

Prison Radicalization in Australia and the Returnee Threat: Assessing the Case of Goulburn Corrections Centre

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ABSTRACT

With the military defeat of Islamic State, scores of radicalized Australian citizens stand to return home. How can law enforcement deal with these potentially dangerous returnees? This paper analyzes corrections policy at Goulburn Corrections Centre in New South Wales, Australia to better understand prison radicalization and how to combat it. It contextualizes the phenomenon of radicalization through a discussion of the concept and its presence in prisons, using Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's time at Camp Bucca detention center as case study. It then analyzes the current Goulburn strategy. It concludes with a recommendation to shift toward a rehabilitative rather than deterrent strategy.

**The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

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Introduction

In 2004, the U.S. military detained a low-level Iraqi Muslim cleric at Camp Bucca. There, the cleric established ties with Islamist radicals, and remained in contact with them after his release in 2006. In 2014, this cleric, known by his nom de guerre Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, declared himself “Caliph Ibrahim” of what the world today calls the “Islamic State” (IS). Holding the top positions within IS’s leadership were those same men that al-Baghdadi first met in Camp Bucca.¹

IS is now in decline, and as it collapses, governments fear that up to 31,000 foreign fighters will return to their countries of origin in the Middle East, North Africa, and the West.² Average returnee rates of 20-30% confirm these fears.³ Some fighters might return disillusioned, but others may seek to carry out further terrorist operations in their home countries.⁴ Arguably most troubling, detained returnees may radicalize other inmates or form new networks within prisons in their countries of origin, just as al-Baghdadi did in Camp Bucca.

This paper will analyze how the Australian prison system in New South Wales (NSW) is coping with this phenomenon of “prison radicalization” by examining the policy of Goulburn Correctional Centre, a maximum-security prison near Sydney. In light of the returnee threat and potential influx of battle-hardened radicals into Australia, this paper focuses on the danger of terrorist network formation in prisons. The next section defines radicalization. Next, this paper illustrates the threat of terrorist network formation in

¹ Tomáš Kaválek, “From al-Qaeda in Iraq to Islamic State: The Story of Insurgency in Iraq and Syria in 2003-2015,” *Turkish Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 1 (2015): 13.

² Edwin Bakker, Christoph Paulussen, and Eva Entenmann, “Returning Jihadist Foreign Fighters: Challenges Pertaining to Threat Assessment and Governance of this Pan-European Problem,” *Security and Human Rights* 25, no. 1 (2014): 11; Richard Barret et al, *Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq* (New York: The Soufan Group, December 2015), 4, http://soufangroup.com/wpcontent/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf; Daniel Byman, “The Jihadist Returnee Threat: Just How Dangerous?” *Political Science Quarterly* 131, no. 1 (2016): 70; Daniel Byman, “The Homecomings: What Happens When Arab Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria Return?” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 8 (2015): 581.

³ Richard Barret et al, *Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq*, 4.

⁴ Byman, “The Jihadist Returnee Threat: Just How Dangerous?” 70.

prisons through a case study of Camp Bucca, particularly with respect to al-Baghdadi. This paper then examines prison radicalization and how it relates to Australia in general and Goulburn in particular. It ends with a recommendation to adopt a more rehabilitative policy toward Muslim radicals at Goulburn. Using Eugene Bardach's and Eric Patashnik's "Eightfold Path" framework of policy analysis, this paper will argue that Muslim Goulburn prisoners are too vulnerable to prison radicalization and will propose several alternatives to ameliorate this problem.⁵ It will then recommend a rehabilitation-based policy. Figure 1 adapts the first seven "steps" of the Eightfold Path to this analysis. The framework consists of six steps: defining the problem, gathering evidence, proposing alternatives based on the evidence, formulating criteria by which to judge policy outcomes, listing projected outcomes for each alternative, and confronting trade-offs between the criteria for each projected outcome. Then, the analyst decides on an alternative that he/she discerns best addresses the problem and fits the criteria. Evidence drives findings; this analysis employs data mostly from scholarly and governmental sources. This framework allows discretion for the analyst to choose what kind of data to use, which criteria and alternatives to include and their respective weights, and ultimately how to decide on an alternative. This paper comprises the eighth step, namely "tell your story," an explanation of the policy analysis as a whole. Finally, this paper presents several examples to support its recommendation of implementing dispersion and reform programs.

Understanding Radicalization

One may understand "radicalism" as the rejection of a gap between ideals and actions. Action becomes increasingly drastic according to an ideal's urgency.⁶ For example, an adherent of a radical Islamic ideology may claim that the implementation of Islamic law is not a distant prospect, but an ideal that one may realize in the present through action. IS ideology is based on the assumption that the apocalypse is imminent and thus,

⁵ Eugene Bardach and Eric Patashnik, *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving* (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2016), 1-72.

⁶ Ori Goldberg, *Faith and Politics in Iran, Israel and the Islamic State: Theologies of the Real* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

demands such high urgency that IS may justify its brutal actions as necessary for realizing its goals.⁷

Radicalization entails a process of accepting and becoming increasingly willing to act on a worldview. On the individual level, radicalism indicates how far one is willing to go in order to serve a worldview while radicalization is the process by which one becomes more willing to do so. This definition encompasses two views of radicalization. One – “cognitive radicalization” – interprets radicalization as the process by which individuals come to accept ideologies that promote violence toward political ends.⁸ The other – “behavioral radicalization” – refers to a process by which individuals act increasingly more violently on behalf of a worldview.⁹ In the case of IS, radicalization may mean accepting Islam and the impending apocalypse and increasingly carrying out militant operations on the ground. Hence, radicalization is a process involving both increasing acceptance of violence as a legitimate tool as part of a worldview and heightening willingness to carry out violent acts on behalf of a worldview.

Camp Bucca and Terrorist Networking in Prison

In 2003, the U.S. military established Camp Bucca as a detention center for Iraqi prisoners on the site of a former British detention center in Basra, Iraq.¹⁰ By 2007, it became the U.S.’s largest detention center in Iraq, housing about 26,000 inmates, at least

⁷ James Fromson and Steven Simon, “ISIS: The Dubious Paradise of Apocalypse Now,” *Survival* 57, no. 3 (2015): 27-28.

⁸ Ido Levy, “Deradicalization Programs in Australia and the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon,” International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, April 8, 2018, https://www.ict.org.il/Article/2178/Deradicalization_Programs_in%20Australia_%20and_the_Foreign_Fighter_Phenomenon#gsc.tab=0; Peter R. Neumann, “The Trouble with Radicalization,” *International Affairs* 89, no. 4 (2013): 873.

⁹ *Building an Army of Believers: Jihadist Radicalization and Recruitment: Before the Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment, United States House of Representatives*, 110th Cong. (2007), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2007/RAND_CT278-1.pdf; Neumann, “The Trouble with Radicalization,” 873; Lorenzo Vidino, “Countering Radicalization in America: Lessons from Europe,” United States Institute of Peace, November 2010, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR262%20-%20Countering_Radicalization_in_America.pdf.

¹⁰ “800th Military Police Brigade (EPW) (USAR),” Global Security, 2011, accessed June 20, 2018, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/800mp-bde.htm>. Camp Bucca is named after Ronald Bucca, a New York City firefighter who died in the events of 9/11.

1,350 of whom were “hardened terrorists.”¹¹ The U.S. military closed Bucca in 2009, shortly after Iraq’s implementation of a general amnesty law that set free approximately 17,800 of the 33,600 inmates held in Iraq and thousands more subsequently. Increased terror activity followed thereafter, and the majority of the perpetrators of the August 19 and October 25 attacks were former Bucca inmates.¹² As of 2015, 19 out of IS’s 20 top leaders were Bucca detainees, as was current leader of Hayat Tahrir ash-Sham, Abu Mohammad al-Julani.¹³ The high number of terrorist leaders and attackers who came out of Bucca has led some to call it the “birthplace” of IS.¹⁴

Camp Bucca witnessed mass radicalization. Major General Doug Stone, who assumed command of Bucca in 2007, noted, “Sometimes guys would allow themselves to be caught. Then, they’d ask to be put in a specific compound which housed a lot of the al-Qaeda guys.”¹⁵ Stone recalled the high level of organization among detained radicals and that they would regularly try to propagate their violent worldviews to other detainees.¹⁶ Observers have called Bucca and other American detention centers “terrorist universities.”¹⁷ Indeed, radical inmates at Bucca established Sharia courts, exacted harsh punishment (even death sentences) against those who breached it, and adamantly encouraged others to take on their radical interpretations of Islam.¹⁸ Among the most

¹¹ Michael Christie, “U.S. Military Shuts Largest Detainee Camp in Iraq,” *Reuters*, September 17, 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-usa-detainees/u-s-military-shuts-largest-detainee-camp-in-iraq-idUSTRE58G1HZ20090917>; Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror* (New York: Regan Arts., 2015), 83.

¹² Myriam Benraad, “Prisons in Iraq: A New Generation of Jihadists?” *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel* 2, no. 12 (2009): 16.

¹³ Truls Hallberg Tønnessen, “Heirs of Zarqawi or Saddam? The Relationship Between al-Qaida in Iraq and the Islamic State,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 4 (2015): 51; Craig Whistleside, review of *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, by Michael Weiss and Hassan Hassan, *Naval War College Review*, Winter 2016, 164, <http://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol69/iss1/16/>.

¹⁴ Terrence McCoy, “How the Islamic State Evolved in an American Prison,” *Washington Post*, November 4, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/11/04/how-an-american-prison-helped-ignite-the-islamic-state/?utm_term=.fc6d2ce51d2a; Othman al-Mukhtar, “Camp Bucca: Iraq’s Militant University,” *The New Arab*, January 27, 2015, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/features/2015/1/27/camp-bucca-iraqs-militant-university>; Brad Parks, “How a US Prison Camp Helped Create ISIS,” *New York Post*, May 30, 2015, <https://nypost.com/2015/05/30/how-the-us-created-the-camp-where-isis-was-born/>.

¹⁵ Weiss and Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, 84.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

¹⁷ McCoy, “How the Islamic State Evolved in an American Prison.”

¹⁸ *Ibid.*; Weiss and Hassan, *ISIS: Inside the Army of Terror*, 84.

notable and intriguing examples of radicalization at Bucca is that of detained former officers of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime. At Bucca, these officers mingled regularly with radical Islamists and formed a partnership that resulted in about 60% of IS's original leadership comprising ex-Ba'athists.¹⁹ What is intriguing about this case is that the officers arrived at Bucca having already undergone behavioral radicalization under Hussein's regime and coming to accept IS's violent worldview only through their experiences with radical inmates at the detention center.²⁰

Case Study: Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's time at Camp Bucca is a high-profile, but understudied example of radicalization that reveals the danger of terrorist network formation in prisons. Although already involved in terrorist activities before his arrest, al-Baghdadi's ideology seems to have evolved and access to resources increased over his detainment to the point of acquiring the doctrine and capability to create his own group. This section presents al-Baghdadi's time at Camp Bucca as pivotal in preparing him for leadership of IS. It gives background on al-Baghdadi's life prior to his detention. Next, it discusses his time at Camp Bucca and how it influenced his subsequent activities.

Al-Baghdadi's radicalization began before his detainment. He was born Ibrahim ibn Awwad al-Badri al-Samarrai in Samarra, Iraq. He received a PhD in Islamic studies from the Islamic University of Baghdad and became an assistant to local preachers in Fallujah.²¹ Following the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, al-Baghdadi helped found Jamaat Jaysh Ahl al-Sunnah wa-l-Jamaah, one of many Sunni insurgent groups that formed to fight the

¹⁹ Tønnessen, "Heirs of Zarqawi or Saddam? The Relationship Between al-Qaida in Iraq and the Islamic State," 56.

²⁰ Richard Barret, "The Islamic State," The Soufan Group, November 2014, <http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TSG-The-Islamic-State-Nov14.pdf>. Scholars have increasingly challenged the notion that radicalization begins with adoption of radical viewpoints and only later leads to violent behavior. For a deeper discussion of this topic, see Neumann, 2013 above.

²¹ Martin Chulov, "Isis: The Inside Story," *The Guardian*, December 11, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/11/-sp-isis-the-inside-story>; Kaválek, "From al-Qaeda in Iraq to Islamic State: The Story of Insurgency in Iraq and Syria in 2003-2015," 13.

American occupation. In 2004, American troops apprehended him.²² Although it is unclear precisely when al-Baghdadi took on radical tendencies, his involvement in a Sunni insurgent group suggests he was willing to involve himself in violent activities even before his detainment. At the same time, the U.S. invasion sparked a widespread Iraqi backlash not confined to religious groups, and al-Baghdadi may well have joined the insurgency as a means of resistance against the American occupation rather than as a fulfillment of ideological goals.

At any rate, his radicalization seems to have deepened at Camp Bucca. Sources vary as to the length of his detainment, claiming that it lasted from 2004 to as early as later that year to as late as 2009. Whatever the timeframe, al-Baghdadi became well-respected among Bucca inmates, established ties with other esteemed detainees, notably the ex-Ba’athists, and may have helped administer the in-prison Sharia courts. In fact, Bucca inmates viewed him with such high regard that the U.S. military perceived him as a force for resolving disputes among detainees. He seems to have participated in regular meetings with other “emirs” at Camp Bucca and developed together with them a new ideology and made plans to regroup after their release. One inmate, known as Abu Ahmed, recalled, “Bucca was a factory. It made us all. It built our ideology.”²³ By 2008, as more people were detained and released from Camp Bucca, head of al-Qaeda Osama bin Laden became increasingly weary of a growing group of “millenarians” within the organization who were “talking all the time about the Mahdi [messiah] and making strategic decisions’ based on when they thought the Mahdi was going to arrive.”²⁴ In 2010, this group coalesced into its own organization when a group of the ex-Ba’athists who served time at Camp Bucca raised al-Baghdadi to head the Islamic State in Iraq, IS’s predecessor.²⁵ Thus, it seems that al-Baghdadi and his fellow Bucca inmates crystallized a millenarian ideology more radical

²² Aaron Y. Zelin, “Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi: Islamic State’s Driving Force,” *British Broadcasting Corporation*, July 31, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28560449>.

²³ Chulov, “Isis: The Inside Story.”

²⁴ Graeme Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants,” *The Atlantic*, March 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.

²⁵ Kaválek, “From al-Qaeda in Iraq to Islamic State: The Story of Insurgency in Iraq and Syria in 2003-2015,” 13.

than the narrative of resistance against occupation or even the ideology of al-Qaeda and agreed to pool their skills and resources to create IS with al-Baghdadi at its head. The core of this new organization comprised a network of radicals that emerged from the creation of ties between and mutual deepening radicalization among Bucca inmates.

Prison Radicalization and Australia

This section explores how similar instances of prison radicalization may occur in Australia. The Australian prison system contains a handful of convicted terrorists and faces a potentially sharp increase in the coming years. As of 2015, Australia has convicted 23 individuals under anti-terror legislation out of 38 charged with terror-related crimes.²⁶ Of those convicted, most are between the ages of 20 and 32 and hold Australian citizenship.²⁷ This age profile matches that of most foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria, of whom Australians account for up to 255.²⁸ The return of these foreign fighters poses potential challenges for policymakers and corrections officials.

The presence of Muslim prisoners at Goulburn Super Max Correction Centre in NSW has already caused concern among officials regarding their potential to radicalize others. Muslims comprise 9.3% of NSW’s prison population.²⁹ The government has concentrated many “violent extremism” (VE) convicts, including at least nine of the aforementioned 23 terrorist offenders, in Goulburn.³⁰ This has allowed Muslim inmates convicted of violent crimes to influence, convert, and even possibly radicalize other prisoners, as they had done in Camp Bucca. So far, this has resulted in at least six Goulburn

²⁶ Hamed El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and De-Radicalization Programs* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 65.

²⁷ Louise E. Porter and Mark R. Keibell, “Radicalization in Australia: Examining Australia’s Convicted Terrorists,” *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law* 18, no. 2 (2011): 218.

²⁸ Barret et al, *Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq*, 7.

²⁹ Riaz Hassan, *Australian Muslims: A Demographic, Social and Economic Profile of Muslims in Australia*, (Adelaide: University of South Australia, 2015), 34-35,

https://www.unisa.edu.au/Global/EASS/MnM/Publications/Australian_Muslims_Report_2015.pdf.

³⁰ Clarke R. Jones, “Are Prisons Really Schools for Terrorism? Challenging the Rhetoric on Prison Radicalization,” *Punishment & Society* 16, no. 1 (2014): 82; El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and De-Radicalization Programs*, 82-83.

inmates converting to Islam.³¹ Observers have noted the consequent development of “prison Islam,” a type of Islam that involves emphasis on a common purpose and may correlate with prison gang formation and intra-prison violence.³² This creation of a new religious ideology in prisons is reminiscent of the crystallization of IS’s ideology through Bucca inmates.

Efforts to address prison radicalization usually follow a “containment” or “reform” strategy. One group of experts fears prisons can serve as “training grounds” for detained extremists, citing high-profile cases of prison radicalization that led to post-release terrorist activity, such as Richard Reid and Jose Padilla.³³ These experts promote “containment,” a policy that seeks to deter prison radicalization by isolating terrorist offenders as much as possible from the general prison population.³⁴ A second group contends that containment is counterproductive since it may allow VE prisoners to form networks and recommends instead policies of “reform,” which aim to rehabilitate prisoners. From this perspective, certain conditions, such as overcrowding, enable prison radicalization rather than the detainment of radicals per se. This group bases its recommendations on analyses of “prison culture” and studies on how environmental factors can lead to disengagement from radical

³¹ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and De-Radicalization Programs*, 86; Alison Liebling and Christina Straub, “Identity Challenges and the Risks of Radicalisation in High Security Custody,” *Prison Service Journal*, no. 203 (2012): 21-22; Shadd Maruna, Louise Wilson, and Kathryn Curran, “Why God Is Often Found Behind Bars: Prison Conversions and the Crisis of Self-Narrative,” *Research in Human Development* 3, no. 2&3 (2006): 161. Of course, conversion does not always imply radicalization. In fact, some studies have shown that conversion may lead to better behavior among prisoners.

³² Mark S. Hamm, “Prison Islam in the Age of Sacred Terror,” *British Journal of Criminology* 49, no. 5 (2009): 667; Hassan, *Australian Muslims: A Demographic, Social and Economic Profile of Muslims in Australia*, 34; Liebling and Straub, “Identity Challenges and the Risks of Radicalisation in High Security Custody,” 17; Gabriele Marranci, *Faith, Ideology and Fear: Muslim Identities within and beyond Prisons* (London: Continuum, 2009), 5.

³³ James Brandon, “The Danger of Prison Radicalization in the West,” *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel* 2, no. 12 (2009): 1; Frank J. Cilluffo, Sharon L. Cardash, and Andrew J. Whitehead, “Radicalization: Behind Bars and Beyond Borders,” *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 13, no. 2 (2007): 113; Ian M. Cuthbertson, “Prisons and the Education of Terrorists,” *World Policy Journal* 21, no. 3 (2004): 15; Patrick T. Dunleavy, *The Fertile Soil of Jihad: Terrorism’s Prison Connection* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2011); Gaetano Joe Ilardi, “Prison Radicalisation – The Devil is in the Detail,” (paper presented at the GTRc ARC Linkage Project on Radicalisation Conference – Understanding Terrorism from an Australian Perspective: Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation and Counter Radicalisation, Melbourne, Australia, 2010), 1.

³⁴ Peter R. Neumann, “Prison and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation in 15 Countries,” International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2010, accessed January 15, 2018, 17-21, <https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/1277699166PrisonsandTerrorismRadicalisationandDeradicalisationin15Countries.pdf>.

groups and ideologies.³⁵ The next section examines each alternative presented in Figure 1 through both containment and reform dimensions.

Analysis of Goulburn’s Containment Policy

The NSW Parliament and Department of Justice set policy for NSW Corrections Services.³⁶ NSW corrections policy currently favors a policy of containment through concentration, at some times confining “radical” prisoners to two or three high security detention centers and at others, concentrating them exclusively in Goulburn. Since its establishment in 2003, Goulburn has kept all of its Muslim inmates, including at least nine convicted terrorists, in one unit separate from non-Muslim prisoners (intermingling requires permission). Goulburn authorities claim this strategy facilitates monitoring Muslim detainees while preventing them from radicalizing other inmates.³⁷

Aside from its current containment-concentration policy, Goulburn has several alternatives (see “alternatives” in Figure 1): isolation, segregation, dispersion, and integration, with a choice between orienting toward containment or reform.³⁸ Segregation, i.e. building a separate prison exclusively for convicted terrorists, would most likely reduce the likelihood of radicalization in regular prisons, but may facilitate convicted terrorists’ efforts to form networks among themselves.³⁹ Combined with containment, dispersion – a calculated distribution of prisoners among the populations of different detention centers – and integration – indiscriminate distribution – carry the same projected outcome, namely an increase in radicalization, since radical prisoners would have more access to vulnerable

³⁵ Hamm, “Prison Islam in the Age of Sacred Terror,” 671; Jones, “Are Prisons Really Schools for Terrorism? Challenging the Rhetoric on Prison Radicalization,” 76; Marranci, *Faith, Ideology and Fear: Muslim Identities within and beyond Prisons*, 5; Porter and Kebell, “Radicalization in Australia: Examining Australia’s Convicted Terrorists,” 226; Tinka M. Veldhuis, *Prisoner Radicalization and Terrorism Detention Policy: Institutionalized Fear or Evidence-Based Policy Making* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

³⁶ “Justice Organisation Chart,” State of New South Wales (Department of Justice), 2016, accessed January 15, 2018, <http://www.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/About%20us/justice-organisation-chart.pdf>.

³⁷ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and De-Radicalization Programs*, 82-84.

³⁸ Hassan, *Australian Muslims: A Demographic, Social and Economic Profile of Muslims in Australia*, 34-35; Marranci, *Faith, Ideology and Fear: Muslim Identities within and beyond Prisons*; Neumann, “Prison and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation in 15 Countries,” 17-21.

³⁹ Hamm, “Prison Islam in the Age of Sacred Terror,” 673.

inmates. The current policy slightly mitigates prisoners’ vulnerability to radicalization by simply placing the radical prisoners separately, but it does not actively discourage radicalization when contact does occur and may even facilitate network formation among convicted terrorists. Reform is more costly, but offers an active effort to reduce radicalization in prisons, rather than simply a deterrent.

Recommendation

The author recommends dispersion with a strategy of reform. This alternative best meets the four proposed criteria: 1) legality, 2) political acceptability, 3) effectiveness, and 4) efficiency (see “criteria” in Figure 1). This analysis views legality and political acceptability as threshold criteria the alternatives must satisfy to remain viable. Dispersion faces no issues of legality and has constituted part of NSW’s corrections policy since 2003. At the same time, the current NSW budget shows that a strategy of reform currently holds robust political acceptability. The budget allocates \$3.3 billion to “offender management,” of which NSW has set aside \$27 million specifically to “combat radicalisation in the NSW prison system.”⁴⁰ Moreover, experts are increasingly urging the adoption of reform-based strategies over containment-based ones.⁴¹ Mark Hamm’s study on prison culture demonstrates that decreasing overcrowding and improving chaplaincies can contribute significantly to rehabilitation.⁴² Dispersion complements this strategy by allowing authorities to at once prevent VE convicts from grouping together and distribute higher risk prisoners among institutions with more developed rehabilitation programs. In contrast, isolation, segregation, and concentration are more likely to prove ineffective or counterproductive vis-à-vis rehabilitation.⁴³ Finally, reform requires more investment in

⁴⁰ “\$3.3 Billion Investment in Offender Management,” State of New South Wales, June 20, 2017, accessed January 15, 2018, <https://www.budget.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2017-06/20172006%20MR%20-%20Elliott%20-%20243.3%20Billion%20Investment%20in%20Offender%20Management%20FINAL.pdf>.

⁴¹ Hamm, “Prison Islam in the Age of Sacred Terror,” 682; Marranci, *Faith, Ideology and Fear: Muslim Identities within and beyond Prisons*; Neumann, “Prison and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-Radicalisation in 15 Countries,” 22-23.

⁴² Hamm, “Prison Islam in the Age of Sacred Terror,” 682.

⁴³ *Ibid.*; Jones, “Are Prisons Really Schools for Terrorism? Challenging the Rhetoric on Prison Radicalization,” 95-97.

developing programs, chaplaincies, and rehabilitative prison environments, and thus, carries a higher financial cost. Nevertheless, as a whole, the merits of the proposed policy outweigh this cost.

NSW and Goulburn may take four concrete steps to implement this policy. First, including a Muslim cleric in the NSW Chaplaincy Services administration can contribute to an overall organizational culture of encouraging rehabilitation for Muslim offenders and encourage faith-based initiatives. Second, Goulburn houses a chaplaincy and should use it to build rehabilitative programs for Muslim inmates, which it currently lacks.⁴⁴ Third, NSW's budget allocates funds to increasing the size of some of its prisons, but not to Goulburn; extending these efforts to Goulburn would further contribute to a rehabilitative environment by reducing overcrowding. Finally, officials may use NSW's goal to reduce reoffending by 5% over four years as a benchmark for evaluation.⁴⁵ In sum, a reform-based dispersion policy that involves faith-based initiatives best addresses the vulnerability of Muslim inmates at Goulburn to radicalization.

Comparing Cases of Containment and Reform

A brief comparison of reform programs with containment-based strategies reveals that the former were more effective. An ideal case of containment failure is the aforementioned case of Camp Bucca, in which terrorists concentrated in one section of the detention center were able to collude and radicalize only to become more dangerous once released. California's Folsom State Prison is another model of containment's disadvantages. In this case, inmate Kevin Lamar James, a Muslim convert, founded the gang Jamiyyat ul-Islam i-Saheeh ("Assembly of True Islam") with a group of fellow Muslim detainees to propagate a radical type of Islam. After recruiting and radicalizing other inmates, James organized the 2005 plot to bomb American military structures, synagogues, and an Israeli consulate in California. Although foiled, an FBI official had

⁴⁴ El-Said, *New Approaches to Countering Terrorism: Designing and Evaluating Counter Radicalization and De-Radicalization Programs*, 82-83.

⁴⁵ "\$3.3 Billion Investment in Offender Management," State of New South Wales.

described this plot as ‘closest to actually occurring’ since 9/11.”⁴⁶ London’s Feltham Young Offenders Institution is where the notorious “shoe bomber,” Richard Reid, purportedly converted to Islam before plotting to blow up American Airlines Flight 63 in 2001 with a bomb hidden in his shoe. Reid converted while in prison after seeing that Muslim inmates “treat you like a human being” and get better meals. After his release, Reid began associating with radical Islamic groups and individuals, including 9/11 co-conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui. Although Feltham allowed imams to interact with prisoners, it did not have formal faith-based program, enabling some visiting spiritual leaders to preach radicalism and share with inmates “anti-American leaflets highlighting the importance of jihad.”⁴⁷ Bucca, Folsom, and Feltham all lacked reform programs and ultimately enabled the development of radical prison Islam that often made radical Muslim inmates more dangerous by concentrating them during detention.

In contrast, faith-based reform programs reveal promise. Buddhist nun Robina Courtin’s “Liberation Prison Project” caters to the spiritual needs of prisoners interested in Buddhism by, inter alia, providing books to inmates, giving them “legal and post-prison support,” and teaching in prisons. The program operates in several countries, including Australia and the U.S., and keeps in contact with about three of twenty inmates it assists, a success rate triple that of NSW’s goal to reduce reoffending by 5%.⁴⁸ The Christian InnerChange Freedom Initiative is a three-phase program that operates in four U.S. state institutions. Phase one lasts about one year and focuses on educating and creating a sense of community among participants through mentoring and support and peer groups. Phase two may take up to one year and involves hands-on work for inmates to further ingrain the moral sense the program tries to convey in phase one. Also lasting up to one year, phase

⁴⁶ Hamm, “Prison Islam in the Age of Sacred Terror,” 668-669; Rob Harris, “Kevin James and the JIS Conspiracy,” *Public Broadcasting Service*, October 10, 2006,

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/enemywithin/reality/james.html>.

⁴⁷ Michael Elliott, “The Shoe Bomber's World,” *Time*, February 16, 2002, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,203478,00.html>.

⁴⁸ “Buddhism in Prisons around the World,” Liberation Prison Project, 2017, accessed January 15, 2018, <http://www.liberationprisonproject.org/>; “\$3.3 Billion Investment in Offender Management,” State of New South Wales.

three assists inmates in finding housing and employment post-release and connects inmates to local church communities. The program relies heavily on volunteers from local congregations. In Texas, independent researchers found that the recidivism rate among program graduates was 8% while it was 20% for a group of non-participants.⁴⁹ One of few programs for Muslim inmates is New Haven, Connecticut-based Masjid Al-Islam's Da'wah program, which provides services to Muslim inmates across the U.S. Annually, it provides services to about 2,500 individuals and 5,000 families of inmates. The volunteer-led program offers prayer services, religious education, and individual counseling and emphasizes aftercare for participants, continuing to give counseling services to ex-inmates as well as their families and assisting them in finding affordable housing and offering free transitional housing. Program staff ensure that prison curricula and diet meet the needs of Muslim prisoners. Funding for the program comes mostly from Masjid members and all staff and volunteers undergo a training program.⁵⁰ Following the Richard Reid case, another Muslim convert at Folsom named Akil initiated the Islamic Studies Program, which focuses on a non-violent Islamic religious education. This program is unique in that it is inmate-led, reflecting Akil's belief that the prison system is broken because it does not assist prisoners with reformation and that they must, therefore, pursue reformation on their own. As a result of the program's purported success, Akil has taken on semi-celebrity status, even making television appearances.⁵¹ These faith-based reform programs reveal the potential of reform strategies for dealing with convicted terrorists.

Faith-based reform programs have considerable potential to aid governments seeking to combat radicalization in prisons. Most such programs, as the aforementioned ones, are private initiatives that cooperate with corrections authorities rather than products

⁴⁹ Coretta Pettway, "Best Practices Tool-Kit: Faith-Based Programming, Reentry and Recidivism," Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2007, https://kb.osu.edu/bitstream/handle/1811/30146/Tool_Kit_Faith_Progra..?sequence=2.

⁵⁰ Jeanette Hercik et al, "Development of a Guide to Resources on Faith-Based Organizations in Criminal Justice," National Criminal Justice Reference Service, 2005, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/209350.pdf>.

⁵¹ Hamm "Prison Islam in the Age of Sacred Terror," 679.

of the prison system and Muslim chaplaincies are less developed than Christian ones.⁵² Moreover, researchers and chaplains often point out rampant overcrowding – a problem only public officials have the power to address – as a major obstacle to rehabilitative work.⁵³ At the same time, Grant Duwe and Byron Johnson found that visits by clergy and mentors significantly reduced recidivism rates.⁵⁴ Taken together, these points suggest that institutionalizing Muslim chaplaincies would be a positive step toward effective deradicalization, but that there is still a long way to go. Overcrowding means chaplaincies need to be larger; Folsom, for example, is designed to hold 1,200 inmates, yet houses 4,200 and has just one chaplain for every 2,000 inmates.⁵⁵ Even with Akil’s program, this makes it impossible to effectively reach inmates and Folsom is still at risk of producing more radical gangs that may turn to terrorism. Despite these difficulties, there is enough will to improve the situation if corrections officials cooperate with religious leaders. Faith-based reform programs have shown that they can have significant effects on recidivism and institutionalizing them will amplify their reach while allowing easier vetting of undesirable elements, such as radical preachers distributing radical Islamic pamphlets. Hence, faith-based reform programs offer a promising alternative to failed containment policies.

Conclusion

Goulburn should adopt a policy of dispersion with a strategy of reform to combat radicalization in its walls. Concentration has failed to achieve its desired deterrence value for radical inmates, instead allowing them to mingle, radicalize further, form new organizations, and plot terrorist activities outside of prison. Multiple studies, as well as the aforementioned examples, have shown reform efforts, particularly faith-based ones, can

⁵² Asim Hafiz, “Muslim Chaplaincy in the UK: The Chaplaincy Approach as a Way to a Modern Imamate,” *Religion, State & Society* 43, no. 1 (2015): 85-99.

⁵³ Ibid.; David P. Farrington and Christopher P. Nuttall, “Prison Size, Overcrowding, Prison Violence, and Recidivism,” *Journal of Criminal Justice* 8, no. 4 (1980): 221-231; Michael A. Ruderman, Deirdra F. Wilson, and Savanna Reid, “Does Prison Crowding Predict Higher Rates of Substance Use Related Parole Violations? A Recurrent Events Multi-Level Survival Analysis,” *PLoS ONE* 10, no. 10 (2015), doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0141328.

⁵⁴ Grant Duwe and Byron R. Johnson, “The Effects of Prison Visits From Community Volunteers on Offender Recidivism,” *The Prison Journal* 96, no. 2 (2016): 279.

⁵⁵ Hamm “Prison Islam in the Age of Sacred Terror,” 676, 678.

significantly reduce recidivism rates. Dispersion allows for breaking up of concentrated populations and selective placement of vulnerable inmates at institutions with reform programs that can help them. The nascency of Muslim chaplaincies and persistence of overcrowding leave Australian correctional authorities unprepared to deal with a potential influx of terrorist returnees from the Middle East. But rising political will and increases in budgets for Australian prisons provide an opportunity to meet the challenge and give reform programs the resources they need to reach more inmates.

Figure 1. Policy Analysis Based on Bardach’s and Patashnik’s Eightfold Path

Problem	Muslim inmates at Goulburn Correctional Centre are too vulnerable to radicalization.
Evidence	Studies are increasingly showing that conventional methods of containment are likely to be counterproductive to rehabilitation efforts. As the threat of returnees looms ever larger, Goulburn may adopt innovative reform-based strategies. These include increasing the number of beds to reduce overcrowding and investing in chaplaincy programs. Some sources: Hamm, 2009; Jones, 2014; Liebling & Straub, 2012; Maruna, Wilson, & Curran, 2006; Neumann, 2010; Porter & Kebell, 2011; El-Said, 2015; State of New South Wales (Department of Justice), 2016; Veldhuis, 2016
Alternatives	A: Isolation B: Segregation C: Concentration (current policy) D: Dispersion E: Integration
Criteria (by order of importance)	1) Legality: Is the policy compatible with the law? 2) Political acceptability: Is there sufficient political will to adopt and implement the policy? 3) Effectiveness: How likely is the policy to bring about the desired outcome? 4) Efficiency: Do the policy’s benefits outweigh its costs?

<p>Projected Outcomes</p>	<p>A: Slight decrease in radicalization B: Slight increase in radicalization C: No change (increased radicalization) D: Slight increase in radicalization, robust likelihood of decrease in radicalization if combined with reform E: Slight increase in radicalization, slight likelihood of decrease in radicalization if combined with reform</p>
<p>Trade-offs (What gain vs. what we give up)</p>	<p>A: Effectiveness vs. legality and political acceptability B: Efficiency vs. political acceptability and effectiveness C: Political acceptability vs. Effectiveness D: Efficiency and political acceptability vs. effectiveness (with containment) E: Efficiency vs. effectiveness (with containment)</p>
<p>Decision</p>	<p><u>D</u> D effectively addresses the problem, has no issues of legality, and enjoys political support. It also allows for the development of a robust rehabilitative environment that integrates the latest research into corrections and radicalization. Findings from this research show that one may reasonably judge that it is likely to be effective. It requires some investment and, therefore, comes with a cost. Nonetheless, its merits outweigh its cost.</p>

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