniably the common currency of international conflict. We also appreciated the potential hypocrisy that would not be lost on these individuals, of criminalising beliefs within a country that represented itself as tolerant and pluralist. We reasoned that beliefs were only problematic where they concerned the use of violence to achieve political goals, and that political beliefs in themselves were not an appropriate target for change. Eventually we settled on the definition of an extremist offence developed by the Extremist Prisoners' Working Group in 2007:

'Any offence committed in association with a group, cause or ideology that propagates extremist views and actions and justifies the

use of violence and other illegal conduct in pursuit of its objectives'.

This definition is generic to different extremist ideologies and does not specify political motivation. It has served us well as our developing dialogue with terrorists revealed that their motivation was not always straightforwardly political; it was sometimes criminal or otherwise opportunistic, and at root was always personal. In this edition extremist is used as a generic term for all those whose offending is influenced by extremist views: simplistic bi-polar ideologies that split the world into the worthy and the unworthy and project blame for the ills of the world on to the unworthy. The word terrorism is used to refer to acts of violence that are intended to advance an extremist cause. We have found it necessary to separate *engagement* with extremist ideology from *intent* to commit an act of terrorism (and the *capability* to do so). This allows us to make essential discriminations between those who have been convicted of being engaged with ideology (on the assumption that they were on a pathway to terrorism) from those who have crossed the threshold of intent to commit harm and been involved in terrorist plotting.

We established fairly early on that despite the claim, often repeated in the literature, that *'the distinguishing feature of terrorists is their normality'*¹, most of those we spoke to were troubled people. OASys analysis showed that greater numbers of terrorist offenders than criminally motivated offenders were identified with 'emotional wellbeing' needs. These took the form of emotional vulnerability, unhappiness, poor adjustment and disappointment, sometimes manifesting in depression. It was sometimes accompanied by a strong sense of superiority, the experience of being thwarted, misunderstood, denied one's true place in the sun, and a desire to assert oneself, to become a hero in the vanguard of change and take revenge against those responsible for their perceived marginalisation and victimisation.

We also found that a significant number had a background in crime, often violent crime, with a few diagnosed as psychopaths. For these individuals a period of conditioning or grooming to overcome their inhibitions about using violence was not necessary. They had attitudes supportive of violence, divided the world into criminals and 'straight-goers', and were already persuaded that the ends justified the means. Such individuals were willing to commit terrorist

1. Crenshaw, M. (1981) The causes of Terrorism, in *Comparative Politics*, V13, 379-99.

offences without subscribing to ideology or cause. It was enough that it served their criminal interests to do so and conferred the fringe benefits of justifying or laundering their offending, providing an outlet for their violence and boosting their status.

This finding that offenders were vulnerable to extremism, however opportunistic, reinforced the fear of radicalisation in prison widely aired in the media and borne out by the development of some unlikely alliances between organised offenders and terrorist offenders in custody, highlighted by Mark Hamm's analysis in the edition. It has yet to be established whether such opportunistic alliances survive beyond prison, but a close watch is being maintained.

Extending our dialogue to include extreme right wing offenders, animal rights activists and some gang related offenders confirmed that many shared the same 'psychological hooks' of identity and status issues. These generic vulnerabilities rather than ideology therefore became the focus for intervention. More recently the evaluation of a scriptural reasoning programme 'Al Furqan' for Islamist offenders has shown that there are additional benefits for some in tackling the common misinterpretations of the Q'ran that accompany their extremist beliefs.

It became evident that by the time we began our dialogue most had already done a considerable amount of reflecting and re-thinking. Our subsequent understanding of the importance of exclusive associations and ongoing exposure to reductionist rhetoric in maintaining engagement, explains how easily some disengaged when these were disrupted. As Eric Hoffer² commented '*It is startling how much unbelief is necessary to make belief possible*' and constant conditioning and/or grooming is required for it to remain in place. When reality-tested, simplistic explanations for all the ills of the world that project blame on to an out-group with no human worth who are hell bent on your destruction are hard to sustain in the face of conscientious treatment in prisons from professional staff and exposure to fellow prisoners from a range of cultural backgrounds.

Conversely, as also highlighted by Mark Hamm, unprofessional custodial practices such as those used in Guantanamo can reinforce feelings of grievance and vengeance and fuel radicalisation. Richard Pickering describes the more measured response of NOMS to the challenges posed by the incarceration of terrorist related offenders in England and Wales, and Alison Liebling and Christina Straub clarify the challenges of physical and psychological survival in a high security prison from the prisoners' perspective

and explain the potential appeal of 'identities of resistance'³. The power of treating people well may turn out to be our most powerful weapon against the threat of extremism.

Another finding has been that not all Islamist offenders have been directly inspired by AQ ideology. This may be true of those who received operational sanctioning from the AQ leadership, but many have been self-starters motivated by their desire to express dissatisfaction with British and American foreign policy in Afghanistan and Iraq rather than any desire to introduce religious government into the UK. In fact their aims have sometimes been quite vague, '*to ensure the fair treatment of Muslims across the world*', '*to defend the Muslim faith against its attackers*'⁴. When pushed, some have been unable to articulate any political goals; their involvement simply allowed them to express their disaffection from western values, to signal their difference by their distinctive dress and appearance and to experience themselves as a soldier in the army of Allah and in the vanguard of change. For this reason, I prefer the term 'Islamist extremist' instead of AQ influenced.

Desistance from crime being the over-riding goal, disengagement from ideology is not essential, though experience has shown that disengagement is not uncommon in response to intervention. Self evidently many former provisional IRA members in Northern Ireland have given up violence without relinquishing their goal of wanting a united Ireland. Chris Dean describes the background to the interventions developed for addressing extremism. Our experience so far indicates that both disengagement and desistance are realistic goals.

One final observation: Wherever terrorism is discussed there is fear in the room. Prisoners and staff fear being the victim of a terrorist offence in custody; governors fear an act of terrorism in their prison on their watch or after release by an offender who was radicalised in their prison; offender managers fear a repeat offence by an offender on licence; senior officials from police, probation and prison fear they may miss evidence of radicalisation or of terrorist plotting in prison, or under-estimate and mismanage the risk of re-offending in the community; terrorist offenders themselves fear retribution from their own if they abandon the cause. Fear sometimes prevents us from responding proportionately to these challenges. If this edition achieves anything I hope it will serve to demystify terrorist offending and build confidence that both our operational and correctional skills are equal to working effectively with these individuals.

2. Hoffer, E. (1951). *The True Believer: Thoughts on the nature of mass movements* London: Harper Collins.

3. Neumann, P. (2010) *Prisons and Terrorism, Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation in 15 Countries*. International Centre for the Study of Political Violence and Radicalisation (ICPR). King's College, London.

4. Quotes are taken from prisoners.

Prisoner Radicalisation in the United States

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Although prisoner radicalisation is currently a matter of grave concern, it is actually a very old issue that can be traced to the early development of prison as a government institution to control transgressors. Sometime between the years 30 and 36 AD, Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee, ordered the imprisonment of the itinerant preacher John the Baptist at the fortress of Machaerus, a walled complex located on a desolate hilltop near the Dead Sea in what is now Jordan. The Gospels state that Herod reacted to John's public denunciation of Herod's marriage to the wife of his own brother, Philip, in violation of Old Testament law. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus offered a more political account, writing that Herod had John arrested to preempt a popular uprising among his followers. Yet the authors of Matthew and Luke were in agreement about an episode that took place while John was confined in his dungeon at Machaerus: namely, that John met with two of his disciples and asked them to carry a message to his cousin, Jesus of Nazareth, asking 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?'¹ They were John's last recorded words before he was beheaded by one of Herod's sons.²

Fast-forward through 21 centuries and prisoners are still radicalizing through kinship networks, clandestine communication systems, chiliastic religious beliefs, and most importantly, charismatic leadership—what Max Weber described as 'a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary people and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least exceptional powers or qualities.'³ ('Among them that are born of women,' said Jesus of his companion, 'there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.'⁴) Yet the technology and scale of the matter have undergone profound changes.

In Israel today, imprisoned members of Hamas direct militant actions on the Palestinian streets using smuggled mobile phones and *ashgarim*—crimped notes written on thin transparent paper tightly rolled into 'bindles'. In American prisons, the notes are known as 'kites' and they too are used by terrorist inmates, along with cellphones, as a surreptitious means of communicating with criminal networks of the free world.

Meanwhile, Islam has swept across Western prisons bringing with it both unprecedented security challenges and exceptional possibilities for progressive reform. The growth of Islam in prison is taking place against the backdrop of a global economic meltdown; a rise in religious extremism and ethnic conflict; changes in prisoners' class and race compositions; a declining interest in Christianity among prisoners; new developments in youth subcultures; and shifting power dynamics of long-term confinement—all situated within the framework of post-9/11 fear. Radicalisation has become an issue of such intense sociopolitical complexity that it is poorly understood even by those who run our prisons. This is especially so for the world's leading jailer, the United States of America.

Challenges Facing the United States

Every Western nation is struggling in its own way to work out the institutional methods and conceptual frameworks for controlling the threat of radicalisation brought on by the widespread incarceration of those of Muslim heritage. America faces three major challenges.

Guantanamo Bay

Currently, 171 suspected terrorists are being detained without trial at Guantanamo, including five al-Qaeda operatives charged in connection with the 9/11 attacks. Guantanamo is America's greatest challenge, because instead of rehabilitating terrorists, Guantanamo is creating them. Several cases bear this

1. Matthew 11:3.

2. Montefiore, S (2011), *Jerusalem: The Biography*. New York: Knopf.

3. Weber, M (1947), *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Trans. Henderson, A and T Parsons. New York: Free Press, 390.

4. Matthew 11:11.

out and two are worth recounting to illustrate a significant point about radicalisation: In both instances the detainees were released from Guantanamo after the government failed to uncover any evidence of potential terrorism. That is, they were not terrorists when they entered prison but became terrorists upon release.

The first case involves the Afghan Abdullah Mehsud. As a teenager, Mehsud lost a leg when he stepped on a land mine left over from the anti-Soviet war and was fitted with a prosthesis. He was later forced into Taliban conscription, but due to his missing leg, was held out of combat and assigned a desk job. Mehsud was taken into U.S. custody during the early years of the war on terrorism and detained as an enemy combatant at Guantanamo.

Similar to the treatment of al-Qaeda's Ayman al-Zawahiri at the hands of the Egyptians following the assassination of Anwar Sadat in the early 1980s, the U.S. military subjected Guantanamo prisoners to what has been obliquely termed 'torture-based techniques' as part of an 'enhanced interrogation' protocol intended to gather intelligence on future attacks against America. According to media accounts of victim statements and official documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, these techniques involved pervasive beatings; solitary confinement in over air-conditioned cells where inmates were stripped naked and exposed to loud rock and hip-hop music, strobe lighting and sustained noise from recordings of crying babies and American television commercials; prolonged sleep deprivation and various forms of personal humiliation—from forcing inmates to soil themselves to the use of attack dogs and sexual abuse.⁵ A 2003 report by the International Red Cross indicates that the techniques also included deliberate desecrations of the Koran, 'excessive isolation' of detainees, and the absence of a policy for the release of those who did not belong in prison. The report cited 'a worrying deterioration in the psychological

health of a large number of the detainees because of uncertainty about their fate.'⁶

Upon his release in 2004, Adullah Mehsud was repatriated to Afghanistan where he rejoined his Taliban unit. Mehsud's final Guantanamo assessment stated that he 'did not pose a future threat.' To the contrary: Mehsud had been radicalized by Guantanamo. Having never committed an act of terrorism before, he set about making jihadist videos and organized a Taliban division to fight U.S. troops. Mehsud then planned and carried out a bold attack on Pakistan's interior minister, killing 31 people. Then he oversaw the kidnapping of two Chinese engineers affiliated with coalition forces. And finally, in 2007, Mehsud blew himself up in a suicide attack against the Pakistani Army. His martyrdom was hailed in an audio message by Osama bin Laden.⁷

. . . Mehsud had been radicalized by Guantanamo. Having never committed an act of terrorism before, he set about making jihadist videos and organized a Taliban division to fight U.S. troops.

The second case concerns a Saudi carpet salesman named Said Ali al-Shihri, also taken into U.S. custody in Afghanistan following 9/11. Intelligence officials would later interview members of Shihri's family in Saudi Arabia. They would attribute his extremism to the five years he spent incarcerated at Guantanamo.⁸ In 2007, Shihri was released to the Saudis and placed in a government-sponsored de-radicalisation program, but escaped a short time later. Shihri traveled to Yemen, bin Laden's ancestral home, where he became a

commander of al-Qaeda's Yemen branch (soon to become al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula). Shihri's first act of terrorism came in September, 2008, when he participated in the car-bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Yemen's capital, Sana, killing 16. Later that year he killed six Christian missionaries in Yemen. Then, in 2009, Shihri played a pivotal role in Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's attempted suicide bombing of a U.S. jetliner bound for Detroit on Christmas Day—the most significant terrorist attempt since 9/11.⁹

A year later, and nearly two years after he pledged to close the facility, President Obama called Guantanamo 'the number one recruitment tool' used

5. Mayer, J (2009), *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned into a War on American Ideals*. New York: Anchor Books; Worthington, A (2007), *The Guantanamo Files: The Stories of the 774 Detainees in America's Illegal Prison*. London: Pluto Press.
6. Hersh, S (2005), *Chain of Command: The Road From 9/11 to Abu Ghraib*. New York: Harper, 14.
7. Shane, S and B Weiser (2011), 'Judging Detainees' Risk, Often With Flawed Evidence. *New York Times*, April 25.
8. Ross, B, Rhee, J and R El-Buri (2009), 'al-Qaeda Leader Behind Northwest Flight 253 Was Released by U.S.' ABC News, Dec. 28.
9. DeYoung, K and M Fletcher (2010), 'Attempt to Bomb Airliner Could Have Been Prevented, Obama says.' *Washington Post*, Jan. 6.
10. The White House (2010), News Conference by the President, Dec. 22.

by jihadists, because ‘it’s become a symbol.’¹⁰ Not only is Guantanamo a symbol for many Muslims of American hypocrisy, confirming the contempt they believe the United States holds for them, but it is also for the intelligence community a symbol of the existential threat posed by prisoner radicalisation. In 2003, a CIA official familiar with interrogation techniques at Guantanamo told journalist Seymour Hersh: ‘If we captured some people who weren’t terrorists when we got them, they are now.’¹¹ Seven years later, Obama’s National Intelligence Director warned the President that Guantanamo may be producing terrorists rather than reforming them.¹² Nevertheless, the camp remains open. And throughout the world, Guantanamo has become a symbol of what many see as America’s dangerous drift away from the ideals that made it a moral beacon in the post-World War II era, thereby attracting even more recruits into radical Islamic networks by making the terrorist’s cause appear a just response to an unjust enemy.

‘Guantanamo North’

A total of 362 federal prisoners were serving sentences on terrorism-related charges in the continental United States at the close of 2011. Most were involved in international terrorism (269 inmates) with another 93 inmates locked up for domestic terrorism.¹³ Among the international terrorists in the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) were about two dozen al-Qaeda operatives, including those involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the 1998 East African embassy bombings, the 1999 millennial plot to bomb the Los Angeles International Airport, and the 2000 bombing of the USS *Cole*.

The challenge posed by these prisoners first surfaced several years after 9/11 when three federal inmates incarcerated at the BOP’s Administrative Maximum security facility (ADMAX or Supermax) in Florence, Colorado, for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, wrote over 90 letters to Islamic militants outside the prison between 2002 and 2004. Fourteen

of these letters were sent to Spanish prisoners with connections to the terrorist cell responsible for the Madrid train bombings. The government’s after-action report condemned the BOP, charging that it had failed to monitor terrorists’ communications, including mail, phone calls, visits with family and friends, and cellblock conversations, resulting in ‘little or no proactive’ intelligence on the activities of terrorist inmates in custody.¹⁴ Thus was born the total segregation model.

Between 2006 and 2008 the Justice Department transferred all but the most highly-secured terrorist inmates (e.g., Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski, shoe-bomber Richard Reid, Zacharias Moussaoui, the 20th hijacker of 9/11) to two newly established maximum-security Communication Management Units (CMUs) within the federal system—one in the former death row at the U.S. Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana, and the other at the U.S. Penitentiary at Marion, Illinois. Information on these prisoners and their conditions of confinement is primarily due to the investigative reporting of journalists.¹⁵ According to these sources, prisoners are under 24-hour surveillance in the CMUs. Guards and cameras record their every move and hidden microphones pick up every word they speak. Such information—along with data gleaned from

the monitoring of phone calls, mail and visits—is routinely gathered by prison intelligence officers who share their findings with counterterrorism experts in Washington.

The CMUs prohibit group prayer beyond the authorized hour-long services on Fridays and restrict inmate visitation to lawyers and immediate family members. Visits from journalists, human rights experts and volunteers are off limits. As are researchers, who are denied access to the CMUs; hence there is no primary criminological research on the incarceration of terrorists in the United States. Inmates are required to hold all conversations in English. Most of them are Arab Muslims, yet the units also hold some African

. . . throughout the world, Guantanamo has become a symbol of what many see as America’s dangerous drift away from the ideals that made it a moral beacon in the post-World War II era . . .

11. Hersh (2005) see note 6, 3.

12. Homeland Security News Wire (2010), ‘Gitmo Repeat Offender Rate Rises Sharply.’ Dec. 9.

13. Shane, S (2011) ‘Beyond Guantanamo, a Web of Prisons for Terrorist Inmates.’ *New York Times*, Dec. 11.

14. U.S. Department of Justice (2006), *The Federal Bureau of Prisons’ Monitoring of Mail for High-Risk Inmates*. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Inspector General, 49.

15. Johnson, C and M Williams (2011) ‘Guantanamo North’: Inside Secretive U.S. Prisons. NPR News, March 3; Shane (2011), see note 13.

American Muslims charged with radicalizing other inmates. Also locked up in the CMUs are inmates who have threatened prison officials or ordered murders using cellphones.

In addition to virtually banning the prisoners' contact with the outside world, the objective of the CMUs is to segregate terrorist inmates from the general populations to prevent them from both converting other convicts to radical Islam and plotting terrorist acts behind bars. By fully segregating terrorists, the BOP argues that it can better concentrate its resources on language translation, content analysis of letters and phone calls, and intelligence sharing. Despite repeated media requests, authorities have refused to release a full list of the CMU inmates, although reporters have compiled a partial list. Among them are three felons who have previously waged terrorist attacks while confined to maximum-security prisons.

Nothing is known of the prisoners' psychological status, the criteria by which they have been chosen for incarceration in the CMUs, or their conflicts with guards and other inmates. Nor is anything known about their rehabilitation, their preparation for community reentry, or their recidivism. Yet many of the CMU prisoners will one day finish their sentences and return to society (some 300 terrorist-related prisoners have completed their sentences and been set free since 2001). Civil rights attorneys have filed lawsuits contending that CMU inmates are denied the right to review the evidence that sent them there, or to challenge that evidence. Some evidence indicates that by creating Muslim-dominated control units, the BOP has inadvertently fostered solidarity and defiance among the CMU prisoners, thereby increasing levels of radicalisation. Adding to these risks, the BOP has failed to institute de-radicalisation programs which are common in other countries. Because of the legal complaints, combined with the atmosphere of secrecy surrounding the disproportionate placement of Muslim prisoners in the CMUs, Terre Haute and

Marion have become internationally known as 'Guantanamo North.'

Mass Incarceration

The rise of Islam in American prisons cannot be separated from the nation's experiment with mass incarceration. With 2.3 million inmates now in custody, U.S. prisons are experiencing an overcrowding problem of historic proportions. A range of negative consequences occur when prisons are filled beyond capacity. First to suffer are rehabilitation programs, leading to rampant idleness. Chronic idleness and confinement in spaces that are occupied by too many people increases the number of social interactions inmates have that involve

uncertainty and problems in mental reasoning. Add to this the increased risk of victimization and predatory violence accompanying overcrowding, and prisoners experience heightened stress levels that aggravate interpersonal instability in an already dangerous world where errors in judgment can be fatal.¹⁶ Exacerbating this challenge is the emergence of a new generation of gangs, bringing with them a primitive racial

tribalism to prison life—one in which blacks, whites, and Mexicans form their own standing armies, each inflated by a bizarre spiritualism that often accompanies secret-society crime networks. Evolving from these conditions, more than a dozen prison converts to Islam have been indicted for waging terrorist plots against the United States since 9/11.¹⁷

A leading theory of prisoner radicalisation holds that disorderly, overcrowded and under-staffed institutions breed a desire in convicts to defy authorities. This creates a condition where 'identities of resistance' are viewed favorably within inmate subcultures.¹⁸ Some scholars argue that Islam, or the 'religion of the oppressed,' is fast becoming prisoners' preferred ideology of resistance, playing the role that once belonged to Marxism.

This breakdown theory is consistent with my own research, which found a pattern of radicalisation among Islamic gang members in California's

The rise of Islam in American prisons cannot be separated from the nation's experiment with mass incarceration.

16. Haney, C (2006) 'The Wages of Prison Overcrowding: Harmful Psychological Consequences and Dysfunctional Corrective Reactions.' *Washington University Journal of Law and Policy*, 22: 265-93.

17. Hamm, M (forthcoming) *The Spectacular Few: Prisoner Radicalisation and Terrorism in the Post-9/11 Era*. New York: New York University Press.

18. Neumann, P (2010) *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation in 15 Countries*. International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence. London: King's College.

overcrowded maximum-security prisons.¹⁹ As one Shiite prisoner told me in 2007, 'People are recruiting on the yard every day. It's scandalous. Everybody's glorifying Osama bin Laden.'²⁰ Along with Muslim prisoners, I interviewed inmates affiliated with white supremacy gangs. In both instances, radicalisation was based on a prison gang model whereby inmates are radicalized through a process of one-on-one proselytizing by charismatic leaders.

Yet I also learned that radicalisation is a double-edged sword. That is, a counter-radicalisation movement is evolving from the same harsh conditions that spawn prison extremism. This movement is exemplified by self-help groups which are often led by charismatic inmates serving life sentences. Lifers

typically have little interest in gangbanging, recruiting supporters through intimidation, or pitting believers of different faith groups against one another. Their efforts are consistent with research conducted in the Middle East and Singapore showing that successful de-radicalisation programs are often designed and carried out by inmates themselves.²¹ But more importantly, prisoner de-radicalisation is evocative of a wider movement now taking place in the Muslim world—revealed in the more egalitarian features of the Arab Spring—which is increasingly rejecting various forms of extremism, including the ideology of al-Qaeda.²² For that reason alone, these de-radicalisation programs should be replicated far and wide.



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19. Hamm, M (2009) 'Prison Islam in the Age of Sacred Terror.' *British Journal of Criminology*, 49: 667-85.

20. *Ibid*, 674.

21. Neumann (2010), see note 17.

22. Wright, R (2011) *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion Across the Islamic World*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Terrorism, Extremism, Radicalisation and The Offender Management System

— The Story So Far

Richard Pickering is the head of Security Group in the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and Chair of the NOMS Extremism Board. Prior to this he set up and headed the Extremism Unit within HM Prison Service, subsequently NOMS HQ.

This article attempts to set out the principles underpinning the approach adopted by NOMS, our understanding of the challenges facing us, what we have achieved so far and what the future might look like.

Introduction

The offender management system is, of course, familiar with the challenges posed by terrorism, extreme violence, criminal behaviour and dissocial attitudes. The questions and challenges raised by 'new' types of terrorism, in particular al-Qaeda influenced terrorism, and the broader social phenomenon of radicalisation plays to a wider audience than those traditionally interested in prison, probation and the offender management system. As speculation and increasingly academic and operational learning has identified the drivers and stages of radicalisation, a range of organisations, agencies and bodies have looked to the offender management system as a potential area of vulnerability, risk, opportunity and learning.

What is striking is that whilst there is agreement that there are a set of what might broadly be described as risks with an extremist flavour within the offender population, there is relatively little hard evidence, significant speculation and a degree of disagreement on both the extent and shape of this risk and the appropriate response.

Within Government, CONTEST¹ (the Government's counter terrorism strategy) and the revised PREVENT strategy² (which sets out the Government's approach to identifying and countering radicalisation) both reference prisons and offenders as areas of concern. The recent Home Affairs Select Committee report into the roots of violent radicalisation³ acknowledged the focus of these strategies but, after investigating, took a slightly different

interpretation of the importance of institutions in the radicalisation process, concluding that 'a number of convicted terrorists have attended prisons and universities, but there is seldom concrete evidence to confirm that this is where they were radicalised'.

Discussion within pressure groups and think tanks, including RUSI⁴ and the Quilliam Foundation⁵ has in large part speculated on the diffuse question of radicalisation, the extent to which it may be taking place in the prison system and the adequacy and appropriateness of the operational response. This narrative is echoed in extensive press coverage⁶ which has recently started to address the risks posed in the community by terrorist offenders who have served the custodial part of their sentence.

These are all legitimate viewpoints and add to the discussion taking place around this range of topics. They echo the considerations of NOMS following the attacks of 9/11 that gathered pace and direction following the London bombings of 7/7 in 2005.

Where NOMS came in — the Extremist Prisoners Working Group (EPWG)

The prison system has significant experience in the management of terrorists. The escape from HMP Whitemoor of IRA prisoners and the report by Sir John Woodcock⁷ was the single most influential incident of the last 50 years in shaping the delivery of secure prisons. But the emergence of what appear to be new, more covert, extreme and complex forms of terrorism has raised legitimate concerns about the ability of prisons to manage risk effectively, with particular concerns around radicalisation.

It was against this background that the then Deputy Director General convened, in 2006, a series of seminars involving a wide range of practitioners, to consider these questions.

1. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/counter-terrorism-strategy/>
2. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/counter-terrorism/review-of-prevent-strategy/>
3. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmhaff/1446/144602.htm>
4. <http://www.rusi.org/news/ref:N4C8DDB8C10819/>
5. http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/images/stories/pdfs/unlocking_al_qaeda.pdf
6. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/8218219/Christmas-bomb-plotters-were-radicalised-in-jail.html>,
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2090042/Feltham-youth-jail-A-inmates-Muslims-large-numbers-convert-better-food.html>,
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1217384/Five-freed-terrorists-sent-prison-breaching-parole.html>
7. <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm27/2741/2741.pdf>

Its report⁸ recommended:

- ❑ written briefing materials to senior operational staff about the role of the Muslim chaplain within the Prison Chaplaincy Team and the establishment;
- ❑ a support network for Muslim chaplains that envelops their role both within the Prison Service and within their local communities;
- ❑ tools to help staff identify and counter the radical extremist;
- ❑ counter-radicalisation measures dovetailed into existing security systems and policies and priorities, to avoid impinging on core-business;
- ❑ Prison Service IT security intelligence systems (SIS) developed and networked;
- ❑ protocols to regulate how the Prison Service interacts with other agencies;
- ❑ policies on the strategic management of Islamist extremist prisoners, taking into consideration the comparative risks of dispersal and concentration and the long term impact of extremism, as well as the resources available within the prison estate;
- ❑ dedicated training for establishment security managers, training managers and intelligence analysts on Islamist extremism and radicalisation;
- ❑ ongoing analysis of the extent of extremism across the prison estate as intelligence data is received;
- ❑ proposals should form a part of the Prison Service's commitment to the decency agenda;
- ❑ resettlement projects; and
- ❑ international learning to ensure best practice.

These recommendations were grouped into an action plan focussing on training, intelligence systems, intelligence and information analysis, facilitating de-radicalisation and policy and procedure.

The Prison Service was at the same time dealing with the consequences of another seminal event — the racist murder at HMYOI Feltham of Zahid Mubarek, a young Asian man who was killed by his violent, racist cellmate in which the risks were neither identified nor actioned by the organisation. In its wake the then

Director General acknowledged that the Prison Service was institutionally racist. This event, together with two subsequent Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) investigations and a public inquiry⁹ became a watershed in the management of race issues and, almost as much as the conclusions of the EPWG, were critical in shaping the overall approach to extremism that followed.

How do things look now?

There have been significant developments since the EPWG reported. Many of these developments are as foreshadowed by the report. There is increased and enhanced connectivity with operational partners; a range of training and briefing materials has been produced and continue to be refined; guidance on reporting and enhanced intelligence infrastructures are in place, with Project Mercury commissioned and in its final stages of testing; there has been significant investment in and development of Muslim chaplains and the broader chaplaincy; and as discussed in detail elsewhere in this edition, there has been a major drive in the development, evaluation and operationalisation of new and innovative interventions and other offender management tools.

The EPWG was, though, an exercise in crystal ball gazing. It speculated on the potential impact of a small but growing number of terrorist prisoners on

the prisoner population and the potential implications for the configuration of service delivery and risk management. Discussion focussed on the potential growth of these numbers with continuing prosecutions of large and complex conspiracies. The prospect of hundreds more such offenders, extrapolated from the public discussion of a speech by the Director General of the Security Service in November 2007¹⁰ was not lost on NOMS and was a matter of significant concern.

In the event, the numbers current at the time of the EPWG report remained remarkably static. What did change over time was the mix and profile of prisoners held under Terrorism Act (TACT) powers. There have been fewer 'goal line clearances' (arrest and prosecutions of well developed plots shortly before their activation) and more 'upstream' prosecutions of preparatory acts,

These recommendations were grouped into an action plan focussing on training, intelligence systems, intelligence and information analysis, facilitating de-radicalisation and policy and procedure.

8. Report of the Extremist Prisoner Working Group, hard copy circulated to Governors, February 2007.

9. http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc0506/hc10/1082/1082_i.asp

10. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7078712.stm>

fundraising and other 'lesser' offences. This has meant a more diffuse population, receiving a wider range of sentences, with a small but significant number who have acted alone.

Self evidently, given the passage of time, those who receive finite sentences progress through the system towards release. A significant and growing number of terrorist offenders have completed the custodial part of their sentence and spent time under licence. There are currently a total of around 120 terrorist prisoners, just over 20 of whom are on remand and just under 20 held under extradition or immigration powers, with the balance convicted. Ninety are identified as al-Qaeda influenced, with the remaining 30 including animal rights, separatist and other domestic extremists. Since 2007, around 70 terrorist prisoners have progressed through the prison system; some have completed their sentence, some have been removed from the country and others remain under supervision in the community.

In terms of risk management, a set of behaviours have emerged that are progressively less conceptual and more the focus for active management. They include continuing extremist activity, criminal behaviours, threats to order and control, violent acts, bullying and radicalisation.

Development and implementation of a strategy

Whilst the initial focus of the extremism strategy was on taking forward the findings and recommendations of the EPWG, other developments, operational, political and organisational have shaped the work further.

The impact of Mubarek has been significant. With hindsight it is noteworthy that many of the key players directly involved in formulating the extremist strategy had been closely associated with Mubarek and its aftermath. Whilst Security Group held the ring, key players have been the Muslim and Equalities Advisers, operational practitioners and increasingly, interventions and public protection colleagues. The need for effective inter-agency work, a key conclusion of the EPWG, has been clear and is being realised. There has been increasingly close working with police, Home Office and other agencies, with a strong focus on formalising ways of working, structures and intelligence sharing

The re-configuration of NOMS as an integrated organisation delivering end to end management of offenders has supported a holistic approach. Progressive

developments in the demographics of the terrorist population, improving understanding of the impact of broader social pressures and radicalisation, and improved intelligence reporting have shaped the approach further. Resources have been allocated, including funds secured from the Home Office, to strengthen and develop key areas in intelligence, development of chaplaincy capacity, training, interventions and co-ordination of these activities.

Security and Intelligence have in many respects been the entry point for the overall approach (which is not to say that they have been the prime focus) by beginning to define what we know about offender dynamics in custody. There has been a significant investment of time and effort in the security infrastructure, most notably of the High Security Estate, with enhanced intelligence functionality. A wider infrastructure of regional counter terrorism co-ordinators provides an interface with external partners to facilitate joint working and assist operational colleagues in, for example, awareness raising and threat profiling.

Alongside a range of awareness raising, training (both internal and external) and briefings, a range of behaviours of potential concern have been identified and formalised to help front line staff understand the complexities of radicalisation and produce assessments of threat, both quantitative and qualitative.

One of the most critical areas of work has been attempting to look below the surface behaviours to understand the risk factors and the most appropriate response to them. These issues are covered in greater detail elsewhere in this edition but are touched on here. The ability of NOMS staff to engage directly with extremists who not only have undergone a process of radicalisation but have gone to the extreme of acting on their ideology is a privileged one, not readily available to any other sector of government. A programme of activity, led by forensic psychologists, undertook extensive fieldwork to understand the dynamics and drivers behind the radicalisation and criminal acts of a number of terrorist offenders. This work resulted in a digest of learning which became the basis for the development of bespoke interventions and a framework for the formulation of case management.

From the digest of learning, which captured some of the drivers and the phenomena which distinguish the fully formed terrorist from the disaffected and dissocial, emerged the Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG22+) which groups by engagement, intent and capability the key

One of the most critical areas of work has been attempting to look below the surface behaviours to understand the risk factors and the most appropriate response to them.

drivers observed in terrorists. This guidance, which is progressively being rolled out to practitioners in prisons, probation and latterly our Channel partners ¹¹, provides a basis for screening offenders, identifying risk factors and signposting appropriate interventions.

At the same time, innovative approaches to intervention have been formulated, including the development of the Healthy Identity Intervention (HII), the Healthy Identity Intervention + (HII+) and explicitly faith based approaches including Al Furqan. These new interventions sit alongside the existing suite of interventions and resettlement pathways whose relevance and applicability to extremist/radicalised offenders can be determined through the findings of the ERG and other risk screening tools such as OASys.

The role of the chaplaincy and specifically of Muslim chaplains and imams in responding to the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation has been much discussed. It was a key focus of the EPWG and is one of the areas of greatest divergence in terms of scale and nature of provision between England and Wales and other administrations where provision of spiritual and pastoral support can be patchy and uncoordinated.

There has been a Muslim Adviser post in NOMS since the late 1990s and progressively a drive for greater multi-faith provision within the chaplaincy function specified in legislation. A negative Commission for Racial Equality report in 2003 commented that the faith needs of non-Christian religions, particularly Muslims (most of whom were members of minority ethnic groups), were not adequately met and progressively, these deficits have been addressed through regime, diet and spiritual provision.

There are now in excess of 200 Muslim chaplains as opposed to fewer than 100 in 2008. This increase has taken place against a background of careful recruitment in which religious credentials are checked and tested, backgrounds vetted and staff bolstered by training, support and networking opportunities. Muslim chaplains have been progressively integrated, through the multi-faith chaplaincies, into the management of prisons, providing a source of advice to Governors on the appropriate provision of faith, pastoral support and

advice. Muslim chaplains now run one on one sessions and Islamic classes, including formalised courses such as Tarbiya, to enhance prisoners' knowledge of Islam and provide support and help. Doing so helps to address issues of identity, faith and purpose and to counter the single narrative and distorted version of Islam used by radicalisers. Most recently, the development of the Al Furqan intervention has looked to do this explicitly where concerns exist about the risk posed by individual terrorist offenders.

In terms of demographics, one of the most striking developments of recent years has been the variation in sentences given by the courts to terrorist offenders. Whilst lengthy sentences continue to be handed down, as discussed above, the nature and variety of offences committed has also resulted in a wide range of sentences. This, allied to the passage of time has placed increasing focus on preparing for the inevitable return to the community of convicted terrorists.

Against a background of a desire for de-radicalisation and counter-radicalisation tools, in part taken forward through the work on interventions referenced above, a framework for risk management has also developed, using as a starting point existing Multi Agency Protection Panel arrangements. Terrorist offenders have been brought within MAPPA scope, initially at MAPPA level 3 with probation, police and other resources configured around this

structure, aligned to the demographic of known and anticipated releases.

One challenge to this process has been the ability to engage effectively with released terrorists through the provision of interventions and resettlement activities within the multi-agency supervisory framework of MAPPA, as well as the specific licence conditions available for the management of terrorist offenders. There is an unequal distribution of releases of terrorist offenders across the country with high concentrations in a small number of urban areas. Local provision varies and questions of public acceptability are to the fore in working with local partners. Part of multi agency management of offenders in the community can include onward referral from NOMS providers to our Channel partners. Compliance with licence conditions has been

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11. <http://www.acpo.police.uk/ACPOBusinessAreas/PREVENT/Channel.aspx>

closely monitored and enforcement action has been taken in discussion with MAPPA partners when concerns have been raised.

And as approaches and tools are developed for identifying and managing extremist risk in the broader population, structures are progressively being created to match risk to capability. The new pathfinder initiative¹² requires action to be taken on receipt of information suggesting concerns about possible sympathies with extremist ideologies, specifically looking at the case for onward referral to intervention providers, both in the scope of offender management and, potentially into police responsibilities including Channel referral.

So what have we learned?

Firstly, the terrorist population is not homogenous. Whilst initial concerns (possibly grounded in the experiences of the 1970s and 1980s) focussed on co-ordinated and sophisticated terrorist plots being disrupted, with key players transplanted from the community into prisons, the current picture is much more nuanced. Numbers have not increased as significantly as initially feared or expected. The large, complex and multi-handed trials which created significant operational challenge a few years ago (such as the dirty bomb and airline plots) have been followed by the arrest and prosecution of individuals for much more diverse behaviours including self-starters, fund raisers and proselytisers. The resultant demographic, including women and teenagers as well as adult male offenders and with a range of challenging presentations including mental health deficits and significant public profiles, creates further challenges around estate configuration and infrastructure.

As a consequence, some of the theoretical discussions rehearsed in the EPWG and more widely about appropriate managerial responses seem simplistic. For example, discussions of dispersal policy premised on offence type as opposed to risk presentation have proved to be fundamentally misconceived given the actual demographic and risk profile of the terrorist population.

Second, the broader demographic of prisons is challenging and changing, and radicalisation, though much discussed, is hard to quantify. A lot of discussion has focussed on risk factors including, for example, the role of charismatic individuals, grievances, conversion to

Islam and the roles of various schools of faith. Yet many of these factors apply, in varying degrees, to many of those in custody. Much has been made by some of the apparently disproportionate number of Muslims in prisons. Distinguishing cultural identity from religious practice, from religiosity and from inappropriate behaviour is enormously challenging and can throw up a number of false positives, potentially generating actions that can deepen grievances and make things worse. Such analysis requires an in depth understanding of concepts, custodial environments, individuals and group dynamics before a real understanding can be reached.

What is clear from reporting and research is that there are a multiplicity of behaviours and motivations in play which revolve around identity and manifestations of

identity. Crudely these can include ways of coping with imprisonment, techniques of self-protection, opportunities to exploit the custodial environment for personal or criminal gain and attempts to create power bases potentially for criminal purposes which may extend into extremist behaviours. The role of 'moments in time', exploited by individuals including those who employ charismatic or violent personal characteristics, can be significant.

Third, the prison environment is a heightened and different version of that present in the community. Coping strategies reflect the specific pressures faced by individuals and vary from

offender to offender, from location to location and from prison to prison, and may very well be only temporary. Challenges exist in understanding the very personal question of how an offender deals with the deprivation of liberty, the pressures and opportunities created by others and the impact of friendships, allegiances, bullying and criminal endeavour which all play out in a constrained environment. The extent to which these dynamics can also be positively influenced by location, regime, friendships and intervention also depends on the individual. Critically, the fluidity of these factors, the readiness of individuals to adapt and our lack of knowledge around the persistence of what may be temporary behaviours and affiliations all represent a major challenge in identifying and managing possible risk.

Fourth, risk management in this area is emergent and dynamic. The progression of terrorist/extremist offenders through the system requires careful mapping.

What is clear from reporting and research is that there are a multiplicity of behaviours and motivations in play which revolve around identity and manifestations of identity.

12. Guidance sent to Governors, March 2012.

The case for multi-agency activity is self evident and clear articulation of respective roles and responsibilities essential. The most obvious points of transition — remand into prison custody, conviction, sentence, release into the community on licence and sentence expiry — all represent points where the respective agency roles and responsibilities shift. This is no less true for terrorists or radicalised individuals than for other offenders and is a principle which shapes the work of all the various agencies that operate in this space.

Current and future challenges

Offender management is and remains a critical part of the Government's overall counter terrorism strategy. It deals with the aftermath of the radicalisation process in the event that the state is unable to prevent it proceeding to terrorist activity. But it also has a role to play in managing those who may be vulnerable to radicalisation by diverting or protecting them from radicalising influences, or by identifying and reversing pathway influences. Where individuals remain resistant to these efforts and continue to seek to draw others to their world view and/or actively seek to engage in planning terrorist and other criminal acts, then intelligence gathering becomes a crucial aspect of good offender management.

But these are not activities which take place in a vacuum. The demographics of prisons are challenging in terms of age, health, learning and skill deficits, racial, social and ethnic tensions, disaffection and criminal activity. They are also changing, as Professor Liebling's study at Whitemoor demonstrates, with consequences for the complex and fluid dynamics of a high security prison environment that may jeopardise rehabilitation by an over-focus on managing the risks of highly capable, violent individuals. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 2010 thematic inspection of Muslim Prisoners highlighted the further dangers of conflating risk with race or faith.¹³ The management of these complexities is challenging enough in itself together with the ongoing priorities of delivering safe and decent regimes, rehabilitation, diversity, decency and effective work with partners, without the introduction to this mix of the difficult concept of radicalisation.

The operational culture within which this agenda develops is similarly complex. On one analysis, the aftermath of the CRE investigations following the murder of Zahid Mubarek created a dynamic of staff being fearful of getting it wrong, of being accused of being

racist and hesitant to engage with certain groups of prisoners as a result. Yet at the same time, many of the improvements set in train following the CRE investigation — equality impact assessments, improved equality monitoring, clear policies and auditable standards and better provision for minority groups, support the conclusions of the learning drawn from engagement with extremists — that an environment that respects ethnic and religious difference and actively promotes racial harmony is incompatible with divisive radicalising narratives and can protect against their influence or prompt their undoing. The acknowledgement of detriment and the honest promotion of remedial actions can go a significant way in protecting against both criminogenic and radicalising influences.

This is an emergent area of learning both for NOMS and Government more broadly. The importance of the counter terrorism agenda has meant that funding streams have been available to develop capability at a time when other sources of income are reducing. The challenging agendas of delivering the rehabilitation revolution¹⁴, addressing the risks posed by organised crime¹⁵ and maintaining public protection exist alongside this work. The ability to integrate both tactically and strategically work on extremism and radicalisation into NOMS' broader responsibilities without losing focus on accountability is challenging. Future funding cannot be taken for granted and dependencies with partners may become progressively strained as, post Olympics, budgets and priorities are reassessed.

Conclusion

One of the challenges to any strategy is defining success. Narrowly, a counter terrorism strategy will be judged on its ability to prevent terrorist attacks, but simply delivering a negative is hard to evidence. CONTEST through its 4 Ps (Protect, Prepare, Pursue and Prevent) articulates this challenge well. But in the specific setting of offender management the challenge is more nuanced. The starting point of risk management is to stop criminal activity. The offender management process seeks to do this but also to rehabilitate, and within this the extremism strategy looks to integrate into the broader offender management strategy specialist approaches to the identification and management of risk. We have made some progress but this is an area where ongoing dialogue, reflection and analysis remain crucial. NOMS remains a potential area of vulnerability, risk, opportunity and learning.

13. http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/hmipris/thematic-reports-and-research-publications/Muslim_prisoners_2010_rps.pdf

14. <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/consultations/breaking-the-cycle.pdf>

15. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/organised-crime-strategy?view=Binary>

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.² 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 annihilation³.

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).

1. 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.
2. Liebling, A. and Price, D. (2001; 2nd edition 2010) *The Prison Officer*, Leyhill: Prison Service (and Waterside Press).
3. 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'⁴ 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*⁵.

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

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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 the 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 supervision⁶. About two thirds of these are convicted under the Terrorist Act for al-Qaeda-inspired 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.⁷ They

4. Ibid.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. For example, 'Extremist Muslim prison gang radicalising inmates, say warders' (Tibbets, G. *The Telegraph*, 10/10/08, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/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*

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.

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

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-to-day 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

8. Although the current majority of terror-related prisoners are al-Qaeda inspired extremists, the number of right-wing radical offenders has also risen, see Kant, D., supervised by Liebling, A. and Arnold, H. (2009) *The Experience of Muslim Prisoners: A Brief Review of the Literature*, p 19. University of Cambridge, (unpublished report).
9. 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>).
10. 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).

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).

Staff and prisoners offered theories about the top dogs that mainly consisted of assumptions about how terrorists operated in general.

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, or feelings of 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 risk-creating 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-to-five 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. They aren't smart enough to figure out how to get it to work. But they have that desire because they think it's the way that they can prove to the world that they are somebody or something (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

11. 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 day 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.

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'.

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 blah-blah', and they're stereotyping somebody constantly. And sometimes they force theirselves 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).

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. Hamm¹² 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 counter-weight against Islamic extremism.¹³

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.

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

13. *Ibid.*

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

Learning from Casework and the Literature

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This article sets out what we have learned about pathways into terrorism from casework with those convicted under terrorist legislation and from research with extreme right wing individuals, triangulated against the terrorist literature and prison behaviour.

Theories of 'radicalisation' suggest that terrorism is the end point of a number of changes that take place over time that are the product of an interaction between personal dissatisfaction and social and political influences. Stages correspond with increasing identification with an in-group to the detriment of an out-group, the members of which are de-humanised to the point that violence against them is legitimised. Horgan¹ calls this process 'socialisation into terrorism' and Richardson² identifies three essential factors in the making of a terrorist: a disaffected individual, an enabling group and a legitimising ideology.

These theories assume that all terrorists are politically motivated and that 'radicalisation' is a necessary pre-cursor to involvement in terrorist violence. Our casework confirms that this applies to a proportion of terrorist offenders, but not to those with a criminal history who are motivated in part by criminality. For offenders with criminal motivation and attitudes supportive of violence there appears to be a non-linear pathway into extremism which by-passes radicalisation.

Early casework with terrorist offenders did not reveal a single profile or pathway, but a number of needs and susceptibilities that were not abnormal or particularly uncommon but which, in the presence of a radicalising environment and in the absence of protective influences, were sufficient to engage some individuals with an extremist group, cause or ideology. The first to engage in casework were more followers than leaders, and we have since hypothesised that the motivation and characteristics of leaders, followers and those with criminal backgrounds may to some extent diverge.

We were helped in building our evidence base by the work undertaken by Alyas Karmani, who completed a project for London Probation that identified the radicalising influences in the background

of a dozen terrorist offenders sentenced to short periods who had been released on licence.³ This work, undertaken independently of ours, provided the opportunity to cross validate our findings. This article describes the early trends and themes that were identified from casework, prison behaviour and the literature, grouped under engagement influences, objectives and intent, opportunistic involvement and failures of protection.

Engagement influences

Threat and grievance: personal and global

In casework, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the loss of life were widely referred to as a source of grievance, as were the displacement of religious governments by secular governments in Arabic and North African states and the perceived victimisation of Muslims in the former Soviet Union and the Balkans. The 'single narrative' interpreted all these events as evidence of Western imperialism and hostility towards Islam. The cognitive distortion of the single narrative was reinforced by attention to those aspects of current affairs that reinforced a belief in the victimisation of Muslims and the moral failings of the West.

Many referred to the injustice and violence inflicted on fellow Muslims as a key factor in mobilising their support. Pictures of the abuse, humiliation, oppression or victimisation of Muslims evoked a strong desire to protect them, avenge injustice, show they were not powerless and restore Muslim pride. *'I was watching these things going on, the helpless suffering, my fellow Muslims being killed and oppressed by outsiders. I felt like I could not control this suffering, I could not stop this. I needed to do something, not just sit back and do nothing.'*

'I hate seeing people bullied. I know how it feels to suffer alone and no-one helps.'

We cannot be sure whether those who moved on from feeling compassion to engaging with the rhetoric of vengeance were particularly sensitive to injustice, but our experience has been that the single narrative has been adopted where it resonates with personal experiences of injustice and grievance.

1. Horgan, J. (2005) *The Psychology of Terrorism*. Routledge. p 101.

2. Richardson, L. (2006) *What Terrorists Want. Understanding the Terrorist Threat*. John Murray.

3. Alyas Karmani (2009). Reducing the Influences that Radicalise Prisoners Research Project. Final Report, unpublished.

Some terrorist offenders recounted experiencing racism and discrimination. One Asian offender described growing up in 'a very white area' of the South-East with childhood experiences of '*..being thrown into walls, bashed, spat at, beaten up, people kicking and punching you. It's weird as a kid to be hated. Part of you hates those doing it and the other part is eager to please*'.

Other antecedents concerned disappointment, disempowerment and humiliation: feelings of inadequacy when faced with the freedoms of University life after the restrictions of home, loneliness in the wake of relationship failure and resentment and boredom as a result of failing to secure employment. One offender qualified as a motorbike mechanic but was unable to find paid work in this area. The short time he spent in unpaid work experience he claimed were the happiest of his life, but it did not lead to paid employment.

Special status

Another feature of some Islamist extremists has been an apparent need for status, to be recognised as someone special. This has also been found in the background of extreme right wing (XRW) offenders and some animal rights offenders, particularly in those who take a leadership role. Whether this is the product of a gap between normal aspirations and a failure to achieve or a particular feature of personalities attracted to extremism, or both, is as yet unclear. But our experience so far indicates that many wanted to make a difference, to make a mark in history, to live notable lives and to be revered, but encountered a wide gap between their aspirations and reality.

One had a desire to join the SAS ('special' forces) in the British army but believed that he would be rejected as a black Muslim and aspired instead to become an insurgent abroad. Another described the buzz he got out of being looked up to as preacher, teacher and leader. Another told us how he had wanted to be an Islamic hero and how being part of a global movement made him feel special. His group came to believe that they were the chosen sect as prophesized by Mohammed who would be guaranteed a special place in paradise. '*We thought we were special, we thought we were better than everyone else...Everyone felt that they were in a privileged position...There's a lot of*

narcissistic self-serving amongst followers. I used to lie in bed at night, thinking why I am so special to be involved. The sense of belonging and identity was very important. I was never bullied or a misfit, but my status took me to another level. I wanted to help society in a big, big way, living with principles, living with morals. You build this picture in your mind as a hero, someone that you only saw in movies or books'.

Karmani points out that the few Islamic heroes there are concern violent jihad, past and present⁴. He used the word 'vanguardism' to describe the belief that their group is the only one championing the cause of Muslims effectively.

Geographical displacement and cultural dissonance

Migration from the developing world and from conflict zones can create feelings of dislocation, isolation and alienation. In June 2009 most (58 per cent) Islamist extremist offenders in custody were minority ethnic British; either born in the UK, naturalised British or asylum seekers with leave to remain. Many had experienced geographical displacement, moving between countries or continents sometimes more than once in their lifetimes, adjusting and re-adjusting to different cultural demands. Dissonance between their heritage and host cultures contributed to identity and status issues. Some had experienced trauma from living in conflict zones, and others from mistreatment in custody.

One terrorist offender born in Britain was captured in Pakistan and subjected to rendition and water-boarding. He continued to reproach himself for succumbing to this mistreatment. Another, also British born, was taken back to his heritage country in Africa by his mother as a teenager when he started truanting from school and getting into trouble. He was told that the trip was a holiday but his mother returned without him. Two years later, having settled into a new boarding school, his mother returned to take him back to the UK, again without any warning or explanation, necessitating another major re-adjustment. Another Indian offender was born in Africa, moved to the north of England as an infant and from there to London as a boy. He subsequently returned to his family in India several times during his adolescence for months at a time. A third was born in Africa but was taken by his

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4. Ibid.

father as a boy along with his four older brothers to a European country and left there. He was told he was going on holiday and would return to his previous home and school, but he has not seen his father since, nor returned home.

None of these experiences would necessarily have caused difficulty if these men had been adequately protected by a secure relationship with their parents, had been helped to understand what was happening to them and why, and were confident about their cultural identity.

Guilt associated with a hedonistic lifestyle

Several Islamist extremists experienced a period of aimlessness, without a clear focus and enjoying what they described as a Western lifestyle characterised by sexual promiscuity, use of drugs and alcohol, regular frequenting of nightclubs, a preference for 'Western' music and a love for designer clothes. Part of the attraction of fundamentalist Islam in these circumstances was a clear moral framework for clean living that assuaged guilt associated with un-Islamic behaviour.

One who had led a life of sexual promiscuity and hedonism was attracted to the structure of fundamentalist Islam and specifically to the opportunity he believed it afforded of having more than one wife, as he did not think he would ever be able to achieve sexual fidelity to one woman. He had indeed 'married' for a second time in Saudi Arabia during his pilgrimage to Mecca. Karmani⁵ points out that 'Dar al Harb' jihadi groups permit the taking of girlfriends outside of marriage, which makes them attractive to Muslim men otherwise denied extra marital sex.

Another Islamist offender had lived a delinquent and hedonistic lifestyle as a young man and served two prison sentences twenty years earlier. He became a cocaine addict after his marriage collapsed. Spending time in India allowed him to de-tox and regain his self respect and the custody of his children. Adopting Islam and a zealous proselytising style became his protection against relapse. A younger extremist offender

experienced guilt following a sexual relationship with a non-Muslim woman at University and subsequently assuaged this by adopting a fundamentalist Islamic identity and lifestyle.

Many of those who had reverted or converted prior to adopting an extremist identity seem to feel a need to make an outward show of their changed identity, adopting Arabic dress and appearance. As well as demonstrating difference, and possibly superiority, this may fulfil a need to protect against relapse to a Western identity and way of life.⁶

Need for stimulation and excitement

Several Islamist extremists were thrill seekers, bored with their lives and attracted by the chance to travel abroad to attend training camps to fight as mujahedeen. Susan Stern, a member of the Weather Underground group, stated that '*Nothing in my life had ever been this exciting*'. Similarly Eamon Collins, a member of the IRA recalls '*I had spent six years leading an action-packed existence, living each day with the excitement that I was playing a part in taking on the Orange State. At the very least, such activity gave a strange edge to my life: I lived each day in a heightened sense of awareness. Everything I did, however trivial, could seem meaningful. Life outside the IRA could feel terribly mundane*'.⁷ A former Italian terrorist when asked what he missed about being a terrorist replied: '*The fact of being totally at risk*'.

Warriors, heroes, legends

Many of the people from the tribal regions that make up present day Pakistan place great value on valour and the protection of honour. Mahmood, a military historian, has pointed out that many from these regions volunteered to fight alongside British conscripts in World War II, and that a 'warrior script' finds contemporary expression in the concept of military jihad.⁸ Karmani⁹ referred to an obsessive focus on stories, symbols and heroes of jihadi past and 'delusions of grandeur' — '*a sense of greatness and doing great*

Several Islamist extremists were thrill seekers, bored with their lives and attracted by the chance to travel abroad to attend training camps to fight as mujahedeen.

5. Ibid.

6. As with many of our findings this is of course very tentative, and it is important to stress that for the majority of people changes in appearance, such as growing a beard, do not necessarily reflect the presence of extremist sympathies.

7. Collins, E. (1997). *Killing Rage*. Granta: London, p363.

8. <http://www.britainmuslimsoldiers.com/#!/about-author/4554737755>

9. Karmani (2009) see n.3.

things; that they are on the level with great Islamic heroes of the past and that their actions will make the difference and establish justice and freedom for Muslims... The radicalisation process reinforces the view that 'once we were kings' and this appeals to individuals who have internalised their oppression'.

One terrorist offender was preoccupied with what he perceived to be his responsibility to protect his family by preparing for either fight or flight. He believed in the imminent second coming of 'Mahdi' when Muslims would be avenged, and that they needed to prepare for this through discipline of the mind and body. He encouraged British Muslims to attend camps in the UK where they could practise a regime of building fitness and resilience. This group was described by an Oxford Professor of Islamic Studies as 'a group of zealots traumatised by the sufferings of Muslims worldwide and developing a program of **spiritual knighthood** in defence of the oppressed'.

The element of fantasy and the role of emotional rhetoric have been highlighted by the Eidelsons: 'Research psychologists have found that fictional narratives can be especially powerful vehicles for persuasion. Even when we know that the stories are untrue. Drawn in by our emotions, we're simply 'transported' by the setting, the plot, and the characters — in part because a well-told tale helps us make sense of our own personal experiences'.¹⁰ A communiqué from the ETA leadership illustrates the power of the Basque separatist narrative in linking personal sacrifice to a nationalist cause. 'We have saved our people from the threat of imminent extinction and we have brought them this far We have paid dearly for this, we continue to pay for it dearly, but we cannot deny that it is worth it to participate in this struggle, bitter yes, but also wonderful. Because the Basque Country deserves it!'

Sprinzak¹¹ described the fantasy world that extremists inhabit: 'Although most of the participants in the process are capable of preserving their sense of reality, a few cannot. They imagine a non-existent 'fantasy war' with the authorities and expend

themselves in the struggle to win it. Ideological terrorism in the final analysis is the simulated revolution of the isolated few.'

Over-identification with group, cause or ideology

Most terrorist offenders have been convicted with co-defendants with whom they shared a group identity. Social psychological research indicates that over time individual identity can become synonymous with group identity such that a threat to the group is experienced as a threat to the self and group success is experienced as personal success. Thinking, perceptions, feelings and behaviour all become increasingly controlled by shared standards, norms and rules.

A Special Branch officer referred to the passion with which Islamist extremists identified with the cause as 'a love affair with Islam'. Ballen¹², a former US state prosecutor who spent two years at the Saudi Rehabilitation Centre for former terrorists suggests that many are sexually repressed and thwarted in love. 'These are people with no kind of outlet. If you can't find love from your fellow men and women, that human connection, and the only way is through God, then you become more and more fanatical and more subject to manipulation by others.' Being prepared to die for the group can be seen as the ultimate act of sublimation to a group, cause or ideology.

This state of mind and lifestyle amounts to 'over-identification' in which individuals are prepared to go to extremes to preserve the group, cause or ideology that defines them. The more distinct a group is (by means of beliefs, symbols, values and behaviour) the more attractive it is to those who seek confidence, esteem, direction and meaning¹³.

Objectives and Intent

From casework there was wide variation in terms of what Islamist extremists wanted to achieve and what they were prepared to do to realise their objectives. These have ranged from wanting to demonstrate against British and American foreign policy (the most commonly articulated motive) through wanting to assist Muslims

The more distinct a group is (by means of beliefs, symbols, values and behaviour) the more attractive it is to those who seek confidence, esteem, direction and meaning.

10. http://www.eidelsonconsulting.com/blog/2008/09/martians_and_election_day.html

11. Sprinzak, E. (1998) *The psycho-political formation of extreme left terrorism in a democracy: The case of the Weathermen*. In Reich, W (Ed). *Origins of Terrorism*. Woodrow Wilson Centre Press.

12. Ballen, K. (2012). *Terrorists in Love: the Real Lives of Islamic Radicals*. Northtown Books.

13. Hogg, M.A., Sherman, D.K., Dierselhuys, J; Maitner, A.T. & Moffitt, G. *Uncertainty, entitativity & group identification*. *J of Experimental Psychology*, (2007) 43, 135-142.

under attack abroad, to wanting self-determination for Muslims to reinstate Sharia law in their own countries. Although the desire of al-Qaeda to remove all American influence from Arab lands has some symbolic resonance, very few have articulated support for al-Qaeda.¹⁴ Karmani¹⁵ also notes that none of the twelve terrorist offenders he interviewed expressed adherence to extreme 'Harbist' views and none were formal members of jihadist groups. One Islamist offender in custody objected to our use of the word 'extremist' because it ignored the differences between them in respect of aims. This man in particular did not have extreme aims, though he was willing to fight as an insurgent abroad to support fellow Muslims who he believed were being victimised because of their faith.

In fact, contrary to our expectations, many of those we worked with did not appear to have any extrinsic motivation for their involvement at all, being unable to articulate any changes they wanted to see in British society or elsewhere. Karmani¹⁶ also observed that jihadist methodology was '*unable to be proactive and solution driven*'. In this respect Islamist extremism reflects that of loyalists in Northern Ireland whose motivation was reactionary to the clearly articulated goals of the Provisional IRA.¹⁷ We have concluded that most of those we have worked with have wanted to signal their opposition to Western values but have not been clear what they would have in its place. Indeed several have appreciated the freedoms afforded by living in the UK even where they have opposed Western values.

Apparently, for some Islamist extremists, adopting the extremist identity is an end in itself. It allows them to assert their Muslim identity and express their dissension from Western values. Again, this does not necessarily mean that they were not capable of committing a terrorist act, but it helps to explain their motivation.

Opportunistic involvement

Our initial assumption that all extremist offenders moved through a process of conditioning to arrive at a

point of readiness to offend has not been totally supported. As casework progressed we encountered several offenders convicted of serious terrorist offences who had only a limited identification with ideology and whose involvement appeared to be opportunistic and self-serving. They were violent criminals with anti-authority attitudes supportive of violence; two had committed serious violent assaults in custody and were being managed centrally through the Managing Challenging Behaviour strategy. They had not adopted the usual Islamic extremist appearance or dress. On this basis it was easy for them to deny being extremist as they did not share the same appearance, belief system or religiosity as other Islamist extremists.

Assessment identified a high level of social dominance, aggression, intimidation and exploitation of others through fear, as well as narcissism and sensation seeking, suggesting that they were violent offenders motivated by the exercise of power and control rather than a 'noble cause'. Others whose motivation was political and moral were disparaging of them, recognising that their motivation and values were at odds with their own. Criminal opportunism, influence or protection have all been identified as motives for adopting Islamic extremism, confirming that not all those who adopt an extremist cause necessarily identify with it or subscribe to its ideology.

Prison behaviour has also identified a new hybrid group of Islamist criminal/terrorist prisoners, some volunteers and some coerced by staunch terrorist offenders who have established a power base and reputation for serious violence, either personally or by delegating this role to enforcers. These offenders have involved themselves in typical subversive mainstream prison behaviour such as bullying, drugs and mobile phone trafficking. Recruitment is effected through shaming, bullying, threatening, assuming the moral high ground and/or persuading those from a criminal background that Islam is a means of laundering their criminality, assuming status, gaining protection or simply pursuing their criminal activities. Some prisoners

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14. It should be noted that those who have been willing to work with **may be** those who are less committed to the AQ cause, and those interviewed by Karmani were those serving short sentences for less serious offences who were already released into the community. As such they **may also** have been less committed to jihadist ideology.

15. Karmani (2009) see n.3.

16. Ibid.

17. Personal communication with paramilitary prisoners in the Maze prison in 1998.

have also spontaneously begun to show interest in Islamist extremism without any direct contact with terrorist offenders or recruiters, underlining the vulnerability of those with a criminal background to engagement in extremism.

Failures of Protection

Self evidently many share the vulnerabilities associated with extremism, but only a few go on to become terrorists. The few who cross this threshold of willingness to use violence appear to have lacked protective influences that might have prevented this. Jacobson¹⁸ explored the reasons why some of the 9/11 plotters did not go through with the attack. These were:

- ❑ the influence of family members who promoted alternative views and lifestyle or intervened in more direct ways (such as removing a passport)
- ❑ removal from the fanatical environment such as a training camp
- ❑ loss of respect for or disillusionment with the leader
- ❑ feeling disrespected or treated poorly.

Limited understanding of Islam, history and politics

Most of the Islamist extremists we have worked with have been relatively recent reverts or converts to the religion. Without a developed understanding of the peaceful nature of the faith they are easily more persuaded that it is a political ideology. Aside from a simple lack of knowledge, when people adopt an identity and affiliation they also take on its associated beliefs, values and goals in order to gain its benefits. In these circumstances there is little motivation to question the belief system. Bartlett et al¹⁹ identified a developed understanding of Islam as a factor that

separated his samples of Young Muslims and those whom he termed Radicals who subscribed to a fundamentalist version of Islam.

Many of those in custody have confirmed that lack of knowledge about Islam made them vulnerable to indoctrination. They said the questioning of beliefs in the groups to which they belonged was actively discouraged or punished. One suggested there should be a helpline where you could seek anonymous advice to check out whether what you were being told was true.²⁰ A juvenile offender said that he was unable to

seek guidance about the chat room contacts he had made with extremists via the internet at home as such views were totally unacceptable to his parental family. *'I couldn't talk to my family about what I was going through in my life; they just would not be able to understand me and they were not supportive.'*

Karmani²¹ noted from his study: *'The level of knowledge for many of the offenders was basic and acquired through self study, attending occasional Islamic study circles, listening to tapes and viewing CDs of Islamic Daa'e's (preachers) and not Islamic scholars. Only one individual had a more robust and advanced level of Islamic knowledge, however this was self-acquired (there is an Islamic principle that the one who learns from books alone always makes more mistakes than the one who learns from books and a teacher). This is significant as none of the individuals had a*

correct and true understanding of the position of jihad and bearing arms in Islam.'

Similarly many had not shown any previous interest in current affairs, history or foreign policy and were therefore a blank sheet for others to write their own version of Muslim history and conspiratorial politics. This points to the importance of education in general and in the Islamic faith in particular as protectors against radicalisation, and the protective role of opportunities in custody to discuss current affairs,

. . . many share the vulnerabilities associated with extremism, but only a few go on to become terrorists. The few who cross this threshold of willingness to use violence appear to have lacked protective influences that might have prevented this.

18. Jacobsen, M. (2010). Terrorist Drop-outs: Learning from those who have left. *Policy Focus*, 101. Washington Institute for Near East Policy.
19. Bartlett, J, Birdwell, J, King, M (2010). *The Edge of Violence. A radical approach to extremism*. Access at: [www.Bartlett et al \(2010\).co.uk](http://www.Bartlett-et-al.com)
20. There is now an internet advice line managed by Al Azra University in Cairo that allows individuals to ask questions anonymously of Islamic scholars and to receive a reply within 24 hours.
21. Karmani (2009) see n.3.

politics and world history in multi-ethnic groups where a range of perspectives can be accommodated.

A poor relationship with father

This has been a common feature of the backgrounds of terrorist offenders from casework. One did not believe that his father was his real father. He described keeping himself physically and emotionally apart from other family members and not entering into family life. Another felt he was an under-achiever and 'black sheep', not respected by his father. Another was abandoned by his father as a boy and has not seen him since. Yet another identified that failure to fulfil his father's wishes to become a doctor left him feeling without worth or status. His motivation since that time had been to become a better Muslim than his father in order raise his status above his father's and reverse his humiliation. In another case extremism was specifically adopted as a way of thwarting a father who was vehemently opposed to Islamist extremism and who the offender claimed he hated.

There is little comment on this in the literature, though Bollinger²² examined the background of Red Army Faction terrorists in the 70s and found that a quarter had lost one or both parents as children and a third reported severe conflict at home, describing the father, when present, in hostile terms.

Such a vacuum in their lives may have rendered them vulnerable to the influence of charismatic preachers who provided them with powerful male role models with whom they could affiliate. Karmani²³ argues that attachment to violent jihad bolsters masculinity and compensates for feelings of being dominated and emasculated by authoritarian fathers. He notes from his interviews: *'In many cases family relationships are strained. In particular there is an absence of emotional openness in the family, in particular with the father. In many cases the father is very authoritative or was absent.'*

'The emir ran the circle and we were told he had fought in Afghanistan; he told us we had to make our faith strong and prepare ourselves; I did look up to him

and, yes, he was like a father figure especially since my father and I were not close.'

The characteristics of extreme right wing offenders

A study of a dozen young people in Holland²⁴ who had disengaged from right wing movements identified that gatherings around a particular music and style of dress operated as 'gateway' movements from which recruiters gradually introduced Extreme Right Wing (XRW) rhetoric. This gained a hold where it resonated with personal prejudice often based on previous negative experiences of foreigners or ethnic minorities. They identified a failure to fit in and lack of success at school as risk factors, together with an absence of engagement from parents at a critical period of adolescence when the allure of such groups was at their strongest.

An unpublished study in the UK²⁵ suggests that there are commonalities with Islamist extremists in terms of grievance, threat, sense of injustice and need for identity, meaning, belonging and status. Some are susceptible to indoctrination by virtue of their lack of knowledge about world affairs, many use violence and have a propensity to dominate others, and some have mental health problems that contribute to their vulnerability. Group identification also appears to confer a sense of identity and

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status, provide comradeship and excitement and legitimise and promote violence.

As with Islamist extremists, there is no single profile but a number of characteristics in common. They are mainly white males, often unemployed with friendship and group membership in common, they display rigid narrow minded thinking, lack of empathy for others and ignorance of world affairs, they have poor family relationships often marred by bereavement and loss, high levels of criminality, and a significant proportion have mental health problems and misuse alcohol. At an emotional level they are angry and frustrated and harbour a sense of injustice that is expressed in poor attitudes to women often including violence, and

22. Bollinger, L. (1982). In *Analysen Zum Terrorismus 3: Gruppenprozesse* (Darnstadt: Deutsher Verlag, 1982).

23. Karmani (2009) see n.3

24. Van de Valk, I. & Wagenaar, W. (2010). *The Extreme Right: Entry and Exit. Racism and Extremism Monitor*. Anne Frank House.

25. Knight, S. (2011). *The Personal Characteristics Of Individuals Linked To Far Right Extremism*. Unpublished.

feelings of superiority and hatred towards minority groups who are blamed for their situation.

Five themes emerge from in depth examination of six offenders convicted of XRW offences, all of which resonate with the backgrounds of terrorist offenders reported above:

- ❑ *mental health issues including depression, personality disorder and suicidal tendencies (OASys assessments show that terrorist offenders have high levels of emotional wellbeing needs and relationship problems),*
- ❑ *rigid bi-polar thinking, ignorance, denial (many terrorist offenders have similarly shown bi-polar thinking, dividing the world into worthy and unworthy, with only a superficial understanding of Islam and world affairs)*
- ❑ *significant events, trauma, family traits (many terrorist offenders have experienced psychological challenges in terms of geographical displacement, inadequate parenting, bereavement, victimisation)*
- ❑ *frustration, grievances, under-achievement (many terrorist offenders are preoccupied with issues of justice and fairness and have under-achieved)*
- ❑ *self esteem, belonging, identity (many terrorist offenders have identity and status issues).*

These commonalities suggest that there may be a common psychology generic to extremism at the emotional level that allows those who feel unhappy and thwarted to tell themselves a story about the world that projects blame for their failures on to a victimising out-group who are perceived as less worthy than themselves.

Products of this learning

This learning, confirmed by ongoing casework, has informed the development of the Extremism Risk

Guidance 22+, a framework for the assessment of engagement, intent and capability in extremist offenders. This methodology has been independently evaluated and endorsed by international experts in the field of risk assessment. It identifies treatment targets for intervention and provides a framework for the assessment of risk across police, prison and probation services. This methodology and the Healthy Identity Intervention (HII) derived from it are now being mainstreamed within NOMS so that terrorist offenders can be offered intervention and case management to address their offending behaviour and prepared for their safe return to society. The methodology has also been adapted to provide a framework for the screening of risk and needs in those about whom there are radicalisation concerns in prison.

An undertaking has been given to Ministers that all terrorist offenders will be assessed by means of this methodology by April 2013, and to this end a number of prison psychologists and offender managers have been trained to complete these assessments and to offer intervention where this is indicated. Additional input with Islamist extremists is also available in the form of Al Furqan.

The ERG methodology has also been adopted by the Channel project run by the Police in the community to divert those attracted to Islamist or XRW ideology from a possible terrorist pathway. Those selected for intervention are assessed by means of the ERG as a baseline against which to map progress over time and the implications for risk.

This surely represents a breakthrough: the development of evidence based products that have received international endorsement and been adopted across criminal justice agencies to screen, assess and manage risk in terrorist offenders.

Intervening Effectively with Terrorist Offenders

Chris Dean is a Principal Psychologist and Head of Extremism in NOMS Interventions Group.

One of the most significant questions of our time is how can we prevent people from committing terrorist offences? The desire to ‘intervene’ in order to achieve this is powerful and the pressure on correctional services to deliver this is considerable. In recent years — under the government’s CONTEST strategy — NOMS has developed a number of initiatives to contribute to this endeavour. Whilst managing terrorist offenders in custody is nothing new for the Prison Service, intervening to prevent such offending is. This article outlines the background to the emerging interventions in NOMS, what we have learned so far and addresses the ongoing challenges that will shape this work in the future.

Background

From a correctional perspective, intervention may take many guises. These may range from implementing a well considered policy to having a meaningful conversation with an offender, from expertly delivering a structured programme to placing an individual in suitable employment, from locating an offender effectively to rebuilding supportive relationships with friends and family. Whilst the word intervention has become more commonly associated with structured or semi-structured programmes, such approaches are only a part of how NOMS has addressed this issue.

A significant consideration is the cultural and social context in which interventions are delivered¹. Providing the basic services for survival in majority Muslim countries where these are not in place may suffice to draw some individuals away from extremism, but this clearly is not the case in the UK. Although extremism is not a welfare issue here, learning from other jurisdictions does suggest that intervention should be holistic and address social, psychological, political, operational and, where appropriate religious approaches. NOMS has actively sought to develop such a strategy and infrastructure (as outlined in Richard Pickering’s article) involving security and intelligence working with intervention staff and chaplaincy groups as well as with partner agencies in the community. In

addition to the structured interventions presented here, London Probation has developed a Diversity and Violent Extremism package, NOMS Muslim chaplaincy has developed the Tarbiyah programme designed to develop knowledge and understanding of Islam, and one-to-one support work is being delivered in HMP Manchester.

Structured Interventions

Over the past four years a team in NOMS Interventions Unit has been developing structured interventions to specifically address terrorist offending. A number of precursor products have been piloted and evaluated and their successors are now being delivered in custody and in the community as part of offender supervision. These are the Healthy Identity Interventions (HII Foundation and Plus) and Al Furqan. Their aim is primarily to encourage individuals to desist from terrorist offending and ideally to disengage from an extremist group, cause or ideology. Experience shows that many of those who are wedded to a political cause may never become totally disengaged but may still make the decision to desist.² As NOMS business is to prevent offending *behaviour* rather than to police thought the goal of desistance is an appropriate correctional goal.

In a democratic country any intervention needs to reconcile the right of freedom of expression and thought with the rights of the public to security and safety. Therefore it is important to allow individuals to retain their own beliefs except where they support the use of terrorist violence, in which case challenging such beliefs becomes a legitimate goal. To try and ensure a balance is maintained individuals are not challenged directly but invited to consider alternative beliefs or perspectives alongside those they already subscribe to. This approach does not seek to undermine their beliefs or values but to encourage them to re-examine them, question how consistent they are with their other values and beliefs and raise doubts about the use of violence in the furtherance of their aims.

Identity issues appear to go to the heart of why people commit these types of offence and also why

1. El Said, H. (2012). *De-radicalising Islamists: Programmes and their Impact in Muslim Majority States*. International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR). Kings College: London.
2. Bjorgo, T & Horgan, J. (2009) *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individuals and Collective Disengagement*. Oxon: Routledge.

they choose to disengage and desist.³ They recognise that when people identify strongly with their relationships, groups or values, these bonds can have a powerful effect over their thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Helping people to reconsider what they most identify with (and can often love or care passionately about) is a process that requires support, sensitivity and persistence. This focus allows the interventions to take a more holistic approach and focus on what really matters to people rather than addressing more peripheral issues. The things that offenders typically gain from their involvement (status, purpose, identity, meaning, belonging and justice) are common needs that can be met in other ways. Enabling them to realise and express what they want in legitimate ways is at the bottom of what intervention is trying to achieve.

Experience so far suggests that in order to encourage desistance and/or disengagement interventions need to try and help offenders work towards all or some of the following five goals:

- 1) Enabling them to meet their personal needs and desires without becoming involved with an extremist group, cause or ideology
- 2) Addressing the specific attitudes or beliefs that enable them to harm (or support harm) to others
- 3) Enabling them to express, tolerate and cope with powerful emotions without denigrating or harming others
- 4) Empowering them to take more responsibility for who they are, how they live their lives and the personal commitments they make
- 5) Encouraging them to use alternative ways to realise their goals or express their commitments without breaking the law or causing harm to others.

The Healthy Identity Interventions are delivered one-to-one (or two facilitators to one offender) over a number of sessions and are responsive to the individual's needs, risks, type and level of engagement.⁴ They are suitable for all types of extremist offenders (regardless of cause) and address both the factors and circumstances that *motivate* individuals to engage and commit terrorist offences as well as the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions that *enable* them to offend.

These are the factors that feature in the Extremism Risk Guidelines (ERG 22+).⁵ They focus on issues associated with personal and group identity, self-image, group involvement, managing threat, group conflict and seeking social change. The interventions encourage offenders to reconsider whether the commitments they have made to an extremist group, cause or ideology really allow them to achieve their goals, meet their needs and be the type of person they want to be. Ultimately, they encourage individuals to move on with their lives, embrace new commitments and feel empowered to walk away.

Some of the key attributes of this intervention which have been positively endorsed by both facilitators and offenders are: the scope to select the sessions that are most suited to the individual; to work at their own

pace; to explore and examine issues which go to the heart of the issue and the power of the material to initiate and sustain genuine commitments to leave offending behind. Both the HII and Al-Furqan have been piloted and evaluated and are in the process of being mainstreamed in both custody and the community.

The Al-Furqan intervention (meaning to distinguish between truth and falsehood) is specifically suitable for Islamist offenders where ideology has become

wedded with extremist interpretations of the Islamic faith. It is intended to challenge misinterpretations of Islamic texts and the 'single narrative' interpretation of world history that support Islamist violence. It does this by avoiding schools of thought and going back to source, inviting participants to examine 20 key texts from Islamic scripture that concern the use of violence by placing them in their original context, by exploring the example and influence of the life of the prophet and his companions and examining periods in Islamic history of peaceful co-existence with those of other faiths. It focuses on key themes such as when it is legitimate to use violence; the covenant of security and good citizenship in Islam, stressing the importance of avoiding discord and meeting obligations to ones neighbours and hosts; how Muslims should conduct themselves with non-Muslims; the concepts of an Abode of War and an Abode of Peace which indicate that Muslims may only defend themselves when they exist in an abode of war and not in a tolerant

Enabling them to realise and express what they want in legitimate ways is at the bottom of what intervention is trying to achieve.

3. Schwartz, S J, Dunkel, C S & Waterman, A S (2009). *Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective*. Studies in International Conflict & Terrorism. 32:537-559.

4. HM Government – National Offender Management Service (2011). *Healthy Identity Intervention; Delivery Manual*.. London: Ministry of Justice Publications.

5. HM Government – National Offender Management Service (2011). *Extremism Risk Guidelines: ERG 22+ Structured Professional Guidelines for Assessing Risk of Extremist Offending*. London: Ministry of Justice Publications.

and accepting community. The aim is to challenge attitudes that support violence by developing a more elaborate and informed understanding of Islam as a tolerant and peace-loving faith within which it is the duty of Muslims to uphold peace and harmony. A preliminary evaluation has endorsed its effectiveness as a means of answering some key questions about the duties and obligations of Muslims in a non-Muslim host country and freeing up participants from beliefs that were holding back their progress.

Learning from Interventions

The importance of effective assessment.

One size does not fit all. As with other offenders, terrorist offenders vary in terms of their motivation and degree of involvement. They also vary in the extent to which they identify with an extremist group or cause, what they would do and to whom. Some become involved because they genuinely want to change the world or to redress injustice; whereas for others it meets criminal motives such as making money or because they enjoy violence. Whilst not all are motivated by a noble political cause, all are motivated for personal reasons. Individuals therefore require interventions that target and respond to these personal differences. For those who have risks and needs similar to more 'conventional' offenders referring them to conventional interventions is the more appropriate course of action. Good assessment is therefore crucial in informing decisions about risk, needs and management strategies so that resources are deployed proportionately and our approaches are effective, ethical, legal and credible. The implementation of the ERG22+ has been crucial in identifying appropriate intervention, measuring its impact, communicating progress and assessing risk in multi-agency forums.

Recognising the dynamic nature of engagement.

Learning suggests that commitment or engagement is dynamic and that intervention can impact differently at different stages of readiness to

change. We cannot assume that offenders are all heavily engaged at the time of intervening or that they haven't already made steps to disengage. Similarly we cannot assume that those whose involvement seems peripheral at the time of conviction haven't become more engaged over time. This requires making subtle and sensitive discriminations which if not handled carefully can threaten the credibility of what we are trying to achieve. Intervention is effective when it is responsive to where individuals are in terms of their

commitment and involvement. For some the result may be a permanent decision to 'walk away'⁶; some may begin to question their commitment, thinking and behaviour; for others intervention may consolidate decisions to change they have already made; for others it may simply allow them to express their version of events. For some simply being given the opportunity to discuss their involvement in detail has built trust and a willingness to engage with offender management.

Respecting issues of identity and affiliation.

Identity issues have been recognised as significant not only for why people engage but also why they disengage.⁷ The reasons why individuals become engaged in a terrorist group are not different from why anyone bonds with any group, cause or idea: to achieve a sense of identity, meaning, belonging, purpose or security, with the same outcomes in terms of pride, love, even passion, or threat or fear when these identifications are challenged. Enabling individuals to discuss and explore the impact and importance of their extremist engagement on who they are and on their lives — for better or worse — can help them to appreciate the power of this in their lives. Acknowledging the importance of this, without validating what they may have been prepared to do because of it, can allow trust and mutual respect to develop.

With trust individuals can be open to exploring whether their extremist identity actually met or continues to meet their needs or defines who they want to be. A number have described how intervention

The aim is to challenge attitudes that support violence by developing a more elaborate and informed understanding of Islam as a tolerant and peace-loving faith within which it is the duty of Muslims to uphold peace and harmony.

6. Horgan, J. (2009). *Walking Away from Terrorism*. Oxon: Routledge.

7. Schwartz, S J, Dunkel, C S & Waterman, A S (2009). *Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective*. *Studies in International Conflict & Terrorism*. 32:537-559.

helped them resolve personal doubts about their involvement not reflecting the type of person they wanted to be. Disengagement involves active attempts to establish a new identity and commitments in relationships, life circumstances, interests and employment options. However, for change to be embedded it needs to be supported by new opportunities, peers and trusted others who can validate these new identities and tolerate mistakes and set-backs that are a common feature of change. Intervention can play a fundamental role in this process but without a supportive context progress can be hindered or reversed.

The Power of Relationships.

Evaluation has stressed the importance of a trusting, collaborative, mutually respectful and supportive relationship with the facilitator. Often facilitators have had to overcome suspicion, hostility and defensiveness to enable this. Comments such as 'I have realised you are not that different from me' or 'I thought you would be out to hurt me, not help me' illustrate the potential for breaking down 'us and them' perceptions which justify violence.⁸ These relationships of trust with the authorities have raised the confidence of other offenders to engage in intervention. This underlines the importance of retaining trusted facilitators and possibly using ex-terrorists to build credibility and trust for the authorities. It also argues for maintaining a small specialist group of facilitators to deliver this type of work (especially in custody) who can develop expertise and credibility not only with terrorist offenders but with other departments and agencies in the wider counter-terrorist community.

This power also operates outside of formal intervention in the everyday encounters extremist offenders have with any member of staff who represents the 'out-group'. Demonstrations of concern, respect, empathy and compassion have been the trigger for change in several terrorist offenders who have reported that such behaviour contradicts their preconceptions of staff as 'the enemy' who they expect to humiliate, demean and dis-empower them. This also supports the potential power of positive diversity policies that seek to embed respectful relationships and

racial harmony. Equally the importance of family members, friends or companions in facilitating disengagement should not be underestimated.

Sticking to What Works.

Experience also suggests that the general 'what works' approaches that govern how we intervene with other offenders are equally effective with this group.⁹ Effective interventions are those that have been delivered as intended (preserving integrity), where staff have been adequately trained, supervised and supported and where offenders and facilitators are supported by those around them. Ensuring intervention targets those personal factors (criminogenic needs) and circumstances which seem to contribute to the offending also appears to be crucial with this group.

This is important as terrorist offenders can create anxiety, fear and unease in staff. Whilst there are some differences in the offending and presentation of terrorist offenders compared to criminal offenders, there are also some similarities. OASys profiles indicate that extremist offenders have similar problems to criminal offenders in the areas of emotional wellbeing, relationships, accommodation and employment and particular problems with thinking and

behaviour, attitudes and lifestyle and associates. A significant number also have a criminal history, such that the skills, knowledge and experience that staff bring to other offenders are also relevant to this group. Whilst there are also political or ideological drivers to their offending there are also criminal drivers, and the motivation is also always personal. Working with *personal* issues and needs to prevent offending is what staff of all disciplines do on a daily basis.

What is not yet clear is the extent to which extremist offending is also associated with a deficit in thinking and/or behavioural skills, or whether intervention needs only to focus on uncoupling ideology from its psychological hooks. We need to continue to develop our learning about the differences and similarities between extremist offenders and criminal offenders, but this should not prevent us using what we already know as a solid basis for steering this evolving area of work.

Whilst there are also political or ideological drivers to their offending there are also criminal drivers, and the motivation is also always personal.

8. Borum, R. (2004). *Psychology of Terrorism*. Tampa: University of South Florida.

9. Mullen, S. (2010). Rehabilitation of Islamist Terrorists: Lessons from Criminology. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, 3, 3, 162-193.

Progress-enabling opportunities.

Our experience suggests that both 'push' and 'pull' influences are important to disengagement. Forming new (or rediscovering old) relationships, interests, activities or groups unconnected to their extremism appears crucial in this process. Whilst this takes responsibility, creativity and courage on the part of the participant it also requires new opportunities and support from others in their immediate surroundings in both community and custody. Where structured intervention has been most effective is where the learning and insight taken from sessions has been realised in embracing new opportunities in their lives. This has proved easier in the community than in custody where opportunities are more limited. In both contexts allowing new freedoms has to be balanced against maintaining restrictions that ensure safety and security. This is not easy to achieve and requires understanding, trust and collaboration between all the parties involved. A danger is that restrictions imposed on individuals by the authorities can fuel further grievance or claims of marginalisation which can sustain their involvement.

Ongoing Challenges

Measuring Effectiveness and Progress.

Unlike other offender groups, we do not have the numbers of convicted terrorist offenders to conduct rigorous outcome studies. Therefore measuring and evidencing impact and change will continue to be confined to reflecting on the experiences and progress of those who have completed interventions. We need to be cautious about assuming that our interventions are effective but ensure that they are designed as effectively as our current knowledge allows, based on a clearly articulated model of change and systematically evaluated. Whilst the ERG has identified a number of risk factors associated with engagement and readiness to offend, these have only been evidenced by a limited number of cases and are only as good as our current understanding allows. Experience suggests that judgements about intervention and progress are most credible when informed by a range of different perspectives sharing information and knowledge and recognising that change is a dynamic process.

Ensuring Quality.

Given the intense political and public pressure to prevent terrorist offending at all costs, intervention can be deployed inappropriately and disproportionately. What feels the right thing to do may not always be the effective thing to do. Asking individuals to reconsider and re-examine fundamental heart-felt beliefs and life choices is not equivalent to 'sausage making'. This is not intended to sound flippant but to emphasise the sophisticated, sensitive and skilled work required over potentially long periods of time to have a meaningful impact. This is expensive of resources in the current climate. Ensuring a measured approach that seeks to evolve knowledge and understanding should build confidence in our ability to intervene proportionately and resist delivery pressures which could undermine effectiveness.

Supporting Disengagement.

Structured interventions are not divorced from the contexts in which they take place. An ongoing challenge is how we respond operationally to those who show signs of wanting to disengage or who may already have taken steps to disengage. The extremist identity can confer benefits, especially in high security prisons where issues of survival, status and security are paramount. Choosing to 'walk

away' involves giving up these benefits and exposing oneself to considerable intimidation and pressure, especially when this becomes public. If offenders do not feel safe or supported in this process, or experience that the system is not responsive to the changes they have made and continues to define them by their offence, it is less likely that they will engage with interventions. There are arguments for and against relocating individuals who wish to disengage. Relocation may remove them from negative sources of influence, but may also prevent them from providing an alternative and credible source of hope and support to those who may be re-considering their own position.¹⁰

Commentators are quick to identify how influential terrorists may radicalise others in custody but are less quick to appreciate the impact that those who have disengaged may also have on others. This raises the question of whether 'ex-terrorists' should play a more active role in our intervention strategies. There are many reasons why this may be beneficial, including preserving their own decision to disengage where there

A danger is that restrictions imposed on individuals by the authorities can fuel further grievance or claims of marginalisation which can sustain their involvement.

10. Bjorgo, T & Horgan, J. (2009) *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Individuals and Collective Disengagement*. Oxon: Routledge.

are few valid roles for ex-terrorists to move in to. However there are also costs to this strategy such as the reputational risk of them becoming re-engaged. How we locate, support and utilise those disengaging from terrorist causes or ideologies is an ongoing matter for debate.

Intervening with those about whom there are credible concerns.

NOMS has a responsibility to intervene not only with those who have been convicted of a terrorist offence but also with those about whom there are credible concerns about radicalisation and future risk. This raises various practical, legal, ethical and professional issues. However taking action to challenge possible future offending is not without precedent. Violent or sexual behaviours that manifest in prison or in supervision in offenders who are not convicted of violent or sexual offences are addressed within established child and/or public protection processes. Intervention in these circumstances may involve exploratory discussions about the issues or referral for further support. At the very least, such concerns would be shared with staff on a multi-agency basis and the offender monitored appropriately. However engaging offenders who are not convicted of terrorist offences in structured interventions (as part of sentence management) remains contentious. This is an area that will evolve over time and transparent risk screening should ensure that any such intervention is credible, defensible and appropriate.

There clearly remain a number of ongoing challenges and issues to be addressed such as how can we engage with those who are most staunch and resistant to working with us? How can we be confident about self-reported progress and how can we measure change effectively? How can we ensure intervention approaches are ethical, defensible, credible and at the very least do not 'provoke' or fuel offending? When and for whom may structured intervention be

unnecessary? How can different staff in NOMS become more confident about working with terrorist offenders? What opportunities are there to work in partnership with other parts of the counter-terrorist community?

Conclusion

The development and delivery of a co-ordinated, multi-faceted approach to preventing terrorist offending is still in its relative infancy. In a short space of time we have made significant advances in piloting and evaluating a structured assessment methodology and associated interventions that are evidence-based, grounded upon 'what works' principles and beginning to be integrated into mainstream offender management processes. We are developing a growing understanding of pathways, treatment targets and what appears to work, but increasingly need to consider the detail of what works when, why, how and with whom. Through our experience we are developing a much richer understanding of why individuals choose to engage and cross the offending threshold, and why some may choose to disengage and/or desist. There remain a number of significant and pressing challenges, none more so than the necessity to measure more robustly what is and what is not effective. Some terrorist offenders continue to resist working with the authorities. We can only assume that they remain prepared to commit terrorist offences. An important goal for all those who seek to prevent such offending is to ensure that we do not replicate or reinforce the radicalisation process through the work that we do and the policies we create.

Making further progress in addressing these types of issues is likely to require innovative approaches which demand both faith and considerable perseverance. Being able to research, analyse and learn from such experiences and feeding this back into the ongoing evolution of interventions is essential.

Reviews

Book Review

State Crime

By Alan Doig

Publisher: Willan Publishing (2011)

ISBN: 9781843923060 (paperback)

9781843923077 (hardback)

Price: £24.99 (paperback) £57.00 (hardback)

Alan Doig is a former Professor of Public Service Management at Liverpool Business School and Teeside Business School, who has also worked on international projects with Council of Europe and United Nations. In this book he attempts to provide an introduction to the issue of state crime, promoting this subject as part of criminological debate. The focus of the book is primarily upon the UK and it draws upon a wide range of contemporary and historical examples that most readers will find familiar and illuminating, including the Iraq War and Bloody Sunday.

Doig discusses some of the core concepts in state crime, exploring what is a deeply contested and academically under-developed area. Broadly, state crime is defined as 'crime initiated, approved, committed or condoned by the state for state purposes' (p.77). However, such a definition carries with it significant uncertainty and imprecision. Even the question 'what is the state' is unclear when one considers that it may encompass not only decisions at a Prime Ministerial, Cabinet or ministerial level, but may also include acts of the executive including the armed services, police, security services, and even the more arm's length work of formal regulators or informal advisors. The reach and composition of the state in contemporary society is itself murky, messy and hard to pin down.

Defining 'crime' in this context is also difficult. Most political decisions do not come within the ambit of the

criminal law, and even when actions include unlawful killing, such as at Bloody Sunday, judgements do not necessarily emerge through the criminal courts. Instead, the notion of crime can be located in a wide range of national and international documents, but also within different political perspectives. As a result, the nature of 'crime' in this context is equally vague and contested. This also means that the monitoring and control of state crime is problematic. Whilst this can be drawn occasionally from civil or criminal courts, it can also be found in the parliamentary process, inquiries and through the campaigning of non-judicial interest groups or citizens.

This book successfully provides the reader with an introduction to the complex issue of state crime. It is a topic that examines the intersection of law, politics and criminology. Doig reveals that state crime is an emerging, inchoate and contested area of study. However, it is a topic that is important as it draws criminology into addressing wider issues of power and the uses of crime and crime control.

Jamie Bennett is Governor of HMP Grendon & Springhill.

Book Review

Balancing liberty and security: Human rights and human wrongs

By Kate Moss

Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan

(2011)

ISBN: 978-0-23023-029-3

(hardback)

Price: £55.00 (hardback)

Kate Moss is Professor of Criminal Justice at Wolverhampton University. In this book she explores

the balance between security and liberty in the UK, particularly in the context of the increased concern with violent extremism following the terrorist attacks in New York in 2001 and London in 2005. She argues that this has created; 'a world that is characterised by fear and subsequently obsessed with security' (p.2).

In her previous book, *Security and liberty: Restriction by stealth* (2009)¹, Moss examined how increasingly restrictive legislation has been used to address various perceived threats including football hooliganism and dangerous dogs. Here, she looks at how the State uses these perceptions to justify expanding its control. In both books Moss considers not only the philosophical ideas which contextualise these developments but a detailed analysis of the law in action as well. In this way she illustrates that the definition of important terms such as 'torture' become blurred and finessed in practice; that judicial interpretation and enforcement are often pragmatic or inconsistent rather than truly principled; and that politicians use their powers and influence to sidestep legal obligations. This careful reading shows why such enquiry is needed and that nothing can be taken for granted.

Human rights and security are central to much public discourse, for example, there have been bitter debates about issues such as the use of surveillance, DNA databases, and the proposed introduction of identity cards. However, it is the perceived threat of terrorism or violent extremism, which has been most important in the debate over the last decade. Moss dedicates three substantial chapters to detailed analysis of the effects on the prohibition against torture (Article 3),

1. Moss, K. (2009) *Security and liberty: Restriction by stealth* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

detention without trial (Article 5) and the right to a fair trial (Article 6 — particularly in the context of extraordinary rendition).

What Moss achieves is not a dramatic exposé of a hidden abuse, such as that which occurred at Abu Ghraib², but what could be characterised as the slow and steady way that judicial practice adapts and embraces new ways of thinking about security and liberty. This insidious drift towards a 'culture of control'³ may not be dramatic but it is fundamentally important. For Moss, what is at stake are 'the rights which are generally considered inalienable in any true democracy' (p.220).

Moss should be applauded for her meticulousness and the conviction of her arguments. There

is undoubtedly an important role for those who act as public and intellectual guardians of individual liberties, speaking out against incursions and articulating the risks. However, the weakness of the book is the dualistic tension she perceives between liberty and security. Are the two really mutually exclusive and necessarily antithetical? Is security not an essential component in enabling individuals to enjoy and exercise liberty? These issues were addressed by Ian Loader and Neil Walker in their theoretically bold attempt to reconceptualise liberty and security as a duality⁴.

They argued that security is not a narrow concept aimed at the mitigation or elimination of particular risks, but is instead the

creation of a society in which individuals have the ability and opportunity to self-actualise. This moves the debate away from the old dichotomies and towards a concept of security and liberty as interdependent. In this way security means not only protection from crime or acts of terrorism but also sufficient wealth, education, and opportunity to realise ones potential. In contrast to this, Moss's book remains wedded to the idea of two polar extremes and basically asks readers to choose which side they are on.

Jamie Bennett is Governor of HMP Grendon & Springhill.



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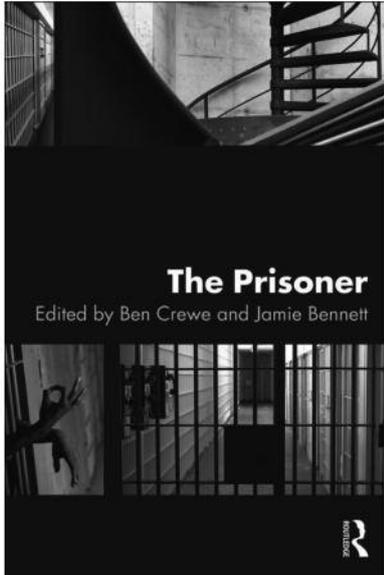
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2. Gourevitch, P. and Morris, E. (2008) *Standard operating procedure: A war story* London: Picador.
3. Garland, D. (2001) *The culture of control: Crime and social order in contemporary society* Oxford: Oxford University Press. The term was used in relation to criminal justice but is applied here in relation to broader anti-terrorism measures.
4. Loader, I. and Walker, N. (2007) *Civilising security* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press .

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Six editions of the Journal, printed at HMP Leyhill, are published each year with a circulation of approximately 6,500 per edition. The editor welcomes articles which should be up to c.4,000 words and submitted by email to **jamie.bennett@hmpr.gsi.gov.uk** or as hard copy and on disk to *Prison Service Journal*, c/o Print Shop Manager, HMP Leyhill, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 8HL. All other correspondence may also be sent to the Editor at this address or to **jamie.bennett@hmpr.gsi.gov.uk**.

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