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Jihadist Extremism in Spanish Prisons. Characterisation of the Inmates Linked to Jihadist Radicalisation and Analysis of Their Behaviour in Prison

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ABSTRACT

In Spain, 10.1 percent of jihadist terrorists were radicalised in prison. The objective of this paper is to elaborate on the analysis of the phenomenon of jihadist radicalisation in Spain's prisons by analysing the inmates linked to jihadist radicalisation who are included in the groups A, B and C. The results show that the profile of the inmates linked to jihadist radicalisation has not undergone major changes, although a drop in age and an increase in the number of cases of Spanish nationality can be observed. When the inmates included in the three groups were compared at the time of the investigation (August 2019), it was found that they are of a similar age, that Spanish citizens are more common in group A, mental disorders are more common in group C and that both group B as well as C exhibit a more extensive criminal record and more admissions to prison. Important differences were found with regard to the behaviour in prison, namely that the inmates in group A are not individuals who repeatedly employ violence, while the inmates in group C exhibit a very pronounced antisocial profile, with frequent use of both verbal and physical violence in their day-to-day life in prison.

KEYWORDS

Radicalisation; extremism; jihadist terrorism; behaviour in prison; violent behaviour

Introduction

Prison as a radicalising environment

82 percent of the terrorists who are currently in European prisons are associated with jihadist terrorism,¹ with a significant percentage of them (between 34 percent and 57 percent) having been in prison before.² It is for this reason that the nations as well as various international agencies have emphasised the importance of the prison context in the fight against this phenomenon.³ Yet the concerns about the prison environment are not so much related to the inmates imprisoned for terrorism, but rather to the influence that these inmates may exert over the rest of the inmates.

The conditions in which the prisoners are kept may favour the emergence of radicalisation processes⁴ This process is influenced as much by institutional factors as it is by social and individual aspects, in particular overcrowding and the existence of charismatic inmates who exercise leadership and serve as a guide for the others⁵ According to Warnes and Hannah,⁶ in the European context,

discrimination by society, by the prison staff and by the rest of the prison population is especially relevant; this, along with a lack of personal identity⁷ creates a psychological fragility that makes them vulnerable to the radicalisation process.⁸

As to the relation between mental disorders and radicalisation, the studies show that the presence of mental disorders in terrorists and in the general population is very similar, although it does appear to be more prevalent in specific types of terrorist such as lone wolves.⁹ Nonetheless, it is suggested that the presence of disorders could make subjects more psychologically vulnerable, thus making them more susceptible to the recruitment process.¹⁰ What is more, criminals in general have become a target group for recruitment, given that they generally tend to have a greater predisposition to committing new crimes, as opposed to individuals without a record, who could show a certain reluctance to break the law for the first time.¹¹ Lastly, it seems that young prisoners who are not serving sentences for terrorism have the greatest predisposition to adopting the extremist ideology (Vidino & Clifford, 2019).¹²

Various authors¹³ have noted the lack of empirical studies analysing the characteristics of the inmates as well as the processes of radicalisation in prison. With this in mind, it is worth pointing out the study by King et al.¹⁴ in which the prison data on 40 classified inmates was analysed in two study groups: “Salafist Islamists” and “Islamist terrorists.” The authors found that on the whole, the “Islamist terrorists” demonstrated a greater capacity for committing crimes and terrorist attacks in terms of knowledge, capabilities and financial resources, and that the “Salafist Islamists” had prior criminal records (a profile more similar to that of the common criminal), compared to 25 percent of the “Islamist terrorists.”

The categorisation used in the work of King et al.¹⁵ highlights the two dimensions of jihadist terrorism: thought (extremist beliefs and ideas) and action (commission of crimes related to terrorism).¹⁶ In this context, Silke¹⁷ also identified two types of inmate with regard to jihadist terrorism: a) those that hold extremist beliefs; and b) those that, despite having entered prison on a terrorism offence, were not radicalised. These two groups could be expanded upon by the addition of a third group formed of inmates who entered on charges unrelated to terrorism and were radicalised in prison.

Jihadist radicalisation in Spanish prisons

Reinares et al.¹⁸ found that between the years of 2013 and 2018, of the terrorists detained or killed in Spain, 10.1 percent had been radicalised in prison. Although this may seem like a low percentage, this includes cases of particular severity such as the police operation known as NOVA,¹⁹ which culminated in the arrest of 32 people on charges of membership of a terrorist organisation and planning attacks against the National High Court, among other institutions. This cell was headed primarily by prisoners. Another recent case is that of Abdelbaki Es Satty, better known as the Ripoll imam, who, after leaving prison, created the terrorist cell that was behind the attacks in Catalonia in 2017.²⁰ These cases have contributed to the growing concern over the phenomenon of radicalisation, especially violent radicalisation, in prisons. So much so that, in Spain, the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (Order PCI/179/2019) highlighted the importance of the role played by the prison environment in relation to jihadist terrorism, outlining as the key objectives the identification of proselytising behaviours, the creation of tools for evaluating violent radicalisation, the detection of inmates who actively participate in terrorist groups and the application of deradicalisation programmes.

As for the profile of those imprisoned in Spanish prisons for jihadist terrorism, the studies by the ICSR²¹ and Reinares et al.²² found that the vast majority thereof are men, with only a small number of women, owing in part to the secondary role of women inherent in Muslim society. Nevertheless, the presence of women has increased in recent years, both in Spain²³ and on an international scale,²⁴ whereby the women are mainly involved in recruitment and indoctrination work, and the causes of radicalisation are different to those of the men.²⁵ With regard to age, those imprisoned in Spain for terrorism are overwhelmingly adults, predominantly between the ages of 18 and 38. Specifically, the study by Reinares et al.²⁶ found that over the last few years, there has been a general decline in the average age of those convicted of terrorism, a tendency that is also noticeable internationally.²⁷ As far as nationality, the studies referred to the homegrown phenomenon to demonstrate the

importance of second and third-generation immigrant terrorists from countries such as Morocco or Syria, but also to shine a light on the conversion of nationals of the country in which the attacks are committed,²⁸ highlighting the role of online radicalisation in particular.²⁹ In Spain, the study by Reinares et al.³⁰ found that 66.8 percent of the jihadist terrorists detained or killed in Spain were foreigners, although the percentage of Spanish citizens increased considerably from 2012 onwards, making up 33.2 percent of the total analysed cases. The most prominent nationalities amongst foreigners were Moroccan (40.2 percent), Algerian (8.9 percent) and Pakistani (7 percent), which coincides with the findings of Gutiérrez et al.³¹ On the other hand, although the nationality and the country of birth tend to coincide, variations can occur. In this regard, Reinares et al.³² reported that the countries of birth that stood out were Morocco (42.7 percent), Spain (25.4 percent), Algeria (8.9 percent) and Pakistan (7.5 percent).

The Spanish penitentiary strategy for the control and prevention of jihadist radicalisation

In Instruction 12/2011, the Secretary-General of Penitentiary Institutions (SGPI) outlines that the list of prisoners under special observation (*Fichero de Internos de Especial Seguimiento* or FIES) is directed at those inmates who present a special danger due to the nature of the crime they have committed, since either as a result of their track record in prison or their association with organised crime groups, they have the potential to endanger the stability of the prison system. Based on the crimes committed, the social repercussions thereof, their relation to criminal organisations and the level of danger, the inmates can be classified into five types: *FIES-1 Control Directo*; 2) *FIES-2 Delincuencia Organizada*; 3) *FIES-3 Banda Armada*; 4) *FIES-4 Fuerzas y Cuerpos de Seguridad del Estado y Funcionarios de Instituciones Penitenciarias*; y 5) *FIES-5 Características Especiales*.

As a result of the increase in inmates linked to jihadist terrorism, the SGPI, by way of Instruction 8/2014 and Service Order 4/2014, established that it was necessary for the prison facilities to collect, analyse and systematise information relevant to the detection of extreme behaviours in prison and possible cases of radicalisation. Both Instruction 8/2014 as well as Service Order 4/2014 were revised in Instruction 2/2015. According to this most recent instruction, the following classification of inmates was established: group A (within FIES-3 BA), composed of inmates convicted of belonging to or being associated with jihadist terrorism; group B (within FIES-5 CE), which includes prisoners who carry out a mission of indoctrination and the dissemination of extremist ideas among the rest of the inmates, even performing acts of pressure and coercion; and lastly, group C (within FIES-5 CE), which consists of inmates with a greater level of risk and vulnerability towards the radicalisation process, for whom it can be inferred that an incipient or consolidated process of recruitment may take place.

The tasks of observation, control and information regarding these three groups were intensified and a series of specific measures established for each group, which included the prison regime that is enforced upon and that regulates the life of these inmates. A large number of European countries have opted to isolate people linked to terrorist crimes, so as to prevent them from being able to radicalise other people.³³ This prison policy has also been applied in Spain, as a result of which almost the entirety of cases in group A are in closed regime departments (classified as first degree if they are serving a term of imprisonment, and with the application of art. 10 of the Prison Rules if they are in pre-trial detention). The daily regimen that is applied to those who form part of groups B and C is determined by their behaviour in prison, since they are not convicted of a terrorist offence. Thus the majority thereof live under the ordinary regime. The enforcement of a more restrictive daily regime (closed regime) limits the interactions with the rest of the inmate population and the prison staff as well as the activities in which the prisoner participates, such that the daily regime affects the behaviour in prison. Apropos behaviour, Spanish prison regulations also provide for the existence of sanctions and rewards. Thus on the one hand, the disciplinary regime (violations and sanctions) is designed to guarantee security and the proper functioning of the regime and to achieve an ordered coexistence in such a way that the sense of responsibility and capacity for self-control are fostered. On the other hand, acts that demonstrate good conduct, a good work ethic and a sense of responsibility on the part of the inmates, as well as positive participation in the activities associated with the regime or of any other kind that are organised in the establishment, are encouraged with rewards.

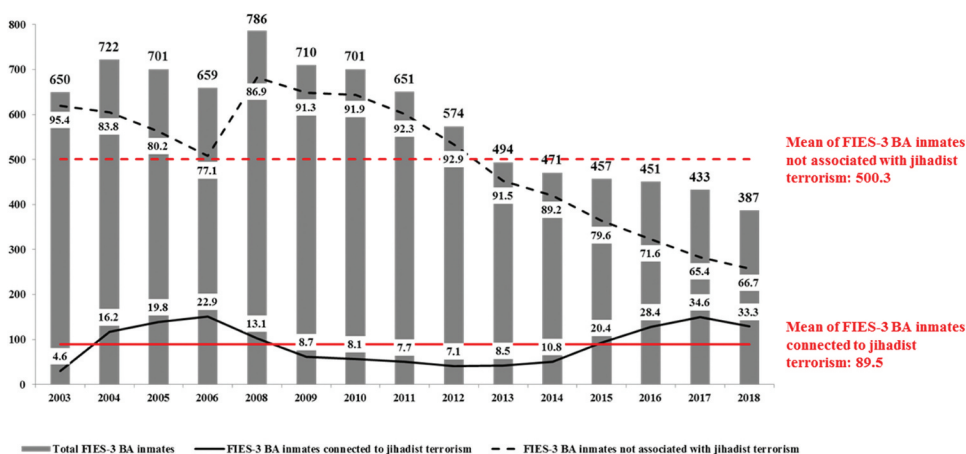


Figure 1. Evolution of the Spanish prison population included in the FIES-3 BA list (2003–2018)*. *No data is available for the year 2007.

Since 2004, the SGPI has published data on the number of inmates associated with jihadist terrorism. The average prison population between the years of 2003 and 2018 was 55,617.2 inmates, of which 1.1 percent was classified as FIES-3 BA, with 0.4 percent of the prison population belonging to group A. During these years, an average of 589.8 inmates classified as FIES-3 BA was recorded, 16.3 percent of which were linked to jihadist terrorism. As can be seen in Figure 1, the evolution of the number of FIES-3 BA inmates not associated with jihadist terrorism (dashed line) shows a downward trend since the year 2008 due to the decline in inmates belonging to the terrorist organisation ETA. As for the FIES-3 BA inmates connected to jihadist terrorism (group A; continuous line), an increase becomes apparent from the year 2004 onwards, owing to the arrests made following the attacks in Madrid on the 11th March 2004 (11-M). Subsequently, there is a period from 2009 until 2014 in which the number of inmates remains stable, ranging between 41 and 62. But the most important change at the national level was the reform of the Criminal Code in which, by dint of Organic Law 2/2015, the regulation of terrorism offences was modified, resulting in a new categorisation of behaviours. Furthermore, multiple arrests were recorded in Ceuta and Catalonia during these years, with the peak of this period coinciding with the Las Ramblas and Cambrils attacks in 2017.

The inclusion of the groups A, B and C in the FIES list was progressive, and was primarily due to the changes described in Spanish criminal policy, fuelled by various terrorist attacks. As can be seen in Table 1, there are records of inmates included in group A from the year 2000 onwards, whereby 2004 was the year in which the highest number of inmates were included in this group, chiefly as a result of the arrests carried out due to 11-M. Group B was included in the FIES list in 2004; 2015 was the year in which the most inmates were included in this group. Lastly, the inclusion of group C in the FIES list took place relatively recently, regulated by Instruction 2/2015 and motivated by the dangerous situation generated by various terrorist attacks committed the same year.

Aims of the study

The main objective of this paper is an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of jihadist radicalisation in Spanish prisons, attempting to overcome the limitations associated with an excessive dependency on secondary sources of information and the lack of empirical research.³⁴ Official data available from the SGPI since records began will be used for this purpose, and a distinction will be made between the various types of inmates associated with jihadist radicalisation and extremism. To begin with, this

Table 1. Number of inmates included in the FIES list each year (2000–2020).

Year	Group A n (percent)	Group B n (percent)	Group C n (percent)	Total
2000	2 (100)			2
2001	15 (100)			15
2002	5 (100)			5
2003	20 (100)			20
2004	84 (85.7)	14 (14.3)		98
2005	50 (80.6)	12 (19.4)		62
2006	34 (75.6)	11 (24.4)		45
2007	30 (88.2)	4 (11.8)		34
2008	34 (75.6)	11 (24.4)		45
2009	13 (56.5)	10 (43.5)		23
2010	10 (71.4)	4 (28.6)		14
2011	17 (53.1)	15 (46.9)		32
2012	9 (56.3)	7 (43.8)		16
2013	20 (80)	5 (20)		25
2014	19 (79.2)	5 (20.8)		24
2015	49 (22.7)	29 (13.4)	138 (63.9)	216
2016	53 (57.6)	12 (13)	27 (29.3)	92
2017	66 (61.1)	13 (12)	29 (26.9)	108
2018	24 (32.9)	19 (26)	30 (41.1)	73
2019	48 (53.3)	22 (24.4)	20 (22.2)	90
2020	13 (34.2)	10 (26.3)	15 (39.5)	38

paper will examine the profile of the inmates historically included in the groups A, B and C, paying attention to the potential differences between the inmates who are currently in prison and those who have already been released, thus leading to the first research question:

Research question 1. Has the socio-demographic profile of the inmates included in groups A, B or C changed?

After examining the evolution of this profile, the paper set out to conduct a comparative study of the inmates included in the three groups who were in prison in August 2019. To do so, both their socio-demographic characteristics as well as their behaviour in prison were taken into account, posing the following research questions:

Research question 2. Are there differences in the socio-demographic characteristics of the inmates currently included in the groups A, B or C?

Research question 3. Are there differences in the behaviour in prison of the inmates currently included in the groups A, B or C?

To a certain extent, the inmates' daily regime determines the behaviours in which they are able to engage. This is why it was taken into account that the majority of the inmates in group A are in a closed prison regime, which is more restrictive than the ordinary regime under which groups B and C live; this could therefore limit their interactions with the prison staff and other inmates. Moreover, the control and security measures are greater. For this reason, this study includes a comparative analysis of the behaviours displayed by the inmates in group A included in the closed regime and in the ordinary regime:

Research question 4. Does the daily regime influence the behaviours of the inmates in group A?

Methodology

Sample

The sample was made up of 624 inmates who had been or were included in the groups A, B or C in August 2019, in accordance with the provisions of Instruction 2/2015 of SGIP. Thereof, 279 (44.7 percent) were in group A, 134 (21.5 percent) were in group B and 211 were in group C (33.8 percent). These inmates presented a mean age of 37.4 years (SD = 9.468; range = 21–74; Mdn = 36), 95 percent were men and 20 percent were born in Spain, while 26 percent were of Spanish nationality. Among the most common foreign countries of origin were Morocco (324; 51.9 percent), Algeria (64; 10.3 percent), Pakistan and Syria (15; 2.4 percent each). The most prominent foreign nationalities were Moroccan (297; 47.6 percent), Algerian (71; 11.4 percent), Pakistani (14; 2.2 percent) and Syrian (11; 1.8 percent).

In the second part of the study, which compared the socio-demographic characteristics of the inmates included in the groups A, B or C, only the data of the inmates who were in prison at the time of the study was analysed. The subsample used for this analysis was made up of 222 inmates (35.5 percent of the total). Of these inmates, 119 (53.6 percent) were in group A, 42 (18.9 percent) in group B and 61 in group C (27.5 percent). They presented a mean age of 35.78 years (SD = 8.577; range = 21–64; Mdn = 34.5), 94.6 percent were men and 27.5 percent were born in Spain, with 32.9 percent of them holding Spanish nationality. The foreign countries of origin that stood out the most were Morocco (114; 51.4 percent), Algeria (15; 6.8 percent) and Syria (6; 2.7 percent). The most prominent foreign nationalities were Moroccan (102; 45.9 percent), Algerian (18; 8.1 percent) and Syrian (6; 2.7 percent).

Procedure

As part of the goals set out in the fight against violent radicalisation in the prison setting, the SGPI decided to conduct an empirical investigation that would allow for a more detailed look at the variables related to radicalisation in prison. Accordingly, the review of the available prison information was initiated in August 2019. Once all the inmates in groups A, B and C had been identified, the next step was to examine the existing documentation on these inmates, paying special attention to the socio-demographic variables and the variables pertaining to their behaviour in prison, with a view to discovering indicators that would enable a differentiation between the groups. In order to identify the possible evolution of the characteristics of the inmates included in groups A, B or C, the investigation identified the inmates who had been included in said groups but who were not in prison (former prisoners) in August 2019.

All of the data was obtained via the Prison Information System (*Sistema de Información Penitenciaria* or SIP), which is the official IT tool for the management of prison data. Ethical issues about the treatment of personal data are regulated in the Spanish penitentiary regulation (Chapter 3 of the Spanish penitentiary regulation), establishing that the penitentiary administration is allowed to gather personal data about inmates with the aim of exercising their functions without needing to previously obtain the inmate's consent. Otherwise the Instruction 13/2019 refers to the inmate's duty of accessing these data.

Variables

Classification of the inmates

The central variable of the study is the penitentiary classification assigned to the inmates included in the sample and as described in the introduction (1 = Group A; 2 = Group B; 3 = Group C). What is more, given that the study includes all the inmates who were ever classified as A, B, or C in prison at any moment in time, they were also divided according to whether they were in prison or not at the time of the study (1 = Former prisoner; 2 = In prison). For the last part of the study, the inmates in group A were categorised according to the prison regime under which they were living (1 = Closed regime; 2 = Ordinary Regime).

Socio-demographic variables and criminal history

The socio-demographic variables of the inmates included their sex (1 = Man; 2 = Woman), age indicated in years, country of origin (1 = Spain; 2 = Other), nationality (1 = Spanish; 2 = Other) and a combination of the last two variables (1 = Country of origin Spain/Spanish nationality; 2 = Foreign country of origin/Foreign nationality; 3 = Foreign country of origin/Spanish nationality). For the inmates who were in prison at the time of conducting the study, the existence of mental disorders was also recorded (1 = Yes; 2 = No). With regard to the criminal history, the total number of crimes and the total number of admissions to prison were recorded.

Behaviour in prison

Data on the behaviour of the inmates who were in prison in August 2019 was collected in accordance with the Spanish prison regulations. This involved gathering information on behaviour related to violence in general, physical violence, physical violence against prison staff, physical violence against inmates, insults or threats in general, insults or threats towards prison staff, insults or threats towards other inmates, self-harm, failure to comply with the rules of the centre, the introduction of prohibited goods (prohibited goods are understood to mean all goods that the inmate is not authorised to have, which can include objects such as mobile phones, CDs or weapons) and specifically the introduction of drugs, non-prescription medication or jihadist material (all variables were codified 1 = Presence; 2 = Absence). With a view to also evaluating the inmates' adjustment to the prison environment and appropriate behaviour, the total number of rewards for good behaviour and participation in registered activities since their last admission to prison were also included.

Analysis

In this study, descriptive and bivariate analyses were carried out, whereby the first part compared the former and current inmates in each of the groups, and the second part compared the current inmates with one another, this time including the variables of behaviour inside the prison. Given that the profile of the women exhibited several important differences vis-à-vis that of the men and that the literature has found that the role of women in jihadist terrorism is different to that of men, a choice was made to present the data on women in an independent and descriptive manner in the second part of the study, seeing as only women classified in group A were recorded. Lastly, in this second part, the behaviour of the inmates in group A was also analysed at a descriptive level, based on the regime under which they were living (closed regime vs. ordinary regime). The Chi-Square test of independence was used to compare the categorical variables, including the value ϕ and Cramer's V to provide information on the size of the effect, and under consideration of Fisher's exact test if the expected count was less than 5 in any of the cells. When addressing the distribution of the quantitative variables, the tests employed were the Mann-Whitney U test, Student's t-test for comparing the means and the Kruskal-Wallis test. The investigation worked with a level of significance of .05.

Results

Comparison of former inmates vs. current inmates

As can be seen in Table 2, the number of men and women included in group A remained stable, with no significant differences found between the former inmates and those who are currently in prison. The former prisoners presented a mean age of 37.6 years (SD = 10.383; range = 21–71; Mdn = 36) and the current inmates that of 35.3 years (SD = 9.077; range = 22–60; Mdn = 33); but despite this decline in age (a median of 36 vs. 33), these differences are not significant. With regard to the country of birth, it was observed that it is more common for the inmates who are currently included in group A to have Spain as their country of birth compared to the inmates who have already been released from prison ($\chi^2(1, N = 274) = 13.971, p = .000; \phi = -.226$); the same is true for the nationality, with it being more

Table 2. Comparison by groups of the socio-demographic characteristics of the former inmates associated with jihadist radicalisation and of those who are currently in prison.

	Group A (n = 279)			Group B (n = 134)			Group C (n = 211)		
	Former inmate n (percent)	In prison n (percent)	Total n (percent)	Former inmate n (percent)	In prison n (percent)	Total n (percent)	Former inmate n (percent)	In prison n (percent)	Total n (percent)
Sex									
Man	143 (89.4)	107 (89.9)	250 (89.6)	91 (98.9)	42 (100)	133 (99.3)	149 (99.3)	61 (100)	210 (99.5)
Woman	17 (10.6)	12 (10.1)	29 (10.4)	1 (1.1)	0 (0)	1 (0.7)	1 (0.7)	0 (0)	1 (0.5)
Age									
Years (Mdn)	36	33	35	40	37	40	36	35	36
Country of origin									
Spain	27 (17.3)	44 (37.3)	71 (25.9)	11 (12.4)	4 (10.3)	15 (11.7)	26 (18.2)	13 (21.3)	39 (19.1)
Other	129 (82.7)	74 (62.7)	203 (74.1)	78 (87.6)	35 (89.7)	113 (88.3)	117 (81.8)	48 (78.7)	165 (80.9)
Country of nationality									
Spain	46 (28.9)	53 (44.5)	99 (35.6)	12 (13)	5 (11.9)	17 (12.7)	31 (20.7)	15 (24.6)	46 (21.8)
Other	113 (71.1)	66 (55.5)	179 (64.4)	80 (87)	37 (88.1)	117 (87.3)	119 (79.3)	46 (75.4)	165 (78.2)
Country of origin- nationality									
Spain-Spanish	27 (17.3)	44 (37.3)	71 (25.9)	11 (12.4)	4 (10.3)	15 (11.7)	26 (18.2)	13 (21.3)	39 (19.1)
Foreign-foreign	111 (71.2)	65 (55.1)	176 (64.2)	78 (87.6)	35 (89.7)	113 (88.3)	114 (79.7)	46 (75.4)	160 (78.4)
Foreign-Spanish	18 (11.5)	9 (7.6)	27 (9.9)	-	-	-	3 (2.1)	2 (3.3)	5 (2.5)

common for the current As to have Spanish nationality ($\chi^2(1, N = 278) = 7.230, p = .007; \phi = -.161$). Upon studying the combination of both variables, it was found that among the A inmates who are currently in prison, it is more common for them to have been born in Spain and have Spanish nationality, and for the former inmates to be foreigners and have foreign nationality, with the number of those born abroad but with Spanish nationality remaining stable ($\chi^2(1, N = 274) = 14.094, p = .001$; Cramer's $V = .227$).

As far as the profile of the inmates in group B is concerned, no significant differences were found in the socio-demographic variables analysed. Despite this, it is worth pointing out that historically, only one woman was recorded as belonging to this group, although she was not in prison at the time of performing the study. As was the case for group A, a decline in the age of the former B inmates (average = 40.3; SD = 9.086; range = 24–74; Mdn = 40) and the current B inmates (average = 37.3; SD = 8.414; range = 21.64; Mdn = 37) was observed, although the difference is not significant. Lastly, the country of origin and the nationality of these inmates remained stable over the long term; they were predominantly foreigners with foreign nationality. No cases of inmates born abroad with Spanish nationality were recorded.

Finally, no significant changes were found in the characteristics of the inmates in group C either. As was true for group B, it should be pointed out that only one woman was recorded in this group, although she was not in prison at the time of performing the study. A decline in age can also be observed among the inmates in group C, albeit less pronounced than in the two previous groups, with the former prisoners presenting an average age of 37.6 (SD = 9.546; range = 22–63; Mdn = 36) and the current inmates an average age of 35.6 (SD = 7.651; range = 23–51; Mdn = 35). The inmates' countries of origin and nationality remained stable; they were predominantly born outside of Spain and held foreign nationality, whereby 5 cases of foreigners with Spanish nationality stood out.

Comparison of the inmates associated with jihadist radicalisation who are in prison

Table 3 displays the socio-demographic profiles of the male inmates included in the groups A, B and C who were in prison at the time the data was collected. As can be seen, although there are no major differences, the inmates in group A are the youngest (34 years), followed by the Cs (35 years) and the Bs (37 years). In terms of the country of origin and the nationality, those born in Spain and of Spanish nationality are more common amongst the inmates in group A, while foreign countries of origin and foreign nationalities are more common amongst the inmates in group B. It is also worth noting the 8 cases of inmates born abroad and holding Spanish nationality who were included in group A. There was a significant association between mental disorders and the inmates in group C, while they were very rare in the other two groups. Finally, considerable differences were found both in the number of crimes ($H(2) = 77.424, p < .000$) as well as in the number of admissions to prison ($H(2) = 21.440, p < .000$). To calculate the differences, the Mann-Whitney U test was used, with an alpha value adjusted using the Bonferroni correction of .017 (.05/3). The side-by-side comparisons revealed that the inmates in group B ($U = 1398, z = -3.490, p < .000, r = -.232$) and C ($U = 692, z = -8.576, p < .000, r = -.340$) logged significantly more crimes than those in group A, and in turn, the C inmates logged significantly more crimes than those in group B ($U = 598, z = -4.477, p < .000, r = -.141$). As for the number of admissions, the inmates in groups B ($U = 1663, z = -2.826, p = .005, r = -.232$) and C ($U = 1986, z = -4.409, p < .000, r = -.342$) demonstrated significantly more admissions to prison than the inmates in group A.

At the time of performing the study, there were only women in group A, who exhibited a median age of 24.5 and who were mainly born in Spain and of Spanish nationality. No women with mental disorders were recorded. As for the number of crimes and admissions to prison, the data for the women recorded a median of 1 crime and 1 admission.

Table 3. Comparison by groups of the socio-demographic characteristics of the inmates associated with jihadist radicalisation in prison.

Variable	Category	Group of current inmates (n = 210)			Total men	p value (Cramer's V)	Group A current women (n = 12)	Total
		A (n = 107) n (percent)	B (n = 42) n (percent)	C (n = 61) n (percent)				
Age (Mdn)		34	37	35	35.5	.636	24.5	34.5
Country of origin	Spain	37 (34.9)	4 (10.3)	13 (21.3)	54 (26.2)	.007 (.221)	7 (58.3)	61 (28)
	Other	69 (65.1)	35 (89.7)	48 (78.7)	152 (73.8)		5 (41.7)	157 (72)
Country of nationality	Spain	45 (42.1)	5 (11.9)	15 (24.6)	65 (31)	.001 (.262)	8 (66.7)	73 (32.9)
	Other	62 (57.9)	37 (88.1)	46 (75.4)	145 (69)		4 (33.3)	149 (67.1)
Country of origin-nationality	Spain-Spanish	37 (34.9)	4 (10.3)	13 (21.3)	54 (26.2)	.002 (.197)*	7 (58.3)	61 (28)
	Outside of Spain-foreign	61 (57.5)	35 (89.7)	46 (75.4)	142 (68.9)		4 (33.3)	146 (67)
	Outside of Spain-Spanish	8 (7.5)	0 (0)	2 (3.3)	10 (4.9)		1 (8.3)	11 (5)
Mental disorder	Yes	6 (5.6)	2 (4.8)	12 (20.3)	20 (9.6)	.008 (.229)*	0 (0)	20 (9.1)
	No	101 (94.4)	40 (95.2)	47 (79.7)	188 (90.4)		12 (100)	200 (90.9)
Number of crimes (Mdn)		2	3	7	3	.000	1	3
Number of admissions to prison (Mdn)		1	2	2	1	.000	1	1

(Mdn). The Kruskal-Wallis test was used.

*Fisher's exact test.

Behaviour of the inmates associated with jihadist radicalisation in prison

As illustrated in Table 4, the behaviour of the inmates in prison differs significantly depending on the group in which they are classified. With regard to the presence of violent incidents in general, these are more frequent among the inmates in group C. Physical violence was linked to the inmates in groups B and C, as both of these groups were violent with the other inmates; the Cs also exhibited violence against the prison staff. Non-physical violence was linked to the inmates in group C, for whom a greater presence of insults and threats was recorded, both against other inmates as well as against the prison staff. Self-harm was also more common among the inmates in group C.

What is more, failure to comply with the regulations of the centre was associated with the inmates in group C, who recorded a greater number of introductions of prohibited goods, specifically of drugs and non-prescription medication. No significant differences were found with respect to the introduction of jihadist material.

Lastly, significant differences were found both in the number of rewards ($H(2) = 31.007, p < .000$) as well as in the number of punishments ($H(2) = 41.803, p < .000$). To calculate the differences, the Mann-Whitney U test was used, with an alpha value adjusted using the Bonferroni correction of .017 (.05/3). The side-by-side comparisons showed that the inmates in groups B ($U = 1253, z = -4.131, p < .000, r = -.340$) and C ($U = 1731, z = -4.901, p < .000, r = -.380$) recorded substantially more rewards than the inmates in group A. In terms of the number of punishments, the inmates in groups B ($U = 484.5, z = -2.812, p = .005, r = -.433$) and C ($U = 218.5, z = -6.289, p < .000, r = -.498$) logged significantly more punishments than those in group A, and in turn, the inmates in group C presented more punishments than those in group B ($U = 145.5, z = -3.212, p = .001, r = -.012$).

For their part, half of the women in group A recorded violent incidents, 2 of which involved physical violence against inmates and 4 of which were insults or threats against inmates. Only 1 woman recorded an incident of self-harm. Of the 12 women, 3 showed failure to comply with the regulations and only one was recorded as introducing prohibited goods. None were recorded for smuggling in jihadist material. The women in group A recorded a median of 4.5 rewards.

Influence of the prison regime on the behaviour of the inmates

Given that the daily regime that is enforced also has the potential to condition the behaviour in prison, the influence of this variable was analysed specifically. Table 5 shows the behaviour of the male inmates included in group A based on their prison regime. Violence against prison staff and self-harm are the behaviours recorded least of all; this form of violence was committed by only 3 percent of the inmates in the closed regime and none of those included in the ordinary regime. Conversely, violent incidents in general and the introduction of prohibited jihadist material are the two behaviours that were recorded to a greater extent among the inmates in the closed regime. The rest of the behaviours are more common among the inmates in the ordinary regime.

Discussion

Comparison of the former inmates and those who are currently in prison associated with jihadist radicalisation

The results of this study lead to the conclusion that the profile of the inmates linked to jihadist radicalisation in Spanish prisons has not undergone major changes. In general, almost no differences were found between the inmates who are currently in prison and those who have already been released, although a certain decline in age and an increase in the number of cases of Spanish nationality can be observed. The studies carried out at an international level did find changes in the tendencies with regard to jihadist terrorism. These changes were mainly related to the gradual



Table 4. Comparison of the behaviour in prison of inmates on the FIES list.

Variable	Category	Group of current men (n = 210)			Total men	p value (Cramer's V)	Group A current women (n = 12)		Total
		A (n = 107)	B (n = 42)	C (n = 61)			Group A	Total	
		n (percent)	n (percent)	n (percent)					
Violent incidents	Yes	54 (50.5)	28 (70)	53 (88.3)	135 (65.2)	.000 (.346)	6 (50)	141 (64.4)	
	No	53 (49.5)	12 (30)	7 (11.7)	72 (34.8)		6 (50)	78 (35.6)	
Physical violence	Yes	24 (22.4)	28 (70)	45 (75)	97 (46.9)	.000 (.508)	2 (16.7)	99 (45.2)	
	No	83 (77.6)	12 (30)	15 (25)	110 (53.1)		10 (83.3)	120 (54.8)	
Physical violence prison staff	Yes	3 (2.8)	3 (7.5)	12 (20)	18 (8.7)	.001 (.264)*	0 (0)	18 (8.2)	
	No	104 (97.2)	37 (92.5)	48 (80)	189 (91.3)		12 (100)	201 (91.8)	
Physical violence inmate	Yes	20 (18.7)	26 (65)	42 (70)	88 (42.5)	.000 (.500)	2 (16.7)	90 (41.1)	
	No	87 (81.3)	14 (35)	18 (30)	119 (57.5)		10 (83.3)	129 (58.9)	
Insult or threats	Yes	26 (24.3)	21 (52.5)	37 (61.7)	84 (40.6)	.000 (.349)	4 (33.3)	88 (40.2)	
	No	81 (75.7)	19 (47.5)	23 (38.3)	123 (59.4)		8 (66.7)	131 (59.8)	
Insult or threats to staff member	Yes	19 (17.8)	15 (37.5)	32 (53.3)	66 (31.9)	.000 (.334)	0 (0)	66 (30.1)	
	No	88 (82.2)	25 (62.5)	28 (46.7)	141 (68.1)		12 (100)	153 (69.9)	
Insult or threats to other inmate	Yes	13 (12.1)	10 (25)	19 (31.7)	42 (20.3)	.008 (.217)	4 (33.3)	46 (21)	
	No	94 (87.9)	30 (75)	41 (68.3)	165 (79.7)		8 (66.7)	173 (79)	
Self-harm	Yes	3 (2.8)	7 (17.5)	21 (35)	31 (15)	.000 (.390)	1 (8.3)	32 (14.6)	
	No	104 (97.2)	33 (82.5)	39 (65)	176 (85)		11 (91.7)	187 (85.4)	
Failure to comply with centre rules	Yes	47 (43.9)	24 (60)	43 (71.7)	114 (55.1)	.002 (.245)	3 (25)	117 (53.4)	
	No	60 (56.1)	16 (40)	17 (28.3)	93 (44.9)		9 (75)	102 (46.6)	
Introduction of prohibited goods	Yes	47 (43.9)	25 (61)	48 (80)	120 (57.7)	.000 (.316)	1 (8.3)	121 (55)	
	No	60 (56.1)	16 (39)	12 (20)	88 (42.3)		11 (91.7)	99 (45)	
Prohibited goods drugs	Yes	8 (7.5)	8 (20)	20 (35.7)	36 (17.8)	.000 (.315)	0 (0)	36 (16.8)	
	No	98 (92.5)	32 (80)	36 (64.3)	166 (82.2)		12 (100)	178 (83.2)	
Prohibited goods medication	Yes	7 (6.6)	3 (7.9)	15 (25.9)	25 (12.4)	.002 (.260)	0 (0)	25 (11.7)	
	No	99 (93.4)	35 (92.1)	43 (74.1)	177 (87.6)		12 (100)	189 (88.3)	
Prohibited goods jihadist material	Yes	18 (17)	6 (14.3)	13 (22.4)	37 (18)	.539	0 (0)	37 (17)	
	No	88 (83)	36 (85.7)	45 (77.6)	169 (82)		12 (100)	181 (83)	
Rewards (Mdn)		1	6	6	3	.000	4.5	3	

(Mdn). The Kruskal-Wallis test was used.

*Fisher's exact test.

Table 5. Comparison of the behaviour in prison of inmates in group A in a closed regime and an ordinary regime.

Variable	Category	Inmates group A in closed regime (n = 101) n (percent)	Inmates group A in ordinary regime (n = 6) n (percent)	Total A
Violent incidents	Yes	51 (50.5)	3 (50)	54 (50.5)
	No	50 (49.5)	3 (50)	53 (49.5)
Physical violence	Yes	22 (21.8)	2 (33.3)	24 (22.4)
	No	79 (78.2)	4 (66.7)	83 (77.6)
Physical violence prison staff	Yes	3 (3)	0 (0)	3 (2.8)
	No	98 (97)	6 (100)	104 (97.2)
Physical violence inmate	Yes	18 (17.8)	2 (33.3)	20 (18.7)
	No	83 (82.2)	4 (66.7)	87 (81.3)
Insult or threats	Yes	49 (48.5)	3 (50)	52 (48.6)
	No	52 (51.5)	3 (50)	55 (51.4)
Insult or threats to staff member	Yes	17 (16.8)	2 (33.3)	19 (17.8)
	No	84 (83.2)	4 (66.7)	88 (82.2)
Insult or threats to other inmate	Yes	11 (10.9)	2 (33.3)	13 (12.1)
	No	94 (87.9)	4 (66.7)	94 (87.9)
Self-harm	Yes	3 (3)	0 (0)	3 (2.8)
	No	98 (97)	6 (100)	104 (97.2)
Failure to comply with centre rules	Yes	44 (43.6)	3 (50)	47 (43.9)
	No	57 (56.4)	3 (50)	60 (56.1)
Introduction of prohibited goods	Yes	44 (43.6)	3 (50)	47 (43.9)
	No	57 (56.4)	3 (50)	60 (56.1)
Prohibited goods drugs	Yes	6 (6)	2 (33.3)	8 (7.5)
	No	94 (94)	4 (66.7)	98 (92.5)
Prohibited goods medication	Yes	6 (6)	1 (16.7)	7 (6.6)
	No	94 (94)	5 (83.3)	99 (93.4)
Prohibited goods jihadist material	Yes	17 (17)	1 (16.7)	18 (17)
	No	83 (83)	5 (83.3)	88 (83)
Rewards (Mdn)		18.5	18.5	1

introduction of women to these types of crimes,³⁵ the decrease in age in those imprisoned for jihadist terrorism (Vidino & Clifford, 2019)³⁶ and as a result of the increase in terrorists born in the country in which they commit the crimes for which they are arrested.³⁷

With regard to the women, the results of this study do not reflect the same evolution in our country, since they show that the number of women imprisoned on charges of jihadist terrorism in Spain has not varied significantly, as the percentage of female former prisoners and those who are in prison is similar (10.6 percent vs. 10.1 percent). This could be ascribed to the fact that in Spain, violent crimes against people (attacks) based on jihadist ideology are not as common as in other countries. For their part, the behaviours that are indeed more common are self-indoctrination, recruitment and the dissemination of extremist ideas online, all crimes that the studies associated with women. What is more, from the year 2014 onwards, the Islamic State intensified its efforts to recruit women with the intention that they would produce the next generations of terrorists, thus perpetuating the radical jihadist ideology.³⁸

With reference to the age of the men, a general decline was observed both among those imprisoned for jihadist terrorism (group A) as well as among the rest of the inmates associated with jihadist radicalisation (groups B and C). This tendency of a drop in age has been observed internationally and may, to a certain extent, be explained by the vulnerability of young people to the processes of radicalisation,³⁹ which makes them major targets for the terrorist organisations (Vidino & Clifford, 2019),⁴⁰ and as a consequence of the campaign led by the Islamic State for the recruitment of Western youth.⁴¹ Young people are characterised by having fewer personal responsibilities such as a family or work, which increases their availability for becoming involved in terrorist groups, in addition to having less awareness of the costs and dangers, all of which makes it plausible to consider youth as a risk factor for terrorist violence.⁴² Although the differences in age were not significant, it is worth mentioning that the As are the youngest (35 years old), followed by the Cs (36) and the Bs (40). The elevated age of the inmates in group B could be explained by the fact that, since these are inmates who carry out tasks of proselytism, indoctrination and recruitment, their profile is that of a more adult inmate who exercises leadership over the rest.

Lastly, a clear tendency was identified in terms of the countries of origin and the nationalities of the inmates connected to jihadist radicalisation. There are more Spanish citizens among the inmates who are currently in prison than among the former prisoners. This is especially true in the case of the As, seeing as the number of Spanish inmates has increased by 20 percent and the number of those with Spanish nationality has increased by 15.6 percent. An increase of 3.1 percent and 3.9 percent respectively also occurred among the inmates in group C. Only in group B did the number of Spanish inmates and those with Spanish nationality show a slight decrease (2.1 percent and 1.1 percent respectively). This increase in Spanish citizens among the inmates connected to jihadist radicalisation can be explained primarily by the increase in the processes of online recruitment and radicalisation,⁴³ which does not require direct contact between the recruiters and recruits; additionally, it could also be explained by the inmates who represent second and third generations of immigrants from countries such as Morocco, Syria or Pakistan, on account of their concept of dual identity and dual ethnicity, which could contribute to their tension, stress and the temptation to confront their internal conflicts by taking refuge in a radical ideology.⁴⁴

Comparison between the inmates in groups A, B and C

An in-depth analysis of the profile of the inmates associated with jihadist radicalisation who are currently in prison reveals important differences between the groups A, B and C. As mentioned in the introduction, this classification is based on the crimes that got them admitted to prison as much as on the behaviours they exhibit in their day-to-day life. Accordingly, the inmates in group A are those who have committed crimes of terrorism, the Bs engage in efforts involving recruitment and the dissemination of extremist ideas, and the Cs are vulnerable inmates who are being or have been radicalised in prison.

With respect to the socio-demographic profile of these inmates, it was found that they are of a similar age, with the As being the youngest, followed by the Cs and the Bs. At present, the only women recorded are in group A, and they present an age much lower than that of the men (24.5 vs. 34 years old), which can be explained by the fact that the recruitment campaigns are focused on finding women of a fertile age so that they enter into marriage with mujahideen.⁴⁵

With regard to the country of origin and the nationality, it was found that Spaniards are more common among group A, as is the Spanish nationality. As previously discussed, this could be due to the particular endogenous phenomenon in the West that arises as the result of cultural tensions and the fact of belonging to two countries (parents' country of origin and host country) in the case of individuals who are the second or third generation of immigrants.⁴⁶ It could also be explained by the new methods of recruitment adopted by the terrorist groups, who use social media and the internet as a means of disseminating radical propaganda with the goal of recruiting the current generation of young people. The influence of these virtual environments, in addition to their young age and low

awareness of the costs and dangers, can lead to violent radicalisation. These strategies would avoid the physical limitations and achieve a global jihadist impact.⁴⁷ As is true for the men in group A, the women are also primarily of Spanish origin and Spanish nationality.

Mental disorders are rare in the study sample, as they were only recorded in 20 (9.6 percent) of the inmates associated with jihadist radicalisation. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that these cases were found to occur with much greater frequency among the inmates in group C. The reasonable explanation for this is that the presence of mental disorders can make these individuals especially vulnerable to the recruitment processes.⁴⁸ No women with mental disorders were recorded, which can be explained by the fact that there are no women in group C, the group in which this characteristic was most commonly found.

Lastly, it was found that the inmates in groups B and C presented a more extensive criminal record and greater number of admissions to prison than those in group A. These results indicate that the inmates in group B, and especially those in group C, have a profile that is more similar to that of the common criminal, which leads to them recording more admissions to prison, while the inmates who have committed crimes of terrorism only serve the sentence for these crimes and, in the majority of cases, this tends to be their first and only crime. This can also be explained by the fact that since the inmates in group A are the youngest, it is less likely that they will have been able to build a criminal career. The findings concerning the criminal history also demonstrate that support for terrorist organisations and, in general, extremist ideas, is what makes the inmates in group A exercise violence, while the antisocial profile of the inmates in group C means that they do not show reluctance when it comes to breaking the law, which is what the recruiters are seeking, according to what the studies have indicated.⁴⁹ The women in group A present a criminal history very similar to that of the men in this same group, although the number of crimes recorded is in fact even lower, which once again demonstrates that the women arrested for jihadist terrorism in Spain are not particularly violent in general.

Behaviour in prison of the inmates associated with jihadist radicalisation

As indicated in the introduction, the day-to-day life of the inmates varies depending on the group in which they are placed, with the majority of the inmates in group A placed under a closed regime. Since this may condition the interactions that these inmates are able to have within prison as well as their behaviours, the behaviour of the inmates in group A was analysed specifically on the basis of their prison regime. For 50.5 percent of those included in the closed regime, violent incidents were recorded, and 43.6 percent also failed to comply with the rules of the centre and were caught introducing prohibited goods. What is more, it should be emphasised that behaviours such as violence against prison staff only occurred amongst inmates included in the closed regime, and conducts that do not reflect interaction with others, such as self-harm, were also exclusive to these inmates. This has enabled the conclusion that, although their behaviour may be limited to a certain extent, the inmates included in a closed regime have the possibility to perform all of the behaviours analysed.

After analysing the possible influence of the prison regime, the comparative analysis by group showed that, in general, the inmates in group C present the most violent behaviour in prison. With reference to physical violence, the Bs also exercise this type of violence against other inmates, although it is only the Cs who also exercise it against prison staff. Insults and threats are also more common amongst the inmates in group C, as is self-harming behaviour; the latter could be related to the presence of mental disorders in group C, which may lead them to harm themselves or even contribute to the occurrence of violent behaviour in general.

This antisocial behaviour of the inmates in group C is also reflected in the systematic failure to comply with the rules of the centre, whereby the smuggling of drugs into the centre, which would reinforce this antisocial profile, is particularly noteworthy, as is the introduction or undue accumulation of non-prescription medication. This last factor, again, could be related to the mental disorders observed in group C, since the medication in question could be the medication needed to treat the disorder. With

regard to the introduction of prohibited goods, it should also be noted that there are no significant differences in the possession and subsequent confiscation of jihadist material. Although it would be expected that the inmates in group A, or even those in group B due to their role as recruiters and disseminators of extremist ideas, would be involved in more incidents of this type, the results obtained could stem from the fact that there is stricter control over the inmates in group A, which would lead them to avoid having these and other kinds of prohibited goods; the same could be said for the inmates in group B. For their part, the Cs present the highest number of introductions of jihadist material, which could be explained by the fact that they are less strictly monitored than the other two groups, but also because it is likely that this material forms part of the process of radicalisation in which they find themselves.

Lastly, both the Bs and Cs register more rewards than the As—the rewards are associated with participation in activities. Since participation in activities is affected by the daily regime, in the sense that inmates in the closed regime departments are much more limited in their options, it is only normal that the inmates in group A receive fewer rewards. In general, the inmates in group A go unnoticed to a greater extent, since they exhibit fewer violent behaviours than the other two groups, but they also register fewer rewards, although this could—as previously mentioned—be a result of the conditioning of their behaviour, in terms of both negative as well as positive behaviour.

As far as the behaviour of the women is concerned, it is worth highlighting that physical violence is rare, and the most commonly recorded type of violent conduct are insults and threats against other inmates. In addition, it is not common for the women to violate the rules of the centre; they did not record a single introduction of drugs, nor of medication nor jihadist material, and they registered a greater number of rewards than the male inmates in group A. This shows that the behaviour of the women who are in prison for crimes of jihadist terrorism is not violent, which is to be expected since, as is the case with the men, group A is made up of inmates who are rarely violent in general and whose use of violence is intimately linked to extremist ideas.

Overall, the findings on behaviour in prison reveal two clear ideas. Firstly, that there is a large difference between the inmates in group A and the inmates in group C, given that the former associate violence with extremist ideas, since they generally do not seem to be individuals who repeatedly exercise violence. The inmates in group C, in turn, present a very pronounced antisocial profile, frequently employing violence in their day-to-day life in prison, even against prison staff, and they also present a prior criminal history with various crimes and various admissions to prison. This, together with the presence of mental disorders and the introduction of drugs, supports the idea that the group C inmate has a profile similar to that of the common criminal, with certain characteristics that make him especially vulnerable to the processes of radicalisation.

The results shown in this investigation have important practical implications. On the one hand, they reinforce the measures implemented by the Spanish prison administration since 2004 to prevent, control and reduce the processes of radicalisation in prison. The fact that no major changes have occurred in the profile of the persons linked to this type of crime since the emergence of this type of terrorism in our country means that the penitentiary measures implemented so far continue to be fully effective. In many other cases, the criminal phenomena evolve at great speed, forcing the institutions to carry out constant changes in order to adapt to this evolution of criminality.

On the other hand, important differences were observed between the men and the women who commit crimes of terrorism. This finding has important repercussions, as it establishes the need for the prison policy to include the perspective of gender when it comes to violent radicalisation. The actions taken to control and intervene in female radicalisation should be different, given that the women are younger, less violent and have a less extensive criminal history than the male terrorists. With a view to applying treatment programmes, these differences should also be taken into account; after all, the criminogenic and therapeutic needs are different.

The fact that important differences can also be observed between the male inmates in groups A, B and C also has consequences for the prison policy. The treatment programme that is currently applied at penitentiary institutions provides for two different itineraries: for inmates in group A on the

one hand, and those in groups B and C on the other. The results indicate that the programme for group A should be more focused on the radical beliefs, while in the B and C groups, the antisocial behaviour should be addressed in a more general manner. Furthermore, since behaviour in prison is very varied, the policies for the management and control of the inmates should also be individualised and adapted to the characteristics of the inmates.

Limitations

The main limitations of this study are those related to the conditioning of the behaviour of the inmates. Firstly, as indicated in several different parts of this paper, some of the inmates in group A were under an ordinary regime and others under a closed regime, which could determine, to a certain extent, the behaviours that these inmates are able to carry out, as a result of the restrictions imposed by the closed regime. Nevertheless, it was established that even under this daily prison regime, the inmates exhibited several of the behaviours analysed in the second section of this paper. Secondly, when an inmate is included in the FIES list, they are informed of this fact, which in one way or another also conditions their behaviour in prison.

Future lines of research

This paper constitutes the first investigation that systematically analyses the official information available on the inmates who have been or are associated with jihadist radicalisation in Spanish prisons. For something that should form the basis on which to continue developing studies on the phenomenon of jihadist radicalisation in the prison setting, there is still a substantial need to delve further into the factors that encourage the establishment thereof in prison, what variables influence behaviour in prison and also what factors influence the commission of crimes once prisoners are released.

As discussed above, it is in the interest of the prison system to detect the inmates who are engaged in tasks of recruitment and proselytism, as well as to identify inmates who are vulnerable to being recruited. But the intervention that should be carried out with these inmates is also of importance, always with the aim of adapting the treatment to the individual and creating effective deradicalisation programmes. And, finally, from the point of view of the prison environment, the other factor of particular importance is the detection of inmates who present an elevated risk of recidivism in terms of crimes related to jihadist terrorism. Accordingly, the future lines of research should focus on addressing each one of these aspects in greater depth.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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