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The Making of Militarism:

Gender, Race and Organisational Cultures in UK National Security Policymaking

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

I declare that this thesis consists of 94,493 words.

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Abstract

Feminist and post/decolonial scholarship has shown that gender and race, as systems of power, produce and are produced by militarism and coloniality. This study offers an empirical contribution to this body of work, examining the relationships among gender, race, militarism and coloniality in UK national security policymaking. Based on semi-structured interviews with 60 national security officials and 182 hours of participant observation, this thesis examines how organisational cultures in UK government departments involved in national security policymaking are gendered and racialised, and how this shapes policy discussions. It asks what racially-coded constructions of masculinity and femininity are invoked by and produced through policy discussions, examining how these appear in the systems of meaning, norms and epistemologies that constitute organisational cultures. Through a discourse analysis of counterterrorism policy discussions, I show how the discursive linking of different security practices to constructions of masculinity and whiteness legitimises liberal militarism. Noting the increasing presence of women and people of colour in national security policymaking, I explore how these officials are experiencing and (partially) remaking organisational cultures. While some women have succeeded in valorising notions of white femininity that challenge certain masculinist norms, I argue that this does not challenge the liberal militarist worldview that is part of the organisational script to which securocrats are expected to adhere. Further, I argue that norms entrenching ignorance concerning the role of national security policies in perpetuating systemic racism make it difficult to challenge militarist and colonial policies. I conclude that while the national security community is increasingly diverse, shifts in organisational cultures have favoured constructions of gender and race that sustain liberal militarism. Antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist efforts to reimagine security governance must go beyond diversity initiatives to dismantle the gendered and racialised norms, systems of meaning and epistemologies that underpin militarism and coloniality.

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List of Abbreviations

ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
BAME	Black, Asian and minority ethnic
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CONTEST	Counter-Terrorism Strategy
CVE	Countering violent extremism
DFID	Department for International Development
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GAPS	Gender Action for Peace and Security UK
GCHQ	Government Communications Headquarters
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
IR	International Relations
IRA	Irish Republican Army
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MP	Member of Parliament
NAP	National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PVE	Preventing violent extremism
SaDDIN	Security and Defence Diversity and Inclusion Network
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Successive UK governments of different political stripes have placed military preparedness at the centre of their approach to security. Despite its small size, and the presence of "no immediate direct military threat to the UK mainland" (HM Government 2015a, p.24), the UK spent £38 billion on defence in 2018/19, the eighth highest military spending of any country in the world (Ministry of Defence 2020, p.2; SIPRI 2020, p.2). The government has pledged to continue boosting defence spending, lift the cap on the size of its nuclear warheads stockpile, and "deploy more of our armed forces overseas more often and for longer periods of time", whether on operations or to train others (HM Government 2021, p.4, 75, 76). In contrast, it has consistently identified global pandemic influenza as a "Tier One" national security threat, based on its high likelihood and potentially devastating consequences for the UK population (HM Government 2010, p.27, 2015a, pp.85–86; Hopkins 2020). Yet, from 2010, pandemic preparedness became a victim of economic austerity: emergency stockpiles of gowns and masks for health workers were reduced, and training for key workers postponed (Calvert, Arbuthnott & Leake 2020). When the global COVID-19 pandemic reached the UK in 2020, this failure/refusal of preparation contributed to the country experiencing some of the highest death rates in the world. In the face of urgent crises caused by disease, climate change and vast economic inequalities, the British government's actions reflect a conceptualisation of security that remains determinedly militaristic.

This thesis is concerned with understanding the processes that make this militarist worldview possible. After all, militarism — a set of attitudes, relations and social practices which regards the preparation for and practice of organised political violence as a normal and desirable social activity (see Mann 1987, p.35) — is not an inevitable feature of societies. It takes work to reproduce the idea that permanent, organised systems of state violence are necessary in order to keep people safe. In particular, the thesis is inspired by the work of feminist and post/decolonial scholars of International Relations (IR) and related disciplines, who argue that the (re)production of particular configurations of gender and race is a central component of this process (e.g. Enloe 1983; Cohn 1993; Cockburn 2010; Mohanty 2011). Conceptualising

race and gender as interlocking systems of power (Combahee River Collective 1977; Crenshaw 1989), I explore how they are constructed and maintained in one specific context — the UK's national security policymaking community — and how they make militaristic ways of thinking and speaking about security feel natural and inevitable. As I elaborate in Chapters 2 and 3, I understand British militarism to be underpinned by coloniality, by which I mean that it relies on and perpetuates colonial structures and cultures of racial domination (Quijano 2000, 2007; Grosfoguel 2007). I therefore treat the reproduction of colonial ways of thinking as integral to British militarism, and address how constructions of gender and race underpin both. Of course, I do not suggest that racism and patriarchy are the only systems of power that play a role in maintaining militarism and coloniality: they intersect with capitalism and nationalism, for example (Connell 2002, p.38; Cockburn 2010, pp.150–151). Rather, I explore what role they *do* play, in the particular context of UK national security policymaking.

My analysis interprets race and gender, in the form of racially-organised constructions of masculinities and femininities, as features of the organisational cultures of government departments. That is to say, the informal, often unspoken rules that govern how officials interact with each other in the workplace, and the shared meanings through which they make sense of their work, are imbued with gendered and racialised[1] meaning. The focus of my analysis is on discourse, understood as "systems of meaning-production… that fix meaning, however temporarily, and enable us to make sense of the world" (Shepherd 2008, p.20), addressing how racialised and gendered meanings are fixed to different aspects of organisational culture. I explore how constructions of racially-coded masculinities and femininities are attached to policy ideas, how they regulate how officials perform their duties and engage in policy discussions, and how they shape what kinds of knowledge are considered important to policymaking.

I became curious about these questions after working for several years as a policy adviser for an international peacebuilding NGO, where (among other things) I lobbied the UK government on issues of gender, peace and security. My work was particularly concerned with understanding how constructions of masculinity and femininity fuel militarism and conflict, and how transforming patriarchal norms might contribute to efforts to build peace. However,

[1] The word 'racialised' carries multiple meanings (See Goldberg 2002, footnote on p.12). In this thesis I use it in its broadest sense, to describe something that is shaped by race or attributed racial meaning. When specifically describing people or ideas that are produced as racially subordinate, I use the term 'racially-marked'.

while there was considerable interest among my NGO colleagues and policymakers in considering how gender norms shape conflict in the Global South, I found little appetite for discussing how gender norms in the security policy community itself might contribute to the UK's own militaristic approach to national security (see Wright 2020, pp.664–665). Being familiar with feminist analysis of how notions of manliness can shape foreign policies (e.g. Cohn 1987, 1993; Enloe 2003), my regular interactions with securocrats (bureaucrats in national security) caused me to reflect on what work masculinities and femininities might be doing in those conversations. This thesis turns those nagging questions into a piece of in-depth research.

While much social science research aims to be free from political bias, feminist scholars argue that not only do our values inevitably influence our research, but that research is itself a political act (Mies 1983; Scheper-Hughes 1995; Collins 2014, p.9). This thesis seeks to inform and support movements for dismantling systems that support war-making, driven by my antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist political commitments. Because these normative commitments shape every aspect of the thesis, from the formulation of research questions to the analysis and dissemination of findings, it is important to outline what they entail. Though antimilitarist politics are heterogeneous, they are broadly characterised by an ethical and pragmatic opposition to war and the maintenance of the 'war system' that makes it possible (Cohn & Ruddick 2004; Cockburn 2012a; Rossdale 2019). Antimilitarists are not necessarily pacifist and may, for example, support the strategic use of violence to resist oppression (Dirik 2017; Eastwood 2018; Stavrianakis 2020a, pp.159–162). Many recognise the impossibility of consistently practising non-violence in a violent world (Rossdale 2019, pp.184–196). However, antimilitarists broadly oppose the systematised use of violence to hold in place structures of oppression such as capitalism, colonialism and white supremacy, while seeking to build more just and less violent ways of organising societies. In this respect, antimilitarism ought to be inseparable from anticolonialism: the latter challenges the structuring of global systems of power around racial hierarchies that survive the formal end of European colonialism, structures whose maintenance provides a principal rationale for militaristic policies and practices (hooks 1995; Mohanty 2006). What makes an antimilitarist and anticolonial politics *feminist* is an analysis of how militarism and coloniality rely on and reproduce patriarchal relations of power (Cohn & Ruddick 2004; Mohanty 2006; Lugones 2010; Duncanson 2017). As I elaborate in Chapter 2, gendered and racialised hierarchies underpin militaristic and colonial ways of thinking about and pursuing security, and feminist scholars and activists argue that

undoing these hierarchies should be an essential part of any strategy to disrupt militarism and coloniality.

The key question this thesis poses is: *What are the relationships between the gendering and racialisation of organisational cultures in UK national security policymaking, and militarist and colonial ways of thinking and speaking about national security?* In particular, *how — if at all — does the gendered and racialised character of organisational cultures help to sustain militarism and coloniality in policy discussions?* By better understanding the processes that maintain the militaristic worldview that underpins much national security thinking, I aim to contribute to antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist strategising about how to disrupt those processes and generate new approaches to ensuring the safety and freedom of individuals and communities. However, although feminists tend to emphasise the role of gender relations in producing or sustaining militarism (e.g. Connell 2002; Cockburn 2010), this relationship is not assumed to be unidirectional. Not only do constructions of race and gender help produce militarism and coloniality, but militarist and colonial systems and organisations help produce the particular constructions of race and gender they need to sustain them (Enloe 1983, 1993; Bhattacharyya 2008; Lugones 2010). Indeed, notions of racial superiority have been used to legitimise colonial rule (Quijano 2000), and appeals to masculine toughness and bravery have long been used strategically to persuade men to fight wars (Goldstein 2001, pp.252–283). I therefore remain attentive, too, to the ways in which militaristic and colonial approaches to national security shape how gender and race are constructed and performed in policy discussions.

The thesis focuses on the work of the Civil Service, and is based on 182 hours of participant observation, as well as semi-structured interviews with 60 officials from five government departments that play(ed) key roles in national security policymaking: the Home Office, Cabinet Office, Ministry of Defence (MOD), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Department for International Development (DFID) — the last two having since merged into a single department. For reasons I elaborate in Chapter 4, rather than focus on the culture of one department I explore the workings of cross-departmental teams in two areas of security policy: counterterrorism and the women, peace and security agenda (WPS). Of course, decision-making power in these policy areas, like any other, ultimately lies with politicians: the Civil Service is a formally apolitical body that is expected to serve the government of the day, "whatever its political persuasion" (HM Government 2015b). However, civil servants produce and curate research evidence to help ministers make decisions, often presenting them with a

range of policy options and a recommendation on which to choose (Bevir & Rhodes 2010, p.161). While they are obliged to implement ministerial decisions once taken, officials are also expected to highlight the risks incurred by any course of action (Rhodes 2011, p.185). These functions afford them a crucial role in shaping the discourses that set the terms of what is considered normal and acceptable in policy discussions. My suggestion is not that officials are exercising undue political influence, but that — as I will argue throughout the thesis — the role that discourse plays in defining the terms of acceptability means it is always productive of power relations (Foucault 1980). As active participants in the discourses that directly inform national security policymaking, civil servants help reproduce configurations of power and knowledge that make the continuation of militarism possible.

Importantly, while studying how militarism and coloniality are reproduced in government departments, I do not assume that the solution to overturning these structures of dominance lies within those organisations. As various scholars and activists have argued, the reproduction of British militarism is not centralised in Whitehall, but diffused throughout factories, schools, universities, households and mindsets up and down the country and beyond (Basham 2016a; Woodward, Jenkings & Williams 2017; Rossdale 2019, pp.49–60). To imagine militarism as the preserve of government departments is to underestimate its reach and overlook potential sites for resistance. My goal is not to propose reforms that would demilitarise or decolonise national security policymaking, if such a thing were possible: as I elaborate in Chapter 3, significant demilitarisation is unlikely without transformation of the liberal world order that reproduces it (Millar 2016; Howell 2018), and decolonisation impossible without mass redistribution of land and wealth stolen through colonialism (Tuck & Yang 2012). Further, as Chapter 2 will argue, the concept of national security does not provide an adequate starting point from which to realise peaceful and just societies. Rather, by contributing to understandings of processes that sustain militarism and coloniality — in this case the reproduction of gendered and racialised norms and discourses — I aim to inform feminist and anti-racist thinking about how to dismantle those processes, with a view to building more liberatory modes of collective governance.

The thesis makes both empirical and theoretical contributions to scholarly efforts to understand the relationships amongst patriarchy, racism, militarism and coloniality. As I will elaborate in Chapter 2, there currently exist few studies of racialised and gendered organisational cultures in national security policymaking that aim to link these with colonial

and militaristic thinking and practice. Those that I have been able to identify focus on the US context, with the two most in-depth studies addressing national security in the Cold War period (Cohn 1987, 1989, 1993; Dean 2001). Empirically, then, this study contributes a new case study investigating this question in the present day, in a non-US context. I will argue that the significant influx of white women into UK national security policymaking since the 1990s, and smaller increases in numbers of women and men of colour, make it a fruitful context in which to revisit feminist debates about how constructions of gender and race are shaped and reshaped, how organisational cultures change, and how this affects the reproduction of militarism.

This brings me to the study's theoretical contribution to this literature, which is to challenge some of the more optimistic accounts of how militarism might be undermined by changes to the gendered cultures of militarist organisations (Cohn & Ruddick 2004; Duncanson 2013; Duncanson & Woodward 2016). The central argument of this thesis is that the discursive linking of liberal militarism with particular, valorised constructions of white masculinity in organisational cultures in UK national security policymaking functions to make militaristic and colonial approaches to security policy feel natural and inevitable. I find evidence that racialised and gendered discourses are shifting, including in ways that some feminists have suggested may constitute progress: the softening of masculinities, the revaluing of (certain) feminine-coded attributes and performances, and seeking out of (some) subjugated knowledges, albeit for instrumental reasons. However, I argue that none of these apparent changes seriously challenge the centrality of militarism and coloniality to the organisational 'script' to which policymakers are expected to adhere. Militarism shows itself to be flexible, adapting to changes in organisational norms and discourses such that it can legitimate itself in new ways. I further suggest that the UK government's deep material and ideological investment in militarism places limits on the possibilities for securocrats to remake racialised and gendered discourses in ways that are liberatory. Changes in organisational culture have favoured constructions of gender and race that help sustain liberal militarism. My findings imply that antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist efforts to transform racialised and gendered discourses and structures that undergird militarist and colonial national security policies must look beyond these institutions to the wider societal norms, structures and discourses that enable their work.

Context

Before outlining how my argument proceeds through subsequent chapters, I offer some background information about the political context and events which shaped the conversations I observed and participated in during this study. As I was gathering data from July 2017 to September 2018, questions about race, gender, representation and organisational culture were prevalent in the national security community. The effects of the #MeToo movement reverberated in Whitehall following the resignation of Defence Secretary Michael Fallon due to allegations of sexual harassment. The far right continued to increase its influence in politics and the media, emboldened by the public vote to leave the European Union the previous year, which sparked an increase in racist discrimination and attacks against migrants and people of colour on Britain's streets and online (Home Office 2018a, p.14; Booth 2019). In Spring and Summer 2017, a series of bomb and knife attacks carried out by Islamists in London and Manchester, and a van attack on a London mosque by a white supremacist, both reflected and escalated this atmosphere of racism. A short time later, media reports revealed that the Home Office had been denying healthcare and housing to, and even deporting, Black British citizens and legal residents, many of whom had had documents demonstrating their residency rights lost or destroyed by the Home Office itself. These events, which would become known as the 'Windrush scandal', foregrounded debates about institutional racism at the Home Office (Muir 2018; Allegretti 2018). In an apparent move to fend off criticism, Prime Minster Theresa May appointed Sajid Javid as the first person of colour to become Home Secretary, offering representation in place of a genuine reckoning with systemic racism in Britain (Goodfellow 2018).

This thesis does not seek to establish any correlation between numbers of women and/or people of colour in government departments and a propensity for militarist or colonial thinking. However, as I will show in Chapter 2, feminist antimilitarists are divided on the question of how much descriptive representation matters to maintaining or unsettling organisational cultures that sustain militarism, and so some background on the demographic make-up of the national security community is useful for situating my analysis. While the UK Civil Service has traditionally been dominated by white men, perhaps especially in national security, it has admitted greatly increased numbers of white women in recent decades, and much smaller but gradually increasing numbers of men and women of colour (Institute for Government 2021a, 2021b). During the period of my fieldwork in 2017/18, women were

between 41.5% and 56.1% of staff in each of the five departments studied, with the largest percentage in DFID and the lowest in the MOD (Office of National Statistics 2018; Cabinet Office 2018; DFID 2018; FCO 2018).[2] While their numbers trail off at senior grades, women made up more than 30% of senior staff in each department (see Appendix, Figure 1). Representation of people of colour — as measured through employees' self-identification as Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME)[3] — varied widely across departments, from 4.6% in the MOD to 23.5% in the Home Office (see Appendix, Figure 2). More so than women, BAME officials were (and are) concentrated in the lower grades, constituting no more than 6.1% of senior officials in any of the five departments.[4] The published data do not show how ethnic groups are broken down by gender; all that can be inferred from the figures is that the vast majority of both women and men in these departments are white.

The language of 'diversity and inclusion' has become ubiquitous across the Civil Service, turning up frequently in strategy documents and job titles (e.g. Cabinet Office 2017a; Home Office 2018b). In the national security community, the push for great diversity and inclusion has been framed in part as a response to findings of the Chilcot Inquiry, which investigated the UK's role in the 2003 invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq. The Chilcot Report found that this generation-defining policy failure resulted in part from a failure of senior national security officials to challenge each other's thinking (Chilcot 2016, p.57, 135). In response, the government conducted a review of culture and behaviours in the national security community to identify means of increasing the ability of officials to challenge their peers, senior colleagues and ministers when they disagree with them (HM Government 2018a, pp.27–29). As I explore further in Chapter 7, a narrative developed — though Chilcot did not make this claim — that an absence of 'diversity of thought' could be attributed in part to a somewhat socially

[2] Only certain parts of these departments work on national security, but since workforce data are not published by sub-department it is not possible to get a more accurate view of the national security community in particular. The three departments with arguably the strongest focus on national security — the Home Office, FCO and MOD — had the lowest proportion of women in senior roles (Institute for Government 2018, p.4). It is possible this pattern is replicated within departments, meaning that women's representation in national security policymaking would be lower than these figures imply.
[3] The terms 'people of colour' and 'BAME' are not necessarily coterminous, but often used interchangeably. I use 'BAME' where referring to data gathered by the government using this category. Otherwise, I refer to 'people of colour', because 'BAME' reduces the workings of a transnational system of oppression to a question of numerical minorities in a national context (Adebisi 2019). The term 'people of colour' is not unproblematic: see, for example, Burgin's (1996) argument that it invisibilises whiteness by suggesting that white is not a colour (pp.130–131).
[4] For comparison, BAME people were 13% of the UK population at the last census (HM Government 2011a).

homogenous national security community in which elite-educated, middle-class white men were over-represented. To remedy this, the government introduced measures to increase diversity and inclusion, setting up a National Security Shadow Board made up of junior officials from underrepresented groups — women, people of colour, working class people and so on — to scrutinise the work of the National Security Council (HM Government 2018a, p.8, 27). The Security and Defence Diversity and Inclusion Network (SaDDIN), made up of officials from across departments, produced a toolkit entitled *Mission Critical: Why Inclusion is a National Security Issue and What You Can Do to Help,* covering how to recruit and retain a diverse team and how to run inclusive meetings. Given the prevalence of this discourse about diversity of thought during my fieldwork in 2017–18, and the long shadow cast on policy discussions by the war in Iraq, it significantly shaped the conversations I had with officials, and made for an interesting object of analysis in itself.

Since I completed my data gathering, this diversity and inclusion agenda has been subject to a backlash within government after power shifted more firmly into the hands of the right wing of the Conservative Party at the 2019 General Election. In 2020, for example, Equalities Minister Kemi Badenoch announced that "critical race theory" — a broad field of inquiry examining the operation of racism within societies — was a segregationist ideology that should not be espoused in public institutions (Nelson 2020). A few months later, unconscious bias training for civil servants was abandoned and not replaced with an alternative plan for addressing discrimination (Syal 2020), and Minister for Women and Equalities Liz Truss declared that the government had focused too much on the "fashionable" topics of gender and race, which are "the failed ideas of the left" (Tolhurst 2020). The government-appointed Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021), in a report responding to the Black Lives Matter movement, blamed racial inequalities on the culture and family structures of (particularly Black) communities of colour, arguing that claims of structural or institutional racism often lack "objective foundations" (p.36) and risk "alienating the decent centre ground" (p.27). Although a commitment to diversity in national security policymaking has been retained on paper (HM Government 2021, p.98), the government's assertion of these reactionary narratives, which construct claims for racial justice in particular as dangerous and anti-British, have no doubt soured the environment for diversity work, as piecemeal and cautious as it has been. While the conversations about diversity and inclusion I analyse in Chapter 7 preceded the present backlash, I also reflect on more recent developments in my analysis.

Sequence of Chapters

The thesis unfolds as follows. Chapter 2 explains why my research questions matter by situating them in relation to the literature on gender, race, militarism and coloniality and describing how I build on and contribute to that literature. I outline how critical IR scholarship has problematised the conceptualisation and practice of national security, identifying militarism and coloniality as two interlinked features that have been critiqued from a feminist, anti-racist perspective. I explain how masculinism and racism sustain militarism and coloniality, exploring how feminists theorise the importance of systems of meaning, norms and epistemologies in explaining this relationship. I highlight a small number of existing studies of gendered and racialised organisational cultures in national security policymaking that link these to militarism in specific contexts. After outlining how antimilitarist feminist scholars have suggested that cultures and discourses that sustain militarism could be undermined or transformed, I argue that the UK national security community offers a useful example though which to test their assumptions about how organisational cultures that uphold militarism change, and how they are held in place.

While Chapter 2 explained how gendered and racialised organisational cultures can be understood as sustaining militarism and coloniality, Chapter 3 delves into the theories I use to understand each of these concepts. I set out my understanding of militarism as a set of attitudes, relations and social practices which regards the preparation for and practice of organised political violence as a normal and desirable social activity. I then explain how I understand coloniality as structuring militarism, and why I find 'liberal militarism' to be a useful concept through which to interpret UK national security policy discussions. Finally, I outline how I theorise the three aspects of gender and race I study in the thesis — systems of meaning, norms and epistemologies — explaining how each of these can be understood as a facet of organisational culture, how they are interconnected, and what it means to say they are gendered and racialised.

Chapter 4 introduces the research methodology I use in the thesis, explaining key methodological decisions I have made throughout the research process. First, I explain the feminist epistemological assumptions underpinning the project, setting out how they follow from my theoretical framework and making clear what kind of knowledge claims I aim to

make. I introduce the two policy areas I have chosen to focus on — WPS and counterterrorism — and why I selected them. I then explain how and why I use participant observation and semi-structured interviews, reflecting on challenges associated with these methods and how they have shaped my research findings. I also situate myself within the research, explaining how my positionality has influenced the data gathering process. I then introduce the strategies I use to analyse the data, encompassing both a straight-forward representational reading and a discourse analytical one. Finally, I discuss the ethical considerations I have applied, including around informed consent, preventing harm and questions of complicity in militarist practices.

The analysis of my research findings is organised across three empirical chapters, addressing the roles of racialised and gendered systems of meaning, norms and epistemologies respectively in sustaining militarist and colonial ways of thinking and speaking about national security policies. Through an analysis of discourses on counterterrorism in Chapter 5, I examine how policy discussions cite gendered and racialised systems of meaning, what notions of racialised masculinities and femininities are invoked, and what work this does in legitimising militarist and colonial worldviews. I argue that the discursive linking of two approaches to counterterrorism with different, socially valued constructions of masculinity and whiteness gives them an air of credibility, which reduces the burden of argument needed to make the case for them. Meanwhile, more emancipatory approaches to addressing political violence are dismissed, in part through being discursively linked with feminine, queer and racially-marked subjects. I argue that, while masculinist and racist discourses are working to legitimise militarism in familiar ways, the fact that these meanings are implicitly invoked rather than explicitly reproduced may make them unstable and open to resignification.

To understand further how gendered and racialised meanings are reproduced and/or unsettled, Chapter 6 examines how the everyday embodied performances of securocrats construct notions of masculinity, femininity and whiteness. I argue that the performance of what I call 'gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities', which form the dominant organisational script to which securocrats are expected to adhere, link liberal militarist values with objectivity and rationality. Exploring how some women construct 'insider-activist femininities' as a different way of performing the securocrat role, I argue that while these promote the introduction of liberal feminist ideas in national security policymaking, they do not challenge militarism and coloniality, and at times reinforce them. I then show how the gentleman-bureaucrat and insider-activist scripts appear to be merging, creating a hybrid script that all

securocrats are expected follow, regardless of race and gender. Although this might appear to displace association of liberal militarism with masculinity and whiteness, I argue that the experiences of women and people of colour[5] in the workplace demonstrate how these discursive links are actively maintained. I conclude that the government's deep investment in militarism imposes limits on the possibilities for changing gendered and racialised organisational norms in more liberatory ways.

In Chapter 7, I turn to examine how racialised and gendered organisational norms govern the production of knowledge, asking what assumptions are made about what kinds of knowledge matter to policymaking and why. I argue that recent discourses on diversity of thought begin to challenge long-held notions of the bureaucrat as disembodied, scientifically objective knower, but fail to recognise how relations of power are implicated in knowledge production. To illustrate why this matters I show how policy discussions about Prevent, the UK's counter-extremism programme, are shaped by racialised power relations that function to suppress knowledge about the programme's complicity in systemic racism. I argue that bringing historically excluded groups into policymaking will not dislodge colonial and militarist ways of thinking as long as policymakers do not recognise the role of power in knowledge production, which would entail abandoning the self-image of the Civil Service as objective and apolitical.

Finally, Chapter 8 summarises my contribution to the literature and reflects on the implications of my findings for feminist antimilitarist and anticolonial political strategies. Across the three dimensions of organisational culture that I have studied — systems of meaning, norms and epistemologies — small changes to gendered and racialised discourses that feminists have identified as potentially progressive have fallen short of challenging militarism and coloniality. I suggest that these organisations' investment in militarism, which is reflected in their structures and policies, itself limits the potential for securocrats to construct and perform gender and race in ways that challenge those investments. While officials actively working from within to change these organisations may over time be able to alter the racialised and gendered discourses I have identified, I suggest that the urgency of the crises facing us as a result of militarism, and the colonial world order it protects, demand more immediate and transformative political action.

[5] The phrase 'women and people of colour' is sometimes critiqued as implying that the two are separate groups, thereby erasing women of colour (for discussion see Foley 2018). I use it throughout the thesis for lack of a better phrase, always treating the two groups as overlapping.

In summary, this study contributes to feminist scholarship that seeks to understand how the production of race and gender helps to make militarism appear as the only sensible response to security problems. Through an analysis of the systems of meaning, norms and epistemologies that constitute organisational cultures in UK national security policymaking, it demonstrates that the valorisation of (particular constructions of) masculinity and whiteness does work in sustaining militaristic and colonial ways of thinking. However, it also underlines the capacity of militarist organisations to adapt to new circumstances, including the increasing representation of women and people of colour and the valorisation of some feminine-coded and racially-marked practices and knowledges in policy processes. By showing how national security institutions absorb changes to racialised and gendered discourses that can be used to legitimise militarism while resisting those that would threaten it, this thesis underscores the challenges facing the reformist agendas proposed by some antimilitarist feminists. It points toward the need for an antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist agenda that looks beyond the security state toward the construction of alternative institutions and processes for building more just and peaceful futures.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review: Feminist and Anti-Racist Perspectives on National Security Policymaking

Chapter 1 set out the core aim of this thesis: to understand the relationship(s) between the gendering and racialising processes that constitute organisational cultures within UK government departments responsible for national security, and the persistence of militarism and coloniality in national security policy discussions. This objective, and the research questions it gives rise to, emerge from my reading of literatures on which this thesis builds and to which it contributes, including critical, feminist and post- and decolonial interventions in IR, organisation studies and political science. This chapter reviews this literature, with three aims in mind. First, I seek to provide an outline of the existing literature with which I understand this thesis to be in conversation. Second, I explain how this literature give rise to my research questions, demonstrating the importance of the theoretical and empirical problems with which I engage. Third, I show that there is a gap in this literature, explaining why this gap matters and how the thesis addresses it.

I have identified three sets of literature as being particularly important to the subject of this thesis, which can be broadly categorised as those on: (1) gender, race, militarism and coloniality; (2) gender, race and organisations/institutions; and (3) gender, race, foreign policymaking and diplomacy. The literature connecting gender, race, militarism and coloniality, while interdisciplinary, largely falls within the scope of critical, feminist and postcolonial IR, but draws on wider contributions from feminist, post- and decolonial and critical race theory. This literature provides the normative, epistemological and theoretical grounding for this thesis: it explains why militarism and coloniality are useful theoretical lenses through which to analyse national security policymaking and why they are of concern from a feminist and anti-racist perspective. Further, it explains how gender and race function to sustain and reproduce militarism and coloniality, and shows that gendering and racialising practices in national

security policymaking communities can be instrumental in that process. The literature on gender, race and organisations/institutions is drawn from both the sociological field of organisation studies and work on institutions from political science. This literature provides theoretical frames for understanding how gender, race and organisational cultures are simultaneously produced, explaining why organisational cultures, and not just wider societal norms and discourses, are important to policymaking. The literature on gender, race, foreign policymaking and diplomacy yields insights into the relationships between organisational cultures in white- and male-dominated settings, the presence of women and people of colour, and policymaking processes and outcomes. In particular, literature on UK foreign policymaking and diplomacy elucidates how organisational cultures within government departments, including those concerned with national security, are historically constituted by particular constructions of white, middle- and upper-class masculinities.

Rather than address these three literatures in turn, I put them in conversation with one another to show what gaps in the literature are revealed and how the thesis responds to them. I first discuss critiques of the conceptualisation and practice of national security from a feminist, anti-racist perspective. Next, I outline theoretical work making the case that gender and race sustain militarism and coloniality through the production of norms, systems of meaning and epistemologies. I then examine literature looking at how these relationships play out in national security policymaking spaces to show that they are important sites for empirical study, and discuss the few existing studies that address how gendered and racialised organisational cultures reproduce militarist and colonial ways of thinking in such settings. I show that these studies raise questions about how racialised and gendered discourses have changed as women and people of colour have entered national security policymaking spaces in growing numbers. To explain why this matters, I outline debates among antimilitarist feminists about how discourses that sustain militarism could be transformed in liberatory ways, and what role (if any) the inclusion of women and people of colour in policymaking should play in advancing antimilitarist and anticolonial political aims. Finally, I summarise how this thesis advances thinking on this question by providing an empirical study of the UK national security community — one which women and people have colour have joined in significant numbers and, at times, attempted to challenge the whiteness and masculinism of its organisational cultures.

Problems with 'National Security'

This section outlines the literature that informs the normative stance from which this thesis begins, explaining why the conception and practice of national security are problematic from an antimilitarist and anticolonial perspective. In particular, I show why critical, feminist and postcolonial scholarship identifies militarism and coloniality as key features of national security policies and practices, and how militarism and coloniality inflict gendered and racialised harms, marking them out as important concerns for feminist and anti-racist politics.

Critical scholarship in the field of security studies demonstrates that the conceptualisations of security that predominate in most states' national security policies function to make ordinary people less safe. Security studies has traditionally been concerned with "the phenomenon of war" and "the threat, use, and control of military force" (Walt 1991, p.212), understanding security to be the absence of military threats to the rule, autonomy or territorial integrity of states (Bellany 1981, p.102). Since the 1980s, however, a body of scholarship informing the field known as critical security studies has made compelling critiques of this conception (Krause & Williams 1997; Booth 2005). Scholars argue that this focus on state security neglects the needs of ordinary people, arguing instead for a focus on securing human beings (Roberts 1990; Booth 1991; Fouinat 2004). This broader understanding of security also expands what can be considered a security threat, from a narrow focus on military threats to one that includes environmental degradation, disease, political oppression, poverty and economic breakdown (Ullman 1983; Tuchman Mathews 1989; Haftendorn 1991; Booth 1991). In practice, the widespread adoption by states of a narrow, military-focused conception of security has facilitated vast increases in states' capacities to inflict armed violence, often at the expense of the environmental, economic and physical security of their own citizens and the wider global population (Ullman 1983; Booth 1991, p.318). The concept of 'national security' in particular prioritises imagined 'national interests' — constructed largely by states themselves (Campbell 1992; Weldes 1996) — over both common global ones and those of marginalised groups within each state (Haftendorn 1991; Buzan 1993, p.253). The result is national security policies that fail to make the majority of people safer from the myriad threats they face, often exacerbating their insecurity rather than remedying it. As Peterson (1992a) has put it, "'national security' is a contradiction in terms" (p.32).

Contributing to this literature, feminist scholars of security studies and peace studies highlight that traditional conceptions of security are both patriarchal and militaristic. For example, domestic violence — one of the most pervasive threats to women's safety globally — is ignored by traditional understandings of security and peace, which rarely take account of violence in the private sphere (Brock-Utne 1989, p.42; Boulding 1992, p.58; Tickner 1992, pp.57–58). Further, the 'nation' invoked in national security discourses is often imagined in gendered terms: to secure the nation is to secure an existing patriarchal order backed by state power (Peterson 1992a). Importantly for this thesis, feminists identify militarism — broadly understood as a set of beliefs, values and practices that treat the use of force to resolve conflicts as legitimate, natural and inevitable (Enloe 1983, pp.7–10; Reardon 1985, p.14; Cockburn 2007, p.237; Cockburn 2010, p.148) — as a central feature of national security thinking and practices.[6] Militarism is a part of the 'war system': a set of institutions and political, social and economic processes that confer on societies the capacity to wage war, including, for example, militaries, ministries of defence, arms industries and weapons research facilities (Reardon 1985, pp.10–12; Cohn & Ruddick 2004, p.406; Cockburn 2010, p.147). However, as I noted in Chapter 1, militarist values and practices are found not only within those organisations that directly wage war, but throughout societies: they are taught in schools, made concrete in the form of war memorials, and permeate popular culture (Enloe 2000, pp.1–14, 2015; Lutz 2002, p.724; Sjoberg & Via 2010, p.7; Basham 2016a). Whereas wars usually appear confined to bounded times and locations, militarism, and the war system of which it is a part, extend through time and across the globe, operating even in contexts typically thought of as peaceful. By paying attention to militarism as a system of beliefs and practices rather than wars as discrete events, feminists trace continuities in how it operates across contexts, in war and peace.

Analyses of militarism are central to feminist critiques of national security policies, both because of the death and destruction wrought by a system that produces and legitimises violent responses to conflict, and because militarism's impacts are deeply gendered. For example, militarist policies direct public spending towards war preparation at the expense of social reproduction, exacerbating women's burden of under- or unpaid labour (Reardon 1985, p.14, 28; Stienstra 1995, p.123; Chew 2008, p.76). Militarism often perpetuates exaggerated constructions of masculinity and femininity that sustain patriarchal gender relations, such as

[6] For a more in-depth discussion of definitions of militarism, see Chapter 3.

that of the manly "just warrior" protecting the innocent "beautiful soul" (Elshtain 1987, p.4), or the conflation of "womenandchildren" as helpless victims (Enloe 1993, p.166). Patriarchal beliefs, combined with gendered inequalities in economic vulnerabilities and security provision, fuel gendered violence against women during and after war (Cockburn 2004; True 2010; Kostovicova, Bojicic-Dzelilovic & Henry 2020).

In addition to being patriarchal, postcolonial and critical race literatures highlight that the conception and practice of national security is racialised and racialising: it is profoundly shaped by race, while also discursively (re)producing race and reinforcing structural racism in material ways (Omi & Winant 2014, pp.109–112). Just as the nation ostensibly secured by these policies is imagined as gendered, it is often imagined to be racially homogenous, and/or ordered by racial hierarchies determining who is afforded protection by the state (Gilroy 1987, pp.43–71; Goldberg 2002, p.9, 10). The state sovereignty that national security policies aim to protect is often implicitly understood as fixing associations between a state authority, territory and a population imagined and regulated in racial terms (Nişancioğlu 2020). Consequently, states frequently construct security threats in ways that reproduce racist logics. For example, Western states and media outlets have framed immigration as a threat to national security, discursively linking 'terrorism'[7] and organised crime with migrants and people of colour (Bigo 2002; Ceyhan & Tsoukala 2002; Buonfino 2004). By constructing racial others as less than human, national security discourses legitimise the use of violence, control and surveillance against them both domestically and externally, regarding some lives as less worthy of protection than others. As Bhattacharyya (2008, p.121) explains in her discussion of Western military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq:

> The fictions of race enable the cruelties and carnage of imperial adventures because these people are not like us, are not people at all, and their otherness proves that they are lesser, unworthy, dangerous, and to be contained by any means possible.

As she implies in her reference to "imperial adventures", racialisation functions to enable coloniality as well as militarism. Indeed, as central features of national security policies and practices, militarism and coloniality are interconnected: scholars variously conceptualise militarism as founded on imperialism (hooks 1995, p.61); militarism as constitutive of

[7] I put 'terrorism' in scare quotes through the thesis to signal my concerns about the harm caused by this framing of political violence, as discussed in Chapter 4.

coloniality (Shigematsu & Camacho 2010, p.xxvii); or the two as mutually reinforcing (Iñiguez de Heredia 2019, p.624). National security policies and practices reproduce coloniality — understood as a global system of power that enables and sustains the unequal distribution of capital, labour, cultural currency, and epistemic authority so as to privilege the Global North over the Global South (Quijano 2000, p.218) — through systems of surveillance, incarceration and violence that primarily target people of colour.[8] These practices include, for example, the use of military, stabilisation and peacebuilding interventions to impose conditions of governance favourable to the West (Gregory 2004; Herring 2008a; Mohanty 2011; Sabaratnam 2018; Iñiguez de Heredia 2019) and maintenance of military bases by world powers in colonised territories, often displacing indigenous populations (Lutz 2006; Vine 2009; Shigematsu & Camacho 2010; Davis 2011). Domestic-facing policies can also reproduce colonial logics: for instance, Kapoor (2013) argues that UK domestic counterterrorism efforts represent "contemporary forms of colonising power as they play out in the metropole" (p.62). She shows how the use of aggressive pre-emptive action toward terror suspects and secret military-style trials, built on the same racist logics as colonial occupations, was transferred from UK military operations abroad to domestic policing, and publicly justified by reference to suspects' links to their ancestral homelands (Kapoor 2013a, pp.65–66, 72; see also Turner 2018; Trafford 2021).

While I have offered here only a brief tour through a vast literature, it has shown that, from a feminist, anti-racist perspective, the state-centric and military-focused conception of security that predominates in national security policies, and the practices that flow from it, warrant attention because they sustain patriarchy and racism in material and discursive ways, producing and exacerbating racialised and gendered harms. The logics of militarism and coloniality provide justifications for such policies, while the war system provides the material means to implement them. While this helps explain the objective of this thesis in challenging the politics of national security, its focus lies not on the gendered and racialised *impacts* of militarism and coloniality, but on how constructions of gender and race make militarism and coloniality possible. It is the literature on this relationship to which I now turn.

[8] A more in-depth discussion of definitions of coloniality follows in Chapter 3.

How Gender and Race Sustain Militarism and Coloniality

The theoretical foundations on which this thesis builds, and the debates to which it seeks to contribute, can be found in feminist, post- and decolonial literature exploring how gender and race work to sustain militarism and coloniality. This literature explains why antimilitarist feminists argue that to disrupt militarism it is necessary to transform discourses and relations of gender and race, and therefore why this thesis seeks to understand the relationships among them in national security policymaking. This section sets out key arguments from this literature, beginning with feminist analyses of masculinism and its relationship to militarism. I argue that while much feminist scholarship on militarism privileges analysis of gender over that of race, and the literature on coloniality often emphasises race over gender, postcolonial and decolonial feminist scholarship bridges this divide. In doing so, it shows that the production of racialised hierarchies of masculinities and femininities that underpins coloniality also underpins militarism, and vice versa. As such, any feminist strategy to undo the gendered and racialised discourses that sustain militarism can and should also be a strategy to undo those that sustain coloniality. To demonstrate how these relationships operate in practice, I then show how the literature explains the interactions between gender, race, militarism and coloniality on three levels: norms, systems of meaning and epistemologies.

Feminist analyses of how gendered discourses and relations sustain militarism employ the concept of masculinism, understood as an ideology that values that which is culturally coded as masculine over that which is coded as feminine, whilst making this hierarchy, and the inequalities it produces between men and women, appear natural (Peterson & Runyan 2010, p.63). Masculinism can be seen as contributing to militarism in two interrelated ways, which are often elided: through the content of particular constructions of masculinity and femininity; and through production of a hierarchy of value between masculinities and femininities (Hutchings 2008a, pp.390–394, 2008b, p.24). Analyses of the *content* of masculinities point out that masculinity is often culturally associated with power, violence and domination, such that men and boys are expected to condone, commit and/or withstand violence in order to prove their manhood (Reardon 1985, pp.18–19; Goldstein 2001, p.264; Theidon 2009). Popular cultural narratives often assume that aggression and competition are natural, or even desirable aspects of masculinity, making men's participation in violence appear an inevitable feature of the world. However, as Hutchings (2008a, 2008b) points out, masculinities and femininities are constructed differently across contexts, and not always in ways that support

militarism. Nonetheless, masculinism creates a hierarchy of value between them that consistently provides a framework through which militarism can be legitimised. Because of this hierarchy, the discursive masculinisation of certain worldviews, organisations, practices or attributes can be used to accord value to them, while the feminisation of others can be used to denigrate or reject them (Cohn 1993, p.231; Hutchings 2008a, p. 395; Peterson & Runyan 2010, pp.77–78). It is because this masculinist value system is deeply embedded in most cultures that common (albeit not universal) associations between masculinity and war, and femininity and peace, are so effective in making militarism feel realistic and inevitable, and dismissing antimilitarist ideas. In practice, then, the content and hierarchical structure of masculinities and femininities can combine to sustain militarism.

Feminist analyses of IR broadly, and militarism specifically, often centre on gender, subsuming race and other axes of power underneath it as interlinked but secondary lenses for analysis (Chowdhry & Nair 2002, p.9; Howell 2018, p.120; Achilleos-Sarll 2018, pp.40–41). However, they usually recognise that masculinities and femininities are always already racialised — that is, they are always imbued with racial meaning (Crenshaw 1989; Ware 1992; Lugones 2010). While masculinities are usually valued over femininities, there are hierarchies among masculinities and among femininities, often produced through their interaction with other systems of power, such as race, class and sexuality (Hooper 2001, pp.53–64; Connell 2005, pp.76–81). Masculinism interacts with racism to produce a situation where masculinities associated with whiteness are valued over others, while white femininities are valued over other femininities and some racially-marked masculinities. For example, the feminist literature on militarism often examines what Young (2003) calls the "logic of masculinist protection" (pp.3–4), in which national security discourses construct a triad of gendered and racialised identities: the protector, the protected and the threat (see also Stiehm 1982). In Western contexts, these discourses typically construct the protected — civilians — according to tropes of white femininity as innocent and vulnerable (Crenshaw 1989, pp.155–160; Kronsell 2016, p.320; Holzberg & Raghavan 2020, pp.1194–1196). The image of the masculine protector — the state — draws on an implicitly white notion of heroic, patriotic masculinity, defending its civilians against the threat of a deviant, racially-marked masculine other in the form of the terrorist or rogue state (Niva 1998; Shepherd 2006; Brittain 2008; Messerschmidt 2010; Khalid 2011; O'Reilly 2012). By citing a hierarchy of value that privileges white-coded masculinities and femininities over a demonised, racially-marked masculinity, this familiar trope works to make militarist responses to security threats feel like a natural reaction to a perceived threat.

Meanwhile, as noted above, much scholarship on colonialism and coloniality finds racialisation to be a, if not *the,* central foundation of colonial projects (e.g. Quijano 2000, 2007). Yet post- and decolonial feminists intervene in this literature to argue that the production of gender is an integral part of racialisation. For example, decolonial feminist Maria Lugones (2010) argues that European colonisers in the Americas understood gender to be a property only of those considered fully human — European men and women — whereas colonised people were thought to be "bestial and thus non-gendered, promiscuous, grotesquely sexual, and sinful" (p.743). For Lugones, this characterisation of colonised subjects as possessing sex but not gender is part of the racialising process that produces them as less-than-human, which has been used to legitimise colonisation and ongoing relations of coloniality. Postcolonial scholars identify racialised hierarchies of masculinities and femininities here too: for example, British colonisers' construction of Bengali men as too effeminate for self-rule vis-à-vis their own (supposedly) muscular and athletic manliness (Sinha 1995); or European colonisers' construction of African men as primitive, hypersexual and a danger to 'chaste', 'vulnerable' white women as justification for harsh legislation and vigilante violence (Stoler 2010, pp.58–60). Particularly in the latter case, continuities with the logic of masculinist protection identified in the militarism literature are clearly evident.

A number of scholars make this link between militarism, coloniality and their common foundations in gendered racialisation / racialised gender more explicit. For example, Mohanty (1984) demonstrates how some Western feminists construct a homogenising image of the "Third World Woman" as "ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc.", in contrast to the "First World Woman" who is educated, modern and free (p.337). This discourse enables a colonial understanding of many North-South interactions as a dynamic of "white men saving brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1988, p.297), from the 'civilising mission' associated with formal colonialism to the modern-day development and humanitarian industries. While Mohanty's original critique addresses the coloniality of Western feminist scholarship, her later work identifies the same gendered and racialised discourses at work in US national security policies (Mohanty 2006, 2011; Mohanty, Pratt & Riley 2008). Mohanty and others (Shepherd 2006; Fluri 2008; Khan 2008; Khalid 2011) find the Third World Woman trope to be prominent in US justifications for the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan as a mission to rescue oppressed Afghan women, an intervention that Mohanty

characterises as an instance of "militarist imperialism" (2006, p.9).

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the interlinkages between militarism and coloniality, then, racialised hierarchies of masculinities and femininities are instrumental in sustaining both. Of course, masculinism and racism are not the sole forces sustaining militarism and coloniality: they combine with other mutually reinforcing structures such as capitalism, nationalism and heterosexism (Mohanty, Pratt & Riley 2008; Cockburn 2010, p.140, 144). Feminists must necessarily engage with all of these when thinking through strategies for an antimilitarist and anticolonial politics. Nonetheless, all of these systems intersect with and are constituted in part by race and gender, making efforts to challenge masculinism and racism an indispensable part of those strategies. Further, as I noted in Chapter 1, although feminists have tended to focus on "how constructions of gender *drive* war, rather than how masculinities and femininities are *constituted through* militarism and war" (Duncanson 2017, p.51, emphasis original), they also acknowledge that this relationship is reciprocal (e.g. Enloe 1983, p.12; Reardon 1985, p.1; Cohn & Ruddick 2004, p.410; Cockburn 2007, pp.244–248; Cockburn 2010, p.152). This thesis therefore engages with feminist debates about how transforming racialised hierarchies of masculinities and femininities might form part of a strategy for undermining militarism and coloniality, whilst also being attentive to how militarism and coloniality reproduce constructions of gender and race that serve them best.

In the remainder of this section I elaborate three interlinked levels of analysis which the literature suggests are needed to understand how masculinism and racism are implicated in militarism and coloniality. I examine how gender and race operate through the production of (1) norms, (2) systems of meaning and (3) epistemologies, before briefly examining how all three are produced through organisational or institutional processes. Drawing on these insights, this thesis examines all three of these elements and their interactions with each other, demonstrating that all three levels of analysis are crucial to understanding how masculinism and racism sustain militarism and coloniality.

Three Dimensions of Race and Gender

Some attempts to understand the relationship between gender and militarism focus on gendered *norms* — that is, on how individuals are expected to conform to social expectations

of what it means to be a man or a woman — noting strong discursive links in most cultures between masculinity and war, and between femininity and peace. Feminist scholarship broadly rejects any biological explanation of these associations, refuting the idea that men have any genetic or hormonal predisposition toward violence, or women toward passivity (see Goldstein 2001, pp.128–182).[9] However, early contributions to feminist peace research highlight differences in how women and men are socialised to cultivate different attributes. For example, Reardon (1985) and Brock-Utne (1989) both argue that raising boys to be aggressive primes them for participation in the war system as fighters or political leaders, while raising girls to be obedient facilitates their compliance with such a system. As Brock-Utne puts it, "maybe we are not educating girls for peace and boys for war, but rather are educating both girls and boys for war — though boys to a higher degree and in a different way than girls" (1989, p.10).

While this approach avoids biological essentialism, it tends to essentialise and universalise masculine and feminine socialisation. For example, Reardon (1985) draws on psychoanalytic accounts of childhood development that centre on the Western nuclear family (e.g. pp.50–52), implying what appear to be singular, monolithic versions of masculinity and femininity. However, other feminists argue that individuals usually enact a range of masculinities and/or femininities in different contexts, influenced by varied social expectations across times, places, organisations and social groups (West & Zimmerman 1987, p.139; Connell 2005, p.xix; Wetherell & Edley 2014, pp.359–360). Later accounts of the relationships between gender and militarism therefore allow for a multiplicity of masculinities and femininities, and understand norms as continually produced and reproduced in different social contexts, rather than something instilled only or primarily in childhood. For example, Duncanson's (2013) study of masculinities in the British military during its interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan in the 2000s finds that soldiers typically understood their masculinity as demonstrated through performances of toughness, military prowess, and superiority on the battlefield. They were also expected to engage in peacebuilding work, and while some soldiers valorised peacebuilding as part of a softer soldiering masculinity that emphasised intelligence and compassion as well as physical strength, others dismissed it as "fluffy nonsense" (p.90) carried out by "treehuggers" (p.96). Duncanson finds that the dominant discourses in soldier narratives disparaged peacebuilding activities as emasculating, which may have led to

[9] For a rare exception see Holliday (1978). Though Holliday describes herself as a feminist, her reliance on biological essentialism is out of keeping with most feminist thought both then and now.

decisions by British forces to take a more combative approach to counterinsurgency.

In another example, Gibbings (2011) describes how assumptions about appropriate ways of performing femininity at UN meetings in New York shaped how two Iraqi women, Amal Al-Khedairy and Nermin Al-Mufti, were heard by NGOs and UN officials. Gibbings explains that unwritten rules of the UN dictated that women from conflict-affected contexts should present themselves as peacemakers, bringing messages of hope, change and inspiration; that "speaking in terms of imperialism was avoided" and "those who did not meet these expectations caused embarrassment and discomfort" (2011, p.525). After Al-Khedairy and Al-Mufti criticised the US and UK invasion of Iraq as imperialist, and condemned the UN's sanctions regime, participants labelled them as "angry" and dismissed their message (p.532). While Gibbings does not explicitly mention race, this response invokes the racist stereotype of the "angry woman of colour" (Ahmed 2012, p.162, 2018, p.338), suggesting a racialised ordering of femininities. The UN's norms as to what constitutes appropriate feminine behaviour, Gibbings argues, "can be used as a rationale to privilege certain voices and exclude others", making it difficult to introduce critiques of militarism and imperialism (2011, p.532).

In a variety of ways, then, militarism and coloniality rely on individuals performing according to gendered and racialised norms, which differ across contexts. However, the literature on gender and militarism emphasises that not only sexed bodies but anything — ideas, activities, policies, organisations — can be coded masculine or feminine. As such, it moves beyond analyses of gendered norms to examine how gender operates as a *system of meaning* that organises the way we think about the world (Tickner 1992, pp.7–8; Cohn 1993, pp.228–230, 2013, pp.11–15; Cohn & Ruddick 2004, p.408). For example, Tickner (1992) argues that a particular, masculine conception of human nature has been projected onto the behaviour of states in the international arena (p.6). In so-called 'realist' theories of IR, which have strongly informed practices of national security policymaking, states are assumed to be essentially self-interested, existing in an amoral world where they can never trust each other, and so must take 'rational', 'unemotional' decisions to maximise their power to ensure their own security. While prescribing state behaviour that adheres to this masculine-coded norm, realists position the idea that a more peaceful, co-operative international system is possible as naïve and idealistic — attributes that are coded as feminine in that context (Tickner 1992, p.50). Tickner concludes that the projection of this masculinity onto states and the feminisation of international co-operation "generate[s] a national security discourse that privileges conflict

and war and silences other ways of thinking about security" (1992, p.51). These systems of meaning create what Hutchings (2008b) calls "cognitive shortcuts" (p.23) — a kind of shorthand that can be used to render militaristic ideas more persuasive by associating them with masculine-coded terms such as 'rational' and 'realistic', thereby lessening the burden of justification needed to support them (see also Cohn 2019).

Of course, gendered systems of meaning are also racialised systems of meaning, and racial hierarchies are also at work in producing cognitive shortcuts. For example, in an analysis that recalls the logic of masculinist protection, Shepherd (2006) describes how the George W. Bush administration's rhetoric around its 2001 invasion of Afghanistan constructed the US nation as embodying a version of heroic, white masculinity associated with firefighters and rescue workers (pp.22–24), while the Afghan government was associated with the uncivilised, racially-marked masculinity of "irrational barbarians" (p.25). By contrasting what he called the "civilised world" with "terrorists" (Bush 2001), Bush deployed cognitive shortcuts to invoke a familiar hierarchy of gendered and racialised meanings that was "an integral part of the production of consent to the US-led attacks on Afghanistan" (Shepherd 2006, p.28). Indeed, in masculinist systems of meaning, ideas or practices can just as easily be denigrated through being constructed as hyper-masculine as through being constructed as feminine, and racially-marked subordinate masculinities are often framed in this way (Hooper 2001, p.74).

Importantly, the racialised masculinities and femininities that emerge as norms regulating the practices of individuals and those that are assigned to ideas or states through systems of meaning are interlinked and mutually reinforcing (Cohn 1993, p.229; Hooper 1998, p.32; Peterson & Runyan 2010, p.78). In the example just given, masculine norms that might be enacted through the performance of individuals in the US emergency services were assigned to an abstract construction of 'the nation'. However, separating these manifestations of gender and race analytically is useful because it sheds light on how, in settings characterised by masculinist cultures, differently gendered and racialised people can come to privilege ideas coded as white and masculine, regardless of whether they themselves desire to be perceived in that way. As Hutchings (2008b, p.31) explains:

> [I]t is not necessarily that theorists, whether consciously or unconsciously, fear emasculation or denigrate the feminine or women; rather, it is utilizing masculinity as

> a resource for thought which saves a great deal of work in rendering arguments persuasive.

Understanding the interrelationships between norms and systems of meaning is critical to thinking about how systems of meaning might be changed, a question I address in Chapter 3. However, I now turn to the third aspect of race and gender I consider here: epistemologies.

Feminist engagements with *epistemologies*, or theories of knowledge, highlight how knowledge framed as objective and impartial is often produced from the particular perspectives of white men, whereas the perspectives of women and people of colour are dismissed as subjective and partial (Harding 1986; Haraway 1988; Code 1993). Antimilitarist feminists ask how knowledge produced from women's diverse perspectives about security, war and militarism can challenge hegemonic understandings (Ruddick 1989; Tickner 1992; Kronsell 2005; Cockburn 2007, 2010). For example, Cockburn (2007) has generated an antimilitarist feminist standpoint on militarism and war, based on her engagement with feminist peace movements around the world. She shows how these movements, in thinking from the lives of women, expose the relationships between masculinities, patriarchy and militarism. For instance, women's experiences of gendered violence across war and peacetime, often overlooked in mainstream accounts of war, reveal how patriarchal power connects the two (Cockburn 2007, p.212). While accounts of 'women's experiences' or 'women's perspectives' run the risk of essentialism, Cockburn is careful to clarify that there is no singular women's or feminist standpoint, but multiple standpoints shaped by intersecting systems of power (2007, p.7). Of course, women's perspectives are not inherently antimilitarist: women involved in waging war often bring similar perspectives to men in parallel positions (Grant 1992). Yet even in militarist institutions, women's experiences of masculine cultures can help us to "see the operations of the-male-as-norm" (Kronsell 2005, p.288) and how it props up militarism, which is often hidden from scrutiny when thinking only from the lives of men.

Just as claims to 'objectivity' in militarist thinking can conceal androcentric perspectives, they also obscure the workings of whiteness. For example, while hegemonic thinking about security that begins from white lives positions criminal justice systems as *providers* of security, taking Black lives as a starting point reveals the realities of policing and prison systems as bringing violence, exploitation and premature death to communities of colour (Davis 2003; Gilmore

2007; Kaba 2021). Black feminist scholarship highlights how the economies and logics of the war system and criminal justice systems are deeply interconnected, in ways that white feminists' research on militarism has often overlooked (Davis 2003, pp.86–88, 2008; Gilmore 2012). Similarly, the suppression of the knowledge of colonised people perpetuates coloniality by producing collective ignorance about colonial histories, presenting global racial inequalities as the outcome of Western superiority rather than exploitation backed by military power (Mills 1997, 2007, 2015; Vimalassery, Pegues & Goldstein 2016; Wekker 2016).

This literature shows, then, how masculinist and racist norms, systems of meaning and epistemological assumptions operate to normalise and legitimise militarist and colonial worldviews and practices, and hence why one might suspect them to do so in national security policymaking organisations. Given the central role that organisations play in social life, and in the construction of gender and race specifically, they are unsurprisingly an important site where norms, systems of meaning and epistemologies are reproduced (Hearn & Parkin 1983; Nkomo 1992; Gherardi 1995; Aaltio & Mills 2002; Prasad & Prasad 2002; Mackay, Kenny & Chappell 2010; Holvino 2010; Ray 2019). Most literature examining how organisations produce gender and race in ways that sustain militarism focuses on militaries, describing how recruitment, hazing rituals, training, ranking systems and combat experiences combine to produce 'military masculinities' that enable bonding among soldiers and ready them to fight racially-marked others (e.g. Barrett 1996; Razack 2004; Whitworth 2004; Belkin 2012; Hale 2012; Duncanson 2013). As for those organisations responsible for *making* national security policies, scholars note in passing that securocrats are expected to show masculine-coded qualities of "strength, power, autonomy, independence, and rationality", while "characteristics associated with femininity are a liability when dealing with the realities of international politics" (Tickner 1992, p.3, 41). Yet, as I elaborate in the next section, few studies provide detailed empirical evidence of how these dynamics play out within these organisations. I suggest the paucity of research in this area represents a significant gap in the literature because, while militaries are responsible for meting out violence on behalf of states, it is — to a greater or lesser degree, at different times in different states — government ministries, largely run by civilians, who usually decide whether to go to war, to buy or export weapons, or build military bases (for example).

When seeking to understand how constructions of gender and race reproduce militarism and coloniality, then, understanding how this process operates within national security

policymaking organisations would seem to be particularly important. In the next section, I outline the scholarship that does exist in this area. I show that although a growing literature examines gender and race in national security and/or foreign policymaking organisations, few studies attempt to link these to coloniality and militarism, and many of those that do treat gender and race as fixed categories or variables, rather than systems of power that produce and are produced by organisational cultures.

Studying Securocrats

Much of the literature drawing links between gendered and racialised discourses, militarism and coloniality in the context of national security examines policymakers' public-facing performances. For example, Niva (1998), Ducat (2004) and Messerschmidt (2010) analyse the masculinist meanings in US Presidents' rhetoric on Iraq since the 1990s. Niva argues that Bush Senior's public rhetoric during the 1991 Gulf War constructed for the nation a 'New World Order' masculinity combining toughness and compassion, which "could be used to reinforce and legitimate a more aggressively militarized foreign policy" (1998, p.115). Ducat finds that Bush Senior's decision to invade Iraq challenged the media portrayal of him as too effeminate to be President, increasing his popularity by making him appear more manly in the eyes of voters (Ducat 2004, pp.84–108). Taking a slightly different stance, Messerschmidt argues that Bushes Senior and Junior used public rhetoric to construct softer, more publicly acceptable masculinities for themselves to conceal the fact that they were enacting a "geopolitical dominating masculinity" through aggressive military action in Iraq (2010, pp.74–87, 144–151). Cannen (2014) finds a publicly constructed demilitarised masculinity doing similar work for Barack Obama, emphasising humour, street cool and his role as loving husband and father, which obscured how he had continued and intensified Bush Junior's 'War on Terror' (2014, p.256). This literature on public rhetoric helps to explain how national security policies are sold to, or concealed from, sceptical publics; however, it is unclear whether the same, or different, gendered and racialised discourses inform the development of those policies in the first place.

Studies of the inner workings of national security policymaking communities are of course limited by the difficulties of accessing these often-secretive spaces. Nonetheless, a growing literature examines foreign policymaking and diplomacy — which overlap substantially with national security policymaking — from the perspective of gender and, to a lesser extent, race. Much of this literature focuses on women and gender inequality: for example, McCarthy's

(2014) history of female British diplomats documents barriers to women's advancement and efforts to overcome them, while Enloe (1989) reveals how international relations rely on the unrecognised labour of diplomatic wives, and the difficulties this creates for heterosexual female diplomats who have no one to perform this feminised labour for them (pp.93–123). Some studies also address men from a gender perspective, such as Neumann's (2012) ethnographic study of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which analyses a class-inflected hierarchy of masculinities among diplomats (pp.129–168). A recent upsurge of scholarly interest in the topic has yielded rich analysis of embassies and ministries of foreign affairs as gendered institutions,[10] exploring gendered norms governing how diplomats and foreign policymakers dress (Essex & Bowman 2021), network (Niklasson 2020), navigate host-country cultures (Marriott 2017), and what roles they are appointed to (Niklasson & Towns 2017; Niklasson & Robertson 2018).

Much of this literature on gender, foreign policymaking and diplomacy refers to the importance of intersectional analysis, and while some studies address class (Neumann 2012) or sexuality (Dean 2001, pp.63–167; Southern 2017; Stephenson 2020), few examine race or ethnicity in any detail. A separate, smaller literature on race and ethnicity examines how and why ministries of foreign affairs have promoted racial diversity among diplomats and policymakers in recent years, for example to build their legitimacy and demonstrate their nations' openness and tolerance (Krenn 2015, p.163; Conley Tyler 2016, p.706) or, in Global North states, for the purpose of "breaking with the perception of a neo-colonial legacy but also a white-dominant international system" (Lequesne et al 2020, p.60).

Looking at the UK context, studies on gender and race in the Civil Service show how women and people of colour have been structurally excluded, and how its organisational cultures — perhaps especially in the national security sphere — have valorised white, middle-class masculinities.[11] Historically, the national security community was almost exclusively populated by men: in the FCO, for example, women were only present as housekeepers and typists until diplomatic roles were opened up to them in 1946 (Crowe, Hamilton & Southern 2018). Even

[10] See, for example, edited volumes by Cassidy (2017) and Aggestam & Towns (2018), and a 2020 special issue of Foreign Policy Analysis, 16 (2), on gender and foreign policy analysis. Aggestam & Towns (2019) and Smith (2020) review the literature and call for more studies in this area.

[11] I refer here to the literature on diplomacy and the FCO, and some on the broader Civil Service. While histories of the other departments in the national security community are available (e.g. Newsam 1954; Gibson 2011; Seldon & Meakin 2016), these focus on key political decisions, ministers, or the structural organisation of departments, not their social histories or organisational cultures.

then, the proportion of senior diplomats who were women was formally capped at 10%, and women were expected to resign upon marriage, effectively preventing most of them from advancing in seniority until the 'marriage bar' was lifted in 1972 (Crowe, Hamilton & Southern 2018, p.18, 21). While no formal bar existed based on race or ethnicity, a memorandum was circulated in 1951 stating that "a person of manifestly un-English appearance or speech" should not be allowed to represent the UK overseas, and the assumption that Black and Asian people were insufficiently loyal to the country was evidenced in internal documents throughout the 1960s (Southern 2018, p.5, 9; Lomas 2021). Security vetting procedures differed between departments, but stipulations about parentage, nationality and length of residence in the UK long excluded many people of colour from working in national security; even today, having lived or having family overseas slows down vetting processes, which puts some candidates off applying (Lomas 2021).

More generally, the role of the UK civil servant has been conceived of as that of an objective, detached, rational processor of information, qualities often discursively linked with masculinity and whiteness (Walters 1987; Stivers 1993, pp. 38-9; Chappell 2002, p. 102, 105; Puwar 2004, pp.14–24, 56–58). While formally the role of the bureaucrat is framed as one that anybody could perform, studies as recent as the 1990s and early 2000s show that informally the UK civil servant was expected to be the "right sort of chap" (Watson 1994, p.213). That is, they should adopt a habitus — learned ways of speaking, carrying oneself physically, thinking and feeling (Bordieu 1990, pp.52–65) — usually associated with middle or upper class, Oxbridge-educated white men: confidence, emotional reserve, an ability to project authority, understatement, formality, politeness, dry humour, and speaking in received pronunciation[12] with comfortable use of sporting metaphors (Edwards 1994, p.123, 131; Chappell 2006, p.227; Rhodes 2011, pp.190–199). These studies also paint a picture of women, people of colour and working-class civil servants more or less consciously performing these qualities in the workplace in order to gain acceptance and respect (Edwards 1994, p.105; Watson 1994, p.219; Puwar 2004, p.98, 113–129).

This literature has begun building a detailed picture of masculinities and femininities enacted by policymakers and diplomats in a range of settings, including the UK, as well as barriers to gender and racial equality in these workplaces. While these are important insights in their own

[12] 'Received pronunciation', also known as 'BBC English' refers to an accent associated with the English home counties and particularly the middle and upper classes.

right, few studies make connections between the gendered and racialised cultures of foreign or security policymaking spaces and the content of policy discussions.[13] The literature shows that some governments see a connection between their officials' ethnic and/or racial identity and their approach to foreign policy, often based on essentialist assumptions. For example, some states see opportunities in using diplomats' racial identity as a resource, such as Brazil and the US sending Black diplomats to African countries in the hope that shared heritage will promote rapport (Lequesne et al 2020, p.53; Krenn 2015, p.83), while the French and Norwegian governments resist similar moves out of a fear that their staff may "go native" and fail to act in the national interest (Lequesne et al 2020, p.60). Krenn's (2015) work on the US State Department and Foreign Service details how Black civil rights activists throughout the 20th Century argued for greater participation of Black people in shaping US foreign policy, precisely in order to challenge the racist and colonial assumptions on which policies were made. However, Krenn concludes that a lack of progress in increasing the voice and presence of Black people in US foreign policymaking makes it impossible to say whether this would have made a difference (2015, p.172). While the framing of this question implies that — just as Black activists asserted — the whiteness of the foreign policy establishment may help explain its colonial worldview, it is not clear how this whiteness manifests in policy discussions or shapes the contributions of Black or white policymakers.

A few studies investigate links between gendered organisations and the content of foreign and security policies, but most are quantitative studies examining the impact of the presence of female policymakers. For example, Koch and Fulton (2011) argue that states with more female legislators spend less on defence and are less conflict-prone, while Bashevkin (2014) finds that they allocate more aid to advancing women's equality in the Global South. Schramm and Stark (2020) claim that female political leaders are *more* likely than men to initiate militarised international disputes, ostensibly in order to gain status with masculine elites. Yet the approach taken by these studies treats gender as an explanatory variable represented by the seemingly fixed and homogenised category of 'women'. If one rejects essentialist understandings of womanhood, as most feminists do, it is unclear why counting numbers of women would explain policy outcomes. In contrast, a qualitative study by McGlen and Sarkees (1993) assessing the impact of female policymakers on US foreign policy argues that there is

[13] Separately, recent literature addresses what it would mean to enact a feminist foreign policy (e.g. Aggestam & Bergman Rosamond 2016; Hudson 2017; Aggestam, Bergman Rosamond & Kronsell 2019), but does not (yet) link the policy content to gendered or racialised organisational cultures.

no unique 'women's perspective' on foreign policy or evidence that women's participation alone changes policy outcomes. While some quantitative studies acknowledge the mediating influence of gender norms on policymakers' behaviour (Koch & Fulton 2011; Schramm & Stark 2020), they capture little of what feminist scholarship has to say about how gender (and race) not only regulate the performances of individuals but fundamentally constitute the discourses from which policy decisions emerge. Counting women reveals little about the workings of power if not accompanied by, for example, analysis of the multiple constructions of masculinity and femininity they encounter in their organisations, or of national security discourses in each context and the gendered and racialised meanings they invoke. As Achilleos-Sarll (2018, p.45) argues in her call for a postcolonial feminist mode of foreign policy analysis:

> While it is important to acknowledge the historical underrepresentation of women in the realm of foreign policy-making, it is not adequate […] to assume that increased representation may over time alter policy-making — without drawing attention to the underlying gendered, sexualised and racialised assumptions that exist within the institutions, practices and ideas of foreign policy prior to decision-making.

This thesis, while it discusses implications of the presence of women and people of colour, situates this within a wider investigation of how gendered and racialised norms, systems of meaning and epistemologies reproduced in specific organisational cultures make particular ways of thinking about national security possible. As I noted at the start of this chapter, a few existing studies also adopt this approach: notably, Carol Cohn's multi-sited ethnography of US defence intellectuals in the 1980s, and Robert D. Dean's study of the US foreign policy establishment in the 1960s and 1970s. Cohn's and Dean's research differs from the literature already described here, in that it is concerned with the detail of how norms and discourses operate within a policymaking community in their everyday discussions about policy issues. In the remainder of this section, I outline how the findings of these two studies demonstrate the importance of national security policymaking settings as a site for understanding the gendered and racialised norms and discourses that sustain militarism and coloniality. I also discuss several smaller and more recent studies addressing similar themes, and elaborate how this thesis both builds on this literature and addresses further lines of inquiry made possible by the demographics of the UK national security community.

Cohn on US Defence Intellectuals

Cohn's study explores the discourses through which US defence intellectuals discuss nuclear weapons strategy at a university research centre. Although the setting is not formally a policymaking organisation *per se*, Cohn's participants were drawn from a group of men whose careers saw them moving around between government departments, think tanks and universities, and who had considerable influence over national security policy. Her analysis takes place across three articles (Cohn 1987, 1989, 1993), all of which underscore the importance of gendered discourses in shaping how defence intellectuals think and talk about national security.

Cohn found that defence intellectuals adopted what she calls 'technostrategic' discourse, which made it possible to speak about nuclear weapons in a sanitised way that erased their human and ecological costs. This discourse employed gendered metaphors that made the weapons seem either small and safe (missiles "marry up" or "couple" with delivery systems) or sexy and exciting ("vertical erector launchers" and "deep penetration") (Cohn 1987, p.693, 698). Through these metaphors, technostrategic discourse constructed the weapons themselves as subjects, describing them as "vulnerable" and as "getting killed", while actual deaths of human beings appear only as "collateral damage" (p.691, 699). Cohn argues that technostrategic discourse enables defence intellectuals to make their day-to-day work palatable; however, it does not explain *why* decisions are taken to keep developing new nuclear weapons in the first place. Rather, whenever it was suggested that new weapons systems could not be justified even within the logic of technostrategic discourse, her colleagues would fall back on axioms such as "it is important to demonstrate our resolve" or "it complicates an attacker's plans" (1989, p.158). These arguments could justify almost any new weapons system, and offer no criteria for distinguishing a useful one from a useless one, yet no one saw fit to question those maxims. Cohn attributes this to their resonance with ideals of masculinity to which this community of people was emotionally attached. Invoking a masculinist system of meaning, they expected the state to uphold a masculine stance that makes the (feminine-coded) idea of backing down from developing new weapons systems unthinkable, even in the face of widespread recognition among defence intellectuals that they are not militarily useful (Cohn 1989, pp.160–161).

Cohn's 1993 piece, 'Wars, Wimps and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War', explores masculinist systems of meaning in greater detail, examining how they make certain policy

positions appear 'thinkable' while others are taken off the table altogether. She illustrates her analysis with an anecdote from a white male physicist who had an emotional outburst during a conversation about nuclear strategy, in which he exclaimed in shock at the casual manner in which he and his colleagues were discussing the (theoretical) deaths of 30 million people. His colleagues responded with embarrassment on his behalf, following which he told Cohn that he "felt like a woman" and resolved never to act in such a way again (Cohn 1993, p.227). She observes that in the discourses prevalent in this setting, some behaviours, ideas or topics are coded as feminine, including any discussion of the destruction wrought by war on human bodies, or display of heightened emotions in one's tone of voice. Because that which is coded feminine is devalued in masculinist thinking, it was exceptionally difficult for this physicist, and other defence intellectuals, to be seen to be taking a feminised position, and so they regulated their own behaviour so to avoid being perceived that way. Certain conversations or arguments — including those which show concern for the "bloody reality" of war and its impact on human lives, "have been *pre-empted* by gender discourse, and by the feelings evoked by living up to or transgressing gender codes" (Cohn 1993, p.230, 232). Cohn's research, then, gives a detailed picture of how gendered discourses in a policy-influencing community shape policy discussions in concrete ways that serve to sustain militarist assumptions. Before discussing how this thesis builds on these insights, I first outline Dean's study, its commonalities and differences.

Dean on US Foreign Policymakers

Dean's (2001) book, *Imperial Brotherhood*: *Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy*, examines US foreign policymaking under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. He observes that most members of the foreign policy establishment at that time were drawn from a small group of men with remarkably similar life histories: they attended a handful of private boarding schools, went to Ivy League universities and undertook military service in elite units before taking up posts in government (Dean 2001, p.4). Using memoirs, archived official documents and other published pronouncements by these men and others who belonged to the same organisations, Dean tracks how the cultures of each these organisations contributed to the development of a "warrior-intellectual" masculinity (2001, p.13). Whereas Cohn focuses primarily on systems of meaning, Dean also explores more embodied and material processes with which those meanings interact. For example, he examines how, in boarding schools that these men attended, the deliberate project of turning them from 'soft' upper-middle class

boys into men with hard bodies and disciplined minds was reinforced through brutal physical punishment of any boy seen to be displaying feminised behaviours. Once these men entered the foreign policy establishment, the production of a masculinity based on patriotism and heroism was ensured through, for example, the sacking of anyone perceived to be homosexual and therefore, they believed, potentially sympathetic to communism (Dean 2001, pp.63–167).

Having described the organisational processes through which this masculinity was produced, Dean traces the deliberations of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations over whether to escalate or withdraw from military intervention in Vietnam. Similar to the case of Cohn's nuclear strategists, Dean describes a situation in which continued escalation of US involvement could not be justified on military grounds: administration officials themselves acknowledged the likelihood and costs of defeat. Yet, Dean argues, "deeply ingrained ideologies of elite masculinity" made the prospect of military withdrawal "unthinkable" (2001, p.234). For Dean, this militarism is linked to colonial ambitions: he describes this masculine ideal as one of "imperial manhood" (p.14, 15) that is fulfilled by advancing an expansionist vision of the US's role in the world. It not only made counterinsurgency strategies based on ideals of heroic masculinity appear appropriate, but meant that talking about alternatives was all but impossible: on the rare occasions when the possibility of withdrawal was brought up, it was dismissed as making the US appear cowardly and lacking in honour (Dean 2001, p.202). In Dean's account, as in Cohn's, cognitive shortcuts can be seen in action, with masculinist systems of meaning providing a discursive resource with which less militarist approaches could be rejected outright.

Cohn's and Dean's studies demonstrate how gendered norms, systems of meaning and organisational processes work together to reinforce militarism and, in Dean's case, coloniality. Gendered meanings constructed confrontational and violent approaches to international conflicts as masculine, and any deviation from those positions as feminine and therefore devalued. Individuals in these environments disciplined their own behaviour and that of those around them, making it difficult for anyone to propose those feminised policy approaches. Individuals learned these behavioural codes through their acculturation into their organisations, whether through induction into technostrategic discourse as described by Cohn, or through embodied processes of formal education and socialisation such as those described by Dean. Both studies offer strong reasons for thinking that it is not just 'gendered discourse' in general which is implicated in militarism; there is something important about organisational

culture. As the organisation studies literature attests, organisational cultures are constituted by their own systems of meaning that help members to make sense of their activities (Gherardi 1995, p.20; Bruni & Gherardi 2002, pp.22–23). While gendered norms and meanings are shaped by wider societal cultures, they congeal into particular configurations (re)produced and reinforced within organisations. Cohn describes how working among defence intellectuals exerted a powerful influence over how she herself thought and felt, in what she calls the "militarization of the mind" (1987, p.714). Despite coming to the organisation with strong feminist and antimilitarist convictions, Cohn found herself genuinely hurt when her colleagues feminised her by calling her a "wimp" for not supporting military action in a scenario-based exercise (1993, pp.237–238). She started to think in technostrategic language, and felt she was losing sight of moral arguments against nuclear weapons (1987, pp.712–713). This suggests that understanding the processes by which individuals come to adopt — or at least express — an organisation's values and beliefs as their own is key to explaining how policymakers come to support particular policy approaches.

More Recent Studies

Cohn's and Dean's studies make valuable contributions to understanding the relationships between militarism and gendered norms, systems of meaning and organisational processes in national security policymaking settings. They also suggest new questions for scholarly enquiry, and two in particular inform the research questions that drive this thesis: about the role of race in gendering practices, and about the presence or absence of women and people of colour in policymaking processes. Both studies examine settings where the vast majority of policymakers or -influencers were white men, in the white-dominated culture of the US, raising questions about how the masculinities they describe are constituted by whiteness. Given the centrality of racialisation to creating the conditions for coloniality and militarism, understanding how these gendered norms and systems of meaning were also racialised would help to build a fuller picture of the workings of power that antimilitarist and anticolonial politics seek to challenge. Cohn states that almost all of the defence intellectuals she worked with were white men, while young Black women cleaned the rooms (1987, p.704; 1993, p.227), and while she acknowledges that gender discourses are always shaped by race, this raises questions about what work it was doing in this particular setting. Dean notes briefly the use of racist metaphors among policymakers, and orientalist depictions of Vietnamese leaders (2001, p.206, 228), but while constructions of whiteness are implicit in his description of

imperial manhood as linked to discourses of "civilization" (pp.21–22), he offers no explicit analysis of their role.

A few smaller, more recent studies, while less focused on organisational culture *per se*, nonetheless highlight how gender and race intersect in shaping how securocrats think. For example, Khalili's (2011) archival and ethnographic research on US counterinsurgency policymakers addresses the intersections of race and gender, arguing that this policy community increasingly values the softer "soldier-scholar" masculinity of men who are "white, literate, articulate, and doctorate-festooned" (p.1475). As middle-class white women increasingly occupy powerful positions in counterinsurgency policy, Khalili describes them as espousing a colonial, "war-like" feminism to justify their presence in this masculinised space (2011, p.1491). This coincides with the performance of a "collaborative warrior femininity" (p.1488) that shares many qualities with soldier-scholar masculinity. As these masculine and feminine identities comfortably co-exist, Khalili argues that they sit atop "imperial hierarchies in which one's gender does not tell us anything about one's location in the hierarchies"; rather, race and class position these policymakers in relation to both the soldiers who enact their policies and the civilian men and women in the Global South who are the target of counterinsurgency operations (2011, p.1476). Her findings show that whiteness is at least as important as masculinity in forming the subject positions occupied by Western national security policymakers, particularly as white women become more established in these communities.

Grewal's (2017) discussion of "security feminists" (pp.131–143), based on the writings of and media interviews with women in US counterterrorism policymaking, resonates with Khalili's findings. She argues that security feminists advocate a kind of "white girl power" feminism (Grewal 2017, p.134) that views their participation in US imperial projects as signifying women's empowerment. They sell what they frame as a uniquely feminine approach to counterterrorism based on "maternal power and prowess" (p.140) which, while ostensibly less violent than traditional counterterrorism, infantilises societies in the Global South by comparing US overseas interventions with parenting. Razavi (2021) strikes a (somewhat) more optimistic tone in her ethnography of national security experts in Washington DC, which analyses the "NatSec feminism" (p.363) articulated by women in these circles. She argues that while older, predominantly white feminists in national security play into the gendered and racialised logics of counterterrorism, a younger generation, who are more often women of

colour and/or migrant women, are taking a more radical and oppositional stance toward US militarism. While these recent articles offer briefer snapshots compared to Cohn's and Dean's studies, they highlight the need for analyses addressing gender *and* race (and their intersections), and point to how racialised and gendered discourses in national security policymaking communities may have changed since the Cold War period.

This thesis builds on and adds to these newer studies by asking whether and how racialised and gendered organisational cultures sustain militarist and colonial thinking in a different empirical context. While the US remains the globally dominant military and political power, other states also help to sustain the militarist and colonial paradigm underpinning security policymaking internationally, and it cannot be assumed that findings from the US can be transposed to other contexts. While many studies examine gendered and/or racialised organisational cultures in the UK Parliament and Civil Service, they focus on questions of workplace equality and do not attempt to link these cultures to militarism or coloniality in policy thinking (e.g. Walters 1987; Watson 1994; Puwar 2004; Willie 2007; Annesley & Gains 2010; Malley 2012; Chappell & Waylen 2013; Rai 2015; Childs 2016; Miller 2021). Analyses of the British state's masculine self-identity — for example as expressed by British soldiers or in official policy documents — suggest possible differences with the US, with Britain's militarism often constructed as moderate and benign compared to the US's more gung-ho 'cowboy' persona (Duncanson & Eschle 2008; Christensen & Ferree 2008; Higate 2012; Duncanson 2013, pp.85–89). This thesis therefore addresses a gap in the literature relating to whether similar or different dynamics can be found in UK policymaking.

Furthermore, given that people of colour make up 14% of staff in the five UK government departments examined here, and women 49% (see Chapter 1), this provides an opportunity to explore how women and people of colour navigate organisational cultures in these predominantly white, male organisations, in ways that were not possible for Cohn or Dean. While I have argued that studies expecting the mere presence of women or people of colour to produce less militaristic policies are overly simplistic and misguided, their participation can nonetheless change organisational cultures. As the studies by Khalili (2011), Grewal (2017) and Razavi (2021) suggest, gendered and racialised discourses that sustain militarist and colonial ways of thinking might look different when women and people of colour are present in significant numbers. This thesis therefore contributes to antimilitarist feminist debates about the importance of presence by examining the relationship between gendered and racialised

organisational cultures, militarism and coloniality in a policymaking community where numbers of women, and to a lesser extent people of colour, are substantial and growing. The final section of this chapter sets out the key arguments in these debates, demonstrating how the thesis builds on the literature in this area.

Unmaking Militarism

While this thesis asks how gendered and racialised organisational cultures might help to sustain militarism and coloniality in policy discussions, it does not assume that they do so. Given my sympathies with antimilitarist feminisms that posit such a relationship, I find it important to offset this bias by actively seeking evidence of cultural formations that do *not* legitimise militarist and colonial worldviews. Doing so requires an account of what organisational cultures that do not support militarist and colonial thinking might look like, and for this I turn to feminist antimilitarist debates about how militarism and its gendered and racialised underpinnings might be undone. Feminist antimilitarist political strategies have been wide-ranging, from passing UN Security Council resolutions (Cohn 2008) to vandalising warplanes (Needham 2016). Given my focus on the discursive construction of race and gender in policymaking organisations, I discuss here how feminists have proposed to transform these discourses. This does not imply that changing discourses is *sufficient* to undermine the war system, but rather reflects the contention of many antimilitarist feminists that disrupting masculinist discourses can help to destabilise the hegemonic view that militarism is natural and inevitable (e.g. Cohn & Ruddick 2004; Otto 2006, 2020; Duncanson 2013).

Debates about how to transform the masculinist and racist discourses that underpin militarism inform the theoretical framework I use to examine how gendered and racialised norms and meanings are changing in the UK national security community (see Chapter 3). However, I outline them here to explain why — despite the reasons for scepticism about inclusion as an antimilitarist strategy that I have offered above — the thesis nonetheless analyses the implications of the presence of women and people of colour in UK national security policymaking and its relationship to militarism and coloniality. To elucidate key arguments in these debates, I adopt a typology developed by Squires (1999), which divides feminist strategies into three categories: inclusion, reversal and displacement (p.3). Proposed as a typology of approaches to gender in political theory, it has been adopted by Duncanson (2013, pp.64–68) and Duncanson and Woodward (2016) to think through feminist strategies for

overcoming militarism.[14] While this framing has been used to expound the relationship between gender and militarism, I also bring in literature on race and coloniality which speaks to these debates. In what follows, I critically discuss each of the three strategies, before explaining Duncanson and Woodward's rationale for advocating a strategy that combines all three, and how the thesis responds to their ideas.

Inclusion, Reversal and Displacement

As the name suggests, strategies of inclusion advocate women's entry into spaces from which they have historically been excluded. The UN's WPS agenda promotes women's equal participation in security decision-making, citing women's right to participate in governance structures, while often also positing that women's participation will make war less likely, or peace more sustainable (Coomaraswamy 2015, p.41; Paffenholz et al 2016). Invoking this idea, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (2011) declared that "including more women in peacemaking is not just the right thing to do, it's also the smart thing to do", while former Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström adopted the slogan "more women, more peace" (Georgetown University 2016). As noted above, feminist scholarship largely rejects the notion that women are inherently more peace-loving, and so such claims are rightly treated by many with scepticism. Some women are highly invested in militarism, and white women in particular have a long history of complicity in colonialism and war-making (Amos & Parmar 1984; hooks 1995; Mohanty 2006). Not all women are feminists, and not all feminisms are antimilitarist or anticolonial. Similarly, participation of people of colour in white-dominated state institutions has often not produced the "anti-racist trickle-down" its advocates typically anticipate (Bhattacharyya at al 2021, p.90), creating more diverse organisations that remain racist in their structures and functions (pp.84–99).

Even if strategies of inclusion got women with the 'right' politics into decision-making positions, women entering masculinist organisations often experience pressure to 'act like men' in order to be taken seriously (Kanter 1977, p.220; Acker 1990, p.153; McDowell 1997, p.153; Puwar 2004, p.100). In national security institutions, this might mean taking a more militarist stance (Reardon 1985, p.33; Hooper 2001, p.49; Peterson & Runyan 2010, p.120).

[14] Though she does not use the same descriptors, Burguieres' (1990) review of feminist approaches to peace studies uses similar categories.

Women and people of colour become highly visible when in the minority: their mistakes are more likely to be noticed, and their success or failure used to draw conclusions about their entire gender or race (Kanter 1977, pp.212–214; Puwar 2004, p.49). As such, it may be even more difficult for them to advance antimilitarist and anticolonial ideas in conservative national security communities than it would be for white men. Further, women and people of colour may find themselves functioning as gendered and racial "decoys" (Eisenstein 2007, pp.xi–xviii), giving national security establishments a veneer of diversity while they continue to enact colonial and militarist policies. Clearly, strategies of inclusion alone are unlikely to be transformative.

Strategies of reversal address some of these problems by seeking to dismantle masculinism, by valorising that which is culturally coded as feminine. For antimilitarist feminists, this often means revaluing peace, empathy, care and co-operation (Reardon 1985, p.4; Ruddick 1989; Sylvester 1994; Sharp 2020). In national security policymaking, this would, in theory, make it impossible to use cognitive shortcuts to dismiss antimilitarist perspectives simply by linking them to femininity, and would alleviate pressure on women and men to espouse militarist ideas to demonstrate masculine credibility. Critics of this strategy point out that while revaluing peace and care is important, if they are still associated femininity, this reinforces the same gendered dichotomies that are used to justify both patriarchy and militarism (hooks 1995, p.59; Otto 2006, p.126, 165; Peterson & Runyan 2010, pp.249–250). They argue that women have been oppressed precisely *because* they are associated with these values, whether through disproportionately bearing the burden of care work or being excluded from positions of power. This strategy paints a depressing picture of a world where 'peaceable' women are left in charge of keeping unruly militarist men in check.

Due to these problems with strategies of inclusion and reversal, feminist scholars have increasingly favoured strategies of displacement (also called strategies of deconstruction), which aim to dismantle binaristic thinking, delinking femininity from peace and masculinity from war (Squires 2001, p.12; Otto 2006, p.138; Duncanson 2013, p.66). If militarism and patriarchy depend on these discursive dichotomies, rather than reversing their hierarchical structure, it would seem logical to deconstruct them altogether. However, advocates of strategies of displacement acknowledge that, given their focus on discourse, they do not readily offer up a concrete plan of action. As Duncanson (2013) asks, "Does it restrict feminists

to a realm of theory, language and symbolism, where feminists can point out how discourses justify and legitimate problematic policies, such as military interventions, but little more" (p.66)? Partially as a means to overcome this dilemma, Duncanson (2013) and Duncanson and Woodward (2016) advocate an approach that combines these three strategies, bringing together the practical recommendations of strategies of inclusion with the more transformative trajectories of reversal and displacement.

A Three-Pronged Antimilitarist Strategy

In their work on military masculinities, Duncanson and Woodward draw on Cockburn and Hubic's (2002) imaginary of a 're-gendered military' to argue that challenging militarism and imperialism necessitates a three-pronged approach that revalues that which is currently feminine-coded, deconstructs gendered dichotomies of meaning, *and* increases women's representation in militaries (Duncanson 2013, pp.151–155; Duncanson & Woodward 2016, pp.11–15). They argue that because the discursive linking of war-making with masculinity is constantly reproduced by the presence and practices of putatively male bodies in militaries, the inclusion of women can disrupt that process of meaning-making (Duncanson 2013, p.153; Duncanson & Woodward 2016, p.12). Therefore, Duncanson and Woodward argue, strategies of inclusion cannot be abandoned despite their difficulties, as they play an important role in strategies of displacement. To address concerns about women being co-opted into masculinist cultures, however, their inclusion must be accompanied by the presence of feminist ideas that revalue the feminine. This suggestion is drawn from the work of Hooper (2001, pp.230–231), who argues:

> Masculinity appears to have no stable ingredients and therefore its power depends entirely on certain qualities constantly being associated with men. Masculine spaces are precisely the spaces where such associations are cemented and naturalized. Therefore, even the marginal appearance of women (particularly if they refuse to play the part of honorary men), together with feminist ideas, and/or other self-conscious reference to gender issues, may sufficiently alter the overall ambience of such spaces that their masculine associations become weakened.

For Hooper, as for Duncanson and Woodward, this three-pronged strategy "undermines the easy assumption" that a liberal feminist commitment to inclusion is "nonthreatening to the

status quo" (p.227). While Duncanson and Woodward are concerned with militaries, others make similar arguments about the radical potential of inclusion in security decision-making. Otto (2006) also links it to reversal and displacement, stating that women peace activists must pursue "a revaluation of the marginalised ways of thinking that suggest alternatives to militarism" and that "for women's participation to make a transformative difference" it must be used to "challenge the ideas that war and masculinity are intertwined and that women are the peacemakers" (p.169). Similarly, Cohn and Ruddick (2004) argue that the power of masculinist discourses to dismiss challenges to militarism "would be weakened by the presence of women for whom 'acting and feeling like a woman' were a matter of course, even sometimes a source of strength, and not an occasion for self-doubt and silence" (p.428). Though they do not explicitly advocate a strategy of displacement, they challenge the linking of peace with femininity, arguing that "what gets left out of dominant ways of thinking about weapons — the emotional, the concrete, the particular, the human bodies and their vulnerability, human lives and their subjectivity — is neither masculine nor feminine but human" (Cohn & Ruddick 2004, p.428). Bringing these three strategies together gives a sense of how abstract systems of meaning may be challenged through a concrete strategy of bringing women with feminist ideas into masculinist, militarist organisations.

Of course, Khalili's (2011), Grewal's (2017) and Razavi's (2021) analyses of militaristic feminisms among female securocrats demonstrate that *which* women and *which* feminist ideas are included is of critical importance (see also Otto 2006, p.151). As well as underlining the clear need for antimilitarist, anticolonial feminist ideas, this raises questions about whether and how the inclusion of women and men of colour in such organisations may shift the racialised norms and meanings that organisational cultures (re)produce. Just as the continual association between men and militarist organisations produces them as masculine, the habitual proximity of bodies racialised as white marks organisational spaces as 'being' white (Ahmed 2007a, p.157). Following Duncanson and Woodward's logic, then, to challenge the racialised underpinnings of militarism and coloniality, the three-pronged strategy would need to address inclusion on the basis of race as well as gender, introduce anti-racist ideas, dismantle racist hierarchies of value, and displace racialised dichotomies of meaning such as that of the white masculinist protector and the racially-marked security threat.

This thesis uses Duncanson and Woodward's three-pronged strategy as framework through which to analyse changes that are happening within the organisational cultures of UK

government departments working on national security. I do not suggest that increases in the numbers of women and people of colour in recent decades have been part of any deliberate antimilitarist or anticolonial strategy, nor that those working on diversity and inclusion within these organisations would view their work in these terms (see Chapter 7). Rather, I look for evidence that changes in the demographic makeup of the national security community have been accompanied by changes in organisational culture, including changes that women and people of colour consciously strive to bring about. I ask whether such changes challenge masculinist and racist hierarchies of value, and/or displace discursive dichotomies of masculinity/war and femininity/peace that hold militarism in place. In the course of exploring whether and how gendered and racialised organisational cultures *sustain* militarism and coloniality in UK national security policymaking, then, the thesis also asks whether and how dynamics of inclusion, reversal and displacement challenge that process, and reflects on the implications for feminist antimilitarist and anticolonial politics.

Conclusions

My review of the literature on which this thesis builds has demonstrated why the conceptualisation and practice of national security matters from an anti-racist feminist perspective, how constructions of gender and race help to sustain militarism and coloniality, and why it matters how those dynamics play out in UK national security policymaking organisations. I have argued that militarism and coloniality are common features of national security policies, which are critiqued from a feminist and anti-racist perspective because of the gendered and racialised harms they perpetuate. This explains (in part) my normative investment in an antimilitarist and anticolonial politics, which in turn motivates questions about how militarism and coloniality are sustained in national security policymaking. Feminist and post-/decolonial scholars explain how masculinism and racism — in concert with other systems of power such as capitalism and nationalism — sustain militarism and coloniality through the production of racialised hierarchies of masculinities and femininities. I am persuaded by their argument that to understand these linkages, it is necessary to move beyond treating gender and race as fixed attributes of individuals, focusing instead on the social construction of gendered and racialised norms, systems of meaning and epistemologies that make militarist and colonial worldviews appear natural and inevitable.

Literature on national security policymaking, foreign policymaking and diplomacy finds that these processes shape, and are shaped by, race and gender. While this literature yields rich insights into gendered and racialised organisational cultures in policymaking spaces, few studies link these to the content of policy discussions. Most of those that do tend to understand gender and race as attributes of policymakers that can be treated as explanatory variables, failing to capture how masculinism and racism operate as interlinked systems of power that constitute the discourses from which policy discussions draw meaning. However, studies by Cohn (1987, 1989, 1993) and Dean (2001) examining the masculinities and femininities constructed by US national security policymakers in their course of their work show that studying organisational processes and everyday conversations in these settings reveals a great deal about how masculinist cultures make it difficult to challenge prevailing militarist and colonial ways of thinking. Newer studies by Khalili (2011), Grewal (2017) and Razavi (2021), also focused on the US, demonstrate both the centrality of whiteness to these organisational norms and meanings, and the ways in which securocrat femininities that support militarism have emerged since more (predominantly white) women have entered national security policymaking. This thesis makes an empirical contribution to this literature by providing insights into the relationship(s) between gendered and racialised organisational cultures and militarism and coloniality in policy discussions in another contemporary setting beyond the US. It does so by asking: What are the relationships between the gendering and racialisation of organisational cultures in UK national security policymaking, and militarist and colonial ways of thinking and speaking about national security? How — if at all — does the gendered and racialised character of organisational cultures help to sustain militarism and coloniality in policy discussions?

Moreover, the significant presence of women and, to a lesser extent, people of colour in UK national security policymaking enables me to make a theoretical contribution to feminist debates about how militarism might be undermined. Feminist and anti-racist literature provides many reasons to be sceptical that the inclusion of women and people of colour in organisations will produce transformative change. However, some antimilitarist feminists see potential for the inclusion of women and feminist ideas to challenge the masculinist underpinnings of militarism by breaking down masculinist hierarchies of value (a strategy of reversal) and undoing the discursive links between masculinity and war, and femininity and peace (a strategy of displacement) (Cohn & Ruddick 2004; Otto 2006; Duncanson 2013; Duncanson & Woodward 2016). By exploring how women and people of colour navigate

gendered and racialised organisational norms, how they reinforce or challenge them, this thesis reflects on whether and how strategies of inclusion can contribute to reversal and displacement, and what this might mean for feminist antimilitarist and anticolonial strategies. I therefore also ask the supplementary question: How — if at all — have organisational cultures changed as more women and people of colour have entered national security policymaking, and with what implications for militarism and coloniality? Next, I outline the conceptual framework which allows me to make sense of and respond to these questions.

CHAPTER 3

Conceptual Framework: Militarism, Coloniality, Gender and Race

The literature on gender, race, militarism and coloniality makes the case that gendered and racialised discourses constructing masculinist and racist hierarchies of value sustain militarist and colonial ways of thinking about national security. It prompts questions about how race and gender manifest in specific contexts where militarism and coloniality are reproduced, including organisational cultures where security policymaking takes place. *If* gender and race are doing important work in maintaining militarist and colonial approaches to national security — it cannot be taken for granted that they always are — this raises questions about how they come to be constructed in the way that they are, and how they could be constructed differently. In Chapter 2 I outlined feminist antimilitarist strategies of inclusion, reversal and displacement, which offer ideas about *what kind* of changes in the construction of gender and race might help advance antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist goals. However, this raises further questions about *how* change happens: that is, what holds masculinist and racist discourses that sustain militarism and coloniality in place, and how can they be dislodged? This chapter outlines the theories I use to make sense of my empirical data in order to explore these questions. Having set out in Chapter 2 how feminist and anti-racist scholars explain the relationships *among* gender, race, militarism and coloniality, this chapter delves into each of these concepts, elaborating the theories I use to understand them, and how these help me to theorise the relationships between gendered and racialised organisational cultures and militarist and colonial ways of thinking about national security.

I begin by elaborating how I conceptualise militarism, responding to recent critiques of the concept, clarifying how I have adapted it to address these, and explaining how the concept of liberal militarism in particular sheds light on discourses that legitimise the UK's militaristic approach to national security. I outline how I understand militarism as structured by coloniality, which describes how global systems of power are structured by racial domination. In the second part of the chapter, I explain how I conceptualise gender and race, focusing on

how they manifest in organisational cultures along three dimensions: as systems of meaning, as norms, and as epistemologies. Because all three of these are concerned with the discursive construction of gender and race, I begin by outlining the poststructuralist conceptualisation of discourse I adopt throughout the thesis. I then explain how I understand gender and race as systems of meaning, setting out how I use Hansen's (2006) theory of linking and differentiation to explain how racialised and gendered meanings are assigned to ideas about national security. This is followed by a discussion of norms, in which I outline how and why I use Butler's (1999) theory of performativity to account for how securocrats construct gendered and racialised norms in the workplace. Finally, I explain how gendered and racialised norms and assumptions regulate the practices of knowledge production, describing how and why I think with Harding's (1986, 1991, 1993) articulation of feminist standpoint theory in order to analyse the epistemological assumptions underlying national security policy discussions.

Conceptualising Militarism and Coloniality

The concept of militarism has been understood in a variety of ways. In their review of its use in IR, Stavrianakis and Selby (2013) identify five broad categories into which conceptualisations of militarism may be grouped. These are: (1) ideological definitions, which characterise it as a set of beliefs or ideas valorising military institutions and values; (2) behavioural definitions, which focus on the actual use of military force; (3) military build-ups, referring to increases in military spending and the acquisition of military hardware and personnel; (4) institutional definitions, which focus on the influence of military institutions over civilian ones; and (5) sociological definitions, which refer to the embedding of military relations and practices in social life. In this thesis, I conceptualise militarism as a set of attitudes, relations and social practices which regards the preparation for and practice of organised political violence as a normal and desirable social activity, a definition which draws together aspects of these different notions of militarism. Before explaining how I reached this conceptualisation as the most useful for analysing UK national security policymaking, I address recent scholarly critiques of 'militarism' and 'militarisation', which query whether these are useful concepts at all. I then show how the conceptualisation I have adopted builds on these critiques, while also drawing on the critical and feminist literatures to which they are responding.

Millar (2016) questions the usefulness of the concept of militarism, arguing that its typical usage misrepresents the relationship between militarism and liberalism. She argues that the

academic literature on militarism tends to construct it as an aberration from the norm, rather than a "normal, constitutive aspect of liberal democracy" (2016, pp.186–187). In a critique of institutional conceptions of militarism, which conceive of it as the "excessive influence" of military institutions over political or civilian ones (Stavrianakis & Selby 2013, p.13), she argues that these rest on the notion that if we can just keep military institutions under the control of democratic civilian ones, militarism will be kept in check. This, Millar argues, naturalises the aggressive policies of liberal democracies — including the activities of civilian-controlled militaries and coercive practices by non-military actors such as riot police and border agencies — which are then excluded from the definition of militarism. Her argument builds on a more commonly made feminist observation that the boundaries between military and civilian spheres are often blurred (e.g. Sjoberg & Via 2010, p.7). This is not to deny any formal separation or qualitative difference between military and civilian institutions, but rather to acknowledge that they are mutually influencing and that militaristic and civilian values and practices are found in both. Millar extends this critique further, arguing that even critical scholars who acknowledge that militarism is compatible with liberalism tend to implicitly assume that it is "possible to excise militarism from liberalism" (2016, p.186).

Arguing along similar lines, Howell (2018, 2019) critiques common usages of the concept of militarisation. Like militarism, 'militarisation' has multiple meanings, encompassing, for example, processes through which individuals and societies come to adopt militaristic beliefs and values as their own (Enloe 2007, p.4), the diffusion of militaristic practices and symbols (Henry & Natanel 2016), and more generally the cultural, symbolic, and material practices that prepare states and societies for war (Bickford 2015, p.484). Howell argues that literature which address processes by which institutions, policies and so on *become* militarised, implicitly assumes a previous, non-militarised state of being, in what she calls a "before-and-after logic of militarization" (2018, p.6). This assumption, she argues, erases long histories of martial violence by and within liberal democracies, particularly against populations marginalised along lines of race, class, (dis)ability and indigeneity. Both Millar and Howell argue that what feminist IR calls 'militarism' is a defining feature of liberal democracy, and that constructing it as deviating from liberal politics-as-usual implicitly normalises or invisibilises common forms of liberal state violence, including, but not limited to, war. In place of militarism/militarisation, Howell (2018) proposes the concept of 'martial politics', which is conceived from the start as being constitutive of, and not a deviation from, liberal politics.

Millar's and Howell's critiques resonate in the UK context, where militarism is far from being an aberration, given the British government's long history of military conquest, racialised policing and investment in the security state. However, while agreeing with much of Millar's and Howell's arguments, I suggest that it is not necessary to abandon the concept of militarism altogether, nor does all literature on militarism fall foul of their critiques. Recent work mobilising the concept of liberal militarism, for example, regards militarism as constitutive of liberal democracy, and examines the particular forms of militarism that inhere in liberal politics (e.g. Stavrianakis 2016; Basham 2018; Rossdale 2019). Originally coined to describe the evolution of British militarism in the late 20th Century, 'liberal militarism' refers to a form that does not rely on mass conscription, but on advanced technology enabled by a strong military industrial base (Edgerton 1991, p.141). It also has an ideological dimension: while liberal states have been built on colonial conquest and continue to benefit from colonial relations of domination, liberal militarism is discursively produced as law-abiding, restrained in its use of force, and led by democratic and humanitarian values (Khalili 2013, pp.3–10; Stavrianakis 2016, p.845, 2019, p.68; Basham 2018, p.33; Rossdale 2019, pp.68–69, 241, 249). Indeed, as Stavrianakis (2016) points out, international laws and norms regulating the use of force have been disproportionately shaped by rich and powerful states in ways that authorise the kind of high-tech violence they are equipped to wield (pp.845–846). This enables the violence of powerful liberal states to appear legitimate in comparison to criminalised, low-tech, 'illiberal' forms, thereby protecting their positions of global dominance.

While Millar and Howell rightly point out how some literature on militarism is complicit in normalising the violence of liberal states, then, scholars working with the concept of liberal militarism emphasise that this normalisation of liberal states' violence as unremarkable and "non-excessive" (Rossdale 2019, p.238) *is itself* a feature of liberal militarism. Thinking with the concept of liberal militarism allows me to retain much of what is useful about common definitions of militarism (as I outline below), while foregrounding the need to analyse, rather than reinforce, the normalisation of liberal state violence. In Chapter 5, for example, I explore how gendered and racialised discourses in UK counterterrorism policymaking draw on this ideological construction of liberal militarism. While the conceptualisation of militarism I use encompasses elements of Howell's description of martial politics, I retain the term 'militarism' because the conceptualisation I adopt draws heavily on existing usages from critical and feminist literatures, while trying to avoid some of their attendant problems. Furthermore, in thinking with the concept of liberal militarism, I explicitly deny that the end goal for

antimilitarist politics is a non-militarised liberal democracy, instead situating antimilitarism within a wider emancipatory project that looks beyond liberal democratic forms of governance. In the next section, I explain how I arrived at the conceptualisation of militarism as a set of attitudes, relations and social practices which regards the preparation for and practice of organised political violence as a normal and desirable social activity.

Defining militarism

The conceptualisation of militarism I use in this thesis is adapted from Mann's (1987) definition of militarism as "a set of attitudes and social practices which regards war and the preparation for war as a normal and desirable social activity" (p.35). By including this "set of attitudes" I draw on definitions of militarism as an ideology, which tend to characterise it as beliefs or ideas that valorise military institutions, worldviews and practices (e.g. Vagts 1937; Berghahn 1981; Enloe 1983; Cockburn 2010). These can include, for example, the belief that the world is an inherently dangerous place, in which the ability to enact violence is essential to staying safe; the belief in dangerous others against whom the use of violence is justified; and the willingness to hand over significant power to those who have the means to wield violence, in exchange for protection (Reardon 1985, p. 57; Tickner 1992, pp.50–51; Enloe 1993, pp.14–15, 2004, p.219; Young 2003). While militarist ideology is sometimes characterised as the glorification of violence, as other scholars have noted (Shaw 2013; Stavrianakis 2015; Basham 2018), glorification is not necessary in order for organised political violence to be normalised: Chapters 5, 6 and 7 will show how ambivalence or resignation can also be part of this process.

Furthermore, militarism includes but goes beyond the ideological; hence, the definition encompasses relations and social practices as well. This draws on sociological definitions of militarism, such as that used by Stavrianakis and Selby (2013), which takes "the social and international relations of the preparation for, and conduct of, organized political violence" (p.3) to encompass aspects of ideological, behavioural and 'military build-up' definitions. This broader focus allows me to explore how gendering and racialising practices and the relations of power they produce, as well as ideas, sustain militarism in the UK national security community. Importantly, the relations encompassed by sociological definitions are not only concerned with the elevated influence and resourcing of military institutions, but see other social organisations and individuals as important to sustaining militarism. However, while some sociological definitions of militarism tend to characterise this as the leakage of military

relations and practices into the social sphere (e.g. Shaw 1991, 2018; Peterson & Runyan 2010, p.91), I draw on Howell's notion of martial politics, which recognises the "indivisibility of war and peace, military and civilian" (2018, p.2). This helps to make sense of the UK context, where government policies increasingly emphasise co-operation between departments and shared responsibility for national security: militarism is embedded across military and civilian organisations alike, and may not travel in a unidirectional way from one to the other. Thus, 'militarism' as I use it here takes on the sociological definition of militarism's concern with ideas, relations and practices, which are not limited to military institutions, while rejecting the implied notion of a wholly separate civilian sphere previously unimpinged by the military sphere.

Where Mann views militarism as concerned with "war and the preparation for war" (1987, p.35), I follow Howell in being "attentive to *war-like* relations or technologies and knowledges that are 'of war'" (2018, p.2, emphasis added), encompassing not only the waging of war itself but organised political violence in general. As a range of scholars point out, when antimilitarism focuses solely on war, it misses forms of routinised state violence experienced in the metropole primarily by people of colour, such as policing, incarceration and border enforcement, rending a partial and racialised view of what kinds of violence matter (Amos & Parmar 1984, pp.15–17; McCulloch & Sentas 2006, p.101; Davis 2008, pp.25–26; Rossdale 2019, pp.199–200). By broadening the concept to include organised political violence beyond what is typically thought of as war-making, I am able to examine how gendered and racialised discourses in national security policy discussions are present not only in, for example, conversations about military operations abroad, but also those about domestic counterterrorism work. Further, I understand militarism as encompassing not only the practice of violence but processes of preparing for the ongoing possibility of this violence. While the direct use of force certainly forms part of militarism, the war system includes, for example, the establishment and maintenance of military organisations and technologies. This thesis does not focus on the conduct of violence itself. Rather, it examines processes that reproduce the systems that enable this violence: in particular, the discussion and development of policies that authorise, legitimate, or at least fail to challenge it.

Finally, in adopting Mann's understanding of militarism as producing violence as "a normal and desirable social activity" (1987, p.35), I recognise that even if militarism inheres in liberal politics, this does not mean it is in some sense natural; it takes work to normalise and sustain it

(Basham 2018). The process of normalising militaristic beliefs and practices is often referred to as 'militarisation', although, as I have noted above, the term carries multiple meanings (Enloe 2000, p.3; Enloe 2007, p.4; Shaw 2013, p.30). However, noting Howell's critique of the before-and-after logic that can accompany analyses of militarisation, I seek to avoid the implication that militarism was ever *not* normalised in UK government ministries. Rather, I suggest that it is not inevitably so — a different world is possible in which the practice of and preparation for organised political violence really *would* be an aberration. To avoid confusion on this point, I do not use 'militarisation', but rather discuss gendering and racialising practices in terms of how they do or do not sustain or reproduce militarism, understood as a set of attitudes, relations and social practices which regards the preparation for and practice of organised political violence as a normal and desirable social activity.

Militarism as Colonial

In Chapter 2 I noted that militarism and coloniality are imbricated with one another, held together by shared histories and simultaneously reproduced through national security policies and practices. Grosfoguel (2007) summarises coloniality succinctly as the "cultural, political, sexual, spiritual, epistemic and economic oppression/exploitation of subordinate racialized/ethnic groups by dominant racialized/ethnic groups with or without the existence of colonial administrations" (p.220). Whereas colonial*ism* is a direct and formal relation of economic, social and political rule, 'coloniality' refers to the continuing structures and cultures of domination that were established by, but also outlive, European colonialism (Quijano 2007, p.168, 170; Grosfoguel 2007, p.219). These include, for example, the unequal global distribution of capital and labour, as well as global hierarchies that prioritise and value European and white-coded subjects, knowledges, languages, culture, configurations of gender, sexuality and so on over non-European and non-white ones. In other words, 'coloniality' describes a situation in which multiple intersecting global structures of power are themselves organised by racial social stratification (Quijano 2000, p.218; Grosfoguel 2007, p.217). While the concept is wide-ranging, then, I am specifically interested in coloniality as it structures British militarism — that is, in how the UK's militaristic national security policies assume, rely on and perpetuate colonial structures and cultures of domination.

Understanding coloniality as undergirding British militarism draws attention to how the latter is moulded by norms and discourses that value whiteness over non-whiteness in its many

forms. Indeed, this conceptual linkage underpins the notion of liberal militarism, which I use to highlight how the UK government legitimises its militaristic policies by constructing them as more moral and civilised than the violence wielded by its state adversaries (predominantly in the Global South or otherwise racially-marked) and non-state actors constructed as security threats (predominantly people of colour). In Chapter 5, for example, I explore how UK counterterrorism policies are discursively linked to notions of whiteness and Britishness portrayed as rational and moderate, while Chapter 6 examines how the embodied performances of securocrats reproduce and/or challenge these discursive links.

One limitation of treating coloniality as a structuring feature of militarism is that, while I refer to 'militarism and coloniality', my analysis prioritises the former. Whereas approaching coloniality as a phenomenon in its own right would no doubt shed light on different aspects of national security thinking, my approach largely subsumes coloniality under militarism. However, thinking about militarism and coloniality alongside each other rather than combining them (as 'colonial militarism', for example) does allow me to examine some forms of racial domination and control that do not use direct physical violence. For example, the UK's domestic counter-radicalisation programme, Prevent, uses a range of tactics beyond policing, including media campaigns and the provision of mental healthcare and employment support (HM Government 2011b). Prevent operates through a reporting system in which state bodies such as schools, universities and healthcare providers are expected to identify individuals they believe to be 'at risk' of radicalisation and refer them to local authorities. Because the supposed signs of radicalisation are vaguely defined, and service providers are encouraged to "trust their intuition", Prevent institutionalises surveillance based on popular imaginaries of the 'terrorist' as a Muslim person of colour (Younis 2021, p.46). The result is a disciplining of racially-marked subjects which, though it can involve police intervention, operates primarily through administrative processes that inhibit political expression and undermine equal access to services like health and education (Open Society Justice Initiative 2016; Human Rights Council 2019, pp.13–14; Aked 2020). Thinking about Prevent as a form of coloniality alongside more overtly militaristic practices illuminates how cultures and structures of racial domination in national security underpin but also go beyond the use of organised violence. Having outlined how I understand militarism and coloniality, I now turn to discuss the theories I use to understand how these are reproduced in everyday working lives of securocrats: those concerning gender and race, and their relationship to organisational cultures.

Organisational Lives of Gender and Race

I use 'organisational culture' as a conceptual lens through which to understand how gender and race are produced in organisational settings, through configurations of practice that are particular to each organisation.[15] Organisational culture has been variously understood to encompass norms, values, shared meanings, rules for or patterns of behaviour, symbols, rites and rituals, specialised language and discourses, socialisation processes or, typically, a combination of these (Mills 1988; Helms Hatfield & Mills 2000; Wilson 2001; Aaltio & Mills 2002; Hearn 2002). Building on the literature I outlined in Chapter 2, which identifies gendered and racialised systems of meaning, norms, and epistemologies as key to sustaining militarism and coloniality in other contexts, I structure the analysis of my empirical findings around these three concepts. As I will show in the following sections, systems of meaning, norms and epistemologies can be understood both as components of organisational culture and as modalities of race and gender. As such, the remainder of this chapter elaborates how I conceptualise gender and race, as well as organisational culture, and explains how they are interconnected.

One should always exercise caution in drawing too many easy comparisons between gender and race, both because of their different (though interlinked) histories, and because considering them in parallel tends to erase the intersections between them (Carby 1982 p.213). As I argued in Chapter 2, race and gender are produced through one other, such that constructions of race are always already gendered, and vice versa (Davis 1983; Spillers 1987; Crenshaw 1989). Nonetheless, as I will show, the literature suggests enough commonalities in the modes of their production in organisational settings to merit discussing them together in the following sections, not as parallel processes but as mutually constitutive ones. Both race and gender have been understood in myriad ways, as operating on discursive, material,

[15] Many organisations bear similarities in how their cultures are gendered and racialised, but it is probably still true to say that no two are identical. Notably, the feminist literature on institutions is concerned with much of what I describe as organisational culture (e.g. Krook & Mackay 2011; Chappell & Waylen 2013; Bacchi & Rönnblom 2014; Thomson 2018; Aggestam & Towns 2019). Institutions are typically characterised as formal or informal "rules of the game" that produce recurring patterns of behaviour, whose boundaries may or may not be contiguous with organisations (Krook & Mackay 2011, p.1; Chappell & Waylen 2013, p.599; Lowndes 2014, p.686). In practice, 'institution' is sometimes used interchangeably with 'organisation', while at other times its application is broader, such that there is "no clear distinction between institutions and social norms in general" (Lowndes 2014, p.685). To avoid this ambiguity, I use 'organisations' over 'institutions', but recognise that much of what is addressed by the institutionalist literature is organisational culture by another name, and draw on both literatures accordingly.

structural, ideological, cognitive, embodied and affective levels, to name a few (e.g., Hall 1980, 1997; Scott 1986; Connell 1987, 2005; Bonilla-Silva 1997; Butler 1999; Robinson 2000; Omi & Winant 2014; Meghji 2021). Given their multifaceted-ness, rather than offer singular, overarching definitions of gender and race, I instead outline how they manifest in the three aspects of organisational culture explored in my analytical chapters: systems of meaning (Chapter 5), norms (Chapter 6) and epistemologies (Chapter 7).

These three dimensions, while different, are not entirely separate. For example, if a particular construction of white masculinity associated with rationality and objectivity is ascribed to a policy position or worldview (through systems of meaning), any individual who espouses that worldview might be interpellated as performing that same version of white masculinity (norm). Similarly, someone whose embodied performance invokes that notion of white masculinity (norm) might also find that their knowledge is interpreted as rational and objective as a result (epistemology). However, I find it important to make an analytical distinction between them because, as discussed in the Chapter 2, antimilitarist feminists have made different arguments for the importance of each in producing militarism. By separating them, I am able to explore what work each of them is doing in policy discussions, and ask what relationships exist between them. I set out below how each of them can be understood as dimensions of organisational culture, and how they become gendered and racialised, introducing the key theories I use to analyse them.

Systems of Meaning

I use the term 'systems of meaning' to refer to a particular subset of discourse. Indeed, the three dimensions of gender and race examined here are all concerned with how gendered and racialised meanings are discursively produced and fixed, and how this produces particular relations of power. While my analysis of norms examines how these meanings are fixed to individuals and their performances in the workplace, and my discussion of epistemologies explores how they are attached to knowledges and ways of knowing, I use 'systems of meaning', following Cohn (1993, 2013, 2019), to describe how gendered and racialised meanings are fixed to all other aspects of the social world — inanimate objects, places, organisations, concepts — but in particular, to ideas about national security policies and practices. Given that the ascription of racially-coded masculinities and femininities to different worldviews and approaches to national security can serve to make militaristic ideas and

practices appear natural and inevitable, as I explained in Chapter 2, analysing how these meanings are continually (re)produced can help us to understand how militarism is sustained. In Chapter 5, I examine how these processes of gendered and racialised meaning-production reflect and maintain power relations, and lend authority and credibility to particular ways of thinking about and practising counterterrorism. Before explaining what it means to say that systems of meaning are gendered and racialised, how they are produced and invoked, and how they can be said to be 'of the organisation', I briefly elaborate how I define 'discourse'.

Following Shepherd (2008), I conceptualise discourse as "systems of meaning-production… that fix meaning, however temporarily, and enable us to make sense of the world" (p.20), interpreting this to encompass all social processes that produce meaning, including language (written and spoken), but also non-linguistic practices such as gestures, dress and the production and circulation of images. Drawing on the work of poststructuralist discourse theorists, I hold that all knowledge is constructed through discourse — that is, we make sense of the world through meanings produced by human subjects (Shepherd 2008, pp.18–22; Laclau & Mouffe 2014, pp.93–94; Dunn & Neumann 2016, pp.39–41). In this sense, all objects *as we know them* are produced through discourse. This does not mean there *exists* no material world beyond language and ideas, but rather that the world is only comprehensible through discourse. Because discourse "delineates the terms of intelligibility whereby a particular reality can be known and acted upon" (Doty 1996, p.6), it plays a powerful role in shaping the social world and relations of power within it. In-keeping with other poststructuralist theorisations of discourse, I follow Foucault (1980) in conceiving of discourse as intrinsically imbued with power: discourse is both the product of, and produces, power relations. For example, the discursive construction of liberal militarism as banal and ethical vis-à-vis other forms of militarism produces configurations of power that favour Western liberal states over others, while the widespread acceptance of this discourse by international institutions such as the UN is enabled by that same global ordering of power. Throughout this thesis, then, I analyse the functions of discourse in order to understand how it shapes the workings of power. This Foucauldian conceptualisation of discourse as infused with power relations also explains why the Civil Service, although it is formally considered an apolitical body that simply implements the directives of politicians (HM Government 2015b), remains an important site for understanding how militarist and colonial politics are sustained. Because officials' everyday conversations about national security policy construct, maintain and contest meaning, they are implicated in the production of power relations.

Gendered and racialised systems of meaning discursively associate ideas, organisations, policy positions and so on with particular constructions of, for example, masculinity, femininity, whiteness or Blackness. I use the phrases 'gender coding' and 'racial coding' to describe this attribution of gendered and racialised meanings (Scott 1986, p.1073; Stern 2011, p.33). Following a range of feminist thinkers, I conceptualise masculinity and femininity as 'empty' or 'floating signifiers' (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994; Hutchings 2008a; Howson 2009): they are concepts with no essential content (Laclau 1996, p.36). This means that anything — any object, action, idea, etc. — can be coded as either masculine or feminine. Masculinity and femininity are typically understood as that which is culturally associated with the social categories of 'men' and 'women' respectively, however these too are unstable categories, whose meaning and membership are interpreted differently across social and historical contexts (Riley 1988, pp.1–7; Butler 1999, pp.1–25). Similarly, the boundaries of whiteness, Blackness and other racial categories are shifting and contextually defined, having drawn on various notions of biology, religion, class and culture at different times in history, never fully fixed to a set of subjects or attributes (Hall 1997).

Given how racially-coded masculinities and femininities are hierarchically organised (see Chapter 2), this fluidity makes racialised and gendered systems of meaning powerful: in theory, almost anything can acquire or lose social value by being differently coded. However, in practice it is not that simple. We can easily observe strong (albeit not universal) patterns in how attributes or concepts are gendered and racialised, the construction of war as masculine and peace as feminine being just one example. This raises the questions: how do ideas, objects, qualities and so on become racially- and gender-coded? Why do some gendered and racialised meanings seem to be 'sticky' and difficult to change? And given that there are multiple different versions of masculinity, femininity, whiteness, Blackness and so on, how do particular constellations of attributes or qualities come together to constitute these different constructs?

In order to demonstrate how gendered and racialised systems of meaning are produced, I draw on Lene Hansen's (2006) concept of 'linking and differentiation' (pp.17–18, 37–41). Hansen explains that, "meaning and identity are constructed through a series of signs that are linked to each other to constitute relations of sameness as well as through differentiation to another series of juxtaposed signs" (2006, p.37). What Hansen calls 'signs' — words, concepts

and so on — can be temporarily fixed in their association with (a particular, racially-coded) masculinity through being repeatedly linked with it in discourse, as well as through being differentiated from signs associated with femininities or other masculinities (2006, pp.17–18). Through this repetition, a range of signs can be linked together into a recognisable family of terms whose associations "congeal" or become "sedimented" in discourse (Butler 1988, p.523, 1999, p.45), appearing as stable, entrenched and even natural. For example, when 'objectivity', 'rationality' and 'independence' are repeatedly linked with white men — such as through statements to the effect that they do or should hold these attributes — a pattern emerges which fixes these terms together into a recognisable construction of white masculinity. Their connection is further cemented by the repeated differentiation of these terms from subjectivity, emotionality and dependence, which are in turn linked with femininity and with Blackness. However, the fixity of these associations is always temporary and unstable: it can be undone by the emergence of new patterns of linking and differentiation, which become socially recognisable through widespread repetition (Hansen 2006, p.18). Furthermore, what is linked to a particular masculinity in one discourse may be linked to a different masculinity or to femininity in another, through its association with a different group of signs. This concept of linking and differentiation helps me to understand how securocrats might reproduce, for example, the discursive links between masculinity, whiteness and liberal militarism in their everyday conversations, but also how such links are unstable, allowing me to identify moments of contestation.

While worldviews and approaches to national security may become gender- and racially-coded through being linked to or differentiated from masculinities, whiteness, and so on, securocrats do not routinely mention these gendered and racialised constructions in conversation: that is, they rarely talk explicitly about what it means to be white or masculine. In order to understand how policy discussions nonetheless draw on gendered and racialised meanings, I follow Butler (1993, 1999) in theorising discourse as drawing authority from its historicity. That is to say, the meaning of any speech or action is derived not solely from the intentions of the speaker, but from its citation of prior discursive acts which, repeated over time, have assigned meanings that are sedimented in discourse. Because discourse "accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices" (Butler 1993, p.19), policy discussions draw meaning from patterns of linking and differentiation that are already sedimented in discourse, and familiar to anyone conversant in those discourses. This means that, as Duncanson (2013) puts it, "a single word […] is able […] to conjure up and reinforce an

image which is instantly recognizable" (p.68). As such, securocrats can (consciously or otherwise) *invoke* gendered and racialised meanings without making any explicit reference to masculinity, femininity, whiteness or Blackness (for example), simply by using terms whose associations with these constructions are recognisable to anyone familiar with the relevant discourses. Much of my analysis of counterterrorism discourse in Chapter 5 focuses on how research participants invoke sedimented systems of gendered and racialised meaning.

Given that discourses can circulate widely and are not limited by the boundaries of organisations, it is worth explaining how systems of meaning can be understood as an aspect of organisational culture. Organisations produce their own shared systems of meaning for making sense of the organisation and its activities, including language, symbols, images and metaphors (Acker 1990, p.146; Gherardi 1995, p.20; Bruni & Gherardi 2002, p.22). Of course, organisations are not hermetically sealed: individuals arrive at them having already been exposed to a range of discourses on which they draw to interpret their work. In this sense, organisational cultures both influence and are influenced by the 'ambient' culture of the societies within which they exist (Gherardi 1995, p.13). In my discussion of systems of meaning in UK counterterrorism policymaking, I show how policy conversations draw on discourses salient in the news media as well as a broader community of counterterrorism practitioners that is internationally networked. However, much as the repetition of patterns of linking and differentiation gives gendered and racialised meanings a sense of fixity over time, the repeated use of certain terms or linguistic tropes in organisations generates particular configurations of discourse that, while drawing on wider influences, can be understood as a component of a specific organisational culture.

In summary, then, systems of meaning (re)produce constructions of gender and race within organisations through repeated processes of linking and differentiation, which both *assign* gendered and racialised meanings, and *cite* or invoke ones that are already sedimented in discourse. If, as I argued in Chapter 2, hierarchically organised constructions of racialised masculinities and femininities provide a discursive resource that can be used to legitimise coloniality and militarism, this process of linking and differentiation explains how the language and concepts that constitute national security discourses come to be anchored to these gendered and racialised constructions. Understanding systems of meaning as becoming sedimented over time also gives a sense of how securocrats come to invoke gendered and racialised meanings, "sometimes against their authors' most precious intentions" (Butler 1993,

p.29). However, this focus on sedimented meanings creates a sense that discursive links are 'sticky' and difficult to undo (Duncanson 2013, p.141; Ahmed 2014, pp.90–92). Hansen's theory of linking and differentiation does provide a framework for understanding how sedimented meanings can be unsettled: through new and different acts of linking and differentiation. However, as I noted in Chapter 2, some feminists express concern that a focus on deconstructing language and symbols presents a limited vision of how change can be brought about (Squires 1999, p.230; Duncanson 2013, p.66), perhaps especially when faced with the immediate material harms of militarism. Duncanson and Woodward's (2016) three-pronged strategy of inclusion, reversal *and* displacement is framed as a response to this problem, arguing that the inclusion of women and feminist ideas in militarist organisations can accelerate the reversal and displacement of masculinist discourses underpinning militarism. In the next section, I outline how I use the concept of norms to think through Duncanson and Woodward's ideas as they relate to the presence and activities of securocrats in policymaking organisations, particularly women and people of colour, and how these might be shaping the production and displacement of gendered and racialised discourses.

Norms

In Chapter 2, I argued that militarism and coloniality are sustained not only by gendered and racialised systems of meaning, but also through social norms regulating subjects' embodied performances of racially-coded masculinities and femininities. Building on this insight, Chapter 6 examines how these norms manifest in organisational cultures in the national security policymaking community. I explore whether and how gendered and racialised norms create an imperative for securocrats to carry out their work in ways that reproduce militarism and coloniality, remaining attentive to the possibility that at times they may not do so. In thinking about what possible subversions of this dynamic might look like, I draw on Duncanson and Woodward's (2016) argument that the repeated discursive linking of putatively male bodies with war-making in militarist organisations plays an important role in reproducing the cultural coding of militarism as masculine (Duncanson 2013, p.153; Duncanson & Woodward 2016). They propose that introducing women and feminist ideas into militarist organisations can undermine that process of meaning-making, weakening the discursive links between masculinity and militarism. While this thesis does not seek to measure the effects of women's inclusion on policymaking, Duncanson and Woodward's theorisation of the relationship between the presence and activities of particular gendered subjects and the production of

gendered meaning helps me to think through how masculinist cultures that sustain militarism are created, and how they might be subverted. Extending this theory to address the production of racialised as well as gendered meanings, I use the concept of norms to understand how embodied performances of racially-coded masculinities and femininities create and displace meaning in ways that reproduce and/or disrupt militarism and coloniality. In this section, I outline how I conceptualise norms, how they become gendered and racialised, and how their gendered and racialised meanings might be changed.

My understanding of gendered and racialised norms builds on Judith Butler's (1999) conceptualisation of gender as performative, which holds that gender is a social process: not something that individuals *are*, but something they continually *do* through their everyday activities. According to Butler, gender norms are sets of social expectations that govern whether and how subjects are identified with the social categories of 'man' or 'woman' (1993, p.21, 1999, p.45). Subjects continually affirm their gender identity through repeated acts — speaking, carrying themselves or dressing in a certain way, for example — that are culturally prescribed for their gender in their particular social context. For Butler, these repeated performances "congeal over time" to produce norms — masculinities and femininities — which take on the appearance of being natural (1999, p.45). While it is often assumed that acts which conform to gendered social expectations are the *effects* of gender norms, then, to understand gender as performative is to posit that such acts continually bring these norms into being (Butler 1999, p.34). Once a norm is established, subjects are held accountable by others for their adherence to it through disciplining practices that reward conformity and punish transgressions, creating a "highly rigid regulatory framework" (Butler 1999, p.45). For example, in Chapter 6 I discuss how securocrats receive and interpret signals from their colleagues about the appropriateness of their gendered and racialised performances, from casual comments of praise or admonition to being given or denied promotions. Furthermore, the expectation of being held accountable to gender norms conditions individuals to discipline their own behaviour. That is, subjects' awareness of the constant possibility that their behaviour will be surveilled and judged by others leads them to self-regulate, incorporating societal norms such that conformity is produced without the need for coercion (Foucault 1991, pp.202–203; Butler 1999, pp.171–173). Butler's theory of performativity helps me to make sense of how civil servants learn and perpetuate particular ways of doing gender in the workplace, by disciplining themselves as well as each other.

In my discussion of norms in Chapter 6, then, I understand masculinities and femininities as sets of social expectations that subjects are held accountable for fulfilling, and which they continually reproduce through everyday performances. I refer to these acts as 'gendering practices' — as opposed to the past tense 'gendered' — denoting their ongoing role in producing gender norms (Korvajärvi 2002 p.102; Yancey Martin 2003; Bacchi 2017, p.20). Gendering practices are a form of discourse that produces meaning by continually linking particular performances with particular bodies, constructing them as appropriate for some bodies and inappropriate for others (Butler 1999, pp.23–24). Of course, since constructions of masculinity and femininity are always already racialised, to perform gender is also to perform race. While the concept of performativity has been applied more extensively to the theorisation of gender, race too has a performative dimension: it produces contextually defined norms linking behaviours and attributes to bodies according to how they are racialised, links which are often then interpreted as natural or innate (Warren 2001; Alexander 2004; Carbado & Gulati 2013; Chadderton 2013). For example, the accusation of 'acting white', sometimes levelled at people of colour, is a performative act that produces a/the meaning of whiteness while purporting to merely describe it: it reproduces the idea that certain behaviours are appropriate only for white people (Alexander 2004, p.661). Used in a pejorative sense, it also performs a disciplinary function, admonishing the subject at whom the accusation is addressed for transgressing an established norm. Racialised and gendered norms are simultaneously produced through the repetition of such performative acts.

Importantly, norms regulating the performance of gender and race can be understood as a facet of organisational culture. Organisational culture consists (in part) of norms or rules which members are expected to follow, which may be encoded in policies and formally enforced, or be informal and regulated through more subtle modes of acculturation (Mills 1988; Helms Hatfield & Mills 2000). These norms are sometimes described as occupational 'scripts' (Puwar 2004, pp.78–79; Neumann 2012, p.16; Rai 2014, p.6): the script for 'being a securocrat', for example, brings together ideas about what it means to perform that role in the organisation's cultural imaginary. These scripts inevitably cite and (re)produce gendered and racialised meanings: for example, the occupational script for British civil servants has historically consisted of norms that are culturally coded as masculine and white (Walters 1987; Watson 1994; Puwar 2004). This "logic of appropriateness" (March & Olsen 2011, p.479) aligning social rules with identities and situations has been produced through the repeated performance of that script by bodies socially designated white and male. Organisational scripts and gendered

and racialised norms are therefore "fused" (Puwar 2004, p.79), such that to perform 'being a securocrat' is to perform a particular version of whiteness and masculinity. In Chapter 6, I use this notion of organisational scripts to examine how the valorisation of particular notions of masculinity and whiteness rewards adherence to militarist worldviews, and whether and how the embodied performances of securocrats are changing dominant organisational scripts.

At this point it is worth addressing two critiques of Butler's theory of performativity, her responses to which help to demonstrate the suitability of the theory for my analysis of norms. First, Butler's account of gender has been critiqued as being too voluntarist, failing to account for the limits imposed on gendered performance by social and material structures (Butler 1993, p.21). Compared to more structural accounts of gender and race, which rightly highlight their embeddedness in social, political, economic and legal systems (e.g. Davis 1983; Bonilla-Silva 1997; Robinson 2000; Connell 2005), Butler's focus on discourse has been critiqued for presenting gender as overly malleable, such that individuals can decide at will which gender to perform each day. Were this the case, securocrats could (if they wanted to) choose to radically transform their performances of gender and race, producing new scripts that favour the practice of anticolonial and antimilitarist politics. However, Butler is clear that gendered (and, I would add, racialised) performance is disciplined by "social constraints, taboos, prohibitions, threats of punishment" (1993, p.21). Crucially, regulatory frameworks that discipline subjects to conform to norms can include and emerge from social and material structures (Omi & Winant 2014, p.124–127; Nentwich & Kelan 2014, pp.124–126). In this respect, treating gender and race as performative is fully compatible with a recognition that structures matter. For example, as I will suggest in later chapters, the UK government's material investment in reproducing militarism and the structuring of government departments around this aim itself constitutes a structural constraint on the ability of securocrats to transform gendered and racialised norms in ways that challenge the politics of militarism. Understanding gendering and racialising practices as limited by social and material structures is therefore vital to understanding how, just as race and gender shape and sustain militarism, so militarism also shapes and sustains constructions of gender and race.

Furthermore, Butler emphasises that sedimented discourses are themselves a constraining factor: performative acts will always be interpreted in relation to existing meanings assigned through prior acts (1993, p.18, 2004, pp.1–2). The subject cannot spontaneously invent a new masculinity or femininity at will. Indeed, she argues that it is only by citing recognised norms in

a given social context that individuals are read as subjects at all: to transgress the norm is to risk the denial of one's full personhood, and the negative social consequences that entails (Butler 1993, p.22, 1999, p.22, 2004, pp.232–233). Consequently, Butler describes performativity as "a *compulsory* repetition of prior and subjectivating norms, ones which cannot be thrown off at will, but which work, animate, and constrain the gendered subject" (1993, p.22, emphasis added). This brings me to the second critique of Butler's theory, which — contrary to the first — objects that she presents gender norms as too entrenched, not adequately explaining how subjects can exercise agency to change them (Lloyd 1999; McNay 2000). If norms determine behaviour so strongly, it is difficult to see how securocrats could ever hope to change them in ways that unsettle the racially-coded constructions of masculinity and femininity that sustain militarism and coloniality.

In her early work, Butler argues that subjects can approximate but never fully embody norms, and each failure to do so reveals "possibilities of gender transformation" (1999, p.179), but she does not make clear how this transformation takes place. However, in her later work Butler explains that, although to transgress existing norms is to risk having one's personhood denied, by acting collectively we can "articulate an alternative, minority version of sustaining norms or ideals" that is more desirable and liberatory (2004, p.3). I read Butler's claim as similar to the argument I made earlier concerning practices of linking and differentiation: that while individual discursive acts will always be interpreted with reference to prior sedimented meanings, the widespread repetition of acts that propose a new or different logic of appropriateness can lead to new meanings becoming socially recognised, constituting a new norm. Collective action, then, can provide a means through which securocrats could change gendered and racialised workplace norms, and potentially challenge the masculinity and whiteness of organisational scripts. In Chapter 6, I use this idea to examine how (some) female securocrats are working to produce new norms of femininity, exploring whether these advance feminist antimilitarist strategies of reversal, or merely sustain militaristic thinking.

In summary, Butler's theory of performativity helps me to understand how patterns of stylised performances by securocrats cite and produce gendered and racialised norms that are fused with organisational scripts defining how securocrats should behave. Her characterisation of performativity as a "practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint" (Butler 2004, p.1) explains how these performances are regulated by everyday acts of disciplining, and limited by social and material structures, but also how they are open to change. Analysing norms in this

way helps me to understand how constructions of masculinities, femininities and whiteness that favour the reproduction of liberal militarism are held in place, as well as looking for patterns of embodied performance that might suggest that these norms are being displaced. This analysis also lays a foundation for my discussion in Chapter 7 of how organisational norms regulate a particular core function of securocrats: that of knowledge production, which I turn to next.

Epistemologies

The national security community is, among other things, an "epistemological community" (Nelson 1993, p.124): a group of people that collectively constructs and shares knowledge and standards of evidence. Knowledge production as a collective endeavour demands some shared rules, norms and assumptions which can be understood as part of the rules and norms that make up organisational culture (Choo 2016). For example, the Civil Service Code formally outlines a commitment to objectivity, which requires that officials "provide information and advice, including advice to ministers, on the basis of the evidence, and accurately present the options and facts" (HM Government 2015b). To be operationalised, this principle requires a broadly shared (if not necessarily stable) understanding of what counts as evidence or facts, how these should be produced, and which kinds of evidence and facts matter to policymaking processes; ideas which are often not codified but informally understood and communicated in the course of policymaking. In Chapter 7, I examine this combination of formal and informal norms regulating the social practices of knowledge production, paying close attention to how they are gendered and racialised, and how this shapes the ability of officials to challenge militarist and colonial ideas. In this section, I outline feminist critiques of scientific objectivity, and feminist standpoint epistemology, theories which both underpin my analysis of organisational norms surrounding knowledge production and also inform the epistemological assumptions supporting the knowledge claims I make in this thesis, as I elaborate in Chapter 4. Because standpoint epistemology has been framed by some scholars as incompatible with poststructuralist approaches (Hekman 1997; Leavy 2011), I also explain how I interpret it so as to be consistent with the poststructuralist conception of knowledge that I use in this thesis.

A central concern for feminist epistemologists has been to show that scientific notions of objectivity obscure the operations of gendered and racialised relations of power (Harding 1986; Haraway 1988; Code 1993). Given that a commitment to objectivity is central to how the

Civil Service understands itself as a knowledge producer, these feminist critiques provide an obvious starting point for my analysis. The notion of scientific objectivity that predominates in the social and natural sciences holds that knowledge consists of objective facts, which are true independently of the knower and their social location, such that the same conclusions would be reached by any knower in the same circumstances (Code 1993, p.16). Knowledge producers are expected to be neutral, detached from the influence of subjectivity, values, emotions, politics, or their location in systems of power such as gender and race. However, feminist scholars such as Code (1993), Haraway (1988) and Harding (1986, 1991) point out that knowledge that has been construed as objective often reflects the interests and biases of socially privileged subjects, particularly white men. For these thinkers, this bias results not from a failure to transcend subjectivity, but from the impossibility of doing so: all knowledge is produced by specific, socially located knowers asking questions shaped by their experiences, interests and values (Haraway 1988, p.583; Harding 1991, pp.145–147; Code 1993, pp.26–32). These experiences, interests and values are, of course, influenced by the knower's social location as gendered, racialised and classed subjects. The expectation that knowers be neutral, detached from social location, values or emotions in order to achieve objectivity is only sustained by concealing the subjectivity that inevitably shapes knowledge production, effecting a kind of "god-trick" (Haraway 1988, p.581) or a "view from nowhere" (Code 1993, p.16). By contrast, making visible the operation of power in knowledge production demands a recognition that all knowledge is situated and partial (Haraway 1988, p.584). I use this feminist analysis of the relationship between social location and knowledge to analyse the epistemological assumptions that inform organisational norms regarding knowledge production in the national security community. Where securocrats' epistemological assumptions draw on scientific notions of objectivity, these critiques of the concept enable me to examine how this shared understanding of the civil servant as objective knower conceals the operation of gendered and racialised relations of power.

As I briefly outlined in Chapter 1, recent discourses on diversity and inclusion in UK national security policymaking have linked diversity of representation to diversity of thought. This position suggests an acknowledgement that the social location of the knower shapes the knowledge they produce, posing a challenge to scientific objectivity. Chapter 7 analyses this discourse in the context of counterterrorism policymaking, where it drives efforts to recruit individuals from different demographics targeted by counterterrorism operations — women, Muslims, white working-class people — into policymaking roles in order to draw on their

knowledge and experience. While the conceptualisation of knowledge as situated and partial that I have outlined above offers a feminist interpretation of why seeking the perspectives of knowers from a variety of social locations might be advantageous, it does not explain why the knowledge of people in socially subjugated positions might be of particular importance — a claim often made by feminists and anti-racists. In order to explore this idea, I use another, related theory: feminist standpoint epistemology.

A number of scholars have proposed versions of feminist standpoint theory (e.g. Hartsock 1983; Jaggar 1983, pp.353–394; Collins 2014, pp.251–271); however, I rely on Sandra Harding's (1986, 1987, 1991, 1993, 1997) formulation because I believe it represents the most thorough articulation, and because, as I will show, Harding has made efforts to reconcile standpoint theory with poststructuralism. Harding argues that while all knowledge is situated and partial, knowledge produced from the locations of socially powerful subjects is likely to be limited or "epistemologically disadvantaged" (1993, p.54), whereas knowledge produced from the perspective of socially marginalised subjects is likely to be "less partial and distorted" (1993, p.56), giving the marginalised a kind of epistemic advantage. Although she offers a range of possible reasons why the 'view from below' that is available to women and other subjugated groups might produce less distorted accounts of the world (1991, pp.121–134), Harding emphasises particularly that the everyday *activities* undertaken by individuals, shaped by their place in social hierarchies, organise and set limits on the knowledge they produce (1993, p.54). Based on these activities and experiences, marginalised people also have strong *motivations* to understand the systems of power that subjugate them, while the powerful have little incentive to ask questions that would expose relations of domination from which they benefit, nor to interrogate how their beliefs are shaped by those relations (Harding 1993, p.54; 1997, p.384). Harding stops short of arguing that the standpoints of the marginalised necessarily provide better *solutions* to social problems, but nonetheless argues that they provide a starting point for asking critical and transformative *questions* (1993, p.62). Her position is not essentialist or identitarian: she argues that marginalised positionalities "tend to" produce less false knowledge but do not guarantee it (1997, p.384), and that socially privileged subjects can learn to think from the standpoints of the marginalised (1993, pp.58–59, 67).[16] Therefore, it does not imply a simple causal connection between the inclusion of marginalised groups in policymaking and gaining an epistemic advantage associated with thinking from marginalised

[16] Of course, no one is either entirely 'privileged' nor entirely 'marginalised': subjects typically experience social privilege accorded by some axes of power while being marginalised by others.

standpoints. However, it offers a useful lens through which to think about how such thinking *could* produce more radical and emancipatory approaches to peace and security, and why the participation of marginalised groups in national security policymaking often does not lead to such changes.

While I elaborate Harding's formulation of standpoint epistemology further in Chapters 4 and 7 where it supports my arguments, it is important to address here one potential problem with my uptake of the theory: its tensions with the poststructuralist framing of this thesis. Feminist critiques of scientific objectivity are broadly consistent with the poststructuralist conception of knowledge I outlined earlier: if all knowledge is constructed from available discourses in the context in which it is produced, as poststructuralists claim, then it is inevitably contextually situated. The idea that knowledge offers a transparent window on the world, unmediated by discourse — and therefore power relations — is unsustainable for poststructuralists. However, the fit between standpoint theory and poststructuralism is more fraught (Harding 1986, pp.163–196; Wylie 1987; Hekman 1997; Leavy 2011).[17]

For poststructuralists, 'truth' is not a relationship between knowledge claims and an objective reality: we cannot comprehend the world except through discourse, and so cannot compare our knowledge to a non-discursive reality to ascertain its accuracy (Campbell 1981, p.43). Rather, societies construct belief systems that set the terms by which truth can be distinguished from falsity (Foucault 1980, pp.131–3). While knowledge claims can be true in relation to the discourses from which they emerge, there is no transcendent standard against which they can be judged. As such, poststructuralists often assess knowledge claims according to the relations of power they produce, based on normative judgements about how oppressive or emancipatory they may be, rather than how accurately they represent the world (Campbell 1981, p.41–43; Ashley 1988; Shepherd 2008, pp.31–33). In contrast, by aiming to produce knowledge which is "empirically more accurate" or "less partial and less distorted", standpoint theory assumes that there are epistemological grounds for adjudicating which knowledge claims hold more truth than others (Harding 1991, p.119, 138). As such, theorists such as Haraway (1988) and Hekman (1997) who more fully embrace poststructuralist ideas argue that the standpoints of the oppressed add to the array of partial perspectives from which we might

[17] Similarly, Charles Mills (1997) argues that his concept of white ignorance, which builds on standpoint theory and which I also use in Chapter 7, would be incoherent "if all claims to truth were equally spurious, or just a matter of competing discourses" (p.15), an apparent reference to poststructuralism.

view the world, but offer no epistemic advantage per se. Harding summarises this tension as one in which "standpoint epistemologies appear committed to trying to tell the 'one true story' about ourselves and the world around us that the postmodernist epistemologies regard as a dangerous fiction" (1986, p.195).[18]

Harding's earlier work characterises tensions between poststructuralism and standpoint theory as ones that feminists will just have to live with (1986, p.195); however, she later attempts to resolve them (1991, 1997). Her efforts to elaborate a poststructuralist standpoint theory centre on articulating a conceptualisation of truth that allows for "false beliefs" and "probably less false" ones, but does not require "transcendental, certain grounds for belief" (Harding 1991, p.169). She argues that (her version of) standpoint theory is mischaracterised as trying to tell one true story about the world: rather, it accepts the poststructuralist claim that no knowledge claim can be "uniquely congruent" with how the world is, while maintaining that some are more consistent with it than others (Harding 1997, p.383). Rather than offer guidelines for selecting the most advantaged standpoints or perspectives, however, she rejects calls to so on the grounds that "knowledge projects are designed for local situations, including diverse interests in gaining and exercising power" (Harding 1997, p.387).

While Harding does not elaborate on this point, her reference to the efficacy of knowledge projects for upending power relations suggests political, rather than epistemological, standards of justification — a position closer to some poststructuralist feminisms (Haraway 1988, p.585; Hekman 1997, p.362). This emphasis on political usefulness is echoed in her explanation of the purpose of standpoint theory as aiming to produce "knowledge that is more useful for enabling women to improve the conditions of our lives" (Harding 1997, p.383). Her refusal to suggest transhistorical criteria for assessing knowledge claims is consistent with the poststructuralist position that standards of truth are socially produced and historically contingent. While Harding does not say so explicitly, her appeal to local situations might be read as (re)interpreting standpoint theory's central tenet — that thinking from marginalised lives tends to produce less false beliefs — as a claim that these beliefs are generally less false *according to many currently available standards of justification*, rather than any transcendent criteria. These less false beliefs might, for example, be found to be more internally coherent or

[18] While 'postmodernism' and 'poststructuralism' are not always taken to be synonymous, Harding and her critics use 'postmodernism' to refer to ideas I have described here as poststructuralist: I use 'poststructuralist' throughout this chapter for consistency.

have more explanatory power. After all, the fact that knowledge is mediated through discourse does not mean that justifications cannot appeal to an external world. As Hawkesworth (2007) puts it, "although theoretical presuppositions structure the perception of events, they do not create perceptions out of nothing" (pp.481–482). Indeed, the observation that knowledge is imbued with power relations is itself an empirical claim that poststructuralists treat as holding more truth value than traditional accounts of knowledge (Alcoff 1996, p.139). Poststructuralists can justify truth claims using conventional criteria, while also acknowledging that these criteria are contextually specific and not universal.

In rejecting universal standards of truth, this poststructuralist reading of standpoint theory offers a less powerful account of the epistemic advantage gained by thinking from marginalised lives. Further, it is open for debate whether knowledge claims made on this basis *are* less false according to many currently available standards of justification, not least because such standards are often set by the powerful. In practice, however, feminist and anti-racist thinkers who produce knowledge from the perspective of marginalised lives typically *do* argue that their accounts of the world are truer than those of the powerful by appealing to conventional justificatory criteria, such as internal coherence and explanatory power. For example, Cynthia Enloe, whose plea for a feminist curiosity about international politics that takes women's lives seriously has been foundational to feminist IR, argues that feminist analysis is important precisely in so far as it provides explanations for political events that would be impossible without it (2007, pp.1–18; 2017, pp.60–63). Her empirical work consistently demonstrates how and why theories of global politics that do not take women's lives seriously "grossly underestimate the range of sites and types of power that have been (and currently are) wielded in any process of creating and perpetuating the structures and belief systems that prop up the complex patriarchal international political system" (Enloe 2017, p.61). While my reading of standpoint theory may not bring us closer to an imagined universal truth, it might be conducive to knowledge that is less false according to at least some of the various standards for truth and falsity that are actually available to us for use in social science and in everyday life.

The project of reconciling a poststructuralist recognition of the discursive construction and political effects of truth with a concern for accuracy is ongoing, and will not be solved in this chapter (Patomäki 2002; Fluck 2010). However, I have presented one interpretation of standpoint theory that is compatible with poststructuralism, allowing me to go beyond the

recognition that all knowledge is situated and consider the advantages of thinking from the standpoints of the oppressed. In the context of my discussion of the epistemologies that inform security policy thinking, this enables me to analyse why thinking from marginalised lives may be not only more useful in furthering antimilitarist feminist political goals, but may also offer a less distorted picture of the social world than the perspectives of the privileged that dominate traditional national security policymaking. In using feminist standpoint theory to interpret the discourse on diversity of thought among securocrats, I do not suggest that officials are themselves drawing on standpoint epistemology to explain the importance of including historically excluded groups in policymaking. Rather, I compare standpoint theory with the epistemological assumptions implied by the diversity of thought discourse to show why the latter's failure to theorise the relationship between power and knowledge production, as standpoint theory does, renders it unable to advance an antimilitarist, anticolonial politics.

Conclusions

My conceptual framework for analysing militarism and coloniality in national security policymaking and their relationship to gendered and racialised organisational cultures has five main elements: conceptualisations of militarism and coloniality, as well as three dimensions of race and gender that form part of organisational cultures — systems of meanings, norms and epistemologies. I have characterised militarism as a set of attitudes, relations and social practices which regards the preparation for and practice of organised political violence as a normal and desirable social activity. Despite recent critiques suggesting that the concepts of militarism and militarisation frame war-making as an aberration from, and not integral to, liberal politics, I have argued that militarism remains a useful concept with which to understand the normalisation of political violence. The concept of liberal militarism, which addresses militarism as a feature of liberal democracy, sheds light on the fact that discourses framing violence committed by liberal states as banal and non-excessive are themselves a feature of militarism, to be analysed rather than reinforced. Militarism is structured by coloniality: that is, it relies on and perpetuates structures and cultures of racial domination. While conceptualising coloniality as a constitutive feature of British militarism draws attention to the latter's racial dimensions, thinking with the concept of coloniality also highlights that national security policies and practices that maintain white racial domination include, but also go beyond, those that use physical violence.

The three facets of organisational culture I examine in this thesis lay the foundation for my analysis of how militaristic and colonial ways of thinking are sustained. All three are constructed through discourse — that is, through practices of meaning-production with which we make sense of the world and act within it. *Systems of meaning* temporarily fix gendered and racialised meanings to all aspects of the social world through practices of linking and differentiation. This concept enables me to explore how approaches to national security policy are ascribed different constructions of racialised masculinities and femininities, such that they can be legitimised or devalued according to their place in masculinist and racist hierarchies of value. Gendered and racialised *norms* are produced through repeated performative acts, regulating which attributes and behaviours are considered appropriate for different embodied subjects. The concept of norms allows me to analyse how securocrats' ideas about what are appropriate ways to engage in policy discussions are regulated by gendered and racialised scripts, how they reproduce and/or subvert these subscripts, and how this maintains and/or disrupts militarist and colonial ways of thinking and speaking about policy. Finally, the national security community is governed by shared *epistemologies* constituted by racialised and gendered norms concerning how knowledge is produced and what kinds of knowledge matter to policymaking. Feminist conceptualisations of knowledge as situated, and particularly standpoint theory's argument that thinking from the perspective of marginalised lives offers an epistemic advantage, provide a useful starting point for analysing both traditional imaginaries of the securocrat as objective and politically neutral, and newer discourses on diversity of thought that highlight the importance of social location to knowledge production. In the next chapter, I outline how my methodological approach to the thesis builds on these theoretical foundations, enabling me to analyse the relationships between gendered and racialised organisational cultures and militarist and colonial ways of thinking and speaking about national security.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology:
Process, Politics and Ethics

Having reviewed the literature to which this thesis contributes and described the concepts and theories I use to frame the research, all that remains before presenting the analysis of my findings is to outline my methodological approach. In keeping with the poststructuralist theorisation of gender and race introduced in Chapter 3, I do not treat them as explanatory variables or weigh them up against other factors to produce a causal explanation for security policies — capitalist expansion, or the structure of the international system, for example. If race and gender are understood (in part) as discursive constructs, and discourse filters all perceptions of the world, then "one cannot, as a consequence, formulate hypotheses about the (relative) explanatory power of discourse as opposed to material explanations" (Hansen 2006, p.15). Rather, taking discourse as the object of analysis, I seek to understand the processes through which gendered and racialised meanings are constructed and deconstructed, and what courses of action these discourses frame as normal and desirable. Methodologically, this approach suggests a focus not on policies themselves, but on the everyday production of meanings that make particular ways of thinking about and acting in the world possible (Doty 1993, p.298; Achilleos-Sarll 2018). I therefore use qualitative methods to gain in-depth insights into how policy communities function day-to-day, and how officials invoke, produce and contest meanings as they go about their work. In this chapter, I outline why and how I have used participant observation and semi-structured interviews to gain insight into these processes, and how I have used discourse analysis to interpret the findings.

Furthermore, the feminist and antimilitarist political commitments that inform my research questions also shape my methodological approach. I set out in Chapter 3 how feminist approaches to epistemology challenge traditional ideas about how knowledge is produced and what kind of truth status knowledge claims can have. Building on the feminist understanding of knowledge as situated that I have already outlined, this chapter expands on the epistemological assumptions that inform the knowledge claims I make in the thesis. In particular, it explains my commitment to taking a reflexive approach to knowledge production,

and begins the process of setting out how my positionality has shaped the research process. My political stance also informs the ethical considerations I have made throughout the research process, including in decisions about what kind of relationship I, as an antimilitarist researcher, should have with national security policymaking organisations, as well as how to protect the wellbeing of participants in the research, and the interests of marginalised populations that are most affected by militarist policies.

As this chapter will show, political, ethical, epistemological and methodological questions are closely linked: each decision I have made has implications across all of these registers. However, for the purpose of clarity I have separated them, somewhat artificially, in the sections that follow. I therefore begin by setting out my epistemological assumptions, before going on to explain how I selected the two policy issues I have chosen to focus on, as well as my methods of data gathering. I explore how my positionality shaped the data gathering process, and outline the analytical strategies I have used to interpret my data. Finally, I address the ethical considerations and dilemmas with which I have contended, and how I have dealt with them.

Epistemological Assumptions

Chapter 3 outlined some important tenets of the feminist approach to epistemology on which this thesis draws, treating all knowledge as situated, partial, productive of, and produced by, power relations. Building on these epistemological assumptions, I do not attempt to be a neutral observer of events, nor to tell the 'one true story' about the relationships between race, gender, militarism and coloniality in UK national security policymaking. Rather, I seek to produce *a* story about these relationships, which is inevitably partial, but aims to be "less false", to use Harding's terminology (1991, p.169), than alternative accounts, not least the official Civil Service conceptualisation of bureaucratic processes as apolitical and objective. By developing this less false story, I also seek to advance the normative goals that inform the project: to further antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist efforts to disturb the processes that make militaristic and colonial national security policies and practices possible (see Chapter 1).

Not only does a feminist epistemological approach eschew the practice of concealing or ignoring partiality and normative investments in research; it demands that I account for how they have shaped every stage of the process, from conception to data gathering to the analysis

of my findings (Harding 1991, pp.161–163, McCorkel & Myers 2003; Hesse-Biber & Piatelli 2007). Indeed, a significant component of feminist standpoint theory which I did not address in Chapter 3 is Harding's notion of "strong objectivity" (1991, pp.149–152, 1993, pp.69–72), which is reached through the practice of reflexivity in which "the subject of knowledge [is] placed on the same critical, causal plane as the objects of knowledge" (1993, p.69). For Harding, whereas scientific objectivity is weak because it refuses to account for the effects of subjectivity on knowledge production, researchers can achieve strong objectivity precisely by analysing how their own subjectivity shapes their research. I am wary of this move to reorient 'objectivity' for feminist purposes, given both its close association with the artificial separation of subjects from objects and the often-oppressive political effects of claims to objectivity. Harding retains the term partly to signify that one can "still apply rational standards to sorting less from more partial and distorted belief" (1991, p.159), though, as discussed in Chapter 3, these standards are elusive in her work. Regardless of whether the 'strong objectivity' moniker is applied, I maintain that a reflexive approach is vital: making explicit how the subjectivity of the researcher shapes knowledge production better allows readers to assess for themselves how the researcher's social location, beliefs and background assumptions render their knowledge partial.

In this chapter, and throughout this thesis, I aim to take such a reflexive approach, applying the same critical scrutiny to my own thinking, and its embeddedness in power relations, as I have done to that of my research participants. Of course, any attempt to do so is itself partial; however, I have attempted to identify some important moments in which my positionality and political investments have shaped the process and outcomes of this research. The remainder of this chapter describes the most significant methodological decisions I have made through the course of the project. While I introduce my positionality in detail in my discussion of my data gathering methods, I revisit it throughout the chapter, and the remaining chapters of the thesis. First, however, I explain why and how I selected two policy areas — WPS and counterterrorism — on which to focus my research.

Selection of Policy Issues

When I began collecting data for this study in 2017, the British Civil Service employed more than 400,000 people, of whom more than 89,000 worked for the five main departments

featured here: the FCO, MOD, DFID, Home Office and Cabinet Office.[19] Give their size, it would be impracticable to study the organisational culture of whole departments. Furthermore, responsibility for many, if not most, national security policies is cross-departmental: different issues can be handled by any combination of these departments, and/or the Stabilisation Unit, a body of technical experts advising the government on issues of security and stability.[20] Focusing on a single department or sub-department[21] would therefore not give a clear picture of how any particular issue is discussed within government. Rather than treat departments as units of analysis, then, I examine two policy issues, each managed by teams drawn from across departments, enabling me to gain a deeper understanding of how specific policy questions are addressed. The pictures of organisational cultures I produce in this thesis cannot be extrapolated to whole departments, as organisations commonly display cultural variation between their different parts (Barrett 1996), and comments from participants indicated that this is certainly the case in their workplaces. Rather, I aim to explain how the gendered and racialised cultures within the teams handling these two policy issues shape, and are shaped by, militarism and coloniality. Because the teams are cross-departmental, I also gained some insights into how the different organisational norms of the sub-departments involved interact and shape policy discussions.

My criteria for selecting policy issues to focus on were a mixture of the practical and the strategic. First, and most obviously, they needed to be areas where, based on a reading of policy documents, I felt signs of militarism and coloniality might be readily identified. Second, I needed policy areas where someone with low-level security clearance could join meetings and conversations on substantive policy issues in order to do participant observation. Conversations with relatively senior people (referred to from here on as my 'key interlocutors') working in policy areas that looked like potential points of entry confirmed my expectation that civil servants would not allow me to observe them unless they were getting value in return. They were quick to ask what work I could do for their departments in exchange for access, and so a third criterion was that these should be issues on which I had (or could quickly

[19] Figures derived from Office for National Statistics 2017; FCO 2017; MOD 2017a; DFID 2017; Home Office 2017; Cabinet Office 2017b. The 89,000 figure includes only government departments, and not executive agencies, other bodies which answer to them, or military service personnel.
[20] This is based on a relatively narrow definition of 'national security' as it is typically understood within the community itself; a broader one could encompass all government departments.
[21] Confusingly, 'department' is used both for government ministries, as in 'Department for International Development', and for small sub-sections, such as the FCO's Conflict Department. For clarity, I use 'department' to refer to ministries (FCO, DFID, MOD and so on) and 'sub-department' to refer to units within those departments.

develop) enough expertise to do consultancy work. In the following sections, I introduce the two policy issues I settled on — WPS and counterterrorism — and explain why I understand them as offering examples of militarist and colonial thinking, and how I gained access.

Women, Peace and Security

The aims and genealogy of the WPS agenda are hotly contested. The international policy framework surrounding it — now comprising 10 UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs)[22] and a General Recommendation under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) — calls for increased representation of women in decision-making at all levels in institutions for the prevention, management and resolution of (armed) conflict. It is also concerned with the protection of women's rights in conflict situations, including the prevention of gender-based violence and the provision of humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of women and girls.

Many WPS activists situate the formal adoption of WPS by the UN in the year 2000 within a longer history of women's and feminist activism on issues of peace and security (Tickner & True 2018). These activists often claim WPS as part of an antimilitarist feminist agenda which is not about "making war safe for women" (Weiss 2011), but about ending war altogether (Cohn 2008; Cockburn 2012b; Anderlini 2019). Building on many of the antimilitarist feminist ideas on which this thesis also draws, WPS activists have linked the social production of masculinities and femininities to militarism, viewing WPS as a vehicle for bringing these ideas into mainstream international security policy discourses. However, this antimilitarist vision of WPS is a significant departure from what might be called the liberal version embodied in the UNSCRs, as well as most national action plans (NAPs) on WPS — the primary policy tools used by UN member states to implement WPS commitments at the national level. This liberal version typically focuses on increasing women's participation in security sector institutions and formal peace negotiations, placing greater emphasis on protecting women's rights in conflict than on preventing the outbreak of armed conflict in the first place (Shepherd 2016; Basu & Shepherd 2018). As such, antimilitarist feminists accuse the mainstream WPS agenda of failing to challenge militarism and even sustaining it, conferring legitimacy on militarist institutions by

[22] UNSCRs 1325 (2000), 1820 (2009), 1888 (2010), 1889 (2010), 1960 (2011), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019) and 2493 (2019).

giving them a veneer of equality (Otto 2004; Cockburn 2012b; Geuskens 2014). Through its privileging of gender justice over racial justice, and reproduction of racialised tropes of the Third World Woman, mainstream WPS is also "steeped in racialized hierarchies manifested in whiteness" (Haastrup & Hagen 2020, p.133). WPS is therefore at times complicit in both militarism and coloniality.

These competing interpretations of WPS make it ripe for analysis both as a site for the reproduction of militarism and coloniality and for their contestation. My background as a policy adviser on WPS issues also meant I had contacts within the government teams working on the issue. When I approached them, they asked me to help them develop a new UK NAP: a five-year cross-departmental strategy that sets the direction of the government's work on WPS. I gained agreement that I could do participation observation while 'holding the pen'[23] on the new NAP for 2018–2022 (HM Government 2018b), in collaboration with officials from the FCO, DFID, MOD and the Stabilisation Unit, a process I discuss further in Chapter 6.

While the WPS community makes for an interesting object of study, it is atypical of the wider security policy arena in two important respects: most officials doing the day-to-day work on it are women, and they tend to give more thought to gender issues than the average securocrat. By contrast, national security policymaking is traditionally male-dominated (in terms of numbers) and masculinised (in terms of culture), and gender is usually considered to be of marginal concern to the 'core' national security issues (Tickner 1992, p.43; Enloe 2003; Puechguirbal 2017). While my findings are not intended to be generalisable across the security policy apparatus, a study of gender in security policymaking that only examined the most feminised, gender-aware field of security policy would surely be missing something in terms of understanding the wider picture. As such, I was keen to ensure the second policy community I studied was in an area more typical of security policy, where men outnumber women and gender equality issues are not at the forefront of people's minds. For this, counterterrorism fit the bill.

[23] In policy speak, to 'hold the pen' is to take responsibility for producing a text that requires inputs from a range of stakeholders.

Counterterrorism

"Countering radicalisation and terrorism" ranks highly among the UK Government's security priorities domestically and overseas (HM Government 2021, p.80). Counterterrorism is typically presented as a policy response to acts of 'terrorism', broadly defined as the use or threat of violence against civilian targets in order to spread fear as a means of achieving political ends (Booth & Dunne 2012, p.20).[24] However, ideas and practices now understood as counterterrorism have a longer lineage in counterinsurgency operations once used to suppress anticolonial uprisings in British (and other) colonies (Khalili 2013, pp.11–43; Kundani 2014, pp.70–72). These include the combination of special legislation, surveillance, military and policing activities with the use of pre-emptive measures such as propaganda and 're-education' to prevent and reverse 'radicalisation'. Once used against colonised populations, these measures are now used to discipline the political activities of their descendants, both in the global metropole and elsewhere. In the UK, such measures are summarised in the CONTEST strategy (HM Government 2018c).

The 'Pursue' pillar of CONTEST provides the most obvious manifestation of militarism, focusing on military, intelligence and policing activities to identify people involved in 'terrorist' activities and stop them through seizing their assets, criminal prosecutions, or the use of deadly force (HM Government 2018c, pp.43–52). As I explore further in Chapter 5, the very concept of the 'terrorist' creates a category of people against whom exceptional levels of violence and incarceration are believed necessary (Jackson 2005). This category is racialised and racialising: in the present era, its repeated association with Muslims produces a "racialization of Muslimness" (Kundani 2014, p.12) as inherently violent and irrational.[25] The framing of 'terrorism' as an exceptional and inescapable security threat legitimises high levels of public spending on the security and defence sectors, increased state powers, and suspicion of communities who are produced as 'suspect' (Hillyard 1993; Jackson 2015; Mueller & Stewart 2018). To conceive of counterterrorism in this way is not to deny the threats posed by acts of political violence against civilians; rather, it suggests that the use of 'terrorism' and

[24] The definition of terrorism is, however, deeply contested: for discussion Easson & Schmid 2011; Jackson 2011; Shanahan 2016.

[25] As Kundani (2014) explains, "since all racisms are socially and politically constructed rather than reliant on the reality of any biological race, it is perfectly possible for cultural markers associated with Muslimness (forms of dress, rituals, languages, etc.) to be turned into racial signifiers" (p.12). In this thesis I treat Islamophobia in counterterrorism thinking and practice as a form of racism (see also Bhattacharyya 2008, pp.108–109; Lockman 2010, pp.74–99).

'counterterrorism' as discursive frames to make sense of them is built on a militarist worldview that lends itself to martial responses.

The 'Prevent' pillar of CONTEST aims to prevent crimes before they take place, for example by removing 'terrorist' materials shared online, using the media to counter 'extremist' ideology, and counselling individuals deemed to be at risk of radicalisation (HM Government 2018c, pp.31–42). As I suggested in Chapter 3, Prevent can also be understood as colonial. While it theoretically addresses all forms of 'extremism', understood as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values" (HM Government 2015c, p.9), its primary focus is Islamic 'extremism' (HM Government 2018c, p.19). In the wider context of entrenched structural, institutional and cultural racism, the construction of 'extremism' as opposition to liberal values understood as essentially *British* inevitably feeds into anti-immigrant and racist discourses and practices (Skoczylis & Andrews 2019, pp.4–5). Sidelining structural factors and focusing on ideology as the "root cause" of 'terrorism' (HM Government 2015c, p.5), Prevent frames 'extremism' as a pathology of the individual, steering them away from radical critiques of the state (Younis 2021). While it is not wrong to suggest that one aim of counterterrorism is to prevent particular forms of violence, then, it can also be understood as a project to deter political dissent, as further evidenced by the use of counterterrorism legislation in the UK and elsewhere to surveill and prosecute protesters for racial, migrant and climate justice (Steer 2019; Grierson 2020; Viana & dos Santos da Silva 2021).

Counterterrorism policymaking, then, offers a rich example of militarism and coloniality in national security thinking. During my work with the WPS team at the FCO, they put me in touch with officials who became my key interlocutors in the counterterrorism community. At that time, the government was seeking to increase the integration of gender perspectives into counterterrorism activities in order to fulfil their policy commitments on WPS, avoid possible harms resulting from approaches that lack a gender perspective, and make counterterrorism operations more effective, and they invited me to help produce a guidance note on these issues. Given the critiques of counterterrorism outlined above, this presented an ethical dilemma, which I discuss in the final section of this chapter. Ultimately, however, I accepted

the invitation to work with Home Office and FCO officials in exchange for permission to do participant observation during this process.[26]

Data Collection

The data-gathering methods I used combine participation observation with semi-structured qualitative interviews. While this approach is influenced by ethnographic methods, I stop short of describing the study as 'an ethnography', due to the term's association with immersion in host communities over a period of years. However, given the close associations between ethnography and participant observation, I draw heavily on the literature on ethnography in this chapter. The following sections discuss what these methods consist of, why they are appropriate to the project given my epistemological and theoretical commitments, how I went about putting them into practice, and how the practical and epistemological challenges associated with these methods influenced my data.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is "a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people" as a way of "learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture" (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, p.1). The method aims to get as close as possible to the everyday practices of a community or organisation's members to understand how they carry out and assign meaning to those practices. Whereas interviews enable the researcher to record and analyse an individual's consciously held knowledge and attitudes, participant observation can help to access tacit knowledge or information that interviewees might not think to mention (Becker & Geer 2004, pp.247–248; DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, pp.10–15). For example, my analysis of counterterrorism discourses in Chapter 5 examines exchanges between policymakers that happened in meetings, from which I interpret gendered and racialised meanings, but which the officials involved did not mention in my interviews with them, because they probably did not think of them as gendered or racialised. Because I undertook most of my observations in each community before beginning

[26] My contributions to these two pieces of work — the UK NAP and the guidance note on gender and counterterrorism — were funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, who extended my scholarship award to cover this period.

interviews, I also used this time to generate ideas about which aspects of each policy area might offer fruitful sites for analysis, and what questions to ask interviewees. When interviewing, I was able to check whether what interviewees were telling me was broadly consistent with what I had observed, in order to identify patterns that suggested I was observing common norms and discourses and not isolated cases. Thus, I deployed the two methods in a complementary way, using each to check and explore what I had learned through the other.

With WPS officials, I spent approximately 20 days (160 hours) over a period of five months doing participant observation, attending meetings, public events and social gatherings, as well as sitting with the FCO team and observing them in their open plan office while I worked alongside them. In counterterrorism, I spent three days (16 hours) over six months meeting with officials, in groups or individually. This difference in length arose because, while I spent time based at the FCO with the WPS team, security protocols did not allow me to do the same with counterterrorism officials. Although it was not possible to get the same sense of the day-to-day office chatter and less formal conversations among counterterrorism officials, the shorter time I spent in their company was spent entirely in detailed, substantive conversations regarding policy issues. These yielded rich data on how these issues are talked about, and as a result I draw more heavily on my field notes from observing counterterrorism officials than the WPS community. I also attended other events that looked like good opportunities for data-gathering: for example, induction sessions for new employees on the FCO graduate scheme, a training workshop on 'How to Challenge Policy', and events on diversity and inclusion, totalling another six hours.

I opted to do *participant* observation — rather than ethnographic observation without the participatory element — for reasons of access, but the participant role also presents its own advantages. The role I took is best described as that of 'active participation', in which the researcher does not become a full member of the community but participates in its everyday activities and is relied upon to undertake specific tasks: in this case, writing policy documents (Adler & Adler 1987, pp.51–67; Johnson, Avenarius & Weatherford 2006; DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, pp.23–24). While active participation can take one's focus away from the observer role (Fine 1993, p.280; Jorgensen 1989, p.55), and I undoubtedly missed out on potential data because of this, it was also beneficial in important respects. I believe my active participation helped to build participants' trust in me as someone contributing to their work, which meant

they were relatively candid with me, and by the time I came to conduct interviews they shared more than they might have done otherwise. Participating directly in the organisations whose culture I was studying also enabled me to learn about their unwritten (and written) rules by negotiating them myself (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 1995, p.4). At times I inadvertently overstepped the rules, or deliberately tested the boundaries of acceptability: for example, as I detail in Chapter 6, I inserted language into the NAP which I (rightly) suspected would be more radical than colleagues were willing to accept. Given my status as an external researcher, the rules applied to my behaviour were not necessarily the same as those that would be applied to civil servants, and I therefore refrain from relying too heavily on my own experiences in my analysis. Nonetheless, experiencing this disciplining of behaviour myself undoubtedly enriched my data.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In line with my understanding of knowledge as situated and discursively produced, I conceive of the interview as a social process through which researcher and researched collaboratively construct knowledge (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, p.63). They were a site where I worked together with officials to make sense of the rules and norms that make up organisational culture: how they are expected to speak, write, and behave; how they feel they need to conduct themselves in order to be taken seriously; and how they respond to these expectations. I asked whether they felt these expectations were the same or different for men and women, or for white people and people of colour, and solicited examples of where they have experienced these norms in action. To further my understanding of militarism and coloniality, I also asked about the policy issues they were working on, including areas where they had challenged the prevailing ways of thinking, or perhaps wanted to but chose not to, and what stopped them if so. Interviews therefore provided a means to learn about events that I was not able to observe, and, more importantly, to understand how participants made sense of their experiences in the workplace, giving me insight into systems of meaning they constructed, norms they adhered to or transgressed, and epistemological assumptions that informed policy discussions.

Between July 2017 and September 2018 I interviewed 60 officials in total. These included 20 individuals working on WPS or broader gender equality issues across FCO, DFID, MOD and the Stabilisation Unit, and 18 working on counterterrorism in the same departments, or at the

Home Office or Cabinet Office. I also interviewed 17 officials who worked on issues of diversity and inclusion, whether as their official role or an add-on, such as running diversity networks or staff associations for historically excluded groups. I included this group to better understand how diversity and inclusion are conceptualised, but also because they were particularly attentive to questions of organisational culture, race and gender. Selection of interviewees was based on a combination of planning and opportunism: I began by approaching those I knew to be working on relevant issues, including those I worked with during the participant observation phase. From there, I identified further interviewees through snowballing, asking at the end of every interview which of the respondent's colleagues I should also speak to. As a result, I also interviewed five officials who were recommended to me as having important things to say on the topic, even if they did not work directly on the issues outlined here.

Policymakers in Whitehall are perhaps not the marginal subjects for whom standpoint theory was developed: however, informed by its insights, I made a particular effort to interview as many people of colour and women as possible. Of course, there can be no easy assumption that women are experts on gender or people of colour experts on race. However, I reasoned that those who did not fit the organisational norm of who a securocrat is imagined to be based on their social characteristics may be more likely to have developed particular insights into that norm as a result of this experience (Collins 1986; Kronsell 2005; Ahmed 2012). I asked all interviewees to complete an optional demographic survey, the results of which are shown in Figure 3 (see Appendix). Out of 60 interviewees, 42 were women and 18 were men, while 50 were white and 10 were people of colour. Given my focus on policy discussions, I opted to interview officials who are directly engaged in them, as well as a small number in communications or human resources roles. An examination of organisational cultures that encompassed, for example, staff who provide catering, clean, maintain or provide security for the department buildings would no doubt reveal a different picture of how they are gendered and racialised.

Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours, and were conducted in meeting rooms in Westminster, either in the departmental headquarters where the interviewee was based or at the FCO, where I had a building pass to facilitate my work there. At times I sensed that some interviewees were in 'work mode' as a result of being in their workplace during their working day, which may have made it difficult to speak in a personal capacity rather than give the 'organisational line' (Dexter 1970, p.48). However, in practice there were no other private

spaces in the vicinity. I could only emphasise that I was looking for personal perspectives and not the official view of their department, which most seemed to oblige to a significant extent. With the consent of interviewees, I made audio recordings of most interviews and later transcribed them to ensure an accurate account of the conversation.[27]

As I outlined at the beginning of this chapter, every aspect of this research has been shaped by my social location as the researcher, and a reflexive approach is therefore necessary to account for how it has been so. Before describing how I analysed my data, I discuss next how my positionality shaped the data gathering process.

Positionality of the Researcher

My social location as a white, middle-class, cisgender woman, as well as a student and academic with an NGO background, created certain similarities, differences and relations of power between myself and participants in the research. This positioned me at different times as an insider, an outsider or, more often, both. A vast literature on how the status of insider and/or outsider in research settings shapes data collection and analysis explores the merits and drawbacks of each, while also challenging this rigid binary (e.g. Collins 1986; Horn 1997; Thapar-Björkert & Henry 2004; Bucerius 2013; Vass 2017). My positionality, fusing and slipping between roles as insider and outsider, shaped how participants perceived me and influenced the data I collected.

I was initially introduced to many participants by their colleagues who had known me in my previous NGO role, which seemed to give me a degree of credibility in their eyes and helped them to think of me as 'one of them'. Holding an FCO building pass that enabled me to walk around the department's headquarters unaccompanied, and an FCO email address from which to contact potential participants, also positioned me as officially trusted by the institution. Being proficient in much of the jargon in which national security policy discussions are couched also gave participants the sense that I belonged to the same policy community, even though I was not a civil servant. White, middle-class, university-educated people make up the majority of staff across all of the departments I studied, and women a significant minority in most, and so my similar social location to many participants also helped me to blend in. Like Cohn (2006)

[27] Only one interviewee did not consent to this; in that case I typed notes as we spoke.

and Gray (2016) in their studies of masculinised security institutions, I found that being read as a young, white, middle-class woman meant that I was viewed as non-threatening: it facilitated my performance of what has been called a 'good girl persona' (Samoano 2020), which plays on stereotypes of professional, white, middle-class femininity as compliant with existing power structures. This performance reflects my socialisation, and was not a deception per se. However, I suspect this good girl persona, in an academic interested in gender, contributed to an apparent assumption among many participants that I held liberal feminist views that, while probably critical of a Conservative government, perhaps did not include a commitment to antimilitarism (see Cohn 2006, p.99). I discuss later in this chapter how this dynamic complicated questions of informed consent and facilitated my complicity with militaristic thinking and practices. In terms of data collection, however, it facilitated a conditional insider status that helped to build rapport with participants and gain candid responses which have benefitted my analysis.

In other respects, this insider status was less helpful. Sharing a privileged racial background with most participants made it difficult for me to perceive how organisational cultures were shaped by whiteness. This is partly because exposure produces acculturation: I am so familiar with predominantly white, middle-class workplaces that their culture (or these aspects of it) is virtually invisible to me (Gherardi 1995, p.12; Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 1995, p.17, 24; Puwar 2004, pp.124–127). It is also because, as standpoint theorists point out, subjects who benefit from systems of power often know them less intimately than those who have had to struggle against them (Hartsock 1983; Harding 1993). I knew that organisational cultures in the Civil Service centred whiteness, but as an observer I had a continual feeling that I was missing details of how it was performed and reproduced. I addressed this problem in two ways: first, by interviewing as many people of colour as possible, all of whom contributed analytical perspectives I had not yet considered; and second, by drawing on literature analysing organisations and security discourses from Black, postcolonial and feminist of colour perspectives to help to make sense of my data. Of course, being a white researcher interviewing people of colour in white-dominated organisations shaped the power dynamic between us (Carby 1982; Edwards 1990; McCorkel & Myers 2003). Their acceptance within these organisations is likely more precarious than that of their white colleagues, and the information several of them shared about their experiences of workplace racism was particularly sensitive, which probably raised questions about whether I could be trusted with it. Indeed, one person of colour phoned me after their interview, asking me to redact sections

of the interview and delete the audio recording immediately after transcription, which I duly did. While the low proportion of interviewees who were people of colour (16%) mirrors their under-representation in WPS and counterterrorism policymaking, the lack of response or reluctance to speak on record from some prospective interviewees may also reflect this racialised power dynamic (Edwards 1990, p.485). The interviews I conducted with people of colour and the insights from the relevant literatures greatly enriched my analysis of the whiteness of organisational cultures, but I undoubtedly still missed insights that a non-white researcher might have made.

There were also continual reminders to both me and my participants that I was not a true insider, not least the large 'T' on the security pass around my neck indicating that my access was temporary. Because I had lower-level security clearance than most participants, they sometimes indicated that there were certain conversations they could not have when I was in the room. In the WPS community in particular, the involvement of my former NGO colleagues in consultations during the policy process reminded officials that I too had been part of that NGO community not so long ago. This, combined with my current status as an academic, led some participants to assume (rightly) that my politics would be left wing and critical of government policies. In one meeting between NGOs and government officials, a long-time associate from one NGO asked, jokingly, "Which side are you on, Hannah?" and asked to see my security pass. A government official chimed in with, "Is [the pass] giving you a rash around your neck?" — a reminder of the frequently oppositional relationship between government and NGOs, and where my loyalties were perhaps perceived to lie. As a result of these factors, I suspect that some officials were more guarded with me than they would otherwise have been. For example, while my analysis includes quotations from officials criticising academics and NGOs and their antimilitarist ideas, I believe that such criticism was sometimes avoided or toned down for my benefit.

At other times, however, participants' perception of me as an outsider was an advantage. Officials vented to me about their colleagues and seniors in ways I suspect they would not have done had I been a permanent member of the team (Bucerius 2013), which sometimes yielded useful insights into workplace norms and how they are reinforced. Like Cohn (2006) in her study of defence intellectuals, as both an outsider and a young(ish) woman I could ask basic questions that were read as naïve, but prompted officials to spell out to me the logic behind their thinking ("And why could you not propose to your colleagues that this policy take

an antimilitarist approach? What would happen if you did?"). My age, gender and outsider status likely helped to ensure that these questions neither completely undermined my credibility with participants nor came across as hostile or loaded questions from someone perceived as a competitor (Cohn 2006, p.97). Equally, the institutional power that officials held over me — specifically the power to restrict or withdraw my research access — made me nervous about overtly challenging some participants' views. This raised ethical challenges about becoming complicit with militarist thinking, which I address later in this chapter. In terms of my data, however, it meant I lost out on some insights into how militarist ideas are sustained that might be gained from observing how officials respond to those ideas being challenged. I compensated for this to some extent by asking officials who sympathised with antimilitarist ideas about their own experiences of challenging their colleagues.

Based on these experiences, I suggest that neither 'insiderness' nor 'outsiderness' confers an absolute advantage in terms of knowledge production (Tixier y Vigil & Elasser 1976). A combination of sameness and difference, and the shifting power dynamics they created, brought both challenges and benefits, which I have attempted to account for here. Of course, my positionality shapes not only the gathering of data but every aspect of this study; as such, I return throughout the thesis to address how it has influenced not only my data but also my analysis.

Analytical Strategies

In practice, data collection and data analysis cannot readily be separated (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, p.215, 343). Much of my analysis was done 'on the go' and fed back into shaping the focus of my fieldnotes and interview questions. 'Data analysis' here therefore refers both to how I have dealt with my fieldnotes and interview transcripts and how I interpreted information in real-time while undertaking fieldwork. This section begins with an explanation of the 'double reading' approach I have taken to analysing the data. I then set out how I identified evidence of militarism and coloniality within the two policy areas, how I identified and interpreted gendering and racialising practices from my data, and how I have analysed the relationship between these two phenomena.

My analytical strategy consists of a double reading of my fieldnotes and interview transcripts, applying both a descriptive reading and a discourse analytical one (Ashley 1988; Shepherd

2008). This double reading strategy reflects the fact that I am interested in the data *both* as a description of events *and* as a text in itself which is productive of meaning. The descriptive reading addresses the interview transcripts and on fieldnotes on their own terms, as accounts of what people say, do and think in policy discussions. While recognising that description is never neutral, because discourse produces that which it claims merely to represent, this descriptive reading takes my participants (and myself as participant observer) seriously as witnesses to their own experiences. Looking "beyond the text" at what it describes (Potter & Wetherell 1987, p.160) provides me with information about, for example, the disciplining practices that officials have experienced, and how they interpret them as evidence of gendered and racialised norms. A discourse analytical reading then treats the interview and observational data as discourse — that is, as itself producing racialised and gendered meanings. I use discourse analysis to identify gendering and racialising practices in the text (a process I describe further below), and to interpret the effects of discourse, in terms of the particular courses of action that they construct as natural or inevitable (Dunn & Neumann 2016, p.4). It is through this discourse analytical reading that I analyse how the discursive construction of masculinities, femininities and whiteness and its others (Muslimness in particular) make militaristic and colonial approaches to national security thinkable or even desirable.

The analytical process proceeded as follows. I initially identified evidence of militarism and coloniality in each policy area by studying policy documents, examining what these texts told me directly about the government's approaches to WPS, counterterrorism and the use of organised violence in pursuing policy objectives. This reading of policy documents enabled me to focus my data gathering on areas of policy discussion where evidence of militarism and coloniality might be present, while remaining open to observing new and different phenomena not suggested by these texts. Collecting together my interview transcripts and fieldnotes, I undertook a close reading to analyse the underlying assumptions implicit in how participants talked about their areas of policy — for example, concerning the necessity of military action or the inevitability of arms sales. To ensure that I was analysing something that might constitute organisational culture, and not only the ideas or practices of one or two individuals, I looked for patterns in the data, seeking areas where there were strong continuities in the meanings that participants ascribed to their work.

Identifying gendered and racialised meanings demanded a two-pronged approach, examining both how officials *produced* meaning through gendering and racialising practices, and how they implicitly *cited* existing racialised and gendered discourses. To understand how participants produced gendered and racialised meanings, I looked for practices of linking and differentiation (see Chapter 3). For example, interviewees sometimes explicitly described certain performances or attributes as 'masculine' or 'feminine', or associated them with men or women, particularly when I specifically asked about gender norms. Often, however, participants did not mention gender or race explicitly, but invoked existing gendered and racialised meanings in ways that would be legible to someone with knowledge of the discourses in which these discursive acts were situated. To interpret the meanings being cited, I draw on the cultural competency I have developed through working with UK securocrats for more than a decade, as well as media representations and literature on British politics, the Civil Service and national security. Using these reference points, I am able to interpret — I believe with a high degree of accuracy, albeit not exhaustively — meanings that particular terms or phrases are likely to conjure up for officials, based on discourses with which they are likely familiar.

I then use a variety of strategies to interpret how gendered and racialised systems of meaning, norms and epistemologies make militaristic ways of thinking about security policies appear natural and inevitable. In my analysis of systems of meaning in Chapter 5, I examine how the discursive linking of different approaches to counterterrorism with particular, valorised notions of masculinity gives them the appearance of credibility. My examination of norms in Chapter 6 examines how gendering and racialising practices maintain or dislodge the linking of the securocrat script, so closely associated with liberal militarism, with constructions of masculinity and whiteness. My exploration of epistemologies in Chapter 7 analyses the experiences of people of colour in counterterrorism policymaking, to show how commonly held epistemological assumptions continually reproduce ignorance about the complicity of counterterrorism policies in systemic racism. In each case, I do not suggest a deterministic relationship between racialising and gendering practices and approaches to security policy. Rather, by using discourse analysis, I seek to understand how discourse "produces preconditions for action" (Dunn & Neumann 2016, p.4): how it sets the parameters for how securocrats make sense of the world, making some policy options appear common-sensical while others are virtually unthinkable.

Because all knowledge is situated, a different researcher posing the same questions, observing the same events, and interviewing the same subjects may have seen and heard different things, highlighted different features of the data and reached different conclusions. This is perhaps particularly true for ethnographic approaches and discourse analysis, given their relatively unstructured nature (Fine 1993, p.279; Cohn 2006, p.107). But although there is no single objective answer to my research questions, this does not mean that all possible answers are of equal value. A limited range of different answers could be reasonably interpreted from the texts and events studied here. In my analytical chapters, I attempt to demonstrate the reasonableness of my interpretations by critically examining the ways in which my view is shaped by my location, showing that my interpretations are derived from patterns observed in a diverse range of texts and settings, and considering alternative interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

Standard approaches to research ethics emphasise the responsibility of the researcher to protect the autonomy of participants by gaining informed consent and to minimise the risks of harm that might result from the research (e.g. Social Research Association 2003; American Anthropological Association 2012). Feminist researchers often go beyond these principles, calling for approaches that demonstrate reciprocity, level the power relations between researcher and researched, and allow participants to help set the research agenda (e.g. Oakley 1981; Mies 1983, Wolf 1996). However, such approaches typically assume that the 'researched' have less social power than the researcher, an assumption which does not apply to my study of officials in powerful institutions. I have practised reciprocity through the work I did in exchange for access, and, as I outline below, I have taken the impacts of my research on participants into account as an important consideration. However, I suggest that powerful actors such as civil servants do not need to be given greater power over the research process, and to do so may undermine its political aims (Neal 1995; Becker & Aiello 2013). As such, rather than empower my participants, I have sought to protect their autonomy and wellbeing through a focus on informed consent and the avoidance of harm. As I set out in this section, these principles are never fully realisable: no consent is ever fully informed, no risk of harm ever fully mitigated, and responsibilities toward one group affected by the research must often be weighed against competing responsibilities to another group. All research involves ethical compromises (Wolf 1996), and my aim here is to account for the compromises I have made. I begin by explaining how I elicited informed consent from participants, highlighting areas

where consent cannot be said to be fully given or fully informed, and setting out how I dealt with this. I then discuss other ways I have sought to prevent harm, including through maintaining participants' anonymity, and how I weigh ethical responsibilities toward participants with those toward others affected by the research. Finally, I address concerns about how the research process has made me complicit in the militarist and colonial processes I set out to critique.

Informed Consent

The principle of informed consent seeks to protect research participants' autonomy to decide how their information is used (Faden & Beauchamp 1986). In addition to being an ethical imperative, it was particularly important in this project because my fieldwork involved handling, and taking steps to avoid publishing, information marked as 'sensitive'. The frequent circulation of this information in my research sites created risks of this happening accidentally, which could have negative consequences for my participants and for me. Maintaining a dialogue about what information I had consent to publish was therefore also a means of protecting all those involved from potential negative repercussions of the inadvertent disclosure of 'officially marked' information.

In both policy areas, I began by securing the consent of senior people within the relevant policy teams. These key interlocutors acted as gatekeepers, in the sense that it would not have been possible to conduct research with their teams without gaining their permission. Knowing that their seniors had agreed to the process probably helped participants to feel comfortable with my presence. However, to mitigate the possibility that this might make those over whom my interlocutors held power feel pressure to consent (Miller & Bell 2012; Brinkmann & Kvale 2015, p.93), I emphasised to each participant that the decision to participate or not was theirs alone, and I would not (and did not) inform their colleagues or seniors whether they agreed to participate. I also made explicit agreements with my key interlocutors about which types of information could be used and which could not — for example, at times I was asked not to name specific countries whose bilateral relations with the UK came up in conversation.

I explained the project to participants verbally and through a written information sheet explaining the research objectives and methods, the voluntary nature of participation, and how the information would be used. When doing participant observation, I asked for consent

verbally, via email, or sometimes both. For interviews, I sent the consent form to participants in advance and gave them the opportunity to read it at the beginning of the interview, repeating the key points to them verbally before asking them to sign it. Some participants requested to see a transcript of the interview, which I provided so that they could remove or amend anything they later decided they preferred not to share.

In practice, the extent to which this consent could be considered informed was variable. Many participants — due to being busy, or perhaps lack of interest — did not want to read or sit through long explanations of what the research was about. Indeed, any explanation of a research project will always be partial, and the researcher cannot control how much participants choose to take in (Fine 2003, pp.274–277; Horsley, Gillies & Edwards 2017, p.110). As such, there is no clear line between 'informed' and 'uninformed' consent in the way that researchers often like to think (Thorne 1980; Lugosi 2006). While acknowledging that consent is never fully informed, and that this was not entirely within my control, I sought to make information about the project as accessible as possible in the hope of encouraging participants to absorb it. In addition to using information sheets, I produced and circulated a blog post in non-academic language explaining in a more engaging way what the research was about and why it mattered (Wright 2017).

In addition to grey areas concerning what it means to be informed, the nature of participant observation creates difficulties in ensuring consent is continuously given. If the purpose of participant observation is to study communities' everyday practices, then the researcher always hopes that participants will, to some extent, forget that they are being observed (Bourgois 1990, p.52; DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, p.214). While participants were all made aware that I was making notes about their activities, day-to-day most of them seemingly thought of me primarily as a (temporary) colleague, at least in the WPS community where I was present more of the time. They were therefore unguarded in their conversations with me in a way that they may not have been had they had my research role at the front of their minds — for example, sharing gossip or making casual comments about colleagues. Furthermore, my participant role required them to share information with me that was not intended for public consumption, and rarely did they explicitly ask me not to include particular things in my notes. As a result of such challenges, participant observers are often urged to secure consent not only at the outset of a project, but through continual renegotiation with participants throughout (DeWalt & DeWalt 2011, p.216). Yet despite my intentions to maintain such a dialogue, I found

most participants reluctant to continue the conversation about consent. Civil servants are extremely busy, and the culture in most departments values brevity in conversation and abhors repetition. In one meeting where I introduced the research to a group of participants, for example, I was asked to simply exercise common sense in deciding what to record in my fieldnotes and what to leave out. Yet 'common sense' is constructed differently across contexts, and is therefore far from common. At times, then, I have made decisions about what data to include based not on clearly informed consent, but on judgements about whether its inclusion could result in harm to participants (or anyone else).

Because challenges in maintaining informed consent are inherent to the method, participant observation is always partially covert (Lugosi 2006). Covert research is rightly criticised as infringing the autonomy of participants (Homan 1991); however, to reject any form of concealment would entail abandoning participant observation as a method altogether, or "nurtur[ing] a paralyzing state of reflexive self-criticism where every act was open to perpetual debate" (Lugosi 2006, p.557), a state I certainly found myself close to much of the time. Rather than seeking to eliminate this inevitable aspect of the process, I sought to maximise participants' opportunities to give and withdraw consent as far as was practicable, while accounting for how I understood my ethical responsibilities in cases where it was not. When making decisions about including information that fell within those grey areas, I turned to the principle of minimising the risks of harm.

Avoiding Harm

Researchers have responsibilities to a range of actors who may be affected by their research, including participants, funders, their own institutions, and those whom the research is intended to benefit (Social Research Association 2003; American Anthropological Association 2012). In this study, these parties — particularly my participants and intended beneficiaries — have competing interests; what harms one may benefit another. When making judgements about avoiding harm, then, I have had to weigh potential harms against each other. Standard ethical guidelines are of little help here, as they tend to prioritise ethical responsibilities towards participants. The American Anthropological Association's Code of Ethics (2012), for example, states that ethical obligations to research participants are "usually primary", while acknowledging that "obligations to vulnerable populations are particularly important". Building on the latter claim, and my feminist commitment to using research to dismantle

oppressive structures, I suggest that weighing these competing claims requires an analysis of power relations. To facilitate this, I adopt Hodgson's (1999) three-step process for balancing ethical responsibilities to different groups. This entails: (1) identifying the groups to whom one is accountable and analysing the "historical and contemporary political, economic, and socio-cultural power relations among them" (Hodgson 1999, p.213); (2) assessing the positive and negative consequences to each group that may result from the research; (3) "determin[ing] whether support for the most oppressed group (in a given time and place) is worth the consequences for the other (perhaps differently oppressed) groups" (p.214).

My research participants are in positions of relative power: largely British citizens, in well-paid employment, with relative job security and the power to influence government policies. The research is ultimately intended to benefit people with less power: those who experience most acutely the negative impacts of UK national security policies, be they Yemeni civilians targeted by British bombs dropped by the Saudi military, or Muslims in Britain targeted for surveillance under counterterrorism laws, for example. While I clearly hold ethical responsibilities to minimise risks of harm to both groups, taking into account the unequal relationships of power between them, at times I have judged that my ethical responsibilities toward the latter group outweigh minor potential harms to my participants. Claiming to speak on behalf of those with less power itself raises ethical challenges, a point to which I return at the end of this section. First, however, I describe the steps I have taken to avoid harm to participants, before illustrating where these responsibilities have come into conflict, and how I have applied Hodgson's principles.

The most significant potential harms to participants come from the possibility of the publication of their views damaging their professional relationships, hindering their prospects for promotion, or resulting in disciplinary action. My primary means of avoiding these outcomes is to keep participants anonymous by assigning each a pseudonym, and using only general descriptors of their roles (e.g. 'counterterrorism official' or 'diversity worker'). For each participant, I use only as much data as I deem necessary to the analysis, ensuring that when put together they are not identifiable. Given the small percentage of securocrats who are people of colour, for example, I refrain from disclosing their racial or ethnic backgrounds in specific terms. This has the regrettable effect of concealing important differences between the experiences of, say, Black African-Caribbean officials and South Asian officials. While recognising the problems in referring to people of colour as though they were a homogeneous

group, I judge that protecting the anonymity of participants is paramount. Where disclosing that a participant is of colour is not central to the analysis, I have given them 'white-sounding' names so as not to reveal ethnicity; where it is, I have refrained from using their pseudonym altogether, so that it cannot be linked to other quotations from that person. Of course, all of these decisions rely on my judgements about which information is theoretically relevant in each moment, which unfortunately prevents the reader from making that judgement for themselves.

The challenges of continually negotiating informed consent offer an example of how competing interests of participants and other stakeholders come into play. Where grey areas have arisen, I have looked to the imperative to minimise risks of harm to guide my decisions. Yet there were times when what some participants might consider harmful to them might also benefit those most affected by UK policies. For example, like many other participant observers, I rarely discussed my own political leanings with participants (e.g. Bourgois 1990; Wall 2011; Gray 2016). This influenced the language I chose in conversation with them: for instance, the term 'militarism' is only really used by those who oppose it. I introduced my research in more general terms, as being about how organisational cultures are shaped by gender and race, and how this in turn shapes the way policymakers think and talk about national security. When participants asked for more detail — for example, why I became interested in the topic, or what my hypothesis was — I answered honestly, typically explaining that I was interested in whether organisational cultures that centre masculinity and whiteness lead to more militaristic ways of approaching security policy. Though it is common for researchers not to talk about their political beliefs up front, this raises questions around participants' right to know the details of what kind of study they are participating in (Fine 1993, pp.274–277). It is possible that some participants, had they understood my political leanings, might not have participated, and might be frustrated to have their words used in a critique of their workplace cultures with which they may not agree (see, for example, Mosse 2011). However, like Wall (2011) in his ethnography on militarism in his hometown, I determined that this minor harm was outweighed by the much greater harms to those bearing the brunt of militaristic policies, which this study seeks to contribute in some small way to preventing. Furthermore, while I protect individuals from public critique by anonymising them, I do not believe that government departments as a whole need to be shielded from criticism in the same way.

Of course, those affected by national security policies are not a homogenous group who share common views and interests that can be easily translated into a set of clear ethical responsibilities towards them. Indeed, British anti-war movements have often caricatured or ignored the views of those affected by British militarism in their messaging and strategies (Syria Solidarity Movement UK 2015; Al Shami 2018; Rossdale 2019, p.197). However well-intended, claims to speak on behalf of marginalised people can become an act of epistemic injustice, silencing or misrepresenting those they claim to benefit (Mohanty 1984; Spivak 1988; Dhawan 2012). Yet, holding positions of power confers a responsibility to use one's platform to advocate for justice for the less powerful; to refuse to ever speak for others is an abdication of that responsibility (Alcoff 1991). Faced with this inescapable postcolonial feminist "double-bind" (Dhawan 2012, p.54), I suggest that it is neither possible nor desirable to attempt to speak for all of those affected by the policies studied here, nor is there any unmediated way to access their interests. Instead, I seek to make transparent — as I have done in this chapter and those preceding it — my political investments and how they have shaped my ethical decision-making and practices of representation in this project, such that I can be held responsible for their political effects.

Co-optation and Complicity

Scholars of critical military studies have raised concerns about what Enloe (2010) refers to as the "risks of scholarly militarization" (p.1107): the danger that when studying militaries, the antimilitarist researcher becomes complicit in the same oppressive systems she seeks to critique. In a bid to maintain access or be taken seriously by the organisation, the researcher may adopt, or at least decline to challenge, militarist practices and ways of thinking. From my perspective, the core concern is not maintaining some illusion of scholarly virtue, but rather the impacts of contributing to material harms. Although my object of study is not a military, the same risks are present in government departments, and I continually worried about the ethics of both specific decisions I made during my fieldwork and the decision to carry it out at all. Indeed, my situation had all of the characteristics that Becker and Aiello (2013) argue create pressures to become complicit: the institutional setting gave participants a degree of power over me; my access to them would be easy for departments to revoke and difficult for me to regain; and the harmful practices I observed were both serious and central to the organisations' work (p.67). In the remainder of this section, I discuss three moments when my research could or did become complicit in militarism and coloniality: in interactions with

participants during the research process; through the work I did for the government in exchange for access; and through potential uses of my research once published.

The first moment relates to my interactions with participants when observing or interviewing them. There were many instances where participants expressed views that I deemed to be oppressive: for example, that killing people is a necessary and effective means to prevent 'terrorism', or that people who say counterterrorism is racist just don't understand it. This raised a dilemma: when research access is precarious, it is often easiest to keep quiet, lest challenging harmful views cause the participant to withdraw their participation or become guarded, which would be particularly problematic given that these views were part of the phenomenon I wanted to study (Fine 1993, pp.270–272; Neal 1995, p.528; Wall 2011, p.135; Horsley, Gillies & Edwards 2017). Because a belief in the legitimacy of militarism is at the very core of what securocrats do, to oppose that belief would be a serious condemnation. In some instances, I gently challenged such views, but mostly I stayed silent, making myself complicit in their perpetuation. At times I adapted my own language to avoid causing discomfort: for example, after one participant pointed out that my use of the term 'arms trade' could be read as hostile, I started asking about 'defence exports' instead. These choices represented a trade-off between complicity in the moment and maintaining access in pursuit of a longer-term goal. As Martín de Almagro (in Holmes et al 2019) puts it, "instead of challenging the power dynamics at the time, you prioritise critical feminist research outcomes that will help you […] uncover and challenge the broader power dynamics" (p.224). I hope, but cannot be sure, that this thesis will contribute to the latter. Certainly, these moments of silence or acquiescence helped me to build rapport with participants in ways that enabled me to ask them more challenging questions later, which both yielded useful data and prompted participants to consider critical perspectives.

The second and, to my mind, most concerning moment of complicity was my contribution to the development of policy documents, particularly the guidelines on gender and counterterrorism. By helping to produce policies that I have chosen to study precisely because they offer examples of militarism and coloniality, I made myself complicit in sustaining them. This dynamic is of course highly racialised: my whiteness and British citizenship both helped facilitate my access to participate in these policy processes and protect me from their worst effects. While there are aspects of these policies I could support — those that sought to reduce gendered harms of various kinds, for example — others caused me to continually

question whether my participation could really be justified. Reasoning that the work would be done with or without me, I committed to bringing in critical perspectives wherever I could. For example, as I explain in later chapters, I inserted wording into the draft NAP supporting arms export controls, and highlighted to counterterrorism officials how Prevent contributes to the discriminatory treatment of Muslims. While at times these interventions pushed participants to articulate responses that became interesting data, they did little to change the content of the final documents. As with my silences in response to harmful views, I hoped that the positive impacts of this study would be greater than any negative impacts of my contributions toward these processes. Whether they will be is unknowable, not least because there is little transparency around how such documents are used. Ultimately, I cannot say my decision to participate in exchange for access was the right one. My experiences with counterterrorism policymakers in particular led me closer to Jackson's (2016) conclusion that minimal reductions in harm resulting from advising policymakers cannot compensate for the overall effect of legitimising counterterrorism as a practice.

The third moment of potential complicity relates to how my research might be used: researching militarism, even from a critical perspective, risks the findings being co-opted in service of militarism, whether the researcher likes it or not (Basham 2013, p.3; Jackson 2016). When I approached some of my key interlocutors, I was put in touch with the Security and Defence Diversity and Inclusion Network (SaDDIN), a small group of civil servants working to increase workplace diversity and inclusion in national security policymaking. As I elaborate in Chapter 7, they argue that greater diversity among officials would make for more effective policymaking, and they were hopeful that my research might provide new evidence to support this argument. Having not expected there to be such interest in my findings, I became concerned that my research might be used, even in a limited way, to increase the effectiveness of militaristic policies. Indeed, I cannot guarantee this will not happen. I committed to share my research findings with participants when ready, both to gain their support for my research access and to reciprocate their good will in this regard, and I hope to open a dialogue with them concerning the use and distribution of my findings. Furthermore, while this thesis highlights some limitations of the WPS and diversity and inclusion agendas, my participants' work on these agendas pushes hard against organisational resistance to make necessary changes to policy. Given the recent government backlash against liberal equality agendas, described in Chapter 1, it is also possible that research critical of these agendas — albeit from the left, not the right — may be used to justify rolling them back. Again, I cannot decisively

prevent this outcome. However, when analysing the work of officials with whom I share some political goals, I have attempted to do so in the spirit of critical friendship (Holvikivi 2019; Chappell & Mackay 2020), framing my criticisms around a committed effort to understand the contextual constraints under which they work; indeed, those constraints are largely the object of my analysis.

Conclusions

This chapter has outlined how my feminist political commitments and my understanding of knowledge as embedded in power relations has informed the research process, from selecting policy issues and research methods to data gathering and analysis, including my approach to research ethics. The reflexive approach I have sought to apply throughout the thesis builds on this theorisation of knowledge as partial and situated, requiring me to analyse how my positionality shapes each stage of the research process and account for how it has influenced my findings. My decision to focus on policy communities working on WPS and counterterrorism results partly from the access afforded by my professional background, but also from my identification of these policy agendas both as exemplifying the militaristic and colonial approaches the UK government takes to national security, and as areas where such approaches may be contested. As such, they provide useful opportunities to understand how the gendering and racialisation of organisational cultures may reproduce militarism and coloniality, and how they regulate dissent. The ethnographically-influenced qualitative methods I employ, in the form of participant observation and semi-structured interviews, have allowed me to gain in-depth insights into how officials perceive, produce and negotiate these cultures in the everyday. The double reading approach I have used to analyse my data further enables me to take seriously their accounts of their experiences, while also treating the interviews and observations as texts in themselves which invoke, produce and contest racialised and gendered meanings. These methods, while they do not allow me to make generalisable claims about how gendering and racialising practices shape security policymaking across government, do allow me to paint a detailed picture of how these dynamics played out in two specific policy areas at a particular point in time. In doing so, they allow me to make meaningful claims about organisational cultures within these settings and how they have made militarist and colonial ways of thinking appear normal and desirable.

Tensions between the antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist politics that animate my research and the core beliefs and functions of the organisations I have studied generate a range of ethical dilemmas, making the research process an uncomfortable one. In many ways, this discomfort reflects the research problems the thesis addresses: how are subjects within militarist organisations disciplined to accept the beliefs and values of those organisations? Is it possible to challenge these from within, and what are the costs of doing so? My efforts to navigate these problems have therefore also been a source of learning about organisational cultures and the experience of negotiating, submitting to and resisting them. I have argued that the way through these dilemmas is rarely clear-cut: consent is never fully informed and not always continuously and unambiguously given; what protects one group from harm may harm another; and complicity with militarism can be both antithetical to and a precondition of antimilitarist research. While sitting uneasily with the ethical ambivalence to which these problems give rise, I have sought to maintain a critical antimilitarist practice where possible and compromised it when I believed it was necessary, in the hope that my research findings will contribute toward antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist thinking and organising. In the remaining chapters of the thesis, I turn to the analysis of those findings.

CHAPTER 5

Punchy, Progressive or Pie-in-the-Sky?
Militarism in a System of Meaning

I begin the analysis of my empirical data by exploring how national security policy discussions invoke gendered and racialised systems of meaning. I ask what constructions of racially-coded masculinities and femininities officials invoke in policy discussions, and how are they fixed to different worldviews or security practices. As I argued in Chapter 2, the hierarchical structure of masculinist discourses means that ideas can be legitimised or delegitimised through their association with more or less valued constructions of masculinity and femininity. I therefore explore whether and how the racialised and gendered meanings invoked in policy discussions are hierarchically ordered, and what work these hierarchies do — if any — in sustaining militaristic and colonial ways of thinking about security policies. This chapter therefore begins to address the research problem at the centre of the thesis: that of understanding the relationship(s) between gendered and racialised organisational cultures in UK national security policymaking, and militarism and coloniality in policy discussions. Further, by establishing how policy discussions invoke meanings that are already sedimented in discourse, this chapter sets the scene for my analysis in Chapter 6, which asks how securocrats' everyday embodied performances of race and gender reinforce and/or destabilise these sedimented meanings. Therefore, while this chapter's focus on *sedimented* meanings might make gendered and racialised discourses seem static, and forever doomed to reproduce the same meanings and relations of power, subsequent chapters address processes through which they might be dislodged.

National security policy discussions are many and varied, and so in order to offer some depth of analysis, I focus on one set of conversations: a series of meetings among officials on integrating gender perspectives into counterterrorism operations, and my subsequent interviews with officials working on counterterrorism in a range of capacities. Using poststructuralist discourse analysis, I explore how counterterrorism discourses employ specific interpretive repertoires — clusters of terms, tropes and metaphors (Wetherell & Potter 1988,

p.172, 1992, p.90) — when speaking about different policy positions or approaches to counterterrorism. Through reference to policy documents, media articles and academic literature, I show that the gendered and racialised meanings cited by these interpretive repertoires are already sedimented in discourse. In accordance with the double reading strategy I have adopted, I explore both how officials cited racialised and gendered meanings in the conversations I participated in, and their reflections on their experiences of participating in counterterrorism discourses. As I interpret how racially-coded masculinities and femininities are constructed and cited in policy discussions, I also note that "the process of making gender visible is also a process of creating gender" (Oyěwùmí 1997, p.xv). That is, by describing gender and race I participate in a gendering and racialising practice, one which serves to reinforce the very discourses that I seek to challenge (Jones 1993, p.106; Hooper 2001, p.63; Alexander 2004, pp.653–658). However, as it is not possible to dismantle relations of power without talking about them, this paradox is an inevitable feature of political movements that seek emancipation. Even as I reinforce racialised and gendered discourses by describing them, I demonstrate that these are not stable; they have shifted over time and are open to further contestation.

The chapter unfolds as follows. First, I contextualise the meetings and conversations which provided the empirical data for this chapter and explain the gendered metaphor of 'hard' and 'soft' approaches that runs throughout counterterrorism discourses. I then describe the three interpretive repertoires I identified in conversations about counterterrorism — which I have labelled 'tough realism', 'evolving empathy' and 'academic idealism' — and interpret what function each one performs in relation to militarism and coloniality. I argue that the tough realism repertoire serves to make palatable the work of military and policing approaches to counterterrorism by framing it around an implicitly racialised opposition of 'good guys' versus 'bad guys'. By valorising masculine-coded 'tough' approaches over feminine-coded 'fluffy' ones, I suggest that it also helps to foreclose any serious questioning of the continued prioritisation of militaristic practices. I then examine the evolving empathy repertoire, which is used to describe 'newer' approaches to counterterrorism that combine coercion with persuasion, and presents them as progressive and evolved. I argue that, by invoking familiar discourses that construct certain white-coded 'softer' masculinities as evolved and modernised, the evolving empathy repertoire gives a sense of legitimacy to a form of counterterrorism that is nonetheless militaristic and colonial. Finally, I analyse the academic idealism repertoire, which appears in officials' responses to antimilitarist and anticolonial

critiques of counterterrorism. I argue that this repertoire uses cognitive shortcuts to dismiss these critiques as non-serious by linking them to feminine-coded and racially-marked subject positions. I conclude by arguing that, while these three repertoires at times appear contradictory, together they function to normalise the ideology and practice of liberal militarism as it is manifested in counterterrorism policies. In some ways they reflect the material realities that securocrats are working with, yet they also serve to reproduce and normalise them.

Interpreting Counterterrorism Discourses

My participant observation with counterterrorism officials consisted largely of small, relatively informal meetings with officials to agree the scope, content and outputs of an internal review into how the government could better integrate gender perspectives into its counterterrorism work. To produce content for this review, I also attended several consultative roundtable meetings with officials from across departments who were working on different aspects of counterterrorism. That review is not the subject of this chapter. Rather, I treated these meetings as opportunities to learn about how officials talk about the ideas, people and organisations that make up the world of counterterrorism in their everyday discussions. The meetings covered all four pillars of CONTEST: Prevent and Pursue, which I introduced in Chapter 4, as well as 'Protect', which aims to protect airports, embassies and other major UK infrastructure and high-profile individuals from attacks, and 'Prepare', which aims to mitigate the impact of attacks by, for example, strengthening emergency procedures. This meant that I was able to get a sense of how officials talked about different approaches to counterterrorism. I explored this further in interviews by asking, for example, how counterterrorism policies and thinking have changed in recent years, which ideas are taken most seriously, and how the government finds a balance between different approaches.

Throughout the meetings I observed, one metaphor that was continually repeated, and which has previously been the subject of gender analysis (Shepherd 2006; Khalili 2011; Duncanson 2013; Lamb 2014), was the use of 'hard' and 'soft' as descriptors for approaches to counterterrorism. For example, one official, describing the focus of the proposed review in a meeting, explained: "There's quite a lot of literature out there on gender in a kind of soft, countering violent extremism, preventing violent extremism kind of way, but we wanted to get more into the kind of tough stuff". Similarly, when I asked another official which approaches to

counterterrorism were taken most seriously within government, she explained: “I think it used to be the harder stuff. [...] I think now because there is some more appreciation than there used to be of the softer stuff”.

This metaphor of ‘harder stuff’ and ‘softer stuff’ — a reference to soft and hard power (Nye 1990) —appears commonly in counterterrorism discourses internationally, with activities falling along a spectrum from hard to soft according to the extent to which they use coercion versus consent (Shepherd 2006, p.29; Khalili 2011, p.1472; Chenoweth & Moore 2018, p.355). The hard end consists of military operations aimed at isolating and killing those designated as ‘terrorists’ and destroying their infrastructure. Still at the harder end, but perhaps less so, is the use of policing and criminal justice systems to arrest and prosecute those suspected of planning or committing acts of ‘terrorism’: all activities covered under Pursue. Moving toward the softer end, there are strategies often described as ‘countering violent extremism’ (CVE) (e.g. UN Office on Drugs and Crime 2018), such as those covered by Prevent, which seek to identify individuals or groups considered to be at risk of committing acts of ‘terrorism’ and intervene to persuade them to denounce ‘extremism’. At the softest end are approaches, sometimes described as ‘preventing violent extremism’ (PVE), which seek to address structural factors believed to contribute to the emergence of ‘terrorism’, such as poverty, inequality, conflict and poor governance (e.g. UN General Assembly 2015; UN Development Program & International Alert 2018, p.16). PVE largely falls outside of CONTEST, and in 2017/18 it was led by DFID as part of its wider development efforts. Confusingly, the term ‘counterterrorism’ can refer either to the whole spectrum of activities, or to the hard end specifically. To avoid confusion, I use the term ‘coercive’ to describe the hard approaches, and ‘military’ or ‘policing’ to describe subsets of those activities and keep the widely accepted descriptors ‘CVE’ and ‘PVE’ to refer to the soft end.

I read this hard/soft metaphor as invoking a gendered binary opposition, given that associations between masculinity and hardness, and femininity and softness, are sedimented in Western language and culture (Hooper 2001, p.43; Cohn, Hill & Ruddick 2005, p.8; Ahmed 2007b, p.247, 2014, p.2; Anderson 2010, p.33; Stern 2011, p.30). Officials rarely made this gender coding explicit, although a few noted that hard counterterrorism was numerically dominated by men, while women were more likely to do the “caring and softer elements”, as one interviewee put it. For example, Thomas explained the following about strategic communications as an area of counterterrorism:

> Strat comms […] is an area where women tend to be. As it's the softer end of national security it tends to be where there are more women. […] Though the national security environment might not be so hospitable to women, the strat comms can be a good route to engage women more in the [counterterrorism] agenda.

In explaining the higher numbers of women in strategic communications, Thomas simply offers, "as it's the softer end of national security…", suggesting that the link between women and the "softer end" is self-evident. This chimes with feminist analyses of counterterrorism discourses internationally, which suggest that hard counterterrorism has typically been masculine-coded and soft counterterrorism feminine-coded, perhaps unsurprisingly given the prominence of male-dominated police and militaries in implementing the former (Charlesworth & Chinkin 2002; Shepherd 2006; Khalili 2011; Duncanson 2013).

Given how masculinist logics operate to valorise that which is coded masculine, one might expect that these gendered meanings are used to denote the value of hard approaches over soft ones. In the conversations I observed and participated in, this was often the case, though not uniformly so. As I elaborate below, the first two interpretive repertoires I identified within counterterrorism discourse drew on this soft/hard dualism in different ways. While the tough realism repertoire works in precisely this way, constructing hard counterterrorism as more important, necessary and effective than soft approaches, the evolving empathy repertoire constructs an over-emphasis on hard approaches as hyper-masculine and excessive. I observed some patterns in which officials invoked each of the two repertoires: officials working exclusively on hard counterterrorism were more likely than others to invoke the tough realism interpretive repertoire, while those working exclusively at the softer end tended to invoke it only to critique it. However, there were exceptions to this pattern, and most interviewees invoked both at different points in the conversation. Further, many participants worked across a range of counterterrorism approaches, particularly in the Home Office and FCO, making it difficult to categorise them as belonging to one 'side' or the other.

I characterise these as two distinct interpretive repertoires, then, not because they were invoked by different people or circulated in different departments, but because they serve different functions (Wetherell & Potter 1988, p.178). That is, whether or not it was the speaker's intention, each interpretive repertoire serves to legitimise a different set of militarist

and colonial ideas and practices. Furthermore, the contexts in which they were invoked suggested this distinction: they usually appeared in different sections of the conversation, and were often used to delineate two ways of thinking about counterterrorism which participants themselves characterised as different (Wetherell & Potter 1988, p.178). As I will show, several participants described witnessing a shift over time in how different approaches to counterterrorism were valued, and used these interpretive repertoires to describe the merits of one approach over another. In the following sections I take each interpretive repertoire in turn, analysing their features, how they cite gendered and racialised meanings, and the functions they serve in sustaining militaristic and colonial thinking and practices.

Tough Realism

In the meetings I attended, officials decided that the review into gender perspectives in counterterrorism should focus particularly on Pursue and on countering Islamist-inspired violence specifically, which remains the main focus of UK counterterrorism operations (HM Government 2018c, p.8, 19). The tough realism repertoire appeared in these discussions of Pursue and was characterised by particular terms used to represent the targets of coercive counterterrorism, the activities undertaken in this workstream, and the mindset that practising coercive counterterrorism requires. I call this repertoire 'tough realism' because officials in these conversations consistently referred to Pursue using terms drawing on the theme of toughness or hardness: "the tough stuff", "the pointy end of the business" and "the punchy end", for example. The descriptors 'tough', 'pointy' and 'punchy' all allude to physical strength and the use of force, attributes and activities usually coded as masculine.[28] As I will show, these 'tough' activities were linked to a worldview that regards the idea that military action is necessary to stop 'terrorism' as realistic, and any suggestion to the contrary as unrealistic. First, however, I examine how the tough realism repertoire constructs the targets of counterterrorism operations in gendered and racialised terms.

[28] The visual images invoked by 'pointy' or 'punchy', while violent, convey something neat, decisive and clean, recalling the techno-strategic discourse described in Cohn's (1987) 'Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals' (discussed in Chapter 2). Cohn's conclusion that language that treats violence in abstract and distancing ways enables well-meaning, empathetic people to discuss grisly topics with minimal discomfort may well apply here. Indeed, when I introduced my research topic to them, two participants mentioned having read Cohn's 1987 article at university, and one said that they had observed among their colleagues the use of euphemisms to make discussing military activity palatable and exciting.

Chasing 'Bad Guys'

A recurrent trope which stood out to me in conversations with Pursue officials was their persistent references to the targets of counterterrorism as "the bad guys", and the construction of coercive counterterrorism as the tough work of pursuing a masculinised enemy. For example, one official referred to Pursue as the work of "chasing bad guys", while another described the rationale for the review into gender perspectives in counterterrorism as being "to think more about women being part of the bad guys". A couple of officials corrected themselves or each other on this use of gender-specific language, for instance in the roundtable discussion on Pursue, when one official commented:

> One of the issues is a perception of who the bad guys are — and you [*gesturing to a female colleague*] picked me up on this before, saying 'guys' — the bad *people* have generally been men, but we are finding that there are women who are among the foreign terrorist fighters and perhaps the domestic fighters.

I was struck by the fact that, while this official sought to modify his phrasing, his correction made it clear that it was the term 'guys', and not the term 'bad', which he acknowledged to be no longer acceptable. The notion of 'bad guys' implies a binary opposition between 'good guys' and 'bad guys' based on essential differences, conferring a sense of natural justice on the latter's defeat: it evokes language from comic books or cowboy films, in which the tough and heroic 'good guys' come to save the day. 'Bad guys' conjures up an image of figures who engage in violence not as part of a calculated political strategy but because evil or badness is essential to who they are (Jackson 2005, p.59) — a stock character who might previously have been the communist or the Nazi, but is now understood to be the 'terrorist'. This good/bad binary also recalls discourses surrounding the so-called 'War on Terror' in the years after 11 September 2001, which divided the world into 'good' and 'evil', the 'civilised' and the 'barbaric', where the US, UK and their allies were associated with the former terms and a shifting constellation of (primarily) Middle Eastern regimes, Islamist organisations and individuals associated with the latter (Coe et al 2004; Jackson 2005; Shepherd 2006).

I suggest that the 'bad guys' trope, through its citation of these binary oppositions and its construction of essential difference, also participates in a colonial and racialising form of

othering. The adjective 'bad' is of course not inherently racialising, and naming this difference explicitly as one of race would largely be considered unacceptable in the Civil Service. However, as Bhattacharyya (2008) notes, "a battle of ideas or politics can take on a racialised character if the conflict is understood to be based on an absolute and impassable difference, not of ideas but of being" (p.108). The 'bad guy' here is already placed into the category of the 'terrorist', constituted by its impassable difference as a "racial, epistemic, ideological, and material *other*" (Husain 2020). Reducing diverse political actors to 'bad guys' therefore produces a difference of being, constructing the (here explicitly Islamist) 'terrorist' as less than human and impossible to empathise with. While officials might reframe "bad guys" as "bad people", the (in this context) racialising prefix 'bad' remains, ensuring that violence against them appears reasonable and justified by virtue of their essential nature. This move to make the epithet gender neutral while leaving its racialising connotations intact perhaps also illustrates how the prioritisation of gender over other inequalities in security policy discourses often obscures or simply ignores the workings of racism (Pratt 2013; Parashar 2019; Achilleos-Sarll 2021).

Having heard this language repeatedly in meetings, particularly among Pursue officials, I mentioned it to some interviewees. One official, Paige, acknowledged that it was common and identified the 'bad guys' trope as "movie language", part of a "macho culture" among her colleagues that she found concerning. She stated:

> I think it takes away from the gravity of the stuff that we are doing. It makes it seem very unreal, and I think that that's probably not a good thing in the long run. Turning what we do into fiction isn't going to help us really, it's just going to convince us that we know what's right all the time, and I think it's probably better to be a bit more self-critical. […] I think it's distancing, to try and make things seem less real, like we're talking about TV characters or something.

Building on Paige's suggestion, I contend that the construction of counterterrorism as a matter of good guys fighting bad guys helps to fictionalise and thereby obscure the reality of planning the deaths of other human beings, and to racialise the targets of such violence as others against whom the use of deadly force is justified. While difficult to verify, I encountered some evidence that this framing may help some officials to put aside any qualms they may have about participating in that process. Another interviewee, Tony, told me that he had been

involved in the process of ordering a lethal attack on an individual, and he sometimes wondered how it had affected him. Tony explained that he often reflected on the fact that his actions had led to a person's death, though he had never shared these thoughts with his colleagues. Rather, he explained his thought process as follows: "I think terrorists are bad people. As long as I'm satisfied with the evidence that this group of people who we're calling terrorists are those bad people and we're acting within the law, then fine". This being the case, Tony explained that he was "happy that it was the right process and it led to the right outcome".

Being 'Realistic'

More generally, an acceptance of the necessity of war-making was presented as part of the tough worldview required for counterterrorism work. For example, in one meeting I attended, the conversation steered into a debate about whether the principle of conflict sensitivity should apply to counterterrorism work. 'Conflict sensitivity', a term widely used in peacebuilding, development and humanitarian work, refers to the notion that all activities in conflict contexts should seek to avoid exacerbating drivers of conflict and should strengthen efforts to build peace (Haider 2014, p.4). UK government policy states that conflict sensitivity should be a starting point for work in unstable environments, citing the need to "prevent conflict and help build a stable foundation for development" (HM Government 2011c, p.16).[29] One participant in the meeting, Imogen,[30] who worked on CVE, argued that conflict sensitivity principles must be applied to all counterterrorism work. Her colleague, Rosalind, who worked across the whole spectrum of counterterrorism policy, quickly rebutted her argument, responding that conflict sensitivity is redundant when it comes to military operations:

> Conflict sensitivity is important, but we have to be aware that what we do in [counterterrorism] may promote conflict, by the nature of what we're doing and our protecting UK interests. […] In the softer end of the spectrum there is no problem, but let's be honest, part of the spectrum involves killing people, and conflict sensitivity is a bit bonkers in that context.

[29] Despite being published under the 2010–2015 coalition government, participants confirmed that this policy remained current policy in 2017/18.

[30] I have given Imogen and Rosalind different pseudonyms in this passage than I have used for their interview responses elsewhere in the thesis to ensure that their interview data is not identifiable to their colleagues who witnessed this exchange.

By framing her argument in this way, I suggest that Rosalind invokes a web of linked meanings which feminists have repeatedly identified in national security discourses: one in which the idea that war is an inevitable feature of the world is constructed as realistic, rational, hard-headed and masculine, while the idea that peaceful alternatives are possible is unrealistic, emotionally-driven, naïve and feminine. These linked meanings can be found in mainstream IR theory (Tickner 1992, p.29, 34, 50, 2001, p.52; Hutchings 2008b, p.34), in the writings and public pronouncements of policymakers and -influencers (Miedzian 1992, pp.18–33; Dean 2001, p.193, 202–203; Stern 2011, p.29; Cohn 2019, pp.8–10), and in their conversations behind-the-scenes (Cohn 1987, 1989, 1993). Former British diplomat Carne Ross (2007) identified a similar discourse among securocrats during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, in which expressing moral judgement was deemed "romantic" and "sentimental" while cynicism about moral considerations was presented as "practical" and "realistic" (p.139).

Rosalind did not explicitly use the terms 'rational' or 'realistic' — although other officials did, as I discuss later in this chapter. However, she posits that when "killing people", it should be accepted that this will exacerbate violent conflicts, which is simply in "the nature" of protecting UK interests. By presenting the nature of the work as self-evident in this way, and constructing this position as simply "honest", I suggest that she is framing her outlook as more realistic than that of Imogen, while also performing a kind of brutal honesty that is perhaps also part of this tough approach. Similarly, her framing of the idea that the government should refrain from killing people when to do so will exacerbate conflict and undermine development as "bonkers" suggests that it is irrational, detached from reality, a failure to grasp this self-evident "nature" of things. Even if her words are not precisely those commonly identified in feminist analysis, their implications are clear and recognisable to anyone familiar with these common tropes in security discourse. As Cohn (2019, p.9) explains,

> One of the most pernicious and powerful effects of ideas about gender in national security is that the mantle of 'realism' is reserved for whatever is coded 'masculine', while policy alternatives associated with anything coded 'feminine' can be summarily dismissed as 'soft' or 'unrealistic' before they are ever thought through.

Historically, this gender coding may have come about because of the preponderance of men in national security organisations where this militarist worldview is hegemonic. Conversely, women have been deemed unsuited to decision-making on matters of national security

precisely because they were deemed too naïve and sentimental to cope with the harsh reality of the necessity of military force (Reardon 1985, p.33; Miedzian 1992, p.27; Tickner 1992, p.3, 1997, p.621). In the present day, as Rosalind demonstrates, this tough realism may be espoused by women as well as men. She makes no explicit suggestion that such a worldview is manly; to do so would probably be considered sexist and increasingly unacceptable to most securocrats. However, by discursively linking this worldview to toughness and realism, she conjures up a recognisable cluster of meanings that are linked to a construction of masculinity that is pervasive in national security discourses.

Separating the Tough from the Fluffy

If the masculine-coding of military-led counterterrorism is illustrated by the invocation of toughness and realism, its superior position in the hierarchy of counterterrorism approaches is illustrated —and, I argue, partially sustained — by its contrast with soft counterterrorism, which officials linked to another set of terms. For example, Gary, who has spent much of his career working on military counterterrorism, described the government's attitude towards CVE and PVE in the following terms:

> For a period, our interest in doing overseas [CVE and PVE] really declined because of a sense that it was too fluffy. It's not a technical term, but there was not a sufficient evidence base, and it was volleyball contests and singing competitions and that sort of thing, which was about cohesion and integration […] rather than easily discernible counterterrorism benefits from it.

He later added: "Pursue is always the hard end stuff that everyone thinks works and you have to do; Prevent is the wishy-washy stuff". Use of the terms "fluffy" and "nice" to describe CVE and PVE was common in the meetings I attended. Terms like "fluffy nonsense" (Duncanson 2013, p.90) and "pink and fluffy stuff" (Choudhury & Fenwick 2011, p.26) have been used by some British soldiers and police officers respectively to dismiss community-focused counterterrorism and counterinsurgency work as inimical to their traditional masculine roles. The insistence that this work is *not* "fluffy" has also been used in its defence by soldiers (Greenwood 2016, p.85, 97), parliamentarians (Hansard HL Deb 13 January 2015) and think tanks (Briggs, Fieschi & Lownsborough 2006, p.79), confirming the familiarity of the critique. Officials working on CVE and PVE picked up a similarly dismissive tone among their colleagues

working on the military and policing side. For example, Chloe, who worked on Prevent, explained how people working on Pursue viewed her work:

> On the Prevent stuff, then, it's the 'fluffy stuff'. So, you know that people from the Pursue community will look at [Prevent] stuff and go, 'Well you're just doing football clubs and stuff, and we're actually stopping the [terrorists]'. Whereas I would challenge anyone who would say that: […] if you can get this bit right, all the preventative stuff, you won't have to be dealing with [terrorism] in the long term.

Chloe critiqued her colleagues' framing of Prevent as 'fluffy' as one that undervalues it in her eyes, while Gary seemed to be endorsing this hierarchy of value. Nonetheless, both identified this set of meanings as commonly ascribed to Pursue and Prevent within the counterterrorism community.

On these characterisations of CVE and PVE, as seen through the eyes of those working on coercive counterterrorism, I make two observations. First, this interpretive repertoire invokes a masculinist system of meaning that valorises masculine-coded toughness over feminine-coded fluffiness (as in "pink and fluffy"). By assigning these qualities to coercive and non-coercive counterterrorism respectively, the tough realism repertoire can draw on that gendered hierarchy as a discursive resource with which to signal the inferiority of CVE and PVE. Second, the quality of fluffiness is discursively linked to a lack of effectiveness, or at least a lack of evidence of effectiveness. Gary explains the meaning of "too fluffy" by saying "there was not a sufficient evidence base", contrasting this with coercive activities that "everyone thinks works and you have to do". Similarly, Chloe states that her colleagues distinguish "fluffy" approaches from ones that are "actually stopping the [terrorists]". In what follows, I argue that this linking of fluffiness with ineffectiveness gives an important clue as to the work this masculinist system of meaning is doing in counterterrorism discourses, enabling a cognitive shortcut that reduces the burden of argument needed for prioritising military and policing approaches.

When invoking the tough realism repertoire, officials repeatedly contrasted the apparently tangible, measurable results elicited by coercive counterterrorism with the absence of such in CVE and PVE. They emphasised that coercive approaches are demonstrably effective, where effectiveness is understood in terms of its contribution to Pursue's stated aim "to stop

terrorist attacks" (HM Government 2018c, p.43). This argument reflects the importance placed throughout the Civil Service on measuring results, quantitatively where possible, in order to demonstrate value for money. It also recalls recognisably gendered meanings: like the tough militarist worldview described above, "[d]ata is assumed to be 'hard,' a form of evidence whose 'truth' is detached from an emotional orientation to the world" (Ahmed 2012, p.75). Participants identified soft counterterrorism as being ill-suited to producing hard data, both because they are intended to be preventative and it is difficult prove a counterfactual, and because (they believed) the more complex theories of change involved make it harder to confidently attribute any outcomes to CVE and PVE activities. As Isabelle explained when I asked her how the government finds a balance between these different approaches:

> 'What are DFID doing?' is a question that gets asked quite a lot. 'What are they really contributing? Are they just giving money to poor people? How is that really helping?' […] [T]he people that are doing the really hard end stuff I think still don't understand […] how getting girls to go to school in Pakistan can help [stop] Al-Qaeda from blowing stuff up in Pakistan. And it is quite a hard sell. What you're basically saying is, in the very long term, twenty, thirty years, it's going to have an impact. Whereas what they're dealing with is what's going to happen over the next week to stop somebody blowing something up.

On one level, the logic Isabelle ascribes to her colleagues makes sense: if one's aim is to reduce the number of attacks that are carried through to completion, it *is* likely impossible to quantify whether any reduction in attacks is attributable to girls' increased access to education. An operation to arrest or kill people actively planning to "blow something up" can be fairly confidently said to have stopped that one attack. However, a broader view of military and policing approaches, that looks beyond the numbers of people arrested or killed, paints a different picture: one in which not only does political violence against civilians continue, but in which these policies exacerbate the very violence they seek to address.

As Keen (2006) has argued, "[terrorists] can't all be killed or captured, and even if they could, the process would inevitably be imprecise and would predictably produce replacements" (p.10). In the UK, prisons have been identified as key sites for 'radicalisation', and several attacks in recent years have been carried out by people who conceived and planned them while incarcerated (Acheson 2016; Dearden 2020). Elsewhere, military interventions in

Afghanistan from 2001 and Iraq from 2003, framed in part as efforts to stop 'terrorism', increased instability and produced cycles of violence that only increased violence against civilians by non-state actors both in those contexts and in the metropole (Hills 2006; Keen 2006, pp.26–27; Bergen & Cruickshank 2007; Dodd 2010). Beyond direct military intervention, Western counterterrorism strategies often entail providing political, financial and logistical support for 'partner' states, which can prop up governments with little legitimacy, assist them in committing abuses, and give them little incentive to resolve ongoing conflicts (Keen & Attree 2015, pp.24–28; Saferworld 2017; Crouch 2018). Groups such as Al Qaeda and Daesh have seized on grievances created by these Western counterterrorism policies in their propaganda to recruit people to their cause (Keen 2006, p.28; World Bank 2011, p.83; Abbas 2019, p.402, 405). Far from being a marginal critique, the truth of these arguments has been recognised by senior UK security, police and intelligence figures (Leppard 2006; Townsend 2006; Dodd 2010; Wintour 2016; Hewitt 2017), opposition parties (Corbyn 2017; Revesz 2017), a majority of the British public (Smith 2017), and many of the officials interviewed for this study.

Given this evidence, it is striking that Pursue is characterised as "stuff that everyone thinks works and you have to do". How is it possible that officials speak about coercive counterterrorism as though its effectiveness is self-evident, despite widespread acknowledgement of its counter-productiveness? As I will elaborate in the final section of this chapter, any suggestion that the use of military and policing-led counterterrorism be radically reduced or revised is not given serious consideration within the counterterrorism community. Any number of explanations might be offered, from the influence of political ideology or public opinion to short-termist thinking produced by election cycles. In amongst these, however, I suggest that the tough realism interpretive repertoire plays a role. By linking coercive counterterrorism to toughness, and CVE and PVE to fluffiness, this repertoire invokes familiar, recognisably gendered meanings ordered by a masculinist hierarchy of value that makes the prioritisation of military and policing approaches over CVE and PVE feel natural and obvious. As Christensen and Ferree (2008) put it, "gendered language is a readily available binary that can add emotional depth and visual imagery to other forms of binary thinking, thus creating firmer, more self-evident packages" (p.303). The repeated discursive linking of toughness with tangible, quantifiable results and of fluffiness with unattributable, unquantifiable ones gives an air of truth to the idea that coercive counterterrorism has "easily discernible counterterrorism benefits" and is "actually stopping the [terrorists]", as Gary and Chloe put it. I suggest that this

is an example of how masculinist discourses enable cognitive shortcuts: how invoking hierarchies of gendered meaning "saves a great deal of work in rendering arguments persuasive" (Hutchings 2008b, p.31). If the effectiveness of military and policing approaches can be reaffirmed by persistently recalling a system of linked meanings that differentiates them from "fluffy", "wishy-washy" approaches, one need not spend much time making the case for them, despite extensive evidence of their failings. This is not to say that counterterrorism officials lack carefully thought-through positions on why they find coercive counterterrorism to be necessary and important. However, by invoking and reaffirming a masculinist value system that is so established in this community as to be virtually invisibilised, the tough realism repertoire provides a sense that the debate is settled, and the arguments need not to be continually revisited in policy discussions.

I have argued that the tough realism interpretive repertoire serves two functions: first, it makes the work of military and policing-led counterterrorism more palatable by framing it as a question of 'good guys' chasing 'bad guys' (or 'bad people'), drawing on popular cultural narratives about battles against an essentialised, racially-marked other. Second, it employs cognitive shortcuts that make the predominance of coercive approaches in counterterrorism appear natural and reasonable while deflecting important critiques of their use. Next, I analyse the evolving empathy interpretive repertoire, which invokes the hard/soft binary in a different way, with distinct but not incompatible effects.

Evolving Empathy

While military and policing approaches still form the backbone of the UK's counterterrorism strategy, officials I interviewed indicated that the balance between hard and soft approaches has shifted in recent years, partly in response to growing acknowledgement of the shortcomings of coercive approaches. Internationally, CVE and PVE, which seek to address the (perceived) drivers of violence by non-state actors, are often presented as responses to critiques of the heavily military-focused approach that characterised the early ears of the War on Terror (e.g. UN General Assembly 2015, p.2). In the UK, Prevent has expanded significantly since its inception in 2003: notably in 2011, when it shifted from a narrower concern with preventing acts of 'terrorism' to the wider aim of preventing ideological 'extremism' (HM Government 2011b, p.12), and again in 2015 with the introduction of the Prevent Duty and its requirement for schools, universities and healthcare providers to refer individuals who they

believed to be at risk of radicalisation (see Chapter 3). PVE has also played a growing role in the government's international development programmes. As noted above, the evolving empathy interpretive repertoire was most often invoked by people involved in this CVE and PVE work, though this was not exclusively the case.

When officials described the shifting focus of UK counterterrorism in conversation, they typically depicted their policy approach as having "evolved", the UK having "learned" or having "more understanding" and "more awareness". For example, when I asked Gary how counterterrorism policy had changed in recent years, he explained:

> [T]he international discourse became very much so about international CVE, and CVE became a term, which didn't really exist about five years ago. […] I suppose previously the tendency's always to go for Pursue, the tendency's always to go and catch or kill the bad guys. And then it turned out that wasn't working on its own, so you learn and you evolve.

This idea of learning and evolution was reflected by several interviewees, who drew a distinction between the older (though not abandoned) "catch and kill the bad guys" strategy and a newer way of thinking that incorporates CVE and PVE. Whereas the tough realism repertoire consists of a series of binary oppositions, then, the evolving empathy repertoire is characterised by this narrative of evolution, which officials use to make sense of apparent changes in their work and explain them to others. I argue that, through telling a story about evolution and progress, the evolving empathy repertoire invokes different gendered and racialised meanings than the tough realism repertoire, with different effects. In what follows, I analyse how this repertoire hyper-masculinises military-led counterterrorism and constructs a softer, hybrid masculinity around approaches that combine hard and soft counterterrorism, and I interpret the function this repertoire serves in relation to militarism and coloniality.

Understanding the 'Bad Guys'

While the tough realism interpretive repertoire valorises military and policing-led counterterrorism by linking it to masculine-coded toughness, the evolving empathy repertoire denigrates the overuse of military solutions by framing it as hyper-masculinised and insufficiently evolved. A hyper-masculinised worldview was often ascribed to those most

directly involved in the use of force — the MOD, military and police — usually by people working on CVE and PVE, but sometimes by those working in hard counterterrorism themselves. At times this took the form of casual comments, such as one official joking in an informal coffee meeting about the MOD: "I know they bomb things indiscriminately, but…" Her comments, which suggest that the military's use of force is excessive and unrestrained, were clearly intended as an amusing aside, and not a serious suggestion that it engages in indiscriminate violence. However, the construction of coercive counterterrorism as hyper-masculine occurred in a more serious form in interviews. For example, Nadia told me how she felt that counterterrorism policies were designed "from a male perspective", which she described as follows:

> [T]errorism, police, military, it's all very male environments. So it's very much [*bangs fist on the table*] being strong, 'We will not fall!' That sort of thing. And, 'We must fight back!' From the police side, [I] probably still see that. And in the policy side I think it's a little bit better, because we've got to be a bit more careful about what we say, who it's going to affect, so it's a bit more thought-through. But the police are very much, 'Security! We must protect!' […] and I think the Foreign Office is quite good at calming everyone down and being like, 'Well, hang on, let's have a look.'

In speaking of this as a "male perspective", Nadia explicitly codes the police and military mindset as masculine, and her description of their approach as a fist-banging, "We must fight back!" mentality contains a value judgement, confirmed by its contrast with the more "careful" and "thought-through" approach she ascribes to the FCO, which is "a little bit better". As such, I interpret this discursive move as disparaging an excessively militaristic approach by hyper-masculinising it. While most officials did not make its gendered coding so explicit, they frequently contrasted the overuse of force with a more restrained, more thoughtful approach. The following explanation from Isabelle explains more about this narrative and is worth quoting at length. Like Gary, Isabelle describes these two approaches in a temporal relation with one another, recounting a change in thinking in the counterterrorism community. While several other officials raised similar themes, Isabelle's description is particularly evocative:

> When I first started working on [counterterrorism] I did a lot of profiles of individual terrorists, which for me I found really interesting. And it felt like you got to know more

> about that particular person and their family, the way in which they operated. It's a natural element of that area of work, I think. And that's not to say that I got to the stage where I felt sorry for those individuals, because obviously they were still breaking the law. But I think it made me see it in a very different way. And at the time I remember feeling quite alone, because the culture was, 'They're all terrorists, they're all really bad people. They all want to kill us and we can't possibly understand why they would hold the views that they hold.' For instance, […] with a lot of the missile strikes that were happening in Pakistan at the time, there was some very well publicised collateral damage that was being caused. And in one instance, twenty-four of one individual's wider family got killed, so children and grandchildren and great grandchildren. And that for me was a moment where I thought, 'That's not okay'. And I think the change started to happen from that point because of the press that it was getting. A lot of other people started to think, 'Well actually, yeah, this isn't right. This isn't the right way of doing things.' Whereas up until that point, if you went and killed a terrorist, I'm not saying that nobody would care but there was an acceptance that they deserved it. And I think that [culture] has reversed and there is now a sense that actually whilst you don't agree with the mindset of these people, you can understand why they've gotten to that place. […] And dealing with it from that perspective rather than a military perspective of, 'Let's just kill them and they'll be fine.'

Isabelle's explanation describes a shift in thinking, which she frames as a move from eschewing any attempt at empathy with people designated as 'terrorists' ("we can't possibly understand") to one where empathy is a necessary aspect of counterterrorism work ("you can understand why they've gotten to that place"). I make no claims about whether or to what extent such a shift *has* taken place, but rather am interested in the work that this narrative does. According to Isabelle, learning about what motivates individuals to commit acts of violence enables the government to "deal with it from that perspective" by addressing those motivating causes through CVE and PVE. She contrasts this with solely military-led approaches, which are based on the idea that "they're all really bad people" — a reference to the tough realism repertoire. Isabelle, Gary and other participants using the evolving empathy repertoire did not advocate the abandonment of military approaches: note how Gary identified the lesson learned from the failures of military counterterrorism as that it "wasn't working *on its own*" (emphasis added). However, some interviewees referenced specific practices as emblematic of militarist excess: for example, Isabelle mentioned public inquiries into the use

of extraordinary rendition, water boarding and the Guantanamo Bay detention camp as prompting this rethink, while others referenced the Chilcot Inquiry into the war in Iraq. Where the evolving empathy repertoire was invoked, then, officials appealed to a particular a notion of progress, one which centred on the increased use of CVE and PVE, coupled with restraint in the use of particular military tactics that had been publicly decried as transgressing international norms.

A Hybrid Masculinity

In the description of this 'new' approach as more calm, careful and empathetic, I read the evolving empathy interpretive repertoire as invoking a hybrid masculinity: one which combines the toughness of traditional military masculinities with the 'softer' quality of empathy, an attribute often coded as feminine and assumed to come more naturally to women (Duncanson 2013, p.115–117; Greenwood 2016, p.97; Cohn 2019, p.9). In Chapter 6, I will explore how male and female securocrats have constructed both masculinities and femininities that are performed in part through the expression of this policy stance. This combination of traditionally masculine-coded and traditionally feminine-coded qualities could therefore be read as a form of masculinity or a form of femininity, depending on which bodies or subjects it is discursively associated with in a given context. However, for the purposes of this discussion of *sedimented* meanings — those produced through a legacy of historical acts (Butler 1988, p.523–524) — I suggest that, in the context of national security discourses, the evolving empathy repertoire invokes a recognisably masculine construction. For example, this construction recalls that of Khalili's (2011) counterinsurgent soldier-scholars, who are "not interested in chest-thumping gestures, deploy the language of 'hearts and minds' much more readily and see their wont as being the wielders of softer or smarter power" (p.1487). Many, if not most practitioners of this hybrid 'hard and soft' approach to counterterrorism may be neither soldiers nor scholars, but the combination of attributes assigned to this approach is nonetheless historically associated with such figures, who are predominantly male.

How might this softer masculinity be read from an antimilitarist, anticolonial feminist perspective? It is common — perhaps in response to the success of feminist ideas and movements — for hegemonic or dominant constructions of masculinity to take on previously

feminine-coded attributes (Demetriou 2001; Bridges & Pasco 2014).[31] This idea has been manifested in the popular notion of the 'new man', who is constructed as more sensitive, open to taking on caring responsibilities and domestic work and more supportive of gender equality than his predecessors (Messner 1993; Morrell 1998; Gill 2003). In national security discourses, these softer masculinities are often associated with restraint in the use of force, and greater emphasis on intellect and persuasion than physical strength and coercion (Hooper 1998; Niva 1998; Messerschmidt 2010; Duncanson 2015; Myrttinen 2019). Scholars often argue that these masculinities have adapted to changing historical circumstances by discarding qualities no longer deemed acceptable and appropriating qualities from femininities or subordinate masculinities in order to maintain their dominant position (Demetriou 2001; Duncanson & Eschle 2008; Myrttinen 2019). In the face of feminist critiques of more overtly sexist or violent expressions of masculinity, for example, "hybridisation is thus a strategy for the reproduction of patriarchy" (Demetriou 2001, p.349). Likewise, by rejecting particular militarist practices viewed as excessive and outmoded, and incorporating softer elements, the evolving empathy repertoire presents a hybrid model of counterterrorism as more evolved and progressive than that encapsulated by tough realism. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 3, liberal militarism is often normalised and legitimised precisely through being constructed as non-excessive, unremarkable and compliant with international law. Given growing public scepticism about UK military interventions overseas (Smith 2017) and the very public shaming enacted by the Chilcot Inquiry, it is unsurprising that government efforts to build a sense of legitimacy for ongoing counterterrorism work necessitates distancing itself from that recent past. The newness of this hybrid hard/soft approach is debatable, given its continuities with decades-old counterinsurgency strategies employed against anticolonial and communist movements (Dixon 2009; Kundani 2014, p.71–72; Sabir 2017). However, by citing familiar gendered discourses that portray softer masculinities as modern and progressive, I suggest the evolving empathy repertoire confers legitimacy on this particular expression of liberal militarism.

The government's apparent move toward CVE and PVE, then, offers little for antimilitarists to celebrate. As Khalili (2013) argues, "the more tactics of war are represented and remade as more 'humane', population-centric, and developmental, the greater the risk of such wars

[31] 'Hegemonic' masculinities are those which legitimate the domination of men over women in a given context (Connell 2005, p.77). I have refrained from using the concept in my analysis because, as I will show in Chapter 6, constructions of masculinity that legitimise militarism are not necessarily the same ones that legitimate patriarchy. Messerschmidt (2010) proposes the concept of 'dominant' masculinities to describe those which are more valorised or widespread in a particular context, but which may not be hegemonic (p.38).

becoming acceptable" (p.10). However, if feminist strategies of reversal seek to revalue that which is usually coded feminine, could the revaluing of empathy be interpreted as even a step in the right direction toward undoing masculinist discourses that underpin militarism and coloniality? Certainly, scholars have proposed that valorising empathy could form the basis of a feminist approach to peacemaking and foreign policy (e.g. Sylvester 1994; Porter 2016; Aggestam, Bergman Rosamond & Kronsell 2019). As Duncanson (2015) points out, if shifts in the content of hegemonic masculinities always stabilise patriarchy, this would seem to leave little room for dismantling them. She argues that, while softer hybrid masculinities are usually still built on hierarchical relations with others — such as femininities, or other masculinities that are marginalised due to their intersections with race, class or other axes of power — this need not always be the case. Looking for such possibilities, Duncanson proposes that hybridisation could be a transitional stage on the way to dismantling masculinism: first hegemonic masculinities take on traits usually associated with femininity, then hierarchies between masculinity and femininity can be dismantled. However, this will only happen, she argues, if hybrid masculinities are constructed through relations of equality and mutual respect, and not through othering that which is feminised or hyper-masculinised (Duncanson 2015, p.242). In the remainder of this section, I read the evolving empathy repertoire through Duncanson's argument to assess whether hybridisation in this case is sustaining or undermining the masculinism that undergirds militarism. I argue that, because this hybrid masculinity is still built on racialised relations of othering, it does not represent a step on the way to dismantling masculinism.

As I noted in Chapter 2, softer, supposedly benign 'protector' masculinities in national security discourses are often implicitly white, and constructed in relation to a hyper-masculinised, racially-marked threat. However, in the evolving empathy repertoire, the hybrid masculinity of 'new' counterterrorism thinking was usually constructed not through differentiation from that of the 'terrorist', but from the same community's 'old' way of thinking. While the 'terrorist' does appear in the evolving empathy repertoire, they do not represent the masculinity (or femininity) in relation to which this hybrid masculinity is constructed. I caution against reading too much into this observation: it may simply reflect the way I framed my interview questions — in terms of how counterterrorism thinking has changed, or how the government balances different approaches — and perhaps interviewees' assumptions about my views as a feminist researcher (i.e. that I would be critical of the same militaristic practices they framed as excessive). While the othering of hyper-masculinised, military-led counterterrorism is perhaps

not the kind of othering that Duncanson would view as problematic from an antimilitarist feminist perspective, it was sometimes done through an appeal to colonial notions of Britishness that are often racially-coded. For example, one interviewee, Lucy, explained:

> [T]he point is, we're the best nation on counterterrorism. We've got the longest history. The first terrorist attack was on the London tube, doing the anarchist stuff in, what, 1870 or something.[32] We've had all the IRA. We've learnt shit through our own experiences. We have learnt that you don't crack terrorism with a heavy-handed response, all you do is you damp it down, but you fuel the grievances that then come back. And there aren't any other nations who've really gripped that.

Most officials were not so overt in claiming softer counterterrorism as distinctly British. However, the British military has often constructed 'hearts and minds' counterinsurgency work as a British approach, and the phrase was used in the 20th Century to describe Britain's strategy for defeating national liberation movements in its colonies (Dixon 2009, pp.361–362). More broadly, British state and military narratives about the UK's role as a world power often position the UK as being moderate, restrained and compassionate, eschewing overly aggressive or gung-ho displays of militarism, and playing the brains to the US's brawn (Duncanson & Eschle 2008; Christensen & Ferree 2008; Higate 2012; Duncanson 2013, pp.85–89). This conception of national identity was historically linked to a notion of gentlemanly British masculinity that is intimately linked with empire. The "imperial class" of white, elite-educated men charged with the administration of empire were constructed as ruling in a distinctly British style, "with the minimum use of force, and with consideration for the governed that would inspire a minimum of resentment" (Mason 1993, p.12). This notion of British decency and restraint — which belies the often-brutal reality of British imperial rule (e.g. Heuman 1995; Elkins 2014; Wagner 2019) — was explicitly linked to whiteness, and constructed in relation to the subordinate, racially-marked masculinities and femininities of the colonised (Hall 1989, 1992; Sinha 1995). To name its links to whiteness today would be considered unacceptable in the Civil Service: indeed, some officials seemed hyper-conscious of the allegation that counterterrorism policies are racist, and repudiated the idea in my interviews with them (see Chapter 7). By invoking this familiar construction of Britishness, however, they avoid appealing to an overt racism now considered outmoded, while still

[32] This likely refers to the 1897 bombing of Aldersgate Street Station by an anarchist group, though this was preceded by two bombings of London tube stations by Irish republicans in the 1880s.

drawing authority from colonial discourses that justify the UK's world power status with reference to an implicitly racialised hierarchy of masculinities.

Where 'terrorists' do appear in the evolving empathy repertoire, their othering is similarly subtle. While they are no longer "bad guys" whom "we can't possibly understand", the empathy extended to them is built on hierarchies of power and not relations of equality and mutual respect. Though I cannot claim to analyse any *feelings* of empathy that securocrats might have, or how they practice empathy in the everyday, the way they framed it rhetorically in their conversations with me is indicative of their discursive framing of the hybrid counterterrorist mindset. Empathy, as described by Sylvester (1994, p.326),

> taps the ability and willingness to enter into the feeling or spirit of something and appreciate it fully in a subjectivity-moving way. It is to take on board the struggles of others by listening to what they have to say in a conversational style that does not push, direct, or break through to a linear progression which gives the comforting illusion that one knows where one goes.

Isabelle's description of her own change in mindset might in some respects be understood as subjectivity-moving, as she outlines how researching the lives and families of those targeted by counterterrorism led her to "see it in a very different way", until she thought, of the missile strikes, "that's not okay". However, the caveats she makes when explaining this moment of realisation suggest that this new mindset falls short of truly taking on board the struggles of others. As she explains, "that's not to say that I got to the stage where I felt sorry for those individuals, because obviously they were still breaking the law".

Of course, one can empathise with people without agreeing with them, and empathising with those designated as 'terrorists' need not entail supporting acts of violence against civilians. However, I suggest that it does necessitate taking seriously the myriad political, economic and social analyses and associated grievances that motivate and give rise to non-state armed groups. Isabelle gestures towards this idea when she states that "you can understand why they've gotten to that place", but indicates that her act of subjectivity-moving is stopped short by her observation that "they were still breaking the law". As I noted in Chapter 3, liberal militarism gains its aura of legitimacy in part from laws designed to protect and normalise forms of high-tech violence committed by liberal states while criminalising low-tech forms

available to groups that lack institutional power (Stavrianakis 2016, pp.845–846). Not all law represents the will of the powerful, and without knowing the specifics of the case to which Isabelle refers it is impossible to comment on it. However, given that the law itself is productive of colonial relations of power that facilitate British militarism, I suggest that measuring one's willingness to take on board the struggles of others according to the lawfulness of their actions alone is not characteristic of the kind of empathy that anticolonial feminist peacebuilding demands. In contrast to Sylvester's notion of empathy as resisting "the comforting illusion that one knows where one goes" (1994, p.326), Isabelle's refusal to take on board the struggles of lawbreakers makes her version appear closer to what Duncanson (2013) describes as merely "instrumental" empathy: one that is "deployed […] as a tactic in order to meet security objectives" (p.157).

My purpose in analysing the form of empathy described in the evolving empathy repertoire has been to investigate whether the incorporation of previously feminine-coded values into this softer hybrid masculinity merely shores up masculinism or represents a step toward dismantling it. Per Duncanson, hybridisation can only be a step toward deconstructing masculinist hierarchies of value if the new, softer masculinities are built on relations of equality and mutual respect. My analysis of the form of empathy revalued by the evolving empathy repertoire suggests that it does not seek to take on board the struggles of the other in a solidaristic way: rather, it seeks to understand the other's motivations for instrumental reasons, in order to change their behaviour. Therefore, while I do not seek to adjudicate on whether hybridisation can *ever* serve feminist antimilitarist ends, I argue that in this context it serves to legitimise liberal militarism by linking it to a softer masculinity understood as progressive and evolved. The valorisation of instrumental empathy might, as Duncanson (2015) suggests, create "opportunities for feminists to push at those contradictions, make them explicit, in the hope of forcing consideration of the underlying problems" (p.243). That is, it might open up possibilities for asking what it *would* mean for securocrats to practice empathy in a non-instrumental way; however, the signs so far do not look promising. In the final section of this chapter, I examine how officials speak about antimilitarist critiques of counterterrorism that advocate a more solidaristic approach, through an analysis of the academic idealism interpretive repertoire.

Academic Idealism

The framing of Pursue and Prevent as representing the binary options of hard and soft counterterrorism respectively suggests that they are opposite poles or ends of a spectrum, exhausting the possible options for addressing political violence by non-state actors. However, the third interpretive repertoire I identified in counterterrorism policy discourses appeared precisely when officials talked about alternatives beyond this dyad. Building on critiques of both hard and soft approaches, scholars of critical terrorism studies, as well as some NGOs and thinktanks, argue for a paradigm shift in the way that political violence is understood and prevented. While they vary in their theoretical commitments and policy prescriptions, they broadly recommend situating efforts to prevent 'terrorism' within a struggle against structural oppressions and wider systems of political violence. Following a range of critical terrorism studies scholars (Booth 1991; McDonald 2007; Lindahl 2017), I use 'emancipatory approaches' as an umbrella term to describe these critiques, which have been variously labelled as "critical approaches" (Booth 2008, p.76), "progressive alternatives" (Blakely et al 2019, p.6) and "peacebuilding alternatives" (Keen & Attree 2015, p.36). In what follows, I briefly describe the core elements of emancipatory approaches, before examining how officials speak about these ideas, identifying the features of the academic idealism repertoire they use to do so, and analysing its gendered and racialised connotations.

Emancipatory Approaches to Political Violence

At a conceptual level, emancipatory approaches tend to either eschew the label 'terrorism' altogether, or at least refuse to exceptionalise this form of political violence over others or to address it through 'counterterrorism' strategies (Booth 2008, p.72; Herring 2008b, p.209; Toros 2012, p.3; Lindahl 2017, p.530; Schwarz 2018, p.12). Rather than seeking victory over a specific enemy, emancipatory approaches aim at building 'positive peace' (Addams 1907; Galtung 1969) by dismantling systems of structural violence that create the conditions that produce 'terrorism' and other forms of political violence (Toros 2016, p.76; Lindahl 2017, p.528). Put differently, it means viewing the problem not as one of 'terrorism' *per se*, but as one of conflicts caused by factors such as corrupt and unaccountable governance, exclusionary political institutions and inequitable access to the basic means of survival. Forms of violence usually labelled as 'terrorism', along with other forms of political violence (including that carried out by states) are treated as symptoms of these structural problems.

In some ways, emancipatory approaches might sound like the soft counterterrorism already described here, in that both focus on addressing the causes of 'terrorism'. However, while CVE initiatives like Prevent "generally focus on influencing or changing the perceptions and immediate social environment of individuals deemed vulnerable to radicalization" (Schwarz 2018, p.3), emancipatory approaches "prioritise[s] improving lives and livelihoods over countering ideas and narratives" (p.14), looking beyond immediate environments to wider structures. Whereas CVE often seeks to persuade individuals that their grievances are not justified, emancipatory approaches start from the position that grievances are often (though not always) justified, even if violent responses are not, and seek to address those grievances head-on (Lindahl 2017, pp.527–528). Emancipatory approaches thus demand empathy of a kind that seeks not only to understand grievances instrumentally in order to dissuade individuals from committing violence, but to act solidaristically to end the structural violence those individuals experience. This could include measures to transform economies and political institutions to be more democratic and equitable, introduce processes for transformative justice, and/or to end corruption and human rights abuses. While these strategies may overlap with PVE programmes, which target (some) structural causes of political violence, PVE programming typically takes the (neo)liberal peacebuilding model as given, while emancipatory approaches need not, and some identify capitalism as a structural cause of political violence (Herring & Stokes 2011; McKeown 2011). Further, PVE is usually advocated alongside traditional coercive counterterrorism, while emancipatory approaches typically advocate rejecting or drastically reducing and reforming the use of military and policing operations. Some allow a vastly reduced role for military activities (Booth & Dunne 2012); some reject the use of violence outright (Lindahl 2017); and others position the abolition of counterterrorism within wider movements to abolish policing and the carceral state (Kundani & Theoharis 2019; Husain 2020; Seyhan 2020). Even as emancipatory approaches vary among themselves, then, they explicitly oppose aspects of militarism and coloniality, challenging the normalisation of the preparation for and practice of organised political violence and the racialisation of the 'terrorist' as less-than-human.

In the conversations I observed among officials, the policy prescriptions offered by emancipatory approaches were almost never discussed. In one instance where they (briefly) were, it was not in a formal meeting, but in casual comments that one official made to me

after leaving a meeting with an NGO lobbyist who had been critical of counterterrorism as a paradigm. Venting her frustration to me about how the meeting had gone, Sheila[33] stated:

> [The lobbyist] spent the first half hour giving the intellectual argument as to why we shouldn't work on [counterterrorism], and I thought, 'You're missing a huge opportunity here'. [My colleague] was drumming his fingers on the table next to me. I just thought, 'What a waste of time. We can't do this again'.

Sheila suggested that, by critiquing the very conceptualisation of counterterrorism, which was enshrined in policy and endorsed by ministers, the lobbyist had missed an opportunity to influence how counterterrorism was done in a more immediate sense. I was intrigued that on the one occasion where an antimilitarist critique was formally presented to officials during my observations — albeit I had not been in the room at the time — it was later privately dismissed as both an "intellectual argument" and "a waste of time". A few interviewees similarly mentioned the fact that civil society actors would sometimes argue in favour of emancipatory approaches, and I began to notice themes in the terms with which they were associated. For example, Peter mentioned being lobbied by NGOs critiquing counterterrorism, and while he had some sympathy with their critiques, he described why he hadn't acted on them in his work:

> You couldn't really see how any of that was going to be implemented and how you could actually practically move that forward. And obviously, that can be justification for being lazy on your part. But often you're like, 'I agree with you in principle, but what do you actually want me to do?' Or sometimes you're just like, 'Sorry mate, that's pie-in-the-sky. Anybody can demand a paradigm shift'.

I identify here a continuity between Sheila's describing emancipatory approaches as an "intellectual argument" and Peter's describing them as "pie in the sky", while contrasting them with those he could "actually practically move forward". Based on Sheila's frustrated tone, I read 'intellectual' here not as (only) conveying that the argument drew on critical thinking and research, but that it was, in her mind, purely intellectual — concerned with theory and not

[33] I have given Sheila a different pseudonym in this passage than I have used for her interview responses elsewhere in the thesis to ensure that her interview data is not consequently identifiable to her colleagues who witnessed this exchange.

practical application. Both Sheila and Peter convey a concern with practicality versus abstraction, pragmatism versus idealism. Similar concerns were voiced by another interviewee, Nathan, who often engaged in conversations with NGOs and academics about approaches to counterterrorism. He spoke about how he took the critiques he heard from civil society actors and discussed them with his colleagues, and said he felt he had an important role to play in "being that contrarian voice in government". When I asked how his contrarian voice was received by his colleagues, he explained:

> It's not always taken seriously. A lot of people will say, 'Well it's fine, that's the liberal left [*laughs*]. That's the academic in you. I've got a policy to make. I want to see to it'. That does happen quite a bit. But for the most part it's taken seriously, and it will make people stop and think.

Nathan was speaking about civil society critiques of counterterrorism in general, and not only those coming from an emancipatory perspective: it is not clear whether this would affect how seriously they were taken, although apparently at least some of those that were not taken seriously came from the political left, as emancipatory approaches do. However, following a similar theme to Sheila and Peter, Nathan reports that his colleagues frame these left critiques as "academic" and therefore not helpful when there is a "policy to make". Indeed, beyond the counterterrorism community, I observed a wider trend among securocrats of discursively linking the 'academic' with the idealistic or utopian. For example, I asked Cathy, who worked in another area of national security, how she adapted to the organisational culture of her department when she joined the Civil Service. She explained:

> I think I'm maybe slightly more realistic about things. So, when I did my Masters… oh not realistic… When I did my Masters, I did very sort of SOAS,[34] out-there, postmodern type thinking about how international relations worked. And I suppose now I've got into the system I'm […] less idealistic and a bit more, I'm quite pragmatic these days about how I approach things.

Across all of these comments from Sheila, Peter, Nathan and Cathy, emancipatory approaches to counterterrorism, or in some cases left-wing critiques of security policies broadly, are linked

[34] Formerly the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, SOAS is known for its critical and left-wing political thought.

to a cluster of terms that are all used to succinctly dismiss them: “academic”, “intellectual”, “out-there”, “idealistic” and “pie-in-the-sky”. Elsewhere in my interviews, similar ideas were also described as “utopian”, “ideologically pure” and even “extreme”. This cluster is differentiated from terms used to describe the kind of thinking that policymaking demands: “pragmatic” and “practical”. Notably, it is not only academics who advocate emancipatory approaches, but also thinktanks and NGOs, many of whom make concrete recommendations about how policymakers can implement the paradigm shift they promote (e.g. Keen & Attree 2015; Crouch 2018; Schwartz 2018; Blakely et al 2019; Cage 2020). Indeed, it was an NGO representative who made the “intellectual argument” that Sheila found so frustrating. Much like ‘intellectual’, ‘academic’ functions here not as a neutral descriptor but as a value-laden term, as in the Cambridge English Dictionary’s alternative definitions: “Based on ideas and theories and not related to practical effects in real life” and “not important because it is based only on possibilities” (Cambridge Dictionary, nd). It is difficult to know to what extent this language was a response to participants’ perception of me as an academic: at times I felt some were deliberately dismissing any such critique I might later make of them, while others seemed to temper their critiques of ‘academic thinking’ out of politeness. However, when I mentioned to one interviewee, John, that I frequently heard ‘academic’ used in this way, he confirmed that it was common and added: “Oh yes, it’s a criticism, yeah”.

Before I analyse what racialised and gendered meanings this cluster of terms might invoke, it is important to note that, in an immediate sense, these officials are right in saying that emancipatory approaches are unrealistic. From their perspective as civil servants, it *is* unrealistic to think that ministers with deeply militaristic worldviews would adopt such an approach. Policy advice is usually signed off by several layers of senior officials before they are submitted to ministers, and interviewees knew that their seniors would remove anything they believed the minister would not regard as a serious option (see HM Government 2018a, p.28). As one official put it, “You’re writing what you think they’ll accept rather than what you think is proper, which is correct and appropriate and good policy”. When Nathan’s colleagues say, “That’s the academic in you. I’ve got a policy to make”, or when Sheila expresses frustration at an NGO using her time to argue against the counterterrorism paradigm, this is largely because these ideas would be dismissed before they were even presented to a minister. As John explained:

> [F]rankly this is a deeply, deeply task-oriented organisation, and so academics, for example, who come from a different theoretical background — whether it's critical or anything else — that are not being helpful, they need to be ignored even if privately many of the people you are talking to, actually if they stop and think they might agree, but that's not the point. To get your job done, to move the stuff from left to right across your desk in the course of the day, which is what you absolutely have to do, you can only do that if your inputs from outside help you […] And if they don't, you'll just ignore them. You haven't got time.

John describes a situation in which his heavy workload demands a problem-solving approach which fixes specific policy problems to keep the organisation running smoothly, and not a critical one that questions the entire frameworks through which those problems are understood, as emancipatory approaches do (Cox 1981, pp.128–130; Booth 2008; Jackson 2016). In part, then, the academic idealism discourse reflects the structural organisation of government and civil servants' place with it, which makes entertaining antimilitarist ideas a "waste of time", as Sheila put it. However, the cluster of meanings that make up the academic idealism repertoire is not found only in the Civil Service. They also appear in the media and parliamentary politics: for example, discourses invoking the dualisms of idealism/pragmatism and naivety/realism had been used in the national media to argue that the Labour Party's (then) anti-war politics and scepticism about hard counterterrorism made them an unserious political opposition (Ramsden 2015; McDermott & Pickard 2015). Therefore, it would seem that the framing of the academic idealism repertoire cannot be explained solely as a reflection of Civil Service structures. My analysis of the academic idealism repertoire therefore explores how it implies not only that emancipatory approaches are unhelpful to civil servants, but also that they represent an unrealistic view of the world.

Three interpretations

Multiple readings are apparent to me, and compared to tough realism and evolving empathy, I find the academic idealism repertoire trickier to interpret. In what follows, I suggest three ways in which this repertoire might be read as citing different racialised and gendered meanings. I argue that, while these three readings all give the academic idealism repertoire different inflections, it ultimately conforms to the pattern observed by Cohn, Hutchings and others, in which antimilitarist ideas are associated with terms that are linked to feminine and

racially-marked subjects, thereby confirming their subordinate position as ideas that should not be taken seriously within counterterrorism policymaking. However, I suggest that race and gender are perhaps doing less work here than in the tough realism and evolving empathy repertoires.

Firstly, I read the academic idealism repertoire as citing much the same gendered system of meaning as the tough realism repertoire: one in which 'idealistic' views that favour non-violence are coded as feminine vis-à-vis 'practical' or 'realistic' ones that favour militarism and are masculine-coded. I noted earlier that this system of meaning has historically been linked to the assumption that women lack the worldly mindset needed in national security thinking, and it has also long been used to dismiss antimilitarist ideas, and antimilitarism feminisms in particular. For example, in 1915 when women from around the world formed an International Congress of Women that sought to put an end to the First World War, their ideas were dismissed as "idealistic and impractical" (Tickner & True 2018, p.223), in the "realm of fantasy" and lacking "a masculine energy and an eye for unadorned reality" (Sharp 2020, p.642). They would go on to form the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) who, a century later, still defend themselves against accusations of naivety and idealism. The arguments of WILPF and other anti-nuclear activists who sought a UN treaty banning nuclear weapons were dismissed by nuclear-armed states as "naïve" and "neither practical neither feasible", a move that WILPF activist Ray Acheson (2019) read as appealing to a system of meaning that is "highly gendered" (p.79).[35] Not unlike Peter's dismissal of "pie-in-the-sky" ideas, they were told by the Russian delegation to the UN that they were "radical dreamers" who have "shot off to some other planet or outer space" (Acheson, Nash & Moyes 2014, p.18). In a parallel with these examples, the academic idealism repertoire can be read as denigrating antimilitarist ideas by assigning meanings to emancipatory approaches that are sedimented in discourses on (anti)militarism as feminine-coded. This first interpretation thus conforms to the pattern identified by Cohn (1993), Hutchings (2008b) and others in which a masculinist system of meaning provides discursive resources from which subjects can construct cognitive shortcuts with which to easily dismiss antimilitarist ideas.

While my first reading perhaps focuses mainly on the opposition between the 'idealistic' and the 'practical', the terms 'academic' and 'intellectual' suggest a different reading. Intellect and

[35] The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was agreed in 2017 and entered into force in 2021.

abstract thought have typically been associated with masculinity and whiteness in European cultures and philosophies: white men have been considered intellectually superior to people of colour and white women, who have been discursively associated with the body rather than the mind (Pateman 1988, pp.95–101; Mills 1997, pp.59–60; Oyěwùmí 1997, p.3). Academia in the UK continues to be dominated by white men, and the stereotyped figure of the academic — a white, middle-class man — is similar to that of the civil servant in terms of social background. On this second reading, then, the academic idealism repertoire does not rely on a gendered or racialised hierarchy of values in any obvious sense: the dismissal of antimilitarist ideas takes place through linking them to terms coded as masculine and white. It might perhaps be read as invoking a subordinate, feminised masculinity: the academic who has the luxury of pontificating from his ivory tower while the real men and women make the hard decisions of governing. However, in the present day, the popular imaginary of the academic who is cossetted from the real world is not necessarily a white and masculine figure: my third reading offers a different take on the 'academic', one which links it to contemporary public discourses concerning the role of universities in British political life.

Academia has long been cast as a bastion of the 'extreme' left in media discourses, and in recent years journalists and Conservative politicians have taken aim at the perceived prevalence of 'identity politics' and 'wokeness' in universities – used here as derogatory terms for anti-racism, feminism and other social justice movements (e.g. Gove 2013; O'Neill 2015; Hayes 2020; Pluckrose 2020). This discourse portrays academia as an immature and unmasculine space taken over by coddled 'snowflakes' and sealed off from the realities of the world (Read 2018). Some terms used by officials would seem to point towards their associating the 'academic' or 'intellectual' with the political left in ways that might invoke this discourse. For example, Nathan's linking of the "academic" with the "liberal-left", or Cathy's mentioned of SOAS — a university with a reputation as "radically left-wing" (Perry 2020) — in describing the kind of idealistic thinking she had left behind. Peter perhaps also nodded toward this cluster of meanings when explaining why he would not discuss emancipatory approaches to counterterrorism with ministers, because "some of the more extreme views, or more utopian views, they're probably not going to entertain". This public discourse has clear gendered and racialised connotations, having often been aimed explicitly at academics in gender studies, disability studies, queer theory and critical race theory (e.g. Gove 2013; O'Neill 2015; Pluckrose 2020). The term 'woke' has been appropriated from African-American Vernacular English and used as a pejorative by right-wing commentators for left-wing academics in general and anti-

racist scholars in particular. Even if the quintessential academic is a white man, then, the "out-there", "utopian" academic at the centre of this discourse is often a person of colour, female, queer, disabled, or a combination of these. On this third reading of the academic idealism repertoire, then, it dismisses emancipatory approaches by employing cognitive shortcuts based on both gendered and racialised hierarchies of value.

How best to make sense of what work gender and race are doing in the academic idealism repertoire in light of these three readings? My first and third interpretations broadly follow the pattern observed by Cohn and Hutchings, in which discourses that contain gendered and racialised hierarchies of value are used to dismiss ideas by linking them to terms which are coded as feminine or racially-marked, while the second does not follow this pattern. For cognitive shortcuts to be effective in using masculinism as a resource for rendering arguments persuasive, they must invoke systems of gendered meaning that are recognisable to the listener, even if unconsciously (Hutchings 2008b). All three of these interpretations refer to discourses that are likely familiar to UK counterterrorism officials, although which one (or which combination) resonates most strongly will likely depend on which discourse(s) they are most immersed in through their experiences, media consumption and so on. In drawing conclusions, I make two broader observations.

First, the 'academic' or 'intellectual' is linked in this repertoire to the 'idealistic' and the 'out-there': as I noted in Chapter 3, to invoke one term in a cluster of linked meanings is to conjure up all of the others (Duncanson 2013, p.68). As such, it is unlikely that any official would hear the second interpretation in isolation without also hearing at least one of the other two, and perhaps others. The academic idealism repertoire therefore likely still derives some persuasive power from the hierarchically ordered gendered and racialised discourses from which I develop my first and third interpretations. Second, whereas the racialised and gendered meanings invoked by the tough realism and evolving empathy discourses draw power from being — in my view — clear and easily understood, the ambiguity of the academic idealism repertoire might simply indicate that race and gender are doing less work here. Militarist and colonial ways of thinking may of course be legitimised through discourses that do not rely (as) heavily on hierarchies of gender and race. In organisations that are ideologically and materially invested in reproducing militarism and coloniality, officials will likely draw on whatever discursive resources are available to sustain that work in the face of critique.

The academic idealism repertoire, then, employs cognitive shortcuts in a similar way to the tough realism repertoire: as a quick but effective way of indicating that certain ideas which challenge militarist and colonial ways of thinking do not warrant further discussion. Even officials like Peter, who privately expressed some sympathy with emancipatory approaches, did not feel it was worth presenting them to his colleagues as a serious policy option. This repertoire appeals to sedimented gendered and racialised meanings, in which 'pragmatic' militaristic approaches to security problems are masculine-coded and 'pie-in-the-sky' non-violent ones are feminine-coded, as well as invoking notions of the 'academic' as linked to 'utopian' anti-racist and feminist ideas. Yet, whereas tough realism (for example) draws on the gendered dichotomy of 'soft' and 'hard' that is so ubiquitous as to be instantly recognisable, academic idealism's multiple racialised and gendered meanings make it more ambiguous, such that gender and race perhaps play a less powerful role in enabling these cognitive shortcuts. I have suggested that this repertoire also reflects, and works in tandem with, the structural organisation of the Civil Service to make the militarist and colonial worldview that informs counterterrorism seem impossible to challenge. However, given the reproduction of similar discourses elsewhere, including in party politics and the media, to reduce it to a mere product of officials' position within this structure would be reductive. Indeed, paying attention to systems of meaning that help to make militaristic and colonial framings appear as the only realistic ways of thinking about the world may help us to understand why those structures work in the way they do.

Conclusions

This chapter has begun to explore the relationships between gendered and racialised organisational cultures in national security policymaking and militarism and coloniality in policy discussions by analysing how conversations about counterterrorism invoke gendered and racialised meanings that are sedimented in discourse. I have identified three different interpretive repertoires, which each cite hierarchies of racially-coded masculinities and femininities. By linking different approaches to counterterrorism to specific masculinities and femininities, officials can use cognitive shortcuts that quickly signal how these approaches are similarly hierarchically organised. These gendered and racialised systems of meaning are so pervasive and well understood that they lend an air of naturalness to this ordering, making the primacy of militarist and colonial worldviews and approaches, and the unthinkability of antimilitarist and anticolonial ideas, appear inevitable and not worth challenging. Overall,

then, my findings in this chapter support the arguments of many feminist IR scholars that the hierarchical structure of gender discourse "weights the credibility of approaches to peace and security according to their association with masculinity or femininity" (Otto 2004, p.7) in ways that sustain militarism and coloniality.

Each of the three interpretive repertoires I have identified serve different functions, which are sometimes complementary and elsewhere appear contradictory. The tough realism repertoire helps to legitimise 'tough' military and policing approaches to counterterrorism that target racially-marked 'bad guys' by contrasting them with 'fluffy' PVE and CVE, cementing the idea that coercive approaches are demonstrably effective in preventing 'terrorism' despite extensive evidence to the contrary. Where needed, then, the tough realism repertoire can be used to dismiss common critiques that question the rationale behind coercive approaches to counterterrorism. The evolving empathy repertoire, meanwhile, rehabilitates the CVE and PVE denigrated by tough realism by linking the combination of hard and soft counterterrorism to a hybrid masculinity understood as modern and evolved, while also drawing on a mythical notion of (white) British masculine restraint. In doing so, it functions to give the government's current approach to counterterrorism, combining Pursue and Prevent, an air of progressiveness, compared to a solely military and policing-led approach, which is hyper-masculinised.

In an immediate sense, these repertoires contradict each other: soft approaches go from 'wishy-washy' and ineffective to evolved and 'thought-through', while hard approaches are transformed from 'tough' and realistic to fist-banging displays of machismo. However, if viewed in relation to the liberal militarist thinking and practice that characterises the government's approach to national security, the functions of these two interpretive repertoires are quite compatible. The tough realism repertoire functions to normalise the UK's practices of war and war-preparation, while the evolving empathy discourse helps to construct them as restrained and non-excessive. The academic idealism repertoire complements both, helping to remove emancipatory approaches that challenge this militarist paradigm from any serious consideration in policy discussions. This flexibility of counterterrorism discourses in assigning different and apparently contradictory gendered and racialised meanings at different moments reflects genuine contestations among officials about which approaches should be prioritised. However, in combination, these three interpretive repertoires function to confer

legitimacy on a broadly liberal militarist worldview manifested in the practice of counterterrorism.

Throughout this chapter I have refrained from ascribing motivations to my research participants in their choice of language. I have focused instead on how discourses function — how they have "repercussions […] which may not have been formulated or even understood by the speaker" — though they also may have been (Wetherell & Potter 1988, p.169). This is not a simple case of, for example, men proving their manliness through performing a 'tough' masculinity: women and men from a range of racial backgrounds cite and reiterate these meanings in ways that most would probably not perceive as gendered or racialised at the time. If anything, officials sought to evacuate counterterrorism discourses of overtly gendered and racialised language, whether through reframing 'bad guys' to 'bad people' or through periodic reminders that the latter can include white supremacists. Indeed, I have observed that in all three interpretive repertoires, with a few notable exceptions, their gendered and racialised meanings are usually not explicit and making them so would be considered unacceptably sexist and racist in this context. Given how deeply sedimented and therefore recognisable these meanings are, their implicit character does not make them less powerful. However, the fact that officials cite these clusters of linked meanings but often do not reproduce their links to race and gender might make these discursive links unstable. That is, the frequent (though not universal) refusal to explicitly link ideas or activities to particular gendered and racialised subjects could leave them open to resignification — though that resignification may not necessarily be liberatory. In the next chapter, I explore what role the embodied performances of securocrats play in reproducing and/or destabilising racialised and gendered meanings that sustain militarist and colonial approaches to national security.

CHAPTER 6

(Re)constructing the Securocrat: New Bodies, Old Norms

> It's always funny, people have the stereotypes. [They say] if you walked into a room and you had a cross-HMG meeting on counterterrorism […] just by looking at the people you'd be able to know who's the DFID person because they're probably going to be wearing something a bit more casual and they've probably got braids in their hair and they'll be female. And then you're going to know the MOD person because he's wearing a pinstripe suit and he's looking really frustrated and looking at his watch 'cause you're late. And you're going to know who the intelligence agency people are 'cause they're trying not to look at you. There are particular stereotypes around it. DFID probably suffers the most from it because, 'What are DFID doing?' is a question that gets asked quite a lot: 'What are they really contributing?'
>
> —Isabelle, counterterrorism official

Analyses of gender as a system of meaning, such as that I laid out in Chapter 5, are useful in demonstrating how we all participate in (re)producing militaristic discourses. They help shed simplistic assumptions that militarism can be explained (solely) in terms of putatively male-bodied subjects confirming their masculinity through war-making and colonial domination. Yet, antimilitarist feminisms cannot ignore how bodies are produced and read as gendered and racialised, nor how subjects navigate expectations placed on them as a result of those interpellations. As the above quotation from Isabelle suggests, the gender coding of government departments and their ideas is (re)produced through the embodied performances of their members, while the ways in which gender is inscribed onto bodies also reflects assumptions about the masculinity or femininity of their roles and departments (McDowell 1997; Neumann 2012, pp.153–159; Standfield 2020, pp.148–151). Isabelle implies that female officials' clothing and hairstyles are interpreted as an expression of DFID's femininity, and linked directly to the department's credibility in the national security community. Their

sartorial choices seemingly confirm the feminine stereotype from which the department "suffers" when officials ask, "What are they really contributing?". Bodily performance of gender becomes "an external marker for institutional affiliation and professional stature and importance, which are in turn linked to the gendered coding of diplomatic and development work and expertise" (Essex & Bowman 2021, p.318). As I argued in Chapter 3, then, the gendering of subjects and the gendering of organisations, ideas and worldviews are interlinked processes.

This chapter examines how securocrats' embodied performances of race and gender reflect and performatively reproduce organisational norms or scripts and how these regulate officials' engagement in policy discussions. Whereas Chapter 5 showed that counterterrorism discourses cite sedimented meanings but often do not link them explicitly to particular gendered and racialised subjects, in this chapter I ask how the everyday performances of women and men, white people and people of colour, actively reproduce and/or challenge constructions of masculinity, femininity and whiteness. This enables me to explore whether and how the norms produced through these performances reinforce and/or challenge the gendered and racialised discourses that sustain militarism and coloniality. In doing so, I examine the claim by some feminists that the inclusion of women and feminist ideas in militarist organisations can help to undermine masculinist discourses that sustain militarism. Whereas Chapter 7 will be primarily concerned with the experiences of people of colour, whose role in knowledge production has drawn particular attention in discourses around diversity and inclusion, this chapter gives particular attention to the experiences of women due to how their presence seems to be reshaping norms regulating embodied performances in the workplace. However, both address the intersections between race and gender, including in the particular experiences of women of colour.

As I outlined in Chapter 2, Duncanson (2013) and Duncanson and Woodward (2016) argue that women's inclusion, along with feminist ideas, can facilitate a revaluing of feminine-coded practices and worldviews (reversal) and a deconstruction of the discursive linkages between masculinity and war, femininity and peace (displacement). This raises the question whether the increased presence of (mostly white, middle-class) women and feminist ideas has been accompanied by a revaluing of the kinds of femininities typically denigrated in militarist discourses, which feminists have suggested would reduce the power of masculinism as a discursive resource for legitimising militarist ideas (Cohn & Ruddick 2004, p.428). I also ask

whether the presence of women and feminist ideas has been accompanied by any displacement of the discursive links between masculinity and the practice of militarism (Duncanson 2013, pp.151–154; Duncanson & Woodward 2016, p.12). Extending this framework to address race as well as gender, I further ask whether the inclusion of people of colour has been accompanied by a displacement of the discursive construction of the securocrat as white masculinist protector against racially-marked security threats. Duncanson and Woodward's theorisation of the relationships between inclusion, reversal and displacement provides a framework for identifying what gendered and racialised norms that do *not* support militarism might look like, as well as examining those that do. Further, it allows me to examine whether their account of the antimilitarist potential of women's inclusion holds traction in the context at hand.

As I also discussed in Chapter 2, there are reasons to be sceptical about the idea that a 'critical mass' of women or people of colour is sufficient to change the gendered and racialised character of organisational cultures (Yoder 1991; Childs & Krook 2006, 2008; Jones, Charles & Davies 2009). There are also methodological challenges in determining the direction of causality between representation and cultural change. As Lovenduski (2005) explains in her research on women in politics, "[w]e cannot be sure that women representatives are making a difference, only that a difference is being made and they are part of the process" (p.180). As such, I do not seek to establish a causal connection between the numbers of women and people of colour in the national security community and the changes in organisational culture I describe in this chapter. Instead, I develop a picture of how subjects, particularly women and people of colour, experience organisational cultures in the national security space, and analyse what this reveals about gendering and racialising processes. Further, while I refer to 'strategies' of reversal and displacement, I do not imply that the inclusion of women and people of colour in policymaking has been driven by any deliberate strategy to challenge militarism and/or coloniality. Rather, given that inclusion has been theorised by some feminists as potentially contributing toward antimilitarist political strategies, I examine what changes in gendering and racialising practices *have* accompanied the inclusion of women and people of colour respectively, in order to derive lessons on the potentialities of such strategies were they to be pursued.

Before outlining the performances of masculinities and femininities my interviewees perceived to be normative in the national security community, I offer three caveats. First, as should be

clear by now, the masculinities and femininities I describe are performances, not personality types. As many interviewees pointed out, securocrats switch between different gendered performances depending on context, though most individuals find certain ways of behaving more comfortable than others. Second, dividing performances up into discrete categories gives a messy reality the misleading appearance of neatness, and the construction of these categories can feel somewhat arbitrary. I delineate performances based on patterns that participants themselves identified, grouping qualities and behaviours that they perceived to be linked. In order to convey the fluidity of these categories, I describe each in the plural because it represents a 'family' of similar performances and not a single discrete form. Each category might, for example, manifest in slightly different variants between departments or subdepartments. Third, because the national security community comprises multiple teams across several government departments (five of which are studied here), there are variations between organisational cultures in terms of their gendered and racialised norms. Some of these differences I elaborate, but I focus largely on areas of commonality, of which there are many. This approach helps to protect the anonymity of participants by not stating which team they belong to, but also allows me to convey something meaningful about this larger network of people even as it overlooks some of the particularities of different workplaces.

The chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by describing the dominant script regulating the performances of securocrats in their workplaces, which I characterise as a collection of 'gentlemen-bureaucrat masculinities'. I argue that the performance of gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities and the meanings assigned to them reproduce the idea that the liberal militarist worldview that predominates in national security policymaking is rational, credible and objective. I then outline how women in national security have sought to change masculinist organisational cultures by performing what I call 'insider-activist femininities', which place greater value on co-operation and the introduction of liberal feminist ideas in security policymaking. Using the WPS policy community as site in which to observe how insider-activist femininities are performed, I argue that while the latter valorise feminine-coded ideas and attributes, as in strategies of reversal, they do not do so in ways that help to advance an antimilitarist or anticolonial feminist politics. Finally, I examine whether the inclusion of women and people of colour has been accompanied by dynamics of displacement through a discussion of the "somatic norm" (Mills 1997, p.53; Puwar 2001, p.652) — that is, the construction of certain (white, male) bodies as the norm in national security policymaking. By analysing the experiences of women and people of colour, I demonstrate that this norm

remains firmly in place, and the links between militarism, masculinity and whiteness are continually reaffirmed through the embodied performances of securocrats. In summary, I argue that inclusion has not advanced dynamics of reversal or displacement in ways that the more optimistic feminist antimilitarist advocates of inclusion might have hoped, and I suggest that the potential for more subversive practices is limited precisely by the organisations' material and ideological investment in militarism.

Gendering and Racialising the Securocrat

I identified a number of common themes throughout interviewees' descriptions of organisational norms, suggesting strong similarities among the organisational cultures of departments within the national security sphere. Further, the descriptions given by women and men, white officials and those of colour, were broadly similar, suggesting more commonalities than differences in how they are expected to behave, even if their experiences of navigating these norms differ. Broadly, my findings resonate with other studies of the British Civil Service, which highlight that these norms recall a habitus that is culturally associated with white, middle-to-upper-class, middle-aged men (Edwards 1994; Watson 1994; Puwar 2004; Southern 2020). That is, they are constituted by ways of speaking, bodily comportment and social conduct whose repeated performance by bodies interpellated as white and male have cemented their discursive links to both whiteness and masculinity. While I will later call into question the extent to which these links endure, as I will show below, many interviewees themselves identified these norms as masculine and white. In what follows, I describe how norms governing the performance of 'being a securocrat' cite and combine two interlinked and culturally recognisable masculinities: those of the gentleman and the bureaucrat.

Gentleman-Bureaucrat Masculinities

Many of the attributes that participants described as being valued in securocrats were ones associated with a Victorian notion of the 'English gentleman': a habitus cultivated in elite British public schools[36] and universities, gentleman's clubs and elite professional associations

[36] Confusingly, 'public schools' in the UK are private boarding schools, not publicly owned and run 'state schools'. They were previously all boys' schools, but some are now co-educational.

(Mason 1993; Watson 1994, p.213; Puwar 2004, pp.77–85; Cohen 2005; Deslandes 2005). Public schools and elite universities, particularly Oxford and Cambridge, have explicitly sought to produce a ruling class, which historically meant instilling the gentlemanly masculinity thought necessary for rulers of empire, including politicians, civil servants and colonial administrators (Mason 1993, pp.161–174; Deslandes 2005, p.3, Kothari 2006a, p.241). Although today neither public schools nor Oxbridge are (formally) tasked with producing men to run an empire, they are still renowned for inculcating a habitus that bears the hallmarks of the English gentleman and that is culturally associated with the exercise of power (Watson 1994; Puwar 2004; Di Domenico & Philips 2009). Oxbridge-educated white men no longer dominate the Civil Service to quite the extent that they once did, but its organisational norms have been shaped over centuries by the habitus they honed at elite educational institutions. While many interviewees identified these workplace norms as being linked to masculinity, whiteness and middle-to-upper class status, they conveyed that officials tended to be taken more seriously if they adhered to these norms, regardless of their own gender, racial or class background.

Elements of this gentlemanly habitus that survive today include, for example, demonstrating "civility and courtesy" and speaking "briefly, authoritatively", concisely but not too quickly (Cohen 2005, p.327). This manner of speaking can be summarised through the concept of 'gravitas', an attribute highly valued in the national security community and typically associated with masculinity (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt 2001, p.782; Haynes 2012, p.498; Askehave & Zethsen 2014, p.542; Jackson 2020, p.2). As one official, Edward, explained:

> [G]ravitas is really important. Gravitas is read in all the sort of traditional ways that you would expect it to be: old but not too old, male but not hyper-masculine. It's exactly what you'd expect it to be. The ability to make a directional and decisive argument and say it carefully in front of people, slowly and understandably: all of that's really important.

This gentlemanly habitus is perhaps most exaggerated at the FCO, where the practice of diplomacy is particularly associated with performances of upper-class Britishness, perhaps because the Diplomatic Service was once the preserve of the aristocracy (Otte 2011, pp.8–9; Southern 2020), and even today most diplomats are privately educated, attended Oxbridge, or both (The Sutton Trust & Social Mobility Commission 2019, p.48). Participants observed the

valorisation of a "posh" manner of speech in the predominance of people speaking in received pronunciation as opposed to other accents less associated with affluence. As Charlotte described:

> It seems to be more extreme, because in the corridors of the FCO everywhere you'll have very posh accents and they'll all be very white and it'll all be very public school. […] It's quite extreme in the Foreign Office as well just because of the kind of people who are attracted to the Diplomatic Service as well, but no other Government department is quite that bad.

While most participants agreed that the variety of regional accents that could be heard in the FCO corridors had increased, they observed that accents denoting membership of the upper classes remained an advantage. Debra explained: "It's terribly well-spoken and quite posh. I grew up in the South East, and one of my first line managers said to me, 'If you didn't go to public school, don't tell anyone, 'cause you could pass for public school'." I discuss later in this chapter how some officials deliberately affect such an accent when they arrive at the FCO. As Puwar (2004) notes, due to its longstanding association with power, this manner of speaking appears as "the hegemonic language, the voice of reason" and thus as "a central element of the corporeality of authority" (p.111). Though not essential, participants felt that speaking in received pronunciation with correct grammar was important to being taken seriously.

Perhaps less particular to the FCO was the imperative to speak with confidence and assertiveness. These qualities are also cultivated by public schools, which traditionally prepare the student for positions of authority through the development of "a kind of extrovert self-sufficiency, based on internal integrity, on confidence in himself" along with an "edge of hardness and decision" (Mason 1993, p.162, 221). Interviewees described a need to be confident but not verbose, and comfortable with confrontation and debate. They noted that recruitment processes favour people who display these qualities, as one official who was involved in recruitment to the Civil Service Fast Stream[37] explained:

> We see people who can fly through the role play exercises, dealing with a difficult senior stakeholder because they have all the confidence or the veneer of confidence

[37] The Fast Stream recruits graduates to be fast-tracked into leadership positions. A recent study by The Bridge Group (2016) confirms that Fast Stream recruitment favours Oxbridge graduates.

> that comes from public school and a good university. And you get the people who just went to a grotty comp[38] down the road, as I did, and they're just floundering about and completely out of their depth.

Participants explained that this assertiveness was increasingly valued as civil servants reached senior grades where, Gary explained, they were expected to be "extremely decisive, extremely firm. You have to be open to confrontation and be able to hold a very tough line both for your department and for your sub-section", which he noted might be viewed as a "masculine tendency". Assertiveness is linked to standing up for one's department and its interests and to a willingness to get competitive where necessary to win others around to the department's way of thinking. Of course, assertiveness must also be backed up with knowledge: as most officials are generalists, not subject specialists, they must quickly pick up new knowledge each time they move subject areas in order to inspire the confidence of their seniors. As Paige put it: "You just need to show that you know what you're talking about, that you're engaged in whatever project or role you're trying to show them and show that you've got the evidence to back up anything you're claiming".

In practice, norms surrounding gentlemanly conduct and those pertaining to 'being a bureaucrat' are inseparable: the bureaucrat script reflects the Civil Service's history as home to those socialised into the habitus of the English gentleman. However, I adjoin the two terms in the 'gentleman-bureaucrat' descriptor to denote how the manifestation of gentlemanliness in the Civil Service prioritises attributes that relate to its bureaucratic function. The emphasis that Paige placed on having "evidence to back up anything you're claiming" represents just such an attribute. After all, a core function of the policy official is to consume large quantities of information quickly — research, government records, advice from interest groups etc. — and analyse it to produce policy advice. As Edward put it, "can you digest this pile of information and produce either a summary or a decision from that? That is the number one skill valued by government".

The demand for officials to back up all claims with evidence reflects the construction of the Civil Service as a rational, objective body that advises ministers "on the basis of the evidence, and accurately present[s] the options and facts" (HM Government 2015b). Bureaucrats are

[38] Comprehensive school — i.e. a non-selective state school.

presented as “the producer of unbiased, value-free information and advice” and “guardians of impartiality” (Puwar 2004, pp.56–57). This principle relies on a scientific notion of objectivity which, as I argued in Chapter 3, requires that knowledge production be detached from the interests, emotions and biases of the knower in order to be considered objective (Haraway 1988; Code 1993). Officials seek to demonstrate their objectivity through particular ways of speaking and carrying themselves, characterised in particular by emotional restraint. Interviewees variously explained that in order to be taken seriously, officials must be “measured”, “calm”, “focused”, “business-like”, “level-headed”, “stony-faced” and “reserved” with a “serious demeanour” (see also Swan 2010, pp.498–499; Rhodes 2011, pp.190–191; Social Mobility Commission 2021, pp.58–64). For example, when I asked Chris how he had adapted to fit into the organisational culture of his department, he told me he had learned to “present arguments in the right way”:

> You always go for understatement, rather than overstatement. […] If you say, ‘This is completely awful and terrible and unacceptable,’ you will be to some extent treated less seriously. You’ll be treated like a lobbyist, or somebody who’s got advocacy points to make. Whereas if you present fact as cold as you can, and as unemotively, and use tentative conclusions, you are perceived to be allowing the facts to speak for themselves, and that is perceived to be more intellectual and credible.

By separating the lobbyist who is emotive from the bureaucrat who is “cold”, “unemotive” and therefore “intellectual and credible”, Chris invokes a dichotomy between the emotional and the intellectual. As I noted in Chapter 5, intellect is culturally associated with masculinity and whiteness in Western thought, and emotion associated with femininity and Blackness (JanMohamed 1985, p.63; Pateman 1989, p.124; Cohn 1993, p.229; Oyěwùmí 1997, p.3; Hooper 2001, p.99; Puwar 2004, p.21). Some officials were quite conscious of these gendered and racialised meanings in their day-to-day interactions: for example, female securocrats I interviewed spoke about being particularly careful in male-dominated national security meetings to be seen to stick to this script. Verity described, for instance, being mindful of “not being emotional” or “too impassioned” and “sticking to the facts”, especially when she is speaking about “soft” issues such as human rights.

Emotional distance is further conveyed through the use of technical language — what one interviewee called “acronym culture” or “jargon culture” — which gives ideas an air of

scientific-ness and professionalism and demonstrates the speaker's command of the subject matter (Kothari 2005, p.428). This norm is reflected in the writing style of the Civil Service, which I had to quickly learn during my participant observation. I was advised to write in short, declarative sentences with no unnecessary adjectives or adverbs, and without introducing too much complexity (see also Puwar 2004, p.113; Neumann 2012, p.33, 65; Wright 2020, pp.8–9). As Hooper (2001) observes, this style, favoured in the masculine-coded fields of politics, economics and current affairs, is one in which "text is presented as if it is a natural reflection of experienced reality, a transparent window on the world, reflecting pure truth" (p.131). The absence of the first person in the text renders the writer invisible, a voice from nowhere, contributing to the impression of scientific objectivity.

Few, if any, aspects of gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities I have outlined here are unique to the national security community. Most interviewees found the dominant script in national security policymaking to be broadly similar to the wider Civil Service, if perhaps exaggerated: more competitive, more fast-paced, more public school. As I explore later in this chapter, where policymakers come into contact with the operational side of national security — military, police, intelligence agencies — the latter bring with them a different set of norms, which also inflect policy discussions. More generally, however, securocrats perhaps explained the importance of certain norms differently to how they might in other policy areas. They described national security as exceptional due to the frequency of crises, the necessity of secrecy and the high stakes of getting things wrong.[39] Sam, for example, explained the importance of emotional reserve in terms of staying cool and taking an evidence-based approach in crisis situations:

> [I]f you were a really extravagant extrovert, I think that would be a bit challenging and people would find that a bit challenging, and maybe would question, 'Is this bluster?' or 'This person doesn't seem very calm,' etcetera. And I think part of that goes to the fact that a lot of the time we're dealing with a real time crisis, and what you're looking for is a calm assuredness that someone won't take a rash decision or rush to a decision but actually will base a decision on the evidence analysis produced. So I think yeah, that calmness and assuredness, level-headedness, really makes a difference.

[39] Several securocrats argued that national security was a particularly serious and important policy area due to its life and death stakes, though it is not unique in this respect. The COVID-19 pandemic would go on to demonstrate starkly that every policy area is a matter of life and death, whether or not this is usually acknowledged.

In summary, the gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities that constitute the dominant securocrat script combine a gentlemanly habitus linked to white, upper-class men from elite educational institutions with a level-headedness and emotional reserve which officials understand as demonstrating objectivity and rationality — a commitment to "allowing the facts to speak for themselves". Given the ubiquity of both gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities and liberal militarist ideas in the national security community, the two are inevitably discursively linked. This point proved difficult to discuss in interviews, because liberal militarism is so common-sensical among securocrats that it is almost invisible: when I asked interviewees whether their organisational cultures prescribed a particular way of thinking about the world, most either acknowledged that there was one but found it difficult to describe or reiterated that the Civil Service is politically neutral. However, gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities share some commonalities with the softer masculinity invoked by the evolving empathy interpretive repertoire outlined in Chapter 5. The construction of the UK's approach to counterterrorism as 'careful' and 'thought-through' would seem to resemble what Sam and his colleagues describe as necessary for securocrats in their bodily performances: calmness, moderation and restraint. In an organisational culture that valorises displays of measured level-headedness, one can see why constructing a policy position as bearing those same attributes might be an effective way of lending it credibility. Similarly, given the relationship that officials articulated between this level-headed performance and objectivity, one can see how expressing ideas in the style of the gentleman-bureaucrat — calmly and unemotively — might lend them the appearance of being rational and evidence-based. If, as I argued in Chapter 3, liberal militarism derives legitimacy from being constructed as non-excessive and unremarkable, its expression through performances of gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities would seem to effectively reinforce that impression. The deep association between the habitus of the gentleman-bureaucrat and institutional power in the British cultural imagination further contributes to a sense that the (normative) securocrat speaks with the voice of authority. Later in this chapter, I consider whether apparent changes in organisational norms are beginning to displace the discursive links between gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities and the practice of liberal militarism. First, however, I outline what those changes are, by examining some of the traditionally feminine-coded attributes that are — perhaps increasingly — valued among securocrats.

Insider-Activist Femininities

In addition to the qualities already described, interviewees emphasised the importance of being collaborative, consensual and inclusive in management and decision-making styles, qualities that are often culturally associated with femininity (Dahlerup 1988, pp.289–290; Wajcman 1998, pp.56–59; Jones, Charles & Davies 2009, p.5). For the most part, this norm applied to how officials interacted with their colleagues within government: for example, practising co-operation rather than competition between teams and departments; running meetings in inclusive ways where women and junior staff are encouraged to air their views; and promoting flexible working patterns more friendly to those with caring responsibilities. Many officials believed that these working styles resulted from the growing presence of women. Charlotte was one of several officials who speculated that promoting more women to senior roles might accelerate a cultural shift:

> I don't think [the culture is] as genuinely collaborative through all the levels as it would be if you had more women up there. […] Again, I'm generalising a bit, […] but […] I can't help but think it would be that little bit softer, that little bit more collaborative. […] And not needing to be quite so harsh with how you engage across Whitehall. And maybe that's also a reason why [my team, led by a woman] is quite good because we are led more by that, 'Actually let's be collaborative and let's actually force that,', even when oftentimes we've been pushed towards not doing that either. And that's mostly by [my senior female colleague's] bosses who might sometimes be more directive, but then again [she] tries to break that down a little bit and go, 'No, let's try to fight that'.

Several women I interviewed, many of whom were involved in diversity and inclusion initiatives, saw themselves as activists within their workplaces pushing back against what they perceived as a masculinist culture. As one counterterrorism official, Alison, put it:

> People like [my senior male colleague], he's an alpha male, he has a particular style. And that's not a problem but it's a particular way of being. And I feel like that is more respected than others […] Whereas I feel like I want to be a leader who cares about my staff and develops them and brings them on. And I feel like my skills are less about being alpha male. And so for me there aren't as many role models in my mould as there are in the alpha male mould. But I think that is changing and I'm beginning to see more women in senior roles that I am a bit like and I can see myself in.

While Charlotte and Alison make clear that this style is not currently the norm, many participants felt it was increasingly common and valued. One woman in the Senior Civil Service explained how she had been modelling this in her sub-department, and how it was beginning to change the culture of the wider national security community:

> I role model our entire [sub-department] as, 'We're the nice people, we're the collaborative people. We do have backbones of steel, and don't mess with us, but basically we're the nice people and we get things done by collaborative work, team work, group decision-making where that's viable […].' And I think we are, as a national security architecture, moving a bit more towards that.

Similarly, Wendy, who had been in the Civil Service for 20 years, saw a change over time:

> I'm naturally a people person, and I think, whilst I've got away with being maybe [a] more fluffy, line management, empathetic type at the beginning, it's actually quite a desired thing now. So I don't think I've adapted, but I think [my department] has caught up with me.

While I cannot verify whether this culture shift really is a result of the increased representation of women, or whether women really are more likely to adopt such ways of working, as these quotations demonstrate, they were repeatedly constructed as forms of femininity by officials themselves. As such, I refer to these as 'insider-activist femininities', which typically combine a more inclusive and less hierarchical working style with a willingness to stand up against workplace sexism. I suggest that, like gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities, these insider-activist femininities bear a discursive link to whiteness. They draw on elements of what might be called white-collar or business femininities that have been repeatedly performed (mostly) by white, middle-class women in office jobs, "balanc[ing] submissiveness with authority", "a well-groomed appearance, a well-modulated voice, maturity, poise and grace, and the ability to converse intelligently with managers" — what Pringle (1988) calls "[o]ffice 'lady' with its dual overtones of gender and class", which "encapsulates this ideal of white and middle-class femininity" (p.133). Yet if 'office lady' femininity has been traditionally characterised by gentility, insider-activist femininities also valorise an assertive, confrontational style when

addressing sexist or otherwise exclusionary behaviour. Debra explained how she modelled this style in her work:

> Observing women around the [meeting] table, a lot of them will say, 'I'm sorry, maybe I shouldn't say this but…' and then come up with a perfectly valid opinion. And men would just launch in [*laughs*]. And I'd see this and with my [junior female colleague]. I said, 'Never apologise for what you're going to say. Your opinion is as valid as anyone else'. If I was chairing a meeting and I would see that a woman wasn't getting heard I would make sure that she had the floor, and space to think. And if anyone tried to interrupt, I'd just roar at them. And I'd say, 'She's speaking now, please have the courtesy to listen'. And people would look a bit shocked and shut up then.

While Debra's intervention may have shocked her colleagues, other women I interviewed told similar stories, and conveyed that this forceful approach was necessary to advance the changes they wanted to see in their workplaces. I suspect, however, that to "roar" at colleagues would be an approach less available to women of colour, one of whom expressed that she had been described as "feisty" or "opinionated" for speaking her mind, recalling the stereotype of the "angry woman of colour" (Ahmed 2018, p.338; see also Chapter 7). This increasing value placed on insider-activist femininities, then, can be understood as a revaluing of feminine-coded attributes in masculinist organisations, much as is advocated by strategies of reversal — albeit a specific form of white, middle-class femininity. In the next section, I explore what this means for an antimilitarist, anticolonial feminist politics.

Strategies of Reversal: Women and Feminist Ideas

As I outlined in Chapter 2, some antimilitarist feminists suggest that, while both women and men are likely to find it difficult to adopt policy positions that are coded as feminine, the "presence of numbers of women for whom 'acting and feeling like a woman' were a matter of course, even sometimes a source of strength, and not an occasion for self-doubt and silence" might reduce the power of masculinist discourses to dismiss feminine-coded ideas (Cohn & Ruddick 2004, p.428). That is, a revaluing of certain feminine-coded qualities, as suggested by strategies of reversal, may enable subjects to resist the disciplining effects of masculinist systems of meaning, or even undo them altogether. These feminists do not suggest that either women or femininities are inherently antimilitarist or anticolonial, nor that it is (solely) the job

of women to challenge masculinist or militarist ways of thinking. Rather, they propose that, while feminists should promote decision-making cultures in which people of any gender can perform (particular) femininities and still be taken seriously, increasing the presence of women is part of a strategy for achieving that end (Otto 2006, p.169). For if women are present and valued in an organisation, it will be more difficult to denigrate certain qualities or worldviews *simply* because of their association with womanhood. Of course, which version(s) of femininity is/are revalued matters, as militarist organisations prize some femininities precisely for the work they do in sustaining the war system (Enloe 1983, 2000; Kaplan 1994). Such a strategy relies on the revaluing of a form (or forms) of femininity that present a challenge to militarist and colonial thinking and practices. As Chapter 5 identified, in the UK national security community, a willingness to prioritise long-term efforts to address structural inequalities that generate security problems over short-term measures to quell threats through the use of force is constructed as idealistic and utopian, as opposed to realistic and pragmatic. As such, I look to my empirical data for any evidence that these ways of thinking might be rehabilitated as part of the advancement of insider-activist femininities.

In my interviews and observations, I sought to understand what relationship (if any) these insider-activist femininities might have to militarism and coloniality and the discourses that sustain them. I asked female officials whether this growing emphasis on co-operation and inclusion extended beyond relationships within and between government departments and into how the UK government understands and pursues security. While many observed that, for example, women worked in greater numbers on (so-called) soft policy issues than hard ones (Puwar 2004, p.89; Chappell & Waylen 2013, p.611; Aggestam & Towns 2019, p.21), they took care to emphasise that women were just as able to work in areas that deal with the use of force in pursuing national security objectives. For example, most female securocrats bristled when I asked them whether they had heard any suggestion that women are more suited to working on soft issues, and some clearly took pride in making in-roads into the most masculinised and militaristic parts of government.

The framing of women's entry into the national security community as a feminist success has been used in diversity and inclusion initiatives to attract women into counterterrorism work. In May 2018, in collaboration with the FCO, the UK edition of *Vogue* magazine published a feature entitled 'In the Line of Danger' which profiled four female diplomats working in counterterrorism. Interviewees confirmed that the FCO had approached *Vogue* about running

the piece, as part of efforts to recruit more women into counterterrorism. While the article might primarily reflect the journalist's ideas about counterterrorism, the text was almost certainly approved by FCO officials before publication, suggesting they did not object to its framing. Accompanied by glamourous portrait photographs of the women, the piece emphasises their diverse ethnic, class and regional backgrounds, describing them as "part of a generation of trail-blazing women" (Lewis 2018, p.178) who face danger head-on, entering a department that "once had a reputation as the natural home of the kind of former public school boys who wore double-breasted suits at home and safari suits abroad" (p.180). This framing recalls the analyses of women in US counterinsurgency I presented in Chapter 2 (Khalili 2011; Grewal 2017; Razavi 2021), which show how they "celebrate work in masculinist policy spaces and with the military as an index of 'having made it'" (Khalili 2011, p.1475). By contrasting counterterrorist women who enjoy "the glamour of globetrotting" (Lewis 2018, p.181) with the stereotype of an old-fashioned, privately educated colonial administrator in his safari suit, the *Vogue* piece further suggests that women's advancement within the FCO represents a break from its colonial past, rather than a continuation of (particularly white) women's longstanding role in maintaining colonial relations of power (Mohanty 1984; Ware 1992; Cook 2007; De Jong 2017). The insistence by some of my interviewees that women are equally capable of doing such work, while clearly true, suggests that they feel that being comfortable with their role in the practice of militarism and coloniality is important to their credibility as securocrats, and not something most want to challenge through their insider activism.

One area where respondents *did* see their insider-activist femininities shaping foreign and security policies was in relation to applying gender perspectives to policy issues. For officials working on WPS, this meant advocating for the UK's commitments on WPS to be implemented across its foreign policy, for example, through training for British troops on how to respond to sexual violence in conflict, or efforts to promote women's participation in all peace processes that the UK government supports. Among counterterrorism officials, many argued that greater attention should be paid to the possibility of women becoming 'terrorists'. As Sylvia explained:

> [T]here's plenty of women at the operational end in counterterrorism. The sexism that I think does pervade counterterrorism culture thinking, and it's something that quite a lot of us are aware of and are trying to change, is how we view terrorists, […] where it's assumed that the man is the greater threat and the women and the kiddies are

> absolutely fine. And if Daesh [is] in the process of teaching us anything it's that you have to assume that the nine-year old girl is potentially as great a threat as the twenty-one-year-old man, in different ways. […] And I don't think we've fully made that adjustment yet.

In the meetings I observed, several officials (mostly, though not only women), made the case to their colleagues that more women should be recruited into counterterrorism policymaking because they would bring more attention to women's role in 'terrorism'. Thus, many women saw their insider activism as linked both to promoting collaborative and inclusive working styles *within* the national security community and advocating for what could broadly be described as liberal feminist reforms to foreign and security policies themselves. The latter, broadly, sought to make women and women's lives more visible in policy areas that have historically tended to ignore them and advance women's inclusion in state security sectors at home and abroad. As the above quote from Sylvia illustrates, this visibility is not necessarily intended to foster solidarity: it can also facilitate state repression of women and girls of colour.

While still marginal within national security policy discourses, these feminist ideas have gained a foothold in at least some parts of government, as evidenced by WPS policies such as the NAP (HM Government 2018b). Indeed, one site where insider-activist femininities, and particularly the promotion of liberal feminist ideas, were prominent was among those who worked on WPS and gender equality issues more broadly, who might be thought of as femocrats (Watson 1991; Eisenstein 1996). Advancing gender mainstreaming in foreign and security policies is part of these officials' job descriptions, and so these roles understandably attract people — mostly women — who are committed to some vision of gender equality. Furthermore, because the WPS agenda has been framed by some activists and organisations as an antimilitarist agenda (see Chapter 4), it is a site where critiques of militarism, and to a lesser extent coloniality, have surfaced in civil society advocacy. As such, in the next section I use my participant observation with the WPS policy community as a rich seam of experiences through which to analyse the relationships between militarism and insider-activist femininities.

Challenging Militarism in Women, Peace and Security Policy

UK civil society actors — including the NGO network Gender Action for Peace and Security UK (GAPS), feminist academics and independent activists — have launched sustained critiques of the government's approach to WPS as set out in its four NAPs.[40] These concerns are rarely framed around the concept of militarism, and largely do not come from organisations who would explicitly identify themselves as antimilitarist. Nonetheless, these critiques speak to the relationship between WPS policies and militarism. For example, they include: the silence of successive NAPs on the UK's role as a major arms exporter; the exclusion of issues relating to Northern Ireland from the NAP (thus locating conflict as something that occurs elsewhere and obscuring the UK's role in fuelling that conflict); and, most recently, the linking of WPS to the counterterrorism agenda (e.g. GAPS 2017, 2018; LSE Centre for Women Peace and Security 2017). These points of contention serve as useful lenses through which to examine the place of militarism within UK policy discussions on WPS, and I therefore paid close attention to them in my fieldwork.

When I started doing participant observation with the team of FCO, DFID and MOD officials who developed the NAP 2018–2022, they had already made decisions about whether and how to include most of these issues in the document. However, as civil society organisations continued to ask questions about them, I was able to participate in conversations about how the government should respond. I examine conversations about one of these issues — the UK's role in the arms trade — to analyse the gendered meanings they reproduce, and what they reveal about organisational norms that discipline the conduct of WPS officials.

The UK government actively promotes exports of defence and security equipment as a means of supporting UK industry, cementing bilateral relationships and reducing unit costs of supplying its own armed forces (Wearing 2018; HM Government 2021). Its heavy investment in the production and export of armaments and other defence equipment is a clear example of militarism: it is precisely a practice that prepares for organised political violence, construed by government policies as a normal and desirable activity (see Chapter 3). The arms trade also fits squarely within the range of issues addressed by the international WPS policy framework. The Beijing Platform for Action — only sometimes considered part of the WPS canon — contains

[40] Published in 2006, 2010 (revised in 2012), 2014 and 2018 respectively.

the most radical position, calling for "appropriate reduction of excessive military expenditures" and "the conversion of military resources and related industries to development and peaceful purposes", subject to national security considerations (United Nations 1995, article 143). Links between the arms trade and gender-based violence are referenced in the 2013 UN Arms Trade Treaty (ATT),[41] which was explicitly drawn into the international WPS policy framework through UNSCR 2106, as well as CEDAW General Recommendation 30, which calls for "robust and effective regulation of the arms trade" and the ratification and implementation of the ATT (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 2013, pp.8, 9, 24).

UK civil society actors have used these policy documents to argue that the government's arms transfer control practices are inconsistent with the principles of the WPS agenda, and should be brought in line. Written submissions from NGOs and academics during the development of the NAP 2018–2022 identified UK arms exports to Saudi Arabia, used to conduct airstrikes in Yemen, as a particularly egregious example: GAPS (2017) highlighted the "disproportionate" impact on women (p.6), while academics argued that these exports are inconsistent with the WPS agenda's prioritisation of conflict prevention (LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security 2017, p.2). However, the final NAP contained no reference to arms or the ATT. Notably, while the request to reference the ATT in the NAP is an attempt to highlight perceived contradictions between the UK's support for the WPS agenda and its arms export practices, it does not imply a full-scale critique of militarism. Indeed, the ATT itself, and civil society's vocal campaigning against UK arms exports to Saudi Arabia and not to its Western allies, have been criticised for playing into colonial mindsets and exceptionalising some forms of militarism while legitimising others (Stavrianakis 2016, 2019; Acheson & Butler 2019; Rossdale 2019, pp.239–260). Nonetheless, the responses to even this modest challenge to militarist practices illuminate the barriers that officials face in voicing critical ideas within policy discussions.

In interviews, I asked WPS officials whether and how they thought WPS policies should address the arms trade, how they and their colleagues had responded to critiques from civil society and whether they would consider making such arguments themselves. Unsurprisingly, their views varied. Some were broadly comfortable with the UK's approach to arms exports, some had sympathy with civil society organisations' critiques, and others sat somewhere in

[41] Feminist campaigners secured a provision in the ATT requiring states to take into account the risk of arms being used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence when making arms transfer licensing decisions (see Green et al 2013; Acheson & Butler 2019; Stavrianakis 2020a).

between. I spoke to Ruby, a WPS official who saw herself as something of an insider-activist trying to change her department's "traditional, old-fashioned culture" with its "masculine thinking". When I asked her what she thought about civil society requests for the NAP to address arms export policies, she responded:

> So I think one should try to do something about [UK arms export policies], but there's no way that we are ever going to do anything about it because, at the highest level, the biggest single revenue earner for the British Government is the arms trade. And so the fact that we're big on making arms and selling arms around the world is always going to take precedence over [concerns about] the use of those arms.[42]

Ruby reported that, although the argument had been raised by civil society, she had not heard anyone in government raise this critique themselves, a point confirmed by her colleagues. Indeed, during the drafting of the NAP, I slipped a (fairly innocuous) reference to the ATT into the text, curious to see what response it would get. I was instructed to remove it, although no explanation was proffered. Indeed, whenever civil society advocacy messages on this issue were mentioned, usually in passing, the reason for their dismissal seemed to be taken as given. In one such conversation, for example, an official referred to such advocacy as "people trying to push us down nasty little holes we are trying to avoid", and quickly moved the conversation along, confident that the reasoning was understood by all. Although I could infer it fairly easily, I was interested to hear the logic made explicit, and so asked WPS officials I interviewed to explain what would prevent them from raising such a critique. Ruby's response is instructive:

> Well, I suppose because we all know that we're talking in a world of *realpolitik*. […] Maybe, [coming] back to the masculine cultures of [the department], I think people see moral arguments as being the softer issues rather than the critical issues. […] It would be dismissed as an issue and you would be told you were not being realistic on it. So I don't think you would suffer anything for it particularly, but it would be completely set aside as an argument that mattered. And people don't. In any culture, people tend to conform to the culture of the organisation.

[42] To my knowledge, Ruby had not worked directly on arms transfer control and was not speaking from personal experience of the arms transfer licensing process. However, the idea that risk assessment processes for UK arms export licences continually facilitate arms transfers in spite of their obvious harmful consequences is well evidenced (see Mulready 2020, 2021; Stavrianakis 2020b).

Ruby's analysis resonates with that of Ross (2007), who recalls that among his former colleagues at the FCO, "to mention that there should be a moral component to policy was regarded, in the unstated and inexplicit way that a culture operates, as naïve and unprofessional" (p.140). Her view that critiques of British arms sales would be dismissed as unrealistic was shared by other officials who were privately critical of government policies in this area, as well those who supported them. For example, Christine, another WPS official, explained:

> I think I have to be realistic about what we're able to do. And I think it's quite high risk as well […] being seen as a little bit 'out-there' if you try to address [the ATT] within this policy framework even. I think it would get closed down quite quickly, is my instinct, but that's not based on any attempt of having tried to do that.

Ruby's and Christine's explanations recall the gendered and racialised systems of meaning discussed in Chapter 5, contrasting "soft issues" (ethical objections to the death and destruction caused by British weapons) with "critical issues", and emphasising the imperative to be "realistic". If, as I have argued, the liberal militarist worldview that predominates within UK national security policymaking is constructed as realistic and pragmatic, these characteristics are also apparently transposed onto subjects who espouse, or at least do not challenge such a worldview. Ruby and Christine fear being perceived as "out-there" or as "not being realistic" if they critique this view, affirming that conformity to a liberal militarist way of thinking about security is part of what it means to perform the role of the 'credible securocrat'. This does not appear to be different for men and women: the few men working on WPS gave similar explanations.

Similarly to the systems of meaning described in Chapter 5, these organisational norms regulating dissent reflect the structural constraints within which officials work. WPS officials have no direct power over UK arms transfer control policies, and they (very reasonably) pointed out that there are limits to what their raising such a critique would achieve. As in counterterrorism discourses, the imperative to be 'realistic' can refer to both the *realpolitik* worldview that Ruby describes and the need to manage one's expectations about one's own influence over policy. Another WPS official described the expected response from other parts of government if arms were mentioned in the NAP: "if we make it all about the Arms Treaty, then that's like arguing with someone who's just never gonna change their mind on that". As is

often the case for bureaucrats tasked with promoting gender perspectives in security governance, teams working on WPS are small, under-resourced and not structurally empowered to influence policies such as those on arms exports (Keaney-Mischel 2006; Klot 2015; Puechguirbal 2017; Bastick & Duncanson 2018). Successive governments' material and ideological investment in a militaristic approach to security has produced organisational structures that separate WPS from places where decisions on 'core' security issues are made. Even as organisational norms and meanings reflect this structure, however, they also reproduce it: the continued discursive framing of WPS as a (feminine-coded) soft issue likely plays a role in maintaining its marginal position. This combination of norms and structures produces a form of gender mainstreaming which, against the private wishes of some officials, promotes a liberal feminist vision of gender equality that does not challenge the colonial and militaristic orientation of UK national security policies and the racialised violence it produces.

If the (partial) embrace of insider-activist femininities has shifted norms concerning how securocrats interact with each other and the acceptability of espousing liberal feminist ideas in national security policy discussions, it does not extend to challenging the position of liberal militarism as a/the 'realistic' worldview. Indeed, Ruby was one of only a handful of officials I interviewed who saw this worldview as part of the masculine culture that she wished to see changed. The fact that WPS officials fear being seen as "out-there" or insufficiently "realistic" if they challenge the logic of liberal militarism affirms that accepting this worldview is part of the dominant gentleman-bureaucrat script, albeit an often unacknowledged one. Insider-activist femininities in their current form do not seek to rehabilitate the feminine-coded qualities of being idealistic or utopian, at least where these are linked to antimilitarist or anticolonial sentiments. To the extent that many 'insider-activists' viewed women's increasing participation in counterterrorism as a success for feminism, insider-activist femininities reinforce militaristic and colonial thinking. While my findings lend some support to the contention of scholars like Cohn and Ruddick (2004) and Duncanson and Woodward (2016) that the inclusion of women and feminist ideas might lead to a revaluing of certain feminine-coded attributes, then, these have not been the right kind of attributes or feminist ideas to advance an antimilitarist, anticolonial feminist politics. Further, I have argued that, just as gendered organisational norms limit critiques of militarism, the organisations' investment in militarism — as reflected in their structures and processes — curbs insider-activists' ability to challenge those norms in more radical ways. Next, I turn from strategies of reversal to strategies of displacement, to explore whether the inclusion of women and people of colour

has been accompanied by challenges to the discursive linkages between masculinity and war, femininity and peace.

Strategies of Displacement: Rewriting the Script

As I argued in Chapter 2, revaluing activities and values often coded feminine — even if these did include 'idealistic' antimilitarist sentiments — is insufficient to disrupt the gendered underpinnings of militarism and coloniality if these values are still associated only with women. As such, antimilitarist feminists have advocated for *both* the dismantling of masculinist hierarchies that value masculinities over femininities *and* the delinking of femininity with peace and masculinity with war (Otto 2006; Peterson & Runyan 2010; Duncanson 2013). As the reader will recall, Duncanson (2013) argues that, because the discursive association of masculinity with war is continually reproduced by the presence and practices of male-assigned subjects in militarist organisations, the participation of women in such spaces, along with feminist ideas, can disrupt those discursive links (pp.153–154). In this section, I examine this suggestion by asking whether the significant presence of women in UK national security policymaking shows any signs of weakening the discursive links between masculinity and its hegemonic liberal militarist worldview. Given that 'white spaces' and the attendant qualities of whiteness are also produced through their repeated association with bodies racialised as white (Puwar 2001, 2004; Ahmed 2007a), I also examine whether the smaller but growing presence of people of colour has in way displaced the association of liberal militarism with whiteness. In thinking through these questions, I draw on Peterson's (1992) argument concerning the reconfiguration of gendered categories:

> To the extent that 'adding women' means adding 'that which constitutes femininity' to categories constituted by their masculinity (the exclusion of femininity), a contradiction is exposed. Either women as feminine cannot be added (i.e. women must become men) *or the category must be transformed* to accommodate the inclusion of women (as feminine). The (masculine) gender of the original category […] is exposed. Because the categories of masculine and feminine are mutually constituted, a new category accommodating women/feminine necessarily reconfigures the gendered meaning of the original category — including the construction of masculinity it presupposed. (p.17)

Following Peterson's line of thinking, I seek to understand whether the addition of the feminine — the emergent valorisation of insider-activist femininities — shows signs of reconfiguring the gendered meaning of liberal militarism, and the constructions of masculinity with which it is linked. Interpreting these links proved challenging because, as I have already indicated, the hegemonic position of liberal militarist thinking in the national security community renders it virtually invisible. However, given that this liberal militarist politics is so pervasive, and accepting it is a condition of being taken seriously as a securocrat, I suggest that any discursive delinking of the securocrat script itself from white masculinity would be a step in this direction. In Chapter 5, I argued that liberal militarism is legitimised in counterterrorism discourses through its association with at least two white-coded masculinities: one constructed as tough, pragmatic and realistic (but potentially also excessively macho) and another constructed as moderate and restrained, with strong similarities to gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities. In the remainder of this chapter, I address how these associations are reproduced and contested, arguing that the experiences of women and people of colour demonstrate that they are far from being displaced.

The Re-gendered Securocrat: Displacing Masculinity?

Just as both women and men can and do perform gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities, so both women and men at times perform insider-activist femininities. Indeed, male and female interviewees described feeling an expectation that they should 'flex their style' according to the situation they found themselves in (see also Duerst-Lahti & Johnson 1991; Greenwood 2016). As in many masculinised environments, women were often expected to toe a careful line, performing in masculine-coded ways to preserve their credibility while maintaining just enough femininity as not to be perceived as overly manly (see also Jones 1993, p.103; Edwards 1994, p. 105; Watson 1994, p.219; Enloe 2000, p.263; Puwar 2004, p.93; Lovenduski 2005, pp.148–149). Pauline, a senior civil servant, described how this requirement led her to develop a more feminine style:

> My natural style is quite directive. My natural style is to make sure that we're delivering and we're on track and all of that sort of thing. […] So I deliberately try and soften and make sure that people know I'm approachable and can come and chat and smile, and ask about weekends and ask about their job and work and what have you.

> But then there are times when you do need to be very directive. So, as I say, it's just that flip in-between the spectrum.

While no behavioural style is 'natural' per se, Pauline's explanation indicates an expectation that she will at times adopt a style that she is less well-practised at performing. Some men, too, felt an expectation that they should perform at least some aspects of insider-activist femininities, in addition to gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities. Again, this reflects patterns observed in other white-collar jobs, in which men adopt certain feminine-coded working styles that are increasingly valued in the workplace (McDowell 1997, p.157, 208; Hooper 2001, p.156). Evan, a counterterrorism official, explained:

> [M]y observations are, especially on the gender side, you almost have to be a bit male in the way you approach your work. So, I think, a bit thick-skinned, a bit direct, authoritative, giving that impression that you're in charge. But I think we've also moved over to the… you also need to be inclusive and consultative and be willing to hear other people's views. I think that very much depends on the person, but I think that's how the shift has moved. You get an amalgam of those two different positions, which for some it can look disjointed because they're trying to wear both hats and neither are natural for them.

If both women and men are expected to switch between these styles of performance — presented here as gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities and insider-activist femininities — could it be said that the national security community is moving toward a culture in which these particular norms of masculinity and femininity are converging? These styles cite attributes that are sedimented in discourse as masculine and feminine respectively. Yet it is perhaps too easy to declare organisational scripts to be masculine- or feminine-coded based on their invocation of sedimented meanings, without giving sufficient weight to how gendered meaning is produced in the present moment (Fournier & Smith 2006; Nentwich & Kelan 2014, pp.128–129). If women are persistently expected to conform to (traditionally) masculine-coded norms, and men to (traditionally) feminine-coded ones, can those norms still be accurately described as such? Taking seriously the notion that gendered meanings are fluid and contextually-defined, it might make more sense to view these two scripts as (moving towards) a singular, hybrid script to which both men and women are held accountable. Pauline encapsulated this idea when asked whether there was a masculine culture in the national security community:

> The answer is probably yes, but there is a whole spectrum of behaviours, as you will know. And some behaviours are traditionally and historically seen as feminine, and some behaviours are traditionally and historically seen as masculine. And actually there are men and women all along that spectrum. And I slightly resist labelling one set of behaviours as one thing or another when actually there are lots and lots of behaviours, as I say, on that whole range. The skill, I think, is to be able to flex between them depending on where you are.

The observations of Pauline, Evan and others suggest tentative moves toward a securocrat script that is less gender-differentiated. By this I do not mean that the categorisation of subjects into gendered categories is refused such that the securocrat is entirely de-gendered (Lorber 2005, pp.33–38). Dress codes, for example, are an aspect of organisational norms in which clearly delineated gender differences remain. Rather, I refer to the "gradual relevance" of gender (Deutsch 2007, p.115; Nentwich & Kelan 2014, pp.129–130): a situation in which, while subjects are still categorised as women or men, this assignment becomes less relevant to the scripts they are held accountable for performing. If strategies of displacement can operate through the construction of an "identity that is equally open to women and men, that equally values 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits, so much so that they cease to be masculine and feminine" (Duncanson & Woodward 2012, p.12), the gradual incorporation of insider-activist femininities into the securocrat script appears to signify a tentative shift in this direction.

If officials are, through their everyday performances, producing a version of what it means to be a securocrat for which the gender of the performer is decreasingly relevant, this surely has implications for how the different worldviews and policy approaches they espouse will be gendered too. I have argued that the liberal militarist worldview that is hegemonic in the national security community derives legitimacy from its discursive links with gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities, which are constructed as rational and objective. However, if that worldview is repeatedly espoused by female and male officials, who are increasingly not seen to be 'doing masculinity' but some hybridised, less gender-differentiated securocrat script, then for how long can that worldview rely on its discursive links to masculinity to secure its legitimacy?

Clearly, gendered meanings are 'sticky' and take time to change: the continuation of this shift is neither inevitable nor irreversible, nor should the extent of such a change be overstated. The above-quoted interviewees referring to these scripts as masculine and feminine respectively is itself a gendering practice that reinscribes this binary opposition. As the earlier quotations from Charlotte and Alison suggest, insider-activist femininities are gaining currency. However, they are not equally valued with gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities, and the experiences of many women in navigating their organisational cultures reveal that the masculine-coded norm remains in place. For example, while both women and men noted the importance of gravitas, only women reported being taken to task for their failure to perform it. Sylvia and Claire, two white women working in counterterrorism policy, had been told by their seniors that they needed to display more gravitas in order to advance their careers. Both interpreted these comments as gendered:

> I was talking to my boss about promotion, what sort of things I could do to prepare for promotion — a few years down the line, not immediately. And he said, 'Oh you might want to think about your gravitas'. And I'm like, 'Oh, *fascinating*. Could you just describe gravitas to me?' And we got to the end of his description, and I'm like, 'That's a lovely description of an old Etonian white male definition of gravitas'.
>
> — Sylvia

> I once heard a word used, 'You need to have gravitas', but I don't like that word because it tends to conjure up an image of grey senior men. […] And I have a particular issue about it, because I was in a particular job and the next senior position was going to become vacant and they were looking to fill it, and I was a candidate for it. And the reason I didn't get it was I was told I didn't have enough gravitas. And I was like, 'Well, what does that really mean?' And no one could ever really define it, but it was men telling me this. And so for me that word is probably a bit of a thorn in my side. I've really not heard women say, 'You need to have gravitas'. And I tend to bristle against it when I hear that word.
>
> — Claire

As noted earlier, the gravitas required resembles a habitus into which only some officials have already been socialised, through formal education or less formal means. Claire explained that her "bubbly", "lively" personality and habit of gesticulating freely when talking were

interpreted by her male colleague as “flapping or flustering”, which he believed made her less likely to get promoted. As Young (2000) notes, “[t]he speech culture of white, middle-class men tends to be more controlled, without significant gesture and expression or emotion” whereas that of women, people of colour and working-class people “often is, or is perceived to be, more excited and embodied, values more the expression of emotion, uses figurative language, modulates tones of voice, and gestures widely” (pp.39–40). To increase her gravitas, Sylvia’s boss advised her to “talk a lot more slowly and to use pauses judiciously in order to reinforce one’s point”. In response, she put it to him that “pauses and women are not compatible” because women are frequently interrupted when speaking.

These findings resonate with Puwar’s (2001) analysis of the “somatic norm” in the Civil Service — that is, “the corporeal imagination of power as naturalised in the body of white, male, upper/middle-class bodies” (p.652). She draws on Mills’ (1997, p.76) metaphorical description of racialised norms as the water that fish swim in but do not see to explain that it is only those who, often by dint of their race, class and/or gender, have not been previously socialised into particular ways of behaving who “feel the weight of the water” (Puwar 2004, p.127). Meanwhile, those around whom such norms are constructed are often less aware of their gendered, racialised and classed character (Puwar 2001, p.656; Ahmed 2007a, p.157). Even if the scripts to which male and female securocrats are expected to adhere are converging, they still centre heavily on a somatic norm that women find more difficult to ‘fit’ because they are less likely to have experienced prior acculturation into this norm. While Sylvia’s boss recommended that she learn to mimic the habitus of an elite white man, the self-assured ease with which such men perform ‘old Etonian’ gravitas is acquired through a lifetime of socialisation: such fluency requires practice and cannot be quickly acquired on the job without intensive labour (Rai 2015, p.7; Kuus 2015). Moreover, even if Sylvia and Claire were to slow their speech and use judicious pauses, one wonders whether, as long their bodies are read as female, their peers would interpret them as correctly performing gravitas (see McDowell 1997, p.156, 210; Neumann 2012, p.165; Haynes 2012). While emergent organisational norms may not prescribe stark gender differences, such that some securocrats read them as gender neutral, the hybrid script’s strong resemblance to norms that remain firmly masculine-coded in the wider social context means that many female officials still read and experience it as masculine. Further, the gentleman-bureaucrat is not the only mode of masculinity that is valorised in the national security community. In the next section, I analyse what I call ‘legacy masculinities’, which provide a stark illustration of how the links between militarism,

masculinity and white, male bodies are continually reaffirmed through the embodied performances of securocrats.

Legacy Masculinities: "Big Boys Doing the War Stuff"

When asked whether outsiders' assumptions that the national security community is a masculine environment had any basis in truth, many interviewees signalled their awareness of a stereotyped image of national security policymaking as full of "macho" men or "alpha males" for whom raised voices and assertive, even aggressive behaviour were the norm. They were clear that this behaviour was not pervasive or even common, but neither was it entirely mythical. Participants linked this stereotype to what I refer to here as 'legacy masculinities' because it was commonly framed by participants as a relic of a past in which this behaviour was more accepted, but also a legacy that officials who had previously served in the military had brought with them. In line with common accounts of military cultures as "shouty shouty" (Greenwood 2016, p.96) and fostering a "cult of toughness" (Basham 2016b, p.31), interviewees described what they saw as "intimidating" or "harsh" communication styles. Amongst others, these include "bravado", shouting in meetings, hierarchical leadership styles, dark or offensive humour, and sometimes casual sexism and/or racism. Participants reported that these behaviours could still be found in two sites in particular: the Senior Civil Service and (parts of) the MOD.[43] Because I interviewed only a handful of senior civil servants and was not able to observe them often, I focus my analysis on the MOD.

Participants saw this macho style as having travelled from the operational side of national security, and the military in particular: one MOD official, Beth, described her colleagues in operational roles as "thinking they're the big boys, they're doing the war stuff". Alison, an official who had worked closely with the MOD, offered the following when asked whether she thought the national security space had a masculine culture:

> I guess anywhere where you have a crossover with operational areas that tend to be quite masculine and slightly militarised. So — that's probably the wrong word — but the police or the MOD, special forces, intelligence, those sorts of things. Those areas

[43] These are not the only sites in which these behaviours are performed: for example, some women working at DFID identified humanitarian operations as sites where "macho" behaviour was common.

> where there's a bit of a crossover with those quite male and potentially quite aggressive environments. And again, I think that's changing but there's still an element of that. I think there does tend to be a bit of a macho, bravado culture. In our policy jobs we are a bit separated from that but I think it probably does leak across a bit.

Several women at the MOD mentioned certain male colleagues referring to them in patronising terms as a "girl" or a "female". Another interviewee, Tamara, explained how she experienced this masculinity – and the sexism associated with it – in an embodied way when she was working on a country in the midst of armed conflict:

> Men used to stand with their legs up on the chairs at any opportunity, a very crotch-focused kind of presentation. […] You had to physically hold your space. So around the table, I remember that I used to have to sit up straight and have my arms out *[sits up straight and holds her arms out sideways slightly],* because I'd be around a table with a lot of men, and who often had a military or security background […] And it was very hard *[laughs]*. I mean, you get shut down in meetings. I remember making a contribution in a meeting once, and someone who knew very well who I was said, 'Excuse me, who are you?' Just a much more senior man, in a purely otherwise male meeting. Because they didn't like what I'd said.

I was struck by the parallels between these embodied performances of legacy masculinities and the construction of 'tough' counterterrorism approaches, discussed in Chapter 5. Both were strongly linked with actors involved in hard security: the military, police, intelligence agencies and MOD. Alison, Beth and Tamara, and other women and men I interviewed, constructed legacy masculinities as hyper-masculine, framing their bravado as overblown and outdated, in a way that recalls the construction of an over-emphasis on coercive counterterrorism as macho and excessively militaristic. Recall how Nadia, quoted in Chapter 5, linked a "very male" and "we will not fall" approach to counterterrorism with police and military personnel banging their fists on tables: she made a clear connection between an aggressively masculine embodied performance and the expression of (what she viewed as) a hyper-militaristic approach to security. I suggest that, through their embodied performances of legacy masculinities, certain officials reinforce the discursive link between (largely white) male bodies, a macho or aggressive form of masculinity and a 'tough' militaristic worldview.

The association of legacy masculinities with sexist comments and hierarchical management styles — behaviours which are becoming less acceptable in the Civil Service — perhaps lends power to discourses framing excessively militarist worldviews as hyper-masculine and outdated. However, legacy masculinities are far from being uniformly rejected. Brian, a civilian official in the MOD, explained that military experience and/or the masculine performances associated with it can confer considerable credibility on an official in the eyes of their colleagues:

> So a lot of the culture comes from the military. And there is therefore a certain type of Sandhurst type.[44] […] And I think that then does bleed across into this department. […] Therefore, people who can come across credibly to the military, which largely means behave like they're in the military, will tend to succeed better. […] There can be resentment at dealing with people, you know, 'If you haven't come up through the route that I have come up through' — the kind of Sandhurst and experience in the field — 'I simply do not value your opinion'. […] And I am aware of a lot of those comments being made of, 'What can a girl teach me about military operations? It's humiliating having to work for a woman'.

Brian describes (and critiques) the view that knowledge garnered through military training and deployment is more credible (if you lack it "I do not value your opinion") and also masculinised ("What can a girl teach me?") than that produced by civilian officials. Anthea, too, explained that because she had been deployed on more military operations than many men, her knowledge is taken seriously and perceived as "a bit different from, say, reading a book or listening to an academic talking about the subject". While some women can achieve this credibility by demonstrating their operational credentials, the terms in which Brian, Beth and others discuss it confirm that this is considered a performance of masculinity. For example, speaking about her military experience in a region affected by armed conflict, Beth explains:

> A lot of people I worked with died [during that deployment]. And not that I became comfortable with the realities of war, but I am very aware of it and I don't feel the need to express it. There are times I have spoken to civilians and they've tried to out-man me on that sort of thing. It's like, 'Darling, you're ten years younger than me,

[44] 'Sandhurst' is the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, Berkshire, where Army officers receive their training.

> you've never, ever served a day in uniform in your life. Don't try and out-macho me, because it's not going to work'.

The ascription of masculine-coded credibility to those who had worked on the operational side of national security is not limited to the MOD: officials in other departments made similar observations. For example, when I asked Tony, who had worked across a range of departments, what it takes to be taken seriously in national security, he responded:

> It depends who you want to take you seriously. But I think generally speaking, it helps if you have worked at the sharp end, […] if you've worked your way up in the [intelligence] agencies, for example. Or if you've actually done proper policy in the Home Office or somewhere like that.

I took Tony's reference to "proper policy at the Home Office" to mean that such credibility can also be earned through working at the heart of hard security policy as opposed to, say, peacebuilding at DFID or consular work at the FCO. This interpretation was reinforced by Douglas, an MOD official, who indicated that this credibility may not always be ascribed on the basis of personal experience, but that of the department:

> I do wonder whether the department you're in, if I'm being controversial, helps. […] I bet if you ask colleagues [in other departments] about me or about other members of the Ministry of Defence, they would often potentially give them more credit for the background they have in that than they're actually probably due, maybe. And that I think is definitely true of the intelligence agencies. I think they're given, because of where they're from, more credibility or more agency for you to believe what they're saying or to give them authority. […] You just associate someone with an organisation […] whereas I think some others within the [counterterrorism] community probably get an unfair press because of where they're from. DFID for instance, I think.

Douglas' comments reiterate what was highlighted by the quote from Isabelle at the beginning of this chapter: that the ascription of particular masculinities (or femininities) to worldviews or organisations and their ascription to individuals is mutually reinforcing. Not only can a department, its work and its worldview be taken seriously because of the experiences or embodied masculine performances of its individual members, but membership of that

department also confers (or denies) masculinised credibility on them in return. In this case, a feedback loop is created in which performances of legacy masculinities, membership of the most militarist organs of state, and the expression of 'tough' militaristic views each reinforce the perception of the other as signalling masculine credibility, at least in some parts of government.

If the potential merging of gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities and insider-activist femininities would threaten to displace the discursive linking of militarism with masculinity, then, legacy masculinities represent a site where this linkage remains intact, reinforced by the embodied performances of some male officials. While women can perform elements of legacy masculinities, such as gaining masculinised credibility through "behav[ing] like they're in the military", these performances are still firmly masculine-coded. Again, one cannot shed some aspects of somatic signalling: it is difficult to imagine a woman who adopted a "crotch-focused kind of presentation" in a meeting being perceived as authoritative. The construction of legacy masculinities – and their association with a 'tough' militarist worldview – presents a mixed picture of how gendering practices could both support and undermine a particular version of militarism. While some officials linked 'Sandhurst-type' legacy masculinities to credibility born out of military or other operational experience, others found it sexist and outdated, while some expressed both views. The parallels with how officials constructed a strong emphasis on coercive counterterrorism as "the tough stuff" that is "protecting the homeland" and/or an outmoded "let's just kill them" approach that is insufficiently "evolved" is striking. While difficult to verify empirically, it is possible that the framing of legacy masculinities as hyper-masculine might also work against the particular form of militarism with which they are associated. However, at least for now, the construction of a 'tough' form of militarism as masculine both resists displacement and apparently lends it credibility within at least some parts of the national security community. Indeed, whereas the notion of women's presence gradually effecting a discursive displacement might sound somewhat passive, the experiences of Tamara and others paint a picture of a struggle in which some men actively refuse to surrender the masculine character of their workplaces.

"Fit in to Get Ahead": Displacing Whiteness?

While I have noted that gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities and insider-activist femininities follow cultural scripts of whiteness, this was often much less apparent to the white officials I interviewed than it was to people of colour. Several of the latter could "feel the weight of the water", and their experiences help to reveal how the somatic norm of the securocrat remains a white one. For example, one man of colour working in national security described how he consciously engaged in code-switching — that is, modifying one's behaviour or style of speech, dress or expression, usually to one with a different racial or classed coding, to meet the approval of the intended audience (Goffman 1981, p.126; Scott 2000; Boulton 2016; McCluney et al 2019). He explained how this helped him to navigate differences between the environment in which he was raised and his current workplace:

> [I have adapted my] personal style as well, so the way I talk and discuss things with my family are very different to the way I talk and discuss things here. Now that's the same for anybody, of course. But when you come from a different cultural background or ethnic background, that can be harder. So when I go back home and I talk to family, if I talk to them like this [they will say], 'You've sold out, you've become posh, you've become one of them.' Whereas if I were to pick up the phone to them [at work] — it happens very rarely, but when I have — my colleagues will turn and go, 'I didn't know that you talked like that.' And some of them are like, 'Oh that's great.' But some are like, 'Oh, you're one of those.' And you can feel that cynicism, that potentially negative impression that you give […] Which can mean for some — not all, but for some — that they cognitively have to work that extra bit harder.

I heard similar stories repeatedly from and about officials who were of colour, working-class, or both. Indeed, Puwar (2001) argues that the norms of "middle-classness" have always been racialised, such that "the process of 'becoming' or performing upper/middle-class etiquette is simultaneously a performance of a particular variant of whiteness and a disavowal of blackness" (p.663). Some people of colour explained that they had long ago learned to adapt their style, like the above-quoted official whose upbringing in what he called a "very white, middle-class town" meant he had learned to adopt this habitus with such proficiency that it no longer required conscious effort. Several interviewees commented that most people of colour in the national security community had privileged upbringings or educations that enabled them to fit in with relative ease. As one official put it, "everybody who's not white speaks and

behaves like a Caucasian and somebody who's been to public school because half the time they have been as well" (see also Puwar 2001, pp.666–667). For others who were not so well-practised, the weight of this expectation was more consciously felt.

In addition to speech, the white somatic norm encompasses bodily appearance and dress, which was more apparent in the experiences of women of colour. Whereas men could stick to the 'uniform' of a suit and short haircut, women faced difficult choices about their attire and hair styling. One woman of colour described how most (white) women in her office adopted a "certain uniform", wearing high heels and looking "very put together, very designed". In contrast, she had been seen as an "oddity" when she arrived, particularly when her dress reflected her cultural heritage:

> You know when you watch them Western films and someone walks into the bar and it all goes quiet and everyone stares at you? That's exactly what it was like. So I would walk through the [department] and people would literally stare at me and move their head along as I was walking along like that. So that was weird. It doesn't happen as much now. People do still stare but I'm lucky that I'm a sort of person who doesn't really take that on board.

Drawing on the work of Fanon (1986), Puwar (2004) identifies this 'look' as one commonly experienced by people of colour, especially women of colour, when entering organisational spaces where the somatic norm is white and male – a look "which abnormalises their presence and locates them, through the workings of racialised framings, as belonging elsewhere" (pp.41–42). This look therefore both reflects and also reinforces the whiteness and masculinity of the space in question. This interviewee explained that, although she had been encouraged by colleagues to change the way she dressed in order to "get ahead", she would never be able to fully "fit in" to the white-coded norm:

> A manager who was [a man of colour] said to me, 'You will never get ahead, because you don't dress [like], have a look at…', and he was pointing out different older white ladies to me and saying, 'Look at how they dress, look at how they are. You need to be like them to be able to get ahead, because they are the ones who do the interviewing.' […] But I suddenly thought to myself, 'Well I can't be like them anyway.'

Recognising that her embodiment meant she would never be racialised as white, this official decided that "what I can be is my own person […]. That's all I can do. If that doesn't fit in, then that doesn't fit in." Having little of her career left ahead of her, she was willing to take the risk that her refusal to imitate the white somatic norm would stop her from getting promotions, but acknowledged that this choice would be more difficult for younger officials with more to lose.

If there is some — albeit limited — evidence that the securocrat script's links to masculinity have been weakened, then, I found little evidence that its links to whiteness have been displaced. People of colour can and do perform gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities, but some — particularly those not already socialised through their formal education to adopt such a habitus — were conscious that they were performing whiteness, with the cognitive effort that code-switching entails (McCluney et al 2019). Again, my findings resonate with Khalili's (2011, p.1475) analysis of US counterinsurgency, which suggests that the softening of masculinities has created a culture in which middle-class white women can more readily feel at home (see also Hooper 2001, p.74). She argues that as counterinsurgent masculinities soften and (white) militarist femininities emerge, they are meeting somewhere in the middle, producing an organisational culture in which "gender does not tell us anything about one's location in the hierarchies, and where different masculinities and femininities can coexist simultaneously if inflected through the lens of racialisation and class" (2011, p.1476, 1491). Gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities and insider-activist femininities may be converging, but they are both constituted by a habitus that is distinctly white and middle-class.

Indeed, I generally found a higher level of comfort around talking about gender than about race, with the latter often only referenced indirectly through conversations about ethnicity (see also Puwar 2004, p.43, 134–135). As one woman of colour put it, "[D]efinitely you can see […] people wanting to champion and be seen to be at the forefront of gender equality, but race is something… they're not in that space". Similarly, while advocacy for the inclusion of gender perspectives in security policy has achieved some success, for example through the establishment of posts dedicated to WPS and the adoption of a NAP, the same cannot be said for race.[45] Insider-activist feminists were proud to be gender champions but people of colour

[45] While the Cabinet Office has a Race Disparity Unit, it primarily collects and publishes statistics, and has not been charged with mainstreaming considerations of racial equality in security policies as WPS teams have been with gender equality.

were often hesitant to raise critiques of UK policies that invoke race (see also Puwar 2004, p.138–139; Kothari 2006b, p.2; Ahmed 2012, pp.142–171). As one person of colour put it:

> So if you raise a challenge to a policy based on your background, your ethnicity, for example, you'll actually get a lot of people from your ethnic background saying, 'Shhh, don't raise that. Don't draw attention to it. Don't draw attention to how different you are, just go along with it.' Which is negative but actually it comes from this [idea that], 'If you work hard, keep your nose down, head down, that would be enough to get you through. And if you're lucky you'll progress, but just keep your head down and do the job, go home. Don't bring race into it, don't bring faith into it, because you'll draw attention, you'll make mountains out of molehills.' I get told this regularly, 'Don't bring up race, it's not an issue.'

As with some challenges to the masculinity of the 'hard' security community, this official and their colleagues anticipate that challenges to the whiteness of their workplace will be actively resisted — a dynamic I explore further in Chapter 7. But what do these findings reveal about strategies of displacement?

The logic of strategies of displacement is that breaking the discursive links between femininity and peace, and masculinity and war, would mean that actors invested in militarism could no longer rely on masculinist discourses, assumptions and hierarchies of value to secure its legitimacy. Similarly, a strategy of displacement framed around race might posit that denaturalising the construction of the 'protector' as a white subject who defends the nation against racially-marked threats would help to undo the racialised discourses that undergird liberal militarism. The emergence of a securocrat script that ceases to be masculine or feminine may lead to the liberal militarist worldview with which it is associated similarly becoming less gendered, though I have argued that this is not currently the case. Were organisational cultures in the national security community to proceed in this direction, however, it also seems unlikely that this would drastically undermine discourses that legitimise militarism. I have already suggested in Chapter 5 that actors invested in militarism can draw on a range of discursive resources to reinforce the impression that militarism is natural and inevitable, including ones that do not appeal to masculinist hierarchies of value. Given that the figure of the securocrat remains firmly racialised and classed – and may well continue to be so even if gender becomes less relevant to the script – securocrats could continue to appeal to

racialised and classed meanings to (re)produce liberal militarism as legitimate. Any strategy of displacement that relied on the inclusion of white, middle-class women to disrupt the discursive association of liberal militarism with masculinity would of course overlook its ongoing reliance on whiteness and middle-classness.

Conclusions

I have shown that, if the gendered and racialised systems of meaning that give militarism and coloniality their air of inevitability are sedimented in discourse, the construction of norms through the everyday embodied performances of securocrats represents a site where those meanings can be reinforced and contested. I have argued that securocrats' performances of a habitus associated with middle- and upper-class, Oxbridge-educated white men have cemented the discursive links between liberal militarism, whiteness and masculinity. Their performances of these gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities, characterised by 'gravitas' and emotional restraint, repeatedly reinforce the impression that the liberal militarist views they espouse are objective, rational and evidence-based. Similarly, the performance of legacy masculinities, predominantly by white men, continually reproduces the association of militaristic worldviews with masculine toughness, which may be read as either credible and authoritative or hyper-masculine and overblown.

Through my analysis of how these norms are contested, I have also explored Duncanson (2013) and Duncanson and Woodward's (2016) hypothesis that women's inclusion in masculinist organisations, combined with the introduction of feminist ideas, can prompt a revaluing of femininities (reversal) and deconstruction of the dualisms of masculinity/war and femininity/peace (displacement). Though I do not advance a causal claim, I have shown that the increased presence of mostly white women in UK national security policymaking has been accompanied by changes in organisational cultures that can be read as modest shifts toward both reversal and displacement. However, I have argued that neither of these developments disrupts the gendered and racialised discourses that underpin militarism and coloniality in the ways that some antimilitarist feminists might hope.

In relation to strategies of reversal, my findings highlight that — as Duncanson and Woodward acknowledge (2016, pp.7–9, 11–12) — whether or not the revaluing of femininity disturbs militarist discourses depends on *which* feminist ideas are introduced and *which* femininities

revalued (see also Razavi 2021). The insider-activist femininities that have gained a level of acceptance in UK national security policymaking do not revalue the qualities of being idealistic or utopian that are associated with antimilitarist and anticolonial politics. The feminist ideas that are gaining currency, though some of them promote policy changes that better reflect the needs and interests of some women and girls, do not encompass a critique of militarism or coloniality. In the case of 'gender-sensitive' counterterrorism, these ideas include advocating the extension of racialised regimes of surveillance and criminalisation into the lives of women and girls of colour. For femocrats whose feminist ideas are (even moderately) antimilitarist or anticolonial, their expectations about how even mild critiques would be received affirms that acceptance of a liberal militarist worldview is central part of the securocrat script. The gendered and racialised meanings applied to policy approaches and worldviews are thus transposed onto subjects who espouse them, such that the securocrat who toes this line is appropriately 'realistic', while one who does not is 'out-there'. Meanwhile, other women welcome their active participation in militaristic practices as a feminist success.

As for strategies of displacement, my findings are a reminder that gendered and racialised meanings are slow to change, and therefore, unsurprisingly, the increasing presence of women and people of colour in recent decades has not been accompanied by a radical rewriting of the securocrat script. Nonetheless, securocrats' accounts of their experience both reflect and potentially constitute a modest re-gendering of that script, such that the norms to which women and men are expected to comply are apparently converging. While this trend might over time weaken the discursive links between masculinity and the militarist and colonial worldview that predominates in the community, as Duncanson and Woodward suggest, as long as the practice of liberal militarism maintains its links to whiteness and middle-classness there are other discursive resources on which it can draw for legitimacy. My analysis of the somatic norm in national security spaces also indicates that, as adeptly as women and people of colour perform gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities, their embodiment means they are interpellated as other than white and male – and therefore other than the normative gentleman-bureaucrat. This further suggests the limits of inclusion as a means of displacing racialised and gendered discourses that sustain militarism and coloniality. My findings do not entail that strategies of inclusion could *never* advance dynamics of reversal and displacement in ways that are more transformational, for example if they were accompanied by the inclusion of antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist ideas. However, they do demonstrate how organisations' investment in militarism, as reflected in their structures and norms, impedes

efforts toward cultural change. Next, I explore further how securocrats' contributions to policy discussions are regulated, by examining organisational norms and assumptions regarding how knowledge is produced and what kinds of knowledge should be taken seriously.

CHAPTER 7

Seeking 'Diversity of Thought': Epistemologies, 'Objectivity' and Ignorance

As I noted in Chapter 1, within the UK national security community there has been a burgeoning diversity and inclusion agenda aimed at increasing the representation of women, people of colour and other historically excluded groups and creating more inclusive working environments. In recent years, this has been framed in part as a response to the Chilcot Report's finding that senior national security officials did not challenge each other's thinking in the run up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Chilcot 2016, p.57). As this chapter elaborates, officials working on diversity and inclusion argue for more diverse representation partly on the basis that this will bring greater 'diversity of thought' to policy discussions, making for more effective policies. By opening up conversations about the relationship between social location and knowledge production, this discourse on diversity of thought reveals much about the epistemological assumptions underpinning national security policymaking. In this chapter, I use discourses around diversity of thought as a lens through which to understand how securocrats think about whose knowledge matters and why, what counts as valuable knowledge in the policymaking process, and how the answers to these questions are racialised and gendered. Based on interviews with diversity workers — i.e. individuals working to increase diversity and inclusion across the national security community — I explore whether and how the discourse on diversity of thought challenges the traditional conceptualisation of the bureaucrat as an objective knower. Whereas Chapter 6 explored how feminine-coded performances have been revalued as (mostly white) women have advanced in the national security space, this chapter focuses in particular on how and why knowledge produced by people of colour — or a particular subset of it — has been revalued through discourses on diversity of thought, and with what effects. Because conversations about race and/or ethnicity have been particularly prevalent in this discourse, I examine in particular the experiences of people of colour in national security policymaking, and explore how organisational norms that centre whiteness shape practices of knowledge production and limit the possibilities for challenging militarist and colonial ways of thinking.

The chapter is structured as follows. I begin by outlining important features of the diversity of thought discourse, how and why it positions questions of representation within policymaking along lines of gender, race and other axes of difference as a national security concern. I explain how this discourse conceptualises the relationship between diverse life experiences of securocrats and the knowledge and analysis they contribute to policy discussions. I argue that this formulation challenges the traditional construction of the bureaucrat as an abstract and objective individual whose gendered and racialised embodiment is inconsequential to knowledge production. However, while the diversity of thought discourse aligns with certain feminist epistemological insights regarding the situatedness of knowledges, it tends to treat gender and race as markers of difference, not as systems of power. I show that the diversity of thought discourse continually slips into a 'power-evasive' framing (Frankenberg 1993, p.14): one in which recognition of power imbalances is evaded. To illustrate what is missed by such a framing, I analyse conversations about the Prevent programme to show how racialised organisational norms suppress knowledge about Prevent's complicity with systemic racism, arguing that these routinised acts of unknowing offer an example of white ignorance (Mills 2007). By analysing the power-evasive framing of conversations with/among securocrats about British colonial history, I further show how discourses on racial diversity tend to obscure, rather than challenge, the coloniality of UK national security policies. I argue that as long as discourses on diversity of thought are power-evasive, they can neither identify nor remedy the reproduction of white ignorance, nor other effects of power that discipline knowledge production in policymaking. Challenging militarist and colonial ways of thinking about security demands an acknowledgement of the imbrication of knowledge with power; however, recognising this within the Civil Service would require a rethink of the very principles of objectivity and political neutrality on which the institution is built.

Diversity of Thought: A National Security Issue

The government's response to the Chilcot Report has characterised the inquiry as having identified a tendency towards 'groupthink', which it interprets as a process in which "a desire to conform results in unchallenged analysis or decisions" (HM Government 2018a, p.27). The term is typically used to describe a situation where group members prioritise maintaining group cohesiveness over a commitment to rigorous analysis and decision-making, such that they decline to challenge each other's ideas (Janis 1972, p.9). Subsequent to the Chilcot

Report, a discourse has gained prominence among securocrats that presents promoting diversity and inclusion as a means of preventing groupthink and ensuring effective challenge. 'Inclusion' — understood as the presence of a workplace culture in which people feel they can freely speak their minds — seeks to overcome the pressure for conformity stemming from group dynamics. The addition of 'diversity', however — the recruitment and promotion of policymakers from more diverse social backgrounds — extends this analysis, positing that the absence of challenging ideas is a function not only of groupthink, but of who is admitted to the group in the first place (e.g. Gove 2020). As Charlotte explained:

> Just walking the floor, again most of the accents you hear are all the same. Everybody looks the same. And a lot of people probably don't think that differently. […A]ll my friends who've been to public school think a similar way 'cause they've all been through boarding school. That leaves a certain trace on you. […] If you said you've got more groups of people who've all been to boarding school, all went to Oxbridge and are all white, you're probably going to have more groupthink just because their backgrounds are oftentimes just very similar.

Where Charlotte refers to 'groupthink' here, she is not (only) speaking about a pressure to conform but making a claim about how people's backgrounds and life experiences shape their thinking. She argued, as many participants did, that the absence of diversity — in terms of protected characteristics enshrined in law, such as sex, age, race and religion, as well as, for example, class, education, neurodiversity and caring responsibilities — produces decision-makers who tend to think in similar ways, a claim that I will unpack throughout this chapter. Drawing on research conducted in the private sector (Hewlett & Sumberg 2011; Hunt, Layton & Prince 2015; Hunt et al 2018) and in the field of WPS (O'Reilly, ó Súilleabháin & Paffenholz 2015), a number of securocrats, including SaDDIN and other diversity networks, have made the case for diversity and inclusion on the grounds that it will promote diversity of thought and so contribute to more effective decision-making.[46]

Though often not explicitly defined by securocrats, 'diversity of thought' in the lexicon of human resources practitioners refers to a situation in which members of an organisation

[46] This agenda is not unique to the UK: similar arguments have been made, and initiatives established, in other contexts (e.g. Hurlburt & Cofman Wittes 2019; Harris Rimmer & Stephenson 2019; Jenkins 2019; Lequesne et al 2020; Blinken 2021), and they echo logics that have long been articulated at the UN under the WPS rubric.

recognise and value the different knowledge, ideas and ways of thinking that each member brings to their work (Diaz-Uda, Medina & Schill 2013; Cairns & Preziosi 2014). In government documents, the idea is explicitly linked to "embracing challenge", which entails "seek[ing] real diversity of thought, not just shades of mainstream thinking" (MOD 2017b, p.62). While a few diversity workers I interviewed made essentialist arguments that, for example, women naturally think more collaboratively, most made the case that diversity in terms of gender, race, class and so on could be a proxy for diverse life experiences, which would in turn produce diversity of thought. For example, when I asked Wendy why she thought diversity and inclusion was important, her response was typical of many I received:

> It's all to do with diversity of thought for me. […I]t's obvious that you need diversity, 'cause it's the decent thing to do in a sense, *but* to make the business case for it, with diversity of thought you get much better policymaking. You get a much better range of options. And to get diversity of thought you need diversity of people […] in each policy team, getting different people together with different backgrounds and different thoughts.

So the logic goes, people whose lived experiences differ as a result of how they are gendered, racialised, classed and so on, will bring different knowledge, assumptions and analysis to policy discussions. In an inclusive culture where officials feel free to speak their minds, this will increase diversity of thought, broadening the range of policy options that are discussed, and potentially yielding better conclusions. While many officials also made the case that marginalised groups have an equal right to participate in government, the present discourse frames diverse representation as critical to national security due to its potential to produce diversity of thought, thereby preventing policy failures caused by an absence of effective challenge.

From a feminist, anti-racist perspective, this diversity of thought discourse might well provoke mixed feelings. Diversity initiatives are often critiqued as taking a "body count" approach (Spivak 2000, p.128; also Alvesson & Due Billing 2002), changing who is at the decision-making table but not what is discussed. As Angela Davis (quoted in Eckert 2015) put it:

> Diversity is a corporate strategy. It's a strategy designed to ensure that the institution functions in the same way that it functioned before, except that you now have some black faces and brown faces. It's a difference that doesn't make a difference.

The discourse on diversity of thought appears to go beyond counting 'diverse' bodies, explicitly seeking to change how the organisation functions by highlight and challenging organisational norms that deter dissent. However, feminists critique the watered-down language of 'diversity' — as opposed to 'equality' or 'justice' — as celebrating difference while often not signalling a commitment to the redistribution of power (Deem & Ozga 1997, p.33; Ahmed 2007b; Davis 2008, p.24; Bilge 2020). While most officials expressed a commitment to more equitable representation for marginalised groups, the prioritisation of the "business case" for diversity as a resource for making better policy certainly signals the potential for equality and justice to take a back seat. Such a tendency can be observed elsewhere in how 'diversity of thought' has been mobilised to deflect attention from structural inequalities: for example, when minister Matt Hancock defended the lack of Black MPs in the Cabinet by saying, "It's diversity of thought that's the really important thing when you're taking those big decisions around the Cabinet table" (Besanvalle 2020). Used in this way, it is easy to see how a focus on diversity of thought can serve to conceal, rather than address, the continuation of systemic injustices (see Titley & Lentin 2008; Ahmed 2012, p.72).

As Ahmed (2012) notes, the vagueness of 'diversity' as a normative goal can allow diversity workers to use it as a (relatively) accepted, non-confrontational label under which to pursue more transformative political ends (p.65). The diversity of thought discourse has gained traction as a response to a military intervention now widely recognised as a catastrophic mistake, and one diversity worker I spoke to, Lisa, viewed the diversity of thought agenda as a means of challenging the militarist and colonial ways of thinking that led to that intervention and others like it. She explained:

> [W]hen you're looking at national security issues, so many of these problems sometimes are connected with gender policy, gender issues, understanding of what, when and how we should use military force. Such a traditionally masculine way of interpreting policy and events and everything. […] I felt particularly with the Chilcot Report and the Iraq inquiry and everything, I feel that having diversity of thought, whether that is from women or ethnic minorities, or different ages, or different social backgrounds, […] it's just so important to get in that challenge inherent in how we work with each other. […] I feel like having that really militaristic approach to policy,

> which we have had in the past, it's a tendency of the language and the history, I think; the way in which men have managed the state.

Lisa makes a connection, as I have done in previous chapters, between the masculine coding of policy approaches that prioritise the use of military power and the historical predominance of men in national security policymaking, regarding diversity of thought as a means to challenge "that really militaristic approach". However, it was not conceived in this way by most interviewees. In analysing the diversity of thought discourse in terms of its relationship to militarist and colonial thinking, I am not assessing it on its own terms. Nonetheless, I find conversations about diversity of thought, its conceptualisation and its limits, instructive in illuminating how organisationally embedded assumptions about knowledge production enable or inhibit the sharing of challenging ideas. I will later explore how the power-evasive character of much of the discourse on diversity of thought inhibits its use as a vehicle for pursuing anticolonial and antimilitarist ends in the way that Lisa suggests. First, however, I examine how this discourse troubles some inherited ideas about civil servants as producers of knowledge.

No More Disembodied Bureaucrats?

The traditional conceptualisation of the role of the civil servant emphasises personal detachment and objectivity, resembling Weber's (1968) theorisation of bureaucracy as "eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation" (p.975). In common with the liberal subject around whom much Enlightenment political philosophy is constructed, the bureaucrat is usually understood as an abstract individual whose gendered and racialised embodiment is irrelevant to their work (Pateman 1988, pp.39–76; Mills 1997, pp.16–17, 60; Lister 1997, pp.69–70; Puwar 2004, pp.55–57, 133). This imaginary of the bureaucrat as disembodied has been enabled by the historic conformity of most civil servants to the white, male somatic norm: the body has been regarded as irrelevant by and for those whose bodies do not stand out as different (Mills 1997, p.53). Whereas the body is seen as the location of emotion, bureaucracy is concerned with the realm of ideas and rationality, constructed as the antithesis of embodiment. As Oyěwùmí (1997, p.3) explains, in the history of Western social and political thought,

> '[b]odylessness' has been a precondition of rational thought. Women, primitives, Jews, Africans, the poor, and all those who qualified for the label 'different' in varying historical epochs have been considered to be the embodied, dominated therefore by instinct and affect, reason being beyond them. They are the Other, and the Other is a body.

His embodiment rendered invisible by its whiteness and maleness, the bureaucrat has been constructed as a rational, almost machine-like processor of information: he consumes research and analysis and turns it into policy options for ministerial approval, without regard for personal preferences or political opinions. The structure of the Civil Service is built on this idea, designed to produce and promote generalists who are understood to be (relatively speaking) interchangeable, developing a "universal rationality" (Walters 1987, p.28) that can be applied by any official to any policy area.[47] Unencumbered by the investments and biases that come with embodiment and particularity, this universal rationality is thought to produce impartial policy advice.

This conception of the disembodied bureaucrat recalls the feminist critiques of scientific objectivity I outlined in Chapter 3. It bears a striking resemblance to the "gaze from nowhere" (Haraway 1988, p.581), presenting partial and situated knowledge as disembodied and transcendent by concealing the workings of power in knowledge production. Whereas feminist epistemologists argue that knowledge is contingent on the location of the knower within systems of power such as gender, race and class, this conception of objectivity aims for knowledge that is true independently of the knower (Rich 1986; Haraway 1988; Code 1993). While I do not suggest that most officials subscribe to the idea that civil servants' work can be *entirely* detached from their personal experiences, emotions and opinions, many described a separation between the practice of thinking as a bureaucrat and thinking from their position as a situated, embodied subject. For example, Nina explained how she coped with working on issues where she disagreed with government policies:

> So, I just tell myself that I'm here to support, whether it's the [Secretary of State] or my head of unit, to deliver an objective or policy. You have to separate yourself,

[47] Though the balance between producing generalists and specialists tends to shift back and forth over time and varies between departments, interviewees agreed that generalists were favoured for senior roles. This is designed into the Civil Service Fast Stream, which moves individuals between different roles and specialisms to prepare them for leadership positions.

> basically. What you do at work is separate from who you are as an individual. So I don't ever feel like any work I'm doing here is reflective of me as an individual.

In practice, the idea that an official's life experience influences their contributions to policy discussions is neither surprising nor brand new to securocrats. But whereas difference has long been *tacitly* recognised, despite being obscured by dominant discourses, the diversity of thought discourse makes a virtue of (some kinds of) difference. This is perhaps seen most clearly in counterterrorism work, where the predominance of middle-class white men has come to be viewed as a problem by some officials, many of whom have become diversity workers in some capacity. For example, two white women, Francesca and Sylvia, described why they thought diversity and inclusion were important in counterterrorism as follows:

> For counterterrorism, when it's literally a bunch of white people sitting in a room talking about Islamist extremism on the Prevent side of things, […] when it's predominantly affecting one religious group — then I guess having no representatives who actually understand and have grown up in that kind of culture, that faith, understanding how you can turn people away from radicalisation. [...] And then the far-right extremism, I guess socioeconomic diversity is important: understanding what leads people to become radicalised on either side, right-wing or Islamist.
>
> — Francesca

> How are we meant to fundamentally understand some of this when all of us have learnt about the Koran via textbooks or seminars and things like that? So I can quote bits and talk about bits and defend my own. But I haven't lived it, I don't feel it, I'm not from those communities. So inherently we're coming at it from an unconscious bias, different angle. […] I'm conscious that we all think like liberal middle-class people, which is great in terms of agreeing something, but you're not necessarily quite agreeing the right thing.
>
> — Sylvia

During my fieldwork, a number of counterterrorism officials were making the case to their seniors that they needed more BAME officials in order to better understand Islamist extremism, more working-class officials to understand far-right extremism, and more women

to maintain attention on women's 'extremist' activities.[48] Each of these three claims posits a particular relationship between social location, 'extremism' and knowledge production, the analysis of which would merit a whole chapter of its own. For the purposes of this chapter, I wish to draw out two points.

First, a claim is made that there are types of relevant knowledge that cannot be acquired through "textbooks or seminars", but only through lived experience of viewing the world from a particular social location. The post-Chilcot diversity of thought discourse shares this with many feminist and other critical epistemologies, which reject abstraction and emphasise everyday lives, and particularly those of the marginalised, as starting points for knowledge production (e.g. Hartsock 1983; Harding 1993; Collins 2014, pp.257–260). Francesca, Sylvia and others did not elaborate precisely *how* these experiences change people's thinking, but they repeatedly cited the experience of growing up among Muslim or working-class communities[49] as generating knowledge about how others in those communities view the world, what might lead them to toward radicalisation and what might turn them away from it.

Second, this latter claim can at times rely on the notion of an 'authentic' experience belonging to each of these groups: that there is some experience shared by all or most members of a marginalised group that would give each the authority to speak about that 'community' as though as it were a coherent entity (Minh-ha 1989, pp.86–94; Bhattacharyya et al 2021, pp.89–90). Of course, experiences vary according to many factors, including individuals' locations in multiple, intersecting systems of power: there is no common or authentic experience of being a woman or a Muslim from which to generate knowledge claims (Grant 1992; Harding 1993, p.62; Bar On 1993, p.92; Mills 1998, p.38). Furthermore, experience is not a transparent or foundational source of knowledge in itself, but is interpreted through discourses shaped by power relations (Scott 1991). One official used the authority accorded to them by their colleagues as a Muslim to subvert this appeal to authenticity, for example by questioning colleagues' assumptions that there is such a thing as a coherent 'Muslim community'. Others bought into it, such as one British Asian official who explained the value of

[48] In relation to Islamist extremism, some officials spoke of a need for more Muslim officials, while others suggested a need for BAME officials more generally or specified particular nationalities or ethnicities. In relation to the far right, they presumably meant *white* working-class, though this was not specified. This framing plays into two prevalent and heavily-critiqued narratives in UK politics: that the white working class is the 'real' working class, and that racism and far-right extremism are primarily propagated by white working-class people and not the middle classes (see Bhambra 2017a, 2017b).
[49] These were usually spoken about as discrete categories rather than intersecting ones.

their participation in counterterrorism as being to explain, “No, no, no, Asians don’t do this, they do this [other thing]”. Whether officials play into or subvert this assumption of authenticity, the logic presented by Sylvia, Francesca and others translates into a demand for officials who share social characteristics with those who are the target of counterterrorism interventions to provide knowledge that can be used to inform those interventions. Later in this chapter I will unpack this demand for knowledge, and how it is experienced by those who are expected to provide it, and its political effects.

More broadly, what is striking about the diversity of thought discourse, and particularly its framing as a response to the Chilcot Report, is the disconnect between historical accounts of events and the explanations it offers for them. The narrative that the invasion and occupation of Iraq resulted (in part) from an absence of diverse thinking belies the fact that rigorous and principled analysis exposing the flawed rationale for invasion was so widely shared in Parliament and the media that no one working in government could reasonably have missed it (Ross 2007). The refusal of those in power to listen to this analysis might be framed as a failure of inclusion, but this does not seem to get to the heart of why it was actively dismissed. Similarly, interviewees explained that the Home Office in 2018 was urgently trying to recruit BAME officials to work in immigration policy following the Windrush ‘scandal’ (see Chapter 1), and argued that the deportations of Commonwealth citizens could have been prevented had more BAME officials been involved and listened to. The Public Accounts Committee[50] (2020) similarly concluded that a “significant lack of diversity at senior levels” in the Home Office meant it did not “access a sufficiently wide range of perspectives when establishing rules and assessing the human impact of its decisions” (p.3). However, the existence of undocumented but legally resident migrants and the potential for their wrongful deportation has been repeatedly rediscovered and documented by the Home Office since at least 2006, and highlighted by MPs, NGOs and media outlets as well as civil servants (Williams 2020, pp.36–45). Both the Iraq and Windrush cases highlight that — as I will go on to argue in relation to counterterrorism policy — organisational cultures in the Civil Service not only fail to include dissenting views, but actively suppress and overrule them. In order to analyse the shortcomings of the diversity of thought discourse in understanding such outcomes, I explore next how it interprets the relationship(s) between embodied experience, knowledge and power, and in particular the Civil Servant’s duty to be objective.

[50] A parliamentary committee that scrutinises the effectiveness of public spending.

‘Objectivity’ and Power

If the traditional conception of the disembodied bureaucrat resembles the ‘god-trick’ enacted by scientific notions of objectivity, then the diversity of thought discourse challenges that conceit by foregrounding how knowledge is shaped by the social location of the knower. In doing so, it recalls the insights of feminist epistemologists which — as I outlined in Chapter 3 — begin from the insight that all knowledge is partial and situated (Haraway 1988; Harding 1993). However, whereas these feminists understand the socially located knower to be situated within systems of societal power, the diversity of thought discourse is often — as I will argue in this section — power-evasive: it fails to acknowledge the centrality of power to knowledge production. As a result, the diversity of thought discourse cannot account for or address the ways in which the operation of (gendered, racialised) power prevents critical ideas that challenge coloniality and militarism from being spoken and from being heard in policy discussions. To demonstrate this, I put the diversity of thought discourse, and its conceptualisation of the relationship between knowledge and knower, in conversation with Harding’s (1986, 1991, 1993) articulation of feminist standpoint theory (see Chapter 3). I argue that while Harding’s analysis of the relationships between knowledge production, politics and power offers conceptual tools for challenging scientific objectivity, the frequently power-evasive character of the diversity of thought discourse renders it unable to make these theoretical links. The result is that knowledges and epistemologies that are discursively associated with masculinity and whiteness continue to be privileged over more critical ways of thinking, making it extremely difficult for officials to challenge the colonial and militarist national security paradigm.

The Civil Service Code lists objectivity as one of its four “core values”, explaining that “‘objectivity’ is basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence” (HM Government 2015b). This includes an imperative to “provide information and advice, including advice to ministers, on the basis of the evidence, and accurately present the options and facts” and to “take decisions on the merits of the case” (HM Government 2015b). In common with scientific notions of objectivity, then, the official Civil Service view suggests that objectivity in decision-making can be achieved by making a value-free assessment of empirical evidence. Objectivity appears as closely linked to another of the four core values, “impartiality”, which means “acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well governments

of different political persuasions" (HM Government 2015b). To be impartial, the civil servant must not "allow your personal political views to determine any advice you give or your actions" (HM Government 2015b). While the code does not explicate the relationship between objectivity and impartiality, both are premised on the notion that each "case" has "merits" which present themselves unmediated to the civil servant, and can be adjudicated without reference to his or her values, interests or biases. The definition of impartiality further makes clear that political views are placed in the category of the "personal", which can and must be separated from any assessment of the facts. The self-understanding of the Civil Service as politically neutral is thereby sustained through this strict binary opposition between acting objectively and impartially by following the evidence, and acting on the basis of one's personal feelings and political opinions. In this way, officials can be understood as "'good empiricists', untainted by ideological preferences" (Richards & Smith 2004, p.786).

By contrast, as I outlined in Chapter 3, Harding's articulation of feminist standpoint theory argues that individuals' locations within hierarchies of power such as those organised by gender and race shape their everyday activities and relations with others, which in turn shape how they perceive the world. The possibility of eliminating personal investments and biases from knowledge production is therefore illusory. Whereas the notion of objectivity put forward by the Civil Service Code regards political ideology as undermining objectivity, for standpoint theorists *all* knowledge production is inevitably political due to its enmeshment with power relations. Taking this as given, knowledge claims are instead strengthened by scrutinising and exposing how power, political interests, personal experiences and emotional attachments have shaped the process of knowledge production (Harding 1991, pp.149–152, 1993, pp.69–72).

In order to better understand how diversity workers conceived the relationship between officials' social location and knowledge production, I asked interviewees to describe how they understood the connections between diversity and inclusion and diversity of thought. This elicited a variety of answers, and some officials had clearly given careful thought to how better representation of under-represented groups would or would not change policymaking. Most argued that diverse representation was important, but not sufficient, to producing greater diversity of thought. As one official put it:

> There's this assumption that just because you recruit people from different protected characteristics, you automatically get diversity of thought. Now if you want to move from where we are now to a better place, that is probably true. It won't necessarily be the case that that will get you all the way.

Most also identified the importance of diverse representation as being primarily about increasing the range of policy options that were considered in any decision-making process. As Douglas explained:

> I think if it wasn't diverse then I think you'd be in real problems. I think if you then have two rooms which were separated, one with a diverse group and one with a non-diverse group, I could bet your bottom dollar having seen working groups here and working groups elsewhere where it's not white, middle-class background males with a specific training, specific background, they'll come up with answer C whereas [the diverse group] will come up with answer[s] A, C, B, D, F, G, Z.

From the perspective of feminist standpoint theories, Douglas's suggestion makes sense: because different views on the world become available from different standpoints, subjects who are differently socially located are likely to offer different ideas to policy discussions, at least in an environment where everyone feels able to speak freely. Furthermore, thinking from the lives of the marginalised may generate questions that are particularly critical — in the sense of challenging prevailing modes of thought and in terms of their importance to understanding the topic at hand — and individuals who are living those marginalised lives tend to be better able to adopt this 'view from below' (Harding 1993, p.56, 1997, p.384). For example, while there is no singular, 'authentic' experience that would allow any individual to speak on behalf of a whole social group unproblematically, Muslims with experience living among other British Muslims may well hold perspectives on how domestic counterterrorism activities are received by (some) British Muslims in ways that are less obvious to the majority of white officials, who lack that experience. The expectation that individuals will bring diversity of thought as a function of their gender, race, class or religion could easily place a burden of representation on those individuals to speak for a whole demographic, and to demonstrate the value of diversity by doing so (Kanter 1977, p.214; Minh-ha 1989, p.89; Phillips 1995, pp.23–24; Puwar 2004, pp.62–63). Given the absence of such an 'authentic' standpoint, people of colour in policymaking spaces will not necessarily bring with them a critical analysis of

structural racism, nor will women necessarily bring a feminist analysis of patriarchy. Harding would likely agree with the assessment of most diversity workers I spoke to, then, that diversity of representation is conducive to, but not sufficient for, increasing diversity of thought.

Furthermore, as I have noted, Harding does not posit that *only* marginalised knowers can adopt a 'view form below' (1993, pp.58–59, 67), although the voices of those with direct lived experience must not be lost. In contrast to the appeals to authenticity I critiqued earlier, standpoint theories typically posit a looser relationship between subjects' social location and the knowledge the produce. As Collins (2013) argues in relation to Black feminist thought, it is necessary to find a balance, avoiding "the materialist position that being Black and/or female generates certain experiences that automatically determine variants of a Black and/or feminist consciousness" but also "the idealist position that ideas can be evaluated in isolation from the groups that create them" (p.406). Were a feminist standpoint theorist in the room of diverse policymakers that Douglas describes, then, they might suggest that everyone present practise thinking from the standpoints of marginalised subjects who would be directly affected by the policy options under discussion, while paying particular attention to the views of those with lived experiences of subjugation by systems of power shaping the policy environment. Of course, they would add that all policy ideas considered should be subjected to a reflexive analysis of how the social locations of policymakers might be influencing their views.

While the officials I interviewed might broadly agree with standpoint theorists that, on balance, more diverse representation makes a wider range of policy options more likely, their views diverge considerably when it comes to what happens next. This is how one diversity worker, Sam, described how having a more diverse and inclusive workplace would change how decisions are made:

> I think, as well as challenging some of the options on the table, it might help to broaden the set of options because people would apply different lenses to these particular problem sets. So, you might have a bit more variety of the options, but I'm still not massively convinced that you'd have hugely different conclusions reached. Because, like I said, most of the time they are the most sensible conclusion to reach, and you still have the ministerial layer to all of this official machinery anyway.

I read Sam's argument that a more diverse set of officials would probably reach the same conclusion on what is "the most sensible conclusion" not as a suggestion that groupthink would pressure both groups into (perhaps irrationally) agreeing on a particular option. Rather, I understand him as arguing that there really *is* a singular, objectively most sensible option, reached through a common logic that all those present will, or at least should, apply (see also Ferguson 1984, p.20). He does not problematise this logic as a particularistic one produced by a culture dominated by white, middle-class men; he apparently assumes that all rational observers presented with a common set of facts will evaluate them similarly. In contrast, recognising officials as situated knowers would highlight how they each draw on their prior knowledge to make "judgement calls about [the] relevance, plausibility, coherence, consistency and credibility" of the evidence — prior knowledge which is shaped by each official's social location and life experiences (Alcoff 2007, p.44). While not all interviewees agreed with Sam' assessment that considering a wider array of options would not change the final decision, they often drew on similar language to describe how those options would be prioritised. In the push for diversity of thought, then, while securocrats are expected to bring their experiences as gendered and racialised (etc.) subjects to the table when suggesting policy options, the process of selecting or narrowing down those options is framed as one of objectively sorting through ideas, accepting or rejecting them based on a neutral, disinterested process. Prior recognition of the securocrat's knowledge as situated is seemingly put back under the table, quietly reinstating the idea of policymaking as requiring a view from nowhere.

I suggest that this move results from a tendency of the diversity of thought discourse to understand gender, race and other protected characteristics as aspects of identity or difference rather than locations within systems of power. In line with the feminist critiques of 'diversity' I outlined above, which argue that the language of diversity often signals a failure to grapple with questions of power and injustice, the diversity of thought discourse slips into what Frankenberg (1993) refers to as "power evasiveness" (p.14). While the diversity of thought discourse engages in power-evasive ways of talking about difference generally, I outline the concept here using the example of race, both because of its origins in Frankenberg's research on whiteness and because I use it to analyse discourses on racial difference in the remainder of the chapter.

Frankenberg uses the term 'power-evasive' to describe "modes of talking about difference that evaded questions of power" (1993, p.149). Whereas 'colour-blind' or 'colour-evasive'

discourses are ones in which the speaker claims not to notice racial difference or regard it as salient (Frankenberg 1993, pp.142–149; Williams 1998; Bonilla-Silva 2006) — typified by the claim, 'I don't see race' — power-evasive discourses allow selective acknowledgement of race as an axis of difference, but do not recognise it as a structure of power (Frankenberg 1993, pp.149–157). Power-evasive ways of talking about race need not represent a conscious effort to obscure the workings of power, though they can do. They reflect a liberal conceptualisation of racism, long dominant in British public life, which frames it as a question of individual attitudes and prejudices rather than a structure of power instituted by histories of colonialism and slavery (Mills 1997, pp.73–78, 2015, p.219; Titley & Lentin 2008; Kapoor 2013b, pp.1033–1035). Power evasiveness is a mode of thinking and speaking about difference based on this liberal conceptual framing which, I argue, can be observed in the way that securocrats speak about race and other axes of difference.

Civil Service conversations about diversity and inclusion are not *always* power-evasive: in discussions about recruitment, for example, I noted a recognition that structural inequalities are a barrier to entry into the Civil Service. However, when discussing how difference or sameness shapes knowledge production in the policymaking process, recognition of power imbalances tended to be lost. In Sam's description of a diverse group of officials producing policy options, he argues that their different social locations will lead them to generate different ideas, but these are merely "different lenses" that offer "variety". This power-evasive framing does not recognise, as standpoint theories do, that thinking from the lives and experiences of marginalised groups can offer a vantage point from which to produce less distorted accounts of the world, because their standpoint is not just "different" but epistemically advantaged (Harding 1991, 1993). Many diversity workers argued, as Francesca and Sylvia did in the excerpts quoted earlier in this chapter, that there are times when the views of certain minoritised groups are especially important to selected policy discussions which particularly affect those groups, such as on counterterrorism or immigration. However, this did not translate into a sustained recognition of the role of power relations in knowledge production, nor — as I will later show — is *priority* given to thinking from the standpoints of the marginalised.

At the more extreme end, power-evasive ways of thinking and speaking about difference can be detected in the insistence by some officials that diversity of thought could be or has been achieved without increasing the presence of marginalised groups. For example, Sam argued

that the range of departments represented in the national security community already provided a significant level of diversity of thought:

> We underestimate, I think, a bit, the diversity within the national security community […] Because my sense is, if you've had a sterling career in GCHQ,[51] it would be really very different to someone who's had a career in the Foreign Office. […] Your experiences will be different, the way you look at problems will be different. What's seen as important to you when you're looking at a problem would be very different. When we look at the statistics or the data in the usual way that you'd look at it when you're looking at [diversity and inclusion] — gender, ethnicity, working class, etc. — I'm sure there are a whole load of other axes you could put on it where actually you think that's really quite diverse, and it's really quite a mixed community.

In addition to overlooking how different departmental perspectives are held together by a hegemonic liberal militarist worldview, Sam's comparing departmental differences to gender, race and class elides the fact that the latter are not merely axes of *difference* but also of *power*. They have shaped how UK national security is understood and pursued over the course of centuries: as I outlined in Chapter 2, hegemonic conceptions of national security, sovereignty and statehood, and associated policies and practices, are profoundly racialised and gendered in their assumptions about who security is for, and who threatens it. These same assumptions have shaped what counts as the kind of knowledge that should inform government policies. For example, while white Europeans have regarded themselves as knowledge-producing subjects, colonised people and people of colour have been treated only as objects of knowledge, lacking expertise or authority (Quijano 2000, 2007; Kothari 2005), a dynamic that continues in modern day foreign and security policies. Thinking from such positions of subjugation and exclusion has produced radically different ideas about what peace and security are and how to achieve them (e.g. Acharya 1997; Davis 2003; Bilgin 2018; De Leon 2020). By contrast, while British government departments differ somewhat in their organisational worldviews due to their different mandates, those worldviews all emerge from positions of power at the heart of the state. Most diversity workers I interviewed did not share Sam's view, and saw that race and gender differed from (for example) departmental differences, even if they did not articulate this through an analytic of power. However, views

[51] Government Communications Headquarters, the intelligence agency responsible for communications monitoring.

akin to Sam's do apparently have some currency — perhaps increasingly so as the government has shifted further to the political right. For example, Chief Adviser to the Prime Minister Dominic Cummings (2020) declared about his plans to reform Whitehall:

> People in SW1[52] talk a lot about 'diversity' but they rarely mean 'true cognitive diversity'. They are usually babbling about 'gender identity diversity blah blah'. What SW1 needs is not more drivel about 'identity' and 'diversity' from Oxbridge humanities graduates but more *genuine cognitive diversity*.

While dismissing the importance of "gender identity", Cummings is vague about the meaning of "cognitive diversity": while it might sound like a reference to neurodiversity, he puts a call out for "weirdos and misfits" while admitting, "I don't really know what I'm looking for". Setting out this Civil Service reform agenda more formally, Minister for the Cabinet Office Michael Gove (2020) argued that efforts to diversify government must include bringing it "closer to the 52% who voted to Leave" the EU, from whom the Civil Service is "estranged". The mantle of 'diversity' is therefore being used, as it has been in higher education, to argue for a greater hearing for right-wing views (Eisenstein 2007, pp.76–77; Wilkson 2019).[53] At worst, then, the evacuation of power analysis from understandings of diversity can enable a rejection of moves to address social inequalities and an embrace of political ideas hostile to social justice. More commonly among the securocrats I interviewed, it can reduce social inequalities to just one form of difference among many (Titley & Lentin 2008, p.19). Treating gender and race only as forms of difference that produce diverse policy options to be accepted or discarded through a process of 'value-free' calculation limits the potential for far-reaching challenge, missing as it does how the terms of what is considered objective and 'value-free' are all but dictated by those very systems of power. In the remainder of this chapter, I explore how this power-evasive understanding of difference renders invisible and thereby enables the workings of white ignorance, making critiques of coloniality and militarism both difficult to speak and difficult to hear.

[52] SW1 is the postcode in which Parliament and Whitehall are located.
[53] This interpretation is perhaps supported by the fact that two of Cummings' new 'weirdo' recruits were exposed by their colleagues as holding racist views (Shahid et al 2020).

Producing White Ignorance

Charles Mills' (2007) concept of white ignorance refers to a state of not-knowing about matters of race and racism that is common among (though not exclusive to) white people and institutions, and is actively reproduced by normative social processes and structures. He argues that the socially-mediated routes through which subjects produce knowledge, such as perception, conception, memory and testimony, are typically practised in ways that lead subjects to acquire either false beliefs or an absence of true beliefs about the racial structuring of the world (Mills 2007, p.16, 23; 2015, pp.217–218). By enabling mischaracterisations of the racial status quo as one of equality, white ignorance has the effect of sustaining white supremacy: "it enables a self-representation in which differential white privilege, and the need to correct for it, does not exist" (Mills 2007, p.31). In this sense, it is a function of white interests: whereas Harding (1993) emphasises that the material interests of dominant social groups make them less motivated to ask critical questions about the systems of power from which they benefit (p.54), Mills (2007) emphasises that white people have a positive interest in *not* seeing the realities of racial oppression (p.34). White ignorance endorses "an understanding about what counts as a correct, objective interpretation of the world, and for agreeing to this view, one is ('contractually') granted full cognitive standing in the polity, the official epistemic community", yet this view represents an (often tacit) "agreement *mis*interpret the world" (Mills 1997, pp.17–18). Individuals' ignorance of racism might be deliberately maintained out of a desire to maintain white racial dominance, but it need not be: because knowledge is suppressed or distorted by social processes and institutions, individuals may become ignorant whether or not they hold overtly racist beliefs (Mills 2007, p.21). Either way, given the effects of white ignorance in obstructing efforts to prevent and repair racial injustices, there exists an ethical imperative to continue exposing and overturning the social processes and structures through which it is produced.

In the sections that follow, I analyse how social processes of knowledge production in the national security community reproduce white ignorance. First, I explore government responses to arguments that the Prevent programme is racist, which highlight how different forms of knowledge are evaluated, and the difficulties people of colour face in being heard when speaking about racism in national security policy discussions. I then examine conversations and silences around Britain's colonial past and present, which highlight the pressure officials of colour experience to embody postcolonial Britain while refraining from critiquing the

coloniality of present-day policies. I argue that, by reproducing white ignorance, organisational norms regulating knowledge production in the national security community sustain colonial and militaristic ways of thinking and speaking about policy. Further, while the diversity of thought discourse acknowledges that whiteness plays a problematic role in policymaking, its power-evasive framing renders it unable to account for or address how racialised power relations reproduce these organisational norms, and so stifle the expression of critical, anti-racist ideas.

Defending Prevent

When I began researching the counterterrorism community, I had no particular intention of writing about Prevent. However, from early on in my fieldwork, counterterrorism officials I met with or interviewed frequently raised Prevent in conversation unprompted. Often, they sought to address common criticisms of the programme as racist (see Chapters 3 and 4), perhaps anticipating that I might make a similar critique. As I collected notes on these pre-emptive defences, I noticed patterns in the language used and the grounds on which criticisms were dismissed. These pertained to the evidential basis for claims that Prevent is racist, claims which largely derive from the testimony of people of colour who have been affected by the programme, and/or whose experiences of systemic racism inform their analysis of how Prevent reinforces it.

Criticisms of Prevent as a racist project, or one which disproportionately and unfairly targets Muslims and those perceived as such, are often based on the lived experiences of Muslims, and some non-Muslim people of colour, who have been targeted by the programme as potentially 'radicalised' individuals or have otherwise felt its effects (e.g. Abbas & Siddique 2012; Jarvis & Lister 2013; Open Society Justice Initiative 2016), particularly young people and students (e.g. Miah 2013; Brown & Saeed 2015; Martuja & Tufail 2017; National Union of Students 2018). Critiques also start from the experiences of professionals working closely with targeted individuals or communities, including staff in schools and universities (Taylor & Soni 2017), healthcare workers (Heath-Kelly & Strausz 2019; Younis & Jadhav 2019, 2020; Aked 2020) and Muslim and youth organisations (McDonald 2011; Qurashi 2018). Research details, for example, the testimony of Muslim students reported to their universities and made to undergo painful bureaucratic processes because they were seen reading course textbooks about terrorism; students whose events about race, Islam and the Middle East have been

cancelled due to the Prevent Duty; and Muslim patients intrusively questioned by medical practitioners about their political beliefs (Open Society Justice Initiative 2016).

The government's public rejections of these criticisms often seek to delegitimise the epistemic foundations on which they are based. For example, in 2019, security minister Ben Wallace made this scepticism clear when announcing an independent review of Prevent, stating: "This review should expect those critics of Prevent, who often use distortions and spin, to produce solid evidence of their allegations" (Home Office 2019). Lord Carlile, who was appointed to lead the review, stated that the review "was completely unnecessary, based on fictitious or a complete lack of evidence" and critiques of it were "absolute nonsense" (Dearden 2019). While this provoked a legal challenge from campaigners that forced the government to remove him from the post (Bowcott 2019), it is consistent with a wider narrative presented by government that criticisms of Prevent are not evidence-based.[54]

These defences of Prevent imply claims about what counts as reliable evidence of the programme's impacts. Given that much of the published evidence, such as that cited above, relies on the testimony of people of who experience those impacts, it is strongly implied that their analysis of their experiences does not meet this threshold of evidence. For example, the government has claimed that there is "no evidence" of Prevent policing negatively impacting relations between Muslims and the police (HM Government 2011b, p.11), based on a perceptions study among British Muslims (Innes et al 2011, p.7). The study finds that, while overall perceptions of the police among Muslims are positive, they are negative among more than half of young Muslim men, who also experience higher levels of police contact than other groups. It concludes that their perceptions "may […] be an effect of the focus of much Prevent policing and also street-policing in general" (Innes et al 2011, p.75). Similarly, Muslim women over the age of 45 had more negative perceptions of the police than other groups, which is attributed to their "experiencing policing through the accounts of their sons" and to their being "susceptible to their views being negatively influenced by the stories they are told" (Innes et al 2011, p.7). By downplaying the experiences of young Muslim men as mere "stories", the report implicitly questions the validity of their testimony, while simultaneously doubting their mothers' capacity to make a reasoned assessment of that testimony by framing

[54] Lord Carlile's replacement with William Shawcross, who has a history of making Islamophobic statements, further suggests that the review represents a willful refusal to engage seriously with allegations of racism — a conclusion which has led hundreds of Muslim organisations, scholars and community organisers to boycott the review (Qurashi 2021).

them as "susceptible" to negative influence. The government's interpretation of these findings then goes a step a further, declaring that this testimony is not evidence of any negative impacts of Prevent policing at all.

These public statements appear to exemplify a practice that Mills (2007) identifies as reproducing white ignorance, in which "one group […] of potential witnesses is discredited in advance as being epistemically suspect" such that "testimony from the group will tend to be dismissed or never solicited to begin with" (p.31). It may be, as Mills suggests, that testimony outlined in the report is not considered 'evidence' because of how survey respondents are racialised, because testimony based on lived experience is considered 'unscientific', or a combination of the two. Rather than analysing motivations, I am instead interested in how routine and institutionalised practices suppress knowledge of Prevent's racism so as to reproduce white ignorance (see also Ali 2020). In the remainder of this section, I outline six practices that effect the suppression of testimony that would substantiate critiques of Prevent and wider counterterrorism policies as racist: framing accusations of racism as a misunderstanding, focusing on intentions over impacts, self-silencing, limiting what counts evidence, framing critics as emotionally-oriented, and decisions concerning who participates in these policy discussions in the first place.

During my field observations with counterterrorism officials, their pre-emptive defences of Prevent as not-racist were usually framed around the idea that allegations of racism were based on a misunderstanding. For example, during a conversation about how policies on equalities might apply to counterterrorism activities, Rosalind, a white woman, argued that those who suggest that Prevent is racist simply misunderstand the programme. She stated that Prevent is a safeguarding programme, similar to interventions around domestic violence, mental health or child protection, and that its purpose is to keep vulnerable people safe from being radicalised (for discussion see Heath-Kelly & Strausz 2019; Pettinger 2019; Aked 2020, pp.46–53).[55] Rosalind argued that, contrary to the supposed views of its critics, the government views people who are referred to Prevent not as suspects but as (potential) victims, a framing consistent with its wider messaging that a referral to Prevent is a "supportive process" and "not a sanction" (Aked 2020, p.52). Therefore, the logic goes, although Prevent does focus largely on Muslims, to do so is not racist because the programme

[55] I have not included direct quotations here because I was not able to take verbatim notes in these meetings, and wish to avoid inadvertently misquoting individuals.

is supporting, not punishing them. Thus, presumably, if Prevent's critics properly understood that it is designed as a safeguarding programme, they would see that it is not racist. As Ali (2020) argues, framing Prevent as a safeguarding measure allows "the unseeing of racism embedded in ideas of radicalization and extremism" (p.589). Criticisms are then treated as a public relations problem: if people just do not understand the programme, this can be solved by government explaining it better. Consider the following two comments, both from people of colour working in national security, who had heard criticisms of Prevent expressed by their friends and family:

> But you hear the conversation [among friends and family members about Prevent] and they're like, 'Why is the government not doing this?' and you almost want to say 'Actually, that's not…' But I don't say anything because I know I shouldn't, I can't. And I'm thinking, well, if these groups of people are thinking that, then there must be lots of people around the country who think that. Why is government not doing more to either make it very clear what this policy is about, what they're trying to achieve with the policy, and how they can get involved in the policy?

> [W]hen you look at Prevent or Channel,[56] these programmes are regarded as poisonous in the Islamic community because [they think] it's the white man telling a Muslim mum to police their children. That's fundamentally wrong on a lot of levels, but that is the perception. But I think the whiteness of the Civil Service, […] particularly national security, means that we miss out on ever such a lot of talent and diverse thought that's needed to create good policy that will challenge a lot of these falsehoods or these false perspectives that a lot of people in the general public hold on counterterrorism strategy.

Like Rosalind, both officials framed criticisms of Prevent as being founded on a lack of understanding, albeit one caused by the government's failure to communicate effectively. In the second quotation, the official names the whiteness of the Civil Service as a barrier to creating 'good policy', yet still frames the benefit of having more diverse perspectives as being to 'challenge falsehoods' — that is, to communicate better about the policy, rather than to change it.

[56] Channel is a part of the Prevent programme which works with individuals identified as being at risk of becoming involved in 'terrorism'.

In these arguments I observe two interlinked discursive moves that serve to deflect conversations about racism, both of which have long histories of being used in this way. First, these officials frame critics of Prevent — largely people of colour or those proximate to them as service providers — as inexpert and lacking the relevant facts, while policymakers — most of them white — assume a kind of 'big picture' view from above, which is more complete. Rosalind and her colleagues did not (and likely would not) explicitly invoke their own racial identities or those of their critics to explain their claim that the latter simply do not understand. However, their arguments derive their force from a wider context of racialising discourses, which construct the knowledge of white people as objective and detached, while the knowledge of people of colour is regarded as biased or anecdotal (Puwar 2004, pp.64–76; Bonilla-Silva & Zuberi 2008, pp.17–18; Smith 2010, p.43). The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021) report which, as I noted in Chapter 1, was commissioned by the government in response to activism and public discourses highlighting structural racism in Britain, similarly laments a tendency of anti-racist organisations to "stress the 'lived experience' of the groups they seek to protect with less emphasis on objective data" (p.31). By thinking from the lives of those who experience systemic racism, critics show how Prevent functions as a vector of that oppression, yet their perspectives are deemed partial because they do not accept the characterisation of Prevent as a benign safeguarding programme. While some officials acknowledged that their own perspectives on counterterrorism were incomplete, such as Sylvia and Francesca above, who highlighted that they were "a bunch of white people sitting in a room", this did not extend to recognising their lack of understanding of Prevent's racism. By refusing to regard Prevent's critics as credible knowers, officials effect a kind of testimonial quieting (Dotson 2011, p.242) that prevents their analyses of racism from being heard.

Secondly, by orienting their rebuttals around framing Prevent as a safeguarding policy, or articulating its problems as being about a failure to "make it very clear […] what they are trying to achieve with the policy", officials shift the focus of discussion on to the government's intentions. While some critics of Prevent argue that it has malign intentions, most emphasise the impacts of the programme.[57] For example, addressing the operation of Prevent in healthcare settings, Aked (2020) highlights cases which "raise the disturbing possibility that

[57] This is not to suggest that Prevent's harmful impacts are incidental byproducts of an otherwise benign programme (see Ali 2020), but rather, I suspect, to emphasise that its impacts are demonstrably harmful regardless of intention.

Prevent may actually harm the vulnerable, or damage their care, rather than helping or safeguarding them" (p.53). Yet the argument that it is designed to safeguard the vulnerable — that the *intentions* behind it are not to over-police Muslims — is offered as evidence that Prevent cannot be racist, apparently trumping evidence that its *impact* is to do exactly that. Again, the practice of focusing on the apparent good intentions of white people and organisations has a long history as a move that deflects attention from discussions of the impacts of racist systems and practices (Frankenberg 1993, pp.146–147; Wekker 2016, pp.78–80). This framing of discussions of racism around intentionality re-centres the experience and subjectivity of white people, repositioning them (us) as victims of a misunderstanding or unjust accusation (DiAngelo 2011, p.64). In doing so, it preserves the white subject's sense of herself as not-racist, reducing racism once again to individual acts of intentional discrimination and obscuring how it structures societies and institutions. As Wekker (2016) argues, such moves to innocence enact a form of white ignorance, protecting white people from knowledge of the workings of racism and its effects on the lives of racially-marked subjects (pp.17–18). This framing is a common feature of discourses on race within government. For example, an independent review of the Windrush 'scandal' found that Home Office staff held a "misconception that racism is confined to decisions made with racist motivations" and did not track "the racial impact of its policies and decisions" (Williams 2020, p.114, 149). Again, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021) appears as a backlash against such suggestions, proposing to "limit the widening charge of racism" by "assessing the intent of the perpetrator as well as the perception of the victim" (p.35).

Defensive responses to people pointing out the racist impact of one's actions, such as those highlighting one's 'good intentions', are sometimes explained as the product of a white habitus (DiAngelo 2011, pp.57–58). That is, they are a learned way of behaving that result from white people's experiences of growing up in relatively racially segregated societies, in which they (we) never learn to confront the discomfort that comes with confronting one's own complicity in white supremacy (Bonilla-Silva 2006, pp.103–129; DiAngelo 2011, pp.58–61). However, this is clearly not all that is going on here: the two quotations above which dismiss critiques of Prevent as "false perspectives" came from people of colour, who presumably do not share such life histories. Rather, given that white ignorance is produced through the social and structural suppression of knowledge (Mills 2007, p.21), this individualising way of thinking about racism has likely been reinforced by, for example, formal education and the news media. Further, I suggest that, just as people of colour adopt other aspects of a white habitus

that are embedded in organisational norms, as I argued in Chapter 6, so epistemological assumptions and rhetorical techniques become a part of the organisational script to which officials are socialised to adhere. As Ahmed (2012) explains, "If whiteness is what the institution is oriented around, then even bodies that do not appear white still have to inhabit whiteness" (p.41). The continuous disciplining of subjects through the internalisation of organisational norms in government departments encourages officials of colour, as well as white officials, to adopt a habitus that reproduces white ignorance (Mills 2007, p.22; Collins 2014, p. 253).

This disciplining of subjects occurs in part through the third practice I identified as sustaining white ignorance: that of self-silencing, in which officials — particularly those of colour — decline to speak about the racist impacts of national security policies because they perceive that their colleagues are not willing or able to hear what they have to say. While this is a kind of self-disciplining, it is nonetheless a form of coercive silencing, enacted by the audience's prior behaviours demonstrating that they are not competent to hear the speaker's testimony (see Dotson 2011, p.244). One woman of colour, for example, told me that she found aspects of Prevent to be "a bit offensive and not thought-through, and [a] very white, privileged, colonial almost, view" but did not feel able to voice this opinion in the workplace. When I asked how she thought her colleagues might respond if she did, she answered:

> I think they would have been really offended, and probably assumed that I'm thinking they're racist, when it's not… I'm not saying you're racist, I'm saying you can miss out on a lot by not getting those views and understanding what it's like to be a young Muslim in this country.

This interviewee's explanation highlights, among other things, the effects (and perhaps the prevalence) of power-evasive ways of talking about racism: she anticipates her colleagues assuming that she is "thinking they're racist", a framing that characterises racism as an attribute of an individual rather than as a social structure. Her actual claim — that Prevent takes a "very white, privileged, colonial almost, view" because it fails to think from the lives of young Muslims — cannot be comprehended if read through the lens of a power-evasive understanding of racism as individual acts of deliberate discrimination (see Abu-Bakare 2020, p.94). Anticipating that her ideas will not be heard, she strategically opts to self-silence. This reluctance to name racism is a common feature of organisations, particularly predominantly

white ones (Puwar 2004, pp.138–139; Kothari 2006b, p.2; Ahmed 2012, pp.142–171; Beeman 2015), which will surely be exacerbated by the government's declared intention to eradicate 'critical race theory' from public institutions (see Chapter 1). Ahmed (2012) documents the myriad ways in which organisations treat those who speak out about racism as being a problem themselves, including by personalising institutional racism, interpreting the accusation as an attack on the individual and their intentions as well as the organisation (p.147, 150). Such practices reproduce white ignorance by demonstrating to workers that "to use the language of racism is to risk not being heard" (Ahmed 2012, p.156) or worse, to be reframed as the problem. Indeed, Prevent has its own communications strategy specifically to "counter extremists' false characterisation of the UK as being a place where Muslims are oppressed" (HM Government 2006, p.16). To acknowledge the oppression of Muslims might therefore risk oneself being accused of perpetuating an extremist narrative.

Similarly, in Chapter 6 I quoted an official of colour whose colleagues (also people of colour) had advised them not to challenge policies by invoking race, saying "Don't bring race into it, don't bring faith into it, because you'll draw attention, you'll make mountains out of molehills". Their experience demonstrates how responses to individual people of colour who speak about racism can generate a routinised social practice of self-silencing, as officials pass on cautionary advice to one another. The same official's subsequent comments also highlight the fourth practice I identify here as sustaining white ignorance — that of setting unreasonable standards for what counts as evidence. They continued:

> I get told this regularly: 'Don't bring up race, it's not an issue'. The flip side of that is when you do bring up the challenge, and it's not necessarily always unhealthy, but the challenge [in response] can be, 'Right, prove it. Show me your evidence base for me. Show me this'.

Noting that once again the rebuttal to allegations of racism is a demand for evidence, I asked whether the fact that this official was speaking from personal experiences of racism enhanced or undermined their authority on this subject in the eyes of other officials. They replied:

> At the risk of bringing in every Black and Asian minority ethnic civil servant to talk about their challenges or their lived experiences, I suppose the other difficult thing

> about lived experiences is that they're difficult to measure. We can't make a nice quantitative chart on lived experiences unfortunately.

This demand for quantitative evidence as a supposedly more 'solid' form of proof once again invokes scientific objectivity. As I noted in Chapter 5 in relation to discussions about the effectiveness of counterterrorism policies, quantitative data is constructed as a 'hard' a form of evidence, bearing the masculine- and white-coded qualities of objectivity and emotional detachment (Swan 2010, pp.494–497). As such, those seeking to highlight inequalities often deploy it strategically because they "cannot afford to be seen as soft, and hence having less value for the organisation" (Ahmed 2012, p.75). Lived experiences of racism, because they are difficult to quantify and acknowledged to be inseparable from personal investments and emotional orientations, do not confer the epistemic authority needed in order to be heard. This is not the case for all lived experiences: compare the stories of two white women, Anthea and Beth, quoted in Chapter 6 as finding that their experiences serving in military operations overseas gave them epistemic authority in the eyes of their peers. Whereas their experiences appealed to a notion of military masculinity valued by their colleagues, people of colour's experiences of moving through the world as racially-marked subjects apparently lack similar appeal. Indeed, because objectivity is widely culturally associated with masculinity and whiteness (Walters 1987, pp.22–23; Stivers 1993, p.39; Chappell 2002, pp.102–105; Puwar 2004, pp.14–24), there may be extra pressure on women and people of colour to frame their critiques in terms of 'hard data', or else to refrain from making them at all. Conversely, comprehending how counterterrorism policies reproduce racism requires different analytical lenses that treat racism as structural: quantitative data is not necessary to effect such a reconceptualization, and is inadequate without it. To require officials to produce numbers that somehow 'prove' that counterterrorism is complicit in systemic racism is to set a standard of evidence that cannot be met.

Perhaps linked to this demand for critique to be presented in way that can be read as objective, at times it is rebutted in ways that frame these critiques as taking an emotional orientation, drawing on racist and sexist tropes. For example, multiple British Asian women told me they felt there was sometimes an expectation that they would conform to a stereotype of Asian women as submissive, or "studious and quiet and hardworking", as one interviewee put it. When they challenged the views of their white and/or male peers, they failed to fulfil this expectation, as one woman of colour explained:

> I don't know whether that's particularly in the counterterrorism space more generally, but men in particular from a certain class are taken more seriously than women from a different class to them or different ethnicity. Sadly, to me it does seem as though that's the case because it's just happened to me too many times for it to be a coincidence. And sometimes I do wonder whether that's because people have assumptions or stereotypes about the way that women from ethnic minority backgrounds should act. And I've found when I've been quite vocal — not vocal to be honest with you, I've just been normal and I've just been doing my job — people have said that I'm… what's the word, feisty? That I'm quite feisty or that I'm very opinionated.

The term 'feisty' is typically applied to those perceived as diminutive, who are exercising force or aggression beyond that predicted by their size or status. Its application to this official therefore implies that her is directness unexpected and out of place. It recalls the stereotype of the "angry woman of colour" (Ahmed 2018, p.338), a racist trope that portrays assertiveness as touchiness, unwarranted by the situation, unnecessarily rocking the boat. If the unemotive habitus of the gentleman-bureaucrat signals his objectivity, feistiness might be seen to signal the opposite. This official's being labelled as "opinionated" similarly suggests her viewpoint results from personal bias rather than 'objective' evidence. This interviewee did not specify what she was being "vocal" about in this case, but faced with the risk of being read as biased and emotionally-oriented, one can see how this would provide a powerful disincentive for a person of colour within the national security community to raise critiques that invoke race. This is not to say that white people critiquing the racialised impacts of counterterrorism policies would necessarily be listened to: during the work I undertook with officials during my participant observation, I highlighted research suggesting that Prevent may increase Islamophobic attitudes, harassment and violence, which was roundly dismissed. However, for officials of colour, to raise such critiques, particularly by invoking their own experiences as racially-marked subjects, foregrounds their otherness in ways that they fear will damage their image as credible securocrats. While people of colour are sometimes expected to be the voice of difference, when they do this in ways that violate the organisational norms that sustain white ignorance, this difference becomes a flaw.

Sixth, and finally, white ignorance is reproduced in policy discussions around Prevent through decisions about who participates in these conversations in the first place. These can either be organisational decisions about hiring and promotion, or individual officials' decisions about whether to apply to work in this area. As one person of colour explained, expressing "friendly" opinions is a condition of — or at least much more conducive to — recruitment and advancement within the national security community:

> I feel as though what's happening now is, 'Okay, let's recruit more ethnic minorities or more women'. Okay you've recruited them but they're all quite posh really. You just think, 'You've just recruited people who are just like you. They're just [a] different skin colour or different gender'. So is that actually diversity? […] There are some people in senior positions from an ethnic minority or Muslim background. But those people tend to be, as I said before, like everyone else. I find that people are recruited if they're friendly or they have opinions that seniors like and want to hear. And perhaps because of that, there's a lack of maybe understanding about how deep this anti-Prevent sentiment runs.

Writing about the reproduction of whiteness by white women in feminist theory, Crenshaw (1989) argues that "[t]he authoritative universal voice — usually white male subjectivity masquerading as non-racial, non-gendered objectivity — is merely transferred to those who, but for gender, share many of the same cultural, economic and social characteristics" (p.154). The above quotation suggests that in the counterterrorism community, people of colour — many of whom, but for race, share the economic and social characteristics of their peers — are conditionally accepted as speaking with this authoritative universal voice, so long as they are not speaking about the racist impacts of counterterrorism policy. On the other hand, those who do not share "opinions that seniors like" on Prevent are likely to self-select out of jobs pertaining to it. As several interviewees acknowledged, ethical objections are among the major reasons why many people of colour working in government choose not to work in national security generally, and counterterrorism in particular. As Vanessa put it:

> [P]eople will refuse to come and work [in counterterrorism] because they don't agree with Prevent. I've got Muslim friends who've done that: 'I like [this team] but I don't agree with Prevent, so I'm leaving'. So that is our, I think, probably biggest recruiting

> barrier is that people just don't agree with what we're doing. And we've got limited ability to change that.

Given the critiques of the very concept of counterterrorism I have offered in this thesis, to say that the paucity of people of colour in counterterrorism policymaking who are critical of its practice contributes to the maintenance of white ignorance is not to critique their (very reasonable) decisions to opt out of it. Rather, the fact that accepting the counterterrorism paradigm largely as given is a condition of working in this area demonstrates how the production of white ignorance is routinely reproduced by organisational structures and norms.

This discussion of conversations around Prevent highlights two important points. First, white ignorance is sustained by a range of practices that both deter officials from offering analysis of Prevent's complicity in systemic racism and prevent such analysis from being heard. While it is difficult to tell how widespread these practices are, officials — especially those of colour — speak about them as though they are deeply embedded in organisational norms, such that these officials routinely discipline their own behaviour in response to them. If talk of racism cannot be heard, the potential for challenging colonial and militarist logics is surely severely limited. Second, as a direct result, any attempt to promote a culture of challenge to dominant ways of thinking that treats race (or gender for that matter) as merely an aspect of difference and not a system of power cannot comprehend nor address this dynamic. White ignorance sustains, and is enabled by, racialised relations of power: structural white supremacy makes it both possible and desirable for those who benefit from it to dismiss evidence of its harms. The diversity of thought discourse finds rooms full of white people making counterterrorism policy to be a problem because it produces pertinent gaps in relevant knowledge; however, its power-evasive framing means it cannot account for how whiteness actively suppresses knowledge of racism in order to uphold its dominant position. The invitation for people of colour, and Muslims in particular, to be the voice of difference is conditional upon their adherence to organisational norms that effectively prohibit any serious challenge to white ignorance. Indeed, as I will show in the next section, the presence of people of colour who accept these terms may provide the appearance of diversity, and therefore legitimacy, while simultaneously reinforcing the very epistemological assumptions that reproduce white ignorance.

Forgetting Empire

Another illustration of the workings of white ignorance can be found in silences surrounding Britain's colonial past and ongoing dynamics of coloniality in national security policies. Physical evidence of British colonialism is easy to find in Whitehall, particularly in the FCO headquarters, where statues and paintings of former colonial rulers can be found in abundance throughout the building. Though sporadically the subject of controversy, the department's main greeting point for visiting dignitaries is still adorned with a mural depicting the white settler colonies of the British Empire as "virile adults and Britannia's standard bearers", while Africa is represented by "a little naked boy carrying a fruit basket" (Wintour 2020). Some interviewees commented on these artefacts as being embarrassing or, for officials of colour, actively alienating. Several also mentioned being acutely conscious of the history of empire, or the persistence of colonial mindsets in policymaking, and so I asked them whether this was openly discussed in policy conversations. Many felt that while the legacies of British colonialism are there to see in many aspects of security policy, there is a taboo around discussing it. As one woman of colour explained:

> I remember when I first came [to the FCO] and walking around Durbar Court and seeing all the governors, India, and the Old India Company, and it's really weird coming in and seeing that and being reminded of that history. And silly things like the Map Room, which was where they would go and sit and decide where they were going to go and colonise next. Slightly awkward, but it's probably more awkward for the white British to talk about than for the likes of me who is like, 'I'd like to talk about it, I'd like to know a bit more about what the Foreign Office history is on that'. But instead it's swept under the carpets, we don't talk about this because it's a bit embarrassing.

As I noted in Chapter 2, public discourses on race in Europe are often characterised by an actively produced state of collective unknowing about European colonialism (Mills 1997, 2007, 2015; Vimalassery, Pegues & Goldstein 2016; Wekker 2016). This unknowing variously minimises the violent realities of colonialism and frames colonialism and colonial relations of

power as having ended with the formal dissolution of empire.[58] By positioning colonialism as a relic of the past, represented in this case by statues and paintings, the persistence of coloniality as a structuring feature of the politics of the present is rendered invisible: the racial status quo is framed not as "the outcome of a history of political oppression but rather as just 'the way things are'" (Mills 1997, p.30). This unknowing can be understood as a form of white ignorance, systematically sustained through, for example, formal education and public memorialisation of British history (Basham 2016c; Bain 2018). While it is not particular to the Civil Service, then, it is reproduced there. In the past, the British government actively destroyed records of its colonial atrocities (Sato 2017), but in the present day, interviewees felt that silences around the ongoing impacts of British colonialism were produced by a widespread sense that it just did not need to be discussed.[59] For example, one person of colour explained:

> [British colonial history] comes up in passing. I think sometimes there's too much of an assumption that we all know about it so we don't need to talk about it. […] And actually my personal perspective is that's not true, we do need to be having that conversation because what, to us, is history and historical perspective, to other people in some of those countries it's so present and so cutting. And particularly in places like [certain former colonies] where they still go through some very, very difficult periods of time which they will find a way to trace back to empire or colonialism or whatever. […T]he counter-accusation around that is, 'Oh, well we can't be apologetic for our past. We can't just go around apologising all the time'. And I don't think we need to, but I think we need to be much more conscious of actually how that's perceived.

Note that, even in the words of someone who believes that thinking of British colonialism as a historical irrelevancy is inaccurate and unhelpful, there is some scepticism directed towards those who highlight its bearing on current political realities. By framing the political analysis of

[58] The idea that formal empire has been fully dissolved is itself a form of ignorance, as Britain maintains a number 'overseas territories': Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Antarctic Territory, the British Indian Ocean Territory, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, the Pitcairn Islands, St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

[59] There is some structured learning around Britain's colonial history in the form of a course on the British Empire run by the FCO's Diplomatic Academy. While I was unable to access the content of this course, it seems to have garnered mixed reactions. I interviewed one person of colour who found it to be "totally whitewashed", while noting that their white colleague thought it was "really harsh" toward the British.

people in former colonies as "find[ing] a way to trace back to empire or colonialism", they suggest that to make this link requires some inventive justificatory reasoning, expressing apparent disbelief through a cursory "or whatever". Because this collective unknowing positions colonialism as historical, the possibility of a continuing need to challenge coloniality appears unreasonable. Like the facets of white ignorance already discussed in this chapter, this colonial unknowing "establishes what can count as evidence, proof, or possibility — aims to secure the terms of reason and reasonableness — as much as it works to dissociate and ignore" (Vimalassery, Pegues & Goldstein 2016, p.3). This unknowing, again much like other manifestations of white ignorance identified here, is enabled by a power-evasive understanding of race and racism, as is evident in the following anecdote, offered by the same person of colour:

> I remember very early on when I was in [an overseas posting] and a [local] contact said to me, 'Oh you come in here and you created this problem. And it's just white colonialism, blah blah blah'. […] I was like, 'I'm quite a lot darker skinned than you, so [*laughs*] it's not really about that'. 'Cause he was very much putting this message of, 'White people are coming here still and telling us what to do and that's not okay'. And I think actually there is something really powerful about having ethnic minorities or different races out there and being really clear that that's not what we're doing now. And, actually, Britain looks different and we are different to how we used to be. And some of that toxic brand of empire is something that we're working against now.

There are two claims being made here that warrant unpacking: first, that the presence of people of colour in the UK national security community is evidence that British foreign policy is no longer colonial; and second, that racial diversity should be promoted as a means of demonstrating a kind of anticolonial politics.

In relation to the first point, the interviewee equates coloniality with "white people […] telling us what to do". However, while white people have been the primary beneficiaries of European colonialism, the latter was and is not an event enacted solely by white people against people of colour, but a structure of power in which both white people and people of colour are implicated in different ways. Under formal structures of British colonialism, colonised people have participated in the running of empire in a wide variety of roles, including as civil servants in colonial administrations (Bhabha 1994; Mamdani 2012). Further, by pointing to their darker skin as evidence of their claim, the interviewee reduces race to skin tone, invisibilising the

ways in which whiteness as a set of epistemic standpoints and cultural practices can be exercised by people of colour. As Gopal (2019a) has put it, "anticolonialism is a critical spirit, an oppositional praxis that is not just about replacing white rule by brown rule".

The second claim suggests that promoting racial diversity among policymakers might be a means of shedding the "toxic brand of empire", demonstrating Britain's status as a cosmopolitan nation. Just as arguments in favour of allowing (white) women to join the Diplomatic Service in the mid-20th Century were framed in terms of maintaining Britain's image and influence by signifying its modernity vis-à-vis other nations (Crowe, Hamilton & Southern 2018, p.17), several interviewees proposed that showcasing racial diversity could be advantageous to British foreign policy (see also Krenn 2015, p.163; Conley Tyler 2016, p.706; Lequesne et al 2020, p.60). Consider, for example, the following comment from Nathan:

> [The colonial past] comes up in counterterrorism as well — it's one of the big critiques that people make about it. One of the most powerful videos that [Daesh] made was of someone standing on the border of Iraq and Syria and saying, 'We're tearing up the Sykes-Picot agreement.[60] They were able to draw a line on a map because they were powerful and they were white'. And I think if we were willing to talk about that then the Foreign Office could respond sensitively to that message. If we were to say that yes, that happened, but look at the UK today, we're an open, diverse, cosmopolitan society; we're a diverse Civil Service, things have changed — that would really help.

If the previous examples have shown that power-evasive understandings of difference cannot facilitate critical challenge to coloniality, Nathan's recommendation demonstrates how they can be used to legitimise it. Any effort to deny that Britain continues to exercise colonial power by pointing to the (relative) racial diversity of its Civil Service only shows how, in Ahmed's words, "changing the perception of an organization from being white to diverse can be a way of reproducing whiteness" (2012, p.102; see also Collins 2014, pp.254). I do not suggest that this is a deliberate strategy on the part of diversity workers: those I met were, I believe, genuinely committed to creating more equal opportunities and more critical thinking

[60] The 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement divided up control of the Ottoman Empire between the British and French governments.

in policy discussions.[61] Furthermore, the increasing presence of people of colour in the Civil Service does mark a change which should not be dismissed: it reflects increasing possibilities for (some) people of colour to take up an opportunity they are entitled to pursue — that of holding public office. In focusing on the complicities of people of colour in reproducing white ignorance and the colonial policies it facilitates, I do not wish to displace attention from the white majority in the national security community and their own role in this process. Rather, I aim to show that, as the examples I have given make clear, initiatives that promote diversity of thought by increasing the descriptive representation of racially-marked individuals without grappling with organisational norms constituted by whiteness risk legitimising colonial organisations by enabling them to market themselves as cosmopolitan while actively maintaining global structures of racial inequality.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined how norms regulating knowledge production in the UK national security community, and the epistemological assumptions that underpin them, are racialised and gendered, and how this limits the possibilities for ideas that challenge militarism and coloniality to be heard. In particular, I have explored discourses on promoting diversity of thought, in which officials have articulated changing understandings of the relationship(s) between social location and knowledge production. I have argued that, by recognising that knowledge is situated and shaped by lived experiences, the diversity of thought discourse poses a partial challenge to traditional conceptions of the bureaucrat as a disembodied thinker providing a view from nowhere. However, whereas feminist standpoint theorists would argue that some epistemic advantage can be gained from thinking from the lives of subjects marginalised by systems of power such as a race and gender, I have shown that the diversity of thought discourse is often framed in a way that does not recognise the imbrication of knowledge production with power relations.

[61] A more deliberate example, it has been suggested, can be observed in the Prime Minister's two successive appointments of British Asians to the role of Home Secretary, where they have been responsible for implementing the government's policy of creating a 'hostile environment' towards immigrants and publicly defending it against allegations of racism (Goodfellow 2018; Gopal 2019b; Kinouani 2019).

Many diversity workers argued that increasing the representation of marginalised groups would help to increase the range of policy options on the table, as they brought new kinds of knowledge generated from lived experiences that differ from those of the normative white male securocrat. However, they maintain that the process of selecting between these options is objective and disinterested, reinstating the view from nowhere. My analysis of conversations about Prevent reaffirms the feminist insight that ways of thinking framed as objective and universal often reflect the social locations of the powerful. Organisational norms are constituted by a range of social practices that function to suppress testimony substantiating the argument that Prevent is a racist project, and so reproduce white ignorance as a form of systematic, pernicious not-knowing. These norms shape what all officials are able to say and able to hear, and what counts as the kind of evidence that policymaking should be based on. However, people of colour in particular may find that while there is a demand for them to draw on their lived experiences to provide information that helps with implementing current policy objectives, doing so to point out how policies collude with systemic racism causes them to be read as insufficiently objective. Because white ignorance is not just an absence of relevant information but an active process of resistance to the acquisition of knowledge about racism, it cannot be remedied by simply including people of colour and asking them to fill in those gaps in organisational knowledge. Further, as my analysis of discourses and silences around Britain's colonial history shows, the presentation of people of colour within the Civil Service as evidence that Britain is no longer racist or colonial in its outlook only conceals, and thereby reinforces, institutional whiteness.

The diversity of thought agenda is designed to increase the government's effectiveness in achieving its existing policy objectives, which are typically based on its hegemonic militaristic and colonial worldview. The agenda is not, at least for most officials, intended to advance an antimilitarist or anticolonial politics. For the few for whom this is the intention, it would seem to be a case of expecting the master's tools to dismantle the master's house (Lorde 1984). As Minh-ha (1989) so aptly adds, "The more one depends on the master's house for support, the less one hears what he doesn't want to hear" (p.80). Securocrats' ability to present and to hear critical analyses of racism and patriarchy, both in policymaking and within diversity and inclusion initiatives, is limited by a range of structural factors, including their mandate to implement the wishes of ministers; the demand to work quickly and come ready with solutions, not problems; and the codified imperative to maintain the appearance of being apolitical. The organisational norms I have identified as regulating knowledge production,

including the tendency toward power-evasive ways of thinking about difference, no doubt reflect these structures, but also help to maintain and normalise them. The words of Patricia Hill Collins (2014) are appropriate here:

> Alternative knowledge claims are rarely threatening to conventional knowledge. Such claims are routinely ignored, discredited, or simply absorbed and marginalized in existing paradigms. Much more threatening is the challenge that alternative epistemologies offer to the basic process used by the powerful to legitimate knowledge claims that in turn justify their right to rule. (pp.270–271).

Alternative epistemologies, including feminist ones, can expose the workings and the harms of militarist and colonial approaches to security, and produce knowledge that could form the basis for building more just and less violent societies. To accept that all knowledge is political and shaped by race, gender and other systems of power would challenge the foundational liberal conception of what a bureaucracy is, as well as the relations of power it preserves. Antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist political strategies therefore require the construction of alternative institutions for decision-making — ones which do not conceal or deny the imbrication of knowledge with power relations but treat knowledge production as a central component of an emancipatory political praxis.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusions

This thesis has set out to analyse some of the processes that make militaristic and colonial ways of thinking about security feel natural and inevitable in UK national security policymaking, and therefore help to hold them in place. Building on feminist literature that identifies the discursive construction of gender and race as helping to sustain militarism and coloniality, I posed the question: how — if at all — does the gendered and racialised character of organisational cultures in UK national security policymaking help to sustain militarism and coloniality in policy discussions? This question arises from an antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist commitment to dismantling processes that reproduce militarism and coloniality and bringing an end to the militaristic practices long promoted by the British state. Noting that many feminist antimilitarist scholars conceive of gender and militarism as mutually shaping, the thesis has also remained attentive to how militaristic and colonial worldviews shape the gendering and racialisation of organisational cultures. As such, I also posed the broader question: What are the relationships between the gendering and racialisation of organisational cultures in UK national security policymaking, and militarist and colonial ways of thinking and speaking about national security?

I have argued that literature theorising the relationships among gender, race, militarism and coloniality points to the importance of gendered and racialised organisational cultures in legitimising militarist and colonial thinking and practices, yet raises questions about how this dynamic plays out in specific contexts (Chapter 2). While many studies examine these relationships in militaries, only a few offer empirical accounts of how these dynamics play out in the context of national security policymaking. Understanding how organisational cultures in policymaking organisations are racialised and gendered matters because — while it would be a mistake to imagine that government departments are the only, or even the most important, sites for the reproduction of militarism (Rossdale 2019, pp.49–60) — they are crucial to the maintenance of systems of state violence. Of the few studies that examine racialised and gendered cultures in national security policymaking or -influencing organisations, the two largest published studies on this question examined the Cold War period (Cohn 1987, 1989,

1993; Dean 2001). While a few more recent articles and chapters make important contributions to understanding similar dynamics in 21st Century security policymaking (Khalili 2011; Grewal 2017; Razavi 2021), those I have identified all examine US policy communities. In the UK context, though there is much research addressing gendered and racialised cultures in Parliament and the Civil Service, this literature does not analyse the relationship of these cultures to militarism and coloniality. This thesis has therefore examined the UK as another colonial power that plays an important role in upholding the global war system.

I argued that these empirical gaps in the literature also give rise to theoretical questions about relationships between the demographic make-up of security policy communities and their gendered and racialised organisational cultures. Because studies from the Cold War period examined organisations that were numerically dominated by white men, this raises questions about whether and how organisational cultures differ in contexts where this is not (or no longer) the case, at least to the same extent. I have rejected the essentialist argument that more women in policymaking means more peace, or that more people of colour in policymaking necessarily leads to less colonial policies. However, I set out to respond to more nuanced arguments from some feminists about how the inclusion of women could form part of a broader antimilitarist strategy (Cohn & Ruddick 2004; Otto 2006; Duncanson 2013; Duncanson & Woodward 2016). In particular, Duncanson (2013) and Duncanson and Woodward (2016) argue that women's inclusion should not be dismissed as merely a liberal feminist project of assimilation, because it can be used to advance dynamics of reversal and displacement that would undermine gendered organisational cultures that sustain militarism. Studies by Khalili (2011) and Grewal (2017) offer less cause for optimism in this regard, showing how, as (predominantly white) women have entered the US national security community in greater numbers, they have promoted feminisms and feminine-coded ways of working that remain resolutely militaristic, though Razavi (2021) sees more hope in younger generations of female securocrats, and particularly women of colour. In this final chapter, I summarise the arguments I have made in the thesis, explain how my findings build on and respond to this literature, and reflect on the implications for antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist political strategies.

Given the main focus of the thesis on understanding how militarism and coloniality are reproduced, I begin by summarising how my findings respond to my narrower question about what role gender and race play in this process. Next, I outline the evidence I found of shifts in

gendered and racialised discourses that I have identified as potentially representing dynamics of inclusion, reversal and displacement, which Duncanson and Woodward (2016) have suggested could unsettle masculinist military cultures. I demonstrate how my findings challenge their optimistic account of how militarist organisations might be transformed, by demonstrating how UK government departments' commitment to militarism places limits on the possibilities for change. In doing so, I show how my findings respond to my broader question about the relationships between the gendering and racialisation of organisational cultures and militarist and colonial ways of thinking and speaking about national security, suggesting that the two share a reciprocal relationship. Finally, I discuss the implications of my findings for antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist strategies for dismantling militarist and colonial ways of doing security and suggest avenues for further research.

What Work Do Gender and Race Do?

Across the three dimensions of organisational cultures I have studied — systems of meaning, norms and epistemologies — I found evidence that the association of liberal militarism with particular constructions of white masculinity and white femininity served to make militaristic and colonial approaches to security policy feel natural and inevitable. Taking each of these dimensions in turn, I outline below how my findings support the theoretical propositions of feminist scholars examining relationships between gender, race, militarism and coloniality in other contexts.

My analysis of counterterrorism discourses demonstrated how policy discussions invoke racialised and gendered meanings that serve to legitimise militaristic modes of security governance (Chapter 5). I argued that military and carceral approaches to counterterrorism are discursively linked to a valorised notion of tough, realistic masculinity that is contrasted with 'fluffy', feminine-coded CVE and PVE. By positioning counterterrorism policy as a binary choice between these hard and soft approaches and linking the latter's 'fluffiness' to a lack of effectiveness, this interpretive repertoire helps to deflect critiques highlighting that coercive approaches tend to escalate violence, not prevent it. Meanwhile, hybrid approaches to counterterrorism combining coercive and non-coercive interventions are linked to a softer masculinity that invokes colonial notions of upper-class, white masculinity as restrained in its use of force. Yet this softer masculinity is framed as modern and progressive, reinforcing hegemonic understandings of liberal militarism as civilised, "more humane" (Khalili 2013, p.10)

and “non-excessive” (Rossdale 2019, p.238). The construction of emancipatory approaches to preventing political violence as idealistic and academic, while invoking multiple, conflicting gendered and racialised meanings, nonetheless follows a familiar pattern of denigrating antimilitarist and anticolonial thinking by linking it to feminine and racially-marked subjects. My findings resonate with those of scholars such as Cohn (1993) and Hutchings (2008a, 2008b), who find that masculinist discourses constructing hierarchies of racially-coded masculinities and femininities provide a discursive resource on which individuals and organisations can draw to make militaristic approaches to security appear natural and inevitable. Building on Hutchings’ (2008b) analysis of cognitive shortcuts, I argued that the citation of these sedimented meanings, which are so familiar to anyone in national security as to be banal and unremarkable, reduces the burden of argument needed to make the case for militaristic practices, or dismiss antimilitarist ones.

While counterterrorism discourses cite meanings already sedimented in discourse, I have also demonstrated how the discursive links between masculinities, whiteness and liberal militarism are actively reproduced through the embodied performances of securocrats (Chapter 6). I argued that organisational norms valorise the performance of emotionally-reserved gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities as demonstrating rationality and objectivity, suggesting that this norm constructs the expression of liberal militarist views as objective and merely ‘following the facts’. Indeed, the framing of gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities as moderate and level-headed reinforces constructions of liberal militarism as restrained and non-excessive. The repeated performance of this script by white men, in organisations where they remain the somatic norm, performatively reproduces its association with masculinity and whiteness. Organisational norms then serve to discipline the performances of all securocrats, rewarding adherence to the gentleman-bureaucrat script and deterring performances deemed too emotional or impassioned — qualities traditionally associated with femininity and Blackness. My analysis of policy discussions among WPS officials further showed how these norms shape not only the tone but also the content of policy discussions, with those who are privately critical of UK arms exports often refraining from voicing those views for fear of being perceived as ‘out-there’ or ‘not realistic’. The performance of macho, ‘fist-banging’ legacy masculinities, sometimes associated with excessively militaristic worldviews, are viewed by some securocrats as hypermasculine and outmoded. However, for other officials these performances confer militarist credibility, signalling the speaker’s military training or experience working at the ‘sharp’ end of national security. Again, my findings about organisational norms cohere with

those of scholars like Cohn (1993) and Dean (2001) in finding that, where valorised notions of masculinity are discursively associated with militarism, masculinist organisational cultures reward men and women for adhering to a militarist worldview and deter them from challenging it.

My analysis of the epistemological assumptions underpinning the organisational norms that govern knowledge production adds a further dimension, arguing that the traditional conception of bureaucracies as objective and apolitical obscures the workings of race and gender (Chapter 7). The organisations' dominant understanding of policymaking as the formulation of policy options based on objective facts, and prioritised through a neutral and disinterested process, conceals how the production and analysis of facts are shaped by relations of gendered and racialised power. In counterterrorism discussions, the valorisation of objectivity — traditionally associated with masculinity and whiteness — is linked to a preference for 'hard' quantitative data and a tendency to interpret officials' own viewpoint as 'the big picture'. In contrast, analysis developed from the experiences of people of colour showing how counterterrorism policies entrench and extend systemic racism is variously labelled as partial, emotionally-driven and based on misunderstandings. These norms work to sustain militarist and colonial thinking by making critiques of the racist ideas and structures they depend on both difficult to speak and difficult to hear. Meanwhile, a power-evasive understanding of race enables officials to cite increasing numbers of people of colour in the national security community as evidence that government policies are not colonial, thereby conferring legitimacy on this militarist and colonial status quo. These findings affirm the conclusions of feminist scholars such as Cohn (1987) and Tickner (1992, pp.27–66, 2001, pp.44–53) that policymakers' commitment to scientific notions of objectivity can reinforce ethnocentric, masculinist and militarist approaches to security while suppressing knowledge of the harms they cause.

In summary, my analysis of organisational cultures in the national security community contributes a new empirical case study that supports the findings of a range of feminist antimilitarist scholars that the construction of race and gender play a role in reproducing militarism and coloniality (e.g. Cohn 1987, 1989, 1993; Mohanty 2006; Cockburn 2010; Lugones 2010). Furthermore, by looking at the systems of meaning, norms *and* epistemologies that constitute organisational cultures, it demonstrates how these three facets of gendering and racialising practices reinforce one another. For example, constructions of masculinised

objectivity are produced through discourses on what kinds of knowledge count and how decisions should be made, but also by embodied performances of level-headed neutrality. The notion of hard counterterrorism as tough and masculine is produced both through its construction in discourse as 'punchy' and 'realistic' and through performances of militaristic bravado by some of its practitioners. These discursive acts produce racially-ordered hierarchies of masculinities and femininities, which provide a resource on which securocrats can draw to normalise their worldviews and practices. By mapping ideas, performances and knowledges onto those hierarchies, securocrats can easily signal what is valued and what is not. While at times this may be a conscious strategy, the meanings that produce these hierarchies are so embedded in national security discourses as to be virtually invisible to those familiar with them, such that securocrats may invoke and reproduce them as much through habit as through intention. Nonetheless, more or less subtle modes of reward and punishment provide powerful incentives to adopt, or at least not challenge, an understanding of militarism and coloniality as normal and acceptable. Gendering and racialising practices thereby work to regulate securocrats' performances in the workplace, helping to maintain the militarist and colonial worldview that informs national security policymaking by rendering it banal and unremarkable. However, my findings suggest that this is not a one-way relationship. As I outline below, my discussion of changes in the gendering and racialisation of organisational cultures, analysed through the concepts of inclusion, reversal and displacement, indicates that national security policymaking organisations have produced precisely those configurations of gender and race that help to sustain their militarist and colonial outlook.

Shifting Discourses

At each stage of my analysis, I have kept a close lookout for shifts in organisational cultures, as well as instances where racialised and gendered discourses might *not* support militarist and colonial thinking, using the typology of inclusion, reversal and displacement as a guide to what those might look like (Squires 1999; Duncanson 2013). In particular, Duncanson (2013) and Duncanson and Woodward's (2016) theorisation of how these three strategies might be combined has provided a basis for understanding how the presence of women and people of colour in national security policymaking, the revaluing of feminine-coded and racially-marked attributes and knowledges, and the displacement of racialised and gendered meanings and binaries might undermine processes that sustain militarism and coloniality. In addition to contributing to debates about antimilitarist feminist political strategies, I view this effort to

remain attentive to aspects of organisational cultures that might not normalise militarist and colonial thinking as part of the reflexive approach to research I introduced in Chapter 4. Given my political commitment to antimilitarist and anticolonial feminisms, which emphasise that patriarchy and racism are central to sustaining militarism and coloniality, I have sought to counteract my biases by remaining attentive to the possibility that this may not (always) be the case. My findings offer tentative evidence to support Duncanson and Woodward's (2016) argument that the inclusion of women in militarist organisations could contribute to dynamics of reversal and displacement, though my methods do not allow me to infer a causal connection, nor the direction of causality between the two. However, the resultant changes to gendered and racialised discourses have tended to reinforce militarism and coloniality rather than disrupt them.

In relation to strategies of inclusion, I examined how diversity workers have made the case for greater representation of marginalised groups in order to access knowledges that have historically been side-lined in national security policymaking, which they argue will increase diversity of thought (Chapter 7). This discourse might also be understood as contributing to dynamics of reversal, since it seeks to revalue the knowledge of women and people of colour, as well as types of knowledge often associated with femininity and Blackness, such as that generated through lived experience. I argued that diversity workers have begun to challenge the traditional conceptualisation of the bureaucrat as an abstract, disembodied individual, introducing the idea — also found in feminist epistemologies — that knowledge is dependent on the social location of the knower. However, I showed that, because of its power-evasive framing, this discourse on diversity of thought cannot recognise the epistemic advantage gained by thinking from marginalised lives, as feminist standpoint theories do. As such, the diversity of thought discourse does not challenge organisational norms that reproduce white ignorance by suppressing knowledge of security policies' complicity in systemic racism. I showed how knowledge based on the lived experiences of people of colour is welcomed when it is understood as making policies more effective in achieving their existing aims but silenced when it disturbs the colonial assumptions on which those aims are premised. The fact that an acceptance of colonial practices appears pivotal here might imply that the organisations' investment in maintaining colonial relations of power itself places limits on the ability of officials to reshape the racialised and gendered epistemological assumptions that form part of their organisational cultures.

I have further shown that the inclusion of growing numbers of (predominantly white) women has been accompanied by efforts by some of those women to encourage their organisations to value feminine-coded working styles that are more co-operative and inclusive, per strategies of reversal (Chapter 6). Following suggestions by Hooper (2001, pp.230–231), Cohn and Ruddick (2004, p.428) and Duncanson (2013, p.153) that the presence of women and feminist ideas in militarist organisations could promote the revaluing of femininities that challenge militarism, I queried whether this has been the case among UK securocrats. However, I have argued that the insider-activist femininities championed by these women (and some men) have not revalued the right *kind* of feminist ideas or feminine-coded attributes to challenge militaristic thinking in policy discussions. While they have had some success in promoting softer management styles and co-operation between departments, they have not revalued the promotion of antimilitarist ideas. While these insider-activists have brought liberal feminist ideas into the national security sphere, those who hold more antimilitarist views fear that to voice them would undermine their credibility in the eyes of their peers. Instead, the feminism that has gained (some) acceptance among securocrats is one that holds women's participation in militarism to be a feminist victory (see also Khalili 2011; Grewal 2017; Razavi 2021). Again, these findings suggest that while there is flexibility in the gendering of organisational cultures in national security policymaking, that flexibility has been curtailed by the organisations' commitment to militarism.

Another possible instance of reversal emerged in my analysis of counterterrorism discourses, where the usually feminine-coded practice of empathy has been revalued as part of a 'softer' approach to counterterrorism (Chapter 5). I argued that empathy has been incorporated into a more traditional 'tough' military masculinity to produce a hybrid masculinity associated with the combination of military and policing activities with PVE and CVE approaches to win 'hearts and minds' (see Shepherd 2006; Khalili 2011; Duncanson 2013). While Duncanson (2015) contends that such hybridisation can be a step on the way to reversal, she suggests that this is only the case if new, softer masculinities are built on relations of equality and mutual respect and not othering. I argued that the empathy extended to 'terrorists' in counterterrorism discourses is an instrumental one, used tactically to pacify others rather than to take on board their struggles. Indeed, this 'soft' approach to counterterrorism remains militaristic and colonial, often pathologising political dissent, failing to address systemic injustices, and working in co-operation with military and carceral approaches (Kundani 2014; Sabir 2017; Skoczylis & Andrews 2019; Younis 2021). As such, I argued that this apparent shift is not a

stepping-stone to dismantling masculinist and racist hierarchies: it shores up the legitimacy of liberal militarist practices by framing them as modern and evolved.

In addition to inclusion and reversal, I encountered evidence of changes in national security discourses that could signal the displacement of discursive links between masculinity and war, femininity and peace, as well as links between whiteness and liberal militarism (Chapter 6). My discussion of counterterrorism discourses showed how policy discourses can invoke gendered and racialised meanings without making them explicit, and I argued that this may open up possibilities for those meanings to be displaced (Chapter 5). Duncanson (2013, p.153) and Duncanson and Woodward (2016, p.12) suggested that the presence and practices of women in masculinist organisation who refuse to 'act like men' could help to displace the association of masculinity with war-making. I have argued that gentleman-bureaucrat masculinities and insider-activist femininities do at times appear to be converging, producing a hybrid script that is normative for both women and men, potentially dislodging liberal militarism's links to masculinity. However, female securocrats' experiences of being urged to increase their gravitas illustrate how they still experience the securocrat script as a masculine one. The performance of 'macho' legacy masculinities, which remain firmly associated with male bodies, further entrenches the linking of militarism and masculinity. Meanwhile, the experiences of women and men of colour in diverging from the white somatic norm demonstrate that the whiteness of the securocrat script has not been displaced. Indeed, while the idea of discursive binaries being gradually displaced perhaps conjures up a somewhat passive process, the experiences of women and people of colour who do not represent the normative securocrat demonstrate how cultural change is actively resisted. Evidence of dynamics of displacement is therefore limited, and the modest displacement of the masculinity/militarism link that has accompanied the advancement of white women in national security does not seem to threaten militarism or coloniality. Rather, my findings affirm Khalili's (2011) view that white masculinities and femininities can merge to form "a kind of metropolitan imperial gendering" (p.1490) that serves militarism and coloniality, so long as it sits atop hierarchies of race and class.

Whereas Duncanson and Woodward view the three-pronged strategy of inclusion, reversal and displacement as a means of undermining militarism, then, the (albeit modest) examples of reversal and displacement I have identified have tended to legitimise militarism and coloniality in new ways rather than challenging them. While this finding clearly has implications for

antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist strategies, which I explore in the final section of this chapter, it also suggests some theoretical contributions concerning the relationships between gender, race, militarism and coloniality, of which I wish to highlight two in particular.

The Resilience of Militarism

First, the fact that gendered and racialised discourses in UK national security policymaking have shifted in a variety of ways, but never ones that enable serious challenges to militarist and colonial thinking, would seem to indicate that the government's investment in liberal militarism itself curtails the possibilities for transforming organisational cultures. These material and ideological investments manifest in government spending plans, structures of decision-making authority, and webs of relationships that make up the military- and prison-industrial complexes (The Ammerdown Group 2016; Kennard & Curtis 2018; Corporate Watch 2018; Reeve 2020). Identifying the influence of such structures on security policymaking has not been my objective here. Doing so at the micro-level also presents methodological difficulties: whereas securocrats are willing to speak in generalities about the goings on in their workplaces, they often cannot discuss specific decisions, individuals and relationships that shape policy processes. My decision to concentrate on discourse follows the antimilitarist feminist literature's similar focus, which reflects the poststructuralist orientation of much feminist IR scholarship. However, an analysis that examined more closely how discourses interact with material structures would no doubt shed further light on how the government's investment in militarism and coloniality inhibits the transformation of gendered and racialised meanings, norms and epistemologies. Some of the structures that I *have* discussed — such as the Civil Service requirement for objectivity and impartiality, or the structurally-enforced necessity to work quickly and adopt a problem-solving approach — lend themselves to reproducing the status quo, whatever it may be. However, others — such as the disempowerment and separation of WPS and other 'soft' issues from the 'core' of national security policymaking — illustrate a built-in commitment to militarism that limits the possibilities for shifting discourses to make a meaningful difference. My findings therefore support calls for more structurally-focused research on gendered and racialised organisations (Medie 2021), as well as underlining the role of discourse in normalising oppressive structures.

Feminists often emphasise how masculinism *drives* or *causes* militarism and war, perhaps to underline the urgent necessity of transforming gender relations (e.g. Connell 2002; Cockburn

2010). Yet, while I have shown how masculinism helps to sustain militarism, my findings are consonant with accounts that present militarism and the construction of gender as mutually reinforcing (e.g. Enloe 1983, p.12; Cohn & Ruddick 2004, p.410; Cockburn 2007, pp.244–248). My answer to my research question asking what are the relationships between the gendering and racialisation of organisational cultures in UK national security policymaking and militarism and coloniality, then, is that they share a reciprocal relationship. While this is more a difference of emphasis with some of the feminist literature than a disagreement, it does have implications for antimilitarist and anticolonial strategies, which I discuss at the end of this chapter.

The second theoretical contribution I wish to highlight concerns the flexibility of militarism to adapt to changing constructions of gender and race. In common with studies of the US national security community, I have observed that some feminine-coded attributes and values have been revalued among securocrats (Khalili 2011; Grewal 2017; Razavi 2021), and that notions of white-coded masculinity and femininity that securocrats are expected to perform appear to be merging (Khalili 2011). I have similarly argued that these developments are wholly compatible with militaristic and colonial discourses and practices. I am wary of overstating the extent to which dynamics of reversal and displacement are present, given the continued denigration of feminine-coded ideas (as soft and fluffy), performances (as emotional or impassioned) and knowledges (as insufficiently objective). This does not represent the radical re-gendering that Duncanson and Woodward envisage in their prescriptions for transforming militaries. However, my findings reinforce the notion that masculinism is flexible enough that some masculinities and femininities can jostle for primacy, merge, or develop relations of equality with one another without disturbing its overall hierarchical structure — and that militarism, too, can adapt to such changes. This idea is not new: feminists often highlight, for example, softer masculinities that are more open to equality with (some) women/femininities but are constructed through the demonisation of others on the basis of race and/or class (Niva 1998; Razack 2004; Whitworth 2004; Khalili 2011; Duncanson 2015). However, I suggest that debates surrounding strategies of inclusion, reversal and displacement[62] that centre on a masculine/feminine binary could better reflect this insight. While antimilitarists feminists almost universally acknowledge that racism and masculinism

[62] As I argued in Chapter 2, many feminists propose similar ideas whether or not they adopt the language of inclusion, reversal and displacement (e.g. Hooper 2001; Cohn & Ruddick 2004; Otto 2006; Peterson & Runyan 2010).

intersect to produce militarism and war, the conceptualisation of antimilitarist strategies in terms of reversing and displacing gendered binaries does not fully capture all that this entails.

My findings emphasise in particular how racialised discourses continue to provide discursive resources for the legitimisation of militarism, even as certain masculinist hierarchies may be (on their way to being) dismantled. While I have argued that masculinism plays an important role in making militarism feel natural and inevitable, it does not do so alone. Some feminists argue that "*militarism needs patriarchy*" (Cockburn 2007, p.244, emphasis original), or ask, "is militarism without masculinism possible?" (Peterson 1992b, p.48). Yet, the privileging of gender over race and other axes of power in these analyses perhaps underestimates militarism's flexibility. As I discussed in Chapter 5, Duncanson (2015) argues that dismantling masculinism could be a two-step process that begins with incorporating feminised traits into hegemonic masculinities and proceeds by flattening racialised and classed (etc.) hierarchies as the "ultimate, more challenging stage" (p.244). While I may be less optimistic than Duncanson about the prospects for effecting such changes within organisations such as militaries or national security institutions (as I discuss further below), I concur with her assessment that it would be defeatist to assume that hegemony will always reassert itself in new ways and cannot be dismantled. I have attempted to bring an analysis of race further into the discussion of strategies of inclusion, reversal and displacement by examining, for example, how some racially-marked knowledges have been revalued, and how the association of whiteness with liberal militarism might (not) be displaced. Developing this thinking into prescriptive strategies will require context-specific engagement with questions around how to transform the structures, discourses and interests that hold white supremacy in place, for example through deeper engagement with research and activism around decolonisation, abolition and Black liberation. Of course, just as I have suggested some antimilitarist feminist work has privileged gender analysis over that of race, one could equally argue that I have under-theorised the role of capitalism, heteronormativity, ableism or any number of other systems of power.

In summary, my analysis of apparent shifts in the racialised and gendered organisational cultures found in the national security community shows that dynamics of inclusion, reversal and displacement — to the extent that they are present — have tended to reinforce rather than undermine discourses that sustain militarist and colonial thinking. I have argued that (perhaps unsurprisingly) organisations that are ideologically and materially invested in militarism and coloniality are likely to actively resist cultural changes that challenge them, and

favour those that do not: militaristic and colonial ways of thinking shape gendered and racialised organisational cultures, and vice versa. Militarism and coloniality are flexible, adapting to changes in organisational culture and using what discursive resources are available for their legitimation. Inevitably, my findings represent a snapshot of norms and discourses in the national security community: it is possible that, had I selected different policy issues, or even observed different conversations, I would have reached different conclusions. While the ethnographically-influenced methods I have used do not allow me to make generalisable statements about UK national security policymaking, however, I find it significant that, across diverse conversations with officials in two policy areas, strong patterns emerged (see Cohn 2006, p.93). The ethical imperative to protect the anonymity of participants has also precluded a more fine-grained analysis at times, such as might be achieved by differentiating more between the cultures of different departments, between the experiences of women and men of colour, or between white women and women of colour. Nonetheless, my analysis offers critical insights into a community that is relatively difficult to access. In the final section of this chapter, I consider what my findings mean for feminist efforts to challenge militarism and coloniality.

Implications for Antimilitarist and Anticolonial Feminisms

In Chapters 1 and 2, I expressed scepticism about the possibilities for reforming militaries and state security institutions, particularly in the absence of wider changes to political, social and economic structures. Insofar as my findings underline how organisational cultures in government departments resist the kind of changes that would destabilise their militarist outlooks, they lend credence to this sceptical position. Of course, feminists such as Cohn and Ruddick (2004) and Duncanson and Woodward (2016) who advocate challenging gendered and racialised discourses in militarist organisations in order to undermine militarism do not promote this strategy in isolation: some argue that, as I suggested in Chapter 1, building feminist peace means transforming the (neo)liberal-capitalist world order, as well as patriarchy and white supremacy (Duncanson 2013, p.149, 2016; Cohn 2017; Cohn & Duncanson 2020). Nor are they naïve about these organisations' ability to resist change. Duncanson's (2013) account of British soldering masculinities demonstrates the armed forces' strong resistance to re-gendering (pp.140–142), and Duncanson and Woodward (2016) call for empirical studies examining what helps *and* hinders gender transformation in militaries (p.14).

While acknowledging this potential for resistance, Duncanson and Woodward (2016) call for theorising which is open to the *possibility* of reforming militaries — as this thesis has been open to the potential for reforming national security policymaking organisations (p.13). In light of my findings, however, I suggest that reversing and displacing gendered and racialised discourses in national security policymaking through the introduction of women and people of colour and of anti-racist feminist ideas should not be a strategic priority for antimilitarist feminists. This is not to say that there is no value in engaging with state institutions to reduce the harms they produce and direct their resources toward more socially useful activities where opportunities arise. Faced with ever-evolving manifestations of racialised and gendered state violence, I concur with Otto (2006) that feminists have little choice but to engage with bureaucracies, as insiders or external advocates (pp.172–173). Nor do I suggest that exclusion from these organisations is inconsequential. Who joins (or is permitted to join) state institutions is often a marker of who is considered a full member of the nation or political community and afforded rights as such (Sharoni 1995, pp.46–47; Ware 2009; Spade & Belkin 2021, p.288, 294). As long as these organisations exist, they should be open to all. While exclusion from security institutions can precipitate or symbolise other oppressions, however, inclusion is not liberatory if liberation is understood — as it should be — in anticolonial and antimilitarist terms.

In her work on militaries, Duncanson argues that this sceptical position is too deterministic, imagining institutions as immutable and leaving no possibility for positive change (2013, pp.6–7; 2017, p.53). However, to say that attempting to reform these organisations' cultures through strategies of inclusion should not be a strategic priority for antimilitarists is not to say that their current state is immutable. Radical changes in public opinion and electoral outcomes, for example, could shift mindsets in the national security community (perhaps even away from 'national security' as a framing concept). In the absence of such, however, adding women and people of colour into government departments, even with feminist and anti-racist ideas, and hoping they will over time reverse and displace deeply sedimented discourses linking liberal militarism with masculinity and whiteness is a long-term strategy that the present moment cannot afford. As militarism, and the colonial world order it protects, fuel ecological, economic and humanitarian crises around the world, more urgent transformation of political, social and economic structures is needed. As Duncanson (2017, p.53) acknowledges in her work on militaries,

> most anti-militarist feminists would insist, I think, that we are a long way from the level of re-gendering required […] to make the concept worth exploring, or even intelligible! Moreover, they might argue, any energies devoted to changing militaries from within are energies diverted from transnational feminist organising to build nonviolent alternatives to militaries.

While national security policymaking organisations are not analogous to militaries in all respects, I would apply the view that Duncanson attributes to most antimilitarist feminists to the policy sphere: energies might be better spent finding nonviolent alternatives to national security than changing the security state from within. Given the inevitability of *some* inside engagement, however, antimilitarist feminists might consider whether the distinction adopted by anti-capitalist and police and prison abolitionist organisers between reforms that legitimise oppressive institutions and those that pave the way for their abolition might be applied to national security policymaking (Gorz 1967, pp.6–8; Gilmore 2007, pp.242–248; Kaba 2021, pp.70–71).

Furthermore, while the capacity of securocrats to transform the gendered and racialised organisational cultures in their workplaces may meet with resistance linked to successive governments' commitments to militarism and coloniality, those cultures do not exist in a vacuum. As I argued in Chapter 3, organisational cultures are not hermetically sealed: they are legible to those inside and outside the organisation because they draw on culturally recognisable norms and discourses in the societies in which they are situated (Wright 2019, pp.52–53; Standfield 2020, p.141, 146). The continual reproduction of hierarchies of racialised masculinities and femininities within the national security community therefore depends on the wider circulation of similar discourses, which enables both the public and officials themselves to regard these constructions as normal and legitimate. Rather than focusing on directly changing cultures within militarist organisations, then, a long-term antimilitarist and anticolonial feminist strategy might be better advised to tackle the wider societal norms and discourses that make them possible. While organisations and movements seeking to challenge attitudes toward masculinity have proliferated in recent years, these have at times tended to focus on masculinities deemed 'extreme' or 'toxic', particularly where these are (perceived to be) performed by marginalised men (Duriesmith 2017, 2020; Pearson 2019). Often funded by overseas development aid, this 'engaging men' agenda has often reproduced — or at least struggled to challenge — the neoliberal and colonial structures that such masculinities emerge

from and sustain (Duriesmith 2017; Greig 2019, 2020). Further research and activism could help to establish how efforts to transform masculinities *and* femininities might address gender norms that probably do not seem extreme to most — including those performed by privileged actors, such as the gentleman-bureaucrat or the militaristic femocrat — and challenge the unjust systems in which they are embedded.

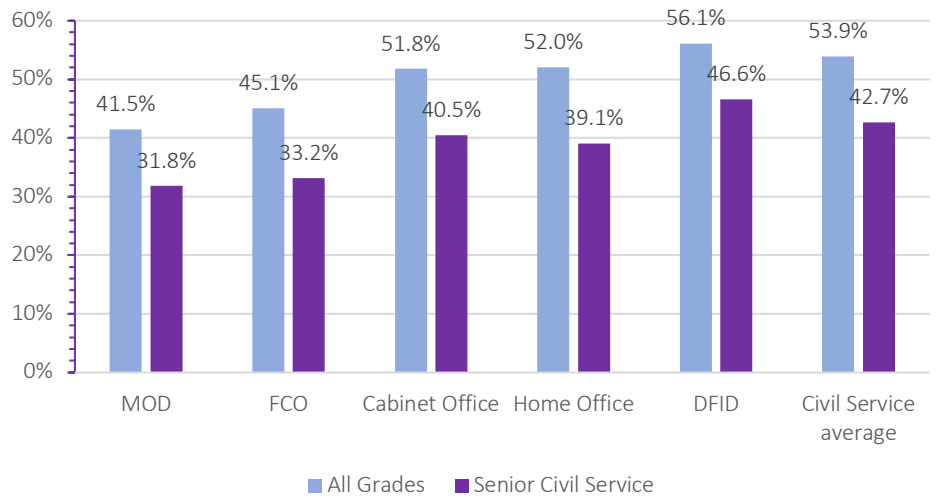
Finally, if — as I have argued — taking seriously the insights of feminist and anti-racist epistemologies would challenge the foundational conception of what a bureaucracy is, this raises questions for further investigation. What would it mean for decision-makers to reject scientific objectivity and embrace a conceptualisation of knowledge as situated and imbued with power relations? What would policymaking processes look like if based on a commitment to justice rather than impartiality, and who would participate in them? Feminist political theorists have offered some answers to these questions. For example, Ferguson (1984) views bureaucracy as incompatible with feminism, proposing a "non-bureaucratic vision of collective life" (p.5) based on feminised experiences of caretaking and nurturing. Jones (1993) calls for a conceptualisation of compassionate authority that rejects both objective knowledge and identitarian notions of authenticity, instead valorising community, dialogue and an ethics of care. While some similar values inform imaginaries of feminist peace and feminist foreign policy (e.g. Ruddick 1989; Sylvester 1994; Hutchings 2000; Aggestam, Bergman Rosamond & Kronsell 2019), putting these two literatures in conversation with one another could provoke more radical thinking about how to transform not only the content of security policies but also the structures and processes that produce them.

I began this thesis by highlighting the mismatch between the threats that face the world today and the British government's security strategy: interlocking ecological, economic and health crises have been met with policies that use violence to preserve the systems that created those crises. While many processes contribute to the making of this militaristic and colonial approach to the world, the discursive construction of gender and race play a role — an important one, I have argued — in producing a sense that this situation is natural, unremarkable and 'just the way things are'. Challenging these masculinist and racist constructions should therefore be a component of any strategy to destabilise these systems of violence and develop alternative ways of organising our societies to create more just and sustainable futures. While organisations that make national security policy resist such changes from within, understanding how the militaristic mindsets that inform their work are sustained

and legitimised on an everyday basis can help us to imagine how they might be delegitimised as part of wider strategies of emancipation. Only by undermining the unrealistic notion that there are no alternatives available can we begin to build the alternatives we urgently need.

Appendix

Figure 1: Women as a Proportion of Staff in National Security Departments, 2017–18



Data obtained from the Office of National Statistics (2018), Cabinet Office (2018), DFID (2018) and FCO (2018). Figures from FCO and DFID are for UK based and 'Home Civil Service' staff respectively, because staff appointed locally overseas do not typically enter on to a Civil Service career track that would see them appointed to Whitehall posts. This is to give a more accurate picture of the pool of people from which Whitehall staff are drawn. Figures for BAME staff at senior grades in DFID are unavailable due to low reporting rates.

Figure 2: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic People as a Proportion of Staff in National Security Departments, 2017–18

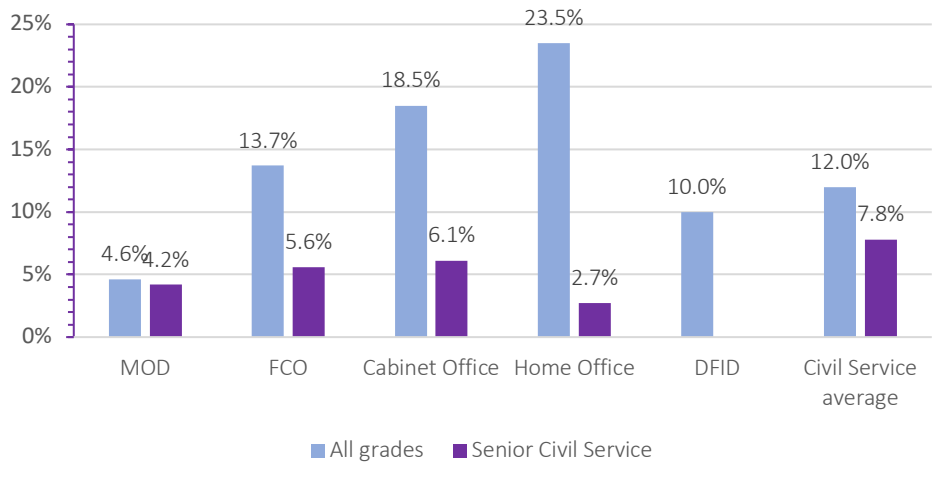


Figure 3: Demographic Backgrounds of Interviewees

Demographic	Number of interviewees
Gender	
Female	42
Male	18
Ethnicity	
White	50
Black, Asian or other ethnic minority	10
Class Background	
Upper Middle Class	2
Middle Class	33
Lower Middle Class	10
Working Class	10
No answer/unsure	5
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	55
Bisexual	2
Gay	1
No answer	2
Age	
20-34	17
35-49	38
50-67	3
68+	1
No answer	1

Participants used varying descriptions in response to the open-ended questions in my demographic survey; I have grouped them into broader categories to protect their anonymity.

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