

PRISONS AS HOTBEDS OF RADICALISATION? EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

KRUS Conference on prison radicalisation,
Lillestrøm, October 7th 2015

©Franck Orban
2015

EU anti-terror chief Gilles de Kerchove, January 2015

*“We know that prisons are a **massive** incubator for radicalisation”*

From prisons as
schools for
crime..



To prisons as
schools for
terrorism..



Growing concern through the 2000-years

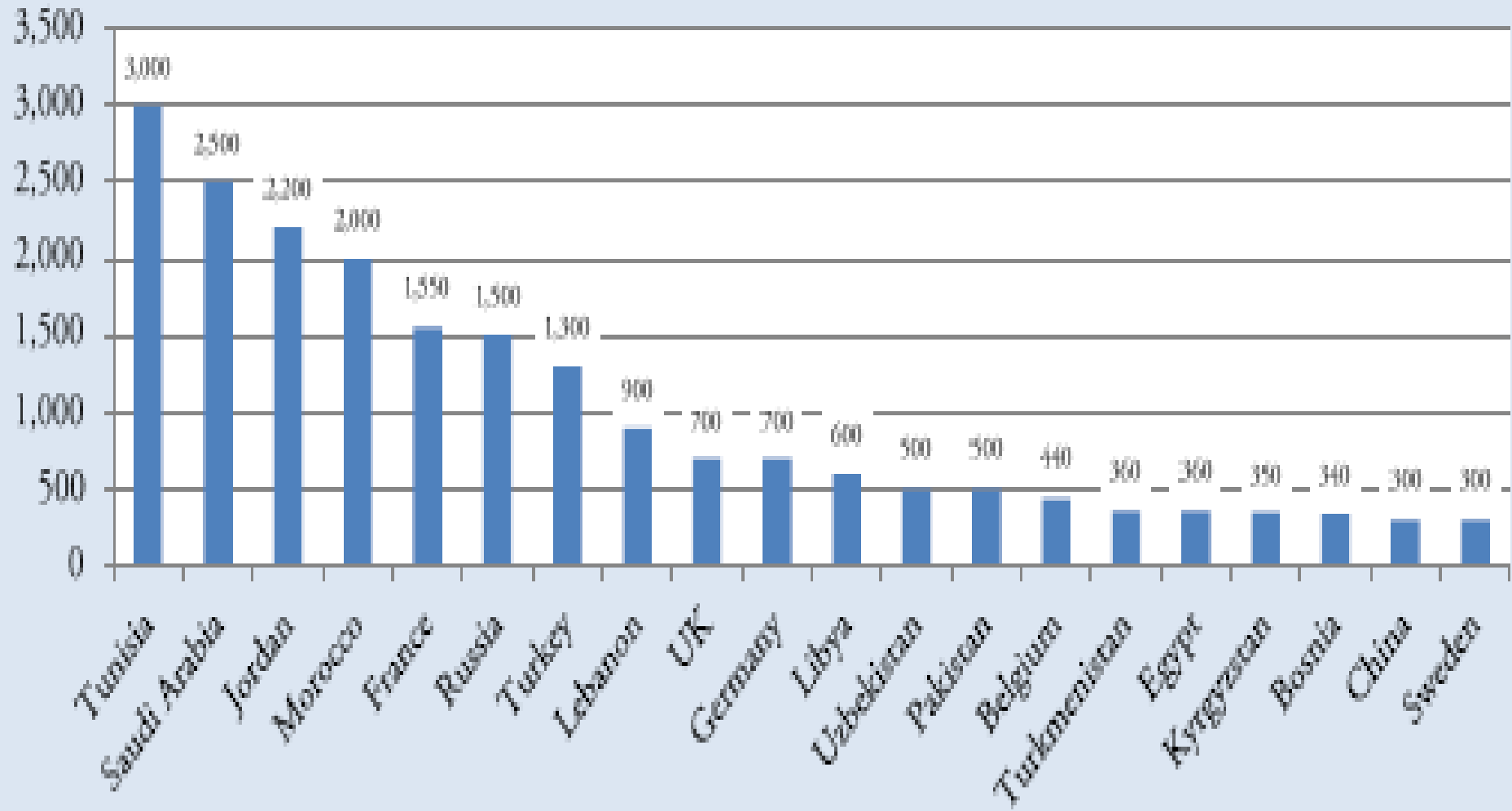
- **In France**, French Minister of Internal Affairs Michèle Alliot-Marie: “ French prisons are fertile grounds for the recruiting of Islam radicals. (2008)
- **In Italy**, the Department of Security Information: «[..] An insidious job of indoctrination and recruitment is being carried out by the “veterans’ convicted for belonging to terrorist networks, on prisoners sentenced for drug pushing or minor crimes» (2008)
- **In UK**, State Secretary of Justice: “[..] radicalisation is a matter of concern to the whole of the Prison Service [..] and is exercising us a lot as to how you handle those prisoners who are likely to go in as proselytisers and evangelisers and how you separate them from their targets (Parliamentary Select Committee, (2007).

How recent events impact

- **Mohamed Merah**, the al-Qaeda militant who shot dead seven people in a series of 2012 attacks
- **Mehdi Nemmouche**, 2014's Brussels Jewish museum killer
- **Omar El-Hussein**, shot dead by police after killing two people in a shooting spree in Denmark
- **Cherif Kouachi**, one of the brothers who massacred 12 people in an attack on the offices of the Charlie Hebdo magazine
- **Amedy Coulibaly**, the Islamist who killed four hostages at a Jewish supermarket

Figure 1: Top 20 Sources of Foreign Fighters in Syria & Iraq

**“Syria will prolong the problem of jihadi terrorism in Europe by 20 years”
Thomas Hegghammer**



Data sourced from official government figures and anonymous government sources cited in: International Centre for the Study of Radicalization, United Nations, Soufan Group, *Die Welt*, BBC, *The Sunday Times*, Reuters, *Le Monde*, *France24*, RFE-RL, *Latvian*, *Hurriyet*.

9/11

Global
Islamic
terrorism

**Madrid,
London,
Glasgow,
Stockholm**

Global Islamic
terrorism



Homegrown
terrorism



Radicalisation

**Paris &
Copenhagen**

Global Islamic
terrorism



Homegrown
terrorism

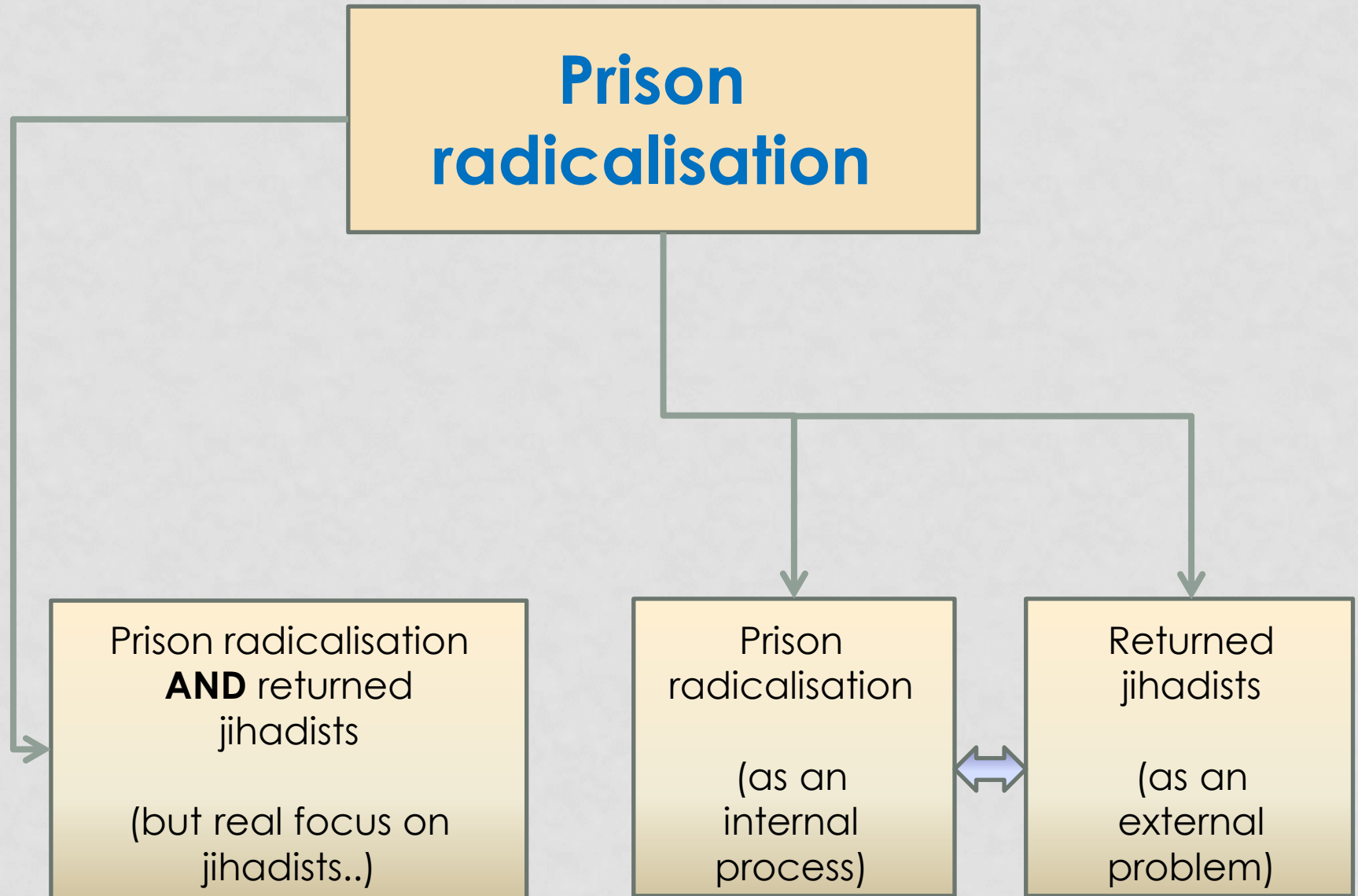


Radicalisation



Prison
radicalisation

« C'est la crise syrienne et le départ en nombre de jeunes Français vers les théâtres de guerre au nom du jihad qui ont provoqué des initiatives, très tardives »,
Rapport du contrôleur général des lieux de privation de liberté



A harmless concept?

1. From focusing on process..
- 2... To describing individuals rather than processes =
3. "It's a problem if **we then base policy actions on these perceptions** [...] We're **acting in blindness** and making strategies that might make the situation worse" Tobias Gemmerli, DIIS

"Antiradikalisering i de danske fængsler står højt på den politiske dagsorden. Forskere advarer nu om, at der mangler viden, både om hvordan radikalisering skabes, og hvordan den forhindres".

Videnskab.dk,
23. april 2015

How to define radicalisation?

Alex P. Schmid, March 2013

An individual or collective (group) process whereby, usually in a situation of political polarisation, normal practices of dialogue, compromise and tolerance between political actors and groups with diverging interests are abandoned by one or both sides in a conflict in favour of a growing commitment to engage in confrontational tactics of conflict-waging.

These can include either:

- the use of (non-violent) pressure and coercion,
- various forms of political violence other than terrorism or
- acts of violent extremism in the form of terrorism and war crimes.

Preventing and countering youth radicalisation in the EU, April 2014

Recommendation 1: Revising EU's diagnosis of 'radicalisation'

[..] We urge both EU institutions and EUMS to avoid the escalation process by favouring an approach in terms of **distanciation**. It is necessary to **move away from counter-productive alarmist discourses** that dramatically contribute to the polarisation of the debates and eventually to the spreading of dangerous antagonistic positions across our European societies that damage social cohesion.

There is today a growing consensus within the academic community that **radicalisation is an unhelpful concept**, and that the process it describes in theory cannot be found in actual social practices.

Radicalisation **should not be analysed as a form of pre-terrorism**, nor as a linear process but as a **relational dynamic**.

A “massive” problem.. or hysteria?

1. Anecdotal evidence of prison radicalisation easy to find and spectacular.
2. Tempting to generalize anecdotal evidences
3. How to prove that radicalisation takes place in prison, and not before (Richard Reid, Jose Padilla)?

**Relationship to
Communities (UK), Laïcité
(F); Federalism (G)**

**Relation-
ship to
terrorism**

**Relation-
ship to
colonial
past**

**Prison
system's
national
culture and
perception**

Relationship to organised crime



England and Wales: situation out of control?

■ Status:

- Over 12.000 Muslims prisoners by the end of 2014 in England and Wales (+122 % since 2002)
- General prison population increase of only 20%
- Total number of individuals jailed for terrorism and domestic extremism 183 (123 were Muslim).
- **1% of the Muslims prisoners were convicted on terrorism or extremism charges.**
- Number of prisoners on terrorism and extremism related charges is expected to rise,
- Fear that prison radicalisation will **proliferate** in the future.

■ Measures:

- 2011: evaluation program: “Extremist Risk Guidance ». 22 criteria to determine level of radicalisation and dangerousity
- Pathfinder, Ibaana (2014)

France: fertile hunting ground for islamists?

Status:

- France's prison population is estimated to be 70% Muslim
- 167 people detained in France on terror charges and regarded as radical Islamists
- 60 particularly dangerous (almost all in Paris)
- **only 15% of convicted had been incarcerated before.**

Measures:

- January 2015: five localisations in Paris region where the most dangerous are regrouped and cut from the rest of prison population
- May 2015: deradicalisation program/measures (theatre, meeting with former victims, lectures)
- **NEW TREND: taqiya = dissimulation, one-to-one, small groups: make tracking tools unefficient (adapting to counter-radicalisation)**

Two competing strategies

1. Letting prisoners mix in general circulation so ideas are moderated
2. Isolation to prevent radical ideologies to spread inside

Constant oscillations from **1 to 2**.

Haras Rafiq (Quilliam foundation): “Neither model works on its own [...] need for an increase in the number and professionalism of imams who provide spiritual guidance to inmates (Britain/200 imams; France/182)

How and who to handle radicalisation?

Hard power or soft power?

1. Inflexible models: Main goal: protecting society
2. Flexible models: Main goal: opportunities of rehabilitation should be exploited.

Institutional autarchy or alliance?

1. Exclusively internal institutional resources (penitentiary structure/security agencies)
2. Through cooperation with civil society/NGOs.

What kind of tools?

1. Self-centered strategies:

2. Reaching-out strategies:

La radicalizzazione jihadista nelle istituzioni penitenziarie europee, 2010

1. “Faced with the size and the extent of the dynamics of the radicalisation threat, some European institutions are reacting inadequately, seemingly unable to take advantage of the improved emerging procedures. The threat is global, **politics are national and regional.**
2. The threat necessitates working together whereas the **answers are sectorial.**
3. The threat makes new institutional and social alliances essential but institutions are often **isolated in their own autocracy.**”

Previous EU-focus on radicalisation and violent extremism

Texts:

- Revised EU-Plan of action on combating Terrorism (June 2004)
- Communication on prevention, preparedness and response to terrorist attacks (Hague Programme, (November 2004)
- The European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism and European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy (November and December 2005)
- Expert-group established in 2006 with report to the EU-Commission (Radicalisation processes leading to acts of terrorism, 2008)
- EU-Commission led expert-seminar: "Radicalisation phenomenon in Europe: present challenges and future trajectories.

Research projects:

- *Towards Preventing Violent Radicalisation (TPVR)*
- *Reducing Influences that Radicalise Prisoners (RIRP)*

Finding the good manual?

- ***Netherlands:***
- **Germany, Austria and France:**
- ***UK:***
- **Belgian EU Presidency 2010: The CoPPRa project**

European responses to prison radicalisation

- **Decision-making level:**
 - Informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government Brussels, 12 February 2015 - Statement by the members of the European Council, February 2015 (after Paris)
 - European Agenda on Security of April 2015
 - Council Conclusions on the Renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy 2015-2020 of June 2015
 - Council of Europe Conference of Directors of Prison and Probation Services (9-10 June 2015, Bucharest): European committee on crime problems (Council for Penological Cooperation; PC-CP)

- **Actor level:**
 - Radicalisation Awareness Network
 - RAN Prison & Probation:
 - European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EUROPRIS)

Countries	Name	Target	Method	Prison-system alone?	How?
Denmark	Back on track	Inmates and remand prisoners who charged with or convicted of terrorism, and/ or vulnerable to radicalisation	Mentoring	No (prison system + other Dpts)	Motivating to opt for a lifestyle free of crime
Germany	Exit-Germany	Right-wing extremists	Motivational interviewing	No (NGO)	Practical issues + critical distancing from ideological background and past
Germany	Violence Prevention Network	Juvenile offenders convicted for extremist violence (right-wing and radical Islam)	Education of Responsibility	No (NGO)	Two-step program based on group and individual sessions (23 weeks in prison)

«Back on track»-model?

- 10 mentors for 6+7 mentees (primary group + gang group)
 - «In general it is **difficult to document the effect of the project if it is to be based on a measurement of how many target group members will abstain from committing extremist crimes in future.**
 - Moreover, the mentoring has been going on for a **relatively short time, and accordingly it is yet too early to give a definite response.**”

Belgium action plan, March 2015



Federal Public Service
Justice

Priorities:

1. Better living conditions in the penitentiary institutions;
2. A stronger information position;
3. Efficient consultation and coordination structures;
4. The digitization and automation of the flow of information;
5. A better detection of radicalization;
6. A well-considered placement policy;
7. An individualized approach when necessary;
8. The systematic involvement of the representatives of the various religions;
9. De-radicalization and disengagement programs;
10. Reinforced cooperation with the local level, the federated states and Europe.

Action Plan

*against radicalization
in prisons*

11th March 2015

1. A common european design or set of «good practices» or still national designs?
2. Short-term security objectives or long-term rehabilitation objectives?
3. The dark side: choice of repressive “design” will have consequences for the way inmates will react to prison after release..



**THANKS FOR
YOUR ATTENTION
AND
PLEASE DON'T ASK
TOO MUCH**