

COUNTER-RADICALISATION IN THE CLASSROOM



The challenges of counter-radicalisation policies in education in the Council of Europe member states

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Insights from eight grass- roots projects in Council of Europe member states

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ACRONYMS

ACT	Association for Citizenship Teaching: the NGO leading the Deliberative Classroom project, in several locations, including London
CHD	central help desk: consists of a group of social work professionals who can be reached by telephone; schools and PGCs can contact the CHD about radicalisation or other problematic behaviour
CSHR	Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of the Region: project led by the NDC
CVE	countering violent extremism
EDC	education for democratic citizenship; see also HRE
EU	European Union
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
HRE	human rights education; see also EDC
IS/ISIS	Islamic State/Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NDC	Nansen Dialogue Centre, the NGO leading the CSHR project in various locations in Croatia, including Osijek and Dalj
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PGC	pupil guidance centres (centrum voor leerlingenbegeleiding in Dutch): four centres, linked to schools, which aim to guide pupils; PGCs are the contact points for the central help desk in the municipality of Antwerp
PVE	preventing violent extremism
RAN	Radicalisation Awareness Network
RFDCDC	Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

FOREWORD

In response to the terrorist attacks that have shaken the international community, counter-radicalisation policies have entered the core of national and international security agendas and also the agendas of other sectors, including educational, impacting citizenship education in our democratic societies. Teachers entrusted with the primary mission of supporting students in the development of competences enabling them to grow as responsible citizens, have been given a new role in many instances: reporting students with suspicious ideas or behaviour to law-enforcement authorities.

Following on from the Council of Europe publication *Students as suspects?* (2017), this report investigates how such potential conflicts, which go to the heart of pressing questions about human rights and civil liberties, about social cohesion and democratic culture, play out in practice. Showing how these issues are unfolding in corridors, classrooms and communities across member states, it offers an analysis of eight grass-roots projects that are working with schools to tackle violent radicalisation in local settings in Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Norway and the United Kingdom.

The report highlights the challenges encountered by teachers in understanding and implementing their new role and the possible consequences for their students. As spaces where individuals can express themselves freely and learn safely, schools are challenged as soon as a climate of suspicion, fear and self-censorship sets in. Freedom for students to express themselves is key, enabling teachers and fellow students to hear diverse opinions, identify their shortcomings and ultimately leading students to question ideas incompatible with democratic values.

With this in mind, the Council of Europe will continue to encourage the strengthening of democratic citizenship and human rights education through the implementation of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture in the states parties to the European Cultural Convention in its future activities. The aim is to support teachers to address sensitive and controversial issues, while building a free and safe space for exchanges enabling students to develop autonomous and critical thinking that is respectful of democratic values.

Matjaž Gruden

Director of Democratic Participation
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report offers an assessment of the effects of counter-radicalisation policies in the education sector, through the empirical analysis of eight grass-roots projects located in schools across the member states of the Council of Europe (Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Norway and the United Kingdom). It is based on qualitative interviews and focus groups with project leaders, students, teachers, educators and school managers. It provides a detailed insight into how such policies are experienced in practice. The report covers three main areas. Chapter 1 provides background information on the legislative and political context that led to the development of counter-radicalisation policies, as well as their contestation. Chapter 2 shows how the term “counter-radicalisation” covers several types of practices, and describes them in detail. Chapter 3 outlines how these policies challenge the fundamental rights and autonomy of education, as well as how practitioners deal with these challenges. The report draws out the main conclusions from the empirical the data collected from our field study and makes some key recommendations to the Council of Europe.

Introduction

Counter-radicalisation policies, understood broadly as policies aimed at preventing people from engaging in terrorist activities, have become a priority of local, national, regional and international security agendas.¹ As enshrined in the Action Plan on the Fight against Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism (Council of Europe 2015), the Council of Europe has outlined a set of measures, including for use in education, both to detect radicalisation and to build a more cohesive societal environment so as to prevent its emergence. Such an approach was initially developed in the UK and the Netherlands in the mid-2000s. Since then almost all Council of Europe member states have adopted policies and plans to counter radicalisation.² However, despite widespread support from governments and some civil society

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1. Policies aimed at tackling radicalisation operate under different names. In the UK, the term used for a long time was “preventing violent extremism” (PVE), while in the United States the same policies were designed and implemented under the term “countering violent extremism” (CVE). Since 2014, the UK’s policy has broadened to include “non-violent extremism”, that is, extremism that is not necessarily violent but may be considered to create a context in which violence can be justified. The terms are now commonly used by both policy makers and practitioners to describe different types of practices: PVE refers to a range of activities to build resilience to the underlying problems that lead to radicalisation, while CVE describes practices that undermine the influence of “extremist” ideas or activities (i.e. involvement in proscribed organisations). In this report, we refrain from using one label over the other, and refer to “counter-radicalisation” policies that cover both PVE and CVE. We make further distinctions on the basis of the practices observed.
 2. For a detailed list of policies of the Council of Europe member states, see Ragazzi (2017).

organisations across Europe, these policies have also been criticised for encouraging non-educational interests to encroach into schools. These debates centre on whether counter-radicalisation reconfigures the pedagogical, pastoral and ultimately democratic roles of schools according to a logic of suspicion that is traditionally found among security professionals. Critics argue that this jeopardises the autonomy of the education sector, and erodes the fundamental rights and civil liberties of students who are cast as potential suspects.

While debates in academia and civil society have offered several versions of what educational responses to “radicalisation” should look like, we still lack an evidence-based understanding of what has actually been happening in the meantime. It has largely been taken for granted in the normative discussions on educational autonomy, and the securitised, racialised politics of counter-radicalisation. Little attention has been paid to the extensive, diverse array of strategies, organisations and networks that constitute the counter-radicalisation sector, and the composite norms, practices and expertise that move between them across local, national and transnational boundaries. This report sets out to draw attention to them through the analysis of eight projects: The Deliberative Classroom (UK), Dembra (Norway), Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of the Region (Croatia), CleaR (Germany), Resilience (UK), Derad Theatre Therapy (Hungary), Dropout Prevention Network (Hungary) and Embrace Differences (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

What do projects do?

What do grass-roots projects designed to counter radicalisation do in practice? What kind of activities and programmes are offered to students and educators as part of these to bring counter-radicalisation into the education sector? While we might expect these projects to engage in similar practices, there is actually a very broad diversity of practices linked to the multiple traditions from which they originate and for many other reasons. Our research shows that there is a fundamental difference between awareness-raising programmes and casework programmes.

Awareness-raising programmes are aimed at a broad audience and follow the path of citizenship and human rights education. They offer a diverse array of activities, including in-school workshops, role play and alternative narratives through extra-curricular sessions, such as anonymous group sessions, field trips and summer schools. They use experiential methods and participation to establish a normative framework both within and outside the classroom. While the official aim of the projects is to prevent radicalisation, the projects work at different complementary levels to foster social cohesion, anti-racism and anti-discrimination and to encourage individuals’ democratic and intercultural competence.

Casework programmes are more related to social work, and possibly police work. They belong to a different category of interventions, based on the contested idea that radicalisation can be “spotted”, and are linked to processes of detection, risk assessment, referrals and interventions. As such, they share many features with social programmes aimed at tackling bullying, gang violence and drug use. Our field visits showed that in counter-radicalisation programmes assessing risk, sharing information

internally and externally, and interfacing with law enforcement varied greatly according to the national legal environment and the design of the specific projects. Issues of trust, confidentiality and the professional autonomy of the education sector arise at different steps of the process. This means that programmes differ greatly in their objectives, their practice and their relation to law enforcement, so that any assessment of the challenges that arise from them must consider these fundamental distinctions.

Challenges and solutions

Counter-radicalisation programmes in schools both face and pose challenges at the grass-roots level. We found that the two main areas in which problems tended to arise were concern about the protection of fundamental rights, and about the autonomy of education. In addition to discussing these challenges, this report also highlights their effects as they featured in the experiences of the students, teachers and counter-radicalisation practitioners we interviewed.

Among the most salient challenges posed by counter-radicalisation programmes are those that threaten or place a strain on fundamental rights. Several universally recognised fundamental rights have been at the centre of concerns about counter-radicalisation in schools, as highlighted in *Students as suspects?* (Ragazzi 2017). These include freedom of expression; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the right to education; the right to preserve one's identity; the right to freedom from discrimination; and the right to respect for one's private and family life. Ragazzi's report also highlighted that the right to a fair trial may be affected where intelligence collected in schools is used to justify administrative and judicial measures.

Our interviews with educators and other professionals revealed concerns that counter-radicalisation can place a strain on the professional autonomy of the education sector. These concerns, like those about fundamental rights, appeared predominantly in relation to casework, specifically in relation to detection and referral. They were therefore also more prevalent in northern European countries, where such approaches are more established. The strain on educational autonomy is principally caused by two interwoven factors. First, in countries dominated by a police-led reporting culture, there is a higher chance of front-line educators mishandling cases. Indeed, the imperative for early detection and reporting is often prioritised over careful consideration by educational practitioners who have been tasked with assessing the extent to which a student is "at risk" of radicalisation, rather than of more traditional welfare problems to which police involvement is not the answer traditionally. Second, against this backdrop, educators often confront the reality that the consequences of their decisions to refer a student will probably never be fully known to them, as information tends to flow one way, from school to the police, without feedback on individual cases. In some cases, this takes place in a climate where stories of the unfair treatment of the most vulnerable groups at the hands of the police are well known. This makes it very difficult for education practitioners, who usually prioritise the welfare of their students, to be confident that their choices are aligned with their professional and personal values. As a result, in such instances,

there is a risk that educational autonomy becomes subordinate to external interests, namely those of security. Other significant challenges include conflicts between practitioners and high-ranking officials within the education sector, which disconnect front-line practices of resilience building from their intended purpose.

Practitioners respond to these challenges in many different ways. Some of our participants highlighted the importance of transparency in the referral process, as a means of re-establishing control over the decisions they make. Others observed that, where schools are unable to reconcile opening up free debate with formal demands to be “alert” to detecting radicalisation, such as in England and Wales, third-party actors such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can offer alternative approaches. Finally, our interviews foregrounded several instances of front-line practitioners, often with the help of third-party actors, mobilising their agency to relocate prevention in a pedagogical context. Amid claims that counter-radicalisation securitises education, these accounts show that front-line practitioners in even the most regulated policy contexts can always wrest back control of their practice in line with their professional ethics.

Conclusions

On the basis of the results presented above, and picking up where the report *Students as suspects?* (Ragazzi 2017) left off, this report offers the following conclusions.

First, counter-radicalisation policies can be conceived as “a solution in search of a problem”. Our field visits showed once again that there are very few cases of students who are involved in or at risk of being involved in terrorist organisations. The image of schools, in particular schools located in disenfranchised or Muslim-majority neighbourhoods of European cities, as potential incubators of terrorism is largely a myth. Problems of “radicalisation” are numerically marginal in comparison to the usual, regular issues faced by schools. However, schools face pressures both from above and from below to do “something”, as public policies on radicalisation have undermined the confidence of many educators in their ability to respond to traditional pedagogic challenges when these are reframed in terms of “radicalisation”. The discourse of radicalisation generates in part its own reality.

Second, as a result of the contradictory national and international dynamics of counter-radicalisation in the education sector, it has been impossible to formulate a single critique of policies or projects labelled as “counter-radicalisation”: the range of practices is too broad. In our field visits, we were able to divide practices into two broad categories: (1) projects aimed broadly at raising awareness around key societal issues such as nationalism, racism and discrimination; and (2) projects aimed at dealing with individual cases which are deemed to be in need of special attention. The first category, of awareness-raising projects, is generally in line with the principles and philosophy of education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and human rights education (HRE), and the core values of the Reference Framework of Competences

for Democratic Culture (RFCDC).³ Such projects generally emanate from NGOs that are themselves at the core of the conversation on citizenship education. The second category of projects, which we refer to as “casework based”, poses a different set of ethical and political questions. Contrary to the common critique, front-line professionals from NGOs or the public sector are generally very aware of the ethical dilemmas they have to navigate. Each of these steps presents an ethical risk and presents the risk of conflicting with the fundamental rights and principles of EDC, HRE and the RFCDC.

Third, it was clear from our interviews with students, educational staff and project practitioners that, as criticisms of them have long claimed, counter-radicalisation measures in schools create conditions in which students’ fundamental rights may be threatened. These might be as a result of several often related factors, including confusion on the terminology of extremism and radicalisation, the difficulty of putting vague concepts into practice in real life, and the unintended consequences of referral processes, which follow from the ethical ambiguity that confronts educators attempting to do so. Furthermore, casework-based projects often give rise to grass-roots struggles as educators attempt to reconcile prevention approaches with their pedagogical and welfare-based priorities, which are often at odds with the security-oriented interests of law enforcement. Awareness-raising projects, by contrast, offer a vital means through which front-line practitioners in schools can reassert their educational autonomy by relocating prevention in a pedagogical context and explicitly challenging the negative effects of counter-radicalisation.

Recommendations

To address the issues raised throughout this report, we make the following recommendations to the Council of Europe.

How can the demand for counter-radicalisation policies be met while preserving the principles of human rights, education for democratic citizenship and human rights education?

- ▶ Awareness-raising projects are the projects that best promote the values of human rights as well as EDC and HRE, through their aims, their methods of implementation and their methodology. While framing activities aimed at raising awareness of racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination might respond to a need in the short term, in the longer term they legitimise a security-based approach to issues that form the basis of

3. The RFCDC is a set of materials that can be used by education systems, education programmes and educators to equip young people with the competences to defend and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law; to participate effectively in a culture of democracy; and to live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse societies. It offers a systematic approach to designing the teaching, learning and assessment of learners’ democratic and intercultural competences. As such, it provides a comprehensive and coherent framework covering EDC and HRE.

human rights and democratic citizenship education. Our recommendation is for the Council of Europe:

- to refuse to rebrand the long-existing education in democratic citizenship and human rights as “counter-radicalisation”;
 - to promote and circulate existing materials and methods that have the same goals as awareness-raising programmes;
 - to support safe environments for addressing controversial issues around religion, discrimination, exclusion and foreign policy while engaging in the core principles of EDC, HRE and intercultural education (IE);
 - to show the relevance of existing Council of Europe EDC/HRE materials to educators;
 - to assist governments in de-securing EDC, HRE and IE materials by counter-proposing an approach based on human rights to build competences in tackling social problems currently labelled as “radicalisation”.
- ▶ Casework-based counter-radicalisation projects do not in themselves threaten the principles of EDC, HRE and the RFCDC, but they risk doing so. The Council of Europe should therefore ensure that such projects and programmes do not infringe its principles in the domain of education. In particular, the Council of Europe should:
- raise awareness of governments and NGOs of the risk that casework-based projects may threaten fundamental rights, such as the interests of a child, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and privacy;
 - develop mechanisms of oversight and democratic accountability, in terms of data protection and right to privacy of casework-based projects;
 - work with governments, and especially with law enforcement and intelligence services, to establish a strict division between social work and intelligence work, as well as mechanisms of accountability for the personal data obtained by law enforcement when collaborating with casework-based projects.

How can radicalisation be tackled while preserving the autonomy of the education sector?

- ▶ As this report shows, one of the significant effects of the counter-radicalisation discourse on the education sector is the disempowerment of educators, and the idea that educators are not able to cope with the specificities of “radicalisation”. While educators might not be able to “predict” radicalisation, it is also true that neither are parents, friends or law enforcement, unless specific surveillance mechanisms are put in place. The Council of Europe should:
- raise awareness and communicate with governments about the risks of “over-reporting” and “misreporting” cases of radicalisation. Given the very low incidence of recruitment to terror organisations, in the large majority of cases educators who have been trained to report are likely to misreport;
 - encourage the development of informal and privacy-friendly mechanisms of reporting such as anonymous referrals.

- ▶ Since awareness-raising programmes are more likely to be carried out properly than casework-based projects, the Council of Europe should:
 - encourage the development of awareness-raising programmes that rely on the pedagogic know-how of educators, and empower them to tackle issues of extremism, racism, hate speech and discrimination from the perspective of EDC/HRE;
 - work with governments to raise awareness in law enforcement and intelligence services about the dilemmas and ethical issues faced by educators when dealing with law enforcement in the context of “counter-radicalisation” or “deradicalisation” programmes.

How should educational professionals be trained?

- ▶ In the context of counter-radicalisation policies, the issue of training is both contentious and instrumental. Training programmes that take the discourse of radicalisation and counter-radicalisation at face value risk increasing the chances of misreporting and thus infringing on students’ rights. At the same time, lack of training, and the absence of privacy-conscious protocols, present the same risk. As such the Council of Europe should:
 - promote training in awareness-raising programmes that are both useful to tackle issues currently framed as “radicalisation”, while at the same time promote the principles of EDC/HRE;
 - in the context of casework-based programmes:
 - raise awareness of the risks to fundamental rights and EDC, HRE and IE of poorly executed assessments, referrals and interventions;
 - encourage the development of training in which the effects of misreporting and over-reporting are communicated to the trainees.

Chapter 1

Introduction



Counter-radicalisation policies, understood broadly as policies aimed at preventing people from engaging in terrorist activities, have become a priority of local, national, regional and international security agendas. As outlined in the Action Plan on the Fight against Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism (Council of Europe 2015), the Council of Europe has a set of measures, including ones for use in education, both to detect radicalisation and to prevent it by building a more cohesive social environment. In 2018 the Council of Europe published *Students as suspects?* (Ragazzi 2017), which explored the challenges of the counter-radicalisation policies that have been rolled out in education sectors in almost all its member states in the past 5 to 10 years. The report traced the development of counter-radicalisation policies from their origin in Dutch and British intelligence circles in the late 1990s to their widespread diffusion by 2018, reviewing the state of our knowledge on these policies and their potential effects. Analysing government policies, and drawing on the perspectives of teaching unions, academics and civil society, the report highlighted several key areas of potential conflict between the logics, values and practices of EDC/HRE on the one hand, and security and preventive counter-radicalisation on the other.

The current report follows *Students as suspects?* and investigates how such potential frictions, which go to the heart of pressing questions about human rights and civil liberties, about social cohesion and democratic cultures, play out in practice. Showing how these issues are unfolding in corridors, classrooms and communities across member states, it offers an in-depth analysis of eight grass-roots projects that are working with schools to tackle violent radicalisation in local settings in Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Norway and the UK. Each project is the focus of a brief ethnographic investigation, which includes interviews with students, teachers, public servants and members of the counter-radicalisation sector, among other local actors. The eight cases were selected from a dataset of 50 local counter-radicalisation initiatives used by schools across the member states of the Council of Europe, from which a typology of grass-roots initiatives was developed. From this vantage point, the report moves beyond current understanding, which has been derived largely from official documentation and analysis of specific national contexts (in particular the UK), to address in detail the impact of counter-radicalisation efforts across different policy settings.

This chapter begins with an overview of government policies, showing the variety of different approaches that vary between western Europe (specifically the UK) and eastern and central Europe. It then describes the eight local projects and their local contexts, including the typology of grass-roots initiatives that informed their selection.

Overview

Countering radicalisation

The idea that terrorism should be fought through preventive measures that involve the civilian population has a long history, which can be traced back to colonialism and counter-insurgency warfare (Miller and Sabir 2013; Mumford 2012). The notion that the state must “win the hearts and minds” of the population, which places society at the centre of attempts to combat terrorism, has emerged from this historical context.

The recent history of counter-radicalisation is generally considered to have started at the end of the 1990s. Dutch intelligence services were among the first in Europe to consider that terrorism, in particular the “home-grown” variety, should be addressed not only through law enforcement, but also through societal measures aimed at addressing broader issues of integration and polarisation in ethnic and religious groups in society (Coolsaet 2010; Fadil, Koning and Ragazzi 2019; Vermeulen and Bovenkerk 2012). After the London bombings of 2005, the UK became interested in the Dutch findings and approach. From the mid-2000s onwards, the UK and the Netherlands became two of the most prominent countries to promote preventive, “softer”, counter-terrorism both in Europe and internationally. The Dutch-British model gradually attracted interest in Europe and further afield from the mid-2000s up to the early 2010s. In 2014, with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (UN Security Council 2014), counter-terrorism became one of the top security

priorities of the international community. By 2015, with the encouragement of international institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), a large number of countries had adopted similar policies.

The educational context

As counter-radicalisation policies were developed in the mid-2000s in the Netherlands and the UK, the issue of home-grown terrorism seemed restricted to a few large northern European cities. In the light of further domestic and international terrorist attacks since 2010, however, governments of the member states of the Council of Europe have increasingly placed policies aimed at countering radicalisation and terrorism at the top of their security agenda. Through the multiplier effects of the adoption of such policies by regional and international institutions (the European Union (EU), the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the UN), almost all Council of Europe member states have now adopted counter-radicalisation policies and plans (Ragazzi 2017). A growing number of states are also translating these strategic objectives into concrete policy. In most counter-radicalisation plans and policies, young people and the institutions dealing with them (education, youth work and social work) are considered as key targets (Kundnani and Hayes 2018).

As the *Students as suspects?* report (Ragazzi 2017) highlighted, a growing number of states now face the task of implementing an agenda that has at its centre the contradiction of working with suspicion while requiring trust. This has provoked a mixed reception from education professionals.

From its origins, the policy framework has been built on contradictory assumptions. On the one hand is the idea that schools can be a space of “detection” of future criminal behaviour. In the words of O’Donnell, efforts to target those at “risk of radicalisation” appear to be based on assumptions of pre-crime counter-terrorist strategies: (1) that there are individuals who are vulnerable to certain kinds of ideas; (2) that these individuals may not even know that they are on a path to terrorism; and (3) that professionals can be trained to spot the signs that indicate someone is at risk of radicalisation (O’Donnell 2016: 57). On the other hand, schools are promoted as a space where radicalisation can be addressed by building resilience through dialogue, social inclusion and the encouragement of diverse societies, and by fostering and strengthening learners’ democratic and intercultural competences. In particular, schools are considered as the main locations for the development of and experimentation with democratic citizenship. How do schools manage this contradiction in practice?

What we know

Since counter-radicalisation policies were introduced into the education sector, the issues of teachers’ roles, securitisation, and human rights and civil liberties have dominated discussions between academics, policy advocates, practitioners, NGOs and other sections of civil society. However, the attention paid to these important

normative questions has not been extended to evaluating the vast array of practices that have unfolded in the meantime. Consequently, the debates continue to be based on narrow understandings of counter-radicalisation in education, which inhibits our ability to understand and address its social and political effects effectively.

A new international best practice

In the past 5 to 10 years, educators across Europe have faced the challenge of implementing their governments' policies and strategic plans in schools. They have responded to varying forms and degrees of pressure that regulate how they perform counter-radicalisation in different policy contexts. Policies to tackle radicalisation in schools have entered the mainstream and been framed as a "best practice" through instruments such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum's Abu Dhabi Memorandum (GCTF 2016) and the Radicalisation Awareness Network's various recommendations (RAN 2016; see also Harris-Hogan, Barrelle and Smith 2019: 3). Teachers responding to the various calls to action at the local, national and international policy levels can now consult guidance and advice from, for example, UNESCO (2016), OSCE (2016) and the EU (RAN 2015, 2016, 2018). The fundamental assumption across these new nodes of expertise is that "radicalisation" is self-evidently a societal problem.

In Europe much of this activity is co-ordinated through the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), formed in 2011 by the European Commission to connect front-line workers transnationally and to produce "state of the art knowledge" on counter-radicalisation (RAN 2018). Through various guidelines, manifestos and calls to action, catalogues and conferences for exchanging "inspiring practices", RAN explicitly reinforces the logic found in state policies: that teachers are among those best placed to "identify and safeguard youngsters at risk of radicalisation" (RAN 2015). Teachers are considered both as agents of "detection" and as those who teach competences that build societal resilience to extremist discourse: they are considered to be "well-positioned for prevention work, both for identifying and safeguarding vulnerable young people at risk of radicalisation, and for teaching critical thinking skills from the first stages of education" (European Commission 2016).

In the exceptional case of the United Kingdom, more specifically Great Britain, where educators are statutorily required to "prevent young people from being drawn into terrorism" (Department for Education 2015), the state offers teachers formal and informal guidelines, and practical resources, that limit their use of discretion (HM Government 2016, 2018; Home Office 2015). Compliance with the formal guidelines is closely monitored by the national education inspectorate, which may impose sanctions on schools deemed to be underperforming. By contrast, there are no such formal, centralised regimes of regulation in the vast majority of member states. Instead, transnational institutions and networks, with their own expertise and solutions to this supposedly new problem, claim to know the correct ways for schools to respond. While their efforts to prescribe schools' responses to radicalisation promote traditional educational values and competences (i.e. critical thinking), they often seek, at the same time, to impose external forms of expertise which respond to logics that are not, in the first instance, pedagogical.

A contested intervention

The very notion of radicalisation is, however, a security-oriented concept born in intelligence circles in the wake of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, DC, on 11 September 2001. It is deeply contested in both academic and educational circles (Kundnani 2012). As such, while RAN and others in the counter-radicalisation sector promote traditional educational practices such as the teaching of critical thinking, they have also been criticised for encouraging the encroachment of non-educational interests on schools. More specifically, critics have highlighted how the new networks of radicalisation expertise in Europe have overlooked the European Commission's earlier objectives, to examine the underlying tensions and potential counter-productivity of counter-radicalisation policies. Scholars have pointed to how such actors depend heavily on certain "trusted" individuals to promote counter-radicalisation policies at the expense of alternative voices and experiences (Davila Gordillo and Ragazzi 2017: 63). The result, these critics argue, is that the guidance for teachers on how to prevent radicalisation broadly reproduces the securitising policy discourses of states, thereby concealing the challenges posed by attempts to anticipate and prevent terrorism in schools.

Despite their free circulation in policy circles, the concepts and logics espoused by external "experts" seeking to shape educational responses have proved divisive. One of the issues that has attracted regular critical attention is the concept of radicalisation itself (Coolsaet 2019). The early work of scholars such as Sedgwick (2010), who identified the concept as a "source of confusion" for its disproportionate emphasis on individuals at the expense of social factors, continues to be invoked in education studies (Mattsson and Säljö 2018; Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks and Winter 2015). Education scholars (Hill 2019; Mattsson and Säljö 2018) also continue to rely on the seminal works of Sedgwick (2010) Heath-Kelly (2012) and Kundnani (2012), which foreground the lack of empirical support for the causal links between the risk factors of radicalisation and extremism on the one hand, and terrorist acts on the other.

Alongside these critiques of the empirical foundations and clarity of the concept, education scholars have also taken exception to the broader radicalisation discourse and its attempt to transform pedagogical interactions. Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks and Winter (2015) contend that the very assumption of the current radicalisation discourse – that the alternative or subversive expressions of students demand judgment, suspicion and intervention by teachers – is irreconcilable with an educational perspective on human development. Drawing on long-standing pedagogical debates, they stress that exploring non-mainstream political perspectives and their own socio-political identity (Bhui et al. 2012) is part of the developmental process of individuals as they progress from childhood to adulthood (Erikson 1968; Sieckelinck and Ruyter 2009). Mattsson and Säljö (2018) agree, arguing that educators' roles in the promotion of democracy and human rights is not to "control the minds of the pupils" but to help them to explore their relation to the world critically. As O'Donnell argues, the very notion of "anti-extremist" education – whereby critical enquiry, sensitive engagement, understanding, passion and curiosity are recalibrated as instruments of counter-terrorism – "is not just erroneous but potentially

counter-productive" (2016: 71). Many scholars of education have therefore viewed counter-radicalisation as an external attempt to interfere with fundamental pedagogical principles and practices.

The framing of extremist ideas in terms of vulnerability, a central trope of the radicalisation discourse, has also been critiqued for its problematic performative effects. Individuals are marked out not only as potential suspects or villains, but also as victims (Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks and Winter 2015), thereby becoming simultaneously "risky" and "at risk" (Heath-Kelly, 2012). Some scholars have highlighted how, unlike the "villain" paradigm which is more obviously at odds with educational principles, framing individuals as victims of radicalisation resonates profoundly with prevalent pastoral discourses in education around child protection (Durodie 2016; Ecclestone 2017). For these observers, characterising radicalisation as "vulnerability", thereby relocating it from a context of control to one of care, is central to legitimising contentious counter-radicalisation policies in schools (Durodie 2016; Ecclestone 2017). The cost, these scholars hold, is to explicitly deny young people their autonomy and agency, and to pathologise political dissent in a way that jeopardises the free flow of ideas that underpins authentic pedagogical interactions (Durodie 2016; O'Donnell 2016). It is because of their concern about the impact of counter-radicalisation on pedagogical interactions that several education scholars have called for an "educational response" to extremism.

Where governments and members of the counter-radicalisation sector have sought to impose external visions for counter-radicalisation on schools, proponents of the "educational response" have argued for professional resistance to policies that demand the subservience of pedagogical practices to surveillance-oriented logics and interests (Davies 2016; O'Donnell 2016). A truly educational approach to radicalisation, they hold, demands "safe" pedagogical spaces where students can trust that their exploration of politically sensitive ideas will not be met with suspicion of terrorism (Davies 2008; Miller 2013; O'Donnell 2016; Panjwani 2016; Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks and Winter 2015). Davies argues that the creation of "positive insecurity" in schools, which demands "inclusivity, encounters with difference, networking and active, non-violent citizenship to challenge justice" (Davies 2016), is essential. Amid concerns that anti-radicalisation measures give rise to self-censorship among students from certain (particularly Muslim) communities who feel disproportionately vulnerable to reproach or referral, such "turbulence" (Davies 2014) is identified as crucial to any attempt to prevent youth radicalisation (Davies 2014; Sieckelinck, Kaulingfreks and Winter 2015). This tension in the forms of expertise that promote the dual roles of teachers as both agents of detection and promoters of resilience-building skills has so far proved irreconcilable in debates about counter-radicalisation (Ragazzi 2017).

What is left to know

The debate on the impact of counter-radicalisation in education has hardly progressed in recent years. Whereas governments and members of the counter-radicalisation sector, such as RAN, continue to marginalise and ignore criticism (Davila Gordillo and Ragazzi 2017), some academics have continued to

reproduce the same arguments about its theoretical incompatibility with liberal democratic pedagogy. In addition to these pedagogical arguments, scholars also continue to revert to arguments from political science that emerged in the early days of counter-radicalisation. One recurring argument contends that the construction of vulnerability to radicalisation, in that it relates to belonging to certain populations that are both at risk and risky, has contributed to a widespread stigmatisation of Muslims (Heath-Kelly 2012; Kundnani 2012; O'Donnell 2016), participating to the formation of a "suspect community" (McGovern and Tobin 2010; Pantazis and Pemberton 2009). The effect of this in schools, according to several scholars, is the formation of a culture of surveillance around Muslim students (Breen 2018; Coppock and McGovern 2014; Sian 2015). While these arguments remain important, one of the reasons that the debate about the effects of counter-radicalisation policies in education is locked in stalemate is its reliance on a very narrow understanding of what counter-radicalisation policies look like in practice. Only a very few studies have engaged empirically with counter-radicalisation practices in schools. While Busher et al. (2017) found that teachers in Britain were confident in fulfilling their duties under the Prevent programme, Jerome and Elwick (2019) analysed local "curriculum-based" alternatives to "restrictive securitised" responses to it. This literature, however, is indicative of a broader overreliance on the British experience with Prevent to produce knowledge about counter-radicalisation. By marginalising the varied practices carried out in the name of counter-radicalisation, and drawing almost exclusively on one narrow and exceptional national context, the debate has risked not keeping up with counter-radicalisation practices on a transnational scale.

While the debates in academia and civil society have offered several alternative versions of what counter-radicalisation in schools should or should not look like, we still lack a clear evidence-based understanding of how it has actually played out. Until now, this has largely been taken for granted in the important normative discussions about the limits to teachers' roles, securitisation and racialised policies, human rights and civil liberties. Little attention has been paid to the extensive and diverse array of strategies, organisations and networks that constitute the counter-radicalisation sector, and the composite norms, practices and expertise that move between them and that stretch across local, national and transnational contexts. For too long social scientific understandings have been drawn from (1) the strategic visions and discursive positionings of counter-radicalisation policies, rather than the practices carried out in their name; and (2) the most high-profile, and exceptional, policy contexts such as Great Britain, rather than the diverse geographies in which counter-radicalisation has taken hold. It is therefore highly probable that the competing discourses between policy makers, civil society organisations and practitioners, and critical scholars are based on different versions of what counter-radicalisation looks like. This report offers both a broader and a more in-depth understanding of the concept, examining the various ways in which front-line practitioners, or "street-level bureaucrats" (Lipsky 1980), translate, adapt, resist and reappropriate the demands of counter-radicalisation policy across greatly varying contexts.

The aim of this report

Taking stock of the current literature briefly reviewed above, and drawing on the preliminary research carried out in the report *Students as suspects?*, the current report therefore asks a simple research question: How are counter-radicalisation policies applied in schools in practice, and what are the practical effects of the contradictory basis of these policies for schools, institutions, students and their families?

Chapter 2

What do projects do?



To assess the effects of counter-radicalisation policies in schools, we should first examine their emergence at the local level and the array of practices to which they give rise. Grass-roots projects aimed at tackling radicalisation are often seen as a response to a pressing problem of radicalisation in schools. However, a more complex picture emerged from our interviews with students, educators and counter-radicalisation practitioners from eight selected projects (see the methodological appendix). The projects we visited (1) had emerged from a diversity of social, political and bureaucratic conditions; (2) vary greatly in the extent and nature of their efforts to tackle “radicalisation”; and (3) operate according to a varied array of objectives, according to which they have been envisioned and designed.

Why grass-roots projects against radicalisation?

Who is calling for action?

In the context of several terror attacks in Europe since 2015, “radicalisation” in schools and elsewhere in the education sector appears to be a highly politicised issue that demands concrete – and visible – action, rather than a pressing problem that has emerged from the everyday experience of students and teachers.

In our research we found a dearth of cases of students who were involved, or susceptible to being involved, in terrorist organisations; there were only a very limited number of individual cases. Schools and students face a wide range of other problems, from bullying to interpersonal violence, that are generally more pressing than “radicalisation”. This is true even of schools that are supposedly most affected (for example, schools whose students had travelled abroad to join violent extremist groups such as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or schools where students were seriously investigated regarding links to radical groups).

Nonetheless, educators feel the need for counter-radicalisation projects because they do not feel equipped to deal with what they regard as “new” issues, or “old” discussions about Islam, the Holocaust or politics in the Middle East, which have been recast in the light of a potential terror threat.

Looking for radicalisation in schools

Grass-roots projects reflect these insecurities. We found that counter-radicalisation projects are launched for a variety of reasons. Some are genuinely concerned with radicalisation, and support and are compliant with existing state policies. Others, however, are launched in response to the shortcomings of state policies, which are perceived as over-reacting to and over-securitising the problem. Some have seen such projects as an opportunity to rebrand educational or social projects that have lost their funding under the label of tackling “radicalisation”. Others are using the language and rhetoric of radicalisation to tackle other issues which they believe to be much more pressing, including poverty, broken families, bullying, truancy, drug abuse, homophobia, racism, discrimination and mental health.

As such, the grass-roots projects we investigated revealed a range of understandings of the problem of radicalisation, in line with the diversity of local- and national-level demands they faced, and according to which they framed their goals. Some are a response to specific local instances of perceived “radicalisation” (i.e. direct recruitment by ISIS or far-right groups), while others operate at a more general preventive level.

Only in one school, in Antwerp, did students acknowledge that recruitment into terror-related groups was an issue. In other schools in western Europe, such as in Norway or the UK, the idea of radicalisation was more theoretical and was gathered from the news. Finally, in the projects in central and south-eastern Europe, “radicalisation” did not emerge as such: instead, the issue of interethnic tensions occupied centre stage, which were seen as remote from the question of radicalisation.

The rest of this chapter provides a fine-grained account of the diverse practices across the projects we visited, in light of the varying contexts and the differing local visions for countering radicalisation. There is a fundamental difference between awareness-raising programmes and casework programmes. The first category is aimed at a broad audience and follows the path of citizenship education, human rights education or intercultural education, while casework projects are more related to social work and possibly police work. This means that programmes differ greatly in their objectives, their practice and their relation to law enforcement – to the point that an assessment of the challenges they present must take these fundamental distinctions into consideration (see Chapter 4).

Raising awareness

Awareness-raising projects such as the Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT), Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of the Region (CSHR), Dembra and Embrace Differences use methods that are primarily aimed at generic awareness raising on issues of political extremism, discrimination and violence. These programmes do not target individuals specifically but focus instead on broader group dynamics, providing a general set of perspectives on controversial issues. Such programmes can be delivered as a part of courses such as citizenship education (ACT) or in an English or German class (CSHR). These courses may be optional or mandatory depending on the age group and the institutional context. They can also take the form of ad hoc workshops which students can decide to attend voluntarily (Embrace Differences) or a combination of both (CSHR).

In-school workshops

Workshops organised in schools to raise awareness can take various forms, with different degrees of interactivity: they can imply the visit of “formers” or inspirational figures, role play, multi-media activities, developing alternative narratives or sharing theatre plays of films.

Live encounters: “formers” and inspirational figures

Visits by and discussions with “formers”⁴ – individuals who can talk to students about their experiences of extremism, drug use or discrimination – are sometimes considered to be helpful. Both the Derad theatre-therapy project in Budapest (interview with Anett Mundrucz, Budapest, 18 February 2019) and the Resilience Project in Cardiff and Swansea drew attention to the specific resilience-building qualities of exposure to first-hand accounts (interview with Shafina Sawar, 3 April 2019, p. 6). Other programmes, such as Embrace Differences, invite individuals who have been victimised to share their experiences with students. One practitioner, Amina Kurtagić, described how direct contact with figures whose experiences are not openly represented in school (e.g. LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities, a Muslim cleric) often results in students revising their assumptions about other groups (Interview with Amina Kurtagić and Adnan Bajramović, Sarajevo, 29 January 2019).

Role play

The projects make use of interactive methods to place students in concrete situations. In one workshop, for example, Ivana Kovač and Mirjana Jerković raise awareness of discrimination against the Roma community by encouraging students to experience the restrictions that marginalised communities face (interview with Ivana Kovač and Mirjana Jerković, Osijek, 31 January 2019, p. 17). In Cardiff, a facilitator from the

4. “Formers” is a term that is commonly used among advocates and practitioners of counter-radicalisation to refer to individuals who have previously participated in violent or extremist groups. We use the term more broadly to describe individuals who can impart experiential knowledge about a particular social problem that the educational institution aims to prevent and tackle.

Resilience Project used the scenario of a “Zombie apocalypse” to discuss what it might be like to be an asylum seeker or refugee (interview with Shafina Sawar, 3 April 2019, pp. 6-7). The group is told to imagine that the area is being invaded by zombies, but they live in a big castle that is safe. There are people out on the road: who will they allow to join them in their castle? Early on, participants usually agree to take in people who are of immediate instrumental value in such a situation; they reject, for example, a mother and her baby. However, upon acquiring more information (i.e. when they learn that the mother is a paramedic), they come to regret such decisions. Such activities are useful for challenging prejudices. Through games and role play that explore questions of social inclusion and exclusion, the instructors slowly draw the students round to the topics they want to discuss (interview with Shafina Sawar, 3 April 2019, pp. 7-8). Similar role-playing exercises were carried out by the CleaR project in Düsseldorf.

Alternative narratives

Workshops are also used for deploying alternative narratives and bringing different perspectives to students. Workshops can use remote examples to talk about issues that would otherwise be too sensitive for students to deal with. In one instance, teachers at the school in Osijek used Australian history (in the context of an English class) to talk about issues related to the recent conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

By using the struggles of indigenous peoples in a distant context as a frame of reference for discussing questions of exclusion and intercultural conflict, the school was able to implicitly address local issues that were still deemed too sensitive to confront directly (interview with Ivana Kovač and Mirjana Jerković, Osijek, 31 January 2019, p. 8). Similarly, webinars are used to help demystify unfamiliar faiths and religions (interview with Jasenka Vajdić, Ivana Milas and Ivana Kovač, Osijek, 31 January 2019).

Extra-curricular activities

In addition to in-school workshops, awareness-raising programmes also include activities outside the school. We list here a few approaches that we witnessed in the course of our visits.

Street presence

For social workers with the Resilience Project in Swansea, one of the reasons for past failures was the excessively “academic” approach of some of its programmes. It became clear to them that a strategy of proactively seeking out their clients was necessary.

I’ll give you an example, I had one young person that [had been] to prison for beating up Muslims. Now for six, seven years he hasn’t even been arrested. It’s that “de-rad” process of just keeping in contact with them. Now it’s changed – five years later, I’ll drop him onion bhajis for instance, do you get what I’m saying? He sees my wife in a shopping centre and says hello. It’s these little things about keeping in contact with them, and you’re actually protecting society and you’re protecting your community from people that are Islamophobic and racist. (Interview with Gareth Hicks and Nicky Nijjer, 3 April 2019)

Anonymous groups

Personal relations are important, but for the Megálló Centre anonymity and anonymous groups are a very useful setting for approaching and gaining the confidence of drug users. As Timea Kiss-Lukasik explains:

The first and most important thing that I am quite sure that you know [is] the philosophy of the anonymous groups. Like Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and all these very traditional different groups on different addictions, which I mention now because the main power of these groups [is] that you are the same and peers in the situation, and people that have the same problems and similar background are sitting together in a circle and sharing honestly about their life, and start to work honestly with something which is for them a miss or a lack of something, gives a very strong solidarity and feeling of having a common case or something like that. (Interview with Timea Kiss-Lukasik, Budapest, 18 February 2019)

Collective exercises

Outside school, collective exercises involving theatre, gymnastics or simply physical contact are useful for building trusting relationships between the group and the facilitator, as well as within the group itself, as a basis for working with drug users. For Timea Kiss-Lukasik, sensitivity is a key aspect of her work, and physical exercises can help to build trust (interview with Timea Kiss-Lukasik, Budapest, 18 February 2019). Such exercises are commonly found across the various projects. In Osijek, different forms of greetings from other cultures help to establish a direct bond between participants from the beginning (interview with Ivana Kovač and Mirjana Jerković, Osijek, 31 January 2019, p. 11).

Field trips

Several projects use field trips, or residential trips to raise awareness about specific issues. The CleaR project, for example, organised a trip to a former Nazi prison to learn about the dangerous implications of far-right movements and neo-Nazism (interview with Lisa Kiefer and Jan-Hendrik Weinholt, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019). For the CSHR project, activities relating to cultural heritage show students that the traditions they assume to be unique to their culture are shared with others, across many countries. Eating goulash, for example, proved not to be as exclusively Croatian as many students had believed: "And then, when they go to Bosnia, you have the same meals; you go to Serbia, you go to Slovakia, Hungary, we have very similar cuisine. And then they get confused: how come?" (interview with Jasenka Vajdić, Ivana Milas and Ivana Kovač, Osijek, 31 January 2019).

Summer schools

Since not all children can afford to travel, yearly summer events can allow children from lower-income families to experience diversity as well. Regional meetings allow

students from different countries to dispel myths and stereotypes. Amina Kurtagić of Embrace Differences explains:

And we also had some co-operation with Roma and Jews... so, we had this co-operation and within the talk, OK what can we do, but actually the best results were when they brought them together: people who have prejudices and people who are the victims. Just to meet each other, that's what happened in summer school of tolerance. They just met each other and OK I have 17, you have 17, I also like Metallica, you like Metallica – why do I hate you? (Interview with Amina Kurtagić and Adnan Bajramović, Sarajevo, 29 January 2019)

For Tin Ujević school in Osijek, such an approach is particularly effective with primary-age students who come from small, broadly monocultural villages, which they tend not to leave until high school.

Awareness raising and cohesion projects range therefore from one-hour weekly workshops to field trips, summer schools and other extra-curricular activities. These often fall under the category of “citizenship classes” and use a traditional toolkit of experience-based pedagogical projects. Awareness-raising activities, while branded as “PVE” activities, have in fact much more in common with education for democratic citizenship, human rights education and intercultural education than they have with casework-based projects. They focus on participation and experiential methods in order to establish a normative framework in the classroom. The official aim of the projects is to prevent radicalisation, but in fact the projects work on a variety of different complementary levels: social cohesion, anti-racism, anti-discrimination. Casework-based projects offer a significant departure from these models. (Interview with Ivana Milas, Osijek, 2 January 2019)

Casework

Another set of practices is what is more commonly understood as countering violent extremism (CVE). We call them “casework”; that is, they constitute a specific type of intervention treated as a specific “case”, which is designed to work with individuals who fall into the category of being “vulnerable to radicalisation”. There are three stages of casework analysis: detection and assessment of individual cases; mentoring and liaison and information work if law enforcement is not involved; and finally delegation to law enforcement should it be involved.

Detection and assessment

The basis of casework is the detection and assessment process, which determines whether a specific individual requires dedicated attention. Assessment is particularly difficult and controversial. For critics of the radicalisation discourse, there are no good criteria for predicting who is “vulnerable” or “at risk”. Others, including most government actors, law enforcement agencies and some of the projects we surveyed, consider it possible to make an assessment of vulnerability to radicalisation. There are, however, different approaches.

Risk assessment

Formal tools

The first type of assessment projects use can be called “formal” tools. For example, the Drop Out Prevention Network in Antwerp works with a specifically designed tool.

We have a kind of instrument: the Radix tool. It is like: if you have a borderline-problem, you will have some crossing [of] the lines. So how do we make the difference? But they make a lot of work on that Radix tool. And it is a tool my colleagues also use a lot. I see it as a support instrument: do we have to go further, or can we deal with it in our network? Because it also activates our network partners, who also have some programmes or attention on radicalisation. Because you cannot say: “We have two or three signals of radicalisation, we cannot work with that kid.” We think that those three signals may be something else. (Interview with Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 3)

The formal tools represent an attempt to standardise responses and to limit the subjective nature of the judgments required.

Like the Radix tool, you have a scale instrument with indicators [about] the youngsters. About his school, home, personality. To get a picture when they come to the central help desk, and then when they start their trajectory. And then during the trajectory, every three months. It is not something that it is exact. But I hope it helps us to have more objective data. (Interview with Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 6)

Municipality workers in Antwerp are, however, aware of the ways in which the tool can be misused, and for that reason decided not to share it with schools (interview with Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 4).

Others, such as the Resilience Project, use participants’ responses to a set of predetermined questions to establish whether an individual might require support:

But now we’ve got a tool like: “Are asylum seekers and migrants destroying the country?” So, they’ve got something to talk [about]. “Are some religious groups more violent than others?” or “Do you know what racism is?” “Do you know what extremism is?” “Radicalisation?” So, we go through that tool method. (Interview with Gareth Hicks and Nicky Nijjer, Swansea, 3 April 2019)

Non-formal approaches

When access to assessment tools is not available, as for schools in Antwerp, the municipality asks teachers to rely on their “gut feeling” (interview with Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 9). The notion of “gut feeling” can be put into practice in different ways. CleaR in Düsseldorf, for example, work with indicators but not a specific set of criteria. Rather than using a checklist

approach, they view radicalisation as a process that requires more nuanced, emotional responses:

of course, we inform teachers that there are indicators for radicalisation, or possible indicators for radicalisation, but not if they are seeing one or two, that it is radicalisation, so that they get more sensitive for this, but not having a list, and doing their crosses, and saying, "Okay, you're radicalised, and you go through the clearing process." Also, radicalisation and the radicalisation process are something which is not only based on different factors, but it's an emotional process, and you can only counter it with emotion, and with relationships, and I don't think it works with a checklist. (Interview with Lisa Kiefer and Jan-Hendrik Weinhold, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019)

Context is important. Hateful sentiment on its own is not necessarily considered an indicator of radicalisation. That said, as the CleaR practitioners described in sharing their experiences of a recent case, it is when such sentiment is combined with something such as technical knowledge of the Holocaust that a problematic picture requiring investigation (i.e. into family background, recent behaviours) emerges (interview with Lisa Kiefer and Jan-Hendrik Weinhold, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019).

Information sharing within the school

The process of assessment is not merely individual; it requires information to be shared between different stakeholders. Various projects organised this process differently. We visited a school involved in the Deliberative Classroom project, which uses an informal, internal consultation process:

Each case is going to be so different, so it's going to be hard to know exactly when you would, and when you wouldn't [share information externally]. Generally speaking, I might have a conversation with [my line manager], not saying the pupil's names, but I'd just say, "Look, I've just seen this, what do you think I should do?" And then make that decision from there. (Interview with Teacher 2, London, 19 March 2019)

For the CleaR project across several German schools, the process involves teachers, headteachers, a member of the CleaR project and the head of the project. Importantly, the final decision always lies with the school (interview with Katharina Falger, Ariane Heimig and Lisa Kiefer, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019, pp. 13-14).

The grey area between internal solutions and "full" referrals

When the initial assessment, and early discussions within the project or within the school, leave front-line workers uncertain as to whether the case is serious, an additional grey area of decisions can be taken, between internal deliberation and referral to external law enforcement. This grey area is sometimes located directly in the school (Düsseldorf), sometimes in social work (Antwerp) and at other times elsewhere, in the police (Great Britain), where teachers can contact their local Prevent officers, without making a formal referral, to discuss cases anonymously. This space is made up of procedures that, on the one hand, reassure educators that they have not missed an important case and, on the other hand, avoid unnecessary escalation and protect the student's privacy.

As Katharina Falger in Düsseldorf put it:

It is difficult when someone immediately reports it to the state security, and that has been the case at the beginning of the project, because there's always the fear that one might miss or oversee a fact, or that there's something there that a teacher cannot fully comprehend. And it is indeed, but it was also very obvious then, where it wouldn't have been necessary and where the student was exposed to a potential attacker discourse. And that has to be avoided, which is what really is important to us in the clearing process, to clarify what has even happened. And if it's really true what another student had said about a student or what he had seen. For that reason, it is very important that the barrier with regard to the state security is fully discussed, because things like that can also have negative effects for the student. (Interview with Katharina Falger, Ariane Heimig and Lisa Kiefer, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019, pp. 13-14)

In Norway, local radicalisation co-ordinators triage cases on the understanding that many referrals to law enforcement by teachers will not actually be directly related to radicalisation:

And we decided that we are going to take contact with me and my team, and not the police directly. That was because I guessed that a lot of the worries were not actually about radicalisation but something else. And that was – I think I have seen that that was right. Very few of the worries were actually about radicalisation in the end. (Interview with Kari-Anne Okkenhaug, Oslo, 12 July 2018)

Antwerp has a two-tier system. Schoolteachers can turn first to pupil guidance centres (PGC), which can then contact the central help desk (CHD), which has been set up by the four pupil guidance centres and the municipality. When the school feels that they are no longer able to handle a problem on their own, the first point of contact for teachers is the PGC, who may provide advice on how to handle the case (interview with Marc van Beneden and Dries Geeraerts, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 9). In a second step, the PGC can contact the CHD. The same conversations can go the other way: concerned municipal services can consult with schools to learn more about a student, without contacting the police. The CHD again plays the role of intermediary. As it is part of the Department of Social Services, the CHD is bound to confidentiality. Informal exchanges such as these are very important. As practitioners explained, they have many advantages:

Fabienne: The persons of the CHD can share all information with the PGC, because we are the same, as the first construction that we made it easy because we really can talk to each other about everything. We don't write everything down, but when we are working together with other organisations, we really have to be careful about what we are sharing.

Luc: Staff from PGC and CHD are both bound to the professional secrecy act and can share information. When they want to discuss a case with people who are not bound to secrecy, they need consent.

Fabienne: We need the consent of the youngsters. (Interview with Luc Claessens, Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 11)

The last step before referral to law enforcement: anonymous referrals

Where such intermediary agencies are not present, or are not themselves entirely sure about a case, a last resort before an explicit referral may be an anonymous referral, that is, sharing the details of a case without revealing the name of the student. In Norway, teachers decide whether to report someone anonymously, which involves a trade-off between protecting the identity of the student and retaining autonomy and control over the case. Dembra's Peder Nustad explains:

I mean there are two ways of reporting. The one is to make a phone call and make an anonymous referral, describe the situation anonymously. Of course, that is unproblematic in one way. Except it gives the police the role of defining what it is. But then there is the other issue which is naming someone, which in Norway, the bar to name someone from the school to the police, is supposed to be high. (Interview with Ingun Andersen and Peder Nustad, Oslo, 12 July 2018)

In Antwerp, the system of "case deliberation" allows for law enforcement to be brought into the decision process without breaching social workers' obligation to confidentiality:

Just the flow, it is reported by the pupil guidance centre to the central help desk. Which had the same training and will clarify the question and do the analysis. If it is urgent. Someone's bags are in the hallway, ready to leave for a war theatre, then the police are told so they can intervene. We've had youngsters put into the network that were about to leave, and stopped at the last minute, thanks to the signalling of our system. The network will do a case deliberation, and this case deliberation is quite special. Something we may have to elaborate on later. They deliberate a case without knowing who it is. They can share information with a lot of people [and ask them about their] views, "what you think would work". Only after the youngster agrees, the information will be shared with the organisation that will actually take care of the youngster. (Luc, in interview with Luc Claessens, Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 11)

Threshold for external sharing

The schools and front-line workers we interviewed give a lot of thought to reporting students. It is certainly not an automatic procedure, for a number of reasons: consideration for the students' future dealings with law enforcement; legal considerations around privacy; and professional considerations of the autonomy of education and control over the case. There are, however, instances where the situation may be out of control. This raises the question of the thresholds that have to be met for referrals to be made. In our interviews, we found a range of different attitudes, which were mostly influenced by the obligations set out in the national legislation under which the various projects operate.

Low-threshold projects

For some projects, the threshold is comparatively low. In particular, for teachers in England and Wales, this is mainly because of the statutory duty to report suspicious

behaviour, and so referrals can be made on the basis of discriminatory views, as one London teacher explained:

Okay, well I think if you had certain political views, then, regardless of how you've come across it, I'd be concerned. If someone said, say when I'm teaching history, and we were looking at something like 9/11, which does come up at some point, if a person then suddenly said that al-Qaeda were wholly justified, that would be kind of like a red line, at that point. Or, if I start hearing a very conspiratorial or anti-Semitic point of view, then I would have a red line at that point. So, yeah, that would be something. Like a really red-line issue where it's so clearly a point of view which is aggravating and just shows that that person has beliefs which go completely against what the whole country's interests are, then I would be worried. Yeah, so actually showing acts of support for terrorist groups, or a complete hatred for another group, then that would be a red line. (Interview with Teacher 2, London, 19 March 2019)

High-threshold projects

Other projects have a higher threshold: their default position is not to deal with the police and to refer cases only where students are breaching the law. In the Resilience Project in Cardiff and Swansea, external-intervention providers tend to refer students only when they threaten to use violence. Participants are very quickly informed of these obligations (interview with Gareth Hicks and Nicky Nijjer, 3 April 2019). In Antwerp, the central help desk prefers not to share information with law enforcement unless it is absolutely and immediately necessary, for example, when the young person is at risk or is deemed to be a risk to others:

I'm quoted here, but I'm not with the central help desk, as is indicated above. I'm with the team Prevention of Violent Radicalisation of the Antwerp Municipality. The CHD refers to us [three case managers/social workers] take up cases of youngsters at risk of radicalisation.

No, preferably not. But I have to say I don't do house calls; I'm speaking for my colleagues now. But they are really trying to keep the information on what they really need to know. And they will only share information with police if it's really necessary – there is a security threat, that's about it. (Interview with Luc Claessens, Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 10)

Similarly, in Norway, local co-ordinators are obliged to work with law enforcement if there is a real mutual concern between agencies, but permission to involve the police in a case needs to come from the parents (interview with Kari-Anne Okkenhaug, Oslo, 12 July 2018). The same is true for Düsseldorf, where the decision to expel a student and refer them to the police is made reluctantly, after a year of effort, and ultimately in the interests of the other students in the school (interview with Manfred Uchtmann, Salome Betz and Lisa Kiefer, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019, pp. 7-8).

Referral processes

Referral can mean one of two things: referral of students to dedicated mentors or tutors from the projects we visited (Resilience, CleaR and Drop Out Prevention

Network), or referral of students to law enforcement agencies. These two types of referral are fundamentally different, since referrals to law enforcement will often mean that students enter the orbit of the criminal justice system and the intelligence services. The boundary between the types of referral are blurred, however, as information often travels in multiple directions, and is continually interpreted and reinterpreted.

Referrals from schools to NGOs

In Cardiff and Swansea, referral to the Resilience Project is seen as an alternative to referral to law enforcement under Prevent, the state policy for schools requiring external support (interview with Tony Hendrickson, Cardiff, 3 April 2019). In Düsseldorf, the CleaR project has a more structured approach, but it is also the “last resort” for schools before cases are reported to law enforcement. Three steps are involved. In step one, once a teacher reaches out to the “clearing team”, they investigate and then hold a panel discussion of the headteacher, school social worker, teacher and the resident CleaR practitioner.

The first step is a teacher comes to see us and says something – like “I have a student who gives a Koran to all his teachers.” Then we first have to see to whom he gave the Koran, what he said when he gave the Koran to the teachers. (Interview with Lisa Kiefer and Jan-Hendrik Weinhold, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019)

Step two consists of a deeper investigation of the context of the case and the background. In the case above, the student was innocently handing out the Koran, but had contact with Salafist groups.

In this case, when the student gave the Koran to the teachers, it was a refugee, and he wasn't in Germany for quite a long time. The Korans he had were in German, so he just wanted to show his teachers his religion. He thought that's cool. The Koran is in German, so they can read it. What he didn't know though, what we found out, was that the Koran was from [a particular group] which is this thing that guys in the city give out Korans. I think it's also in the Netherlands, in UK, and now it's forbidden in Germany. But back then they were, you could, see them all over in the city, and he collected from there, and we know that this organisation of, like an entrance point to, Salafism here, so we were like, OK, he's not radicalised, because he's not behaving anything like this, but he has the contact to these guys, so we have to talk to him and explain why this could be difficult, so we went on. We met again, and the team, and discussed this again, so that everybody knew ... We need to talk to him, so that we get to know why he's hanging out with these guys, and how close the contact is, and if there's contact to others, and to other Salafi groups. (Interview with Lisa Kiefer and Jan-Hendrik Weinhold, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019)

As it transpired, the boy was lonely, and religion was one of the few lasting connections to his native country. Step three, the intervention, sought to put him in contact with positive influences with whom he could share his culture. (interview with Lisa Kiefer and Jan-Hendrik Weinhold, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019)

Referrals from law enforcement to NGOs

By contrast, sometimes, law enforcement contacts the projects, as we learned on our visits to Wales and Belgium. Generally, these are cases not considered to be dangerous after a police assessment. The Resilience Project in Cardiff and Swansea, for instance, sometimes receives referrals directly from the state's multi-agency counter-radicalisation deliberation system, the Channel programme (interview with Gareth Hicks and Nicky Nijjer, Swansea, 3 April 2019). In Antwerp, most of the data fed to the central help desk from 2017 onwards came not from the schools and PGCs but from the police (interview with Luc Claessens, Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 7).

Referrals to law enforcement

While referrals to social workers depend very much on the type of NGO involved in the schools, referrals to the police depend on the existing legislation and institutional arrangements of each city, region or country. In Britain, referrals to law enforcement are codified in the various anti-terrorism acts, and the Prevent element in the national counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST). Though the obligations are centrally mandated, local actors retain some discretion as to how they might respond before cases are escalated up the chain to the police through the formal Prevent mechanism. Here Teacher 1, a teacher and in-house Prevent officer of a London school, explains:

Hypothetically if there was a situation, it would be me speaking with my safeguarding officer [in school] and speaking with my headteacher about a referral ... At that point it would then be getting in contact with the officer in terms of the local authority. When that's happened, it will then go to a panel and then that's when they start to speak about whether or not they're going to go down a route of going forward with the referral. It's then getting in contact with the person who potentially the referral's about and then potentially getting in contact with the police and looking at the different ways in which deradicalisation could then go about. (Interview with Teacher 1, London, 19 March 2019)

In other countries, such as Norway, the absence of a centralised formal strategy allows even more room for local discretion. As Stian Lied described how this plays out depends on several factors:

Of course, the level of concern, but also as a starting point they have a lot of focus on who has the best relation to the person, who can take the first conversation. It is the local police officer who already knows the guy because he has been involved in other crimes, or is it the teacher? So, I think they have a discussion of who is in best position to take the first conversation, and in that sense, they have kind of a system. So, it depends on the case and it is also different in every region. Because if the people in the municipality or the school are not comfortable to enter a dialogue then they just hand the case over to the police ... But if you have pretty competent people in the municipal organisations, they will take more responsibility of the case themselves. So, in that sense I don't think it is fair to say there is a common strategy – strategy might be the same, but the practice is different. (Interview with Stian Lied, Oslo, 12 October 2018)

When the police are not involved: tutoring and mentoring

When individuals are not referred to law enforcement, casework-based projects can engage in mentoring and tutoring activities.

Casework in practice

Interventions with, or the mentoring of, individuals can take several months, sometimes up to a year, during which mentor and mentee meet at regular intervals. In Cardiff and Swansea for example, the average intervention last two to three months, which usually allows for the practitioners to develop a relationship of trust with the individual and to facilitate their reintegration into mainstream education. This can sometimes take longer, which often signals a need for alternative approaches (interview with Tony Hendrickson, Cardiff, 3 April 2019).

Gaining trust

Mentoring sessions aim at making students think about the trajectory they are on and their behaviour, and reflect upon how these could be changed to benefit themselves and their environment (school, neighbourhood, etc.). Such goals can be attained only by developing strong relationships of trust. This often involves personal dedication from the tutor. Nicky Nijjer in Swansea described how he, as a Muslim, gets students with far-right affiliations to listen to him by challenging their perceptions.

So, first of all when I went in there, I walked in with a white policeman. Ex policeman. So, ex Muslim Asian naughty boy is walking with a retired policeman that happens to be white. This is the ice breaker. Ask questions, ask me questions. That always goes back to my youth. That always goes back to me converting to Islam ... Now with a name like Nicky you're not expecting me to be Muslim. Some people think I'm mixed race. Okay. Or I've just got a tan, cool. When I tell them I'm a Muslim after they've abused it so much, because they have a misconception as well of Muslims. Okay? That in itself is an ice breaker. They're actually sitting in a room with a Muslim. ... I've been called a terrorist ... I go in there and I bulldoze things. (Nicky, in interview with Gareth Hicks and Nicky Nijjer, Swansea, 3 April 2019)

Being outside the statutory framework makes it easier for the Resilience Project to obtain the trust of individuals. It is an advantage to be seen as distinct from the establishment, in particular the school and social services (interview with Tony Hendrickson, Cardiff, 3 April 2019).

The consequences of a referral to law enforcement

As highlighted above, in some instances, when the school is overwhelmed and/or the tutoring mechanisms have not worked, the only viable option is to refer cases to the police or other law enforcement agencies. Generally, teachers and social workers do so reluctantly, but in other scenarios it may be a welcome solution.

What happens after a referral to law enforcement?

The consequences of a referral to law enforcement vary according to the local and national contexts in which the projects operate. Indeed, the extent to which NGOs, municipal offices and intelligence services share information varies from country to country.

I don't know really know the details in the legislation, but I noticed that for example when we talk to the people in Holland, how they go about it, or the UK, they are much more at ease with sharing information with all the actors, police [being] one of them. The Channel programme in the UK, they just come together like it's nothing. In Holland in the Veiligheidshuis they also do that. In Antwerp, it is not the case. (Interview with Luc Claessens, Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 10)

In Düsseldorf, cases that require the attention of law enforcement are referred to the state security (Polizeilicher Staatsschutz). After that, the process of surveillance, and possibly criminal prosecution, can start.

Well, concerning State Security [Staatsschutz], normally if you call the police and say you have a case in the area of radicalisation, terrorism whatever, then that goes from the police to State Security. And the State Security investigates. So, the State Security is an investigating authority. The Office for the Protection of the Constitution [Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz] is an observing authority. That means, if the State Security finds something, it goes to the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and you are classified as a threat. But this investigation starts one way or the other. (Interview with Katharina Falger, Ariane Heimig and Lisa Kiefer, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019, p. 17)

Conclusion

Projects linked to raising awareness represent a diversity of practices, including in-school workshops featuring “formers” or individuals of interest, role play and alternative narratives. They can take the form of extra-curricular sessions, such as anonymous group sessions, field trips or summer schools. Focusing on participation and experiential methods, they aim to establish a normative framework both within and outside the classroom. The official aim of the projects is to prevent radicalisation, but the projects actually work on a variety of different complementary levels to foster social cohesion, anti-racism, anti-discrimination and learners’ democratic and intercultural competences.

Casework-based projects are different. Premised on the contested idea that radicalisation can be “spotted”, they belong to a different category of interventions, which are linked to processes of detection, risk assessment, referral and intervention. As such, they share many features with social programmes aimed at tackling bullying, gang violence or drug use. With reference to counter-radicalisation programmes, our visits showed that assessing risk,

sharing information internally and externally, and interfacing with law enforcement varied greatly according to the national legal environment as well as the specific design of individual projects. Issues of trust, confidentiality and the professional autonomy of the education sector frequently arise in the different steps of the process.

Chapter 3

Challenges and solutions



Counter-radicalisation programmes in schools face as well as pose challenges at the grass-roots level. This chapter addresses the two main areas in which these problems have arisen: (1) concerns for the protection of individuals' fundamental rights; and (2) struggles over the autonomy of education. In addition to discussing the challenges, each section in the chapter also highlights the effects of these challenges as they feature in the experiences of the students, teachers and counter-radicalisation practitioners we interviewed. It then foregrounds the range of local solutions developed by grass-roots actors to mitigate the difficulties they face.

Fundamental rights

Among the most salient challenges of counter-radicalisation programmes are those that threaten or place a strain on fundamental rights. As *Students as suspects?* (Ragazzi 2017) highlighted, several universally recognised fundamental rights have been at the centre of concerns about counter-radicalisation measures in schools. These include freedom of expression; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the right to education; the right to preserve one's identity; the right to freedom from discrimination; and the right to respect for one's private and family life. The report

also observed that the right to a fair trial may also be affected where intelligence collected in schools is used as justification for administrative and judicial measures.

Challenges

Several, often interconnected, factors can give rise to conditions for infringements on the fundamental rights of students in the course of counter-radicalisation programmes. In our interviews, these issues tended to emerge in relation to casework-based projects, while those involved in primary preventive interventions were either not concerned with such difficulties or their projects had actually been set up as alternatives to approaches that they perceived to be problematic.

The terminology of radicalisation and extremism

Our interviewees supported the claim addressed in *Students as suspects?* that the vagueness of the terms at the heart of the counter-radicalisation programme is a source of confusion at the grass-roots level. The key organising principles of counter-radicalisation projects, “radicalisation” and “extremism”, are often not well understood by students and teachers alike. The doubt this creates can result in increased referral rates.

We then go into vulnerabilities, radicalisation, exploitation. Most young people don't even know these words. We tend to, as professionals, tend to throw them around and we even ask: we ask teachers, nursery teachers, youth workers, professionals to be alert. If you see anything that's going on, report it. We ask the children, are you being exploited? Don't know, they don't know what we're saying. We're looking to things and their behaviour's not even showing signs of what we're thinking. That's why we've had so many referrals. (Interview with Gareth Hicks and Nicky Nijjer, Swansea, 3 April 2019)

For Lisa Kiefer in Germany, the terms carry the potential to stigmatise and do not adequately reflect the grass-roots work of the Clear project.

We should be more concrete with terms ... to define radicalisation, to define extremism. If I would start with the project again I would never use the term “extremism” in this project. Not only because it might stigmatise students, but also, because it doesn't apply to what we're doing. (Lisa, in interview with Lisa Kiefer and Jan-Hendrik Weinhold, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019)

The warning signs are highly ambiguous

One of the greatest difficulties for educators involved in casework is how to distinguish problematic behaviour that might indicate radicalisation from behaviour that can normally be expected of children and, more specifically, adolescents. This ambiguity presents significant challenges, as the distinction between restricting the religious freedom of students, and preventing them from being exposed to violent propaganda and possibly being recruited by an extremist organisation, is rarely clear-cut. As Dries Geeraerts in Antwerp explains:

I think it was around 2010 probably, and he invited their Imam as well. ... And the Imam turned out to be a leading figure, who later got involved with Sharia4Belgium.

He was a recruiter that sent off lots of the fighters, and who was at risk of losing his Belgian nationality at this time. Then our boards made clear – listen we are not going to participate in these activities ... So, they blocked a lot of their questions or demands. And then some of them left school, by their own choice, a few others felt a little heat when it came down to results. (Interview with Dries Geeraerts, Antwerp, 19 November 2018)

While in this case it quickly became clear who the school was dealing with, in many other instances pedagogical staff are not trained to know who will be speaking to their students. In a climate of fear about radicalisation in Muslim communities and travel to Syria, the school therefore felt it was highly risky to allow contact with “extremist” preachers as well as, conversely, to deny them the right to meet with legitimate religious figures. As Lars van der Linden, a religious studies teacher, put it:

I think as a teacher, you have to know a lot about Islam. I noticed that two years later, we had a lot of speakers about Islam ... Like I think, two years ago the Imam of Ghent came here: how to cope with Muslim students. Very interesting. And for me, I know a lot of things, but I can understand a teacher who teaches in car mechanics ... that he doesn't know a lot about Islam. (Interview with Lars van der Linden, Antwerp, 28 February 2019)

Another issue relates to the double standards of considering conservative views from Muslim students as signs of radicalisation, and xenophobic or racist perspectives as a normal part of “our civilisation”. Here one teacher differentiated between Islamic radicalisation and right-wing radicalisation:

I don't think we report that, we have ... Do you know Vlaams Belang? We know in this area certainly in Antwerp, certainly here in Hoboken we know there are a lot of people who think like Vlaams Belang. “Those Muslims are very bad, take them back to their country ...” We know that it is sort of allowed in our country, and if you talk about radicalisation – those thoughts are also wrong, but not at the level of radicalisation. If you know what I mean. (Interview with Marc van Beneden and Dries Geeraerts, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 15)

The unintended consequences of referrals

A third significant challenge pertains to the flows of information once educators make a referral. In most cases, once schools share information with law enforcement, they relinquish control over where the data travel and who is able to access it. There is no guarantee that police and security professionals will act as compassionately and carefully as schools are trained to do, as Lisa of the Clear project highlighted:

There was a rumour that a student was showing videos of the Islamic State ... Okay, so [the police] was called, and [they] came, and talked to this kid ... They took him to a room, and asked him about the video. In fact, it was a Yazidi boy, who couldn't speak so well German, and he just wanted to show his classmates how he was tortured ... Then the police come, and so just really he was already traumatised, and then you get this chat with the police, and these are negative effects. (Interview with Lisa Kiefer and Jan-Hendrik Weinhold, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019)

The consequences of referral relate to not only the immediate actions taken towards a student but also to the storage and transfer of information. Young people can face problems as a result of past referrals. They may, for instance, have difficulty finding employment:

Because in this case the school go to Staatsschutz and gives them the case. They actually investigate. Yeah, they investigate and it has real consequences for the student because they have this in the report and it doesn't go away, even if the case is not going to court and this has real consequences if, for example, the student wants to work in social work or youth work. They can't because it stays. So this is the problem. (interview with Katharina Falger, Ariane Heimig and Lisa Kiefer, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019)

Effects

Our interviewees' accounts show that several of the fundamental rights discussed in *Students as suspects?* are directly affected by the challenges in the processes of detection and referral. While none of the projects was directly involved in judicial procedures, and the right to a fair trial was not a concern for our participants, several issues were raised concerning the child's best interests as a primary consideration; the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of expression; respect for private and family life; and freedom from discrimination.

The child's best interests as a primary consideration

Concerns about the consequences of referral can often translate into anxiety on the part of education professionals about the extent to which the best interests of the child can be protected. Teachers in Düsseldorf described their fears that, in contrast to referrals to the CleaR project, the child's best interests will no longer be the primary concern if they choose to share information with law enforcement:

Yes, but it comes from the fact that if we now make the ad with Lisa, we still learn what is happening and are involved. If we give that to the police, the public prosecutor's office, so – we are out. They do that and we're scared, they don't pay the same attention to the student as we do. (Interview with Katharina Falger, Ariane Heimig and Lisa Kiefer, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019, p. 16)

The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion

In a climate where politicised and mediatised discourses on terrorism link it almost synonymously to radicalism in Muslim communities, the ambiguity that practitioners confront in attempting to identify radicalisation is particularly ominous for freedom of religion. Students in Cardiff reflected on an instance when one of them was disciplined for a haircut that reflected their religious practice.

Abid: I got boot for religious reasons. They made me stay in at breaks and lunch, because I wasn't allowed out with my brother, not applying school rules ... Because your hair can't be less than two on the back and sides, and it has to be long on the top.

Francesco: And so, why is that religious?

Abid: Because, I went on pilgrimage to Mecca, and then I had to cut my hair as part of it.

Francesco: Were you kept in detention because of that?

Abid: I had to go to the headteacher's office a couple of times. I had to cover my head during break and lunch, I wasn't allowed to show it, even when I was leaving the classroom. To go to another lesson, or to the toilet, I had to cover my head. (Interview with Cardiff Focus Group, Swansea, 3 April 2019, p. 6)

The right to freedom of expression

Participants also raised concerns, often shared by critics of counter-radicalisation, that such policies have a "chilling effect" on the freedom of speech in classrooms. These effects were most pronounced for students and practitioners working in England, where the threshold for sharing information with law enforcement is low, and where teachers face a statutory obligation to report concerns about radicalisation.⁵ Lee Jerome reflects on how the threat of possible sanctions undercuts the ability of teachers in England to open up discussions in which students can freely express their thoughts and opinions:

But, the second bit of advice [from the national government] is: "If a child goes too far in a discussion, you have to report them." Because that's the logical follow-up. But you can't have a controversial issues discussion if all the participants feel this is an opportunity for surveillance and reporting. It would just be completely disingenuous. There's a nice phrase that someone uses, which is ... it's classroom ventriloquism. That it all looks like it's a nice debate, but actually kids have just worked out what they're allowed to say and they say it so that the teacher will be happy, so they'll let them go and give them a good grade ... We felt like it was very bad advice, because it kind of gave you two completely contradictory bits of advice, and then said, "And you must do them both." And of course, the unspoken bit is: every few years Ofsted [the national school inspectorate] will swoop in unannounced and see whether you've got it right. And I think anyone who has any knowledge of how that works would go down the more conservative route. Which for us is worrying, because it closes down the proper area for discussing democratic ideas. (Interview with Lee Jerome and Liz Moorse, London, 19 March 2019)

As the following comments from one London student, Adam, highlight, the various oral histories shared about counter-radicalisation can have a knock-on effect, particularly for students from communities who feel unfairly targeted.

I feel like it does scare a lot people especially from the Middle East, from certain minorities and Muslims feeling they're afraid to say something in class. Like all through Year 7 and Year 8, I remember, I so remember, I kept on saying "Oh, if I say

5. Although educators in Wales work within similar conditions, we did not speak to any during our visits to Cardiff and Swansea, and therefore cannot comment on whether these effects are also shared there.

this in class I'll get in trouble", or "If I asked about al-Qaeda and how they did 9/11, am I going to get in trouble? Are you going to put on a list or something?" And that's just because [of] what my parents said to me: "Don't say something dodgy in class, you'll get put on a list because that happened to them." That happened to people they know just asking questions. (Interview with London Focus Group, London, 19 March 2019)

The right to respect for private and family life

The right to respect for private life, in particular, can conflict with the imperative to detect and share concerns about radicalisation. When anxieties are heightened about the threat of radicalisation, students and their private lives can be the subject of intense investigation, as Lars van der Linden, a religious studies teacher in Antwerp, recalled: "And we're getting instructions to notice that if they are growing beards, if they were going separates? There was, like a witch hunt for a period ... of a year I think" (interview with Lars van der Linden, Antwerp, 28 February 2019).

Such investigations can direct attention arbitrarily to various aspects of students' personal lives, such as their internet activity:

I think there was a study group, if I'm correct. And then every week we get some notices. We got some guidelines to observe ... But as I remember it, before five years ago, it was a lot of panic. So we accused ... I think this guy ... The student just could be checking some things about Islam and not be thinking about extremism ... So then there was for the students, it was also an "Oh, I'm checking internet and they're checking me and then." (Interview with Lars van der Linden, Antwerp, 28 February 2019)

The right to freedom from discrimination

Another question at the heart of debates about counter-radicalisation is its potential role in giving rise to discrimination in schools. Several participants expressed concerns about the disproportionate targeting and stigmatisation of communities that have become associated with terrorism in the popular imagination, such as this student in London.

Outside of school because of my Irish background I was told I was a terrorist because of the IRA. And that affiliation, I don't know if it's simply because kids are learning these things and not caring, or kids are learning these things but not to a good enough standard to care. Like focusing on Islamic terrorism can have the positive effect of making kids not wanting to join these terrorist groups because of these morbid reasons. But then it could have the negative effect of them grouping Islamic terrorisation with Islamic. (Interview with London Focus Group, London, 19 March 2019)

One student linked discrimination because of his Muslim background to a fear of being the target of a referral:

In Year 7 we had this whole joke going around because ... there was a joke going around saying Adam's a terrorist. And then it turned into a self-deprecating joke. Which I would make it about myself, and then once when I made it I got really scared because I was like "Oh my God, are they going to actually think I'm a terrorist? Are they going to send

me to Guantanamo?" I know it's like over-exaggerated in your head but when you come from a background like this and your family has been in those situations, it really does make you afraid so that's the problem with preventive programmes. (Interview with London Focus Group, London, 19 March 2019)

Discriminatory sentiments like this not only circulate among students but can be shared by teachers. As Lisa Kiefer observed, those who run counter-radicalisation interventions in schools can meet with strongly discriminatory attitudes:

"I'm not going to teach hijabs or burkas. I'm not going to teach burkas", and the girl was like "What the f***?" Then another teacher came, another teacher came and they were all blaming her for what do you look like? You will never get a job like this, and then she was like, "Sorry, but I'm not going to talk to anyone here anymore," and this is, when it comes to this point, then you don't have a chance. The only chance there was to work with her parents, but normally they want to talk. (Interview with Lisa Kiefer and Jan-Hendrik Weinhold, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019)

Here, Lee Jerome of ACT recounts a conversation he had with a school leader.

In an engineering class, where they had introduced the kids to mini-batteries to do a remote-control boat, and the kid had said to the teacher, "Where can you get those mini-batteries, because I want to do a remote-control gadget." He was an Asian Muslim, and he was reported to the headteacher, because he was asking for how to get a remote-control kit. Now it seems to me, actually, preposterous. And a prime example of racism that you would leap to the conclusion. (Interview with Lee Jerome and Liz Moore, London, 19 March 2019)

Grass-roots solutions

Through our interviews we were able to trace not only the complications of counter-radicalisation measures, but also the coping strategies that have been developed at the grass roots to mitigate its potentially pernicious consequences for fundamental rights.

Safeguarding trust relations a means to protecting the best interests of children

Several students highlighted the importance of being able to trust their teachers to act in their best interests, and of their being accessible. Trustworthy educators can often provide a route away from criminality and other erroneous choices that students sometimes feel pressurised into, as these two Antwerp students described.

Mohamed: The contact with teachers – it's good. When you have problems with the... if you have next to school, you have a lot of good police, you have not good friends, they say "Go with us, we're going to borrow this, steal this", you don't want but you feel scared and if you go to school they're going to help you ... If you go outside and try to at 15-16 years old you can try to sell drugs if you want. Now the criminality is big, now a lot of students don't go to school, because they want earning this money, and if you go to your director and tell them, they're going to help you, I know that.

Salah: Not helping with giving money but they're going to say you what to do, what you can do, maybe help you out to find a job, to have money, that kind of things. (Interview with Antwerp Focus Group 1, Antwerp, 28 February 2019)

Students in Düsseldorf spoke similarly positively about having teachers in whom they could confide without fear of reproach or referral.

Another thing that is good here at our school is Mrs Schütz, who is a teacher with an office here. If you have a problem with fellow students or teachers or the like, you can simply go to her and talk with her. Like finding a solution together. And then, yes. (Interview with Düsseldorf Focus Group, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019, p.15)

In some scenarios, trust is understood specifically in the context of counter-radicalisation measures. One London student highlighted how, despite having expressed anxieties earlier about his fear of being reported after being called a “terrorist” by his classmates, his relationships of trust with his teachers made him feel safe.

But the way it's executed in this school by him and by other teachers who actually understand is a lot, lot better than in other schools. Because when it is about Islamic radicalisation they teach you how home-grown terror can become, and you can spot it in yourself. For example, I'm Kurdish and I've seen videos online of, like, troops from a free Syrian army or a Turkish troops committing horrible things to Kurdish civilians. I felt really bad about it so I came and I spoke to sir about it. And then, like, I was able to spot those things in myself. And so that did bring up the resilience in me. And that is one way how the Prevent strategy was successful in this school. (Interview with London Focus Group, London, 19 March 2019)

Allowing teachers space to get to know their students

Educational practitioners who understand their students and the communities they come from are better placed to detect when things are wrong. An example of this comes from Don Bosco Hoboken school in Antwerp. Despite several students from the school leaving Belgium for Syria in 2014-15, and giving rise to what one teacher described as a “witch hunt” in school (interview with Lars van der Linden, Antwerp, 28 February 2019), the staff have since developed an approach based on their appreciation of the problems their students face. As another teacher, Dries Geeraerts, observed:

We have had a few foreign fighters, maybe one to two years before I started working here. I think it went really fast, I think that a lot of the signals of radicalisation are more at the surface than deeper down below, if you consider it as sort of an iceberg image. Because we try to discuss on a deeper basis the reasons behind some of their statements, the reasoning, it almost never has to do with spiritual stuff. It is only religious on top and they tend to get stuck in a lot of dos and don'ts: Sharia tells this, halal means that; the clothing. But this is on the surface. And below, a lot of times, there is rather a lack of real knowledge and real interest, and I think the hole you can feel underneath has got a lot more to do with lack of real bonding with family/ friends/ school as an institute. (Interview with Dries Geeraerts, Antwerp, 19 November 2018)

Creation of safe spaces may require trusted third-party actors

Particularly where sensitive issues such as radicalisation are concerned, even the most approachable teachers may be difficult to confide in as a result of a range of social and institutional circumstances. Some topics may be too embarrassing or simply off-limits according to interpretations of counter-radicalisation policy. In these situations, third-party practitioners can provide an alternative means for students to express their feelings and concerns. Students in Swansea, for example, spoke particularly positively about the Resilience Project in this context (interview with Cardiff Focus Group, Swansea, 3 April 2019, p. 9). In Düsseldorf, students also appreciated having an alternative forum in which to express themselves.

B4: Yes. And every one of us was able to speak about his/her opinion. I definitely like the fact that everybody speaks their mind. And, well, that was ..., I liked it.

B5: I liked it, too, because everybody was able to say what he/she thought without being discriminated and, yes, it was just speaking one's mind. We have watched the videos and we were able to speak our mind just like that. I either thought that was right or wrong and what can be done to improve a situation. Yes. That was definitely good. (Interview with Düsseldorf Focus Group, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019, pp. 4-5)

Locating counter-radicalisation in social work to preserve privacy

Projects with high thresholds for the sharing of information between schools and the police are by their nature more concerned with safeguarding the privacy of young people. One such project, the Drop Out Prevention Network in Antwerp, seeks to achieve this goal by locating its casework within the local infrastructure for social work, which works separately from the police.

Francesco: Because the Jeugdinterventie they are social workers from the city? They also have this confidentiality acts?

Fabienne: Yes, but not the same. They have one because they are social workers, but if you look at the law, the confidential act for us as PGC – it is a little bit like welfare, it is really more intense. You cannot share information unless the judge tells you to or if you have the consent of the youngster.

Francesco: And for Jeugdinterventie it is easier to share information?

Fabienne: Yes, it is. It is a regulation. That's why it was so important to put the CHD in the PGC, if a local authority would ask for names of youngsters with radicalisation problems we can say no. They cannot say no. That is a difference. I think it is very important. (Interview with Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 5)

Separation of students

At times, however, the separation in groups becomes an ingrained solution that is internalised by the students themselves. As detailed in a focus group in Croatia:

It's a very different atmosphere. For example, some students don't have anything against mixing us, but others have some sort of negative energy towards others, and all of them will have an issue with the fact that we are together, then we will start fighting with bottles and similar things. (Interview with Dalj High School Focus Group, Dalj, Croatia, 2 January 2019, p. 14)

Conclusion

The challenges posed by a counter-radicalisation programme in schools to the protection of fundamental rights, as identified in *Students as suspects?* and in the broader literature, were experienced in concrete ways by participants. These accounts often referred to the confusion surrounding the terminology of extremism and radicalisation, the difficulty in applying these concepts to practice in a non-discriminatory way, and the unintended consequences of referrals. They illustrated in concrete detail some of the ways in which the fundamental rights pertaining to children's best interests – freedom of conscience, thought and religion; freedom from discrimination; and the right to privacy – are threatened. However, they also showed that anxiety about such infringements is not pervasive; they do not define the way most students and educators deal or engage with counter-radicalisation in schools.

The participants' accounts also foregrounded several working solutions to these problems at the grass-roots level. Several students across the varied geographic and policy contexts highlighted the importance of being able to trust that their teachers would act in their best interests, and a need to remove barriers to protecting such trust relations (i.e. the perception that some groups of students are under surveillance). In highly regulated policy environments with low thresholds for referral, students may feel unable to confide in their teachers for fear of reproach and referral. Here, third parties such as NGOs can offer alternative means through which students can express themselves. Finally, locating casework within a social-work infrastructure rather than law enforcement can safeguard against the securitisation of processes of support for students deemed to be at risk. The next section, however, reveals a more complex picture: while these solutions may prove beneficial in some scenarios, they also strike at the heart of long-standing concerns about the impact of counter-radicalisation on the professional autonomy of educators.

Autonomy of education

Concern that counter-radicalisation “narrows the mission of education” by subordinating the professional autonomy of educators to the interests of security services has been a prominent criticism of counter-radicalisation since the early days of its

introduction in schools (Ragazzi 2017). At the grass-roots level, several factors are influential in determining (1) whether struggles occur between the expertise and know-how of educators and the impulses of security-oriented practices, and (2) the type of professional autonomy that prevails in these contexts. Issues relating to the autonomy of education were most prevalent in projects oriented towards casework (Drop Out Prevention Network, CleaR), or in contexts where primary prevention projects operate alongside or as a response to counter-radicalisation policies (Dembra, Deliberative Classroom). These issues did not emerge in our interviews with primary preventive projects in south-eastern Europe (Derad Theatre Therapy, Embrace Differences).

Challenges

Predominance of a police-led reporting culture

One of the primary concerns related to the preservation of educational autonomy is the pressure placed on schools by the police to report radicalisation. In Norway, the extent to which such a reporting culture is imposed on schools depends on localised relations and traditions of multi-agency collaboration, as Peder Nustad of Dembra pointed out.

I think the relations in the schools is varying a lot in municipalities and school and police districts. Depending on, because there are a lot of individual relations, every police district in Norway has their own radicalisation co-ordinator. Which means that there is one guy/girl who knows things. And they have been, or the police has been, very eager, they have had this idea and it has been in the papers: "It is better to report one time too much than one time too little." Which I am very much opposed to. (Interview with Ingun Andersen and Peder Nustad, Oslo, 12 July 2018)

Elsewhere, the experiences of the Drop Out Prevention Network demonstrate that the reporting culture can prevail even where counter-radicalisation is built into existing social-work infrastructures, with the aim of avoiding securitisation.

You know there are so many schools that it is really difficult to spread information everywhere. We tried top-down and bottom-up but sometimes you don't succeed even after years to reach every principal and get everybody on the same page about this. We keep investing in that, but still sometimes teachers don't follow the flow we agreed on, don't even consult their principals and just call the police themselves ... In the last few years, with IS and terrorism being framed like something we all should constantly be scared of. (Interview with Luc Claessens, Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 13)

Unsurprisingly, as a result of the heavily regulated, centralised "duty" codified in the UK's Prevent policy, schools across the system feel the pressure to refer students externally.

I mean I think schools have to exercise their judgment, don't they? And so, you have to say, "Kids can say all sorts of things." And actually people can support ideas, but it doesn't mean they, as an individual, are at any immediate risk, and I think what has

happened, because people feel under pressure, the minute the duty came in, the number of referrals shot up. (Interview with Lee Jerome and Liz Moorse, London, 19 March 2019)

The concerns, highlighted in Chapter 2, that the best interests of children are no longer the primary concern as information is shared with law enforcement are thus accentuated by the way in which a police-led reporting culture has become embedded in schools' responses to radicalisation. Where educators respond primarily to pedagogical and welfare logics, law enforcement responds to the logics of security and criminality. By virtue of their enlistment into counter-radicalisation practices, educators are trained to think that there is no such thing as an erroneous referral; they are constantly reminded that under-reporting is the only form of malpractice. This pressure to refer externally outsources the judgments made about certain cases, therefore decreasing the professional autonomy of educators, as highlighted in the sections that follow.

One-way flows of information

A second difficulty relates to the direction of travel of information once it is shared by schools. Once cases are referred to the police, regardless of whether or not there is evidence of criminal wrongdoing, it may be that very little information is fed back to the school.

Blurred boundaries between educational interventions and security interventions

In some contexts, it is becoming harder to distinguish between grass-roots projects that are premised on educational interests and those that serve security priorities. In Germany, for example, the field of primary prevention in schools is now a source of intelligence for the security services, as well as a potential recruiting ground, according to Lisa Kiefer of the CleaR project.

Francesco: Did they approach you? Lisa: ... No, they didn't approach us, but, actually, in the field I know about some colleagues who were approached by them. Not only to get information, but also because they need staff there, so they are trying to get ... recruit from the project. (Interview with Lisa Kiefer and Jan-Hendrik Weinhold, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019)

Regular shifts in state education policy

The variety of policy demands to which schools respond outside of the sphere of counter-radicalisation can also limit the range of pedagogical responses to radicalisation that are feasibly available to schools. The experiences of ACT, a charity behind the Deliberative Classroom project, whose prevention work is premised on the promotion of citizenship studies as an "educational response", highlight this. The ebbs and flows of political priorities for education are a key factor in determining the areas of the curriculum into which schools invest resources. For ACT's Lee Jerome, the removal at the national level of incentives for schools to teach citizenship studies opened the door to less pedagogical oriented approaches.

So it all gets complicated in the UK, because we have a national curriculum, but most schools don't have to follow it, because most schools are no longer locally maintained by local government. Most are kind of free-floating as academy schools, which are rather self-governing, or they're governed in small clusters of academies, in multi-academy trusts. So they are exempted from having to implement the national curriculum. So it does mean, if you're a headteacher and you realise that the real government priority was on a raft of core curriculum subjects, and citizenship wasn't going to be one of them, then if you'd already dropped it, thinking it was going to disappear from the curriculum, there is no incentive to reintroduce it. Because you don't really even have to pay lip service to the curriculum. So it's undoubtedly taught in fewer schools, and in schools where it is taught, it's taught in less time, and it's taught by non-specialists, and it's taught in combination with personal social education, careers education, RE – religious education – all of those kinds of things. (Interview with Lee Jerome and Liz Moorse, London, 19 March 2019)

Autonomy is important not only as it is understood as the boundary between the education sector and the security sector. It also pertains to how autonomy is distributed at different levels of the decision-making chain within the education sector. Tensions that emerge between high-ranking officials and “street-level” bureaucrats, or front-line practitioners, can also encroach on the autonomy of grass-roots actors to determine their approach to prevention. This is illustrated by contestation over the tools for “controversial issues pedagogy”, which were developed as part of the Deliberative Classroom project. Here, Lee Jerome reflects on his conversations with the project funders in the Department for Education, about how the topic of religious freedom should be approached. Ultimately, the most progressive activities from a pedagogical perspective, developed together with front-line teachers, were side-lined by the project's sponsors at the top of the national educational bureaucracy.

If you're going to have a discussion about religious freedom, you give some pictures of people engaging in various activities, and you just say, “What do you see? What questions would you like to ask about these issues? Our topic is religious freedom: look at these people, standing on a soapbox, talking, look at these people being locked up, look at these barricades, look at these armed police ... What questions might we ask about religious freedom? What do we already know about it, and then let's talk about what we're concerned about.” And he said, “That ...” And this is a, you know, part of this neo-traditionalist pedagogic movement, dismisses things like that as a waste of time. (Interview with Lee Jerome and Liz Moorse, London, 19 March 2019)

Effects

Professional dilemmas

Among the effects on educational autonomy that were most discussed in our interviews were the professional dilemmas that educators face because of counter-radicalisation. While most practitioners at the grass-roots level have invested in the well-being of their students, the ambiguity surrounding signs of radicalisation and the consequences of information sharing, coupled with the pressure to report,

clouds decisions as to whether referral promotes the child's best interests. As highlighted in Chapter 2, teachers in Düsseldorf, for example, described acute feelings of doubt about whether their decisions to make referrals promoted or threatened the welfare of their students (interview with Katharina Falger, Ariane Heimig and Lisa Kiefer, Düsseldorf, 4 November 2019, p. 12).

That school staff are being warned not to miss key warning signs while at the same time avoiding knee-jerk reactions leads to confusion and anxiety. Sofie Scholliers, of the RAN team Prevention of Violent Radicalisation of the city of Antwerp described the back-and-forth nature of these dilemmas.

So, I am the first to ask people to relax a bit about this problem, at the same time, because of my background I think I am very worried about youngsters, falling into the hands of the wrong people. So where do you switch attitude? From "Hey, people please chill. Not everyone who doesn't want to shake hands anymore is a terrorist/terrorist-to-be. We should relax a little bit" to "Now we have to intervene because this youngster is probably going to be/is being approached by the wrong people. And is being sucked up in a network or is being brainwashed by social media or whatever". This is something that I think most of us struggle with all the time. (Interview with Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, pp. 8-9)

Parents worry about links to the police

Anxiety about the close proximity of schools to the police on the issue of radicalisation is a cause of anxiety not only for professionals but also for parents. As Luc Claessens of the Drop Out Prevention Network explained, in Antwerp this has proven a barrier to gaining the support of parents for the project.

One of the main things for parents is always that they are worried if they have to go to a professional partner, that this might link to police. This might link to prosecution of the youngster. So, they are very much in doubt on what to do. (Interview with Luc Claessens, Sofie Scholliers and Fabienne Fell, Antwerp, 19 November 2018, p. 8)

Grass-roots solutions

Transparency about the consequences of referral

One means of preserving or re-establishing the autonomy of educators over the decisions they confront in responding to the demand to prevent radicalisation is to increase transparency about the consequences of sharing information externally. Teacher 1, a teacher in London, reflected on the positive contribution of the Prevent officer in the police force local to his school.

We used to have a Prevent officer called Liam Duffy who worked in Lewisham who was really good as well. I think it was much more understood to people why the referrals were made. I think one of the problems that has happened in terms of the actual referral system for it is that there's a misunderstanding of what it is. There's a misunderstanding of what happens. There's this thought that if you are to refer someone their name just goes on a list and there's no dialogue of that person, [that] MI5 are going to be watching them for the rest of their life. So I think that a lot of the knee-jerk reaction to it has been

the fact that some of the training might have been quite poor that people received. Or some of the information given hasn't actually been explained in the way it could be explained. (Interview with Teacher 1, London, 19 March 2019)

The role of providing reassurances has been taken on in the Norwegian context, where the Dembra project is located, as Peder Nustad described.

But these co-ordinators have helped a lot, because they have a bit more knowledge to comfort. And to say this is nothing you have to worry about, so the whole idea of reporting has brought about quite a few callings because someone has a beard, or all those classical ideas. (Interview with Ingun Andersen and Peder Nustad, Oslo, 12 July 2018)

NGOs as supplementary where teachers' hands are tied

In some contexts, it may be felt that NGOs can provide alternative channels for prevention where schools are unable to act freely because of the requirements of official policy, particularly where counter-radicalisation policy is deemed to disproportionately affect certain communities in an unfair manner, as Tony Hendrickson of the Resilience Project explained.

But I have to say this, and I'm not saying this to be glum around Prevent. But I think the workers that we have, we probably have got the same results as Prevent anyway. 'Cause they are big to go with the well-being of that individual, very much in the forefront. They know how to interface with those young people. They know how to come to the assumptions which those young people have around extremism. They're well versed in that. So I'm not saying this globally in any way, shape or form, but there is a lot to be dismissive of Prevent. I think the staff that we have know their stuff. (Interview with Tony Hendrickson, Cardiff, 3 April 2019)

For these practitioners, the Resilience Project and its predecessor, Think, provide alternative channels through which young people and the communities they belong to can receive support without the fear of being incriminated.

And do something that basically was, I suppose, in a broader sense have the same goal as Prevent in terms of tackling the increase of, at that time, extremism. But in a way that we felt was more empowering to the individuals involved. 'Cause I think a lot of perceptions about Prevent was more around the fact that it was people felt they were having to police their own communities. Whereas our Think was about empowering people and building their resilience. So it was very much designed from the community, from the organisation up. (Interview with Tony Hendrickson, Cardiff, 3 April 2019)

Relocating prevention in a pedagogical context

An alternative to "outsourcing" prevention to other agencies and organisations is to adopt methods that reassert teachers' authority over the nature of their practice. Central to this activity are efforts to restore the confidence of educators to lead classroom discussions on their own terms. Part of such shared standards may include an emphasis on ensuring that subject specialists such as humanities teachers are the ones who lead discussions with students on sensitive and controversial issues.

This is the position taken by ACT, with its emphasis on a citizenship studies approach through the Deliberative Classroom. Teacher 1, the citizenship studies teacher who worked directly with the project, describes how his subject knowledge enables him to approach radicalisation prevention much more confidently, in contrast to a non-specialist.

It is, but it is completely on my radar, because obviously if something was to happen, I'm going to be the person who's liable if a referral wasn't made, it's going to come back onto my door. But I think a lot of it is through professional judgment and a lot of it is, particularly with my subject, it's allowed me to see a student who might make a comment just to get a laugh or just to spark a debate, and a student who might be saying something and I think to myself, hmm, let me dig a little bit deeper. Whereas if you give Prevent training, this will be very stereotypical, to a mathematician, and then a child makes a comment, and it might literally just be trying to wind up the teacher, the day after they've been given that training, that teacher's senses are going to be heightened, and they're going to go, oh, referral. (Interview with Teacher 1, London, 19 March 2019)

Within this framework, ACT deliberately provides citizenship teachers with tools, based on long-standing pedagogical expertise, to mitigate the potentially damaging effects of counter-radicalisation policy. For the Deliberative Classroom, the best means of approaching the contradictory requirements of state policy to discuss controversial issues, while also reporting non-mainstream opinions, is to include state policy as part of its "controversial issues" pedagogy for teachers.

David Kerr and Huddleston did a [paper] recently for the Council of Europe on exactly the same thing, so it was really looking at the same kind of literature, and saying, "In the very narrow context of responding to Prevent, what do we already know about controversial issues pedagogy?" That led us to, I think for very sound reasons, to frame the Prevent policy as a controversial issue. And one of the defining features of a controversial issue is: it speaks to fundamental principles, it stirs emotions and it will not be resolved by rational argument. It's perfectly possible to decide that that security measure has impeded on my freedom too much, and you're not going to convince me simply by the power of your argument, or you're not going to put out some clinching piece of evidence. We will continue to have an argument about how to strike the balance. On narrow academic grounds, I think we're perfectly right to say it's a controversial issue, and therefore should be taught as such in schools. (Interview with Lee Jerome and Liz Moore, London, 19 March 2019)

This move to subvert the official script enables teachers to open up honest and critical discussions that consider the relative advantages and disadvantages of the policy, rather than to avoid the topic. It should be noted, however, that this is dealt with in an age-appropriate manner. Here, Teacher 1 describes his more subtle approach with younger students:

With Key Stage 3, [Years] 7 to 9 (aged 11 to 14), I have actually said to them what Prevent was, but I don't approach it with the teaching of this is the explicitly Prevent agenda, so in Year 7 the rule of law, we look at what a law is, why is a law there. In Year 9 we have the rule of law, we look at the court system, how the court systems work. So, in terms of

one of the strands of British values that kind of come under Prevent/Channel, I'm doing it with them but I'm not explicitly saying every single time "This is Prevent". Because I think if I was to do that, it would just seem as though I'm standing at the front and I'm the mouthpiece of essentially, what I'm being told to do by the British government. ... Something like tolerance, which is again one of the British values, within Year 7, through work I've actually done with Liz, at ACT. We do a thing about where human rights have been taken away and the students write off to people, like Jeremy Hunt now, but it was Boris Johnson when he was Foreign Secretary, about issues they've seen around the world. And we did a whole load of work around Uganda. So in terms of British values and Prevent, I am teaching the students essentially about content that is going to be controversial without saying to them "This is going to be an issue with Prevent". (Interview with Teacher 1, London, 19 March 2019)

Conclusion

The accounts of the educators and other professionals we talked to lend support to concerns that counter-radicalisation can pose significant challenges to the professional autonomy of the education sector. Much like the concerns for fundamental rights, these issues predominantly appeared in relation to casework, and the activity of detection and referral more specifically. They were also therefore more prevalent in northern European settings, where these approaches are more established. The principal strain on educational autonomy is caused by two inter-related factors. First, in countries dominated by a police-led reporting culture, front-line educators have a higher chance of mishandling cases. In other words, the imperative for early detection and reporting is often prioritised over the careful consideration of educational practitioners who have been tasked with assessing the extent to which a student is "at risk" of radicalisation, as opposed to more traditional welfare problems, in which police involvement is not the answer traditionally. Second, against this backdrop, educators must often confront the reality that the consequences of their decision to refer will likely remain opaque, as information tends to flow one way, from school to police, without feedback on individual cases. In some cases, this takes place in a climate where stories of the unfair treatment of the most vulnerable groups at the hands of the police are well known. This makes it very difficult for practitioners, who usually prioritise the welfare of their students above all, to be sure that their choices are aligned with their professional and personal values. As a result, in these instances, there is a risk that educational autonomy is rendered subordinate to external interests, namely those of security. Other significant challenges include the struggle between street-level practitioners and high-ranking bureaucrats within the education sector, which disconnects front-line practices of resilience building from their intended purpose.

Practitioners respond to these challenges in diverse ways. Our participants highlighted the importance of transparency in the referral process, as a means to re-establish their control over the decisions they make. Others highlighted that, where schools find themselves unable to reconcile the contradiction of opening up free debate while also responding to formal demands to be alert to radicalisation, such as in England and Wales, again, third parties such as NGOs can offer useful

alternatives. Finally, our interviews foregrounded several instances of front-line practitioners, often with the help of third parties, mobilising their agency to actively relocate prevention in a pedagogical context. Amid claims that counter-radicalisation universally securitises education, these accounts show that front-line practitioners in even the most regulated policy contexts always retain an ability to wrest back control of their practice in line with their pedagogical values.

Chapter 4

Conclusions



This report is a follow-up to *Students as suspects?*, published by the Council of Europe in December 2017. Drawing on a review of the existing academic literature, it concluded that the move to recast many of the problems mentioned above in a language of counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation is not simply a semantic one, it is profoundly political. It has indeed a concrete effect: it makes the assumption that educators are not well equipped to deal with these problems – and that the logic of education should be subordinated to another one, that of intelligence collection and social control that forms part of the broader counter-terrorism project. (Ragazzi 2017, p. 103)

On the basis of this premise, the report formulated three claims that were in need of further empirical assessment.

1. What permeates starkly through individual testimonies of students, families and educators as well as through statements of students and educators' unions, is the unease with precisely this position, and in particular the effects of counter-radicalisation policies in schools in terms of both human rights and efficiency with regard to countering extremism.

2. These policies [are] perceived as questioning and possibly undermining the ethical and professional principles of educators – for example in terms of confidentiality, freedom of expression or simply consideration for the best interests of the child.
3. These policies generate counterproductive effects in terms of the two stated objectives of these policies: preventing radicalisation and ensuring social cohesion.

In the light of our visits to eight counter-radicalisation grass-roots projects, we can revisit and qualify these assessments.

A solution in search of a problem

A numerically marginal problem

First, our fieldwork illustrated once again that counter-radicalisation in the education sector can often be considered as a “solution in search of a problem”.

- ▶ Our field visits showed once again that there are very few cases of students involved in or at risk of being involved in terrorist organisations. The image of schools, in particular schools located in disenfranchised or Muslim-majority neighbourhoods in European cities, as potential incubators of terrorism is largely a myth. Even in schools from which students have travelled to Syria, and which have experienced direct recruitment by highly organised terrorist groups, the risk of radicalisation pales in comparison to other concerns.
- ▶ As a result, our visits confirmed that most referrals are false positives, that is, there is no “radicalisation” at stake. This phenomenon of over-reporting should be understood in the light of the re-framing of a number of unrelated issues (conservative religious practice, teenage provocations, etc.) as potential problems of terrorism.
- ▶ Problems of “radicalisation” are to a large extent numerically marginal, in comparison to the “traditional” issues faced by schools, such as bullying and cyber-bullying, racism, discrimination or truancy, which are often linked to socio-economic deprivation and difficult family backgrounds.

Nevertheless, a need from above and from below

Nevertheless, none of our participants claimed that projects aimed at tackling radicalisation were unhelpful or unnecessary. The phenomenon they aim to tackle might be marginal, but such programmes also address other needs.

- ▶ First, counter-radicalisation programmes respond to political pressure from above, that is, from the national governmental level, reinforced by international norms and transnational networks. National and transnational governmental structures create the conditions for the emergence of such programmes, as a response to public and media attention arising from recent terror attacks. Furthermore, regional organisations such as the European Union’s RAN, the Council of Europe or OSCE, as well as international organisations such as the

United Nations Security Council, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and UNESCO have set out the standards to which educational sectors across the world are encouraged to conform.

- ▶ Second, this in turn has contributed to the idea that tackling radicalisation in schools is an unquestioned priority. The elaboration and diffusion of this new normative framework around counter-radicalisation has had practical effects, which we were able to observe in our fieldwork:
 - It undermines the confidence of many educators in their ability to respond to traditional pedagogic challenges, as soon as these are reframed in terms of “radicalisation”. As a result, educators are in demand for training and external interventions.
 - The discourse of radicalisation in part generates its own reality. Since radicalisation is considered an endemic problem of certain urban areas, educators tend to misrecognise student behaviour as resulting from a process of radicalisation and in need of external intervention. As for risk factors, contrary to the assumptions presented in counter-radicalisation policies, there is no clear model for identifying whether indicators (i.e. social isolation) are symptoms of radicalisation or causes of it. This only fuels misrecognition.
 - The structure of opportunity created by government programmes encourages NGOs, which would otherwise evolve in an environment characterised by scarce social funding, to rebrand or reframe their activities in terms of counter-radicalisation or deradicalisation so as to benefit from political attention and public resources.
 - Nonetheless, the pressure on the education sector to engage in counter-radicalisation practices, and the rolling out of contested counter-radicalisation policies at the national level encourage NGOs to propose alternative models as a response to the shortcomings of such policies.
 - A large number of countries located in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe, which are ostensibly not as affected by the problem of “home-grown terrorism” as western European countries, have developed counter-radicalisation strategies when none of their schools has faced the problem of recruitment into terrorist organisations and educators and parents have not demanded such policies. In these contexts, “counter-radicalisation” has become an empty signifier, under which a great variety of projects unrelated to the threat of terrorism have been developed and funded.

A multiplicity of counter-radicalisation practices

A great heterogeneity of practices precludes making a single assessment

Given the contradictory national and international dynamics in the educational sector with regards to counter-radicalisation, it is impossible to formulate a single critique of the policies or projects labelled as “counter-radicalisation”. The spectrum of practices is too broad. In our field visits, we were able to divide practices into two broad categories: projects aimed broadly at raising awareness of key societal issues

such as nationalism, racism and discrimination; and projects aimed at dealing with individual cases, which are deemed in need of special attention.

Awareness-raising projects are generally in line with the principles of education for democratic citizenship, human rights education and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

- ▶ The first category, of awareness-raising projects, is generally in line with the principles and philosophy of EDC, HRE and the RFCDC. Such projects generally emanate from NGOs which are themselves at the core of the conversation about citizenship education and intercultural education, and seek to foster the competences that are specified by the RFCDC.
 - In their aims, their design and their implementation, awareness-raising projects are vectors for diffusing values (such as human dignity and human rights, cultural diversity and democratic processes) in national educational contexts where such values may not be the norm.
 - They are labelled as “counter-radicalisation” or “deradicalisation” for a variety of different reasons, but they do not pose any of the ethical and political issues raised in the 2017 report.

Casework-based projects display a more complex array of ethical dilemmas

- ▶ A second category of projects, sometimes called “deradicalisation” or “disengagement” projects (in this report we refer to them as casework-based projects) pose a different set of ethical and political questions. Contrary to the common criticism, front-line professionals from NGOs or the public sector are generally very aware of the ethical dilemmas they have to face. Furthermore, “casework-based projects” present an ethical risk and the risk of infringing fundamental rights and the principles of EDC/HRE.
 - Risk assessment is the first contested practice of casework projects. Projects first have to determine whether cases that are referred to them fall within their remit. This supposes a working definition of “radicalisation” or “extremism” and the use of “gut feeling” or formalised tools to determine a status.
 - Second, casework-based projects rely on referrals. There are two types of referrals, which involve two fundamentally different processes: a referral to a casework organisation as an alternative to law enforcement, and a referral to law enforcement. Each decision has political, ethical and pedagogical implications, and, while they differ in importance in terms of their consequences for individuals, none of our respondents appeared to take them lightly. Professional judgment is often characterised by speculation, doubt and ambiguity, and internal discussion and debate are often the norm.
 - Our field visits revealed the complexity of the process of referrals to law enforcement. These can involve “grey areas”, such as anonymous referrals or informal information sharing, where cases are not transmitted entirely to law enforcement.
 - Indeed, when they refer a case to law enforcement, schools lose control over the case. The police may put together the pieces of the jigsaw, but they are

detached from the child as they deal with second-, third- or fourth-hand accounts whereby many details of the case can be lost.

Challenges and solutions

Fundamental rights can potentially be under threat

- ▶ From our interviews with students, education staff and project practitioners it became clear that, as critical debates have long highlighted, a counter-radicalisation policy in schools gives rise to conditions in which students' fundamental rights may be threatened. Such scenarios may occur as a result of several, often interrelated, factors, including ambiguity about the terminology of extremism and radicalisation, the subsequent difficulty of applying these vague concepts to concrete practice situations and the unintended consequences of referral processes, which follow from the ethical ambiguity that educators confront in attempting to do so.
- Casework-based projects are more likely to undermine fundamental rights. Front-line attempts to spot radicalisation are inextricable from suspicion and doubt, while simultaneously taking place in a context in which dominant discourses equate the practitioners who hesitate to refer students as breaching their professional and personal duty of care for their students. These pressures can, in some contexts, combine to make some students susceptible to arbitrary breaches of their privacy, to students being unfairly singled out for their religious beliefs and practices, and to instances of self-censorship. The external information sharing that these projects often seek to normalise can also place a strain on the primary consideration of the best interests of the child. We encountered several cases of such interferences.
- Importantly, and contrary to much of the critical literature, we did not find violations of the fundamental rights of students, such as a widely diffused "chilling effect" on free speech, to be pervasive.
- Anxieties about the negative effects of counter-radicalisation on fundamental rights are not widely shared among students and educators. This might be a consequence of the normalisation of radicalisation as an indisputable risk to be eradicated through means of formal (institutional rules, external accountability) and informal (the moral responsibility to safeguard vulnerable young people) means of social regulation.

The autonomy of education is often questioned

- ▶ Casework-based projects often give rise to grass-roots struggles over the ability of educators to align counter-radicalisation approaches with their pedagogical and welfare-based priorities, which often run counter to the security-oriented interests of law enforcement.
- Casework-based projects, which are based on the premise that radicalisation can be "spotted", and that evidence of it should be immediately shared by schools, often serve to legitimise: (1) the predominance of a police-led reporting culture in school communities, and (2) a one-way flow of information

from the school to the police, without feedback, once a case is shared. As a result, educators are increasingly inhibited in their efforts to make clear judgments that are in keeping with their professional values, and have to refer decisions about the welfare of their students to external agencies that operate according to the logics of security and surveillance.

- Awareness-raising projects, by contrast, offer a vital means by which front-line practitioners in schools can re-establish educational autonomy by relocating prevention in a pedagogical context and explicitly challenging the negative effects of counter-radicalisation.

Institutional contexts pose further obstacles

- ▶ Both types of projects face significant challenges as a result of the specific institutional contexts in which they are enacted.
 - Counter-radicalisation practices do not take place in a vacuum. They are just one of a myriad of pastoral, pedagogical and administrative responsibilities that most schools now have to balance. We should not exaggerate the extent to which their introduction transforms educational settings, so as not to distort the effects of such policies in concrete settings.
 - The pressures of formal accountability are often conducive to “performative” responses to prevention in schools. As Ball observes, schools increasingly function as neoliberal institutions where the performances of individuals “serve as measures of productivity output, or displays of ‘quality’, or ‘moments’ of promotion or inspection” that come to “represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation within a field of judgement” (Ball 2003: 216) This in turn produces cultures of performativity in schools, where practitioners engage in routines of “presentation” and “being seen to be doing what is required” (Ranson 2003) Schools are attuned to shifts in frames of accountability, or “fields of judgment”, towards and away from the political requirement to prevent radicalisation, and they respond accordingly. Consequently the effects of such interventions are almost impossible to trace, as the need to perform outweighs the imperative to prevent.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE



To address the issues raised throughout this report, we make the following recommendations to the Council of Europe.

How can the demand for counter-radicalisation policies be met while preserving the principles of human rights, education for democratic citizenship and human rights education?

- ▶ Awareness-raising projects are the projects that best promote the values of human rights as well as EDC and HRE, through their aims, their methods of implementation and their methodology. While framing activities aimed at raising awareness of racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination might respond to a need in the short term, in the longer term they legitimise a security-based approach to issues that form the basis of human rights and democratic citizenship education. Our recommendation is for the Council of Europe:
 - to refuse to rebrand the long-existing education in democratic citizenship and human rights as “counter-radicalisation”;
 - to promote and circulate existing materials and methods that have the same goals as awareness-raising programmes;
 - to support safe environments for addressing controversial issues around religion, discrimination, exclusion and foreign policy while engaging in the core principles of EDC, HRE and intercultural education (IE);

- to show the relevance of existing Council of Europe EDC/HRE materials to educators;
- to assist governments in de-securing EDC, HRE and IE materials by counter-proposing an approach based on human rights to building competences in tackling social problems currently labelled as “radicalisation”.
- ▶ Casework-based counter-radicalisation projects do not in themselves threaten the principles of EDC, HRE and the RFCDC, but they risk doing so. The Council of Europe should therefore ensure that such projects and programmes do not infringe its principles in the domain of education. In particular, the Council of Europe should:
 - raise awareness of governments and NGOs of the risk that casework-based projects may threaten fundamental rights, such as the interests of a child, freedom of expression, freedom of religion and privacy;
 - develop mechanisms of oversight and democratic accountability, in terms of data protection and right to privacy of casework-based projects;
 - work with governments, and especially with law enforcement and intelligence services, to establish a strict division between social work and intelligence work, as well as mechanisms of accountability for the personal data obtained by law enforcement when collaborating with casework-based projects.

How can radicalisation be tackled while preserving the autonomy of the education sector?

- ▶ As this report shows, one of the significant effects of the counter-radicalisation discourse on the education sector is the disempowerment of educators, and the idea that educators are not able to cope with the specificities of “radicalisation”. While educators might not be able to “predict” radicalisation, it is also true that neither are parents, friends or law enforcement, unless specific surveillance mechanisms are put in place. The Council of Europe should:
 - raise awareness and communicate with governments about the risks of “over-reporting” and “misreporting” cases of radicalisation. Given the very low incidence of recruitment to terror organisations, in the large majority of cases educators who have been trained to report are likely to misreport;
 - encourage the development of informal and privacy-friendly mechanisms of reporting such as anonymous referrals.
- ▶ Since awareness-raising programmes are more likely to be carried out properly than casework-based projects, the Council of Europe should:
 - encourage the development of awareness-raising programmes that rely on the pedagogic know-how of educators, and empower them to tackle issues of extremism, racism, hate speech and discrimination from the perspective of EDC/HRE;
 - work with governments to raise awareness in law enforcement and intelligence services about the dilemmas and ethical issues faced by educators when dealing with law enforcement in the context of “counter-radicalisation” or “deradicalisation” programmes.

How should educational professionals be trained?

- ▶ In the context of counter-radicalisation policies, the issue of training is both contentious and instrumental. Training programmes that take the discourse of radicalisation and counter-radicalisation at face value risk increasing the chances of misreporting and thus infringing on students' rights. At the same time, lack of training, and the absence of privacy-conscious protocols, present the same risk. As such the Council of Europe should:
 - promote training in awareness-raising programmes that are both useful to tackle issues currently framed as “radicalisation”, while at the same time promote the principles of EDC/HRE;
 - in the context of casework-based programmes:
 - raise awareness of the risks to fundamental rights and EDC, HRE and IE of poorly executed assessments, referrals and interventions;
 - encourage the development of training in which the effects of misreporting and over-reporting are communicated to the trainees.

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

As the aim of the report is to look at practices – at how things are actually done and understood – we chose a research design that enabled us to both capture the multiplicity of cases and the intricacies of specific educational environments. From the onset, our objective was to carry out in-depth qualitative observations in schools: to observe at first hand how teachers, students and different actors intervening in the school environment deal with the challenges of counter-radicalisation in practice.

This posed two challenges. First, the schools we visited needed to be representative of the diversity of the Council of Europe populations and educational systems. Second, the visits needed to account for variations in approaches to counter-radicalisation policy in each country, and the type of intervention that was enacted under the label of “counter-radicalisation”.

We thus selected our cases on the basis of two criteria: (1) the type of legislation and/or the counter-radicalisation policies that had been put in place in schools; and (2) the type of grass-roots projects that were developed organically by NGOs, schools or other actors at the local level. The objective of the research design was thus not to be representative of all school practices in the member states of the Council of Europe, but to rely on a typology of practices from which academic, policy and advocacy claims could be examined.

We proceeded in three steps. First, on the basis of publicly available data, and complemented by a survey of key governmental actors, we established a typology of current counter-radicalisation legislations and policies in the field of education. Second, through a survey of the current literature on grass-roots initiatives in Europe, we established a second typology of projects. This offered a 3 × 3 typology of projects which were then selected for the third step, the field visits. In the following section, we present the eight projects we selected for our visits.

The Deliberative Classroom

The Deliberative Classroom consists of a set of lesson packs and guidance material for teachers, centred on debating controversial issues. The project was developed by the Association for Citizenship Teaching, a small London-based charity dedicated to the development and promotion of citizenship studies in schools nationwide. Funded by both the Department for Education and the Home Office, the project is a specific response to the UK government’s Prevent counter-extremism strategy. The resources, which were developed in collaboration with the English-Speaking Union, an international charity that promotes debating and public speaking among young people, are a response to the state’s requirement that teachers “actively promote fundamental British values” (HM Government, 2016). It aims to assist teachers in balancing if not resolving the tension between the requirement to promote

democracy, liberty, the rule of law and tolerance, with their coexisting statutory duty to detect and report students exhibiting signs of radicalisation, including “extreme” opinions. The Deliberative Classroom is informed directly by academic debates in education studies and political science, and ultimately seeks to present an educational response to extremism in a contested policy landscape. The project was originally to receive funding for 18 lessons to be released over a two-year period (interview with Lee Jerome and Liz Moorse, London, 19 March 2019), but has encountered funding problems and political conflict. Notwithstanding this, ACT has worked closely with several schools in developing, delivering and evaluating the project and, as we learned on our visit to an inner-city London school, its experiences provide an important insight into the challenges of preserving pedagogical autonomy in the face of counter-radicalisation.

Dembra

Based in Norway, Dembra offers a model of co-operation between selected schools and NGOs with the aim of enhancing the “democratic preparedness” of educational settings. Originally targeted at tackling issues of anti-Semitism and racism more broadly, from 2015 Dembra incorporated into its mission the aim of assisting schools in responding to the challenges of Islamophobia, radicalisation and extremism, and of discrimination against migrants. The project is run by the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies and the European Wergeland Centre, and operates a model of “process consultancy”, where practitioners from these organisations develop relationships with specific schools and assist them in (1) diagnosing concerns related to non-democratic attitudes and behaviours; (2) formulating strategies to address these; (3) monitoring problems and tracking the effects of interventions; and (4) reflecting on the consequences of the changes implemented. As such, while Dembra is centrally funded by the Directorate for Education and Training, its delivery in schools, of which five are selected each year, varies according to local context. Common to all interventions is an effort to develop an inclusive school culture and to empower teachers to approach the teaching of controversial issues openly so as to encourage students to develop their critical thinking. In this sense, those behind Dembra view it as an alternative response to securitisation in dealing with problems of radicalisation. Our field visit to a “Dembra school” just outside Oslo highlighted this, while also revealing the difficulties faced by those wishing to implement such an approach in a policy area that appears to be overwhelmed by a discourse of urgency.

Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of the Region

Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of the Region is a programme that seeks to develop the capacities of over 20 schools across Croatia to undermine the legacies of segregation and discrimination that have persisted following the war that gripped the country in the 1990s. Run by the Nansen Dialogue Centre (NDC), an NGO dedicated to reconciliation and peace building, CSHR allows schools to mobilise the one hour per week afforded to them for extra-curricular activities to promote tolerance. Funded through the NDC, the participating school and targeted support from the Ministry of Science and Education, CSHR provides classroom resources, organises educational visits and runs pedagogical workshops and student projects. Such activities target

intercultural understanding of shared heritage in school settings where student populations are often formally divided by their ethnic identification. This work led CSHR to be featured in the promotional material of the EU's RAN, which highlights the programme's success in "preventing violent and extremist behaviour and points of view" (European Commission 2018). Our interviews with teachers and students from two schools close to the Croatian-Serbian border, and with NDC workers, revealed what counter-radicalisation looks like as it travels further outwards from its northern European centre of gravity.

CleaR

CleaR is a programme designed to offer a structured case-management model for schools in Germany confronting problems of "violent neo-Salafism and right-wing extremism" (Clearing Schule 2018). Based in the offices of a local social youth work organisation in Düsseldorf, CleaR is marketed as an advisory centre on issues of extremism in schools. Its team of "pedagogical experts" comes from a range of professions, including academia, health care and public service, who are currently stationed part-time in six schools, working directly with practitioners and students on a regular basis – the only project to have such a presence in German schools. When schools identify a student at risk of radicalisation the programme offers a seven-step case-management procedure, known as the "clearing process". Supported by their local clearing agent, schools work through specific steps of investigating cases, assessing risk, making decisions about sharing information (i.e. with law enforcement), and often implementing targeted measures (i.e. mentoring). The programme is funded by the Federal Agency for Civic Education and also provides preventive support to schools in the form of educational workshops, as well as a counselling service for teachers, students and parents. We visited one Düsseldorf school that employed the CleaR team after one of its students left Germany to join ISIS in Syria. Our interviews with several members of the school community, and with CleaR's co-ordinators and pedagogical experts, demonstrated how the unease provoked by such an event can profoundly impact school life.

The Resilience Project

The Resilience Project employs a team of youth workers working in communities in Cardiff and Swansea in Wales to "support young people at risk of Islamist and Far-Right extremism" (Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team 2019). Run by a registered youth charity, the Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team, the project offers a range of services including workshops and mentoring that seek to deliver counter-narratives to build resilience to extremism. This work builds on two prior projects: (1) the Think Project, partially funded by the UK government's Prevent counter-radicalisation strategy, which targeted right-wing views among young people; and (2) the Cardiff Positive Street Project, which tackles "religious extremism" (interview with Tony Hendrickson, Cardiff, 3 April 2019). The Resilience team work directly with individuals identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation and receive referrals from both schools and the Channel programme, the formal multi-agency case-deliberation mechanism for managing cases of suspected radicalisation that is part of the Prevent strategy. Its primary target audience also includes young people who, for a variety of

behavioural and health reasons, are temporarily unable to continue attending mainstream education, and are continuing with lessons at outside institutions called pupil referral units. While the manner in which the project's aims are framed on paper – in terms of building resilience to radicalisation and protecting vulnerable individuals – closely mirrors that of the British counter-extremism strategy, grass-roots actors claim to be offering an alternative approach. Our visits to Cardiff and Swansea revealed the challenges of operating in communities where counter-radicalisation is contentious but mandatory, and spotlighted the legitimacy of interventions and their impact on social cohesion.

Derad Theatre Therapy

Based in Budapest, the Derad Theatre Therapy project is run by the Megálló Group Foundation for Addicts, an organisation that supports young people addicted to psychoactive substances. Drawing closely on the work of the Faculty of Special Needs Education at Eötvös Loránd University, the project uses techniques derived from the pedagogy of drama and psychodrama to combat extremism. The project espouses the logic that individuals suffering from addiction are among the most vulnerable to radicalisation, particularly at a time when unfamiliar and untested psychoactive substances are continually entering the market. The project targets both individuals who are referred for support by schools and young people who are unable to continue with mainstream education because of health problems. Representatives from the Megálló Group are active participants in RAN, and the Derad Theatre Therapy project has been presented at its meetings on several occasions since 2012. The Megálló Group is a small organisation beset by funding problems, which looks to international networks for support. Our field visit to a rehabilitation centre on the outskirts of Budapest highlighted this, while also raising significant questions about the social and political effects of the sprawling expansion of the European counter-radicalisation industry.

Drop Out Prevention Network

Originally formed as part of the city of Antwerp's infrastructure for combating truancy, the Drop Out Prevention Network is now a central part of the support system for the city's schools in tackling radicalisation. Following the departure of several young people for Syria in just two months in early 2013, the city government sought to use its existing mechanisms to improve the detection, risk assessment and information-sharing capacities of educational institutions. In addition to enhancing the competences of schools, the project organises collaboration between schools, pupil guidance centres and the CHD. As a partner in the Lokale integrale veiligheidscel, or local integral security cell, it is able to collect and share the necessary information on cases of suspected radicalisation with the local police, a number of social services, CHD and city services. The network consists of (1) PGCs across the city, which offer advice to teachers and students on issues relating to student welfare, including radicalisation; (2) "radicalisation antennae", which, as part of the city's departments of culture, sport and youth, are designed to offer expertise on radicalisation, its local manifestations and how to respond; and (3) a CHD, which functions as a hub for processing cases referred by the PGCs, radicalisation antennae and

schools, and manages relations between these actors and others, such as the police. The project also conducts teacher training sessions, an original risk assessment tool for radicalisation cases, a mentoring programme and employment support for students who have left mainstream education. Despite this expansive system for tackling this pressing problem, our visit to an Antwerp school which had seen one of its students depart to join ISIS in 2014, and then lose his life a year later, demonstrated that the clamour for counter-radicalisation does not always filter down to the front line.

Embrace Differences

Organised by the Youth Council of the municipality of Sarajevo, the Embrace Differences project is composed of a coalition of actors from schools and youth centres across Bosnia and Herzegovina. With 20 co-ordinators across 16 schools, the project deploys a variety of methods including training sessions, workshops and debates to combat the development of political, ethnic, religious and right-wing violent extremism. It seeks to address “individual, relational, community, institutional, and ideological factors which may impact on the process of radicalisation of young people” (García López and Pašić 2018). Embrace Differences also offers alternatives to violent extremism, such as community activities (i.e. painting over offensive graffiti), and co-ordinates public responses to incidents of hate crime and discrimination to de-escalate tensions and promote cohesion.

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