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1. INTRODUCTION

For the last couple of years there has been a lot of talk, and fear, surrounding the issue of homegrown Islamic terrorism. Newspaper headlines warned us of the hundreds even thousands of nationals of Western nations that had become terrorists, making the trip to Syria, or joining ISIS' ranks, or even planning terrorist attacks on Western soil. The idea of being threatened from within has undoubtedly shaken our societies. We have all started to wonder, in relation to the increase in foreign fighters, and the so-called "homegrown terrorists", what is it that pushes individuals to act against their own countries or societies? It is in this context that the concepts of radicalization, extremism and terrorism appear, as three distinct, but interrelated, concepts that define the process by which individuals adhere to radical ideas and belief systems, espouse anti-system ideologies (mainly anti-democratic attitudes and the belief in the superiority of the Islamic system – namely Sharia), legitimize the use of violence and might ultimately participate in those violent measures. The path to radicalization is not a unique one, it is not linear, or made up of boxes one must check in order to be called a radical. Therefore, there is no clear-cut answer to the question above. In reality, we ask ourselves what pushes individuals to abandon the relative comforts of a life in a Western society to die for a religion, a community or a cause which might be initially foreign to them, in order to find out how to stop it. By looking at the pathways to radicalization we might see different patterns develop and having that knowledge hope to use it in our efforts at de-radicalization and prevention of future radicalization.

One such pattern that can be observed is the impact of the prison environment on radicalization. Looking at some of the biggest terrorist attacks carried out on Western soil in the last few years, starting with 9/11, the Madrid train bombings or the Charlie Hebdo attacks amongst other examples, they all have in common that their perpetrators spent time in prison and that their confinement in some way or other affected their path to violence. Prisons have for some time been environments where radicalization is seen, for all ideologies not just for Radical Islamists, and that is what this work will look at. Due

to the enormity of the subject of radicalization, its very theoretical nature, and its diverse and varied branches and outlooks, this work will concentrate on the penitentiary system and its impact on the radicalization of individuals. Prisons are just one of many environments where evidence of radicalization is being noted and taking into account that prisons are places where criminals, terrorists and possible radicals converge, it is not surprising that this is the case. Therefore, although looking into this specific environment might not provide answers for the broader problem affecting Europe, the US and the West in general, which is the radicalization growing in other less extreme or violent milieus, it might shed some light into some of the dynamics of radicalization.

So, although the number of cases of radicalization in prisons in the West is not comparable to that of cases taking place outside prison confinement in relative terms, we see that prisons are a very relevant and active environment for radicalization. This is of renewed importance now that the last physical enclaves of ISIS are falling thanks to the efforts of allied forces, and therefore repatriation and imprisonment of many of those foreign fighters that left the West in order to join the ranks of terrorist organizations, namely but not limited to ISIS, is expected to take place in the coming months. The penitentiary system was designed as a place of punishment but also of rehabilitation and re-education of prisoners, in the hopes that when reinserted into society (those whose sentences allowed them to return to society) they would be able to coexist in moderate societies as moderate individuals. Today, however, it is not rare to hear that terrorist plots were thought of in prisons, that prisoners radicalized during confinement or that more and more individuals are imprisoned for terrorism-related activities. In short, the number of radicalized prisoners seems to be increasing, either because more are sent to prison already radicalized or because many are leaving prisons radicalized (in most cases not having entered particularly inclined to any ideology). It is clear then that the penitentiary system is not correctly rehabilitating its inmates, if, as it seems, it has become a prolific environment for radicalization to take place. As previously stated, addressing this issue is more urgent than ever, if, as expected, hundreds of terrorists and radical Islamists will be shortly imprisoned in our countries as they are repatriated from the ranks of the physically defeated ISIS.

This work will therefore look into the fascinating world of radicalization in the prison environment, in the hopes of identifying its flaws in order to improve them. First off, it will look at radicalization in general, the diverse theories and ideas behind the why, when, how and who's of the concept, to then apply it to the prison environment, to show how in fact the current conditions in prison environment (overcrowding, understaffing and the ensuing problems these entail) enhance many of the factors of radicalization. The final objective is to be able to look at new practices of deradicalization and disengagement and how they could be applied to the penitentiary system.

2. RESEARCH AIMS

- The final objective of this work is to see to what extent prisons are environments of radicalization and how to deradicalize the prison environment.
- this work will build on different studies and look at the wide array of theories available in order to try and explain the why's and the how's of radicalization.
- Look at how the various factors involved in radicalization process come together in the prison environment. The purpose here is to see how the paths to radicalization are made more accessible or visible in the prison environment, and how other forces intrinsic to the penitentiary system might affect the process of radicalization of inmates
- Once the forces at work in prisons have been identified, look to see how they can be neutralized.

3. QUESTIONS

In short, this work will try to answer the following questions:

- What is radicalization?
- What is the difference between radicalization, extremism and terrorism?

- Why do individuals radicalize and how does radicalization take place?
- Which conditions and factors of the penitentiary affect radicalization? and
- How and what deradicalization programs and techniques can be put in place to diffuse the radicalization forces at play in the penitentiary system?

4. HYPOTHESIS

This work will delve into the penitentiary system and how it currently affects radicalization patterns in the West. Prisons are neither the only environment where radicalization is taken place, nor are they the most surprising, taking into account the very nature of the prison system and the fact that it is a milieu of hostility and vulnerability where criminals, terrorists and possible recruits come together. This is not to say that it is not an issue, on the contrary, the potential of the current system of creating active violent extremists is higher than ever, even if only because of the increase in the number of convicted terrorists serving time in Western prisons, and because of the expected increase in these numbers in the coming months. However, prisons, this work will try to show, can in fact be used as environments of deradicalization, if, the environment and conditions in prisons are improved. What allows for radicalization to propagate in the prison environment, more than the presence of terrorists who act as proselytizers, are the bad conditions for prisoners. Overcrowding, understaffing, lack of services and rehabilitation programs have made Western prisons vulnerable to radicalization of its inmates; understaffing and overcrowding allows for charismatic leaders to flourish unnoticed, as correct and early detection of proselytizing depends on the quantity and quality of staff. So, as it will be shown, successful deradicalization techniques need to tackle these issues, for prisons to become deradicalization enclaves, with special importance being paid to the role of prison imams as charismatic leaders the penal institutions can use to counter the influence of proselytizers. Despite these findings, by looking into the Spanish deradicalization programs and strategies are still lacking in this area, the preference of securitization over deradicalization techniques that favour the role of imams and prison authorities will not enable successful deradicalization.

5. THE STATE OF ART

Since 9/11 terrorism has taken centre stage in what national security is concerned. After waging a war on terror – a failed one at that – we have come to realize that security issues needed a reconceptualization in order to be able to come up with more successful counter measures. It is since then that the concept of radicalization has increasingly come up, linked to terrorism, extremism and in general violence against Western societies. Before this point, radicalization referred nearly exclusively to those political radicals, anti-status quo individuals, and connoted political activism, many heroic “rebels” having been considered radicals. It is the new meaning of radicalization, that linked to current security issues and terrorism that this work will concentrate on (Mellón, et al., 2015). In reality, the final objective of national security is to tackle terrorism, however, time and past failures have taught us that attacking terrorism in itself is not easy or even possible, which has ultimately taken us back to radicalization and extremism, more concrete possibly than terrorism as an enemy against which to fight.

In fact, the subjects of radicalization, extremism and violence are very much in vogue and numerous studies have looked into these concepts. The vast majority of these have approached the subject from a theoretical perspective, concentrating on the individual and the motivations individuals might hold in order to radicalize. Mohammed Hafez and Creighton Mullins (2015) do exactly that in their own study of the issue, and ask “Why and how do individuals residing in relatively peaceful and affluent Western societies come to embrace extremist ideologies that emanate from distant places?” (p. 958). In the same way, Phil Gurski (2017), in his book on Western Foreign Fighters seeks to understand and explain why people in general radicalize to violence, and more specifically why Western citizens decide to enlist in wars outside their own countries. Many experts have in this same line of thought carried out research into the psychological and sociological aspects of individual motivations to radicalize.

Randy Borum and Robert Fein's (2017) research into "the psychology of foreign fighters" is very enlightening and provides a very sound analysis of the motivations of the issue of radicalization. The authors explain that motivations are made up of both "push" and "pull factors", that might be born internally or from external encouragement, which come together and influence the individual in unique ways, which is why motivations (the "whys" of radicalization") are so varied (p. 250). As they put it, while one individual might join the fight to defend their community (not necessarily one which is based on nationality), others might feel more strongly motivated to defend a "cause" or an ideology (including religious ideas), whilst what attracts others is not fighting for someone but against a particular group (p. 251). Tomas Precht's (2007) three-part motivational structure also hints at the complexity of radicalization as he suggests there are three different levels of influential factors at play: background factors (include personal factors, identity search, lack of belonging); trigger factors (which refer to people, mentor, a charismatic leader, and events that might provoke the individual); and opportunity factors (which include the degree of exposure to the grievances fuelling a conflict or to the people involved in it, referring to both virtual (internet) and physical (religious institutions, penal institutions...) spheres) (p. 38). In this case it is the coming together of these three categories that might lead to radicalization, as the existence of just one of them is not enough to push an individual to radicalization (Borum, 2011).

Another author, Anthony Vinci (2006), divides the wide array of motivations into four main groups: loyalty (to a community the individual identifies with); self-help (for one's own survival, or own benefit); economic incentives; and coercion (where one is psychological or physically manipulated into joining the cause) (p. 52). While Vinci's work refers to the motivations behind individuals becoming foreign fighters and joining an armed conflict, the psychology behind radicalization, even if the radicalized individual does not actively or physically participate or act on their radical ideas is still similar, and so Vinci's work remains relevant to the wider question of radicalization. Colonel "Matt" Venhaus (2010) conducted a very enlightening study on detained foreign fighters, carrying out interviews with them, their families and friends, and concluded that they were "all looking for something... they want to understand who they are, why they

matter, and what their role in the world should be” (p. 8). Venhaus refers to potential recruits as seekers, because of their search for meaning, and defines 4 main types of motivations: the revenge seeker (anger and frustration play an important role in this case); the status seeker (who needs recognition); the identity seeker (driven by the necessity to belong to something); the thrill seeker (attracted to the adventure and excitement) (2010, p. 8).

One of the most complete works in this regard is the two-part study “Radicalization into Violent Extremism” by Randy Borum (2011a). In the first part the author reviews many of the most accepted definitions of radicalization and extremism, and different theories that might help in the study of the subject (at least in its contextualization). The objective of the work is to understand the motivations and psychology of the individuals that enter into the process of Radicalization into Violent Extremism (RVE) as it is referred to, and in doing so understand the process in itself (Borum, 2011a). The second part of his study is more practical in its approach; building on the theoretical framework established in the first part, the author goes on to look at conceptual models of radicalization (his four-stage model of the terrorist mindset; Moghaddam's Staircase to Terrorism; NYPD's model of “jihadization) that try to explain how individual motivations are put into practice, the steps or stages separating radicalization, extremism and terrorism, in order to create more effective counter radicalization initiatives (Borum, 2011).

This second study is more in line with new ideas about radicalization. The why part of the question is too complicated to answer in a simple, clear-cut way that might help policy makers, as the individual factor is too difficult to predict and simply too varied. New studies have preferred therefore to look at ways in which the individuals have actually radicalized, once they have passed the initial phase in which their belief system and values change. Meaning, that although the cognitive aspect of radicalization is the first step, i.e. adhere to radical belief systems (ones that believe in the need for the complete overturn of the present system for their own preferred one), it is the behavioral aspect of radicalization that is more worrying. As many experts have come

to conclude, holding radical ideas is not illegal, especially in the case of the Muslim faith, were not only orthodox and fundamentalists, but simply very religious men and women who might interpret the Koran rigorously will believe in the superiority of the Sharia to Western political and legal systems, and will ultimately believe the world would be better off under said Islamic system. However, the fact that they adhere to such beliefs is not a problem, as long as they do not act on them, use violence or intimidation to obtain their political objectives. There lies the difference between cognitive and behavioural radicalization: both a “prerequisite” but with very different implications. It is in this area of behavioural radicalization in which many works have begun to concentrate on emphasizing the role of the environment, networks and kinship ties, social and political context as enablers of behavioral radicalization, giving more clues as to how individuals really do radicalize into violent extremism (Hafez & Mullins, 2015, p. 961).

On what prison radicalization is concerned, there are diverse studies, although less than those devoted to radicalization in general, that have looked into the penitentiary system and the contributing factors that enable radicalization to take place in prison. One of the most complete works is that by Mark S. Hamm “The spectacular few” (2013). In this book Hamm covers not only a brief history of radicalization, some possible definitions for the concept and an overview of the history of Islam in prisons, but takes the research further and compares various prisons, their conditions (services provided for prisoners, their gang subculture, the relation between religion and prisoners..), their radicalization data to conclude that what enhances radicalization in the prison setting are the conditions of confinement. Another very interesting study is that by Basra and Neuman called “Criminal Pasts, Terrorist Futures: European Jihadists and the New Crime-Terror Nexus” (2016), where they explore the relation between petty criminals and terrorist groups, concluding that there is a crime-terror convergence taking place, were criminals and terrorists feed of each other and complement each other to become more effective. One of the biggest implications of this study is the role of prisons as the environment where criminals and terrorists meet, where their networks are created and where crime and terrorism come into contact.

The role of prisons as either an environment where radicalization is seen, or even as a contributing factor to radicalization is present in many other studies. Imran Awan (Awan, 2013), Salim Yaacoub (2018) and Farhad Khosrokhavar (2013) carry out individual research into the prison environment and present the specific cases of Britain, Britain and Lebanon (comparison) and France respectively. In their works the ideas presented by Hamm about conditions of confinement come up again, presented in the debate about models of confinement (segregation, partial segregation) and their effects on radicalization. Khosrokhavar (2013) in his analysis of French prisons also very interestingly brings up the issue of French *laïcité*, and how the very strict imposing of *laïcité* values (which especially affects Muslim prisoners in their religious practices) contributes to the proneness of prisoners to radicalize.

This being said, whilst a lot of literature covers the theoretical and conceptual basis for the concept of radicalization, and other linked or related concepts, they all conclude that there needs to be further research into the subject, and more specifically into deradicalization and disengagement. In the same way, the studies that look into radicalization in the more specific prison environment, as enlightening as they are, do not propose clear ideas or policies for deradicalizing prisoners, or for prevention of further radicalization. This is one of the greatest gaps in the available research, which comes as no surprise taking into account it is the most complicated part of the whole issue, as proposing theories, frameworks, models and analyzing radicalization data, despite the complications they might entail, remain in a way abstract and part of the realm of the ideas. However, proposing policy changes, specific programs or initiatives leaves the abstract to become concrete making it an infinitely more complicated task. Radicalization and deradicalization as concepts in themselves, are still at very early stages of study, interest in the whole subject having only recently been sparked up. It is nevertheless positive to note that studies into radicalization have begun to leave the theoretical aspects behind to concentrate on more practical issues describing the possible paths through which individuals radicalize into violent extremism. Without a window into the minds of individuals, deciphering what motivates them is impossible, we can guess, create stereotypes that might help us in the guessing, but we will have nothing more than

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: RADICALIZATION, PROCESS DYNAMICS AND SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

I. DEFINITIONS OF RADICALIZATION

The first order of business is to try and define what radicalization in itself is. There are various theoretical and empirical studies that address the concept of radicalization, what it is, what it entails, as well as the how, who and when of the subject matter. The main use in trying to define radicalism, radicalization and other connected concepts is to improve the efforts to counter violent extremism. Radicalization, or radicalization into violent extremism, as it can more specifically be referred to, has been considered in recent years as one of the biggest security threats faced by the Western nations, and the hope of radicalism and radicalization experts and researchers is that in defining the whys and the hows new answers will come up as to how to put an end to radicalization. The simplest most basic definition of radicalization is as the process by which an individual comes to embrace radical or extreme ideas (Hafez & Mullins, 2015, p. 960). Neuman (Neumann, 2010) builds on this simple definition and describes extremism as "political ideologies that oppose a society's core values and principles [...] could be applied to any ideology that advocates racial or religious supremacy and/or opposes the core principles of democracy and universal human rights." (p. 12). So, it can be said that a radical is the individual who holds extreme ideas that seek to change the social order or core values of a given society.

Different national institutions from various countries have been pushed to define these concepts too, mainly to be able to design counter extremism policies. For example, the Dutch Security Service defines radicalization as: "Growing readiness to pursue and/or support—if necessary, by undemocratic means—far-reaching changes in society that conflict with, or pose a threat to, the democratic order" (Borum, 2011a, p. 12). The Danish Intelligence Service similarly mentions the increasing extent to which an individual accepts alternative (as in undemocratic or violent) means of pursuing political or ideological objectives but goes further and adds the idea of terrorism as one of these "undemocratic and violent" ways in which radicalization can show itself (Borum, 2011a,

p. 12). The U.K.'s Home Office also includes the terrorism nuance and defines radicalization as, "the process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, then to join terrorist groups" (Borum, 2011a, p. 12) Apart from official institutions, many authors have come up with their own definition of the concepts, theirs being more specific and theoretical definitions. McCauley and Moskalkenko (2008) give more importance to the group dynamic and define radicalization as "Increasing extremity of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in directions that increasingly justify intergroup violence and demand sacrifice in defense of the ingroup." (p. 416) Another very interesting definition is that proposed by Wilner and Dubouloz, who state, "Radicalization is a personal process in which individuals adopt extreme political, social, and/or religious ideals and aspirations, and where the attainment of particular goals justifies the use of indiscriminate violence. It is both a mental and emotional process that prepares and motivates an individual to pursue violent behavior," (Wilner & Dubouloz in Borum, 2011a, p. 13) which includes the individual factor of the process as the main trigger to radicalization, as well as the cognitive and behavioural aspect of what the individual internally goes through during their radicalization.

From the literature available there are some common denominators to most radicalization definitions which Veldhuis and Staun (in Borum, 2011a) summarise as:

Definitions of radicalisation most often centre around two different foci: (1) on violent radicalisation, where emphasis is put on the active pursuit or acceptance of the use of violence to attain the stated goal, and (2) on a broader sense of radicalisation, where emphasis is placed on the active pursuit or acceptance of far-reaching changes in society, which may or may not constitute a danger to democracy and may or may not involve the threat of or use of violence to attain the stated goals. (p. 12)

Recurring ideas are that of a process through which (normally) an individual goes through (although they might be started on the process, or encouraged on their way by external factors or individuals, it is a mental and behavioural transformation they go through themselves), by the end of which he/she embraces extreme or radical ideas that go against the existing values of the given society. Violence is another recurring

theme when talking about radicalization, which is important to clarify that it is not, however, a prerequisite for complete radicalization, meaning, that embracing radical or extreme worldviews or ideologies does not mean violence will ensue. Stevens and Neuman (2009) reference to this distinction by stating "some authors refer to 'violent radicalization' in order to emphasize the violent outcome and distinguish the process from non-violent forms of 'radical' thinking." (p. 10) In short, most radicals are not terrorists, or do not actively participate in violent acts, and interestingly, many terrorists are not especially ideologically driven whatever it might seem.

As it can be seen, there are many nuances surrounding the topic of radicalization, especially in what violence, extremism and terrorism are concerned, and it is necessary to differentiate such concepts which are often confused or are incorrectly used as synonyms. From the definitions above we can understand radicalization as a process that may, or may not, end with the individual (or group) taking part in violent acts, and in order to better understand the nuances of the concept it is useful to look at the different "stages" of characterization: the individual or group being radicalized must first abandon moderate cognitive frameworks to start adopting intransigent positions; then they will proceed to admit undemocratic factors as legitimate; begin to sympathise with the cardinal concepts of the proselytizing organization; go from sympathiser to believer; become an activist of the organization; disregard legal inhibitions; support the organization in their ideas and methods; finally consider terrorist action as legitimate (Mellón, et al., 2015). So, as it can be seen, there are levels or stages within the concept of radicalization, from which different categories can be determined: extremism, activist extremism, violent activist extremism and terrorism. In this line of thought, it is important to clarify that having radical ideas is not a crime, and the vast majority of people who adhere to radical ideologies will not perpetrate violent acts to achieve their objectives. Most radicals do not engage in terrorism, and many terrorists did not (and do not) "radicalize" in any traditional sense. This difference between cognitive and behavioural radicalization can be set as the frontier between being a radical and an extremist, if we understand extremism to imply the adherence of a concrete doctrinal corpus that is characterized by inflexibility and intransigence towards others (basically creating a fundamental binary division between "us" and "them") (Mellón, et al., 2015).

Once the individual or group completely accepts the group's vision and ideology and is prepared to carry out illegal activities to achieve political gains, we are talking about activist extremism, which in its turn becomes violent extremism when the use of force and intimidation comes into play, leading to terrorism. This work will concern itself with the process in general but more specifically with the idea of radicalization into violent extremism (RVE) (Mellón, et al., 2015) (Borum, 2011a), as radicalization becomes evident when the radicalized individual has passed the cognitive stage and entered the behavioural aspect of the question. By concentrating on individuals who have shown indications of violent extremism (either by belonging to an ideologically extreme group or by taking part in the planning of carrying out of a violent act) we eliminate certain prejudices and generalizations.

Although clarifying such nuances or specifications might seem trifle in the bigger picture, it is of utmost importance to call each thing by its name, as, only when we have identified what we are "fighting against", will we be able to design successful policies to counter these forces. This is why fighting "radicals" might be a lost cause from the start: many Sunni Muslims, or from other branches of Islam, that interpret the Koran in a strict way, that are rigorous in the practice of religion, or that are simply orthodox in their take on Islam will fit the category of "radicals" from the Western perspective, as they will ultimately believe in the superiority of the Islamic system, and they will govern their lives based on the principles of the Sharia and the traditions established through the example set by the Prophet (Hadiths) (García, 1994). Without wanting to enter into a complete description of the religion in itself, it is undeniable that Islam has a socio-political component that other religions do not have: Islam is religion, culture and civilization, and from its texts Muslims gather the norms that will govern not only their spiritual life, but also their family, social and political lives, both for the individual and the ummah as a whole (García, 1994). Islam is therefore *din* (concerned with religious precepts, god's law), *dunya* (concerned with material life and daily matters that do not depend on the Koran or the *Hadiths*) and *dawla* (meaning dynasty, sometimes nation), which is why it can be difficult to separate the aspects of political Islam, with those concerned with the actual faith, which only makes the definition of radical, extremist and terrorists an ever more complicated task (García, 1994, p. 87).

Another important specification that has to be understood is that radicalization can refer to any ideology, not exclusively to Radical Islamism. In recent years the terms terrorism and radicalism/radicalization have been used as synonyms of radical or violent Islamism, hearing the word 'terrorist' immediately conjuring images of bombing by bearded individuals shouting the all too known phrase "*Allahu Akbar*". It is true that Jihadist terrorism and Radical/Violent Islamism are currently security issues, and it is what this work will focus on (radicalization into extremist Islamism), however it is important to understand not all radicals adhere to radical Islamism and that not all fundamentalists or orthodox Islamists are terrorists. Radicalization can take place in all societies and cultures and in many ideologies, including non-Muslim ones. Such nuances are important to have in mind in order to move away from sweeping generalizations that have in the past created resentment and animosity between people. What is more, many experts agree that more often than not RVE is not particularly religiously driven; to start with rather than religion, ideology (the narrative created to surround and give global meaning to religious precepts) is a factor in RVE; also, religious beliefs are only one factor affecting the individual (micro level) in the process towards RVE, the process however is dependent on many other factors coming together at meso and macro level.

II. MOTIVATIONS TO RADICALIZE

Having defined what radicalization is the next step is to try and identify why individuals radicalize, what motivates them to embrace extremism and, in some cases, perpetrate acts of terrorism. There are no simple answers to these questions, as the individual factor in radicalization is too important and too difficult to generalize. Some of the possible answers are an individual's background (family tensions, rough childhood, lack of education...), their grievances towards their country (due to perceived racism, their foreign policy, unmet expectations), their economic situation (unemployment, lack of opportunities for improvement...), mental or health problems... more often than not the answer is made up of a combination of some or all of these factors that make up the 'why' of the radicalization question. The wide spectrum of individual motivations can be

described as “push” and “pull” factors that are either born internally or from external encouragement, that are put together in unique ways in each case, and which, therefore, rarely answer to predictive models (James Brandon in Hamm, 2013, pág. 53) (JMISC in Borum, 2011, p. 44). Whilst one individual might feel a strong connection to an ideology or a cause, others might find themselves attracted to a community, their identity within the community (not necessarily defined along national lines), and others will radicalize against a particular group, rather than in pro of another.

In analysing the motivations to radicalize it is useful to think of influential factors being divided into different levels. One possible division is in background factors, trigger factors and opportunity factors (Precht, 2007). Background factors include identity or lack thereof in the sense of an identity search because of a lack of belonging. Trigger factors can be events or persons, like mentors, which provoke the individual into changing their cognitive perspective. Finally, opportunity factors are those that expose the individual to the wider ideology they are joining, to the members of the group, to the collective grievances that fuel them, and might be virtual or physical settings (the penitentiary system being a physical opportunity factor in this case) (Precht, 2007). Another possible division of motivations is into micro, meso and macro levels. The micro level describes the individual’s feelings of alienation, discrimination or identity crisis for example; the meso level refers to networks and kinship ties that act as enhancers; the macro level is constituted by the socio-political and economic conditions present (Jordán, 2009). All these levels are needed for a complete RVE. In other words, and as it was mentioned in the previous section, a conversion into fundamentalist beliefs (which would constitute a micro level factor) is not enough to become radicalized, it would need of the influence of networks or charismatic leaders that help in the proselytization of the individual, the group in which the individual is radicalized into will have an overarching narrative or ideology that feeds on macro factors such as foreign policy events, that in their turn legitimize the micro and meso factors (Mellón, et al., 2015) (Jordán, 2009). This is why self-radicalization is not only rare but rather quite impossible, as external influences, even if originating from virtual places, are key in the process as a whole.

From the literature available, it can be established that the “prerequisites” involved in radicalization (although these are tentative as this is not a strict science), are individual grievances and identity crisis, networks and charismatic leaders, an ideology that serves to frame the process and enabling environments that allow for individuals to come into contact with networks or other individuals who will sell them on their ideology or narrative (this being a radical or extreme one clearly) (Hafez & Mullins, 2015) (Mulcahy, Merrington, & Bell, 2013). All these factors will come together in very different ways, depending on the importance given to each one by the individual. Answering the question of why individuals would radicalize can therefore be compared to putting together a complicated jigsaw without the representative image that lets us know how the pieces come together. Put simply, we have the pieces (the factors) of the puzzle, but do not know how to put them together, or if there is just one way in which they will fit, as the puzzle can also be put together, using the same pieces, into different shapes, here lies the puzzle of radicalization (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). This inevitably complicates the matter further for policy makers, as creating systems to predict why and how radicalization is taking place today, when one only has the motivational factors that could, to some extent form part of the equation is a daunting task.

III. THEORIES AND SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

As it can be seen from the above brief overview of just some of the definitions and motivations studies available, there are many factors coming together in trying to come up with the answer to the question of why radicalization is taking place. For that reason, many experts have concentrated on the hows. Looking at the “pathways to radicalization” might prove more fruitful, in the sense that one might even obtain some answers, and possibly shed some light on the more daunting task of answering the why part of this question.

Radicalization is therefore not seen as the consequence of a single decision, but as “the end result of a dialectical process that gradually pushes an individual towards a commitment to violence over time” (Borum, 2015, p. 67). The key question guiding the research of those experts concentrating not on the motivations but on the pathways into radicalization is to decipher how people come to adopt these radical ideologies, and

how they transform the ideas into imperatives for violence or action in the name of said ideologies. Therefore, in their efforts to try and explain how exactly the factors involved in the dynamics of radicalization come together some experts have tried to give the radicalization dilemma a more practical approach and have tried to see it through the use of different existing theoretical frameworks. One such framework is the Social Movement Theory (SMT), which is centred around the survival of the group or movement (Borum, 2011a). Klandermans and Oegema (in Borum, 2011, p. 17), suggest that in order to survive any social movement must: achieve mobilizing potential; form and motivate recruitment networks; arouse motivation to participate; and remove barriers to participate. In relation to the concept of radicalization, it would be recruiters who are charged with the task of the survival of the cause and they act as “rational prospectors” who might identify and gather information about possible recruits, and ultimately convince them to join the movement, which is related to the idea that although radicalization is an internal process, it is many times encouraged by other individuals (usually charismatic leaders) that set them in the path to radicalization (Borum, 2011a). The use of SMT, and looking at Radical Islamism as a social movement of global scale, allows for a different conceptualization of the issue of radicalization, as Borum (2011a) puts it:

First, it provides the framework of "mobilization potential" to consider the process by which a movement's human resources are developed [...] Second, it offers the notion of "recruitment networks," with some historical guidance for navigating the processes by which those networks are formed and motivated. Third, it offers the mechanism of "frame alignment" to explain how the networks shape members' beliefs and sentiments to best serve the interest of the group or movement. Fourth, it points out the importance in understanding radicalization of not only analyzing incentives and grievances, but also how groups effectively identify and remove barriers to participation. (p. 20)

Framing Theory, a branch of SMT is a very interesting contribution when talking about radicalization as its focus is to “construct, produce, and disseminate meaning [...] attempt to frame messages in ways that will best resonate with the interests, attitudes, and beliefs of its potential constituency” (Borum, 2011a, p. 18), what could be

considered as the “marketing strategy” of the social movement. In the case of radicalization, it is the ideology behind the movement, how they try to justify in many cases their political objectives by framing their cause as part of a broader ideological fight. The success of the movement will depend on how well they are able to align the individual’s interests and ideas with those of the organizations. Framing theory comes in handy when explaining the difference between the Islamic faith practiced by the majority of the Muslim population globally, and the one being “sold” as real to prospective radicals: framing is a very subjective process based on strategic choices on the part of those creating the narrative they want their adherents to believe (Borum, 2011a), and it is undoubtedly a very powerful tool, that if used successfully (as so many radical or extremist ideologies have) can convince many of their own made-up reality. This is what is being seen today in the way that ISIS, as its predecessor Al-Qaeda did, chooses the symbols, passages of the Quran and traditions of the Islamic faith which suit their own agenda in order to further radicalize and enhance the commitment of their followers to their cause (Hamm, 2013).

Other schools of thought also offer different approaches to the concept of radicalization. Social Psychology sheds some light on the group dynamics of terrorist collectives (groups that have become radicalized and have passed to violent action) (Borum, 2011a). Group dynamics, as social psychology shows, cultivate extreme attitudes (there is “group polarization”) as in their search for consensus the more moderate segments of a group are left behind; decision making in groups is often more biased and less rational, as the need to reach consensus might be put before making the right decision; group dynamics also make individuals feel less responsible for “group” actions, which makes them more acceptant of more extreme actions; the “in-group/out-group bias” that makes group members see in-group behaviour as more positive than they probably are (McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2008). All of this will gain renewed importance in situations of group isolation, where “group cohesiveness and perceived interdependence increase, which also enhances member compliance”, of special relevance in the penitentiary system context as it will be presented in future sections (McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2008, p. 421).

Conversion Theory also proves very insightful of the individual's ideas and beliefs and how they transform ("conversion"), in reference to religious sociology and psychology. Lewis Rambo's (in Borum, 2011) seven-component model (where each phase or facet is cumulative, rather than linear, and can recursively affect the others), provides a very useful model in looking at individual transformative processes. This model comprises the *context* (environmental factors operating throughout the whole process); *crisis* (personal or social disruption); *quest* (often precipitates by a crisis, which involves seeking to restore equilibrium); *encounter* (when the individual and a spiritual option or its proponent come into contact); *interaction* (exchanges of information and furthering contact between the seeker and the proponent); *commitment* (first the demonstration of faithfulness to the religion and second a public statement that solidifies the person's membership to the movement); finally, *consequences* (of the actions and decisions made in the service of the belief) (p. 23). As it will be explored in the following sections, conversion theory is also very relevant to the penitentiary system, as a conversion to more radical ideologies (not necessarily from another faith, or in any particular ideology, just embracing more extreme views) is also one of the pathways to radicalization that is most seen in the prison setting. All these theories will come back in the next sections, in relation to radicalization patterns in the prison environment in order to explain the specificity of the pathway to radicalization in this milieu.

7. ANALYSIS

I. RADICALIZATION IN PRISONS

From what has been explained in the previous section about radicalization, it can be gathered that the path to radicalization is a “bumpy one”, that entails (in most, if not all cases), a crisis or turning point in an individual who in his search for meaning will eventually, through coming into contact with various push and pull factors, including contact with radicals, will turn into the road to radicalization, which slowly but surely will in a few cases lead to violence and or terrorism. Prisons are one of many social environments where all these “conditions” are met; the factors that contribute to radicalization (identity crisis, grievances, vulnerability, charismatic leaders, networks...) are all present in the prison environment (Basra & Neumann, 2016) (Mulcahy, Merrington, & Bell, 2013). The conditions of confinement, isolation, the presence of gangs and other dangers, the networks forged with other criminals, are all contributing factors to the microcosm of prisons, as well as to the dynamics of radicalization (Mulcahy, Merrington, & Bell, 2013).

As previously discussed, the common denominators, or the stages, involved in RVE are an identity or crisis of some sort that forces a “turning point” or “cognitive opening” on the individual, who then turns to religion – Islam in this case – or Islamic belief systems to find a new identity, which will then be reinforced (the identity) through socialization processes and creation of networks and ties with like-minded individuals (Wiktorowicz, 2005). Entering prison is a turning point or crisis in itself, as Basra and Neuman (2016) point out, “prisons are places in which new inmates are mentally and physically vulnerable, and where they experience ‘cognitive openings’—the willingness and desire to identify with new ideas, beliefs, and social groups” (p. 30). On top of it, prisons are more often than not hostile environments, with dangerous gang subcultures and divisions amongst inmates, which add to the vulnerability and crisis faced by new inmates.

Mulcahy et al., (2013) explain this first moment of “cognitive opening” in the following way:

When an individual goes through some sort of crisis (known as the transformative trigger), the individual uses pre-existing habits to make sense of the event. [...] (The individual) reacts to the meaning distortion by exploring new experiences and undergoing critical reflection (e.g. turning to religion for guidance). [...] Eventually a point is reached whereby the individual comes to the realisation that their old identity no longer exists and a new one must be established. Therefore, when radicalised individuals socialise and are validated by other 'like-minded' individuals, their transformation is reinforced, and the new identity is strengthened. (p. 7)

Religion evidently holds a central position when looking into the radicalization of prisoners into radical or violent Islamism. It comes as no surprise that when looking for meaning, or a change in beliefs system, inmates will turn to religion for solace, identity seeking, or even safety networks (Mulcahy, Merrington, & Bell, 2013) (Basra & Neumann, 2016). As seen in the previous section, Conversion Theory is very relevant to this topic, in its proposal that after a crisis comes the encounter with a “spiritual option”, the commitment to which will grow as the interactions with similar-minded people increase (Borum, 2011a, p. 23). In fact, it has been noted that most radicalized prisoners entered prison without any strong Islamic conviction, many of which converted in prison or became more religious as prisoners (in the case of those who declared themselves as Muslims already). To be clear when referring to converts in this work it is not only to non-Muslims who become Muslims in prisons, but also to those who though Muslim in theory they did not follow the religious precepts in reality, and who espoused the religion truly during imprisonment (Hamm, 2013, p. 116). This is what is known as “authentic conversions” which are defined as real and transcendental human transformations involving the “displacement of one universe of discourse by another or the ascendance of a formerly peripheral universe of discourse to the status of primary authority” (Snow & Machalek, 1984, p. 170) and which take place when the individuals become “penitent and then attempt to redirect the focus of their lives” (Hamm, 2013, p. 117). However, it is also important to note that, as previously stated, conversion does

not imply radicalization; religiosity or becoming more pious and strict in one's interpretation of religion does not mean they are radicals or jihadists, and should not at any point be confused.

Islam is in fact the religion to which most prisoners turn to. Roughly 80% of prisoners in the United States turn to the Muslim faith, which translates into approximately 30,000 converts a year (Mulcahy, Merrington, & Bell, 2013, p. 5). This trend is also seen in European countries, namely France and the United Kingdom (where the Muslim population is already a large proportion of the national demographic), what is more Islam has become the fastest growing religion among prisoners in Europe and North America (Hamm, 2013, p. 43). However, several studies point to the beneficial role of religion in prison security and rehabilitation, and it has been found that "as religion intensified prison disciplinary infractions declined" (Mulcahy, Merrington, & Bell, 2013, p. 7). Islam in many cases is a very positive force "because the Muslim influence can encourage people to get their lives together, to get off drink or drugs to learn self-discipline" (in Hamm, 2013, p. 48). In a way it offers structure and a sense of identity in the way that "the Islamic work ethic values self-discipline and the productive use of each period of the day" (Hamm, 2013, p. 48). Islam, or more specifically conversion to Islam (or becoming more religious within the Muslim faith), is neither dangerous nor unimportant – conversion does not imply radicalization, but it still brings individuals one step closer.

Whilst Islam in itself is not a negative factor or an indication of radicalization, it is used as a rallying force for radicalization by radical or extremist prisoners that serve as recruiters to vulnerable converts and inmates. As shown in the previous section, all theories of radicalization point to the role of the "recruiter", the "charismatic leader" or more generally the "kinship ties" as key elements in the path to radicalization; whilst the individual goes through the transformation individually, self-radicalization is rare and even more so in an environment as restrictive as are prisons. Most individuals look for validation of their new (Muslim) identity in like-minded people, Precht even considers mentors and charismatic individuals as the "trigger factors" needed to set individuals on

the path to radicalization (Precht, 2007). Using SMT it can be noted that the role of “rational prospectors” is key in the survival of the movement; even if we don’t consider radical Islamism as a social movement, it is clear that terrorist groups need recruits who will further their cause, and through the already radicalized charismatic individuals in prisons they are able to achieve just that, by carefully selecting and recruiting susceptible and vulnerable individuals (Borum, 2011a). Because of the scrutiny to which prisoners are subjected and the restrictive nature of the prison environment, proselytizing is usually carried on a one-to-one basis (Khosrokhavar, *Radicalization in Prison: The French Case*, 2013), allowing the recruiter and the recruited to form a bond of trust and even friendship. Recruiters because of their charisma are respected, in the case of convicted terrorist many are even looked up to by fellow radicals, and this image of prestige allows them to create a dissymmetrical relationship in which they hold the power and are able to brainwash more vulnerable or susceptible individuals. Networks are key in the process of radicalization as it is what gives the “seekers” of meaning and identity a support group, a sense of belonging, which in its turn strengthens their commitment to the cause (Basra & Neumann, 2016). In this way they are also able to foster group dynamics that will enhance the commitment to the cause and the closer the network is knit the higher the cost of leaving or not agreeing with the group (McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2008). As explored in the previous section, social psychology theories looking at group dynamics (even if small groups of 2 or 3) establish how within such social dynamics the individual is usually lost in the group, becoming one in the same with the rest, enhancing the chances of radicalization (McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2008). If there is anywhere where this stands to be true is in the prison environment, where survival sometimes (depending on the prison) depends on the belonging to a group.

It is through these networks that new recruits are presented with a specific version of radical Islam, which draws on their shared grievances and frustrations, enticing them to join into their radical aspirations. In this regard, there is a very interesting concept referring to the alignment between the psychology of many prisoners and the Radical Islamist ideology (or Prison Islam). Basra and Neumann (2016) refer to it as the new “crime-terror nexus” and describe it as a “a complete alignment between a group like

Islamic State and criminals who are attracted by its core counter-cultural message of redemption through strength, power, and violence” (p. 26). On one hand they explain that Islam can be considered a redemption narrative; inmates adhere to the faith in their search for forgiveness and redemption, which justifies their involvement in religion and jihadist group (they become convinced that the more zealous they are in their religiosity, the more sins they can redeem). In this way, the jihadist narrative, apart from a possible source of redemption, can also be used to legitimize crime. Jihadist narratives allow for the use of violence against the enemy, not only in the waging of jihad, but also in stealing, petty crime etc. influential clerics have come out and stated the necessity of stealing from the enemies in the *dar al-harb* (‘lands of war’ or non-Muslim lands) (Basra & Neumann, 2016). This situation is evidently very attractive to prisoners who by joining radical Islamist groups or groups that espouse jihadist narratives not only gain redemption from their sins, but they gain it through the use of violence and crime, meaning they do not have to change their behavior or reform the “old ways” that got them stuck in prison in the first place.

This “crime-terror nexus” has other implications too. Firstly, it involves a dangerous skill transfer from crime to terror that aids in the carrying out of the latter’s activities. Criminal pasts mean access to criminal networks of different sorts, that might facilitate their access to weapons, false documents and in general staying under the radar (Basra & Neumann, 2016). Hamm (2013) points to this same idea, as he states that whilst radicalization in itself does not translate into terrorist action, the possibility of terrorism ensuing is very much dependent on access to knowledge on how to pass to action. This also means access to financing from crime, usually drug money, as in the case of the Madrid train attacks in 2004 (its perpetrators were former criminals and partly financed their operations by selling drugs) (Basra & Neumann, 2016). Access to forged documentation also allowed the terrorists of the Charlie Hebdo attack to rent a van with which they fled. What is more, in an issue of *Dar al-Islam* (the French language magazine of ISIS) they even advised their operatives to conceal their religiosity when going to buy weapons and to look like a “jeune de cité” (a petty criminal from the ghettos basically), which as the authors point is not too hard taking into account many of their new recruits

form prisons are exactly that (Basra & Neumann, 2016, p. 32). Another important implication of this new convergence of crime and terror is that new recruits, because of their criminal pasts, have familiarity with violence, which “lowers their (psychological) threshold for becoming involved in terrorist acts” (p. 33), making them even more dangerous than regular terrorists, or at least more prone to violence in the case of a complete radicalization.

Prisons are therefore the physical spaces where criminal and terrorist milieus (their networks, environments and members) have converged in an unprecedented way, “creating (often unintended) synergies and overlaps that have consequences for how individuals radicalize and operate” (Basra & Neumann, 2016, p. 26). At the same time, the profile of radicalized prisoners is also changing, many being from similar backgrounds, usually European ghettos, second generation immigrants, frustrated because of their lack of possibilities, that have therefore turned to crime and who have inevitably ended up in prison, where they have forged networks with like-minded inmates, and have become part of the jihadist counter-culture narrative as a channel for their frustration and grievances against their situation, the West, their predicament...the prison environment then takes care of setting them on the path to radicalization, aided by the matured and charismatic radicals who they encounter in prison (Khosrokhavar, *Radicalization in Prison: The French Case*, 2013).

Evidence of terrorists and foreign fighters having criminal pasts also points to this fact. Recent information on European jihadists show chilling evidence of the increasing problem faced by Western nations in regard to the prevalence of criminal pasts amongst foreign fighters and jihadists involved in terrorist plots from European descent.

German Federal Police stated that of the 669 German foreign fighters about whom they had sufficient information, two-thirds had police records prior to travelling to Syria, and one-third had criminal convictions. The Belgian Federal Prosecutor said that approximately half of his country’s jihadists had criminal records prior to leaving for Syria. A United Nations report suggests a similar pattern amongst French foreign fighters. Officials from Norway and the Netherlands told us that ‘at least 60 per cent’ of their countries’ jihadists had previously been involved in crime. (Basra & Neumann, 2016, p. 25)

On top of this, other more specific cases are the Madrid train attacks that were planned by Jamal 'el Chino', who not only radicalized after a long history of ins-and-outs of prison, but who got help from four other inmates, and financed the whole operation by selling drugs (Hamm, 2013). Kalid Kelkal, another radicalized prisoner went on to murder a moderate imam in Paris, and to plot an attack on a train from Paris to Lyon, after being recruited by an Algerian terrorist group (Neumann, 2010). Another more recent example is that of Chérif Kouachi and Amedy Coulibaly, the first an ordinary criminal, the latter an extremist, who formed a lasting friendship during the months spent together at Fleury-Mérogis prison in France, who after their release carried out the Charlie Hebdo attack in January 2015 (Basra & Neumann, 2016). It is clear that the role of prison cannot be ignored. As seen above, the alignment between certain Muslim prison forces and the ideas of different terrorist groups, the relevance of prisons as enhancers or enablers of radicalization is undeniable.

It is safe to say therefore that the issue of prison radicalization is not all "hype and hysteria" as some experts have pointed out, and it is in fact grounded on specific cases (Hamm, 2013, p. 46). Another camp of experts have taken an "alarmist perspective" on the whole issue, basically stating that "Western prisons have become incubators for radical Islam and terrorist ideology" (Hamm, 2013, p. 46). For supporters of this view, every radicalized prisoner is a potential terrorist and therefore a threat to national security, and the root cause for radicalization is the fact that "Islam feeds on resentment and anger" (p. 46), very prevalent in most prisons. This work however does not agree with any of the previous stances on the issue and takes a more moderate view. That radicalization takes place in environments such as prisons comes as no surprise, the very nature of prison, the fact that they are hostile environments, where prisoners are in most cases forced into a crisis state, and where radicals abound, make radicalization very possible (Mulcahy, Merrington, & Bell, 2013) (Basra & Neumann, 2016). This being said, the fact that not all inmates become radicals during their confinement, and that prisoner radicalization is still low compared to radicalization in other environments, point to the fact that prisons are not intrinsically linked to radicalization, but rather, that under certain conditions radicalization might flourish. As this work will show, the

potential for radicalization in prison is there, however only when certain forces come together, under certain conditions will it grow. It is by identifying these conditions and learning how to neutralize these forces of radicalization that successful radicalization prevention and deradicalization will be achieved.

II. CONDITIONS THAT ENHANCE OR ENABLE RADICALIZATION IN PRISONS

Hamm's study into this very subject proves very enlightening: he compared the conditions and radicalization rates of two very similar prisons Folsom Prison and New Folsom prison, however, at New Folsom Prison a terrorist group, *Jamiyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh* (JIS) was formed by a group of convicts who used the release of two of its members to plan and nearly carry out a deadly attack on American soil (Hamm, 2013). Arguably, both prisons were basically the same, except in one a terrorist group was able to develop. Hamm concluded this was due to the difference in prison conditions between Folsom and New Folsom prisons, referring to a situation of overcrowding and understaffing. These conditions enhance the factors leading to radicalization: "badly run prisons make the detection of radicalization difficult, and they also create the physical and ideological space in which extremist recruiters can operate" (Neumann, 2010, p. 2). These conditions also lead to frustration amongst inmates, they "breed a desire in convicts to defy the authorities", (authorities which are not giving them what they need), leading to the creation of "identities of resistance" amongst inmates, the most defiant ones being looked up to by other prisoners (Hamm, 2013, p. 128). Many other studies have reached similar conclusions about (bad) conditions of incarceration being what leads to prisoner radicalization, namely overcrowding of prisons and understaffing.

One of the main consequences of overcrowding and understaffing in penitentiary facilities is the lack of attention paid to each prisoner. This is not only relevant in the supervision of prisoner activity by guards, which evidently decreases as the number of prisoners increases, but also, and more importantly, in the services provided to prisoners, namely in reference to religious guidance. In this respect, the lack, or insufficiency of chaplains is very much linked to the overcrowding and understaffing of

prisons. Chaplains play a fundamental role in establishing moderate religious views and a tradition of religious tolerance amongst inmates (Hamm, 2013) (Khosrokhavar, 2015). This is especially relevant in the case of Islam, as there is no authority equivalent to the papacy or priesthood, “and so matters of Koranic interpretation are left to the individual”, and therefore interpretations of the texts are a “matter of personal prerogative” (Hamm, 2013, p. 117). This means that when questions of interpretation come up Muslims have to turn to imams or leaders who can provide them with answers, and they will turn to those who they trust, as “believer’s first loyalty is to a teacher, not a system” (Hamm, 2013, p. 117). When there are no trustworthy chaplains (both from the perspective of the state and the individual) they become susceptible to the influence of other inmates, some of who will hold radical views. As Wiktorowicz explains (in Hamm, 2013, p. 118), individuals that do not have a sound “grounding in religion” (which is often the case for converts) are the most likely to be tempted to radical Islam. What is more, many Muslim prisoners that have been interviewed have little knowledge about Islam, and as a study points out “their lack of knowledge could lead them to being susceptible to radicalization” (Awan, 2013, p. 381). Although it might seem as a naïve response to extremism, the power of dialogue as a tool of deradicalization should not be underestimated

The role of imams is not only to give religious guidance, but it is also to forge those kinship ties that are so vital for prisoners going through an identity crisis or a conversion. Imams have the power to create their own moderate networks with Muslim prisoners, converts or long-time Muslims, who need a support system when they enter prison. Furthermore, as an Imam told the author, “trust is more important than anything”, (Hamm, 2013, p. 117) which relates to the importance of the influence networks and charismatic leaders on vulnerable inmates. As it has been previously discussed networks are one of (if not the most) influential factors in radicalization processes, as it is through group dynamics and socialization with like-minded individuals that converts and vulnerable Muslim prisoners find solace and protection, and on the other hand it is the technique used by proselytizers to attract and recruit new members into their extreme ideologies. It seems only logical that avoiding the establishment of gangs or creation of

strong ties between extremists and vulnerable prisoners is key in preventing radicalization, and creating alternative positive influences in the prison environment, through the use of religious chaplains or charismatic religious leaders is one way of doing so (Awan, 2013, p. 372). A study carried out by Quilliam (Manning & La Bau, 2015)(a counter-extremism think tank) points to the importance of counter-messaging and moderate dialogue in the process of undermining extremist ideologies. Their study of ten former-extremist individuals (some belonging to far-right ideologies and some to Islamist extremism) and their journey to deradicalization shows how in all cases the access to moderate ideologies from respected individuals was key in their disengagement from extremism. The former Islamist participants in the study stated that it was the ability of the speaker (the individual who acted as a support figure in their deradicalization) “to undermine the foundations of the extremist narrative through a theological lens, which encouraged them to reflect and challenge their extremist ideology” (Manning & La Bau, 2015, p. 24). Feelings of isolation, fear, perceived discrimination or exclusion are strong factors that might prevent individuals from leaving extremist groups and ideologies, especially in hostile environments such as prisons, which is why the role of charismatic leaders is key not only in the radicalization process, but also in the deradicalization process (Manning & La Bau, 2015).

It is important to note that deradicalization does not mean abandoning of religious ideas, on the contrary, it involves the promotion of moderate religiosity. Policies and programs of deradicalization have to establish this from the start, as deradicalization programs should not aim to decide which ideas are good or bad, or which religious practices should be followed or not. Therefore, as Awan (2013) puts it, “using religion and trained imams in prisons seems to be the way forward as it offers a real opportunity for disengagement from terrorism and can help prisoners” (Awan, 2013) in the sense that only by presenting prisoners with religious frameworks that are more flexible and tolerant than extreme belief systems will prisoners be able to fulfill their spiritual needs without becoming radicalized. In this same line it is necessary for prison professionals to be able to differentiate between “ legitimate expression of faith and extremist

ideologies”, in order to ensure they are not discriminating against Muslim prisoners because of their religious beliefs, and to make sure they are targeting the right ideologies, in this sense, the role of moderate imams and what they can teach prison workers is very much needed. If prisons are able to offer alternative religious doctrines to their vulnerable and radicalized inmates, doctrines which are backed by moderate leaders, and which help them in their balancing religion and social life in Western societies, they will be one step closer to ensuring that prisoners in search of new identities or undergoing a conversion will not turn to Islamist gangs or extremist groups.

This charismatic leadership is not exclusively carried out by imams or official chaplains and can be part of a grass-root movement, that can be even more successful amongst inmates. Going back to Hamm’s study of Folsom and New Folsom Prisons, he presents the Islamic Studies Program (ISP) established at Folsom Prison by one of their own inmates (Hamm, 2013). Akeem, the prisoner in question, is a charismatic religious leader that, in the face of insufficient chaplains and prison-provided services, seeks to train “other prisoner and teachers based upon what he call the “three R’s” – rehabilitation, repentance, and reform,” the results of which are impressive (Hamm, 2013, p. 151). The ISP demonstrates how ideology and relationships with charismatic leaders can curtail, rather than enhance, radicalization. Akeem is a respected leader, one to whom many converts turn to for guidance, and his presence and his program at Folsom have ensured religious tolerance and lower rates of radicalization; it is a perfect use of prisoners, as participants themselves, in the face of understaffing and overcrowding. It goes back to the importance of relationships of trust and leadership, as quintessential for radicalization, but as this work has to prove, also for deradicalization. In an interview given by Akeem, he made the following very enlightening statement:

The potential for radicalization is there, no doubt. But there is no one from the outside who will radicalize us. That can only happen from the inside. Maximum-security is more likely to produce radical prisoners because there is more violence in this environment [...]the potential for radicalization must be understood on a one-to-one basis [...] you must remember: Islam has always been shaped by the environment in which it is practiced. Prison is no different. As long as you can keep the environment right, you can avoid having radical Muslims. (Hamm, 2013, p. 156)

This statement by Akeem points to several interesting aspects of prisoner radicalization: i) that as suggested by the previous discussion the environment matters, and “keeping it right” is essential to radicalization prevention efforts, ii) that as already established, radicalization is carried out on a one-to-one basis, and so should deradicalization efforts. These concepts are however not present, or not as present, as they should be in many national strategies for prevention and counter-radicalization, as is the case of Spain, which will be briefly explored in the following section in comparison with other European countries.

III. SPECIFIC NATIONAL PREVENTION AND COUNTER-RADICALIZATION STRATEGIES

Spain, as a member of the EU, is in many areas subject to EU regulations, which is why a brief review of EU policy in matters of radicalization and deradicalization is in order. In 2005 the EU adopted the EU counter-terrorism strategy, which together with other support instruments constitutes EU policy on the matter. It has a four-pillar structure: prevention, protection, pursuit and response. It is the prevention priority of this strategy that concerns this work, as it is the pillar within which counter-radicalization is included, in the form of the *Revised EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism* (2014). In this document there is mention to the need of ensuring “that voices of mainstream opinion prevail over those of extremism” pointing to the important role of dialogue and counter-narratives in deradicalization techniques. However, barring a couple other mentions to the need to be able to hear moderate voices, the strategy appears lacking in the area of deradicalization of prison environments; it only mentions prisons as a place where more work should be done and does not specifically propose strategies including imams or charismatic individuals who might be able to bring the counter-narratives to prisons. It is true that the EU strategy is only a guideline for Member States who then will build their own counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization strategies at national levels, however, further recognition of the issue by the EU would surely go a long way in establishing new practices throughout European states.

From the information gathered in Table 1, it is safe to say that each state creates national strategies based on their own context and understanding of the issue, building on EU guidelines in a loose and individual way. However, this summary of a few deradicalization strategies from a few European states, as the overall EU strategy, seems lacking in areas of one-to-one deradicalization, use of imams in prisons and improvement of the prison environment, and especially so in Spain. The program is based on the identification of variables that might suggest a radicalization process is underway. Individual variables considered include physical appearance, change in behavior (becoming more aggressive), changes in treatment of others... collective variables include the formation of small groups of Muslims, bad or non-existent relationship with guards and prison professionals, taking part in communal prayers... The specific tool for the evaluation of radicalization risk amongst inmates further explains this strategy, and explains that inmates are divided into three categories, A, B and C. Category A includes high risk factors of radicalization and high disposition to violence (convicted terrorist enter this category) and some of the behaviours to watch include physical training and attitude of resistance and defiance to prison rules; category B and C are grouped together, to include risk of proselytizing and of being recruited and self-radicalization, which includes inmates that seem to lead groups activities as prayers, who show intolerant attitudes to non-Arab Muslims or having feelings of dissatisfaction or perceived discrimination or isolation. This strategy, not only does not propose interesting measures of deradicalization, but also risks encouraging further radicalization, as explained in Awan's (2013) study:

Indeed, this form of interventionist programs aims to help prison staff identify and respond to signs of radicalization, however whilst such tactics have little evidence of actual prevention of terrorism or rehabilitation, they may actually risk further unnecessary surveillance of some Muslim prisoners and risk maligning and stereotyping all Muslim prisoners as potential extremists, irrespective of the offense or crimes they may have committed. (p. 380)

As Hafez and Mullins propose that experts look into "identifying the conditions under which extremism grows and resist the temptation to seek after radical archetypes based merely on putative observable attitudes and behaviors", this is

particularly interesting for the Spanish authorities to take into consideration, as signaling candidates for radicalization, and labelling them in categories A,B,C will not prevent radicalization in itself, and will not contribute to deradicalizing inmates (Hafez & Mullins, 2015, p. 960).

Neumann's (2010) study into deradicalization in 15 countries also points to Spanish strategies lacking in many respects. As this work has tried to prove, Neumann points to evidence that "advantage of poorly run and overcrowded prisons, and that Muslim prison gangs tend to form in environments in which resources are scarce, ethnic and religious conflicts are rife and the prison management can no longer ensure the safety of inmates" (Neumann, 2010, p. 30) and confirms that Spanish (as well as French and UK) prisons are examples of this situation. Much of the Muslim population inside Spanish prisons is foreign (usually of Moroccan or Algerian origin), in many cases they do not speak the language and have not integrated into prison life, evidently making them more susceptible to extremist influences (Neumann, 2010) (Reinares, García-Calvo, & Vicente, 2018). This being said, Spain's strategies and programs of intervention of inmates is not being able to respond to these issues, most importantly in the case of religious services, which is the issue being discussed in this work.

In Spain security services of observation and control have taken center stage and playing little or no attention to other deradicalization techniques that have proven more successful. The institutionalization of the role of prison imams as a tool for deradicalization has only recently been established, but as can be seen in the comparative table, many countries as the UK and France have included them in their programs (Neumann, 2010). The case of France is of special interest, considering their strict imposition of *laïcité* values and their initial reluctance to provide state-sanctioned religious services. In the words of Neumann, "only Spain seems not to have changed its (indifferent) attitude" (Neumann, 2010, p. 33) prison imams and the positive role of religion in deradicalization programs. The Spanish law, however, established in 1992 through a cooperation agreement with the Spanish Islamic Commission (CIE) the right to religious services in prisons, through the use of imams chosen by each autonomic community and approved by the State. An interview with imam Ouakili points to the

necessity of abiding by the principles established in the law (Carbajosa, 2016). Ouakili goes to a Castellón prison once a month, in order to present the inmates with an “Islam of harmony”, that helps Spanish Muslims understand that practice of the Muslim faith is dependent on the context they live in, and they cannot and should not intend practice Islam in the same way as if they lived in Middle Eastern countries. Ouakili’s case should be the norm, however it is the exception (Carbajosa, 2016).

The lack of imams formed and trained in Spain, the role of Imams on some terrorist attacks on Spanish territory, and the overall suspicion surrounding Muslims in the country have made the establishment of these good practices difficult. As another leader of the Muslim community of Palma points, it is important for imams to enter the prison environment, to fill gaps that otherwise would be taken by extremism (Carbajosa, 2016). Spain’s current strategy is not successful, as a national newspaper pointed out, seen as the Department for Home Affairs have for the last years been forced to change and reinforce their strategy. Newspaper headlines of the last months read: “The government’s plans to deradicalize inmates fails” (Saíz-Pardo, 2018); “ only 15 prisoners enter the voluntary deradicalization program” (Editorial, 2018); “ The radicalization of 79 common prisoners forces the government to strengthen their anti-jihadist plans” (López-Fonseca, 2018). The weaknesses of the current model are evident, and now that the repatriation of Spanish foreign fighters is expected, as their ensuing incarceration, it is urgent that Spain, as other states, changes their approach to deradicalization to effectively neutralize the negative forces at play in the prison environment.

Table 1: Comparison of different deradicalization programs and strategies.

| Countries | Program | Characteristics | Highlights |
|-----------|--|--|---|
| Spain | Program of intervention with Islamist inmates in prisons | The process of deradicalization is looked at through the study of individual and collective variables of the inmate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychosocial risk variables (marginalization, high anxiety, feeling of dislocation, polarization and extremism, presence of proselytizing inmates) • Voluntary participation of the inmate |

| | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|---|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the program • Participation of support inmates. |
| Denmark | BOT (Deradicalization Back on Track) | Preparation and capacity development of the professionals working with inmates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue techniques, strategies and management of coping conflicts • Mentoring programs (help the inmate in strengthening their motivation to look for more positive alternatives) |
| Netherlands | Polarisation and radicalization Action Plan | Three pillars of action: Prevention Singling out Intervention | “soft” and “hard” measures aimed at neighbourhoods or ghettos where signs of polarization or radicalization can be seen. |
| Germany | Programs: EXIT HAYAT Deradicalization in Prison | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXIT. Program implemented in prisons and in personnel training. • HAYAT. Program aimed at the most radicalized members and foreign fighters. • Deradicalization in Prison. Working with inmates linked to far-right movements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight of the Deradicalization in Prison program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary participation - Promotes contact between inmates and professionals in the long-term, inside and outside the centres - Works with the family and social networks to prepare the freeing of the inmate. |
| France | Pilot Program | Three fronts of action: General closed regime Open regime Minors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs on citizenship and laicity. In the case of minors, special attention is placed on civic education and history of religion. • Participation of imams (inmate support). |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">England</p> | <p>Active Change Foundation (ACF)</p> <p>Al- Furqan</p> | <p>ACF. Created to end violent extremism, gangs and hate crimes.</p> <p>AL-FURQAN. Provides some inmates with additional benefits in the fight against negative interpretations of the Koran, linked to extremist ideologies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At national level aims to reintegrate inmates back into society through a process of readjustment of extremist beliefs. • At international level, provides methods of intervention and strategies of common participation • Highlight of both programs: the use of imams (support inmates). |
|---|---|--|---|

Source of Table: (Moreno Lara, 2017)

8. CONCLUSIONS

Radicalization in the West is increasingly becoming a problem, so much so that it is considered one of the foremost security issues of our time. As it has been explored, the process of radicalization is a complicated one, involving many individual factors coming together in different ways, to shape the individual's acceptance of extreme ideological beliefs, and their readiness in some cases to perpetrate terrorist acts in defense of said belief system. Preventing radicalization into violent extremism in general is impossible, as it would include the constant and complete surveillance of the whole population on the base of a list of arbitrary unacceptable behaviors established as evidence of radicalization. Preventing the creation of environments that enhance or enable RVE is, although still an arduous task, a more attainable objective for national security strategies.

As it has been shown, prisons are one such environment where the conditions and factors that might encourage radicalization are met. Prisons are spaces of vulnerability, they force individuals to rethink their identity, their actions and at the same time are spaces charged with hostility and violence, controlled in many cases by gangs and divided along ethnic lines. Because of these conditions, many new inmates turn to religion in their identity search path and find support and validation of their new identities in like-minded people. These relationships and networks that are established constitute the number one danger for prison radicalization; many prisoners are convicted terrorists or radicals who will try to radicalize other inmates. They are usually charismatic leaders, who tend a helping hand to newcomers, act as a support system, and slowly but surely are able to sell the vulnerable inmate on their own belief system. This pattern, with its evident individual traits in each case, stands to be true in most cases, and for most ideologies too.

Prisons, despite being environments where conditions for radicalization are met, are not intrinsically incubators of radicals as many have suggested. Not all prisoners become radicals during confinement, not all Muslims, in this case, that convert in prison go on to become terrorists, and not all Muslims who during their time in prison become more religious are planning a terrorist attack either. As it has been shown in the previous analysis, it is specific prison conditions, and not prisons in themselves, that allow for

radicalization to flourish. Understaffing and overcrowding are the overarching conditions that enable radicalization to spread, as they influence many other aspects of prison life. Another condition that enables radicalization, and probably one of the most important ones, is the lack or insufficiency of religious services provided for inmates. In the case of radical Islamism, as proved by this work, the lack of Muslim chaplains or religious leaders who work in support of Muslim prisoners is one of the main factors involved in radicalization processes.

Radical leaders use their friendship ties and networks to recruit new adepts to their causes, and their success will depend on the need for support and susceptibility of the inmate. Chaplains and religious leaders (moderate ones) are able to become said support system for Muslim converts and prisoners. The more “gaps” that are filled by trusted chaplains and leaders the less space there will be for radicalization to grow. These figures of moderation can also present a moderate or more flexible belief system for converts, one that promotes tolerance towards others and which enables democratic social values to coexist with religious ideas, not only in prison environments but in society at large.

Taking all this into account, deradicalization programs and strategies should use chaplains, religious leaders and moderate inmates to create positive spaces and networks within prisons. Many studies point to the beneficial use of one-to-one deradicalization, which makes sense taking into account that radicalization is most successful on a one-to-one basis too. However, it is surprising to find that countries such as Spain, where prisoner radicalization is a problem, are still reluctant to change their approach of deradicalization from a securitization approach to a more hands-on approach based on dialogue and powerful counter-narratives. Observation and control of specific inmates and possible radicals is evidently important in what further radicalization or proselytization is concerned, however, prisons have the potential to become enclaves of deradicalization, if some of these practices were established. It is therefore very much recommended that the Spanish government, as many other states, double their efforts in deradicalization, and work closer with prison imams and other religious figures and leaders.

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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