SERA Report

2nd Step Of State Of Art

Bordeaux, France

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Main points

- **Definitions of radicalisation**
- **Theories on radicalisation in prison**
- **Policy context and prison education/training**
- **Common trends in programmes**
- **Shortcomings**
- **Best practices**
- **Conclusions**

Definitions of radicalisation

- SERA project sought to provide insight into the understanding and interpretation of radicalisation among:
  - prison management
  - prison staff and
  - frontline officials in the respective national contexts.
- 30 definitions of radicalisation

Definitions of radicalisation

- Definitions varied across the board
- Descriptions focus on:
  - a **way of thinking**,
  - an **attitude**,
  - a **concept** or
  - a **pattern of behaviour/action**.

  The wide majority of interviewees made specific reference to radicalisation as a '**process**'.

Theories on radicalisation in prison

- Referred to Silke's (2017) recent article titled 'Countering Violent Extremism in Prisons: A Review of Key Recent Research and Critical Research Gaps'

- It encapsulates the main salient issues of radicalisation and management of violent extremist inmates.

Religious or ideological commitment

- For first-offenders, imprisonment can be a disheartening experience
- Adopting a belief system is
  - a more positive attitude
  - meaning to their prison experience
  - coping with feelings of guilt and shame,
  - gaining a sense of control and
  - self-significance while in prison.

Religious or ideological commitment

- Scholars in the US and UK respectively, noted the positive effects of religious or ideological conversion for prisoners

  - Hamm (2011) concludes that prison conversions mostly "did more good than harm and sometimes even served a de-radicalisation agenda."

  - Liebling et al. (2012) noted that religion can offer moral and social guidelines for inmates and help them make sense of their imprisonment

Causes and dynamics of prisoner radicalisation

- Key contextual factors that appear to make inmates vulnerable to violent extremism in prison

- Radicalisation is considered to stem from a combination of institutional, social, and individual factors such as:
  - overcrowding and deprivation,
  - violence and group dynamics, and
  - a desire for protection and belonging.

- Two factors appear to be attractors to violent extremist ideologies are:
  - **overcrowding in prisons and charismatic leadership**

Overcrowding

- a common problem in
- a cause behind misconduct and recidivism.
- results in stress
  - induces inmates to form subgroups that compete over scarce resources and social status.
- make the inmates more susceptible to the influence of groups or ideologies
  - offer social and moral comfort.

Together with the problem of overcrowding…

- under-resourced prisons pave the way for charismatic extremist leaders to:

- organise social groups, and

- impose extremist belief systems upon their followers

- hand-pick vulnerable inmates and

- use an individualised form of propaganda
  - other followers are recruited in the group

Old vs recent research

- Older research explored how prisons increased the politicisation of terrorist prisoners.

- Recent research illustrated the increased radicalisation among terrorist prisoners
  - radicalisation increased over the two years imprisonment
  - stronger effects among young and unmarried prisoners, and prisoners without children

Management and Allocation

- To segregate or not to segregate?
- Prisons in the USA, Australia, and the Netherlands adopted concentration policies.
- Other countries, like Spain opted for a mixed policy, dispersing prisoners belonging to the Basque group ETA, but concentrating Jihadi terrorists.
- Which of these strategy works best and under which circumstances is still under-explored!

Effectiveness of De-radicalisation Programs

- Good evidence about the effectiveness of prison-based programs – SCARCE

- Published studies are mainly:
  - descriptive or theoretical

De-radicalisation approaches in focus on

- isolating prisoners from other terrorist prisoners;
- providing practical incentives for prisoners to engage,
  - providing economic assistance for them and their families;
- using former militants to debate with current prisoners the ideology, rationales and justifications for violence;
- running workshops to tackle issues such as anger management but also to develop practical skills for future employment and provide new social relationships outside the terrorist network.

Significant for the prisoners

- the awareness of an ideological change
- the meeting the victims of terrorist bombings
- insight in terms what was needed to make an effective rehabilitation programme e.g. personal self-empowerment
- developing vocational skills allowing to gain employment, develop
- businesses and be economically self-sufficient after release.

Staff running the programme

- a strong knowledge of Islam

- an ability to work in a positive

- genuine and respectful manner with the prisoners.

Obstacles faced by programmes

1. problematic relationships with key stakeholder partners such as the Public Prosecution Service and civil authorities;

2. staff in support agencies lacked appropriate understanding or knowledge around extremist offenders; and,

3. staff running the programme frequently reported a lack of line management support which added significantly to stress and workload levels.

Some Major Research Gaps

- little empirical scrutiny of the underlying social and psychological dynamics behind prisoner radicalisation.

- Several studies have set out to identify the factors that may be conducive to radicalisation, such as overcrowding, gang dynamics, and the presence of charismatic extremist leaders. These accounts fail to explain why, when confronted with the same prison conditions, some people radicalise while others do not.

- Empirical research is needed to disentangle the *mechanisms* by which contextual conditions may lead to radicalisation in some, but not in others.

Some Major Research Gaps

- Work is needed to understand disengagement from violence within prison

- More research on the dynamics behind violent extremist inmate groups or gangs

- Inmate groups can play a positive role in maintaining order and structure within the inmate population.

- examine how prison staff can positively intervene in group dynamics.

- Lack of good evaluative studies on prison and probation programs aimed at terrorist offenders.

Policy context and prison education/training

- France
- Italy
- Belgium
- Malta
- Spain
- Turkey

France

- For several years now, France has devoted more and more resources to fighting and forestalling extremism

- Following Charlie Hebdo attack, the Hyper Cacher Kosher supermarket siege and the Bataclan attack in 2015 – intensified efforts to prevent and counter-radicalisation

France … core objectives

- To detect routes to radicalisation and terrorist networks
- To surveil, hinder and dismantle terrorist networks
- To fight terrorism internationally
- To enhance prevention mechanisms ensuring an individualised and tailored approach towards radicalised people
- To engage in research and develop counter-narratives
- To better protect vulnerable sites and networks
- To be able to react to the terrorist threat and protect the nation

France

- 13 planned centres
- 1 open centre – Pontourny (closed in 2017)
- Promising results from Mulhouse

France ... prisons

- 2016 - the government dedicated prison wings for violent extremist male prisoners
- supervised by trained staff - specialised training course
- dedicated units for radicalised inmates proved to be controversial
- 2017, the Central Bureau for Prison Intelligence - share intelligence about prisoners at risk
- Prison Security Teams created
  - additional security personnel to support prison officers

Italy

- Italy's terror threat and risks of violent radicalisation are allegedly lower, it is argued that:

  - radicalisation is occurring behind the scenes e.g.

  - online & in prison

  - Emphasis on the need of more measures to outline signs of radicalisation

  - Harder measures for foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)

Italy … prisons

- Several trainings for prison staff,
- Aim raising awareness of radicalisation and extremist violence - conducted in a number of Italian prisons
- First training in 2010 in 4 prisons holding offenders convicted with terrorism charges
  - Training conducted 6 times
  - 156 penitentiary police officers participated (and 8 management and admin staff)
  - Recent training 21 hours (over 3 days)

Italy … most recent prison training focused on

- the cultural and religious aspects of Islam;
- Islamic religious practice;
- international terrorism;
- ideological background and its diffusion;
- proselytization and radicalization;
- penitentiary management of international terrorists; and
- operational techniques.

Italy … prison training

- Course replicated 46 times - participated over 1,300 penitentiary officers
- In 2017, 48-hours courses for Imams and other spiritual leaders on:
    - sociology,
    - Italian constitution,
    - freedom of religion and speech,
    - as well as the rights and
    - duties inherent in democratic societies
- Lombardy and Caritas conducted a course for 150 penitentiary police officers on religious pluralism in Italian prisons

Belgium

- Wave of terrorist attacks
  - 2014, a French fighter affiliated with ISIS, shot and killed three people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels (Bremmer, 2016), and

  - 2016, Brussels Airport and Maalbeek metro station resulted in the death of thirty-two civilians
  - ICCT - Belgium has the highest number of foreign fighters per capita

Belgium

- 2005 the government launched a national counter-radicalism plan (updated in 2015),
- preventive and punitive measures to counter Islamic radicalisation and terrorism
- Goal - early detection of radicalised actors, to ensure that adequate action is taken
  - radical websites, radio and television outlets, extremist imams and preachers, cultural centres and associations, radical groups, propaganda centres and prison

Belgium … prisons

- 2015, action plan addressing radicalisation from various points some of which are the following:
    - To prevent the radicalisation of inmates,
    - To ensure follow-ups for radicalised people in detention.
    - To improved living conditions in penitentiary institutions;
    - a better detection of radicalisation;
    - an individualized approach when necessary;
    - the systematic involvement of the representatives of the various religions;
    - de-radicalisation and disengagement programmes; and
    - enhanced cooperation at the local level, the federated states and Europe.

Belgium … prisons

- A specialised unit called 'Extremism' was created to coordinate all aspects of the implementation of the action plan, such as:
  - training of staff,
  - security measures,
  - intelligence,
  - knowledge
  - information sharing, and
  - recommendations on security measures to local and regional entities

Malta

- Low terrorist threat
- Terrorism not a major concern
- No report of FTFs and radicalisation
- Recent incident hijack of Libyan flight Dec 2016
- Police attend RAN trainings & courses by the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law

Malta … prison

- 1 prison
- currently no programmes specifically targeted at preventing radicalisation,
- the prison is equipped with an Educational Unit,
- training on radicalisation - prison staff, participates in trainings organised by RAN

Spain

- 2017 attacks - two attacks are strikingly similar: in Barcelona, a van drove into the crowd at Las Ramblas killing 13 people, while in Cambrils, an Audi A3 drove into pedestrians

Spain

- 2015, launched National Strategic Plan to fight violent radicalization and extremist thought.
- envisaged the creation of a network of local working groups, formed by:
  - social workers, schools, local police officers, tribunals and civic associations.
  - The network would share information about vulnerable individuals, at risk of being recruited by jihadists

Spain

- allegedly poorly implemented National Strategic Plan
- efforts to prevent and counter radicalisation were made in the field of education.
- During the academic year 2016-2017, a new compulsory school subject was introduced for secondary school/ Baccalaureate Muslim students.
- The new subject – which will be incorporated in religion class - covers the main aspects of radicalisation, with the overall goal
  - teaching about factors that might lead to radicalisation, prevention, as well as civic education, non-discrimination,
  - rejection of violence and gender-based violence, and human rights.

Spain … prisons

- 2006, the Marco Plan for Educational Intervention with foreign prisoners in Spanish prisons
- The plan entails:
  - educational/vocational programmes aimed at facilitating the reintegration of prisoners from difficult socio-economic backgrounds.
  - Among the subjects taught are Spanish language, cultural and societal values, multicultural values, solidarity, justice, respect and tolerance

Spain … prisons

- 2016, reports of a secret framework programme of intervention emerged.
- Plan Nanclares targets 228 Jidahist inmates of Muslim faith, seeks to distance prisoners from extremist violence
- Distinguishes between three different groups of prisoners :
    - Group A - prosecuted or convicted for their links to Islamic terrorism;
    - Group B - inmates who have become radicalised in prison and play a role in indoctrinating other inmates;
    - Group C - inmates at risk of radicalisation

Spain … prisons

- Group A the course will focus on:
  - self-awareness,
  - personal change,
  - religion,
  - Values - particular emphasis on empathy towards victims.
  - Final stage - inmates will be expected to take responsibility for their personal change.
- Course for groups B and C will include similar topics, but give **greater prominence to cultural and religious pluralism**

Turkey

- Turkey witnessed numerous terrorist attacks by:

  – Kurdish separatists

  – Daesh

Turkey … prisons

- Main topics to improve:
  - Authorizing social workers more in the penal system,
  - Developing and implementing individualized penal programs for each prisoner,
  - Ensuring participation of psycho-social staff in the prison administration,
  - Ensuring that the state cooperates with relevant NGOs working on the penal system,
  - Opening prisons up for independent monitoring,
  - Ensuring that physical conditions and architectural standards meet the needs of prisoners.

Turkey … prisons

Important prongs to socialization in penitentiaries:

- Preservation of ties to the inmate's social circle and family outside of prison;
- Sufficient support by social services and social workers in prison and the application of individual socialization programs;
- Organization of social and artistic activities to distance penitentiary inmates from a criminal subculture;
- Development of programs for inmates to develop their own professional skills alongside self-help and educational programs; unrestricted access to prison libraries; and
- Sufficient possibility for inmates to take advantage of their right to instruction.

Common trends in programmes

- Combine one-on-one sessions (usually with a psychologist/counsellor) with group sessions
- Advocate the need for an <u>individualised, tailored</u> approach
- Rely on a <u>multidisciplinary team</u>
- <u>Inter-institutional cooperation</u>
- The importance of having <u>credible speakers</u> involved in the programme –not just religious leaders, such as imams, but also people who were once part of extremist groups and changed their views

Common trends in programmes

- The importance of teaching the <u>values</u> of Islam
- Involving family/social network of prisoners
- The importance of giving space to experience & looking to the future
  - consider prisoners who have served their sentences and are preparing to leave prison
- Focus on youths (at risk of radicalisation in the community, or are currently being detained/ held in prison)
  - specialised programme for youths should be different from a de-radicalisation programme for adults
- Voluntary programmes ~ a hurdle
- Completion of the entire programme + support & guidance past completion of the programme

Shortcomings

- Lack of a gender perspective link to terrorism
  - the role played by women/ women's vulnerability to radicalisation
- Lack of focus on protective factors, in favour of risk factors.
  - Most programmes involve 'secondary prevention', i.e. engage individuals have already been exposed to radicalisation. A valid prevention programme should be implemented way before the signs of radicalisation even manifest themselves in individuals or communities.
- Risk of stigmatising or isolating the Muslim sphere
- Risk of censuring topics that should be discussed – e.g. moderate Islam
- Programmes are often not holistic
- Some programmes are too 'packed', leaving no time/space for introspection
- Risk of re-indoctrination
- Confusion surrounding strategy: should dispersal be preferred to concentration?

Programmes aim at

- Desistance from violence
- Abandonment of radical mindset
- Anger management
- Conflict management
- Resilience to radical views
- Psychological Rehabilitation
- Religious Rehabilitation
- Emotional literacy
- Development of critical thinking
- Taking responsibility
- Strengthening of self-esteem
- Development of relationship skills
- Integration
- Respect for diversity

Contents

- Anger management sessions
- Psychological rehabilitation
- Activities focusing on counter-narratives - develop acceptance of plurality
- Religious rehabilitation: understanding Islam (through imams/ people that participants can relate to.
- Civic Education: Citizenship/ the Constitution (where applicable)/ freedom of religion and speech/ democracy
- Life skills: work on life skills or social skills generally, such as dealing with peer pressure;

Methods (employed in group sessions)

- Inspirational/credible speakers
- Videos
- Active learning
- Group discussion
- Roleplay
- Practical activities

Best practices found in projects targeting youths & prisoners

- BOUNCE ᵞᵒᵘⁿᵍ
- FRIEND&FOE
- Denkzeit
- Digital disruption
- Extreme Dialogue

- Identity, Belonging and Extremism
- Athena-Syntax
- IC Thinking
- THINK!

Best practices for prisoners

- Social net conferencing
- Team TER (Terrorists, Extremists and Radicals)
- Inclusion

Conclusions

- Many programmes aimed at fighting radicalisation are still in an experimental phase.

- Evaluations and assessments are just beginning to emerge

- It will take time to understanding of 'what works' in the field of de-radicalisation'.

Conclusions

SERA partners should work on:

- – existing inspiring practices,

- – being mindful of the specific national and custodial settings in which the programme will be implemented,

- – an operational definition of radicalisation,

- – a methodology and

- – indicators of success.