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Education as prevention: Intersectional feminism in security spaces

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Keywords: Prevention of violent extremism, Feminist security studies, education, intersectional feminism, post-colonial theory

Purpose: This theoretical article argues that the inclusion of education in the prevention of radicalization creates space to address long-standing concerns about the racialized and gendered problems created by traditional security approaches.

Design/methodology/approach: The article uses intersectional feminism as a theoretical basis to discuss the combination of pedagogy and intersectionality in PVE-E and the role of teachers in this particular context.

Findings: Education can be a space that allows for more women, non-binary persons, and people of color to engage as policy actors in the prevention of violent extremism. While policy documents emphasize the role education plays and alludes to the presence of women, non-binary persons, and people of color in education, the research and application often overlook these perspectives.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Schools are increasingly seen as sites where "wicked" problems can be solved (Salminen, 2019). In order to prevent the proliferation of radical and extremist thinking and behaviour amongst young people, governmental policies have in many countries, including Finland, assigned a central role for education in preventing violent extremism (PVE) (Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 2020; Skr 2015; Danish Government, 2016). Definitions of what extremism is vary and are heavily context-specific (Sedgwick, 2010). For example, the Counter-Extremism Strategy in the UK defines extremism at the level of opposing values, as "the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect for and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs." (Gov.UK, 2019). The Finnish Ministry of the Interior, in turn, refers to extremism as connected to violence: "using, threatening with, instigating, encouraging or justifying violence on ideological grounds" (2020, p. 20). The national definitions of what is to be prevented impact the way prevention work is planned and implemented in and through education and teachers' role is in these processes. In this theoretical paper, we discuss some of the central questions related to combining pedagogy and intersectionality in the prevention of radicalization and extremism, and the role of teachers in this particular context.

Although radicalization and extremist ideologies are not new phenomena and generally concern a relatively small number of individuals at the societal level, they are issues that – along with hate speech, xenophobia, and attacks on migrants and refugees – are strongly related to social polarisation that concerns all European countries and beyond (Engel et al., 2018). Since some literature indicates that these issues are triggered by broader phenomena of experiences of exclusion along individual life trajectories (e.g., Kinowska-Mazaraki 2021; Hörnqvist & Flyghed, 2012), preventive measures focused on inclusion, participation, and strengthening the sense of belonging can benefit the whole population and not just those at risk of violent actions. Global developments highlight the importance of addressing the increasing polarization of worldviews and identities before these "us against them" thought-constructs and derogation and dehumanisation of the outgroup turn to violent actions (Somer & Murat, 2019, Maynard, 2014). The novel responsibilities of educational institutions to take part in the national prevention of radicalization and extremism (PVE-E) are, therefore, well grounded.

Although initiatives to prevent violent radicalization and extremism in and through education (PVE-E) are often highly controversial (Christodoulou, 2020), they have become an integral part of the wider European and international public policy on national and global security. While there have been discussions on the confusion of educators in the face of the new duties (Ragazzi, 2017; Vallinkoski et al., 2021; 2022), the vagueness of the objectives of PVE-E (Vallinkoski et al., 2021), and the inadequacy of teacher training to implement these duties (Benjamin et al., 2023a) less thought has been given to the ontological premises and complexities underlying the interdisciplinary research literature on terrorism from which much prevention of radicalization and extremism

through education derives (Gearon, 2019a, 2019b; Ghosh, 2017). Measures of counterterrorism (CT) and prevention of violent extremism (PVE) have traditionally belonged to the realm of masculinized security studies, with an emphasis on using force to intervene (Giscard d'Estaing, 2017). In the past five years, there has been an increasing push to find ways to prevent radicalization from even beginning (Ghosh et al., 2016). As Mattsson (2019) brings forward, this trend is new as it shifts responsibilities, which have previously belonged to state-level actors, to those, such as educators and youth workers, who are typically using softer and more broad-based public health approaches in their work with children and youth (Vallinkoski et al., in press).

The shift away from hard power towards a soft power (Ghosh et al., 2016) approach to prevention, provides not only another, earlier space for intervention, but also aims to prevent common problems that appear in traditional responses like targeting minoritized populations, leaving women and nonbinary persons out of the conversation, and focusing on individual-level factors rather than community level ones (e.g. Borum 2014). It has been stated "where women's inclusion is prioritized, peace is more likely" (O'Reilly 2015) and we broadly interpret 'women' to include all overlooked populations. In light of the fundamental shift from hard to soft approaches in PVE, it is of interest to examine the way in which the inclusion of teachers, a profession traditionally feminized (Apple, 1995; Luttrell, 1997), in security work interacts with the gendered nature of security work itself, as well as how the pivot towards softer approaches can also help PVE-E to be more intersectional, and less colonial in their approaches (see also Gearon, 2019).

For this research, we ground ourselves in critical intersectional feminism. Critical movements seek to change the status quo, in particular, to dismantle existing hierarchies and systems that entrench the power of the relative few (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). Here we use the definition of intersectional feminism put forward by Collins and Bilge (2020, p. 1) "intersectionality investigates how intersecting power relations influence social relations across diverse societies, as well as individual experiences in everyday life." Intersectional feminism argues that many of these hierarchies are based on intersecting identities and binaries in which whiteness, maleness, and straightness are presumed to be superior to blackness or brownness, femaleness, and queerness (Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016; Fotopoulou, 2012). These hierarchies have been sustained with force throughout time to the degree that violence itself is often conceptualized as an approach and a tool of the powerful. Connell (2005) demonstrated that men are gatekeepers in gender equity reform, allowing access to claims for justice. In basing our work on these theories, we hope to deconstruct the notion of who is and should be involved in prevention work, and what prevention work is.

Some of this work has already started. There have been efforts to include women in war and peacebuilding under UN resolution 1325 (UN S/RES/1325, 2000), arguments for Feminist security studies (Tickner, 2004), and even public health approaches to violence prevention could be argued to be a feminist act (Hammarström & Ripper, 1999). We argue in that a public health approach to violence prevention can be viewed as a way of also

achieving an intersectional feminist approach in the prevention of violent extremism, both of which address historically problematic trends in terrorism and security studies (Novelli, 2017). Feminist security studies argue that the voices of women, minorities and gender and sexual diversities (GSD) need to be included in security decisions (Tickner, 2004) and education, a profession traditionally dominated by women, provides a logical avenue for the two to overlap.

2 THE SOFT POWER OF EDUCATION

Education can play a central role in preventing violent extremism because it is so deeply connected to building a society. Within a nation, the development of desired attitudes, skills, and behaviours of future generations has always been steered through educational objectives and content. Formal schooling enables building or maintaining social cohesion and integrating newcomers (Alesina, Giuliano & Reich, 2021). Ongoing debates about the role of education in society are as old as civilizations themselves. Scholars argue that education is often thought of as a tool for the reproduction of society, especially the hierarchy that currently exists in society. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) state that social and cultural capital are reproduced through schools, and functionalists like Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Merton agree that schools are primarily responsible for perpetuating the accepted culture (DeMarrias & Lecompte, 1999). On the other hand, other theorists, both liberal and critical, give us examples of how education can be transformational, which can be applied to the role schools have in preventing violence and extremism (Hughes, 2020; Elliott, 2023). Transformation, according to Mezirow (1978), happens when people realize the harmful or unconstructive patterns in their lives that they keep repeating or become aware of unethical or unequal structures in society, and through the process of conscientization can make changes and stop repeating those patterns. Dewey (1938) and Freire (1968) both conceptualize education to create a society that is prepared to engage and change the world as it is. Dewey (1938) presents part of the goal of education: an engaged citizenry who are prepared to be a productive part of society. Freire (1968) adds that education of the oppressed is necessary to change society to release people from systems of structural violence. He also provides explanation for extremist narratives; sectarianism seems to align closely with what are considered violent extremist groups. The commonality is based on the role of myth in both (Freire, 1968.) Ideological narratives are often mythic in their identification of archetypes as good and evil, and for Freire (1968) the myth prevents engagement with reality.

In practice, the work of educating and of schooling has long been associated with the work of mothering. Luttrell (1997) argued that teaching was gendered labor, reflected both in the gender of teachers and the gender of the parent responsible for the child's education. Rissanen et al. (2018) and Kuusisto et al. (2012) both emphasized the moral aspect of the teaching profession. For Rissanen et al. (2018) this encompassed both teaching morally and teaching morality, while Kuusisto et al. (2012) highlighted how early childhood educators navigate diverse worldviews in the classroom. Lahelma et al. (2014)

made the connection between teaching and carework in Finland, highlighting that even within teaching there are certain teachers (like early childhood educators or Health and Social services teachers in vocational education) that are conceptualized as doing more carework than other. In some European contexts, like Finland, for example this carework is professionalized and is no longer tied as clearly to gender (Elliott, 2023), but in other national contexts, the work of caring is still very much tied to gendered expectations of care. Ghosh et al. (2016) argued that it is this soft coercive power that recruits young people to extremism and that schools have the potential to use that coercive soft power to turn young people away from extremism.

Giroux (2003) states that ideally, schools would play a role in getting students to think critically about society, take risks, and resist dominant forms of oppression. Haavelsrud (2019) argues that formal education should have a specific role in raising epistemic questions and broadening students' understanding of what counts as knowledge. For example, "peace education" scholars have supported the transformational potential of education for years (Harris & Morrison, 2013). Indeed, the concept of transformation is central to both the processes of peacebuilding and radicalization. Transformative learning theory provides a powerful argument for education as a solution. According to transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2009), transformation is a process in which problematic aspects, like mindsets, assumptions, and expectations, are changed to make them more inclusive. In this sense, education can prove to be a solution by transforming people's ability to recognize unequal and oppressive frames of reference, interrupt the overlying of ideological schemas with personal experience, and ultimately, lessen their tolerance for the use of violence.

There is an abundance of research that demonstrates both curricular and pedagogical approaches exist that help to promote tolerance, peace, and healthy individuals and communities. However, we argue that there needs to be a greater understanding of those who engage in this work perceive their role because there is often a great deal of space for individual implementation of national and local policies (Niemi et al., 2018; Lipsky, 2010). The possible and probable missteps in implementation are not malicious and typically occur because educators and other street-level policy bureaucrats must make decisions without guidance and balance the many different responsibilities we place on them as a society (Lipsky, 2010). Teachers have always been street-level bureaucrats in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, but they are also now being asked to participate in work that is traditionally only carried out through security services. However, educators have not signed up to become security officials, or to participate in preventing violence and extremist ideologies, and yet they have become a new type of street-level policy actors in the work to prevent violent extremism.

In the following, taking Finland as a case study, we will briefly present the burgeoning field of PVE-E with an aim to create a basis for the subsequent discussion on the gendered roles of those implementing PVE work, especially the teachers.

2.1 Education as prevention

Ultimately, the role education plays in society depends on what that education consists of, how it is implemented, and by whom. Within the PVE-E strategies adopted by different European governments, the role of education has gained various forms, from reactive models to preventative approaches (European Commission, 2022). While some of these strategies are grounded on the idea that teachers need to monitor their students for possible signs of radicalization and report these to the authorities (e.g., Prevent in the UK, see Davies, 2009), other approaches focus on strengthening the students' skills needed for deciphering information as well as increasing their knowledge about religions and worldviews to combat and counter the lure of ideological extremism and violence (Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 2020; Skr 2015; Danish Govt., 2016).

Finland provides a useful context for examining this because it has a national action plan, which employs curricular and pedagogical tools that can be tailored at a local level by educators and has a long history of gender equality (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2021). Educational institutions in Finland, as in many other countries, are currently viewed as central agents in the national PVE action plans (UNESCO, 2018; Vallinkoski et al, 2020; Niemi et al., 2018). In 2020, Finland published its third National Action Plan which, for the first time, included a separate chapter dedicated solely to the education sector (Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 2012; 2016; 2020). Following the idea of broad-based prevention, the action plan emphasizes that education operates with all children and youth and highlights that the same causes that may, for some, lead to violent radicalization, may for others lead to other types of negative trajectories, such as depression, loneliness, isolation from the society, or crime (Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 2020).

Indeed, numerous recent studies from various national contexts have highlighted the importance of supporting young people's psychological wellbeing and especially their resilience as means to prevent violent extremisms (Benjamin et al., 2022; Koirikivi et al., 2021; Dilimulati, Dhali, & Ghosh, 2019; Grossman et al., 2017; Aly et al. 2014; Weine et al., 2015). Young people can be especially vulnerable to being radicalized (Ghosh et al., 2016) because of their developmental stage in which they are seeking to explore and solidify their (group) identities and may thus more easily engage in risk-taking group behaviors (Albert, Chein & Steinberg, 2013). Ghosh et al. (2016) argue that extremist recruiters are successful because they use soft power to entice young people by providing support, belonging, and a sense of purpose, all things that could and should be provided by educational systems, too, but cannot be provided by traditional security measures. Educational institutions are in many ways uniquely positioned to guide the youth during the phase of life when they are most vulnerable to external influences and radicalization messages.

However, there is only so much that educational institutions can do to prevent radicalization. Not all (young) individuals take part in education. For soft power approaches to be effective, there have been increasing calls for collaborative, multi-

professional approaches to the prevention of violent extremism (Stephens & Sieckelinck, 2019). For example, Finland has adopted a "whole of society" approach, according to which countering and preventing violent extremism needs the contribution and close cooperation of all societal sectors, including the security and safety authorities, social and health care, youth work, education, religious communities, and the third sector, to be efficient (Vallinkoski et al., in press; Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 2020).

Further, there are pertinent critiques of the way education has become adjunct to the governmental responses to national safety and security (Gearon 2019; Ghosh, 2020). This can be examined from two opposite perspectives. First, it can be suggested that the securitization discourse has not penetrated the Finnish education system, as the preventative nature given to education in the National Action plan is not seen as something distinct or additional to the core objective of education. The elements located within education are primarily focused on supporting the wellbeing and resilience of all individuals. The need to prevent or counter violent radicalization or extremism is not portrayed primarily through the national security discourse but addressed as parallel to other safety concerns regarding the illbeing of students (Vallinkoski et al., 2020). However, alongside the safety discourse, there is a discourse that highlights the need to act because all signs of concern are important indicators of student illbeing highlighting the need for additional support. The concern for the safety and wellbeing of the individual "at risk" is thus highlighted alongside safeguarding the safety of the 'victims'.

However, it can also be claimed that the mere fact that education is included in the Finnish National Action plan is a form of securitization of education. As theories of securitization suggest, securitization is, at its core, founded on speech acts – or on strategic practices - aiming to convince an audience about a possible threat and promote certain actions against the perceived threats (Balzacq, 2005; Taureck, 2006). The Finnish national action plan gives a mandate to education to promote social cohesion and prevent violent radicalization and extremism. This can thus be seen as a pragmatic act that aims to convince the public that extremism prompts a security threat that needs to be tackled with political actions and that these actions also include education. Viewing educational objectives through the lens of security threats and risks thus turns the discourses from purely pedagogical visions into political elements that aim to enhance security and prevent potential threats.

2.2 Curriculum and pedagogy

Curriculum choices are often highlighted when educational approaches to prevention are mentioned. Much like curriculum can be used as forms of indoctrination, such as in current Afghanistan or Syria, where extremist groups use education to indoctrinate their worldviews onto new generations, it can also be used to help build and encourage positive outcomes (Hughes, 2020). The design of curriculum and textbooks can shape how students understand history, as well as civic norms around tolerance and use of force. There are

several different schools of thought on the appropriate way to prevent violent extremism through curriculum. Horner et al. (2015) argues that the goal is to create social cohesion, sense of unity over individual identification. They range from fully developed curricular that emphasizes perspective taking, like Facing History and Ourselves (Murphy et al., 2016), to textbooks that focus on historical facts (Metro, 2020), to broad conceptual focuses like peace education or global citizenship education. However, discussions of the role of pedagogy in the work of prevention are often not included even though they often contain much of the hidden curriculum in schools (e.g. Niemi et al., 2018).

Pedagogical decisions can reinforce democratic principles of choice, de-hierarchize power structures, and teach empathy, among other things. Similarly, pedagogical choices are appropriate for both broad-based prevention, and deradicalization. Learning is both cognitive and situational (Greeno et al., 1996). People operate with general schemata to learn and make meaning, and this is especially clear from the research on preventing violent extremism (Kruglanski et al, 2017; Greeno et al., 1996). Additionally, metacognition or reflection is essential for students to understand processes and learn from mistakes (Greeno et al., 1996). Similarly, learning occurs through legitimate peripheral participation because learning is situated within all social situations and explains why learning happens both in formal and informal environments (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Based on these assumptions, certain pedagogical approaches are more appropriate to ensure the prevention of violent extremism, especially approaches that address power differentials like critical pedagogy (Freire, 1968), peace and conflict like peace pedagogy (Bajaj & Hantzoupolous, 2016), and emotional responses like affective pedagogy (Zembylas, 2014). Zembylas (2016) brings these all together in critical affective peace pedagogy where students are taught in a manner that focuses on positive, peaceful societal change while holding space for emotional responses from students. For example, the preventative nature of education in Finland is not regarded as an add-on, but as something that must penetrate all education from planning to pedagogical practices to assessment (Niemi et al., 2018). The Finnish PVE-E strategy is not drafted from the perspective of security and countering terrorism but through the societal mission to provide children and young people with experiences and capacities to develop a positive sense of self and foster their cognitive, and critical thinking skills that may help counter the lure and propaganda of extremist actors (Vallinkoski et al., 2020).

However, it is noteworthy here that alongside the official educational objectives, educational practices are also shaped by the so-called hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1968). Hidden curriculum refers to the characteristics of education that are based on the prevailing societal values, dispositions, and social and behavioral expectations, but which often remain undisclosed and unquestioned. Hidden curriculum indicates “what is implicit and embedded in educational experiences in contrast with the formal statements about curricula and the surface features of educational interaction” (Sambell and McDowell 1998, pp. 391–92). The hidden curriculum can be recognized, for example, in the structural or consistent patterns that favor or tolerate certain types of behaviors more

than others. National hegemonies are expressed in the hidden curriculum through the educational expectations the schools have regarding their students and affect how, for example, students with different profiles and backgrounds are considered and addressed in education, mainly as members of the dominant group or as part of the minorities. The latter includes different ethnicities and faiths, and identities related to gender, sexuality, and physical abilities. These understandings contribute to the inadvertent exclusion of some groups and individuals from the social sphere and they are especially central when framing education as a context for preventing extremisms, as they depict the realities in which prevention is to take place (Niemi et al., 2018). For example, the values underlying Finnish education, likewise in many other contexts, are equality, wellbeing, and democratic participation (Finnish National Agency for Education, FNAE, 2019). But the true possibilities for inclusion and democratic participation may be limited and reserved for those considered as being part of the "dominant group", namely, white, secular Lutheran, middle-class, Finnish-speaking, able-bodied individuals. The powerful national secular-Lutheran hegemony and the persistent ideal of Finnishness dictate and delimit the extent to which diversity is tolerated and fostered in the Finnish society (Benjamin et al., 2023b; Niemi et al., 2018; Poulter et al., 2015).

2.3 Role of teachers

Teachers are seen as being both agentic individuals within systems and as simple cogs in the wheel of reproduction. Apple (1995) argues that even when teachers demonstrate agency it is rarely enough to change the system at the individual level. However, teachers are often viewed as one of the few agents outside of the family able to change individual students' paths. Giroux (2003) argues that teachers are oppositional intellectuals, and they can shape students to think critically about social issues. Depending on the country, there are, however, substantial differences in ways educational institutions provide a platform for discussing and addressing these in a safe environment, in addition to the individual difference in which teachers approach this work. While some PVE-E programs explicitly encourage teachers to address topical, at times controversial issues with their students (see e.g., Bounce, BRAVE, Dembra, Finland), some others ask them to detect potential signs of violent radicalization in the rhetoric of their students. This approach obviously restricts the students' freedom of expression and makes the threshold for expressing views critical of society higher by fears that the teachers, fulfilling their official duty, will report opinions and attitudes that deviate from the mainstream to other authorities (Arthur 2015; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015). This approach allows—and even enables—the making of false conclusions about students being 'at risk' of radicalisation. It has also been criticized for the ways in which the focus on risk assessment easily leads to unequal treatment of students and increased stereotyping (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015).

Horner et al. (2015) portray teachers as agentic. They are agents of change in communities through their work as members of unions and forces for democratization

(Horner et al., 2015). Teachers are agents of healing and are often perceived as the most important caregivers outside of the home (Horner et al., 2015). Greaces et al. (2019) demonstrate the work that teachers do in refugee camps to help make their students feel safe and comfortable to minimize retraumatizing students: they work to build trust, implement non-authoritarian teaching methods, and find ways for students to express their emotions creatively. Other research found that supportive relationships with a least one teacher made students feel much safer, and that teachers' modeling of bystander behavior helped students learn to intervene in situations that could lead to violence (Storer, Casey & Herrenkohl, 2017). However, as Rajala et al (2021) point out: "commonly held and simplistic conceptions of care hide the complexity of the emotional and relational demands that constitute educational activity." Additionally, it is important to note that not only does the conceptualization of care vary between nations, but the role of teachers also varies. Therefore, while we conceptualize teachers as careworkers, it is possible that in other contexts teachers could be conceptualized rather as an arm of the state, gatekeepers of knowledge or harmful enactors of societal discrimination and can therefore also be drivers of further conflict (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

Pedagogically, there is an understanding that young people explore different identities and experiment with different manners of engaging with the world, and that this exploration is developmentally appropriate and needs to be responded to in a manner that does not solidify any roles or identities the youth may be exploring and testing (Sieckelinck et al., 2015). Teachers watch students explore these identities daily and can approach provocative and even radical behavior with an emphasis on socialization and individual growth, while security services are not necessarily trained to approach individuals in that manner in all national contexts (Sieckelinck et al., 2015). In Mexico, positive interactions with teachers and peers acted as a preventative factor against violence for boys. The positive relationship with teachers or school leaders led to less desire for a violent reputation specifically for boys (Jimenez & Estevez, 2017). Yablon (2017) found in Israel that good relationships with teachers meant that students who experience violence are better able to share their experiences because sharing is lower risk in a close relationship; therefore, student relationships with teachers are key in predicting their willingness to seek out help if they experience violence. Sieckelinck et al. (2015) argue that teachers do not see youth playing with radical ideals as beyond redemption, while policymakers, and securitization forces often are more likely to conceptualize them as moral failures.

3 ADDRESSING PROBLEMS WITH TRADITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Majorized vs. minoritized populations

Turning now to the intersectional challenges in PVE work, we agree with Chukuwu's (2022) call for increased focus within Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) on postcolonial narratives. There is a need for both increased accountability for the disparate treatment

that members of the Global North and Global South have experienced in the post 9/11 world and a greater reckoning with what is considered "legitimate" forms of violence on the global stage that also meet definitional requirements for terrorism or violent extremism but are performed by sovereign nations and authorities. Kundnani's (2014) influential argument demonstrated that in both the US and European nations, often the work of prevention focused on policing tools that focused almost solely targeted Muslim populations. Novelli (2017) argues that current programs of education in CVE demonstrate Foucault's boomerang theory at work: military and security tools of surveillance that were employed overseas in former colonial lands are now being used for domestic surveillance. Not only is the problem in that this often violates the rights of citizens of a nation and treats them like enemy combatants, but it also reproduces colonial relationships with minoritized domestic populations bearing the brunt of the scrutiny, much like they did previously (Novelli, 2017). Christodoulou (2020) highlights, in particular, the problems evidenced in the UK's Prevent strategy that targets Muslim youths and communities and has led to discrimination, Islamophobia, and other forms of stigmatization, and Finch et al (2019) similarly showcases how this has also occurred in Sweden.

While previous research demonstrated how efforts to integrate softer approaches into prevention work have reproduced racist and colonial relationships and problems, this does not mean that it must. Christodoulou (2020) points out that postcolonial efforts have been made in Global North nations to reflect the white supremacism tied into so-called national values, which often legitimize violence against domestic minoritized populations to maintain the traditional race-based hierarchies. In the Global South, similar work has been done to decouple CVE and PVE strategies from colonial pasts. Chukwuma (2022) calls for increased research from and about Global South approaches to PVE and CVE, and highlights the work that is currently being down in Nigeria. Both research from Murphy et al. (2016) in South Africa and Bermeo (2016) in Ecuador demonstrate the way that PVEE can engage in these discussions in formal settings. Gomez-Suarez (2017) also demonstrates how informal education has worked to build cultures of peace and prevent outbreaks of political violence. The framing and approach of this research, as peacebuilding, instead of prevention of violent extremism, prompts questions about whether the conceptualization of this work is too narrow.

While there is a great deal of research on how to approach issues of violence and extremism in fragile contexts, specifically in the Global South, there is much less focus on these challenges in the Global North. Ferguson (2015) highlights similar challenges in looking at conversations around gender equality as continued colonialism, in that it is portrayed as a problem which only exists in the Global South. In addition to the colonial overtones, there is also a decidedly masculine approach that appears when discussing peacebuilding and highlights tension between the discourse around peacebuilding, and the implications for using education, a feminized space, as a path towards peace.

3.2 Masculinized vs. feminized

Traditionally, security studies and international relations are considered masculine spaces and conversations, in part because of the dominance of rational choice theory which favors attributes also traditionally associated with men – rationality, power, autonomy, and self-reliance (Tickner, 2004). While security studies are often considered a masculinized space, the truth is more complex. Some researchers in feminist security studies argue that in conflict situations there is often a concept of militarized masculinity as protectors and women as subordinates (Schaftenaar, 2017). For example, both law enforcement officers who work against violent extremism and certain violent extremists see themselves as idealized masculine protectors (Aharoni & Féron, 2020). Yet this concept belies a narrow definition of what security and violence are understood to be. Cohn (2011) argues that this traditional conceptualization is based on the idea that security is individualistic, rational armed independence when, in reality, security is always based on interdependence. Similarly, Butler (2020) argues that while violence is conceptualized as being committed by one individual against another, in fact, the relational aspect of community and society means that violence's impact is always collective.

Giscard d'Estaing (2017) argues that in PVE/CVE spaces, there are still challenges to the way in which women are incorporated into the work. Specifically, women are often essentialized based on traditional gender norms which portray them as 'natural peacemakers' and preventers of violence (Giscard d'Estaing, 2017, Rothermel, 2020), which ignores the way in which women are linked to and may reinforce extremist ideologies and extremist violence intentionally, as fans and supporters of the potential extremist perpetrators and communities (Raitanen, 2020), as extremist actors themselves (Stern, 2022; Loken & Zelenz, 2017), or indirectly and unwillingly as targets of hate and rancor in the so-called manosphere. Manosphere refers to a network of online men's communities against the empowerment of women, promoting anti-feminist and sexist beliefs (Ribeiro et al., 2021). An example of actors in the manosphere is the Incel community (involuntary celibacy).

In addition to the masculinized space that monopolizes security and policing (Tickner, 2004), extremism itself is often thought of as a masculinized space as well. Ezekilov (2017) points out that regardless of the extremist group that is recruiting, the targeted recruits are most typically young men. While many embrace the women and peace hypothesis (York, 1996), Aroni (2016) argues that women are just similarly peaceful or violent as men. Additionally, violence may not take the shape of direct violence for women because of gender norms, but rather support and praise for men who engaged in extremist violence (hooks, 1984; Raitanen, 2021). Women are often viewed as instruments to help prevent terror and not as individuals who could potentially be radicalized (Giscard D'Estaing, 2017). Many governments see women as entryways into homes and communities, rather than individuals (O'Reilly 2015). However, these policies are not developed by women, and they often put women at increased risk and suspicion within their communities (Giscard D'Estaing, 2017). The rise in online recruitment has also provided a way to examine how

women are recruited to engage in extremist violence in a new way (Johnston et al., 2020). Women serve as recruiters, propagandists, and wives and mothers; in part, because the acceptable roles for women are gendered in extremist organizations just as they are in many other organizations, women are recruited in different ways (Johnston et al., 2020) but they may also act as skillful recruiters themselves (Saltman, 2019). Girls and women can also act as sympathizers or "fangirls" (Raitanen, 2021) encouraging and supporting, for example, previous or potential future extremists' actions (Ben-Israel, 2018). However, even though girls and women may be recruited in different manners, the reasons for joining are similar – an agreement between lived experiences and extremist ideologies, personal crises, and precarious social situations (Johnston et al., 2020; Loken & Zelenz, 2017). Johnston et al. (2020) found that the role of Indonesian women as migrant laborers allowed for narratives around conservatively defined rights for women as mothers and wives instead of capitalist workers to be used as a form of recruitment. Also, religious ideologies and holy causes may encourage women to join the men in their lives in extremist violence (Loken & Zelenz, 2017). Conway (2017) states that gender is an under-researched area in understanding violent extremism and should receive greater focus moving forward.

3.3 Teaching as a gendered profession

As mentioned previously, teaching is gendered (Apple, 1995; Robert, 2016). According to Azcona et al. (2020), 68% of teachers worldwide are women but are still underrepresented in school leadership roles (Save our Future, 2020). Most teachers in the world are women, which reflects the gendered nature of carework, even in professional spaces. Gerstel (2000) argues that in addition to the carework that happens inside the home, women also take on carework outside of the home, of which teaching is an example. Teachers of refugees in Denmark found that even after transitioning to remote learning during COVID-19, carework that is embedded in the teaching profession, especially of high-needs populations was made even more challenging (Primdahl et al., 2021), and during previous pandemics, like Ebola, female teachers were under additional burdens with their dual responsibilities at work and at home (Malala Fund, 2020). In Argentina, teachers are often expected to help not only provide funding for students' education, and food for students in need but also socioemotional support to families struggling (Robert, 2016). Luttrell's (1997) argument is that teachers, like mothers, represent idealized women, and therefore are expected to provide idealized care, no matter the realities of the situation. This is true both in basic education and higher education. Oleschuk (2020) argues that the research expectations in higher education, especially in regard to promotion and tenure, favor men who have partners who do the majority of domestic labor and childcare. Malisch et al. (2020) add that female faculty in higher education are also more likely to hold contingent positions, have higher-than-average teaching loads, and teach more lower-level courses that often require additional student support.

In particular, the type of teaching that is required by the pedagogical approaches to prevent violent extremism often demands additional care work. Robert (2016) points out that this is not unusual and that many neoliberal policies include aspects of increased care work necessitated by teachers in hopes of improving student outcomes. As is typical of care work, teachers do not receive additional compensation for this type of work (Robert, 2016). Even if teachers are male, they engage in work that is traditionally feminized and therefore have unique experiences with this work. This aligns with the work being asked of teachers in Finland under the National Action Plan for the prevention of violent extremism (Finnish Ministry of the Interior, 2020). It is especially interesting that the educational approach, which is considered traditionally feminine (Robert, 2012), is being employed at the behest of and in the realm of a traditionally masculine space like security studies (Tickner, 2004).

By bringing education into the work of prevention, women are included in a professional capacity and conceptualized as competent policy actors who are able to navigate complex situations and competing agendas. While the addition of education still relies on long-term traditional conceptualizations of women as peacemakers, it adds professional identity and power to that conceptualization. It also, more importantly perhaps, places more value on the emotional labor and carework that is traditionally done by women by holding it in equal partnership with a traditional masculinized force-based hard power. This shift also includes women as agents at the planning and implementation level, not just as subjects (Giscard d'Estaing, 2017). There is also evidence that the inclusion of women in peacemaking processes builds increased levels of trust and support for initiatives, especially at the community level (Giscard d'Estaing, 2017).

In looking at educators who act as street-level policy bureaucrats, not only do they have the potential to prevent violent extremism, but it also opens the door to the fact that women more broadly and feminized educators can be a driving force in spreading extremist ideologies, and condoning violent actions, an idea that is often overlooked (Rothermel, 2020). The backlash against Critical Race Theory and the battle over teaching it in schools in the US illustrates that not only are women involved in supporting extremist ideologies but also that as education is traditionally conceptualized as women's spaces, this is a location where it is socially acceptable for women to take on the role of ideological warriors (Johnston et al., 2020). Similarly, Leidig (2021) highlights the way women are ideological warriors in extremist movements outside of schools.

It would also be remiss to not include the fact that misogynistic ideologies run deeply through all types of extremist ideologies and violence. The so-called manosphere, a conglomerate of Web-based misogynist movements focused on men's issues, has prospered online in the past years impacting the thinking and mindset of millions of young men (Ribeiro et al., 2021). Similarly, when comparing extremist ideologies, the hierarchical focus on power and traditional power structures, the goal is not to equalize and diminish inequalities, but rather to change who is on top.

3.4 Overlapping vulnerabilities

At its heart, intersectionality deals with overlapping vulnerabilities, and how those build upon one another. Schmidt (2020) demonstrates that counterterrorism approaches in Canada often struggle to appropriately address racialized and feminized subjects, and this holds true for most governments. Masculine-presenting men of color are often over-represented in potential suspects, and masculine-presenting white men are often over-represented in both research and prevention spaces. These tensions mentioned above also coalesce when the vulnerable parties in each overlap (Rothermel, 2020). This is especially concerning with the rise in ethno-nationalist extremism, and the potential to overlook concerns presented by white men. We have addressed these concerns separately above but there is also a need for an intersectional feminist approach to the prevention of violent extremism, and we argue education can be a space where that work can be done, especially when looking at broad-based prevention. When belongingness is considered a protective factor against extremism and violence (Ellis & Abdi, 2017), those with vulnerabilities are a risk for not belonging in certain communities. We echo the argument put forth by Ghosh et al. (2016) that schools provided a unique space to address both issues of community level norms, and individual skills.

By broadening our conceptualization of preventing violent extremism, we take steps towards eliminating the use of narratives around foreign Western nations as saviors of brown and black women in the Global South (Rothermel, 2020). There is long evidence of the roles that women played throughout history in peace activism and anti-colonial protest, and even now in the Global South, we see women-led involvement in the prevention of violent extremism as successful, like the women-led civil society organizations in parts of Nigeria where Boko Haram actively recruits (Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019). Nwangwu et al. (2021) also highlight the role which Nigerian women have played in intelligence gathering around extremist violence. Since women and women of minoritized identities are also teachers, involving them in the work of prevention allows for new voices to enter these conversations.

Educators similarly are overlooked as professionals with important expertise to provide to security professionals, yet educators are often asked to do additional work without additional compensation, or empowerment. Christodoulou (2020) argues that while RAN (stands for) claims to empower educators, there is limited evidence that they understand what in reality that would look like. Elliott et al. (2021) argue that engaging teachers in forms of practitioner-based research, like action research, could be a potential avenue to empower teachers.

4 DISCUSSION – INTERSECTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS ON PVE-E

While the inclusion of education as a space and place for the work of preventing violent extremism does address several issues as mentioned above, it is not a silver bullet. Even with these additional roles, women are conceptualized as either victim or savior, minoritized individuals as victim or villain, and communities continue to be ignored. The existence of binaries itself is hard to escape when it comes to violent extremism, and perhaps the role of education will help to deconstruct those black and white distinctions. Since the goal of education to prevent violent extremism is often to make the world greyer and more nuanced, perhaps it's inclusion will also add nuance to the understanding and conceptualization of all humans.

There are also clear concerns that need to be kept in mind when shifting towards the use of education as a tool of prevention. Novelli (2017) extends his argument to include schooling in particular, reminding us that schooling has been used by colonizing forces to indoctrinate foreign populations, and clearly brings to mind current examples of how curriculum can be used to whitewash history and drive political agendas – think of Japan's erasure of human rights violations during WWII and current attempt in the United States to outlaw history that portrays the founding fathers as what they were, slave owners and colonizers.

Similarly, there should in a modern democracy be a clear differentiation between extremist ideas vs. extremist behaviors, and the acceptance, incitement, or use of violence. While schools should be able to place certain limits on students' right to free speech, these should be minimal (Mattsson & Säljö, 2017). Schools and teachers should also take into consideration the way in which teachers and schools respond to extremist ideas so that they do not further reinforce anti-school culture and stigmatization of certain students (Mattsson & Johansson, 2020; Benjamin et al., 2021). Baak et al. (2020) demonstrate this concern to both teachers in classrooms and school administrators and mid-level educational bureaucrats.

There are concerns that using teachers for security purposes disrupts and problematizes the true role of the teacher (Gearon, 2015). Finch et al (2019) similarly demonstrate this problem with social workers in the UK and Sweden. We do not advocate for teachers to become policing professionals, but rather argue that there is a middle path. Educators, much like social workers, are responsible for providing emotional care and support to students, as well as socializing them into the democratic civil society. Therefore, while we must be mindful of turning teachers into police, there is space for educators to be engaged in prevention work broadly without engaging in policing behaviors.

Finally, there is a large concern with overburdening teachers (Mattsson & Säljö, 2017). While education remains one of the few total institutions that exist in many nations, this cannot mean that we ask teachers to solve all of society's problems while paying them only for teaching. Careworkers in many professions, from nursing and mental health, to educators, struggle to meet the needs of students, patients, and clients. This is in part because carework is not adequately compensated in most capitalist systems, no matter the

gender of the individual working the job (Dill et al., 2016). Therefore, societies must both uncouple carework from gender, and professionalize carework so that it is well compensated and valued within society as well.

Gearon and Kuusisto (2022) demonstrate that to decolonize education, we also must consider the manner in which specific subject areas are tied to colonial history; they look at the challenges of creating postcolonial religious spaces in early childhood education by detangling religious education from colonization, in order to try to dispose of the colonization while maintaining the religion (Gearon & Kuusisto, 2022). Their work reminds us that the task in front of us – using education to prevent violent extremism as a way to decolonize and demasculinize security spaces – is not a task of destruction, but rather a quest to detangle and dispose of the harmful remnants of past reality in order to create a better future. This work is not easy – it is complex and requires deep understanding of many intersecting power hierarchies (racial, gendered, colonial) that exist both explicitly and structurally within societies. However, if the goal is truly to prevent violent extremism, then the work of unpacking the historical problems we have created is well worth the trouble.

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