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"LIVING TOGETHER" PREVENTION WORKSHOPS ON RADICALIZATION IN PRISON SETTING

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Abstract

We aim to introduce a field action set up in the prison field following the Paris attacks (07/01/2015) in order to create a talking and thinking space for new arrivals in jail. This action, based on prevention workshops (N=7), has been hosted each time by a probation officer and a psychologist, allowing about forty incarcerated men to think about each one's place as a citizen.

We used intergroup relations framework, specifically of social categorization metatheory (Abrams & Hogg, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986; Turner et al., 1987), supplemented by theory of social partitions (Castel & Lacassagne, 2011, 2015). The methodology is based on empathy in relationship, identification and deconstruction of stereotypes and the need to think about collective beliefs and co-construction concept of "republican secularism". This is made through the solicitation of participants' personal, social and collective identities.

Resorting to a mixed methodology, integrating support and moments contrasting with commonly used ones in workshops and talking groups, allowed to break habits underlying social roles. The failure to mention requirement of action and imprisonment reason allowed participants to put across a definition of identity out of their reality of incarcerated individuals. Joint coordination with outside staff of prison system ensured speaker's as well as participants' participation, which favoured trust and dialogue (participants' private lives were discussed and gave rise to convivial moments). Each workshop took place over a period of three half-days: a) Creation of framework (for the action) and first interaction on the problems of relationships (inside/outside jail); brainstorming about citizenship and its contexts; exchange about religious beliefs and republican values, especially secularism.

Main thematic areas on which the participants worked, have been classified under three types of relationships: personal and interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional and societal. These types of relations led to relations improvement strategies: a/ significance of free thinking and taking ownership of decisions b/ usefulness of forbearance and of daily negotiation and accepting that one may not be always right, c/ questioning empathy and republican equality, resonating with Syrian migrants and d/ linking founding principles of religion and official documents of the Republic, leading to think about religious liberty and understanding acts of violence as a result of a radical interpretation and not as a specific religious belief.

This action has been favourably assessed and welcomed, either by funders or by participants, leading to a renewal in 2016. Extending the target audience not only aids improvement but also intervention and research programs, analysing relations between prisoner categories (foreigners/natives).

Keywords: Prevention, jail, living together, Republic, social categorization.

1. Context

Following the Paris attacks in January 2015, it became necessary to set up a collective action around the issue of living together. This action relies on previous experiences of rules of conduct in its diversity (work on social representations, the acceptance of the other, the confrontation to confinement, self-esteem...).

The "Living Together" workshop[1] has been proposed to the Inter-regional Department of Prison Services of East Central Dijon. The main objective of this project was to create a thinking space to bring

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[1]Proposed by E. Baria (probation officer) and C. Joly (psychologist and researcher at UBFC)

the prisoners to reflect upon how to relate with others and how to become part of society together. The focus of this workshop was to help prevention of radicalization and, more broadly, create conditions for the return of the prisoner into the civil society. During the implementation of the workshop, each group member (including speakers) is taken into account through its ability to reflect, analyse and build independent thinking. Here, it does not refer to an institutional discourse, but to incite thought and to accompany people and the groups through their reasoning and their questions.

Finally, a collaboration between the jail and university staff has been established to foster openness to the outside world through an external participant in the prison setting.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework, mainly psychosocial, refers to Social Identity Theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), Self-Categorization Theory (SCT, Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) and some developments in terms of Social Partitions Theory (Castel & Lacassagne, 2011, 2015).

The SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) postulates that every individual has a personal and a social identity. When the situation allows the individual to act on his own behalf and in his singularity, he mobilizes his personal identity and functions in a generally expected manner within the framework of typologies identified in clinical psychology. When this individual is inserted in a social group (in-group) against another group (out-group), he mobilizes his social identity. This affiliation with the members of his group results in automatic bias of perceptions, evaluations and behaviours in an unfavourable way associated with out-group members. In other words, membership in a group eliminates the individual specificities and leads to a depersonalization (Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1988).

The SCT (Turner et al., 1987) shows the duality of identity (personal identities versus social identities) of individuals and dichotomizes social dimension to give a ternary character to the identity. Thus, the individual is able to activate a personal identity, a social identity but also a specific identity (collective). On the one hand, the individual becomes the actor of his identity mobilization; on the other hand, the mobilization happens at three levels (the sub-ordinate level corresponding to personal identity, the intermediate level corresponding to social identity and super-ordinate level corresponding to the specific identity).

The research on which these theories are based highlight that individual is in constant search of a positive identity. Depending on the situations in which he finds himself, he prepares for the one from which he can get the most benefits. He employs in this way, the so-called strategies of identity management (Ellemers, van Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1990). More specifically, when social interaction places the individual in a positive identity, he accepts and acts from his own determinants at this level. For example, those prisoners who achieve a positive identity during their reintegration present a lower risk of radicalization than those whose reintegration does not promote this type of identity.

Finally, social partitions theory (Castel & Lacassagne, 2011, 2015) while going deeper in the intermediate level, said that there are three types of intergroup positioning (oppositional partition, hierarchical partition, community partition) resulting in different discrimination mechanisms. The advantageous positions being sought by the members of each group, the positions occupied in the categorization do not generally lie in the same partition. To sum up, to get a positive identity, the individual can change the identity level or, in the categorical level, to adopt a favourable partition.

3. Our research

The purpose of this article is to present different workshops conducted during 2015 in a remand prison in France based on the different levels of identity in the understanding of radicalisation and sectarian aberrations.

Indeed, this action aims to solicit each of the identity levels so as to facilitate living together. The action itself, carried out during workshops, allows a provision of forum to fight against exclusion and discriminations, in order to work on the concept of vulnerability inside and outside the prison, and to reconcile prisoners with republican values. This project of prevention of radicalization extended to the acceptance and each one's place in society was offered to newcomers in the remand prison.

4. Method

4.1. Participants
44 men (aged between 18 and 58 years old) imprisoned in the previous month in the remand prison participated in the workshops, without distinction of crime.

4.2. Procedure

Groups: A list of newcomers was established, then shortlisted taking into account the safety rules conforming to life in prison and the requirements of movements in detention (prison leave, extraction). Written notices were sent to those concerned in the week prior to the workshop. Although the action was presented as mandatory, the prisoners who had expressed a formal refusal were exempted, giving way to those in the waiting list.

Workshops: 7 workshops took place between August and December 2015. The social and ethnic mix of participants was sought, and the speakers ensured the creation of a friendly climate (referring to each other by the first name, having coffee and friendly communication) to promote exchange, discovery and acceptance of others. Each workshop was conducted in 3 sessions of a half-day each (Table 1) while following the logic of identity levels.

Table 1. Session content based on identity levels

1st session (individual level)	2nd session (categorical level)	3rd session (collective level)
Presentation of the action & participants Workshop about interpersonal relations(in broad sense) Possibility to mobilize different identities but focusing on the uniqueness of each person	**Brainstorming: What does being a citizen mean? What does the "citizen" word mean to you?** Through words elicited spontaneously by the participants, this time aimed to enable categorical memberships and stereotypes about the relationship between them. The use of inducing the word "citizen" was to ask a possible resemblance to allow the expression of intergroup differentiation	**Analytical reading (common & different elements) of religious texts** Reading and commentary of extracts of religious text to highlight the similarities and differences in ideas and form.
Creation of the framework and group rules Built with the group: respect and freedom of speech, confidentiality, no mention of deeds, speaking on own behalf ("I"), possibility of contradiction and argument For speakers: egalitarian posture, possibility to share personal experiences.		**Analytical reading of republicans texts and integrative vision** Afterwards, the participants have also read republicans texts. The reflection led participants to make connections between religious practices and the concept of citizenship, highlighting the absence of conflict and the possibility of finding a place within French society regardless of religious belief.
Exchanges around the question: What, in my opinion, makes relationship with others difficult or easy? Recalling everyday situations (inside and outside prison) to list the contexts, themes, conditions that could be conflicting for each participant (on three points: a) conduct that may be a problem, b) identification of facilitating/ triggering factors, c) identification of resources to improve oneself) Creation of an atmosphere of trust and sharing.	**Debate over the concept of citizen** Deeper reflexion about the reasons and explanations of the words listed in the brainstorming. Identification of categories and memberships evoking the plurality of the French society.	**Workshop Evaluation** Regarding the themes and the working method.

4.3. Material

During the entire workshop, paper sheets were available. From Session 2, the use of a flipchart was necessary and from the session 3 onwards the following texts were distributed to the participants:
- Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men (Rousseau, 1754);
- Gospel of John 13: 34-35; Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians 3: 5-14 (Bible);
- Surah Al-Hujurat (apartments); Surah An-Nahl (bees); Verse 90 (Koran);
- Leviticus 19: 1-4, 11-18, 33-35 (Torah);
- French Constitution (1958, current version);
- Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789);
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948).

4.4. Data analysis

For all the workshops, the speakers took notes[2] on three aspects: a) group dynamics, b) the content of thinking and links made by the participants, c) few verbatim or specific examples (which were later anonymized). The creation of a workshop report allowed us to recover these elements. All reports constitute the corpus of our reflections.

5. Results

5.1. At the personal level

The results in terms of personal identity show a reflection on the living space. The participants' speech emphasized the differences but also the areas of relationship between the prison setting and the contexts of relations outside the prison.

In addition, the exchange focuses on two central themes of personal identity:

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[2]Given that the recordings are banned or submitted in a controlled manner in the prison setting.

Personal problems and the changes experienced during confinement. The participants question the self-image and self-esteem prior to incarceration and in this new context that is perceived as threatening. This requires understanding the identity changes post their time in prison.

It also addresses the prison conditions and difficulties (physical and human confinement, privacy) but also the opportunity to make the time more rewarding during detention, through reflection on the offense (crime) and the ways to prevent recurrence. Although during the workshops the elicitation of crime was not planned, the building up of trust allowed a significant number of participants to discuss their reason for imprisonment. The aim of this approach was to signify it, not as identification factor but as a personal challenge to manage and as possibility for personal improvement through the identification of protective factors and possibilities of behavioural change.

The family as anchor of personal identity: The participants were also interested in relationships with family and friends, as contexts of relationships that may encourage criminal behaviour but also as protection factors.

The questions about their relationships, presence and example (negative or positive) concerning relatives, the existence or absence of personal and family project also served as anchor of the personal identity of participants.

5.2. At the categorical level

After the brainstorming session, we conducted frequency calculations. 203 words were produced during the seven workshops: 70 words were quoted only by one person, 20 words were quoted twice[3] and 7 words were quoted three times[4]. The frequency of the other words is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Words produced during brainstorming

	Frequencies				
	4	5	6	7	8
Words	*Fraternity, Solidarity*	*Citizen, Equality, Taxes, Liberty, Prison, Republic, Vote*	*Responsibility*	*Respect*	*Rights, Duties*

The participants identified various identity groups on a variety of criteria, different partitions support in the prison context: nationality (Romanian, Spanish, Algerian ...), type of offense ("thief", "violent", "paedophile"...), ethnic (Gypsy, Maghreb, Western...), religious practices (Catholic, Muslim, atheist...) but also outside the prison ("prisoner" as opposed to "free", "citizens", "prison guards").

The words presented in Table 2 have been mentioned in relational contexts, highlighting the group memberships (e.g. the word "taxes" for identifying those who pay versus the members of the state; the word "respect" for acceptance of religious or ethnic difference).

The list has allowed researchers to highlight *stereotypes about different groups* (e.g. French people never go to jail, Gypsies are thieves) and *the fragility of certain groups* (e.g. French cannot claim another category membership) referring to discriminatory and racist behaviour and their impact in the relationships.

Finally, the *plurality of categorical memberships* was present in the participants' speech to suggest the possibility of having multiple remedies for positive categorical identity (e.g. the authors of sexual offense, usually being victims of violence, can protect themselves by claiming membership of a group with a high status in the prison context).

5.3. At super ordinate level

The reading of religious texts allowed the *recognition of different categorical identities* in super-ordinate interest of the French Republic and to consider, from a non-confrontational point of view, the place given to religion in a secular society, allowing meeting points to different religious affiliations.

The consideration of *republican values (secularism and citizenship)* as the axis of building of a super-ordinate perspective is expressed in different ways: a) For law, as well as for religion, "the problem is in the interpretation"; b) the "spirit of religions is to move towards the other, the problem is in the interpretation" c) have good relations with everybody, trying not to create difficulties, go meet each other.

The reading of the republican and religious texts allowed participants to find a place and an opportunity to speak as a resident in France in a positive way.

It was also discussed for the participants to reflect upon militarisation and. Participants reported that the dictatorial system with public executions could not constitute a valid social model; they mentioned the difference between Daesh and Islam because "no religion asks to kill other people" and because Daesh "proposes to mix things up, so that people, who feel discriminated and are fragile, radicalize easily".

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[3]Help, Attacks, Constitution, Thinks, Democracy, Discrimination, Elections, Family, Justice, Secularism, Marriage, World, Sharing, Country, Individuals, People, Revolution, Society, Union, Living.
[4]Traffic, State, Humanity, Laws, Nationality, Property, Religions.

6. Discussion

Each session examined the identity level of the participants. From a theoretical point of view, whatever the requested level, building a positive identity can be a protective factor against radicalization.

At the personal level, incarceration leads to loss of identity that weakens the person making him vulnerable to extreme speeches. The use of reflection helps enhance that identity for understanding their relationship at the individual level by identifying facilitators of the offense and reflecting on resource factors. This entails, through thoughtful construction of a future, building a positive identity to deflect from the prisoner's identity. Different relationship improvement strategies were proposed by the participants: the notion of free will, the need to think for making good decisions, highlighting values such as honesty and sharing.

At the categorical level, the recurrent use of words "rights" and "duties", as well as "freedom", "equality", "fraternity" (motto of the French Republic) during brainstorming, lays a reference identity against which each group member can position himself and thus differentiate themselves from others.

In this differentiation, the presence of French people has given rise to the ambiguity of the position of France, its values such as citizenship, as opposed category to others rather than as shared collective (super-ordinate). The relationships with others has been widely questioned and taken within the prison context but also outside, with the need to make concessions, whether to keep to oneself, not to pay attention to unnecessary things, and to recognize that accepting the person is not the same as accepting the acts that led him/her to prison (especially in the case of the authors of sexual offense).

At super-ordinate level, replicating the strategies to improve both personal and categorical strategies, the participants, through the reading of various texts, noted the existence of similarities between the different groups represented by those texts. The deeper reflection and highlighting of these common points helped weaken the inter-group boundaries, opening the way to a possible membership in a super-ordinate group which needs to be strengthened.

7. Conclusion

The evaluation of the action, as much as with prisoners as partners, prompts us to maintain multidisciplinary and diversity in the groups because they allowed rich and varied exchanges. It also urges to maintain a friendly atmosphere in closed environment, insofar as it facilitates the freedom of speech and respect for everyone. However, it seems appropriate to go further in the safeguarding of the framework to promote free speech. Moreover, it seems interesting to consider group meetings at a fixed frequency (medium or long term) to consolidate the debate on citizenship and its implications on radicalization.

Our perspectives for the future concern in particular the establishment of similar workshops with incarcerated women because nothing suggests that radicalization and the need to create a forum is only a male preoccupation. In addition, we propose to examine the representations and deepen the diagnostic of inter-categorical relationships between prisoners, especially to understand the extreme positions better.

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