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Breaking the Prison-Jihadism Pipeline: Prison and Religious Extremism in the War on Terror

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Recent terror attacks in Europe, in which 32 people were killed in Brussels and 130 in Paris along with hundreds injured, have led to increased attention on the psychological roots of terrorism. One thread that has gained increased attention (Mufson 2016), but that has not received enough systematic study, is that of jihadists radicalizing in prison (Hall 2016; Hickey 2016; Bisserbie 2016; Nawaz 2016). The FBI notes that prisoner radicalization that turns to terrorist violence, while not common, is a serious and recurring phenomenon (Ballas 2010). The media usually portray the issue as one of ordinary Muslims radicalized by “bad guys” in prison. But such a formulation is simplistic in that it ignores the outside forces that lead a prisoner to radicalize.

This chapter argues that jihadist prisoner radicalization is a symptom of tensions and conflicts going on in the world outside of the prison. Throughout history, prisoners have radicalized in ways that mirrored outside radical movements and that sought to address prisoner concerns about injustices both in the prison and in the wider society (Hamm 2013, pg. 1). As Michael Welch notes, summarizing the work of Schrag and Clemmer, “the inmate social world is shaped by the personal characteristics that convicts import into prison” (Welch 1995, pg. 155; Schrag 1960; Clemmer 1958; Sykes 1958). Muslim prisoners—and those who convert to Islam in prison—are part of societies that are in conflict with Muslims. These conflicts are exhibited by tense relations within civil society, inter-communal tensions, and even wars. For example, Muslims are more likely to radicalize in French prisons due to factors external to the prison such as being discriminated against and profiled in France (Haddad 2015, Sageman 2008, ch. 5). Europe in general has done a poorer job than America has of assimilating Muslim immigrants and, concomitantly, has seen greater tension between Muslims and the “native” populations (Sageman 2008, ch. 5). These tensions, naturally, spill over into prisons.

While jihadist prison radicalization is a sign of events and movements occurring outside the penitentiary, jihadist prisoners are not qualitatively different than other prisoners. They turn to gangs or extremism for the same reasons. While reading the reasons that jihadist prisoners radicalize the world over, those acquainted with the literature on corrections and prison gangs will surely find much that is familiar. The fact is that prisoners who turn to jihad against the West are subject to the same prison conditions and overcrowding that push other prisoners into other extremist causes. As a recent RAND report concluded radicalization of prisoners “is neither new nor unique” (Hanna, Clutterbuck and Rubin 2008, pg. x). To this end, the reason that these prisoners turn to jihadism rather than some other form of radicalization has to do with conflicts going on in the outside world that prisoners are both familiar with and latch on to.

The chapter will be organized in the following fashion. First, the problem will be framed and radicalization will be defined. Second, the ways prisoners radicalize will be discussed. Third, the role of the outside world will be examined. Finally, the argument about why prisoners radicalize will be linked to how prisoner radicalization can be stopped—like the cause, the solution will be based on political factors.

Building on previous research, this chapter takes a critical criminological approach to explaining the incidence of jihadist radicalization in prisons. Drawing from Karl Marx’ sociological approach, critical criminology examines power differentials and inequalities as a way of explaining crime (Lynch 2010; Welch 1995, pg. 107; Welch 1996). As Michael Lynch avers, “critical criminology perspectives attempt to promote economic, social, and political equity to diminish the production of crime and disparities in the making and enforcement of law” (Lynch 2010). Critical criminology urges social scientists to look beyond the simple facts of the crime and instead to explore the social contexts that lead to the crime. In this light, jihadist radicalization can be seen as a symptom of wider societal problems that include the treatment of Muslims outside of prisons.

Framing the Problem and Defining Radicalization

While jihadist prisoner radicalization is a hot topic in the news, there is very little systematic academic research done on the phenomenon for a few valid reasons. First, it is difficult to access prisoners who are radicals or in the process of radicalization. Even if prisons grant researchers access to these sorts of prisoners, certainly not a given (see Hamm 2007 report, pgs. 37-38), jihadist inmates are not flocking to speak to researchers. Correctional officers and researchers, further, may not know *who* these prisoners are—and certainly extremists are not eager to reveal themselves. A second confounding factor is that current research on the phenomenon shows that the incidence of prisoners who actually radicalized in prison and went on to attack Western targets as jihadist terrorists is low. Mark Hamm calls these sorts of prisoners “the spectacular few,” but his study of them unearthed only one strong case of an al Qaeda-like prison-group in California. Patrick Dunleavy’s *Fertile Soil of Jihad* unearths an additional network of radicalized prisoners in US prisons. However, the people these authors study do not have much success in their proposed terrorist attacks leaving the question open as to whether they were real threats that were snuffed out or instead just minor threats. As will be seen in later sections, there have been more cases of jihadist radicalization in Middle East and European prisons than in US prisons due to political and social conditions in those regions.

The low incidence of prisoners turning to jihadism in prison may be seen as a reason not to study the topic—after all, if it doesn’t happen that much, should we really be concerned about it? While such a view is certainly valid, one must recognize that the study of terrorism in general suffers from a lack of cases to study (Pinker 2011, chapter 6). For instance, while billions of dollars have gone into counter-terrorism since 9/11 (Sahadi 2015), the actual incidence of terrorism in the West, aside from the huge outlier of the September 11 attacks, has actually gone down over time (The Economist 2016).

As a recent RAND report notes: “Due to the lack of open sources and reluctance on the part of the authorities to discuss these issues, it is not currently possible to draw any definitive conclusions about the extent of violent jihadist radicalization and recruitment in European prisons. While there is some

evidence that problem exists, without greater access to security and prison authorities and, perhaps, to the prisons themselves, it will remain impossible to quantify its extent” (Hanna, Clutterbuck and Rubin 2008, pgs. ix-x).

All this said, inmate jihadist radicalization remains a concern because of a few high-profile cases that cannot be easily dismissed. Further, terrorism operates on human fears. One successful terror attack can drive a society to panic and push resources toward security or even war (Rubin 2011; Pinker 2011). Understanding how people radicalize and why they might turn to jihadism due to the conditions of prison can help subvert such potential problems, which while admittedly not common, are still important.

Defining Radicalization

Before delving into cases of jihadist radicalization, the definition of radicalization needs to be established. A key question that has not been settled in research on the subject is what prisoner radicalization means. Mulcahy, Merrington and Bell note that the definition of radicalization, like that of terrorism, remains contentious and ill-defined not only in scholarly research but also among government agencies. Agencies within the same government will opt to define radicalization differently making what’s being studied a matter of debate (Mulcahy, Merrington and Bell 2013, pg. 5). Randy Borum concurs that radicalization is ill-defined in scholarly sources and adds that too many times radicalization or extremism are used as proxies for terrorist behavior when, in reality, there are many more radicals than terrorists (Borum 2011).

In many cases, prisoners that are examined in studies on radicalization were radicals before entering prison. For instance, Hamm spends a chapter discussing the prison “radicalization” of famous historical figures such as Adolf Hitler and Mahatma Gandhi—men who had strong political views well before their incarceration (Hamm 2013, chapter 1; SpearIt 2014). In Israeli prisons, moreover, many Palestinians are inmates precisely because of their radical views (Merari 2010). In order to isolate the role

of prison, radicalization must be defined as a process and the universe of cases must be trimmed to cut out those where prisoners were already radicals before entering prison.

There are real negative side effects of poor conceptualization of terms like radicalization. Some works, due to the difficulties of gathering information on this subject noted above, have suffered from selection bias due to authors wanting to include more cases to increase the “N” in their studies (Hamm 2013; Khosrokhavar 2013). The alternative approach taken by scholars of prisoner jihadist radicalization is to rely on anecdotal examples given the limited number of prisoners that have actually radicalized while incarcerated (Dunleavy 2011; Mulcahy, Merrington and Bell 2013). This selection bias has watered down the definition of prisoner radicalization and minimized the role of prisons in the process.

This chapter will use Hanna, Clutterbuck and Rubin’s definition of radicalization as a “process whereby individuals transform their worldview over time from a range that society tends to consider to be normal into a range that society tends to consider to be extreme” (Hanna, Clutterbuck, and Rubin 2008, pg. 2). This is a decidedly subjective definition that rests on the definer’s knowledge of what mainstream and outside-the-norm views are. However, this definition will be used here precisely because it does not pre-suppose or pre-judge what a radical will do. For instance, radicalization need not mean someone is committed to acting out violently or even that he or she believes in violence. As Jenkins argues, not all people who radicalize turn to violence. Instead, radicalization should be viewed as a process wherein some people “go all the way” and become violent extremists while others “drop out” at various points (Jenkins 2007, pg. 4; Hanna, Clutterbuck, and Rubin 2008, pg. 3).

In the next section some cases of prisoner radicalization will be covered to show why the problem is significant, which will be followed by a section on why and how prison radicalizes people. Following that, the argument that prisoners radicalize in the ways they do because they are products not just of the prison world they live in but of the world outside of the prison will be forwarded. The chapter will end with some proposed solutions.

Why Prisoner Jihadist Radicalization is Significant

As stated in the previous section, one might argue that due to the small number of cases of prisoners actually becoming jihadist radicals in prison, the problem is not important. After all, Mark Hamm calls those who turn radical beliefs into terrorist action “only a tiny, infinitesimal fraction of prison converts to white supremacy faiths and Islam” (Hamm 2013, pg. 18). While, as previously argued, the actual number of these sorts of inmates is unknown due to limitations on research, the cases that are known are highly significant. Some of the men radicalized to become jihadists in prison carried out the worst terror attacks in modern times. This section will list a few of these cases in order to show the significance of the problem in the face of potential arguments that this is a low-incidence phenomenon that need not concern many people.

Abdelhamid Abaaoud was a relatively privileged Belgian immigrant educated at a prestigious, private Catholic high school. Yet, in Molenbeek, Belgium, the borough of Brussels now notorious for its mass of jihadis, the son of Moroccan immigrants fell into a crowd of petty criminals who committed minor crimes of theft and assault (Higgins and Freytas-Timuras 2015). In 2003, at the age of 16, his parents kicked him out of the house having had had enough of his wild behavior. By 2010, the young criminal was serving time in Belgian prisons where he met Ibrahim Abdeslam (Faiola and Mekhenet 2015). In 2013, Abaaoud visited Syria for the first time and by January 2014, he was bringing along his 13-year-old younger brother Younes to Syria to fight alongside the Islamic State (Dalton 2015). In Syria, Abdelhamid Abaaoud dragged the mutilated bodies of Islamic State’s dead enemies from his truck (Higgins and Freytas-Timuras 2015). On November 13, 2015, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, Ibrahim Abdeslam, and nine others, killed 129 innocent Parisians in a series of shootings and bombings. Abaaoud and Abdeslam, who had met in prison, shot up bars and restaurants together along with another man (BBC News 2016).

Abaaoud’s own father credits the son’s prison stay with his jump from petty criminal to “extremely professional commando” (CBS News 2015). There, Abaaoud found radical Islam and decided

to fight for jihad. In a place where he was supposed to be rehabilitating—or at least kept segregated from the public for its safety—Abaaoud transmuted from a minor thug to one of Europe’s most notorious terrorist masterminds. To be sure, his “commando” skills were learned under the Islamic State in Syria, not in prison, but prison was what got him believing in causes like the Islamic State in the first place.

Like Abaaoud, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the creator of al Qaeda in Iraq, which later became ISIS, began his criminal career with minor offenses. Zarqawi was born in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. After his father died in 1984, Zarqawi, a 17 year-old at the time, “became a petty criminal and a thug.” He was soon imprisoned for possession of drugs and sexual assault (Reidel 2010, pg. 89). Like Abaaoud, Zarqawi became radicalized in prison. After a general amnesty released Zarqawi in 1988, he married and went to Afghanistan to join the mujahideen who were fighting the Soviet Union there. However, Zarqawi was late to the fight and ended up spending his time in Peshawar, Pakistan where he linked up with other jihadis (Reidel 2010, pg. 90).

In 1992, Zarqawi, now fully indoctrinated in Wahhabi ideology, returned to Jordan to try to overthrow the Hashemite monarchy there. When Jordanian intelligence officers raided his home in March of 1994, Zarqawi tried to shoot the officers and then tried to kill himself, but he failed in both attempts. At trial, Zarqawi called for the King of Jordan to be tried in his stead. The would-be revolutionary was found guilty of having illegal weapons and being part of an illegal organization and was sent to a desert prison for fifteen years (Reidel 2010, pg. 92).

In his second stint in Jordanian prison, Zarqawi was joined by his friend Mohamed al-Barqawi, otherwise known as al-Maqdisi. Maqdisi was another Palestinian who lived in Kuwait and studied in Iraq. After his studies, Maqdisi met Zarqawi in Pakistan. Maqdisi along with other Palestinians was kicked out of Kuwait after the first Gulf War in 1991, and came to the al Ruseifah refugee camp in Jordan—the same camp that Zarqawi had lived in (Reidel 2010, pgs. 92-3).

Maqdisi and Zarqawi formed a radical prison gang. Maqdisi, who wrote two books outlining his radical religious beliefs and advocating the overthrow of the Saudi royal family, was the spiritual leader of the group and Zarqawi was the enforcer. In prison, Zarqawi memorized the Koran, made sure other

inmates in his gang followed religious law such as growing beards, and developed a brutal reputation for attacking inmates as well as guards (Reidel 2010, pg. 93).

After Jordan's King Hussein died in February of 1999, his son Abdullah II pardoned many of the father's political enemies thus releasing Maqdisi and Zarqawi from prison after they had served less than five years each. The idea was that pardoning one's enemies may change them, but Zarqawi set out to plan his next terrorist attack once he was out of prison (Reidel 2010, pgs. 93-4). He would go on to link up with al Qaeda and run an organization, al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, that was so brutal and wanton in its violence that even the leaders of al Qaeda sought to distance themselves from his actions (Reidel 2010, pgs. 100, 103-4). This group would eventually morph into ISIS, which today also goes by the moniker Islamic State. That the founder of such an important terrorist group radicalized while in prison speaks to the importance of the topic.

While an anecdotal list of terrorists radicalized in prison can go on and on, the point is that many very important jihadists, such as convicted attempted shoe bomber Richard Reid, al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, Abdelhamid Abaaoud and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, adopted their cause in prison. Indeed, in a report for the RAND Corporation, Greg Hanna, Lindsay Clutterbuck and Jennifer Rubin list multiple instances of radicalization in British prisons (Hanna, Clutterbuck and Rubin 2008, pgs. 34-5). Ayman al Zawahiri, the current leader of al-Qaeda, was arrested for plotting to topple the Egyptian regime after the assassination of Gamal abd al-Nasser. Zawahiri decried the use of torture against him including whippings, beatings, electric shocks, and "the use of wild dogs" (Till 2011 and Wright 2007, pg. 64). Brian Till writes in *The Atlantic* that, "Zawahiri is part of a lineage of giants in the modern jihadi movement who were further radicalized by their years in prison. There's also Sayyid Qutb, the critical thinker in the evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology [and] the blind sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman whose terror network Gamaat Islamiya killed scores, and who, years later, inspired the 1993 World Trade Center bombers in New York mosques" (Till 2011). More recently, terrorists like Abdelhamid Abaaoud and Salah Abdeslam, an alleged attacker who was captured in Brussels, met in Belgian prison (Mufson

2016). While in France, Ahmed Coulibaly, who killed four hostages at a Parisian kosher grocery store in January 2015, served time with the mother of one his accomplices (Birnbaum 2015).

This section shows that jihadist radicalization in prisons is a significant topic for study. The anecdotal evidence presented above shows that none other than the biggest names in global jihadism became extremists while in prison. Some, like Zawahiri, had extreme views to begin with. But others, like Abaaoud and al-Zarqawi, did not and seem to have been radicalized purely while incarcerated. Now that the problem has been framed and its importance has been emphasized, it is time to turn to how prisoners are radicalized.

Factors that Lead to Radicalization: General Prison Conditions

In this section, the general prison conditions and related psychological factors that lead prisoners to radicalize will be examined. As previously discussed, these factors are common to all prisoners who join extremist groups whether those groups are jihadist or not. As Cilluffo, Cardash, and Whitehead note: “Historically prisons have served as incubators of extreme ideas, and jihadists would not be the first to infiltrate and recruit from prisons.” The authors note that inmates are susceptible to radicalization due to the fact that they “form a captive audience” and can exhibit factors making them vulnerable to radicalizers such as “alienation, anti-social attitudes, cultural disillusionment, social isolation, and violent tendencies” (Ciluffo, Cardash, and Whitehead 2007, pg. 114). The same factors that led to the importation of “street gangs” into prisons (Welch 1995, pg. 156), lead to the spread of jihadist ideologies among inmates.

In 2005, then-FBI Director Robert Mueller sounded the alarm on prisoner radicalization, declaring that “prisons are...fertile ground for extremists [and that] Inmates may be drawn to an extreme form of Islam because it may help justify their violent tendencies” (Hamm 2013, pg. x). Later, Charles Allen, former Chief Intelligence Officer for the Department of Homeland Security advised the US Congress in 2009 that the US prison population was susceptible to jihadist radicalization due to prison

conditions coupled with social marginalization. These factors lead inmates to seek out groups to join and people with whom to bond—and given the incarceration of prominent jihadists, the groups and relationships inmates form could certainly lead them to Islamic extremism (Hamm 2013, pg. x).

Penitentiaries since their inception have been intended to transform the incarcerated (Hamm 2013, pgs. 16, 19-20, Welch 1995). But the current era of mass incarceration has made prisons a more chaotic place where prisoners are more vulnerable to violence and more socially marginalized. These factors, according to intelligence expert Charles Allen, make prisons an ideal place for spreading terrorist beliefs (Hamm 2013, pg. 16).

There are shared factors that lead prisoners to turn to extremist or radical beliefs of all kinds. These include that prisons are increasingly overcrowded (Hamm 51), that guards engage in “diesel therapy” by frequently moving prisoners from one prison to the next, and that inmates as a population are more likely than others to be disaffected by society due to their punishments and perhaps their crimes. Alienation and loneliness are additional factors that may lead the incarcerated to radicalize. As Ciluffo, Cardash and Whitehead show, “[e]xtremist recruitment preys on alienation” (Ciluffo, Cardash, and Whitehead 2007, pg. 120). Some studies further exhibit that prisoners desire to join extremist groups because of the loss of significance they feel (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014).

Environmental factors such as understaffed and overcrowded prisons lead prisoners to seek protection in groups. Group dynamics certainly play a role in radicalization since extremist organizations seek out individuals who have not found solace in existing religious views and, in turn, these groups “impart and anchor their ideology” to such people whose “ideological transformations are, in turn, reinforced and amplified by group dynamics” (Rascoff 2012; Atran 2010). So prison conditions lead to alienation and the need for protection, which in turn, lead some prisoners to adopt jihadist religious worldviews. At this point, the story will sound similar to that of prisoners joining gangs of any stripe while incarcerated. Subsequent sections—on the role of religion and the effects of the outside world on prisoners—will help explain why inmates turn to jihadism specifically.

Let's first go over prison conditions before turning to how the psychology of the prisoners and group dynamics lead inmates to radicalize. Khosrokhavar lists three important factors: "overcrowding, understaffing, and the high turnover of personnel and prisoners" that lead the incarcerated in France to turn to jihadist extremism (Khosrokhavar 2013, pg. 284). Overcrowding, which, in France, has led to some cells meant for two prisoners holding three or four, reduces the ability of authorities to supervise inmate behavior. It also increases tension in the prison as guards are overburdened and prisoners are underserved. Khosrokhavar notes that guards frequently fail to bring registered prisoners to Muslim religious services, which is viewed by prisoners as a purposeful slight and by guards as a matter of prisoner choice (the guards say that the prisoners claim to be sick or want to do something else instead of going to religious services when called) (Khosrokhavar 2013, pg. 294). Of course, overcrowding in prisons and the concomitant inability of guards to protect all inmates from each other leads prisoners to joining gangs all over the world. In America, the rise of prison populations, overcrowding and the ascension of prison gangs are all connected (The Economist 2014).

Understaffing and turnover of guards and prisoners aggravate the problem. Guards do not have time to familiarize themselves with the inmates and their surroundings and are also overburdened with work. Guards that don't know the prisoners well are unable to pick up who is a radical, who is associating with whom, and so on (Khosrokhavar 2013, pg. 294). Further, many guards do not know Arabic, so they suspect the worst when they see any Arabic script written by an inmate. These problems persist despite France emphasizing the monitoring and collecting of data on Islamic prisoner radicalization "at least a decade before other major western countries adopted the practice" (Khosrokhavar 2013, pg. 295). Overcrowding, understaffing and turnover explain why radicalization is allowed to happen but not how and why it happens.

Psychological factors work alongside prison conditions to lead inmates to radicalize. Michelle Dugas and Arie Kruglanski argue that prisoners who radicalize do so because they have felt a loss of significance in their life and seek to become a more significant person. This "quest for significance orients individuals toward an in-group in an effort to restore" their self-esteem (Dugas and Kruglanski

2014, pg. 428). Prisoners are a classically humiliated, angry and frustrated group of people who have been forcibly removed from society. The experience of imprisonment clearly can reduce one's feeling of significance in the world and lead an individual to seek out a new foundation for their life. This foundation, of course, does not have to embody extremism, many prisoners pursue journalism, education or sports as ways to pass the time (Bell 2016). Suffice it to say, being imprisoned, and being dragged through the criminal justice system, is a humiliating, disempowering and anxiety-ridden experience that leaves prisoners emotionally vulnerable (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, pg. 431).

Relatedly, Patrick Dunleavy in his book *The Fertile Soil of Jihad: Terrorism's Prison Connection* reinforces the fact that the psychology of inmates makes them ripe pickings for those seeking to recruit for terror organizations. Dunleavy cites a classified CIA study which found that, "Incarcerated individuals are probably particularly receptive to using violence against a government by which they feel they have been wronged" (Dunleavy 2011, pg. 23). He further notes that an FBI report found that prisoners are particularly susceptible to radicalization as they feel discriminated against by the government and may feel hostile toward authority. The FBI report goes on to note that, in addition to the possibility of inmates having violent tendencies, they may also seek acceptance, power and influence, and desire to right the (perceived) wrongs committed against them (Dunleavy 2011, pgs. 23-4).

Psychological factors, such as alienation and disaffection, explain why prisoners seek out new groups or gangs to join while in prison. They join these gangs for social, psychological and personal security reasons (Welch 1995, pgs. 156-158; The Economist 2014). As Clarke Jones and Resurrecion Morales note, "a prison gang's strict code of conduct and ideological influence may provide the circumstances for an inmate to adopt a new belief system, social identity, and pattern of behavior" (Jones and Morales 2012, pg. 212). Prisoners who are not part of existing gangs or groups need to link up with others for protection as well as for social and psychological reasons. As Sune Haugbolle writes in a chapter on Syrian prisoners, "Imprisonment disfigures individuals through extended absence from the ones they love and leaves them with a sense of broken personal history, wasted time and emptiness" (Haugbolle 2010, pg. 229). In the words of a federal prisoner housed in Terminal Island: "associating

yourself with some clique in prison is very important because it gives you a sense of security and an alliance which you can build strong bonds with. The reality of prison is that you cannot survive without the help of others” (SpearIt 2013, pg. 25).

These psychological factors are made worse by prison conditions such as overcrowding and understaffing. Further, guards, who may not speak the inmates’ language, have become increasingly suspicious of potentially jihadist behavior. This makes life worse for all Muslim prisoners, but especially those who are not jihadists. These people are targeted for extra surveillance and scrutiny because of their religion.

Factors that Lead to Radicalization: The Role of Religion and What Might Be Special About Jihadists

In this section, the role of religion in jihadist radicalization will be explored. There are two important points to note: first, religions in general are sometimes afforded special protections in prison, giving inmates a way to connect and meet that they otherwise would not have had. Second, jihadist strains of Islam in particular are subject to special scrutiny in prison, making the recruitment and radicalization process both opaque for outsiders seeking to study jihadists and difficult for the jihadists themselves. Mark Hamm’s research shows that white supremacist and jihadist groups radicalize prisoners “based on a prison gang model whereby inmates [go] through a process of one-on-one proselytizing by charismatic leaders” (Hamm 2013, pg. 53). Khosrokhavar’s research confirms these findings. He explains that radicalizers either seek out psychologically fragile individuals who have no knowledge of Islam or inmates who have some knowledge of Islam and are also in need of physical protection (Khosrokhavar 2013, pgs. 297-8). For both groups, “Becoming a Muslim automatically provides them with the protection of community members, particularly if they adhere (as they do in the majority of cases) to the Salafist or radical tenet of Islam” (Khosrokhavar 2013, pg. 298). Obviously, the individuals discussed here seek out group membership in a certain religious group, but many social scientists that have studied Islamic

radicalization seek to explain it away as either a political or strategic choice (Pape 2010; Scheuer 2004). While all terror groups have demands that they seek to reach through violent means (or the threat of violent means), jihadists' beliefs are not simply interchangeable with any other belief system. For instance, in order to truly understand the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, one must have a deep understanding of certain Islamic beliefs such as the coming of the apocalypse and the return of the Mahdi (basically, the Messiah) (McCants 2015).

As correctional officers have hemmed in jihadist activities the world over, those that seek to radicalize others have adjusted. Farhad Khosrokhavar, a sociologist at École des Hautes Études en Sciences-Sociales, has done extensive research on French prisons and prisoners in which he interviewed “160 inmates and many guards, doctors and social workers in four major facilities, some among the largest in Europe” (Khosrokhavar 2015). In a 2013 journal article, Khosrokhavar writes that radicalization in French prisons happens in small groups of typically two or three individuals to evade authority (Khosrokhavar 2013, pg. 288). He notes in a 2015 *New York Times* piece that prison is an integral part of the “typical trajectory” of French jihadists. That trajectory begins with cultural alienation in France which leads to petty crime, prison, radicalization, and “an initiatory journey to a Muslim country like Syria, Afghanistan or Yemen to train for jihad” (Khosrokhavar 2015).

Religion plays a critical role in inmates' lives. Many of them find religion while incarcerated due to the stresses of prison life. As Patrick Dunleavy notes on this point: “there are no atheists in foxholes” (Dunleavy 2011, pg. 22). Jim Thomas and Barbara Zaitzow's research shows that inmates are more likely to convert religions in maximum security prisons than in medium- or minimum-security ones. To this end, the harshness of the prison conditions seems to be a factor in leading to religious conversion (Thomas and Zaitzow 2004, pg. 242). Religious study and the solace that a religious worldview brings, certainly help an individual survive in prison. But religious gangs or groups in prison also have some important differences from other associations that prisoners join.

First and foremost, there are certain privileges and accommodations that are given to the various religious groups in prison. In New York State, prisoners cannot be denied access to clergy. In fact, “Any

religious worker could demand to enter a prison in the New York system without restriction” (Dunleavy 2011, pg. 61). Prisoners can also use the link to a prison chaplain to, for instance, send a package or a letter or even to bring in contraband (Allen and Costa 1981).

Patrick Dunleavy, a former deputy inspector general of the Criminal Intelligence Unit of the New York State Department of Correctional Services, developed intimate knowledge of how those who seek to radicalize others to the causes of jihadism operate in US prison through his involvement in Operation Hades, an investigation of radical Islamic recruitment inside and outside of US prisons. Dunleavy follows the exploits of Abdel Nasser Zaben, a Palestinian jihadist who migrated to Brooklyn in the early 1990s to recruit others and carry out attacks. Despite his strict interpretation of Islam, Zaben was arrested and sent to Rikers Island after being arrested for a series of armed robberies and kidnappings (Dunleavy 2011, pgs. 16-21). In prison, Zaben not only linked up with other radicals such as Hamas fighter Rashid Baz, who was convicted for a 1994 shooting of Hasidic Jewish students on the Brooklyn Bridge, but also encountered psychologically pliable individuals whom he worked to radicalize (Dunleavy 2011, pg. 25). Michael Lombard, a 55-year-old Italian American only child, certainly does not fit the profile that most people envision as a jihadist terrorist. But, alone in prison, without his codependent mother for the first time in his life, Lombard was converted to Islam by Zaben (Dunleavy 2011, pg. 37). Remarkably, Lombard’s mother also converted to Islam soon afterward (Dunleavy 2011, pgs. 40). Lombard’s hatred of Jews (he was in prison for shooting a Jewish eye doctor who botched an eye procedure), feeling of isolation and psychological vulnerability made him an easy mark for Zaben (Dunleavy 2011, pg. 36). Wiretapped phone conversations between Lombard and his mother captured the two plotting attacks against prominent politicians (Dunleavy 2011, pgs. 40-2).

Abdel Zaben, Rashid Baz, and Edwin Lemmons, another one of Zaben’s converts, all served as personal assistants to the Muslim chaplain at various times. While the New York Department of Corrections had a committee for approving such appointments that was supposed to take into account the needs of the prison and security, in reality a chaplain’s recommendation was good enough for a rubber stamped approval (Dunleavy 2011, pg. 52). In this way, inmates could access the chaplain’s phone to

communicate with operatives on the outside. In the case of Abdel Zaben, thousands of calls were made by the Muslim chaplain on Zaben's behalf to "radical Islamic organizations and associates of incarcerated terrorists in the United States, the Middle East, and North Africa." Procedures put in place to list why calls were made on an inmates' behalf, to list who was called, and to charge the inmate for the call were all not followed (Dunleavy 2011, pgs. 64-5).

From this example, we see that religious groups have important privileges in prisons. Religious services provide a meeting place for co-religionists that does not have the same protections around the world as other types of organizations in prison (Dunleavy 2011, pgs. 31-2). Further, religious clergy can serve as connectors linking the incarcerated to the outside world—for better or worse.

Another factor that differentiates religion, particularly radical Islam, from other types of associations prisoners could make is the vicarious suffering felt by Islamic extremists worldwide. Marc Sageman writes that jihadists feel a sense of "moral outrage" and "vicarious humiliation" when they see their co-religionists suffer in wars and conflicts in sometimes-foreign lands. As Sageman explains: "The humiliation of friends can evoke strong anger... Anger brings the desire to right a wrong, and this may lead to violence" (Sageman 2008, pgs. 72-3). Being part of a large group of co-religionists that are suffering at the hands of "world powers" or "the government," and whose suffering shows that they are on the side of justice can be an especially attractive proposition for prisoners. As Khosrokhavar writes, "Radical preaching catches on because it offers young Muslim prisoners a way to escape their predicament and develop a fantasy of omnipotence by declaring death onto their oppressors" (Khosrokhavar 2015). Further he notes that "international politics," specifically "the predicament of Muslims globally" that inmates follow daily on television, fuel "a radical version of Islam as the 'religion of the oppressed'" (Khosrokhavar 2013, pgs. 288-9). Religion, then, provides multiple psychic and social goods by giving inmates solace, a protective association, and a set of established grievances to fight against all while having the special status of a belief system that needs to be accommodated in many countries.

In the Middle East, this dynamic works a bit differently as fundamentalist religion is restricted by most regimes due to its connection to terrorism in the region, and due to its role as a potential regime destabilizer. Despite these restrictions, religion is the one means by which people are allowed to “protest” the regime in many Middle Eastern nations due to strictures on free speech and even freedom of association (Haugbolle 2010, pg. 227). An emblematic case that exemplifies the religious-secular divide can be seen in Egypt where the Muslim Brotherhood has wrestled with the government ever since its 1928 inception during the times of King Farouk (Lapidus 1983). The long-standing organization of counter-government religious associations explains the Muslim Brotherhood’s national election victory in 2013, Hamas’ national electoral victory in the Palestinian Territories in 2006, as well as the Islamic Salvation Front’s short-lived victory in Algeria in 1991 (Kilpatrick 2012; Wilson 2006; Murphy 1991). Due to this connection between religion and opposition to government, religious prisoners are treated particularly poorly in many Middle Eastern and North African countries. Haugbolle notes that people in the Middle East additionally suffer from “the prison of living in a restrictive society” where religious freedoms are squashed and regime loyalty is paramount (Haugbolle 2010, pg. 227).

Prison has played a prominent role in the radicalization of Middle Eastern Muslim figures since ibn Tamiya, one of the fathers of contemporary jihadism, died in prison in 1328. Later, Sayyid Qutb, one of Tamiya’s recent and most prominent theological descendants, was tortured, abused and, in 1966, executed in Egypt for his radical beliefs and opposition to Gamal Abdel Nasser’s government (Hanna, Clutterbuck, and Rubin 2008, pg. 27). Current al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri came to worldwide prominence after he was detained and tortured for allegedly being part of the plot to assassinate Egyptian President Anwar Sadat (Hanna, Clutterbuck, and Rubin 2008, pg. 28).

In Muslim-majority countries, torture is a critical component of the experience of incarceration and it seems to exacerbate the problem with radicalization. While torture can get jihadists to turn on their compatriots, even Ayman al-Zawahiri is said to have “betrayed a comrade” after being tortured (Hanna, Clutterbuck, and Rubin 2008, pg. 28), it also turns jihadists even further against the government. Torture at the hands of Americans at Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo, or at the hands of Egyptian, Libyan, Jordanian,

or other security forces serves to unite jihadists and further alienate them from government forces. Jihadists even have produced instructions for each other on how to defend themselves at trial by pointing to human rights abuses by their captors (Hanna, Clutterbuck, and Rubin 2008, pg. 69). Being tortured by their captors reinforces the jihadist view that their enemies are evil, irreligious and immoral. To this end, while torture can help security forces glean information, it can also be a major component in the radicalization process. Torture can serve the same ends as vicarious humiliation by angering the inmate and giving him or her a group or entity to oppose.

Finally, the role of religion in prison is different from other forms of radicalization because religious study can be carried out in prison whereas other forms of extremist literature may be banned in detention facilities. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi is said to have memorized the Quran while in prison (Reidel 2010, pg. 93). Further Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, one of the most important living jihadist thinkers, argues that prison is a place where the jihadist can solidify his faith. In an article entitled “Prison: heavens and fires” he wrote that in prison a religious extremist can focus on “obeying God, worshipping him, memorizing the Quran, seeking and spreading Da’wah [meaning: the proselytizing of Islam] and learning from the experience of those around him to become stronger for jihad” (Hanna, Clutterbuck, and Rubin 2008, pg. 29).

As can now be seen, religion both protects and harms Muslim prisoners. It protects them when religious prisoners are given special time to meet and study, but it also harms them by exposing them to scrutiny all over the world. On the plus side, it not only helps prisoners by giving them the protection and social goods that come with joining an organization, it also has a special place in prison that makes religion a good cover for engaging in criminal activities. Moreover, religion links inmates to a wider group of people with whom the inmate can feel a sense of vicarious suffering. Yet the negatives of prison are also many for the jihadist prisoner, the torture that Muslim religious extremists face in prisons and detention centers reinforces their belief in a Manichaeian world of evil Crusaders and corrupt Muslim governments fighting against true believers. As the potential for jihadist radicalization has been discovered the world over, radical Muslim prisoners have received increased scrutiny, which includes

more solitary confinement and even torture (Khosrokhavar 2013; Ganor and Falk 2013; Haugbolle 2010). Similar arguments can be made of religious charities and how radical prisoners might exploit them to fund crime: while religious charities have special protections in some cases, Islamic religious charities in particular have been reserved for special scrutiny (Dunleavy 2011, pg. 32).

Jihadist religious affiliation does have its drawbacks since those who run prisons the world over are today conscious of the potential for and effects of Islamic radicalization. To this end, jihadists today, as Khosrokhavar explains (Khosrokhavar 2013, pg. 295), may need to work to hide their behavior in prison even more than other criminal enterprises do. This makes life in prison for jihadists perhaps similar to life outside of it where so-called taqfiris hide their religious affiliation in the modern world by, for example, not growing out their beards and by dressing in a secular fashion.

The Role of the Outside World

As discussed in the introduction, readers at this point may wonder why any given prisoner would turn to jihadism rather than Marxism, white supremacy or any other ideology while in prison. In the previous section, the role religion plays in prison, both good and bad, vis-à-vis the incarcerated was discussed which provides a partial answer to the question. But, one could still be curious about why prisoners choose jihadist interpretations of Islam over literally any other religion.

In this section, the role of the outside world will be brought in to help explain why prisoners turn to jihadist ideologies. As Mark Hamm emphasizes, prisoner radicalization “is a very old issue” that is “tempered and shaped by the prevailing events of the times in which it occurs” (Hamm 2013, pg. 1). Hamm shows how social movements going on outside prisons affect the choices and perceptions of those inside prisons. For instance, in the 1960s, many black prisoners sought out anti-establishment and black nationalist groups due to movements like the Black Panthers becoming popular in the wider society (Hamm 2013, pg. 34). The book *Soledad Brother* describes a similar process (Jackson 1994). As Stephen Rascoff notes, counter-radicalization seeks to prevent violence by “shaping the ideational currents that are

thought to underpin that violence” (Rascoff 2012, pg. 127). Those currents come from both within the prison and from the outside world.

Critical criminologists seek to explain the incidence of crime, such as terrorism, by looking at power differentials in the wider society not just at the forensics of the crime itself. Without looking at the broader picture, the reason why some prisoners turn to jihadism cannot be landed on because the critic can always ask “Why jihadism and not something else?” By looking at the outside world, we can explain, for instance, why a Palestinian prisoner turns to religious extremism after a stay in an Israeli detention facility. This fictive inmate latches on to ideologies that exist in the wider Palestinian society and turns to hate the Israelis for their occupation of his lands. Jihadism, then, is a routinized form of protest in the face of power differentials in the wider society.

Tensions between indigenous Europeans and late-generation Muslim immigrations have been enflamed throughout Europe. Examples of the failure of Muslim integration in Europe are plentiful including riots in Paris’ *banlieu* (Chrisafis 2015), Switzerland’s constitutional ban on new minarets on mosques (NBC News 2009), the banning of the veil in France and, potentially, Germany’s ban of the burqa (Smale 2016), the Netherlands’ ban on the export of halal meat (Lewis 2016) and the rise of far-right groups and Islamophobia across the continent (Walker and Taylor 2011). The flood of Muslim immigrants that came to Europe after World War II have, in sum, not been well assimilated into European society (Leiken 2005). Muslim unemployment in Molenbeek, the Belgian neighborhood described by media sources as an incubator for terror (Higgins and Freytag-Timuras 2015), is 30% (De Winter 2016). While Europe and the United States have similar legal systems, the problem of jihadist radicalization is greater in Europe due to a larger proportion of Muslims there. The European Union has a six percent Muslim population while America is one percent Muslim (Hackett 2015; Mohamed 2016). Other factors which include the lower income of European Muslims as compared to American Muslims, European policing practices, and the lower assimilation rates of European Muslims as compared to American Muslims play a role in Muslim radicalization there. In Europe, concepts of community policing have not

yet caught on so incidences of white police officers harassing immigrant Muslims are common (Sageman 2008, ch. 5).

Large disaffected minority groups are susceptible to turn to extremism due to their treatment by the majority. European Muslims radicalize whether in prison or outside of it due to the discrimination their people face in Europe. However, the question may be posed “Why Muslims?” Many people are ill-treated the world over, but few turn to terrorist behavior. The reason that Muslims turn to these belief systems is that they are available in the wider Muslim society. After the failure of Arab secular governments to defeat Israel or provide good lives for their people, an increasing number of Middle Eastern Muslims turned to religion as a way to challenge the existing structure and to attempt to make change (Martin 2016, pg. 134). Emblematic of these changes was the rise of Hamas among the Palestinians, after the failure of the Palestinian Authority became increasingly perceived as ineffective and corrupt (Martin 2016, pgs. 134-135). Ayman Zawahiri, al Qaeda’s leader, was part of the vanguard generation in Egypt that turned to the Muslim Brotherhood as a protest against their regime’s peace deal with Israel. This wave of religious extremism was exacerbated by the successes of al Qaeda against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and against America on 9/11 (Martin 2016). The existence of religious extremist groups in the Middle East fighting the establishment and the success of some of these groups explains why Muslims have lately turned to radical religious organizations more than other groups have.

Wars between the West and Muslim nations have also led Muslims to turn to extremist ideologies. These wars include Israel’s invasion of Lebanon which created the radical Shia group Hezbollah and the second war in Iraq which created al Qaeda in Iraq—a group that later became ISIS. Drone strikes and wars in the Muslim World create grievances that can’t be overstated. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been killed since America’s invasion in 2003 (Iraq Body Count). France’s bombing of Mali and its treatment of Algerians during its time as colonizer there have also led to a rise in terrorism (Haddad 2015).

In the Middle East, of course, there are much higher Muslim populations than in the West and, in most cases, fewer rights. Prison stays also are more likely to involve torture (Khalili and Schwedler 2010;

Till 2011). One of the main recruitment centers and organizing hubs for ISIS is prisons. As Weiss and Hassan report, “Whether by accident or design, jailhouses in the Middle East have served for years as virtual terror academies, where known extremists can congregate, plot, organize, and hone their leadership skills ‘inside the wire,’ and most ominously recruit a new generation of fighters” (Weiss and Hassan 2015, pg. xv). For some Middle Eastern prisoners, incarceration led to popularity; for instance, Ayman al Zawahiri gained “global notoriety” while detained (Weiss and Hassan 2015, pg. 5). For others inmates, prison taught them how to fight the dictatorial regimes they opposed. Hassan and Weiss say that “Prison was [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s] university” (Weiss and Hassan 2015, pg. 9). Like with other criminals that join like-minded felons while behind bars, jihadists link up with one other in prison and radicalize each other, a process that happened in spades in Syria under the brutal rule of the Assad regime (Weiss and Hassan 2015, pgs. 145-146). The “outside world” in Iraq, where Sunni Muslim communities are existentially threatened by the majority Shia, has led Hassan and Weiss to report that “Sunnis are being radicalized at record proportions” (Weiss and Hassan 2015, pg. 240). It is no wonder then that people like Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the current leader of ISIS, had such great luck in recruiting his fellow Iraqis to join jihadist causes and fight the Americans and the Shia while he was detained by US forces (Weiss and Hassan 2015, pg. 119).

In the Middle East prison conditions and political conditions merge to create an environment where prisoner radicalization flourishes. In such an environment, Boaz Ganor points out in his study of the Israeli case, what security forces and the government call “Islamic radicalization” is seen by the incarcerated as fighting for one’s rights against an occupation government (Ganor and Falk 2013). To this end, strategies to quell radicalization need to involve both prisoner management and political policy changes. In the final section, strategies to stop prisoner jihadist radicalization will be explored with an eye toward solving the underlying political problems.

Solutions to the Jihadist Problem in Prison: Prison Management and Political Management

Now that the radicalization process has been elaborated upon, it is time to explore solutions to Islamic extremist radicalization in prison. Four main methods for dealing with radicalized prisoners will be examined: segregation, isolation, moving prisoners frequently, and de-radicalization (also called rehabilitation). The first three methods, which are more prison management solutions, will be separated from rehabilitation, which can be seen as a political solution as well.

Segregation, Isolation and Moving Prisoners Frequently

Many countries see the advantage of separating those convicted of terrorism from other inmates. Indeed, one of the underlying logics behind using prison as a punishment is to segregate convicts from the general population (Veldhuis and Lindenberg 2012, pg. 425). In Saudi Arabia and Australia, separation is practiced alongside de-radicalization programs (Jones and Morales 2012, pg. 218). Segregating the most dangerous inmates surely removes the possibility of jihadists radicalizing other inmates. But it may be difficult to figure out who the jihadists are given that if authorities knew who the worst perpetrators were all the time, the prisoner radicalization issue would not exist. Further, grouping inmates of the same ilk together may “create even stronger radicalizing cells within the prisons” (Birnbaum 2015). Segregating radical Muslim prisoners is meant to prevent recruitment (Bouchaud 2014), but, for those with already radical tendencies, segregation of prisoners may intensify extremist patterns. As Haugbolle notes of pre-revolution Syria, “Most prisons separate Islamist convicts from their secular inmates. Once released, former prisoners replicate those patterns of socialisation” (Haugbolle 2010, pg. 237). Boaz Ganor and Ophir Falk find similar patterns in the Israeli case. There, they find that many prisoners had already been radicalized and organize themselves by association with revolutionary or political groups (Fatah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, etc.) (Ganor and Falk 2013, pgs. 116-121). Moreover, even if segregation is a good solution in some cases, resource constraints prevent poorer countries like the Philippines from using this

method effectively as a segregated prison population requires its own staff and sometimes its own facility (Jones and Morales 2012, pg. 220).

Segregation alone may not provide a solution to recidivism. In examining the Dutch case, Veldhuis and Lindenberg note that after the 2004 killing of filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam, the Dutch government felt intense pressure to “do something” about radicalization in the Netherlands (Veldhuis and Lindenberg 2012, pg. 434). In this case, the authors argue, short-term concerns won out as public demand for change made long government deliberation untenable. A terrorism wing was created to segregate radical inmates from the general prison population so as to reduce the likelihood of proselytization. “However,” the authors observe. “No instruments [were] applied to rehabilitate or reintegrate the inmates, with the result that little [was] done to prevent recidivism or radicalization after inmates [were] released from the terrorism wing” (Veldhuis and Lindenberg 2012, pg. 437; Demant and De Graaf 2010). As previously noted, recidivism is no small matter. Ganor, for instance, writes that, “historically, some of the most prominent Palestinian terrorists, responsible for the most horrific attacks against civilians, were released convicts” (Ganor and Falk 2013, pg. 124).

A more extreme version of segregation is solitary confinement or isolation wherein the individual inmate is left alone for most or all of the day sometimes for the entire duration of his or her prison term. So-called “supermax” prisons, which are becoming the norm in the West for housing those convicted of terrorism, rely heavily on solitary confinement (Jones and Morales 2012, pg. 218). Such isolation has been seen by human rights groups as well as psychologists as a form of abuse that can be tantamount to torture (Amnesty International July 2014). As Jones and Morales note, solitary confinement has been shown to be psychologically damaging to inmates and “may act to reinforce the psychology of exclusivity and ‘martyrdom’” among them (Jones and Morales 2012, pg. 218). While isolating prisoners has similar advantages to segregating them, it also has greater downsides. The human rights abuses inherent in solitary confinement can become a rallying cry for jihadists that are emboldened by the suffering of their peers at the hands of “infidel” forces. Further, isolating prisoners in places where inmates have no due process rights and little or no access to lawyers like Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq, the Guantanamo Bay

Detention Center in Cuba, and the many horrible prisons in places like Yemen, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Iran, creates situations where guards face little or no penalty for abusing and torturing inmates. The Abu Ghraib abuse scandal is just the tip of the iceberg of prisoner abuse in situations when inmates are isolated from the outside world—and sometimes each other—and guards can act with impunity. It should also be noted here that jihadists have used the West’s isolation and dehumanization of terrorist convicts as a recruiting tool and a symbol. Groups like ISIS make their Western hostages don the orange jumpsuits of Guantanamo detainees to show both moral equivalency and to exact revenge.

A third prisoner management solution is moving inmates between prison facilities frequently. The thought behind this management solution is to reduce the likelihood of prisoners’ recruiting others to jihadist causes. Khosrokhavar writes that he encountered prisoners “who, in a decade, had been moved to as many as 30 prisons!” He notes, however, that this movement did not serve the intended ends of the French corrections services. Instead, many of these prisoners develop “anti-establishment views” (Khosrokhavar 2013, pg. 302). One issue with moving prisoners is that the authorities move those that they know are problem cases and who have not responded to other punishments (Khosrokhavar 2013, pg. 301). These prisoners are then allowed to germinate new connections in a new facility where staff may not be fully aware of the risks they pose. As Patrick Dunleavy writes, “frequent inmate movement as a management tool has long been a part of corrections” (Dunleavy 2011, pg. 47). However, while Abdel Zaben’s movement to different prison facilities only allowed him to expose his views to new recruits and make more connections with jihadist elements in the prison system (Dunleavy 2011, ch. 4). Moving prisoners frequently, sometimes called “diesel therapy,” can be seen as a form of segregation as the practice is meant to cut off inmates from the social connections they would otherwise make while incarcerated.

Rehabilitation

De-radicalization, a process by which counselors and religious figures try to change the worldviews of jihadist inmates and replace their violent tendencies with non-violent ones, can be seen as

a political solution to these prison problems since this strategy actually deals with the motivations for turning to jihadism both in prisons and in the outside world (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, pg. 433). Here de-radicalization and rehabilitation will be used interchangeably. The de-radicalization process is certainly a problematic one in countries where speech is protected and governments could be viewed as trying to squash a religious view that they find objectionable (Mufson 2016). Yet, while efforts to shift the terrorists' mindset are part of these programs, they are not the only piece. The best de-radicalization programs also provide the inmates with the "opportunity to air grievances in a non-violent fashion," vocational training, new social opportunities, and also try to help the inmates reintegrate into the general public (Jones and Morales 2012, pg. 217). These approaches have been implemented all over the world including in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, among other places.

With so many programs around the world, it is difficult to get a bead on whether de-radicalization is an effective strategy or not. However, Dugas and Kruglanski's scientific study of Sri Lanka's de-radicalization program for LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a.k.a. Tamil Tiger) members found that the "rehabilitation program mattered in the changing attitudes" of the militants (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, pg. 436). Specifically, those LTTE members who were exposed to the de-radicalization program saw a decline in their support for armed struggle while those that did not saw no change in their attitudes toward armed struggle (Dugas and Kruglanski 2014, pg. 435).

In Israel, the de-radicalization program is coupled with a carrot-and-stick approach. Compliance with the program brings more "family visits, telephone calls, canteen purchases..., preferred cooking facilities and accommodations, and leisure activities." Non-cooperative prisoners receive a series of penalties (Ganor and Falk 2013, pg. 125).

Ganor and Falk likewise contend that de-radicalization programs are doomed to fail if prisoners are not "segregated from their peers, held in special prisons or separate sections within a prison, and their families provided with the necessary setting and protection by authorities" (Ganor 126). Still, the authors argue that de-radicalizing Palestinian prisoners in Israel is an uphill battle even if everything is done

according to best practices. This is because radical Palestinian prisoners have large networks in prison, family connections outside of prison, a deep opposition to their enemies (the Israelis) that is based in reality, and the knowledge that many Palestinian radicals have been released over the years, which reduces the need to change (Ganor and Falk 2013, pgs. 127-8).

Saudi Arabia's "Counselling Program" has received the most press for its purported high success rate. This program, like the others, seeks to challenge the jihadists' ideologies through dialogue with religious figures as well as psychological counselling (Jones and Morales 2012, pg. 217). In the Philippines a more holistic approach is being used as well. Staff are being educated about radicalization, reforms meant to reduce corruption are taking place within prisons, and existing programs are being augmented with more vocational training and family involvement (Jones and Morales 2012, pg. 215).

Marisa Porges has analyzed de-radicalization programs all over the world and found that though they have not been a panacea, their overall effect has been positive. She notes that rehabilitating terror convicts is a risky business given that letting even a small amount of radical prisoners go whose rehabilitation has not been successful proves a massive risk even for countries that have extensive security capabilities (Porges 2011, pg. 50). She notes that while de-radicalization may not always achieve its objective, there are valuable secondary benefits to consider. Specifically, these programs can "forestall radicalization among vulnerable groups, including the friends and families of imprisoned terrorists." Further, rehabilitation programs aid in intelligence gathering (Porges 2011, pg. 51).

Porges highlights that while the Saudi Counselling Program is normally lauded for its ability to counter jihadist beliefs with non-violent ones, the Saudis have moved to a greater emphasis on changing jihadist behavior rather than ideology. As Porges observes, Saudi professors, psychologists, security officials and religious scholars teach a range of classes to prisoners, but courses on psychology, sociology, art therapy, politics and history now greatly outnumber lessons on religion, *sharia* law and Islamic culture." The Saudis it seems have found vocational and "life skills" training to be vitally important in reintegrating prisoners into Saudi society (Porges 2011, pg. 52). After all, a non-violent ideology is nice to have, but a job can do wonders for one's social status and sense of worth. Singapore

has a similarly balanced de-radicalization program and the United States has tried to mirror the Saudi program in their detention operations in Iraq and Afghanistan (Porges 2011, pg. 52). Yemen, on the other hand, has focused solely on religious reprogramming and their unsuccessful program was shuttered in 2005 after only three years (Porges 2011, pgs. 52-3). Of course, Saudi Arabia's infamous adoption of Wahhabist Islam and its export of this version of the religion confound the Gulf State's efforts at countering radicalism (Frontline, Inside Saudi Arabia).

As previously seen in the Philippines case, family engagement is an integral part of rehabilitation. In Saudi Arabia, the government helps provide for jihadist prisoners' families as an incentive toward rehabilitation. In Iraq, Afghanistan and Singapore, family visits are encouraged so as to give the prisoner social and psychological support and help in the reintegration effort. Many times "family members or respected representatives from a detainee's tribe or village are asked to take responsibility for a detainee after release" (Porges 2011, pg. 53).

Moreover, Saudi Arabia and Singapore's rehabilitation programs focus heavily on reintegrating and helping the inmates successfully reenter society. Saudi Arabia's focus on individually-tailored programs complete with mentors has made replicating the Gulf nation's success in de-radicalization difficult (Porges 2011, pg. 54). Saudi officials, who held until January 2009 that their programs had a 100 percent success rate, now say that 80 to 90 percent of those who pass through their rehabilitation programs de-radicalize. However, they are careful to note that these programs are not likely to turn "the most committed terrorists" (Porges 2011, pg. 55).

Recidivism statistics are hard to come by for these programs as they rely on sometimes-confidential government and intelligence information. High-profile failures beg the question of whether even a low recidivism rate is good enough. After all, graduates of Yemen's rehabilitation program have gone to Iraq to fight against the American occupation and Ali al-Shihri, a former Guantanamo detainee who also graduated the Saudi program, rose to become the deputy commander of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (Porges 2011, pg. 55). A recent *Washington Post* report detailed that a staggering 111 of the 532 Guantanamo detainees released as of March 2016 returned to terrorism. A Pentagon official

confirmed in the report that Americans had died at the hands of these ex-detainees. Of the 111 released detainees, fifty-seven are still alive and fighting—the rest were killed or captured (Lamothe 2016).

Of course, the Guantanamo detainees were not part of any Saudi-style rehabilitation program. Instead, they were subject to harsh treatment tantamount to torture (Wikileaks 2011). As previously argued, torture is certainly one method for managing terrorism suspects but rehabilitation seems to provide better results for a variety of reasons. Torture rallies jihadists against the torturing country, demonizes the country that does the torturing among its friends as well as its enemies, makes attacks against the torturing country more justified in the eyes of extremists and perhaps others, and serves no rehabilitational purpose.

The major methods of managing prisons so as to quell jihadism are summarized in the below table.

Table One. Prisoner Management Solutions to Jihadism

Country	Approach	Successful?
Saudi Arabia, Singapore Philippines, and Sri Lanka	De-radicalization and reintegration into society	Saudis claim 80 to 90 percent success rate <i>but</i> Saudi’s exportation of official Wahhabist ideology foments radicalization; No data from Philippines; Singapore has seen anecdotal success; Evidence of militants who went through rehabilitation programs in Sri Lanka reducing their support for armed struggle
Yemen	De-radicalization only (no reintegration program)	Program failed with militants returning to al Qaeda
Israel	Incentives and attempts at rehabilitation	Effectiveness confounded by ongoing conflict with Palestinians which reduces inmates desire to change
France, the Netherlands, the UK, and Belgium, among others	Segregation of jihadist prisoners	Unclear due to lack of data and newness of policy in places like UK, but problem clearly persists in Europe; segregated “terrorism wings” may be incubators for jihadist planning
United States	Isolation in solitary confinement (Guantanamo, Supermax, etc.)	High failure rate as 111 former Guantanamo detainees have returned to terrorism.

Drones as an Alternative to Imprisonment?

While perhaps seeming outside the scope of this chapter, drone strikes have been used by the United States, and increasingly other countries, as an alternative to imprisoning jihadists. Killing these people clearly limits their ability to proselytize, so to some drone strikes may be a simpler and better solution than imprisoning jihadists at all. With drone strikes, there is no worry that potential jihadists will radicalize or that terrorists will recidivate.

Like torture, drone strikes do not provide the same benefits to inmates and governments seeking public order that rehabilitation and other detention programs do. While detention programs surely have their problems, and abuses within detention facilities fan the flames of extremism, the opaque, extra-judicial killing of terror suspects has even more negatives than torture and has become a critical counterterrorism tool. After Israel was repeatedly condemned for its targeted killing campaign of Palestinians during the second intifada (Toensing and Urbina 2003), one would have thought that the world did not have the appetite for extra-judicial killings of terrorist suspects. However, the Barack Obama administration has made drone strikes an all-too-common element of their anti-terrorism arsenal. The British Bureau of Investigative Journalism reports that two British nationals whose citizenship was revoked were soon after killed by US drones (Macklin 2014, pg. 8). America has even engaged in drone strikes against its own citizens. These included the targeted assassination of Anwar al-Awlaki and Sameer Khan in Yemen, the killing of Jude Kenan Mohamed in Pakistan, and the assassination of Kemal Dawish and Abdulrahman al-Awlaki who were killed in separate strikes in Yemen. Another American, Warren Weinstein, was inadvertently killed by a drone strike. The US government—in a 2011 secret memo—detailed their legal justifications for these strikes (Taylor 2015). This is despite an executive order prohibiting assassinations carried out by American personnel (Scahill 2016, pg. 2).

As Jo Becker and Scott Shane observe, “Drones have replaced Guantánamo as the recruiting tool of choice for militants; in his 2010 guilty plea, Faisal Shahzad, who had tried to set off a car bomb in Times Square, justified targeting civilians by telling the judge, ‘When the drones hit, they don’t see children’” (Becker and Shane 2012). The United States has carried out more than 400 drone strikes in

countries like Pakistan, Yemen and Iraq, which has resulted in thousands of deaths many of which are innocent civilians. “The proliferating mistakes have given drones a sinister reputation in Pakistan and Yemen and have provoked a powerful anti-American backlash in the Muslim world. Part of the collateral damage in the strikes has been Mr. Obama’s dream of restoring the United States’ reputation with Muslims around the globe” (Shane 2015). Drone strikes and the killing of terrorist suspects certainly have their place—some terrorists may be impossible to neutralize otherwise and others may be too dangerous or difficult to capture. Still, the wanton use of targeted killings of terror suspects kills innocent civilians while providing a recruiting platform for jihadists. For these reasons, prison is the better option.

Political Solutions

Aside from prison management solutions, rehabilitation and drone strikes, the political conditions that lead people to radicalize must be examined. Moving inmates from one cell block to another or isolating them in ever-more-elaborate prisons ignores the very real fact that these solutions deal with symptoms but not the root-cause of the problem. People turn to jihadist groups for many reasons some of which include decades of dictatorial government in the Middle East coupled with the quashing of religious expression. Conflicts in the region have further exacerbated the problem as the so-called Arab Spring and American military interventions have combined to leave chaotic regions full of internecine warfare where the countries Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Libya once stood. As seen in the Israeli case, reprogramming Palestinian radicals would surely work better if they did not have very real grievances that pushed them toward radical ideologies. As Marisa Porges underlines, “relying on recidivism figures largely ignores the political and social context in which a deradicalization program operates and the security environment into which a program releases graduates” (Porges 2011, pg. 55).

While peace between warring parties and a more stable Middle East look unlikely in the near-term, short-term political solutions can include reforms in the Middle East and elsewhere that lead to better treatment of citizens, the enforcement of human rights for prisoners and the eradication of torture. Saudi Arabia could also work to tone down some of the messages it spreads through its Wahhabist faith,

such as those that are intolerant toward non-Muslims and Shi'as (Frontline, Saudi Arabia). Small steps towards liberalization, civil rights, and participatory politics in the Middle East and North Africa will also certainly help. So will greater integration and acceptance of Muslim immigrants in the West, especially given the historic immigrant waves coming to Europe from Afghanistan, Syria, Eritrea, and elsewhere.

Conclusion

Stopping terrorist radicalization has become a critical security issue in the twenty-first century. As many terrorists group together and radicalize in prison, breaking the prison-jihadism pipeline is an important piece of the counterterrorism fight. Understanding how and why radicalization occurs in prison is important—as is understanding why people radicalize on the outside.

Examining the issue from the American perspective, a recent Institute for Social Policy and Understanding report provides some important insights, finding that “despite the existence of an estimated 350,000 Muslim prisoners, there is little evidence of widespread radicalization or successful foreign recruitment” in the American prison system (SpearIt 2013, pg. 5). Despite Islam being the fastest growing religion in U.S. prisons, as 80% of prison conversions are conversions to the Muslim faith, the report holds that radicalization among the American Muslim prison population is rare and, even when it occurs, may not lead to violence (SpearIt 2013, pg. 6, 9). It goes on to argue that Muslim inmates in the U.S. need better religious accommodations, such as more and better Islamic chaplains and better re-entry programs (SpearIt 2013, pgs. 39-42). Finally, the report contends that religion is a net-positive for inmates and Muslim inmates are more likely to have their rights infringed upon than to infringe on the rights of others (SpearIt 2013, pgs. 12, 14-5, 17).

While it is true that we should never conflate Islam with radicalism or jihadism, and that the vast majority of Muslims are non-violent people, the same conundrum faces security forces inside and outside of prison. Muslim radicals are viewed as a particularly noxious threat in many countries all over the world be they Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al Shabaab in Somalia, Chechen separatists in Russia, or Islamic State operatives in France, Belgium or Turkey. People the world over point to horrible attacks, some of which

were carried out by people radicalized in prison, such as the 2015 attacks in Paris, the 2016 attacks in Brussels and Turkey, and similar recent attacks in Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

In many places, governments have sullied entire populations by accusing their people of harboring terrorists—a label that can lead to a person losing all of his or her rights including the right to life, due process and citizenship (Ahmed 2013, ch. 5; Macklin 2014). Jihadist radicalization, such as what occurred in the cases of Abdel Zaben, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and many others, cannot be easily stopped in such a context where Muslims feel threatened and attacked. Political solutions are necessary in conjunction with using best practices in inmate management to quell the problem.

Holistic de-radicalization programs that work to reintegrate, rather than reprogram, individuals seem to have the most promise for stopping the pipeline from prison to jihad. Other methods such as segregation of those convicted of terrorist crimes, and in extreme cases isolation, may be necessary in conjunction with rehabilitation plans. Belgium's approach, for instance, to radicalization in prison has been a mix of two elements: the first is to segregate the jihadist prisoners from the general population and the second is to improve prison conditions. Improvements include reducing overcrowding and providing more services, including religious, psychological, and educational, for Muslim prisoners (Mufson 2016). Torture, drone strikes, and the open-ended housing of jihadist inmates in detention centers cannot be recommended due to their heavy drawbacks.

Critical criminology shows us that social factors are the most important ones in determining whether or not people will turn to jihadism. To this end, political solutions, in the Middle East and in the Muslim diaspora, are necessary for giving Muslims hope and better life opportunities that will ultimately make jihadism appear to be an unwise path. As seen in the Saudi case, providing opportunities, such as jobs, is critical to eradicating jihadism as a belief system inside and outside of prisons. Better integrating Muslims into European societies is also a necessary component of any solution. While prisons need to reduce overcrowding, provide all inmates with greater care, cater more to Muslim inmates, end prisoner abuse, and work to rehabilitate jihadists, prison management solutions alone are not going to stop

jihadism from rising inside or outside of detention facilities. Political solutions that give young Muslims hope and employment, that integrate Muslims into Western societies and that liberalize the Middle East will ultimately be the factors that break the prison-jihadism pipeline.

Biographical Sketch:

Gabriel Rubin is an Associate Professor of Justice Studies at Montclair State University. He is the author of *Freedom and Order: How Democratic Governments Restrict Civil Liberties After Terrorist Attacks—And Why Sometimes They Don't* (Lexington Books, 2011) and has published articles and chapters on terrorism and global justice. His current book project explores today's exploding number of migrants and refugees exposing how the current nation-state system created the problem and how global coordination and a human rights approach are needed to solve it. He lives in New Jersey with his wife Ariel and three children: Shai, Talya and Lev.

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