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Research at a glance

Study 2 of 3: Comparisons of Radicalized and Non-Radicalized Federal Offenders

KEY WORDS: *radicalization, violent extremists, security threat group, terrorism*

What it means

The identification of considerable differences between radicalized and non-radicalized offenders across a variety of areas suggests that the case management, supervision, and intervention strategies used for each group may need to be different.

For example, with respect to interventions, some of the most common treatment targets in correctional programs – such as substance abuse, education, and employment – appear to be less important need areas for radicalized offenders. Other needs, such as beliefs and attitudes, may require greater attention.

Greater investigation into case management, supervision, and intervention strategies for radicalized offenders should be pursued. Indeed, given heterogeneity amongst radicalized offenders, a variety of such strategies may ultimately be required.

What we found

As a group, radicalized offenders frequently differed from their non-radicalized counterparts. While some of the identified differences were consistent with previous literature in the area, many were not.

As compared to other offenders, radicalized offenders were younger, less likely to be Canadian citizens, more likely to be of a visible minority group, better educated, less likely to have had previous contact with the criminal justice system, and tended to have better employment histories.

Radicalized offenders exhibited better adjustment in terms of mental health and institutional behaviour. They also had fewer problems with the abuse of alcohol and other drugs and were less frequently assessed as presenting high levels of criminogenic need or low levels of community reintegration potential.

Why we did this study

As a partner in the Chemical, Biological, Radiological-Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) Research and Technology Initiative (CRTI), the Research Branch,

Correctional Service Canada (CSC), was tasked with contributing to the level of quantitative knowledge surrounding violent extremists in Canada by undertaking an assessment of the data surrounding violent extremists in federal institutions.

As such, three inter-related studies on radicalized offenders in federal institutions (see also Research at a Glance R-313-1 and R-313-3) were undertaken in an effort to both address the knowledge gap surrounding radicalized offenders and to inform correctional policy and operations.

What we did

As one of these three inter-related studies, this examination involved the comparison of radicalized and non-radicalized offenders on administrative data drawn from the Offender Management System (OMS), CSC's computerized data record. A wide variety of factors thought to be associated with radicalization were identified through a review of the research literature and by the results of focus groups conducted with staff. The two groups were compared on any factors that could be measured using administrative data.

For more information

Stys, Y., Gobeil, R., Harris, A. J. R., & Michel, S. (2014). *Violent extremists in federal institutions: Estimating radicalization and susceptibility to radicalization in the federal offender population* (Research Report R-313). Ottawa, ON: Correctional Service of Canada.

To obtain a PDF version of the full report, or for other inquiries, please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

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