

**Secondary School Teachers' and Prevent practitioners'  
Conceptualisations of Radicalisation**

**The Impact on Teachers' Professionalism**

Submitted by Daniela Scerri to Royal Holloway University of London as a Thesis for the Degree  
of Doctor of Criminology

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## **Declaration of Authorship**

I, Daniela Scerri hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own.  
Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: Daniela Scerri

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021

## **Abstract**

The concept of radicalisation post 9/11 has been at the centre of debates for many years. More so, since education was given a role to play in countering it. National counterterrorism policies within educational institutions have been criticised for securitising education and potentially pushing radical students' views underground. The introduction of the Prevent duty, a statutory obligation posed on schools in England and Wales in 2015, shouldered schools and their staff with the responsibility of preventing individuals from being drawn to terrorism. Using qualitative thematic analysis, this study looks at conceptualisations of radicalisation from an educational perspective through the narratives of thirteen secondary school teachers in comprehensive schools in England and fourteen Prevent practitioners. Teachers' conceptualisations of radicalisation were also assessed against measures they adopt in the classroom. Prevent practitioners' views were used to attest whether what they desire of the Prevent duty matched what teachers are doing on the ground in schools. The study also investigated the Prevent duty enactment by secondary school teachers, and the way the guidance impacted on teachers' professionalism. Furthermore, it sheds light on secondary school teachers' classroom-level interventions. Attention was also given to teachers' attempts to address radicalisation and/or extremist activity implicitly or explicitly in the classroom through the teaching of their subject. Prevent practitioners' views provided further insight on the interplay of contextual factors within schools. A thematic analysis was used to present and organise teachers' and Prevent practitioners' views. Through this analysis, twenty-one themes have been identified and are presented across four main chapters. Research data findings show that teacher interviewees expect an educational response to prevent radicalisation rather than a security response through safeguarding. This has implications for teacher training as teachers envisage a curriculum response which targets not just radicalisation but social issues at large. Furthermore, results show that teachers' perceptions of the Prevent duty as a non-educational response to prevent radicalisation pushes teachers to use agency to challenge the Prevent duty or to implement the Prevent duty through their own interpretative framework. Lack of adequate teacher training may result in biased judgements which, in turn, may lead to more harm than good.

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# List of Abbreviated Terms

<b>AIVD</b>	Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service
<b>CONTEST</b>	United Kingdom's Counter Terrorism Strategy
<b>CP3</b>	Centre for Prevention Programmes and Partnerships
<b>CPD</b>	Continuous Professional Development
<b>CRC</b>	Culturally Relevant Curricula
<b>CRI</b>	Culturally Responsive Instruction
<b>CRT</b>	Culturally Responsive Teaching
<b>CVE</b>	Countering Violent Extremism
<b>DCLG</b>	Department for Communities and Local Government
<b>DDSL</b>	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
<b>DfE</b>	Department for Education
<b>DSL</b>	Designated Safeguarding Lead
<b>EDL</b>	English Defence League

<b>ERG 22+</b>	Extremism Risk Guidance
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>FBV</b>	Fundamental British Values
<b>HEFE</b>	Higher Education Further Education
<b>IRA</b>	Irish Republican Army
<b>ISA</b>	Ideological State Apparatus
<b>ITT</b>	Initial Teacher Training
<b>ISIS</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
<b>JCHR</b>	Joint Committee of Human Rights
<b>NUT</b>	National Union of Teachers
<b>PC</b>	Prevent Coordinator
<b>PEO</b>	Prevent Education Officer
<b>PSHE</b>	Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education

<b>PVE</b>	Preventing Violent Extremism
<b>RAN</b>	Radicalisation Awareness Network
<b>RAN (EDUC)</b>	Radicalisation Awareness Network, Youth and Education Working Group
<b>RHSE</b>	Relationships, Health, Sex Education
<b>RPC</b>	Regional Prevent Coordinator
<b>SAT</b>	Situational Action Theory
<b>SMSC</b>	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UKIP</b>	United Kingdom Independent Party
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>WRAP</b>	Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.0 Preventing Radicalisation Using Education – Does It work?**

Education intervention has often been seen as an advantageous way to inoculate the younger generations from new and emerging threats or social harms. Over the years, several international education campaigns, including those organised by the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organisation (WHO), have served to raise awareness of bullying, sexual exploitation as well as highlight health risks from smoking, alcohol dependence, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS. Using education as a means of inoculation or to raise awareness remains one of the most celebrated ways to prevent younger generations from falling foul of social harms.

In the last fifteen years or so, another harm has been added to the long list of educational interventions. This is the threat from radicalisation or violent extremism as an effort to combat terrorism at source. In the last decade, there has been a proliferation of debates on how to counteract terrorism by combatting the roots of radicalisation and/or violent extremism (Davies, 2008; Farish, 2010; Kudnani, 2012). Such measures aim to target those who are not yet implicated with terrorism but are deemed ‘risky or at risk’ (Heath-Kelly, 2012:p.4) of falling into the hands of terrorists.

This is, of course, a very delicate area of preventive work aimed at individuals, in this case young adolescents – school students, who are not suspected of crimes or necessarily planning criminal activities. Nonetheless, their discourse, behaviour and/or habits could signal them out as potential future threats. This debate in relation to radicalisation has developed in reaction to the London terrorist attacks of 2005 and similar attacks that followed in Europe. The concept of radicalisation as understood today has become a field of study in its own right. Initially linked to Islamic terrorism, over the years, radicalisation has developed to include all forms of extremism: religious-inspired, right wing, left wing, ethnonationalist, separatist, and single-issue extremists, such as animal rights activists or environmentalists. Radicalisation research developed alongside terrorism studies, as radicalisation was perceived as that which preceded terrorism. However, recent research on radicalisation (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2017; Schmid, 2016; Schuurmann and Taylor, 2018) moves away from this trend and looks at radicalisation as a phenomenon in its own right, which may or may not lead to terrorism.

The London terrorist attacks of 2005 also marked a new phase of terrorism in Europe. One key aspect of this phase of terrorism was the proliferation of home-grown terrorist actors. This term

developed out of the investigation into who committed these terrorist bombings, which found that the perpetrators were second and/or third generation British Muslim citizens, born and/or bred in the UK. Whilst the term ‘second/third generation immigrants’ may be considered discriminatory (as it implies otherness), in terrorism research, individuals who fit that description are referred to as such. This term distinguishes these individuals from, individuals who might have come to the UK as adults for employment purposes. It was only a few years after 9/11 that studies focused onto the root causes of what may have led these individuals to commit such violence. Those perceived to be most at risk of radicalisation were Muslim adolescents of immigrant descent who were perceived as vulnerable, being ‘socially isolated, identity seeking and politically aggrieved, who may experience a cognitive opening which renders the individual in search for alternative life styles, ideological outlooks etc.’ (Lindekilde, 2012b:p.337).

Terrorist attacks of the same nature have occurred in several countries around the world. Europe in particular, was hit by a wave of attacks such as the Charlie Hebdo attack in January 2015 and the Bataclan attack in November of that same year, both in France; the attacks at the airport and on the metro in Belgium in March 2016; and the Stockholm truck attack in Sweden in April 2017, to mention but a few. These attacks were all of the same nature home-grown and perpetrated by radical Islamists on behalf of ISIS. As a result, the concept of radicalisation became inextricably linked with radical Islam, highlighting the emerging trend of attacks and of the potential problems countries were facing.

The frequency of the attacks and the spread of radicalisation in Europe and beyond alarmed governments significantly. Home-grown terrorism and violent radicalisation was seen to require new solutions (Wilner and Dubouloz, 2010). Consequently, attention shifted from terrorism in general to the new phenomena of home-grown terrorism and the radicalisation of groups and/or individuals with an immigrant heritage in Europe. Since 2005, a lot of research has gone into radicalisation, asking the question why individuals, who were perceived to be leading normal lives within a community, become radicalised to the point of committing violence (Taylor and Horgan, 2006; Schuurmann and Horgan, 2016; Horgan, 2003; 2005; 2006; Borum, 2011; McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2008; 2011; 2014; 2017; Neumann, 2013). According to Mandel (2010), ‘understanding and combating radicalisation of this sort would appear to be an important prerequisite for effectively combating terrorism’ (p.1011). This does not imply that radicalisation or radical beliefs are necessary precursors for terrorism. Understanding radicalisation efforts requires a comprehensive analysis of what people think, how they come to think that and how



those thoughts lead to action (Borum, 2011; Taylor and Horgan, 2006; Horgan, 2003; 2005; 2006; 2008; Corner et al., 2019). Efforts also need to take account of what occurs on the micro, meso and macro levels.

Over the years, a number of conceptual models of radicalisation and theories have been developed, postulating how radicalisation progresses to terrorism. The most prominent include social movement theory (Porta, 2009), rational choice theory (Wiktorowicz, 2005), Moghaddam's (2005) 'staircase to terrorism' with six successive steps leading to terrorism, Kruglanski's (2014) significance quest theory that focuses on social revenge and grievances, and McCauley and Moskaleiko's (2008) twelve different pathways to radicalisation. Some of these early theories and models were underdeveloped as they lacked a firm social scientific basis. Furthermore, the theorists viewed the shift from radicalisation into terrorism as an overly simplistic linear process. Whilst these models have a theoretical backing, they lacked solid empirical evidence and did not provide a complete picture as to why radicals became terrorists whilst others in the same context did not.

In 2017, McCauley and Moskaleiko developed a two-pyramid model of radicalisation that proposes separate pathways of radicalisation, with one leading to extremist opinions and the other leading to extremist action. In doing so, they attempt to explain behavioural radicalisation and cognitive radicalisation, demonstrating that not all those who are radicalised become terrorists. This theory will be examined in more detail in the next chapter as it presents a more realistic way of how people potentially radicalise.

## **1.1 The Problem: What is Radicalisation?**

So far, no agreement has been reached on a definition of radicalisation. Despite the ubiquitous use of the term, the concept of radicalisation still lacks clarity. A number of well-known academics (Moghaddam, 2005; Silber and Bhatt, 2007; McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2008; McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2017; Wiktorowicz, 2005; Pyszczynski et al., 2009; Hogg et al., 2013; Kruglanski et al., 2014; Tajfel and Turner, 1979) have tried to explain the process of radicalisation through conceptual models and theories. Some examples include Silber and Bhatt (2007) who proposed a four-stage model, from pre-radicalisation to 'jihadisation'. The aforementioned 'staircase to

terrorism' theory by Moghaddam (2005) describes how forms of deprivation may lead step by step to terrorism; however, only few people make it to the top of these stairs. However, McCauley and Moskaleiko (2017) two-pyramid model attempted to take a further step towards explaining radicalisation, proposing two pathways, one leading to extremist opinions and the other to extremist action.

Whilst such models have played a role in influencing our understanding of radicalisation, they only tackle the process of this act, and do not offer explanations or underlying reasons as to why some individuals become radicalised whilst others in the same social context do not. 'They lack a differential perspective' (Beelmann, 2020:p.4). Furthermore, empirical evidence related to the abovementioned theories is not sufficiently rigorous. Most studies developed from cross-sectional experimental research, case studies or biographical research 'making it more difficult to make casual inferences with radicalisation processes' (Beelmann, 2020:p.4) . Furthermore, the scholars' theories say little on the preconditions of radicalisation processes or the social processes leading up to terrorism. Whilst such models have served as a spring board for governments to base their national counter-radicalisation agendas, the above models 'do no generate concepts for the universal or primary prevention that needs to be applied before radicalisation processes even start' (Beelmann, 2020:p.4).

Studies into radicalisation have also demonstrated how counterterrorism parameters have widened to include not just terror acts but also extremist beliefs. A number of academics have drawn attention to the fact that not all radicals become terrorists and not all terrorists are radicals, as terrorism as a strategic choice does not make radicalisation a necessity (Taylor and Horgan, 2006; Schuurmann and Horgan, 2016; Horgan, 2003; 2005; 2006; Borum, 2011; McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2008; 2011; 2014; 2017; Neumann, 2013). Consequently, conceptualisations of radicalisation opened up a huge debate on what should fall under radicalisation, how broad its parameters should be, and whether radicalisation should include extremism of thought (cognitive radicalisation) and/or extremism of method (behavioural radicalisation) (Sedgwick, 2010; Neumann, 2013a; Richards, 2015; Mandel, 2010; Schmid, 2013; Horgan, 2005; 2012; 2013; McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2017; Borum, 2011). If the former was to be included, it implied that it would also target individuals who do not support or comply with liberal Western ideas but are not violent. As highlighted earlier, in recent years, however, progress has been made in distinguishing these two forms of processes. Using a two-pyramid model, McCauley and

Moskalenko (2017) attempt to distinguish pathways of radicalisation with one leading to cognitive extremism and the other leading to violent action.

Without going into any debates about how strategy alone can lead to terrorism, this study highlights the importance of clarity when framing radicalisation in policy, particularly educational policy. A better understanding of the latter is crucial, this study argues, to prevent the targeting of impressionable young minds at source.

There was a marked rise of ISIS in 2014, leading to an unprecedented outflow of young men leaving for Syria to become foreign fighters and women ‘to marry fighters, mother children and propagandise’ (Pearson and Winterbotham, 2017, p:1) potentially to carry out attacks (Saltman and Smith, 2015). This surge in followers made the issue of radicalisation even more pressing in Europe. Since the London bombings of 2005, and more so, with the rise of ISIS in 2014, a number of countries added Prevent Violent Extremism programmes (PVE) to their educational policies. The UK developed one of the earliest programmes to prevent radicalisation, called the Prevent strategy (HMG, 2011b). This programme was first published in 2006 as part of CONTEST, the UK’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and has continued to develop since then. In 2015, the absconding of well-educated, young British school girls to join ISIS in Syria, together with the revelation of the identity of Mohammed Emwazi, a young British Arab referred to as ‘Jihadi John’, held responsible for a number of associated, ‘high-profile, medieval-style beheadings’ (BBC, 2015), led the UK and other countries to increase its focus on schools as a means to tackle radicalisation. The UK’s former coalition government, followed by the Conservative-led government, forged ahead with introducing new, soft counter terrorism measures in places like educational institutions to prevent violent radicalisation at source. This occurred despite the lack of clarity and understanding of what radicalisation entailed as well as the lack of knowledge on how education could help prevent radicalisation.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015, educational institutions became central in the fight against radicalisation. The statutory obligation, also known as the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) was introduced to public sectors in England and Wales. This included all schools, registered early years childcare providers and registered later years childcare providers (DfE, 2015). Higher Education and Further Education (HEFE) also had to comply with the duty. All education institutions had to show ‘due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn to terrorism’ (HMG, 2015b:p.2). This

meant that educators in primary and secondary schools and lecturers at HEFE, including universities and colleges, were expected, by law, to prevent students from becoming drawn to terrorism.

This statutory obligation brought about new challenges for those working on the frontline of teaching, as it created conflicts with their professional roles as educators. This thesis addresses many of these challenges.

## **1.2 Challenges of Prevent duty Policy in Education Institutions**

The introduction of the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) initially came under harsh criticism from academia (Thomas, 2016a; Thomas, 2015b; Heath-Kelly, 2017; O'Donnell, 2016a; 2016b) and teachers' unions (Adams, 2016) who stressed that the securitisation of education in the interest of national security undermined those same foundations educational institutions stood for, such as freedom of speech (Gearon, 2019; Dourdie, 2016; Thomas, 2015a; Kudnani, 2009; Adams, 2016). The negative perceptions and reactions brought about by the first iteration of Prevent (HMG, 2008) did not facilitate the introduction of the Prevent duty in 2015 (HMG, 2015b). Prevent was first introduced (but not published) under the Labour government in 2003 as part of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (CONTEST). It was one of the four strands meant to safeguard and protect citizens from terrorism: Protect, Prevent, Prepare, Pursue, first published in 2006. The first Prevent action dealt with tackling the radicalisation of individuals by addressing social and structural problems locally and abroad, deterring those who facilitate and encourage terrorism and engage in the battling of ideas (HMG, 2006). Whilst the policy was developed with good intentions, it came with a number of shortcomings which impacted subsequent iterations of Prevent. These shortcomings included the heavy security discourse deployed by the government (Githens-Mazer and Lambert, 2010), which since then has cemented in the dominant discourse on radicalisation; a lack of clarity in defining radicalisation; and a focus on 'the battle of ideas' (HMG, 2006, p.2) between the West and Islamic states, singling out Muslim communities as potential suspects, particularly Muslim youths (Breen-Smyth, 2014; Mythen, 2012; Mythen et al., 2009; Bartlett and Birdwell, 2010).

In the UK, the Prevent strategy (HMG, 2011b) has continued to evolve under each respective government. In 2011, after acknowledging mistakes committed by the previous government, the Conservative-Liberal Democrats coalition made significant changes to Prevent. One of them included countering all forms of extremism, and placing a greater emphasis on preventing radicalisation and violent extremism. Despite, increased efforts to broaden the scope of the policy to focus on all forms of extremism, concerns remained.

The introduction of the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) in 2015, aimed at tackling ‘the scourge of radicalisation through efforts in schools, colleges and universities, to root out extremist ideology and ban hate speech’ (Dourdie, 2016, p.21). The call for such a policy was already echoed by the then UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, in his Munich speech in 2011 calling for ‘muscular liberalism’ (Cameron, 2011). Since its introduction, the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) and its obligatory nature have led to a number of clashes with Muslim engagement bodies over the objectivity of the measure and its impact on education (MEND, 2019; Versi, 2015). Consequently, in 2019, the Independent Review of Prevent was set up to address these concerns and assess possible changes. However, on 26 January 2021, the review was withdrawn. At the time of writing, Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) has been in force for six years and remains a statutory requirement for all staff in educational settings across England and Wales.

Initially, this new mandatory duty was unpopular amongst educators in England and Wales as it placed an additional burden on the profession (Thomas, 2015a; Thomas, 2015b; Thomas, 2016; Gearon, 2017). According to the National Union of Teachers (NUT), teachers were left in the dark about the associated processes and legislation this duty would bring about in terms of administrative burdens and also the impact on academic freedom, especially for universities (Adams, 2016). A number of academics (Thomas, 2016a; Gearon, 2015; Heath-Kelly, 2017; O’Donnell, 2016b) had raised concerns and criticised the pre-emptive attempt to counterterrorism within educational institutions. The main criticism revolved around issues highlighting the use of therapeutic discourse, undermining freedom of speech, the focus on Muslim and ethnic minority communities and their surveillance by teachers. With this policy in place, some educators felt they were being stripped of their agency (Moffat and Gerard, 2019; Sjoen and Mattson, 2019) as they felt obliged to monitor and survey their students, with potential negative consequences to educator-student relationships, which are built on trust.

However, studies by Busher et al. (2017; 2019) showed that, since the Prevent duty's introduction, perceptions on the ground amongst teachers are not as hostile as they once were. Reframing the Prevent duty as safeguarding has helped with policy acceptance amongst teachers. Busher et al. (2017; 2019) noted that a clearer perception of the risk brought about by radicalisation, the framing of radicalisation as another societal harm, and the 'responsibilisation' (Thomas, 2017) of teachers on the frontline has facilitated this policy acceptance. Prevent as part of the neoliberal ideological framework of the state seeks the maintenance of public order and status quo (Valeriano, 1982; Brodeur, 2007). Through safeguarding practices, individuals are deemed vulnerable and thus require protection, further justifying security interventions.

Such an approach embraces the ideology of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is more than an economic doctrine of capital accumulation, as it assumes a particular mode of governance influencing policies associated with surveillance, education and information. Consequently, neoliberal reforms securitising education conflict with what education stands for. Most teachers join the teaching profession to make a positive difference to the material and social aspects of students' lives through education (Kiriaccou et al., 2010; Sanger and Osguthrope, 2011; Watt and Richardson, 2008). Manuel and Hughes (2006), whose research investigated student teachers' motivations to teach, found that 'personal aspiration, spiritual endeavour, social mission, intellectual pursuit, the desire for connectedness and a belief in the power of ideas and relationships' (p.20) were the main reasons selected by teachers seeking to alter the conditions of others' lives for the better. These attitudes are significant in shaping teachers' decisions to enter the teaching profession (Manuel and Hughes, 2006). Today, this desire to teach good-quality education faces several challenges (Biesta, 2015). At a time when performance standards and managerialism continue to permeate educational settings, little if any space is left for teachers' subjectivation. Neoliberal/neoconservative reforms in education continue to impact those most vulnerable in education, as well as teachers' agency in delivering good quality education.

Today, one may find two types of discourse present surrounding radicalisation in education. One discourse emerges from the war on terror narrative which dehumanises the terrorist and has seeped into Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)/Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) policies (Borum, 2011; Kudnani, 2012 as cited in Mattson, 2018, p.112). Such a discourse may contribute to the securitisation of society but also results in the stigmatisation of Muslim populations (Davies, 2018a; Dourdie, 2016; Kudnani, 2015 as cited in Mattson, 2018, p.113). The second is cohesion discourse, which tackles marginalisation, discrimination, stigmatisation, and racism. It strives for

‘cohesion’ as a solution to the challenge of home-grown terrorism (Husband and Alam, 2011; Thomas, 2015a as cited in Mattson, 2018, p.113).

Despite local criticism of the UK’s Prevent strategy, a number of European countries such as Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands followed in the footsteps of the UK and created their own CVE/PVE strategies to prevent and counter radicalisation at source, fit for their context (Weert and Eijkman, 2021; Mattsson and Saljo, 2018). However, unlike the UK, the abovementioned countries’ policy is not binding. Despite a growing emphasis and political will to invest in long-term preventive efforts in education, several challenges still hinder the design of effective approaches. How education can be used as a successful tool to prevent radicalisation and build resilience against extremism amongst youth remains unclear, as little is known about their success rates. Sjoen and Jore (2019b) call for an educational response to Prevent, stressing that ‘educational prevention should be grounded in genuinely good education that uses social and relational strategies in respect of the growing risks of radicalisation and extremism’ (p.280).

The objective of this interdisciplinary, exploratory study, which is non-representative in nature, is to assess how secondary school teachers in England conceptualise radicalisation and how their understanding influences preventive-measures taken in the classroom, including the implementation of the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b). Prevent practitioners were also selected to act as a comparative group to teachers. Their views were valuable in assessing whether what teachers understood by radicalisation and the measures adopted in class matched Prevent practitioners’ views and expectations. The views of both groups of participants helped to provide a more complete picture of teachers’ understanding of radicalisation as well as Prevent duty’s (HMG, 2015b) enactment on the ground.

An analysis of teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ understanding of radicalisation was necessary for deeper considerations on which kind of preventing radicalisation measures would best fit an educational setting. Such an inquiry was necessary to investigate teachers’ agency and the boundaries in which teachers could exercise that agency to enact state policy according to their own interpretative framework.

The research questions are:

1. How do teachers in secondary schools and Prevent practitioners in England conceptualise radicalisation in education?
2. How do teachers' interpretation of radicalisation influence their prevention methods when teaching, and how do teachers' meet Prevent practitioners' expectations when implementing the Prevent duty?

Incorporated into these research questions are the following research objectives:

- i. Investigate whether teachers' and Prevent practitioners' conceptualisation of radicalisation conforms with state definitions.
- ii. Identify what measures teachers adopt to prevent radicalisation in the classroom and whether teachers meet Prevent practitioners' expectations when enacting Prevent.
- iii. Identify the skills, competences, and the type of training teachers require to increase students' resilience to radicalisation.

### **1.3 A Journey Through the Thesis**

**Chapter 1** provides a brief overview of what this research study entails. It provides the reader with a brief background on the concept of radicalisation, how it developed within terrorism research, and its problems as a concept. It will also examine the role education has been given by states to tackle radicalisation through Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) programmes, policies and/or strategies. The chapter briefly introduces the reader to the statutory obligations contained in the Prevent duty policy, which impacts the role of teachers in England and Wales. Research gaps are then identified, creating the basis for the study's objectives and main research questions. Finally, a brief overview of all the chapters is provided, briefly highlighting how the study is organised.



**Chapter 2** looks at the conceptual evolution of radicalisation post 9/11 and assesses its connection with home-grown terrorism. This chapter also outlines the development of theories and conceptual models to explain the processes of radicalisation, highlighting the distinction between cognitive and behavioural radicalisation, and stressing the importance of an individual's propensity to radicalise. The chapter draws on what has been written by several academics in the counter-terrorism field (Mandel, 2010; Sedgwick, 2010; Neumann, 2013c; Richards, 2015; Borum, 2011; Schmid, 2013; Taylor and Horgan, 2006; 2005; 2003; 2012; 2013; 2014; McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2017; 2008). Whilst common variables exist, there is no single terrorist profile for cases of radicalisation that lead to terrorism. Each case is different and needs to be analysed in its own right. The conflation of concepts of radicalisation and extremism will be examined in detail, highlighting the complexity that the blurring of such concepts brings about, particularly when extremism of method and extremism of thought are defined and dealt with in the same manner. The chapter looks closely at the concept of radicalisation to evaluate how it fits within secondary school education. It discusses the nexus between radicalisation and education and the role education can play to prevent radicalisation effectively, balancing security with citizens' fundamental human rights.

**Chapter 3** focuses on the Prevent branch of the UK's Counter-Terrorism Strategy Act and its development over the years. Specific focus is placed on the Prevent duty policy, which is the UK's main PVE policy in education since 2015. A discussion of how security led efforts affect education – both students' learning and teachers' teaching – is discussed in detail, drawing upon research carried out in schools over recent years. The chapter also assesses how the promotion of fundamental British values can help counter extremism. Drawing on previous research in this area, this study looks at how the Britishness aspect of the values has been perceived by students and teachers. Attention is given to the shift from multiculturalism to assimilation, which is then followed by a discussion arguing that neoliberal approaches in education ambiguously attempt to socially control and/or hijack individuals' freedom, rather than enhance their inclusivity, agency, and equality.

**Chapter 4** attempts to draw out the philosophical questions surrounding educating against extremism, and explores whether we are in need of an educational response to radicalisation. The chapter deconstructs the concept of radicalisation to better assess its impact on education. The chapter stresses how the lack of clarity in educational policy hampers effective implementation

and execution, particularly in the field of education where concepts of radicalisation or extremism are deemed controversial topics. Sieckelinck et al. (2015) state that, ‘radicalisation in a pedagogical sense occurs when a child starts to develop political or religious ideas and agency that are fundamentally different from the educational environments or mainstream’s expectations’ (Sieckelinck et al., 2015:p.330). This is of particular importance for educational policies, which aim to develop ‘critically, politically aware’ citizens (van San et al., 2013:p.288). Yet, neoliberal approaches in education hijack such developments as it portrays young people as either ‘villains or victims’ (Sieckelinck et al., 2015:p.336), unable to think outside conventional schemes. Therefore, new insights and tools into educating teachers and teacher training are required to prevent radicalisation from an educational and philosophical/political perspective.

**Chapter 5** moves beyond the subject of preventing radicalisation in the classroom and focuses on the aspects of teaching which would strengthen a teacher’s positionality in the classroom. In general, the lack of teachers’ exposure to multiculturalism can leave teachers ill-equipped and unprepared to face the realities and mindsets of the variety of students they teach. Remaining culturally attuned and in touch with students’ worlds is essential to better understand students and to prevent potential risks of radicalisation effectively, implicitly, and explicitly. The chapter also draws on the implications of effective initial teacher training (ITT), continuous professional development (CPD) as well as in-service training to prepare teachers for both the challenges and opportunities that multicultural teaching brings.

**Chapter 6** draws on theories which offer a range of interrelated conceptual tools for thinking about the subject, power, knowledge, and agency. The chapter draws on the late work of Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser’s (Althusser, 1971) concept of Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), and on Judith Butler’s concept of subjectification, which further strengthens Foucault’s previous work on power, knowledge, and discourse (Foucault, 1969; Foucault, 1970). These underlying philosophical concepts provide an understanding of the relationships that exist between the subject (teacher), power (agency), and politics (the state). These concepts, as developed by these theorists, provide useful insights into the various components of the research process, particularly general knowledge formation, teachers’ subjectivity and performativity, and the importance of power-knowledge and the self in the divulgence of ideas and perceptions.

**Chapter 7** provides a detailed description of the methodology adopted and research tools selected to conduct the research investigation. The objective is to understand teachers' and Prevent practitioners' conceptualisations of radicalisation and the way their understanding influences their prevention interventions at classroom level. This chapter is significant as it showcases the importance of the researcher's data in deepening the understanding of radicalisation within education, particularly within secondary education. It also focuses on the journey of the researcher and the decisions made to complete the research. It addresses the struggles encountered to access schools and the important decisions made to find alternative ways of encompassing all ethical considerations. Researcher positionality is at the heart of this chapter, highlighting how personal biases and experiences are acknowledged and taken into account, whilst trying to remain impartial during the entire research process.

**Chapter 8** presents the data analysis gathered from the first set of interview questions, which focuses on teachers' and Prevent practitioners' own conceptualisations of radicalisation post 9/11. In this section, the concept of radicalisation is deconstructed and reconstructed through teachers' and Prevent practitioners' own understanding and acquired knowledge.

**Chapter 9** presents the data analyses gathered from the second set of interview questions, which dealt with teachers' preventive interventions against radicalisation in the classroom, including their views on the Prevent duty, which is a statutory obligation. The chapter highlights how teachers still perceive radicalisation as a significant threat and thus attempt to move beyond Prevent guidance to promote multicultural good practices at classroom level, whilst others opt for opportunities to address radicalisation through their teaching subject.

**Chapter 10** presents the data gathered from the third set of interview questions, which dealt with Prevent enactment, its misconceptions, as well as its impact on the teaching profession. It also addresses changes and alternatives teachers and Prevent practitioners wish for in the Prevent duty.

**Chapter 11** presents teachers and Prevent practitioners' views on freedom of speech and the teaching of Fundamental British Values (FBV). The chapter draws on the impact of FBVs on teachers and the use of assimilationist policies, arguing that it highlights national citizenship as another neoliberal policy for social control that undermines inclusivity and agency.

**Chapter 12** features a discussion of the key findings of this study, ranging from teachers' understanding of radicalisation and teacher training needs to whether teachers should be given political licence to enable effective discussion and how critical pedagogy can be used. Results are critically discussed in light of what has already been revealed in previous research studies. Results are also compared and contrasted with key focal areas in the literature review chapters (2-5).

The conclusion summarises the salient issues and arguments made in this thesis. By contextualising the significance of the concept of radicalisation in education, it notes the contribution the research makes to countering radicalisation in education and how it can help policy development in this area, as well as ITT and CPD. The conclusion highlights how this thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge empirically, conceptually, and theoretically.

## **1.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

This interdisciplinary study brings two research areas together: education and terrorism. Whilst plenty of studies on radicalisation in the UK have been carried out from a psychological, sociological, and criminological perspective, empirical research on radicalisation from an educational perspective has only gained momentum in the last eight years (Thomas, 2015b; Busher et al., 2017; Busher et al., 2019; Spiller et al., 2018; Moffat and Gerard, 2019; Elwick, 2019; Elwick and Jerome, 2019; Elwick et al., 2020; Jerome and Elwick, 2020; San et al., 2013; Sieckelinck and Ruter, 2009; 2015; 2016; 2016). The majority of the studies conducted in the UK have focused on the Prevent duty on all levels of education and with both teachers and students (McGlynn and McDaid, 2019; Spiller et al., 2018; Moffat and Gerard, 2019; Busher et al., 2019; Busher et al., 2017; Lewis, 2020; Elwick et al., 2020; Jerome et al., 2019; Thomas, 2010; 2012; 2015a; 2015b; 2016; 2017; 2020; O'Donnell, 2016b; Heath-Kelly, 2012; 2015a; 2017). Some of this research has assessed ground-level implementation by teachers at classroom level in England and Wales (Busher et al., 2017; 2019; Busher and Jerome, 2020 (ed.)).

The rich and detailed narratives of teachers' perceptions and the methods used to prevent potential radicalisation in their schools, together with the experiences of Prevent practitioners working with teachers and students, helps to raise awareness of this ground-level action. It also provides a clear picture of whether teachers' views of radicalisation – and their actions in preventing it – match

and cohere with what the Prevent duty policy stands for. Through the exploration of secondary school teachers' and Prevent practitioners' conceptualisations of radicalisation, as well as their feelings and perceptions towards prevention, provides fresh knowledge regarding how teachers prevent radicalisation through their own 'interpretative framework'. Attention is also given to dominant, public narratives in Britain and how the latter may influence teachers' views on radicalisation. Participants' views on the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) shed light on what works and what does not, and what improvements can be made for better policy delivery. Their views on Prevent training and the need for an educational response through the use of all subject curricula (not just value subjects) are particularly important as they have implications for ITT and CPD. Prevent practitioners' views are very important in identifying whether teachers' conduct and implementation of Prevent is meeting their expectations in fulfilling the Prevent duty and pushing forward the security agenda of the British state. A deeper insight into what secondary school teachers understand by radicalisation and how they are trying to prevent it further helps the research community. It also aids policymakers' understanding of whether teachers' views conform with state objectives when actioning the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b).

Further research could replicate this study with a broader population sample to cover all regions in England and Wales. Furthermore, this study could be used as a springboard for future research into how educational responses could improve Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) implementation by teachers in schools. Future research could also look into the type of training required by student teachers as well as in-service teachers to equip them with the right skills required to address the processes of radicalisation, and to acquire broader community knowledge and competencies in critical pedagogy in order to address complex and sensitive conversations in the classroom.

## **Conclusion**

Realities for teachers today are somewhat more challenging than they were in the past. Today, teachers have to teach against a backdrop of new preventing violent extremism policies in education, further pushed on by neoliberal reforms in education. However, responding to the long list of diverse and varied needs of pupils in the classroom already forms one of the biggest challenges teachers currently face (Tommlinson, 1999; Meijer, 2003). Adding radicalisation to this list will make teachers' duties more challenging.

The definition of radicalisation, as a concept developed post 9/11, has been hotly contested in a range of debates within terrorism research. These debates shall be discussed in the next chapters, which will also introduce the concept of radicalisation in relation to home-grown terrorism and its implications for secondary school education in England and Wales.

## **Chapter 2: Reconceptualising Radicalisation in Education**

## **2.0 Introduction**

This study looks at what teachers understand by the concept of radicalisation and how they interpret the UK's preventing violent extremism policy in education, better known as the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b). Particular attention is given to literature focusing on the challenges brought about in education by the concept of radicalisation, as well as literature dealing with Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) policies in education, their effectiveness, and their ability to balance the needs of security with that of liberty. The literature also highlights recurring problems that exist with preventing radicalisation measures, policies, and strategies.

First, it is necessary to review existing literature in order to identify how the concept of radicalisation as we know it today has developed.

### **2.1 The Concept of Radicalisation and its Evolution Post 9/11**

Over the last two decades, a lot of research has been dedicated to the concept of radicalisation, with several accomplished researchers looking at this phenomenon from various angles. Radicalisation has come to be understood as the 'human developments that precede terrorist attacks' (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2017:p.3). A number of acclaimed researchers such as Randy Borum (2011), John Horgan (2005; 2008), Alex Schmid (2013; 2016), Mark Sedgwick (2010), Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko (2008; 2011; 2014; 2017) have all contributed to research on radicalisation and what it means to become radicalised.

The concept of radicalisation as we know it today developed after the events of 9/11, and more specifically after the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, where the idea of home-grown terrorists proliferated. The understanding and use of the concept of radicalisation prior to 9/11 does not conform with the understanding of radicalisation post 9/11. Prior to these attacks, social science research looking into radicalisation was close to non-existent (Coolsaet, 2016). Northern Irish terrorists operating within the Irish Republican Army (IRA) prior to 9/11 were never described as 'radicalised'. However, research shows that conceptualisation models of radicalisation (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2008) today would also apply to some of the youth



who joined the IRA, which was categorised as a terrorist group by the UK for its illegal, terrorist actions. Research with former paramilitaries shows how their experiences with the IRA share similarities with current theories and models describing the process of radicalisation, some of which include fear, quest for self-significance, exposure to injustice, structural violence, and direct threats to the in-group, which ultimately pushed them towards extremism, often also enabled by relatives and peers in fuelling mobilisations (Ferguson and McAuley, 2019). The radicalisation concept only picked up speed after 9/11.

Before moving on to what we know so far about the understanding of radicalisation post 9/11, it is worth looking at how the concept developed and what it means.

### ***2.1.1 Radicalisation and Extremism***

The term radicalisation as known today has developed after being linked to the views of Islamist fundamentalists in the wake of the Madrid and London terrorist attacks in 2004 and 2005, respectively. It grew out of the phenomenon of home-grown terrorism - where individuals emerging from immigrant diaspora communities commit acts of violence for political/religious aims. The contemporary interpretation of radicalisation became a concept inextricably linked with terrorism. However, if we look at the etymology of the word, it shows that the term has nothing to do with any type of extreme violent act. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (1828 *online*) the term 'radicalisation' stems from the Latin word *radix*, meaning 'roots' or 'proceeding from a root'. Roots are described as those elements which are at the source of life, essentials like food and water. When used figuratively, the term 'roots' gives the idea of that which is 'fundamental' (Merriam-Webster, 1828). The first documented use related to the term 'radicalism' was in the 18<sup>th</sup> century France (Botticher, 2017). Historically, the term radicalism became a marker of the 'enlightened' who are 'liberal to left-wing political tenets, opposing reactionary political establishment' (Botticher, 2017:p.74). It was a political doctrine inspiring national and republican movements to fight for freedom and emancipation from monarchs and aristocrats (Botticher, 2017). Political opponents portrayed radicalism as a destabilising force. However, on a historical level and in terms of political parties' support, radicalism remains closely linked to progressive reformism rather than utopian extremism, whose glorification of mass violence radicals generally rejected (Botticher, 2017).

Whilst the terms ‘radical’ and ‘radicalisation’ are socially constructed, and in contemporary use hold negative connotations, it does not mean that they can be casually connected to terrorism. Whilst some radicals use violence, not all radicals do. Radicals may express their views by going out on the streets to demonstrate, publish books, or even become politicians. Therefore, ‘although radicalisation increases the potential for such forms of violence, it does not necessitate any of them’ (Mandel, 2010:p.2). Mandel defines radicalisation as ‘an increase in and/or reinforcing of extremism in the thinking, sentiments, and/or behaviour of individuals and/or groups of individuals’ (Mandel, 2010:p.2). In his view, an individual is deemed radical when their acquired ideas depart from what is deemed normal/acceptable in that society/context (Mandel, 2010). Radicals are those who push the limits of what is deemed normal (Schmid, 2013; Sedgwick, 2010; Mandel, 2010).

To further complicate matters, radicalism is often conflated or equated with extremism or violent extremism, leading to confusion (Sedgwick, 2010). Whilst both radicalism and extremism can be perceived as that which is most distant from the mainstream, historically, extremism or extremists were described as political actors who disregard the rule of law and reject pluralism in society (Botticher, 2017; Schmid, 2013) Manus Midlarsky (2011) was the first to develop a theoretical framework of extremism based on ideology, narration and groupthink. The terms ‘radical’ and ‘extreme’ are also relative concepts that can be used against something that is defined or accepted as normative, traditional or valued as the status quo (Sedgwick, 2010). Therefore, the concept of ‘radical’ is an evaluative one depending on the perspective from which it is regarded. The same counts for ‘extremist’. Therefore, radicalisation may be described as the product of extremist thinking or behaviour (Mandel, 2010).

Over the years, several definitions have been developed by governments, organisations, and academics. However, they lacked precision, resulting in little clarity and a lot of confusion (Schmid, 2013). Yet, what most of these definitions have in common is that they describe radicalisation as a ‘process’: a ‘process of political socialisation towards extremism’, a ‘process of conflict escalation’, ‘a mobilisation and recruitment process’, and a ‘conversion process’ (Schmid, 2016:p.27).

In early research, the concept was perceived as ‘ill-defined, complex and controversial’ (Coolsaet, 2011:p.240). One of the earliest definitions of radicalisation was provided in 2008 by the European

Commission's Expert Group on Violent Radicalisation, which Schmid (2013) defined as 'socialisation to extremism manifesting into acts of terrorism' (p.5) occurring at the 'intersection of an enabling environment and a personal trajectory' (Reineries et al., 2008:p.9) At the time, radicalisation was viewed as a precursor to terrorism. However, Mandel (2010) and Richards (2015) note that the term 'violent radicalisation' was developed to directly link radicalisation to violence/terrorism, as it was already agreed at the time (Reineries et al., 2008) that radicalisation alone cannot be a sufficient cause of terrorism.

Consequently, the concept of radicalisation has become highly politicised (Horgan, 2011) as it started being used in 'the political game of labelling and blame attribution' (Schmid, 2013:p.17). Initially, there was also 'a widely accepted view among terrorism experts and counter terrorism practitioners that terrorism depended on the radicalisation of its instigators and perpetrators' (Mandel, 2010:p.7). This is why, today, 'violent extremism' is the new discourse used, in terms of preventing terrorism. However, it is important to underscore that the acquisition of extreme ideas does not directly or indirectly lead to violence.

While no common definition has yet been reached on radicalisation, positive strides have been made in radicalisation research. Initially, a lot of focus was placed on the root causes of terrorism that tried to explain what pushed individuals to make the leap to terrorism. The Routledge Handbook of Terrorism (Schmid, 2011) lists over 50 different alleged root causes or grievances, such as political discontent, desire for revenge, alienation, and humiliation.

As shall be seen in the next section, most of the research on radicalisation has conducted micro-level analysis that focuses on the individual. As a result, studies have focused mostly on personal key triggers that lead an individual to become radicalised. Theories and conceptual models have been developed to try to explain such processes. Studies have looked at the radicalised individual from a psychological (Horgan, 2014; Kruglanski et al., 2014), sociological (Borum, 2011), and mental health perspective (Coppock and McGovern, 2014; Campelo et al., 2018). Research has also been conducted on a meso-level, addressing the wider radical milieu surrounding the radicalised individual, stressing the importance of networks of peers and personal crises for the uptake of extremist ideas (Pedhazur, 2005; Horgan, 2008; Ranstrop, 2010; Sageman, 2004; Wiktorowicz, 2005). As to the macro-level research on the enabling environment of radicalisation

– the role of government and society – little research has been conducted so far (Dawson, 2017; Bouhana, 2019; Bouhana et al., 2018).

Whilst various empirical research papers have been published, little has been discovered about an individual's propensity to radicalise and under which circumstances this occurs. Lack of research in this area is particularly of concern as it allows micro- and meso-level research on radicalisation to become a substitute for a fuller exploration of causes of violent extremism and terrorism on a societal level. This could lead to a situation where 'politically awkward factors like "counterproductive counterterrorism" measures are excluded from research – especially government funded research' (Schmid, 2013:p.5).

The next section shall provide a brief overview of the research on radicalisation and theoretical and conceptual models developed so far.

### ***2.1.2 Root Causes, Theories and Conceptual Models***

Most of the initial literature on radicalisation post 9/11 developed in reaction to the war on terror and the unauthorised US-led war in Iraq in 2003. After the London terrorist attacks of 2005, radicalisation research grew inextricably linked to terrorism and came to be perceived as a precursor to terrorism. Research today demonstrates that this is not necessarily the case. Most of the initial research into radicalisation focused on how young, disaffected, vulnerable youths with a migrant heritage, often Muslims, made the leap into terrorism. It 'became the master signifier of the late "war on terror" and provided a new lens through which to view Muslim minorities' (Kudnani, 2012:p.6). In the last decade, research on radicalisation has expanded considerably, providing a greater depth and breadth of understanding as to why individuals become radicalised. Root causes of radicalisation were often blamed upon exposure to ideology, victimisation, alienation, socialisation, social networks, the internet, intergenerational fractures, trauma, relative social and economic deprivation and 'cultures of violence' (Bjorgo and Horgan, 2008; Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2008; Juergensmeyer, 2000; McCauley and Moskalenko, 2008; Silber and Bhatt, 2007; Wiktorowicz, 2005 as cited in Brown and Saeed, 2015:p.1953) leading governments to believe that they could pre-empt future terrorist attacks by means specific interventions (Coolsaet, 2011). However, Wikstrom and Bouhana (2017) argue that the literature on radicalisation today provides

no evidence to support a ‘youth vulnerability profile’. They argue that the notion of an identity crisis, which is often cited as one of the root causes of radicalisation, is a poor predictor.

In the last decade, radicalisation research has also moved away from focusing only on Islamic extremism to include other forms, such as far-right extremism. This occurred due to the rise of far-right world views and far-right terrorism (Koehler, 2016; Bartlett and Birdwell, 2013). Furthermore, more attention has been recently given to the enabling environment (macro-level) which according to some researchers (Bouhana, 2019; Bouhana et al., 2018; Dawson, 2017) is believed to set the conditions for radicalisation to develop. Research has also started looking into why certain individuals have a propensity to become radicalised (Bouhana, 2019; Bouhana et al., 2018). This is in order to understand why some radicals become terrorists, whilst others do not. Several studies have also been published addressing counter-radicalisation interventions (Parker and Lindekilde, 2020; Parker et al., 2020; Hogan et al., 2016a; Nassar-Edine et al., 2011; Davies, 2008; Davies, 2018a), de-radicalisation and disengagement (Horgan, 2012; Horgan, 2013; Bjorgo and Horgan, 2009; Elshimi, 2015; Cherney, 2018/2019). A number of theories and models have also been developed to explain the processes of radicalisation and extremism (Moghaddam, 2005; Silber and Bhatt, 2007; McCauley and Moskalenko, 2008; McCauley and Moskalenko, 2017; Wiktorowicz, 2005; Pyszczyński et al., 2009; Hogg et al., 2013; Kruglanski et al., 2014; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Established researchers (Bartlett and Miller, 2012; Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman, 2009; Goldman et al., 2014; Atran, 2016) have empirically studied what pushed individuals to make the leap to commit violence, which in social psychology has been called ‘unfreezing’, in sociology ‘biographical availability’, and ‘cognitive opening’ in social movement theory.

Over the years, a number of models and conceptual frameworks were developed in an attempt to describe the processes of radicalisation. Most of these models describe radicalisation as a set of levels, with each level showing increased commitment. Initial research on radicalisation demonstrates how radicalisation was perceived to be a linear process triggered by root causes and grievances. This perception has changed over time as empirical studies have confirmed this not to be the case (Bartlett and Miller, 2012). The following are some of the most prominent models developed.

Moghaddam's (2005) 'staircase to terrorism', describes an individual's trajectory to radicalisation in the form of six successive steps. At the base there is a perception of injustice; then the first step is options; then there is anger leading to moral engagement; the fourth step is joining a terrorist group, and on the fifth and sixth floors there are terrorist acts. Each step of the staircase is supported by a number of explanations as well as psychological theories, such as relative deprivation, rational choice, and terror management theory. Doosje et al. (2016) presented a similar theory based on three phases, where first the individual becomes sensitised to extremist views due to psychological factors, then joins a group, and after that he/she adopts an ideology and engages in violent action.

Kruglanski (2014) and his team have developed a social psychological model for extremism using motivational bases as reasons for radicalisation: 'esteem, achievement, meaning, competence, control' (p.73). The theory argues that people have a basic need for recognition and significance; once these are lost, motivation increases to regain significance possibly through extremist social groups. Kruglanski's theory has been empirically tested on attitude levels (Webber et al., 2018).

McCauley and Moskaleiko (2008; 2011; 2017) came up with twelve paths to radicalisation. In doing so, they created distinctions between individual, group and mass radicalisation, providing explanations for levels such as political dissatisfaction, group competition over resources, and war as a reason for martyrdom. In 2017, they also developed a two-pyramid model with one radicalisation path leading to extremist opinions and the other to extremist action. The opinion pyramid has neutral people at the base, above them a smaller group of sympathisers, then higher up are justifiers, and at the very top are those who feel morally obliged to engage in extremism. The action pyramid has inert people at the base, followed by activists and radicals in the middle, with terrorists at the top.

Other empirical studies include Wictorowicz's (2005) 'four-stage model of radicalisation' where people experiencing a cognitive opening, develop personal relations, providing legitimate authority to an extremist group, to finally, making a rational choice to take risks. Sageman's (2008) research looks into terrorists' networks of family and friends, who, he argues, are key to understanding individual pathways to terrorism. Silber and Bhatt's (2007) four-stage model of radicalisation starts off with pre-radicalisation, leading to self-identification – where the individual meets like-minded individuals and adopts an ideology of their own. It then leads on to

indoctrination – where the individual’s beliefs intensify within the group, ultimately leading to Jihadisation, the phase where the individual is ready to act.

This body of research offers sound explanations of the processes of radicalisation and have had an impact on the way we conceptualise radicalisation today; however, they still present weaknesses. Firstly, most of the models (with the exception of the McCauley and Moskalenko’s (2017) two-pyramid model, describe radicalisation as an orderly, linear progression, which plays out over time and involves different effects and dynamics. However, empirical studies (Bartlett and Miller, 2012; Atran, 2016) have demonstrated that radicalisation is far from a linear progression. This is particularly important in order to identify adequate ways and measures to counter different types of radicalisation, both cognitive and behavioural. A lack of distinction between the two explains differences between definitions of radicalisation, and has also provided the backdrop for strikingly different policy approaches. Therefore, more research is required to investigate the interaction between the latter and their patterns along the radicalisation process.

The above-mentioned theories also lack a strong empirical backing since most of them were based on cross-sectional, experimental, and biographical research. Methodological limitations and rigour remain a problem within radicalisation research. Furthermore, the aforementioned theories do not say much about who are the radicals. Consensus exists about terrorists being normal persons suffering no pathologies (Silke, 2008a). Whilst research studies have tried to challenge this view, looking into the pathological character of radical subjects, the ‘diversity of factors contributing to the radicalisation of an individual is larger than commonly expected (Sieckelinck, 2016). Furthermore, little is known about their context. Recent research by Wikstrom and Bouhana (2017) on Situational Action Theory (SAT) sheds light on the context in which radicalisation may occur and proposed ‘mechanisms linking individual, social ecological, and systemic levels of analysis in order to explain how people come to acquire a propensity for terrorism’ (p.182). They describe radicalisation as the ‘outcome of the interaction between an individual who is susceptible to moral change and the radicalising settings present in that person’s activity field’ (Wikstrom and Bouhana, 2017:p.182), what others have called ‘the enabling environment’ (Reinheres et al., 2008:p.9). It therefore explains how an individual comes ‘to see extremist actions as morally legitimate and how they fail to develop self-regulation, leaving them more prone to commit extremist acts’ (Bouhana, 2019:p.10).

Understanding what drives or triggers individuals or groups to become violently radicalised is perhaps the most challenging aspect of radicalisation. However, research on the possible drivers of radicalisation tell us that ‘there is no one single trajectory to radicalisation, the transformation is highly individualised’ (Bell 2005 as cited in Wilner and Dubouloz, 2010:p.38), meaning that there are several variables that come into play and that there is no one direct path to terrorism.

The next section shall highlight further research which has looked into the important distinction between radicalisation of thought (cognitive radicalisation) and radicalisation of action (behavioural radicalisation).

### ***2.1.3 Cognitive Radicalisation versus Behavioural Radicalisation***

One important and ongoing academic argument in the study of radicalisation is about the distinctions to be made between cognitive and behavioural radicalisation. John Horgan (2011; 2005) and Randy Borum (2011) were amongst the first to question the utility of studying cognitive radicalisation to understand how people become terrorists. Horgan (2008) stressed how an academic focus on cognitive radicalisation could prove counterproductive, as such a focus led to what he argues is a flawed notion that extremist beliefs are the precursor to violent action. Such discussions have raised a number of debates in the field of terrorism research as to whether the focus should shift back on to terrorism, as radicalisation does not necessarily lead to terrorism (Taylor and Horgan, 2006; Horgan, 2008; Bartlett and Miller, 2012). According to Jackson (2015), conflation occurred due to an epistemological crisis in counterterrorism. In his view, ‘there is an acceptance of an extreme precautionary dogma whereby unknown (or) constructed threats are acted upon pre-emptively before they actualise’ (2015:p.35). The emergence of the ‘radicalisation discourse’ within terrorism studies appeared to have been provoked by difficulties in applying existing models to the emergence of violence deemed to be religious (Juergensmeyer, 2000; Rapoport, 2002).

Mandel (2010) Richards (2011), and Neumann (2013c) all highlighted the importance of distinguishing between radicalisation of thought (cognitive radicalisation) and radicalisation of method (behavioural radicalisation), stating that each of these forms of radicalisation need to be addressed and tackled differently. McCauley and Moskalenko’s (2017) two-pyramid model, the



‘opinion pyramid’ and the ‘action pyramid’, marks a distinction between ‘radicalisation to extremist opinion’ and ‘radicalisation to extremist action’. Unlike previous models, individuals can skip levels in moving up and down the pyramid. The higher the level, the stronger the commitment to extremist beliefs (opinion) or illegal action to target civilians (action).

The lack of a common definition of radicalisation and violent extremism has allowed governments and authorities to further widen their parameters as to what countering terrorism entails – that is, countering those who perpetrate violence – to include countering those who have radical thoughts or extremist views but who are not necessarily acting upon these. The UK included Fundamental British Values (FBV) in the definition of extremism, which acted as a way to measure extremism. The Dutch government did not perceive radicalisation as necessarily violent but that it could nonetheless heighten the potential for violence, and therefore it was seen as harmful to the democratic legal order (Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Relations, 2007; Rabasa et al., 2010). The Swedish definition of radicalisation focuses on the social context and the underlying social factors that could potentially lead to radicalisation, such as marginalisation, segregation, and discrimination (Swedish Ministry of Justice, 2011). Similarly, Denmark defined radicalisation as a process in which a person starts to accept ideas and methods of extremism, eventually joining an extremist group. They also partially perceive radicalisation as a symptom of inadequate social integration (Government of Denmark, 2009).

The parameters of radicalisation remain wide and undefined, giving governments carte blanche to implement any favoured measures under the pretext of national security. This carries serious implications for national strategies, now called Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) ‘leading to many international analysts using a hybrid ‘P/CVE’ description (Thomas, 2020:p.13). CVE/PVE policy measures vary from country to country and include ‘efforts towards increased surveillance/policing of communities, initiatives aimed at engagement/dialogue with Muslim communities, counter narratives vis-à-vis extremist propaganda, community cohesion programmes, individually focused mentoring programmes, role model campaigns and anti-discrimination measures’ (Lindekilde, 2012b:p.338).

Focusing on the UK, the government originally used the PVE title for the first iteration of the prevention programme but has subsequently simplified this to Prevent. The UK was one of the first countries globally to adopt a PVE policy approach, and, as a result, set an example for others

to observe and follow. However, the Prevent strategy was nationally thought-out and developed, tailor-made to prevent the radicalisation problem within the UK.

The UK government defined extremism as ‘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 as well as calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas’ (HMG, 2011b:p.107). Interestingly, the British definition of extremism here does not make any reference to violence. However, it widened its target group as it focused on a ‘phenomenon of mass psychology’ (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2017:p.24), thus, cognitive radicalisation rather than behavioural radicalisation. Therefore, the definition by the UK government had moved beyond terrorism, (radicalisation of action) to include radicalisation of opinion. This had implications for the Prevent strategy as tackling radicalisation of opinion and radicalisation of action each require different skills and strategies.

## **2.2 Radicalisation and the development of CVE/PVE policies**

In the aftermath of 9/11, a lot of research was conducted on terrorism, centred around Islamic terrorism, suicide bombings, terrorist groups and networks like those of Al-Qaeda and ISIS (Crenshaw, 2008; 2011; Hoffman, 2006; Nesser, 2006; 2008; Khosrokhavar, 2004; 2005; Sageman, 2004; 2008; 2009; Pedhazur, 2005). The ‘war on terror’, also led to a focus on the root causes and perceived grievances (Schmid, 2005; Bjorgo, 2005; Newman, 2006). Leading terrorism researchers (Horgan, 2003; 2008; Horgan, 2005; Maxwell, 1988; Taylor and Horgan, 2006) attempted to find answers as to why individuals become terrorists, using psychological models (Maxwell, 1988; Maxwell and Quayle, 1994) and organisational structures (Bloom, 2005). Horgan (2008), however, dismissed the idea of a terrorist personality or profile, highlighting the complex processes of accommodation and assimilation across stages and the many variables that may push an individual to join a terrorist group. Furthermore, he stated that the creation of profiles would not help prevent radicalisation.

Research on the root causes of terrorism increased with the frequency of terrorist attacks that followed in Europe after 9/11, first in Madrid in 2004 and then in London in 2005. The terrorist attacks in London were identified as home-grown, as perpetrators of the attacks were British

citizens from immigrant diasporas. These attacks revealed the underlying problem of the then emerging phenomenon of radicalisation, which saw young people become radicalised to the extent of committing acts of terrorism against their home country on behalf of terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda. As a result, from its inception, radicalisation became associated with the views of Islamist fundamentalists who used illegal and/or immoral means to spread their beliefs with the objective to establish their idea of a utopian state, in this case an Islamic state.

According to the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), ‘grassroots radicalisation, eventually leading to home-grown terrorism’ had been gaining ground since 2003 (AIVD, 2007:p.17). Andrew Parker, Britain’s head of domestic intelligence service described how home-grown Islamist extremism remained Britain’s biggest threat (Bond, 2019). Statistics have shown that, since 9/11, 60% of people in Great Britain arrested for terrorism-related offences were British nationals, and the rate increased to 72% by 2018/19 (Allen and Kirk-Wade, 2020). As a result, radicalisation became a fixed feature in terrorism research (Schmidt, 2002; Neumann, 2008; Sageman, 2004; Sedgwick, 2010; Mandel, 2010).

Terrorism research primarily focused on the question of why some young Muslim men, particularly those with an immigrant heritage, turned to violence and perpetrated terrorist attacks against their own country. Pioneering work has been carried out on the root causes, motivating factors, and pathways to radicalisation. As highlighted in the previous section, research has shed light on the processes of radicalisation, particularly focusing on individual characteristics (Horgan, 2003; 2005; 2006; Wiktorowicz, 2005; Kruglanski et al., 2014), group dynamics (Sageman, 2004) and contextual features (Dawson, 2017; Bouhana, 2019; Bouhana et al., 2018) that drive such developments.

However, literature on ‘the effectiveness and consequences of radicalisation prevention policies in practice’ remains scant (Mythen et al., 2009a; Schiffauer, 2009; Heath-Kelly, 2011; Lindekilde, 2012b; Lynch, 2013; Davies, 2018a). While filling this gap is of value on an academic level, it is more significant on the prevention level, political level, as well as on a societal level. Providing prevention to citizens is key but doing so without treading on the fundamental rights of people is crucial.

### ***2.2.1 Introducing CVE/PVE policies***

The UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were the first European countries to engage in intense public debates on radicalisation, focusing on counterterrorism policies aimed at home-grown terrorism after the London terrorist attacks of 2005 (Lindekilde, 2012b, p.336). Whilst their respective initial policies differed in terms of scope, target groups, and a specific definition of who is to be regarded as radicalised, their underlying understanding or model of radicalisation processes appeared to be fundamentally the same. Initially policies were based on the ‘conveyor belt’ theory, with the idea that radicalisation was more or less a linear process of increasing extremism. It was only over time that more elaborate analyses of radicalisation started to be considered, highlighting the distinction between cognitive and behavioural extremism. The policies to a large degree share the same idea of how radicalisation develops and have similar profiles of those who are vulnerable to radicalisation.

Focusing on the country examined in this thesis, the UK developed what has been regarded as one of the most forward-looking counter-radicalisation strategies. When the first iteration of Prevent was introduced under the New Labour government of Tony Blair, it formed part of the overall post-9/11 counterterrorism strategy known as CONTEST (HMG, 2011a). This strategy was first introduced in 2003 and then reviewed in 2006. Since then, there have been other iterations of the policy as it continued to change and develop under successive governments. The Prevent policy has so far been reviewed in 2009, 2011 and 2015. In 2019 the Independent Review of Prevent was withdrawn following a legal challenge over the appointment of Lord Carlile who was declared by Rights Watch UK to be a strong supporter of Prevent (Bowcott, 2019). In January 2021 William Shawcross was appointed as Chair to carry out this process despite criticism by Islamic organisations who are to boycott the government’s review of Prevent, due to previous remarks Shawcross had made about Islam (Grierson, 2021). However, this too has been met with a lot of criticism, and as shall be discussed in the next section, since its introduction in 2003, the Prevent policy has been criticised for a number of reasons, mainly for i) conflating concepts make its aims unclear, as cognitive and behavioural extremism were pursued concurrently, ii) focusing on the Muslim community, creating suspect communities, and iii) undermining freedom of speech. In 2015, a new statutory obligation on all public service officials, better known as the Prevent duty,

was added to ‘prevent those being drawn to terrorism’ (HMG, 2015b:p.4). This policy, which is central to this research study, will therefore be critically analysed in more detail in the next chapter.

What is often dismissed in terrorism research is the fact that the concept of radicalisation has a political function; as Heath-Kelly (2012) puts it: ‘...a social science function to produce knowledge for the benefit of governance and/or political-economic arrangements’ (p.5). This, combined with the concept’s lack of clarity, and the way it is applied in counter-radicalisation measures, has blurred the lines between counter-terrorism, counter-radicalisation, and/or extremism (Richards, 2011).

These topics have inspired plenty of debate, as, in moments of crisis like the aftermath of terrorist attacks, governments implement reactive security measures without empirically testing them. As a result, one can argue that governments have used the concept of radicalisation as an opportunity to securitise environments such as educational institutions. Counter-terrorism policies derive their legitimacy from, or are based upon, forms of knowledge that are structured around uncertainty, ambiguity, imagination or fantasy, the ‘known knowns, known unknowns, unknown unknowns’ that Donald Rumsfeld, former US Secretary of Defence under George W. Bush administration, had once spoken of (Rumsfeld, 2002). By these words, Rumsfeld, highlighted what had become the central concern for the nation state in terms of its security logic: ‘Anxiety, fear and foreboding over the possible threats of the future’ (Heath-Kelly et al., 2015b:p.5). At best, these policies aim to tame and manage insecurities (Heath-Kelly et al., 2015b).

In recent years, CVE and PVE policies have been rolled out in schools, universities and prisons across various European states without having the necessary scientific evidence to show the effectiveness of these programmes. Most of the programmes introduced across Europe were designed to be community-led by people whose everyday job brings them in close contact with individuals who are perceived as vulnerable, ‘at risk of becoming risky’ (Heath-Kelly, 2012:p.4). Education became a sector targeted by governments to play a role in preventing violent extremism due to a fear that radicalisation was spreading amongst young, impressionable students. The recent and dangerous rise of the ‘incel’ (involuntary celibate) movement, ‘an online culture fuelled by misogyny and abuse of women’ is also being taken very seriously by the UK government (Adams et al., 2021 online). The recent mass shooting in Plymouth, by 22 years old Jake Davison, which in England has not been termed terrorism, nonetheless has pushed the UK government to tackle

this new phenomenon through education. The UK government expects teachers to play a role in addressing the risk from the ‘incel’ movement and what it stands for through their safeguarding obligations as well as ‘through the relationships, sex and health education curriculum’ to discuss issues related to the respect towards women and healthy relationships (Adams et al., 2021 online).

Fear of radicalisation is born out of part of the UK’s history of protest and violence. In the 1960s and 1970s, UK universities were perceived as places of dissidence following mass students’ protests about an inadequate university system. These demonstrations also reflected general concerns about the nature of society they were living in. In the last twenty years universities have been perceived as potential ‘hotbeds’ of radicalisation (Husain, 2007; McGlynn and McDaid, 2019). Furthermore, recent evidence of people convicted of terrorism in the UK shows that the youngest person convicted of far right-related offences was 16 years old, and was 14 at the time he was arrested, in July 2019 (BBC, 2021), which means he was still in secondary school. Peter Taylor, a British journalist and documentary-maker also documented the convictions of young terrorists, stating there have been ‘at least three separate Al-Qaeda-related operations in [the UK] (in 2003, 2005 and 2006) which involved people who, to varying extents, became involved in extremism while they were at school’ (Taylor, 2010 as cited in HMG, 2011c:p.67). Data published in 2011 by the Home Office highlights how, out of 127 people convicted for terrorism-related offences linked to Al-Qaeda, eleven were aged between fifteen and nineteen (Simcox et al., 2010:p.229 as cited in HMG, 2011c:p.67).

Narratives of CVE and PVE policies tend to portray the targeted individual as vulnerable (Heath-Kelly, 2011; Heath-Kelly, 2012; Heath-Kelly et al., 2015a; Heath-Kelly, 2017; O’Donnell, 2016a). The perceived role of vulnerability in young people appears to play an important factor in placing educational institutions on the frontline of global efforts to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. However, the claim that the next generation of young people is vulnerable, deprived, and angry remains to all intents and purposes just an ideological assumption (Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015). The concept of being vulnerable to radicalisation, as conceptualised in CVE/PVE narratives, constitutes a ‘performative force’ (O’Donnell, 2016:p.4) as it depicts the individual as weak and devoid of agency. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) note that such discourse, described as therapeutic discourse, turns education into a form of therapy. They argue it legitimises state interventions within education, and that the conceptualisation of being vulnerable to radicalisation is more about ‘potential future risks rather than real existing risks’ (O’Donnell,

2016:p.4). Heath-Kelly (2017) argues that this ‘imagined vulnerability’, turns the educational space into a pre-criminal space to apply preventive interventions for the protection of all students. The concept of vulnerability legitimating security state interventions such as the Prevent Duty, sits uncomfortably within educational settings as they securitise and politicise education (Dourdie, 2016; Heath-Kelly, 2012; Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015). Whilst education was always used as a counterweight against political violence, this context is different as it is the product of the ‘global war on terror’ doctrine (Mattson et al., 2016).

Academic literature on the UK’s Prevent Duty, suggests that a Trojan Horse affair (Arthur, 2015; Mogra, 2016) ultimately pushed the UK government into introducing PVE policy within education. The Trojan Horse Affair alleges the plot by some Muslim groups who planned on taking over schools in Birmingham and implementing an ‘Islamist’ ethos into the curriculum. The plan was disclosed through an anonymous and unaddressed letter describing this plan. It was implied in the letter that such a strategy had already worked in some Birmingham schools and could be followed elsewhere. This case was used as evidence to highlight the need for background checks for educators, even though data showed that there had been no systematic attempt to recruit or radicalise people in full-time education anywhere in the UK, either in the state or independent sector (Arthur, 2015). There was no widespread evidence that showed supporters of terrorist groups and ideologies sought or gained positions in schools or in groups who worked closely with young people. One of the few connections between terrorism and educational settings was that one of the London terrorist bombers worked as a learning mentor with children at a school in Leeds (Pantucci, 2015). Despite a low percentage of young people convicted of terrorism or who left the UK to join ISIS, the reporting of such news by the media raised concerns amongst the public that schools and universities could be a hotbed for radicalisation, forcing the UK government to take action.

Several European and non-European governments have opted to include education in their strategies or action plans to prevent violent extremism. Education also features highly in several other international documents, including the UN’s report on preventing violent extremism, developed by the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the UNICEF Teacher’s Guide on the prevention of violent extremism (UNICEF, 2016), the European Parliament’s resolution (Dati, 2015) and a number of European Council conclusions (European Council, 2004; European Union, 2016). The EU Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence (EU

RAN), developed by the European Commission in 2015 to prevent radicalisation in sectors including education, has done a lot of work in this area. EU RAN brings together practitioners from around Europe working on the prevention of radicalisation. Within the European Union (EU) there is also a consensus that educational policy is well placed to prevent and counter-radicalisation at source (EU Council of Education, 2015). Cooperation on preventing radicalisation in education at EU level started in 2015 in response to the terror attacks in France and Denmark when the education ministers of the EU member states, 28 of them at the time, held their first meeting on radicalisation and discussed ways to protect the fundamental values which are at the heart of the EU (EU Council of Education, 2015). The European Commission's RAN Youth and Education (RAN Educ) thematic working group meet regularly to discuss CVE/PVE policies in education.

As a result of these policies, governments have shifted their security responsibilities onto schools and educators. The latter has thus been 'responsabilised' (Thomas, 2017) to take care of national security issues in a space where students are meant to acquire new knowledge (qualification), socialise (socialisation) and acquire the ability to think and act independently (subjectification) (Biesta, 2010; 2020). Positioned at the frontline, teachers are now expected to balance between the new roles of safeguarding youngsters from radicalisation, and to partner in preventive efforts by investing at an early stage in teaching democracy, citizenship skills and helping to develop critical skills.

### **2.3 The Nexus between Radicalisation and Education – New Conceptualisation?**

This section focuses on the nexus between education and radicalisation. A critical review of recent research studies will be carried out to explore the impact and implications of preventing radicalisation and violent extremism through education. This is done to help identify common themes that emerge in existing literature that help embrace the heterogeneity and complexity of radicalisation issues within education. However, it is not in the scope of this research study to go into the detail of distinct CVE or PVE programmes apart from the UK Prevent duty policy, which is central to this study (and which will be analysed in more detail in Chapter 3).



As seen in the previous section, the frequency of home-grown attacks in various countries in Europe, together with the rise of ISIS in 2014 and the outflux of foreign fighters travelling to Syria and Iraq, has led to an evolution in the policy field of preventing radicalisation in education. However, what is noteworthy is the fact that, for example, during the Northern Irish conflict, education was never considered as part of the solution. Potential IRA supporters, unlike current terrorist groups, were not targeted through education but through the use of more traditional political and military means. According to Dourdie (2016:p.23), ‘there was never any parallel system of prevention through education implemented or assumed’. Educational interventions became popular with the rise of ISIS in 2015, when young people started fleeing to Iraq and Syria to become foreign fighters. High-profile cases in schools such as the fleeing of the Bethnal Green (in London) girls to join ISIS in Syria and become jihadi brides (BBC, 2015) and the revelation of the identity of ‘Jihadi John’, a former Westminster University alumnus, held responsible for high-profile, medieval-style beheadings (BBC, 2015), heightened the perceived need of vigilance and preparedness in educational institutions to tackle radicalisation at source, despite the fact that such cases were few and far between. Preventing radicalisation at source led to the introduction of soft counterterrorism policy measures in education. These became popular amongst several Western countries. In 2018, Professor of International Education Lynn Davies (2018a) published a review of educational initiatives describing various prevent-extremism practices, addressing all forms of extremism on an international level. However, much of the data was not empirically tested but offered more of an exploration of what could potentially work. What would be required is a review of current tried-and-tested practices or programmes and their impact on preventing radicalisation.

Consequently, education became part of the solution to national security. Therefore, the nexus between education and security is a more recent development, occurring roughly in the last decade. Nonetheless, the education-security relationship remains ambivalent as there is no evidence that access to education may decrease the risk of radicalisation. This being a relatively new sphere of research, ‘knowledge of effective policies and best practices is limited, leaving fundamental questions unanswered’ (Lindekilde, 2012c:p.335).

Within these preventive policies, schools have been given a firm role to play. The significant increase in the number of preventing radicalisation programmes developed globally within the education sector highlights the increasing role educational institutions play (Davies, 2018a). The

political support garnered for such measures further strengthens this point. Furthermore, research on the education-extremism nexus has moved in parallel with these developments (Davies, 2018a; Leeman and Wardekker, 2013). Yet, little has been written on the impact and implications of such prevention efforts (Gielen, 2017; Sjoen and Jore, 2019; Lindekilde, 2012a). Furthermore, critics have questioned the evidence that education can act as a counterweight in the fight against terrorism (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003; Ostby and Urdal, 2010).

As has been discussed, the introduction of preventing radicalisation efforts has placed schools at the forefront of global counterterrorism. Whilst, in principle, this cannot be perceived as a bad proposition, little is known about the success rate of such interventions within education. Empirically testing the outcomes of such programmes is difficult since measuring its success against a control group is impossible because, as Lindekilde (2012a) explains, ‘if preventions are successful, nothing happens or no radicalisation occurs’ (p.340). The methodological challenge here is ‘that one must prove a “negative”, that is, prove that preventive measures are the reason for the observed “non-events”’ (Lindekilde, 2012a:p.340). This inability to evaluate the effectiveness of PVE policies are a critical deficiency (Borum and Horgan, 2012). Understanding the underlying implications of such measures is key to further clarity.

Prevention of radicalisation is based on identifying individuals at risk – deemed vulnerable – to safeguard their well-being. Therefore, the idea of PVE policies is to survey signs of risk with caring intervention. In this way preventing radicalisation ‘combines elements of more classic security policies (surveillance, monitoring etc. ) with elements of integration policies, social cohesion programmes and community building’ (Lindekilde, 2012a:p.336). Often, those deemed vulnerable in terms of socio-economic and cultural integration are perceived as being potentially risky in terms of national security (Heath-Kelly, 2011). Concerns of security and risk, then, become closely intertwined with concerns of socio-economic integration, anti-discrimination, community building, and social-cohesion (Mythen et al., 2009).

However, preventing radicalisation efforts already presents its own challenges, as the conceptual framework of radicalisation on which they are built upon lacks clarity (Richards, 2011; Lindekilde, 2012a). As highlighted in the previous sections, most definitions of radicalisation describe the concept as linear and does not distinguish between non-violent radicals (cognitive extremism) and violent radicals (behavioural extremism). Furthermore, it focuses on the

individual and ‘significantly de-emphasises the wider circumstances and context in which it arises’ (Sedgwick, 2010:p.480). No distinction is made between cognitive radicalisation (extremism of thought) or behavioural radicalisation (extremism of behaviour), as described in the two-pyramid model by McCauley and Moskalenko (2017). Parameters remain broad and unclear, making it more challenging for practitioners to work with (Richards, 2015; Sedgwick, 2010). In brief, the conflation of cognitive radicalisation and behavioural radicalisation continues to distort the intentions and focus of preventive measures.

Therefore, it is very difficult to build a strong PVE policy solution when the problem of radicalisation is still blurred and ill-defined. Yet, the concept of radicalisation has become popularised and appears to be concretised within Western society. Therefore, better solutions need to be found. The US has recently created a new Centre for Prevention Programmes and Partnerships (CP3) to strengthen the Homeland Security Departments’ ability to counter terrorism and targeted violence, and has invested further to comprehensively combat domestic violent extremism (US Department of Homeland Security, 2021). This further highlights the need for a clear working definition of radicalisation which takes into account both cognitive radicalisation and behavioural radicalisation. A lack of conceptual clarity may result in wrong solutions, despite the investment of resources. The recognition of radicalisation as complex and multifaceted necessitates the application of preventions that are dependent on the content and the scale of intensity of the problem. The idea behind this is that focusing on one single type of prevention carried out on its own is rarely efficient for entire populations (Hogan et al., 2016b). Therefore, preventing radicalisation efforts for schools need to be adapted to their context. Without empirical evidence available that proves there is an effective state-wide preventing radicalisation strategy, educators are left with a blueprint model to follow that will not necessarily suit the community they are teaching. This one-size-fits-all approach will arguably only serve to confuse those working with students, and thus increase the pressure they are already under.

It is clear, then, that further research into the nexus that exists between radicalisation and education is required. Most of these measures are policy-oriented rather than empirically tested (Sjoen and Jore, 2019:p.270). Therefore, it is imperative that ‘prevention should be grounded in genuine ideals of relational, humanistic and inclusive pedagogics’ (Sjoen and Jore, 2019:p.274). As stressed by Biesta (2010), prevention interventions also need to fit in within the aims of education through the ‘qualification, socialisation and the subjectification of young lives’ (p.19). A number

of researchers, however, stress the need for ‘a clear set of philosophical and ethical principles underpinning education’ (O’Donnell, 2016c:p:54) in order to preserve autonomy from security and intelligence agendas. When assessing research, it is clear that good education in the fullest and broadest sense of the term (Biesta, 2010), should be the basis for educational activities aimed at preventing young lives from becoming involved in violent extremism.

In the face of increased terrorist threats involving young individuals, educational systems are duty-bound to take an active role in preventing young lives from falling into the hands of extremists (Sieckelinck et al., 2015). Yet, the security-laden discourse of preventing radicalisation, which perceives individuals as vulnerable and thus strips them of their agency, sits uncomfortably within the empowerment principle in education. Therefore, educators in schools need to be aware of their discursive responsibility in the area of counter-radicalisation, as shall be stressed in the next chapter. Furthermore, dominant, public narratives influencing the radicalisation discourse also need to be taken into account as they may undermine educational prevention in practice.

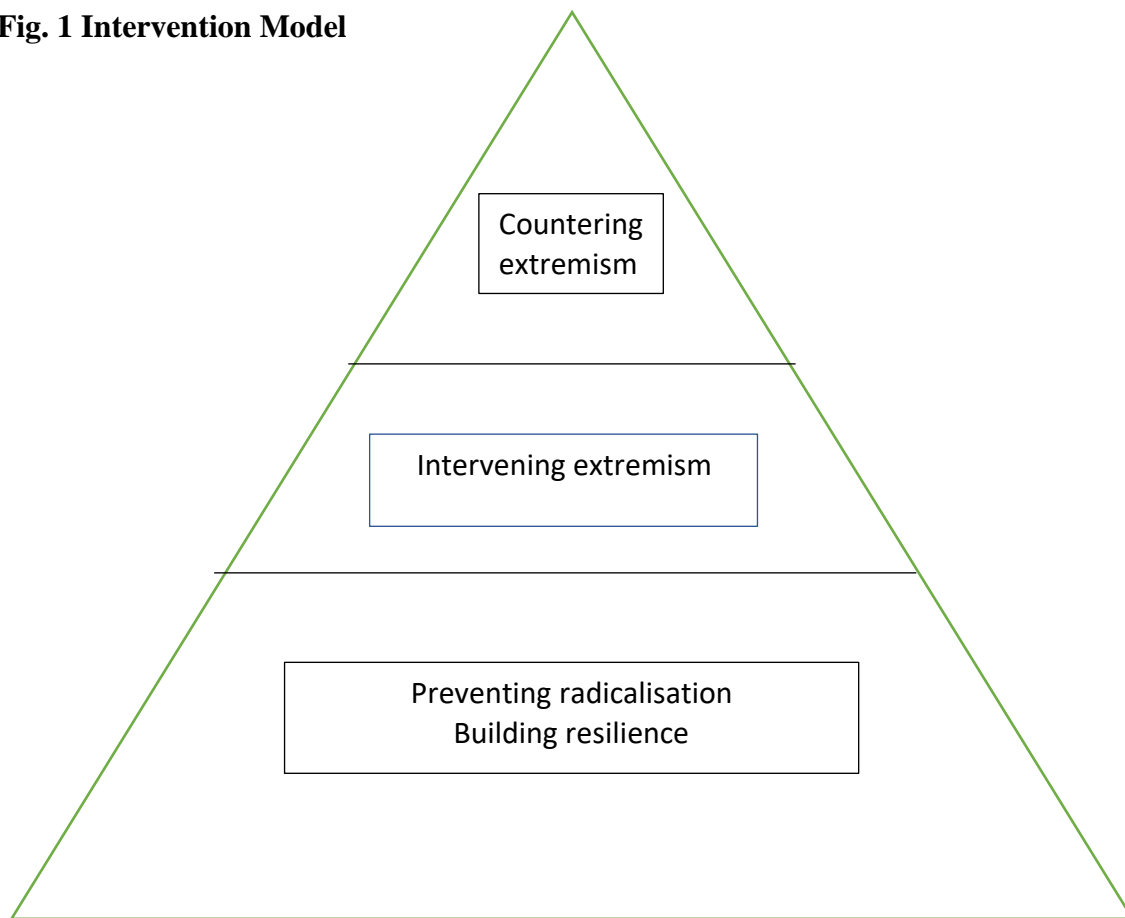
Therefore, how can educators contribute in a meaningful way whilst striking a balance between keeping students safe, empowering them to be critical thinkers and protecting their fundamental rights? An explanation of what CVE and PVE efforts mean in education is required. Sjoen and Jore (2019) describe this using a prevention pyramid (Fig. 1), a model which is also well-known in youth care, crime prevention, and now PVE.

Often, educational programmes, strategies, measures or policies are either given the title of a CVE programme or a PVE programme. CVE and PVE ‘mark a scale-dependent prevention, contingent on the intensity of the radicalisation’ (Sjoen and Jore, 2019:p.271). They add:

‘PVE denotes non-specific prevention that lays the foundation for building resilience against extremism’s commitment across a larger audience. CVE represents a more specific or targeted intervention for potentially radicalised or already identified extremists’ (Sjoen and Jore, 2019:p.271).

Therefore, CVE or PVE interventions offer a spectrum of measures ‘that not only encompasses varying degrees of specificity but can also include a greater mix of coercive and persuasive strategies in dealing with these concerns’ (Sjoen and Jore, 2019:p.271).

**Fig. 1 Intervention Model**



De-radicalisation or disengagement of students from violent behaviours often falls outside education as it is left to other public services. Research on CVE interventions in education has nonetheless received little scholarly attention so far (Davies, 2014). Sjoen and Jore (2019) highlight that this is a weakness since educators might experience having extremist students in their school or classroom throughout their professional career.

PVE interventions are more common in education than CVE interventions, as the former act as soft, early intervention policy to counter potential radicalisation at source. Furthermore, it is aimed more at the whole population of students (Aly et al., 2014; Hogan et al., 2016b), focusing mainly on building resilience against all forms of extremism. Input into this occurs through curricular activities that promote civic values, critical thinking and human right ideals through learning, development, socialisation, and citizenship. The idea behind this educational approach is to provide students with the right skills and critical mindset to question extreme views and ideas (Sjoen and Jore, 2019).

## Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief overview of how the concept of radicalisation has developed since 9/11 and how it is currently being applied within PVE/CVE policies. Radicalisation has become inextricably linked with Islamic terrorism, specifically home-grown terrorism. Initial research into root causes of terrorism has led to the development of a number of models and theories. However, initial models and theories developed at the time perceived radicalisation as linear and progressive providing little information as to why some radicals became terrorists whilst other radicals did not. Recent models on radicalisation (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2017) have nonetheless, recognised that radicalisation is more complex and stress the importance of distinguishing between radicalisation of thought and radicalisation of action, highlighting the importance of having conceptual clarity for the development of prevention radicalisation policies particularly in education. Nevertheless, CVE/PVE programmes were based on a linear model and thus, this thesis argues that these programmes were born out of a flawed concept of radicalisation.

The next chapter shall look at the UK's Prevent strategy, specifically the Prevent duty guidance which obliges public service officials in education and the health sector 'to have due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism' (HMG, 2015b). The chapter draws on the main debates in the literature concerning the Prevent duty, which include the securitisation of education, the predominant focus on Muslims, and the potential creation of a 'chilling effect' (Marsden, 2015) on particular opinions of students in schools.

## **Chapter 3: The Prevent duty**

### **3.0 The Prevent duty in Educational Institutions in England and Wales**

Since this study focuses on England, it is essential to provide some background and context to policy developments in countering radicalisation in England, specifically within secondary school educational settings. This chapter starts by looking at how the UK's Prevent (HMG, 2006; HMG, 2011b; HMG, 2015b) focus, as part of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST), has developed over the years. After that, special attention is given to the statutory obligation of the Prevent duty in secondary education and how the policy has affected teachers and students in secondary school settings. The chapter also focuses on the requirement to teach FBV, which has now become linked to Prevent due to the definition of extremism which portrays anyone opposing these British values as vulnerable to extremism.

#### **3.1 Prevent: Past and Present**

Post 9/11, the UK was at the forefront of developing a policy to counter radicalisation. As far back as 2003, Tony Blair's New Labour government introduced Prevent (HMG, 2011a:p.8) as part of a wider UK counter-terrorism strategy known as CONTEST. The latter was developed at the same time as the unauthorised and unpopular US-UK invasion of Iraq, which led to the overthrow of its dictatorial president, Saddam Hussein. His death left a political vacuum in the country and eventually led to civil unrest and an increase in Islamic terrorism (Sthol, 2008).

CONTEST is made up of four Ps: Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare. The first iteration of Prevent was specifically developed to target radicalisation and preventing individuals deemed at risk of falling victim to extremism. When it was introduced in 2003, Prevent was forward-looking in its vision, in terms of countering radicalisation at source, so much so that it served as an example for other countries to follow. However, the policy was not published until it was revised for the first time in 2006, a year after the London terrorist attacks of 2005.

The aim of Prevent (HMG, 2011b) was and remains to 'counter radicalisation at different levels and stages including interrupting the "process of radicalisation" for individuals who show signs of being radicalised' (HMG, 2011b:p.8). It was created as a soft counter-terrorism measure based on the idea that politically motivated violence was due to societal structural problems (HMG, 2008). Prevent was based on the scientific underpinning of radicalisation as a linear process, which



assumed it could be reliably identified and then disrupted intercepting and breaking the chain (Hafez and Mullins, 2015). It did not distinguish between radicalisation of thought and radicalisation of action. Despite evidence demonstrating otherwise (Horgan, 2008), Prevent was still based on flawed assumptions of radicalisation. It perceived radicalisation as the signs and causes of psychological or social processes such as disenfranchisement, an individual's search for identity and increased religiosity (HMG, 2008; HMG, 2011b). Consequently, approaches taken to counter radicalisation at the time, were narrow in focus. Furthermore, studies show how the first iterations of Prevent put particular focus on the Muslim community (DCLG, 2007; Bonino, 2013; Kudnani, 2009; Sian, 2017). At the time, radicalisation remained a process best summarised as exploratory rather than explanatory (Bouhana and Wikstrom, 2011). Initially, it was distributed across local authorities in England and Wales through the Department of Communities and Local Government (Ragazzi, 2016:p.727). In the following five years, Prevent (HMG, 2011c; HMG, 2008) became the world's most extensive counter-radicalisation policy (Vidino, 2015).

Since 2003, the Prevent strategy (HMG, 2011b) has changed and developed to match the realities on the ground whilst also reflecting the political views and approaches of successive governments that followed, the Coalition government and the Conservative government, respectively. Thomas (2020) identified two phases with the Prevent strategy and a third phase with the introduction of the Prevent duty.

The first iteration of Prevent in 2006 was community-based and explicitly focused on working with Muslim communities via the then Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The Metropolitan police also collaborated with identified, non-violent extremists, empowering Salafists and Islamists against Al-Qaeda with the aim to root out potential terrorists (Lambert, 2011). This was done with the intention of promoting more moderate forms of Islamic religious interpretation particularly in mosques. Muslims were also made responsible as 'moral agents' of terrorism prevention (Choudhury and Fenwick, 2011), inferring that all terrorism was Islamic. Some perceived this as encouraging Muslims to spy on each other (Abbas, 2018), whilst others perceived it as a way the government could work with communities to limit stigmatisation (Lambert, 2011). In 2008, the first non-statutory PVE guidance for schools was issued focusing on Islamic fundamentalism (HMG, 2008). According to some academics, such approaches stigmatised British Muslims and created 'suspect communities', where all Muslims were considered vulnerable to extremism or potentially dangerous (Kudnani, 2014). Prevent was

criticised as it had a narrow policy approach, singling out Muslim communities as the main partner to work with. The government's evaluation of the first year of Prevent funding underscored how it has worked with over 50,000 young Muslims (Thomas, 2012). However, the increased focus on Muslims at the time was criticised as it contradicted community cohesion policies which worked to dismantle the idea of communities leading 'parallel lives' (Cantle, 2001). Cohesion policies were developed following the 2001 riots fuelled by racial tensions in Northern England, to promote cross-community dialogue and common identities (Thomas, 2011). It also focused on Islamist terrorism at a time when there was a sharp increase in far-right extremism leading to reciprocated radicalisation. Furthermore, Prevent was seen as an increase in police community engagement and involvement, with police taking over roles which normally belonged to youth and community workers (Thomas, 2010). Under Tony Blair's government, police worked closely with non-violent extremists to counter radicalisation (Lambert, 2011). Police gradually also become more dominant in local authority Prevent management (Badur, 2012). This raised concerns that individuals were being spied on for extremists' views and beliefs, thereby undermining freedom of speech and civil liberties (Kudnani, 2009; Lakhani, 2014). This criticism continued to significantly develop and impact future iterations of Prevent, despite efforts to change such perceptions.

In 2011, under the Conservative-Liberal Democratic coalition government, the Prevent remit was revised and broadened in order to separate direct counterterrorism activities from integration work with communities (HMG, 2011b). It marked a shift from the first iteration of Prevent, as it ended the community-led based approach, removing the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) from the programme and substantially reducing the Prevent budget allocated to community groups for resilience-building activities. As a result, police and Muslim partnerships came to an end as the coalition government tried to move away from focusing on the Muslim community and aimed to target all forms of extremism, from the far-right to Islamic extremism to left-wing extremism to non-ideological extremism.

The second iteration of Prevent (HMG, 2011b), published in 2011, further widened its scope to include preventing extremism through the teaching of Fundamental British Values in primary and lower secondary education. Prevent also tried to define who the extremists were more generally (Lakhani, 2014). FBVs include: 'Democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE, 2014:p.5). The definition of

extremism became the ‘vocal or active opposition’ (HMG, 2011b:p.107) to Fundamental British Values. The coalition made it clear that, unlike the previous Labour government, it would not work or collaborate with non-violent extremists (HMG, 2011b).

Initially, the British government did not provide much information as to what the teaching of these values entailed. Further explanation was only provided by the DfE in a guidance document (DfE, 2014) issued to schools in 2014 explaining to schools what the values entailed so as to help primary and secondary school teachers better shoulder this new responsibility. The upholding of FBVs was also enshrined in the Teachers’ Standards (DfE, 2011) which stated that teachers were not to undermine them, and to demonstrate their loyalty ‘in relation to the disciplinary norm of Britishness, and to take up the positions constructed by the binary incitements of FBV’ (Ball, 1997, p.22). Furthermore, compliance with FBVs was also Ofsted-inspected, making them mandatory, which, in turn, gives the policy a certain status and impetus. Going against FBVs risked social and professional exclusion (Ofsted, 2019a).

Before forming part of Prevent, FBVs formed part of the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development of students in Britain. The addition of FBVs was particularly important as it ‘deepens and widens policy concern with problematic, “un-British” attitudes and behaviours with Muslim communities’ (Thomas, 2020:p.17).

The second iteration of Prevent (2011b) intended to target all forms of extremism, placing focus on ‘risky’ or ‘at risk’ individuals who were perceived to be vulnerable to radicalisation. However, the term ‘vulnerable’ suffered from a lack of clarity regarding what the concept entailed. Prevent guidance did not only mention vulnerability in terms of people who are ‘vulnerable’ due to personal and/or social circumstances, such as disability or mental health, but also a vulnerability to radicalisation such as those suffering from an identity crisis (Githens-Mazer, 2010). Furthermore, the vulnerability aspect as conceptualised in Prevent and Channel<sup>1</sup>, placed the individual within a therapeutic discourse which ‘justifies pre-emptive intervention and the efforts to bolster immunity and resilience’ when a subject is identified as vulnerable (O’Donnell, 2016:p.9). Prevent critics (O’Donnell, 2016; Heath-Kelly, 2017) argued that framing individuals

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<sup>1</sup> Channel is a branch of the Prevent strategy which assesses referrals made and ‘provides early support to individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism’

as vulnerable created a pre-crime space as it targeted people and behaviours not yet linked to tangible terrorist planning.

Furthermore, the definition of extremism as defined in Prevent did not provide enough legal certainty distinguishing it from activism (Lowe, 2017), making it hard to determine real endorsement of far-right extremist ideologies, or simply a repetition of wider influences. Despite attempts to shift perceptions, concerns were that counterterrorism efforts remained disproportionately focused upon Islamic extremism.

Those individuals identified by Prevent as 'risky' or 'at risk' were provided social and/or psychological interventions or another type of support through Channel (HMG, 2015a). The approach was that Channel panels established by local authorities assess the nature and gravity of the case, the extent of the risk presented by the individual, and develop accordingly the most appropriate programme for the individual concerned. Channel panels bring together various professional and local community experts in, for example, mental health services, housing, ideological reprogramming, and who develop strategies/ interventions for individuals who require help. Since Channel intervention (HMG, 2015a) is a voluntary process, it is then up to the individual to accept or reject this help.

In 2011, the UK started identifying education as a priority sector in the fight against radicalisation. The Government's Prevent strategy (HMG, 2011b) stated that 'in the UK, evidence showed that radicalisation tended to occur in places where terrorist ideologies, and those that promote them, go uncontested and are not exposed to free, open and balanced debate and challenge' (p.63). Consequently, action was taken at all levels in education: primary, secondary, higher and further education (HEFE). A survey carried out by the UK Youth Parliament in August 2008 found that '94% of young people thought schools were the best environment in which to discuss terrorism' (HMG, 2011b:p.70). The UK Government concurred with this view, stating that 'schools can facilitate understanding of wider issues within the context of learning about the values on which our society is founded and our system of democratic government'(HMG, 2011b:p.70), hence the promotion of FBVs. In 2011, the Conservative government pushed for more responsibilities to be taken on by schools and universities to counter the threat of radicalisation amongst young people. In 2011, the Prevent strategy (HMG, 2011b) started reaching out to schools, 'providing them with advice on how to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to challenge extremist

narratives’ (HMG, 2011b:p.49). Educational institutions in the UK became a focus of increased attention for the UK government as research showed that sympathy for terrorism is highest amongst young people (HMG, 2011b).

Government statistics demonstrated that ‘in the UK and overseas most terrorist offences are committed by people under the age of 30’ (HMG, 2011b:p.64). More recent statistics showed that more than half of all referrals made between April 2019 and March 2020 involved individuals aged 20 or under (HMG, 2020c), implying that, over the years, those committing terrorist offences are much younger in age.

The Prevent Duty is what made the Prevent Strategy internationally distinctive. A number of incidents such as the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby by Islamist militants, the planned attacks on an English Defence League (EDL) rally held in Dewsbury (BBC News, 2013) as well as evidence that young Britons were fleeing to Syria to join ISIS, highlighted how more efforts were required in the Prevent Strategy. However, it was the aforementioned case of the Trojan Horse affair described in Chapter 2, which led to the statutory Prevent duty being imposed on educators. This case alleged that hard-line Islamists conspired to take over a number of schools in Birmingham. It was alleged that schools were promoting gender segregation and that no safeguards were being taken against the risks of extremism. However, the case shed light on other aspects such as racism, school governance and the idea of FBVs (Awan, 2017).

Furthermore, the increase of right-wing populist parties across Europe, and more specifically in the UK, played a significant role in promoting the idea that immigrant identities were a threat to the process of integration, and that one was incompatible with the other. This was further accentuated during the Brexit referendum campaign, where the UK Independent Party (UKIP) was accused of using immigration to play on citizens sentiments (Hall, 2016). Often, that resentment and hostility was targeted at Muslim ethnic minorities who made up the majority of immigrants. This resentment intensified particularly after the London terrorist attacks of 2005, resulting in increased Islamophobia in the country (Abbas, 2012).

Such revelations led the Conservative government to take a further step, that of making schools in England and Wales subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-terrorism Act 2015 to have ‘due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’ (HMG, 2015b).

This meant that ‘all schools, registered early years childcare providers (...) and registered later years childcare providers (...) had to identify and report risky or at risk individuals to radicalisation’ (HMG, 2015b:p.10). Paragraphs 57-76 of the guidance are concerned specifically with schools and childcare providers (HMG, 2015c). The Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) also applies to the health sector, prison and probation.

The policy supported those at the frontline, like teachers and health care professionals, through the provision of Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training where frontline professionals were taught how to spot radicalisation through a list of indicators found in the Extremism Risk Guidance (ERG 22+) (Ministry of Justice, 2019) and the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (HMG, 2012). Training and learning materials were provided to staff in organisations like schools and the National Health Service (NHS) in order to help them recognise radicalisation. Local Prevent teams advised and supported organisations (HMG, 2011b). However, according to Kudnani (2014) and Kudnani and Hayes (2018), safeguarding individuals from radicalisation by looking for signs of radicalisation ‘engagement factors’, which supposedly indicate an individual’s vulnerability to radicalisation, implied that the process of radicalisation could be known in advance. Furthermore, such a framework limited a student’s possibility to develop radical political positions in the classroom, as the idea of radical reform or change would put that young person at risk of being singled out as potentially at risk of extremism.

The outcomes of the Channel counselling scheme panels included interventions and support for youths deemed vulnerable to extremism (HMG, 2015a). Prevent duty compliance by educational institutions was also Ofsted-inspected (Ofsted, 2019a), and failure of compliance could lead to intervention or termination of funding if Ofsted judged the school as requiring significant improvement (Ofsted, 2019a). Furthermore, educational institutions which were found non-compliant risked being downgraded (DfE, 2015). Ofsted assessed ‘how well students were being protected from radicalisation and extremism, the levels of vigilance staff show, alongside staff confidence in having discussions with students’ (DfE, 2015:p.23).

When the Prevent duty came into force, there was initial resistance from academia (Thomas, 2015c; 2016; 2017; 2020; Gearon, 2018; 2019; O’Donnell, 2016; Heath-Kelly, 2017) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) (Adams, 2016; 2019; Williams, 2015) as it was perceived as a policy that breached the right of freedom of speech in education and which asked teachers to spy on students and refer them to the government’s security agency for retribution. Taylor and Soni

(2017) stressed that the integration of a securitisation paradigm in education compromised the democratic ideals of freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, and educational inclusion.

Since the introduction of Prevent, empirical research (both small and large-scale studies) has examined what impact Prevent was having on teachers and students and how Prevent was being enacted by teachers in educational settings. Academics like Busher et al. (2017; 2019), Jerome et al. (2019), Jerome & Elwick (2020), Elwick & Jerome (2019), Lundie (2017), Quartermaine (2016), Bryan (2017), Lockley-Smith (2019), Vincent (2018; 2019), Farrell (2016), Spiller et al. (2018), McGlynn & McDaid (2019; 2016), and Habib (2018) have conducted studies with teachers and students on all levels of education, from primary to secondary, and from sixth form colleges to universities.

Having outlined the timeline of the Prevent policy, the next sections will critically explore the main debates concerning the Prevent policy's impact, enactment, and implications within secondary school education and its effects on teachers, who lie at the heart of this study.

### **3.2 Prevent Duty: Security through Safeguarding**

The Prevent duty was promoted in schools under the banner of safeguarding, which was a key factor in the duty's objectives. This was criticised by a number of academics (Heath-Kelly, 2017; O'Donnell, 2016; Gearon, 2019) and the NUT (Adams, 2016), as teachers were now 'responsibilised' (McGhee, 2010) by law to prevent students from being drawn to terrorism as well as a long list of existing social harms such as child sexual exploitation, drug use, and grooming by gangs. With Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) being presented as a safeguarding measure, teachers were given a new security-led role to fulfil, which involves monitoring and reporting potentially vulnerable students. The promotion of Prevent as a safeguarding measure opened up an important debate amongst education practitioners and academia about the role education should play in preventing violent extremism. This is because the duty put teachers in a conflicting situation, as they were expected to monitor the students they were educating and forging positive teacher-student relationships with, as well as maintain teacher-parent/guardian

relationships (Lundie, 2017). Therefore, it was seen that the duty combined ‘aspects of specialist security provision with a much wider civil society implication’ (Busher et al., 2019:p.821).

However, Busher et al.’s (2017; 2019) large scale study conducted amongst teachers and senior leaders did not find hostility towards the Prevent Duty. The authors noted that teachers actually found it easier to accommodate Prevent as another safeguarding issue, as it was far easier for them to adapt to and understand, as safeguarding was already a prevalent concept in educational settings. This helped boost teachers’ confidence resulting in reduced hostility towards Prevent since its introduction. Teachers in the study also believed that concerns about students were better managed by teachers rather than being passed on to the police (Busher et al., 2017). Furthermore, confidence in Prevent has also partially led to an increase in referrals. Yet, the latter could also be the result of fear of ‘missing something’, leading staff to be ‘over-conscientious’ in their professional judgment (Busher et al., 2017:p.94).

According to the research conducted by Elwick et al. (2020), teachers also identified and valued the fact that the duty created opportunities to discuss and learn about terrorism and extremism. Students also concurred that the school should be the place to discuss such matters.

The Prevent duty through safeguarding was also seen as a continuity within school practices. Busher et al. (2019) called this ‘the construction of continuity with existing professional practices’ (p.453). Prevent was being operationalised as safeguarding through teacher training in schools. As a result, the vulnerability profile tied to Prevent also became prominent amongst teachers particularly those involved in the pastoral curriculum or within Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Religion (RE).

However, teachers’ concerns with the Prevent duty were not tied to safeguarding but to other issues related to teachers’ competence in the field of terrorism and other sensitive, controversial subjects, which will be discussed further in the next section under teachers’ agency and training.



### **3.3 An Educational Response to Prevent**

A number of empirical research studies (Quartermaine, 2016; Elwick, 2019; Busher et al., 2017) conducted with teachers in schools highlighted how teachers expected a sort of educational response to Prevent. A number of scholars stressed the importance of replacing the securitisation approach with an educational approach (Panjwani, 2016; Elwick and Jerome, 2019; Elwick et al., 2020; Elwick, 2019; Jerome and Elwick, 2020). Some teachers perceived Prevent as something to be dealt with within the school curriculum. The study by Busher et al. (2017) also suggested that teachers were keener about ‘the curriculum side of things’ than safeguarding (p.43). Schools’ educational responses to Prevent included ‘mapping exercises’ to identify the best places to include Prevent in the curriculum, to own initiatives, to include Prevent-related issues within assemblies, and PSHE classes. When deemed appropriate due to particular events, such as terrorist attacks, they made space within the timetable to discuss related matters (Busher et al., 2017). Cross-institutions’ initiatives and programmes were also organised by schools to address Prevent-related issues and FBVs. Busher et al. (2017) suggested that, whilst schools may have already been actively engaged in discussing such issues prior to the introduction of Prevent, Ofsted inspections on compliance with Prevent spearheaded the pedagogical aspect.

Quartermaine’s study (2016) also suggested the idea that a programme is developed where safeguarding is complemented by learning approaches built to tackle issues like extremist ideologies and cohesion issues. Jerome and Elwick (2019) also stressed the need for an educational response where the teacher’s role would be ‘implementing a curriculum based on knowledge, skills, values and learning experiences’ (p.3). Their study suggested ‘media literacy’ (p.8) as a subject as it may help students strengthen their critical competency, which, in turn, provides them with an ‘ecological agency’ that enhances their understanding of the world in which they live. Political literacy could also help provide students with conceptual tools to enable them to learn about the world in more profound ways (p.14). Their study also highlighted how students rely on their teachers for knowledge, suggesting that schools should indeed have a role to play in preventing radicalisation.

However, trust in teachers appeared to be very important in student-teacher relationships in studies carried out by Elwick and Jerome, 2019 and Jerome and Elwick, 2019. This was also highlighted

in the study by Thomas et al. (2017) and Jerome and Elwick's (2020) study, with both finding that young people wanted to have discussions on extremism and radicalisation with their teachers as they felt schools were the most appropriate place to have such discussions. Data shows that such opportunities are currently lacking in schools or at home (Elwick et al., 2020). This further highlights the importance of having competent teachers who are able to hold important discussions on violent extremism, radicalisation, and terrorism, and who help to frame these concepts in a way that not only engages students but enhances their awareness of the facts over fake news.

Furthermore, Jerome and Elwick's (2020) study, despite being a small qualitative study, it nonetheless offered an educational response to addressing controversial issues in class through 'controversial issues pedagogy'. Using the latter, teachers are able to identify and define an issue as controversial in the context of specific policies, teach through case studies, to perennial issues taking account of curriculum context, as well as the broader local school context.

### **3.4 Prevent Training**

A number of studies conducted since the entry into force of the Prevent Duty, between 2015 and 2021, showed how Prevent training for teachers in secondary schools varied in quality and in the opportunities given to students to debate and explore ideas openly. Factual understanding of radicalisation amongst teachers also remains scant (Hazel 2017). As highlighted in the previous section, Busher et al. (2017; 2019) suggest that Prevent training did in fact boost teachers' confidence. They also highlight how confidence was highest amongst teachers teaching humanities or having pastoral roles, stating that they were accustomed to having to address sensitive discussions in the classroom. The support and trust in the work performed by DSLs within school was also noted to be key, particularly amongst educators who acknowledged their concern about potential effects the Prevent duty and referrals could have on students.

According to Busher et al's (2017) study training was well received by the majority of the educationalists interviewed. The involvement and support provided by the local authority and the police was appreciated. However, in his study Hazel (2017) noted how teachers were compliant to Prevent training and at no time questioned their new role within Prevent as 'engineering

governmentable subjects' through their actions in the classroom during the training provided (Hazel 2017).

Prevent presented as yet another safeguarding measure both facilitated and reassured educators. Hence, the 'narrative of continuity', as an extension to already adopted practices led to feelings of organisational safety also in terms of abiding by Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework. Some educators in fact expressed that the introduction of Prevent duty 'allowed for a renewed emphasis on things such as Citizenship Education' after such focus diminished when former Education Secretary Michael Gove shifted focus onto more British content knowledge.

Busher et al.'s (2017) findings also stress that whilst teachers' confidence levels appeared to be high in terms of fulfilling the Prevent requirements, some teachers revealed they doubted their skills and competencies when having to make a referral. Confidence was even lower when addressing difficult conversations due to either lack of content knowledge, lack of guidance from their own schools and from fear of sounding insensitive or culturally unattuned. In this regard educators highlighted how effective implementation of Prevent much depended on the need for specific pedagogical and curriculum response training in handling difficult, complex discussions. This was deemed necessary and central, more so, than 'additional curriculum materials'. A greater 'prioritisation on developing critical thinking skills for all students' was key (Busher et al., 2017:p.35, 43). Curriculum activities and cross-institution initiatives were considered by most teachers in the Busher et al's (2017) study as more powerful than safeguarding as they gave students time and opportunity to delve into deeper more meaningful conversations about extremism.

Furthermore, some educators expressed scepticism as to the quality of training in terms of content and delivery. Within HEFE it was also perceived that those developing the guidance knew little about how HEFE as well as colleges operated. Whilst training was perceived as average, online training received a lower rating when compared to face-to face training. The latter was felt to be more effective when delivered by competent people who were perceived as understanding the threat better, such as police.

Training and support on improving engagement and conversations with parents was another area which was identified as important by teachers in Busher et al's study (2017). A lack of engagement

with parents could be interpreted in various way. Since data remains scant in this regard further research is required to investigate this area in more depth.

Both Blackwood et al (2016) and Quartermaine (2016) stress the need for teachers' discursive responsibility to 'avoid alienating or villainising discourses' (p.250) particularly when addressing conversations with or about radical students. Holistic focus should consider the environmental features and social group contexts. Teachers teaching humanities, such as RE and PHSE require further guidance since their subjects are often discussion based on critical thinking. As a result, further training is required as to how such teachers can explore resolutions to the above mentioned concerns.

A study conducted by Danvers (2021) also draws attention to the impact the Prevent duty has on critical thinking and critical pedagogy within education which are deemed fundamentals of education, more so within higher education in the UK. Danvers's (2021) findings show how Prevent may lead to 'critical closures for knowledge and knowers' (p. 6). Thus, Prevent training requires moving beyond providing 'how to' instructions to addressing such concerns and potential limitations to critical pedagogy within education. In Danvers's (2020) view training should provide 'a meaningful pedagogic encounter that is targeted to the specific requirements of students, colleagues, departments and institutions' (p. 13). A more critical engagement with Prevent is also required and a way forward to protect the much needed safe educational spaces for critical thinking and discussion is further stressed.

Revell and Bryan (2016) stressed that being aware of policy changes and adapting to them 'does not necessarily translate in altered practices and behaviours' (p.348). Therefore, more empirical research studies in schools are necessary to understand what is happening within the classroom.

Furthermore, because Prevent training was not standardised, and thus differed in quality and content across local authorities, teachers' opinions of the policy may be influenced by the training scheme they were put on (Lundie, 2019). Prevent training was provided by either Prevent teams from local authorities or by private companies who offered training with consultants and experts from a variety of backgrounds (Lundie, 2019). This was described as a "post-institutional and post regulatory space" (Lundie, 2019). It is also worth noting that training decisions were often the

responsibility of senior leadership teams in schools, which often left teachers out of the decision-making process of selecting Prevent training according to their own needs.

### **3.5 Teachers' Agency**

Recent research (Elwick and Jerome, 2019; Weert and Eijkman, 2021) on the Prevent duty has shed light on the role of teachers' agency in interpreting Prevent and implementing it at classroom level. As has already been argued, the Prevent duty has led teachers to navigate between two conflicting paradigms, one security-led and the other with education at its heart. Agency in this context reflects 'the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations' (Biesta and Tedder, 2007:p.137). Even though most studies in this field have been small in scale and qualitative, their findings have nevertheless generated fresh perspectives that suggest the implementation of Prevent is the result of both 'an outcome of teacher agency and a factor which modulates it (alongside a range of contextual factors)' (Elwick and Jerome, 2019:p.351). The idea of an ecological theory of agency could help gain a better understanding of how Prevent is being actioned in the classroom and how it has affected teachers' professions (Elwick and Jerome, 2019:p.351).

Elwick et al. (2019) also highlighted how senior school leadership could use agency when making decisions about Prevent teacher training (Elwick, 2019:p.16) since they were the ones who decided how well to integrate Prevent within school practices. Such choices could be determining in terms of opportunities teachers are provided with, to engage in particular conversations. However, tick-the-box type of approach to Prevent by senior leadership teams in schools could potentially close down teachers' opportunities for discussion (Revell and Bryan, 2018). Teachers could also use agency in their choice of educational material and resources by organisations that best suit their own needs and fit with their own interpretative framework. Nevertheless, for teachers to use agency they first needed to perceive their potential for agency to be able to take own initiatives and reinterpret policies. Others preferred to rely on more informal relationships within the school setting through the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (Lakhani, 2020).

However, a recent study by van De Weert and Eijkman (2021) highlighted an aspect worth considering in Prevent enactment and the impact on teachers' agency: the subjective judgement of teachers in enacting counter radicalisation policy. In their view, frontline professionals relied on 'moral' judgements, a 'gut feeling or intuition' (p.405). Yet, relying on such feelings may result in 'risk of errors of estimation' and this could jeopardise the policy. Teachers who are on the frontline do not have specialist knowledge about radicalisation and terrorism, and therefore decisions made tend to be subjective. Deviant behaviour could be judged based on an expression or an appearance, which could be problematic as it may lead to political controversy, as it creates 'administrative arbitrariness' (Weert and Eijkman, 2021:p.405). Therefore, more empirical research is required in this regard as 'biased judgments may lead to stigmatisation, discrimination and unjustified profiling' (Weert and Eijkman, 2021:p.405).

Other studies (Farrell, 2016; Habib, 2018) also noted how teachers tended to interpret Prevent and its values through the prism of their own political world view. This is particularly important when understanding what influences teachers' own political worldviews and how they gained their political knowledge. This is essential as teachers who are unable to critically assess and challenge the Prevent policy including Fundamental British Values, risk perpetuating negative views about terrorism, extremism and Islam (Farrell, 2016).

The Prevent guidance was not prescriptive in nature and therefore gave schools a margin of flexibility regarding implementation. Both senior school leadership and teachers had, thus, the ability to use their agency to interpret the policy as they deemed fit and according to the cohort of the students they taught. In doing so, teachers needed to remain compliant with the UK government's Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011) and Ofsted's inspection frameworks (Ofsted, 2015a). The latter may have limited teachers' agency in the way they interpreted and enacted the policy, particularly in relation to FBVs which they could not oppose, as stated earlier. Therefore, despite having agency, teachers were limited by the context in which they operated and predetermined boundaries (Priestley et al., 2015).

### **3.6 Preventing All Forms of Extremism Yet Still Muslim-Focused?**

A number of academics have noted how the government's perception of Muslim youth, after the events of 7/7, was that they were more susceptible or vulnerable to radicalisation (Lynch, 2013; Kudnani, 2014; Kudnani, 2012; Abbas, 2018; Corbin, 2017). Radicalisation as a social construct in the media and in public debate became increasingly associated with young, male Muslims in the West. Radicalisation came to be perceived as the precursor to Islamic-inspired terrorism against Western states.

To shift such perceptions, the Prevent duty aimed to target all forms of extremism. Empirical studies in schools showed how teachers recognised that, in principle, the Prevent duty was about preventing all forms of extremism. Certain schools with a certain white demographic, also focused more on far-right issues and overt racism, highlighting that Islamic extremism was not the only type of extremism being addressed in schools. However, findings from several research studies conducted since the introduction of Prevent in 2015 (Busher et al., 2017; Vincent, 2018; Panjwani, 2016; Green, 2017; Lockley-Scott, 2019) showed that young Muslim people and teachers were more likely to feel the impact of Prevent than their white British counterparts. Busher et al. (2017) noted how implicit references to Islam demonstrated how Muslim students and communities may still continue to be a particular and disproportionate focus of attention, even where this might not be the intention of staff. Often assumptions act as unconscious biases. However, within educational contexts, discriminatory policies or assumptions should not pass unnoticed. Unmonitored, unconscious bias allows for discriminatory discourses to become mainstream (Lakhani and James, 2021). One reason behind such findings could be that the negative perception of previous iterations of Prevent have persisted. This, therefore suggested that, over the years, the Prevent Strategy has failed to address the ways Muslims were becoming a suspect community.

Research conducted during the first year the Prevent duty came into force showed that the perception that Prevent targets Muslims persisted (Thomas, 2016). Busher et al. (2017; 2019) found similar findings three years after the introduction of Prevent, noting how Muslim teachers and students felt more targeted by Prevent than the rest of their colleagues. This highlights how the Prevent duty has impacted people differently, through different frames of identity and through dominant discourses connecting terrorism and extremism with Islam.

A number of studies (Abbas, 2018; Kudnani, 2015; Kudnani, 2009; Initiative, 2016) on the first and second iteration of Prevent highlight how Muslims were disproportionately represented in Prevent referrals in relation to Britain's school and college student population (HMG, 2019). This over-representation was perceived as a perpetuation of the suspect community logic and past reality of home-grown terrorism. Over-representation also raised the issue of whether all referrals made were sound in their justification. Channel referrals leading to no further action or other forms of intervention unconnected to extremism raised doubt.

Furthermore, this suggested that the Prevent duty could be acting as a 'performative' (Butler, 1997a; Graaf and Graaf, 2010) meaning that the 'the overall effect of the policy in question was not necessarily determined by the policy measures and their intended results as such, but much more by the way in which they were presented and perceived' (Weert and Eijkman, 2021, p.400).

However, Channel data for year ending 2020 showed that, out of 697 adopted Channel cases, 43% were related to right-wing concerns and 30% were for Islamist radicalisation (HMG, 2020c). Such findings are a cause for concern considering that far-right violent extremism was on the rise globally (Abbas, 2020). In the UK, the four far-right terrorist plots foiled in 2017, the murder of MEP Jo Cox by Thomas Mair in 2016, the proscription of the ultra-nationalist National Action the same year (Allen, 2017), as well as the ramming incident at the Finsbury Park Mosque in 2017 and 2018 by Jack Renshaw, all highlight the rise in far-right terrorist incidents. Furthermore, data collected from the Home Office (2020; 2019) demonstrated that there was a significant increase in people arrested for terrorism-associated offences in relation to far-right ideologies in 2020. There has been an increase of 5% between 2018 (13%) and 2019 (18%). The proportion of prisoners holding far-right views has increased steadily over the past three years, with the number up from 33 in 2019 to 44 in 2020 (Home Office, 2020). By March 2021 out of 215 persons in custody 20% held right-wing ideologies. 21 individuals were also described to be under the age of 18. According to statistics, 13% of all terror suspects detained are now children, 5% more than 2020 (Home Office, 2021).

The UK government appears to have acknowledged within public discourse the real and present threat from far-right extremism and has also responded to neo-Nazis threats with seriousness, shouldering more responsibility on the UK security services to counter the far-right threat (Dearden, 2019). Far-right terrorism has also been included as part of the UK's threat level (BBC,



2019b). The Challenging Hateful Extremism Report, by the Commission for Countering Extremism (2019), also highlighted how the mainstreaming of far-right narratives raised more concern amongst practitioners (68%) than Islamist extremism (64%). However, despite the visible threat from far-right extremism in terms of police arrests, Prevent referrals and Channel cases, concerns remain as ‘to whether existing counter-terrorism policies and measures – to date having almost solely been applied in response to Islamist extremism -remain fit for purpose’ (Allen et al., 2019) particularly to target and address far-right extremism.

Empirical research in this area has been very limited as most research pre- and post - Prevent duty focused on the impact of Prevent on the lives of Muslim students (Sjoen and Jore, 2019). Lakhani and James’s (2021) qualitative study with teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs), was one of the first to investigate how Prevent duty addressed far-right extremism within secondary schools and colleges. Lakhani and James (2021) found that there were significant concerns about the normalisation and mainstreaming of far-right narratives, ideas, rhetoric, and ideologies. According to the study, this affected teachers’ work on the ground as they dealt with contentious figures like, Tommy Robinson (pseudonym for Stephen Christopher Yaxley- Lennon, one of the EDLs founders) or groups like the English Defence League (EDL). Teachers voiced concern and uncertainty as to how to deal with those students who engage with and share rhetoric, propaganda and ideologies of influential characters who despite having been involved in violence and ‘have propagated hateful narratives have not been proscribed by the British Government’ (Lakhani and James, 2021:p.17). In the study, teachers also expressed doubt at how to determine whether racist and xenophobic views voiced by their students could be categorised as far-right views. Such confusion can be counterproductive. Lakhani and James (2021) however suggest that far-right views should not be attached to a certain group of people (white-working class communities) as otherwise the stigmatisation as experienced by Muslims will be replicated.

Focus on far-right extremism within Prevent is also very much context-dependent. Local authority Prevent needs are based on local needs identified by a local threat assessment. Therefore, the establishment of strong, working relationships between educators and the local authority are extremely important as a form of social capital (Lakhani, 2020); ‘knowledge, experience and advice can be drawn upon in informal settings when required’ (Lakhani and James, 2021:p.18). Therefore, more work needs to be done in this regard and more coordination with local authorities

needs to take place so as to effectively take into account all forms of extremism and to avoid repeating past mistakes such as the creation of a suspect community.

### **3.7 Fundamental British Values (FBVs)**

The Prevent duty became linked with FBVs in 2011 when the UK Government broadened the definition of extremism to include ‘opposition of Fundamental British Values’. As explained in section 3.1., the values became a fundamental part of Prevent in its fight to counter extremism. The values include ‘the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs’ (HMG, 2011b:p.107).

Whilst the values proposed were good, the lack of clarity surrounding them and their framing as ‘British’ led to a critical response from teaching staff and academics as many perceived them as further alienating minorities, amongst them Muslims (Bolloten and Richardson, 2015; Tomlinson, 2015a). Worth noting is the fact that the teaching of FBVs did not develop within educational circles but from internal affairs matters. FBVs were first verbalised under the New Labour government in 2006. After that, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, followed by Cameron’s Conservative government, pushed for the retreat from the multicultural approach of the past to move towards a more assimilationist approach, or what scholars referred to as civic-rebalancing (Meer and Modood, 2009; Osler, 2009), underscoring a stronger commitment to Britishness within the UK’s integration policy. The idea was to recreate or rather strengthen the British identity. Theresa May’s unpopular Hostile Environment policy, which aimed to target illegal immigrants, gave the impression of moving away from multiculturalism. However, Theresa May came under fire with this strategy as it ‘came to encapsulate not just her approach to illegal immigration but to reflect a broader rancour towards migrants in the UK’ (Grierson, 2018).

Within the UK context, previous approaches to multiculturalism were perceived as contributing to social unrest, with communities living parallel lives yet never integrating, leading to race and religious conflicts, riots and acts of terrorism. Leeman and Pels’s (2006) study on citizenship education in a Dutch multi-ethnic context found that, ‘there is a strong tendency to reduce problems related to immigration and integration to issues of cultural or religious difference of

migrant groups, or worse fundamentalism' (Favell, 1998 as cited in Leeman and Pels, 2006:p.66). The shift towards assimilation therefore coincided with an increasing accentuation of the 'us versus them' binary of (religious) otherness and stigmatisation. In reaction to such processes, exclusive or even hostile ethno-cultural identities have developed among some ethnic minority youths in the UK, particularly those coming from East Asia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. This occurred because they reported feeling compelled to choose sides in a way that might endanger their integration into their host society (Basit, 2009) leading to social instability and feelings of personal insecurity. The concept of Britishness and the refocus on the British identity were central to these concerns. Consequently, the UK, like other countries, introduced national identity and citizenship education programmes as part of their political agenda to promote cohesion through the teaching of FBVs and national identity (Osler, 2009).

The featuring of FBVs in the Prevent's (HMG, 2015e) definition of extremism made the values part of preventing extremism within education. The clear link that existed between building resilience through the teaching of FBVs and preventing extremism was therefore undeniable. Yet, positioning these values as British vis-à-vis the framing of terrorism in British public narrative, positioned Muslims as vulnerable to extremism and as suspect. Such discourse created new forms of racism tied to radicalisation and potential vulnerabilities. As a result, the discussion about Britishness and British values risked having a polarising effect both on teachers as well as students, as within education FBVs acted as 'a mode of objectification' where individuals were transformed into the subjects of an imposed governmental truth about what it means to be British (Dreyfus and Rainbow, 1983 as cited in Farrell and Lander, 2019 p:474).

The schools' role in promoting FBVs became essential. However, within education one cannot assume schools to be simply passive receptors of policy and educators as passive subjects, passing on dictated government policy directly to students (Ball et al., 2012). Studies show how the teaching of citizenship education has been fraught with problems as teachers felt unequipped to address sensitive and complex issues of diversity (Maylor, 2010). Teachers have demonstrated scepticism to the idea of promoting FBVs (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012) and question why the values have to have nationalistic undertones tied to it. Teachers expressed concern as they demonstrated commitment to social integration rather than assimilation.

The FBV label was criticised by both academics and teachers who interpreted it ‘attempting to impose a common identity with a freighted history on a multi-ethnic population that might hold a number of allegiances’ (Vicent, 2019:p.28). Studies (Smith, 2016; Crawford, 2017; Miah, 2017) have shown how the perception of Britishness as synonymous with whiteness and privilege prevailed as it harked back to Britain’s colonial past. Teachers and trainee teachers expressed concern about the impact FBVs can have on both students and teachers who already felt targeted by the forces of a dominant white society (Farrell and Lander, 2019; Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012).

Critics (Maylor, 2016; Smith, 2016; Farrell, 2016; Vincent, 2019; Panjwani, 2016) expressed how the introduction of FBVs was problematic as it was perceived that they were pointing at ‘un-British’ attitudes and behaviours within Muslim communities’ (Thomas, 2020:p.17). A number of academics (Maylor, 2016; Smith, 2016; Farrell, 2016; Vincent, 2019; Panjwani, 2016) perceived the promotion of FBVs as a distinct move away from the liberal, multiculturalist paradigm of civic integration policies (Revell and Bryan, 2018) and a move closer to an assimilationist approach. Whilst at face value, the values aimed to create a deep civic understanding of identity, studies (Panjwani, 2016; Vincent, 2019; Crawford, 2017) show how FBVs have had an impact on both teachers and students and the dynamics within educational institutions due to the creation of ‘cultural dissonance’ (Revell and Bryan, 2018; Miah, 2017). Teachers feel uncomfortable with the political aspect of the Britishness agenda (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012). British Muslim students who identified with the FBVs and the Britishness still felt that their religious identities were not being recognised (Green, 2017; Lockley-Scott, 2019). Findings suggest that the FBVs and the Prevent duty more broadly perpetuated the stigmatisation of Muslims despite their willingness to embrace them, demonstrating a form of double standards. Similar views are supported by the Joint Committee of Human Rights (JCHR, 2016) amongst others. However, Farrell and Lander’s (2019) small study with Muslim religious education teachers’ noted how ‘teachers demonstrated agency through a reflexive rejection of FBVs’ as it was perceived as a ‘governmental device which justifies state surveillance and instrumentality’ (p.479).

Concerns were also raised about defining what being British meant, as a number of academics stressed that Britishness meant different things to different people. The literature shows how ‘students tend to identify differently with Britishness using various identity markers from personality to religion, ethnicity, gender and social class (Basit, 2009; Osler, 2009). This shows

how identity is dynamic and multifaceted and may change depending on various factors such as values or place of birth and residence (Maylor, 2010). Osler's (2011) study also highlights how the conceptualisation of Britishness and British identity varied between working- and middle-class schooling contexts.

Keddie's (2011) study demonstrated how, at times, educators undermined the teaching of FBVs and the Prevent duty by presenting a reductionist and racialised understanding of Britishness, equating it to ethnic students' disconnectedness with symbols of Britishness, such as the Royal Family, cricket, Christmas, and to a lack of affiliation with British national identity. This demonstrated a narrow conception of what British culture is, basing it on traditions rather than values. Such reductionist and binary views are problematic as they impose a hierarchy that indicates that loyalty has to be related to the country and its people, and therefore, different identities cannot co-exist (Keddie, 2011). This highlighted how FBVs enshrined within the definition of extremism has served to further accentuate the 'us vs them' binary. Whilst Britishness in itself was not inherently a racist concept, it did carry connotations that impact on the extent to which ethnic minority groups feel affiliated with Britain.

Studies carried out with teachers in British state-funded Muslim schools (Farrell and Lander, 2019; Panjwani, 2016) highlighted how with FBVs they felt they had to prove themselves more compared with non-Muslim schools, as they were viewed 'through a prism affected by the frequent discursive positioning of Muslims as homogeneous, isolationist and wishing to follow conservative interpretations of Islam that clash with British values' (Meer, 2010; Shain, 2017; as cited in Vincent, 2019:p. 23). Furthermore, studies with Muslim religious education (RE) teachers, demonstrated how much their views on FBVs mattered, as unlike white teachers, Muslim teachers are viewed through a racial frame which leads them to experience a 'double othering'. This is because as Muslims they are 'already positioned by an assimilationist discourse which associates difference with dissent and, as potentially suspect themselves' (Farrell and Lander, 2019, p. 471). Consequently, Muslim teachers have to constantly negotiate their boundaries whilst retaining professional and personal integrity (Farrell and Lander, 2019) Furthermore, Muslim teachers may experience dissonance when accommodating the teaching of FBVs, demonstrating the extent to which FBVs subjectify teachers through a governmentality of unease (Bigo, 2002). The term governmentality means 'mentalities of rule, that is, how government is justified and rationalised' (Gillies, 2015:p.67). Within this 'governmentality of unease' Muslim teachers' views on FBVs

offer a critical outlook of how to assess government policies. This stresses the point made by Farrell and Lander's (2019) study which highlights how despite their social and bridging capitals Muslim teachers or teachers with an Asian immigrant background who felt they contributed to society like white British nationals did, still claimed to have endured 'symbolic violence' through the whitewashed discourse of FBVs, a discourse which they negotiated through total identification with Britishness.

These policies promoting citizenship and/or FBVs ran the risk of creating 'an ethnic nationalist dominance of a "legitimate" citizen identity' excluding those 'who are not perceived to be part of the nation, who do not belong and who do not deserve to do so' (Banting and Kymlicka, 2017; Southphommassane, 2012, as cited in Vincent 2018:p.19). Through the teaching of FBVs, the government aimed to 'foster inter-connectedness through the deliberate cultivation of common allegiances' (Vincent, 2019:p.28). However, the aforementioned studies demonstrated how FBVs discourse was 'inherently divisive, magnifying the exclusionary dynamics of structural racism by creating a new constitutive outside, a new way for the Muslim teacher subjects (...) to be alienated but in their professional roles' (Farrell and Lander, 2019:p.479)

However, studies show that teachers felt they could accommodate FBVs using their agency and the problematisation and reinterpretation of FBVs through other pluralistic discourses (Farrell, 2016). As Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) highlighted, teachers have used innovative measures to adjust policy to also remain true to themselves.

Often, FBVs were discussed in as part of citizenship, PSHE and Religious Education classes, which under the current accountability system were deemed low status as these subjects are not exam based. Therefore, without a critical engagement with notions of identity, belonging and citizenship, the risk remained that promoting FBVs would in fact promote a 'myopic and exclusivist approach to citizenship' (Gholami, 2017:p.809).

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of how the Prevent duty has evolved since its introduction in 2015, based on a review of recent literature addressing its impact on both students and teachers at all levels of education in England and Wales. Being a statutory obligation, teachers are obliged by law to prevent students from being drawn to terrorism, a safeguarding measure which, unlike other social harms deals with aspects of identity. As a neoliberal post-9/11 policy, scholars have argued that, Prevent tends to securitise and politicise education, potentially undermining the subjectification of students as free citizens. The chapter also shed light on how citizenship education and the teaching of FBVs in England and Wales is being used as a means to strengthen national identity and resilience, breaking away from multiculturalism and opting for a more assimilationist approach instead. The inclusion of FBVs in the definition of extremism in the Prevent Duty (HMG, 2015b) further accentuates the ‘us versus them’ binary, demonstrating that those who do not embrace these values are to be monitored, observed, and potentially reported (Espinoza, 2016; Farrell, 2016; Panjwani, 2016).

The next chapter will look at how education should address the prevention of radicalisation to the benefit of all students’ needs and their holistic development. The use of critical pedagogy to promote social justice for all students is a determining factor for good education in a post-9/11 environment. The following chapter will also look at how culturally responsive teaching can act as a countermeasure to empower ethnic students and, consequently, preventing radicalisation.

## **Chapter 4: Preventing Radicalisation in Education**



## **4.0 Navigating Preventive Policies in Education – A Teachers’ Perspective**

It is often the case that preventing radicalisation measures come into effect reactively without prior testing, examination or research. If we look at preventing radicalisation efforts in education, one may realise that the basis has developed out of a fragmented knowledge base which offers solutions which remain empirically untested and have no theoretical underpinnings (Borum and Horgan, 2012; Borum, 2011; Leeman and Wardekker, 2013). Therefore, combining national security efforts with education entails introducing security within an area of growth, intellectual development, and socialisation. As a result, such a move has created a number of ethical dilemmas (Miller et al., 2011), such as putting in jeopardy democratic ideals of freedom of opinion, of expression, and educational inclusion (Taylor and Soni, 2017). Most of these dilemmas are being faced by teachers and students in the classroom.

Since 9/11, terrorism research has tended to focus on the micro-level causes of radicalisation, that is, the individual level, and the meso-level causes, which are the radical milieux, that is, ‘the supportive or even complicit social surround’ (Schmid, 2013:p.4). However, little attention has been paid to the macro-level causes – the role played by the community at large. The enabling environment – the wider community – is often less researched. The educational context into which a child grows and develops falls under the macro-level and is extremely important to further understand this environment so as to learn how to counter radicalisation and violent extremism effectively, without undermining the principles of education itself. Knowing well the context within which preventing radicalisation measures are to be enforced is extremely important to consider when developing such measures. Bouhana (2019) argued that ‘much of the risk associated with complex social problems emerges from the interaction between individual and context’ (p.9). The environment within schools and the socialisation processes that take place within that context are unique and cannot be compared with anything else. Within schools children grow, develop, interact and learn through what Biesta calls ‘qualification, socialisation and subjectification’ processes (Biesta, 2010:p.19).

This chapter highlights the importance of a better understanding of school environments. It also provides an overview of how current preventing radicalisation practices in education in some European countries is impacting teachers and their profession.

## 4.1 The Enabling Environment and Extremism

To study what measures would work best in a particular setting requires a good knowledge of the setting within which these measures are to be implemented. This is essential as everything happens within a context. Therefore, having a good understanding of the social ecology of schools, big or small, requires an understanding of the local culture of the school, and how this contributes to the interactions and socialisation processes that take place within that environment (Bahns et al., 2011), the type of education being delivered as well as the relationships built between teachers and students, teachers and senior leadership teams, and students with students. This is particularly essential when introducing CVE/PVE measures which may impact the social ecology of schools on several levels: ‘Qualification, socialisation and subjectification’ (Biesta, 2010:p.19).

The concept of extremism has been difficult to pin down to a single, lasting definition, as highlighted in Chapter 2. The term is relational and changes with time (Schmid, 2014). What a society perceives to be extremist today could change over time and could also differ widely from what another society would consider extremist. In their studies on violent extremism, both Dalsgaard-Nielsen (2012) and Schmid (2013) stressed that research into what occurs at the micro-level should always integrate the meso and the macro levels to be able to understand violent extremism. Already in 2008, Reinares et al. (2008) made an interesting point when stating that the commonality between all forms of radicalisation leading towards violence is ‘that it always takes place at the intersection of an enabling environment and a personal trajectory’ (p.9).

Academics Dawson (2017) and Bouhana (2019) have both focused on the ecological approach in understanding how terrorism happens rather than *why* it happens. This approach moves beyond linear or theoretical models of progression; instead, attention is paid to the dynamic interplay of individuals with their environment, with several many variables and contingent factors that may come into play, and may work in different ways on different individuals.

Dawson’s model focused on the individual, and their involvement in terrorism is attributed to a combination of factors motivating or leading the individual towards terrorism, which includes the global situation and movement of people, the immigrant experience, identity development and struggles, ideology, and group dynamic. This approach takes into account the complicated and

variable nature of the process of radicalisation, ‘with the need to model the overall processing in a way that resonates more intuitively with the practical orientations of those charged with protecting us from terrorism’ (Dawson, 2017:p.10). In studying terrorism, Bouhana (2019) applied her knowledge on crime and the interplay of criminals with their environment: ‘where they are as much as who they are’ (p.9) Studies showed that, where crime tended to concentrate, other social issues arose, such as health and psychological issues (Weisburd and White, 2019; Bouhana, 2019). Bouhana (2019) explained how the same occurred with terrorists. Prevent priority areas for radicalisation were developed based on this idea of geographical concentrations of either far-right extremists or Islamic extremists. Early research findings also supported this idea (Bouhana et al., 2018). The Situational Action Theory (SAT) (Wikstrom, 2014; 2018) offered a functional approach to the identification and organisation of counter-extremism strategic goals and the actions needed to achieve it. It focused on an individual’s propensity to extremism in the context in which they found themselves in. Therefore, the theory stated that ‘changing contexts rather than changing people is the more effective strategy, because vulnerability is inherently context-dependent’ (Bouhana, 2019:p.23). Four out of five levels of the SAT framework addressed the ‘exogenous drivers seen as fundamental contributors to the explanation of extremist behaviour’. (Bouhana, 2019:p.11) These include ‘system’, ‘social ecology,’ ‘settings’ and, ‘selection’ (Bouhana, 2019:p.11).

However, it is important to keep in mind that not all individuals who shared the same sense of injustice or were living in the same polarised environment turned to radicalism and even less to violence and terrorism. Therefore, the question remains, what enables an individual’s propensity to radicalisation particularly? And what can stop that enablement?

Since the terrorist attacks in London in 2005, a number of European countries have tried to counter radicalisation through different approaches in education. However, security-led approaches in education bring about ethical dilemmas for teachers who are meant to provide students with a good education based on democratic principles such as tolerance, freedom of expression and speech. Recent studies highlighted how current security policies have caused anxiety among both students and educators (Sjoen and Jore, 2019), as it stripped them both of their agency and freedom of self, and subjected them to a policy which potentially conflicted with their own system of values and beliefs (Dourdie, 2016; San et al., 2013).

## **4.2 Teacher-Student Relationship – Based on Trust and Care**

Adolescents often search in vain within their primary social environment for an audience willing to listen to their views of present-day society and their ideas about change. Today the internet has served as a link which brings together communities of like-minded people. However, online processes/ relationships happening within these groups are usually hidden from the watchful eyes of parents or educators.

Exploratory research in this field argued that cases of exclusion or personal or group threat, being uprooted, and/or an experienced gap with the adult world lie at the root of this vulnerability (Buijs et al., 2006; Moghaddam, 2005 as cited in Pels and Ruyter, 2012).

Within educational settings, the influence of teachers on students plays a significant role in the lives of young people, particularly those deemed at risk. However, research on how such relationships could help counter radicalisation was scant and little was known on the impact such relationships could play in countering extremism. Findings on interpersonal relationships between teachers and students (Leeman and Wardekker, 2013; Mattson et al., 2016; Elwick, 2019; Elwick et al., 2020; Jerome et al., 2019; Sieckelinck et al., 2015), demonstrated its impact on students. Yet, most studies focused on teachers' interaction and instruction. Almost no quantitative research has focused on the aspect of teachers' care for students. However, one of the basic components of the student-teacher relationship is the students' perception that their teacher cares for them and supports them (Muller, 2001; Noddings, 1992; 1984). Care within an educational context is fundamental for students and it allows teachers to acknowledge and respond to their students' needs and feelings (Pianta, 1999; 1992; Noddings, 1984; 2006; Wentzel, 1997; Mayseless, 2015) and provide them with protection, security, and support (Noddings, 1984; Mayseless, 2015). The latter is essential for children, not only to move forward with their education but it also contributes to their social skills, promotes academic performance, and fosters students' resilience in academic performance (Battistich et al., 2004; Birch and Ladd, 1997; Curby et al., 2009; Ewing and Taylor, 2009; Rudasill et al., 2010).

Studies showed that teachers who experience close relationships with students reported that their students were less likely to avoid school, appeared more self-directed, more cooperative and more engaged in learning (Birch and Ladd, 1997; Decker and Christenson, 2007; Klem and Connell,

2004). Teachers who used more learner-centred practices (i.e. practices that show sensitivity to individual differences among students, include students in the decision-making, and acknowledge students' developmental, personal, and relational needs) produced greater motivation in their students than those who used fewer such practices (Daniels and Perry, 2003).

The concept of care is also often tied up with the idea of vulnerability. This vulnerability is related to their age and to the hierarchical structure of schools (Karna et al., 2010) but it is also generally related to learning and developmental processes (aimed to take place in schools), which typically require exploring new things and entail some degree of uncertainty (Sharan and Sharan, 1992). However, the vulnerability frame is also found within CVE/PVE and it has been perceived by academics as stripping students' agency in their ability to make decisions.

### **4.3 Encountering Radicalised Youths in the Classroom**

Research into how education can contribute towards countering violent extremism, or preventing radicalisation, to protect young people is still in its infancy. Whilst the idea of schools as the cornerstone for peace-building and protection from social harms prevailed, academics have struggled to find clear evidence that proved that education could truly act as a counterweight to violent extremism and terrorism (Krueger and Maleckova, 2003). The lack of empirical evidence justifying preventive efforts questioned the effectiveness of such measures.

This section reviews teachers' experiences in dealing with potentially radicalised students in the classroom, underscoring the difficulties teachers tend to face in such situations. Studies cover teachers' experiences in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway (Sjoen and Jore, 2019; Mattson, 2018; Mattson et al., 2016; Sjoen and Mattson, 2019; Leeman and Wardekker, 2013; Parker et al., 2020; van San et al., 2013; Sieckelinck et al., 2015; Weert and Eijkman, 2021). In policy research, the teacher was claimed to be the most important factor in the educational process. However, such claims were often linked to narrow ideas of what education was supposed to produce, rather than the difference schools were able to make. Biesta (2015) argues that issues related to performativity and academic achievement have commodified the teaching profession, 'basing professional activity on scientific evidence about 'what works' rather than on subjective judgements of individual professionals' (p.82). As a result, the idea of the teacher as a human

being, a moral subject, with a mind of their own, and an educational professional who has the ability to think and judge, was often dismissed (Ball, 2003; Cowie et al., 2007; Keddie et al., 2011; Wilkins, 2011; Priestley et al., 2012; 2015) even within the sphere of policy development.

Changes in school demographics connected to the process of globalisation has given rise to a number of challenges for teachers. One of these issues includes preventing radicalisation of young people in education. Research shows how radicalisation has challenged some of the core values of the teaching profession as it required addressing a number of ethical dilemmas. Yet, teachers are not static beings; as society changes, they are required to adapt and meet new expectations. However, as Keltchtermans (2009) stressed, teaching as a profession can never be separated from ‘the person of the teacher’ (p.258). Furthermore, the teacher cannot be separated from its context and the rules and regulations that make part of it.

Within education, young people who are deemed at risk of radicalisation are portrayed as vulnerable individuals. The vulnerability frame is so dominant within preventing radicalisation measures in education that teachers, rather than addressing why students find solace in extremist views, which should act as the point of departure for any type intervention, tend to overlook that and instead perceive students as weak (Sieckelinck et al., 2015), complying with state control agendas. Such a ‘precautionary culture’ (Dourdie, 2016:p.26) may result in students’ voices being muffled as dissent is ‘pathologised’ (O’Donnell, 2016:p.9) and individuals are portrayed as either victims ‘of a segregated and unjust society’ or as villains ‘poisoned by a snake’ (Sieckelinck et al., 2015:p.332). Such views were further amplified by dominant public discourses in the media and by politicians who portrayed sections of societies as potentially suspect. This situation in education is the result of a culture of performativity which over the years has become part of modern education, and those who resist the neoliberal image of the democratic citizen can be controlled by the state through the use of therapeutic interventions (Heath-Kelly, 2017; O’Donnell, 2016). With reference to the UK’s Prevent policy, O’Donnell (2016) noted how governments circumvented ethical dilemmas through safeguarding practices like the Prevent duty, legitimised through the vulnerability discourse.

A number of academics (Heath-Kelly, 2017; O’Donnell, 2016; Thomas, 2017) have criticised the preventing radicalisation approaches taken in education that portray students as weak individuals devoid of agency and unable to think for themselves. In viewing students under the vulnerability lens, one risks missing educational opportunities in the early stages of radicalisation (Sieckelinck

et al., 2015). The development of strong ideals in young people could be understood in terms of the normal development of political ideas, on the one hand, and interactions taking place during their upbringing, at school with teachers and peers and through the internet, on the other hand. Furthermore, simplistic descriptions of potentially radicalised students miss the large variety of trigger factors that could lead to or reinforce radicalisation, as highlighted in Chapter 2. Such perceptions went against current understandings of the causes of radicalisation and violent extremism (Borum and Horgan, 2012; Borum, 2011) and may continue to offer wrong solutions for teachers who attempt to prevent radicalisation in schools. Dourdie (2016) stressed how portraying students as vulnerable went against what education stood for and could impair values which education tries to foster in students: independence, autonomy, and agency of young people which Biesta (2020) defines as ‘subjectification’ – the development of the self. Furthermore, the concept of vulnerability legitimises a criminal justice framework within an education environment prior to any criminal act having actually taken place.

Empirical studies noted how teachers appeared to be at a loss and struggled when adolescents’ antagonisms became of a political nature (van San et al., 2013:p.287). Teachers expressed feeling ill-equipped and confused about their own views on particular sensitive issues such as integration, exclusion, and terrorism. In short, their own professionalism became contested (Leeman and Wardekker, 2013).

Studies noted how teachers had little experience with radicalisation as they either had little encounters with extremist youths in practice (Sjoen and Mattson, 2019) or believed that radicalisation did not occur often (Leeman and Wardekker, 2013). Nonetheless, teachers felt it was their responsibility to prevent radicalisation in education and protect students from violent extremism (Aly et al., 2014; Busher et al., 2017; 2019; Davydov, 2015; Mattson, 2018). Most teachers in these studies, believed that this had to be based on the ‘educational ideals of inclusion and support’ (Sjoen and Mattson, 2019:p.3; Mattson, 2018), the increase of cognitive resilience against violent extremism (Aly et al., 2014) and the maintaining of open lines of communication (Leeman and Wardekker, 2013). However, teachers’ implementation of such approaches varied significantly.

Some teachers felt comfortable abiding by therapeutic prevention strategies, portraying students as vulnerable. However, in doing so, teachers exerted a form of pedagogical control over the students, stripping them of their agency and telling them ‘what not to become’ rather than

supporting them in developing their own identities (Sjoen and Mattson, 2019:p.3). When an open and honest conversation with a young person stops being possible and when his or her opinions are disqualified or dismissed before conversations take place (van San et al., 2013), this sets a dangerous precedent in education as it shuts down opportunities for critical debates. Schools are meant to be safe spaces providing students with opportunities for open, radical discussions, and for critical thinking; not as spaces under surveillance, creating passive thinkers, polarisation, and discrimination.

In doing so, safeguarding practices securitised educational spaces to control those deemed vulnerable. van San et al. (2013) argued that ‘policies which portray young people with extreme ideals as nothing more than “radicals”, tend to lose sight of the fact that we are dealing with potentially critical citizens who would help shape our democracy’ (p.277). This might occur due to a knowledge gap that existed with regard to the influence education can have on radicalisation (Pels and Ruyter, 2012; van San et al., 2013). However, some teachers resisted adapting to a safeguarding paradigm out of fear that soft measures in education could become harder preventive measures, further controlling vulnerable students (Taylor and Soni, 2017).

In Leeman & Wardekker’s (2013) study, teachers appeared to lack confidence in addressing the subject of radicalisation explicitly. Whilst teachers wanted to learn more about their students, the context within which they worked did not support a culture for exchange and sharing. Teachers, however, did not want to contribute to a repressive approach to radicalisation. As professional teachers, they wanted to counter polarisation through education and open lines of communication. However, the latter did not entail addressing issues in the classroom. Rather, the alternative they adopted was silence, to avoid what they perceived as “unnecessary” conflict’ (Leeman and Wardekker, 2013:p.1061). Teachers defended their position, stating they were unequipped to handle such emotional discussions and required more knowledge about radicalisation processes and their students to be able to counter the problem effectively. However, teachers’ inability to see the process of adaptation as a two-way process resulted in a one-way process, where students with an immigrant heritage had to adapt to dominant cultural standards, eliminating the opportunities for students to learn about other students’ experiences and feelings.

Another study by van San et al. (2013), found that, when young radicals aired radical right-wing ideas, at school or at home, either no corrective action was taken or when action was taken it was too late. The study showed how few parents challenged or contradicted their children when



voicing extreme ideals. Within schools, school staff reacted by either confronting students, disciplining them or even suspending them, or by not responding at all (van San et al., 2013:p.284) at times keeping parents in the dark about certain incidents. The study also showed that schools did not take young people's extreme views seriously either because of a lack of educational support, or because of schools' fear of reputational repercussions. van San et al. (2013), stressed that this did not mean that the signals were not picked up but, rather, youngsters were at a loss for safe spaces: 'Students with extreme views are often pushed into a corner for fear that they might infect the rest of the class with their fanaticism' (p.287). However, in van San et al.'s view, such a reaction only helped to legitimise students' extremist views, which could potentially push them underground or push young people to seek refuge in internet communities, ending up becoming more radicalised.

It was noted in various studies (Leeman and Wardekker, 2013; Sjoen and Mattson, 2019) that silence, denial or evasiveness was often the path educators chose. When teachers felt unequipped to deal with complex issues in the classroom, they denied or trivialised what was happening (van San et al., 2013). However, when educators behave in this way, young radicals are bound to isolate themselves and turn to other people or sources, online or offline, to find confirmation of their opinions and/or feelings. In the absence or failure of a pedagogical counterforce, 'extreme ideals can spread like wildfire and quickly get out of hand' (van San et al., 2013, p.288).

A more recent study conducted by van de Weert and Eijkman (2021) stressed the importance of teacher judgment in early detection in preventing radicalisation. The early detection by local frontline workers reflected 'a paradigm shift in counterterrorism policy: a shift away from prosecution (solving and punishing crimes) towards risk management (identifying potentially dangerous people)' (Weert and Eijkman, 2020:p.398). Consequently, educators have seen their role being converted into 'gatekeepers for a (criminal) justice system' (Weert and Eijkman, 2020; O'Donnell, 2016; Heath-Kelly, 2017). Yet, Weert and Eijkman (2020:p.398) state that judgements on referrals by frontline workers are very subjective, as people tend to evaluate risk based on their own perspectives. Psychologists call this 'moral' judgement', which takes into account the values and norms of the individual (Kelchtermans, 2009). In educational theory, subjectivity is perceived as 'largely idiosyncratic, based on personal experiences and therefore, potentially incomplete, one-sided or simply wrong (even if it works for the teacher involved)' (Kelchtermans, 2009:p.264) As a result, a preventive policy that is based on intuitive judgment may potentially put in doubt the effectiveness of that policy.

van San et al. (2013) argue that unless young people are thought to think critically of whatever they come across online or offline, impressions left on young adolescents might lead to the development of a passion for an ideal. Whilst having ideals is something positive and to be encouraged, prudence on the pursuit of such ideals is of utmost importance. Thus, educators need to be provided with the skills and tools to help young people build a 'reasonably passionate attachment' and 'reasonably passionate pursuit' to their ideals, thus, to be rational, moral, and prudent (Sieckelinck and Ruter, 2009:p.193).

As shall be identified in the following sections, educators, although professionally qualified, often lack the skills to deal with sensitive issues that frequently arise in multicultural classrooms.

#### **4.4 Deconstructing the Concept of Radicalisation in Education**

The concept of radicalisation, as is known in terrorism research, needs to be deconstructed and reconstructed once again to fit within the educational sphere. This is because radicalisation from a security perspective does not sit well with educational principles. The term 'radicalisation' as used today is value-laden, and politically and emotionally charged. Moreover, preventing radicalisation measures securitise education safe spaces to such an extent that they pose obstacles to any hope of developing meaningful conversations with youngsters with a 'radical' reputation' (van San et al., 2013:p.277).

In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire, (1970), one of the founders of critical pedagogy, described radicalisation in education as a process of liberation that is 'nourished by a critical spirit, is always creative'... 'involves increased commitment to the position one has chosen and thus, ever greater engagement in the effort to transform concrete, objective reality' (Freire, 1970:p.37). In his view, a radical in education was one who wanted and stood ready to transform the world, to overcome deep social and economic structures of injustice, inequality, oppression, exploitation, and exclusion. In contrast, one of the most prominent American scholars and educational reformer, John Dewey perceived education more as a social experience, where students came together to interact, learn from each other and exploit their potential (Dewey, 1899). Like Dewey, Johnson (2008) pointed out that schools were not simply buildings, curriculum timetables, and meetings. Schools were relationships and interactions amongst people.

Historically, schools have always been considered as crucial sites of ideological contest, regarded as the main social institutions in society entrusted with children's engagement in 'political socialisation' which is the 'process of learning political attitudes and behaviour through social interaction' (Braungart and Braungart, 1997 as cited in Collet, 2007:p.3). This implied that it was through schooling that younger generations should learn about political philosophy, citizenship, and the core ideology of the society in which they live. Since childhood and adolescence are formative stages for developing social and political orientations, most of the focus on political socialisation across national contexts should occur in primary and secondary school systems (Braungart and Braungart, 1997 as cited in Collet, 2007).

However, Heath-Kelly's (2017) and O'Donnell's (2016) criticise how the introduction of preventing radicalisation practices within the safe spaces of education have turned schools into an extension of the criminal justice framework, a space meant for fostering intellectual growth, socialisation, and subjectification of students (Biesta, 2010). Consequently, such securitisation within education may jeopardise children's opportunities in political socialisation. As highlighted in the previous section, these interventions are legitimated through a 'vulnerability' discourse which portrays young adolescents as weak, unable to think and therefore require monitoring. Whilst adolescents attending secondary school are at an age where their identity and opinions are still forming and developing, security policies which target cognitive thought may undermine young adolescents' radical thinking which from the very outset may be deemed negative and therefore shut down.

van San et al. (2013) state that within the educational context, adherence to extreme ideals during adolescence should not be immediately regarded as a vulnerability, an abnormality, or a 'dangerous mental disorder' (p.288). During adolescence, young people develop a personal, social and political identity, redefine bonds and relations, and form new relationships, which in turn make them vulnerable to radical beliefs. During puberty, a young person's behaviour is traditionally erratic and thus can be hard to understand. Drug use and sexual promiscuity are well-known problems associated with adolescence. However, radical ideas during puberty is an area which is still under researched. Gemmeke refers to this (ideological) development period as the "impressionable" years, the time when the world begins to make an impression on the young person's mind' (1995 as cited in van San et al., 2013:p.286). Gemmeke (1995 as cited in van San et al., 2013:p.286) claims that young people going through puberty often think in 'antagonisms',

in black or white thinking, everything or nothing. This type of thinking is needed to define their own identity.

Therefore, in this case, ‘the sociohistorical location of the teacher and the teacher’s negotiation of context is critical for the normative decision about what should be done about an issue’ (Misco, 2012:p.71) particularly in PVE. Most empirical studies conducted in this area suggest a pedagogical approach to preventing radicalisation. Furthermore, understanding radicalisation from a pedagogical perspective may strengthen and enhance our understanding of the process of radicalisation and offer new solutions for intervention (van San et al., 2013; Dourdie, 2016; Sieckelinck et al., 2015; Sieckelinck, 2016).

So far, radicalisation in education has only been addressed from a security/safeguarding perspective. Research looking at radicalisation from a pedagogical perspective has only picked up in the last decade to try to influence curriculum content, pedagogy, or the type of discourse used in education (Mattsson and Saljo, 2018; Mattsson, 2018; Sjoen and Mattson, 2019; Sjoen and Jore, 2019; Parker et al., 2020; Parker and Lindekilde, 2020; Sieckelinck and Ruter, 2009; Sieckelinck et al., 2015; Sieckelinck, 2016; van San et al., 2013; Elwick, 2019; Elwick et al., 2020; Elwick and Jerome, 2019; Jerome and Elwick, 2020; Busher et al., 2017; 2019; Thomas, 2015b; 2016; 2017). Educational institutions and educators should go beyond the adolescents’ motives and provide the necessary counterweight by showing alternative perspectives and setting boundaries when needed. van San et al. call this ‘a system of pedagogical checks and balances’ (van San et al., 2013:p.288).

Pels and de Ruyter (2012) have also stressed how ‘often schools and their families are under-appreciated sources of informal social control and social capital’ (p.311). Yet, if there is a better understanding of the effect of educational policy, interventions can be developed to assist parents and teachers in preventing radicalisation. Research into the field of moral education and democratic citizenship shows that this is not the only or the best approach to educate for good citizenship. Indirect approaches, such as creating a sense of community through cooperative learning, and developing democratic and socially just communities inside schools can be more effective (Leeman and Pels, 2006). Balancing diversity and communality in bonding students with their school and society might be a more promising perspective than securitising education. Moreover, it is important to listen carefully to the perspectives on morality from immigrant youths themselves (Leeman and Pels, 2006) who are often those most targeted by security policies.

However, radicalisation that is perceived as still posing a risk to society, as well as public fears and public rejection of extremism, could stand in the way of an educational approach to radicalisation, ultimately leading to ‘ideals adrift’ (van San et al., 2013:p.276). Therefore, ‘restoration of trust is probably best achieved by good parenting and tailored education, rather than by large-scale prevention or early warning programmes’ (van San et al., 2013:p.288) Whilst teachers remain responsible for students’ development, identity, and ideals, teachers also need to take care that that same ‘identity develops in a socially constructive direction’ (van Winter, 2007 as cited in van San et al., 2013:p.288). Whilst education may indeed play a role in preventing initial inclinations to radicalisation at source, the securitisation of education might not lead to the desired outcome.

Means (2014) in his paper about moving towards a critical human perspective in educational policy, argues, citing critical pedagogists like Apple and Giroux, that the main tenants of education is today strongly being challenged by ongoing neoliberal reforms in education which treat educational institutions just like ‘commodities and potential sites for the extraction of economic value for profit through educational ventures and/or as future exploitable labour’ (Means, 2014:p.732). Neoliberalism, is a political approach that favours free-market capitalism, deregulation, and reduction in government spending. Whilst there is no single conceptualisation of neoliberalism as such, progressive educators employ it in pejorative terms. Critical pedagogists like Apple (2005; 2006; 2011; 2013) and Giroux (2004a; 2010) are of the view that focus on education lies in preparing students to harness the post-industrial global neoliberal economy. Professor Gert J. J. Biesta (2015) also strongly opposed neoliberal reforms in education. Already in 2010, Biesta argued that good-quality education generally performed three different but related functions: (i) ‘qualification’, providing the individual with knowledge and skills, (ii) ‘socialisation’, providing the individual with the skills to become part of the social, cultural, and political orders and (iii) ‘subjectification’, the process by which a subject becomes able to think and act critically and independently (Biesta, 2010:p.19). Thus, at the heart of education lies the person’s social development, more than anything else.

According to research into the sociology of education, the social dimension also works without teachers’ and students’ conscious knowledge, in the ways in which education reproduces existing social structures, divisions, and inequalities (Biesta, 2015:p.77). This has become worse with the

securitisation of education, more so after 9/11 and the introduction of new surveillance measures in education.

According to Giroux (2009) and Apple (2005), neoliberal approaches in education limit possibilities for ‘political socialisation’. Hyman (1959) defined political socialisation as an individual’s ‘learning of social patterns corresponding to his societal position as mediated through various agencies of society’ (p.25). In other words it is a processes by which citizens through formal and informal learning develop their political identities, values and behaviour that remain relatively present throughout later life (Neundorf and Smets, 2017). As radicalisation encompasses a broad concern with a way of life rather than just specific behaviours or actions, it has allowed for the securitisation of ‘ordinary unexceptional lives, including those of students’ (Amnesty International, 2006; Hussain and Bagguley, 2012; Kudnani, 2012 as cited in Brown and Saeed, 2015:p.1953). Despite the significance of this issue, which has implications for security beyond the UK, research is scant on how such legislative frameworks in Western education impact students, both at university level and secondary education level. Such studies are crucial if we wish to understand the ways in which environmental factors, in this case education, may or may not contribute to the development of extreme views.

The social and cultural changes taking place globally are moving at a very fast pace, and the increase in ethno-cultural diversity can also be seen in schools and universities (Leeman, 2006; Leeman and Koeven, 2018). At the same time, our societies are becoming more polarised and populist, and far-right groups are also gaining more popularity. Therefore, promoting social cohesion is becoming a social duty, which also demands a contribution from education. However, over the years, policies introduced in education in many Western states has shifted from a multicultural approach, which was criticised for focusing on ethnic differences, to a more assimilationist approach, which often focuses on emerging commonalities. It has involved a shift from the automatic valorisation of cultural differences to a renewed concern with civic integration. Up to a certain extent this can be seen happening in the UK, France, Germany and the United States (Brubaker, 2001).

This forces us to ask questions about the domains and degrees of emergent similarities and persisting differences, between multi-generational populations of immigrant origin and particular reference populations, more specifically in education. Moreover, the perceived cultural gap between the majority population of migrants from non-Western parts of the world and the security

discourse surrounding it is leading to more demands for the latter to adapt by putting more pressure on frontline educators.

#### ***4.4.1 The Neoliberal/Neoconservative Restructuring of Schools and its Impact on Education.***

Significant changes within education in England started with the election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1979, which sought to redefine the purpose of public education provision, giving priority to academic needs in schools, while administering public expenditure cuts on the state education system, signalling a move away from the welfare state toward a more neoliberal outlook (Ball, 2017). At the time, schools and universities were already caught up in a much larger, deepening process of what would be called neoliberalism. It is important to add that there is also huge disagreement over the effects of neoliberal policies on education, but more centrally, there is disagreement about the nature of neoliberalism (Ball, 2012; Gewritz, 2002; Hursh, 2005 as cited in Arthur, 2015:p.50). Without going into the heart of major discussions about neoliberal or neoconservative policies, it is important to highlight the impact such policy restructuring had on education in Britain, leading to more state control and inequality for the most vulnerable.

Since the 1980s, neoliberal reforms in education in the UK, under both Conservative and Labour governments, revised legislation that effectively overhauled an educational system that was still abiding by the Education Act of 1944 which established the principle of universal and free secondary education for all. However, according to contemporary educationalist Fred Clarke this Act reeked of 'class prejudice and it was fundamentally a social class project.' (McCulloch, 2006:p.703 as cited in Ball, 2017:p.75). Reforms between 1976 and 1997 signalled a key aspect of the neoliberal approach which opposed the welfare state and focused on market-led economic growth. Consequently, the management and organisation of educational institutions were placed under the control of private entities, but with public funding (Rodrigues and Herreria, 2017:p.135). These neoliberal reforms turned out to be 'less liberal in the traditional sense and more vocational in orientation, and more instrumental in value, with a shift from qualitative to quantitative measures of achievement' (Arthur, 2015:p.312). However, they expanded the idea of education as markets, with intensive testing of pre-designed curricula and accountability schemes, employing

market principles across the school system. Consequently, a lot of emphasis has since been placed on outcomes and academic achievements. Schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century were ‘increasingly regarded as the key social institution that sustains the competitive edge for high-tech, post-industrial societies in the global market’ (Arthur, 2015:p.313).

A number of academics including Ball (2012), De Lissovoy (2012; 2013), Giroux (2010), Apple (2005; 2006), and Biesta (2010) argued that the alignment of education and learning with the neoliberal economic agenda was not simply a material economic incentive to remain productive and efficient, but was also ‘part and parcel of a neoliberal discourse of social control aimed at cultivating social subjectivities that align their conduct with competitive economic sensibilities’ (Olssen, 2006:p.223). Market principles in education treat students as a ‘monolithic, heterosexist, Eurocentric and middle class entity’ (Laren and Jaramillo, 2007:p.80). Giroux stressed that ‘with a move towards neoliberalism in Western society, in which basic provisions of the welfare state have been eliminated, the fates of children of immigrants and children of colour are particularly in jeopardy’ (Giroux, 2004b as cited in Orellana and Johnson, 2012:p.75). A similar impact could also be seen during the riots in England in 1981 (Murji and Neal, 2011), where communities were seen as leading parallel lives. In the US black and ethnic young men ‘were increasingly perceived as a danger to society (...) and where the role of the state is one of surveillance, punishment and incarceration’ (Giroux, 2004b as cited in Orellana and Johnson, 2012:p.75). This perception became more pronounced after the events of 9/11.

A key ontological claim of Marxist education theorists such as Althusser (1971), whose theory of Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) will be further discussed in Chapter 6, was that ‘education served to complement, regiment and replicate the dominant-subordinate nature of class relations upon which capitalism depends, the labour-capital relation’ (Greaves et al., 2007:p.38). For Althusser this meant that education services the capitalist economy, helps reproduce the necessary social, political, ideological, and economic conditions for capitalism, and therefore, reflects and reproduces the organic inequalities of capitalism originating in the relations of production. Ultimately, education becomes a site of cultural contestation and resistance (Greaves et al., 2007).

Governments and their ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971) such as schools, which served their interests, attained control and ideological hegemony through neoliberal and neoconservative policies and practices. These aimed to weaken teachers’ and students’ resistance through policies including ‘new public managerialism’ of performance standards and school



management, tighter curricula, blacklisting, non-promotions for those who resisted the state and through 'culture wars'. Ideological state apparatuses legitimised neoliberal and neoconservative ideology, which allowed the state to introduce practices which further controlled and repressed the working classes. The UK's Prevent duty guidance fitted in with the neoliberal perspective which now permeated education. The promotion of the Prevent duty under 'safeguarding' projected the idea of individuals as vulnerable and requiring protection by the state, legitimising interventions. Extremism was transformed into a child protection issue. However, young people who were being protected were not individuals who had committed a crime. Therefore, Prevent in education became an extension of the criminal justice system (Heath-Kelly, 2017).

Therefore, at this juncture it is key to understand how schools do and practise policy to further understand the implications of the Prevent duty policy enacted in education. Policy interpretation is central to the way a policy is implemented in schools and its impact on education. Interpretation is about strategy, and as such, it is often influenced by the 'culture and history of the institution and the policy biographies of the key actors' (Ball, Maguire, Braun 2012, p. 43). Yet, disconnect is often experienced between interpretation and translation of policy. The way a policy is translated into the classroom much depends on the tactics and measures applied by all stakeholders involved be it policy makers, senior leadership and teachers. Teacher training, continuous professional development as well as the change in structures and allocation of resources and responsibilities all fall under this.

Policies are often presented to the teaching staff at events and meetings, or through texts and frameworks for further reflection and discussion on how to focus or orient new educational objectives. However, Elmore (1996 as cited in Ball, Maguire, Braun 2012, p. 47) stresses that, policy is not 'the only influence on the behaviour of teachers. Students are also policy actors.' As policy actors, teachers react and interact with policy in various ways as narrators, entrepreneurs, outsiders, transactors, enthusiasts, translators, critics or receivers. They change it in some ways, and it changes them in other ways. Riseborough (1992) calls this the 'empirically rich under-life to policy intention' (p.37). Teachers' own positioning within the school influences the way they relate to and enact policy. Teachers reformulate and resize policies to fit them and their students according to their own views, perceptions, experience and performance expectations. They do so according to their own interpretative framework (Keltchermans, 2009). Yet, teachers are also constrained by the professional culture of the school, that is, the 'ethos [and] teachers' values and

commitments within schools' (Ball et al., 2012, p.216). Furthermore, other contextual aspects that schools have to deal with, such as the local setting, school structures, school budget, levels of staffing and information technologies used by schools also condition how policies are enacted (Ball et al. 2012). Furthermore, 'wider local and national policy frameworks' (Ball et al. 2012, p.36), such as assessments carried out by local authorities, their delivery structures, as well as, Ofsted inspection frameworks amongst others, influence policy enactment in schools as well.

Therefore, policy texts and their enactment cannot be studied in isolation as policies constantly interact with the 'sense of service and promise of fulfilment' and 'improvement' over and against moments of disillusion. As such, policy is constantly configured and re-configured to fit the social processes within a specific educational context. Within schools, policies serve as 'meaning makers and controls of meanings in the social-material world of school' (Ball, Maguire, Braun, 2012), carrying within them a vision and a set of beliefs which interact with social processes, and ultimately lead to enactment. This is what Foucault calls 'governmentality' – where 'artefacts and materials become part of the tools and techniques of governmentality in the policy work of the school' (Foucault, 1991 as cited in Ball, Maguire, Braun 2012, p. 122). Policies are also discursive formations that frame and influence wider social processes of schooling. Teachers get caught up in this web of discourse, which is often exclusionary and selective, and where their students' happiness and their own wellbeing becomes second to 'the production of order and the ordering of productivity' (Ball, Maguire, Braun 2012, p. 135). Consequently, within the discursive practices of contemporary schooling both teachers and students are required to 'not only to submit to disciplinary regimes but also to participate in their production and administration, through techniques of mutual surveillance' (Scott 2010, p. 227).

The introduction of the Prevent duty led to the emergence of new educational experts, often from backgrounds other than education, aiming to provide assistance to educational institutions in interpreting and translating the policy, and providing resources to use in practice. However, approaches taken by these experts depend on the purpose and the interest of the group developing them. Consequently, policy promotion ends up potentially delivered by non-experts in the field. This, as well as the lack of opposition to the Prevent duty amongst teachers in Busher et al.'s (2017; 2019) study, highlights what may have changed in education, that is schools may have become impermanent. According to Revell and Bryan (2016) it is possible that in such a context educators may deliver Prevent pragmatically like they have done with other policies. One reason

behind this may be that the professional identity of teachers has been significantly impacted by recent developments within national education policy which have seen counter-terrorism policy being introduced in education, framing students as vulnerable individuals.

The concept of safeguarding in the duty has moved discussions on extremism away from the political realm – issues of disenchantment with the state, anger at foreign policy or disengagement with standardised forms of politics – and towards a depoliticised, socio-psychological realm. Framing extremism as a vulnerability made it comparable with other social harm issues such as child abuse or drug addiction (O'Donnell, 2016; Heath-Kelly, 2017).

In this way, the introduction of the Prevent duty can thus be seen to take responsibility for extremism away from the state, and makes it a more technical, apolitical issue. Whereas the subjects of the state, in this case educators, become responsible for this duty – responsible for safeguarding those vulnerable from certain ideologies that could be extremist (Wilson, 2017). These legal and discursive changes have created legal requirements to report any suspicious behaviour. They can also be seen to frame young people, often of a particular religion or colour, as the most vulnerable and most impressionable to radical ideas, which explains the duty's youth focus. Whilst Prevent may have been perceived as a policy priority in 2015, like many other policies, it risks fading in the background, 'only to be thrust into the foreground again at certain times' (Lewis 2020, p.133). Therefore, Prevent, like any other policy in education has to compete for attention.

The neoliberal/neoconservative approach to education stands in contrast with 'political socialisation' which offers an opportunity for transformative learning, helping to fight prejudices and inequalities found in our societies. In Biesta's (2015) view the quality of 'subjectification' in education is being undermined due to the culture of measurements outcomes and league tables leading the direction of education. Biesta argues that good education needs to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. Beckmann and Cooper (2004) stress how such an approach has profoundly damaging consequences for the British education system and society in general. In weakening the power of local authorities and in favouring the deregulation of schools, the UK government, inadvertently, encouraged culturally conservative Muslim leaders with entrepreneurial values to effectively run public schools as private institutions. This is what in fact occurred with the Trojan Horse affair in the UK, described in Chapter 3. Some schools were

converted into academies run by private academy chains independent of local democratic control. As Arthur (2015) states, whilst:

‘net effect of these policies has been to break down the institutionalised interests of teachers, trade unions and local democratic control mechanisms (...) the cumulative effect of all these policies is to weaken and disconnect local schools from the locally elected authority’ (Arthur, 2015 as cited in Gearon, 2018, p.51)

However, as Arthur (2015) observed, these policies paradoxically ‘increased central government control through a system of standards, testing and measuring watched over by the inspection regime Ofsted (Arthur, 2015 as cited in Gearon, 2018, p.51). Therefore, whilst governments claimed that schools were being liberalised, evidence shows that there was increased control over schools from the Department for Education.

As a result, the increased surveillance and control of education, combined with the pressure to conform to the demands of the market, has generated bleak prospects for the development of diverse curricula and research projects, as well as for critical models of teaching and learning. According to Christie’s study (1997), in higher education, students were subjected to a process of ‘infantilisation’ where they ‘socialised in an educational machinery rewarding receptivity and the ability to reproduce other people’s experience’ (p.4). Students’ own experiences were devalued as only authorised perceptions were given respect and room within the educational process. Christie (1997) argued that adult learners were treated like schoolchildren in terms of the continuation of the hierarchical teacher-student relationship that existed in schools, reducing the students to a receptor of knowledge. There was little room allocated to innovation. ‘By organising universities as if they were schools, we inhibit the innovatory elements of the universities. We make students into pupils’ (Christie, 1997:p.17).

Judging by the diverse range of dissenting opinions, an alternative form of education is needed. In Giroux’s (2004b) and Apple’s (2005) view, the purpose of education needs to be reclaimed in preparation for a more caring, productive, and democratic society. In their views, surrendering to a neoliberal approach was out of the question. Lissivoy (2013) highlights how teachers and teacher educators are being encouraged to ‘denounce and stand their ground against the proceduralisation and instrumentalisation of schooling’ (p.432).

#### ***4.4.2 Are Teachers in Touch or Out of Touch with the ‘Other’?***

Whilst students’ successes may depend on individual traits such as grit, determination, passion, and raw talent (Duckworth, 2016), these traits alone do not make up the whole picture. Apple (2011) notes how students’ successes also depend on factors which fall outside of their remit of control, such as their background and their socio-economic situation. Education reforms are often introduced without taking into account the social and political context of students and without considering serious discussions as to why schooling in so many nations plays a very complex role (Apple, 2011:p.225).

Ball (2003) has written extensively about how schools in the UK have become overburdened by a bureaucratic order, a performative culture, and a mode of regulation ‘that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as a means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions’ (p.216). However, to become more socially just and resist such a bureaucratic order, schools needed to stand ready to address the socio-political context. This meant taking account of ‘class, gender relations, racialising dynamics and structures, political economy, discussion of empire and colonialism and the connection between the state and civil society’ (Apple, 2011:p.225). Such a discussion is highly relevant within the British education system, amongst others.

As highlighted in the previous section, the drive for market-based reforms in education, and an increased focus on performativity and academic outcomes, has undermined the importance of getting together and learning about each other, something which teachers have asked for as a response to counter radicalisation (Leeman and Wardekker, 2013; Sjoen and Mattson, 2019). Meanwhile, this has also impacted the development of empathy and emotions amongst young people (Roffey, 2017). In Giroux’s (2010) view, the individual who is referred to as ‘vulnerable’, as ‘the other’, as well as someone who ‘struggles’ needs to have a place in education so the constant attempts by people, in real movements, in real economic, political, and ideological conditions is addressed and recognised. Education is the place to challenge their circumstances. Giroux (2010) argued that:

‘Any form of resistance against neoliberalism must address the discourses of political agency, civic education, and cultural politics as part of a broader struggle over the

relationship between democratisation (the ongoing struggle for a substantive and inclusive democracy) and the global public sphere.’ (p.53)

For a change in the educational mindset, teachers need to understand and address global realities much better than they do today. Educators need to ‘think relationally and face the realities of the global political, economic and cultural context’ (Apple, 2009 as cited in Apple, 2011:p.227). Acknowledging and coming to terms with the production of inequalities inside and outside of education is essential. Studies in the US have shown how ‘most governments, and unfortunately, not a few teachers in urban areas and teacher educators who teach them, know least about the slums, about the housing in them, about the services that their inhabitants need and (almost always) don’t get, and so on’ (Davis, 2006:p.42 as cited in Apple, 2011:p.226). Davis called this lack of knowledge ‘an epistemological veil’: ‘What goes on under the veil was a secret that must be kept from public view, as to know [was] to be subject to’ (Davis, 2006:p.42 as cited in Apple, 2011:p.226). The value of understanding and empathising with the difficulties endured by the oppressed, those perceived as vulnerable, would help teachers, as well as teacher educators, to recognise and acknowledge the agency rather than the vulnerabilities of oppressed people inside and outside of formal education. This is a crucial step in our ‘rejecting of stereotypes that often go with an almost missionary sense that pervades teachers’ perspectives on student migrants or students with a migrant heritage’ (Apple, 2011:p.227).

Some academics (Uptin et al., 2016; Leeman, 2006) have stressed how schools could only play a significant role in creating respectful, welcoming environments if educators widened their understanding to become critical scholars and activists in education. Uptin et al. (2016) highlight how teaching and teacher education programmes have to become more grounded in global realities that can be jointly controlled by all of the people involved. In their view, education needs to employ the politics of recognition and look past simplistic ways in which certain individuals (immigrants, refugees) are construed in Western discourse enforced by policies of fear. The role of education should be one that addresses the cultural struggles over identity, the gaining or denial of respect, the basic ways in which people are recognised or misrecognised as fully human and deserving of rights are of key importance (Uptin et al., 2016).

Consequently, educators need to look at global realities through the use of different frames, that of class politics, gender, race and, since 9/11, religion. It is through the complexities of what in Critical Race Theory (CRT) is called ‘intersectionality’ – the contractions among multiple dynamics and histories’ (Gilborn, 2008). It is there, where ‘one can find a more adequate sensitivity to the utter complexities surrounding globalisation and its effects’ (Apple, 2011:p.224). Educators need to ‘engage in a process of repositioning, to look at the world through the eyes of the dispossessed and act against the ideological and institutional processes and forms that reproduce oppressive conditions’ (Apple, 2011:p.229). This is particularly key in a post 9/11 world.

Furthermore, neoliberal policies in education, like the UK’s Prevent, which aims to prevent extremism and terrorism, must be sufficiently integrated into the government’s wider social policies, shifting away from securitisation and towards improving society. ‘Reducing extremism becomes a by-product of a much broader attempt at changing society, focusing on policies that address racism, gender and socio-economic inequality’ (Skoczylis and Andrews, 2020:p.350). If the aim of education is to change and transform society, education itself needs to be integrated within a larger project of critical social transformation – that of building relationships between schools and communities, creating equality and unsettling the deep seeded institutionalised inequality.

According to Freire (1970), for education to remain purposeful and relevant today, it needs to be perceived as a ‘political act’. He elaborates that education needs to be situated inside the unequal relations of power in the larger society and into the realities of dominance and subordination, and the conflicts that are generated by these relations. Interrogations like the ones Apple (Apple, 2011:p.229) makes in relation to the curriculum such as; ‘Whose knowledge is this? How did it become official? What is the relationship between this knowledge and the ways in which it is taught and evaluated and who has cultural, social, and economic capital in this society and others?’ are necessary. Similar interrogations need to be made about other important aspects within education including, content knowledge, critical pedagogy, initial teacher training (ITT), and continuous professional development (CPD) amongst others.

## **Conclusion**

When developing preventing extremism measures, it is crucial to take into account the social ecology of the schools as well as socialisation and educational environments within which children and youngsters develop (Pels and Ruyter, 2012; Biesta, 2015). This chapter focused on the experiences and perceptions of teachers in enacting preventing radicalisation policies, the perceived impact of neoliberalism and neoconservatism on education, and the ways to dismantle structural inhibitors and discriminatory practices of ‘othering’ within education.



## **Chapter 5: Teaching Multicultural Classrooms: Implications for Initial Teacher Training and Continuous Professional Development**

## **5.0 Initial Teacher Training and Continuous Professional Development Needs**

Over the last decade, the UK government has deemed the multicultural approach as a failure (Cameron, 2011) resulting in a shift towards a more assimilationist approach. This move resulted from the alleged link between multiculturalism and home-grown terrorism (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010), as described in Chapter 2. However, student population within state-funded schools in England still remain multicultural. This chapter sheds light on the importance of exposing teachers to the multicultural realities of the classroom during initial teacher training (ITT) and continuous development. Within education, teacher preparation for effectively teaching multicultural classrooms is often not perceived as a priority for educational policymakers. Yet, teachers' ability to teach in such environments has an impact on the social, emotional, and academic development of students, highlighting implications for improved ITT and continuous teacher development.

In today's UK multicultural society, teachers can be faced with the challenge of ensuring that no pupil feels ethnically, religiously or culturally discriminated against (Wilson, 2012). This level plateau made up of equality, tolerance, empowerment and cohesion, it is argued, does not fit with the Prevent Duty requirement of monitoring and singling out 'risky' or at 'risk students' (Heath-Kelly, 2012:p.4). Teachers need to know how to balance between protecting students' rights whilst keeping students safe. Whilst teachers as educators are required to pass on knowledge and empower students to think critically, they are also requested by the state to monitor students' views for potential signs of radicalisation. The question for educators would be, as Kant succinctly put it: 'How do I cultivate freedom through coercion?' (Kant, 1982:p.711)

ITT programmes, as well as continuous professional development (CPD) do not appear to be doing enough to equip teachers with the skills and competencies necessary to address new challenges in the classroom (Gay, 2010a; Cockrell et al., 1999:p.352), including addressing radicalisation. A study (Leeman and Wardekker, 2013) in a Dutch school showed how teachers viewed radicalisation as a linear process. Reacting only to problematic behaviours between native and non-native Dutch students, teachers in the study avoided, denied and socially disassociated themselves from addressing or analysing extremist views or positions taken by students in the

classroom, showing how teachers end up distancing themselves from any personal responsibility for causing and correcting oppressions and inequalities.

Preparing teachers for cultural diversity is to help teachers become aware and understand how beliefs about race, class, culture and ethnicity should affect instructional behaviours. According to Gay (2010a:p.147), educational programmes should teach prospective teachers how to become cognisant of their habits of using examples, and how to modify them to be more culturally diverse. Micro-teaching in this regard could be helpful in teacher training, to help prospective teachers identify patterns and trends in example usage, and to extract the beliefs underlying them.

Teacher educators in teacher training and continuous professional development should therefore aim to facilitate teachers' understanding of different beliefs about race, class, culture, and other human diversities. Biesta (2010; 2012; 2015) notes how teachers have to make personal and pedagogical sense of what, at times, appear to be incomprehensible contradictions related to what good education stands for. These contradictions result from multiple (and sometimes contradictory) policies that teachers need to be familiar with and enact, 'policies which are planned for them by others and they are held accountable for this task' (Ball et al., 2012:p.9). Some of the newly qualified teachers who took part in similar studies expressed that they did not have the skills and competencies or the communicative skills to face the increasing challenges a multicultural classroom presents (Ting-Toomey, 1999 as cited in Wubbels et al., 2005:p.2). Consequently, this may be detrimental for the teaching environment, and hence, the students. Nieto and Bode (2008) believe that 'multicultural education should be viewed as the interaction of societal and school structures and contexts influencing learning, rather than, as an add-on or luxury disconnected from the everyday lives of students' (Nieto and Bode, 2008 as cited in Acquah and Commins, 2013:p.447)

According to pedagogical scholars (Cochran-Smith et al., 2003; Gay, 2010a), breaking such barriers was a challenge, more so, when education often remained dominated by white European students and teachers. In England, student populations in state-funded schools are very multicultural – a global trend (Santoro and Forghani-Arani, 2015) – while teachers' populations in England are less so. Statistics from 2019 show that 85.6% of all teachers in England were white British (HMG, 2021) but just 65.4% of state school pupils have a white British background. As a comparison, 78.5% of the working age population of England were recorded as white British in the 2011 census (DfE, 2020). Whilst students' representation in schools is a good reflection of

Britain's multicultural society, students with an African or Asian heritage do not see themselves much represented in their teachers, resulting in a lack of diversity in experiences and understanding, and potentially a lack of just and race-conscious teaching (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020). Banks and Banks (2010) argue that the ethnic composition of a multicultural society should be reflected in its school pupils, teachers, as well as the curriculum. A recent report published by University College London's Institute of Education also attested to this, stating that more needs to be done to employ and retain Black, Asian, Muslim and ethnic teachers in the workforce in England (Tereshchenko et al., 2020).

As a result, this mismatch between the background and lived experiences of students and teachers may represent a potential challenge for teachers or teacher educators to effectively teach diverse students in the classroom. Kelchtermans (2009) argues that who the teacher is matters: teachers' actions are looked at, evaluated and made sense of by students. Furthermore, in her study, Nias (1989) notes how teachers' sense of self is very prominent.

Whilst, often, education is thought of as a means to inoculate against social harms, in reality, teachers' limited knowledge on sensitive subjects, their limitations and biases, as well as academic pressure allow little time for deep, critical reflection and analysis of societies in terms of distributive and cultural justice. Consequently, this risks undermining the opportunity of the students to exist as free subjects as defined by Biesta (2020:p.92).

International findings on teacher education in multicultural schools show that not all pre-service teachers hold positive beliefs about cultural diversity (Glock et al., 2018), or are comfortable working with minorities. Some may have a limited understanding of what multicultural education entails (Barry and Lechner, 1995; Shultz et al., 1996 as cited in Acquah and Commins, 2013:p.447). Other studies found that student teachers 'hold different, sometimes opposing positions on multiculturalism, based on personal experience, political ideologies and beliefs about the roles of schools and teachers' (Cockrell et al., 1999). Education experts argued that student teachers believed that special efforts had to be made to 'fit in' a multicultural curriculum, rather than seeing it as an integral part of the curriculum itself (Causey et al., 2000:p.40 as cited in Acquah and Commins, 2013:p.447). Studies conducted in both the US and the UK suggested that a large proportion of prospective teachers often entered the teaching profession with overly idealistic perceptions of the opportunities available in the West. This has been referred to as "naïve egalitarianism", common amongst student teachers and linked to their monocultural

background, independent of their race or ethnicity’ (Finney and Orr, 1995; Nieto, 1998 as cited in Acquah and Commins, 2013:p.446). Some entered classrooms culturally, racially, and ethnically incompetent (Clarke and Durdy, 2006; Larke, 1990 as cited in Acquah and Commins, 2013:p.447) whilst others entered teacher-training courses with a thin base of knowledge relative to their own and other cultural histories and value systems (Dufrene, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, as cited in Cockrell et al., 1999:p.352). This was often tied to a lack of exposure with persons of different ethnicities or social class (Shaw, 1993 as cited in Cockrell et al., 1999:p.352). Such a lack of exposure only reinforced stereotypical beliefs about children, particularly those living in urban areas, as the idea that they brought with them attitudes that interfered with their education (Shultz et al., 1996 as cited in Acquah and Commins, 2013:p.446).

A number of studies conducted in the US highlight how (Glock et al., 2018; Cockrell et al., 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; 1995a; 1995b; Acquah and Commins, 2013) the reality in Western countries was that most culturally diverse students and their teachers lived in different worlds and they did not fully understand or appreciate one another’s experiential realities. Findings show how daily interactions between teachers and students were often sporadic and superficial, and teachers’ knowledge about cultural diversity was filtered largely through mass media. In practice these kinds of contacts and related information were far from desirable and often produced distorted perceptions of beliefs and attitudes towards ethnically and racially diverse individuals, groups and cultures. Data also showed that teacher educators with a deficit perspective on diversity were less inclined to adopt inclusive teaching practices at universities or in ITT (Glock et al., 2018; Cockrell et al., 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; 1995a; 1995b; Acquah and Commins, 2013). This shows that efforts are required amongst teacher educators focusing on beliefs on cultural diversity.

A case study of teacher candidates from three ethnic groups - Asian American, African-American, and Hispanic—in a state university in the U.S found that white teacher trainers had little awareness of discrimination, especially racism (Su, 1997). Many had the perception that equality has been achieved and that success in life is a matter of the individual working hard (Su, 1997). Thus, they believe that all children start off on an equal footing in life. Findings by Dufrene (1991) and Ladson-Billings (1995a) concur with such a view, stating that many teacher trainers operate from a limited base of knowledge about culture and identity. The study carried out by Whipp (2013) recommends that justice-oriented programmes should consider making prior cross-cultural experiences a consideration for programme admission. Justice-oriented programmes may provide new teachers with opportunities to collaborate on a vision oriented at socially just teaching, like

drawing from cultural funds of knowledge to teach traditional subjects, involving students in consciousness-raising discussions and debates on justice-related topics, or engaging in equity-oriented advocacy (Whipp, 2013). Consequently, more ethnically and racially diverse students, families, communities, and their advocates demand the right to be recognised, respected and educated for who they are, instead of having to conform to specific cultural norms as a condition for receiving high-quality educational opportunities (Gay, 2010a:p.143; Lewis, 2018b; Durden et al., 2016). This is particularly important as real or perceived inequality, as well as feelings of marginalisation or isolation, could put students at various risks potentially of violent extremism.

Teacher educators' life experiences and personal beliefs are closely related to their beliefs about teaching culturally diverse students (Pohan, 1996; Young and Buchanan, 1996 as cited in Cockrell et al., 1999). A number of studies on teacher education programmes (Lawrence and Bunche, 1996; Lawrence, 1997; Intyre, 1997; Cockrell et al., 1999) conducted in the US found that there appears to be a cultural deficit as white pre-service teachers are not exposed to cultural diversity hence lacking self-introspection and reflection about their own racial privilege, advocating 'a "caring" and "colour blind" approach to teaching that ignores the socio-historical context of schooling, including institutionalised racism and racial identity in American society' (Cockrell et al., 1999:p.363) However, some teacher educators in these studies were of the view that prospective teachers' beliefs needed to be challenged through classroom practices (Benton and Daniel, 1996; Dillard, 1996) despite possible resistance and negative course evaluations (Greenman and Kimmel, 1995; Jordan and Rice, 1995).

Teachers teaching in a culturally diverse context, including those with many years of teaching experience, may require a number of new skills and competencies to be able to work in such contexts. Santoro and Forghani-Arani's (2015) study, which addressed the challenges of integrating immigrant background students into Austrian schools, investigated student resistance, relationships of power, and the values and beliefs that underpin these relationships. This study was particularly interesting as it drew on principles of critical discourse analysis to identify how social identity and relationships are constructed in the classroom between teachers and students. Findings showed how teachers during swimming class attempted to regulate the bodies of Muslim girls and to discipline them into compliance by attending swimming class with boys and wearing swimsuits like the rest of the girls, despite their resistance. The teacher's performative behaviour and the discourse used increased the possibility of students becoming marginalised.

Unintentionally, the teacher ‘othered’ the students and pressured them to assimilate into the Austrian mindset and culture.

In the past, student resistance was often associated with social class and was perceived to represent working-class struggles and a challenge to social class reproduction. However, students’ resistance may be a way to ‘contest wider hegemonic ideologies and practices’ (Russel, 2011:p.67 as cited in Santoro and Forghani-Arani, 2015:p.65), and to disrupt practices that negatively shape their experience of school, therefore, a demonstration of individual or collective agency. According to Solorzano and Bernal (2001):

...the concept of resistance emphasises that individuals are not simply acted on by structures [...] individuals negotiate and struggle with structures and create meanings of their own from these interactions” (Solorzano and Bernal, 2001 as cited in Santoro and Forghani-Arani 2015:p.65)

A closer analysis of how and why students resist particular school practices can reveal to teachers how students seek to work within and shape institutional structures. Similarly, an analysis of the ways in which teachers respond to such student resistance can also make visible teachers’ beliefs and values.

Racial, ethnic and cultural attitudes and beliefs are always present, and profoundly significant in shaping teaching conceptions and actions. However, such aspects are not clearly articulated and thoroughly scrutinised in teacher education programmes. The idea remains that talking about differences, especially if they are race related and today even if it is tied to religion, it is taboo (Santoro and Forghani-Arani, 2015) Tensions in classrooms often arise resulting from lack of experience and exposure to ‘people who are different, conceptual confusions between acknowledging differences and discriminate against students of colour and the fallacious assumptions that conversations about race with people of colour will always be contentious’ (Gay, 2010a:p.145). Appeasing tensions by genuine declarations of teaching about cultural diversity is not helpful to people who are perceived as fearful or suspicious. Whilst teachers cannot shy away from having uncomfortable discussions and conversations, they first need to deeply reflect on their own self as an educator and shake to the core their own ‘personal interpretative framework’ defined by Kelchtermans (1993; 2009) as ‘the set of cognitions and beliefs that operates as a lens

through which teacher educators perceive their job, give meaning to it and act in them’ (Vanassche and Kelchtermans, 2014:p.118)

Studies by Cockrell et al. (1999) and Whipp (2013) show how student teachers with significant cross-cultural background experiences and more student teachers of colour should be recruited to create a critical mass of candidates who could support each other’s development of a more structural orientation to socially just teaching. Furthermore, pre-service teachers with little or no cross-cultural experiences should be offered opportunities for significant community immersion experiences adjacent to their formal teacher education programme (Gay, 2010a; Acquah and Commins, 2013). With appropriate guidance from teacher educators, such experiences could be explicitly linked to culturally responsive teaching, justice-oriented curriculum design, and advocacy.

Studies on teacher trainers and experienced teachers (Adams et al., 2005; Garmon, 2004 as cited in Whipp, 2013:p.455), demonstrate that certain types of experiences both in and out of teacher training programmes can be important influences on culturally responsive, justice-oriented teachers. Cross-cultural background experiences, which allow for direct interaction with one or more individuals from a cultural group different than one’s own, have been linked to candidates’ greater openness to diversity and commitment to teaching in urban and/or special needs schools (Taylor and Frankenberg, 2009 as cited in Whipp, 2013:p.455). Through engagement in diversity-focused teacher education courses, pre-service teachers can gain critical insight into the effects of diversity upon teaching and learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Lawrence, 1997 as cited in Cockrell et al., 1999).

Having prospective and professional teachers holding limited views of society is far from ideal, particularly when they are responsible to make judgments on whether to report students for extremist views (Weert and Eijkman, 2021). This ‘potentially limits people from thinking “outside the box” and overshadows the reality of life for those who are not part of the majority’ (Acquah and Commins, 2013:p.447). This implies that a more collaborative and inclusive form of teacher education is required for teachers to make sense of the complex, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, gender and religious identities of pupils. Historical and contemporary research shows that inclusive educational practices, such as culturally responsive pedagogies, as defined by Gray (2010b), ‘using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of



ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them' (p. 31), empower and motivate students' engagement.

Whilst multicultural courses in ITT do help a little, isolated learning opportunities of a single module do not always lead to a change in attitudes or prior beliefs (Ahlquist, 1991 as cited in Acquah and Commins, 2013:p.446). Teacher education needs to be a continuum. Santoro and Forghani-Arani (2015) raised issues with regard to curricula, teaching practices and teacher-student interactions, and highlighted the pressing need for critical pedagogy in teacher training, which has at its heart 'a focus on question and critique and education for social change' (Santoro and Forghani-Arani, 2015:p.64), assisting teachers and prospective teachers to 'see beyond the obvious, the common place and common sense of the culture of everyday life in order to understand the interrelatedness of human activity at a range of levels' (Kirk, 2000:p.145). Although research on the integration of social justice is limited (Young, 1990; Nieto and Bode, 2008), new approaches to multicultural education and diversity have suggested that programmes that integrate a social justice orientation across programmes are likely to do better.

Through research and engagement with their students, teachers can become culturally responsive teachers, learning about their students, their cultural traditions, values, traditions, family experiences, and traumas they might have gone through (Apple, 2011:p.223). Superficial knowledge teachers may acquire from sensationalist media outlets is not enough to dispel images of parents and youth as passive victims of global forces. Rather, stories need to be heard and acknowledged, giving the opportunity to students to share their own personal experiences.

Culturally responsive teaching (CRT), culturally relevant curricula (CRC), and culturally responsive instructions (CRI) are key to make learning more relevant and meaningful for all students. This is essential for empowering minority students and the building of an inclusive, culturally responsive learning community. However, existing literature argues that implementation of CRT has suffered over the years (Kim and Pulido, 2015) or was rather implemented in a tokenistic way through the celebration of ethnic food or dress (Sleeter and McLaren, 2009). This highlights how teachers could improve their skills in adapting their teaching needs to include all students, white British students, British students with a migrant heritage, as well as newly arrived migrants. Rychly and Graves (2012) identified three qualities teachers should work on to implement CRT effectively. These are i) taking students' perspectives by replacing one's own frame of reference, ii) develop positive attitudes and beliefs about other

cultures, iii) learn about new cultures represented in the classroom. These qualities are all key to address social justice issues, including countering radicalisation in the classroom. It is essential for both prospective and in-service teachers to learn about and develop respect for group differences without reaffirming or re-establishing aspects of oppression. Culturally responsive teaching/socially just education provides teachers with opportunities to develop respect for the individuals' differences and recognises how those differences might be informed by the individuals' affiliations with particular social groups, such as those based on race, religion, ethnicity or class.

The literature also shows how teachers' own interpretative framework (Vanassche and Kelchtermans, 2014) has profound influences on instructional judgements and actions (Knopp and Smith, 2005; Pajares, 1992; Smylie, 1995 as cited in Gay, 2010a:p.143). To change current practices in significant and worthwhile ways, it is key for teachers to learn new subject matter and instructional techniques. Furthermore, they must alter their beliefs and conceptions of practice, theories of practice, and their 'theories of action' (Smylie, 1995 as cited in Gay, 2010a:p.143). According to Nieto (1996), the introduction of multicultural theory and methods in ITT presents encouraging prospects of a significant 'change in perspective' (Nieto, 1996 as cited in ; Cockrell et al., 1999:p.352). When teachers come to terms with the impact of race and class dominance on teaching and learning, they must make its role in society and in their own lives visible (Lawrence, 1997; Sleeter, 1994 as cited in Cockrell et al., 1999:p.352).

Nonetheless, Pohan (1996) argued that 'there are structural limitations on attempts to change beliefs in isolation from the social contexts of life experience and teaching' (Pohan, 1996:p.63). Whilst some teacher education programmes include field experience in culturally diverse settings, there is an emerging consensus in the literature that field experience alone, without reflexivity or critique, may do little to effect attitude change (Bassey, 1996; Deering and Stanutz, 1995; Goodwin, 1997; Cockrell et al., 1999) Therefore, whilst field exposure has resulted in positive effects, research has found that positive effects of field experience may be bounded experiences which do not persist long term. Therefore, this 'change' process should begin in the professional preparation of teachers, with them exposing to critical analysis their attitudes and beliefs about cultural diversity in general and within the context of schooling. They should also receive guided practice in adopting new beliefs that are more compatible with embracing and promoting cultural diversity in curriculum use and instruction (Gray, 2010:p.144).

## **5.1 The Need for Critical Teacher Pedagogy in Teacher Education Programmes**

Teachers' classroom practices are nestled within and shaped by complex and intersecting socio-political discourses and policies over which they often have little control or awareness. However, if teachers are to be agents of change, then it is imperative that they understand the ideologies of the dominant cultural groups to which they belong and the signals these send out to the less dominant cultural groups. Teachers need to have a 'professional self-understanding' (Kelchtermans, 2009:p.261) knowing that who they are influences the way they teach. Therefore, before expecting to teach students how to think critically, teachers need to interpret critically situations that arise in the classroom with students. They should develop awareness of the ideologies upon which their views of students are based so as to be able to acknowledge limitations to their approaches and seek alternative solutions. Despite the discomfort teachers might feel in addressing the political aspect of their job, teachers need to address 'the intrinsically political nature of their work and its fundamental relevance to their effectiveness, job satisfaction and the quality of learning opportunities for their students' (Kelchtermans, 2009).

The potential mismatch between teachers' and students' cultures requires that prospective teachers, as well as qualified teachers, have the confidence and preparation necessary to address issues regarding the education of students from diverse backgrounds, their values, their beliefs, traditions, as well as their way of thinking. Empowering teachers in multicultural educational settings and exposing them to different cultures and situations is key to start with. Teachers need to have knowledge about diversity in order to be culturally sensitive and attuned, to be able to tune in when cognitive processes shift and views or belief systems start to become extreme. Such an understanding impacts 'reflection and reflectivity' (Kelchtermans, 2009:p.267) in teaching and teacher development. This means, the deep thinking about incidents, as well as one's own actions. This is a key component of critical teacher education that seeks to facilitate prospective teachers' and graduate teachers' understanding of self (Santoro and Forghani-Arani, 2015:p.64). Furthermore, teachers need 'growth of an understanding of cultural diversity, engagement in the struggle for equity and commitment to promoting educational achievement for all students' (Rico, 2000 as cited in Acquah and Commins, 2013:p.447). In summary, increasing teachers' knowledge about potential enabling environments students grow up in is key to more effective counter-radicalisation policy enactment.

Thus, early detection by teachers to counter radicalisation in the classroom goes beyond a simple list of indicators to identify signs of radicalisation. It requires teachers' deeper understanding of the broader community they teach, a deeper reflection and awareness of the teacher's self and the ability to address the political and societal issues affecting students in the classroom.

Two scholars have also pointed out:

‘Thus far, the predominant focus has been on changing students, rather than teachers, and “blame” is therefore placed on the students for any deficiencies or “vulnerabilities” noted, rather than critically exploring the pedagogies and philosophies espoused by teacher educators’ (Mills and Ballantyne, 2016:p.275).

How can teachers understand the shifting worlds of students if they can only identify with their own? Teachers may gain critical social perspectives if they come into contact with and immerse themselves into multiple cultural perspectives, particularly those of marginalised groups to help them gain first-hand information that will challenge societal and preconceived stereotypes about people who are different from themselves. Throughout Europe, there is a critical need for ITT programmes and continuous professional development to incorporate multicultural perspectives and social justice approaches into teacher training. This is the case for a majority of Western countries since perceived challenges related to the teaching of immigrant populations are likely to increase due to globalisation and social movements due to climate change, instability and war.

As can be seen, these challenges do not all directly deal with radicalisation but include broader aspects of multiculturalism and social justice. This means that, for teachers to be well equipped in preventing radicalisation, they need to have the above-mentioned skills and competencies. To date, little research has been undertaken to investigate interpersonal competence of teachers to effectively communicate with students from different backgrounds and support their learning (Derriks et al., 2002; Hajer, 2002; Renkema et al., 2000 as cited in Wubbels et al., 2005; Pels and Ruyter, 2012). Whilst empirical research indicates that the level of education of radicalised youngsters and adults does not have a strong influence on prevention of radicalisation (Silke, 2008b; Gambetta and Hertog, 2016), little research to date has been conducted on whether teachers' interpersonal competencies may prevent or help trigger the onset of radicalisation.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, realities in the classroom today force teachers not to shy away from addressing and tackling inequalities in education caused by globalisation. Unless teachers embody these global commitments in the classroom, it is very difficult to expect students to do so in their own setting (Zeichner, 2009 as cited in ; Apple, 2011). Thus, educators need to become active agents, self-critical, reflexive, and critical of others. They need to ‘theorise more fully a notion of pedagogy that expands our understanding of how the educational force of the culture has become harnessed to neoliberalism as both a mode of common sense and a dangerous form of rationality’ (Giroux, 2010:p.63). Most of all, they need to teach their students to open their eyes, especially about their own motives and to encourage them to be autonomous. This is both the main aim of analysis and the prerequisite for social change.

The next chapter shall look at the theories used as a basis to support this research. Using Althusser’s ideological state apparatuses and Foucault’s theories on discourse as developed by Butler, the study sheds light on the subjectification of teachers, as well as performativity and its effects in education.

## **Chapter 6: Theoretical Framework**

## **6.0 Positioning Teachers as Subjects within Ideological State Apparatuses – Schools**

Education is often portrayed in existing scholarly literature as the solution to the world's problems (Biesta, 2015; Lindekilde, 2012b). However, the idea of schools as sites of ideological state domination and /or repression is often downplayed (Althusser, 1971:p.205). This may be because the state ideology itself, represents the school as a:

‘...neutral environment purged of ideology, where teachers respectful of the “conscience” and “freedom” of the children who are entrusted to them (in complete confidence) by their “parents” (i.e. the owners of their children) who are free too, open up for them the path to the freedom, morality and responsibility of adults by their own example, by knowledge, literature and their “liberating” virtues’ (Althusser, 1971:p.211).

According to French Marxist Louis Althusser, schools are tools with which the state wields power, subjects the individual to the political, the communication, the cultural, the religious, and the family apparatus of the state ideology. In his view, schools mould students and supply them with the state's ideology, which suits the role they have to fulfil in class society: ‘The role of the exploited, the role of the agent of exploitations, of the agent of repression or of the professional ideologist’ (Althusser, 1971:p.211). Although many of these contrasting virtues are also taught within the family home, the church, in the army, in literature, and so on, ‘no other ideological state apparatus like schools, have the obligatory (and not least, free) audience of the totality of the children in the capitalist social formation, eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven’(Althusser, 1971:p.211).

Therefore, schools play a determinant part in the ‘reproduction of the relations of production, of a mode of production threatened in its existence by the world class struggle’(Althusser, 1971:p.211).

In using Althusser's theory of ideological state apparatus (ISA), and the concept of the interpellation of subjects, this study investigates whether teachers act as ‘apparatchiks’, serving as subjects of ideological state apparatus to diffuse the UK's ideology, through neoliberal policies, specifically counter-radicalisation and countering-terrorism policies more generally. The concept of interpellation, describes the way in which the ruling class ideology undermines the class

consciousness of the working class. This research applies this theory to modern day schooling in the UK to investigate whether counter-terrorism policies in education are being perceived as ‘inevitable’, as part of the natural order of globalisation or whether they’re being challenged by teachers. So far, literature has focused on whether teachers have accepted or not the counter-terrorism policy in force in education, but little research has been carried out about how they enact and propagate it, the way they communicate and transfer knowledge about it, their social construction, and *modus operandi*.

As McPhail notes, how Althusser amongst other authors, have focused on understanding how education can inculcate ideology through the use of ‘the language, practices, routines, techniques and architecture of education’ but not on the actual communicators doing that job, the actual teachers’ (McPhail, 2001:p.477).

Althusser places the teaching profession within a context where he describes how teachers become subjects of the state once they enter the teaching profession – a process called ‘interpellation’. In Althusser’s (1971) work on Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses, Althusser describes schools as ISAs, which means, instruments which ‘reproduce class struggle’ (p.205). ISAs as understood by Althusser are:

‘Representations of ideas, outlooks, and beliefs that are imaginary or “distortions” of a scientifically accessible “real” (in Althusser’s terms, the ‘real’ conditions of production and consumption). As these ideas are translated into actions and social practices and come to be embedded in social ritual, ideology is given a material existence that is at once a distortion and implicated in the production of this distortion. These ideological state apparatuses are both at stake in and the site of struggle, with the school identified as a key site’ (Youdell, 2006:p.10-11).

This differs from Foucault’s concept of ‘dispositif’, which is a historical formation of heterogenous elements as discourses, institutions, rules, scientific knowledge, and so on, which plays a key strategic role in governmentality and regimes. Unlike Althusser, Foucault rejects ideology as the tool that enables the individual to make sense of the evolution of forms of knowledge intertwined with practices of power.



Althusser's idea of schools as ISAs positions teachers as highly complex subjects (Kameniar, 2007:p.1). Therefore, teachers teach students 'the rules' of good behaviour, rules which teach what and where their place in society is (Althusser, 1971:p.205). In other words, 'the school teaches "know-how", but in forms which ensure subjection of the ruling ideology or the mastery of its practice' (Althusser, 1971:p.206). As a result, school institutions aid not just the reproduction of workers but also the reproducing of the vicious circle of class struggle.

This study uses Althusser's philosophical outlook on schools as ISAs as an aide to analytically provide a context for teachers' perceptions under investigation. In Althusser's view, teachers are instruments in the hands of the state whose aim is to wield power and reproduce the class struggle:

'The teacher in a classroom has oversight over a public/private space, which is never her/his own. The teacher exerts conditional and discretionary control over that space, most particularly over the students who must perform the demands placed upon them without autonomy or with an autonomy that is circumscribed' (Althusser, 1971:p.205).

Using teachers' and Prevent practitioners' narratives, this study explores their understanding of radicalisation and their role in countering radicalisation in secondary schools in England, and their relationship with the Prevent duty as a government policy in education. Teachers in this study are perceived as 'functionaires', operating within schools which are, according to Althusser's theory, ISAs seeking to counter radicalisation at source. Teachers, to varying degrees, act as products of the UK government ideology. Prevent practitioners are also perceived as 'functionaires' of the state, yet their role differs from that of teachers as they work for the UK government's Home Office. Despite working close with the police, which in Althusser's ISAs are theorised as Repressive State Apparatus, the role of Prevent practitioners is slightly different as they do not have police powers and work in closely with the local community, including schools. Their role is to reinforce and oversee state policy, in this case the Prevent duty, and to make sure it is being fulfilled. Prevent practitioners also help teachers with policy enactment and training. In this study, Prevent practitioners act as a comparison group to teachers. Comparing Prevent practitioners' narratives with those of teachers helps identify whether, as 'functionaires' of the state, both groups interpret and push forward state policy in the same way or differently, and whether there are gaps and differences in the way both groups interpret and enact policy. Possible differences in policy interpretations and enactment may have serious implications for policy impact.

Teachers have a lot of power over how to use their control and how to perform the demands placed upon them. This explains why the teaching profession is deemed to be so influential considering its position vis-à-vis the state and the young generation yet to master. According to Althusser (1971), Harris (1982), Apple (1979), and Ainley (2000), teachers' work is the production and reproduction of knowledge, attitudes, and ideology.

## **6.1 The 'Subjectivation' of Teachers**

As argued in the previous section, teachers as intermediaries in the chain and distribution of knowledge act as tools in the 'production, exploitation and repression, not to speak of the "professional of ideology"' (Althusser, 1971:p.211). Foucault abandons the idea of ideology and moves towards the idea of the individual framed within a discourse and through the technologies of disciplinary power, or through practices of the self. The concept of subjectivation (Foucault, 1982) refers to the 'productive force of circulating discourses that creates people as social subjects *at the same time* as it subjects them to relations of power' (Youdell, 2010:p.220).

Within this study, Foucault's notion of subjectivation is used to examine 'how teachers (...) are constituted by prevailing discourses of education, professionalism, the teacher and teacher authority (perhaps no longer the good teacher), as well as, wider discourses' (Youdell, 2006:p.524) – particularly pressing here, that of radicalisation. And within this discursive frame, they are also constituted by their own practices of self. Understanding such discursive practices as subjectivating it is possible to consider how these constitutions and their framing discourses might affect students and subjects more broadly.

By applying the concept of subjectivation to this study, the study investigates the subjectivation which encapsulates teachers through technologies of governmentality. This means the freedom practised by teachers 'to be a self', a 'subject of [their] own life' (Biesta, 2020:p.94). The study analyses whether teachers subvert or resist relations of power presented in the form of neoliberal policies like the UK's Prevent policy, intended to promote the dominant ideology. (see Biesta, 2020).

In identifying the subjectivating practices of teachers, and the practices of the self of teachers, this study aims to demonstrate the importance of engaging these ideas to make sense of such practices. These theoretical tools insist that the potential to act with intent and, therefore, shift meaning, is inherent to the contingent nature of discourse and the discursive agency inherent to subjectivating processes. If teachers as subjects question the ideology of the state, then the state's ideology could transform and the state cannot wield power without its agents. Althusser's metaphor of the edifice states this clearly: 'It is the base which in the last instance, determines the whole edifice' (Althusser, 1971:p.207). Nonetheless, he stresses that it is only the few who are aware and work against the mechanisms of the state's ideology. The majority do not even suspect the 'work' the system forces them to do, or worse, put all their heart and ingenuity into performing it with the most advanced awareness (Althusser, 1971:p.211).

Since 2015, as statutory law, teachers in England and Wales became obliged to 'prevent people from being drawn to terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support' (HMG, 2015b:p2). However, as discussed in Chapter 3, not all teachers identify with the Prevent duty and perceive it as a healthy policy. Whilst Busher et al. (2019; 2017) found less hostility towards the Prevent duty amongst teachers, yet it was noted that teachers' accommodation of Prevent was not simply a straightforward acceptance. Whilst safeguarding facilitated the accommodation of Prevent, teachers still faced challenges when addressing complex discussions in the classroom. Furthermore, the perceived stigmatisation of Muslims was still a cause for concern amongst teachers.

As required by the Prevent duty statutory obligation (HMG, 2015b) , schools may embed Prevent within the curriculum as rigorously as they deem fit. Some schools may do so through the use of the curriculum or as a tick-the-box exercise ensuring to conform with Ofsted's requirements (Ofsted, 2015; 2019a). which stipulated how schools and teachers were to uphold and teach FBVs, and implement and ensure a robust application of the Prevent duty guidance, as requested by the Department for Education, so as to protect students from the threats of radicalisation and extremism. Ofsted Inspection Frameworks assess education institutions on the following Prevent Duty requirements ensuring that i) external speakers and events are appropriately risk-assessed to safeguard learners' ii) that partnerships with different agencies are effective in identifying and reducing the spread of extremist influences, iii) providers assess the risks that their learners may face and take effective action to reduce such risks, iv) learners are being protected from

inappropriate use of the internet and social media, v) staff training and pastoral welfare support contribute to learners' safety (Ofsted, 2019a).

However, teaching is also perceived as 'a profoundly moral activity' (Fenstermacher, 1990:p.132). The reason behind this is that teaching contributes to the creation of future generations and also 'because teachers as moral subjects make morally significant judgements in their interactions and socialisation processes with children, parents and their colleagues (Hargreaves, 1995:p.14 as cited in Kelchtermans, 2009:p.268). Therefore, the moral dimension of teaching should be taken into account, as the moral aspect of education revolves around the question of 'what is educationally in the best interest of students' and teachers' own judgments in relation to this (Kelchtermans, 2009:p.268).

Behind the moral dimension of education lies the issue of power and interests as education is not a standalone discipline but is interconnected with all forms of societal factors. However, within education, teachers as state subjects tend to fear the political power of their profession, sometimes denying it. However, denial leads teachers too miss out on 'seeing the intrinsically political nature of their work and its fundamental relevance to their job effectiveness, job satisfaction and the quality of learning opportunities for their pupils' (Kelchtermans, 2009:p.268). Consequently, to move onto the constitution, constraint and political possibility of the teacher as a subject, Judith Butler's concept of 'subjectivation' as influenced by Althusser and Foucault is used to highlight the notion of discursive agency and performative politics. Butler highlights at least two caveats on subjection and regulation derived from Foucauldian scholarship:

'1) regulatory power not only acts upon a pre-existing subject but also shapes and forms the subject; moreover, every juridical form of power has its productive effect, and 2) to become subject to a regulation is also to be brought into being as a subject precisely through being regulated' (Butler, 2004b as cited in Youdell, 2006:p.518).

According to Butler, what occurs is that the subjectivated rejects its dependence from the dominant order (the state) who recognises the self, and in that recognition, constitutes its existence through the terms in which recognition takes place. Subjection depends on this fundamental dependency on a discourse which initiates and sustains agency (Butler, 1997b:p.2 as cited in Davies, 2006:p.427). Therefore, agency breaks with this dependency, 'not out of flawed capacity for

reflexivity, but because the achievement of autonomy, however illusory it might be, is necessary for the accomplishment of oneself as a recognisable and thus viable subject' (Davies, 2006:p.427). This implies that subjectivation as an effect of discourse, and, more specifically, the performative offers political potential, and this is affected through discursive agency. Butler's outlook on Foucauldian theory is used to help the researcher analytically understand teachers' perceptions under study. Foucault did not provide a comprehensive philosophical and methodological episteme for research projects. However, Butler moved a step closer to interpreting some of his ideas, which in turn have ethical implications for education, more specifically, teaching.

## **6.2 Discursive Agency and Performativity**

To closely assess teachers' views on radicalisation, and how they address such an issue within their teaching, the research draws on Butler's understanding of how 'performative politics' is implicated in the process of 'subjectivation'; as in 'who' the subject is, or might be, subjectivated as – specifically when addressing the concept of radicalisation or the prevention of radicalisation.

The study makes use of Butler's theory on subjectivation and performativity which both have strong implications for the ethics of teaching practice (Davies, 2006:p.425), and for practice in general. Through an examination of the themes and discourse used, as well as the discursive frames used by teachers during in-depth interviews, this research study examines the subjectivating effects of discourse within education, with the aim to overturn educational inequalities. In exploring these conceptual tools and putting them to use, the study focuses on how through their own subjectivation, teachers may uncover and disrupt both the explicit and silent discursive ties that make possible, and normal, the continued othering of differentiated student subjects.

As Butler (1997a), Youdell (2006) and Ruttenberg (2015) highlight, performatives are not necessarily spoken language – it can be written, representational, bodily, even silence or an omission. As Youdell states: 'Performatives are a part of discourse and are affected through a range of discursive practices' (Youdell, 2010:p.223). Curricula and syllabi may also act as performatives as they push forward knowledge which the government imposes on educational

institutions to turn students into citizens that the country wants them to become. Honan (2002) argues that institutions do so by ‘couching the learning process in terms of what may drive students to become active citizens, and desire for self-esteem. The curriculum presents itself as liberating students through knowledge in order to become individuals; that is, active agents who will choose to be active citizens. Drawing on Foucault’s ideas on government, the curriculum directs ‘the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed’ (Foucault, 1994:p.341). Yet, according to Butler, teachers have to submit themselves to the curriculum content in terms of what they have to teach and for students what they are to become, while at the same time ‘covering over the relations of dominance and submission’ (Davies, 2006:p.429). However, as evidenced in the literature review, teachers often argue that they have little room for manoeuvre within the institutions of schools, or within the framework of state syllabi, to shift their practices. Yet literature also shows how often teachers tend to challenge and subvert official documents and practices in the interests of what they believe to be good teaching (Honan, 2004; 2005).

Linking this in with the research, the introduction of the Prevent duty in secondary schools and the teaching of FBVs shapes the conditions of possibility available to school students. The introduction of concepts like radicalisation within the education sector, particularly secondary schools, makes visible the conditions of possibility imposed on students. Since the introduction of the Prevent duty, as identified in the previous chapters, teachers in studies on the Prevent Duty and FBVs (Lockley-Scott, 2019; Panjwani, 2016; Farrell, 2016), have demonstrated how such measures make them governmental power-wielding instruments, contesting their professionalism.

Keeping the ideas of discourse and subjectivation described earlier in mind, these performative processes remind us that, performatives, and the subjects they constitute, are not neutral but are situated in discourse and the enduring relations of productive power (Youdell, 2010:p.223). This is called the politics of the ‘performative’ – that is, ‘the potential to use the performative to resist constraining, normative subjectivities and potentially, make alternative subject positions possible’ (Youdell, 2010:p.223).

Using ‘performativity’ as a conceptual tool, the study questions whether an ideological shift, both on the individual as well as on a structural level, is necessary in order to counter the real societal problems of radicalisation in education. As discussed in the previous chapters, the concept of radicalisation, particularly in the context of education, has raised concerns as to how it is received

within a policy by teachers, its impact on their profession, and the effect on their relationship with their students. Therefore, this post-structuralist political practice invites subjectivated subjects, in this case teachers, to take up a position of what Butler calls ‘strategic provisionality’ (Butler, 1993) and try, ‘without a promise of finality or closure, to use their discursive agency to unsettle normative meanings and avoid being made a subject who stands in and acts her/his “place” in discourse’ (Youdell, 2010:p.224). In this case, the performative (the action/movement/speech etc.), can act as a means to ‘resisting normative meanings and making currently subjugated subjects intelligible in new ways’ (Youdell, 2010:p.225). Using the idea of the performative stresses that while ‘who’ we are is constrained, it is not determined – either socially or biologically – and so what it means to be a teacher in this case might be opened up to radical rethinking and remaking.

The use of the ‘performative’, as developed by Butler, who returns to Althusser via Foucault, can be used to reflect on the constraints the concept of radicalisation in education has put on secondary school teachers in England and Wales. The performative Butler speaks of is not what Loytard calls the ‘terrors of performativity’ (Loytard, 1984:p.221 as cited in Ball, 2003:p.220). Rather, this performative is ‘borrowed from a debate between Derrida (1998) and Austin (1962) concerning the nature of language and its relationship to the world in which a performative is: ‘the discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names’ (Butler, 1993:p.13).

In this research study, teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ narratives are collected and analysed in detail, unpicking any performative effects. Drawing from Butlers’ work, teachers’ positioning will be observed in between conditions of power and powerlessness when addressing radicalisation issues. Such an analysis allows for a better understanding of whether the concept of radicalisation and the introduction of the Prevent duty in education in England and Wales has led everyday teacher practices to deploy a particular kind of discourse. Such discourse may act performatively to constitute some students as vulnerable, a potential threat, and so, as impossible learners, whilst ignoring or, rather, underestimating white privilege which, ultimately, could be interpreted as another technology of disciplinary power. Pinning this to Butler’s thoughts on performativity, the Prevent duty could also be perceived as a subjectivating policy.

However, teachers may avert such discourse only through their own performativity and agency.

Teachers, therefore, must be conscious and aware of the role they play ‘in creating and withholding the conditions of possibility of particular lives, what makes for a viable life, and how we are each implicated in constituting the viability or non-viability of the lives of others’ (Davies, 2006:p.435). Teachers also require ethical reflexivity which, as defined by Butler, entails ‘remaining vulnerable in the face of normative constitutive practices’ (Ellewood, 2006). This has implications for everyday teaching, but in particular the teaching and prevention of radicalisation. This is because an uncomfortable reflexivity seeks to go beyond the confession/absolution tendencies of some forms of reflexivity, and, in acknowledging the impossibility of a thoroughly transparent and nameable knowledge of oneself, accepts ‘the uncomfortable task of leaving what is unfamiliar, unfamiliar’ (Ellewood, 2006:p.5 citing Pillow, 2003:p.117 ).

Butler’s (1997a) ‘performative politics’ offers significant promise for a post-structural politics of change within education. As underscored by Youdell (2006), such practices may shake up ‘the sedimented meanings of enduring and prevailing discourses’ and:

‘...the subordinate, disavowed, or silenced discourses might be deployed in and made meaningful in, contexts from which they have been barred: and challenges to prevailing constitutions of subjects might be deployed self-consciously through the discursive practice of subjects who are themselves subjectivated’ (p.519).

Butler sets out, then, a possible method for Foucault’s struggles against subjectivation. Butler also notes that discourses that highlight the distance between the real and the imagined do not need to be made explicit or spoken to be cited and to have performative force. On the contrary, discourses that go unspoken, that are silent or silenced, remain constitutive (Butler, 1997a).

Subjectivation and performativity, as conceptual tools, help the researcher identify discourses as they are deployed, resisted, recuperated, and deployed again in the classroom. Undoubtedly, intersecting discourses, which are at play, result from the influence of other frames of reference. Thus, the interviews conducted with teachers offer only a fragment of a porous network of discourses that are particularly significant to the subjectivations the researcher explores with teachers and Prevent practitioners in this study.



### 6.3 Understanding Perceptions on Radicalisation through Discourse

Thematic and discourse analyses are two of several methods used to analytically interpret perceptions. An examination of the language used by teachers to describe their understanding of radicalisation and the preventive measures they apply is crucial to this research as it is only through an analysis of the perceptions and language used that insight into the knowledge of participants can be gained.

Analytically deconstructing language is essential for the analysis into the power-knowledge dynamics, particularly when trying to position teachers' views within policy discourse of discipline and control. Foucault's theories on the archaeology of discourse, and philosophical and language formation, help this research in providing initial insights and a framework by which the limitations of the divulged knowledge is explored (Foucault, 2002). Foucauldian critical method of deconstructing discourse, otherwise known as genealogy, is inclined 'to expose the relationship that exists between knowledge, power, discourse and force relations, the "meticulous ritual of power" (dispositifs) which shape social subjects' (Foucault, 1991 as cited in Farrell, 2016:p.287) – in this case teachers who are the participants of this study.

According to Foucault (2002), the study of language involves the study of representations of knowledge rather than a study of knowledge itself. In his view, language – written or spoken – is just a recognisable manifestation of a representable aspect of human knowledge and the ordering of ideas. Thus, once the representations of knowledge have been acquired, 'man transmits these resemblances back into the world from which he receives them' (Foucault, 2002:p.23). Therefore, there is a constant knowledge cycle between representations and interpretations of these representations. Drawing from Foucault's conceptualisation of power/knowledge, Farrell (2016) argues that the:

'FBV discourse is panoptic in its scope operating through 'meticulous rituals of power' evident in high stakes Ofsted inspections, safeguarding policies, relentless curriculum audits, multi-agency surveillance and Channel referrals, serving to produce and construct new 'knowledge' about student and teacher subjects, radical or otherwise, through the attendant data collection processes of 'inspection' and 'examination' (p.287).

The concept of radicalisation as well as the use of FBVs, has many interpretations, as seen in the literature review. These interpretations or understandings can be uncovered by exploring how the concept is used in context, what words are used to describe ideas, and the grammar chosen to construct sentences. An examination of the participants' language sheds light on known representations, as well as other influential modes of discourse, and may contribute to our overall understanding of the teachers' perception of radicalisation in education (Foucault, 2002:p.23). Teachers' perceptions on radicalisation are analysed against the processes involved in knowledge formation and their expression, assessed according to the struggles associated with divulging such information. The participants' behaviour, language, and inhabited silence do not simply express knowledge about radicalisation but, rather, the effects of the power-knowledge process, and each of the knowable facets has provided a particular insight into how the process functioned with the participants' perception of radicalisation. These facets do not function independently, but form part of an entire 'network of relations' (Foucault, 1991:p.81 as cited in Farrell, 2016:p.287) that function as a whole to produce perceptions uncovered during the research process.

Meaning is constructed based on a range of things including, for example, individual experiences/perspectives, interaction with others, which are, in turn, informed by the local and international media, political, cultural, economic, faith, social, and situations that individuals encounter'(Denzin and Lincoln, 2003 as cited in Maylor, 2016:p.322). This means that whatever surrounds the individual and whatever the individual experiences, forms his/her truth and gives him/her meaning. As Crotty states: 'Meaning is not discovered but constructed' (Crotty, 1998:p.8 as cited in Maylor, 2016:p.322). Understanding individual/group socially constructed realities and what informs their meaning constructions is, therefore, important in any data analysis. Bulmer (1986) warns against researchers ignoring the meanings that certain things generate amongst individuals/groups:

'To ignore the meaning of the things towards which people act is seen as falsifying the behaviour under study. To bypass the meaning in favour of factors alleged to produce the behaviour is seen as a grievous neglect of the role of meaning in the formation of behaviour.' (Bulmer, 1986:p.3 as cited in Maylor, 2016:p.322).

## **Conclusion**

In order to analytically investigate and interpret teachers' perceptions of radicalisation, the researcher has used a theoretical framework based on the work of Althusser (1971) and post-structural concepts by Foucault, further developed by Butler (1997a) and Youdell (2006; 2010). Whilst Althusser's concept of ISAs was used to frame teachers within a socio-political context, Foucault's work was used as a philosophical aide because his theories allow for multiple interpretations to be explored.

The research will use the following conceptual tools: ISAs, subjectification, and performativity through the use of discourse. By doing so, the research highlights how teachers' perceptions can be influenced by the state's ideology being imposed by ISAs as well as by the frames of reference of the self. Once teachers become aware of their own agency, their own perceptions might change accordingly. In challenging the effects of radicalisation discourse whilst understanding these processes helps us to see where 'discursive interventions might enable new discourse to be rendered intelligible or enduring discourse to be unsettled within school contexts' (Youdell, 2006:p.526).

## **Chapter 7: Methodology**

## 7.0 Scope

This study explores secondary school teachers' and Prevent practitioners' conceptualisations of radicalisation and preventive measures adopted at classroom level. These are the research questions:

- a) How do teachers in secondary schools and Prevent practitioners in England conceptualise radicalisation in education?
- b) How do teachers' interpretation of radicalisation influence their prevention methods when teaching, and how do teachers' meet Prevent practitioners' expectations when implementing the Prevent duty?

The study attempts to construct an understanding of the radicalisation phenomenon in education through the eyes of secondary school teachers and Prevent practitioners who engage with secondary schools in England. The study also takes account of the preventing radicalisation measures adopted by secondary school teachers at classroom level, measures that go beyond the statutory obligation of the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b).

The objective of the investigation is *not* a search for a one single universal truth which is empirically tested and waiting to be investigated through the application of the scientific method. It became clear in the literature review chapters of the study, that the concept of radicalisation has been discussed and assessed from various angles and through the eyes of various terrorism and education experts. As evidenced, radicalisation as a standalone concept, let alone within education, is far from straightforward. It is complex, vague, and lacks a common definition. To gain further understanding of how this concept is conceptualised by educators and how counter measures are operationalised at classroom level, this investigation analyses secondary school teachers' and Prevent practitioners' understanding of the concept of radicalisation. The views of both groups of participants are compared and contrasted. Prevent practitioners act as a comparison group to further analyse whether teachers are fulfilling Prevent practitioners' expectations when it comes to Prevent enactment. This is particularly important in order to evaluate whether teachers' methods of countering radicalisation comply with the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) and whether they go

beyond that or not.

The investigation uses the UK's Prevent (HMG, 2011b) definition of radicalisation as a point of departure which is:

‘The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism’ (HMG, 2011b).

It is worth pointing out that, at the time of data collection, two terrorist attacks took place in London, at London Bridge and Streatham (SkyNews, 2020). Interestingly, these terrorist attacks occurred three months after the UK terrorism threat was reduced from severe to substantial, indicating the volatile perception of the terrorist threat. It is important to highlight that the recent terrorist attacks could have influenced participants' views. However, identifying the level of teacher concern with the problem of preventing radicalisation demonstrates the importance teachers give to the subject in question.

## **7.1 Research Design**

This research study uses an exploratory, investigative approach to answer the research question set out in Chapter 1. As evidenced in the literature review chapters, research on radicalisation or countering radicalisation within education has gathered speed over the last six years. Conducting exploratory research entails adopting a very flexible attitude towards collecting information and the need to constantly question what lies beneath the surface. It allows the researcher to explore and investigate in-depth areas of study which are yet unexplored. Exploratory research can be described as ‘broad-ranging, purposive, systematic, prearranged undertaking’ (Stebbins, 2001:p.4). Exploratory research allows for enough flexibility to delve in-depth into the subject under study, extracting rich and valuable information from individuals working on the frontline – in this case, secondary school teachers and Prevent practitioners in England. The research adopts a qualitative methodological approach to exploration using semi-structured interviews in order to gather valuable empirical data and in-depth personal views from participants. Given the complexity and gaps in the current understanding of radicalisation in the education sector, this

exploratory research aim is consequently concerned with gathering data, making sense of it, and offering an ontological account of radicalisation in the education sector.

Taking an open-minded and flexible approach, which are cornerstones of exploratory research (Stebbins, 2001:p.6) allowed the researcher to overcome a number of struggles faced during the initial stages of the data collection phase. These issues will be further discussed in section 7.7.

## **7.2 Participant Information**

The population sample was determined primarily by the time designated for fieldwork, access to interviewees, and the quantity and quality of the data obtained. The selected sample for this study involved two different groups of participants (see Appendix A). These included secondary school teachers and Prevent practitioners both working across England. Despite the fact that the Prevent duty is enforced in England and Wales, the study focused on England only. This was done due to time constraints as the researcher was conducting the study whilst working full-time in another country, at the time when the research was being conducted.

Teachers selected for the study were secondary school teachers teaching in different comprehensive schools across England, teaching any subject at Key Stage 3 and/or 4. Students at Key Stage 3 and/or 4 are approximately 11 to 15 years of age. Teachers teaching at this specific level were chosen as the cohort of students being taught by these teachers, as highlighted in Chapter 2, are perceived by the UK government to be at a vulnerable age or potentially at risk of being targeted by extremist groups (Simone, 2020; BBC, 2021). According to Home Office statistics, some individuals convicted for terrorist offences in the UK belonged to this young age group (Home Office, 2020).

Within the social ecology of schools, teachers act as agents of the state. However, besides transferring knowledge to students, teachers are obliged to safeguard students to protect them from harm. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, radicalisation cannot be compared with other social harms like child sexual abuse or bullying, as radicalisation neither equates to terrorism nor does it necessarily mean becoming violent. Hence, learning about teachers' understanding of radicalisation and their responsibility in relation to the UK government's policy, the Prevent duty

(HMG, 2015b) would provide further insight into what is happening in terms of prevention of radicalisation in educational settings. The selection of teachers for this study did not depend on the specific subject they taught. This decision was made based on the fact that all teachers teaching any subject are statutory bound to enact the Prevent duty. Due to academic pressures, and research fatigue experienced by schools, and other challenges, access to teachers proved to be more difficult than expected. As a result, the study's research design was impacted and decisions had to be made to overcome challenges faced. These challenges will be addressed in more detail in section 7.7.

To have a more complete picture of how the Prevent duty was implemented in the classrooms, Prevent practitioners were also selected for the study. Prevent practitioners included Prevent education officers (PEO), Prevent coordinators (PC) and Regional Prevent coordinators (RPC) (see Appendix A). The roles of these three Prevent officials vary in terms of responsibility. PEOs are responsible in supporting primary and secondary schools across a local authority or borough, help them to develop and implement Prevent duty requirements such as risk management plans based on local priorities, train staff and collaborate with social services when required. Prevent Coordinators and Regional Prevent Coordinators oversee Prevent work being carried out across larger areas, cities, and regions in England and Wales. They help educational institutions, HEFE, colleges, universities and other competent educational authorities to deliver Prevent duty requirements, providing their support through training, workshops and collaboration.

Prevent practitioners' participation in this study was of great value as they acted as a comparison group to teachers, providing the balance between what they expect of teachers to be doing with what teachers were actually doing in the classroom. Within the data, Prevent practitioners will be referred to only by the initials PC, RPC and PEO for a cleaner presentation. More details regarding the dates when the interviews were carried out with participants are provided in Appendix A.

Teacher interviewees teaching in comprehensive schools across England were contacted through the help of the Department for Education, and through the help of Prevent practitioners who had established relationships with secondary schools in the local authority in which they worked. Participants interviewed were aged between 23 and 60. Out of thirteen teachers, eleven were white British teachers, one was black Canadian and one was British with an ethnic minority heritage. The latter two teachers were the only Muslim teachers in the sample. The Prevent practitioner interviewees contacted were a combination of those who were known to the



interviewer personally through networking, some were contacted through the snowball sampling technique procedure, and some were contacted by e-mail through the local authorities in which they worked. Prevent practitioners interviewed were aged between 26 and 60. Two PEOs were new to their job. The rest of the participants had a number of years of experience working on Prevent. Whilst the majority of PEOs were based in different boroughs across London, PCs and RPCs were based outside London in different regions across England. Furthermore, some of the Prevent practitioner interviewees were also former teachers prior to joining Prevent.

In total, thirteen secondary school teachers and fourteen Prevent practitioners were interviewed over the period of eight months. Table 7.1 provides a clear visual of the sample participating in the study.

**Table 7.1: Overall sample**

<b>Population Sample</b>	<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<i>Secondary school teachers</i>	13	8	5
<i>Prevent practitioners</i>	14	9	5
<b>Total</b>	27	17	10

This targeted sample was the most effective way of collecting data on a phenomenon within a sector that is understudied, misunderstood, and lacking rigorous methodology.

Whilst this is not a representative sample and findings cannot be generalised, this should not take away the analytical value harvested from the data. Qualitative research using interviews favours the quality of the interviewees more than the number of people interviewed (Glaser and Laudel, 2009). Furthermore, the study offers an initial picture into what secondary school teachers understand radicalisation to be, sheds light into the way secondary school teachers adopt and implement preventing radicalisation measures and enact the Prevent duty guidance as a statutory obligation. This study could act as a springboard for future research using a larger population sample of secondary school teachers, and covering more or all regions across the UK. This study has not set out to prove or disprove hypotheses or to test a particular theory. Rather, it has sought to generate thematic data from which a theoretical understanding might be developed. The aim of

this study was to ascertain how secondary school teachers and Prevent practitioners in England understand radicalisation in education, and how – through their own influences, views, and backgrounds – attempt to counter radicalisation beyond the requirements of the Prevent duty.

### **7.3 Methods**

Due to the nature of this study and its research objectives, a qualitative approach was selected over a quantitative approach. Qualitative research allows a detailed exploration of the subject and a broader consideration of the implications. An exploratory qualitative approach allows the research to directly address both research questions, which are conceptual and descriptive in nature.

Furthermore, this method gave freedom to the researcher to explore the wider context – in terms of themes and concepts from which the idea of radicalisation in education emerged and developed. Yet, research choices were made based on the belief that every interviewee brings his/her own biases, prejudices, and personal take on the reality of violent radicalisation and its prevention in education. The detail gathered using semi structured interviews provided detailed narratives allowing the researcher to probe deeper into participants' experiences.

Research questions are different in quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Qualitative research questions are used to seek understanding of phenomena that are not fully developed, while quantitative methods are used to test hypotheses. In qualitative research, the research question leads the evaluator into the data where the issue can be explored and allows the participants to describe what is meaningful or important to them, using their own words, rather than being restricted by predetermined categories. In light of the definitional, conceptual, epistemological, methodological, and empirical challenges confronting the concept of radicalisation, this study attempts to collate, explore, and develop knowledge on the phenomenon of radicalisation.

The data analysed and presented in the following four chapters – 8, 9, 10, and 11 – are the result of 27 interviews conducted over a span of eight months between September 2019 and April 2020. The selection of all 27 participants – teachers and Prevent practitioners – was based on their profession as well as the function they serve within education. A narrative interview strategy was used to enable respondents to discuss and emphasise what they considered to be most significant

in their experiences and to encourage respondents not to reproduce professional scripts or habitual discourses (Wengraf, 2001). The 27 interviews produced more than 30 hours of data and 308 pages of transcripts.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the 27 participants. However, two separate interviews were drafted, one for teachers (see Appendix B) and one for Prevent practitioners (see Appendix C). Whilst questions asked in both interviews were similar, some questions varied according to the distinct professions of the two groups interviewed. Open-ended questions were used to help guide participants and allow them to provide a deeper analysis of their perceptions, feelings, and thoughts on violent radicalisation and its prevention within educational settings. This made data collected from semi-structured interviews richer in terms of quality. Before being interviewed, each participant was briefed about the study (see Appendix D) and signed a consent form (see Appendix E), giving the researcher permission to record the audio interview. Further details about ethics compliance are provided in section 7.6.

The semi-structured interviews were divided into four separate sections in order to facilitate the organisation of data. The first section of the interview questions focused on the concept of radicalisation, how participants understood the concept, where they have learnt about it, and whether their understanding was influenced by the media or not. The second section focused on how teachers countered radicalisation generally within their teaching through the curriculum. The third section focused on the impact, enactment, and implications of the Prevent duty guidance (HMG, 2015b; HMG, 2015f), and the last section focused on the teaching of FBVs. In total, around fifteen questions were asked to participants (depending on the flow of the interview).

Through the use of interviews, participants had the possibility to voice their views and personal experiences on the subject being researched. The interviews were conceptualised as a ‘policy micro-space’ (Farrell, 2016:p.288), a site in which the educators and others involved in education are able to appropriate, problematise, and construct their responses to violent radicalisation in education through the dynamics of a reflexive semi-structured interview.

To ensure that the interview questions were clear and intelligible for the participants, a pilot study was conducted with a smaller number of teachers prior to the study, making sure the questions were well formulated, well structured, focused, and that the interview process provided room for

description or explanation. Open-ended, semi structured format questions were used flexibly – they were omitted, adapted, or elaborated according to the flow of each interview. Whilst trying to avoid asking closed questions, at times this was necessary when adopting a stance of talking back to the interviewee (Griffin, 1990). In this way, the interview followed a two-way dialogue with which to explore key themes. The order of questions between one interview and another varied slightly, depending on the participants' replies. A number of additional questions were added so as to probe beyond the set of questions selected. This research tool allowed the researcher to move according to the flow of the person being interviewed. The researcher had the flexibility to probe and ask further questions if she felt it necessary. This tool offered a good balance between consistency in questioning and flexibility to probe further.

The research study sought to investigate how teachers, who are accustomed to working within a discourse of pluralism and multiculturalism, understood and interpreted radicalisation within educational settings, and how their interpretations influenced their way of teaching, particularly under the statutory obligation of the Prevent duty guidance (HMG, 2015b). In order to get a broader picture of the situation in secondary schools, Prevent Practitioners were also interviewed to assess whether the UK's government understanding of radicalization matched that of teachers in secondary education. The objective was to provide more conceptual clarity surrounding the concept of radicalisation within education and to say something more substantively on it.

## **7.4 Thematic Analysis**

A thematic analysis approach was selected to analyse teachers' narratives and their personal experiences in the classroom. This approach was also used to analyse Prevent practitioners' narratives, based on their experiences working and engaging with secondary school teachers. Thus, thematic analysis was used to analyse and interpret all the data collected. Thematic analysis is a research method 'for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It is based on a post-modernist commitment to the socially constructive nature of reality' (Macnaghten, 1993:p.54). This analytical approach endowed the investigation with a richer, more meaningful, and deeper exploration of the phenomenon than what quantitative methods would have allowed. It therefore conforms to the social constructionist paradigm which was used to analyse the

interview data collected. The aim of this thematic analysis was to explore and interpret the lived through experiences and internal constructions of reality by participants.

All 27 interviews were audio recorded. This gave the researcher the possibility to relisten to the interviews in full, giving her the possibility of becoming more familiar with the data. Interview recordings were also transcribed, amounting to roughly 30 hours of data. After reading through all the data several times, a coding frame – using themes which were identified in the data – was developed. The interpretation of these themes was conducted by a process of going through the data several times and becoming familiar with it, as well as taking account of reference to relevant literature. Themes were then grouped together and checked for emerging patterns, variability, and consistency. All interview transcripts were then coded, and the coding frame was reassessed and updated to reflect analysis. The use of discourse was also taken into account as it involved giving attention to the ways in which ‘language does more than reflect what it represents, with the corresponding implication that meanings are multiple and shifting rather than unitary and fixed’ (Parker and Burman, 1993:p.3).

#### ***7.4.1 Coding and Identifying Themes***

The original division of the interview questions (see Appendix B and C) helped with the initial organisation of the data into themes, as highlighted in section 7.3. Once data was transcribed and the researcher became familiar with the data by reading through it multiple times, the first initial thematic codes were identified. Coding was first organised following the four themes which organised the interview structure. In the initial stage, codes were developed for the four groups of questions.

Section 1 – Understanding of radicalisation

Section 2 – Preventing radicalisation in the classroom

Section 3 – Impact, implications and enactment of the prevent duty

Section 4 – Fundamental British Values

Based on the questions asked in the interviews, coding was organised according to these four main themes, themes which were expected to arise and which were chosen on purpose to be discussed.

Whilst coding was organised within these four individual sections, the researcher remained open to the fact that the same themes could arise in different questions as well. Despite the original division of the themes created for the semi-structured interview, through the analytical framework it was still possible to utilise codes identified in other sections.

In total, 120 codes were identified in the first phase of coding. In the second phase, codes were reassessed with the re-analysis of the transcripts. In this phase, some codes were merged and were consequently reduced to 45 codes. These codes were then re-evaluated alongside the original transcripts and, in this process, codes were organised under twenty specific themes. These themes were then reviewed to assess whether they fitted with the uncoded and the coded data. These eighteen themes have been organised into the following four chapters. All of these eighteen themes identified will be discussed in detail in the following chapters:

**Chapter 8: Conceptualising Radicalisation** addresses eight main themes and covers discussions about teachers' and Prevent practitioners' understanding of radicalisation, where it comes from, and how it develops. It also addresses the discourse used to describe the concept, how participants have learnt about it, and whether they were influenced by their life experiences or their immediate context. Teachers' and Prevent practitioners' views are contrasted as important nuances are identified in the views of both groups.

**Chapter 9: Countering Radicalisation in the Classroom** addresses eight themes capturing discussions on how teachers attempt to prevent radicalisation through their teaching subject curriculum when possible or during form time, making efforts beyond the statutory obligation of the Prevent duty. It also addresses interviewees' perceptions on the Prevent duty policy (HMG, 2015b) since its entry into force in 2015. Prevent practitioners' views were key in addressing teachers' Prevent training needs within secondary schools. The debates address the shifts from security to safeguarding practices, countering all forms of extremism, the empowerment of teachers and Prevent training.

**Chapter 10: Enacting Prevent** addresses three themes which highlight the contrasts between what Prevent practitioners expect teachers to do in the classroom and what teachers actually do. It covers debates around communication between teachers and Prevent practitioners, the impact of the Prevent duty on the teaching profession, and its effectiveness and impact in educating young

adolescents about the harms of radicalisation as seen through the eyes of both groups. Both teachers and Prevent practitioners made suggestions as to potential policy change that they would like to see carried out.

**Chapter 11: Freedom of Speech and Fundamental British Values** covers two themes and covers discussions about the safe space left in schools for students to voice their views, the framing of FBVs as British, and the conflict both teachers and Prevent practitioners face when promoting FBVs as something that unites the nation rather than divides it.

Within each of these themes one can see the two groups of interviewees – secondary school teachers and Prevent practitioners – moving beyond what is countering radicalisation and the Prevent duty policy. Teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ views on preventing radicalisation in education differs due to their different professions as well as their perceptions. Unlike what Prevent practitioners expected, teachers want to be empowered about radicalisation and learn more about it in order to counter it better. This analysis therefore provides a broader assessment of what’s happening with the implementation of the Prevent duty on the ground in secondary schools in England. Each theme will be discussed in detail in Chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11 alongside a collection of systematically selected illustrative quotes by participants.

The interpretation of the research findings presented in the following chapters are reliable, convincing, and best describe the conceptual ontology of radicalisation within education, and how teachers’ understanding influences teacher prevention methods in their everyday teaching, as far as the data allows (which is substantially more than contemporary conceptions of radicalisation allow). To minimise this deficiency, analytical generalisations will be made as they are deemed to be more appropriate in this case scenario. Analytical generalisations depend on using a study’s theoretical framework to establish a logic that might be applicable to other situations. As for researcher bias, this may be acknowledged as a general reality of research in social science as a whole.

Bearing in mind the objectives of investigating the wider context of radicalisation and its prevention in education, the data can potentially provide interpretations beyond a restricted exploratory remit.

## 7.5 Theoretical Underpinnings

To frame the study on sound theoretical grounding in an analytical way, post-structuralist conceptual tools discussed in Chapter 6 were applied to analyse participants' perceptions and experiences. Post-structural theoretical groundings serve as a good foundation to investigate teachers' subjectification and reflexivity using thematic analysis. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, this research draws on the work of Althusser (1971), and Foucault (2013; 1970; 1969) about concepts of knowledge and power, which was further elaborated by Butler (2010; 2004a; 2004b; 1997b; 1997a) with ideas on performativity. Using these conceptual tools as described in the previous chapter the study investigates if teachers' positionality and use of discourse in preventing radicalisation, 'act as performative politics that rewrite or unsettle hegemonic meaning' (Youdell, 2006:p.32-33). The study examines the extent to which teachers are able to align with the state's policy to follow the Prevent duty guidelines, using their positionality as teachers and personal frames of reference when it comes to their understanding of violent radicalisation. As highlighted in the literature review chapters, policymakers have made causal claims about human behaviour based on the principle that cognitive change leads to behavioural change in conceptions of radicalisation, without substantially addressing the question of ontology and its context in this case (Jackson, 2015). Hence, this research study asks 'what' questions: What do teachers understand by radicalisation? Given the opacity and absence of clarity surrounding the concept of radicalisation in education, this study aims to contribute to disentangling the confusion and assumptions that currently characterise the idea and policy of preventing radicalisation in schools using the Prevent duty guidance (HMG, 2015b).

Using Althusser's ISAs (1971) and Butler's (1997a) conceptualisation of subjectification, which exposes the relationships between power and discourse, this method 'conceptualises the teachers' narratives as contingent socially situated observations with validity because they are able to offer some insights into how teachers accommodate, resist or make adjustments to policy discourse' (Ball, 1997 as cited in; Farrell, 2016:p.288), that is: how they illuminate real social problems. Teachers' narratives revealed their own contingent discursive positioning in their speech, revealing the intersection of biography, race, age, gender, and class in dynamic exchanges – as is seen later in the analysis. Semi-structured interviews gave teachers the possibility to talk about their own personal experiences of complex societal issues – in this case radicalisation, their ambiguity about their British or ethnic positioning in relation to this phenomena being prevented



in education, creating a reflexive environment where teachers begin to problematise the discourses of ‘violent radicalisation’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013:p.12 as cited in Farrell, 2016:p.289). To get a deeper insight into the prevention of radicalisation in schools, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with Prevent practitioners whose role includes engaging with primary and secondary schools, higher education and further education (HEFE), and colleges and universities in various local authorities or regions across England and Wales.

Ethical considerations were followed to the rule according to the Royal Holloway, University of London’s rules of procedure as well as the Research Ethics Committee guidelines.

## **7.6 Ethics Considerations**

Ethical requirements are key when accessing schools due to the protection and safeguarding of minors. Ethical requirements were taken into account to protect each research participant. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was required in conformity with the principles of Royal Holloway, University of London’s Research Ethics Committee, since the study conducted concerned human subjects. Once ethical approval was obtained by the committee, data collection could start. This research study took all necessary precautions to comply with the ethical requirements of research in schools, Royal Holloway’s research standards, and the GDPR regulation. School authorities and teachers’ requests were addressed prior to the commencement of data collection. Furthermore, the researcher had to be sensitive not just to the context of the social setting but also to potentially relevant theoretical positions (Yardley, 2000).

In September 2019, the first interviews were held with participants. The choice of the research topic, the methodological decisions, and the research design have all adhered to the parameters of acceptable fieldwork. Without such safeguards, research could be deemed unethical and harmful to participants. Therefore, protection of their identities was provided for all parties involved. This was particularly important considering the sensitivity of the topic under investigation.

Before participating in the study, all participants were briefed (see Appendix D) about the objectives of the study. After being briefed, participants willing to participate in the research were required to sign a consent form (see Appendix E) prior to participating in the study. Consent forms

were provided to all participants informing them of their rights. Signed consent forms gave permission to the researcher to conduct and record the audio interview for the length of about 60 minutes. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed by the researcher throughout the research process.

Konza (2012) states that 'researchers and teachers often have quite different expectations of the potential benefits of research, and of the importance of careful data collection and analysis' (p.84). With this in mind, the researcher made sure she sought consent on an ongoing basis, acknowledged the complexity of teachers' daily lives and showed appreciation for the time commitment made by teachers to be involved in research. Briefing the participants about the research under investigation prior to the interview was particularly important since the research could have a significant impact on the community on which the research was being conducted, and for practitioners. Whilst conducting research, the researcher remained sensitive and aware of the realities of daily school life and also the impact that involvement in research could have on its participants.

Once the research is concluded and results are published, findings are to be disseminated amongst research participants, as it is always important that research subjects are able to see and understand the results of the time they invested in participation (Knapik, 2006).

## **7.7 Challenges Faced in Data Collection**

During this research process, which has lasted over four and a half years, a number of challenges were encountered. What proved to be most challenging, however, was getting access to research participants. Whilst Prevent practitioners were easy to access and were willing to both participate in the research and discuss their work, access to secondary school teachers proved to be very difficult. Initially, the lack of access to teacher interviewees stalled research progress. Bound by scholarship funding, the researcher had a timeline to respect, putting pressure on her to complete the research on time. As a result, a number of discussions were held with the supervisor overseeing the research to make sure all possible data collection channels with schools were taken before decisions were made which could impact the research or the research design. This aspect and decisions made will be addressed in more detail in the next section. Furthermore, the COVID-19

pandemic lockdown measures complicated data collection as conducting face-to-face interviews became impossible. This shall be addressed in more detail further down.

### ***7.7.1 Lack of Access to Secondary School Teachers***

Whilst the research study proceeded smoothly throughout the whole process, data collection proved particularly challenging due to the difficulty in accessing secondary school teachers to participate in this study. Initially, the study was meant to adopt a comparative case study design focusing on two schools in London and interview teachers teaching any subject at Key Stage 3 and/or 4 (students ages between 11-15) at those schools. However, it soon transpired that the research design had to change as, months into the data collection phase, school access was still denied. Gatekeeping by schools became an issue and a limitation. In order to adhere with ethical requirements and ease any concerns regarding this research, school authorities were provided with detailed information about the objectives of the research project; the likely outcomes were also explained in detail. All necessary documentation requested in relation to the research was provided to the school authorities. Before research started, access to schools had to be granted, and participants could only be contacted once this permission was given. However, the sensitivity of the subject under study became an issue, as well as research fatigue experienced by schools and time pressure on teachers.

Initially, 50 school headteachers were contacted across England via registered letters, e-mails and telephone. Out of those 50, only one headteacher acknowledged the researcher's e-mail and agreed to give access to his staff. To encourage teacher participation in the study, incentives like book vouchers were used, but these were evidently not enough of an attractive option. Only three interviews had been conducted eight months into the data collection phase, between April 2019 and September 2019. Consequently, in discussion with the supervisor alternative ways of collecting data were looked into. The possibility of interviewing secondary school teachers in Malta (the researcher's former place of work) was also considered. However, this plan would have widened the context of the research study since Malta is an island state and its context differs significantly from that of England. However, as things turned out, interviewing secondary school teachers in Malta was not necessary as a few months later a number of interview acceptances were received from a number of secondary school teachers in England.

Between September 2019 until April 2020, 24 more interviews were successfully conducted with secondary school teachers in England and Prevent practitioners. Access to teachers was finally possible thanks to a number of officials within the Department for Education and also through the help of Prevent practitioners already participating in the research. In the end, thirteen teachers and fourteen Prevent practitioners from across England were successfully interviewed.

Since secondary school teachers taught in various parts of England, the research method had to be reviewed from a non-representative case study research to a non-representative, exploratory research. Whilst attempts to start data collection began a year in advance, all interviews were conducted between September 2019 and April 2020. Before the COVID-19 pandemic started, interviews were held face to face in the participants' own environment – at school or within the local authority. When travelling became impossible due to the pandemic, the remaining interviews were conducted over the phone or on Skype.

### **7.7.2 *COVID-19 Pandemic***

As the previous section touched upon, the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020 – in the middle of the data collection. This had serious implications for this study's research process and data collection. Face-to-face interviews, of which only seven had been carried out before lockdown measures were implemented, had to be replaced by telephone and Skype interviews, potentially limiting the humane interactions with the research participant.

Furthermore, conducting the research during the pandemic proved harder as the pandemic created fear and anxiety, leading to lack of human contact. Furthermore, it isolated the researcher as lockdowns and social distancing made travelling impossible and therefore difficult to meet like-minded people going through the same process and/or to attend Research Conferences which due to the pandemic were all cancelled.

## **7.8 Reflexivity and Positionality within the Research**

School settings are a sensitive context within which to conduct research and, thus, to gain access to. With schools' populations naturally consisting mainly of children and adolescents (i.e. minors), they are considered vulnerable subjects to study (National Health Council, 2017). Therefore, particular care and attention was needed when involving them in the research. To make sure subjects were protected at all times, ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the entire research process.

The researcher's own personal background as a former teacher within this research facilitated the understanding of the subject under study, as the researcher was already acutely aware of the sensitivity needed to approach the issues being researched. Furthermore, the researcher's interest in pedagogy provided her with the necessary motivation to rigorously analyse data (Abraham, 1996). However, there was also a risk that the researcher's own experience as a teacher and her views on educational policy developments risked influencing the research judgments or findings. Consequently, the researcher made sure that a distance was kept between her views and the research process and research participants in order to minimise as much as possible the risk of bias or research influence within the study. Being passionate about the subject area under study ran the risk that the research could be influenced by the subjective self and positionality of the researcher. So, to ensure that the researcher remained an inquisitive but passive observer throughout the research process and that her views did not creep into the research, she kept a journal where personal views and emotions were recorded throughout the entire research journey. This allowed her to express views, opinions, and reflections, giving them a necessary alternative space for further thought and reflection.

## **7.9 Research Trustworthiness and Authenticity**

Following Guba's and Lincoln's (1985:p.316 as cited in; Bryman, 2006) criteria of trustworthiness, the research took account of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of data.

Participant validation was carried out to ensure research credibility. This meant that, after each observation and interview, the interview was transcribed and sent back to the interviewee to provide the opportunity to verify what he/she said. As Bryman states:

‘The goal is to seek confirmation of the researcher’s findings, and impressions are congruent with the views of those on whom the research was conducted and to seek out areas in which there is lack of correspondence and the reasons for it.’ (Bryman, 2006:p.392)

Transferability was also ensured through thick descriptions (rich accounts of the details of culture) (Geertz, 1973 as cited in Bryman, 2006:p.392), as is evidenced in the next four chapters. This gives justice to the contextual uniqueness of the environment being studied. According to Lincoln and Guba, ‘thick descriptions provide others with what they refer to as a database for making judgments about the possible transferability of findings to other milieux’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 as cited in; Bryman, 2006:p.392).

Moreover, throughout the research, the researcher kept an objective view and did not allow ‘personal values or theoretical inclinations to sway the conduct of the research and the findings deriving from it’ (Bryman, 2006:p.392). This ensured confirmability and that the researcher has acted in good faith.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter provided a clear picture of the research design and methods used to collect empirical data. The qualitative tools selected to support the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 6 set out the right conditions for analysis. Furthermore, it also clearly highlighted how data was analysed and how the themes were identified and organised.

## **Chapter 8: Secondary School Teachers' and Prevent Practitioners' Conceptualisations of Radicalisation**

## 8.0 Introduction

From the very outset, the concept of radicalisation as developed after the 2005 London terrorist bombings has been the subject of heated debate. Policymakers and academics are still trying to understand how and why young people come to accept legitimate use of violence to achieve political change. The various theories and conceptual models described earlier in Chapter 2 have only helped to provide part of the picture of what happens when a person becomes radicalised. However, with no common and clear definition of radicalisation in sight, it remains difficult to frame in governmental policy – more so within education.

This study qualitatively investigates what secondary school teachers in England understand by the concept of radicalisation in education, followed by how their interpretation of radicalisation has influenced the prevention methods they have adopted in the classroom and the way they have interpreted Prevent. Teachers' views were then compared and contrasted with the views of Prevent practitioners, who engage with secondary schools and HFE settings. This chapter presents the data collected and analysed in the first section of the interview questions to investigate teachers' and Prevent practitioners' conceptualisation of radicalisation in education. Explanations on how the data was collected, analysed, codified, and interpreted can be found in Chapter 7.

For the purposes of this research, the UK's Prevent strategy (HMG, 2011b) definitions of radicalisation and (violent) extremism shall be used as the main reference, since teachers and Prevent practitioners are expected to abide by this policy when preventing violent extremism in the classroom. The definitions are the following:

Radicalisation refers to the 'process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism' (HMG, 2011b:p.108).

Extremism is defined as '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. It also calls for the death of members of our Armed Forces, whether in country or overseas' (HMG, 2011b:p.107).



It is important to highlight that the explanations of the data provided in this chapter focus on answering the first research question of the study, which is:

- What do secondary school teachers in England and Prevent practitioners understand by the concept of radicalisation?

In asking this question, the study looks at what secondary school teachers and Prevent practitioners understand by radicalisation. In existing literature, little research has been carried out about what teachers know about radicalisation, with only one small study conducted in the UK finding that teachers had little knowledge of the processes of radicalisation (Bryan, 2017).

The data analysed and presented in the following three chapters draw on Althusser's ISAs and Foucault's theory of governmentality. The data questions whether teachers act as operatives of the state in propagating preventive radicalisation measures which identify with the UK government's political agenda.

To examine the first research question, it was necessary to:

1. Gain insight into what participants think radicalisation is, conceptually.
2. Understand the wider context of preventing radicalisation within education, which includes the Prevent guidance, the politics accompanying it as well as issues of performativity.

To investigate these points, teachers and Prevent practitioners were asked the following question at the start of their interview:

- i) What do you understand by the concept of radicalisation as an educator/Prevent practitioner?

Participants' replies were analysed using thematic analysis, as highlighted in the previous chapter. The following are the nineteen identified codes from the data which represent participants' own understanding of radicalisation. Graph 8.1 visualising these codes may be seen in Appendix F.

**Table 8.1: Nineteen identified codes**

Process	Method	Extreme	Violence
Belief	Vulnerability	Views	Risk
Political	Contested	Safeguarding	Reformer
People	Cognitive	Ideology	Prevent
Family	Friends	Online	

These nineteen codes were then organised under the following six themes to provide more clarity and depth to the analysis of participants' understanding of radicalisation according to the data collected. The following selected headings represent common themes that were identified in the participants' responses.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 8.2: Six Identified Themes**

Themes	Codes
<b>A post-9/11 understanding</b>	Contested, reformer
<b>Process versus methods</b>	Process, methods
<b>Extremism, ideology, beliefs</b>	Extreme, ideology, belief, views, political
<b>Cognitive versus behavioural</b>	Cognitive, violence
<b>The vulnerability frame</b>	People, vulnerability, risk, safeguarding, Prevent
<b>Self-Radicalisation/Group Radicalisation</b>	Online/ family/friends

Three more questions were also posed to understand how participants felt about radicalisation and how teachers and Prevent practitioners acquired their knowledge of what they believe radicalisation entails.

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<sup>2</sup> The key term 'prevent' will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

- i) What comes to your mind when I say radicalisation?
- ii) How did you form your view of radicalisation?
- iii) Do you consider your understanding of radicalisation to be influenced or informed by external factors?

The following are the codes which have been selected and which were then organised under two themes: feelings and influences.

**Table 8.3: Two Identified Themes**

Themes	Codes
<b>Feelings</b>	Vulnerable, lack of sense of belonging, grievance, fear
<b>Influence</b>	Work experience, life experience, training, media, personal interest

The views of both groups of participants– teachers and Prevent practitioners – were compared and contrasted. As highlighted in Chapter 7, Prevent practitioners were selected for this study as a comparison group to identify whether teachers’ views meet theirs and are in compliance with the Prevent duty. It is important to highlight that teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ professional objectives are different. Teachers are educators whose objective is to empower students through ‘qualification, socialisation and subjectification’ (Biesta, 2020:p.19; 2010), whereas Prevent practitioners’ role in schools is to ensure that educational institutions implement the Prevent duty requirements correctly. Whilst the teaching profession is more values-related, the Prevent practitioner profession is more security-related and led. As a result, considering the different backgrounds of these two participant groups, differences and nuances are expected in their views on what they understand by the concept of radicalisation. These distinctions are further elaborated in more detail in the sections below.

The next section highlights how both teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ understanding of radicalisation, except for one, is set within a post-9/11 environment.

## 8.1 A post-9/11 understanding

This theme describes how participants contextualise radicalisation in time. The concept of radicalism in politics has existed since the late 1790s. However, its understanding was very different from what it became post-9/11. Radicalism before 9/11 espoused the idea of reform, change, and emancipation. Today the concept has acquired negative connotations as it perceives a radicalised individual as potentially willing to commit violence for political change.

Replies provided by all 27 participants interviewed, except for one, conceptualised radicalisation as defined in a post-9/11 environment. This meant that participants framed radicalisation within the construct of terrorism discourse. Only one participant, RPC 2, drew attention to how the meaning of radicalisation had changed over time and had become a political construct boosted by the events of 9/11. He highlighted how that shift in meaning has led to a whole new array of security policy measures. RPC 2 highlighted how the term radicalisation had also changed his own value judgment of the term. In his view the term had been ‘hijacked’ and adapted to suit current political agendas. He described how, before, a ‘radical’ did not carry negative connotations and was perceived to be a ‘reformer’. A pre-9/11 radical was understood by him as an individual pursuing or wanting change. No teacher interview drew attention to this point. Sieckelinck et al. (2015) stresses that there is a risk when teachers neglect how radicalisation brings meaning to the students in their daily life. In his view, rather than demonising and shutting their views down, exploring these views should act as a starting point for educational intervention. This view is supported by van San et al. (2013), who underscore how the term radicalisation became ‘politically and emotionally charged to such an extent that they pose an obstacle to any hope of developing meaningful conversation with youngsters with a ‘radical’ reputation’ (p.277).

This shift in meaning could be problematic within an educational context. This is because post-9/11 radicalisation has become a value-laden concept. However, in the past, some radicals were viewed in a positive light as they brought about positive change, as stated by RPC 2. Thus, framing radicalisation within a terrorism or counterterrorism discourse alters the neutral understanding of the term as originally understood prior to 9/11, attaching negative connotations to it. That said, none of the teachers interviewed highlighted this as problematic. Teachers interviewed understood radicalisation in relation to extremist beliefs and/or ideologies, which could be religious, political or non-issue related. No teacher participant spoke about radicalisation in a positive light. This

might be of concern as it may mean that young peoples' radical thoughts or ideas are by definition condemned or cast aside as wrong (San et al., 2013:p.276).

In their replies, all participants provided various examples of extremist groups which have used violence to push forward their religious or political agenda post 9/11. Two teachers (T 2 and T 11) drew attention to the fact that, whilst the term radicalisation was not used in the same way prior to 9/11, that did not mean that individuals were not radicalised before that. By providing examples of Nazi youth during Hitler's rule in Germany and the IRA in Northern Ireland in the 1980s, these two teachers stressed the social and political implications of a constructed term like radicalisation. Nonetheless, the teachers interviewed appear to have accepted the political construct of radicalisation post 9/11 without too much questioning.

Three more participants (T 7, T 12, and PC 3) also weighed in on the problematics of the term radicalisation. PC 3 (20/03/2020) stated that the concept of radicalisation was a 'contested' term. The only two Muslim teachers participating in the study (T 7 and T 12) also stressed why the concept of radicalisation post 9/11 is particularly problematic in education in England. The term radicalisation as we know it developed after the 2004 and 2005 terrorist attacks in Madrid and London, respectively, and since then remained tied to Islamic extremism. Therefore, the term remains 'closely linked to the Muslim identity' frame.

'There is also a politically motivated stance towards this term radicalisation, especially in a diverse country like the UK because it presupposes that radicalisation is typically Islamic fundamentalism, only affects people who are brown or grew up in Islamic households, which is untrue. It affects others who are not brown and who did not grow up in Islamic households. And rather than politicising that term we should, in general good schools, just be teaching about critical thinking skills so that students are able to identify propaganda when they see it.' (T 7)

'I feel people do not understand that religion, hence why radicalisation is problematic, as there are always negative connotations around Muslims and I have a close relationship to the mosque. Hence that's why I feel it is problematic.' (T 12)

These citations highlight how the concept of radicalisation has remained intertwined with Islamic fundamentalism, creating negative perceptions on the entire Muslim community. White British teachers interviewed also drew attention to this aspect, stressing the need to dispel such perceptions – both amongst teachers and students in schools. Prevent practitioners highlighted the efforts that have been made by the UK Government over the years to shift the focus from Islamic extremism to all forms of terrorism. Evidence of this is the figures by the Home Office (for the year ending March 2020) on the number of Channel case referrals made due to concerns of right-wing radicalisation, which is 13% higher than referrals for Islamist radicalisation (HMG, 2020c). Whilst T 12 acknowledged government efforts, she nonetheless stated that the rise in far-right referrals registered in parts of the UK (HMG, 2020c) was what contributed to the Governments' shift in focus.

Prevent Education Officer 1 raised the point that the concept of radicalisation was not that well known outside the Prevent world.

‘If you ask anyone outside the Prevent world, they wouldn’t have a clue.’ (PEO1)

‘Most young people do not know it exists and that’s ok. They don’t necessarily need to know the word Prevent necessarily.’ (PEO2)

Also, in his view, knowing the term radicalisation was not essential in education; the term did not need to be taught in schools or to people as such. What was essential, he stated, was for educational institutions to build the awareness and critical thinking skills. He thought a teacher’s role was to monitor and identify the risks. In his view, teachers need to address online safety, and thereby building resilience, understanding, and care – issues which are currently taught in subjects like Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). PEO 1 believed that, more than teaching what the term radicalisation meant, it was key to understand where the risks came from: self-radicalisation or through individuals who do not have their best interests at heart.

Teachers interviewed only partially agreed with this viewpoint stating that, whilst it was most likely that younger students in secondary schools did not know or were not aware of the Prevent duty in school, sixth form students held discussions on Prevent in their Sociology class (PEO 5). Muslim teachers interviewed also added that Muslim teachers and students were much more aware

of the Prevent duty in school than their white British counterparts, as they felt more targeted by it. The latter view supports previous findings by other academics, who also found that, despite Prevent countering all forms of extremism, young Muslims remain more likely to be targeted by Prevent (Busher et al., 2017; Vincent, 2018).

A number of teachers did agree that rather than discussing radicalisation directly, education's role was that of preventing it through other means: by building resilience and critical thinking amongst students. The departmental advice does not state whether teachers should discuss radicalisation directly or indirectly in the classroom. It only states that:

‘Schools should be safe spaces in which children and young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas. The Prevent duty is not intended to limit discussion on these issues.’ (DfE, 2015:p.11)

However, what teachers demand is an educational response to Prevent and their role in implementing Prevent within the curriculum, which concurs with other findings (Elwick, 2019). Print (2014) highlights that, whilst teachers can teach directly about the risks, shedding light on the political process through which risks are identified may be more significant.

The next section will look at the descriptions of radicalisation and the discourse used by participants in doing so.

## **8.2 Process Vs Methods**

This theme describes how interviewees view radicalisation. Within terrorism literature, radicalisation is described as a process as it happens over a period of time. Taylor and Horgan (2006) describe ‘process’ as ‘a continuum’ (p.586) (...) ‘implying a sense of change’ or ‘process towards’ (or away) from criminal engagement’ (p.589)

Participants’ understanding of radicalisation included reasons why radicalisation occurred and how it occurred; whether it occurred on an individual level or at group level. Ten Prevent

practitioners described radicalisation as a ‘process’. Descriptions used by the teachers included: ‘reject status quo’, ‘dismiss people views’, ‘not happen overnight’, ‘not a linear process’. The term ‘process’ is most often used in radicalisation research. Radicalisation as a process is, in fact, the only thing radicalisation experts agree on (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011:p.13).

Unlike Prevent practitioners, only five teachers interviewed used the specific term ‘process’ to describe radicalisation. Thirteen teachers opted for other terms describing the ‘methods’ used to radicalise/recruit, using words such as, ‘grooming’, ‘exploiting’, ‘imposing’, ‘adopting’, ‘influencing’, and ‘indoctrinating’. These teachers conceptualised radicalisation as something that happens to individuals through the ‘methods’ or ‘actions’ of other individuals (family members/friends) or groups of people (extremist groups). In using such terms, teachers made clear the distinctions between the concepts of ‘extremism’ and ‘radicalisation’. Teachers understood extremism to mean views, ideology or beliefs which sit ‘at the far end of the spectrum’ (T1, T3, T8), deviating from the norm. Radicalisation described the journey of the individual who came to acquire such beliefs/views/ideologies.

Despite using different terms to describe radicalisation, both groups of participants agreed that radicalisation happens over a period of time, which implies a ‘process’ over a period of time. As Horgan and Taylor (2006) note, process can be described as ‘a pathway, a trajectory – the development of an individual marked by a sequence of transitions’ (p.586). Prevent practitioners also described radicalisation as potentially leading to ‘violence’, ‘terrorism’ or to a ‘dangerous outcome’. In contrast to this, teachers did not. Unlike Prevent practitioners, only two teachers made reference to violence or terrorism when describing radicalisation. Terms used included: ‘violent responses’ (T 2) and ‘threatening to society’ (T 13). Instead, most of the terms used by teachers echoed safeguarding/child protection discourse originating from child sexual exploitation – a social harm which, in education, falls under safeguarding. Yet, teachers did not link radicalisation to violence as Prevent practitioners did. One reason could be that Prevent practitioners have more experience dealing with potentially violent individuals in their day-to-day work when dealing with Channel cases, whereas teachers as educators are more concerned about the holistic development and well-being of the children.

Furthermore, the distinction between the terminology used by teachers and by Prevent practitioners could also be the result of the latter being more familiar with technical terms used in radicalisation research. Teachers are not experts of radicalisation, nor work full-time in that area,



which explains why they have selected terms usually used to describe other social harms, such as sexual exploitation or child abuse. An example is the use of the term ‘grooming’. Another indicator that may sustain this view is the fact that teachers highlight vulnerable aspects of individuals prone to radicalisation more frequently than Prevent practitioners do. A reason behind this might also be related to the terminology used in the distinct professions of the two groups of participants interviewed. As stressed earlier, teachers, as educators, deal more with the educational and socialisation side of children and young people rather than possible criminal or violent aspects, something which may be more familiar to what Prevent practitioners deal with in their job. As a result, teachers may be more sensitive to certain characteristics than others (Dourdie, 2016).

The rest of the key terms identified describe the remaining conceptual features that make up the concept of radicalisation, that is the methods used ‘to draw someone in’ and ‘the effects of’ radicalisation which could be violence or terrorism. The other key terms mentioned provide further details to what leads a person to become radicalised, which in literature is referred to as the root causes. These can include contextual, psychological, sociological factors, family relationships, friends, and extremist groups – key terms which were mentioned at least once.

The next section looks at teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ perceptions of radicalisation vis-à-vis all forms of extremism.

### **8.3 Political, Religious, Right-Wing, Left-Wing, No-One Issue Radicalisation**

The individual’s extreme belief in an ideology, left-wing or right-wing, religious, or unrelated to a specific ideology is how participants understood radicalisation. Having such an understanding is important to identify whether biases or dominant influences are involved in such an understanding. All participants interviewed agreed that, whatever views/beliefs/ideologies were adopted by the radicalised individual, these views had to be ‘extreme’ in their nature.

In their narratives neither teachers nor Prevent practitioners linked radicalisation to a particular type of extremism. All teachers interviewed steered clear from linking radicalisation to one particular ideology or group. This contrasted with existing public narratives in England that

portray Islamic extremism as the cause of terrorism. None of the participants interviewed associated or linked radicalisation to Islamic extremism alone. Several participants provided various examples, mentioning different types of extremism and extremist groups, such as right-wing, left-wing, animal rights, environmental extreme groups, neo-Nazi groups, ISIS, Islamist groups and undefined ideologies.

Prevent practitioners underscored how, initially, the concept of radicalisation was tied up with Islamic extremism and, therefore, was often linked to the Muslim identity. This was also stated earlier (in 8.1.1.) by Muslim T 12. However, Prevent practitioners stressed that those initial perceptions have changed over the years, and that radicalisation in England and Wales was no longer associated with Islamic extremism. To support their argument, some made reference to the increased number of far-right referrals recorded in various parts of the country (HMG, 2019) particularly the North East and North West of England, reflecting most recent government statistics (HMG, 2020c). Home Office statistics for the year ending March 2020 also showed that out of 6,287, 1487 were for concerns over Islamist extremism and 1,387 were for concerns over right-wing extremism. Referrals made by the education sector (1,928) for concerns related to right-wing radicalisation (508 out of 1387) exceeded those made for concerns related to Islamic extremism (281 out of 1487) (HMG, 2020c). Like Prevent practitioners, some teachers revealed how the term 'radicalisation' in the UK, particularly under the Coalition government and then under the Conservative government, denoted Islamic fundamentalism, when, in reality, radicalisation cases were often seen in the context of white nationalism. These teachers' perceptions are not unfounded, particularly when one considers how some segments of the British media still link Islamic extremism with terrorism, leading to heightened levels of Islamophobia in the UK (Hankir et al., 2018). Teacher interviewees also stressed how far-right extremism had become a serious issue across the UK and hate crime had become more prevalent across certain areas in England and Wales. Teacher 1 and Teacher 11 both highlighted how, since the late 1990s the far-right in the UK had become a significant concern, and that a number of far-right groups increased in popularity.

Brexit and the migration crisis of 2015 accentuated polarisation in the UK. Following the Brexit referendum alone it was registered that there was a 15%-25% increase in race and religious hate crime in England and Wales (HMG, 2018/2019). Government figures confirm this view, showing how, in the year ending March 2020, hate crimes in England and Wales increased by 8% compared

with the year ending March 2019 (HMG, 2020b). Also, according to Teacher 1, in schools there was more ‘casual use of racist and occasionally homophobic language’ which was often more tolerated by teachers. In his view, dealing with gangs and far-right nationalist issues had become common in schools as well. Therefore, T 1 encourages addressing radicalisation into far-right extremism in schools, especially in certain areas of England, was particularly important.

T 1 stated that:

‘In school today, students pick up from the right-wing press, you know calling a bogus asylum seeker, people making comments to children wearing head scarfs saying, “you are a terrorist”, which I find very upsetting and ridiculous given that I was raised at a time when the IRA were responsible for bombing mainland Britain.’

‘I am very keen to dispel that being Muslim equates to wanting to destroy the culture of this country.’

The first citation highlights forms of tacit discrimination articulated in references to race, culture, religion, language, immigrant status, and national identity. These references all include discourses that frame difference as negative and problematic. By marking out certain bodies or communities as potentially carrying certain traits or dispositions produces the us versus them binary, disenfranchisement, exclusion, prejudice, racism, and Islamophobia. Since, and because of 9/11, the Muslim community has been essentialised and made to be perceived as suspicious, making it harder for young Muslim students in schools to fit in without being discriminated or ‘othered’ (Kudnani, 2014).

The second citation from T 1 highlights this teacher’s awareness of Islamophobia in the country and the dangers of populist groups perpetuating such ideas. T 1 also highlights how often in schools, Muslim students, have to deal with a range of discriminations because of their religion, which is visible from the way they dress or pray. According to Welply (2018), such ‘discrimination or discriminatory discourses may, more often than not, remain invisible because they are discursively framed as devoid of any racist intent’ (p.383).

Both teachers and Prevent practitioners distanced themselves from potential discriminatory approaches towards Muslim students when providing their understanding of radicalisation. Some teacher interviewees (T5, T10, T12, T13) added that they were conscious of the fact that, outside of school, young Muslims were more targeted by police than white students were. In stressing this point, participants echoed the wider discourses in which, by default, Muslim subjects were considered as ‘bad Muslims’ who needed to prove that they were ‘good Muslims’ (Mamdani, 2004). This highlights the wider social issues impacting young Muslims in Britain at a juncture when they are struggling with identity formation. Recognising and acknowledging the intersectionality of the ‘othering’ Muslim children are subjected to by their peers (or even by adults) could lead to deeper insights into their personal experience of discrimination at school, challenging the notion of younger children as a vulnerable homogenous category (James, 2007). This can help situate Islamophobia within wider racist and discriminatory contexts to understand the experience of race through a religious lens.

Whilst, according to the data gathered, government efforts in education have succeeded in shifting perceptions, data also shows that teachers have to work within a context where dominant public perceptions still tie radicalisation to the Muslim community in England and Wales.

‘It is difficult to distinguish between a terrorist who wants to inflict pain and a child who is going through a developmental phase, of understanding the religion and understanding the oppression that they go through.’ (T 1)

Therefore, whilst Muslims remain constructed as a suspect community by Islamophobic media reporting and government discourse (Cameron, 2011; Manzoor-Khan, 2020)<sup>3</sup>, the national delivery of the Prevent duty has de-emphasised that focus to a broader, national one, focusing on whole school populations.

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<sup>3</sup> Former Prime Minister David Cameron’s speech at a European Security conference in Munich on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2011, targeting his remarks at Muslim youth, he appeared to set up the ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ binary, with ‘them’ (Muslims) being perceived as needing to be effectively assimilated into ‘our values’. Current Prime Minister Boris Johnson, has also been criticized for discriminatory remarks on Islam and Muslim women’s dress.

## 8.4 Cognitive Radicalisation Vs Behavioural Radicalisation

As discussed, a common definition for radicalisation has not been agreed upon in academic circles. Over the years, countries and organisations have come up with their own definitions of radicalisation to suit best their own agendas. However, as seen in Chapter 2, academics previously perceived radicalisation to be a linear process leading to terrorism (Moghaddam, 2005; Wiktorowicz, 2005; Amin, 2014). That view has now been dismissed as empirical evidence (Bartlett and Miller, 2012) shows that not all those who radicalise become terrorists. Studies today look at radicalisation in two ways: cognitive and/or behavioural (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2017).

This view is also reflected in this study, as teachers and Prevent practitioners perceive radicalisation differently. The main distinction identified in their view is related to violence. Eleven Prevent practitioners described radicalisation as leading to terrorism or violence. Terms used by Prevent practitioners include, ‘legitimate/permissible violence’, ‘terrorism’, ‘terrorist’, or the possibility of a ‘tragic end result’. Whereas only one teacher made reference to violence when describing radicalisation.

This finding is particularly interesting as it highlights distinctions between two public sector workers (state subjects), Prevent practitioners and teachers, where the former look at the concept of radicalisation from a security-led perspective and the latter from an educational perspective. Prevent practitioner interviewees look at radicalisation from the goal aspect of terrorism (Borum, 2011; Horgan, 2012).

‘As a Prevent Coordinator I am more inclined to worry about the violent element of the person’s journey or the way of thinking.’ (PC1)

Teachers do not perceive radicalisation as a springboard to terrorism, as a linear process which leads to terrorism. This suggests that perhaps Prevent within education should focus more on preventing cognitive radicalisation (shifts in thoughts and beliefs) rather than behavioural (committing violent acts). This would also have implications for Prevent teacher training, as objectives and focus would shift to extremist ideas rather than behaviour.

Therefore, rather than focusing on the ‘rooting out of a future terrorist’ they look out for the ‘root causes’ (McCulloch and Pickering, 2009:p.629). Several conceptual models (Borum, 2011; Moghaddam, 2005; Silber and Bhatt, 2007; Precht, 2007; McCauley and Moskaleiko, 2008), consider violence to be the last step in the process of radicalisation leading to terrorism (Borum, 2011). Only a few individuals reach the last step in the process and commit violence, others disengage when they become disillusioned or disaffected. In education, when cases are referred and assessed as serious by Prevent officials, the latter – or even the police – take over the case.

This study’s findings suggest that teachers and Prevent practitioners’ conceptualisations of radicalisation differ because of their contrasting professions: Prevent practitioners deal with crime and violence whilst teachers deal with the intellectual development and well-being of students in school. Therefore, participants’ interpretation and understanding of the concept of radicalisation is influenced by the role they play in society. This is particularly interesting as it is likely to have an impact on how this influence plays out in Prevent enactment. Therefore, because the concept of radicalisation may lack conceptual clarity in Prevent, teachers and Prevent practitioners understand radicalisation through their own experiences.

Another reason for a disparity in views could be the result of a lack of communication between teachers and Prevent practitioners on what radicalisation is and how to deal with it when enacting the Prevent duty in schools. A lack of common understanding is particularly of concern as it could result in erroneous referrals being made.

## **8.5 Vulnerability as a Key Concept**

The theme of vulnerability, highlights how participants frame the individual radicalising. Is he a passive or an active subject in this process? The concept of vulnerability is very dominant within CVE/PVE debates. Framing an individual as vulnerable and who needs support allows intervention to be perceived as more acceptable, particularly within education. Such a paradigm frames the potentially radicalised person as passive, vulnerable, and in need of support, stripping him of his agency (O’Donnell, 2016a). Perceiving students in this way may have implications for education and also for freedom of speech in the classroom.

Findings in this study show that the concept of vulnerability is very resonant amongst participants in this study. All 27 participants highlighted the aspect of ‘vulnerability’ at different points in their interview to describe individuals at risk of radicalisation. Prevent practitioners’ (PEO 1, PC 1 RPC 1, PEO 7, PEO 5) underscored how vulnerable individuals were deemed to be most at risk of radicalisation, highlighting the security risk: ‘It has nothing to do with morality but everything with vulnerability’ (PEO 3). Teachers, on the other hand, used the term ‘vulnerable’ with more frequency when highlighting the need for safeguarding. In the data collected, teachers cite a number of vulnerability indicators, including ‘lack of belonging’, ‘feeling disenfranchised’, ‘abused’, ‘neglected’, ‘an outcast’, ‘brainwashed’, ‘manipulated’, ‘coerced’, ‘grooming’, ‘has grievances’, ‘exploited’, and ‘indoctrinated’. Prevent practitioners also mentioned socioeconomic indicators, such as ‘poverty’, ‘lack of financial means’, ‘unemployment’.

The term ‘vulnerable’ or ‘vulnerability’ draws on contemporary fears and anxiety of child sexual abuse as a way to explain threats from terrorism (Furedi, 2007). The vulnerability profile in the conceptualisation of radicalisation has been accommodated within education as it is conceptualised in the Prevent duty and Channel interventions. In terrorism research, individuals who are deemed vulnerable are deemed to be more at risk and therefore require intervention. It has become so intertwined with individuals being radicalised that it has now become a key concept (Davydov, 2015). The vulnerability frame within terrorism literature is particularly important as it frames the radicalising individual as weak and devoid of agency.

The terms used by participants demonstrate how education has, like others have stated, become therapeutic, increasingly emphasising the ‘vulnerable self’ (O’Donnell, 2016b; Dourdie, 2016; Heath-Kelly, 2017), and focusing on potential future risks rather than existing risks. This concurs with critical discourse analysis on UK counter-terrorist documentation (Macdonald and Hunter, 2013:p.137). The vulnerability frame within Prevent has been criticised by a number of academics as it risks ‘creating epistemic injustice as a consequence of discourses, policies, laws and practices in counter-radicalisation and prevention of terrorism’ (O’Donnell, 2016a:p.1). Perceiving educational institutions as ‘incubators’ to monitor potential criminals undermines the core values of education (Dourdie, 2016:p.27).

This research data shows how the discursive use of vulnerability by teachers and Prevent practitioner interviewees demonstrate participants’ accommodation and normalisation of such a

construct justifying soft policing within education through the use of safeguarding and child protection policies. However, as highlighted by the Institute of Race relations (2010) this could be counterproductive within an environment that is supposed to empower young people to engage politically so as to contribute to society. In 2015, when the Prevent duty guidance came into force, teachers were made responsible by the government to spot signs of extremism and prevent radicalisation at source (Thomas, 2017). Teachers highlighted how, with the statutory obligation of the Prevent duty, they felt the pressure of watching out for students' vulnerabilities as a crucial means of preventing radicalisation.

Most of the descriptions given by teacher respondents victimised the individuals being radicalised, stripping them of their agency to blame the group of extremists who try to draw the person in, online or offline. The vulnerability aspect of the radicalised individuals, or those in the process of becoming radicalised, is evident throughout the data:

‘...affects the most vulnerable in society....’ (T 3)

‘People who are put in care...have difficulty socialising with their peers...feel like an outcast or they are victims of some sort of abuse or neglect.’ (T 4)

‘Vulnerable people who are exploited by false ideas and messages.’ (T 6)

RPC 3 stressed that the vulnerabilities of an individual do not always relate to their lack of belonging, social deprivation, or disenfranchisement, but can be because of ‘poor online safety skills or a lack of critical thinking, skills which can be acquired through education’.

T 7 also pointed out how the majority of those being radicalised were often males. In his view, toxic masculinity, sexuality, isolation, and feeling that society has failed them were a few indicators that led them to become vulnerable. The concept of vulnerability is mentioned once again in reference to individuals described as easy targets for extremist groups in person or online. Recruiters do so by ‘befriending them’, ‘grooming them’, ‘feed them with extreme views’, maybe give them ‘gifts’, and, over time, ‘win their trust’ and give them that sense of belonging which they lack.



T 10 highlighted how some students who may be prone to radicalisation might also be experiencing some other kind of harm or neglect at home, making the individual more vulnerable to abuse. This argument was also raised by two Prevent practitioners (PC 1 and PEO 3), who stated that cases of extremism at school may also reveal other social problems such as domestic violence, neglect, or abuse.

‘Society is often to blame for the failure of these young individuals. When vulnerabilities remain unresolved, it is then, that extremists may come in to fill that sense of void.’ (RPC 3)

T 10 also highlighted how media literacy could help strengthen students’ resilience, particularly children in her school who had special needs and were vulnerable young adults.

It was only RPC 3 who highlighted the importance of agency in the radical’s drive to pursue his/her convictions. In his view, agency should not be underestimated. Framing Prevent-as-safeguarding ‘risks silencing and even pathologising the person labelled vulnerable’ rather than understanding and engaging with their practices as acts of dissent (O’Donnell, 2016c:p.53). The focus on the vulnerable, radicalised individual, then, excludes more complex, broader discussions on the meso and macro level.

The opposite of vulnerability is resilience. As O’Donnell argues: ‘resilience trades on ideas of immunity both in terms of personal resilience and fortification of the boundaries of the sovereign state (Borradori, 2003) rather than community (Esposito, 2013). In the study, the term ‘resilience’ also features several times in the interviews with both teachers and Prevent practitioners. The language of resilience is the vaccine to vulnerable individuals; in Prevent, one of the core ways this is done is through the teaching of FBVs, which will be looked at in more detail in Chapter 11.

## 8.6 Self-Radicalisation Vs Group Radicalisation

Radicalisation does not happen in a vacuum but is the result of a range of influencing factors, including psychological, social, and contextual. This theme was selected as radicalisation is often perceived as happening within a group or, in rare cases, an individual may self-radicalise.

Three teachers interviewed put an emphasis on relationships that may lead one to become radicalised. T 5 mentioned the ‘home relatives’ and ‘family connections’, whilst T 4 and T 8 made reference to online radicalisation. However, none of them highlighted the possibility of individuals radicalising entirely on their own. PC 2 voiced scepticism as, in his view, ‘it’s very rare to self-radicalise’. He stated his belief that radicalisation usually occurs as a result of relationships formed offline or online.

‘...there is normally an influencer, an ideologue who feeds someone the information, feeds someone the grievance, he feeds them on the ideology whether online or in person to kind of cement those beliefs and bring about that world view, the extremist world view.’ (PC 2)

Some teachers also highlighted the importance of social media and the increased student reliance on the internet, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers stated that they thought radicalisation can happen at home (T 5), through a friend (T 4), at the mosque (T 18), by watching terrorist material online or by watching funny memes on social media (T 8). Radicalisation could also occur with the help of a small group (T 4) or even be bought into by the use of payments or gifts (T 6).

In the next section, an analysis of the feelings the concept of radicalisation evokes in teachers and Prevent practitioners will be discussed.

## 8.7 Feelings about the Phenomenon of Radicalisation

Emotions play a big part in terrorist behaviour, both for the terrorists and those impacted by it. Violent extremist propaganda online or through social media, memes, and news about extremists locally and internationally may provoke a wide array of emotional responses: from anger, frustration and humiliation to excitement, laughter and, even, love and compassion. However, the growing acceptance of emotions as a critical dynamic within terrorist's strategies and behaviours, or the role of emotion, remains largely absent in the terrorism studies literature (Wright-Neville and Smith, 2009).

This theme identifies how participants perceive radicalisation or how it makes them feel when they learn about it. Findings are particularly relevant as they provide an insight to external reactions and feelings that radicalisation produces on those working on the frontline with young people. Furthermore, feelings may also influence the choice and implementation of counter-measures.

Whilst research on the nexus between radicalisation and education has shed light on several important issues which may impact policymaking, little is known about the feelings radicalisation arouses in teachers who are obliged to monitor for it. Whilst 'feelings' was not marked as a theme established through coding to describe what teachers and Prevent practitioners understood by radicalisation, it is nevertheless identified as a theme as lots of emotions were mentioned by participants when describing radicalisation. As a result, the theme 'feelings' is addressed separately.

The second interview question posed to participants asked them to associate three words with radicalisation. Participants were asked to do so quickly and without thinking too hard so as to avoid analysis or self-censoring. Participants were asked to do so in order to tap into their psychology and to understand how this term affects respondents on a personal level. The key terms voiced by participants were then grouped under key headings, which are listed in Figure 8.2 (see Appendix F). Some participants expressed more than just one term, hence the higher number of words per participant listed in the graph. What is interesting to note is that most of the words chosen by both teachers and Prevent practitioners fall under the key term 'feeling', as seen in

Figure 8.2. This is particularly interesting, as in reply to the first two interview questions participants did not tap into emotions that the term radicalisation may arouse in them.

## 8.8 Informed or Influenced?

Teachers as educators may not hold any specialist knowledge about radicalisation. Unless they have studied terrorism or radicalisation at university or privately, they cannot be experts on the subject. As is known, Prevent duty has put the onus on teachers to identify signs of radicalisation in students. But, without expert knowledge, teachers turn to what they know for guidance. In society, they are exposed to other people's views as well as become influenced by media reports that have a political agenda. As Thevenin puts it: 'critical consumption of content also helps define and orient a sense of place and cultural connection to the world' (Thevenin, 2013:p.1618). Whilst studies indicate that assessing media literacy may be challenging, it is worth considering where one's perceptions of the terrorism phenomenon comes from, as 'common prejudices inform one's construction of risk and subsequent ideas about what action might be required to mitigate those risks' (McQueeny, 2014 as cited in Elwick, 2019:p.9).

The third interview question posed to participants dealt with their acquisition of knowledge on radicalisation. This question was asked to gain an insight of the knowledge base participants have of radicalisation – knowledge participants have acquired or are exposed to. The context in which secondary school teachers work in, as well as their professional objectives, differ from those of Prevent practitioners, whose work deals with counter-terrorism within local authorities on behalf of the Home Office. Therefore, investigating both groups' knowledge base on radicalisation is of value. Figure 8.3 (see Appendix F) illustrates how the 27 participants formed their views about radicalisation.

Professionally, teachers were not expected to be experts on the subject of radicalisation. Yet, since prevention of radicalisation became a statutory duty in 2015, being knowledgeable about it became a must. Data gathered showed that none of the thirteen teachers interviewed had specifically studied about radicalisation prior to taking up teaching. Teachers interviewed acquired their knowledge about radicalisation mainly through positive and/or negative exposure from the media. Teachers admitted to being influenced by government rhetoric and/or mainstream media.

However, despite being influenced, several teachers also acknowledged that most media outlets were biased and did not provide transparent information. They realised it was difficult to form an honest opinion relying just on news broadcasts. Teachers also proposed that ‘politicians were neither very credible nor reliable’ and probably knew as much as them about radicalisation’ (T1, T2, T9). In most teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ views Brexit led to a rise in unorthodox viewpoints, even amongst school students. Some teachers (T1, T2, T7, T9, 12) noted that whether students replicated things heard in the media or within their family, teachers were forced to intervene more often than usual in the classroom to address sensitive issues. Some teachers (T6, T7, T9, T12) working in certain areas in the North of England voiced their concern about the rise of populist viewpoints which increased during Brexit.

Prevent training featured only second amongst teacher interviewees, when asked how they learnt about radicalisation. This finding is a cause for concern as it has implications for Prevent teacher training, suggesting that it may not be fit for purpose. Prevent training is statutory training that all teachers have to attend. It is usually valid for two years and senior leaders in schools are responsible for the delivery of this training. Teacher interviewees stated that they did not know much about radicalisation outside of the basic training provided to them by their respective schools. Most teachers interviewed stated that they had only received online Prevent training provided by a company called Educare. Teachers stated that the training whilst basic, served to raise awareness on radicalisation. T 2 who received online training by Educare, explained how Prevent training helped him fine-tune certain ideas he had about radicalisation. This is because most of what he had learnt was through reading the press and having conversations with friends and family. Whilst some teachers expressed positive views about the training received, the majority of teachers stated that online Prevent training on its own wasn’t enough to equip them to address sensitive discussions in the classroom dealing with Islamic or far-right views to potentially prevent students from becoming radicalised. Such a view suggests that Prevent training is not impacting much on teachers’ ideas about radicalisation. Therefore, it is of value to ask whether Prevent training is fit for purpose.

Some teachers did highlight a personal interest in the subject. T 1, T 2 and T 9 highlighted their passion for politics and their heightened interest in social justice issues, including countering radicalisation, with T 1 being a former union representative and T 9 a member of a political party. As a result, they showed informed knowledge about the subject and looked at it from a political

perspective. Teachers also drew knowledge from their own personal experiences, what happened during their youth during the Troubles with the IRA, despite the fact that, at the time, radicalisation was not an issue as it is today (T 1, T 2, T 9). Another teacher drew on the Bethnal Green girls' case and its impact on her as a teacher teaching in a school in that same area (T 8).

The only two Muslim teacher participants (T 7 and T 12) underscored how their religious identities as Muslims, particularly after 9/11, was a significant factor in how they formed their views on radicalisation, having directly experienced its impact. Teacher 7 who grew up as a Muslim immigrant child in Canada learnt about radicalisation through white nationalism rather than Islamic extremism. On the other hand, T 12 highlighted how her experience as a Muslim convert helped her form her view about the concept of radicalisation even more. As a Muslim, she was often the target of discriminatory behaviour: she was verbally harassed for wearing a veil, particularly after the London terrorist attacks in 2005. T 12 also recalled her experiences as a university student where she alleges that discriminatory practices were put in place at the university she attended. She stressed that as a Muslim student she felt that her body had become essentialised and she was made to be perceived as a threat or as a suspect by her university. Since these discriminatory practices experienced at university level, T 12 has adopted a critical view of radicalisation and counter-radicalisation policies, posing questions such as: 'Who defines radicalisation? Who decides who to target? Whether people ask why it had to come to that?' Her own personal experiences as a Muslim teacher in England had made her more confident to speak about terrorism. However, she described education today as the 'empire of due diligence' (T 12).

Data also shows that few teachers interviewed took self-initiatives to learn more about radicalisation when they felt that the training provided was not enough to equip them with the right skills to address sensitive/controversial arguments in the classroom. Only T 7 explained how his personal interest in becoming a better teacher drove him to seek training outside his school, and bought books to better equip himself in the classroom and to learn how to deal with sensitive issues that could come up in class, or learn more about certain behaviours. Moreover, he admitted he was intrigued about the concept of radicalisation and what it entailed.

As highlighted in Figure 8.3 (see Appendix F), Prevent practitioners' exposure to the concept of radicalisation was different from that of teachers. Most Prevent practitioners interviewed have worked in other sectors before working for the Home Office. Prior to working in Prevent, three

Prevent practitioners worked as teachers (PEO 2, PEO 3, and PC 2), one worked in human standards in one local authority (PEO 8) and another three worked in the police force (PEO 4, RPC 3, and PC 3). Those who were former teachers highlighted how, prior to joining Prevent, they did not think too much about the Prevent duty in their daily professional life, and when they did, they looked at it from a safeguarding perspective (PEO 2), which was not any different from current teacher practices. Prevent practitioners who were former Religion (RE) (PC 2) and PSHE teachers (PEO 2) highlighted how their subject's curriculum allowed them to address radicalisation in the classroom. This matched with what teachers interviewed in this study have stated and shall be discussed in more detail in the following Chapter 9. It is often the case that sensitive subjects like radicalisation or terrorism are placed within humanities subject curricula on purpose by the school as they are considered to be value-based subjects.

However, findings showed that Prevent practitioners gained most of their understanding and knowledge about radicalisation on the job. This is to be expected as it forms the dominant part of their profession. This is followed by their university studies, dealing with various political aspects of terrorism, psychosocial factors of terrorism, and history. The third finding is reading. Several Prevent practitioners highlighted how they like to keep up to date with academic research. In contrast, the teachers interviewed said they did not use their initiative to read and learn more about radicalisation, except from newspapers and popular culture. Only one teacher said he read up on the subject, citing a number of books he found useful (T 7). Prevent practitioners also mentioned the importance of networking with people outside the sector as well as the training provided on the job.

When teachers were asked whether their views were informed or influenced by the media (see Table 8.4), it is interesting to note that all teachers except for one admitted that they were influenced by what media outlets stated. Nonetheless, teachers still distanced themselves from linking radicalisation with any religious or political group, despite dominant right-wing British narratives which still link radicalisation with Islamic extremism. This is particularly important as 'schoolteachers are not immune to Islamophobic media discourses, they apply their duties of suspicion unequally and replicate the stigmatisation of brown bodies found in Labour's Prevent strategy' (Heath-Kelly, 2017:p.299). As for Prevent practitioners, the origin of their views were more or less divided between being informed and influenced. This is particularly worrying when considering that the dominant right-wing narratives in England and Wales still link radicalisation to Islamic extremism.

In education institutions, teachers may feed off dominant public narratives that emphasise the need for students to feel safe and be kept safe. This is because the projection of people as fragile has become more mainstream and accepted today (Heartfield, 2002). However, this may be detrimental for the holistic development of the students as current education which projects people as vulnerable, denies them key educational values presented in a coherent intellectual framework (Malik, 2009).

Furthermore, literature (J. Cho., 2003; Morey and Yaqin, 2011) highlights how media bias needs to be addressed and taken seriously. Media coverage of Muslim extremism and Islamic terrorism significantly increased after 9/11, more so since the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris in 2015. False narratives play a role in creating false stereotypes (Corbin, 2017) and British right-wing media has been complicit in advancing such narratives using discriminatory news headlines. According to Osborne and Jones, Muslims face physical attacks resulting from, at least in part “the media’s assault on Britain’s Muslims” (Osborne and Jones, 2013:p.27) Other studies (Abbas, 2012; Mythen et al., 2009b; Mythen, 2012) indicated that Muslim disaffection in Britain was indeed sustained by perceptions of media misrepresentation of Islam or Muslims. This further highlights the importance of teachers’ knowledge on radicalisation, teachers’ professional reflexivity and positionality within the classroom and the importance of bias awareness when teaching.

**Table 8.4: Media influence**

	<b>Influenced by the media</b>	<b>Not Influenced so much by the media</b>
<b>Teachers</b>	12	1
<b>Prevent practitioners</b>	6	8



## **Conclusion**

This chapter provided an understanding of teachers' and Prevent practitioners' conceptualisations of radicalisation and provided a foundation from which to understand how they make decisions on preventing radicalisation. Teachers' and Prevent practitioners' conceptualisations of radicalisation are important as this helps to understand how they frame the problem of radicalisation from their perspective. This may have implications as to the way they implement the Prevent duty or prevent extremism in the classroom, or their expectations towards it.

Both teachers and Prevent practitioners work against a dominant populist perception where Islam in Britain is still to be blamed for terrorism. None of the participants associate or link radicalisation with one specific community. Both teachers and Prevent practitioners appear to perceive radicalisation as a bottom-up process which occurs spontaneously and without coordination, and not through active recruitment by an external organisations that exploits the imagined cultural conflicts of Muslims (Coolsaet and Swielande, 2008:p.159).

Prevent practitioners' focus on violence might be deemed obvious as part of their role is to prevent violence. Yet, teachers appear to be more focused on the cognitive shifts of students as committing acts of violence which is deemed as the last step in the process of radicalisation – a step which only few students reach. Nonetheless, teachers are aware that students do not necessarily need to commit violence in order to be deemed dangerously radicalised.

## **Chapter 9: Countering Radicalisation: A Classroom Intervention**

## 9.0 Countering Radicalisation in the Classroom

This chapter presents the analysis of the data that focused on answering the second research question of the study, namely:

- How do teachers' interpretation of radicalisation influence their prevention methods in the classroom?

Based on teachers' and Prevent practitioners' perceptions of radicalisation, identified in the previous chapter, this chapter assesses how teachers' own understanding of radicalisation influenced their prevention interventions in the classroom. Prevent practitioners' views as a comparison group were used to gauge whether teachers were or were not complying with the Prevent duty guidance. Teachers' ideas as educators of how to enact Prevent may vary from those of Prevent practitioners, whose aim is to fight terrorism. Furthermore, comparing teachers with Prevent practitioners' views helps to identify whether there are any gaps between both groups' views and, if so, why.

This chapter provides a critique of the Prevent duty policy and the way teachers understand its requirements and how they consequently carry out those requirements in the classroom. Since 2015, teachers became duty-bound by law to implement the Prevent duty. Teachers' compliance with the Prevent duty is also Ofsted-inspected, which means that education providers carry out inspections to assess whether schools' approaches are effective in 'keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism and what is done when it is suspected that pupils are vulnerable to these' (HMG, 2015f:p.12). Furthermore, the Ofsted inspection framework also covers the teaching of FBVs in schools. Schools which are found not to be in compliance with both the Prevent duty and FBVs can be subject to intervention or, in extreme cases, have their funding terminated (HMG, 2015f)

Tension between teachers' views and Prevent practitioners' views is apparent in this study's data – the interpretation of which is likely to have significant implications for debates about PVE policies in education in the UK and beyond. This study's findings highlight how teachers were not hostile towards Prevent, unlike previous studies outlined in Chapter 3. This finding supports Busher et al. (2019; 2017) studies which notes how three years since the introduction of the

Prevent Duty, teachers had accommodated the Prevent duty within their educational practices. However, similar to Busher's (2019) findings, this study also notes that whilst there is evidence of positive acceptance, reservations and concerns were voiced in relation to the duty and fighting radicalisation in the classroom.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part addresses the following themes which were identified through thematic analysis, as explained in the methods chapter:

- i. Radicalisation still a significant threat
- ii. From security to safeguarding
- iii. Prevent duty preventing all forms of extremism
- iv. Empowering or simply signalling: the need for an educational response
- v. Teacher training: addressing violent radicalisation in the classroom

These themes were organised under the heading: Perceptions of the Role of the Prevent Duty in the Classroom. Using these themes, a number of issues were addressed – ranging from the conflict that exists between education and security, the subtle forms of microaggressions impacting Muslim teachers, the need for an educational response, and for special teacher training in preventing radicalisation in secondary schools.

The second part focuses on the following three themes which were also identified in the data and were discussed under the heading: Impact of the Prevent Duty on the Teaching Profession.

- Awareness-raising
- Student-teacher dynamic
- Teacher subjectification

These themes address the impact of the Prevent duty on the teaching profession and how teachers' positionality in the classroom had to change and adapt to address this new responsibility.

## 9.1 Perceptions of the Prevent Duty in the Classroom

The study found that all 27 participants, except for one teacher, were positively inclined towards the Prevent duty. Similar to findings in recent studies (Moffat and Gerard, 2019; Busher et al., 2019; Busher et al., 2017; Busher and Jerome, 2020) teacher participants did not express opposition to preventing violent radicalisation using the Prevent duty within education. Acceptance was pragmatic (Busher et al., 2019), and all teachers identified with the main objectives of the Prevent duty and saw its relevance within secondary education. Whilst teachers expressed reservations, they were not against it. However, teachers interviewed expressed the need to go beyond just watching out for signs of potentially radicalised students in the classroom and to educate students instead. In their view, more work had to be done to make preventing radicalisation effective in education.

Teacher interviewees provided justifications as to why they felt it was appropriate to prevent radicalisation in secondary schools. One of them being the amount of time students spent at school. Teachers were very much aware of the risks from extremism present online and offline. Despite the fact that radicalisation was different from other social harms, teachers were aware that preventing this type of threat fell under that same duty of care. Teachers stressed the continuous potential risks of students falling foul of extremists, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was an aspect also highlighted by Prevent practitioners, who stressed how online schooling and enforced lockdowns have led to young, potentially vulnerable people spending more time online as a result of the pandemic, increasing the risk of radicalisation. This was also confirmed by a number of recent studies which focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people (Kruglanski et al., 2020; Newbury et al., 2020). However, whilst teacher participants demonstrated support for having a preventing radicalisation policy in place, teachers did not refrain from expressing their reservations and concerns about the policy.

‘I understand why it has been introduced. It worries me because I think some teachers are a bit naïve and label people because of Prevent (...) I think we have to be very, very careful indeed. In the same way that I am not going to label a white lad playing football in England a racist...I am not going to label someone who likes to wear traditional Islamic dress and go to the mosque an extremist (..) I am very ambivalent about Prevent though.’ (T1)

‘I think Prevent raised awareness of potentially vulnerable students and how they get radicalised by people with extreme views, but I don’t think it is doing anything beyond that to train teachers to educate how to counter act it.’ (T3)

Prevent Practitioners highlighted how on behalf of the Home Office they worked to promote the Prevent Duty and helped schools with its implementation. Their duty included building relationships with schools and engaging with educators, making sure that education institutions fulfil the statutory obligation. Whilst several secondary schools welcomed them, they highlighted how it is often them who have to pursue schools in keeping up with their Prevent obligations training. Both groups of participants agreed that whilst ISIS, as a group, had lost significant power, nonetheless, violent radicalisation remained a serious threat, which could be further aggravated by the pandemic.

‘The threat to the UK will continue...resulting from different things. In the past it was IRA, then Al Qaeda then Daesh. It will be another group...whichever extremist group evolves. There will be a threat to young people and individuals which the government, we, will have to respond to. For me it’s about safeguarding individuals. In the end it’s a threat posed to individuals, and the vulnerable have to be protected to some extent.’ (RPC2)

### ***9.1.1 Radicalisation still a significant threat***

This theme explores teachers’ and Prevent Practitioners’ perceptions of radicalisation in terms of whether they perceive the threat from radicalisation as still significant or not and if it is worth dedicating educational resources to counter it.

The findings of this study show that both groups of participants, teachers and Prevent Practitioners alike deemed radicalisation to still pose a significant risk amongst young people.

When teacher participants were asked whether they still perceived violent radicalisation to be a significant risk supporting Busher et al.’s (2019:p.452) findings. All 13 teacher participants who came from different localities in the UK replied in the affirmative stating that addressing the issue

within education was necessary and appropriate. In teacher participants' view the Prevent duty represented a proportionate response to what was deemed as a significant societal risk.

In their narratives, teachers made reference to the Bethnal Green girls' case in London and former Westminster alumnus Jihadi John, and how these cases evoked anxiety about missing the signals. A number of teachers also recounted episodes in their professional careers, prior to the introduction of the Prevent duty where, in hindsight, they felt they should have questioned the students further about their views and intentions as the signals at the time were clear. Yet, at the time the incidents happened there was no awareness and no system in place. Teacher 3 recounted how a student he used to mentor at the first school where he taught ended up being radicalised and going to Syria where he died. T 3 recounted how at the time, before Prevent was even introduced, he noticed the student withdrawing particularly from Christian school activities. However, T 3 never saw the student as a threat. Despite having more awareness about the problem of radicalisation, in hindsight T3 doubts whether he would have acted any differently than he did on that occasion.

'I don't know how much I would have done differently because you know sometimes by trying to solve or change someone's views can actually make them stronger. I think before I was much less attuned to the threat of radicalisation but I don't know what I would have done differently.' (T3)

The construction of risk in teachers' narratives may also have played a role in limiting their opposition to the duty. Despite teachers' personal reservations about the Prevent, duty, teachers expressed that the duty was still necessary.

Prevent practitioners also believed that radicalisation still posed a risk. Yet they highlighted that the threat from radicalisation was not as significant as it was in 2015 with the rise and spread of ISIS. However, PC 1 highlighted that, while the former point is true, radicalisation had evolved and 'moved further up the chain' – meaning online. As already noted in Chapter 7, at the time of data collection, two terrorist attacks took place in London, at London Bridge and Streatham (Sky News, 2020).

As highlighted in the previous chapter, teachers drew attention to the online dimension of the threat which had become more significant due to the increase of social media use amongst adolescents, more so during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the excessive use of social media and the time a typical adolescent spends online has made the issue of violent radicalisation more pressing in education. In one teacher's words, the 'internet has made extremism more lethal' (T 4). Evidence by the Home Office and the Department for Education shows how in 2014 ISIS propaganda used social media to recruit young children (HMG and DfE, 2015).

According to PC 2 ISIS also targeted teenage boys playing Call of Duty (PC 1).

'Industrial scale propaganda was being pumped into the phones, the X-Boxes and the laptops and tablets of children with a view to recruit them either to do something horrific in the UK or to try as teenagers to get the money and cross over to Turkey and go to Syria, and some schools were refusing to take action.' (PC 1)

The literature supports this view. Dauber et al. (2019) demonstrate how the Islamic State used video games, 'mimicking, and even directly copying the aesthetic and design of "First Person Shooter games, most often Call of Duty'(p.17). In their videos, ' this specific aesthetic offered a way to recruit young, technologically savvy men while sanitizing the violence they were being recruited to participate in' (Dauber et al., 2019:p.17). Teacher respondents have stressed their concern about young people's online parallel world and how the internet has become central in the lives of young people.

'It has opened a new dimension where one can meet similar mindsets from the comfort of their home, virtually. The internet can serve as a dangerous outlet for vulnerable people and the lack of online policing due to issues of privacy, security and civil liberties makes it more complex.' (T 4)

Teachers referred to media literacy as an important tool in the curriculum, and as a way to educate and protect young people from radicalisation. Teacher 10 stressed the importance of media literacy for her school in particular, as it is an establishment for children with special needs and for vulnerable young adults who could easily be enticed and persuaded by others' opinions – particularly over the internet.



‘In education we have a duty to tell the truth and show both sides of the story. Education is a place where views are voiced and challenged. It is important to have conversations about people’s opinions and that opinions are not necessarily facts.’ (T 10)

Whilst the number of referrals to Prevent from schools decreased in 2020 because of school closures, this did not mean that the threat from radicalisation diminished. On the contrary, there were significant concerns that online recruitment by extremist groups was on the rise (Dodd, 2020). Schools had to remain up to speed with the evolving threat in order to minimise potential risks and counter the threat appropriately, in time and with significant resources allocated. This was not easy for schools or local authorities who lacked funding, according to PC 1. A study on terrorism and the COVID-19 pandemic conducted by Kruglanski et al. (2020) confirmed this view, stressing that international and domestic terrorist groups were wildly exploiting the global uncertainty and vulnerability caused by the pandemic to promote their group’s propaganda.

Teachers interviewed also stressed that adolescents in secondary schools were at a very impressionable age and, therefore, more susceptible to being influenced. Whilst initially it was universities which were perceived to be hotbeds of radicalisation (McGlynn and McDaid, 2018), the media coverage around the Bethnal Green case served to draw attention to secondary school students.

Consequently, 11-16 age groups in secondary schools became perceived as potentially vulnerable. Home Office statistics show how the average age of all individuals referred to Channel from the education sector between 2019/2020 was 15 (HMG, 2020a). PC 1 highlighted how, in the UK, the majority of cases of radicalisation witnessed was between the ages of 13 and 25. That ties with the majority of Prevent referrals published between April 2019 to March 2020, which shows that over half of all referrals (54%) were aged 20 years or under (HMG, 2020). This is supported by studies that show how young people between the ages of 15 and 25 were most susceptible to adopting extremist, religious ideologies (Bhui et al., 2012; Manuel, 2014).

Students between the ages of 11 and 16 are still forming their identities, their self-esteem and meaning in their lives, which makes them more vulnerable to external influences. This view is supported by Hogg’s (2013) uncertainty identity theory – ‘the desire to matter’ suggests that

individuals who want to improve their self-esteem tend to identify with certain social groups with a unique identity and strong belief systems. Extremist groups with a strong identity are appealing to individuals trying to improve their uncertainty. Membership to that group helps reduce self-doubt because individuals take on a strong sense of who they are and how they have to act. Kruglanski's (2014) significance quest theory may also explain why young adolescents may be perceived as potentially more vulnerable to radicalisation.

Teenagers are more susceptible to external influences when still forming and developing their identity. Studies show that, ideologically, children are 'fast to commit, demonstrate loyalty fairly quickly, and are easy to indoctrinate, because they have fewer preformed conceptions and beliefs that recruiters would need to reverse or alter' (Benotman and Malik, 2016:p.27) Furthermore, as Gina Vale (2018) highlights, most young people are free from commitments, are more carefree than adults, and are at a stage when they want to prove themselves. Consequently, 'these impressionable 'clean slates' are therefore highly lethal and malleable subjects' (Vale, 2018p.9). In adolescence, the teenage mindset is still trying to search for a political, religious and social identity. All this makes them more vulnerable to being exploited by the wrong people. PC 1 stated: 'Secondary school children between the ages of 11 and 18 are in a phase of flux and changes, which makes them prime meat for extremists.'

As highlighted through the theories explained above, uncertainty of self may push individuals towards extreme ideologies (Kay and Eibach, 2013). Sageman's (2008) 'band of brothers' hypothesis for terrorism also sheds light on how friendships could lead young people to influence each other and even commit violence.

Adolescence is that period of life in which peer relationships become increasingly important. According to social psychologists, adolescents have a greater likelihood of taking risks when they are with peers than on their own (Knoll et al., 2015). According to PC 1, educational institutions are 'opulent breeding grounds for extremist groups to recruit'. Evidence from the literature shows how extremist groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir (Husain, 2007) and National Action (Simone, 2020) exploited student groups at universities for recruitment purposes in the 1980s and 1990s (though, this comment does not reference secondary schools). PC 1 added that from his experience working in Prevent, often, terrorists were much more knowledgeable about school and universities demographics for recruitment purposes than counter-terrorists were for safeguarding.

According to PEO 6, Prevent duty guidance acts as a soft policing policy for early intervention, which is considered to fulfil the most important roles of the government and of local authorities in terms of prevention. Yet, Prevent views adolescents through the neoliberal lens of risk, a vulnerability which needs to be controlled. Little, if any, space is given to adolescents' political agency. Yet, research into extremist groups like ETA and lone actor terrorism demonstrates that, often, it is adolescents in their teens and early twenties who join extremist groups. Young people are at a key developmental, psychological stage, potentially more vulnerable to 'the attractiveness of lifestyles and political practices that combine the allure of adventure and expectations for radical social change' (Reinares, 2004:p.474-475). Young people may join extremist groups because militancy in terrorist organisations might be more appealing and attractive to them than non-violent political engagement (Braungart and Braungart, 1992).

Therefore, educational settings should encourage young people's agency through open discussions in class because they are at an age where they become more aware of political movements. Adolescents' agency and passions therefore should not be left unaccounted for. Student agency here refers to the quality of students' self-reflective and intentional action and interaction with their environment. The contexts in which students act and interact are increasingly chaotic and subject to multiple concurrent, overlapping and mutually interdependent influence (Klemencic, 2015). When structural context becomes less of a given, the importance of student agency to create desired conditions for study and life becomes more important and even necessary (Biesta, 2008).

Prevent practitioners' justification for teachers' acceptance of Prevent duty is that, currently, security is perceived to be a responsibility that should be shouldered by the entire community, including the educational sector. Nonetheless, whilst support for the Prevent duty amongst teacher respondents was high, concerns were still voiced about its potential impact and its effectiveness. Prevent practitioners who worked to promote the Prevent duty policy and engaged with schools also stressed the need for further improvement.

### ***9.1.2 From Security to Safeguarding***

The aspect of prevention within education in Britain has shifted from a security-led policy approach to a softer measure through safeguarding. The introduction of the Prevent duty as a statutory obligation enforced national security through safeguarding practices in school. This move was criticised by several academics, yet recent findings show that initial hostility within education appears to have abated. This section explores teachers' and Prevention practitioners' perceptions in this regard.

This study finds that government efforts to promote the Prevent duty as a safeguarding policy have been partially successful. In their narratives, all thirteen teachers interviewed referred to Prevent as 'safeguarding'. For teachers, the duty of care was part of their profession. Adding radicalisation to the list of social harms which they were responsible for did not create a significant burden as it acted as an extension of existing responsibilities. This confirms findings in other studies by Revell et al. (2019) and Busher et al. (2019) conducted with teachers who referred to it as 'construction of continuity with existing professional practices' (p.453).

As highlighted in Chapter 8, the term 'vulnerable' or 'vulnerability' featured significantly in teachers' conceptualisations of radicalisation. The concept of 'vulnerability' lies at the heart of Prevent duty as safeguarding, and teachers' narratives demonstrated how this aspect was internalised by teachers.

'I think of vulnerability as a person being radicalised, not having a sense of belonging to either the community or their family.' (T 3)

'An individual being vulnerable for whatever reason, like put in care, or have difficulty socialising with peers and therefore feels like an outcast.' (T 4)

The perception of a pre-crime space created through Prevent, (Thomas, 2016a; O'Donnell, 2016a; Heath-Kelly, 2017) was not a view echoed by teachers interviewed in this study. Teachers did not treat radicalisation much differently from other social harms. Whilst teachers were aware of the implications Prevent Duty could have in terms of potentially silencing students, however, their

experience of the duty was positive. Teachers interviewed did not experience a ‘chilling effect’ in schools nor did they perceive students as being hesitant in speaking up and sharing their views in class:

‘Students are very open to each other and can respect one another’s opinion to a certain extent.’ (T 5)

‘I’ve always felt like kids just come out and say it, no matter how inappropriate it may be, they say their view.’ (T 8)

Prevent practitioners stated otherwise, stressing how the duty acted like any other safeguarding measure which protected children from other social harms.

‘...children get exploited within gangs or by paedophiles...these are exactly the same vulnerabilities that would be exploited by band groups. It’s the same push pull factors, and the same vulnerabilities are really seen in gang members and members of gang organisations. So, I think separating the two in saying you know that this is a different circumstance. It isn’t.’ (PEO 3)

In a report on a Community Care Live event, hosted to discuss social workers’ concerns on radicalisation, a police referral coordinator was reported stating how police and government addressed ‘radicalisation, like child sexual exploitation, and issues with gangs’ (Stevenson, 2015). In their view it followed exactly the same process, and ‘therefore identification was going to be very, very similar’ (Stevenson, 2015). However, a comparative study looking into violent extremism and gangs conducted by LaFree (2019) suggests that not enough studies have been conducted, and parallels between extremist groups and gangs remain largely speculative, and the little studies carried out suggest that the nature of such overlap is not straightforward (Pyrooz and Mitchell, 2015; Pyrooz and Sweeten, 2015).

Teachers interviewed did not refrain from highlighting their reservations on Prevent. They admitted to viewing ‘radicalisation’ under a different light when compared to other social harms. Radicalisation was complex and policy definitions were perceived as blurry and vague. Teachers expressed their lack of confidence and knowledge about spotting signs of radicalisation and were slightly fearful of referring.

“Depends on the extreme views... I think it is really important students express themselves and that they do so with passion and vigour. If it wasn’t with violence, it would really take a lot for me to actually say no that’s not right and it would be over a long period of time.” (T5)

“I am happy to address radicalisation with my students...however I’m conscious that unlike with other social issues, I don’t know enough myself on terrorism and radicalisation generally to be able to give them an unbiased view. So, mine maybe the media influenced my ideas and of course not everything you have in the media is true (...) So when I get to talk about that I am not sure I would have enough information to do it in depth.” (T5)

Teacher participants also perceived the Prevent duty as a ‘reactive’ policy (T 7, T 8 and T 27) a minimum bar schools should implement in view of an increased spread of radicalisation, rather than a more generic measure implemented to take care of root causes or grievances, which may lead to an individual’s first steps into marginalisation (T 2). T 3 described it as ‘a plaster over a much bigger problem’, whilst T 2 described it as ‘the result of this new wave of terrorism which started with the events of 9/11’. As T 13 puts it:

‘I think it is more of a take stock sort of thing from the government. I don’t think it addresses things...it obviously makes people more aware but I think it comes across as a way of the Government saying that they are doing something to address the problem of radicalisation without them actually doing much.’ (T 13)

Prevent practitioners interviewed in this study did not dismiss this view, stating that, under this safeguarding lens, the government created the Prevent duty statutory obligation as ‘a minimum bar of protection’ (PC 1), ‘go-to mechanisms’, ‘clear referral pathways’ (RPC 3) that every single school could adopt to be able to say that they were keeping children safe.

PC 3, described the Prevent duty as a ‘knee-jerk reaction to the rise of ISIS in 2014, and the rapid spread of radicalisation across the world’. The literature shows that, in fact, it was already in 2007 that MI5 Director General Jonathan Evans had stated that people as young as 15 were suspected to be involved in terrorist activities. In March 2009, at the UK’s Association of Chief Police

Officers reported that ‘local community members, including parents, Imams, and teachers found that approximately 200 young people, as young as 13 years of age, were at risk of extremism, or of being ‘groomed by radicals’ (HSI, 2009, p.2 as cited in Gosh et al., 2016:p.18).

After the reporting of such events, violent radicalisation was added to the list of harms falling under the duty of care of schools. Similar to teachers, Prevent practitioners, who all admitted Prevent duty in schools was a ‘work in progress’, justified its need through the construction of risk narratives: ‘The framing of the duty as another safeguarding issue has facilitated Prevent duty acceptance’ (PEO 7).

This study confirms that safeguarding has led teachers to continue normal operations in the classroom by simply extending their safeguarding measures to include radicalisation. Teacher participants also highlighted how Prevent, as safeguarding, had normalised the terrorism threat within education, making it easier for teachers to deal with it in the same way as with other safeguarding issues. The Prevent duty is, therefore, seen as just another safeguarding measure for the well-being of the child who is under the school’s care. As T 2 states:

‘Prevent does a very good job...it provides us with a conduit for delivering an aspect of education ...that dovetails into another work that we do in schools in terms of broader PSHCE. I think in my mind Prevent is a subset of that – it should be an integral part of that.’ (T 2)

Prevent practitioners explained how ‘schools already had long-standing and sophisticated safeguarding policies in place to identify behavioural changes, to raise the flag and refer that to someone within that institution’ (PC 2). The study found that the duty’s safeguarding frame had made it easier for teachers to accept. Unlike what teachers thought, Prevent practitioners interviewed viewed radicalisation as no different to other social harms.

‘The targeting of primary school children to act as drug mules is equally difficult and has a criminal element to it and it is still dealt with under safeguarding. We have children who are being used as drug mules by gangsters because they are under-age and they cannot get a criminal record because they are under the age of ten.’ (PC 1)

In PC1's view, separating the idea of exploitation from Prevent would miss the point. Therefore, education acts as a space to safeguard young people from criminal behaviour – school-aged children from getting into the 'criminal space'. However, the Prevent duty is only a small part of a teachers' safeguarding duties within educational settings.

'If an individual passes the point of criminality with terrorist offences they're going to jail for a long, long time. Educators may have that opportunity to prevent that from happening. Prevent is not a tool for the state but it's a tool the Government gives educators to prevent people from ending up in jail. (RPC 2)

'The more tools you give young people for them to recognise they're being targeted or when they're being groomed at a very early stage the more likely you are to build their resilience and resistance and the excuses to get out of a situation they may be drawing into.' (PEO 8)

Whilst teacher respondents clearly demonstrated the shift from security to safeguarding, only three teachers (T 8, T 10, and T 11) referred to Prevent as 'safeguarding'. The rest of the teachers interviewed opted for more generic terms to describe the Prevent duty, such as: 'necessary', 'worth following', 'works', 'good', 'a duty of care', and 'supports vulnerable individuals'. Despite the Prevent duty's safeguarding frame, eight teachers out of thirteen voiced scepticism and doubt as to its effectiveness. Interestingly, one Prevent practitioner described the policy as a crossover between safeguarding and security (PC 1), whilst RPC 1 stated that, today, 'security is a responsibility that marks all communities' (RPC 1).

To challenge a view raised by Coppock and McGovern (2014) who stated that Prevent duty, unlike other safeguarding measures, was there to protect society from what children did, PEO 5 stated that the Prevent duty was there to safeguard not only children but also teachers, the school, and society in general. Prevent practitioners interviewed recounted how Prevent cases often uncovered other complicated safeguarding issues involving domestic violence and sexual abuse. Extremism was just another item added to the list of social harms (PC 1 and PEO 5). In one Prevent practitioners' view, the Prevent duty in education, unlike popular perceptions, 'was safeguarding but with less teeth' (RPC 1). Channel was a voluntary process, and if the individual in question refused to accept Prevent intervention, the whole Channel panel would have to step back (PEO 3).



That said, some teacher participants did not completely agree with this view. Some teachers (T 6, T 8 and T 12) expressed concern about the students being referred to Channel and what happened to them from then on. Channel was perceived by them to be a tertiary crime prevention method to rehabilitate potential radicals, and by many working outside Prevent to be shrouded in secrecy. As Heath-Kelly highlights, while its presence is always present yet it remains unseen by the public (Heath-Kelly, 2017).

### ***9.1.3 Prevent Duty - Preventing All Forms of Extremism***

When the Prevent duty came into force in 2015, it was criticised by academics, teaching unions (Adams, 2016), and civil society campaigns such as the Society Justice Initiative (2016) and Rights Watch UK (2016). These critics argued the duty was undermining safe spaces in schools and silencing students, particularly Muslim students, who had been previously specifically targeted by the Prevent strategy in 2008 (HMG, 2008) and 2011 respectively (HMG, 2011b). In the same year, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) voted to reject Prevent as, in their view, the policy was ineffective and counterproductive as it instilled ‘suspicion in the classroom and confusion in the staffroom’ (Adams, 2016).

The study’s findings show conflicting views. Whilst some teachers perceived Prevent as preventing all forms of extremism equally, other teachers were sceptical and stressed that Muslim students and teachers still feel Prevent’s impact more than the rest, despite government efforts not to target them specifically. The following are two contrasting views presented by one white British teacher (T 2) and one British Muslim teacher (T 8):

‘The fact that Prevent duty targets all forms of extremism demonstrates that it is no longer monolithic. An increase in right-wing referrals proves that. Given the political context schools maintain a level head and are clear that Islamophobia has no place in schools and that radicalisation has nothing to do with religion.’ (T 2)

‘You become more than a teacher, you become an examiner, you become a potential investigator. If any of my kids do anything messed up, especially and because I am a Muslim teacher, radicalisation has made it such that I have to go the extra mile.’ (T 12)

Teacher scepticism whether Prevent is effectively preventing all forms of extremism is voiced against the backdrop of right-wing narratives in Britain which still link radicalisation to Islamic extremism, as highlighted in Chapter 8. Furthermore, Prevent practitioners’ narratives also made reference to the negative perceptions of the first Prevent strategy, which was deemed more secretive as it was more police-led. Prevent practitioners interviewed stressed their frustration and their wish to dispel these negative perceptions which, in their view, no longer belonged to Prevent today (PC 1, PC 2, and PC 3). When Prevent practitioners were asked what they would change about Prevent, one Prevent coordinator expressed his wish to dismantle the myths and misconceptions around the duty:

‘I would try to change the perceptions that lead people to come to conclusions...such as focus on Muslim communities and that it spies on people....so with that in mind the main thing I would ask of Prevent is that we are more open and transparent about what we do and the processes we follow.’ (PC 3)

Nonetheless, Prevent practitioners also highlighted how, five years on, there was now more acceptance and understanding of the Prevent duty’s objective, and what the requirements are amongst educators. They stressed that an open, transparent, and honest engagement with schools has helped them shift the negative mindset about Prevent duty. PEO 2 highlighted how, in her view, the only way to overcome barriers with schools was through relationships:

‘People get to know you and they get to understand what your motives are and then they trust you and believe you. But obviously it takes time.’ (PEO 2)

Another PEO stressed the importance of having good practitioners delivering quality training that provides opportunity to do a lot of good:

‘Provided that when you go into schools, people can see that you are working for all the multicultural society and that people can express themselves, then you get a lot of people on your side very quickly.’ (PEO 3)

PEO 5 admitted that having national security operating in schools may sound authoritarian but he assured that that was not the case.

‘Some people assume that there is a surveillance state or an attitude of mistrust or reporting. However, Prevent duty does not manifest itself that way. Teachers are happy to have someone come in and talk to them and students about these issues. That’s the sort of daily interaction that a Prevent Education Officer has in schools.’ (PEO 5)

Statistics published by the Home Office showed that 33% of Prevent referrals made between April 2018 and March 2019 came from the education sector followed by the police with 29%. However, statistics for the year ending March 2020 showed that, unlike the year before, the police reported slightly higher numbers (1,950 -31%) when compared with those made by the education sector (1,928 -31%). Despite the small decrease in referrals from the education sector, PC 3 still stressed that the figures from 2019-2020 indicated that there is a growing confidence in the duty from the education sector, as there was more willingness to make referrals.

‘Prevent has been largely embraced by schools which is very much at odds with the national debate around Prevent and the political arguments about the rights and wrongs and complexities of the Prevent duty.... There is growing confidence in Prevent ...Lots of teachers I speak to are quite open about their support for Prevent and the need that they see for it.’ (PC 3)

RPC 3 also made reference to the Office of Students’ Statistics (OFS), which reported that, between August 2017 and July 2018, compliance was in fact very widespread. The OFS concluded in their evaluation that, out of 307 providers, 305 of them took appropriate activity in essential areas of the Prevent duty, and that governing bodies were providing robust oversight. In all but two cases the providers demonstrated compliance with regard to the Prevent duty. Moreover, data showed that referrals made by higher education providers continued to make up an extremely low proportion of Channel referrals overall.

Despite positive shifts in perceptions and accommodation of the Prevent duty amongst teachers, the only two Muslim teachers participating (T 7 and T 12) in the study had more reservations about the Prevent duty than the other teachers. This section focuses on the views of two Muslim teachers which contrast with the views presented by the rest of the teachers interviewed. These two teachers perceived Prevent duty as still targeting Muslim students, aided by dominant public narratives and the media (T 7 and T 12). Prime Minister Boris Johnson's recent statements on Islamophobia being 'a natural reaction' (Reuters, 2021) has been harshly criticised by the media who called him 'racist' and an 'Islamophobe' (Manzoor-Khan, 2020).

T 12 was of the view that the security aspect of the Prevent duty was still an issue within the policy. Prevent practitioners agreed with this view but justified that by stating that certain boroughs, which are Prevent priority areas, are still heavily reliant on the police and intelligence (RPC 3 and PC 3). However, T 12's own experiences of the Prevent duty as a university student still influences her views today. As a Muslim University student, she felt she was scrutinised more than other students simply because she was a Muslim convert, wearing a hijab which identified her as a Muslim. Six years have passed since the duty came into force and T 12 still perceives the Prevent duty negatively as targeting Muslims.

T 12 also expressed concern and critically questioned the drafting of preventing radicalisation policy in schools. She highlighted that teaching about radicalisation in education was useful, only when being mindful about who developed it and who was teaching it. Being Muslim herself, T12 felt that, as a teacher, she had to work much harder to prove that she was compliant to Prevent. Mythen et al. (2009:p.747) call this behaviour 'performance of safety', highlighting how the creation of Muslims as a 'suspect community' has had very real effects on Muslims in society. T 12's perceived pressure by her colleagues to tangibly demonstrate that she supported the Prevent duty may have therefore acted as potential micro-aggression, as developed in the critical race theory, as she felt she was perceived differently and, therefore, treated differently (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Gillborn, 2006).

This sheds light on how she feels her religious identity affects the way she is perceived in her school, demonstrating how policy developments in education impact minority ethnic communities differently, often because as Gillborn calls it: 'education policy is an act of white supremacy'

(2005) - 'the taken-for-granted routine privileging of white interest that goes unremarked in the political mainstream' (2005). Since 9/11, discriminatory frames have also shifted from race to religion, highlighting how 'education policy needs to be viewed through a lens that recognises the very real struggles and conflicts that lie at the heart of the processes through which policy and practice are shaped' (Gillborn, 2005).

Countering this view, Pearce (2003 as cited in Cockburn, 2007:p.553) highlighted how often dualisms in some approaches to anti-racist education tend to always place white raced children as the oppressors, and black or Asian children as passive victims. In his view, this should be avoided. Pearce is right to argue that 'whiteness needs to 'take its place alongside, rather than pre-eminent among other cultural practices' (Pearce, 2003:p.276). According to Cockburn (2007), 'education programmes should promote tolerance of difference and highlight commonalities that create a sense of belonging for all rather than merely attaching blame to white people' (p.558).

The literature shows that despite government efforts in targeting all forms of extremism, the duty appears to still impact Muslim teachers more, as they were expected to demonstrate identification with the normative group in order to prevent being 'othered' or be 'deemed suspect' (Panjwani, 2016; Busher et al., 2019; Farrell and Lander, 2019). T 12 was particularly vocal about this, which is why her views dominate this part of the section. She revealed the difficulty of having to navigate the moral salience of Prevent duty and the moral distress the policy has caused her. Her religious identity in public consciousness appears to be the centre of security concerns (Martin, 2014), putting pressure on her to appear as a compliant, good Muslim. At work she felt she had to work double to prove that she supports Prevent and that she rejects terrorism. She adds that being perceived as a radical would lose her legitimacy not just in the school she teaches but within the whole education sector.

'As a Muslim teacher in particular, I'm expected to go to the Prevent meeting, I'm expected to talk about Prevent, I'm expected to correct what is incorrect. I need to correct my people. So, there is that extra pressure of being a Muslim teacher as well...I am sure when a Prevent training needs to happen, they will ask me to do it to be Muslim-approved but through their lens not mine. Prevent is much guarded by the counterterrorism act. Guarded by all these bills that are written by middle class white men who tell us what they perceive as a threat and the threat they see is colonised in perception of that threat. On the

contrary, we are not comfortable talking about racism, perceptions of race and otherness.’  
(T 12)

Furthermore, T12 highlighted how to legitimise her voice as a Muslim teacher, she felt pressured into publicly and proactively endorsing British liberal democratic values by receiving and providing Prevent training to truly demonstrate she rejected potentially extremist views. Such behaviour, heightens the locus of racial prejudice within individual teaching staff, to the exclusion of social structures which legitimise everyday racial prejudice (Younis and Jadhav, 2019). Despite the widening of Prevent to counter all forms of extremism, T 12 nonetheless states that if school structures really wanted to actively resist the race frame pertaining to Muslims by asking a Muslim teacher to deliver training, this only further strengthened the normative association between Muslims and terrorism.

‘You become more than a teacher. You become an examiner, you become a potential investigator (...) If any of my kids do anything messed up, especially and because I’m a Muslim teacher, the concept of radicalisation in education has made it such that I have to go the extra mile.’ (T 12)

The fact that T 12 was a British convert to Islam might have, according to studies, ‘contested and destabilised predefined political constructions of Britishness, which raises suspicions of radicalisations’ (Schuurmann and Horgan, 2016). T 12 showed frustration at how Muslim people were ‘overburdened by surveillance.’ She highlighted how words like ‘ISIS’ or ‘terrorism’ were unuttered in phone conversations with other fellow Muslims, for fear of drawing some sort of suspicion. The idea of being associated with terrorism terrified her. This highlighted how the spread of radicalisation discourse in the UK had created fear amongst Muslims, fear of being associated with terrorism. In their study with British healthcare professionals, Younis and Jadhav (2019) stressed how the war on terror as a social conflict had essentialised ‘Muslim bodies’ (p.407) who became associated with terrorism: actual religiosity was not the qualifying factor for the association with terrorism (Sian, 2017).

However, it was also interesting to note how T 12 distanced herself from the normative group, in this case white, non-Muslim teachers, calling her Muslim students ‘my people’, highlighting the us versus them binary. She appeared to experience what Fricker (2007) termed ‘identity-

prejudicial credibility deficit' (p.28) meaning that she felt that as a speaker she is given less credibility in the credibility economy, whilst others, in this case white British teachers, are given more credibility (O'Donnell, 2016b).

T 12 admitted that her Muslim colleagues and herself perceived Muslim Prevent practitioners working for the government as sort of 'traitors' as they were not doing enough to safeguard the Muslim identity and instead complied with the UK government. Furthermore, in her view, the added pressure of the duty had turned schools into investigation boards.

Therefore, what should act like democratic policies in education to foster communication and the exchange of ideas, the Prevent duty, regardless of its intent, according to this Muslim teacher, undermines this by making Muslim teachers and students and their families fearful of speaking freely:

'Teachers become like detectives, investigators, they become extra pair of eyes and ears. Muslim kids become suspects to a degree, especially if they come from a particular borough where there are a lot of Muslims, like in London.' (T 12)

There is, therefore, a risk that both Muslim teachers and students may feel they do not have the opportunity to explain themselves and their perspectives as white British teachers and students would. This is particularly concerning as it highlighted the 'silencing' nature of such policies on Muslim educators. In her view, if preventing radicalisation was to happen successfully, it should be done so realistically, which was not currently the case.

'Politics in the UK is led by populism. Therefore, it is important to teach students about radicalism. It is important to reframe it alongside other issues that are being spoken about at the moment so we can catch these initial thoughts early in people's lives and not let them fester and turn into something biased or politically charged.' (T 12)

Whilst such attitudes have been confirmed in the literature in studies conducted with both Muslim students and teachers (Welply, 2018; Lynch, 2013; Basit, 2009), T 12's view cannot be representative of the entire British Muslim teaching profession as it is just one participant's view.

Further research with Muslim teachers as well as Muslim Prevent practitioners would be necessary to confirm whether such views are corroborated across the board.

Nonetheless, cultural bias and dissonance appear to be a problem amongst teachers and within educational institutions. T 7 and T 8 both raised and expressed concern at their lack of training on these aspects, raising fears that wrong referrals may be made. According to T 1, cultural biases and misconceptions, which were further strengthened by right-wing media, influenced teachers' ability to focus on all forms of extremism rather than just Islamic radicalisation:

‘It worries me as some teachers are a bit naïve. I do think that there are people who will latch on, now that we’ve got Prevent, to this idea of quieter, young men, wearing traditional clothes possibly having some sort of links with extremism. I think we have to be very, very careful indeed...Right-wing British media has played a huge role in influencing a lot of people in the UK, including teachers, making them less tolerant.’ (T 1)

As identified in the previous chapter, most participant teachers' knowledge about radicalisation was formed through the media. T 1 made reference to 'naïve' teachers in the above quotation. Therefore, it is key that teachers understand how 'students' religious identity in England inevitably pre-disposed them to certain struggles or opportunities' (Durden et al., 2016:p.1004). This might have also implications for initial teacher training and continuous professional development for teachers.

Both Muslim teacher participants in the study (T 9 and T 12) stressed that Muslim students may perceive the Prevent duty differently than their white British counterparts as perceptions were often formed depending on one's heritage. T 1 also highlighted how British teachers' lack of cultural responsiveness could also result in negative perceptions amongst Muslim students. Teacher participants teaching in the North of England, highlighted how far-right views have become a significant concern at their school. However, according to T 7, white British students who voiced white nationalist views would not attract the same level of suspicion as a religious extremist view: 'Far-right views are otherwise denoted as racism and because it is racist it is not necessarily radical thinking, so they sit into this box.' Consequently far-right view may not be taken as seriously as one should minimising the threshold of the potential gravity of such views.



‘I never had to raise concern under the Prevent legislation in my whole teaching career. However, one thing I definitely had to broach was lots of times is racism. (..) especially around Brexit and when Brexit was going on there was a lot of healthy debate in the classroom and yes there were very often very conservative, very, very far-right views and probably students repeating things they had heard at home, seen in the media and brought into the classroom, maybe I interpreted far-right views as racist ...but I definitely had to manage and ensure that all opinions in the classroom were heard.’ (T8)

Far-right views may have also become normalised and emboldened in mainstream narratives, leading teachers to report such views less. As for Islamic extremist views, teachers felt they were less knowledgeable and therefore felt inclined to report more not to miss anything. Similar views were also voiced in the study by Lakhani and James (2021), who stated that anxieties were on the rise due to the normalisation and mainstreaming of far-right views, particularly after Brexit, which permitted and hardened such narratives. Ultimately, this has affected teachers’ actions, ‘particularly around misperceptions between incidents considered to be racist and xenophobic alone, and those associated with far-right extremism’ (Lakhani and James, 2021:p. 17). T 12’s view supports this, stating that Prevent duty did not treat all forms of extremism equally. In her view, Muslims were treated prejudicially as Prevent lacked ‘critical consciousness’. Therefore, racism, in terms of religious beliefs, exists, despite governments’ ideological protest against prejudice. With 85.9% (DfE, 2021a) of the teacher workforce in England being white British, these questions are arguably more pressing than ever before.

‘You need to see colour. You need to see how by not seeing colour, you’re not seeing the minor questions, you’re not seeing these people’s problems, you’re not seeing how the Muslim community is heavily affected by it, you’re not seeing how because the white community is not affected by it, you’re not seeing how the Muslim community can’t quite detach from the extremist views of whites who are put in care....in this way they’re actually perpetuating these racial views. The society damage is ridiculous.’ (T 12)

Muslim teacher participants T 7 and T 12 highlighted how government efforts to focus on all forms of extremism has made the Prevent duty more ‘colour blind’.

‘Prevent or the idea of Prevent undermines socio-economic families, as they try to make it very colour blind in the sense that a white extreme youth is not as damaging as a Muslim extremist.’ (T 12)

According to Neville et al. (2016:p.9), whilst colour blindness in policy may be well-intentioned, ignoring the reality of the race frame associated with radicalisation actually does harm in interracial interactions. This concurs with findings by Younis and Jadhav (2020) in their study with British healthcare professionals, who perceived Prevent as engaging in ‘performative colour blindness’, the ‘active recognition and dismissal of the race frame which associated racialised Muslims with the threat of terrorism’ (p.620). Muslim British healthcare professionals, similar to Muslim teachers interviewed in this study, perceived Prevent as a racialised policy that impacted clinical interactions, proving that racism was institutionalised. Consequently, this made addressing far-right concerns harder in this context. Indeed, it is statistically proven that white attackers are less likely to be identified as terrorists than racialised Muslim attackers (Corbin, 2017). Mills’ (2018) thesis on ‘White innocence’ supports this view stating that the UK’s counterterrorism strategy privileges Whiteness while it normalises the racial structure upon which the strategy was built.

Alternatively, focus should be less on raising awareness of far-right extremism and more on addressing institutional racism in education. In both Muslim teachers’ views (T 7 and T12), far-right extremism was added as an afterthought.

Studies highlighted that, as long as ‘our critical race consciousness did not lead to behavioural change, reflecting, conceptualising, problematising and critiquing one’s racist belief will not necessarily have the desired effect’ (Lewis, 2018b:p.119), was not enough to change ‘our preconceptual bodies and their habits’ (Granger, 2010:p.71).

However, all Prevent practitioners disagreed with the view that Prevent still targeted Muslims. All Prevent practitioners interviewed stressed that Prevent was not fixated with one particular form of radicalisation but addressed all forms of extremism. That was crucial as they stressed the Prevent duty worked for the benefit of multicultural society. In their view, the first iteration of Prevent had to take on such an approach. However, media portrayal of Prevent had already caused enough

damage. Consequently, Prevent practitioners stressed the importance and the need for more transparent communication as a means to change negative perceptions.

The Channel process was also perceived by the majority of teacher participants as shrouded in mystery:

‘What happens with students who are already radicalised? What are we doing with kids who have been radicalised? Yes, sure there are safeguarding policies designed to take these kids out and put them through re-education and training and that stuff but how does that work? How are the parents involved? How is the local community involved?’ (T 7)

This aspect will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

#### ***9.1.4 Empowering or Simply Signalling?***

This theme focuses on the role Prevent plays in education and the role teachers expect Prevent to play in education. It also explores teachers’ expectations and the role they wish to play within the Prevent duty. Teachers’ views are compared with those of Prevent practitioners. Teachers are neither security experts nor CVE/PVE specialists. Their role is to empower students and help them grow holistically into democratic adults.

One interesting finding in this study had to do with the way teachers interpreted the real objective of the Prevent duty. Whilst teachers agreed with having the duty as a safeguarding measure, as highlighted in section 9.1, all teacher participants stressed how the guidance did not amount to education in their view. Teachers expected an educational response to Prevent. Prevent training was perceived as weak, and time allocated in schools for Prevent was limited. Teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ views were quite conflicting as they both perceived the Prevent duty objectives through a different lens.

Secondary school teachers interviewed received Prevent training by their own school, under safeguarding or as a broader part of safeguarding. Teacher training was mandatory and valid for two years. However, Prevent practitioners interviewed explained how, over the years, PEOs have

adapted that training according to the assessed needs of their local boroughs and the schools they visited. In their view, training should be tailored to particular audiences or regions. All PEOs interviewed highlighted how they were always thinking of new and innovative ways of working, ways in which Prevent delivery standards could be improved (PC 2):

‘WRAP training is decent enough but it’s old and it’s not detailed enough. No Prevent Education Officer I know actually makes use of WRAP product itself. PEOs have changed it to adapt it to the local context to talk about local issues.’ (PC 2)

PEO 8 admitted that the standard WRAP training course was no longer very useful to teachers as it spent too much time on vulnerability and spotting the signs of radicalisation. Prevent training courses were there to raise awareness. Yet, teachers interviewed complained that the training provided did not equip them with the tools and skills needed. The Prevent duty was just guidance and not education, according to PC 1 and RPC 3.

The frequency of the Prevent training also depended on the school leadership team as well as the schools’ needs and the resources available. All teachers interviewed received Prevent training, with some receiving it every two years, whilst others have highlighted that that their school only requested them to follow online Prevent training courses developed by a company called Educare as part of their professional continuous development (T 1, T 2 and T 4). However, according to PEO 5, there are still educators in England today who have never had a decent conversation about when they should contact PEOs, child support, or call the police. These were very difficult decisions for teachers to make, especially when they do not have experience or adequate training.

Whilst Prevent online training was perceived as good, Prevent practitioners believed that no training could substitute an expert in radicalisation coming into school and answering detailed questions, even though not all schools engaged well (PEO 5). In their view, lack of training or inadequate training was one reason which led to negative Prevent perceptions. Prevent practitioners stated that teachers’ perceptions depended on the Prevent duty training. The more they knew about it and how it worked, the more they embraced it and saw it as part of safeguarding (PC 3, PEO 3, and PEO 5).

The Prevent duty was not prescriptive in its nature. This meant that schools had room and flexibility to implement Prevent duty as they deemed fit and in conformity with the school's needs as identified by the leadership management. Therefore, what action was taken within educational institutions depended on the strict positioning of the school vis-à-vis radicalisation. What schools needed to do was to 'build the language around radicalisation, extremism, and recruitment within their existing policy' (PC 1).

Teacher interviewees often made reference to the demographics of their school population, implying that radicalisation issues were more likely if school demographics consisted of a certain type of population. This view has relevance considering that recent government referrals highlight how schools in certain areas of England, like in the North East are considered to be more at risk of far-right extremism, whilst schools in the North West of England were more at risk from Islamic extremism than other areas (HMG, 2020c). This highlights Bouhana's (2019) systemic perspective of the 'moral ecology' where an individual's propensity to engage in terrorism is dependent on the enabling environment and the individual's susceptibility. Prevent Priority Areas (PPAs) were developed based on the crime rates, stressing the 'enabling environment'. On that basis, areas considered more at risk had more resources allocated for training and also had more PEOs recruited to engage with schools. Other areas considered lower risk had less resources to spend on Prevent. As a result, different training may result in different messages. Teachers and Prevent practitioners interviewed for this study agreed that training needed to be tailored to the needs of the school's demographic population. A number of teachers complained that the training they had received was not always relevant to their students. If a policy was to work effectively, the training provided needed to fulfil the needs of that school population. The effectiveness of a public policy can be questioned if it has provided a 'one size fits all' type of training. Therefore, interviewees suggested that the training provided needed to first identify the school context and its needs. This meant that training needed to be based on the risks facing the school, whether it was Islamic extremism, far-right extremism or other forms of unstable or unclear ideology.

Prevent practitioners stated that the effectiveness of the Prevent training also depended on the facilitator delivering it and the willingness of the senior management team within the school. Trust was essential for effective delivery, particularly given that, in the past, Prevent has been perceived as racial profiling and a 'toxic policy' (PEO 2). PEO 2 added: 'Provided that the practitioner is delivering it in a very sensitive manner, it's got the opportunity to do a lot of good.'

However, how and when training is provided to teachers is down to individual school leadership teams, which inevitably results in different levels of training provision.

‘You have got those that are directly involved in students’ services that can have training which is maybe facilitated by me. Then maybe you have those who are still involved with safeguarding but not so much, maybe have a broader safeguarding training and then you maybe got everyone else who had to do a brief online home office accredited training product.’ (RPC 3)

Teachers stressed how half a day’s worth of training did not provide them with structured answers for questions children could ask (T 1, T 2, T 7, and T 11). Initial teacher training, as well as CPD, were not deemed sufficient for teachers to learn how to have conversations with kids about radicalisation. Specific pedagogical skills were required in this case (T 7). Findings from this study showed that teachers did not take much self-initiative to learn about radicalisation. Out of thirteen teachers interviewed, only one teacher (T 7), took self-initiative and ownership of his own learning. As highlighted earlier, T7 read literature on various relevant subjects to keep himself updated and informed. The rest of the teacher participants only made reference to being exposed to mainstream media and through having conversations with friends and colleagues, as highlighted in the previous chapter.

Other teachers felt confident in addressing radicalisation because they felt they knew enough – not based on their training, but on their own background knowledge:

‘I feel I could deal with it as well as anyone could. Not because of any particular reason of my training or my school. I just think I feel I could do a good job of it because I know about it and what I have studied at university.’ (T 4)

A number of teachers (T 1, T 3, T 7, T 8, and T 12) viewed the Prevent duty training as revolving around identifying signs of possible radicalisation. What the policy guidance states regarding educator’s responsibilities is that ‘staff understand the risk and build capabilities to deal with it’ and that ‘staff implement the duty effectively’ (HMG, 2015f:p.3, 4).

Some teachers described the online Prevent training as good enough (T 2 and T 8) whilst others described it as instructional rather than educational (T5). Knowing how to spot signs of radicalisation and who to report it to did not amount to educating against and preventing radicalisation:

‘I think it is often enough, in the sense that, because it is a stand-alone and integral part of PSHE, in terms of what we deliver, in terms of their broader education, it is done very seriously and explicitly.’ (T 2)

‘I didn’t receive training on how to discuss radicalisation with students. But I have received training of what to do if I believe that someone is being radicalised and who I need to report it to.’ (T 5)

‘I think at the moment it is seen as an add-on thing to what we do in PSHE and what we do around general values in the school. I don’t think it is embedded in any meaningful way in the curriculum, so I see that as something staff go through inside training. We have Prevent training, training on awareness of radicalisation....it is sometimes considered as an add-on thing because you do not have specialists delivering it...Prevent raised awareness of potentially vulnerable students and how they get radicalised by people with extreme views, but I don’t think it is doing anything beyond that to train teachers to educate how to counter it.’ (T 3)

Some Prevent practitioners sympathised with this view but stated that the duty was not there to eliminate individuals’ vulnerabilities or to teach about the history of radicalisation. In their view, it is the teacher’s duty to intervene if they spot signs of potential radicalisation taking place.

One issue highlighted by teachers interviewed was that training provided by their school was standard and not specific to any particular teachers. Prevent policy suggests that professionals [could] be trained to identify behavioural indicators of risky or at risk individuals, and if someone is potentially on a pathway to terrorism (Heath-Kelly, 2017). Teachers interviewed did not agree with this, stating that they were only provided with a list of instructions rather than adequate knowledge of radicalisation itself. Teachers interviewed felt that the duty acted more like an instruction manual of how to monitor and identify potential vulnerabilities, ‘spot the signs’ using

a set of indicators established in the ERG 22+, which is often cited in the WRAP training course as a list of indicators for teachers to use, as well as and the Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF).

Studies have highlighted how static risk profiles do not exist (Rae, 2012) because of the vague and shifting character of radicalisation. Radicalisation/vulnerability indicators did not offer conclusive results. Therefore, teachers interviewed described how they had to use their ‘professional judgment’. Academics stated (Heath-Kelly, 2017) that the Prevent surveillance environment tasked teachers with distinguishing the radical from the normal, to generate the terrorist profile rather than respond to it. In this way, teachers became potential counterterrorism assets capable of ‘organically noticing the future radical (despite a constantly shifting profile) and alerting the police’ (Heath-Kelly, 2017:p.312).

Prevent practitioners disagree with this view, stressing that training provided to schools targeted all forms of extremism or was bespoke, depending on the local needs of the school and the threat to that community. Schools were the ones to decide how the Prevent training should be delivered. According to them, Prevent duty training was never the same for each and every school. Teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ perceptions differed also as to the role of the Prevent duty in schools. Teachers felt that the Prevent duty did not go enough beyond what was needed in education to prevent violent radicalisation successfully.

Teacher interviewees stressed that, as professional educators, preventing radicalisation needed to go much beyond just spotting signs. Teachers teaching in both high-risk areas and low-risk areas expressed their wish to learn more about how their profession could help prevent radicalisation. However, Prevent practitioners insisted that teachers did not need to go beyond what their role required (RPC 1). Yet, this message positioned teachers as tools ‘to carry out a form of security role, to monitor people for signs either that they may pose risk to others, or that they may be at risk of radicalisation to others’ (Jerome and Elwick, 2020:p.222).

Yet teacher interviewees felt that the Prevent training was not equipping them with the right tools to address such a complex problem. More discussions were required at teachers’ level. Teacher participants compared the training provided to a list of instructions to spot signs of radicalisation rather than a set of skills which they could apply throughout their profession.



‘Here’s the problem with radicalisation, here’s the effects of it, here’s what we’re trying to do about it, here you have some examples of it, if students ask this, you say this and if the students say that, you say that. Whilst this type of training does raise awareness, yet, I am not convinced that will allow teachers to be fully comfortable discussing these issues, because there are a lot of very complex ideas that come up when discussing Islamic fundamentalism or white nationalism etc – there is a nuanced argument that cannot be reductive – but it is not only nuanced and complex... but as a teacher you have to be able to transfer, deliver the conversation in a way that a child would understand what you are saying.’ (T 5)

Whilst Prevent teams encouraged teachers to facilitate open classroom discussions, teacher participants stressed that they were not adequately trained to do that, and felt ill-equipped to discuss and address radicalisation from all its angles. In their view Prevent training was not enough. Identifying signs of radicalisation did not constitute a comprehensive enough guidance for professional educators. As noted earlier, this suggests that Prevent training is not fit for purpose. There needed to be more focus on the actual cause of radicalisation, the root causes (T 12). Prevent practitioners admitted that Prevent training for teachers was basic and was there to help guide teachers on what to do and who to report to if someone was being radicalised. However, Prevent practitioners stressed that further training or workshops were provided if requested by schools:

‘It’s just an introductory course to know what the Prevent duty is, what’s a statutory duty in terms of referral. But the Prevent team trains further than that so teachers can have those difficult conversations in the classroom. Teachers already know that. They know what vulnerability is. Teachers need more case studies providing them with solutions to their problems.’ (PEO 8)

Teachers said they felt their role as education professionals was not limited to simply transfer knowledge to students. They added that teaching is about providing the necessary skillset to students to be able to live full lives once out of school. In their view, simply spotting signs falls short of duty of care a teacher has towards his/her students. As T 5 states:

‘I think that would be really helpful, not just for radicalisation but for other topics as well, to understand how to deliver it in a way that helps students to express their opinions.’ (T 5)

All teachers interviewed expressed a clear need for more learning around radicalisation.

‘There is a fine line between children expressing their views and what some teachers would then call radicalisation or extreme views. I don’t think it goes far enough in helping teachers to respond to radicalisation, and that’s partly because the information available to teachers is not very good. So yes, I think it is necessary guidance but whether it is suitable is something different. Something is needed but I am not sure the Prevent duty is it.’ (T 5)

According to T 12, both the Prevent duty and the training missed ‘the voice of the people who were heavily affected by it’. In her view, training was developed and often delivered too much from a white perspective, and by those who were rarely affected by the duty in their day-to-day life. Furthermore, policymakers and teachers unfamiliar with the Muslim identity or with Islam may result in biased formulations and decisions which could potentially have negative repercussions on Muslim identity-building.

‘What is important when it comes to Prevent training is to understand that it is not just about “here are the signs of radicalisation”. It would be good to understand in much detail on our own hatred of the other. We should be looking from the angle of why is this problematic. How have these people been reeled? And provide some actual structure and emotions.’ (T 12)

The next section looks at the training teachers feel they require in order to try to prevent radicalisation effectively in the classroom.

### ***9.1.5 Teacher Training: Addressing Violent Radicalisation/ Extremism in the Classroom***

All participants interviewed were aware that the negative perceptions of Prevent could be changed depending on whether the training provided is adequate, effective and relevant. Discussing sensitive or controversial issues, such as violent radicalisation, extremism, and terrorism, is an issue identified in the data collected. Data collected from both teachers and Prevent practitioners showed that a gap exists in the Prevent duty teacher training. Besides spotting signs of radicalisation, teachers bound by the statutory obligation were also ‘encouraged to engage young people in debates about controversial issues, including those related to Fundamental British Values’ (HMG, 2011b). Teaching students how to be resilient in the face of violent radicalisation or terrorism – subjects deemed to be sensitive or controversial – requires the acquisition of skills that go beyond that of identifying signs of radicalisation.

Both teacher respondents and Prevent practitioners have commented on the lack of skills provided to teachers to handle such discussions in the classroom. Prevent practitioners admitted that a gap in the basic Prevent teacher training existed in this regard, more so for teachers teaching in non-priority areas, resulting in teachers’ lack of confidence in approaching such discussions. Despite the possibility of more teacher training offered by Prevent teams, it was the duty of Heads of School to request such additional training. Whilst some teachers expressed some confidence in addressing sensitive discussions related to Prevent, which they gained through work experience, these same teachers still expressed doubt and a feeling of being out of their depth. Teachers highlighted that the Prevent training did not provide them with ‘controversial issue pedagogy’ (Jerome and Elwick, 2020:p.223) which could teach them how to discuss or address radicalisation with students at school.

Prevent practitioners highlighted how the training disparities between local authorities and regions in the UK were also an issue, resulting in slightly different messages across boroughs. Although there was a core message, training varied depending on where it was delivered and by whom. Training also differed from borough to borough as every area had to work out what it could offer based on the developed local risk assessments. The Home Office gave local boroughs leeway in terms of what content and training they delivered to schools (HMG, 2015d). Most Prevent practitioner interviewees, drew attention to how some boroughs had a great deal of experience in

the Prevent area as they had worked with radicalisation issues for a long time and therefore the training delivered was excellent as it was tailored to the needs of the region. Boroughs which were deemed low risk were not as well-resourced as those deemed to be higher risk. These priority differences and discrepancies in resources affected the quality of Prevent teacher training across boroughs. According to Prevent practitioners, where there was no additional funding in non-priority areas, PEOs were not recruited and therefore local authority expertise that could be called on when there was a Prevent concern was missing (PEO 7; PC 2; PC 3).

This study's findings show there is a lot more range around how people are Prevent-trained in the education sector. According to PEO 3, training depended on the individual schools and also teachers' competence:

‘It would be banal to think that everyone is implementing Prevent in the same way, and this is because the training provided is not the same across the board. The way teachers engage with Prevent boils down to teacher training.’ (PEO 3)

Prevent practitioners highlighted how, whilst most secondary schools they engaged with were cooperative, there were always one or two schools which remained resistant to Prevent duty. In their views, this resulted from performativity pressures schools were faced with, and/or resistance due to different political leanings. According to Prevent practitioners interviewed, resistance occurred more at HEFE than secondary schools. As highlighted in the methodology in Chapter 7, gatekeeping was therefore an issue, not just for researchers investigating Prevent, but also for Prevent practitioners who want to engage with schools to provide training and help schools in implementing Prevent:

‘There are still some universities, some areas of HE where there is a fundamental resistance to Prevent and that makes it quite hard to get the work of Prevent really embedded, rather than a sort of a tick box approach to doing just enough to complete what is required for compliance with Prevent duty, and so there is quite a difference across the sector in relation to, you know, their uptake and engagement in that respect.’ (RPC 1)

Furthermore, according to Prevent practitioners, despite the majority of schools cooperating with Prevent officials, more often than not it is PEOs who push schools to get the training done when it is overdue. Therefore, training depends heavily on the leadership in charge and also on the terms of school policies. So, if the senior management of a school does not like Prevent, it was challenging to implement Prevent well, as PEO 3 states: ‘You can go and provide Prevent training only to senior management and they would say they pass it on. We have no idea what gets passed on.’

PEOs said they often provided follow-up training; others offered training to help teachers discuss controversial issues, which were then delivered by private companies. However, PEO 2 stated that, whilst some private companies did excellent work, the prices they charged were too hefty for schools to pay, making them unattractive. As a result, it was often Prevent practitioners who devised and carried out workshops on how to handle extremist conversations and develop resources across the region, so that teachers could receive further training. Therefore, the work of Prevent practitioners went much beyond that of just providing the right counter-narratives (RPC 2). Prevent practitioners also underscored that schools could also nominate a go-to Prevent teacher—either a religious education, citizenship, or PSHE teacher. The nominated Prevent teacher would then receive more intense training and act as a go-to person in that school, should an issue arise. PEO 3 states:

‘Often this is a problem of huge secondary schools who claim that they are not able to get every member of staff in a room to give a presentation as there would be over 300 people. So often, the senior management team is trained in most things, not just Prevent and then they would have days where they pass on the information forwarded or equivalent. It is a statutory duty to be Prevent trained but that doesn’t have to be by PEOs.’ (PEO 3)

Radicalisation may not be an easy topic to discuss in every lesson. Research on the nexus between radicalisation and education showed that, often, radicalisation discussions in the classroom were made the responsibility of teachers who taught humanities subjects, such as citizenship, ethics, PSHE, religion, history, and geography. This was often the case as the ‘Prevent Policy [connected] directly with some of the topics discussed in these subject curricula which are also concerned with the attitudes and values of young people, seeking to promote a commitment to the principles of democratic citizenship’ (Halstead and Pike, 2006 as cited in Jerome and Elwick, 2020:p.225). This

was also the case for this study. Data collected showed that teachers teaching humanities subjects felt that their subject curriculum allowed them to discuss radicalisation within their lessons. Language subject teachers have highlighted a similar flexibility in their subject curriculum. Teachers teaching technical subjects such as maths and science felt more limited and stated that they had never discussed the issue of radicalisation in their subject lesson (T 4 and T 2). T 4 and T 8 admitted feeling ‘lucky’ never having to broach the subject of radicalisation within their lesson. The data clearly demonstrated that most of the teachers interviewed tried to embed preventive radicalisation narratives as best as they could in their teaching subject and they did so in whichever way they felt was most appropriate – either through promoting inclusivity, teaching about world conflicts, or by learning about different cultures around the world. The reality, though, was that some teachers made a bigger effort, whilst others did not because they felt that their teaching subject was far removed from such discussion, or simply because of a packed syllabus, and therefore, had limited time available due to academic pressure.

All 13 teacher respondents, including teachers teaching technical subjects (T 4, T 2 and T 7) highlighted the need to gain more skills in preventing violent radicalisation despite the lack of connection with their subject curriculum. In their view prevention of radicalisation was a cross-curricula concept and, therefore, all teachers had to be equipped to handle such discussions. As T 11 states: ‘It pertains not just to history, politics and geography to an extent, but also English, in the use of language. It should be taught in various subjects but needs to be reframed.’

Besides teaching a particular subject, teachers conduct various other duties in school. One of the roles is that of being a form tutor, which means being the first point of contact for a class of students. Therefore, all teachers have opportunities to broach discussions of any subject at some point. ‘Tutor time’, which was time allocated to form teachers to spend with their year class per week, has been identified as an opportunity to discuss such matters. When terror attacks took place in England, such a time was often used to discuss terrorism (T 12). Teachers highlighted how students brought in what they heard on the news or read on social media. In the classroom, they felt they had that safe space to express themselves and were challenged by listening to others’ ideas (T 10). At dedicated school events, such as ‘Democracy Day’, teachers teaching technical subjects stated how they used tutor time to broach subjects related to Prevent. Yet, teachers stressed that time allocated to ‘tutor time’ per week was very limited and, often, it carried its own

tutor agenda. Therefore, holding such complex discussions and building students' resilience during this allocated time was very challenging.

T 5 described another school event, 'Votes for Schools concept', which formed part of her school's curriculum, carried over a couple of days, where students were taught about democracy. In a year T 5 broached the subject of radicalisation three times with her form class. In these discussions, British values were discussed as well. However, she stressed that the subject of radicalisation and other cultural concepts should be addressed in schools and classrooms more frequently:

'I think it is very important to talk to them about all different aspects of being an adult in a world and to give them an unbiased view and opinion of different events and how they go about and different, as I said, different ideologies, different ideas, different religions.'

(T 5)

All teachers underscored that, before referring to Prevent, they would first sit and discuss the issue directly with the student in question, or as a whole class, to first enquire and learn from where those views were emanating. Only once they drew informed conclusions would they take the necessary, adequate steps. This confirms other studies by Williams et al. (2016), which found that teachers who have close relationships with students tend to address issues in person first, and would only report as a last resort. Informal reactions are preferred to formal reporting, supporting other studies on frontline practitioners (Summerfield, 2016; McKendrick and Finch, 2017).

Teachers stressed the importance of openly and transparently discussing and challenging students' views rather than to avoid or shut down conversations. Literature also demonstrates that 'instructivist educational cultures' (Sjoen and Jore, 2019b:p.275), where teachers assume an authoritative, top-down, patronising position, telling students what not to say or do may be counterproductive, as students need to conceptually and critically understand why certain views or actions are wrong (Cockburn, 2007; van San et al., 2013). Teachers interviewed for this study agreed that a teacher dictating what students should or should not believe in could have a counterproductive effect (T 1, T 4, T 6, and T 11). T 7 stated:

'It is often choosing out what they mean by that and have discussions about it, and then they kind of come around. If they don't that's when the safeguarding policies are used. I

am not sure if the Prevent strategy is actually coming in to play. I think it's general safeguarding policy.'

Whilst teachers may have become more confident in referring students to the authorities, nonetheless, teacher interviewees remain concerned over the risks of referring a student to Channel, potentially stigmatising the student and labelling him/her as a potential terrorist. This view is supported by other studies highlighting teachers' reluctance in reporting due to lack of trust in the system or in authorities (Summerfield, 2016; McKendrick and Finch, 2017). Teachers interviewed were aware that not all extreme views meant a person was violent or wanted to commit violence. Consequently, they demonstrated caution in the way they would approach a student expressing extreme views. They would not refer the student without first having questioned those views and assessed the frequency of the views being stated. According to T 4, 'students should not be penalised for expressing their opinions with vigour and passion'. Some teachers added that they would encourage freedom of speech, encouraging students to challenge each other, and to do so in a respectful manner (T 1, T 4, T 6, T 11). Teachers' fear that referring students to Prevent could potentially undermine student-teacher relationships as shall be seen in the next section. Consequently, they are hesitant to do so unless they have substantial evidence that the student is in grave danger.

In T 12's view, there can be a fine line between ideals and extremism:

'How can you make distinctions between one person who strongly believes in something and is willing to stand up for it, versus somebody who has gone the other way and has taken it a step too far?' (T 12)

## **9.2 Impact of Prevent on the Teaching Profession**

The second part of this chapter addresses Prevent's impact on the teaching profession and how teachers have accommodated it into their educational practices. Furthermore, this section looks at how Prevent has raised awareness about radicalisation amongst teachers and has impacted on teacher-student relationships and classroom dynamics.



The study's findings demonstrated, generally, that the Prevent duty did not have a large impact on teachers' workloads or professional lives. Teachers teaching technical subjects appeared to be less burdened by Prevent than humanities teachers, who from time to time were able to discuss Prevent topics using their subject's curriculum. All the teachers interviewed acknowledged the fact that Prevent was an additional responsibility. In their view, the main administrative burden of the Prevent duty fell on senior school leadership, who had to develop risk assessment plans and train school staff. Teachers' workloads only increased if they had to make a referral, which was not the case for any of the interviewees.

'It would be naïve to blame Prevent for the issues the profession is under at the moment. They have been growing since the last Labour government but it would be wrong and utterly naïve and simplistic to say Prevent is the problem. It has not impacted me much as I did not have to arrange it.' (T 2)

Whilst teachers did not feel their workload had increased, they nonetheless felt that pressure had increased in other areas because of the duty. These had more to do with handling controversial and sensitive discussions, assessing referrals, building students' resilience through the teaching of FBVs, and more demanding Ofsted inspections. According to T 2, the Prevent duty added extra layers of pressure 'to the layers that had already been growing since the Labour government came to power' (T 2). However, PC 1 argued that Ofsted's current emphasis on cultural capital was something schools already worked on so as to build tolerance and respect amongst students. This means that schools had already taken up similar initiatives prior to the introduction of the Prevent duty in schools. Therefore, if the duty was firmly embedded in existing school policy, then there would be no reason to fear an Ofsted inspection.

While the impact on workload is not significant, there is an emotional impact to consider. As shall be seen below, Prevent has created a heightened awareness of radicalisation amongst teachers, and has thus had an impact on student-teacher relationships, particularly Muslim teachers, who became more concerned for students in their community.

### ***9.2.1 Raising Awareness***

This theme explores how the Prevent duty has highlighted the presence of radicalisation and its risks amongst teachers in schools. As highlighted in the previous chapter, teachers are not radicalisation specialists or experts. Therefore, learning about the potential harm caused by radicalisation could open their eyes to new potential hazards.

Data collected showed that one of the biggest impacts of the Prevent duty for secondary school teachers was that of raising awareness about radicalisation amongst educators. At the inception stage, the Prevent strategy (HMG, 2011b) was shrouded in secrecy. Today, the Prevent duty in schools has a public face. Every staff member and educator in school is aware of the Prevent duty and the dangers of extremist views and terrorism. Prevent practitioners highlighted how this increase in awareness occurred because ISIS changed their recruiting tactics (PC 2, PEO 1, PEO 3). As PC 2 states:

‘Because Prevent is so overt, extremists’ movements have been hampered by just how vocal we are but also how everyone now is alive to how they work, how they operate, where they operate, how they radicalise, and things have moved on.’ (PC 2)

Prevent practitioner interviewees working across schools in London noted that teachers started appreciating Prevent training more when it was seen relevant to their profession, focusing more on the needs of the borough within which they taught (PEO2). Prevent practitioners’ interviewees did not perceive the Prevent duty as an onerous policy as it did not significantly impact teachers’ day to day activity. In their view, this was positive as the teaching profession was already under enough pressures of performativity, leading to work-related stress, depression and anxiety in Britain (Ofsted, 2019b:p.4). In their view, the duty complimented what teachers already implemented in schools (PC 1, PC 2, RPC 2). Therefore, the Prevent duty acted as ‘a latent awareness that comes to the fore’ (PEO 2) when required and had ‘a minimal impact’ on teachers (PC 3). Furthermore, schools who already had risk management plans in place were not requested to develop a separate Prevent policy, as long as Prevent duty was embedded in existing safeguarding policies. Nonetheless, practitioners highlighted how some schools felt the need to develop standalone Prevent policy in addition to their already established safeguarding policy (PC 1).

### ***9.2.2 Teacher-Student Relationships***

This theme focused on the impact of the Prevent duty on the student-teacher relationship and whether the duty has influenced the way teachers perceive students, and vice versa. Teacher-student relationships are built on trust, which is an extremely important factor that allows for students' development.

One of the main concerns identified in the literature was how the Prevent duty potentially undermined the trust in student-teacher relationships (Busher et al., 2017; 2019). However, in this study, twelve teachers out of thirteen stated that the Prevent duty did not affect their relationship with their students in any way, despite the varied school demographics. Therefore, the dynamics between student-teacher relationships have not been reported to have changed, according to this study. The only difference highlighted by most teachers was that of increased awareness to the possible signs of radicalisation students may demonstrate in school. T 5 noted how most students she taught were not aware of the existence of the policy. Another teacher highlighted how students born after 9/11 had no idea who Osama Bin Laden was and what terrorism really was. This aspect underscores the generation gap that exists between students and teachers. Furthermore, it highlighted how teacher training and teachers' own knowledge needed to remain attuned and applicable to the realities of young people. Furthermore, it highlighted the impoverished general knowledge of some students who, in the era of fake news, tend to get disaggregated information about the world around them, making it harder for them to establish fake from truth.

PEO 2 explained that it is only students in sociology class at sixth form may learn about the Prevent policy. In her view, younger people were also more open to the policy and have positive reactions to it, unlike in the past when Prevent carried a stigma. She highlighted how she only encountered one boy who had said negative things about the Prevent duty, and later it was discovered that his family was linked to the far-right neo-Nazi organisation, National Action. In the participant's view, it was good students were aware of it, and also aware of the possibility of having someone in their class being groomed for sex, drugs, or extremism. In her view, raising awareness was essential (PEO 2).

However, T 12, one of the Muslim teacher interviewees, holds a contrasting view. Whilst Prevent did not have an overbearing presence on her professional life as a teacher, however as already

highlighted in the previous sections, her negative experiences with the Prevent duty when still a university student made her become more protective and mindful of the type of experience her Muslim students may go through at school. Being involved in behavioural management and pastoral care, T 12 also spent time with students in detention, hearing their side of the story and becoming more mindful as to why students got into trouble, particularly since students were often exposed to discriminatory narratives (T 12). Despite not being professionally burdensome, T 12 explained how the duty had made her life as a Muslim teacher harder because negative perceptions of Muslims persisted:

‘We have got a lot of white British kids and parents and some of them are not happy to know that I am their English teacher. Some parents refuse to see me because of this. You have that side of things.’ (T 12)

This quote has highlighted how the teaching profession is still being defined by white Western elements (Brown, 2014:p.336). Here, language hierarchy and religion intersect with whiteness. Often, teachers who came from racialised groups spoke English in ‘non-mainstream dialects’ (Lipp-Green, 2012) and thus, as T 12 shared, she could be perceived as ‘less of a teacher’ (T12). The alleged patronising and diminishing behaviour of the parents has highlighted the importance of listening to teachers’ counter-stories in ‘recognising whiteness as a form of property that offers to white persons and their interests various rights and privileges that include the right to disposition, the right to use and to enjoy and the right to exclude (Brown, 2014:p.329). Literature shows how internalisation of such discourse may lead to oppression (Freire, 1970; Steele and Aronson, 1995) which affect how the participants judge both themselves and their students.

T 12, stated that being Muslim, she often had to maintain a ‘dialectic position’ – both fitting into the school system and pushing against it. As a Muslim, she felt that she was affected by ‘identity politics’ where her community had to work doubly harder to prove that they were not terrorists or terrorism sympathisers, and that they supported government initiatives.

‘Have you ever seen a church holding event after event saying those who come to our church, a Christian church, have said radicalisation is bad? Mosques hold it every single year with the police involved. So that is my issue with it really.’ (T 12)

She also highlighted how navigating the system was hard, as she felt that oppressive forces were constantly working against her. Changing the systems, in her view, was hard and complex as she ran the risk of being perceived as suspicious.

### ***9.2.3 Teacher's Positionality in the Classroom***

This section sheds light on how teachers' roles in the classroom has been impacted by the Prevent duty. These findings also focus on those moments in the classroom when teachers are confronted with challenging discussions addressing topics of a sensitive nature, like terrorism, radicalisation, and also British values. Teachers' narratives highlighted how confidence, competence, quality knowledge, and training were central in their ability to address complex discussions with adolescents. Whilst acknowledging their importance, the majority of teacher interviewees highlighted how they lacked such skills and competences.

T 7 gave himself seven out of ten in terms of his confidence in discussing such issues. In his view, he felt he needed to prepare well for it as violent radicalisation and terrorism are vast subjects. Nonetheless, he felt that, for other safeguarding issues, he was equipped.

'I know I wouldn't do as good a job talking about radicalisation as I would, for example, cyber bullying or female genital mutilation (FGM). Mostly because I'm teaching history at the moment and a lot of them, they're still sort of learning what an abstract concept it is – the idea of being vulnerable and therefore manipulated, they probably would have experienced it in different ways in being vulnerable, but for now they begin to understand the concept, therefore it is harder to teach it in the classroom than other safeguarding issues.' (T 7)

The lack of knowledge about the subject was another reason which made teachers feel insecure:

'I'm conscious that perhaps I didn't know enough myself on terrorism and radicalisation generally that I would not be able to give them an unbiased view.' (T 5)

The lack of skills in handling sensitive or controversial issues, together with a lack of confidence, could lead teachers to address issues in the wrong manner. Despite years of teaching experience,

some teachers expressed they felt ‘ill-prepared’ (T 6) to ‘discuss important societal issues with 30 sixteen-year-old boisterous adolescents’ (T8). In one teacher’s view, it was ‘nerve-racking’ (T 4). Another teacher even questioned if teachers were the right professionals to hold such discussions with students:

‘I do think like myself and colleagues around me are very ill-equipped when we get legislation and initiatives from the government and things that we now have to do as a teacher in the classroom. We didn’t have the adequate training and the adequate set up from school leadership to be able to feel that we could do that actively.’ – We had one session on looking at Prevent in an inset day and that was it and were told that if Ofsted ever come into your classroom you need to demonstrate that you’re following Prevent. That was it and I don’t know if that equips you to have a meaningful dialogue on radicalisation with young people.’ (T 8)

Teachers found comfort in knowing that, when they were not sure of a referral, they could ask for the support of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL plays a central role within schools. From the data collected, it appeared that teachers relied a lot on safeguarding leads for further insight. Lakhani’s (2020) study confirms this in his study on cultural capital in schools. One teacher participant also added that, when they felt discussions were not enough to address a situation deemed serious, they would not hesitate to call on the local police station’s Prevent team for help (T 5). A number of PEOs interviewed stressed that teachers were not on their own but that there was a support system in place.

‘Teachers just needed to make use of Prevent and know who to turn to. Just like any safeguarding incident, issues did not need to be escalated significantly straightaway.’ (PC1)

‘Teachers are not psychologists and shouldn’t try to be one. They are not experts of radicalisation or any of the forms of exploitations of children. So, it is important they talk to colleagues, to the safeguarding lead. PEOs are there for this reason, to act as a support mechanism. It’s not up to the teacher to make all the decisions. Within education kids should be allowed to make mistakes without thinking the school will further escalate an

issue. PEOs are there to give that reassurance to teachers that they don't need to pass on.'  
(PEO 2)

#### ***9.2.4 A Teacher's Own Interpretative Framework at Work***

This theme addresses the way teachers position themselves when they enact the Prevent duty and/or when they address complex discussions in the classroom. This theme highlights how teachers apply their own life experiences, value systems, and knowledge when teaching, potentially influencing the content of that same knowledge or how that knowledge is received by students.

Findings of the study highlighted how teachers were at a loss when to assert a value position, and when to seek to construct a discussion around related issues deemed controversial (Lammy, 2017 as cited in Jerome and Elwick, 2020:p.225). In such cases, the teacher was more likely to engage with the issue from a variety of legitimate perspectives, and to use a values clarification approach (Raths et al., 1978 as cited in Jerome and Elwick, 2020:p.225) rather than seeking to promote any particular position.

However, in their narratives, teacher interviewees, described various ways as to how they positioned themselves within such discussions. They provided pedagogical examples showing how they addressed radicalisation-related discussions in the classroom. What is clear is that the teacher interviewees do not teach the subject of violent radicalisation directly to students. Out of thirteen teachers, only T 6 had a specific unit, covering seven lessons completely dedicated to addressing the issue of radicalisation using resources by a company called Creative Curriculum:

'We start by doing conspiracy theories and extreme narratives. Then we teach about different types of extremism. Then we have a lesson on what terrorism is. Then we do a lesson on what it means to you to be proud to be British and then we do another lesson on the radicalisation process. Then we do a lesson on counterterrorism and then we have a lesson on antisemitism.' (T 6)

Preventive-narratives provided in schools often stressed the positive aspects and the beauty of living in a diverse community, rather than preaching about the dangers of radicalisation or violent

radicalisation. T 2 explained how, rather than discussing radicalisation or extremism directly, he created opportunities in the classroom to promote inclusivity instead. He stressed that, with students, you cannot preach what they should or should not do as that would be counterproductive. T 2 believed that placing emphasis on inclusivity made a difference as it set an example of how society should work. He felt that prevention of radicalisation in education should be tackled through highlighting the positives of multiculturalism rather than the negatives. In his view, the statutory obligation made him duty-bound to address situations where students felt marginalised, and his role as a teacher did not stop as soon as he stepped out of the classroom. Therefore, he tried to be inclusive using the science curriculum. In his view, Prevent interventions could simply require a conversation or interaction with a student, not just spotting signs (T 2).

The celebration of cultural diversity was one narrative a school used to promote multiculturalism. Schools also organised days where discussions around topics related to global issues were addressed. However, this depended on the school's own curriculum, and up to a certain extent the school's demographic population and its local community. Such activities gave students the opportunity to air and exchange views (T 1). Whilst these sound like good initiatives, it remains important to steer clear from tokenistic approaches (Schoorman and Bogotch, 2010).

T 11 described how his school, which was mostly made up of white British students, left him free to teach certain subjects as he deemed fit. He explained how he prevented radicalisation implicitly by teaching students about tolerance explicitly and the ability to recognise rhetoric when it was used to persuade people to do something:

‘In the English classroom I teach students about tolerance, very explicitly, I play the devil’s advocate with them constantly with whatever their point of view is. I am trying to get them to argue with me and counter-argue and therefore implicitly teaching them to take on board other people’s opinions and take on board how different points of rhetoric can enhance convincing, and how people can try to persuade and even manipulate them...We did an old topic about rhetoric with one of my year groups. And we spoke about people who have used it to do bad things such as [German Nazi politician] Goebbels, and then also a contemporary example of Donald Trump.’ (T 11)



He added that explicit discussions on radicalisation occurred when discussing the book, *I Am Malala* (2013) written by a Pakistani school girl who was shot in the head by the Tehriki-i-Taliban Pakistan for advocating for female education. Discussing radicalisation directly was unavoidable when addressing the book itself.

T12 highlighted Muslim students' unease and discomfort when sensitive discussions like radicalisation were discussed directly. Furthermore, as a Muslim teacher, she felt she was often put on the spot by her own students. Being Muslim, students were more interested about her views on terrorism. Therefore, she preferred to embed such discussions within the context of a William Blake (1789) poem such as 'London' or hold discussions related to immigration and/or identity issues and then discuss the subject within that frame.

'The non-Muslim kids might feel quite uncomfortable but the Muslim kids would feel even more uncomfortable because they'll wonder why I'm doing this? They would ask me: "Why would you do this to us?"' (T 12)

Fanon called this 'psychic alienation', a debilitating self-doubt that stops one from speaking for fear of how one will be heard or constituted, in particular when one risks being constituted as 'at risk' (O'Donnell, 2016:p.14). As a Muslim, T 12 was conscious of how addressing radicalisation directly could act as a micro-aggression and negatively impact her Muslim students in class, opting to do so indirectly.

'The only way I think to address it is through a natural discussion. Having a piece of text, a poem about, maybe, the battle or raiding the Bastille in France, and slowly connecting that to "how does that concern your life?" or we might be learning a poem about Afghanistan, some kid would say "Al-Qaeda", and I'd ask "okay, what's that? Tell me about it" and that way I can pick their mind.' (T 12)

Another reason why teacher respondents preferred not to discuss violent radicalisation issues explicitly with students is because they felt it could lead to controversial, sensitive, and political discussions, which they felt were particularly tricky to handle. Several teachers interviewed also made assumptions about their school student population and their local community, stating they were not risking starting discussions on violent radicalisation not considered pressing.

‘In a school such as this, where we suspect to be less extremism because of the nature of the school, it’s always been about promoting diversity as opposed to saying don’t be involved in extremism.’ (T 2)

‘Because of the nature of the school, we wouldn’t want to introduce it [referring to radicalisation] as a concept to some of the young people if they’re not familiar with the concept already, so we would rather let them focus on the diversity that we have rather than the potential to being extreme.’ (T 1)

As a result, teachers tended to adopt softer ways of how to manage diversity without entering challenging discussions about politics.

‘In my school the only time they’ve come close to talking about it [referring to radicalisation] is when talking about the climate change movement.’ (T 11)

Both Prevent practitioners and teachers highlighted the importance of providing students with unbiased views. According to the Teachers’ Standards, teachers are not supposed to talk about their own political ideas/views and to remain impartial (DfE, 2011). However, both teachers and Prevent practitioners underscored how this rule was often broken as teachers often found themselves under pressure of time to change students’ views (PEO 3). Teachers interviewed said they were apprehensive about discussing such a sensitive topic in case they made unintentional partial comments, which could affect their reputation amongst students.

‘Teachers cannot be secretive, avoidant or are embarrassed to talk to adolescents about certain issues. As a teacher it is important to remain as objective as possible, particularly when addressing delicate subjects. For some teachers, personal experience has helped them become more sensitive and culturally attuned to certain issues.’ (T 7)

The task of teaching about prevention of violent radicalisation within a framework of values, promoting inclusion would undoubtedly be more challenging if teachers taught in a context where anti-immigrant sentiment was high and Islamophobia was rife. It was challenging for teacher interviewees in this study to engage with genuinely controversial political issues. A study by

Jerome and Elwick (2020) noted that this occurred because, ‘on the one hand, they [teachers] are encouraged to engage young people in debates about controversial issues, but on the other hand they are required to monitor the young people’s opinions for signs that they may dissent from the FBVs, which is seen as a risk factor for developing extremist ideas’ (:p.232). Whilst Prevent duty raised awareness about potentially vulnerable students, it did not do anything beyond that: to train them to build student resilience (T 3). According to T 3 Prevent duty fell short in ‘educating’ teachers.

T 7, a black, Muslim Canadian, recounted how his upbringing in an Islamic household in Canada after 2001 made him become more sensitive to such issues. Growing up, he felt he was ‘othered’, simply because he was black and Muslim. Having lived through such experiences, he empathised with teachers who had never undergone such experiences, and therefore, felt detached and had difficulty relating to Muslim students when discussing sensitive subjects related to the Prevent duty (T 7). In his view, the Prevent duty training did not do enough in training teachers about un/conscious bias which could potentially and unintentionally lead students to censor themselves.

‘I think sometimes opinions and expressions can shut down the students and I think sometimes opinions and information given to students is biased. I am not saying this is coming from the teachers but comes from an overall strategy that has been handed down to the teachers to use. But I do think that some of it is one sided so, yeah, I think it would affect some of the students’ opinions and ideas and their ability to express them.’ (T 7)

Furthermore, Teacher 7 stated that a teacher’s role was not simply to teach subject curriculum content, but to also increase students’ resilience by teaching them critical thinking and problem-solving skills:

‘In Geography, in Key Stage 3 national curriculum, the Middle East must be taught. Therefore, not just locational geography but contextual geography as well, meaning social, regional issues which then lead to discussions on terrorism.’ (T 7)

Using the Geography curriculum, he exposes students to a variety of cultures, values and perspectives that exist around the world, further widening their mindset. He described how Geography, being a very contemporary subject, had an understanding of perspectives of people

around the world which one did not get from other subjects. Thus, his teaching subject allowed him to offer preventive narratives to challenge potentially extreme narratives voiced by his students. This was how, in his view, preventing radicalisation fitted within education. To him, radicalisation was just another form of propaganda (T 7). In his view, a teacher's duty was not that of 'dissuading people from thinking radically but teaching kids to think critically, and teach them problem-solving skills, so as to be able to mentally combat such propaganda when they encounter white nationalism, Islamic fundamentalism or left-wing ideology, whatever it was.' (T 7)

In this study, teachers interviewed showed little awareness of their own cultural biases, which may be counterproductive. Teachers who were not exposed to different cultural environments in their life admitted to lacking certain sensitivities towards some cultures, and were 'not well-attuned', or were biased towards certain cultures (T 5, T 6, T 8, T 9, and T 12).

'When it comes to people's moral beliefs, I think some teachers go the other way and start preaching and you've got to be careful that you're not insulting, you're just helping to have an open conversation. It also depends on experience.' (T 10)

'There was a lot of misunderstanding about cultures and languages, and ethnicities, and so much stereotyping...People are dropping comments and not realising or understanding that they're racist because often children repeat things that they hear around the breakfast table from their parents and then they come to school and don't actually know with what they've been brought up with.' (T 8)

'Teachers have a very difficult job in putting aside their values and passions and work with young people who have alternative options to what they have. Very difficult job but at the end most teachers achieve that.' (PEO 1)

Lack of exposure, inadequate training and lack of subject knowledge on violent radicalisation risked leading to avoidance, jumping to simple conclusions of moral judgements or 'ventriloquism', where students worked out what the teacher wanted to hear and effectively voiced the teacher's opinion (Jerome and Elwick, 2020:p.231).

In terms of training, teachers interviewed suggested having more real-life Channel case study examples or practical examples of questions or statements that students would make in class. Case studies had proved helpful, as teachers were encouraged to imagine themselves in those situations and critically assess what to do (T 1, T 3, and T 7). Nonetheless, teachers stressed how the training that was provided very much depended on the personality of teachers receiving it, and their attitude towards life-long learning (T 1, T 7, T 12, T 13) stating that teachers were bad at adapting to change and taking on board new training (T 1, T 7, T 9). All Prevent practitioners interviewed concurred with this view.

One teacher interviewee suggested that, most teachers in her school did not take training particularly seriously: ‘I think anything that is seen as added to the workload or adding to the responsibilities you’ve already got will be seen negatively’ (T 9). This implies that the effectiveness of Prevent training also depends on the way teachers embrace, absorb, and implement it. Teacher interviewees (T 1, T 2, T 7, and T 9) also added that an increased workload or adding responsibilities on top of what teachers already had could be perceived quite negatively.

‘Shifting the responsibility from social services, local and national government onto teachers was one less blame for the government to duck. As a result, some teachers were less willing to engage.’ (T7)

‘Teachers are very averse to change and also bad at taking new things on board. Some teachers just shy away from learning new things. Prevent was one of those new things which force teachers to watch out for signs of radicalisation.’ (T 9)

One teacher however stressed the importance of teacher’s own self-initiative, taking ownership of their own learning, not just in relation to Prevent but in the teaching profession in general.

‘And this is also a cascading effect, because when I read about how boys are predisposed to extremist activity the next thing I do as a teacher is ask what can I do about it – this then puts me in a better position compared to those who do nothing...But I doubt teachers go out of their way to read more than they have to, unless they are obligated to.’ (T 7)

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presents the analysis of the data gathered in the second set of interview questions, focusing on countering radicalisation at classroom level. Moving beyond the Prevent duty, teachers attempt to prevent radicalisation through their own interpretative framework, using agency. This is because most teachers do not perceive Prevent as an educational policy and prefer to prevent radicalisation through the celebration of inclusive practices and multiculturalism.

The next chapter focuses on the effectiveness of Prevent focusing on potential misconceptions, dominant public narratives, and awareness raising, as well as potential alternatives and changes to the Prevent duty.

## **Chapter 10:** Enacting the Prevent Duty in Secondary Education

## 10.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a general perspective of whether secondary school teachers and Prevent practitioners find the Prevent duty effective or not. This chapter also looks at some of the main problems that impact the delivery as well as the implementation of the Prevent duty. Furthermore, it highlights the changes that both groups of participants would like to see. Possible alternatives to Prevent duty are also addressed in this chapter.

This chapter was organised under the following three themes which were identified in the data, as explained in Chapter 7.

- **Effectiveness of the Prevent duty in schools**
- **Weak communication**
  - Misconceptions or political leanings
  - Dominant public narratives
- **Changes and alternatives to the Prevent duty**
  - Subject curricula changes
  - Pedagogy
  - More local authority responsibility and less police involvement
  - Drops political positioning
  - Changing earlier negative perceptions of prevent
  - Leaving the Prevent duty as it is

The first theme, ‘effectiveness of the Prevent duty in schools’, sheds light on teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ perceptions on whether the Prevent duty is working in school settings or not. The second theme, ‘weak communication’, also looks at one of the main perceived challenges of the Prevent duty by teachers and Prevent practitioners which is communication – or the lack of it. The theme has been divided into two subsections to organise better ideas. This chapter concludes with the theme, ‘changes and alternatives to the Prevent duty’, which provides teachers and Prevent practitioners with ideas for improvements that could be made to the Prevent duty, as well



as possible alternatives which would see the duty replaced altogether. This section is also divided into six sections to highlight the specific changes participants would like to see.

## **10.1 Effectiveness of Prevent in schools**

Teachers' and Prevent practitioners' views varied as to the effectiveness of the Prevent duty policy. The majority of teachers admitted that a measure within education was needed to counter the spread of radicalisation across England and Wales. Whilst the Prevent policy was not perceived as a perfect policy, it was filling a gap. Nevertheless, teachers voiced scepticism and doubt as to the policy's effectiveness in fighting radicalisation. None of the thirteen teachers interviewed had ever used the Prevent duty to make referrals.

Thus, there appears to be a potential conflict in how teachers and Prevent practitioners interpret the prevention of radicalisation within the duty. Whilst teachers agreed that education had a role to play in preventing radicalisation, they felt that prevention entailed more than just following a set of potential risk indicators. Almost every teacher highlighted the desire and the need to learn more about what radicalisation is, its processes and how it developed. They highlighted how being more knowledgeable about radicalisation would help them deal better with potential situations in the classroom, as well as identify its risks earlier on, before it becomes too late for the individual in question. Prevent practitioners, on the other hand, were of the view that a teacher's role was only that of monitoring, identifying, and signalling potential radicalisation. This aspect is discussed further in more detail in the next section when addressing teachers' perceptions of the Prevent duty. This disparity between teachers' and Prevent practitioners' views is important as it could have implications for the policy enactment.

Like previous studies (Busher et al., 2019), this study found high levels of confidence amongst the majority of teachers in meeting the duty's requirements. However, the interview data also revealed that there was a strong undertow of anxiety about the duty's effectiveness. Teachers interviewed were quite anxious about making referrals to Prevent and, in fact, preferred to deal with most of the situations through the use of one-to-one discussions with their students. Most teachers feared compromising students' futures because of wrong referrals, highlighting their

close relationships with their students. As one teacher highlighted, once a referral is made, there is a possibility that the whole school finds out, which could damage the student's reputation (T 8).

Teachers' main concerns centred primarily on the perceived difficulty of identifying so-called genuine cases, where students were seriously engaged with extremism rather than, for example, merely testing the boundaries or not realising the potential gravity of their actions. Teacher respondents highlighted how hard it was to pick up and identify signs of radicalisation as taught in their Prevent training. In their view, as well as statistically, violent radicalisation happens relatively rarely in schools (T 9 and T 11). Yet, that said, data from the Home Office shows that for the year ending March 2020, 31% of 6,287 referrals made still came from the education sector. This means that either teachers feel more confident to report to Prevent or that some referrals were made erroneously. Some teachers drew attention to how signalling children at risk under the Prevent duty was unrealistic, as most children who were being radicalised were being exposed to extremist views outside of school:

‘It is not happening within school buildings, apart from one or two very isolated cases which like I said, this duty is just very bad management of the school and you know, not vetting people who are allowed to come into school.’ (T 9)

Therefore, whilst the requirement to prevent radicalisation from happening in schools is understandable, its effectiveness is debatable.

Prevent practitioners who work directly with schools on policy implementation spoke more positively about the policy's success. Nonetheless, they, too, admitted that PVE success rates were difficult if not impossible to measure scientifically. This is because the success of the Prevent duty could not be measured against a control group (PEO 5). The duty could only be deemed a success when no terrorism occurred. However, it was still very difficult to identify whether the result of having no terrorism was due to the policy itself. PC 3 admitted that more work was required on policy assessment. The Home Office was open to exploring new ways to monitor and evaluate the work that was carried out. Increased cooperation between authorities, practitioners, and academia was necessary to assess what was happening on the ground. Assessment remains the only key for future improvements.

According to PC 3, currently, Prevent duty's success was measured in terms of the number of referrals made, and how those identified as vulnerable were receiving support through the Channel programme. Channel cases were deemed successful depending on whether the individual goes through the whole Channel process: their case is assessed and reviewed after six months, then once more after twelve months, and then, if successful, the person is considered as no longer at risk and ready to leave the Channel process.

‘Eighty per cent of the people I work with leave the process, it's a consensual, voluntary process and they can leave at any time with a reduced risk of radicalisation.’ It is successful because it is interlinked with education. The awareness raised helps reduce possible risks more generally in society.’ (PC 1)

Prevent practitioners stressed that Ofsted inspections also offered an alternative way to measure Prevent success, as these inspections assessed schools and their safeguarding policies as well as how schools prepared students for life in modern society (PC 3). However, whilst Channel and Ofsted reports could provide a picture of the Prevent duty's success, measuring increased resilience through education was less consistent. Feedback on projects and workshops delivered could be a way to obtain results. According to PC 3, PEOs received plenty of positive narrative feedback from young people whenever such projects were carried out in schools.

Despite the inability to scientifically measure Prevent duty's success, Prevent practitioners stated how the Prevent duty was having a positive impact in secondary schools, claiming that there was an increased awareness of its need amongst teachers (PEO 4, PEO 6, and PEO 7). In their view, teachers were also finding training on violent radicalisation more relevant to their profession as Prevent was there for the needs of the borough (PEO 6). Some highlighted how projects organised in schools were quite successful. Whilst only relatively few students become radicalised, projects have a lot of positive side effects on young people as they are made to think about prejudice, bullying, homophobia, racism, and sexism. It gets them to reflect about their life and the fact that they do not want to go down a criminal path (RPC 3). The positive side effects of such projects did not just deal with preventing people from becoming terrorists, but other positive side effects come out of it, too (PEO 4).

Part of Prevent's remit also consists in offering advice to schools. Educators can reach out to PEOs to seek advice or to have them conduct workshops, speak to a class or to staff members about risk assessments. Having that contact with a local authority has shown to be reassuring to teachers and has helped them on a practical basis (PEO 7). However, due to lack of funding, not all local authorities were able to recruit PEOs (PC 2).

PEOs interviewed also justified the duty by stating that there have been young people who have been deradicalised because of Prevent, or went through Prevent because there was nowhere else to place them since they had complicated safeguarding issues. They said Prevent was an effective support system. In PEO 5's view, it was definitely better to have Prevent than not to have Prevent at all, as it did help people.

However, the Prevent duty's effectiveness depended on its proper implementation. In PEO 4 and PEO 6's views, it was unfortunate that some schools implemented the duty not out of necessity and awareness of current threats and risks but to satisfy Ofsted requirements. In their view, there was a certain amount of naivety about what went on in the borough from an educational perspective. Lack of communication was one reason cited. Prevent practitioners' narratives highlighted how the Prevent duty's success was also very dependent on the senior leadership team, how seriously they took Prevent, and how much value they put into it.

'When the school management understood the duty's value, strong messages filter down to the teachers and the rest of the staff and it is kind of apparent in the school. It is an ethos rather and not just a tick-the-box exercise that they do Prevent.' (PEO 4)

PEO 2 also stated that the Prevent duty at the moment was the best thing there was in schools to counter-radicalisation.

'Prevent is the best thing we have at the moment and I think it's that or nothing for sure. We are certainly seeing cases of people whose lives are going down a really negative path and we're seeing their lives turned around, and I've seen that even in the short time I've been doing this job, not just young people but with some older people as well.' (PEO 2)

The threat from radicalisation is also constantly changing in Britain, with terrorist groups now also targeting young people online. Consequently, prevention needed to change and adapt accordingly to the nature of the evolving threat. Whilst acknowledging the importance of preventive and timely action, PCs questioned whether the prevention community, including educational institutions, were fast enough to keep up. PC 1 cast doubt on the community's ability to adapt to a new form of radicalisation and to find solutions within cohesion and integration policies. In his view, this had already proved very difficult to effectively set up due to reciprocated polarisation in the community:

‘We’re now moving towards an issue with non-violent extremist groups, so organisation on both the Islamist side and on the far-right side who share all of the aims and endeavours and ambitions of these terrorist organisations but will not publicly support violence. But the risks we face now are that, at a society level, at a cohesion and integration level, this is hugely damaging. So, Prevent is kept a bit in abeyance, you cannot get involved. But it creates a permissive environment for those terrorist /violent organisations to operate and gives them a bigger recruitment pool. Kind of these non-violent extremist groups are leading people up to the edge of a cliff and leaving them there. The terrorist groups can then come along and push them over.’ (PC 1)

## **10.2 Weak Communication**

One of the findings reported by this study is the weak levels of communication that exist between Prevent officials and educators in schools. Data shows that, whilst the objectives of the Prevent duty are clear to most teachers, their needs regarding the guidance remain unmet. The majority of teachers interviewed have received Prevent training online and, therefore, were rarely in contact with a Prevent official or a PEO. The choice of Prevent training is also a responsibility of senior school management who decide on the type of training to be provided. Some local authorities, but not all, provide Prevent training via their local Prevent teams and PEOs. However, the recruitment of PEOs within local authorities depends on the Prevent funding allocated to local authorities, and that depends on the local risk assessment profiles performed by Prevent teams each year (Local Government Authorities, 2010). According to PC 2, only areas with priority funding were eligible for PEOs. As a result, not all schools had the luxury of having PEOs coming to their schools to

train teachers in having sensitive discussions about radicalisation. Several teachers drew attention to this point, stating that, whilst the online training they received was good, however having a physical person in the school every now and again to ask questions would have helped them significantly.

‘Teachers need to have confidence, but they don’t need to be experts. Difficult conversations become more difficult when you don’t have that information where you send the education officer who would help the teacher, and then they facilitate those conversations.’ (PC 2)

As expected, findings show that teachers and Prevent practitioners perceive the Prevent duty differently and, as a result, policy enactment is affected. Teachers’ and Prevent practitioners’ narratives shed light on how Prevent implementation differs across the board. One of the reasons behind this is the different messages delivered during Prevent training. Training provided to teachers in England is not standardised and thus differs from school to school. As a result, the training provided to educators was very reliant on the provider. Some teachers received Prevent training online, others received in-house training via a DSL, whilst only two teachers interviewed said they had ever met or received training via a PEO. As a result, it has been found that communication about Prevent duty requires improvement. Wider research, in fact, shows that, despite confidence in Prevent, educators who were not in charge of Prevent duties in their schools, like DSLs, ‘expressed significantly less confidence than their more senior or experienced colleagues’ (Busher et al., 2017:p.6).

Data also shows that, when unsure about a referral, most teachers mentioned turning to DSLs to seek informal advice and/or support. This data supports previous findings which highlighted how teachers seek informal support and guidance when required (Lakhani, 2020). When in doubt teachers passed the responsibility onto their DSL, expressing feeling ‘safer’ knowing that someone more informed could make that decision for them or with them. Lakhani calls these extended relationships a form of social capital ‘where one can have access to existing practices, experiences, ideas, networks, norms, and knowledge exchange’ (Lakhani, 2020:p.14). Prevent practitioners supported the work of DSLs and were happy that the teachers found support through DSLs who were trained and could provide sound advice on whether to refer or not, particularly when referrals

are complex and dubious. According to Prevent practitioners, DSL support also helps to lower the number of erroneous Prevent referrals.

Prevent practitioners drew attention to the negative myths still circulating around the Prevent duty. In their view, this was due to weak communication with educators in schools. In their view, positive engagement with schools could help shift misconceptions about Prevent still present amongst educators, one of them being racial profiling. In their view, that change in perception can only be dismantled through positive engagement with schools and effective teacher training. Prevent practitioners stressed how they need to prove to schools that they were working for the whole multicultural society and not for the majority or the minority (PEO 3). Prevent practitioners' statements highlighted how, in their view, Prevent was about being proactive and encouraging schools to be proactive rather than reactive to situations that might present themselves in the future. According to PEO 3, the Prevent duty had made positive changes and progressed over the years. Yet, success could be greater if Prevent practitioners were more autonomous in their decision-making. More authority for PEOs and PCs across England and Wales would, according to the Prevent practitioners interviewed, significantly improve the way the duty is managed on a practical level (PEO 6 and PC 2). More autonomy would allow them to take on more responsibilities and make changes needed within Prevent management that could lead to better policy execution (PEO 6 and PC 2).

Weak communication with the rest of the public was another obstacle voiced by Prevent practitioners. In their view, Prevent practitioners (PEO 7 and PC 3) did not communicate enough with the outside world, resulting in often distorted messages about Channel which is still perceived by educators as secretive. As highlighted in the previous chapter, educators are never updated about the referrals they make and, as a result, have little if any knowledge of the implications of their referral. Teachers in this study stressed this as a main reason why they felt nervous about the idea of referring. Whilst all teachers interviewed stated they have never made referrals, some added that they have never been placed in a situation where they needed to make one. Others preferred to solve the situation using other methods, as shall be seen in the following sections. The involvement of police in Prevent and Channel still created concern and discomfort amongst teachers. However, Prevent practitioners highlighted how the general public appeared to be unaware that, since Prevent duty was only a safeguarding initiative, individuals referred to Prevent did not get a criminal record unless they have committed a crime. This was one significant aspect

that in Prevent practitioners' view needed to be continually reinforced (PEO 8). Getting that same message across to the community organisations and to parents was key to gaining trust, but the persistent negative perception of Prevent needs to be overcome first, according to PC 2:

'If I had to hold a Prevent event tomorrow in the local community, for community members and parents, very few people would turn up as they don't think it would apply to them. For me that means that the negative stories, mixed messages around Prevent have stayed in people's minds and that they have very different perceptions from those who have trained on it.' (PC 2)

However, negative press about Prevent, such as the discovered existence of a counter-terror police secret database on individuals referred to Prevent, which is accessible to all police forces in the UK, aggravated concerns (Grierson, 2019). According to Human Rights Group Liberty policy manager Gracie Bradley, the database was not about keeping people safe but about 'keeping tabs and controlling people, particularly minority communities and political activists' (Grierson, 2019 online).

Furthermore, communication between Prevent practitioners and teachers appeared to be weak around the real objectives of the duty. Teachers perceived the Prevent duty as a non-educational policy. The majority of teachers interviewed highlighted how the duty neither taught teachers nor students about the harms of radicalisation or educated to counter/prevent it. Nor did it provide teachers with the necessary skills to teach or educate against it.

Findings show that weak communication between teachers and Prevent practitioners also persisted due to a) misconceptions or political leanings and b) dominant public narratives which often ended up undermining good Prevent work. These two will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.



### ***10.2.1 Misconceptions or Political Leanings***

Prevent practitioners interviewed stated that part of their work also consisted of dismantling negative perceptions of the Prevent duty. RPC 3 stated that:

‘Prevent can always be improved which is why I’m hoping that the independent review does carry on because I think it is important to eliminate perceptions much of which are based on gossip and the recycling of examples... that was wrong... however, one has to highlight the many thing things that have gone right...it’s about being proactive, ensuring that the risks ultimately are reduced.’ (RPC3)

‘I think many have come on board and recognize that it is genuinely a safeguarding response to vulnerable people and that hasn’t always been the case (...) but there are some people in HEFE who are still sceptical about it and still do not agree with it...sometimes this is just because people are misinformed...’. (RPC1)

According to Prevent practitioners, Prevent duty reviews are essential for this reason in order to identify what works and what does not. Reviews helped to keep the policy relevant (RPC 3).

However, one teacher questioned the Prevent duty, stating:

‘I think the Prevent duty is a reactive policy...I feel this is an opportunity for the Conservative government to say, we enact policy and this is not done as an overarching radicalisation project but at the moment it is the contemporary usage of radicalisation that denotes Islamic fundamentalism.’ (T 18)

Prevent Coordinator 1 highlighted how in his view, Prevent critics’ arguments were often tied to the culture of safeguarding in the UK, where a lot of data is gathered on the individual. Prevent practitioners also underscored how Prevent critics, educators with an anti-establishment political leaning, were often ideologically opposed to the concept of Prevent /CVE and all that is related with terrorism legislation, those who want to undermine all terrorism legislation, and/or were groups sympathetic to terrorist organisations either way.

‘They [with reference to educators] keep thinking of it as a Conservative policy and they are quite shocked when you tell them that actually it was brought in by a Labour government and they talk about British values and they insist that British values are right-wing. They see it as government. They don’t like the idea of British values. They don’t like having it as a safeguard.’ (RPC 1)

RPC 1 stated that ‘within higher education, educators tended to be more sceptical of Prevent than teachers within secondary schools’. That said, Prevent practitioners (RPC 1, 2, 3, PEO 4, 7) believed that such resistance was down to a question of political positioning as aforementioned as well as a lack of effective communication as to what is at stake if there is no Prevent duty.

‘They don’t understand the severity of the threat from radicalisation for young people whether the influence is online or offline. Educators may underestimate the risk of this happening at their school. Schools are at times too conscious about reputational damage caused to the school as being deemed a school with issues. Decisions are taken by the SMT in terms of training and approach.’ (PEO 4)

### ***10.2.2 Challenging Public Perceptions***

Prevent practitioner interviewees raised an important point in their interviews that part of their work consisted of ‘dismantling perpetuated myths’ around Prevent. They see these ‘myths’ as an extension of right-wing public opinion that has been engendered by right-wing media stories linking radicalisation only with Islamic fundamentalism. Prevent, then, was unavoidably seen in the public collective mind as a direct government response to Islamic terrorism when in fact, the practitioners insist, the policy is entirely neutral. This has concerned and frustrated Prevent practitioners, who state that part of their work consisted of ‘dismantling perpetuated myths’ (RPC 1, PC 3). The first iterations of Prevent did not help the introduction of the Prevent duty in education. A number of Prevent practitioners highlighted how often the Prevent duty was conflated with all the powers of cabinet and the government’s counter-terrorism strategy that has nothing to do with the duty itself. Prevent practitioners voiced their difficulty in trying to promote a neutral policy which counters all forms of extremism, when the government’s own narrative on terrorism at times may undermine their efforts.

PEO 5 recounted how, when she started working for the Home Office in 2017, she too was critical of the government, which she called ‘Islamophobic like most of British society is’. In her view the dominant contemporary usage of radicalisation within the government was often in reference to Islamic fundamentalism. Therefore, despite a growing threat from right-wing terrorism which she (PEO 5) admitted to particularly in North London, the largest security threat to the ‘UK was from Islamic terrorism, and ISIS in particular’ (PC 1, PC 2, RPC 2). Therefore, within education there was a risk that teachers used the Prevent duty according to how they were influenced by the British media, and thus risked their unconscious bias putting a greater focus on Muslim students (T 1).

### **10.3 Changes and Alternatives to the Prevent Duty**

This section focuses on aspects of the Prevent duty teachers and Prevent practitioners would like to see improved or changed. Some participants also offered alternatives to the Prevent duty which, in their view, would work better to appease discriminatory concerns. Teachers and Prevent practitioners alike have highlighted a number of suggestions as to how they would like to see Prevent change in the future. These include (a) curricula changes, (b) pedagogy, (c) dropping political positioning, and (d) more autonomy to Prevent practitioners. These will be discussed separately under the sections below.

#### ***10.3.1 Subject Curricula Changes***

Schools have always been deemed to be forward-thinking institutions and teachers as liberal professionals, sensitised to issues that affect the well-being of a child. However, part of educational development in Britain is responding to real-world events, be it formally as part of the curriculum or informally in class. Education is, in other words, influenced by contextual factors, and this is what happened with the events of 9/11 (Giroux, 2008). However, teachers interviewed contradicted this view, stressing that, certain aspects of Prevent would have still featured in the curriculum even if 9/11 had never occurred (T 7). On the same note, others assumed that, had Prevent never existed, responsibility for counter-radicalisation and/or counter-extremism would

have fallen under the responsibility of PSHCE, ethics or citizenship curricula and that would have probably been at some point sanctioned by government and turned into Ofsted guidance (T 2).

‘It would have organically grown in and become embedded in the PSHCE curriculum because I think Prevent is an integral part of the PSHCE curriculum, whether it is delivered in a stand-alone way or not, that doesn’t matter. It forms part and parcel of what we in school are duty bound to deliver and should deliver.’ (T 2)

A number of teachers suggested a change in some subject curricula (referring to humanities subjects) to allow more time for discussion in the classroom. Good quality lessons mean engaging in debates which opens the door to a lot of questions and ideas (T 6). The teaching of tolerance and respect through the teaching of values was also stressed as a good way to counter radicalisation. Nonetheless, the term British was criticised by the majority of participants, as shall be seen in more detail in Chapter 11.

More focus on media literacy and critical thinking was also underscored, highlighting concerns over students’ 24/7 access to information and social media use, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their concern was that whatever children read on the internet, it became ‘a kind of accepted truth, making it quite difficult to argue or counteract that kind of idea’ (T 9).

Subject curricula changes, such as changing English literature textbooks was also welcomed. Teachers highlighted the importance of having minority texts introduced in school and more exposure to varied literature. Exposure is what made people more aware, and what helped open up students’ minds, offering them a different angle from where to look at the world from (T 1 and T 12). Teachers of English (T1, T 11 and T 12) described how, in the past, there was a greater diversity of texts prior to Michael Gove’s role as education secretary. T 1 pointed out:

‘It was Gove himself that dismissed a lot of American literature and wanted to focus on traditional English literature. So, for example, there is Shakespeare. There is no more John Steinbeck author *Of Mice and Men* and *To Kill A Mocking Bird*, which is a wonderful text for teaching about oppression and equality. We have *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, from the Victorian era. We have *An Inspector Calls*, from the Edwardian era. *An Inspector Calls* is a wonderful text for teaching pupils about equality, trade unions, the welfare state,

suffragettes, the need for a better society. However, in the past we had poetry from different countries, so we would have a range of poems from all kinds of backgrounds. Poems about the consequences of the Vietnam War, poems about the consequences of apartheid, poems about droughts in war torn countries. And we don't have that anymore, unfortunately. For an English teacher, diversity of texts is less than it was five years ago.' (T 1)

In teachers' views, an educational response should involve addressing wider societal, global issues which go beyond the Prevent duty and Britain. Whilst the literature does not address specific subject curricula in relation to the Prevent duty, besides value subjects such as Religion and PSHE, teacher interviewees drew attention to the importance of integrating aspects which expose students to different cultural issues and global challenges in all subject curricula to provide that much-needed educational response to Prevent.

According to the teachers interviewed, in the past there were moves to make the curriculum more multicultural. Now they say it is the opposite, using books which highlight British culture and the British mindset. In the past, educational programmes were in place to teach multiculturalism more explicitly. Teachers believed that even technical subjects could play a role despite academic pressures and the perceived lack of connection with multicultural aspects. T 2, who teaches Science, explained how in that subject area there were possibilities to teach inclusivity:

'If I can talk about a female scientist who is being wronged and treated in a discriminatory way like the discovery of the DNA is a very good example.' (T 2)

'Two days ago, with my year level we were talking about brain chemistry and I talked about pre-frontal lobotomies and I said that that was used by discriminatory male-dominated society to keep women who were looking for things like the right to vote, who were behaving in a way they were not meant to, doing things they were not supposed to, and what did they do? They sectioned bits of their brain right off. They were tortured and treated in a way which is dehumanising.' (T 2)

‘Chemistry is an Arabic word which is *alkimya* which is where chemistry started. So, I’ll talk a bit about that. I’ll ask an Arabic student to say what it means in Arabic, and so on’ (T 2)

A number of studies conducted in multicultural classrooms corroborate Teacher 2’s teaching style, showing how culturally responsive teaching helps to increase students’ sense of belonging (Hoque, 2018; Abacioglu et al., 2020).

### ***10.3.2 Pedagogy***

Teachers viewed cooperative learning through group work and teamwork in class as an essential way to countering and preventing radicalisation. Teachers believed that, through group work, students have the opportunity to learn about each other more closely, their own way of learning, their mannerisms, behaviours, habits, culture, and traditions (Gay, 2002). Every teacher teaching any subject could get students to work together and learn about each other while doing that. Making students work in groups as much as possible and holding them accountable for their own cultural learning is valuable, as students take responsibility for each other (T 4 and T 5).

Teacher interviewees highlighted the importance of making students work with students who would otherwise never come into contact with. In their view this helps create cohesion:

‘It is really important in teaching students being open and enabling people to find methods to work with other people that perhaps get along with normally or they don’t have exposure to normally. So, making sure that learning is not just independent and just an individual endeavour but making sure that they’re working together as a class and as a team.’ (T 5)

### ***10.3.3 More Local Authority Responsibility and Less Police Involvement***

Several participants highlighted how, had there been no Prevent duty, they would have opted for the safeguarding route instead (T10 and PEO 6) However, several Prevent practitioners

highlighted how, without the Prevent network set up as it is today, there would be no mechanism to spot new ideologies or someone at risk.

Prevent practitioners also suggested that more Prevent responsibility should be given to local authorities. More leadership by the local authority was required to manage the Prevent duty better. A more community-led approach rather than police-led was also suggested for Channel. In Prevent practitioners' views, Prevent duty should be like any other Channel protection meeting, having an independent reviewing officer to make it more a safeguarding issue (PC 3) rather than a security police-led matter. In all Prevent practitioners interviewees' view, less police involvement would be beneficial for implementation and understanding that it's like just another safeguarding issue. It should be at the discretion of local authority, as opposed to police.

'I would like it not to be within CONTEST. I would like it to be a separate safeguarding issue, just like child sexual exploitation or gangs or whatever, and I would like it to be just preventing violence in general because there are so many other forms of violence that are statistically much more common such as domestic violence, and what are we doing about that in schools?' (PEO 2)

Teacher interviewees also suggested a stronger community approach and more regular contact with local authorities. Regular visits from local authorities to the school were deemed important, not to check on the school or teachers, but for students to become acquainted with people working for the local authority and vice versa. Teacher 8 highlighted how in the past, police officers, nurses, and social workers visited schools regularly to raise awareness about different issues that are relevant to students. However, this no longer happens.

'Before, the responsibilities were more spread out across the local authority. Now, teachers have to shoulder more responsibilities and have, up to a certain extent, replaced these individuals. Now police and social workers are often called in when the damage is done, causing further trauma to students who are not familiar with them.' (T8)

'If they [police officers/nurses] have a better presence, a better response, just generally, it would help identify the issues and networks sooner. There is a lost sense of community in a way.' (T 5)

### ***10.3.4 Dropping Political Positioning***

Some teachers suggested alternative measures to the Prevent duty which ‘look more at society, at communities, and teach about diversity with less spookiness’ (T 1). In teachers’ views, the language in the Prevent duty was often interpreted as aggressive and still gave the idea of fighting the war terrorism. Teachers 1, 9, 12 stressed how the language around the objectives of the duty needed to be more precise. Teacher 12 also added that policymakers needed to be more sensitive in how they drafted policy.

According to Teacher 7, more evidence-based policies are necessary. The Prevent duty requires a more coherent line of thinking to focus on all forms of extremism, ideological, political and religious, more effectively. Teachers also insisted on the Prevent duty dropping its political positioning and being open to preventing all forms of radicalisation. More careful thinking was required to train teachers according to the risks within their local areas. Teachers also requested more structured debates/training carried out by knowledgeable, confident practitioners who through solid research are able to control the flow of the debate. This would allow extremist ideologies to be discussed constructively in a safe environment (T7 and T12)

Teacher 9 questioned whether educational policies were driven by people who have never worked in education. Literature shows how policies often have to be adapted by teachers who have to juggle between and enact multiple, often conflicting, policies in their professional life (Ball et al., 2012).

‘There will be a new story of children who are not doing well enough in Maths and Science, or that far too many children are being excluded from school, or that children aren’t getting a good enough education in terms of, you know, budgets and economics, and this needs to be included in schools. But it is always discussed by people who have never worked in school, who have no experience in trying to explain these things.’ (T 9)



### ***10.3.5 Changing Earlier Negative Perceptions of Prevent***

The reputational damage of the Prevent strategy (HMG, 2011b) when it was first introduced still affects it today, despite governmental effort in shifting perceptions. However, Prevent coordinators had hoped to erase and challenge past negative perceptions that have led people to perceive Prevent as a policy that spied on people and focused on Muslims (PC 1, RPC 1, PC 2, and PC 3).

Prevent practitioners highlighted how the releasing of Prevent statistics every year by the Home Office has helped Prevent become a more open and transparent duty. The number and type of referrals made has also given a better picture of what the concerns were and from which sector, geographic location and demography referrals came from. Referral figures are published each year by the Home Office promoting positive case studies when appropriate. Prevent practitioners' interviewees hope that people could eventually see a kinder Prevent strategy which was working to protect them. Prevent practitioners believe that Prevent today has made huge steps forward. In their view Prevent is not static but constantly changing and adapting to the current needs (PC 1, RPC 1, PC 2, and PC 3).

### ***10.3.6 Keeping the Duty as it is***

According to fourteen Prevent practitioners and eleven teachers, the Prevent duty currently remains the best policy to counter radicalisation in education. Without Prevent, the information would be lost as there would be no one to take account of that information (RPC 2). As a result, there would be more vulnerable people at risk of radicalisation and, therefore, a bigger threat to society. The only alternative to Prevent was to have an improved and more well-funded social services that would otherwise shoulder the burden of the Prevent duty (PEO 5). Nonetheless, without Prevent, it would be very hard to address radicalisation problems, as schools would have the option of doing nothing about it. In that case, less schools would establish contact, and perhaps more people would be left vulnerable. As a result, there would be more attacks if people were left vulnerable and there were no safeguarding measures in place (PEO 7).

## **Conclusion**

Negative perceptions of the first Prevent strategy have undermined recent work and efforts of the Prevent duty in schools. Furthermore, the lack of and, perhaps, weak communication between teachers and Prevent officials prevents the eliminating of negative perceptions. Whilst teachers appreciate the awareness raised by the duty, they still remain hesitant to referring students to Prevent, fearing undermining their intimate relationships with students. Whilst teachers and Prevent practitioners agreed that Prevent duty was the best measure there was at the moment to counter radicalisation in education, nonetheless, they propose potential changes and alternatives that in their view could help improve policy development.

The next chapter presents the data analysis collected on teachers and Prevent practitioners' perceptions of freedom of speech, and the teaching of FBVs in England and Wales.

## **Chapter 11: Freedom of Speech and Fundamental British Values**

## 11.0 Introduction

Freedom of speech and the teaching of FBVs were two core aspects at the centre of much debate when the Prevent duty became a statutory obligation in 2015, influencing and impacting prevention interventions in the classroom. Using education to promote and transmit a sense of national identity was not a first in Britain. ‘The celebration of Empire Day or of the monarch’s birthday during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in elementary schools is one clear example of this’ (Lowe, 1999:p.232). Yet, the novelty may be found in the politicised nature of these same values associated with Britishness, also used as a means to prevent and counter extremism (Revell and Bryan, 2018).

In the third part of the interview, participants were asked questions about freedom of speech in relation to the Prevent duty and FBVs. This includes participants’ opinions of students’ rights to express views freely in the classroom – no matter what the views are, and their general opinion on the teaching of FBVs.

The data has been analysed using the thematic analysis described in Chapter 7. Findings have been organised under the headings listed below. The heading ‘freedom of speech’ is an identified theme in itself. Under this section, teachers and Prevent practitioners highlight their views in relation to whether the Prevent duty fosters or hinders freedom of speech in the classroom, and whether students may voice their views safely in the educational space schools are meant to provide. Under the heading Fundamental British Values, two themes are discussed highlighting main issues identified by both groups of participants.

- i. Freedom of speech
- ii. Fundamental British Values (FBVs)
  - *Nationalistic overtones to FBVs*
  - *Alternative terms to British*

## 11.1 Freedom of speech

The introduction of the Prevent duty as a statutory obligation on educational institutions and the broad conceptualisations of violent extremism was highly criticised by academics due to its potential negative impact on freedom of speech. A number of academics voiced concern as to how schools, as safe spaces, where students could freely voice their opinions, had now turned into ‘crime prevention environments’ (O’Donnell, 2016), which, according to some, led to a ‘chilling effect’ in schools (Marsden, 2015). Freedom of speech was and remains one of the central pillars within education. The teaching of FBVs as part of a school’s existing duty to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural cohesion (SMSC), have all had an impact on students’ rights to freedom of expression in all levels of education. As highlighted in Chapter 3, the introduction of the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015c) was labelled by some academics as the ‘spying law’ that inhibits people, especially black and Muslim students, from expressing their views on religion or their political persuasions (Kudnani and Hayes, 2018). Whilst perhaps such measures did not have the intention to curtail such rights, their impact has nonetheless been felt.

However, the findings of this study show that both teachers and Prevent practitioners interviewed did not perceive the Prevent duty (HMG, 2015) as a policy that stifles or limits students’ freedom of speech. Both groups of participants claimed that schools were still perceived as safe spaces for students to express their views. That said, participants interviewed admitted that they could not speak on behalf of the students. Nonetheless, they perceived young people as free to voice their opinions. In one participant’s view (PEO 2), young people did not appear to have that awareness of the wider debates about freedom of speech – they were uninhibited. T 9 also stated that, most of the time, young people were too eager and excited to share new things they were doing or experiencing.

‘They simply say it how they feel it. Teenagers are also quite reactive and volatile, and they often use school space to uphold their views especially if they feel they can’t do so at home. Of course, it always depends on the child and the school in question.’ (PEO 2)

Despite criticism in the literature that the Prevent duty is creating ‘a chilling effect’ in schools, all Prevent practitioners and the majority of teachers interviewed dismissed this view, stating that

their students appeared to be unaware of Prevent and voiced their views freely. However, T 12 stated that there remained a significant possibility that Muslim students censor themselves out of fear of Prevent. Teachers were aware of the challenges Prevent presented to their role as educators, where on the one hand they have to encourage debates to learn to appreciate different points of view, whilst on the other hand they have to monitor and shut down potential extremist views. Some teachers did not hesitate to point out that some students might have felt hindered or targeted by the Prevent duty and, therefore, might have potentially censored themselves. According to T 9:

‘It is hard to tell if students are being open or not, or if they keep things to themselves. Whilst students have that free space to talk within schools, if they are being secretive about something it’s hard to get to know what that is.’ (T 9)

Therefore, the risk of the Prevent duty silencing students was still present in schools. Learning more about students, their inner thoughts and what they were up to outside school premises, therefore, has arguably become more difficult.

Prevent practitioners expressed frustration when asked about freedom of speech in relation to the Prevent duty. All fourteen Prevent practitioners interviewed stated categorically that the Prevent duty did not undermine freedom of speech in any way. Several Prevent practitioners explained how, over the last five years, the Home Office had worked hard to dispel past myths, and to demonstrate to the public that citizens are free to express their political viewpoints, even if radical, without sanction, as long as they were not violent:

‘So, if you’re passionate about the environment, if you’re pro-Israel or pro-Palestine the platforms where you are able to express your views are in the appropriate legal means.’ (RPC 3)

Prevent practitioners are of the view that Prevent encouraged and stimulated discussions through the teaching of FBVs, whilst at the same time safeguarding students’ ethno-cultural identities (PC 2 and PC 3). The teaching of FBVs, which includes the values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs (DfE, 2014), has made freedom of speech more robust as it promoted and encouraged debate in the

classroom, the practitioners argue. This is because it provides educational safe spaces and creates opportunities to discuss controversial issues under the supervision of a teacher. Prevent practitioners stated that it was only through discussion that extremist, violent views could be quashed – not through silencing:

‘If such spaces are missing in education, far-right or Islamist groups would feed off people who often feel suppressed and can’t express their views. The government has made the teaching of British values a legal duty to be discussed in the curriculum.’ (PEO 17)

One Prevent practitioner (PC 3), pointed out how the Prevent guidance highlighted that ‘schools should be safe spaces in which children and young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge ideas’ (HMG, 2015:p 11). PC 3 added:

‘Schools should work within British law, but that is not to say that people’s opinions should go quiet. School children are constantly forming ideas about the world around them, and only by discussing them openly can that help.’ (PC 3)

PEO 4 stressed that it was also the responsibility of teachers and the curriculum to teach critical thinking and build resilience amongst students, and to make sure that their right of freedom of expression did not cross over to violent extremist views. Some teachers also perceived FBVs under this lens. One teacher stated how, through the teaching of FBVs, schools could stress the importance of engagement in society, the importance of understanding what it meant to live and be part of a democratic society, to have the right to vote, and how to bring change if wanted (T 2).

However, in the literature, a number of academics (Revell and Bryan, 2018; Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2016; Espinoza, 2016; Farrell, 2016) have criticised FBVs as they harked back onto a discriminatory time in the history of the British Empire. Whilst FBVs were introduced with the intention of encouraging discussion, fostering and building resilience amongst students, their introduction within the curriculum reflected the UK government’s intentions in strengthening British citizenship, as shall be discussed in more detail in the following section, 11.2.

Teachers interviewed highlighted how that right to freedom of speech was often enshrined in the school's ethos and the school culture. A school that promoted a liberal approach had students who felt more confident speaking up than average school students (T 11). All of the teachers interviewed praised the schools where they taught, and described how these schools provided students with a number of possibilities to voice their views through the creation of dedicated activities, such as democracy days, votes for schools (T 1, T 2, and T 5) the students' council (T 7) and school concepts like 'A Place to Be', where students could go and have private informal conversations with a trained counsellor to talk about anything they wanted (T 2).

However, teachers fell short in commenting on their own pedagogics and the way they structured and guided discussions in the classrooms. Some teachers teaching technical subjects like Maths (T 4) and Business studies (T 8) highlighted issues of performativity and time pressure, which limited time for discussions falling outside subject curriculum. Prevent practitioners also highlighted how aspects of teacher performativity and examination pressures were determining factors which limited students' freedom of speech in the classroom:

'They [with reference to teachers] have to be on topic. If they have a discussion on Prevent, then yes. Academics are always concerned about any policy that is brought in by the government and are very concerned by anything they feel will limit freedom of speech, because this is a very important element of academia, that people say and explore what they want.' (PEO 8)

PEO 6 highlighted how certain religious schools in England were less open to dialogue. He described how, in large Jewish Orthodox communities, he found resistance to discussions about terrorism. Within some of these communities there appeared to be a general fixed mindset that terrorism issues did not concern them as they considered themselves to be the victims of antisemitism and terrorism, and therefore concluded that their own community did not need raising awareness about the matter. As a result, such conservative schools limited the exploration of such topics and shut down that educational space for certain discussions to take place.

Whilst all participants in the study agreed that shutting down conversations in education was not an option, teachers were aware that some students' fear of being targeted by policies like the Prevent duty was possible, and therefore, could still lead to students self-censoring.



PC 2 stressed the important role PEOs play within local authorities in establishing contact with primary and secondary school senior management and teachers, to raise awareness and train teachers to address sensitive and controversial subjects with students. As highlighted in chapter 9, recruitment of PEOs within local authorities depended on the funding allocated to each local authority which was determined by the perceived community risks.

## **11.2 Fundamental British Values**

The Government's promotion of FBVs through the anti-extremism policy of Prevent was perceived as an opportunity for schools to trigger much needed discussions around nationhood, identity and citizenship, marking a clear departure from multiculturalism to a more assimilationist approach (Joppke, 2014). All teachers were bound by the Teachers Standards to uphold FBVs professionally and privately (DfE, 2012). Nonetheless, teachers questioned how free, transparent, and open FBV discussions were, considering that 'Britishness' lay at the heart of those same values (Panjwani, 2016; Maylor, 2016; Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012).

In the last two decades, the aspect of Britishness has taken centre stage within political discourse. Evidence of this are the various speeches by former British leaders, such as Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and David Cameron, who shared similar views in response to current challenges, such as immigration, integration, and terrorism. However, David Cameron's speech in Munich 2011 which targeted minority ethnic youth, particularly Muslims, implied that 'the weakening of our collective identity' was the result of minority ethnic youth who lived segregated from the mainstream. His discourse also inferred a rather racist discourse implying that it was natural for people to prefer 'to be with their own kind' (Wade, 2005:p.1293) .

The incorporation of FBVs in the Prevent strategy (HMG, 2011) highlighted the politicised nature of these values associated with Britishness, and what the values stood for. In Prevent, extremism was defined as 'the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs' (HMG, 2011). Using British values as a means to prevent violent extremism highlighted, 'a perennial issue of how the state balances actions to protect collective security with individuals' liberty to

think and say what they want’ (Jerome and Elwick, 2020:p.225 ). Whether or not the policy strikes the right balance was unlikely to be settled by facts alone as it generates strong emotions and is a divisive public issue.

However, this sense of Britishness and nationhood has slowly crept into education as well. According to PEO 1, it was former education secretary Michael Gove’s influence which has led to this. Michael Gove’s publication of *Celsius 7/7* and his influence in the Extremism Taskforce (Hasan, 2014) played a part in the introduction of FBVs in schools. Since the introduction of the Prevent Strategy in 2011, the concept of FBVs ‘was pushed to the fore as the focus for anti-extremism and as a symbol of resistance against violence and terror’ (Revell and Bryan, 2018:p.11). Since June 2015, schools have been obliged by law to ‘actively promote’ British values, and have clear strategies as to how they embed these values and show how their work with pupils has been effective in doing so.

Some teachers and Prevent practitioner interviewees were positive about the teaching of FBVs in secondary schools and insisted that the word ‘British’ should be kept. They stressed that, whilst other countries might also share these same values, there are other countries around the world which were not democracies and did not entirely share these values.

However, FBVs are not controversial simply for the title they carry, but more for what they stand for. In the last section of the interview, all participants were asked what they understood by FBVs and the strategies they used to promote them in the classroom. The data collected in the study shows that, while there was general support by both groups of participants as to the values identified by the government, there was disagreement in the way the values had been framed, presented, and promoted. Teachers were bound to uphold these values as promoted by government and as listed in the Teachers’ Standards. Yet, teachers had distinct views with regard to how these values were being promoted and presented within secondary education. As a result, analysis of the data collected in schools with teachers and Prevent practitioners was analysed against this backdrop.

The FBVs listed in the Teachers’ Standards 2013 and 2014 were not accompanied by any definitions. This gave teachers enough flexibility to teach their interpretation of the values, as long as they ensured ‘that personal beliefs [were] not expressed in ways which exploit pupils’

vulnerability or might lead them to break the law’ (DfE, 2011). On the other hand, Prevent practitioners highlighted how organisations in receipt of public money had a role to play in supporting the development of students’ mindsets in terms of preparing them beyond academic qualifications. In their view, students require a better understanding of how they should behave in society and the modern challenges that lie ahead of them. Therefore, they believe it is the duty of educators to teach FBVs. It is extremely important for communities to try to uphold and demonstrate those values (PC 1, RPC 1, and RPC 2). One Prevent practitioner stated that, whilst some educators are not confident in having conversations on these issues, it is part of their role to upskill young learners about important standards and values in life (RPC 3).

### ***11.2.1 Nationalistic Overtones to Fundamental British Values***

The inclusion of FBVs in the curriculum was perceived by a number of academics (Lockley-Scott, 2019; Crawford, 2017; Farrell, 2016; Keddie, 2013) as a move to reinforce political values through a subtle use of political discourse in education. The government’s fear of loss or weakened British values by ethnic communities in Britain has led to the promotion of FBVs within education. However, the teaching of FBVs in schools implies that there is a universal agreement in respect of the meaning of values and concepts, such as democracy, rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, and individual liberty. According to Revell and Bryan (2018) teachers’ compliance was key in the promotion of FBVs.

The findings in the study highlight how teacher interviewees strongly feel that the values taught in school should cover the ‘fundamental values of diversity and inclusion of a Britain that we live in and want to live in’(T2). This was contrary to what they felt the UK government was doing, ‘bordering on a kind of England that no longer exists’ (T 1). Furthermore, the dominant political narratives in right-wing media went against the values that were meant to be taught in schools. Issues such as migration and Brexit further highlighted the negative feelings felt amongst the population (T 1, T 5, and T 11). Teacher interviewees made reference to how politicians themselves tended to contradict the same values which they promote, stating that:

‘FBVs are not reflected by authority figures who describe themselves as being leaders of the British people.’ (T 1)

‘The phrase Fundamental British Values has been poisoned, undermined and muddled by the highest authority figures.’ (T 11)

However, teacher interviewees expressed how they as teachers felt professionally duty-bound to counter negative discourses of prominent leaders.

‘Right wing media outlets sow division and exclude citizens from their own countries, and encourage people to turn against one another because of a different skin colour or religion.’ (T 1)

‘Whilst prominent leaders sow division, teachers need to teach to unite and push forward an agenda of kindness. Society is not doing that enough. When we see the US and the rise of the far-right in Europe, and countries have dictatorships and civil wars ...we should teach young people the values of kindness and humanity.’ (T 1)

Some teacher interviewees felt that the idea of ‘Making Britain Great Again’, did not embrace the multicultural population but rather went against integration and cohesion (T 1). Teachers perceived it as a government’s nationalistic approach favouring assimilation. This view was also echoed by PEO 2, who stressed the importance of students’ understanding and appreciating the beauty of multiculturalism. Teachers and Prevent practitioners, who are both agents of the state, spoke favourably about multicultural Britain, and the beauty lying in the variety of its people (T 2, PEO 1). In their view, multiculturalism is one of the key strengths of the UK and therefore should not be undermined. Yet, the portrayal of an imperial Britain and media rhetoric on refugees and Brexit did not help promote this (PEO 2).

The only two Muslim teacher participants in this study, T 7 and T 12, were particularly critical of FBVs. They stressed how FBVs had developed from Britain’s own historical past of colonialism and imperialism. T 12 expressed how a lack of acknowledgment of Britain’s violent colonial past made it hard for her as a teacher to create critical discussions in the classroom, as the values were a whitewashing of history. T 12, as well as other teachers, questioned how they could have critical discussions when they were obliged by law to comply and uphold FBVs.

Whilst T 12, like the rest of the teachers, agreed with the teaching of the values, she stressed that the notion of Britishness was really problematic because, in her view, the history of British values was also problematic. In linking it with the Prevent strategy (HMG, 2011b), she argued that:

‘British values were derived from British colonial perceptions of ethics, of manners, of greatness, of citizenship and civilisation. Yet, these same values, at the same time, systematically oppress the people Prevent attacks. So, the Middle Eastern, the Asians, the West Africans. The history of it is deep rooted in oppression and you’re using it to gauge if we’re acting up in your country and that’s the problem to me. It’s like we’re being monitored constantly. So yes, you can tell me how the far-right, white people are also being problematic, but they can blend into society very easily. We will always stand out.’ (T 12)

Such a perception highlights the importance of counter-narratives in ‘recognising whiteness as a form of property that offers to white persons and their interests various rights and privileges that include the right to disposition, the right to use and enjoy and the right to exclude’ (Brown, 2006:p. 329).

PEO 2 agreed with T 12’s viewpoint, stating that, as a former teacher herself, she too felt that these values could be perceived by foreigners as ‘post-colonial – these are our values, we have invented them’. PEO 2 explained how she used to teach FBVs in a more inclusive fashion, researching values of different nationalities and which value traits they were known for. Moreover, she used to use role-playing to practise the values themselves, for example, voting in a democracy. Yet, as a civil servant, she questioned whether the government’s real intention was that of promoting the notion of Britishness.

PEOs 7 and 8, however, argued the word British should be kept in FBVs. In their view, it was very important, particularly for young people, to feel proud to be British. British values gave schools the opportunity to help young people feel positive about living in Britain, providing them with that sense of belonging. In their view, education twenty years ago was never perceived as a political weapon, but that it is now.

‘In the 1970s and 1980s one of the UK’s main problems was that racism made people feel not British, not included. So, the idea of a British identity being dealt with in school is

positive. Teachers are given leeway how to interpret that and can teach it how they like, which makes it a nice exercise for teachers to do so in practice. Identity crisis can be a social factor which may create vulnerability.’ (PEO 7)

However, Gramsci (1971) and Hooks (1994) contradict, Prevent Education Officer 7 and 8 views, as they argue that education has long been conceived as a political instrument and schools as ‘sites for disseminating or reproducing the correct ideology’ (Blacker, 2007:p.85). This implies that the government was using education to promote not just an agenda but an ideology.

The promotion of FBVs in education stresses the assimilationist approach taken by the government. This was a focus of criticism in existing literature on Prevent due to concerns that ‘it lends itself to the stigmatisation and pathologisation of groups of students or sets of perspectives that are deemed to be somehow less British’ (Richardson, 2015 ; Winter and Mills, 2018 as cited in; Busher et al., 2019:p.442). In this regard, teacher participants also perceived FBVs to be a political opportunity, a political posturing by the UK government (T 7):

‘I think there are some people in society who see the over-progressiveness of values in media as pushing the pendulum in the opposite way, and we don’t want to be doing that because ultimately we want to make sure that people are progressive in their lines of thinking, in their values, in their ideologies, without hitting them on their head as otherwise it might actually go the opposite way.’ (T 7)

In teachers’ views, the mandatory teaching of FBVs itself was a clear demonstration of the Conservative government’s ‘socio-political stance’ (T 2) and ‘a shift’ from a multicultural policy to a more assimilationist, security-type of policy in education (T9):

‘Our government or successive governments would pin the values to this idea of Western liberalism, so it would be, being able to exist in a safe way and having fundamental rights for freedoms and you know, rights associated with democracy.’ (T 9)

In their view, the framing of FBVs embedded in the school curriculum could potentially lead to polarisation or possible marginalisation of students who were new immigrants, or children of

immigrants. Teacher 9 also suggests that FBVs should be tempered according to the school demographics:

‘In areas in London, with very mixed intakes of children, and children who struggle sometimes to identify with a particular group or with a particular culture or ethnic background, there, the word British can be removed. But in other parts of the country, where you still got an intake that is very much predominantly British (English, Scottish or Welsh), then the word British would hold.’ (T 9)

According to T 2 and T 5, Britain in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should not be perceived as identifying with one particular people. Britain today is multicultural and that aspect should be preserved and celebrated (T 5):

‘Some groups of students may feel undermined by British values, because of what it is called and how it is presented, even though it shouldn’t be like that. I do think there are students that are more left out of school generally because of the learning abilities. So, I’m talking about more vulnerable students, more vulnerable groups, and certainly students who have English as a foreign language or students with disabilities.’ (T 5)

T 5 also stated that the term British gave the impression that ‘British values were those tokenistic values tied to the Royal Family, drinking tea and fair people.’ Prevent practitioners criticised schools who presented the FBVs in that way as they undermined the objective of what the values stood for. T 7 stressed that it was pluralist societies who ultimately pushed for democracy, as they knew that having the will of people is positive:

‘Pluralist values push the idea of individual freedoms, as people should be able to do what they want without harming others. Pluralist values push the idea of tolerance and respect. I would be more than happy with such a term...The teacher’s job is to succinctly and distinctly identify what we mean by democracy (as this is not found everywhere).’ (T 7)

The term ‘British’ was also perceived by T1, T11 and T12 as problematic, as it created an ‘us versus them’ binary which puts people against each other. ‘It told individuals with a migrant heritage as well as foreigners residing in Britain that white Brits are better because we have these

values’... when, in reality, lots of people share these same values’ (T1). T 11 also stated that ‘if a nation did not hold these values, plenty of other nations held these values.’ The values of democracy, rule of law, and tolerance are in fact values which are shared by several other Western democracies whose values were enshrined in their constitution (Kymlicka, 2010). In teachers’ views, the teaching of British values could play into the hands of far-right groups by ‘propagating notions of fixed and definable cultural boundaries that could be used to mark out and marginalise those deemed un-British or less British, echoing discussions elsewhere in the critical literature on the promotion of Fundamental British Values’ (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2016:p.43).

Most teachers were of the view that discourse ‘promoting British values’ was conflicting and not beneficial for open, critical discussion with students. In the literature, O’Donnell is of the same view, stressing that ‘FBVs do not allow for or invite dissent or debate over these and alternative ethical and political concepts, since extremism itself is defined negatively and ambiguously as “vocal or active opposition to FBVs”’ (O’Donnell, 2016a:p.4).

According to participants, the monolithic nature of the values is problematic, as the values had nothing specifically British about them. T 12 claimed that calling them British was ‘superior’, ‘arrogant’, and a ‘patronisation of white, middle-aged men’ (T 12). Furthermore, these values were being presented as a measure to prevent extremism. Teacher participants voiced their scepticism as to how they were expected to organise and structure critical discussions when the policy framework was conflicted with schools’ diversity values. This view was echoed by both the majority of teachers and Prevent practitioners who argued that they would either opt for other terms or drop the term ‘British’ altogether in order to avoid creating conflicts in the classroom.

The only two Muslim teacher participants, T 7 and T 12, were those who mostly stressed the importance of teaching students the less rosy parts of Britain’s historical past. T 12 highlighted how presenting true facts and both sides of the story had the ability to develop students’ critical thinking skills, as well as do justice to those communities who have been ‘othered’ or undermined.

T12 questions how these values would obtain credibility in all her students’ eyes. T 10 highlighted how students in her class, hailing from different ethnic groups, questioned the term ‘British’ during discussions on citizenship and the issuing of passports. Whilst the term ‘British’ might not create hostility as such, it may nonetheless contribute to a sense of confusion. Several students in England



were immigrants or had family living in other countries. FBVs could therefore put teachers in a difficult position sometimes (T 10).

Several other teacher participants were put off by the term 'British' as it sounded too conservative, too right-wing, or too patronising, despite the fact that the values were a list of individual liberties. In their view, a significant number of students might have been alienated by the terminology because they did not necessarily identify with being British, especially since the UK's society was multicultural (PC 3).

This highlights how minority ethnic groups' perceptions of FBVs vary. This supports Panjwan's (2016) findings on Muslim teachers' concern regarding Prevent's potential to alienate and transform their role into government watchdogs. Elton-Chalcraft et al. (2016) also concluded that linking FBVs to Prevent politicised the teaching profession and consequently positioned teachers as state instruments of surveillance. Crawford (2017) argued that FBVs supported a nationalistic UK narrative which, instead of being challenged, was left to creep further into educational institutions. In her view, if the UK government aimed to build resilience in the younger generation through FBVs, it had to do so by calling on the collective sense of self, engage in 'professional dialogue, critique and discussions' (Crawford, 2017:p.202) and a transparent and honest understanding of national history (Harris, 2017).

Teaching students critical thinking skills or how to critically assess what they read or see on television is challenging. Teacher participants stated more than once that, in their view, the Prevent duty failed to 'educate' teachers how to encourage such debates with young people (T 6, T 10, T 11, and T 13) Undoubtedly, more teacher training is required in teaching FBVs. Whilst Prevent practitioners highlighted the ample resources teachers had at their disposal to teach FBVs, however, literature highlights how such resources lacked critical dimension or were tokenistic, providing explanations which were described as 'simplistic, jingoistic and which misrepresent the full meaning of the values' (Revell and Bryan, 2018:p.14). Therefore, it is not just a question of being interested and looking for available information and resources.

Teacher participants also agreed that preventive narratives had to be pushed forward when extremist views were voiced. Yet, preventive narratives have to be readily available to use if the need arises. Narratives have to be inclusive and sensitive towards everyone. Teachers also stressed

how adequate training in FBVs would help them improve their level of knowledge on the values, increase their confidence in addressing complex discussions, and help them better structure discussions to guide students become more critical in the way they assess information and challenge ideas. Teachers highlighted that managing complex discussions required time and skills, both of which were lacking in their profession.

### ***11.2.2 Alternative Terms to British***

According to this study, one of the main obstacles facing FBVs is the term ‘British’. FBVs caused concern amongst participants as the term ‘British’, as seen in the previous section, can denote nationalistic and white privilege overtones. Out of 27 participants, nine teachers and six Prevent practitioners did not agree with the inclusion of the term ‘British’, as it caused them discomfort. PEO 3 thought that ‘there is good intention behind it and can be empowering but the way it is currently written could put people off’. In her view, FBVs could be difficult for schools to understand and teach to children. The term ‘British’ is value-laden and renders an image of what Britain used to stand for in the past. Moreover, the stress on ‘British’ implicitly assumes that minority ethnic communities do not share these same liberal values, leading the government to take on a more assimilationist approach to integration. Teacher interviewees who disagreed with the term ‘British’, have opted to use the following alternatives: human values, (T 1 and T 5), values that unite us (T 1), pluralist values (T 7), fundamental moral values (T 7), community values (T 4) and fundamental humanitarian values (T 10)

Only four teachers (T 5, T 6, T 9, and T 13) felt comfortable calling these values ‘British’. These teachers felt that, since their students lived in Britain, they had the responsibility to teach them their rights and obligations of living in this country. Since values were not the same in all countries of the world, FBVs could not be interpreted as human values or European values (PEO 3):

‘We have Chinese children who do not come from a background where democracy is encouraged. We have French children who come in and would have never been allowed to wear their hijab in school because of *laïcité*.’<sup>4</sup> (PEO 3)

Prevent practitioners also did not agree between themselves on what to call these values. Out of fourteen Prevent practitioners, only eight insisted on the importance of using the term ‘British’. Six Prevent practitioners felt that the term ‘British’ was ‘a poor choice of words’ (PEO 1). In their view, other terms such as ‘human values’ (PC 1), just ‘values’ (PEO 1) ‘multipurpose’ (PEO 4), ‘universal or shared values’ (PEO 6) and the ‘UN Declaration of Human Rights’ (PC 2) would suit better and create less hostility.

PC 2 also understood the unease with the term ‘British’ but, similar to PEO 3, he argued that FBVs could not be called human or universal values as they were not the same everywhere. In his view:

‘Mutual respect and tolerance varied from place to place. ‘Democracy may be a universal value for people, but it was not for all governments around the world. Countries like Saudi Arabia, or even France, did not share the same exact values’. (PC2)

Furthermore, he claimed that, everything boiled down to the way these values were presented and explored. Gaining these values marked the journey Britain had gone through in time, and also as an empire (PC 2):

‘There is a unique British history that needs to be explored, about our parliamentary system and the focus on tolerance which is captured differently from other parts of the world.’ (PC 2)

PC 1 made reference to how some Muslim schools were outperforming British comprehensive schools in this regard. Muslim schools, who have disparate communities, have also opted to keep the term ‘British’ PC 1 revealed how several Muslim schools had kept the term ‘British’ in teaching FBVs in order to unify the school population and give them a sense of ownership. Yet,

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<sup>4</sup> *Laïcité* means secularity in French and can be defined as the neutrality of the state towards religious beliefs. It means that religious and public spheres should be kept separate. In the public sphere, the implications are that each individual should appear as a simple citizen who is equal to all other citizens, devoid of ethnic, religious, or other particularities.

this sense of ownership that PC 1 talked about in the interview could also be what Mythen et al. call a ‘performance of safety’ (2009:p.747), highlighting how the creation of Muslims as a ‘suspect community’ has impacted Muslims in society. However, in order to confirm such a view more research is required with Muslim schools in England.

PEO 3 also asserted that if FBVs were called human values, they may be perceived as a ‘white saviour complex.’

‘If one steps out of the UK, they will not find the same values. The idea of international human values is misleading and almost disrespectful to other cultures. It is not a patriotic act. It is not a move to make people feel super British. These values act like rules and regulations that a person will have to follow when residing in Britain. It provides people with the tools to guide their stay in Britain.’ (PEO 3)

According to PEO 4, these were the values every “decent human being should live by”. However, PC 3, and PEO 4, both opted to remove the term ‘British’ as in their view, it made the values contentious and put off people, because so many different ethnicities lived in the UK, and not everybody identified with being British despite living in the UK. Framing these values under the concept of Britishness was problematic as it whitewashes, suggesting that only white, British values were acceptable, setting themselves up against ethnic minority values. Nonetheless, that did not make them any less of a person. The impact was the same, but in doing so one would avoid controversy.

‘Calling them British values doesn’t add anything and may create distinctions and could potentially contribute to feelings of isolation or marginalisation.’ (PEO6)

T 6 agrees with the teaching of FBVs as they currently stand. In his school, he teaches FBVs as ‘D’ standing for Democracy, ‘L’ for rule of law, ‘U’ for universal right, ‘E’ for equal opportunities, ‘S’ sense of community, tolerance and respect, and sovereignty of crown and parliament. In his view this is good as it links in with what is done in PSHE and citizenship (T 6). That said, T 9 stressed that he would teach the values as British depending on the school context in which he taught. Another stated that the term ‘British’ was, in her view, ‘rather, somewhat meaningless’ (T

13). However, these four teachers neglected to elucidate what they taught the term ‘British’ entailed.

PC 1 provided an example of how a Prevent team in Birmingham promoted FBVs using UNICEF’s Convention on the Rights of the Child. In using this United Nations children’s agency’s statement, they taught about the values to around 500 schools in Birmingham. This teaches children about their rights, and it has proved to be a powerful way of instilling values around human rights and equality in young people. In his view, this embraced whole school populations. PC 2 also preferred using an alternative text, in his case, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), to appease divergent views. However, he had no problem with calling the values British:

‘When we’re using this term, it’s not saying that these values are uniquely British and only important in Britain. It’s not saying that at all but it’s saying that those values are important to the vast majority of people in Britain.’ (PC 2)

In his view, using the UDHR instead of FBVs would diminish people’s resistance to it. Hostility was one of the most common reasons provided by both groups of participants to opt for other terms than ‘British’. Having FBVs at the heart of the definition of extremism may have also acted as a proxy and signalled a hostility to difference. However, according to one Prevent practitioner, the government’s intention was not to create hostility or to say that British values are better than other values. The implementation of FBVs was very different from what people may have initially thought (RPC 2).

Considering all the nuanced arguments outlined in this section, implementing FBVs has undoubtedly been a big challenge for schools. Teacher participants described how FBVs, like the Prevent duty itself, have been embedded in the curriculum as an add-on to PSHE and/or RE lessons. Doing so could be an ‘inorganic, clunky way of embedding it, and can be a hinderance for teachers’ (PEO 6).

## Conclusion

This chapter has shed light on whether, since the introduction of the Prevent duty in education, schools can still be perceived as safe spaces, and whether students still feel free to voice their views. Teachers and Prevent practitioners dismissed Prevent having a ‘chilling effect’ on the school in which they taught. According to teachers, students still felt free and eager to share their views. With Prevent duty in force, teachers had to constantly wear two different hats, that of encouraging discussions, whilst at the same time monitoring for potential extremist views. Prevent practitioners highlighted how many students did not even know about Prevent. Whilst perceptions of and knowledge about the duty may vary from one student to the other, in most participants’ views freedom of speech was not being undermined by Prevent.

In their majority, teacher interviewees were very confident in their school practices and the preservation of such a freedom. Nonetheless, teachers did not exclude the possibility of breaches to the undermining of freedom of expression in other schools where teachers may hold biased views. However, such findings should be further corroborated by studies carried out with students in secondary schools.

Since there is no definition as to what being British entails according to the UK government, participants of this study have presented conflicting views in relation to FBVs, with the majority of participants stating that framing the values as ‘British’ was problematic as not all students would relate to ‘British’ element in the values as presented by the UK government in the Prevent Duty. Furthermore, the inclusion of the FBVs in the definition of extremism further stresses the ‘us versus them’ binary potentially targeting those who oppose the values but are not violent. Whilst the values are inherently well-intentioned, framing them as British essentialises white frames and hints at potential right-wing, ideological apparatuses operating in schools.

## **Chapter 12: Discussion of Results**

## 12.0 Discussion

Since the introduction of the Prevent duty in 2015, a lot of research has been conducted at all levels of education, with both teachers and students. Much of the research conducted in Britain focused on the impact of Prevent in schools, its enactment and/or its implications. However, despite the research progress made in this area, still little was known about what teachers understand by the concept of radicalisation. This study's objective was to explore and understand teachers' and Prevent practitioners' conceptualisations of radicalisation and how their understanding of radicalisation influenced the preventive measures they adopted within their professional setting, in this case, education. The study aimed to address issues which went beyond teachers' responsibilities in relation to the Prevent duty. Through the application of theory, this study has attempted to highlight how teachers, despite being subjects of the state, can through their own agency interpret and enact policies as they deem fit and push forward agendas which fit their own interpretative framework. Teachers' as subjectivated individuals are able to take charge and use agency to affect policy change through the curriculum or through other means available to them within their context. Therefore, teachers, despite being communicators of the state, are not entirely bound by the state as subjects. Teachers liberate themselves once they become 'subjectivated' and use that freedom to act. The following were the study's main research questions:

1. How do teachers in secondary schools and Prevent practitioners in England conceptualise radicalisation in education?
2. How do teachers' interpretation of radicalisation influence their prevention methods when teaching, and how do teachers' meet Prevent practitioners' expectations when implementing the Prevent duty?

The study drew upon the qualitative experiences of thirteen teachers, teaching different subjects in comprehensive secondary schools across England and fourteen Prevent practitioners (Prevent Education Officers, Prevent Coordinators and Regional Prevent Coordinators) working with educational institutions, mainly secondary schools across England.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prevent practitioners interviewed also worked with primary schools, higher and further education and universities across England and Wales.



Focus was placed on teachers' responsibilities as subjects of the state and how through 'subjectification' of the self, teachers employ agency to adapt and change preventing radicalisation measures at classroom level through selective use of discourse, use of subject curriculum, and the application of culturally responsive pedagogies. The study also explored teachers' implementation of the Prevent duty. Prevent practitioners acted as a comparison group. Their views were necessary to see whether their expectations of teachers implementing the Prevent duty were being met. Such a comparison helped to identify possible gaps in Prevent practices applied by teachers.

The literature on the application and implementation of preventing violent extremism efforts in schools is underdeveloped (Aly et al., 2014:p.19). It is only recently that researchers like Busher et al. (2019) and Busher & Jerome (2020) have looked more closely at Prevent policy enactment by educators at all levels. Recent studies (Elwick and Jerome, 2019) have also looked at teachers' agency and the way they may influence, alter, and/or shape Prevent's work in school.

This research study's objective aimed to fill this gap in the literature and to provide more insight about how teachers' understanding of radicalisation influences the way in which they enact the Prevent duty in the classroom, not only through the Prevent duty but beyond, through their own subjectification and their ability to take action and respond to such measures through their own interpretative framework. So far, similar research looking into how teachers respond to preventing radicalisation efforts in schools outside the UK has been conducted in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands (Mattson, 2018; Leeman and Wardekker, 2013; Parker et al., 2020; Weert and Eijkman, 2021) applying different theories and methods.

The main findings of the study will be discussed in the following order:

- i) The study's relevance and its academic contribution to the field
- ii) The academic impact
- iii) The policy and practitioner impact
- iv) The policy and practitioner implications
- v) Future research

## 12.1 Academic Contribution

Through the application of Althusser's theory of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) and Butlers' concept of subjectification, which is the process where one becomes a subject (further extending Foucault's concept of subjectification), the study attempts to highlight how, despite being state subjects and communicators of the state, teachers may still affect policy change when this is deemed necessary and beneficial for students. The Prevent duty acting as a performative goes against the main tenants of education which teachers strive for. Consequently, through subjectification of the self, teachers may use agency and enact policy according to their own interpretative framework.

This study also addressed the concept of teachers' agency (Priestley et al., 2015) and has found that teachers frame Prevent through their own interpretative framework. Elwick and Jerome's (2019) study also supports this view, highlighting that teachers exercise agency to interpret and enact policy. However, whilst Elwick and Jerome stress the importance of contextual factors surrounding the teacher, this study focuses on the power that lies within the teachers in freeing themselves from performative policies that perpetuate state ideologies. Teachers' understanding of the social ecology within which they teach is more profound than that of Prevent practitioners, who are there to ascertain that schools fulfil their Prevent duties. Prevent practitioners' views are valuable as, through their perspective, a more comprehensive picture can be built of what is happening on the ground in schools. Whilst teachers may be in a better position than Prevent practitioners to know what may work in school contexts, Prevent practitioners are more knowledgeable about the processes of radicalisation and the stated aims of Prevent in relation to education. The combination of both narratives provides valuable information which could prove useful to enhance our understanding of preventing radicalisation practices within education. Consequently, the study also identifies areas where synergies between these two groups can be improved to benefit from each other's competencies.

The study set out by asking teachers and Prevent practitioners what they understand by the term 'radicalisation'. Despite the increase in research conducted on countering radicalisation in education, so far, little is known about teachers' own conceptualisations of radicalisation. Generally, teachers do not have specialist knowledge about radicalisation and, therefore, most of their acquired knowledge about this concept is obtained through local and international news

reporting of terrorist or terror-related events, online media and/or through discussions with family and friends. However, since 2015, the UK government has made teachers responsible for safeguarding students from the threats of radicalisation and extremism. This implies monitoring and referring students who appear to be at risk of radicalisation. However, the study reveals that the basic Prevent training provided to teachers, often online, does not meet all teachers' needs in providing an educational response to students. They mostly lack knowledge about radicalisation and the pedagogical skills to teach in a way that may prevent one of their students falling prey to extremist groups, resulting in a lack of confidence and complacency. Therefore, through an enquiry of teachers' understanding of the concept of radicalisation, the study identified how teachers believed radicalisation should be best countered in education, reflected through actions they took in the classroom. The same question was also repeated with Prevent practitioners, whose role in education is to act as a bridge to help schools implement the Prevent duty through training, workshops, or advice on potential referrals. In this study, Prevent practitioners act as a comparison group to identify whether their expectations regarding Prevent work by teachers in schools is being met. Therefore, this study examines the relationship between the preventive work of teachers in the classroom and the security work of Prevent practitioners within education and the potential of consolidating and strengthening both areas.

Furthermore, the study also analysed the discourse, behaviours, and/or actions used or mentioned in participants' narratives. Whilst this study uses thematic analysis to assess data, the type of discourse used and examples of actions taken by participants are of value as these have a 'performative value' which impacts educational contexts. Within the data, tension is noticeable between teachers' and Prevent practitioners' narratives. Security-driven discourses used by Prevent practitioners drastically contrast with teachers' inclusive/integrationist type of discourse, which celebrates diversity and multiculturalism. This may highlight other underlying tensions with PVE in British education. Balancing between prevention policies and cohesion/integration policies within education is not straightforward and leaves fundamental questions unanswered as they go beyond the focus of this study.

## 12.2 Academic Impact

This study's findings have contributed to Prevent literature by broadening the perspectives on preventing radicalisation policy in education, an area which remains empirically understudied. This research builds upon previous studies conducted in the field of the prevention of radicalisation in education mainly focusing on the Prevent duty in England and Wales (Busher et al., 2019; Busher et al., 2017; Busher and Jerome, 2020; Thomas, 2015a; 2016a; 2020; Elwick and Jerome, 2019; Elwick, 2019; Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012; Jerome and Elwick, 2020; Jerome et al., 2019; Lewis, 2020; Heath-Kelly, 2012; 2017; O'Donnell, 2016; Moffat and Gerard, 2019; Taylor and Soni, 2017; McGlynn and McDaid, 2019; Spiller et al., 2018; O'Toole et al., 2016; O'Toole et al., 2012; Lakhani, 2020; 2021) and studies on CVE and/or PVE practices in education conducted both in the UK (Gearon, 2018; Jerome and Elwick, 2020; Walker, 2019; Dourdie, 2016; Davies, 2008; 2016; 2018a; 2018b) and other countries in Europe, such as Denmark (Parker et al., 2020; Lindekilde, 2012a; Lindekilde, 2012b; Parker and Lindekilde, 2020), Sweden (Mattson, 2018; 2019; Mattsson and Saljo, 2018), Norway (Sjoen and Jore, 2019; Sjoen and Mattson, 2019), and the Netherlands (van de Weert and Eijkman, 2021; Leeman and Wardekker, 2013; van San et al., 2013; Sieckelinck, 2016).

Empirical research studies conducted with secondary school teachers in England and Wales in the last six years – since the implementation of the Prevent duty – have shed light on how these teachers have reacted to and enacted the Prevent duty (Busher et al., 2017; Busher et al., 2019; Busher and Jerome, 2020; Elwick and Jerome, 2019; Jerome and Elwick, 2020; Lakhani, 2020; Lakhani and James, 2021). Whilst these studies have focused more on the implementation of the Prevent duty, little is known about what teachers understand by the concept of radicalisation and how their understanding influences the choices they make in the classroom.

The findings of this empirical research study focus on a tension within the data that may have significant implications for PVE in education in relation to initial teacher training and continuous professional development for teachers in terms of discourse, handling complex discussions, curriculum use, and teachers' positionality in the classroom. Furthermore, it sheds light on the Prevent duty acting as a performative and its impact on students and Muslim teachers, as well as the need to build relationships and stronger communication between schools and local Prevent teams.

The following five sub-sections will highlight how this study's findings impact academic research:

- a) Conceptualisations of radicalisation
- b) Perceptions of Prevent
- c) Preventing all forms of extremism
- d) Weak communication
- e) Fundamental British Values

***a) Conceptualisation of radicalisation in education***

The events of 9/11 have led to a complete redefinition of the concept of radicalisation within education. Findings show how teachers conceptualise radicalisation in a post-9/11 scenario and use 'war on terror' discourse to provide further explanations. No teacher hinted at non-violent radicalisation leading to reform or change. Only one Prevent practitioner mentioned how radicalisation in the past was what led to reform and change. Despite dominant public narratives portraying radicalisation as an act that precedes terrorism, teachers did not perceive radicalisation as potentially leading to violence. The term terrorism was barely mentioned in teacher's narratives.

Teacher interviewees linked radicalisation to root causes of 'social exclusion, a lack of integration, a break down in common values' (Hornqvist and Flyghed, 2012:p.323), highlighting the importance of social factors as reasons behind radicalisation. Unlike Prevent practitioners who viewed radicalisation from a terrorism perspective, teachers perceived radicalisation as entailing cognitive shifts – the adoption of extremist views and ideologies rather than violent behaviour. Within education, teachers were alert to the possibility of students expressing illiberal, extreme or unpalatable views which potentially went against British values (DfE, 2021b). Violence in schools was rare and therefore, teacher interviewees were not familiar with that in their schools. This may explain why teachers perceive radicalisation more as cognitive shifts in belief systems which do not necessarily lead to violence. This supports McCauley and Moskaleiko's (2017:p.19) opinion pyramid model which described how individuals may start believing in a cause but not necessarily act upon it. Individuals may be either neutral to a cause, have sympathy for a cause but cannot justify violence, justify the cause, or feel a moral, personal obligation to act on their beliefs.

Prevent practitioners who work in crime prevention, on the other hand, perceive radicalisation more through the lens of potential violence, therefore supporting McCauley and Moskaleiko's (2017:p.19) action pyramid. Furthermore, teachers viewed radicalisation as the product of bottom-up processes, starting through family circles, friends and/or via the internet. This supports the views of Sageman (Sageman, 2004) and Hafez and Mullins (Hafez and Mullins, 2015) in the sense that radicalisation was more likely to occur through the network of close friends and family. Prevent practitioners, on the other hand, perceived radicalisation as a process where vulnerable individuals, little by little, due to social and contextual factors, become more inclined to use violence. Unlike teachers, Prevent practitioners associated radicalisation more with violence and terrorism rather than with cognitive shifts, highlighting the distinct perceptions of the two participant groups.

The concept of vulnerability, also highlighted in previous research on PVE discourse in education (Sjoen and Jore, 2019b; Sukarieh and Tannock, 2015; Sjoen and Mattson, 2019), dominated all participants' narratives. In their narratives, teachers appeared to show compassion towards the individuals caught up in radicalisation scenarios. However, when describing the individual as vulnerable, teachers appeared unaware that, in doing so, they strip students of their sense of self, their agency, and portray them as individuals without a mind of their own. Teachers interviewed became teachers as they believed education to be the space for students' empowerment rather than a place of oppression. However, as highlighted in the literature, the vulnerability discourse sets a dangerous precedent within educational settings as it alters the educational space into an area of pre-criminal justice interventions (O'Donnell; Heath-Kelly). Furthermore, it goes against one of the main tenets of education as identified by Biesta (2020) which is subjectification – where the student becomes the subject of his own freedom and is free to act in and with the world 'in a grown up way (2020:p. 89) without being an object of educational interventions.

Without sound reasoning and justification, the vulnerability concept at the heart of a PVE policy like Prevent risks impairing the autonomy and agency of students at a crucial time in their development and within a space which should cultivate their mind rather than shut it down. The latter goes against the main tenets of education as described by Freire (1970) and Dewey (1899). Findings support Sojen and Mattson's (2019) conclusions in this regard, that teachers' understanding 'can also be related to the performativity culture that permeates modern education, where students who do not adapt to neoliberal images of the ideal citizen are pathologised, thus

becoming subject to therapeutic interventions’ (p.14). This implies that the neoliberal reforms taking place within education, like the Prevent duty, make it harder for teachers to free themselves from the ‘repressive state’ ideology which limits one’s freedom and agency to act. Ultimately, this ends up affecting both students’ and teachers’ subjectification in the process.

### ***b) Perceptions of the Prevent duty***

In a neoliberal state like the UK, Prevent duty (HMG, 2015b) has performative power which up to a certain extent limits teachers’ ability to act freely as it politicises their profession using them as instruments of the state, to monitor and prevail over students’ consciousness. Therefore, the Prevent duty introduction entails a form of pedagogical control.

However, this research findings demonstrate that teachers do not blindly follow state policy but are also reactive and active. Despite having accepted the Prevent duty as guidance and accommodating it within existing professional practices (supporting Busher et al.’s (2019) findings), this study shows that teachers are reluctant to become instrumental in enforcing a repressive policy to prevent radicalisation, particularly in secondary education when students are at an important juncture in their life, forming their own identities and opinions. Findings show how, in this study, several teacher interviewees highlighted how they strove to promote multiculturalism in the classroom instead, in all possible ways throughout their teaching subject and during form time. Whilst studies (Quartermaine, 2016; McDonnell, 2020) highlighted how it was often the responsibility of PSHE, RE and citizenship teachers to increase students’ resilience to counter radicalisation, the majority of teachers in this study stressed that it was their duty, no matter what subject they taught. They did so by promoting multicultural values in the classroom as, in their view, those values reflected the context within which they taught. Perceiving social exclusion as the root cause of radicalisation, teachers believed that celebrating multiculturalism was the way forward.

Teachers’ narratives may have also implied, albeit not directly, that assimilationist or segregationist approaches that marginalise or isolate individuals, even within educational structures, may potentially trigger or lead to radicalisation. Teachers appeared more favourable to an educational response through cohesion rather than security efforts:

‘The values that we should all share are the values that unite us and not those that divide us. It is important that we stress this in this particular day and age where the most prominent leaders actually teach division as their modus operandi...sowing conflict potentially leading to more harm than good.’ (T 1)

Findings did not show hostility to Prevent amongst secondary school teachers. In HEFE settings, resistance appeared to be more pronounced, according to Prevent practitioners. Within secondary education, the promotion of the Prevent duty as safeguarding provided teachers with a ‘narrative of continuity’ (Busher et al., 2019:p.454), which facilitated its accommodation as just another policy amongst many. Furthermore, radicalisation was still deemed to pose a significant threat for teachers. Consequently, this facilitated teachers’ acceptance of Prevent, justifying the government’s intervention in schools. The perception of risk (Busher et al., 2019) and the increased fear amongst teachers of missing signs may have contributed to teachers’ acceptance of the Prevent duty. The risk narrative was certainly dominant amongst the teachers interviewed for this study. In critical literature, risk is understood as a performative, a productive technique of governance which makes security actionable (Sjoberg, 2000).

Six years since the Prevent duty entered into force, hostile views appear to have abated (Busher et al., 2019; Lewis, 2020). Despite its imperfections, teacher interviewees saw value in the Prevent duty, particularly during times where the perception of risk was higher in their local community. Moreover, the Prevent Duty neither impacted teachers’ workload nor did it increase their administrative burden, unless teachers were to make a referral. Teachers and Prevent practitioners concurred that, currently, there was no better alternative. No participant challenged the legitimacy of the guidance. In sociological terms, education was always perceived as a means to raise awareness and inoculate against social harms (Levesque, 2011), besides serving various significant functions ‘including socialisation of children and the transfer of knowledge’ (Dourdie, 2016:p.23). Prevent practitioner interviewees noted that unwavering Prevent critics were either risk-averse to the entire safeguarding culture in Britain or simply ideologically opposed because of their personal, political leanings.

The normalisation and mainstreaming of security discourse-turned-safeguarding has provided the discursive terrain through which the state subjectivates teachers to monitor and refer those at risk



within the context of education. Moving beyond Busher et al.'s (2019) findings, and the 'reluctant accommodation or straightforward policy acceptance' (p.459) of the Prevent duty, teacher interviewees demonstrated that, whilst they accepted Prevent, they did so according to their own terms.

Teachers criticised some of the operational aspects of the Prevent duty. Moving away from radicalisation as a linear process leading to terrorism, teachers were not willing to act as police officers who reported and informed on students to the authorities, unless there was real and credible evidence to do so. In their view, the Prevent duty was not introduced as an educational policy and as a result has fallen short of educating both students and teachers alike on radicalisation and its processes. Whilst both Prevent practitioners and teacher interviewees agreed that currently, Prevent was the best there was to prevent radicalisation, teachers felt that an educational response to Prevent was missing. The Prevent duty guidance entailed monitoring and spotting signals, a task which, according to Sjoen and Mattison (2019:p.11), even security and intelligence services struggle to do with the available resources. Teachers expressed being used to implementing various changing and conflicting policies, yet the Prevent duty does not appear to fall under the same educational parameters. However, Prevent practitioners noted that Prevent in education did not have the resources to shoulder the responsibilities teachers expected it to have. Nonetheless, they agreed with teacher interviewees that the policy should be less police-led and that local authorities should be given more autonomy and responsibility to manage Prevent as they deemed fit.

The desire of teachers to move towards an educational response to Prevent rather than a security one is not new (van San et al., 2013). Elwick and Jerome's study also notes how an educational response could 'open up dialogue with students and engage them in debate and discussion around controversial issues' (2019:p.350). Humanities subject teacher interviewees took own initiatives and opted for educational approaches to prevention through the curriculum of their teaching subject. Other teachers described how they often challenged and resisted dominant discourses, norms and practices in the classroom through discussion. Rather than abiding by the government's assimilationist approach to integration, teachers opted for the encouragement of multiculturalism through effective use of the curriculum, culturally responsive pedagogies, cooperative learning as well as using forward-looking pedagogy. Such actions support Panjwani's (2016) aspirations who

believes that ‘the sooner the securitisation approach is replaced by an educational approach the better’ (p.338).

However, the reality is that research on teachers’ competence in countering radicalisation remains scarce. Qualitative studies conducted point to different directions and are often contradictory. Jerome et.al (2019) note that ‘the evidence base is still fairly restricted, and many of the studies are very small’ (p.13). Some teachers implemented Prevent not as subjects of the state but by means of a ground-level enactment determined and influenced by teachers’ own perceptions and values, what Kelchtermans (2009) calls ‘personal interpretative framework’ (p.260). Teachers tend to adapt or otherwise ‘oppose or subvert policy for good educational reasons’ (Sannino, 2010;p.27). Teacher interviewees expressed how, because of the Prevent duty, their positionality in the classroom had to change and shift between that of an educator and investigator, fearing the loss of established trust with their students. In doing so, teachers moved away from the understandings of Prevent amongst high-level policy officials.

This study’s findings highlight how the boundary between preventive work and security work within education can become blurred. This study concurs with previous research findings (Heath-Kelly, 2017; O’Donnell, 2016) that safe educational spaces offered within schools are being jeopardised because of the Prevent duty. Whilst the research cannot elucidate whether this has impacted students’ freedom of speech, as the study has not investigated students’ perceptions, some teachers lack confidence when sensitive subjects come up during certain lessons or during form time. Whilst teachers want to build students’ resilience by having discussions on controversial subjects, they are bound by the Teachers’ Standards (DfE, 2021b) which binds them to the principle of impartiality and the upholding of FBVs.

Unlike other social harms such as bullying, sexual exploitation or drug abuse, radicalisation or violent extremism are politically charged concepts which lack a common definition and, therefore, clarity (Horgan, 2008; Richards, 2011; Sedgwick, 2010; Mandel, 2010; Neumann, 2013a; Schmid, 2013). For this reason, teachers cannot simply equate radicalisation with other social harms addressed under safeguarding. The introduction of Prevent duty within an educational setting potentially securitises cognitive processes at a stage when students are progressing into adolescence, testing the boundaries of their identity within society. This was the juncture when young people start developing their own ideas about the world and their future, with some being

more passionate than others in their attempts (van San et al., 2013:p.279). The possibility of shutting down ideas and sanctioning radical views in secondary schooling could potentially be counterproductive. This is why freedom of speech became a contested topic with the introduction of the Prevent duty (Moffat and Gerard, 2019; Adams, 2019). While this study does not find any evidence of a ‘chilling effect’ (Marsden, 2015) in schools and thus supports the findings of recent studies (Busher et al., 2017; 2019; Busher and Jerome, 2020), more research is nonetheless required with students, to understand whether students with potentially extreme views could either censor themselves or take their views underground. That said, teacher interviewees noted how students were not inhibited by Prevent nor were they much aware of its existence. The literature suggests that a ‘chilling effect’ may be more prevalent within sixth forms and HEFE (Moffat and Gerard, 2019), as also highlighted by some Prevent practitioner interviewees in this study. One Prevent practitioner described, ‘Prevent as safeguarding but with less teeth’ (PC1), adding that Channel was a voluntary process and, therefore, individuals brought before Channel could either accept or refuse intervention. Other child protection interventions related to other social harms such as child sexual exploitation or drug use were not voluntary like Prevent is.

Prevent’s impact on Muslim teachers in secondary schools is worth noting. Whilst a lot has been written on the impact of Prevent on Muslim students in schools (Miah, 2017; Welpy, 2018; Busher et al., 2017) little is known about Muslim teachers’ experiences handling the Prevent duty. Since 9/11, Muslims have been under constant pressure to demonstrate compliance. This study sheds light on how the duty impacts Muslim teachers’ religious identity. The lived experience of one Muslim teacher interviewee in this study highlighted how forming part of a ‘suspect community’ forced her to constantly apply what has been called a ‘performance of safety’ (Mythen et al., 2009:p.747) to demonstrate an active rejection of terrorism to her colleagues.

For certain communities, in this case Muslim teachers interviewed, the Prevent duty acts as a performative, creating the ‘us versus them’ binary, where Muslim teachers feel they need to work harder and speak louder against terrorism than the normative group does, otherwise they feel they are deemed suspicious. Similar evidence was also found in other studies with Muslim NHS staff who described the Prevent duty as yet another act of ‘white supremacy’, which essentialises ‘Muslim bodies’, using discriminatory frames, in this case religion, to maintain current hegemonic powers (Younis and Jadhav, 2019). However, since such views were only voiced by the only two Muslim teacher interviewees participating in this study (there were no Muslim Prevent

practitioners), it would be key for future studies to investigate British Muslim teachers' views more broadly, and to identify whether views voiced by participants in these studies can be supported. Muslim teachers' views were nevertheless particularly interesting as they contrasted with those of white British teachers' views. To the researcher's knowledge, so far, no empirical research has contrasted in-depth Muslim teachers' views with those of white British teachers regarding the Prevent duty in education.

### *c) Weak communication*

Research on the relationships between schools and local authorities have not been very prevalent in the literature (Lakhani, 2020). However, schools operate within a context and what surrounds them affects them and potentially influences them. Prevent practitioner interviewees often made reference to the local context in terms of how it impacts schools, whilst teachers referred to the local context in relation to the most significant safeguarding issues in their local community.

Teachers' interest in the Prevent duty was also context-dependent, depending on whether the threat from radicalisation was perceived as significant or not in their local area. Therefore, the risk level within their local area plays a role in terms of having a potential impact on teachers. Teachers' awareness of the risk from any form of extremism determined their approach to Prevent. More awareness and knowledge about existing threats within the local community could potentially help reduce erroneous referrals. Several Prevent practitioner interviewees stressed how establishing strong relationships with schools have helped ease concerns about the Prevent duty and the consequences of referrals, and to also eliminate false myths. That said, Prevent practitioners stressed that, at times, they too encountered resistance in certain schools. Schools were often under tight schedules and academic pressures, leaving them little time to collaborate with Prevent teams,

However, teacher interviewees claimed they rarely had opportunities to meet Prevent representatives. Teachers interviewed said they would approach their Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL) in their school for any advice needed. Whilst responsibility for the Prevent duty fell on senior school leadership, further research is required to understand whether resistance to collaborating with Prevent teams is widespread or not in secondary schools, and if so, why. This strongly supports Lakhani's study on social capital and how strong relationships at the local level

enables teachers' confidence and improved judgment (Lakhani, 2020). Yet, findings show that local authorities funding Prevent specialist staff to help with schools depends on whether the authority is viewed as a high-priority Prevent area. Low-priority prevent areas will not have the necessary resources to recruit staff such as PEOs.

The lack of communication and transparency on referrals leading up to Channel cases may continue to further perpetuate negative messages about Prevent within schools and senior leadership. Reference to Channel interventions being shrouded in mystery made teachers become more hesitant to refer. Teachers recounting experiences of colleagues who referred students to Prevent and who received Channel intervention highlighted how the lack of feedback received about the student's prospects would leave them doubtful whether to refer or not, as not knowing would fill them with guilt for potentially stigmatising that student for life. Whilst Parker et al. (2020) suggest that 'training would help British teachers feel more confident authorities will deal with a referral appropriately' (p.16), this study's findings suggest that, instead, open and transparent communication with authorities would help increase confidence. Trust in student-teacher relationships is key and extremely important to recognise within education. Prevent practitioners concurred with teachers' views that better communication is needed about what happens on Channel panels. They also stressed that, ideally, Channel was less police-led and more responsibility was given to local authorities instead.

#### ***d) Preventing all forms of extremism***

Research findings has demonstrated that all participants interviewed recognised that the Prevent duty, at least in principle, was attempting to prevent all forms of extremism. It is interesting to note that, throughout the interviews, neither teachers nor Prevent practitioners tied extremism to a particular group or ideology.

However, despite this all-embracing claim that Prevent, prevents all forms of extremism, some teachers shed doubt as to whether this was the case across all England. Muslim teachers were more expressive in this regard stating that Prevent still targeted Muslims more than the rest. Findings also showed how some teachers made assumptions about the risk of radicalisation in their

community simply based on their students' demographics, inferring that certain group populations were riskier than others, highlighting teacher bias. Such biases were also noted by Busher et al. (2017).

Furthermore, the normalisation and conflation of security terms like 'radical', 'extreme', 'violent extremism', 'hate speech' and 'hate crime' is not clear to teachers, particularly when having to address far-right concerns. Qualifying what is deemed to be extreme has become more complicated (Bjorgo and Ravndal, 2019).

Teachers admitted to finding far-right extremist views more challenging to qualify than Islamic extremist views, as it is not clear to them when extreme views can become dangerous. Teachers highlighted how, often, they felt unsure and confused about how to differentiate between far-right views, racist views, and/or hate speech. With Islamic extremist views, some teachers claimed to feel out of their depth. Prevent practitioners and teacher interviewees both agreed that far-right views have become normalised and mainstream within dominant public discourse, particularly after Brexit, where an increase in racism and hate crimes was registered (BBC, 2019a). Such views conform with Mondon and Winter's (2020) findings, which highlight how, over the years, far-right groups' discourse has perpetuated through the media and political discourse, ultimately finding its way into public rhetoric. Prevent practitioners also claimed that the threat from far-right extremism in certain localities had become pressing, putting a strain on Prevent. In certain areas, far-right extremism has become more of an issue than Islamic extremism. This view is supported by the UK Commission for Countering Extremism which found that 68% of practitioners found far-right extremism to be their largest concern (Commission for Countering Extremism, 2019).

Yet, Muslim teachers felt that far-right extremism had been included as an after-thought, to detract attention from Islamic extremism. This supports Busher et al.'s (2017) findings, stating that the Prevent duty's main focus remains Islamic extremism. Furthermore, the two Muslim teacher interviewees perceived that, white British teachers applied lower thresholds when reporting on Islamic extremist views compared to far-right extremist views. These support Lakhani and James' (2021) findings that far-right views have been normalised and were often categorised by white teachers as simply racist, not threatening, or views which circulated at home or in the wider community. However, Prevent practitioners noted that white British lecturers at HEFE feared

more having to make referrals concerning Islamic extremism than far-right extremism for fear of being perceived racist. According to Prevent practitioners interviewed, educators at HEFE are scared of being perceived racist. Evidence of this was provided by RPC 2 who using recent government statistics referred to the North East region of England which has registered the highest number of extreme right-wing referrals in 2020, but where the terrorist conviction rate is higher for Islamists. In RPC2's view educators are reluctant to make referrals where the individual doesn't have a white face for fear of being called racist.

Teacher interviewees also expressed frustration at their inability and lack of knowledge as professionals to distinguish between extreme far-right discourse, racially motivated hate speech and/or hateful rhetoric. This research findings show that when teachers have doubts concerning far-right views, they would either increase their threshold or suggested referring students nonetheless, even when in doubt, to play it safe, and also because of their lack of knowledge on the subject or evidence. These findings support findings by Cockburn (2007) and Lakhani and James (2021), which highlight how the normalisation and mainstreaming of the far-right does affect teacher's actions. However, unlike what Lakhani and James (2021) reported, teachers in this study stated that, rather than not reporting, they would still report – even when in doubt. As stressed by Lakhani and James (2021), conflation of terms leading to wrong referrals is counterproductive and needs addressing as otherwise there is a risk of creating parallels with the early debates of radicalisation vis-à-vis violent and non-violent extremism (Lakhani, 2014).

Lack of awareness and/or lack of inadequate training may also lead to poorly considered or poorly performed prevention interventions. Considering that the majority of teachers learnt about radicalisation through British media exposure, the risk of potentially perpetuating dominant narratives further accentuates the need for more incisive and effective Prevent training, which featured only second in the teachers' list of influences. This is particularly important as since 'schoolteachers are not immune to Islamophobic media discourses, they apply their duties of suspicion unequally and replicate the stigmatisation of brown bodies found in Labour's Prevent strategy' (Heath-Kelly, 2017:p.299). That said, research studies have found that often these 'echo chambers' have been dismissed.

Furthermore, both groups of research participants highlighted that there was no distinction in the targeting of far-right extremism and Islamic extremism by Prevent. Whilst training provided

differed in content in terms of examples or case studies used during training, the approach to counter both belief systems through Prevent remained the same. Like Allen et al. (2019) the researcher also questions whether such policies like Prevent which were ‘almost solely applied in response to Islamist extremism remain fit for purpose’ (p.1). Lakhani and James (2021) also highlight how, currently, Prevent duty literature does not take into account the increased mainstreaming and normalisation of far-right views and this impacts classrooms ‘on the ground’ across the country.

According to this study’s findings, Prevent duty engaged in ‘performative colour blindness’ (Younis and Jadhav, 2020:p.620) in its struggle to counter all forms of extremism. Colour-blindness acts as one of the mechanisms by which racism operates in public sectors, such as education and health (Younis and Jadhav, 2020) and what institutionalises it. This means that Prevent has denied the race frame that exists in associating Muslims with the terrorist threat. Muslim teachers interviewed expressed that such targeting was further accentuated when they felt they had to work harder than their white colleagues to demonstrate that they supported and were compliant to the Prevent duty. A lack of compliance or perception thereof could potentially lead to hostility or suspicion from their white British colleagues what is known as ‘performance of safety’ (Mythen et al., 2009).

This shows how teachers’ choice of discourse or actions at school may also act as performative discriminatory practices, potentially causing micro-aggressions on both teachers and students. This draws attention to how professional micro-aggressions occur within institutions, between parents and teachers, teachers and teachers, and teachers and students. Crawford described Prevent as a symptom of a ‘routine but devastating racism that saturates the everyday world of “business as usual” in nations such as the US, the UK, and Australia’ (Crawford, 2017:p.198).

Whilst Muslim views in this study are not representative and further studies are required to confirm this, nonetheless, the literature still suggests that Muslim teachers and students are those who remain most at risk of being targeted and penalised by the policy (O’Donnell, 2016).



### *e) Fundamental British Values*

Findings highlight how the teaching of Fundamental British Values has led to a lot of critique. Whilst both groups of participants agreed that the values are inherently well-intentioned and had a place in education, framing the values as ‘British’ led to wide-ranging views, with some stating it preserved national identity and provided a sense of belonging whilst others perceived it to be distorting and counterproductive.

The term ‘British’ was perceived by several teacher interviewees and some Prevent practitioners as nationalistic, whitewashed, patronising, and ultimately exclusionary. Education’s lack of acknowledgement of Britain’s violent colonial past, and the circumstances under which the values called British had been obtained, is perceived as hypocritical and deceiving. Findings therefore suggest that schools, as ideological state apparatuses, may serve as a colonial tool pushing forward curriculum content that suits government best, even if this requires being in denial of parts of its own history (Howell, 2014; 2018).

Furthermore, for a number of teachers and Prevent practitioner interviewees, the UK government’s decision to frame the values as British rather than global, universal or otherwise – particularly at a time when global citizenship and global human values should be promoted – was a significant move backwards. This view supported Tomlinson’s (2015b) findings, stating that values cannot be described exclusively British but universal. However, a few Prevent practitioner interviewees dismissed such views, stating that not all countries around the world subscribed to these same values. Democracy is not a global value which all countries subscribe to. However, Santos (2014) highlights how the introduction of FBVs in the definition of extremism, overlooks and actively delegitimise non-western political values, making FBVs be perceived as superior. The majority of teacher interviewees teaching humanities and technical subjects resist pushing forward an assimilationist agenda through FBVs. Instead, in their lessons or during form time they opt for pedagogies which celebrate different cultural backgrounds. This view supports previous studies (Wilkins, 1999; Davies et al., 2005) which reveal teachers’ scepticism at promoting British patriotism or the idea of British values through citizenship education.

Teacher interviewees perceived FBVs as potentially counterproductive. Rather than equipping radicalised students with strong or extreme ideals, providing them with an opportunity to look for

active participation in society, the 'British' frame could potentially lead to students censoring themselves or pushing their views underground. Challenging extreme views in a safe space is what education is all about. Whilst teachers and Prevent practitioners' views remained far apart, a recent small study found that Asian British and Black British 22 and 23 year olds were very supportive of FBVs when introduced in schools and only a small minority appeared to be critical of the values (Janmaat, 2018:p.15). Furthermore, a previous study conducted by the same author (2012) found that, back in 2012, also no difference was found between the native youth majority and adolescents of non-western backgrounds in their support for basic civic values.

Findings also shed light on the structures within state-funded British education. Teacher interviewees drew attention to how a more diverse and multicultural curriculum would prove more effective than teaching FBVs. Whilst Prevent practitioners agreed that such a move would be beneficial for all British students, as it would expose them to a multicultural society, culturally and intellectually, however, educational curricula in most countries around the world were based and oriented towards their own history and culture as a means of preservation of the national identity. However, Britain's population is becoming increasingly multicultural (ONS, 2011) and yet the curriculum is very white British-oriented. Curriculum content including English Literature text books and the teaching of History and Geography tend to be British-oriented. Henry et al. (2017) called this the 'culture of Whiteness' and argued (in the context of higher education) that such culture, 'makes it difficult not only to remedy incidents of racism, but also to shift the institutional culture...so that such incidents would not occur' (:p.309). Gillborn (2005) also stressed how 'race inequity and racism are central features of the education system' (p.498). In her view, these choices were made intentionally, meaning that 'education policy in England is actively involved in the defence, legitimisation and extension of white supremacy' (Gillborn, 2005:p.499). Furthermore, the majority of the teaching workforce in Britain is white, with not many reflecting the multiculturalism present within British society. Handling the contradictions brought about by diversity might be hard and uncomfortable but it is what would provide the quality teaching in current education practices.

## 12.3 Theoretical Development

Althusser's theory of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), and Butler's work on Foucault's notion of subjectivation was applied to this study to investigate the role of teachers and Prevent practitioners in implementing preventing radicalisation measures such as the Prevent duty. Besides highlighting the importance of the theoretical approach used in this study, the section tries to develop a theory that brings to the fore the capacity of the subjects, in this case secondary school teachers, to make choices and act in relation to the Prevent duty.

In Althusser's (1971) Ideological State Apparatuses, schools/classrooms act as the governments' ideological state apparatuses, where teachers as state 'apparatchiks' are expected to communicate and implement government policies as dictated by the state. Therefore, the aim of teachers in schools is to perpetuate the hierarchical levels of society. Prevent practitioners, as subjects of the state, fall under the Repressive State Apparatuses set up to control and reprimand society. In more modern terms, Thomas (2017) described this as 'neoliberal governmentality, a policy approach by which front-line practitioners are "responsabilised" for spotting radicalisation' (p.324). Others called it 'the instrumentalisation of society' (Kudnani and Hayes, 2018) where the government reaches its objectives through its people.

Despite the fact that both teachers and Prevent practitioners are state subjects and work towards fulfilling the state's political agenda, the study shows how teachers as subjectivated selves could change the course of a government's ideology through agency. Prevent practitioners, as part of what Althusser sees as the repressive state apparatus, have less room to exercise their subjectivated self.

Teacher interviewees said they wanted to feel more empowered and that they wished to learn more about the processes of radicalisation to help protect students better. However, Prevent practitioners perceived teachers' roles as limited to monitoring and signalling at risk students. Althusser, unlike Foucault, did not believe in subjects' agency and was of the view that the state was in control of the promotion of ideology. In Althusser's view, teachers as subjects of the state perpetuated the working-class system. However, Foucault believed that through subjectivation, every subject was able to cause change.

Findings show, however, that teachers' role as subjects of the state is far from static and unchanging. Teacher interviewees demonstrated that, despite being state agents, once they became aware of their subjected self (freedom to act) through agency, they could influence, change or adapt state policy as they deemed fit. Teachers did so through their own interpretative framework. Whilst the Prevent duty and the teaching of FBVs demonstrated a clear shift away from multicultural approaches of the past, teacher interviewees, nonetheless celebrated multicultural approaches in the classroom through the use of critical pedagogy. Some teachers demonstrated their ability to apply 'cultural relevant pedagogy' (Ladson-Billings, 1994:p.469) to their lessons, empowering all students to share their thoughts and experiences in their own individual way, and offering them the classroom as a safe space for debate. Teachers believed that, through cooperative learning, students would have an opportunity to learn about each other more closely, their own way of learning, their mannerisms, behaviours, habits, culture, and traditions (Gay, 2002). In their narratives, teachers provided descriptions of lesson plans and resources they used to trigger discussions. For teachers, the prevention of radicalisation is not done via referrals but, instead, through instilling a love for diversity and kindness towards everyone. Whilst teachers were not bias-free, most teachers interviewed showed sensitivity towards the contexts in which they taught. Some Prevent practitioners also exercised agency when distancing themselves from the concept of Britishness in FBVs.

Teachers can and do influence and adapt policies of control (securitisation policies) through the use of their own agency when they enact policy. Education is constructed on the basis of assumed power relations with often little regard for the professional agency of its subjects, in this case secondary school teachers, which, in turn, influence how security measures are enacted within schools. Throughout their professional lives, teachers are required to constantly adapt themselves to diverse requirements in their working environment, interpreting and enacting policies whether they agree with them or not, negotiating terms with students and parents, and making independent choices and judgments to find a balance between their personal preference and shared collegial understandings (Althusser, 1971). According to Ball et al. (2012), 'Policy is done by and done to teachers; they are actors and subjects, subject to and objects of policy. Policy is written onto bodies and produces particular subject positions' (p.3). This further highlights the importance of teachers' own perceptions based on their own interpretative framework and lived experiences.

Teachers therefore have the ability and the power to shift and change repressive state ideologies if this is desired. However, for this to be possible, teachers need to become aware of their own freedom of self, which means becoming aware of their autonomous self and their freedom to choose what kind of person to be. Once this occurs teachers are able to act on their beliefs through the use of their agency to affect change according to their own interpretative framework. According to Foucault's conceptualisation of the subject, teachers, nonetheless, remain constrained by the resources available to them and not entirely free to act as they wish.

This study investigated how the subjectivation of teachers – in enacting countering radicalisation measures such as Prevent – may or may not impact on the differentiating and exclusionary effects of students at school. Since observations were not carried out for ethical reasons and due to gatekeeping by schools, analysis was limited to teachers' and Prevent practitioners' narratives.

## **12. 4 Policy Implications of the Research**

Findings show how the enactment of a national security policy by non-experts, like teachers, can be challenging. Ball et al. (2012) noted the daunting task teachers have when juggling several conflicting policies at any one time. However, teachers do so whilst helping students grow into responsible adults in a society which judges some more than others. This highlights that ground-level empirical evidence about the ways in which the Prevent duty is understood, practised, and contested, is significantly important. Evidence from this study shows that, whilst teachers have accommodated Prevent duty through safeguarding practices (Busher et al., 2019), it has nevertheless led to changing forms of enactment and contestation where teachers 'show awareness of Prevent's potential for racialised stigmatisation and are endeavouring to avoid this, partly by foregrounding education around equality, democracy and tolerance' (Thomas, 2017:p.329) in the ways they can during form time or through the possibilities provided by their subject curriculum.

This implies that schools as an 'ideological state apparatus' of control, as perceived by Althusser (1971), is analytically limited. This is because state power 'is strongly circumscribed by the contextual features of institutions, over which the state may find that control is problematic and contradictory in terms of other political projects' (Bowe et al., 1992:p.120 as cited in Hill, 2001:p.142). Nonetheless, whilst all teachers have the possibility to instigate change, only teachers

who are aware of their freedom of self and use their agency are able to do so. The question now is to what extent do teachers and lecturers exercise agency within educational contexts? How much freedom do individuals and apparatuses have for countering-hegemonic, radical or indeed revolutionary transformative action? (Hill, 2001:p.146).

Further research is required in this area as it is still understudied. This has a lot of implications for policy enactment as this demonstrates that enactment is not standard across the board. Like teaching, enacting policies implies complex processes of sense-making. Teachers' actions are constantly observed, assessed, and made sense of. Teaching is relational and interactive. Yet, as subjects of the state, teachers are key to transferring and reinforcing governments' messages. Ofsted inspection frameworks (Ofsted, 2019a) and Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2021b) are there to enforce state policy. Teachers have to act within these parameters. Yet, the responsibility of enacting the Prevent duty is not one to be shouldered by few teachers teaching value subjects like RE, PSHE or citizenship but by all teachers, as they are all bound by the statutory obligation.

Prevent practitioners desire more autonomy from the Home Office to make decisions independently from the police. The majority of Prevent practitioners stressed their wish that Prevent became more community-led even when overseeing Channel cases. In their view this would be beneficial for the successful implementation of Prevent as another safeguarding issue. Despite claims otherwise, Prevent practitioners also perceived the Prevent duty as a policy for a multicultural society. In their view, the media portrayal of the first iterations of Prevent caused significant damage, and dispelling those views remained at the heart of their profession. Yet Prevent resources in education are limited and distributed according to priority areas. As a result, Prevent cannot shoulder the responsibility teachers wish it to have. Prevent's ultimate objective remains that of early intervention – preventing radicalisation at source.

Findings show how teachers feel they know too little about radicalisation to prevent it. As shall be seen in the next section, more opportunities for learning about radicalisation are required. Discussion and exchange of best practices with their fellow colleagues would help them boost their confidence as well as share their fears. Prevent practitioners admitted that more efforts needed to be directed at effective, quality training. Davies highlighted that 'skills and confidence needed to be developed towards teaching controversial issues and analysing discourse' (2008:p.140). How could teachers identify signs of radicalisation if they were not knowledgeable

about the processes of radicalisation, whether religious or political? How could they challenge extreme views if they were out of tune with them? Connecting and relating with students at the micro-level is key to build resilience. Knowing how to do this is essential.

#### ***12.4.1 Prevent Teacher Training***

Teacher interviewees' main criticism was directed at the Prevent duty's responsibility towards teacher training. Improved and effective educational training also appeared to be necessary for teachers as well as student teachers who would like to join the teaching workforce. Teacher interviewees expressed doubt and concern as to how they were expected to identify students at risk based on online training provided by their schools. Training was described by the majority of teacher interviewees as basic and impersonal, a sort of list of instructions and indicators meant to help identify potentially radicalised students. The two Muslim teachers interviewed perceived training as whitewashed and delivered from a white perspective by people who were rarely affected by it. Therefore, Prevent training needed to be more representative of modern-day British society to make it more credible.

The majority of teacher interviewees perceived Prevent training as a set of instructions which guided teachers how to identify 'risky or at risk' (Heath-Kelly, 2012) individuals, rather than something that empowered them or their students. Prevent practitioners, however, argued that the objective of the duty was not educational but limited to spotting potential radicalisers at source.

Prevent practitioners argued that Prevent was not an educational tool. As for training, they place the responsibility on the heads of school who are the ones developing risk assessment plans and making decisions on the choice and type of training provided to their teaching staff. This research findings show that the type of training provided to teachers much depends on the relationship heads of schools have with the Prevent duty as well as their relationship with the Prevent team working within their local authorities, if any are available. Findings show that it is up to schools to ask Prevent teams for help and guidance when it is required. Prevent practitioners interviewed highlighted how they provide bespoke and tailored training to schools and to particular audiences who request training, depending on the needs of local areas. Prevent practitioners also highlighted how continuous efforts are made to improve training standards across England. However, Prevent

practitioners interviewed highlighted how gatekeeping in some schools, more so at HEFE level remains an obstacle they have to face regularly, making their job more challenging.

Findings also show how Prevent duty training for teachers has a number of weaknesses. Prevent teacher training is not standardised across England and Wales and therefore messages about the Prevent duty varied from one area to another. Training is not a 'one size fits all' and is adapted according to the needs of the local authority. Since some areas were more affected than others, Prevent resources and funding are categorised according to risk. Prevent practitioners perceived the lack of standard Prevent knowledge, training and awareness across England as problematic. Whilst allocating funds according to risk is beneficial, it also results in mixed messages. Although Prevent has one core message, training depends on the needs of the local borough and on what it could offer. Some boroughs have more experience than others in delivering training to schools whilst others do not have the resources to recruit PEOs to help out, making it more difficult to deliver expert training to schools.

Prevent funding is also an issue as it is not spread out equally across the regions in England and Wales. Prevent funding depends on areas qualifying as priority areas in terms of risk assessments. As a result, regions with a higher risk factor are allocated higher financing margins. Other areas which are deemed lower risk receive less money. Practitioners were aware that, due to the lack of resources, low-priority areas are at risk of weak Prevent implementation or can only apply a 'tick the box' approach. As a result, not all local authorities have enough resources to fund Prevent activities or to recruit PEOs to build relationships with schools, provide training or workshops (Local Government Association, 2020:p.12). When large schools have a problem providing training to all staff, often the alternatives are online training or the nomination of a go-to Prevent teacher, often an RE or PSHE teacher who then acts as a Prevent representative for the entire school. As a result, data shows that there was a lot more range around how people were trained in the sector.

Good training also depended on who was providing the training and the content used. Prevent practitioners stressed how training provided to schools focused on all forms of extremism or was bespoke: focusing on the local needs of the school and the local area threats. Prevent practitioner interviewees noted how their work within local authorities had produced results as they constantly



adapted training provided to teachers to meet the needs of their local boroughs and the schools that request their help.

This study's findings also shed new light on the desire for an educational response to countering radicalisation, whether it is through Prevent or not. Whilst Prevent practitioners highlighted a lack of resources for Prevent to shoulder such responsibility within education, more reflection was required in this regard. To counter radicalisation through Prevent, teachers feel they first need to be educated themselves. Making referrals or handling complex conversations without adequate expertise could be counterproductive. Teachers expressed the need to be educated about the processes of radicalisation and to acquire the appropriate skills to structure and lead complex discussion as well as challenging extremist views. Teachers felt that their lack of knowledge on political or religious radicalisation, its sensitivity and complexity, puts them in a vulnerable position. Without proper skills teachers tend to avoid or shut down conversations (Leeman, 2006; 2013).

Such views suggest that teachers' lack of confidence in their knowledge about radicalisation and in handling complex, controversial discussions, either makes them hesitant to refer students or to refer students every time when in doubt. Jerome and Elwick (2020) highlight how teachers are on 'one hand encouraged to engage young people in debates about controversial issues but on the other hand they are required to monitor the young people's opinions for signs that they may dissent from the FBVs, which is seen as a risk factor for developing extremist ideas' (p.223). It is worth noting that none of the thirteen teachers interviewed had ever made a referral at the time of interviewing.

Teachers need confidence to perform well in their profession and to have meaningful and transparent conversations with their students wherever they are from (Judson, 2008; Kohl, 1994). Lack of knowledge and training in their ability to address issues related to radicalisation results in a form of 'intellectual and moral corrosion' that, by challenging certain views and positions, 'calls into question the value of knowledge itself (O'Neil, 2015 *online*). These views have strong implications for initial teacher training and continuous professional development with regard to CVE and PVE in education.

### ***12.4.2 Stronger Communication and Relations with Local Prevent Teams***

Strong relationships between schools and local Prevent teams can be extremely beneficial as a form of social capital. The human contact and informal social practices, as Lakhani (2020) highlights can go a long way. The study showed how Prevent practitioners conducted a lot of good work within schools, providing teacher training, workshops, and sessions with students at all levels. They also helped schools develop their risk assessment plans and fulfilling their Prevent duties. Yet, what emerged is that much of the good work Prevent teams do happens mostly in schools in Prevent priority areas. This is because such areas are allocated more resources, and local authorities can recruit more staff to do the work needed in schools. Areas which are deemed low risk neither get the same attention, nor the same resources. As a result, not all schools have the same possibilities to build strong relationships with Prevent teams in their local authority.

Prevent practitioners have also described how, at times, they still find resistance from schools despite their good intentions. School gatekeeping remains a challenge for Prevent practitioners' work. Teachers also have a role to play in this regard. Strong relationships with Prevent teams could act as a supporting network for teachers. Parker et al. (2020) suggest that British teachers tend to deal with radicalisation issues informally at first rather than formally through Prevent. However, no online training, technology or legislation could substitute the engagement and work done by Prevent practitioners within schools. Prevent practitioners agree that Prevent works effectively with the education sector thanks to the establishment of such relationships.

## **12.5 Practitioners' Implications: Teachers Positionality in the Classroom**

The teaching profession requires an ongoing process of framing and reframing. Teachers' narratives highlighted how the Prevent duty had forced teacher interviewees to become more aware of their positionality within the classroom. As described by Leeman and Wardekker (2013) teachers may have a boundary experience: they are confronted with their own situation and the boundaries of their professional skills. Despite not finding the Prevent duty burdensome, teacher interviewees still found themselves often having to change roles, shifting from being an educator, to an informer, to an investigator.

In relation to Prevent, teachers demonstrated that their positionality and their own interpretative framework were pivotal for the production and transfer of knowledge within the classroom. ‘The teacher as a person is held by many within the profession and outside it to be at the centre of not only the classroom but also the educational process’ (Kelchtermans, 2009:p.258). Teaching is inherently an inter-personal and relational endeavour. Teaching implies a relationship of responsibility for a classroom of students and it also involves the subject matter and the curriculum (Kelchtermans, 2009). Ultimately, ‘this is what allows teachers to develop the validity of their professional know-how’ (Argyris et al., 1985; Schon, 1983 as cited in Kelchtermans, 2009:p.264). This is where teachers’ agency comes in. However, whilst some teachers are bold and use agency to stand up for what they believe in, others may feel insecure or lack confidence to raise the agenda of power to influence and define one’s working conditions.

In this study, teachers used their agency to develop their personal and professional approach in line with their perspectives on the aims of education and the best pedagogical approach to prevent radicalisation in education. Similar to the national curriculum, the Prevent duty was not so much implemented in schools as being ‘re-created’, not much ‘reproduced’ as being ‘produced’ – a cycle which emphasises school context and the re-creation of policy (Ball et al., 2012). Enacting the Prevent duty works in the same way.

Teachers do not seek advice after just one incident in the classroom. Multiple incidents would have to occur for them to seek consultation and to potentially refer students. Teachers preferred to first try to handle situations with their students in a one-to-one, informal way. For the interviewees, such actions proved to be enough. Priestly et al. refer to this as teacher agency ‘their active contribution to shaping their work and its conditions – for the overall quality of education’ (Biesta et al., 2015:p.624). This supports Ball, Maguire and Braun (2012) who view that teachers modify and amend policy as they interpret and reproduce it within the wider, ongoing professional and institutional practice.

Science and Humanities teachers highlighted how, through their subject curriculum, they try to expose students to diversity and multicultural societies as a means to prevent radicalisation or to keep it at bay. Through the use of poems, literary texts or simply teaching about a country, teachers transfer knowledge to students about culture, beliefs, conflicts, and political issues, such as extremism and radicalisation. Whilst Humanities teachers may have found it easier than teachers

teaching more technical subjects to connect complex discussions with their teaching subject, they highlighted that not knowing enough about radicalisation undermined applying the right pedagogy. As a result, discussions end up either being one-sided, teacher-led or instructionist (Sjoen and Mattson, 2019:p.275), lacking that much-needed critical thinking skills which challenge power dynamics. Both Prevent practitioners and teachers highlighted the importance of providing students with unbiased views. However, with an ‘instructionist’ (Sjoen and Mattson, 2019:p.275) type of teaching, students risk rehashing responses or repeating teachers’ responses to please the teacher, or simply to conform. Such discussions do not lead to the generation of new knowledge nor does it generate critical thinking. Furthermore, time constraints limit complex discussions, leaving students with fragmented knowledge.

Teachers teaching more scientific or practical subjects such as Maths and Business Studies highlighted that, during their lessons, they never discuss issues related to radicalisation or extremism because there is no relevance to the subject. However, these same teachers stressed that they would allocate time for such discussions during form time, a time which is normally used to discuss matters deemed relevant to their class. Nevertheless, teachers stressed that form time was very short and barely allowed time for a proper developed discussion.

Whilst some teachers admitted they avoid speaking about radicalisation, mostly because their teaching subject has no link to any aspect of radicalisation, others argued that they do not have the required religious and political knowledge or skills to approach such a subject. Pace (2015) highlights how performativity and academic pressures (Ball, 2003) leave teachers with little time for effective, critical discussions. Consequently, classroom discussions end up lacking genuine inquiry and result in hurried teacher-dominated conclusions, leaving students without much of a critical, in-depth discussion. Pace (2015) called this ‘ventriloquism’ where students regurgitate teachers’ views rather than critically assess views to then arrive at their own conclusions.

Teachers felt that they worked to prevent radicalisation when they behaved as active subjects when teaching according to their own interpretative framework (Kelchtermans, 2009), meaning their conceptualisation of themselves as teachers, making choices and taking actions that sat comfortably with their own frame. When providing their narratives, teachers’ sense of self was very prominent in their accounts. All teachers expressed themselves freely, very personally and

made sense of events in the classroom using their own interpretative framework. They did the same when addressing radicalisation aspects or extremist views voiced in the school or classroom.

## **12.6 Limitations of the Study**

Conducting empirical research in secondary schools is rewarding and exciting. However, it also brought with it a number of challenges. During the course of this study, the research design had to be altered a number of times to adapt to the challenges faced during data collection. The lack of access to secondary schools in England, as well as the challenges of school gatekeeping, made the data collection particularly problematic, and impacted the research design: a single school case study had to be altered to exploratory research to adapt and find alternative solutions to the problems faced at the time. The lack of access to teachers also limited the population sample of the study. Consequently, the collection of teachers interviewed is quite homogeneous, potentially leading to some bias. Such limitations could be addressed in future research by having a bigger, more representative sample of secondary school teachers teaching across both England and Wales. Furthermore, due to the restricted sample, findings cannot be generalised. Nonetheless, the qualitative value of the data remains. Due to time constraints, further attempts to attract more research participants is not possible as the study needs to be completed by September 2021 due to scholarship funding, which terminates then.

The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated data collection, particularly when travel was banned and, as a result, access to research participants in schools became restricted. Despite not having a representative sample of the whole population of England and Wales, the study's analytical value is not diminished and still contributes to the academic field. Data gathered offers new knowledge and more in-depth insights into the issues surrounding teachers' and Prevent practitioners' perceptions of preventing radicalisation measures adopted by teachers at classroom level.

## 12.7 Future Research

As agents of the state, teachers still have the ability to influence and change policy if they wish. However, there is the need for teachers to recognise their sense of self and freedom to act and use agency to be able to make that change. The question now is: to what extent do teachers become subjectivated selves and exercise their agency within educational contexts governed by Ofsted inspection frameworks and Teachers' Standards? 'How much freedom individuals and apparatuses have for counter-hegemonic, radical or revolutionary transformative action?' (Hill, 2001:p.146)

Furthermore, future research should also focus on the impact of the Prevent duty and the teaching of FBVs on Muslim teachers across Britain at all levels of education. A comparison of views between non-Muslim British teachers and Muslim British teachers would help provide a more comprehensive picture as to how Prevent as a performative impacts teachers' professional lives in secondary schools in Britain. This will also help determine whether experiencing Prevent differs across racial and religious lines (Rights Watch Watch, 2016; Jerome et al., 2019; Busher et al., 2017). Further research should also focus on how teachers from different backgrounds, religions and demographics, assess and evaluate far right extremists' views compared with those of Muslim extremists to identify whether teachers are applying different thresholds influenced by their own biases.

Considering that Prevent training was perceived as weak by the majority of participants and strengthening this aspect of Prevent was perceived to be essential by Prevent practitioners, future research should focus on identifying the skills and competencies teachers need to address radicalisation issues in the classroom. It is also needed to address complex, sensitive discussions, taking into account the limited timeframes of lessons and compliance with the Teachers' Standards. Focus should also be paid to the specific content knowledge needed within initial teacher training or continuous professional modules to increase teachers' knowledge of violent extremism (political/religious/non-ideological) and violent radicalisation. More research is required as to the specific skills and competencies needed.

Ultimately, further research is required to identify reasons behind senior leadership resistance to work with Prevent teams within local authorities. Building stronger relationships and informal

networks with local authorities would allow for informal practices to remain alive that ultimately benefit teachers in classrooms (Lakhani, 2020).

## Conclusion

Teachers are in the best position to influence future generations to choose the right steps to take in life, and help them grow to become healthy, responsible individuals. However, teachers' own professional power is often restricted by state regulations which are numerous and, at times, unclear, vague or introduced without much empirical evidence, which can potentially cause more harm than good. Preventing radicalisation through education via the use of CVE/PVE is a case in point.

The picture that has emerged in this study reveals how the introduction of such measures has impacted on teachers' positionality as professional educators in the classroom. They feel conflicted by a need to adhere to state policy, which securitises education, and to encourage the holistic development of the students they teach. The inquiry into teachers' and Prevent practitioners' understanding of the concept of radicalisation, and the preventive methods selected in the classroom, sheds light on how teachers attempt to complying with state policy – in this case the Prevent duty – whilst fulfilling the purposes of their students' education through 'qualification, socialisation, subjectification' (Biesta, 2010:p.19).

This study used Althusser's theory of ISAs to analytically frame teacher's positionality within state structures, combined with the concept of 'subjectification' originally developed by Foucault (and further strengthened and adapted by Judith Butler) to evaluate whether teachers could potentially influence policy enactment in schools. The study found that Althusser's ISA theory was analytically limited as it did not take into account teachers' own ability to affect change. It dismissed teachers' agency altogether. However, the majority of teachers in the study were not static subjects and were responsive to policy changes. When confident in their skills and knowledge, teachers were able to influence policy according to what they believed was right and just through their own interpretative framework (Kelchtermans, 2009). However, this demonstrates how policy enactment cannot separate the teacher from the person, the two cannot be disconnected from each other. Therefore, as communicators or subjects of the state, teachers conform to government policies but they do so in their own way; this also counts for preventing radicalisation in the classroom. This is reflected in the way teachers move away from the UK government's approach towards assimilation to celebrating multiculturalism instead.



Despite teachers' accommodation of the Prevent duty as another safeguarding measure, teachers solved their reservations of the duty through the 'subjectification' of the self, making them aware of their own power to influence policy. The performative power of Prevent as a national security policy has brought with it increased responsibilities for teachers which, if unfulfilled, may result in being perceived as putting students at risk. However, that same performative power has also made some teachers reassess their positionality within the classroom. Those who were aware of their sense of self, opted to counter radicalisation through their own interpretative framework. Those teachers who remained unaware were passive subjects and simply enacted Prevent when the need arose.

The Prevent duty was accommodated by teachers through the safeguarding discourse that presented a 'narrative of continuity' (Busher et al., 2019) for teachers in school. However, despite the novelty of this phenomenon, teachers still viewed radicalisation through an educational lens rather than a security one. The absence of referrals by teachers interviewed highlight how teachers perceive Prevent as a last resort when evidence showed students were at risk. Interpersonal skills and effective use of the curriculum were the preferred option of teachers in addressing extremist views, demonstrating how an educational response using personal agency was preferred to instructions laid down by the state. This also highlighted the importance of the value of socialisation processes occurring in school and the importance of social capital influencing policy enactment.

The study also revealed how teachers and Prevent practitioners perceived radicalisation slightly differently, leading to divergent views on policy implementation. Teachers appeared more concerned of cognitive radicalisation similar to McCauley & Moskalenko's (2017) radicalisation of opinion pyramid rather than behavioural radicalisation represented by the action pyramid. Consequently, teachers' idea of prevention focused on an educational intervention rather than a security-led intervention through the reporting of students through Prevent. In their view, education was there to empower, and therefore they focus on their abilities as educators to counter the root causes of radicalisation, particularly those related to social exclusion, identity issues, and lack of belonging, and through their everyday teaching by celebrating diversity and understanding the beauty of multiculturalism.

Teachers, being human, are inevitably impacted by politics - be it consciously or subconsciously- and they have demonstrated this through certain positions taken in the classroom. Humanities teacher interviewees were those who had more opportunities to engage with the curriculum than teachers teaching technical subjects. The government's move towards assimilationist policies through Prevent and the teaching of FBVs did not sit well amongst teachers' interviewees. Teachers' narratives celebrate multiculturalism and they have provided evidence of doing so through effective use of their subject curriculum, addressing controversial, sensitive, political discussions in a critical and transparent way when possible. The measures adopted signal a clear yet discreet political statement potentially challenging the governmental approach. According to the teacher interviewees, an educational response is the way forward through curriculum engagement and confrontation of political views.

The study also revealed a need for improvement in teacher training. Teachers' knowledge on radicalisation remained limited and prevention methods provided through Prevent training was basic and limited to identifying potential radicalised students through a list of indicators. Yet, such indicators may act as part of the problem rather than the solution to preventing radicalisation. Training did not provide teachers with knowledge on radicalisation processes or equip them with skills and competences for critical pedagogy to structure discussions which lead to reflection, critical thinking, and expose students to different views. Teachers' perceptions of the Prevent training highlighted the need for significant efforts to be made, taking teachers' views into account. Some teachers' comparison of Prevent training to an instruction manual highlights teachers' disapproval of such an approach to countering radicalisation in education. Their desire for an educational response is clear, more so when stressing the need for training which equips them with skills to address complex discussions in the classroom. When training is effective, teachers feel empowered and confident about their abilities in communicating affectively with their students.

In doing so, teachers would still be respecting state policy and abiding by the principles upon which education is based on. Furthermore, inherent problems within schools need to be addressed such as the limited time allocated to important discussions which rarely give students time to develop their own thought processes, which can end up being teacher-centred and instructivist, leading to no effective learning.

The lack of an educational response was deemed a mistake by teachers who believed that no set of indicators could help them in teaching students become more resilient. Basic Prevent training did not equip teachers with the skills and competences to address complex, sensitive discussions. Training revolving around policy implementation alone may not provide teachers with the skills and competences they need. Hence transferable skills and knowledge which could be applied through all lessons is what should be considered.

Non-effective Prevent teacher training which does not stimulate teachers' critical consciousness runs the risk of having teachers, particularly those who lack self-initiative, when it comes to their own learning, to turn to potentially less reliable sources of information which may be biased, potentially influencing their thought processes. Prevent as a performative engages in colour blindness, potentially affecting teachers' relations with students and their own colleagues hailing from an ethnic minority, leading to cultural biases and micro-aggressions due to the perception of seeing them differently and treating them differently (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Gillborn, 2006). This was also essential considering the teaching of FBVs which portrayed Britishness or rather a predefined political construction of Britishness (Revell and Bryan, 2018) as the standard which one had to measure themselves against to not be categorised as potentially extremist. The narratives of the Muslim teacher's views on Prevent confirm this, further stressing the need for more teacher exposure to other cultures as well as the need for a more culturally varied teacher workforce to provide all students, including those from an ethnic background, the same opportunities like the rest. This would also help counter cultural biases and micro-aggressions within school structures.

Without quality teacher training providing practical examples of ways how to prevent radicalisation, teachers are bound to offer students very poor prevention unless their interpretative framework is based on sound expertise on radicalisation and good values. Teachers admitted to feeling disempowered, debilitated, and weakened without solid Prevent training. Lack of skills and knowledge leads to lack of confidence and avoidance amongst some teachers, risking leaving students to fend for themselves and leaving them potentially more at risk of extremism. To prevent this, senior leadership teams in schools need to include teachers in decisions on training, and to identify teachers' needs to prevent radicalisation more effectively. Prevent practitioners who were former teachers could use their previous experiences to provide insights into how to improve training whilst also taking into account teachers' views when developing workshops or

programmes. Whilst Prevent practitioners may work hard to change Prevent perceptions unless they take on teachers' views and advice on Prevent, negative perceptions are bound to stay.

Bridging the gap between the educational response by teachers and the security work of Prevent practitioners requires a deeper engagement in schools – both on a structural level and on an educational level, addressing the curriculum, application of critical pedagogy, and quality training provided to teachers across all England. Furthermore, failing to take account of teachers' views in policy developments risks undermining preventing radicalisation in education effectively. As non-experts, teachers adopt their own interpretative framework to enact policy. However, being able to identify with that policy through their own interpretative framework as educators is one step forward to more effective implementation on the ground.

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# Appendices

## *Appendix A*

### Teachers and Prevent practitioners interviewed

No.	Profession	Date of Interview
1	English Secondary School Teacher and Director of Learning	26/09/2019
2	Science Teacher	27/09/2019
3	PHSE Teacher	05/10/2019
4	Maths Teacher	15/10/2019
5	Design and Technology teacher	15/10/2019
6	Life Skills Teacher	17/12/2019
7	Geography Teacher	19/02/2020
8	Business Studies Teacher and Head of Department	19/02/2020
9	Geography Teacher and Head of Humanities	21/02/2020
10	Special Needs Teacher	20/02/2020
11	English Teacher	20/04/2020
12	English Teacher	04/04/2020
13	French Teacher	06/04/2020

### Prevent practitioners

No.	Profession	Date of Interview
1	Regional Prevent Coordinator	31/01/2020
2	Regional Prevent Coordinator	31/01/2020
3	Regional Prevent Coordinator	03/02/2020
4	Prevent Coordinator	26/09/2019
5	Prevent Coordinator	19/02/2020
6	Prevent Coordinator	20/03/2020
7	Prevent Education Officer	30/09/2019
8	Prevent Education Officer	24/02/2020
9	Prevent Education Officer	31/01/2020
10	Prevent Education Officer	31/01/2020
11	Prevent Education Officer	04/02/2020
12	Prevent Education Officer	06/02/2020
13	Prevent Education Officer	07/02/2020

## *Appendix B*

### **Interview Questions for Teachers Teaching Key Stage 3 and 4**

#### **Participant Details:**

Gender:                                      Nationality:                                      Religion:

Age:                                      Experience teaching:

#### **Understanding of the concept of radicalisation**

1. What do you understand by the word ‘radicalisation’?
2. What words or feelings do you associate with this concept?
3. How did you form your view on radicalisation?
4. Do you think the media/politicians have influenced your views on radicalisation?

#### **Radicalisation and Education**

1. In your opinion, how does the concept of ‘radicalisation’ fit in the educational context?
2. Do you think radicalisation in education should be addressed in schools or not? Why?
3. Do you think ‘radicalisation’ or extremism, is related to the moral values of a person? If, yes, how?
4. How would you explain ‘radicalisation’ to students? Do you explicitly address such issues during the year through your subject curriculum or do you leave such an issue in the hands of senior management?
5. As a teacher, teaching your subject, how do you try to prevent/counter students from becoming radicalised?
6. What would you do if a student in your classroom starts voicing extreme/radical views, but is not violent?

7. How confident do you feel when it comes to discussing issues related to terrorism and radicalisation? (Do you address such topics, avoid or change subject?)
8. Do you think students have space in schools to speak out their true mind, to air their views without judgment?
9. Ethno-cultural and religious identities are important to students. In your opinion, do you think Prevent duty undermines this?

### **(Skills and Training)**

1. Do you think your pedagogic repertoire/experience are adequate to react to what happens in the classroom in such a way that “ideals” are not compromised and create space and trust necessary for learning?
2. Have you been given any training on dealing with difficult issues or specifically on discussing radicalisation with pupils? Is there anyone you turn to when you’re in difficulty?
3. What kind of school or departmental support is offered to you in this regard?
4. In your opinion, what kind of pedagogy is needed to counter extremism and radicalisation?

### **Views on Prevent duty in schools**

1. What is your view of the Prevent duty?
2. How do you try to implement the guidance at school or during lessons?
3. How did the statutory obligation impact your profession? If so, in what way?
4. How did Prevent duty, influence or change the way you view your students or how your students view you? How?
5. If you had the possibility to change Prevent duty for some other policy or other measure, what would it be?

### **Views on Fundamental British Values**

1. What do you understand by Fundamental British values?

2. What teaching strategies are appropriate for enhancing the social and moral development of students in secondary education?
3. What is your opinion of the teaching of Fundamental British Values in the curriculum?

## *Appendix C*

### **Interview Questions for Prevent Coordinators**

#### **Participant Details:**

Gender:                                      Nationality:                                      Religion:

Age:    Professional Experience:

#### **Understanding of the concept of radicalisation**

1. What do you understand by the word ‘radicalisation’?
2. What words or feelings do you associate with this concept?
3. How did you form your view on radicalisation?
4. Do you think the media/politicians have influenced your views on radicalisation?

#### **Views on Prevent duty in schools**

1. What is your role as a Regional Prevent Coordinator?
2. What is your opinion of Prevent in schools?
3. Personally, what impact do you think prevent has in schools?
4. Is countering radical Islam still the most prevalent in Prevent duty? Do you think there’s still stigmatisation of BME students and that Muslim students are perceived as a threat because of Prevent? (Findings by Busher et al., Pal Sian, Vincent, Elwick and Jerome all state this.)
5. How do you resolve something like this?
6. Do you think school is still a safe space for teens to express their views?
7. Do you think the government is successfully preventing radicalisation through Prevent in education?
8. Do you think that Prevent duty has put you face to face with your own beliefs and the boundaries of what your profession entails?
9. Had there been no Prevent duty how would you address the issue of radicalisation in school?



## **Radicalisation and Education**

1. In your opinion how does the concept of ‘radicalisation’ fit in the educational context?
2. Do you think radicalisation in education should be addressed in schools or not? Why?
3. Do you think ‘radicalisation’ or extremism, is related to the moral values of a person? If, yes, how?
4. In your opinion, what is the best measure/skill/method to deal with such situations in the classroom or within school?
5. Do you think teachers push forward the government’s ideology through Prevent or do they push forward just what suits them?

## **Views on Fundamental British Values**

1. What do you understand by Fundamental British Values?
2. Do you think FBVs act as proxies in the sense that they signal a hostility to difference?
3. What is your opinion of the teaching of Fundamental British Values in the curriculum?
4. Do you think such a concept helps or hinders teachers in schools?

## *Appendix D*



### **Participant Information Form**

#### **Project Title and Rationale**

Conceptualising (violent) radicalisation in comprehensive secondary schools in England. How senior management in schools, teachers and policy makers in education, interpret and address ‘violent radicalisation’ within the curriculum.

#### **Purpose of the study:**

My research study focuses on teachers’ understanding of the concept of radicalisation in education and how they interpret this concept within the school curriculum. As a former secondary school teacher, I’m very keen to learn how the school management and teachers’ perceptions on radicalisation influence their everyday teaching in the delivery of the curriculum.

The research aims are the following:

- \* To investigate how the school’s management team and teachers (Key Stage 3 and/or 4 interpret the concept of (violent) radicalisation within education.
- \* To investigate how teachers interpret and implement this concept within the school curriculum.

This study is being carried out in fulfilment of my Doctor of Philosophy degree at Royal Holloway College, University of London.

This information sheet has been written to help you decide if you would like to take part. It is up to you and you alone whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

#### **What your involvement will entail:**

As a participant, you will be asked a number of questions related to your expertise on the subject under study, namely, how you as a teacher/policy maker, conceptualise ‘radicalisation’ in education and how you think it sits within the school curriculum or education in general. You will have the possibility to read the questions prior to the interview and will also have the opportunity to eliminate any questions which you feel are too sensitive to answer. Moreover, if during the

interview you do not wish to answer any particular question you are free to do so, without giving any justification. The interview will be recorded only if you are pleased to give your consent. If the interview is recorded, the data will be securely stored till the report is finalised and results are reached. Data will be only accessible to the researcher and the supervisor.

### **Storage of Data**

This research project will conform to the Royal Holloway Data Management Policy (2014) and the Data Protection Act 2018. As outlined in the Participant Information Sheet your data will now be retained for a period of three years before being destroyed. Your data will remain accessible to the researcher and supervisor only.

### **Anonymity, Privacy and Confidentiality**

This project will conform to the Royal Holloway Data Management Policy (2014) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The researcher will ensure anonymity in the write-up and publication of the final study. The researcher will ensure privacy during each of the data collection sessions. Data collected will be handled only by the researcher and supervisor and will be stored securely in an anonymised format in an external hard disk, secured in a locked cabinet. Raw data will be treated with full confidentiality and if published it will not be identifiable as theirs. The data will be stored for a period of at least three years before being destroyed.

### **Results**

The results will be finalised by 2021 and written up as part of my doctoral thesis.

### **Withdrawal**

Please remember that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Should you do so, all data relating to you will be destroyed.

### **Questions**

You will have the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to this project before giving completing a Consent Form.

### **Consent and Approval**

This research proposal has been scrutinised and been granted ethical approval through the college's ethical approval process. The project will conform to the Royal Holloway Data Management Policy (2014) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

### **What should I do if I have concerns about this study?**

In case the participants have concerns about this study, they can contact the safeguard lead in their school.

### **Contact Details**

*Researcher:* Daniela Scerri  
*Contact Details:* Daniela.Scerri.2018@live.rhul.ac.uk

*Supervisor:* Dr John Morrison  
*Contact Details:* John.Morrison@rhul.ac.uk

## *Appendix E*



# **Participant Consent Form**

## **Project Title**

Conceptualising (violent) radicalisation in comprehensive secondary schools in England. How senior management in schools, teachers and policy makers in education, interpret and address ‘violent radicalisation’ within the curriculum.

### **Researcher’s Name**

*Daniela Scerri*  
*Daniela.Scerri.2018@live.rhul.ac.uk*

### **Supervisor’s Name**

Dr John Morrison  
*John.Morrison@rhul.ac.uk*

Royal Holloway, University of London attaches high priority to the ethical conduct of research. This research project will conform to the Royal Holloway Data Management Policy (2014) and the Data Protection Act 2018. We therefore ask you to consider the following points before signing this form. Your signature confirms that you are happy to participate in the study. If you decide to withdraw from the study, the data collected until that point will be destroyed if you so wish.

## **What is Coded Data?**

The term ‘Coded Data’ refers to when data collected by the researcher is identifiable as belonging to a particular participant but is kept with personal identifiers removed. The researcher retains a ‘key’ to the coded data, which allows individual participants to be re-connected with their data at a later date. The un-coded data is kept confidential to the researcher and supervisor.

## **Consent**

The purpose of this form is to ensure that you are willing to take part in this study and to let you understand what it entails. Signing this form does not commit you to anything you do not wish to do and you are free to withdraw at any stage. If you decide to withdraw at any juncture, your data will be destroyed.

Material gathered during this research will be coded and kept confidentially by the researcher with only the researcher and supervisor having access. It will be securely stored in a locked cabinet.

Please answer each statement concerning the collection and use of the research data.

I have read and understood the information sheet. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have had my questions answered satisfactorily. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give an explanation. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my data will be confidential and that it will contain identifiable personal data that will be stored with personal identifiers removed by the researcher and that only the researcher and supervisor will be able to decode this information as and when necessary. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my data will be stored for a period of three years before being destroyed. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I have been made fully aware of the potential risks associated with this research and am satisfied with the information provided. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to take part in the study. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Part of my research involves taking digital recordings. These recordings will be kept secure and stored with no identifying factors i.e., consent forms and questionnaires. This data will be destroyed after three years.

I agree to being digitally recorded. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and your consent is required before you can participate in this research. If you decide at a later date that data should be destroyed, your request in writing will be honoured.

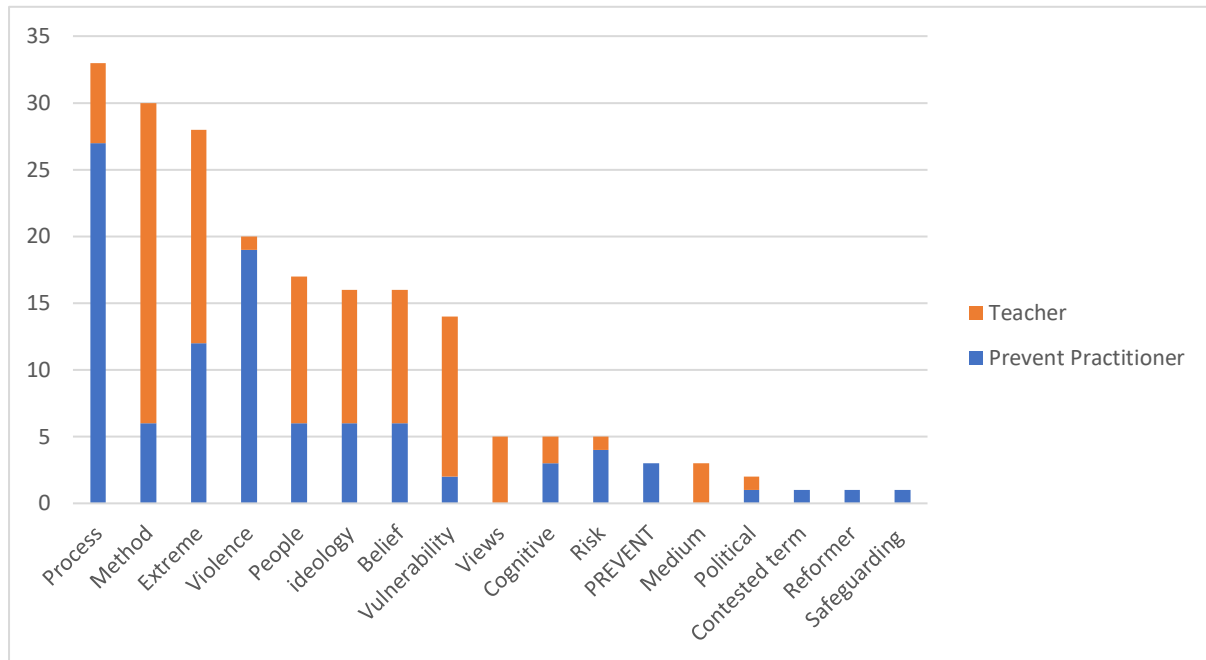
**Name in Block Capitals** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

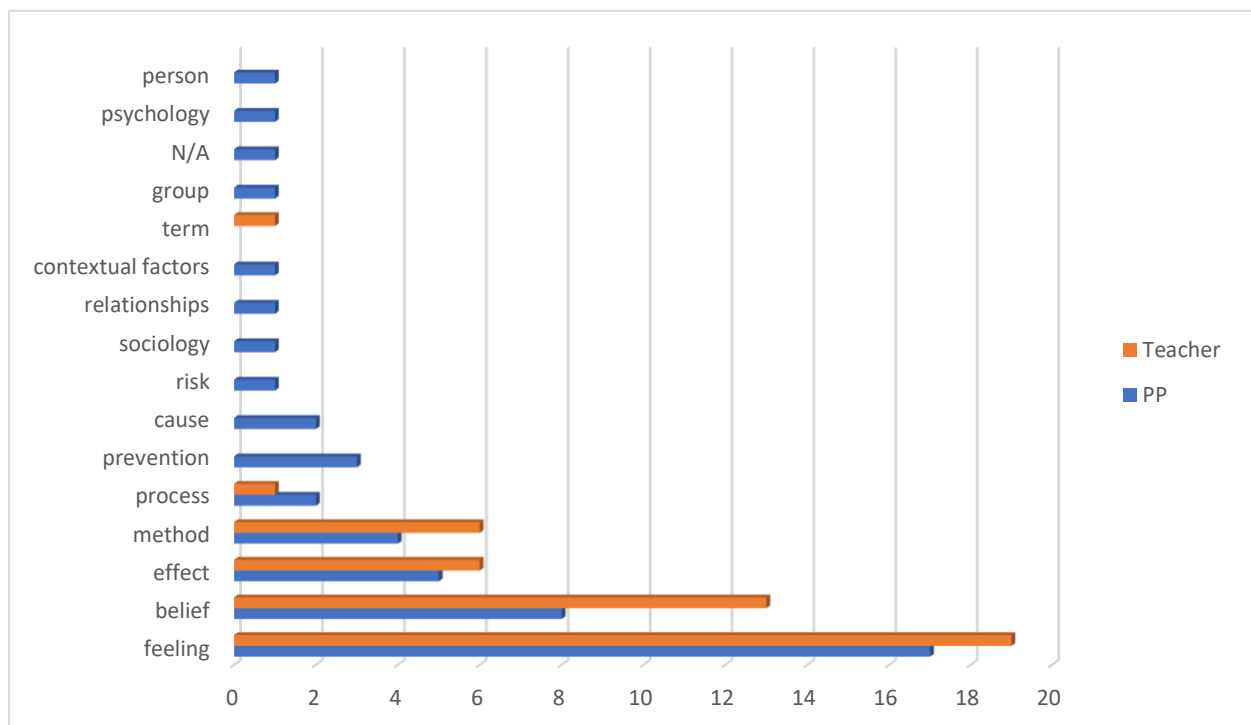
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F

**Figure 8.1: What do you understand by the concept of radicalisation?**



**Figure 8.2 Word associations**





**Figure 8.3 Teachers' and Prevent practitioners' influences**

