

Educational influences on young people's support for fundamental British values

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In 2014 the British government called on schools to actively promote fundamental British values (FBVs), seeing this as an effective way to prevent the radicalisation of young people. The government considers these values to include democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and respect for people of different backgrounds and religions. Rather than criticising this policy on theoretical or ideological grounds, as many studies have done, the current article aims to ascertain support for the values labelled as fundamentally British among 23 year olds in England and to assess whether levels of support are associated with educational attainment and distinct educational practices experienced earlier in life. Data from the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS) are analysed for these purposes. A multidimensional measure of FBVs is constructed based on policy understandings of the term rather than statistical considerations. The article finds that levels of support for FBVs among 23 year olds are already very high and do not differ between the White British majority and various minority ethnic groups, although the small sample sizes of the latter do not allow for strong conclusions about these differences. Among the educational conditions, educational attainment and particularly track attended appears to be the only influential condition, with those obtaining academic qualifications showing significantly higher support for FBVs than those achieving vocational ones. Adding this variable to the model neutralises the effects of specific programmes or pedagogies experienced during lower secondary, such as citizenship education, an open climate of classroom discussion or school-based political activities.

Keywords: fundamental British values; young people; educational influences; tracking

Introduction

In November 2014 the UK government launched a policy calling on schools to actively promote fundamental British values (FBVs). This policy formed part of the government's counter-terrorism 'Prevent' strategy, which aims to avert the radicalisation of young people. Defining FBVs as 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs', the government urged schools to teach them as part of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils and offered specific suggestions for their delivery (Department for Education, 2014: 5). FBVs were also integrated in teaching standards and became part of the Ofsted inspections framework (Richardson & Bolloten, 2015; Panjwani, 2016). Interestingly, the government decided to concentrate on schools with its FBV initiative, that is on primary and lower secondary education, not 16–19 colleges. Although the latter were also obliged to engage with the Prevent

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duty, the Department of Education offered no specific guidance on how to teach FBVs for this group of education providers. Instead, these providers were advised to train staff to help them ‘exemplify British values’ in their management and teaching, ‘challenge extremist ideas’ and decide when to share information about individuals at risk of radicalising (HM Government, 2015: 5).

The new policy received a critical response from academia and professional circles. Although the values as such were not questioned, the way of portraying them as ‘fundamentally British’ was seen as inappropriate and possibly leading to alienation among minorities, particularly Muslims (Bolloten & Richardson, 2015; Tomlinson, 2015). Some also suggested that the new policy might make teachers fearful of addressing sensitive themes in class, prompting them to prevent or close down open discussions of topical social and political issues (e.g. Smith, 2016). Others believed that the policy lacked conceptual clarity and represented an arbitrary selection of values (e.g. Richardson, 2015) or criticised the government for its alleged simplistic assumption that radicalisation results mainly from contact with and indoctrination into extremist ideology (see Panjwani, 2016).

The avalanche of criticism contrasts strongly with the paucity of empirical work on FBVs. The latter consists mainly of studies examining the attitudes of teachers, principals and student teachers towards the new policy and the ways in which schools integrate FBVs in their teaching (e.g. Maylor, 2016; McCully & Clarke, 2016; Panjwani, 2016). To my knowledge, so far no study has looked at support for FBVs among young people or whether schools are at all able to inculcate these values. These issues are of obvious relevance to the government. If young people already fully endorse FBVs or schooling cannot be shown to have a (lasting) impact on such values, then the necessity and effectiveness of the policy can be questioned.

This article therefore aims to ascertain support for FBVs among young people in England and to assess whether, and if so how, education fosters these values. By using data of the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS), the study is in the exclusive position to explore educational conditions both during lower secondary and thereafter, and assess whether these conditions have had any (lasting) impact on support for FBVs among a cohort of 22 and 23 year olds. CELS is further unique in permitting the construction of a measure of FBVs based on the latest wave of data collection (2014). Although this wave preceded the announcement of the new policy, it includes appropriate items for the development of such a measure, as I explain further below.

I wish to emphasise that by exploring support for FBVs I do not necessarily agree with the labelling of these values as ‘fundamentally British’. Indeed, it could be argued that democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance are values underpinning all democracies and are thus not unique to Britain, not even in their combination, as pointed out by Tomlinson (2015) and many others. I simply aim to assess support for these four values, disregarding their labelling, and am only using the acronym *FBVs* as a convenient way of referring to them. Focusing on these four values is appropriate, because they have been identified in the political science literature as cultural prerequisites of effective democratic rule, along with other values such as civic equality, solidarity and participation (Almond & Verba, 1963; Putnam, 1993; Rose & Mishler, 2001; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). The use of

data that preceded the FBV policy is beneficial in this respect, not only because it allows for an exploration of support for the four values prior to the policy's introduction (and thus for an assessment of the policy's necessity), but also because these values were measured before being propagated as 'fundamentally British', which could possibly have affected the responses of ethnic minority and non-British respondents.

The study finds that levels of support for FBVs among young people in their early 20s are already very high, both among native and ethnic minority youth. It further finds no evidence of distinct educational programmes or practices in lower secondary education having durable effects on these values. In contrast, the type of qualification obtained after lower secondary (vocational or academic) appears to be strongly related to the endorsement of FBVs. The article first discusses the origin of FBVs in government policy and the official understanding of these values. Next, it reviews the literature on education and liberal-democratic values to identify possible educational influences on FBVs. Subsequently, it presents the data source and provides an elaborate explanation of the construction of the FBV measure. The results section shows levels of support for FBVs in general and by ethnic and social group. It also presents an analysis of educational influences on FBVs. The discussion section interprets the findings and assesses their relevance and implications for government policy.

FBVs: Official definition and educational influences

In order to develop a measure of FBVs that reflects the concept as intended by policy makers as closely as possible, we first need to ascertain how the government defines FBVs. Interestingly, the concept originates not from educational circles but from internal affairs. In 2011 the Home Office introduced it as part of the more encompassing 'Prevent' strategy. More specifically, it was used to identify organisations promoting extremist values and to stop the cooperation with, and funding of, such organisations (HM Government, 2011). However, other than defining FBVs by what it held to be their antonym (extremist values), the government did not explain in greater detail what it meant by the four values seen as representing FBVs. More explanation was only offered in a guidance document to schools in November 2014 (Department of Education, 2014), which was released shortly after a high-profile speech in parliament by the Education Secretary announcing the policy in educational circles (Richardson & Bolloten, 2015). Although this document does not provide explicit definitions of each of the four values, it does put forward a list of things for schools to do in the provision of SMSC and a set of expected learning outcomes in relation to FBVs, allowing us to get a better sense of the official understanding of these values.

With respect to democracy, for instance, the document urges schools to 'encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England' (Department of Education, 2014: 5). Regarding the rule of law, schools are meant to 'enable students to (...) respect the civil and criminal law of England (...) [and] acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England' (Department of Education, 2014: 5). In relation to mutual respect and tolerance, schools are asked to 'further harmony between different cultural traditions

by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures'. In terms of the learning outcome for this value, students are expected to have developed 'an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour' (Department of Education, 2014: 5, 6). Of the four values, individual liberty is perhaps least clarified, with only the learning outcome of 'an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law' (Department of Education, 2014: 6) showing some affinity with this value. As I have not been able to identify other official documents with further clarifications, I will use the explanations in the guidance document as the basis for developing a measure of FBVs.

In what ways can schools foster FBVs? The guidance document itself proposes a number of actions, all of which have reference points in the academic literature on civic education and political engagement. Actions mentioned include (1) providing information about democracy and the legal system, (2) allowing students to have a voice through representation in school councils, (3) holding mock elections to mimic real ones, (4) teaching debating skills, such as defending one's point of view. The first of these actions, which is often associated with traditional civic education, is considered important for political engagement as it increases young people's knowledge and understanding of the political process and fosters a greater attachment to democratic principles (Leming, 1996; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Galston, 2001). Knowledge of institutions and civil rights, in turn, has been found to enhance several democratic dispositions, including tolerance of unpopular groups and political participation (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). The other actions point to a school of thought that highlights the importance of practice. The key idea is that young people need to *exercise* democracy, for instance by electing others and being elected themselves, by deliberating issues and by partaking in decisions, in order for them to develop the habits and skills of participating in politics (Kerr, 1999; Torney-Purta, 2002; Hoskins *et al.*, 2012; Kahne *et al.*, 2013). Research has found these activities to not only have an immediate impact on political participation, but also to leave a lasting mark on this outcome (McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Keating & Janmaat, 2016).

It is interesting to note that the actions mentioned above all relate to a single outcome (democratic political engagement) while the FBV initiative aims to foster a broader set of values. The one educational condition that has been demonstrated to promote a whole variety of civic outcomes simultaneously is educational attainment (i.e. highest level of education achieved). Education contributes directly to political engagement by enhancing knowledge and verbal cognitive skills, which enables people to better understand and navigate the world of politics (Nie *et al.*, 1996; Emler & Frazer, 1999; Dee, 2004). Apart from this direct (or absolute) effect, education has also been claimed to foster political engagement by enabling individuals to attain better social positions. The latter represents an indirect effect and is known as the positional effect of education (cf. Nie *et al.*, 1996; Helliwell & Putnam, 2007). Scholars also say that education promotes *tolerance*, firstly by providing people with the reasoning skills to see through prejudice and dismiss irrational fears of outgroups (Nunn *et al.*, 1978) and secondly by cultivating tolerance as a key social norm (Hyman & Wright, 1979; Stubager, 2008). The longer young people stay in the education

system, the more they are equipped with these skills and the longer they are exposed to the socialising influence of education. In addition, educational attainment has been found to be strongly correlated with support for postmaterialist values (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). These values concern an appreciation for human rights, individual autonomy and self-fulfilment, and can thus be seen as representing the value of individual liberty. Thus, only for educational attainment are there enough leads in the literature to anticipate that it has a strong positive effect on support for FBVs as a whole.

The study will assess educational attainment with an item on highest qualification obtained at age 22/23 (see further below). Two things need to be highlighted with respect to this measure. Firstly, as practically all youngsters now continue their education after lower secondary, differences in educational attainment are really a product of post-16 trajectories. It is therefore the experience of upper secondary and higher education that the measure primarily captures. Secondly, the measure captures both the level and type (academic or vocational) of the highest qualification obtained. In doing so it reflects the fact that educational routes start to diverge strongly after the completion of lower secondary education, separating young people not only by level and pace of learning but also by field (academic and different vocational tracks).

Taking type of education into account is useful, as academic and vocational tracks can have distinct effects on civic values (i.e. effects differing from those highlighted by the educational attainment literature discussed above) (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2016). Vocational tracks are said to prepare young people less well for democratic citizenship than academic ones for a variety of reasons. First, the *curriculum*, both as intended and as taught, often focuses on practical skills and social manners, which help students to blend into future work environments but not to question work relations (Dewey, 1966; Ten Dam & Volman, 2003). Teachers are less likely to encourage discussion of political issues as they fear a disruption of order within the class (Hurn, 1978; Ichilov, 1991). In the academic track, by contrast, more attention is devoted to developing general skills, such as critical thinking and defending an argument, and to discussing social and political issues, which are seen as important for civic and political engagement (Ichilov, 2002). Cross-track differences in the curriculum are particularly relevant for England, because of the rigorous separation of tracks in this country's system of upper secondary education, with practically no general courses, such as citizenship education, offered in the vocational tracks (Hager & Hyland, 2003; Dehmle, 2005).

Second, the influence of *peers* is different in vocational tracks. This is because of the concentration of students from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds in such tracks, which is itself the result of allocation to different tracks on the basis of prior achievement (Hallinan, 1994; Loveless, 1999). As family SES is also closely related to political engagement (Verba *et al.*, 1995; Achen, 2002), the preponderance of disadvantaged children in vocational tracks gives rise to a peer group culture marked by alternative status symbols, a rejection of the world of politics and a contempt for the educational process (Willis, 1997; Ichilov, 2002; van de Werfhorst, 2007). Third, as being allocated to a vocational track is associated with failure, students in the vocational track lack *self-confidence*, especially concerning educational aspirations (van Houtte and Stevens, 2009), and this can have knock-on effects on engagement with society more generally (van de Werfhorst, 2017).

Although the highest qualification obtained measure does not allow me to explore these three mechanisms, it does make it possible to assess whether educational attainment (or better, post-16 educational trajectory) is primarily related to support for FBVs through *level* or *type* of education. Moreover, I can assess its explanatory power in relation to that of other predictors, such as the actions mentioned earlier in the guidance document.

Data source, variables and method

Data source

I draw on CELS to explore the two research questions. This data source not only includes suitable indicators to measure FBVs (see below), but also information on various educational conditions, including educational attainment, pedagogical approaches and school composition. Moreover, the longitudinal character makes it possible to explore how lasting the effects of these educational conditions are. CELS includes panel data from a cohort of youngsters who were aged 11 and 12 (Year 7; first year of secondary school) when they were surveyed for the first time (in 2002–2003). Subsequently, this group was surveyed every two years until 2011. The last wave was collected in 2014, when respondents were 23 years old. The data from the first wave was collected from a nationally representative sample of 75 state-maintained schools in England (Benton *et al.*, 2008). Within the sampled schools, all the students of the year of interest were selected (i.e. all the students in a certain grade). This mode of selection was continued until Wave 3 (Year 11; ages 15–16). For Waves 4, 5 and 6, the respondents who had participated in Wave 3 were approached individually. The analytical sample of the current study consists of respondents who participated in Waves 1, 3 and 6 ($N = 420$).

CELS is no different from other longitudinal datasets in showing considerable attrition. While the study started out with 18,583 respondents in Wave 1, 38% of this original sample participated in Wave 3 and just 2.3% did so in Wave 6. Despite these high levels of attrition and the selective nature of this attrition (those who continued participating are on average from more privileged backgrounds than those who dropped out), the data is still useful as the respondents who participated in Waves 3 and 6 show sufficient variation on the variables of interest, both dependent and independent (see further below). To neutralise this selective attrition as much as possible, I calculated a weight using variables showing a particularly strong skew in drop-out.¹ By applying this weight I made the analytic sample comparable to the data of Wave 1. To offer further reassurance, any bias produced by attrition can be mitigated by including the variables responsible for the selective drop-out in the analyses as control variables (cf. Paterson, 2013: 29), which I will consequently do. What is more, several studies have shown that selective attrition affects aggregate *levels* of outcomes but not *relationships* between predictors and outcomes (e.g. Alderman *et al.*, 2001; Wolke *et al.*, 2009). I am primarily interested in the latter.

Nevertheless, it is possible that attrition occurred on variables not included in the analysis and that I am therefore not aware of. The results thus need to be interpreted with some caution (I return to this issue in the discussion).

Measuring FBVs

I decided to follow a *formative* approach in developing a synthetic index of FBVs. A formative as opposed to a reflective approach is based on theoretical considerations rather than construct internal consistency (Coltman *et al.*, 2008). In my case it allows me to build a measure that represents the official understanding of FBVs as closely and as completely as possible. By implication, the measure will be multidimensional, meaning that the same overall score across different respondents can reflect different values on the constituting components. According to critics, such measures should be avoided as they perform poorly on measurement equivalence and consequently do not compare like with like (Aléman & Woods, 2016). However, others have argued that a measure's *external validity*, meaning its ability to predict other phenomena or be predicted by causal conditions, is at least as important (Datler *et al.*, 2013). Welzel and Inglehart (2016: 1090, note 20) consider a synthetic measure compensating low internal consistency with high levels of external validity to be quite acceptable and actually preferable if its constituting components are not negatively correlated and do not outperform the synthetic measure in external validity (e.g. by showing higher levels of explained variance). I agree with this argument. Using a reflective approach would have ruled out the construction of a comprehensive FBV measure, which I consider to be a greater drawback than impaired internal consistency. Moreover, the government never made any assumption about the different values labelled as fundamentally British to form a cohesive latent syndrome of FBVs.

I used 13 items to construct four sub-indicators reflecting the constituent values and the overall index of FBVs (see Appendix A for the precise wording and reliability scores). Each sub-indicator represents the average of the responses to the items included in the indicator. As most of the items have five-point response scales ranging between complete disagreement and complete agreement, the sub-indicators simply follow this format, meaning that their scales vary between 1 (minimal support) and 5 (maximum support) for the value concerned.² Subsequently, the overall index of FBVs was constructed by averaging the scores of the four sub-indicators. Consequently, the overall index has the same scale as the sub-indicators, with higher values denoting greater endorsement of FBVs. It also implies that the indicators contribute equally to the index. The great advantage of this simple construction is that it allows for an assessment of both relative and absolute levels of support for FBVs.

The sub-indicator reflecting mutual respect and tolerance is based on six items asking respondents how much it would bother them to have people of a different race or ethnicity, a different religion or speaking a different language as neighbours or colleagues. Although these items unfortunately do not tap *political* tolerance (i.e. respecting people with different opinions and preferences), one may presume that the government would be concerned if many respondents expressed objections to living next to or working alongside cultural others. Support for the rule of law is captured with a question on whether obeying the law makes someone a good citizen, a question on whether terrorism is ever justified and a question on planned participation in a violent demonstration. Although only the first question taps the value directly, as the activities referred to in the latter two questions involve breaking the law, expressing approval for such activities would imply lack of support for the rule of law. I thus

consider them to be good (negative) indicators of this value. I am aware that terms such as ‘terrorism’ and ‘violent’ have strong negative connotations, possibly invoking socially desirable responses. Yet, I judged the variation of responses on these items to still be meaningful. For instance, still 5.5% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that ‘terrorism is never justified’ and 12.1% said they neither agreed nor disagreed. Democracy is tapped with three items: (1) whether democracy is better than any other form of government; (2) whether democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling (i.e. a negative item which was reversed); and (3) whether the respondent intends to vote in the next national elections. The last item was included as the government mentioned ‘participation in the democratic process’ in its explanation of the value of democracy (see earlier). Individual liberty is measured with a single item about whether people should be able to protest peacefully against a law they believe to be unjust. This item was considered an appropriate indicator of individual liberty as it refers to freedom of speech as an important political right of individual citizens. Unfortunately, no other suitable items were found to tap this value.

We note that these 13 items are all either positively correlated or not correlated with one another. Thus, none of them cancel each other out. The correlations among the four sub-indicators are all significantly positive and each of them shows a strong positive correlation of more than 0.57 to the FBV index (see Table 1). Reliability analysis on the four indicators generates an alpha of 0.51. Thus, even though the index represents a formative approach of measurement construction, as it was primarily motivated by a desire to capture FBVs as comprehensively as possible, it still has a rudimentary level of internal consistency. The positive correlations among the sub-indicators meet Welzel and Inglehart’s requirement of the dimensions not being mutually exclusive. Moreover, as we shall see below, the index passes Welzel and Inglehart’s test of external validity with flying colours: not only does it achieve an impressive level of explained variance, it also outperforms its constituent components on this measure by a wide margin (see note 4). I thus believe it is justified to continue with the developed index.

Educational conditions

Wave 3 data was used to measure a number of educational conditions pertaining to lower secondary and thought to influence support for FBVs. The citizenship education (CE) curriculum was covered by six variables: *CE Volume*, which is based on a question about the amount of citizenship education received in school (response categories ‘none at all’, ‘a little’ and ‘a lot’) and five variables capturing the *content* of the

Table 1. Correlations between the components of the FBV index

	FBV index	Rule of law	Individual liberty	Mutual respect
Democracy	.60***	.28***	.23***	.20***
Rule of law	.57***		.19***	.12*
Individual liberty	.59***			.21***
Mutual respect	.70***			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

curriculum. The latter represent items asking respondents whether they have learnt about a variety of topics including parliament and government, voting and elections, crime and punishment, resolving conflict and the media. We treated these variables as categorical ones. The learning by doing approaches were captured with two variables. The first was labelled *Open Climate* of classroom discussion. It represents the average of six items on whether teachers enable open discussions of topical issues and encourage students to express their own opinions in class (Cronbach alpha = 0.81). Its values range between 1 (maximally restrictive) and 5 (maximally open). The second is *School Political Activities*. This variable represents the sum total of four items asking respondents whether they had participated in debating clubs, student councils, elections for council members and/or mock elections in their schools in the last year. It has a minimum of 0 (not participated in any of these activities) and a maximum of 3 (participated in all of them). Appendix A provides the full wording of these questions and their response categories.

I used a Wave 6 item on highest qualification attained to measure *Educational Attainment*. The response categories of this item are based on the National Qualifications Framework for England and Wales³ and cover both the level of the qualification (e.g. Level 2, lower secondary; Level 3, upper secondary; Level 6, degree) and the type of qualification (academic, such as A-levels, or vocational, such as NVQ and B Tech). I leave these categories intact and thus treat the variable as a categorical one (see Appendix A for the categories).

Control variables

I added controls for *Gender*, *Ethnicity* (White British; Asian; Black; other), *Current Activity* (in work; in education or training; neither) and social background. The latter was captured with five variables: *Home Resources*, based on a Wave 3 item on the number of books at home, *Educational Attainment Mother*, *Educational Attainment Father*, *Occupational Status Mother* and *Occupational Status Father* (see Appendix A for the items on which these variables were based). Unfortunately, most of the items used to measure the FBV index were only asked in Wave 6. This means that it is not possible to determine levels of support for FBVs prior to the occurrence of educational conditions, which hampers our ability to ascertain whether any effect of an educational condition on support for FBVs is genuine or represents a selection effect—that is, the propensity of youngsters with high levels of support for FBVs from the onset to experience certain educational conditions or make certain educational choices. However, data from Wave 3 (age 16) on *intention to vote in national elections* is available, which is one of the items included in the index. This wave also includes an item on *educational aspirations* (see Appendix A for the wording). Previous research found the latter to be an important determinant of both academic achievement and political engagement (Lauglo & Øia, 2007; Khattab, 2015; Neundorf *et al.*, 2016). Adding these two variables to the analysis allows me to better assess the effect of at least one of the educational conditions, namely educational attainment (i.e. post-16 educational trajectories): if this effect turns out to be significant, I can state with greater certainty that the influence of this condition is real.

Methods

I examine the influence of educational conditions on support for FBVs using stepwise linear regression analysis. The stepwise approach allows us to assess what happens to the effects of educational conditions when more variables are added progressively. To prevent loss of data due to missing values on individual items (i.e. item non-response), I imputed data using the Bayesian estimation technique of multiple imputation (MI) in Mplus (see Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2012). This technique uses all the variables in the analysis (both independent and dependent ones) to impute the missing values and generate a predefined number, 10 in our case, of imputed datasets. The final estimate of a parameter is then obtained from the average of the parameter estimates over the 10 imputed datasets. MI is able to account for non-random missingness as it is based on the observed values of a certain respondent and on the relations observed in the data for other respondents (cf. Schafer & Graham, 2002). Owing to the clustered structure of the sample (respondents in grades; grades in schools), the observations are not independent. I employed the TYPE=COMPLEX method in Mplus to make the standard errors robust to this non-independence (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2012), using the school ID variable to indicate the clustering of the data.

Results

Young people's support for FBVs appears to be at a very high level in absolute terms, as shown by a mean of slightly less than 4 on a scale ranging from 1 (minimal support) to 5 (maximum support); 97.5% of the respondents scored higher than the neutral midpoint of 3 (see Figure 1). Of further interest is the fact that there are no significant differences between Asian British (mean of 3.93), Black British (mean of 3.92) and White British (mean of 3.98) in their levels of support for FBVs. Ironically, the only group with a significantly higher level of support for fundamentally British values is the 'other' category (mean of 4.24), comprising people of mixed ethnic heritage, European mainlanders and others. We should not attach too much value to the figures of the Black British and the 'other' categories, as the number of respondents in these groups is very small (8 and 14, respectively). The Asian British, which comprise Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indians, show a decent representation in the sample ($N = 47$) and are actually overrepresented by comparison with the White British ($N = 350$). As many of these are Muslims, the implicit target group of the FBV policy, the finding that this group does not show lower levels of support for FBVs than the White British is more meaningful, although we still have to be cautious in making generalising claims due to the small sample size overall. Unlike ethnicity, social background does matter, as groups with fewer cultural resources (measured by number of books at home) show significantly lower levels of support ($r = .30$; $p < .001$).

In terms of the predictors of interest, nearly all respondents indicated that they received some citizenship education in Year 11 (only 2.3% said they hadn't received any). Topics most often mentioned as themes they learned about at school include crime and punishment (83%), the media (71%), parliament and government (66%). Less popular themes were voting (59%) and conflict resolution (53%). Students

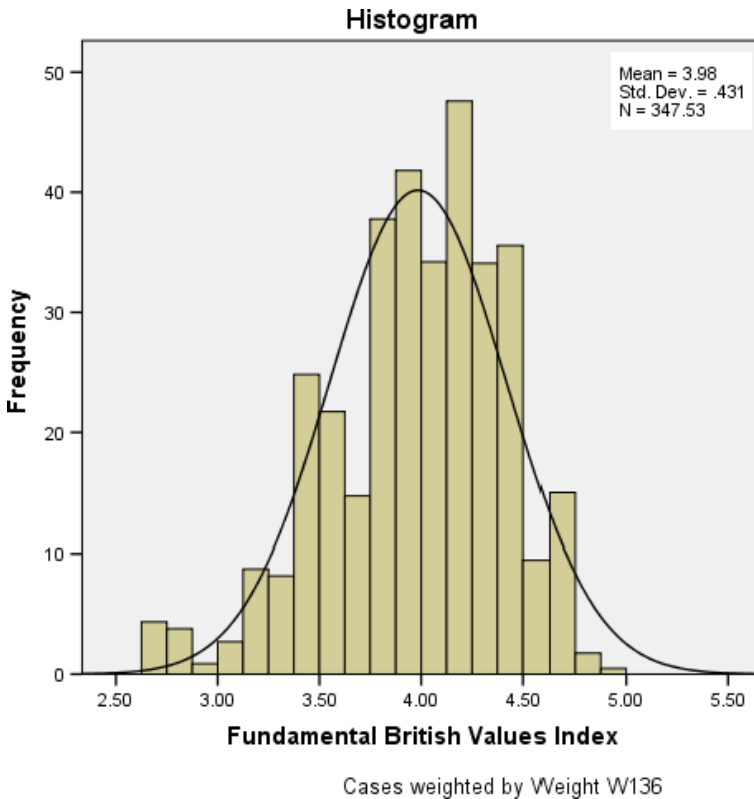


Figure 1. The distribution of values on the FBV index. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

appeared quite nuanced in their perceptions of an open climate of classroom discussion, showing a mean of 3.3 on a scale ranging from 1 (minimal openness) to 5 (maximum openness). Responses on the school political activities variable were skewed towards the non-participatory end, as the mean of this variable was only 0.77 on a scale ranging from 0 (no participation in any activities) to 4 (participation in all activities). In terms of educational attainment post-16, we see that 41% managed to obtain an undergraduate degree as their highest qualification at age 22–23; 61% obtained an academic qualification (GCSE 5A–Cs, A-levels, degree), 31.8% a vocational qualification (NVQ levels 2, 3 and 4/5) and 6.2% achieved the lowest level of qualification (Level 1). Missing values were highest on conflict resolution (32.1%), occupational status of father (26.7%) and education of father (25.5%) (see Table 2 for the descriptive statistics of all independent variables).

As noted before, I use a stepwise approach to examine the links between educational conditions and support for FBVs, as shown in Table 3. Model 1 includes the educational conditions in lower secondary and the sociodemographic controls; Model 2 adds post-16 educational trajectories and current activity to these variables; Model 3 further adds intentions to vote and educational aspirations. Looking at Model 1 we see that CE Volume is positively related to endorsement of FBVs controlling for sociodemographic characteristics. More precisely, students who reported not having

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the independent variables in the analytical sample ($N = 420$)

Categorical variables					
Variable	Valid N (%)	Missing (%)	Variable	Valid N (%)	Missing (%)
CE volume (Wave 3)		9.8	Ethnicity (Wave 6)		0.7
A lot	39.6		Asian Br	10.1	
A little	57.3		Black Br	1.4	
None at all	3.2		White Br	85.6	
Content (Wave 3)			Other	2.9	
Crime	83.3 (% yes)	11.7	Current activity (Wave 6)		0
Media	71.5 (% yes)	17.4	In work	82.1	
Parliament	65.6 (% yes)	22.4	In education	8.3	
Voting	59.8 (% yes)	22.4	Something else	9.5	
Conflict resolution	53.3 (% yes)	32.1			
Attainment (Wave 6)		0.2			
Degree	41.1				
NVQ 4&5	15.0				
A-levels	11.0				
NVQ 3	11.5				
GCSE 5A–Cs	9.8				
NVQ 2	5.3				
Level 1	6.2				
Variables treated as continuous					
Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Missing (%)
Open climate (Wave 3)	1	5	3.27	0.79	1.4
School political activities (Wave 3)	0	3	0.77	0.81	0
Gender (1 boy; 2 girl) (Wave 6)	1	2	1.52	0.50	0
Home resources (Wave 3)	1	6	4.02	1.44	0
Education mother (Wave 6)	1	3	1.65	0.76	25.2
Education father (Wave 6)	1	3	1.68	0.79	25.5
Occupational status mother (Wave 6)	1	9	5.29	3.10	11.4
Occupational status father (Wave 6)	1	9	5.38	2.88	26.7
Voting intentions (Wave 3)	1	4	3.07	0.86	10.5
Educational aspirations (Wave 3)	1	4	3.25	1.11	11.7

had any CE at all had a significantly lower score in comparison to those who said they received a lot of CE (the reference category). In contrast, the content of the curriculum seems not to matter for young people's support of FBVs as none of the themes the students said they had learnt about at school show significant links with the outcome. Neither do the two educational conditions representing learning by doing approaches, namely open climate of classroom discussion and school political activities, appear influential, although open climate is close to being significantly related to the outcome. These results already tell us that educational conditions experienced in lower secondary leave little trace on values eight years down the line.

Moreover, once educational attainment and current activity are added to the model, the link between the amount of citizenship education received and support for

Table 3. Determinants of support for fundamental British values

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i> -ratio	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i> -ratio	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i> -ratio
Educational predictors						
CE volume						
A lot (ref. cat.)						
A little	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.28	0.01	0.11
None at all	-0.49*	-2.00	-0.31	-1.29	-0.34	-1.62
Content						
Crime	-0.05	-0.74	-0.01	-0.14	-0.01	-0.15
Parliament	0.03	0.48	0.01	0.07	-0.01	-0.11
Voting	-0.04	-0.50	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.15
Conflict resolution	0.07	1.12	0.09	1.58	0.09	1.48
Media	-0.03	-0.44	0.05	0.09	-0.02	-0.37
Open climate	0.07	1.90	0.05	1.67	0.04	1.18
School political activities	0.02	0.91	0.00	0.12	0.01	0.19
Educational attainment						
Degree (ref. cat.)						
NVQ 4&5			-0.05	-0.70	-0.04	-0.53
A-levels			-0.07	-0.93	-0.06	-0.72
NVQ 3			-0.27***	-3.99	-0.24***	-3.65
GCSE 5A-Cs			-0.09	-0.77	-0.04	-0.34
NVQ 2			-0.35*	-2.47	-0.33**	-2.79
Level 1			-0.50**	-3.33	-0.41**	-3.42
Controls						
Gender (1 boy; 2 girl)	-0.01	-0.25	-0.02	-0.33	-0.03	-0.65
Ethnicity						
White British (ref. cat.)						
Asian or British Asian	0.13	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.00	0.03
Black or Black British	-0.05	-0.24	-0.15	-0.70	-0.13	-0.58
Other	0.24	1.88	0.18*	2.02	0.16*	2.04
Home resources	0.10**	3.07	0.08**	2.72	0.06	1.71
Education mother	-0.04	-1.14	-0.01	-0.32	-0.02	-0.69
Education father	-0.01	-0.22	-0.04	-0.89	-0.04	-1.23
Occupational status mother	0.02	1.80	0.01	0.84	0.01	1.00
Occupational status father	0.02	1.30	0.02	1.44	0.02	1.54
Current activity						
In education (ref. cat.)						
Working			-0.07	-0.90	-0.05	-0.51
Something else			-0.18	-1.51	-0.15	-0.99
Voting intentions Wave 3					0.05	1.60
Educational aspirations					0.02	0.87
Explained variance (%)	24		39		40	
<i>N</i>	420		420		420	

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Note: *t*-ratios are reported rather than standard errors, since they allow for an easier interpretation of the strengths of effects. A *t*-ratio represents the coefficient divided by the standard error. The more it departs from 0 (in either a negative or a positive way), the stronger the effect.

FBVs disappears (see Model 2). Educational attainment, in contrast, is strongly connected to the outcome. Those with vocational qualifications are significantly less supportive of FBVs than those with undergraduate degrees (the reference category). Interestingly, the *level* of these qualifications matters much less, as is very evident among those with academic qualifications: those with Level 2 (5 GCSEs at grades A to C) and Level 3 (A-levels) diplomas were not significantly different from those with Level 6 (undergraduate degrees) qualifications in their support for these values. This also applies largely to people with vocational qualifications: those with Level 2 and 3 diplomas have significantly lower levels of support. Only those with a Level 4 or 5 vocational qualification do not have a significantly lower score than the reference category. The vocational experience of this group of students is mixed, however, as 25% of them also completed A-levels (i.e. an academic Level 3 qualification). The stark difference between the vocationally and academically schooled respondents suggests that the diverging educational pathways post-16 have a defining influence on the political outlook and democratic engagement of young people in their early twenties and erase the impact of earlier educational activities in the process.

We further see that adding Wave 3 voting intentions and educational aspirations to the model does not change the effect of educational attainment (see Model 3). Those with vocational degrees continue to show significantly lower levels of support for FBVs than graduates. In terms of effect size, we see that those with Level 3 vocational qualifications have on average a 0.24 lower score on the FBV index (which ranges between 1 and 5) than those with degrees, which equates to a gap of 6%. Those with the lowest level of qualifications (Level 1) even have a 0.41 lower score, denoting a difference of 10.3% with degree holders, but this effect is slightly weaker than that of Level 3 vocational qualifications (compare the *t*-ratios). Interestingly, the two added controls are not significantly related to the outcome. Among the other variables, only home resources appears influential, but this effect is not as strong as that of educational attainment. Thus, post-16 educational trajectories do not only override earlier educational influences, but also appear to be far more important than any of the other measured influences on FBVs.

We finally note that the models perform very well in terms of explained variance. From Model 1 to Model 3, the proportion of the variance in FBVs that is explained by the included variables rises progressively from 23.8% to 40.0%. Thus, what the FBV index lacks in internal consistency it more than compensates for with an excellent performance in external validity (see the discussion earlier).⁴

Discussion

The British government firmly believes that certain key democratic values, which it chose to label as ‘fundamentally British’, need to be promoted in order to prevent young people from developing extremist convictions. It also assumes that schools are able to teach these values and are effective in instilling them in young people. The current article has not been able to examine whether the promotion of these values indeed thwarts radicalisation. However, it did manage to gauge overall support for fundamental British values (FBVs) among a group of 22 and 23 year olds immediately preceding the introduction of the FBV policy, and to assess whether the

education they experienced, in terms of specific content, courses, pedagogies and tracks, has had a lasting impact on this outcome.

Young people in Britain appear to be very supportive of FBVs, at least according to the data that I analysed (CELS). Only a very small minority (less than 3%) are more critical of these values. This at first sight questions the necessity of promoting FBVs: What can be gained further if levels of support are already very high? However, as the government is covertly targeting ethnic minorities, and Muslim youth in particular, with the FBV initiative (Bolton & Richardson, 2015; Smith, 2016), it may be more interested in the endorsement of these values among specific minority groups rather than overall levels of support. In this regard a key finding of the current study is that Asian British and Black British respondents are not expressing significantly lower levels of support for FBVs than their White British peers. I hasten to add that this finding should be read as *provisional*, due to the small numbers of ethnic minority respondents in some of the categories (particularly the Black British one).

Nonetheless, this result is echoed by Janmaat (2012), who found no difference between native majority youth and adolescents of non-western backgrounds in their support for basic civic values once social background and educational achievement were taken into account. More broadly, the finding is in agreement with the idea that the four values labelled as fundamentally British actually constitute 'universal human values theoretically upheld in many countries' (Tomlinson, 2015: 2210). We should therefore not be surprised to find different ethno-cultural groups embracing them to an equal degree. Indeed, in a small survey of teachers of Muslim heritage, Panjwani (2016) found that these teachers perceived the four values to be *compatible with* rather than antithetical to Islam. These findings and considerations question the premise on which the policy, according to many observers, is based, namely that Muslim youth are wanting in their endorsement of the four values and are therefore more susceptible to radicalisation.

In contrast to ethnicity, home cultural resources are positively associated with support for FBVs, indicating that alienation from these values is prevalent among socially marginalised individuals within each ethnic group. This provisionally suggests that more targeted and ethno-culturally neutral approaches might be more effective in strengthening support for the values labelled as fundamentally British.

Is education effective in promoting FBVs? Yes, it appears it is, but not in the way expected by the government. I found that post-16 educational trajectories (as proxied by educational attainment) leave a decisive mark on support for FBVs. Indeed, this influence supersedes and neutralises that of earlier educational conditions which, according to the government, should help in fostering these values, such as citizenship education and pedagogical approaches focusing on learning through practice. It would be premature, however, to conclude that these conditions are therefore not effective in fostering FBVs at all. Perhaps they would leave a lasting impact if they were targeted at an age group that is more receptive to curriculum input on social and political affairs, such as late teenagers and young adults (see the discussion further below). Alternatively, earlier phases of education, such as primary education, could have been effective in inculcating these values with targeted interventions. I could not test these propositions with the data at hand, and this is thus an issue for future research to address.

Particularly striking regarding the impact of post-16 educational trajectories is the fact that those who obtained vocational qualifications are much less supportive of FBVs than those who took academic routes. Another conspicuous finding was that within each of these tracks there are practically no differences between the various qualification *levels* in terms of support for FBVs. The latter is surprising in view of the many studies finding a strong link between educational attainment (exclusively understood as *level* of education) and a variety of civic outcomes, as highlighted previously. Perhaps the discrepancy in findings is due to some of these studies not taking the type of qualification into account (vocational or academic) when assessing the impact of educational attainment.

Of course, caution is required in inferring causality from a strong link between an educational condition and some civic outcome—in our case between post-16 educational trajectory and support for FBVs. As noted above, such a link may well reflect a selection effect (i.e. the impact of characteristics determining both the experience of this educational condition and the outcome of interest) (cf. Kam & Palmer, 2008; Persson, 2014). However, the fact that the coefficient of educational trajectory remained significant after adding controls for relevant selection characteristics suggests that the influence of educational trajectory is genuine. What is more, other recently published studies focusing on civic and political engagement have argued similarly that educational track exerts a real effect on these outcomes (Janmaat *et al.*, 2014; Hoskins & Janmaat, 2016; van de Werfhorst, 2017).

The results thus suggest, worryingly, that young people educated in vocational tracks in the English system of upper secondary education are deprived of the input that allows their peers in the academic track to develop stronger attachments to key democratic values. Whether this input represents one or more of the mechanisms that I discussed earlier to shed light on cross-track differences (i.e. the curriculum, peer influences or feelings of failure) is something I could not assess with the current study. Of further interest is the fact that the effect of educational attainment is likely to have been absolute rather than positional, because I mainly found differences between *type* of qualification (academic versus vocational) and less so between *levels* of qualification. If young people's support for FBVs had solely been a reflection of the social status attained through education, we should have seen a much stronger effect of *level* of attainment. After all, with a university degree one is much more likely to attain high social status (including access to more prestigious jobs) than with a Level 2 (GCSE 5A–Cs). This tentative conclusion is only reinforced by the fact that I did not find one's current activity to be associated with the outcome. Surely, if relative position had played a role, being in work, in education or doing something else would have mattered for supporting FBVs.

With these observations in mind, I argue that if the government wishes to promote FBVs still further (despite levels of support already being quite high), it needs to focus on upper secondary education. At this stage (late adolescence), young people are becoming interested in wider political and social issues and are thus especially susceptible to input that influences their civic and political engagement (Hooghe & Wilkenfeld, 2008; Flanagan, 2009). More particularly, the government might want to consider eliminating differences between vocational and academic tracks in educational matters relevant for developing an attachment to key democratic values. One

concrete measure could be to put in place a uniform, or largely the same, curriculum of citizenship education across tracks. This has been in existence for some time in Sweden (Lindberg, 2003) and has recently been implemented in the Netherlands (Dutch Government, 2015). This measure would probably be most effective if it was accompanied by the institution of common citizenship education classes (i.e. grouping students of different tracks together in the same class), as this would allow students to experience the same peer influences and curriculum input.

However, the limitations of this study do need to be highlighted. As explained earlier, the data source used for the study suffers from high and selective attrition. I created and applied a special weight to deal with this problem. This weight, however, may not have included all the variables showing considerable slanted fall-out. If true, the analysis is likely to have *overestimated* the actual level of support for FBVs in the population of 22 and 23 year olds. Secondly, as also highlighted above, the number of minority respondents is too small in the CELS sample and some of the ethnic categories are too broad (e.g. the category lumping Indians, Pakistani and Bangladeshi together). Top-ups for minority groups and more refined ethnic categories could solve these problems. Thirdly, the measurement of FBVs was confined to a single wave (Wave 6). Measurements of FBVs at earlier waves would have enabled a more robust assessment of the impact of post-16 trajectories. This measurement was further restricted by the items available in the data. For some components (e.g. mutual respect and tolerance), more suitable indicators could be found than for others (e.g. individual liberty). Some of the items used have also been phrased in ways that could have resulted in a social desirability bias. These issues could be addressed if new panel data were collected, specifically geared at measuring FBVs. Notwithstanding these limitations, this study offers a useful contribution to the evaluation of the FBV initiative by providing a first glimpse at levels of support for FBVs among young people, however provisional, and at the educational conditions influencing them.

NOTES

- ¹ These are the variables 'Education level Mother' and 'Intention to vote', which were asked in all three waves. The latter is particularly important as it captures a disposition to participate which is likely to have also influenced continued participation in the study. The author will provide the calculation of this weight upon request.
- ² Some of the items have a four-point Likert scale. These were transformed to a five-point one. The scales of two items were reversed (see Appendix A).
- ³ See <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>
- ⁴ In fact, this 40% explained variance is much higher than the explained variance of equivalent models with the four subscales as dependent variables (model on tolerance = 25%; model on rule of law = 21%; model on support for democracy = 30%; model on individual liberty = 19%; the full results of these models are available upon request). This adds to the rationale of focusing on one encompassing index of FBVs rather than its constituent components (see earlier discussion).

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Appendix A: Survey items measuring the dependent and independent variables

Dependent variable: FBV index

Sub-indicator	Item in survey	Response categories
Tolerance and mutual respect*	For each of the following statements please indicate how much it would bother you to have people: of a different race or ethnicity as neighbours of a different religion as neighbours who speak a different language as neighbours of a different race or ethnicity as colleagues of a different religion as colleagues who speak a different language as colleagues	a great deal; rather a lot; a little; not very much; not at all
Rule of law**	A good adult citizen obeys the law Terrorism is never justified If you were confronted by something you thought was wrong would you take part in a violent demonstration? [reversed]	strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree definitely not do this; probably not do this; probably do this; definitely do this

Appendix A1 (Continued)

Sub-indicator	Item in survey	Response categories
Democracy***	Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government	strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree
	Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling [reversed]	
	We would like to know about what you think you may do in the future. In the future, will you vote in general elections?	definitely not do this; probably not do this; probably do this; definitely do this
Individual liberty	People should be able to protest peacefully against a law that they believe to be unjust	strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; strongly agree

* $\alpha = 0.90$; ** $\alpha = 0.42$; the correlations between the 3 items are all positive; *** $\alpha = 0.30$; the correlations between the 3 items are all positive.

Independent variables

Key variables	Item in survey	Response categories	Wave
CE volume	Are you taught about 'citizenship' in school?	not at all; a little; a lot	3
Content	Over the last 12 months, have you learned about any of the following topics in school (in any lessons)?		3
crime	Crime and punishment	no; yes	
parliament	Parliament and government		
voting	Voting and elections		
conflict	Resolving conflict		
media	The media		
Open climate	We would like to know what generally happens in your lessons. In lessons. . .	not at all; not much; sometimes; quite a bit; a lot	3
	Do students bring up issues in the news for discussion?		
	Are students encouraged to make up their own minds about issues?		
	Do students feel free to express opinions even when they are different from most of the class?		
	Do teachers present several sides of an issue when explaining it?		
	Do teachers respect students' opinions and encourage them to express them?		
	Do students feel free to disagree with teachers during discussions about topical issues?		

Appendix A1 (Continued)

Key variables	Item in survey	Response categories	Wave
School political activities	In the last year, have you taken part in any of the following clubs, groups or activities in school? Debating clubs/groups School/student councils Electing school/class council members Mock elections	no; yes	3
Educational attainment	Starting from the top of this list, please look down the list of qualifications and tell me the number of the first qualification you come to that you've got. [tick one box only]	1. Degree (academic level 6); 2. NVQ 4&5 (vocational levels 4 and 5); 3. A levels (academic level 3); 4. NVQ 3 (vocational level 3); 5. GCSE 5A–Cs (academic level 2); 6. NVQ 2 (vocational level 2); 7. Level 1	6
Control variables	Item in survey	Response categories	Wave
Ethnicity	How would you describe yourself?	White British; Asian or British Asian; Black or Black British; Other	6
Current activity	Which of the following best describes the MAIN thing you are currently doing? Are you...?	Working; in education; doing something else	6
Home resources	About how many books are there in your home?	None (0 books); Very few (1–10 books); Enough to fill one shelf (11–50 books); Enough to fill one bookcase (51–100 books); Enough to fill two bookcases (101–200 books); Enough to fill three or more bookcases (more than 200 books)	3
Educational attainment mother	How long did your mother and father stay in education?	Left full-time education at 15 or 16; Left after college or sixth form; Studied at university/got a degree	3
Educational attainment father	ibid	ibid	3

Appendix A1 (Continued)

Control variables	Item in survey	Response categories	Wave
Occupational status mother	So, firstly, what does your mother (or female carer) do for a living? Which of the following best describes the sort of work she does?	Never worked; Homemaker/carer; Semi- or unskilled manual work; Skilled manual work; Foreman or supervisor; Small business owner; Sales or services; Clerical; Manager or senior administrator; Professional or higher technical work	6
Occupational status father	ibid	ibid	6
Intention to vote	We would like to know about what you think you may do in the future. In the future, will you vote in general elections?	definitely not do this; probably not do this; probably do this; definitely do this	3
Educational aspirations	When do you think you may leave full-time education?	At the end of Year 11 (at age 16); At age 17 (one year after taking GCSEs); At age 18 (two years after taking GCSEs); In my early 20s, after a university or other course in higher education	3