

The Prevent Duty: a proactive *dispositif* to manage the risk of extremism in the UK

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ABSTRACT

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a specific duty on clearly identified actors to prevent terrorism. This paper adopts a poststructuralist approach to deconstruct the Prevent Duty's ideology and discourse. Using Foucauldian terminology, Prevent is conceptualised as a proactive *dispositif* to manage the risk of extremism in the UK, in that it is an 'ensemble of discourses,' 'regulatory decisions' and 'moral positions' (Foucault, 1980: 194) that constitute a complex system of response to the threat of terrorism. A globalised state of (in)security is posited as a major influence for Prevent's inception. The formulation of the policy text is underpinned by the neoliberal *governmentality* of the Big Society. The paper problematises its implementation in the education sector through the analysis of the 'duty' to promote British values in the classroom and the expectation of 'preventing people from being drawn into terrorism' (HM Government, 2011; 2019). It concludes that the *dispositif* is driven by principles of human rights and proactivity, however, it has been largely misinterpreted due to lack of clarity and the assumption of shared values.

KEYWORDS: Prevent, critical policy analysis; poststructuralist; Foucault; *dispositif*; governmentality; risk; terrorism, British Values, education.

INTRODUCTION

In 2015 the Prevent Duty 'to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (HM Government, 2019: para. 3) was made statutory for the education sector in the UK. This paper deconstructs the 'uses and effects' (Bacchi, 2000: 51) of such an expectation by exploring the contextual and ideological factors underpinning this policy. In doing so, it aims to contribute to the field of critical policy analysis that seeks to understand the complex connections between education and the relations of power in the larger society (Apple, 2018). I argue that a poststructuralist analysis is needed to elucidate how and why

educators came to have this 'duty', as well as the rationalities and technologies behind its formulation and evolving implementation.

Prevent has been a matter of debate and scholarly critique since its inception. Valuable theoretical conceptualisations include Foucauldian analyses of de-radicalisation strategies (Aggarwal, 2013; Elshimi, 2015; O'Toole, et al., 2016), Prevent's stages of development (Thomas, 2020), empirical research around the impact of Prevent's implementation in schools and colleges (Beighton & Revell, 2018; Busher & Jerome, 2020; Jerome, Elwick & Kasim, 2019; Lakhani & James, 2021; Moffat & Gerard, 2019), critical assessment of counter-radicalisation policies in higher education (McGlynn & McDaid, 2018); the exploration of educational responses to Prevent (Jerome & Elwick, 2019), as well as concerns raised about teachers being perceived as informants in counter-terrorism strategies (Faure-Walker, 2017; 2019). Additional work has focused specifically on the notion of Fundamental British Values, their meanings, interpretations, and problematic implementation (Vincent & Hunter-Henin, 2018; Vincent, 2019; Wolton, 2017). These and other theorisations, conceptualisations and analyses foreground the critical stance that this paper adopts to unveil the complex connections between policy discourse and power.

This paper aims to do so by conceptualising Prevent as a *proactive dispositif*, in that it constitutes the state's exercise of power to respond to the current terrorist threat via a complex network of values, positionalities, and directives. As a rationality, it proposes that before terrorism happens 'extremist' thought must be identified, which normally stems from processes of radicalisation (HM Government, 2011; 2019). In principle, deterring extremism can prevent terrorism.

The analysis presented here is structured around the three contexts of policymaking: 'influence,' 'text production', and 'practice' (Bowe et al., 1992: 20). Thus, the first two sections of the paper explore aspects of policy influence and policy formulation, important in unveiling the power relations inherent to Prevent's 'discourse, practices and subjectivities' (Bailey, 2013: 807). Section one focuses on the discourse of globalisation and terrorism as the backdrop for the *initiation* of Prevent. Section two explores the neoliberal ideology of the Big Society behind policy *text production*.

Section three divides the discussion of the *implementation* of Prevent through two key expectations on educators: 1) to promote British values in the classroom (Department for Education & Lord Nash, 2014), and 2) to support 'vulnerable people through identification, referral and intervention' (HM Government, 2011: 29). The former will be conceptualised as proactive yet misguided, as such values are unclear in their meaning and relevance; the latter will problematise normalised surveillance as a *dispositif* to manage risk, positing that educators' 'duty' to (ill-preparedly) judge whether their students are at risk of supporting terrorism threatens the classroom as a safe space.

TERRORISM AND GLOBALISATION

The Prevent Strategy can be traced back to 2002, when 'it was recognised that a long-term effort would be needed to prevent another generation falling prey to violent

extremism of 'Al-Qa'ida ideology' (House of Commons, 2016: para. 3). The Prevent Strategy 2011 was the precursor of the Prevent Duty 2015 (HM Government, 2019). It embodies the UK's *dispositif* of response to the contemporary and transnational issue of '(in)security' (Bigo, 2006; 2008). With countering terrorism as the mantra of Prevent, this first chapter conceptualises terrorism as, a) a globalised phenomenon, and b) a construct used in the arena of international relations to 'manage risk' in a modern 'World Risk Society' (Beck, 2002; 2014).

Since 9/11 preventing terrorism has become a supranational challenge, allowing the 'enunciation of a discourse of necessity of war against terrorism and suspicion against foreigners, ethnic and religious minorities' (Bigo, 2006: 49). The US declaration of a global "war on terror" brought together international allies to respond to the 'persistent global threat that knows no border, nationality or religion and is a challenge that the international community must tackle together' (NATO, 2019: para.1). Subsequent attacks in other parts of the world, including the UK, allowed the identification of 'home-grown terrorism' (HM Government, 2011: 7).

The UK responded to this threat via the 2009 counter-terrorist strategy called CONTEST; Prevent is one of its four objectives: Prevent, Pursue, Prepare and Protect (HM Government, 2011). Prevent can be conceptualised as an emergent discourse that seeks to 'define the field of intervention and articulate positions' (Ball, 1990: 23) on how the UK would respond to matters of terrorist threat. It is important to note that the UK has taken a unique stance with the naming of the process. It has avoided the use of the term 'war on terrorism' as it was 'judged to be prone to misinterpretation' (HM Government, 2011: 48). Prevent posits a proactive and less reactionary position.

Under the banner of terrorist threat, Bigo (2006: 47) argues that by countries such as the USA, the UK and Australia declaring a 'permanent state of emergency', technologies of surveillance have been introduced into social practices, and are now normalised. Examples include restrictions for liquids in hand luggage for air travel (Gov.UK, 2012) linked to the 'liquid-bomb plot' in 2006 (BBC News, 2009), as well as the British Transport Police's (2021) slogan 'see it, say it, sorted' that encourages peer surveillance as a normal social practice. According to MI5 (2021: para. 2) at the time of writing this paper the current level of threat in the UK is *substantial*; the likelihood of terrorist attacks is pervasively heightened.

The construction of risk has enabled a globalised and normalised culture of fear and '(in)security' (Bigo, 2008). Globalisation has enabled not only a 'world society' (Verger *et al.*, 2018) but a global 'risk society' (Beck, 2002; 2014) that needs to manage risks. As a discourse, terrorism justifies the need for *dispositifs* such as Prevent. Thus, I argue that we need to deconstruct the notion of risk from terrorism, which according to Derrida (2017, cited in Borradori, 2013: XIII) 'is the only politically responsible course of action because the public use of it, as if it were a self-evident notion, perversely helps the terrorist cause.'

I conceptualise the discourse of terrorism as a construct of risk and (in)security that stems from 'knowledge' defined within disciplinary fields, such as security services, that normally present threat intelligence data as reliable. I argue that a more nuanced position would be useful to understand expert knowledge(s)

as a judgement of “‘*bestness*”, or the nearest we have to truth at any time’ (Young & Muller, 2013: 236). The effect of expert knowledge, however, is that subjective views, guided by expert rationalities, result in the oversimplification of images of an enemy and tends to the use of profiling as a technology to manage risk, albeit ‘without and beyond public discourse and democratic participation’ (Beck, 2014: 115). On this, Aradau & van Munster (2007: 91) explain that the quest for knowledge in the war of terror is insatiable: ‘profiling populations, surveillance, intelligence, knowledge about catastrophe management, prevention, etc.’

Critically, risk and social inequality are connected through the relationship between risk and power (Beck, 2014). Prevent as a discourse represents a power stance seeking to regulate the conduct of others. The discourse is authoritative (Ball, 2003) and does not include democratic technologies, such as the peaceful resolution of conflict (Grillot, 2014) to address issues. Instead, Prevent as a *dispositif* mobilises ‘forces’ such as education to counter terrorism. The pervasively ‘self-evident notion of terrorism’ (Borradori, 2013: XII) allows Prevent to decide ‘who is sovereign, and who can legitimately name the public enemy’ (Bigo, 2006: 47). Interestingly, Prevent does not acknowledge legitimate grievances which Aggarwal (2013) and Jamieson & Flint (2015) identify as one of the causes for extremism and terrorism, for example on the military intervention in the Middle East by Western countries. The information presented by Prevent to justify a course of action is partial and subjective.

Foucault (1975: 27) warned that knowledge linked to power ‘not only assumes the authority of “the truth” but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, “becomes true”’. The risk of terrorism, thus, becomes not only ‘true’ but demands action. Importantly, Adam & van Loon (2000: 2) remind us that ‘the essence of risk is not that it is happening, but that it might be happening. Risks are manufactured’. Those who can define the risk, for example, of terrorism, ‘can profit from them,’ whilst those who are assigned to them suffer the consequences, ‘without having had the chance to be involved in the decision-making process’ (Beck, 2014: 115).

The introduction of neologisms is also part of the *dispositif*, to either repurpose familiar concepts, or to define, describe and justify the narrative behind a policy to counter terrorism. Examples include the term *terrorism* itself, *radicalisation*⁴, *de-radicalisation*⁵, *extremism*⁶, and *Islamism*⁷ (more available at

⁴ **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

⁵ **De-radicalisation** usually refers to activity aimed at a person who supports terrorism and in some cases has engaged in terrorist related activity, which is intended to effect cognitive and/or behavioural change leading to a new outlook on terrorism and/or disengagement from it.

⁶ **Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

⁷ **Islamism** is a philosophy which, in the broadest sense, promotes the application of Islamic values to modern government. There are no commonly agreed definitions of ‘Islamism’ and ‘Islamist’, and groups or individuals described as Islamist often have very different aims and views about how those aims might be realised. Some militant Islamists would endorse violence or terrorism to achieve their aims. Many Islamists do not.

Prevent's glossary, see HM Government, 2011: 107-108). Fabricated definitions become part of the discourse that defines the game, the players, the opponents, and the rules of play; it is an assertion of power.

In summary, the backdrop of Prevent is an emergent state of global terrorist threat that requires risk-management in the current climate of (in)security. Both, the notions of terrorism and risk are constructs used by policymakers to define the problem, name the enemy, and lay out counter-terrorism policy. Importantly I want to highlight that preventing terrorism via early identification of 'extremism' is a proactive and plausible approach to avoid 'attacking the attackers', as violence in response to violence breeds more violence. The next section departs from the 2011 Prevent Strategy to move on to the 2015 Prevent Duty, problematising the discourse of the neoliberal ideology of the Big Society that contextualised policy text production.

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE BIG SOCIETY

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain publicly funded bodies, such as education 'in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (HM Government, 2019: para. 1); this is also known as the Prevent Duty. The political and economic neoliberal ideology of the Big Society was instrumental in its formulation as a statutory duty in 2015. As a discourse and 'a way of thinking, speaking and experiencing' (Belsen 1980, cited in Olssen et al., 2004: 65) the neoliberal principles of 'self-help, and volunteerism through the devolution of power' (Williams *et al.* 2014: 2798), were used to justify the education sector, among others, being given the duty to prevent terrorism.

The Foucauldian term *governmentality* is apt to relate ideology to the instruments of power used in policy text production. *Governmentality* is the amalgamation of the terms *government* and *rationality* representing the social practices that lead and guide the governance of conduct (Huff, 2013). This allows us to conceptualise Prevent as a network of rationalities set to govern the risk of terrorism. Beck (2002: 40) argues that 'risk inherently contains the concept of control,' thus, by constructing risk as something that needs to be acted on, educators were given the statutory duty to help its governance.

According to Thomas (2020: 12) Prevent has two distinct stages: Prevent 1 (2006-2011) under the Labour government focused on community-based work with young Muslims, whereas Prevent 2 (2011 onwards) changed its content to focus on individuals 'at risk' of, or vulnerable to, 'radicalisation'. The 2015 Prevent Duty, under the 2010-2015 Liberal Democrat and Conservative coalition corroborated the new trajectory of Prevent, reflecting how the governmentality of the Big Society, not only reviewed Prevent in 2011 and defined the Duty in 2015, but made their 'short-term interests' (Dale, 1989: 53) the guiding principles and actions designed to 'bring about desired goals' (Trowler, 2003: 95). That is, it used

the governmentality of volunteerism and devolution of power to justify the active role of education, faith, health, criminal justice charities and the internet (HM Government, 2011) in preventing terrorism. Under this premise, all publicly funded frontline staff must be on board.

David Cameron insisted that devolution of power would empower communities (Prime Minister's Office & Cameron, 2014). This discourse justified a devolution, beyond power, of responsibility. To ensure compliance, technologies of accountability were put in place to enable 'networked modes of governance' (Bailey, 2013: 810). For example, by creating a (tenuous) link between extremism and safeguarding policy (see Jerome & Elwick, 2019; Panjwani, 2016), Ofsted was tasked to inspect how educators were protecting vulnerable people from the risk of radicalisation (Ofsted & Spielman 2018); the Office for Students (2020) also began to audit Prevent compliance in higher education. From this perspective, the duty to prevent terrorism can be conceptualised as a response to the 'distribution of bads that flow within and across various territories and are not confined within the borders of a single society' (Beck, 2014: vi). In the Big Society all have a role to play in the governance of the constructed problem of terrorism.

From a socioeconomic point of view neoliberalism is based on the idea of free markets and free trade (Denham, 1996; Dowling & Harvie, 2014). In the Big Society the state steps back and devolves power to local communities to enable them to become 'entrepreneurs', with a 'self-responsible mentality', 'individuals [who] make choices by their own free will' (Bonefeld, 2015: 416). It can be argued that the discourse of devolution justifies the underfunding of public services, whilst increasing accountability along with reduced support for educators. Prevent as a *dispositif* of the 'already-said', as much as the 'never-said' (Foucault, 1972: 25) does not acknowledge the complexity of the social mesh. For example, Norman (2010: 4-5) argues that the Big Society counters 'Fabianism... guild socialism; religious non-conformism; civil dissent and suffragism; many shades of Marxism and Communism; mutuals and co-operatives; and unions.' Social justice does not appear to underpin the governmentality of the Big Society.

This governmentality, however, 'endangers not only the social contract, but democracy itself' (Keynan, 2016: 40), in that whoever controls the narrative profits from it. Chomsky (see The Nation, 2017) also posits that neoliberalism undermines the mechanisms of social solidarity and mutual support, replacing it with the idea of freedom. Under this premise, acts of volunteerism are applauded and expected, not because of egalitarianism but because it has potentially positive financial implications for the state. Dowling & Harvie (2014: 869) assert that neoliberal policy introduces the 'metric of "social value"' to justify 'unwaged labour' (p. 882). I argue that a governmentality that seeks social value was significant in the formulation of the Duty. A major implication for the professional practice of educators has been the redefinition of their role and their identity, positioning them now as 'managers of unease' (Bigo, 2008).

In essence, the governmentality of devolution of power and volunteerism, far from empowering educators, has given them extra responsibilities, and made them accountable for preventing radicalisation as an educational duty. This has redefined their professional identity by recruiting them as part of the *dispositif* to

govern terrorism under safeguarding practices. Importantly, a key rationality of the Duty is to prevent people being drawn into terrorism (HM Government, 2019) by promoting some newly coined 'British values' to counter extremist ideology. This expectation will be discussed in two parts in the section below.

A GOVERNMENTALITY OF BRITISH VALUES AND PREVENT AS A DISPOSITIF FOR SURVEILLANCE

This section focuses on the implementation of Prevent in education through an exploration of two key operational expectations: 1) promoting British values in the classroom (Department for Education & Lord Nash, 2014), and 2) supporting vulnerable people through identification, referral and intervention (HM Government 2011: 29). The former was originally mandated in schools; it has now been made part of the Education Inspection Framework that includes all types of provision in England (see Ofsted, 2019: 11-12). The latter refers to the original wording used in the 2011 Prevent Strategy; it underpins the duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

In addition to Prevent having a statutory footing in education, in November 2014 the Department for Education published 'guidance' on 'promoting British values in schools to ensure young people leave school prepared for life in modern Britain' (Department for Education & Lord Nash, 2014: para. 1); and, set the expectation for educators to 'actively promote' British values in the classroom (para. 2). It gradually moved from being advice to be made compulsory, interlinking the Prevent Duty with promoting fundamental British values, making them 'integrally linked' (Jerome *et al.*, 2019: 822). This move was originally prompted after the 'Trojan Horse' affair in Birmingham schools where there were allegations of plans for 'implementing an "Islamist" ethos into the curriculum' (Awan, 2018: 198), which 'raised concerns that extremist ideology could be spread through the school system' (House of Commons, 2016: para. 43). The governmentality of promoting 'fundamental British values' was thus posited as the 'antithesis' of extremism and terrorism (James, 2018). Prevent defines it as:

'Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.' (HM Government 2011: 107).

How and why these values are fundamentally British appears obscure on first inspection, especially when contextualised within counter-terrorism policy. They came, however, as a political discourse from the Coalition government to 'give a convincing and inspiring lead on issues of national identity and narrative' (Richardson, 2015: 39) to the UK electorate. These have been theorised as a rationality to differentiate *them* from *us* (Hoque, 2015), an imaginary binary opposition between Islam and the West (Panjwani, 2016: 330) or more specifically in the context of Prevent, between Muslim values and British values (Richardson, 2015: 45). As a discourse, it names and defines extremism as the 'problem' and formulates a set of values as the strategy to govern the ideology behind terrorism.

It is essentially a positionality that seems to have been distilled by comparing competing ideologies: If ‘they’ legitimise violence based on dogmas, ‘we’ adopt fundamental human rights to delegitimize and govern the threat.

On the coining of fundamental British values, Vincent & Hunter-Hennin (2018: para. 5), remind us that ‘as Britain has no written constitution, these basic common values had to be identified afresh.’ They were essentially defined by policymakers, and never ‘discussed by parliament, nor the wider public’ (para. 6). At the time of the policy formulation stage, the focus was on countering Al-Qaida’s ideology, which according to Prevent sought to: ‘remove existing governments in the Muslim majority world, using violence where necessary, and establish what their proponents considered to be genuine Islamic states and ultimately a single Islamic caliphate’ (HM Government, 2011: 15).

However, more recent developments have seen a rise of far-right extremism in schools and colleges in the UK (Lakhani & James, 2021). Nonetheless, British values are an example of a discourse that requires ‘legitimation, both internally and externally’ (Verger *et al.*, 2018: 11). They are an archetype example of policy-as-discourse ‘produced and formed by taken-for-granted and implicit knowledges and assumptions about the world and ourselves’ (Ball, 2015: 6). I argue that the notion of British values, as a neologism, has been misunderstood from the outset due to poor contextualisation and poor choice of language. Positioning values, identified to counter terrorism, and presenting them as sacrosanct ‘fundamental British values’ was a faux pas. As a discourse, it wrongly assumes commonly agreed values and presupposes unequivocal meanings (Beighton & Revell, 2018). They were not named factually ‘fundamental values to prevent terrorism’, they present a political stance imbued with entrenched, reductive, and subjective views of Britain.

On the above, Wolton (2017: 123) argues that ‘Prevent’s insistence on the importance of democracy, while denying the contestation of ideas which is integral to the working of a democracy, further evacuates the concept.’ Moreover, she argues that the concept of British values is not only unclear but ‘logically opposed to democracy because it is fixed and identifiable’ (p. 138). Using the example of the suffragettes, Walton illustrates how ‘we had to struggle *against* the “British values” of the past to gain the vote for everyone’ (p. 130).

Vincent & Hunter-Hennin (2018) also argue that British values are deliberately broad and vague to avoid controversy. However, official documents present them as clear and incontestable. For example, one Lords Committee tries to legitimise them as ‘the shared values of British citizenship from which everything else proceeds... [they] are “red lines” which have to be defended’ (cited in Ofsted & Spielman, 2018: para. 14). According to Amanda Spielman, Ofsted’s Chief Inspector, ‘the promotion of British values is important in encouraging cohesion and integration’ (Ofsted & Spielman, 2018: para. 3), which ‘must involve a common vision; a sense of belonging; valuing diversity; and ensuring equal opportunities’ (para. 9). I agree with the principles to be defended, however suggesting that doing it through the promotion of decontextualised and vaguely defined values can only lead to confusion for both educators and students. Indeed, Ofsted reports a ‘piece-meal approach’ (Ofsted & Spielman, 2018: para. 40) to the promotion of British

values in the classroom. This is perhaps due to educators' ability to resist or bypass competing directives or morally conflicting organisational rules, or to find creative ways to comply with accountability measures. The latter leads to performativity, and in the practice of promoting British values some educators have responded with a variety of 'fabrications', 'spectacles' and 'outputs' (Ball, 2003) to show compliance.

Empirical research illustrates a wide range of approaches and interpretations. For example, Panjwani's (2016: 333) research with Muslim teachers stated that they either saw 'no incompatibility or there was compatibility between what they considered to be Islamic values and the British values'. Alternative examples include misinterpretations using 'Union Jack themed displays, featuring the Queen and fish and chips – confusing British values with British symbols and stereotypes' (Vincent & Hunter-Hennin, 2018: para. 12). Spielman notes examples of teaching 'fundamental British values through looking at the seasons and weather, which is surely stretching the definition a bit' (Ofsted & Spielman, 2018: para. 46), or via homework that asked students 'to craft a picture of the Queen out of sequins. A charming task in itself perhaps, but that's not teaching children about our common values' (Ofsted & Spielman, 2017: para. 15). The taken-for-granted discourse of shared values is presented as 'truth' here. Though Spielman clarifies that "the active promotion of British values" means giving young people a real civic education' (para. 16). Whilst I agree that civic education has enormous value to advance democracy, for example through understanding our rights and responsibilities as citizens, being aware of the processes that exist to deal with the peaceful resolution of conflict, or the civil liberties that allow freedom of thought, conscience and religion, or the checks and balances that allow a healthier balance of powers in a democracy, these have never been part of the governmentality of Prevent.

In summary, a governmentality that deploys the coining of British values sought to posit an ideological response to that of one 'enemy.' The duty to promote them in the classroom is intended to guide and regulate students' responses to extremist propaganda that could lead to radicalisation, thus being part as the technologies of the self (Elshimi, 2015) for discipline and self-governance (O'Toole et al., 2016). It is difficult to assert the success of either of these two intentions, unless we had empirical evidence where participants indicated that engaging with fundamental British values deterred them from radicalisation and extremism. As a duty to be promoted in the classroom it has perhaps been more aligned to performativity and accountability than as a tool for civic education. In general terms, their legitimisation can be questioned as this core of British values were decided undemocratically, it was assumed to constitute mutually agreed values, and their promotion was imposed as an educator's duty.

PREVENT AS A *DISPOSITIF* OF SURVEILLANCE

This final section problematises the duty given to educators to support 'vulnerable people through identification, referral and intervention' (HM Government, 2011: 29). It can be argued that this duty has made educators a more integral part of the *panopticon* (Foucault, 1975), which I conceptualise as the

normalised practices of surveillance that modify our social conduct, including that of education. Importantly, such forms of surveillance ‘target everybody, as the potential terrorist could be any of us’ (Aradau & van Munster, 2007: 104). Some of the technologies employed to ensure Prevent’s implementation include: 1) mandatory training on Prevent awareness, 2) making educators accountable for reporting concerns of radicalisation under Safeguarding practices, and 3) profiling populations as a technology of surveillance. These are discussed below.

The Prevent duty guidance requires educators to undertake mandatory training to become aware of when to report students to the relevant safeguarding officer (Education and Training Foundation [ETF], 2021). Such training is normally standardised and focuses on awareness. Examples include the ETF’s (2019) ‘Prevent for practitioners’, and the Home Office’s (2021) ‘e-learning training on Prevent.’ The training claims to enable educators to protect people vulnerable to radicalisation ‘by: a. identifying individuals at risk; b. assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and c. developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned’ (HM Government, 2020: 7). The process of what should happen is outlined operationally rather than through the acknowledgement that judgement is a complex process that should be carried out ethically, because education and the role of the educator ‘are inextricably linked to social and moral responsibility’ (Kemmis & Smith, 2008: 3).

Prevent’s underlying assumptions on the straightforwardness of the process of judging who has been radicalised is concerning. It is unclear how educators can develop the capabilities and confidence to identify the risk of radicalisation without acknowledging the complexity of such a process. Aggarwal (2013), Elshimi (2015) and O’Toole *et al.* (2016) provide in-depth analyses of the process of radicalisation and subsequent strategies used to de-radicalise individuals. The Department for Education’s commissioned research on safeguarding and radicalisation carried out by Chisholm *et al.* (2017) report that ‘the degree of internal consensus about how an authority should respond to radicalisation has an impact on staff confidence and capability to handle these cases’ (p. 5). They emphasise that confidence is a crucial factor for early identification and effective intervention. I question whether ‘Prevent awareness’ training is enough for educators to identify students at risk of radicalisation, and whether referrals are not grounded on inherent biases. Busher and Jerome (2020) echo this concern by questioning educators’ confidence to identify signs of radicalisation, and their pedagogical confidence to successfully promote British values in the classroom.

By making ‘safeguarding’ the rationale to justify the involvement of education in the prevention of terrorism, aspects of accountability were devised as one of the technologies of compliance. In the education sector, Ofsted as an overseer of education provision, has played a pivotal role to enforce Prevent’s ‘compliance through accountability’ (Wilkins & Wood, 2009: 286). Ofsted are part of the *panopticon*, in that they inspect, judge, and grade education provision; ultimately, they regulate the conduct of education. Meanwhile, they also have a duty to the state, ‘the gaolers in the panopticon are thus under scrutiny themselves’ (Wilkins & Wood, 2009: 291). It can be claimed that the panopticon can be used

'to understand how society functions at large' (Bigo, 2008: 31), in that the normalisation of modes of surveillance in the classroom helps to reveal the social world outside of it; the classroom is a microcosm of communities (Haupt, 2009).

Central to my problematisation of Prevent as a *dispositif*, is how the panopticism of inspections determines the practices and outputs to be on display (Wilkins & Wood, 2009) when education providers are audited. Crucially, due to the need to comply with data reports on safeguarding, Prevent prompts educators not only to be extra-vigilant, but worryingly, to report concerns on a "gut feeling"... in the absence of radicalisation knowledge' (Dresser, 2015: 3). About this, Ball (2003: 215) argues that targets and expectations of performativity sometimes force us to 'set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live an existence of calculation.' It also pervasively allows a 'sense of ontological insecurity; both a loss of a sense of meaning in what we do, and of what is worthwhile and important in what we do' (Ball, 2015: 5). Accountability as a rhetoric and as a technology of governmentality (Suspitsyna, 2010) brings a 'risk averse' culture of conformity (Hayes, 2001).

The fear of potential risk is leading us to normalise suspicion as a social practice. The classroom as a safe debating space (Jamieson & Flint, 2015) is threatened by Prevent. Faure-Walker (2017) raises a concern that Prevent is casting teachers as informants, meaning that grievances cannot be expressed freely. This fractures the important relationship of trust between educators and students. If concerns cannot be expressed freely for fear of being referred to anti-radicalisation programmes, students can turn to unvetted sources of information, thus putting themselves at greater risk of radicalisation. For example, Von Behr *et al.* (2013) and Phillips (2017) warn us of the dangers of online propaganda, which preys on a sense of isolation and alienation of vulnerable people (Ofsted & Spielman, 2018). This is the main reason for 'the internet' to be one of the key sectors to be governed by Prevent's *dispositif*.

Surveillance as a technology to govern risk has also been gradually shifting the purpose of Prevent. From a policy formulated as a pre-emptive form of action that largely follows human rights as the guiding principles, to a surveillance tool for monitoring potential extremists, not safeguarding vulnerable people from radicalisation (Grierson, 2020). Regarding this, Hargreaves (2016) calls on the need for clarity on Prevent, arguing that educators are confused and ill-prepared to fulfil the legal duty to report and tackle extremism. I support this call and add that we must be cautious and critical about the justification of surveillance as a normalised practice in education. Early iterations of Prevent used the technology of profiling to prioritise Prevent's implementation (for example see the list of 25 priority areas in England at HM Government, 2011: 97-98), which was largely driven by the rationality of risk management. Indeed, the notion of "zero risk" makes those considered potentially dangerous a priori responsible' (Aradau & van Munster, 2007: 106). Profiling is a technology of risk management that justifies Prevent's technology of surveillance as valid and necessary.

According to Ball (2003: 216) 'the issue of who controls the field of judgement is crucial.' Power imbalances can be unveiled when we deconstruct 'surveillance as social sorting' (Lyon, 2002). According to Aradau & van Munster

(2007: 104), 'while profiling is still essential in the war on terror, its targets are increasingly arbitrary;' the fact that 'it could be any of us', justifies 'the surveillance of all the population' (p. 104), which as previously discussed has been gradually normalised. Importantly, Prevent insists on scientific advice and statistical data to profile the enemy. The Home Office claims that '[f]or policies to be effective, it is essential that we base them on what works. Scientific advice provides us with clear evidence to help us weigh up the risks and benefits of a course of action' (HM Government, 2015: appendix 1). As a governmentality we could use Aggarwal's (2013: 264) argument that knowledge of terrorism requires 'knowledge about the mind and character of the offender for governmental use'. Profiling as a technology to manage risk claims the power to identify the terrorist amongst us. However, a terrorist could be 'unemployed or employed, poor or not so poor, young or old, legal residents or citizens, illegal migrants or tourists. Uncertainty slowly extends profiling to the entirety of the population' (Aradau & van Munster, 2007: 104).

Although theoretically it could be anybody, the case of Prevent presents a narrower demographic. For example, data from Channel referrals (Prevent's multiagency panel used to address concerns of radicalisation) has been used to legitimise and maintain it as a *dispositif* to tackle 'home grown terrorism' (HM Government, 2011: 7). At a glance: in 2011 Prevent reports 1,120 referrals to Channel; education made the majority of referrals; most were aged between 13 and 25; over 90% were male; and 88% concerned international terrorism whereas 8% were referred for right-wing extremism (HM Government, 2011: 59). Six years later, the Home Office reported 7,631 referrals; education made most referrals; 56% were aged under 20; 75% were male; and 65% related to Islamist extremism, with 10% related to right-wing extremism (Home Office, 2017: 4). The latest figures, published by the Home Office (2020: para. 2) show 6,287 referrals; the police made a marginally higher number of referrals (1,950; 31%), followed by the Education sector (1,928; 31%); 88% were male; 54% were for individuals aged 20 years or under; and there was a shift to 43% of cases being related to right-wing radicalisation, followed by 30% related to Islamist radicalisation.

While the latest figures show a reduction in referrals related to 'Islamist' extremism, the fact that Prevent conceptualised Islamism as a synonym with terrorist ideology (HM Government, 2011: 108), should be a concern. The Muslim community has been carrying the burden of the few who have chosen to redefine the jihad as an ideology of extremism. Moniruzzaman (2008: 2) reminds us that the central idea of jihad is not a negative concept, it aims to 'eradicate anti-social elements that are harmful to human society;' combating infidels is a secondary accommodated discourse used by some to justify violence as an expression of grievances. Prevent, however, is likely to target non-white minorities (Faure-Walker, 2019), thus unveiling white privilege and power struggles.

Moreover, Faure-Walker's (2019: 369) research on Prevent reports that 'the words "extremism" and "radicalisation" became progressively synonymous with violence between 2009 and 2014'. This means that Prevent is gradually and pervasively redefining what constitutes radical and extreme behaviour. Recent examples of unlawful attempts to silence freedom of speech under preventing 'extremism' include listing XR Extinction Rebellion as an 'extreme ideology' in

January 2020 (Dodd & Grierson, 2020), which had to be quickly recalled after being sent to police officers, teachers, and others in government (Dodd, 2020). This makes critical policy analysis a paramount exercise for educators involved in policy implementation.

In summary, the identification, referral, and intervention of vulnerable students at risk of radicalisation uses a complex apparatus of technologies. Light-touch training on Prevent awareness is not enough to develop educators' capabilities to identify risk. Also, aspects of accountability act to justify extra-vigilance, which is creating an atmosphere of paranoia and mistrust, unhelpful for social cohesion. Lastly, surveillance and profiling the population has pervasively been normalised and justified as necessary to manage the risk of terrorism.

CONCLUSION

Deconstructing Prevent has revealed many layers of complexity. Positing it as a *dispositif* has allowed the mapping of its ideology and discourse against the technologies and rationalities used to justify the educators' duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. By conceptualising risk as a construct used to govern the threat of terrorism, and by unveiling how the *governmentality* of the Big Society devolved responsibility to education on matters of counterterrorism, this paper complicated its inception and formulation. Still, we must acknowledge that the principle of prevention as opposed to intervention, is morally grounded, underpinned by principles of human rights and observes the norms of liberal democracies to manage conflict. From that point of view, Prevent's proactive positionality must be applauded.

However, the imposition of a duty to promote British values, a set of vaguely defined and taken-for-granted values, has mostly fostered confusion and an ill-prepared army of educators on how to use them in the classroom. As Ball (1993: 12) succinctly puts it 'confusion begets confusion', thus British values must be contextualised as part of civic education, and it would also be beneficial to untangle them from safeguarding policy.

The expectation of identification, support, and intervention of students at risk of radicalisation assumes a concerning level of straightforwardness that requires further thought and consideration. Thus, this paper offers an example of policy analysis that is grounded on 'critical thought' (Foucault, 1982: 778), that I argue is important to unveil power relations, as it helps us to act against the 'side-effects' that policies such as Prevent have on teachers and students alike.

As concluding reflections, I would highlight how Prevent is an evolving policy, what started and what it is now has changed direction considerably. We must be aware of how its implementation is having a profound effect on our social practice. We must be very careful with the alienation that social profiling brings, especially for the Muslim community that continues to endure the effects of Islamophobia resulting from Prevent (Jerome et al., 2019). We must also defend the classroom as a safe space (Jamieson & Flint, 2015), safeguarding students must not be done by 'othering' some, preventing radicalisation is a plausible strategy but not by identifying suspects *a priori* without sufficient grounds. As much is still needed to avoid the adverse effects of Prevent, we must start with educators'

understanding of how radicalisation works and how to prevent it, rather than asking them to preach vaguely understood 'British values' or reporting concerns 'just in case.' This highlights the need for educators to engage with critical policy analysis that interrogates not only aspects of implementation but also its ideology and discourse.

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