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**Walking a tight rope- Anti terrorism  
policy, Anti racism and RE-  
implications for ITE?**

**AULRE May 18<sup>th</sup> 2023**  
**Prof Sally Elton-Chalcraft**

How do RE, anti terrorism policy, and conceptions of race and ethnicity intersect? With particular reference to Muslim communities this presentation considers how the RE teacher and teacher educator can balance requirements of governmental policy with their own beliefs about the aims of RE as a vehicle for Anti racism. However the the emerging RE discipline moving away from RE now not It could be argued that Muslim children, students and their families are recognised as the first target of the UK Prevent Policy and there is an emerging consensus that there has been the creation of Muslims as a 'suspect community'. A collaborative project between three female professors drills down into the how and why Muslims have come to be viewed as 'at risk or risky' and we propose a 'Muslims as a Suspect Community typology', drawing on existing research and our own theorisation, to illustrate the complex continuum from 'potential terrorist' to 'good' Muslim and why some Muslims choose to adopt a 'least Muslim role'. We contextualise the concept of 'Muslims' which highlights the diverse ways in which some Muslims speak about Islam and racism (Abbas 2019; Khan 2016) and whether Muslim youth feel they are viewed as a risk to society and at risk of catching the terrorist disease (Thomas 2020), or if they are vulnerable to radicalisation (O'Donell, 2017) and whether different societal perspectives hinder or support anti-terrorist policy enactment. There are moves to decolonise the ITE curriculum with Lander and Smith's anti racist framework but many feel there is a long way to go (Revell and Bryan 2018; Elton-Chalcraft, Revell and Lander 2022; Warner and Elton-Chalcraft 2022). This presentation considers how RE can be

# 1. Thoroughly understand the issues/ problems

An example :The problems with the Prevent Policy

The 'Prevent effect' positions Muslims as a suspect community

Three stances towards Muslims –

- Security forces
- Fearful people,
- Tolerant people

Three 'types' of Muslim

- Perceived terrorist ('bad' Muslim)
- Potential terrorist ('bad' Muslim)
- Harmless ('good' Muslim)

Abbas (2015) Kundnani (2015) Pantaziz and Pemberton (2011)

	Perceived as a terrorist (violent extremist)	Perceived as a potential terrorist ('bad' /extremist Muslim)	Perceived as harmless ('good' Muslim)
Suspicious of/ zero tolerance towards extremist views : Security forces and government	1 Incarceration and zero tolerance towards violent extremist Muslims	4 Anti radicalisation and suspicion of extremist/'bad' Muslims	7 Use 'good' Muslims to 'win hearts and minds' of 'suspect' Muslim community .
Fearful of extremist views: - Muslim and non Muslim communities	2 Surveillance and referral of perceived violent extremists to security forces	5 Suspicious of extremist views and 'bad' Muslims Preventing violent extremism	8 Toleration 'good' Muslims who assimilate into secular society.
Tolerant towards extremist views:- Muslim and non-Muslim communities	3 Countering violent extremism Aware of devastating effects of violent terrorists Being Muslim is only one aspect of identity	6 Facilitate communities of disagreement to explore extremism Consider counter terrorism initiatives as counterproductive	9 Trust and respect diverse Muslim identity

## 2. **Openly engage** in professional development alongside others

**Basic Stance**

**Developing stance**

**Improving stance**

Professional development- I've been refining a typology of stances towards race equality teaching developing our skills as culturally responsive teachers.

**Basic Stance** includes a mono culturalism teacher - a tokenistic, compliant teacher who shuts down any controversial debate because deep down they believe in white supremacy, western, patriarchal (male dominated), heterosexual cultural norms. A few teachers are full of fear; or act as agents of surveillance making referrals to the security forces albeit in a safeguarding context. But this positions learners, often Muslims, as villains or victims.

**Developing Stance** a Colour blind teacher who glosses over difference to make everyone the 'same' (they are the same as us – just a different colour, belief system etc There is a 'chilling' where minority groups feel unable to articulate their views – there is a pretence of safe space – ie no prejudicial treatment because the teacher is safely cocooned in their comfort zone. Minority voices feel 'othered' if they articulate a different opinion. Lockley-Scott (2020) Miah (2017) Kundnani (2015)

**Improving stance, the preferable stance** Highly reflective critical teachers – aware of their own ethnicity and sufficiently brave to take moderated risks and engage their learners in frank, age- appropriate discussions about racism and its consequences. Many, not all, teachers of RE are 'nice' people, conscientious people, the peacemakers of the classroom with sunny dispositions. It can be challenging but we should move out of our comfort zone, feel uncomfortable, learn from mistakes, and provide a space for all voices to be heard. (Bryan, Elton-Chalcraft and Revell 2018, Elton-Chalcraft 2020)

# 3. **Bravely advocate** equitable learning and teaching

Draw on professional development to **inform** practice

Work alongside teachers, young people to **challenge** discrimination

Eg Muslim communities ‘ a suspect community’? OPEN discussions –

- are Muslim youth ‘a risk to society and at risk of catching the terrorist disease’ (Thomas 2016), are they ‘vulnerable to radicalisation’ (O’Donell, 2018)
- Does ‘being PC’ prevent detection of  
sexual abuse (Telford)  
trafficking (Mo Farah)
- If Sir Mo Farah (Muslim) hadn’t received a Knighthood would the Home Office have been so lenient about not investigating his British Citizenship?
- Nadhim Zahawi , Priti Patel, Rishi Sunak, Tim Farron: advocates of religiosity (or not)



# 3. **Bravely advocate** equitable learning and teaching

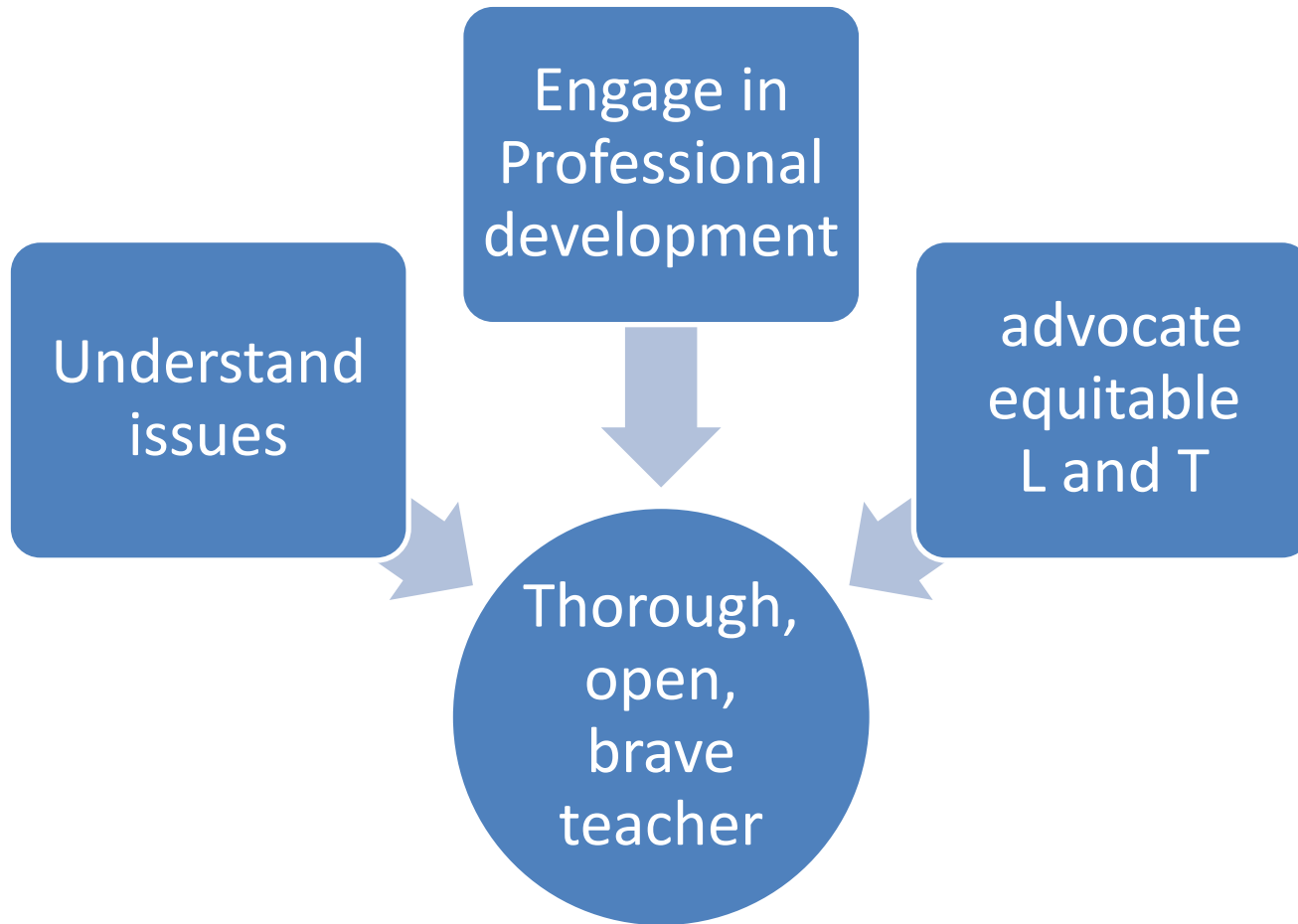
Non brave;

Absolute adherence to Prevent duty Enacting nationalism through a secular civic lens	Teacher as instrument of the state  Chilling	Student: 'risky' villain/ 'at risk' victim or conformist  Safeguarding the vulnerable
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Brave!

Ideology- informed mediation of Prevent  Inclusive secularism	Teacher facilitates space for critical debate  Diverse voices aired	Student: identity development, learn from mistakes  Living with diversity
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# Solutions: what teachers can do



# What can teachers do? :

- 1. Thoroughly understand the issues/ problems**
- 2. Openly engage in professional development alongside others**
- 3. Bravely advocate equitable learning and teaching**

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