

Citizenship Education in the ‘Age of Extremisms’: A case study of England and France

Jonathan James

UCL Institute of Education, UK

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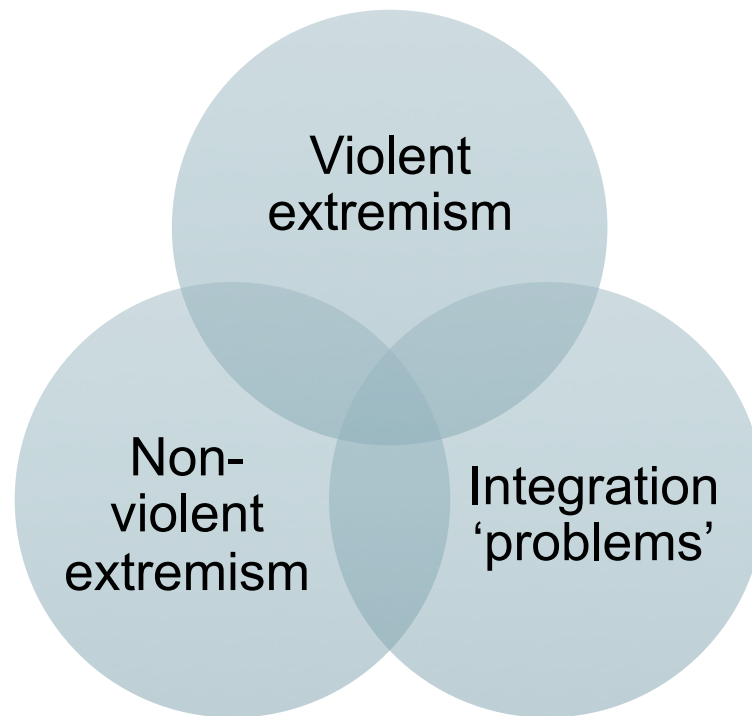
An investigation into the impact of Islamist terrorism on education policy and practice in England and France

RQ: How are schools in England and France responding to the context of Islamist terrorism, and to government policies aimed at combatting it?

Methodology

- Case studies: 3 – 4 ‘contrasting’ schools in each country.
- Interviews, observations, documentary analysis.
- Interviews with policy actors.

An 'age of extremisms'?



England: ‘the Lockean or political-liberal model’ (Mouritsen and Jaeger 2018)

- Multiculturalist – takes ‘the cultural and religious pluralism of contemporary society’ as its starting point (see also Mannitz 2004; Mannitz and Schiffauer 2004).
- Schools ‘serve communities and families by protecting them from the state’ (see also Favell 2001; Johnson and Morris 2012).
- Values ‘implicit’ and poorly defined (Osler and Starkey 2004; Starkey 2018) .
- Elements of ‘neo-liberal market model’ (Mouritsen and Jaeger 2018)
- ‘Light touch’ curriculum (Johnson and Morris 2012)

France ‘the traditional republican-liberal model’ (Mouritsen and Jaeger 2018)

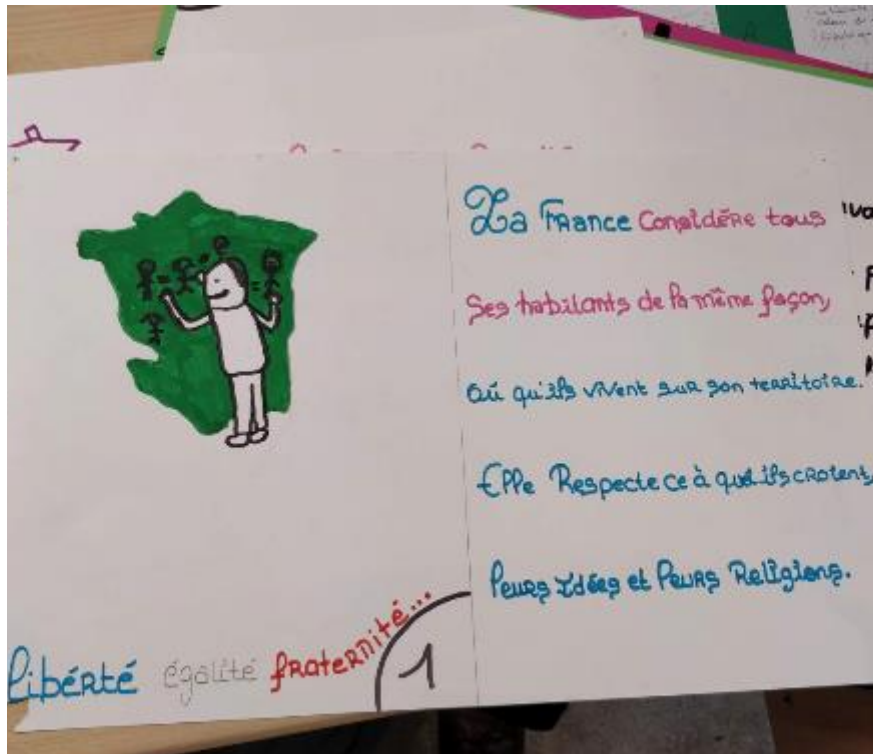
- Focus on civic virtues and political knowledge (see also Johnson and Morris 2012).
- ‘state is entitled to shape citizens to promote its vision of the common good’ (Mouritsen and Jaeger 2018).
- Republican values of ‘liberté, égalité, fraternité’ as ‘hegemonic discourse’ (Starkey 2000).
- Objectivist stance linked to *laïcité* (French secularism; Mannitz 2004; Favell 2001)
- ‘Centralised system and prescriptive curriculum (Johnson and Morris 2012)

England: Prevent, fundamental British values, and citizenship education

- Schools required to 'actively promote fundamental British values' (DfE 2014a; Ofsted 2015; 2018)
- 'The Prevent duty' (DfE 2015)
- Downgrading of citizenship education (Starkey 2018; Vincent 2019b)



France : 'building resilience' through Republican values and laïcité.



- *Grande mobilisation de l'école pour les valeurs de la République (MEN 2015)*
- Introduction of moral and civic education (EMC) and media and information studies (EMI)
- 'shielding minds against radicalisation' (Matignon 2018; Eduscol 2019)

Understanding extremism in the ‘situated context’ (Braun et al 2011)

“Schools can become defined by their intake, but they also define themselves by it. Members of school communities construct stories about their school that are **based on their experiences but also on some broader generalisations.**”

(Braun et al 2011)

“Teacher perception of pupils’ ‘needs’ led them to deploy FBV to ‘gather in’ and generate support for liberal values amongst the **two main groups that teachers positioned as residing outside them—the white working classes and the potentially too-conservative Muslim populations.**”

Vincent 2019a

Understanding extremism in the ‘situated context’ (Braun et al 2011)

Muslim
‘extremism’

- Collège Aimé Césaire, South of France
- Westbrook Primary School, Midlands, UK

Right-wing
extremism

- First Academy, London, UK

“We don’t have
that ‘problem’”

- Lycée Jean Jaurès, North of France
- Southeast College, South of England

References

Collège Aimé Césaire




Westbrook Primary School, Midlands, UK

“when you live or work within a community - or a little bit within a bigger community - that is very patriarchal - like Islam is – then [equality issues] are exacerbated. They really are. And then you have a new community move in, like the Roma gypsy community – we’ve got loads of kids from that community now which is brilliant - that’s very patriarchal. So... that doesn’t help. So my point my point very clearly is – if we don’t tell these kids that boys and girls are equal, that two men can get married, two women can get married, then nobody else is going to tell them that. And we have a duty to [...] make sure they understand it, make sure they challenge inequality when they see it.

(Jane, School Principal)



 As LGBT+ individuals, and organisations that support LGBT+ communities, we are concerned by the way that Muslim communities have been framed by both government and media in relation to the teaching of LGBT+ inclusive Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in primary schools.

Westbrook Primary School, Midlands, UK

“We have to talk well and eloquently about being **British or living in Britain**. Because some children here think they’re Pakistani. And they’re not, they’re British [...] So, it’s great – everybody should be proud of their heritage, but **this is where radicalisation in particular really gets a hold of people because they play on that insecurity about identity.**”

(Jane, School Principal)



First Academy, London, UK

Well, I think there's... there's... one could ask a lot of questions about the union jack, as a symbol [...]

historically, there's a lot of BNP, then UKIP, the George cross, if you go round [area local to the school] you see a lot of George crosses hanging out of people's windows. I consider that to be kind of an aggressive gesture and that says to me, a sort of 'go home, you're not welcome here'

(Mike, Executive Principal)

- Work on equalities and tolerance – particularly race, religion, and LGBT issues.
- 'De-bunking' myths around Islam
- 'Me at school' versus 'me at home'

Some emerging comparative conclusions

- ‘Cultural conflicts’ (Mouritsen 2008) inform policy and practice. These are sometimes understood as extremism.
- Educators in both countries work on promoting equalities and tolerance and may challenge students’ own values.
- Discussions about religious beliefs and practices.

BUT Context matters

- Local ‘situated’ context - understanding of extremisms.
- Country context – values and practices deemed problematic.

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