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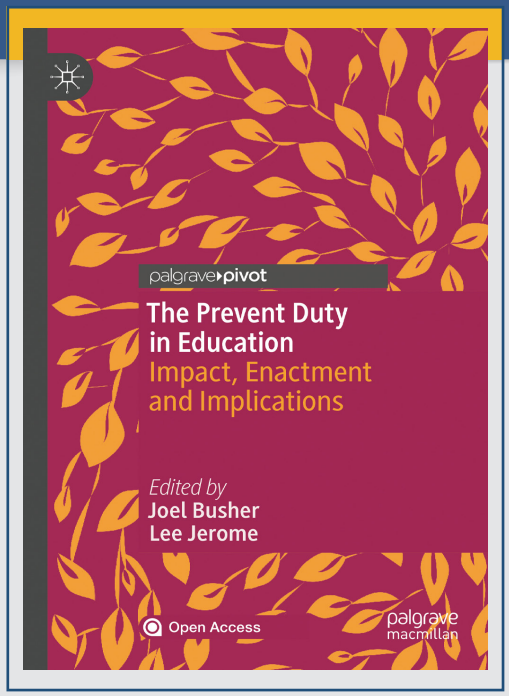
BOOK REVIEW



THE PREVENT DUTY IN EDUCATION

IMPACT, ENACTMENT & IMPLICATIONS

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LEE JEROME

Book Review

Monthly Issue - Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition

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Book Review

THE PREVENT DUTY IN EDUCATION

IMPACT, ENACTMENT & IMPLICATIONS

The PREVENT DUTY IN EDUCATION: IMPACT, ENACTMENT AND IMPLICATIONS provides an approach to the challenges gnawing away at education and how to better address the threats of extremist ideologies that snowball into societies. With this in mine, the publication further explains that it has become critically imperative to gear ourselves up for a better understanding of what educational institutions do; they are no longer functional tools for teaching educational curricula. Empowered by social responsibility, education per se has now a greater position especially assigned to protect youth against extremist ideologies.

Joel Busher and Lee Jerome have extensively discussed developing the necessary policies and enacting the must-have legislation to well introduce a comprehensive update to educational practices in such a manner as to act as protective shields to better protect children and youth from extremist ideologies. With this in mind, confronting destructive ideologies must be a springboard or stepping stones to counterterrorism as spelled out by Joel Busher and Lee Jerome. The publication equally falls into nine chapters, with thematic goals set for each.

Chapter One

Chapter One discusses how the UK government introduced a legal duty in 2015 requiring that specified authorities show due regard to the need to prevent people from slipping into terrorism and violence. With the Counter Terrorism and Security Act coming into play, the UK was the first country to introduce functional obligations on education personnel to contribute to protecting students from being drawn into curricula riddled with extremist ideologies. The said act is the main motive for the new strategy to protect children from extremis. All educational institutions, including schools, child care centers, universities alongside health and social care institutions, are entrusted with the exercise of this national duty; each shall assume a specific responsibility appropriate to the age group for which they are provide given services.

The new strategy determines the approach to be adopted by those entrusted with facilitating education to protect children from extremism. It primarily instills and promotes the high values of the British society, including the urge to reject violence. The authors have indicated that this approach did not come into reality out of thin air. Rather, it is deeply ingrained in a political framework and legal legislation of the British society, emphasizing the need to pay attention to the ethical, social and cultural aspects of education.

The opinions of supporters and opponents of the new strategy are further explained. The supporters believe that promoting this duty with a legal and legislative status attached to it in the United Kingdom is a societal imperative. While the opponents believe that this strategy will be a direct cause of restricting freedom of speech and bring about a whole host of obstacles to education. Possibly, this will also create a satanic view of Muslim students pursuing their education in Britain, who will be the first target of the new Acts, which may cause more isolation and alienation.

It has become critically necessary to adopt this new duty to become an inseparable part of education, as reflected by a consuming interest evinced by researchers theoretically and practically. The target groups were classified according to the age groups, and the functions assigned to the stakeholders were identified to help each group avoid being blinded by extremist and violent ideas, feeding the debate on the subject of freedoms and restrictions in the West in general, and the United Kingdom in particular, following a continued debate on freedom, and the classification of ideas according to cultural values. Values such as religion, morality, duty and freedom have different meanings; associated connotations are not the same for the peoples of the West, people of color and followers of different monotheistic religion. Consequently, many religious and ethnic groups have come into reality from the United Kingdom, preferring to remain silent for fear of being misunderstood, or being accused of stereotypical accusations of violence and terrorism, and linking them to the students' ethnic or religious origins.

The possibility of the new legislation affecting education in general is also brought under discussion; possible introduction of a security tone into educational practices and activities, making educational institutions, over the course of time, turn into something like security or police states. In a similar vein, the potential impact of the new act on the nature of the family relationship between children and youth on the one hand, and their parents on the other hand is also a mooted point of discussion. This relationship may be disturbed as a result of the possible constraint on school and university students, following the actual implementation of the provisions of the new strategy, and perhaps this is one of the negative effects of the new legislation.

It is necessary to refer to the confusion caused by the application of previous acts among teachers, such as the Education Act in 1996, which prohibited the discussion of political matters with students without a clear definition that separates the discussion of political issues as a factor of polarization, and the discussion of ideas as a socio-cultural product.

Chapter Two

The authors explain the stages of development that the strategy for preventing extremism has gone through since 2006. It has been noted that despite the government emphasis that the new duty encourages community participation, broad criticisms have been directed at the strategy: it includes an explicit call to "demonize" Muslims in Britain (we use the term "demonization" and other similar expressions as used in the source text of the publication. This conceptual clash leads to more societal discord.

Chapter Two highlights the four principles of the Anti-Terrorism Act issued in the United Kingdom in 2003, following the 9/11 Attacks of 2001, which caused heightened alert among the security services: prevention, prosecution, protection, and preparation. With this act coming into play, several preventive security strategies were developed, which were adopt by the world countries, taking into account the different circumstances.

The researchers divided the stage-based developments that the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) or Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) strategy underwent into three stages, monitoring the controversy surrounding each stage separately, and reviewing the key criticisms directed at it.

First Stage (2006)

The first track came into reality mainly at the local level, following the bombings that took place in the vicinity of London in July of 2005. The criticisms directed at the track addressed the excessive attention paid to Islamist terrorism only, despite the fact that the far-right was implicated in triggering ethnic unrest in the community, as well.

In the same vein, opinions at the time were directed towards the necessity of controlling Muslim institutions of all levels and activities by some funding offers, so that such Muslim institutions become more like instrumentalized arms of the government in implementing the PVE/CVE policies. This confirms the possibility that the new strategy will lead to more exclusion of Muslims in Britain. Some Muslim institutions have accepted such funding offers, confirming their support for the new security function in the civil life of Muslims in Britain. While some other institutions have reservations about accepting such funding offers.

Second Stage (2011)

The second track of the strategy went beyond simply responding to terrorist activities, focusing on how to rein in intentions, ideas and plans that threaten the security and peace of the government, which stem mainly from Muslim communities that are unfamiliar with the values of the British society, which are inculcated in the hearts of youth in education, according to the official government vision.

The British House of Commons committee recognized the need for the new strategy to be part of community work to overcome differences and limit the hostile view of the other. However, the local government

highlighted the concept of individuals most vulnerable to extremism; it is the basic approach to fundamentalism and fanaticism, although practical experiences have shown that there are no fixed determinants for identifying such people.

Third Stage (2015)

The researchers believe that there are three separate incidents that were the direct cause of the development of the final version of the PVE/CVE strategy in 2015. First, the high-profile murder of an off-duty soldier, Fusilier Lee Rigby, in 2013; second, the trial of six Muslim youths in Birmingham, who plotted to attack a far-right movement; third, there was also growing evidence of a significant number of young Britons attempting to travel to Syria to join ISIS.

This is what made the then government of Prime Minister David Cameron emphasize all concerned institutions on the need for all personnel to assume their responsibilities towards protecting children from extremism and violence.

The interest of the government was evident in several private, Muslim-majority schools in Birmingham.

Although the final version aims to confront all types of extremism, actual practices have demonstrated that the strategy was primarily designed to target Muslims.

The two authors turn the spotlight on the main contradiction that governs the Act in a multi-ethnic society. Acts tend to protect the supremacy of race under the guise of protecting society. In a research paper, featuring RACISM AND WESTERN CUSTOMS published in HISTORY AND IDEAS by UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, Volume 25, No. 4, Dante A. Puzzo states that Western racism manifests itself in two principles: first, consideration of supremacy is derived from shape and color and that human beings are divided into two parts: Westerners and inferior ones from the rest of humankind. This distinction governs the Western mind when identifying the concerns that have become the main motivation for developing Acts.

Second, this supremacy is old, which cannot be broken or changed. Note that the final version of the said Act was encouraged by three violent events, related to Muslims. Then the development of the act turns to the development of means of rejecting the other, instead of working to eliminate the causes of extremism, and the act turns into an unfair legal value, ignoring the concerns of other nationalities in a pluralistic society.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three discusses the reactions of staff in educational institutions in Britain towards the new strategy in the first eighteen months after its final proposal in July 2015. The researchers confirmed that the percentage of the supporters is much higher than that of the opponents.

However, some questions still hover over the feasibility of the new PVE/CVE strategy, as well as doubts about the ability of educational institutions to identify students at risk of extremism from others, or how to train educators in the first place to identify and guide such vulnerable students. It stands to reason that the more a student senses observation, the more alert and mysterious such a student will be, which may make the task of identifying such vulnerable students more challenging.

Clear explanations are provided for the state of high support for the new strategy, highlighting the idea of making it a national duty or considering it a formal legal requirement; failure to comply with it may cause penalties. As many terrorist incidents came into reality across the United Kingdom in coincidence with the PVE/CVE strategy, many were prompted to fully support the duty imposed by the government.

Among the key criticisms directed at the strategy is the reference to the British values, as it is a broad, loose term shrouded in ambiguity, which means it is possible to accept that framing values may fall into the trap of racism and division, and this may make many victims of the racist approach of followers of extremist ideologies.

Among the key concepts is providing protection and safety for students through the virtual world by blocking educational institutions content that threatens the safety and security of students on the Internet. Perhaps, this was one of the biggest reasons for broad support for the new strategy. With the passage of time, those keen to implement the regulations began to understand well what the term “students most vulnerable to extremism” means, by observing some behavioral changes, such as the tendency to shut oneself off, and the sudden fluctuation of tendencies. This made them feel very compatible with the strategy and its importance in education.

Over the course of time alongside the strategy-oriented continued training, some opinions were voiced opposing those who see the strategy as a method to exclude and demonize Muslim students,

explaining that is a manifestation of discouraging official efforts exerted to establish security, and they demanded that the strategy should also be promoted in Muslim institutions for Muslim students to well understand it.

The said duty raised an important question about the impact on freedom of thought and speech among children and students in general. Children always have something to say, and often it is not in accordance with the whims of adults. It is likely that preventing children from speaking about some matters may push them towards isolation at times, making them lack the culture of dialogue and debate. Some solutions have been put forward to such problems, which is encouraging children to engage in activities and discussions related to some humanitarian principles, such as peace and tolerance, which in the course of time causes them to neglect engagement in conversations that may pose some threats to them.

The challenges that faced the actual implementation of the strategy on the ground are further discussed. It is clear that adopting the principle of prevention is a method of protection was not an easy matter, as researchers and politicians initially imagined.

Although the researchers point to the popularity of law enforcement among teachers, this obscures the fact that we still need to grapple with white feelings of fear that do not allow teachers to see the promotion of a particular point of view. This relieves them of the more complex questions because they have not faced any problem in teaching white people seen as a privilege, as long as they study social factors in a systematic methodology, and as long as that is not against the act. Perhaps we should always be certain that the environment in which the act is applied is more important than the act itself. If teachers are riddled and flawed with racist ideologies, it is difficult to expect meaningful results for applying the act to people of other races and religions.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four communicates the reactions of students, being the target group of implementing the new strategy in education decoyed in a new guise, and their view of the efforts made by educational institutions to present a clear vision of extremism and terrorism.

The researchers realize that all the target students were born after the 9/11 Attacks of 2001, and most of them are ideologically inclined to associate that terrorism with Islam work in tandem. The students emphasize that they are seldom allowed to ask about the truth of extremist groups or to discuss the matter with their families and teachers. Perhaps, this has motivated the research to further explore their vision of the ability of their schools and universities to communicate the whole truth and inculcate it in their minds, which fosters awareness of extremism widely.

The researchers observe that the vast majority of students refuse to justify acts of violence on any pretext, and that they tend to uphold the voice of law and high societal values such as democracy and tolerance. Targeting such students with the

British values in the extreme is a glaringly notorious exaggeration. It may even have negative effects in the future.

Perhaps, as students affirm the important role of the media in associating terrorism and Islam, their heated passion for exploring the facts and learning about whether religion is a source of extremism and terrorism or not has come into play. As such, education-driven discussion should take the lead to crack the code of Islamophobia across the media outlets.

A comprehensive assessment of the nature of the developed educational resources is conducted to determine their compatibility with the minds of students looking to unravel the mystery of extremism, and measuring the efficiency of the curricula especially designed for students in establishing the British principles, resisting extremism on the one hand, promoting community participation and rejecting racism on the one hand. Some types of content may lead to political and societal problems in the future rather than their ability to help students understand the world following the 9/11 Attacks of 2001.

Observing the power of media content to control white citizens' assumptions about people of color and Muslims or what is globally known as Islamophobia is mainly due to the culture of society as shown by media elites. This brings us deeper questions about the ability of academic contents and the relationship between the sender and the recipient in the school to build an integrated space to establish a foundation for the elimination of Islamophobia and satisfying students' sheer curiosity to search for real answers about the association between Islam and terrorism, if any.

Research reveals that the United States has identified more than 160 suspected American Muslim perpetrators and terrorists in the decade following the 9/11 Attacks of 2001, which is a small percentage vis-à-vis the thousands of acts of violence in the United States each year. The system of government prosecution and media coverage for terrorist suspects among American Muslims places them in the national interest, intentionally or unintentionally creating the impression that American Islamist terrorism is more widespread than it actually is.

Ever since the 9/11 Attacks of 2001, the American Muslim community has helped security officials and law enforcement authorities prevent nearly two out of every five Al-Qaeda terrorist plots, threatening the United States; this piece of advice provided by the American Muslim community is the single largest source of primary information for authorities about such few plots. We quote these facts to indicate that the issue is deeper than teachers' communication with students; society does not look into such issues with a pair of fair eyes; instead, society sifts through in the rubble left by terrorism for any connection to Islam. We should note that the student is not the only one exposed to Islamophobia; those entrusted and mandated with implementing the education law and associated amendments in schools, including teachers and administration.

Chapter Five

Chapter Five addresses the methods of the PVE/CVE implementation policies in the early stages of education, given that children in the early childhood stage are an appropriate environment conducive for instilling positive values. The researchers

indicate that the government intends to withdraw the support provided to the concerned institutions when it is proven that their members fail to perform their duties related to the safety of children and their families against extremism.

The main issue is reflected in the multinational and multi-ethnic children and their families; this is what made the generalization of the British values to everyone seems a big problem. Some feel discriminated and do not see themselves as originally British. As revealed, discrimination among Muslim students in schools is glaringly flagged; negative impressions of others are also flagrantly mounted, looking always inferior as seen by themselves, despite being granted British citizenship. More infamously, society-driven perception of them as threatening creatures has made them feel alienated.

The term Values-Based Education is also brought under discussion, which presents a problematic issue of how to strike a balance between methods of instilling values in children and training children to discover and develop their own values. The teachers emphasized that their mandate by the government to instill the British values in the hearts of youth does not add anything new; this is their actual job, but the new duty necessarily requires more effort in education.

The strategy at this educational stage identifies the families most vulnerable to extremism, cordoning people with some identities off to surveillance and prosecution more than others, which is a form of discrimination.

Chapter Five highlights the concerns of those entrusted with this strategy, when asking two important questions: Who inculcates and instills values? What is the value reference? Subjecting Muslim students to special treatment when screening the target student population causes discrimination and an implicit awareness aimed at limiting the charge of commission of terrorism by Muslims only! The same screening would make Muslim students more negative, feel more discriminated and more convinced that this educational system is similar to a larger community that does not do justice to them as being equal to all multi-ethnic Britons of different faiths.

Chapter Six

Chapter Six highlights the consensus among primary school teachers on the need to promote PVE/CVE legislation, as it is a national duty in education. The quality of training received by teachers on the implementation of the strategy has a relative effect. Different opinions about training vary: some believe in the the efficiency of the training; while, others see that the training content itself is not appropriate for the elementary stage. However, they unanimously agree on the necessity to refer the suspected student immediately to the authorities concerned with student-based assessment, as a preventive measure.

Although the trainees expressed their satisfaction with the training program, they did not deny prejudice towards Muslims. The content of the training meant great attention to Islamist terrorism, with reference to the supremacy of the white race in all cases. With the passage of time, a trend in the training content was observed towards rejecting extremism without distinguishing between those who displayed extremism, whether Muslims or non-Muslims; perhaps, this is mainly related to the political and societal changes accompanying the stages of implementing the strategy. The need for the measures taken to be consistent with the child's age is highlighted and the new curricula should be necessarily included in some academic subjects, such as religious education and social education, the values of respect for people of other religions, ethnicities and nationalities.

No adequate database is provided on the distribution of the teachers' community of different religious and ethnic origins. The target student group is children; the telling example has more power than mental simulation in persuading and preventing children from adopting racist behavior and exclusionary reactions that turn over time into deeply ingrained beliefs, which are difficult to change by persuasion. The different interests and orientations, of teachers alongside the balance of teachers and trainers between schools allow children to accept the other color, other religions, and different races, and further facilitate the implementation of the strategy away from similar faces and habits between home, school and the media.

Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven explores the context surrounding the methods of legislation in secondary education, with a special attention to the factors affecting PVE/CVE at the local and institutional levels, supporting the concerned institutions to implement the strategy efficiently. Teachers and students tend to link the PVE/CVE strategy with the local conditions surrounding each school; extremism for them is

linked in many cases to the local context and the institutional history of each school. Some schools have observed a lot of cases, and other schools have students who rarely receive the support required by the PVE/CVE strategy.

The approach used in implementing the PVE/CVE strategy differs according to the target group. Schools with a British majority of students need an approach that differs from other schools that include a diverse community. The institutional culture of each school has an important impact on assessing the methods of carrying out the duty, as well. The methods used within schools to inculcate the British values vary, and visions differ between schools as to the feasibility of cases, given that addressing students is an internal matter. The apparent disparity is observed between schools in the implementation of duty due to the difference in the financial conditions and human resources of each school, infrastructure and information systems. This was triggered by the variation in support from local authorities.

The problem of atypical societies is also observed when a dominant culture comes into play. The difference in ethnic fabric and the extent of mixing in schools lead to an evaluation of the success of the new educational strategy. How compatible is the school mission with the goals of the education strategy? The difference in the mentality that governs the educational project and the goals of the strategy leads judiciously to several constraints on interpreting the implementation of the strategy. This may have required the introduction of broader variables that allow the interpretation of a wider range of behavioral elements associated with the cultural message, something that was not taken into account by those entrusted to have developed the strategy and the implementation methods.

Chapter Eight

Chapter Eight sheds light on the experiences of students and faculty in universities in implementing the PVE/CVE policies, and how each of them formed their own vision and self-judgments in such a way that helps them to interact positively with the new educational reality. Training programs targeting faculty members have been developed at an institutional level efficiently consistent with the nature of the university education stage.

The responsibility for inculcating the British values was assigned to faculty as the first line of defense against extremist beliefs and ideologies. Their tasks are based on enhancing the spirit of citizenship and raising the level of awareness among students. Several professors agree that human values, such as tolerance and democracy, are really taught to students; therefore, the PVE/CVE strategy does not add anything new, except that labeling these values as British may have created a whole host of problems at the institutional and societal levels. Some professors see the necessity of using external sources of information to support the courses taught to the students. However, the problem is that these sources approach Islamist terrorism alone, which threatens to expand the scope of the "satanic" view of Muslims. Taken together, they decide to strike a balance by discussing all types of terrorism, especially the terrorism of the far-right trend.

Practices reveal that the new strategy is an extension of the "preserving the children" policy adopted in all British educational circles; what is new here is the call for framing PVE/CVE policies in such a manner as to become an effective and feasible means of prevention in children's lives in the long run. The main challenge remains in demonstrating teacher neutrality when selecting and discussing multiple sources.

The western far-right extremism should not be interpreted according to the Western concept only; it should be interpreted and read as one of the natural outputs of the racist view in Western culture towards other nationalities, even when that culture is encased with a lot of democracy and acceptance of the other, considered a human being of second class as simply put by to Dante Pozzo.

Chapter Nine

Chapter Nine provides a summary that reiterates and highlights the content of the previous eight chapters, emphasizing the PVE/CVE policies and implementation methods in schools and universities, the implications thereof and the mental images of those in charge of the educational process and students towards the stereotypes of the concept of extremism and terrorism stemming mainly from biased media coverage that mainly zooms in and zeros in on Islamist terrorism.

It is worth noting that the attempt of the UK government to frame the new strategy as an extension of the child protection policy may lead to serious societal problems in the long run, such as the marginalization of Muslims, the imposition of restrictions on freedom of expression and the transformation of the educational system into entities of a security nature.

Among other issues, the contradiction that afflicted some teachers is also foregrounded with regard to the duty imposed on them, in terms of their recognition

that it is a societal and security necessity, and their belief in its limited ability to form the ideological patterns of students at the same time. The two authors successfully show the state of transformation that took place among some teachers opposing the new strategy. Most of them quickly recognize the need to include PVE/CVE policies in education, as they complement the efforts of educational institutions in protecting children from potential threats, such as sexual exploitation and drug addiction.

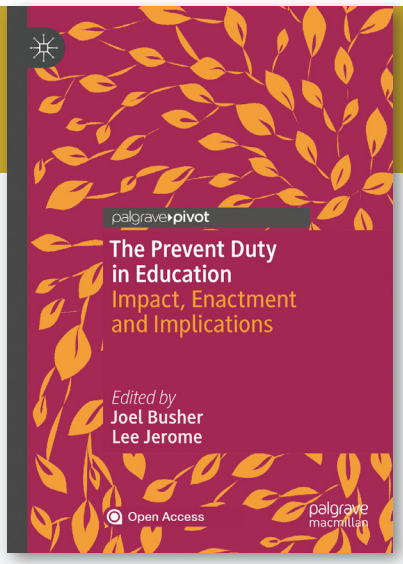
Conclusion

The PVE/CVE policies may create more room for community-based dialogue, hence encourage children and youth to adopt their own values in light of the value framework of society. This mitigates the effects of the opinions that drum up for the strategy being an obstacle to individual freedoms in a given country that claims to respect human rights. It will make those in charge of the educational process more understanding of extremism, which will contribute positively to the meaningful impact on their students with well-monitored practices put in place and regularly assessed by the competent supervisory authorities.

The main goal of the authors is not merely to highlight the mixed opinions between the supporters and opponents of the new strategy; rather, it turns the spotlight on the productive methods of implementation as to make this duty an inseparable part of the educational process in Britain. Despite the government's claim that the responsibility for implementing the new strategy will rest on the institutions in such a manner that relieves pressure on those who work individually, we find that practices have proven otherwise.

Hence, some failures have come to surface in implementation, such as wrong cases and referrals, or the inability to identify students most vulnerable at risk of radicalization. This affected the final evaluation of the strategy on the political, research and societal levels, in terms of its readiness to become part of the general PVE/CVE policy of the United Kingdom.

The general observation of the research is the inability to generalize the results revealed to develop a general model that simulates prevention from terrorism alongside the biased view of Muslims. The research addresses the response to the education law in a given western environment and at specific times. Still, we have a long way to go in research to crack the code of the exclusionary consciousness that feeds the hegemony of the West, flagged up from home to school to media to community. Islamophobia per se is the product of an entire culture that schools can limit or suppress, as long as it is vulnerable to the trauma that makes hate speech and fear of the other again control the West.



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