

# **Introduction**

## **Fundamental British Values**

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This special issue of the *Journal of Education for Teaching* has been prompted by the introduction of the new Teachers' Standards in 2012 in England which require all teachers 'not to undermine fundamental British values' (DfE 2012). The articles collected in this issue examine how education policy has elided with government securitisation agenda and how Britishness is defined in policy; how is it articulated; taught (or not) in classrooms and within teacher education and how in-service and preservice teachers perceive notions of Britishness. This special issue represents the first scholarly collection dedicated to the topic of fundamental British values in education for teaching.

The special issue builds on a series of seminars and symposia organised by the editors over the course of the last three years to problematise, examine and research how the twin spectres of counter-terrorism and securitisation have invaded the professional pedagogic space. Those of us who are teacher educators in England have observed the slow and stealthy erosion of references from the previous iterations of the Teachers Standards to preparing new teachers to teach in our ethnically and culturally diverse classrooms. Kapoor (2013, 1043) describes how the forces of 'racial neoliberalism have ensured the muting of race from government policies on equality' while the state has continued to imbricate race in its forms of governance'. The erasure, or muting of 'race' within education policy has been substituted by the insidious imposition of a political securitization agenda, onto an unsuspecting profession and pupil population. The inclusion of a personal and professional duty on teachers to uphold public trust can be considered reasonable, as can perhaps the duty 'not to undermine fundamental British values', although the notion of British values is rather problematic when the list of these values is examined. However, when the antecedents of such a phrase lie in the government's counter-terrorism strategy Prevent (HMG 2015), and then migrate to professional standards for teachers, as teacher educators we were not only disturbed by such a blatant reinforcement of teachers as instruments of the State within a liberal democracy, we were mobilised to begin research into this phenomenon and how it was

received, interpreted and implemented by school leaders, teachers and student teachers. The duty not to undermine fundamental British values within the Teachers Standards is followed by the definition of these values, a definition drawn directly from the Prevent Strategy (HMG 2015). Fundamental British values within both documents are defined as: ‘democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty; and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith’ (DfE 2012). Whilst there may be popular and political consensus with this list of values, the claim that they are wholly British is troublesome and in an attempt to forge cohesion the unintended, but some (Hoque, 2015) would argue intentional effect, has been to create notions of insider-outsider citizen; or as Taras (2013, p.420) notes the ‘the subaltern internal Others’ or the stranger within, a stratification of citizenship into those who really belong, namely the indigenous majority; those who can belong, namely those of minority ethnic heritage who have assimilated or integrated and those who really don’t quite belong, or those we tolerate up to a point, namely the Muslim ‘Other’.

Since the introduction of the term ‘fundamental British values’ within the Teachers’ Standards the topic has grown in significance over the last three years. The powerful effects of geopolitics and national, as well as, European incidents related to terrorism, the growth of Islamic State in Syria and the flight of young British Muslims to join Islamic State, as well as the so called Trojan Horse Affair in 2015 where certain schools in Birmingham were re-inspected and categorised as failing, has led to the proliferation of securitised requirements for schools such as the need to promote fundamental British values in the non-statutory advice related to promoting pupils’ social, moral, spiritual, and cultural (SMSC) development (DfE 2014) and the inclusion within the statutory framework for inspection for headteachers and governors *actively* to promote fundamental British values and to safeguard children and young people from radicalisation and extremism (Ofsted 2015). Such tight regulation, and indeed the centralisation of the regulation of schools,

teachers and pupils is almost unprecedented in response to State security when compared to the terrorist threat posed by the IRA in 1960s and '70s in England.

In order to understand how the current context is different from that of the terrorist era related to the IRA, the multiple and complex dimensions of 'race', radicalisation, religion, securitisation and national identity need to be problematised and examined within the context of education. The wider political climate in England and indeed globally since the 1980s has seen the advance and reinforcement of neoliberalism as a dominant ideology driving educational policy. Following the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York in 2001 and the July 2007 bombings in London, politicians and media have advanced a discourse which has served to promote the racialisation of Muslims through the stigmatising of Islam and its adherents. Edward Said (1987) explained how the pathologisation of Islam follows 'similar epistemological thinking as anti-Semitism' (Taras 2013, 418). Taras (2013, 243) argues that the lineage of Islamophobia can be traced to the clash of civilisations debate and how this had led to the construction of, and exacerbation of the age old racial binary to create a 'negative Muslim alterity' as opposed to the valorisation of Christianity in earlier eras and of secularism as the dominant truth claim of the early twenty-first century. The Runnymede Report (1997) on Islamophobia delineates conditions or factors that contribute to the stigmatisation of Islam such as representing it as monolithic; not sharing similar values and being the primitive and inferior 'Other' to the West; aggressive, violent and intolerant *etcetera*. The religious and cultural markers of Islam have become racialised and combined with the fear in Europe about Muslim migrants who may be at worst terrorists using the cover of a refugee; or at least migrants who may have values that clash with Western modernity: and all this is compounded by security fears based on recent terrorist attacks in Paris 2015 and Belgium 2016 as Sivanandan (2009 p.viii-ix as quoted in Taras 2013) proclaims, the 'immigrant is no longer the classical outsider but the terrorist within'. Thereby, the construction of the Muslim

outsider is not merely constituted as 'Other' but indeed the *dangerous* 'Other' who must be placed under surveillance and who needs to be assimilated by liberal society and its structures.

Neoliberal ideology has underpinned the sweeping changes within teacher education in England fragmenting the sector in favour of a school-led system. It has led to the undermining of the autonomous professional status of teachers in favour of performativity and now control through the instigation of changes to the schools inspection framework to ensure that schools and teachers teach about 'fundamental British values'. Simultaneously, the vacuum created by the erasure of standards related to 'race' and ethnicity and to the preparation of teachers to teach in a culturally diverse society has been preceded by the vilification and ridicule of multiculturalism to be replaced by what prime minister David Cameron stated as a 'muscular liberalism' constructed around national, British, values. The need to develop 'musculature' to assert a national identity has to be set against the backdrop of the 'war on terror'. The metaphors of aggression and assertion; the link between security and teachers as custodians of national values (Bryan 2012) as well as the instruments of surveillance to police those who may show signs of transgressing from these values, illustrates how teachers have been positioned as the discursive subjects of the securitized neoliberal imaginary. In the educational landscape where sites of struggle such as 'race', class and gender have been erased and teachers' professionalism has been undermined through increasing State control they have become subjects of the majoritarian hegemonic discourse of whiteness constructed to advance assimilation of the 'Other', Muslim child(ren) and as the instruments of surveillance of the 'Other'. This positioning has been cemented by the lack of training in how to teach about British values and the diminution of critical spaces in which to trouble and disrupt their positioning. So teachers and student teachers rely on nostalgic imperialist constructions of Britishness thus re-inscribing not only the whiteness associated with this national identity but as subjects of neoliberal policy they have been metaphorically painted into a corner in which they lack the theoretical and pedagogical frameworks to teach about social and cultural difference let alone to

be reflexive about how educational policy has constrained their professionalism. Thus the promotion of national values has replaced debates on racism. The discourse of civic nationalism which purports to accommodate plurality, (and herein lies the contradiction), serves to exclude the very members of its society that are constructed as the terrorist 'Other' within and whose religious identity is racialised and conceived as the binary opposite against which the discourse of civic nationalism is constructed.

The first article in this special issue examines the perceptions of intending teachers of Religious Education (RE) in North-West England. This well constructed and insightful article guides the reader through the geo-political and policy arenas with respect to how the imperative 'not to undermine fundamental British values' within the Teachers Standards in England positions new teacher entrants' emerging teacher identities. Francis Farrell adeptly outlines how this particular Standard creates professional-personal tensions for some respondents who struggle to straddle their multiple identities as RE teachers best exemplified by British-Muslim RE teachers whose fragile British identity seems contingent and subject to re-interpretation by those in the hegemonic mainstream. The fascinating co-constructed critique of fundamental British values provides an insight into the inherent contradictions of the term which is problematised by these student teachers in terms of their understandings of democracy. Farrell uses Foucault's analysis of power to illustrate critically how politically constructed regimes of truth are reflected in the dilemma voiced by these new entrants to the teaching profession, concluding that the critical space of the academy, specifically the spaces afforded within the RE academic community, have the capacity to facilitate debate and critical dialogue to examine and undermine the ruses of power, hegemony and expose truth regimes.

Heather Smith critically examines issues raised by respondents in Farrell's paper namely the notion of Britishness with postgraduate student teachers. She employs the relatively little known

theoretical concept of racist nativism (Lippard 2011, 595) to explore power, specifically ‘the superiority of the native’. In doing so Smith identifies how racist nativism operates in the students’ responses to the duty ‘not to undermine fundamental British values’ within the Teachers’ Standards in England (DfE 2012) and their conceptions of Britishness. She analyses how they conceive Britishness in terms of the ‘Other’ without naming them and how student teachers admit that they cannot openly talk about ‘immigrants’ and have to tread carefully in terms of the language they use and this article provides empirical evidence for the construction of an unnamed ‘other’ by which to calibrate Britishness in the respondents’ use of the binary ‘us’/‘them’ as well as Christian/non-Christian as criteria to define Britishness.

The first two articles are related to pre-service teachers. The next two examine the perception of inservice teachers: the first by Uvanney Maylor draws on teachers’ and headteachers’ conceptions of British values and identities, highlighting how teachers were worried and ambivalent about how to teach this aspect of the curriculum. Maylor draws on the history and development of the citizenship curriculum to preface discussion of findings which illustrates teachers’ questioning of whether the ascribed values are uniquely British, indeed some asserted that liberty in the right to follow one’s own culture was an unfilled aspiration. Maylor concludes by highlighting the role of teacher education in preparing aspirant new entrants to develop an understanding of multiethnic Britain and to challenge stereotypical views that they or their pupils or colleagues may hold. In recent weeks the introduction of the UK’s White paper *Educational Excellence Everywhere* (DfE 2016) will advance the case for school-led teacher training and ensure that universities have even less involvement in teacher education thereby furthering racial neoliberalism (Kapoor 2013) and the removal of pedagogic spaces for new entrants to deconstruct and disrupt policy discourses and critically examine professional practice.

The article by Farid Panjwani provides space to examine the unique perspective of Muslim teachers and how they reflect on the notion of fundamental British values. The article places these perceptions against a historical exposition of the values of Islam and the West in order to ascertain whether the historical debates on compatibility were reflected in the teacher responses. The respondents reported little conflict noting how British values complied with Islamic values. They were, however, somewhat critical of the 'FBV project', noting the dissonance between the government discourses and action against its own prescribed British values. The Muslim teachers were astute in their observations that the Prevent legislation cast them as teachers into the role of the 'watchdog' and as Muslim into the role of the suspect. This diametrically opposed positioning highlights the contradictory nature of racial neoliberalism which is premised on hegemonic constructions of whiteness as the default 'norm'. The main concern of the Muslim teachers was how the fundamental British values discourse would serve to alienate still further Muslim youngsters, thereby laying the foundations for, and perhaps inadvertently perpetuating, the cycle of disengagement.

Lynn Revell and Hazel Bryan examine the implications of the Teacher Standard not to undermine fundamental British values (FBV) (DfE 2012) with respect to teacher professionalism, particularly in relation to the teacher appraisal system. The standards apply to in-service and pre-service teachers and as such form part of the appraisal structure. The article offers valuable insights into primary and secondary headteachers' perceptions of the appraisal system with respect to FBV. The paper offers a unique dimension to the debate. There are, as yet, no papers or research which examines this aspect of education policy. The article innovatively utilizes Bauman's concept of liquid modernity and the consequences of impermanence and applies them to the fear which pervades the profession in relation to FBV. It considers the issues and dilemmas related to appraisal against the standard. Fear and uncertainty infused headteachers' responses to the standard and how to interpret it. It is frightening to consider how some headteachers interpreted a teacher's



involvement in a protest rally was considered unprofessional. This leads us into territory where we would have to question whether the personal and professional duty imposed on teachers via the standards actually infringes their democratic rights to freedom of expression and individual liberty.

In the final article, by Linda Clarke and Alan McCully the debate on British values is examined from a Northern Irish perspective. It delineates the history, education policy and practice in Northern Ireland and problematises the promotion of British values within their national context noting the complex and dynamic nature of national identities particularly when set against the historical context. The study reports on the redevelopment of a values framework for teachers through engaging the use of a range of strategies to prepare student teachers to deal with community relations in school. The paper demonstrates the contested nature of Britishness in Northern Ireland. However Clarke and McCully argue this can be ameliorated through ‘conflict sensitive curricula’ and teacher education to develop more secure notions of identity. The paper concludes by refuting the notion of FBV within teacher education, robustly confirming that consideration of universal values should replace restricted constructs of British values and be part of the teacher education curriculum.

This special issue shares new and emerging work on the contemporary critical debates about fundamental British values and education. The discussion of values originating from anti-terrorist security legislation that coalesce with the professional standards for teachers has revealed the fault lines of tension, fear and ambiguity that exist between policy and practice as teachers have tried to negotiate the tightrope between professional educator as the custodian of national values and as the instrument of state security. The empirical evidence underlines the outsider status of Muslims, for example, through the use of binary ascriptions of ‘us’ and ‘them’. There are also clear indications for policy-makers, head teachers, teachers and teacher educators on how the hegemonic discourse of British values can be disrupted and transformed to embrace an inclusive notion of Britishness

which reinforces notions of belonging to a multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic Britain no matter where schools are sited in the country. More significantly after the implementation of reforms to teacher education proposed in the White Paper *Educational Excellence Everywhere* (DfE 2016) the need for spaces to engage in professional dialogue, critique and critical pedagogy in teacher education (or training as it will be) will be paramount.

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