Resisting the Prevent Duty—A Typology of Everyday Resistance

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The British government's Prevent Duty puts a legal obligation on civilians employed in health, education, and social work sectors to "prevent people from being drawn into terrorism." The policy repurposes safeguarding and duty of care principles embedded within these sectors to establish a regime of control where frontline staff have to take up surveillance duties. Given the statutory nature of the policy, compliance is mandatory. However, within the everyday enactment of Prevent Duty, we can also find people pushing back against its stipulations or working around them. Using everyday resistance and Foucauldian counter-conducts, this paper will demonstrate that while counter-terrorism technologies co-opt public sector sites and practices to establish structures of surveillance, resistance is still possible. Drawing on semi-structured interviews conducted with medical staff, educators, and social workers in England, this paper will put forward a typology of everyday resistance to capture the different ways in which frontline staff tasked with counter-terror obligations challenge the Prevent Duty and reclaim the spaces and acts securitized by this policy.

Le Devoir d'empêcher du gouvernement britannique (Prevent Duty) contraint légalement les civils employés dans les secteurs de la santé, de l'éducation et des services sociaux à ≪ empêcher quiconque de se retrouver impliqué dans le terrorisme ≫. La politique transforme les principes d'attention et de protection qui caractérisent ces secteurs pour établir un régime de contrôle dans lequel le personnel au contact du public doit assumer des responsabilités de surveillance. Étant donné la nature légale de la politique, il est obligatoire de s'y conformer. Cependant, dans l'application quotidienne du Devoir d'empêcher, nous constatons aussi qu'il y a des personnes qui rejettent ses stipulations ou qui les contournent. Se fondant sur la résistance quotidienne et les contre-conduites de Foucault, cet article démontre que bien que les technologies de lutte contre le terrorisme récupèrent les sites et pratiques du secteur public afin d'établir des structures de surveillance, il est encore possible de résister. Se fondant sur des entretiens semi-structurés menés auprès du personnel médical, des enseignants et des travailleurs sociaux en Angleterre, cet article présente une typologie de la résistance quotidienne afin de représenter les différentes façons par lesquelles le personnel au contact du public qui s'est vu assigner des obligations de lutte contre le terrorisme remet en question le Devoir d'empêcher et se réapproprie les espaces et actes sécurisés par cette politique.

El deber de prevención del Gobierno británico impone a los civiles que están empleados en los secto-res de la salud, la educación y el trabajo social la obligación legal de ≪impedir que las personas se vean atraídas por el terrorismo≫. Esta regla reutiliza los principios de protección y deber de cuidado incorporados en estos sectores para establecer un régimen de control en el que el personal de prime-ra línea debe asumir funciones de vigilancia. Debido a la naturaleza estatutaria de esta regla, su

cum-plimiento es obligatorio. Sin embargo, dentro de la aplicación co-
tidiana del deber de prevención también podemos encontrar personas
que se oponen a sus estipulaciones o que las evaden. El ar-tículo utiliza la
resistencia cotidiana y las contraconductas foucaultianas, para demostrar
que, si bien las tecnologías antiterroristas cooptan sitios y prácticas del
sector público para establecer estructuras de vigilancia, aún es posible re-
sistirse a ellas. El artículo parte de entrevistas semiestructuradas reali-zadas
a personal médico, educadores y trabajadores sociales en Inglaterra y pre-
senta una tipología de resistencia cotidiana que tiene por objetivo captar
las diferentes formas en que el personal de primera línea encargado de
obligaciones antiterroristas desafía el deber de prevención y recupera los
espacios y actos asegurados por esta regla.

Introduction

Since 2015, designated authorities in England and Wales are under a legal obli-
gation to enact the Prevent Duty and conduct counter-terrorism monitoring. The
stipulations of the Prevent Duty have created devolved regimes of securitized con-
trol within civic sectors—such as health, education, and social work—that are nor-
mally considered to be outside of the state's coercive sphere. As such, frontline staff
employed in these sectors have an additional legal responsibility to "prevent peo-
ple from being drawn into terrorism" (Home Office 2015a, 18). Due to the statu-
tory nature of the policy, engagement with the Prevent Duty is both extensive and
mandatory, making it firmly embedded within what Nyman has identified as the
"everyday life of security" (2021). However, despite its entrenched nature, I would
argue that there are also possibilities of resisting the Prevent Duty. Using a typology
of everyday resistance, this paper will demonstrate that within the mundanity of ev-
eryday politics, we can find ideas, actions, and practices that contest the hegemonic
control of the Prevent Duty.

While there is organized and overt resistance to the Prevent Duty through ad-
vocacy organizations such as Prevent Watch, Amnesty International, and MedAct, I
want to focus on another mode of resistance that is more hidden and unorganized.
These acts of resistance take place within the everyday enactment of the Prevent
Duty and are carried out by frontline staff. To capture this parallel sphere of resis-
tance, I will shift the focus away from the meso-level resistance of civil society or-
ganizations to the micro-level everyday politics and foreground the actions of staff
working in health, education, and social work sectors. These interactions will be
analyzed through the framework of everyday resistance that captures irregular and
mundane acts of contestation embedded in daily life (Gilliom and Monahan 2012).
Everyday resistance reorients our gaze toward activity that is "done routinely, but
is not politically articulated or formally organised"—a type of resistance that is not
designed to be recognised as such (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013, 10). Given the
statutory nature of the Prevent Duty, not all forms of resistance to the policy can
be visible and overt. As such, through everyday resistance, this paper will show that
resistance to the Prevent Duty is a consolidation of divergent technologies and ba-
nal activities that would otherwise go unacknowledged because they are "integrated
into social life" and are thus "part of normality" (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013,
3).

While the concept of everyday resistance is drawn from Scott's work on muted and
invisible forms of resistance and has inspired a vibrant field of study (Scott 1985,
1989; Bayat 1997; Vinthagen and Johansson 2013), this paper will build on Lilja
and Vinthagen's approach to situating everyday resistance within the Foucauldian
framework of counter-conducts (2014). Foucault coined this term to identify a

politics of resistance that was not as strong as "revolt" and not as weak as "disobedience," but something that lies in the middle of these two actions and captures the "struggle against the processes implemented for conducting others" (2009, 200). Given the nature of disciplinary control established by the Prevent Duty that turns individuals into self-governing subjects, counter-conducts gives us a useful framework to understand the mechanics of everyday resistance. While the umbrella concept of everyday resistance is crucial in explaining how these quotidian acts of contestation manifest, counter-conducts helps us locate their philosophical foundations and allows us to interrogate the underlying politics of power. In this way, I speak to both Foucauldian scholarship as well as everyday security and resistance studies.

This paper will draw on semi-structured interviews with frontline staff working in health, education, and social work sectors to find instances of everyday resistance to the Prevent Duty. This group forms a useful case study because by focusing on their quotidian encounters, we can understand how everyday resistance to the Prevent Duty manifests and how it differs based on sectoral dynamics and professional hierarchies. I catalog the ideas and actions of these staff through a typology of everyday resistance that captures resistance to the Prevent Duty within three broad categories of cognitive resistance, muted resistance, and vocal resistance. These help us articulate a diverse range of interactions through which frontline staff push back against or work around their Prevent Duty obligations. It is important to situate these acts of contestation within a typology of actions because they are not uniformly organized and as such should not be grouped together in one homogenous category of resistance. The typology allows us to see the variations in thoughts and actions. Situating the different types of resistance to the Prevent Duty within this typology is also useful because it helps us explore the varying dynamics that not only make resistance possible, but also define it. As Vinthagen and Johanson explain, the "decentred and intersectional" nature of power means that resistance is in "relation to several powers simultaneously" (2013, 26). The typology of resistance, thus, helps us understand how professional cultures, personal identities and politics, and sectoral practices facilitate or hinder staff's ability to resist the Prevent Duty. Before we start unpacking the politics of resisting the Prevent Duty, the next section will provide an overview of the policy, its development through the years, and the challenges it poses for the frontline staff.

The Prevent Duty

Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) is a program of anticipatory "pre-criminal" policing that aims to stop terrorism by targeting extremist ideas through social interventions (Heath-Kelly 2017; Stephens et al. 2019). P/CVE programs have been adopted widely by both Western and non-Western states to tackle the "homegrown" threats of terrorism (Kundnani and Hayes 2018). While the philosophy of P/CVE policing can be traced back to the early 2000s Dutch government's policy on the threat of "radical Islam," it was turbocharged following the 2004 Madrid and 2005 London bombings (Millett 2025). The UK government's Prevent policy was one of the first P/CVE programs that was introduced in the 2006 Countering International Terrorism strategy with the aim to "engage in a battle of ideas" to deter terrorism (Home Office 2006). Since then, the policy has undergone many changes with its scope expanding and altering depending as much on the wider threat perceptions as the ruling government's ideological leanings.

Under the New Labour years, the Prevent Strategy focused on winning "hearts and minds" with a program of building resilience among individuals and communities vulnerable to "violent extremist ideology" (Home Office 2008). As a result, Prevent facilitated an unprecedented expansion of the security state into different facets of the civic life. At the government level, counter-terrorism responsibilities were shifted to local authorities, educational institutions, children and youth

services, etc. Within communities, charities and faith groups were provided funding to set up drama programs and cricket lessons to tackle violent extremism among British Muslims (Kundnani 2009, 18). With the Coalition government taking over in 2010, the Prevent Strategy was reviewed, and its remit was widened to target both violent and non-violent extremism with British values becoming the antidote to these threats.[1] The scope of the policy also changed as funding was withdrawn from community cohesion programs, and Prevent Strategy enactment was more formally included in the work of local authorities and education and health institutions (Home Office 2011, 63). With the passage of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, we see the introduction of the Prevent Duty and a statutory obligation on "specified authorities" to enact the policy (Home Office 2015a, 18). The duty mandates that frontline staff working in health, education, and social work sectors should understand the risk of radicalization and extremism and obtain support for "at-risk" people by making a Prevent Duty referral.

The introduction of the Prevent Duty to these sectors has had significant impacts on how frontline staff do their work, their relationships with the people they serve, and the overall culture of these institutions. Within everyday professional routines, this translates as educators, medics, and social workers monitoring members of public for signs of extremism. This act of mandatory surveillance is framed as safeguarding and integrated into existing duty of care practices (Busher et al. 2019, 455). Presenting the Prevent Duty as another component of the wider safeguarding framework conveys the obligatory nature of the policy along with hiding its coercive impact and encouraging staff to see the duty as simply a means of protecting vulnerable people (Chivers 2018, 4). This creates tensions between the welfare sector ethos of care and mutual trust and the Prevent Duty's demands of surveillance. Within the social work sector, the policy encourages social workers to use their access to people's lives as a means of gauging their vulnerability to extremism (Stanley 2018). According to McKendrick and Finch, this changes social work into a "judgemental. . .agent of social control" that is concerned more with policing dangerous ideas as opposed to providing care and social justice (2017, 318). In schools, the Prevent Duty retains this focus on safeguarding with an additional responsibility to promote British values. While the lessons on British values are meant to be educational, they are also used as surveillance opportunities to monitor student input for "extremist influences" (Winter et al. 2021, 102). This not only adds to the responsibilities of teaching staff but also creates a chilling effect on students (Jarvis et al. 2024, 139). Faure-Walker demonstrates this silencing of classroom debates in their study of Muslim students in an east London school (2019, 5). This self-censoring is not just restricted to school students; Barker's work with young Muslim women in further education institutions shows that Prevent-led monitoring causes students to self-censor in their interactions with their tutors (2025, 122). In the health sector, while the Prevent Duty is also predominantly seen as a safeguarding measure (Heath-Kelly and Strausz 2018), it continues to have a censorious impact with staff scared to challenge the policy in case they get associated with radicalization themselves (Younis and Jadhav 2019, 409).

Alongside the critique of the Prevent Duty, we can also find scholarship that focuses on the more positive aspects of the policy. The work on investigating the agency of those enacting Prevent Duty is particularly of interest as this allows us to explore the possibilities of resistance. In his work on contestation within the enactment of Prevent Duty, Thomas shows us how local authorities and frontline staff adapt the policy to mitigate its more harmful impacts (2017). Within schools, this

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[1]The revised counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST 2011 defined extremism as "the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs." Until 2024, this was the definition of extremism used by the British government before it was updated by the then Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government of the United Kingdom, Michael Gove.

contestation is done through a focus on anti-racist and citizenship education, while at local authority level, we can see initiatives that bring in community workers to engage young people, often with non-Prevent funding and resources (Thomas 2017, 315–6). Similar evidence can also be seen in studies of Prevent enactment within the education sector with a focus on engaging Muslim students and using wider professional networks that coordinate with each other and seek advice from the local police forces through informal conversations (Busher et al. 2019, 456; Lakhani 2020, 669). Spiller et al.'s work on British universities comes quite close to capturing acts of resistance to the Prevent Duty (2023). They discuss the different ways in which university managements put up "micro-resistances" against the harmful impacts of the policy by highlighting principles of free speech and social inclusion (Spiller et al. 2023, 1127–8). These are all useful examples of contestation and serve as a good starting point for this paper's aim of finding a more robust challenge and resistance to the coercive influence of Prevent Duty. However, while these actions do important work to mitigate the harmful impacts of Prevent Duty, they do not challenge the basic premise of the policy that embeds surveillance practices in everyday life. These discussions do not go far enough to envisage a form of agency that resists the Prevent Duty. By considering the possibility of resistance within the everyday conducts of these citizens, scholars are invited to challenge this idea of enforced agency. In doing so, this paper will engage with existing scholarship and take this work forward by highlighting more pronounced forms of resistance to both the practice and philosophy of the Prevent Duty.

Conceptualizing Everyday Resistance

The introduction of the Prevent Duty in civilian sectors has created spheres of governance where the reach of the state extends to the very core of civic activity unfolding at the grassroots level. Analyzed through a Foucauldian lens, we can see this omnipresence of state control as the politicization of civic life (Foucault 2009, 390). Within the enactment of the Prevent Duty, we can find a regime of governmentality that diffuses and normalizes control across different avenues of civic life. It is within this framing of everyday (in)security and creation of subjectivities that we also find the conceptual roots of everyday resistance. Foucault's "politicisation" is not just defined by the expansion of state power, the existence of adversaries to this control is also a characteristic of the political (2009, 390).

We can also find this challenge to subjectivity in Foucault's approach to power. The decentralized nature of power in Foucauldian thought alters the nature of subjectivities as it keeps circulating: "Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power" (Foucault 1980, 98). While this does not completely diminish subjectivity, it leaves open the possibility for the "subjects" of power to exercise some agency. As such, the technology of resistance is embedded within the very framework of control. The power hierarchy created by state control nurtures subjectivities that both acquiesce to and challenge this control. This gives us a useful entry point into situating resistance within the enactment of the Prevent Duty. If Prevent is seen as an extension of the state power, then the exercise of that power opens up the possibility of contesting it as well. The agency and subjectivity of frontline staff enacting the Prevent Duty are thus interconnected. It would be valid to question the nature and scope of this agency because it can be argued that as "vehicles of power," these individuals are still subjected to it. However, it is this ambiguity in the agency, or lack thereof, of frontline staff that makes this conceptualization of power useful for understanding the Prevent Duty. By making frontline staff both agents and subjects of counter-terrorism policing, Prevent puts them in a contradictory position where

they can challenge the state control while upholding it. This intertwined nature of control and contestation is captured perfectly by the concept of everyday resistance.

Another intervention that explains the mechanics of everyday resistance better is the concept of counter-conducts. The coining of this term can be seen as Foucault's attempt to put a finer point on the politics of resistance. What is being explored here is the possibility of resisting not exploitation *per se*, but the act of "conducting," such as the technologies of governmentality. Foucault uses "counter-conduct" to capture the struggle against the "processes implemented for conducting others" (2009, 200–210). The concept is introduced with the caveat that it is not meant to be "absolutely and wholeheartedly resistant to any governmentalisation," but rather alludes to "the will not to be governed thusly, like that, by these people, at this price" (Foucault 2007, 72–3). While it may appear that this exploration of Foucauldian thought is taking us further away from our goal of conceptualizing resistance, the concept of counter-conducts is particularly useful for putting together a typology of everyday resistance. The term enables us to problematize restricted narratives of contestation that take into account the lived reality of enacting the Prevent Duty. Given the statutory constraints of the policy, anarchic resistance is not feasible or often possible; hence, people need tools of contestation that allow them to navigate the risks and hurdles present at the grassroots level.

Rather than approaching counter-conducts as a restrictive framework, the lower threshold of action should be seen as its strength. Carl Death has used it to develop an "analytics of protest" to study the destabilization of binaries between power and resistance (2010, 236). Death has used this framing to analyze politics of contestation in South Africa through his work on protests and a township youth movement (Death 2016, 2011). The concept has also been used to problematize varying acts of contestation ranging from more vocal and visible 2011 riots in London (Sokhi-Bulley 2016), pushback against resource extraction in the Amazon biome (Nepomuceno et al. 2019), and processes of self-making as resistance to neoliberal governmentality in rural workers in India (Roy 2023). The breadth of its application is a testament to the usefulness of counter-conducts as a framework for acts of everyday resistance that are irregular and hidden from mainstream activity. Counter-conducts also expand the concept of resistance to include a range of actions and interventions that would otherwise be considered too passive or inactive for consideration.

Approaching everyday resistance through counter-conducts also allows us to revisit subjectivity. As Death explains, by widening the scope of what can count as resistance, we open up different possibilities to explore the creation of "militant and intellectualised subjects" (2016, 216–7). This form of subjectivity moves between acquiescence and resistance, a relationship between the state and citizen that Foucault has described as "work with and be intransigent at the same time" (1994, 456). This framing can help us explore how staff tasked with implementing the Prevent Duty navigate the decentralized terrain of power where they are both agents and subjects.

Everyday resistance is thus an umbrella concept for analyzing different types of contestations. It comprises not just practices of resistance but also mentalities and thought processes (Death 2010, 240). The technologies can be visible and vocal or muted; our subjects may deploy their power and elect to take risks, or they may opt for pragmatic approaches. By taking this discussion forward with a varied conceptualization of everyday resistance that is rooted in counter-conducts, we can uncover a rich tapestry of interactions that take place at the grassroots level within the enactment of the Prevent Duty.

Studying Prevent Duty Enactment—Methods

This paper comes out of a wider project that focused on studying frontline staff's engagement with the Prevent Duty. Between July 2019 and June 2020, I conducted fifty-seven interviews with Prevent coordinators/trainers and frontline staff employed in social work, health, and education sectors across England, covering both small towns and urban centers. These participants belonged to different career stages and jobs across these sectors, including primary and secondary schoolteachers, headteachers, nursery workers, university lecturers, a graduate teaching assistant, social workers, junior doctors, consultants, a nurse, a physician's assistant, and two therapists. In terms of ethnic, religious, gender, and political identities, the sample was diverse with a majority of the participants identifying themselves as White British/White European with no religious affiliations. Most of the participants had received one or two Prevent trainings, ranging from in-person full- or half-day sessions to online e-learning modules. A few participants who had not received Prevent training were aware of the policy and had discussed it with their colleagues.

The project underwent a rigorous ethics review process and secured approval from the university's ethics committee before starting recruitment. Given the concerns regarding participant anonymity, I decided not to conduct recruitment through professional organizations such as schools, NHS institutions, etc. Therefore, recruitment was done by first reaching out to people using personal and professional contacts and then using the snowball sampling technique for further recruitment. During COVID, I also used social media for recruiting participants. Following discussions with my institution's clinical research team, I did not do any recruitment through the NHS-held staff lists and did not conduct any interviews on NHS premises. As a result, the interviews with NHS staff were also covered by the university's ethics approval.

The semi-structured interviews focused on both the practical details about the enactment of the Prevent Duty as well as the discourse around threat and security that the participants had absorbed. In this way, the interviews provided insights on not just how the policy reaches the grassroots level and what frontline staff know about it but also how they articulate and reproduce narratives on responsibility, duty, compliance, and resistance within the context of the Prevent Duty.

Following the advice that transcription should be seen as a step in the data analysis process, I transcribed all the interviews myself (Bird 2005, 227). This process was very useful for familiarizing myself with the data, picking out initial themes, and noticing throwaway comments and sub-text that were missed in the excitement of conducting the interview. The data went through two rounds of coding using NVivo and a workflow management software. The first round of coding on NVivo identified broad themes of governmentality, citizenship, state, radicalization, and safeguarding. The second round unpacked the themes of governmentality and citizenship, showing how citizens articulated compliance with Prevent, how they spoke about loyalty and responsibility, whether anyone associated the policy with spying and surveillance, and how resistance to the Prevent Duty was conceptualized.

The project was not specifically designed to capture acts of resistance and as such the overall findings demonstrated a spectrum of activity ranging from eager compliance on one end to vocal resistance on the other. While participants were asked if they feel they can express opposition to the Prevent Duty during the interviews, some of the responses discussed in the paper emerged out of a wider discussion of their views on the Prevent Duty outside of the context of resisting the policy. As such, the instances of resistance discussed in this paper emerged organically in our conversations.

Resisting the Prevent Duty

Within the Prevent Duty engagement, we find everyday resistance in a variety of micro-processes—practices, rationalities, and thought processes of contestation (Death 2010, 240). Taking this approach shows that the technologies of resistance can be visible and vocal or subtle and muted; individuals may deploy their power and elect to take calculated risks, or they may submit and opt for pragmatic approaches. We do not find outright revolt or rebellion in everyday resistance to the Prevent Duty, but rather different modes of contestations that manifest in banal everyday activities.

As discussed earlier, the Prevent Duty is conveyed to frontline staff as a safeguarding duty; this results in a dominant consensus in favor of enacting the policy (Kaleem 2022). However, I argue that amidst this, there are also instances of resistance. Given the hegemonic presence of Prevent across different sectors, these responses are scattered, irregular, and punctuated with concerns about job security, disciplinary action, and a fear of appearing negligent. As such, the reasons for resisting and the techniques of resistance are not just influenced by one's views on security, safeguarding, and civil liberties, but also their own identities, their place in the professional hierarchy, and the social capital they appear to possess.

Owing to these different factors and power dynamics, resistance to Prevent manifests in a variety of actions and intentions with varying degrees of commitment and vigor. People can be quite comfortable with some aspects of the policy but resist others. This variation can also be seen within the actions of a single individual who can go from vehemently opposing the policy to conceding some form of engagement. This can either be because people view Prevent referrals as an appropriate action for addressing certain issues—such as the schoolteachers who see it as an avenue for tackling right-wing extremism. Alternatively, it could also be a case of Scott's "symbolic compliance" to avoid sanction (1985, 26). The following discussion will unpack these dynamics through a typology of different modes of everyday resistance comprising cognitive resistance, muted resistance, and vocal resistance. The first type—cognitive resistance—captures thought processes through which people come to challenge the hegemonic discourse of the Prevent Duty. Muted resistance refers to acts that allow people to work around the Prevent Duty and address concerns without engaging with the policy. Vocal resistance has an element of visibility because this sees people challenge the policy in a more open way. However, while these acts are "vocal," they should still be seen as a form of everyday resistance because these are carried out in individual capacity and do not correspond to any organized resistance. This typology can be used in two different ways—the three types can either be seen as self-contained ways of resistance as well as steps in a linear process whereby individuals develop ideas of resistance and gradually follow them up with acts of contestation.

Cognitive Resistance

In his analysis of quotidian contestations, Scott explains that thoughts and acts of resistance are in a constant dialogue; the former may not immediately result in the latter, but they serve as cognitive openings that make defiance possible (1985, 38). As such, we can start our discussion of resistance to Prevent by looking at contestation through ideas—a cognitive form of resistance. Through these thought processes, individuals negotiate their engagement with Prevent and interrogate their responsibilities as a good citizen. Cognitive resistance is both the starting point of resistance as well as an act of contestation in itself. The insights discussed here will show that people start the process of resisting by rejecting the common-sense consensus and questioning Prevent's framing of threat and vulnerability. Through these cognitive openings, people start to articulate a desire to claim some form of agency within the

subjection of Prevent. It also makes sense to take account of this resistance through ideas because the self-governance of disciplined subjects starts from cognitive obedience as we can see in the framing of the Prevent Duty as a "battle of ideas" to be waged through the promotion of British values (Richardson 2015; Habib 2018). Therefore, even if cognitive resistance does not translate into actions, it should still be seen as an act of everyday resistance as it challenges the common-sense narrative of individuals accepting security responsibilities and monitoring their fellow citizens for the security state.

For a university graduate teaching assistant (ED-H07), opposition to the Prevent Duty was rooted in concerns about structural racism and how Prevent has established a framework for entrenching these practices in different institutions. She highlighted how Prevent changes a citizen's relationship with the state and co-opts them into a system of oppression:

> The government is addressing people to be representatives of the state in a small community… so, everyone becomes responsible for the public security… When you embed all the racial values that is within Prevent, you start to reproduce the same colonial, white supremacist power, and you become the oppressor to a certain degree. (Graduate Teaching Assistant, ED-H07)

Through this insight, this academic, who is a woman of color, is drawing our attention to two different yet connected issues here, she situates Prevent within a wider societal framework embedded with racist logics of threat and security and how these get reproduced when Prevent policing enters different institutions. Along with this, she also focuses on the co-optation of ordinary people in this oppression and her own (forced) complicity in this coercive system. Her not wanting to "reproduce" the "racist project" of Prevent demonstrates her awareness of the neoliberal logics defining the Prevent Duty. By not wanting to enact Prevent, she is not rejecting her responsibility to protect vulnerable people, she is just reinterpreting how to meet these civic obligations. Here, safeguarding is being reclaimed as protecting people from state oppression rather than as a way of protecting the state from "risky" individuals.

A White, male schoolteacher (ED03) drew on similar themes of structural racism and policing when he discussed resistance to Prevent. He talked about his unwillingness to make a Prevent referral because he situates it within the state's law enforcement infrastructure and does not trust the system to safeguard his pupils, especially those belonging to ethnic minorities:

> I would think twice (about making a Prevent referral) because once you do it, you set in process such a strong machine … (it) could have far-reaching consequences for a particular family, and we know how the police behave! There's so much racism we don't really know what could happen. (Primary Schoolteacher, ED03)

Here, we can see that the cognitive resistance is progressing into a form of muted resistance because owing to his fears about the well-being of his pupils, he is unwilling to make a Prevent referral. However, this viewpoint would still be important even if it does not translate into action because it is challenging the narrative of safeguarding that is associated with the Prevent Duty. These insights should be seen as resistance because cognitive interventions challenge the common-sense acceptance of the Prevent Duty.

A slightly different case for resistance was made by a social worker (LA05) who opposes the way Prevent has securitized certain ideas. This is a clearer example of cognitive resistance where an individual is actively dissenting against the ideas that are instrumental to not just Prevent but also wider counter-terrorism narratives. Discussing his activism, this social worker rejected Prevent's framing of the concepts of extremism and radicalization:

> My political views around radicalisation are that it's good to be radical because we
> don't live in a fair world and I want to change society… Similar thing might apply to
> extremism… what is the extreme… recently all the stuff around Extinction Rebellion,
> I would wholeheartedly support Extinction Rebellion… they would be considered
> extreme. (Social Worker, LA05)

Here, the social worker is taking a clear stance against Prevent's "battle of ideas" and its framing of certain thoughts and actions as extremist (Blair 2005). The mention of Extinction Rebellion is in reference to the reports that a Prevent Duty training manual identified the group as espousing "an extremist ideology" (Dodd and Grierson 2020). The cognitive resistance put up by this social worker (LA05) is targeting ideas that are at the core of Prevent philosophy. Radicalization is one of the foundational concepts upon which the entire Prevent program rests, by rejecting these narratives, the social worker is making the policy irrelevant. In our discussion, he also highlighted Prevent's attempts to depoliticize counter-terrorism by taking a narrow approach to what causes radicalization and framing the policy as a process to be unthinkingly enacted rather than a coercive intervention. For him, getting involved with the Prevent Duty would mean compromising his political principles because Prevent reduces the act of conducting surveillance into a depoliticized process that should be followed by "putting one's politics aside" (LA05). This critique is similar to the one put forward by Rodrigo Jusué (2022) who identifies a similar process of depoliticization at work in the making of "counter-terrorism citizens" who are supposed to accept the state's definition of radicalization without any critique or introspection.

By engaging in these introspections, the participants discussed here turn into what Death has termed "intellectualised subjects" whose resistance is not necessarily outright or organized but starts from and often manifests in a refusal to accept dominant ideas of threat and security (2016, 216–7). While this contestation of ideas should be seen as resistance in its own right, it can also serve as a starting point for more visible forms of resistance. The following two sections will look at more visible and pronounced ways of resisting Prevent.

Muted Resistance

One of the most common forms of resistance evident in the responses is not so much a refusal to engage with the Prevent Duty, but to deal with "vulnerable" individuals in less coercive ways. In these instances, frontline staff opt to take welfare-oriented measures instead of making a Prevent referral, hence treating Prevent as the last resort rather than the go-to option. The participants who opt to contest the policy seem to be more cognizant of the impact a Prevent referral could have on the people they report. Therefore, while they do not outrightly refuse to enact the duty, they make efforts to mitigate the risks posed by Prevent. The form of contestation on display here falls under the category of Foucault's subtle acts of intransigence rather than a "whole-hearted resistance to governmentalisation" (2007, 72–3, 1994, 456).

Within health and social care, Prevent can be resisted by separating it from safeguarding provisions. By doing so, participants demonstrate that the vulnerabilities of patients and service users can be addressed by using existing services that do not rely on the involvement of law enforcement agencies:

> If I suspected that anybody posed a risk to other people or themselves, I absolutely
> have a responsibility, not to let the government know, but [to let] the relevant health-
> care services know that they are at risk or pose a risk… we've got very good and es-
> tablished steps of dealing with that through our training… I would follow things that
> already exist, I don't see why we need something else. (Consultant Physician, HE01)

This doctor is not refuting the idea that people can become "radicalised"; however, they do not see Prevent as the avenue through which this risk should be managed. She believes that the healthcare sector already has provisions to support those individuals who could be vulnerable to extremist views. Here, not only is she separating Prevent from the existing safeguarding infrastructure, she is also reorienting the focus on the safety and well-being of the at-risk individual. The vulnerability of an individual is being seen as a condition that should be managed by focusing on their well-being rather than seeing them as a security risk to be policed. By opting to use existing services, this doctor is seeing Prevent as being separate from the safeguarding practices of her sector. As such, she is rejecting the British state's framing of Prevent as a safeguarding policy, opting instead for existing practices to address vulnerability.

Muted resistance can also manifest in cases where people are generally comfortable with the idea of enacting the Prevent Duty. A schoolteacher favored enacting the Prevent Duty and being a vigilant citizen despite having concerns about spying and working for the "government." However, toward the end of our interview, he discussed how at one occasion he chose *not* to make a Prevent referral and instead treated the issue as a behavioral problem that should be handled internally:

> A child had used a racist word towards another child… the headteacher came down and based on who the child was, he said "listen, I think it's best if you keep them in and have a chat with them about why that isn't appropriate"… and I completely agreed with the headteacher on it… it's just a classic case of ignorant [sic], using a word that they've clearly heard somewhere and not knowing what it means… I think it's completely wrong to then suddenly be like "right! we need to get people involved here" … they need to be educated and they need to learn what's wrong. (Primary Schoolteacher, ED09)

The Prevent training this teacher took presented a case study of a young boy who goes to football matches and gets "radicalised" by a gang sporting tattoos and carrying British flags. Hence, for this teacher, using racist language is an indicator of radicalization, however, despite being aware of this framing, he opted to take an alternative approach to deal with such behavior rather making a Prevent referral. Earlier in our interview, this teacher advocated compliance with Prevent; however, in this instance, he chose to carry out his safeguarding responsibility by not engaging with Prevent. Unlike the examples discussed above, this case of resistance does not have much basis in "cognitive resistance," but we can still see a muted form of contestation emerge here. This shows that countering the hegemonic influence of Prevent is possible even when people support the policy. This also highlights the fluidity of narratives; one's thoughts and actions speak to different narratives depending on circumstances. Therefore, we are not dealing with rigid boundaries; in everyday life, people exhibit behaviors and take actions that cannot be neatly slotted into sealed containers.

This mitigation also raises questions about what motivates individuals to opt for resistance instead of compliance. This schoolteacher (ED09), who is a White man himself, is making an active choice to judge their pupils' conduct as something that can be managed internally. They are giving them the benefit of doubt. However, it is worth exploring if this would happen in cases that involve different forms of risks and threats. From its inception, the Prevent Duty has predominantly focused on the threat of "religious extremism," which is seen as a more pressing security concern. It is worth asking if resistance to Prevent is easier in the cases of "unintentional racism" as opposed to unintentional expression of "religious extremism." In the past few years, there have been a number of instances where Muslim children have been referred to Prevent for talking about video games or making innocuous statements that have been misconstrued (Quinn 2016; Townsend and Stein 2021). This is not to suggest that the teacher discussed here, who supports muted resistance to Prevent,

would only do so for cases involving right-wing extremism, but it is worth exploring whether the wider discourse makes it easier to take a more nuanced approach in such cases as opposed to those concerning religious extremism.

Furthermore, resistance can also be motivated by an individual's empathy and some common ground with the person in question. The British welfare state, especially the education sector, operates on a racial fault line (Graham and Robinson 2004; Schulz 2021; Swiszczowski 2022). Certain identities are seen as more suspect than others. In recent years, under the Hostile Environment policy, we saw different arms of the welfare state acting to exclude people based solely on their racial identity (Webber 2018). With racist narratives embedded in the mainstream discourse, the common sense around threat and security gets shaped by these ideas. Within this context, it is worth asking whether resistance to Prevent is easier when the frontline staff can relate to the experiences of the person considered to be "at risk." This is not to dismiss all instances of resistance as being opportunistic but taking stock of the wider dynamics would help us understand why people are motivated to contest Prevent. This also brings us back to the murkiness between compliance and resistance. Is it more difficult to challenge state control and reclaim civic responsibility when it goes against the established narratives of who is considered a threat? Given the recent interventions by prominent politicians and commentators, including the Prevent Review by William Shawcross, who claimed that Prevent disproportionately targets cases of right-wing extremism while ignoring religious extremism, it may become more difficult to challenge this dominant narrative and put up even muted forms of resistance (Jenrick 2022; Shawcross 2023).

Given the variation in dynamics of different institutions, resistance to Prevent can diverge depending on how frontline staff come into contact with the members of public. As discussed above, schoolteachers are uniquely placed to play a more proactive role in their pupils' lives. They spend a considerable amount of time with them during the day, so they have many opportunities to address any concerns that may come up. A secondary schoolteacher (ED08) said if her pupils were not behaving well, she would just call them after class to talk to them. Within the university setting, however, the pastoral duties and the nature of relationship between the tutors and students are different; therefore, the kind of resistance that we see in schools is often not conducive. However, this does not mean that resistance within these settings is not possible at all. The university academics I interviewed advocated contesting Prevent through pedagogical tools. The graduate teaching assistant (ED-H07) we discussed earlier explained how she contests Prevent by creating a safe space for her students. She talked about addressing racism exhibited by a student through providing them opportunities to not just express themselves but also learn from the experiences of their peers. While the participant did express dismay at her inability to tackle this problem, she stayed adamant about not making a Prevent referral:

> One white, male student who always, in the classroom, outside the classroom, in academic activities for Queer, Trans People of Colour, conversations, would make interventions that were clearly sexist and racist and he couldn't grasp the idea of antiracism, he was curious but he couldn't set himself free from the values of what he'd learn… we could see that there was anger there… I don't think Prevent would be good! I wouldn't (make a referral), even after seeing the masculinity he would perform. (Graduate Teaching Assistant, ED-H07)

This tutor, who is a minoritized woman, is protecting her student from Prevent even though his actions are becoming a source of distress to her. She is putting up two fronts of resistance, one against Prevent and one against the racist behavior of her student. However, despite the challenges, she is clear that she does not see Prevent as a solution for changing her student's ideas. This response is indicative of an approach that is reverting back to a pre-Prevent notion of prevention that foregrounds the well-being of the "vulnerable" person rather than exposing them

to a system that could cause more harm. This can also be seen in other responses where frontline staff try to draw on different tools from within their professions to manage the "risk." These participants do not necessarily reject the responsibility they have, but they are reorienting it toward the people around them.

The interventions discussed here are being presented as resistance to Prevent, but these are not overt and, in some cases, perhaps also not intentional. The challenges these acts pose to Prevent are scattered and irregular, they do not intend to and neither will upend the system, these are counter-conducts where people claim some agency to subvert the system while working within it and reinforcing it. These are not counter-hegemonic acts, but they should still be seen as forms of resistance because, despite being innocuous, they offer some opposition to a coercive policy. The following section will focus on how people can put up a more robust challenge to the Prevent Duty despite being restricted by its normative and statutory conditions.

Vocal Resistance

These instances of resistance differ in nature and scope from mitigations discussed above; however, there is not a clear split among who opts for these in favor of others. The same participants who use muted interventions have also discussed expressing their unease or even opposition to Prevent more or less vocally. While there is a clearer risk associated with openly criticizing a legal duty than quietly contesting it, the same people could be doing both, depending on the circumstances around them. This shows that acts of contestation can be varied and multifaceted even within one person's resistance to the policy.

A common theme that emerged in these instances is using the Prevent training as a site of resistance. The training for the Prevent Duty is conveyed in a number of different ways. Some professionals have to do a 30-min online module, while others can be invited to an in-person training session (Home Office 2015b). On paper, these sessions are designed to serve as spaces where people can raise questions and concerns. The Prevent coordinators and trainers I interviewed discussed how they settled people's fears and concerns about Prevent in their training sessions. As such, these sessions serve as both avenues for vocal and visible resistance by the frontline staff and counter-resistance by the state. In some ways, resistance can also start even before the individual attends the training. A social worker (LA05), discussed above, used the invitation for the training as an opportunity for resistance by refusing to do the training:

> A manager contacted me and said "we are looking for somebody to lead on making sure everyone does the Prevent training" and I said I don't want to do that… I think that Prevent is racist, so you should find someone else. And they said, "oh right, fair enough" and didn't come back to me. (Social Worker, LA05)

This was an overt form of resistance whereby this social worker took a vocal stance against the Prevent Duty and explained their reasons to their manager. By refusing to take the training, he also delivered the message that he would not be enacting the duty in his day-to-day routines. Given the coercive influence of the Prevent Duty in the public sector, this instance of resistance can be taken as a rare occurrence where a professional can refuse to do mandatory training. In fact, even in the case of this social worker, he had to eventually take the Prevent Duty training, however, he attended the training to vocally express his unease with the policy. During our interview, he explained that even though the training session tried to minimize opportunities for negative feedback, he still managed to openly complain about the policy. While he initially refused to take the training, when he was forced to do so, this social worker changed his approach and put up some form of resistance during the training. This demonstrates the flexibility of everyday resistance because

individuals can tailor their responses depending on the context. This makes these scattered acts of resistance easier to take up rather than mounting a more organized challenge.

A schoolteacher, who is a teacher's union representative, also advocated using the Prevent training session as a way of contesting the policy. When asked how he helps new teachers who are worried about Prevent, he said that rather than boycotting, teachers should go to the training session and "challenge them on what's being said, ask questions, if you have concerns, then raise those" (Primary Schoolteacher, ED02). It should be noted that vocal acts of resistance entail challenging one's subjection and given the coercive nature of the Prevent Duty, this means that not everyone has the capacity to do so. An individual may have strong opposition to the duty and fear its negative impact on people but depending on their identity and place in the professional hierarchy, they may also have concerns about their own well-being. As discussed earlier, research on the impact of Prevent on NHS workers shows how frontline staff, especially those of Muslim faith, commonly practice self-censorship out of fear and mistrust in their sectors (Younis and Jadhav 2019). Both the social worker and schoolteacher (LA05 and ED02) discussed here are White, cis males and have been in their professions for a considerable amount of time. They are confident in their roles and can challenge authority, as such, resisting Prevent is easier for them, this may not be the case for everyone, and this is acknowledged by the schoolteacher:

> I think that, as a white, middle-aged guy… I would be perhaps slightly less inclined to worry about what people might think about me and about challenging me afterwards… but it may not be the same with other colleagues. (Primary Schoolteacher, ED02)

This admission explains that resistance to a policy like the Prevent Duty is diverse and scattered because there are a variety of factors that control what an individual can and cannot do. It is not possible for everyone to put up a strong challenge to the policy or make their opposition known. However, it is still useful to take stock of these interventions because it shows the extent to which these boundaries can be pushed. Therefore, the example of the schoolteacher (ED02) should not be seen as a limitation of resistance to Prevent but as an indicator of the diversity of actions that are possible.

Outside of the training spaces, we can also find vocal resistance to the Prevent Duty emerging in the form of direct communication with those impacted by the policy. A schoolteacher (ED03), discussed earlier, explained how he would deal with a student who expresses concerns about the duty, he said:

> I think I will be quite frank with them… I would be like that's what it says and that's what I think, and I understand your concerns and maybe I will explain that I don't really agree with that but I'm a teacher and there's laws [sic] in this country… but I'm taking it critically. (Trainee Primary Schoolteacher, ED03)

Within this form of vocal resistance, this teacher appears to claim some agency to speak freely in front of his students. He is attempting to subvert the system from within by doing a form of "symbolic compliance" that does not pose an overt challenge to the policy but puts up quiet challenges in the background (Scott 1985, 26). He is also trying to challenge the dominant narrative of security and threat by focusing on the concerns of his students rather than seeing them as potential suspects. The Graduate Teaching Assistant (ED-H07) discussed above also advocated a similar approach. When she was asked the same question, she explained that owing to her precarious situation in the higher education sector, what she can offer her students is solidarity against the oppression of the Prevent Duty:

> I don't think it's my job to put their minds at ease (about the Prevent Duty) because they should be scared… It is that level of danger that the government is putting on our students' lives… What I could assure is that they have my support, I cannot speak at the institutional level… so what I could offer to the student is my politics. (Graduate Teaching Assistant, ED-H07)

This form of resistance to Prevent is situated in a politics of solidarity. This tutor is resisting the negative impacts of Prevent by not necessarily challenging the institutional hierarchy but by providing a safe space to her marginalized students. While vocal, this form of resistance moves away from the individualistic focus of a very visible act of opposition to a more outward-looking praxis of solidarity. During the interview, she also talked about undertaking anti-racist trainings organized by social justice networks to enable her to challenge the Prevent Duty. The interventions of these educators (ED03 and ED-H07) help us add a new form of resistance to our typology that is vocal within small, targeted circles while remaining invisible within the wider perspective. By attempting to build networks among their peers or offering solidarity and safe spaces to their students, these educators are opening different fronts of resistance that can challenge the hegemony of the Prevent Duty without jeopardizing their positions within their professional sectors. While these are not always consistent enough to contribute to an established protest movement, this form of resistance is pragmatic and makes it possible for individual actors to take some form of action.

This typology of resistance covers insights from staff employed in different sectors, career stages, and coming from varying backgrounds. I have chosen to present these experiences together to highlight the commonalities across different sectors. We can see that staff across health, education, and social work sectors question the coercive impacts of the Prevent Duty and challenge its framing as a safeguarding responsibility. However, along with the similarities, we should also make note of the differences. As we can see, some people are better able to challenge the policy than others. In terms of sectoral dynamics, the education sector is more prominent for these interventions because tutors spend more time with students and have more opportunities to engage them in intellectual discussions. This makes challenging the Prevent narratives easier for a teacher as opposed to a doctor or a social worker who meets patients in stressful circumstances. While resistance is still possible in these sectors, the typology helps us see how it differs from one case to another and enables us to map the conditions that facilitate resistance.

Conclusion

Everyday resistance allows us to locate the interplay of power politics in the mundanity of everyday life by making visible the thoughts and actions of ordinary people who challenge power. Unlike the organized nature of protest movements, everyday resistance captures the irregular and scattered acts such as "foot-dragging, dissimulations, false compliance" (Scott 1989, 34). Given the entrenched nature of the Prevent Duty's counter-radicalization regime, everyday resistance is a useful framework for understanding how people contest this securitization of their civic lives. It opens up the "everyday" as a site of political contestations while also turning our gaze to interactions and activities that we would not notice as political or as acts of resistance. As such, it gives us the tools to challenge the hegemonic control of the Prevent Duty and reclaim agency as an act of defiance to this policy rather than wilful compliance.

Using the Prevent Duty as a case study also adds to our understanding of the multifaceted nature of everyday resistance. Using a typology, this paper provides three broad categories of actions that make up resistance to the Prevent Duty. Through the categories of cognitive, muted, and vocal resistance, we unpack the ways

people contest this policy as well as the factors that motivate them or hold them back. Furthermore, through this typology, we can also find the overlap and disconnect between these ideas and acts. As the previous discussion has shown, resistance to Prevent can either flow through a linear process where people's viewpoint of the policy is reflected in their actions, or it can be found in instances whereby people who otherwise advocate compliance with the policy choose to not make a Prevent referral in some cases. A university tutor (ED-H07) who views the Prevent Duty as a tool of "colonial, white supremacist" violence refuses to make a Prevent referral about a student who is constantly making prejudicial remarks, while a teacher (ED09) who sees Prevent as a useful intervention chooses not to refer a student to Prevent for a "racist remark." In both instances, the end result is resistance to the Prevent Duty; however, the thought processes and intentions informing these decisions are different. This shows that everyday resistance is not just scattered and irregular but can also be contradictory in some cases.

By analyzing the Prevent Duty through the framework of everyday resistance, this paper makes two key contributions. It introduces a new empirical case study to the already rich and diverse scholarship on everyday resistance (Vinthagen and Johansson 2013). Given the increasing prevalence of P/CVE policies, the typology of Prevent resistance can be used to study similar policy frameworks. Secondly, it adds to the study of Everyday Security by highlighting quotidian resistance to security as a technology of power relations. By identifying different modes of resistance to the Prevent Duty, this paper puts forward a whole range of interactions through which ordinary citizens interact with the state in the security sphere. In doing so, this paper also reclaims agency as a challenge to state authority rather than acceptance of the status quo.

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