Protecting Civilians or Colonial Worldviews?

A Queer Analysis of UK Debates on Humanitarian Intervention

by

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Abstract

The current global political moment can be characterised by multiple, inter-related crises. These include culture wars, identity-based social conflict, massive economic inequality and environmental destruction - all of which are driven by factors such as misinformation, excessive capital accumulation and racial/sexual normativities. Given that many of these conditions are traceable back to early European colonialism, there has been insufficient attention paid to the epistemic frameworks that underpin global politics. In response to this moment of crisis, and informed by Queer IR scholarship (notably the works of Cynthia Weber, Momin Rahman, and Rahul Rao), this thesis takes humanitarian intervention as its central focus, in order to draw into stark relief the ongoing coloniality of the Western state. Focusing on House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention from 2011 to 2018, it explores the extent to which racism and heteronormativity, rooted in colonial understandings of time and space, are enacted through the UK's responses, failed responses, and non-responses to atrocity crimes. In particular, it highlights the ways in which dominant logics in these debates invoke subject-positions of extreme selfhood or otherness. These are identified in this thesis as 'The Brutal Dictator', 'The ISIL Terrorist' and 'The British Self', framed as existing at various steps on 'The Universal Path to Democracy.' In studying these extreme cultural figures of selfhood and/or otherness, this thesis unpacks the ways in which racism and heteronormativity work together to dehumanise certain populations under coloniality, and the ways in which this can be resisted.

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Chapter One:

The Sexual Politics of Humanitarian Intervention

We are undoubtedly experiencing a moment of crisis and transformation on our planet. The US's decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, prompting an almost immediate transition back to a Taliban government, has possibly signalled the end of the project of Western-led interventionism and state-building in the Middle East. Contesting the established international order in the context of perceived American weakness, the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine has disrupted a long period of peace in Europe, and signals a challenge to liberal democratic norms, with Putin leading a right-wing regime that sees the LGBTQ+[1] rights agenda as an affront to its sovereignty (Wilkinson, 2014). Simultaneously, China's meteoric economic rise and apathy towards international institutions such as the UN Security Council also indicates that large systemic changes are likely to be afoot in world politics. While the US may be in decline as a global hegemon, the UK has long since been relegated to the status of second-rate power, which has only been compounded by its departure from the European Union.

Although 'the West' may be in decline in terms of its political and economic influence, the ongoing effects of neoliberal capitalism, enthusiastically launched by Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s, continue to be felt around the world. The Anglo-American experience has been one featuring the collapse of industry, mass inequality, crumbling public infrastructure and an increasing distrust of political elites (Coates, 2018). Whilst European countries more sceptical of the neoliberal economic agenda, such as those following the so-called "Nordic model' of

[1] This thesis generally uses the terms queer and LGBTQ+ to refer to individuals who do not conform to heteronormative norms of behaviour. It does so in the recognition that this is a Westernised term that is located within a particular historical context. I often use the term 'LGBTQ+ rights-holder', contrasting this with queers who are excluded from or resist homonormative (Duggan, 2003) or homonationalist (Puar, 2007) understandings of 'the nation.' Where terms other than queer or LGBTQ+ are used, this is in reflection of the author I am discussing.

social democracy, have much higher levels of economic equality than the UK or USA (Hodgson, 2018), the same cannot be said for the majority of countries in Asia, Africa and South America. Here, structural-adjustment policies enforced by the IMF (International Monetary Fund) have manufactured a downwards trend of economic unproductivity, unemployment, inflation, privatisation and poor governance (Escobar, 1995; Quijano, 2007). Whilst this picture is far from universal, with some countries such as South Korea and Singapore using policies of import substitution industrialisation (ISI) to kick-start economic growth, the global distribution of resources under neoliberal capitalism is deeply incongruent with the existence of a good life for most people on this planet.

The economic inequality associated with neoliberalism has been apparent for quite some time now, but it must be remembered that neoliberalism is just the latest iteration of capitalism and colonialism. These are globally-dominant epistemes that are rooted in an exploitative relationship with the natural world, with a view of agency that is anthropocentric, White and masculine (Wynter, 2003; Phipps, 2021). In the current media and political environment, it seems as though the sheer magnitude of the environmental impacts associated with this ideology have seemingly only recently come into sharp focus, in part due to the activism of individuals such as Greta Thunberg, and organisations such as Extinction Rebellion, as well as the clearly intensifying effects of climate change. With carbon emissions continuing to grow at their current rate, scientists have predicted that the 2015 Paris Agreement's 1.5 °C global warming target is likely to be obliterated, resulting in rising sea levels and erratic weather patterns (Carrington, 2022). In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, governments around the world are spending vast amounts on fossil fuels in order to stimulate economic growth, rendering the breaking of the 1.5 °C target even more likely. The results of climate change are, of course, increasing competition for scarce resources, the mass displacement of people from affected regions, and intensifying social problems to the point of

mass violence emerging, including atrocity crimes (Zimmerer, 2014), which is where the specific focus of this thesis comes into view.

It is specifically within this global context of crisis that this thesis thinks about humanitarian intervention, understood in this thesis as broadly referring to the use of military force in the service of humanitarian aims and the protection of civilians from human rights abuses or atrocity crimes. This is not restricted to the R2P framework, given the multiple instances in which Western states, in particular, have attempted to legitimise interventionism simply by appealing to humanitarian motives both prior to and after R2P's inception. Whilst common-sense conceptions of humanitarian intervention are often understood as relating to international aid and development, the phrase humanitarian intervention has long prior been used to describe the use of military force against another state to protect civilians. This thesis therefore uses the phrase *humanitarian intervention* to situate contemporary (non)uses of military force within their historical context. This is explored in greater depth at the beginning of chapter two.

Cumulatively, the aforementioned problems are too insurmountable to tackle, but it is specifically in response to this context of global crisis that I began thinking about humanitarian intervention. The origins of our current crisis go back much further than the establishment of neoliberal capitalism as the dominant political economy in the 1980s, to the establishment of capitalism as an economic system in which wealth is privately owned, and to colonialism; a process responsible for the dispossession and genocidal elimination of millions of Indigenous people around the world, as well as the subjugation of countries in the Global South through the discursive construction of race (Quijano, 2007, p.170). With the arguments of the colonial civilising mission frequently reproduced in arguments for humanitarian intervention (Hobson, 2014, p.565), the study of this phenomenon provides a key lens through which the arguments originally used to establish colonialism and capitalism can be traced to the present day. Most

notably, it is of interest that centuries of brutality were kick-started by an argument that presented colonialism as altruistic in character, with this providing a thematic and historical context in which humanitarian intervention can be situated. It is my hope that by unpacking the arguments for humanitarian intervention, and indeed arguments against it, arguments that haven't been made (Hansen, 2000), and arguments that have failed (Halberstam, 2005; Weber, 2014; Wilcox, 2017), that we can gain an understanding of the ongoing legacy of colonialism in world politics.

Queer Theory and Humanitarian Intervention

Despite the clear need for radical scholarship which challenges the status quo, the discipline of IR (international relations) continues to marginalise such approaches. Describing the state of IR in terms of a colonial household almost two decades ago, Agathangelou and Ling argued that it seeks to stave off disorder "by appropriating the knowledge, resources, and labor of racialized, sexualized Others (i.e. postcolonial, queer or feminist approaches) for its own benefit and pleasure while announcing itself the sole producer-the father-of our world" (2004, p.21). Whilst there have been some shifts in the constitution of IR, such as the emergence of queer IR as a body of work which is being published in major journals, this is due to the tireless work of critical scholars, and less has changed about the discipline than we would like. Our research continues to be painted as specialist or marginal (Smith and Lee, 2015) and feminist, postcolonial or queer research, where it is engaged with, still tends to be gentrified and stripped of critical impetus to facilitate a disembodied analysis of statecraft (Weber, 2014, p.43). These tendencies have produced a situation whereby Western state violence under the guise of protecting civilians, also known as humanitarian intervention, is routinely discussed in disembodied terms of norm contestation (e.g. see Bellamy, 2011; Chandler, 2015; Deitelhoff, 2019) but is much more rarely discussed in relation to gender, sexuality or race. Non-existent

is an approach which looks at these three dimensions within the historical context of colonialism.

In response, this thesis highlights the existence of humanitarian intervention as a simultaneously sexual, gendered and racist act of colonial violence, deployed by Western states such as the UK to maintain their status and colonial identity, in the context of an international system structured and ordered by White supremacy (Anievas et. al, 2015; Sabaratnam, 2020), misogyny (Hooper, 2001; Parpart and Zalewski, 1998) and homophobia (Weber, 2016; Peterson, 1999, 2014). This thesis focuses on the UK, in particular, due to it being central to shifting international law by legitimising its use of force against the Syrian regime in 2018 by appealing to the doctrine of humanitarian intervention (Scharf, 2019; Watkin, 2020). It also does so due to the existence of the UK as a pioneer of European colonialism, establishing the existence of the aforementioned ideologies of White supremacy, misogyny and homophobia, which continue to define world politics. It is this historical legacy of violence which also continues to define Britishness in the present day (El-Enany, 2020; Khan, 2021; Trafford 2020), establishing the British case as an ideal one for understanding lasting legacies of coloniality in world politics.

Looking at House of Commons debates between 2011 and 2018, this thesis considers how such worldviews are enacted and reproduced through violence (Shepherd, 2006; Vernon, 2021), constructing a reality in which the queering[2] *and* racialising of people, groups or cultural figures is the primary mechanism through which violence is legitimised. In particular, it argues that heteronormative[3] (Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005) and racist (Bhabha,

[2] This paper uses Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's well-known understanding of queerness as "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically" (1993, p.8). That being said, it applies this resistance to processes of categorisation beyond the study of sexuality and gender to all aspects of identity. Notably, it also applies this to its understandings of race and ethnicity. Queering is not always an emancipatory process and can be used to frame particular groups as abnormal or perverse, in order to facilitate violence.

[3] Heteronormativity refers to "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent… but also privileged." (Berlant and Warner, 1998, p.548).

1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015) understandings of time work in tandem to produce the conditions for violent military (in)action by the British state. This not only speaks to British humanitarian intervention operations, but also highlights the deep and intertwined relationship between racism[4] and heteronormativity as globally dominant epistemes. This builds, in particular, on the work of Cynthia Weber (2016) and Rahul Rao (2020), whose work integrates postcolonial and heteronormative critiques of the concept of development.

Offering a slightly different focus, this thesis suggests that we should move away from analysing sexuality through persistent reference to particular subjects (i.e. the LGBTQ+ subject or 'the homosexual') and towards a more expansive understanding of perversion, reinvigorating the queer subject-less critique (Eng et. al, 2005, p.3) in queer IR, in a way that is deeply mindful of racism and racialisation. As I explore in chapter three, this will help to expose the deeply linked ways in which racialised and/or queered populations are othered and dehumanised through similar and often interchangeable notions of perverted development, with trans people and Muslims both targeted through discourses of monstrosity in the current political moment in the UK, for example (e.g. see Alexander, 2023; Warren, 2022). In studying extreme figures of selfhood and/or otherness in relation to the British state, this thesis aims to render clear the colonial discourses which continue to be deployed against racialised and/or queered populations who are positioned as objects of violent (non)intervention.

Whilst drawing general inspiration from Momin Rahman's queer intersectional framework (2010), which discusses the existence of certain subject-positions as being impossible (e.g. 'the gay Muslim') due to dominant understandings of their constituent identities, this thesis does not undertake an explicitly intersectional approach. This is due to its primary focus on the ongoing relevance of historic colonial epistemes (e.g. White supremacy

[4] Drawing upon the work of Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit, this thesis sees racism as not being restricted to personal bigotry, but rather as a broad epistemic system, rooted in White supremacy, colonial power relations and processes of civilisational/racial categorisation, which uphold Western-centric worldviews (2020, pp.4-5).

and heteronormativity) and their ongoing relevance to the organisation of norms of acceptable violence in world politics. I prioritise a temporal focus on notions of (im)proper development in this thesis, suspending discussions of the compatibility of queer theory and intersectionality on the basis that it could detract from this. This stems from a similar epistemological concern with unpacking discourses of racialisation and sexuality as being co-constitutive, but does so through a different theoretical lens.

Offering a completely new contribution to the existing queer IR scholarship is this thesis' empirical focus. This thesis is, to date, the first major queer investigation into humanitarian intervention, understood as military violence with the stated aim of protecting civilians. Whilst Jasbir Puar (2007; 2013) has looked at interventionism using a queer and postcolonial lens, this study specifically analyses the discourses and subsequent practices of using violence to protect civilians, given the centrality of this phenomenon to the organisation of violence in world politics at present (Scharf, 2019; Watkin, 2020). It is by situating this study within the historical context of colonial interventions in the Global South, and offering an enhanced focus on the gendered and sexual dimensions of colonialism in comparison to the existing postcolonial scholarship, that this thesis aims to invigorate the study of humanitarian intervention. By offering this new empirical focus and theoretical lens, this thesis makes a clear contribution to the existing queer IR canon, and to the study of the character of the British state.

In particular, this thesis argues that 'The Brutal Dictator' and 'The ISIL Terrorist' are constructed through reference to, and positioned against 'The British Self' in UK debates on humanitarian intervention, with the latter represented as the fullest expression of civilisational and sexual development. Whilst 'The ISIL Terrorist' is a recent iteration of the colonial subject position of the Muslim terrorist, as studied by Puar (2007) and Weber (2016), for example, 'The Brutal Dictator' is a cultural figure that has not received academic attention within queer

IR to date. The articulation of this colonial stereotype is therefore a key contribution of this thesis' analysis.

In the specific case of 'The Brutal Dictator', his civilisational/sexual barbarism is articulated through reference to the idea of him threatening heteronormative families, his individual pathology/perversion, and the existence of a global battle between good/evil. 'The ISIL Terrorist', by contrast, is constructed by appealing to long-standing histories of Islamophobia, by depicting him as a threat to women, children *and* gay people, and by framing him as a completely undevelopable monster, existing in antithesis to Western ideals and values. 'The British Self', finally, is articulated through reference to British values, understood as holding a maturity and capacity for good governance that is juxtaposed against the perceived immaturity of the Global South. Beyond this, I highlight the masculinist logics which are used to sanitise discussions of violence in IR and the use of humanitarian and diplomatic aims to de-securitise military inaction where taking action is not profitable, with these also contributing to the construction of the identity of 'The British Self'. This understanding of the UK as representing maximum civilisational and sexual development, which I understand as being inherently linked (Weber, 2016, pp.60-61), informs British responsibility for the good governance of the world, up to and including the use of military violence. It is the (re)production of these cultural figures throughout the debates in question that establishes the discursive terrain for colonial violence to occur. It is important to note, however, that all of these figures are resisted in different ways throughout the debates, and at the end of each chapter I reflect on the specific ways in which the arguments of MPs opposing the government restrict or fail to restrict the actions available to the government.

Understood as contributing to a colonial worldview which enables certain material actions (Doty, 1993; Weber, 2016), these cultural figures are read as being at different points of development on the universal 'path to democracy'. It is this worldview which I argue

encapsulates the debates in question, featuring the notion of democracy as a universal end goal of development, the idea of there being a right and wrong side of history, and spatial representations of civilisational/sexual progress or backwardness, such as the state of nature. It is in this discussion, towards the end of the thesis, that I move from a closer reading of the debates in question to a broader consideration of the themes that have emerged and the implications they have for world politics. In the conclusion, I reflect upon the key findings from the study of House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention, and once again situate these findings within our current global political moment. Most notably, I reflect on Western knowledge systems as being the source of humanity's current existential crisis and some possible alternatives to the current state of affairs.

Exploring the British Case

This thesis focuses on UK House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention between 2011 and 2018 as its empirical focus. Included in these debates are instances where the UK Government has successfully securitised an atrocity crime and received Parliamentary approval for military action (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011; Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015). Also included are cases in which the UK has failed to gain Parliamentary approval for action (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013), has retrospectively explained its decision to Parliament (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018) and has decided not to take military action in response to an atrocity crime (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018). Drawing upon the queer and feminist methodological concern with failure (e.g. see Halberstam, 2011; Wilcox, 2017) and absence (e.g. see Hansen, 2000) being just as significant objects of study as success, this thesis studies military non-intervention as being just as important as military intervention.

This thesis produces its key findings by reading these debates through queer (Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005) and postcolonial (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015) interrogations of modernity's progress narrative, seeing this as absolutely central to the way in which the case for violence is or isn't made. Using a radical approach to discourse analysis (Doty, 1993) and the work of Momin Rahman (2014) and Cynthia Weber (2016) to unpack how temporal inequalities are articulated, resisted and inform dominant worldviews, my methodology represents a creative approach to the study of humanitarian intervention. It draws upon the key theoretical and methodological frameworks of leading queer IR scholars and uses their work to look at self/other representations, resistance to these and worldviews articulated in the debates, with the overarching aim of understanding the ways in which House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention (re)produce colonial worldviews.

What this thesis doesn't do is engage extensively with debates on humanitarian intervention in multiple countries, on the basis that it makes more sense to engage with one carefully selected case in a deep and meaningful way, drawing conclusions from this for world politics more broadly. In looking at resistance to dominant narratives on humanitarian intervention, it restricts this to those opposing the government position in the House of Commons. This helps us to understand the full discursive space surrounding decisions on humanitarian intervention in UK policymaking, but I do seek to incorporate the voices of those who are most affected by these decisions in future debates. It also does not seek to make a normative case in relation to humanitarian intervention, instead unpacking debates on humanitarian intervention as an expression of the ongoing coloniality of the British state and of world politics more broadly.

At this point, having briefly established some of the thesis' core premises, it is important to reflect on the characteristics of the British state, and of British society more broadly, which render it an important object of study for the colonial violence of humanitarian

intervention. Firstly, the UK remains one of the leading voices in contemporary debates about humanitarian intervention, and was also deeply involved in the early period of colonisation, deploying civilisationist arguments to legitimise colonial conquest which eventually resulted in the establishment of a global slave trade and the largest formal empire the planet has ever seen. It is this colonial conquest that has given the UK its pre-eminent position in the global economy and global politics, with this position established through wealth stolen from the former colonies (El-Enany, 2020). Furthermore, the British state and British society is constituted by and through colonial worldviews (El-Enany, 2020; Khan, 2021; Trafford, 2020), as there has never been a moment of national reckoning in relation to the cruelty of empire, including slavery, material dispossession, genocidal elimination and the establishment of racialisation and racism as dominant ideologies in world politics (Bhambra, 2009; Du Bois, 1925; Sabaratnam, 2020). This is evidenced by continued national pride in the British empire and institutions such as the monarchy, the existence of anti-terrorism policies which specifically target people of colour (Khan, 2020) and the economic and health disparity between White and racialised people in the UK. This has been laid bare by the Covid-19 pandemic (The Kings Fund, 2021), the continued existence of a deeply racist and violent immigration border policing policy (Bhatia, 2019; Danewid, 2021; Parmar, 2020) and by the ongoing culture war surrounding the public display of the statues of slave-owners, to name a few key dimensions. In the context of a deep reservoir of colonial and racist meanings in the constitution of British identity and Britishness (El-Enany, 2020; Khan, 2021; Trafford, 2020), the study of House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention becomes deeply important in unpacking the ongoing role of colonialism in British politics.

In my study of humanitarian intervention, it is important to note that I integrate an understanding of both sexuality and racism into my understanding of colonialism. Whilst the point that racism is central to the colonial violence of humanitarian intervention has been made

(e.g. see Darby, 2009; Pourmokhtari, 2013), the point that sexuality is relevant has not, except for in a paper I recently wrote for *International Studies Review* (Vernon, 2022), which makes up a part of this thesis. This is a significant blind-spot in the established literature, given the centrality of sexual stereotypes and notions of normality and/or perversion to the colonial project from the early civilising mission to the present day. In the case of the former, heteronormative stereotypes were often deployed as a lens to analyse familial, sexual and gender relations of Indigenous societies (Vrushali, 2018, p.3), in order to construct them as perverse, in need of sexual/civilisational development, or sub-human (e.g. see Lugones, 2018; Picq, 2019; Tallie, 2020). Similarly, these notions of perversion have historically been and continue to be applied to people of colour in the reproduction of race and White supremacy as globally-dominant epistemes (Anzaldua, 1987; Fanon, 1987). In this sense, heteronormativity and racism have always been bedfellows, and this needs to be applied to the study of humanitarian intervention. Furthermore, in more recent years, the ascension of LGBTQ+ rights in Western countries has provided governments with a new sexual criterion through which civilisationist and racist claims can be made against countries in the Global South, flipping historic standards of civilisation and depicting the acceptance of (certain) LGBTQ+ people (Duggan, 2003, pp.50-51) as a hallmark of development (Rahman, 2014). Given the centrality of sexual politics to the liberal project of modernity (Delatolla, 2020), it becomes vital that all analyses of colonial violence incorporate a deep and nuanced understanding of the relationship between sexuality and racism.

It is in the knowledge that Western state-led violence has been an enduring feature of the international system (Chakrabarty, 2007; Fanon, 1987; Mbembe, 2003) that this thesis studies policy makers' means of legitimising and delegitimising violence, so scholars are more prepared to identify next iteration of colonial violence. In the face of mass displacement in recent years, the arguments outlined in this thesis would be useful to those studying the

processes of othering that are used to justify violence against asylum seekers who are fleeing (often Western-induced) crises in the Middle East, for example. Overall, and related to this function, this thesis studies the UK's direct role in some of these crises. It also unpacks the discourses which have historically been, and continue to be deployed against racialised populations in the Global South in order to dehumanise and other them, facilitating the deployment of extreme violence. This is a complex process, and some of the targets of the colonial discourses studied in this thesis are political leaders, such as Assad and Gaddafi, who have caused untold suffering to their civilian populations. Nonetheless, it is by unpacking the often racialised and sexualised discourses deployed to legitimise violence against them that this thesis aims to deconstruct the discursive conditions which enable colonial violence, understood in this thesis as decisions made by Western policy-makers which denigrate or destroy life (Mbembe, 2003), or the conditions for life (Berlant, 2007; Galtung, 1969) for populations in the Global South.

Mapping the Study of Humanitarian Intervention

Progressing in this vein, chapter two provides a brief historical context to contemporary iterations of humanitarian intervention, before outlining the contribitions of constructivist scholarship, which has tended to focus on shifting norms of humanitarian intervention (e.g. see Bellamy, 2011; Chandler, 2015; Deitelhoff, 2019). Responding to a general lack of attention to colonialism in this literature, the chapter then looks at studies of humanitarian intervention as an act of colonial violence (e.g. see Hindawi, 2012; Pourmokhtari, 2013). Highlighting the centrality of gender and sexual norms to colonialism, and the relative absence of this from the postcolonial scholarship on humanitarian intervention, it then explores feminist studies of humanitarian intervention. Noting that they do well to explore gender and race, it notes that they still neglect the study of sexuality. Responding to this gap, chapter three proposes queer

IR as a body of work with the potential to look at humanitarian intervention as an act of simultaneously gendered, racist *and* sexual violence within the historical context of colonialism. In outlining this school of thought, I then situate myself within the established scholarship. In particular, I map early studies of heteronormativity and world politics (e.g. see Cohn, 1987; Peterson, 1999; Weber, 1999), studies which are attentive to homonormativity and racism (e.g. see Puar, 2007; Rahman, 2014; Rao, 2015, 2020), and studies which are attentive to heteronormativity and racism (e.g. see Puar and Rai, 2002; Richter-Montpetit, 2007, 2014; Weber, 2016). Identifying the huge benefits of all of these schools, I suggest that we need to re-orientate queer IR scholarship back towards the study of heteronormativity, whilst incorporating the insights of what I call the homonormative turn in queer IR.

Setting out my theoretical and methodological approach, chapter four first maps the Foucauldian understanding of power that informs this study (Foucault, 1976, pp.94-95), and the postcolonial critiques of Foucault (e.g. Mbembe, 2003; Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2018) that I also incorporate into my understanding of power. It then focuses in particular on postcolonial (e.g. see Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015) and queer (e.g. see Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005) understandings of temporality, seeing modernist temporal logics as the epistemic basis of colonial othering or dehumanising claims. Moving onto my focus on the UK, chapter five sets out my case study selection, and the reasons for my analysis of House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention between 2011-2018, before addressing my approach to discourse analysis and the thesis' research question and sub-questions. Finally, the chapter outlines how I have incorporated and adapted the theoretical and methodological frameworks of Rahman (2014) and Weber (2016) for my study, and some anticipated criticisms of my queer approach.

Commencing my analysis, chapters six to eight map the key cultural figures of selfhood and/or otherness that I identified throughout the House of Commons debates in question. I first

look at the subject-position of 'The Brutal Dictator' and the ways in which this subject was constructed through graphic and emotive descriptions of violence that framed the traditional nuclear family as being under threat, and through racial and sexual discourses of pathology, perversion and underdevelopment (e.g. see Chakrabarty, 2007; Halberstam, 2005). At this point, I also call attention to the establishment of an intertextuality between 'The Brutal Dictator' and dangerous others, namely other dictators, terrorists and those seeking to use chemical weapons, framing the global binary between the civilised self and dangerous others as one between adult/child. Concluding the chapter, I highlight MPs who have contested the hegemonic narratives presented by the government, for example by questioning the UK's moral standing, the legal authority of the government and the selectivity of British interventionism.

In chapter seven, I move onto the second key cultural figure who is constructed as 'other' in relation to the British body-politic in the debates; 'The ISIL Terrorist'. Providing a historical context to the construction of Islamic terrorism in Western popular culture, I first outline the civilisationist positioning of Islam as oppositonal to the West since colonial times (Lowe, 2015; Kumar, 2021), before looking more specifically at the anti-Muslim character of contemporary policy and legislation in the UK (e.g. see Awan and Zempi, 2020; Gilks, 2020; Khan, 2021; Poynting and Mason, 2007; Scanlan, 2010). Moving onto the analysis of the debates, I highlight the racist way in which the figure of the terrorist is securitised as a threat to the UK (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020), and the apportioning of responsibility to the rest of the 'Muslim world' on the basis of shared culture and skin colour. Shifting to an explicit focus on logics of sexuality and gender, I then look at the way in which the protection of what Cynthia Enloe calls "womenandchildren" (1990) is once again invoked. In this phrase, the gaps between the words are removed in order to reflect the way in which women, like children, are framed as intellectually underdeveloped and irrational. This, in turn, creates an image of

feminised vulnerability which necessitates masculine protection, as I will explore in chapter six and throughout this thesis. Here I also explore how the protection of gay men is also brought into arguments for intervention (Rao, 2014), invoking a clearly homonationalist script (Puar, 2007). Just as 'The Brutal Dictator' was simultaneously framed as a threat to children and as infantilised himself, in this chapter I explore the way in which 'The ISIL Terrorist' is simultaneously framed as a threat to gay men, and as a perversely queer figure in need of intervention (Puar and Rai, 2002; Weber, 2016). This speaks to the way in which processes of dehumanisation and othering push the premises of heteronormativity to the point of incoherence in order to mobilise the body-politic against particular figures. Concluding the chapter, I unpack the arguments of MPs who resisted the arguments made by the government and its supporters, including the performative character of the label 'terrorist'.

In chapter eight, I move away from the consideration of figures that are juxtaposed against the British body-politic and consider the construction of British national identity itself throughout the debates in question. I begin by drawing attention to persistent references to British values throughout the debates, articulated as a patriarchal responsibility to govern those racially-darkened (Leigh and Weber, 2018) and infantilised parts of the world that are deemed incapable of self-government. I then note the way in which the case for military action is routinely made through reference to masculine militaristic logics, in particular through reference to realist doctrines (Ashworth and Swatuk, 1998; Hooper, 2001) and techno-speak (Cohn, 1987). These, I argue, work in tandem to frame military action as an act of virility, whilst obscuring its lived consequences.

Considering instances where military logics alone are insufficient, I draw attention to the way in which themes of diplomacy and humanitarian aid were used to present military intervention as being part of a broad suite of measures to rehabilitate the society in question, after the Libyan intervention and the failed attempt to intervene against Assad in 2013. This

had the effect of presenting violence as an act of care, akin to notions of tough love when given to a child, or care for mentally unwell people (Foucault, 1961, p.241; Solvang, 2000). I then look at how humanitarian aid and diplomacy were used to completely de-securitise the Rohingya genocide through the removal of racialised and sexualised stereotypes of threat (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020; Howell, 2014), presenting genocidal violence as civil unrest that the Burmese government had a responsibility to deal with. I also note here the significance of the term 'genocide' being absented from the debate, with this term entailing enhanced responsibilities for the international community to take action (UN General Assembly, 2005, p.30). This is indicative of the subjective character of such terms, depending on the actors that are involved in the commissioning and labelling of violence.

Beyond this, I explore the deep-rooted colonial logics that underpin decisions on whether or not to designate violence as an atrocity crime, and to propose military action, arguing that this process occurs through the deployment of cost/benefit homoeconomicus logics (Lemke, 2001; Lloyd and Wolfe, 2015) enabled by a view of populations in the Global South as being sub-human (Wynter, 2003; Phipps, 2021) and an ambivalent mind-set towards protecting/saving racially-darkened (Weber and Leigh, 2018) populations. Finally, I unpack the multiple ways in which MPs contested depictions of 'The British Self' as being civilised, masculine and responsible, for example by calling attention to the UK's dubious legacy of interventionism and relations with oppressive regimes. Cumulatively, this allows me to destabilise the binary between normality/perversion, drawing upon the work of Cynthia Weber (2016).

In chapter nine, I unpack the broad worldview which informs these debates, and arguably British foreign policy more broadly. Whilst I draw broadly upon themes of colonial temporality throughout all of my analytical chapters, it is in this chapter that I hone in explicitly on the temporal logics which encapsulate the House of Commons debates in question. I term

this 'the path to democracy', and argue that it is rooted in a racist (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015) and heteronormative (Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005) understanding of time as progress, used to frame queer and racialised populations as backwards. Within this frame, the cultural figures discussed throughout the thesis (i.e. 'The Brutal Dictator', 'The ISIL Terrorist' and 'The British Self') are personified representations of a British worldview defined by racial hierarchies, hetero/homonormativity[5] (Berlant and Warner, 1998; Duggan, 2003) and the concurrent operation of colonialism and neoliberal capitalism. After looking at explicit references to temporal notions of progress throughout the debates, I explore spatial representations which construct imaginative geographies that render 'the path to democracy' intelligible. These include 'red lines' and 'the state of nature'. Rather than looking at MPs who oppose the government's argument in a section on resistance at the end of this chapter, as I do for others in the analysis, I look at arguments which support and oppose the government's position throughout, highlighting common understandings of Britain as the telos of civilisation in both of these positions. It is the discovery and deconstruction of this worldview that is one of the thesis' main contributions, speaking explicitly to dominant understandings of Britain's place in the world amongst policy-makers, and largely generalisable to the framing of 'the West' vs. 'the rest' in IR (Tully, 2008), as both an academic field and set of practices.

Concluding the thesis, I reiterate my claim that humanitarian intervention is a simultaneously gendered, racialised and sexualised act of colonial violence, as well as setting out the thesis' key empirical and theoretical contributions in relation to the study of the British state and the ongoing role of colonialism in organising world politics more broadly. After providing an overview of my findings, I map some possible avenues for future research,

[5] Homonormativity refers to refers to a gay politics that doesn't challenge heteronormative assumptions, instead offering "…a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption." (2003, pp.50-51).

including the incorporation of Indigenous and post-human feminist insights (e.g. Braidotti, 2022; Haraway, 1985; Tallbear, 2015) into the study of humanitarian intervention and world politics in this distinctly cataclysmic global moment. These, I argue, offer possibilities of hope beyond Western-centric ways of knowing which have produced the dire situation that humanity is in.

Chapter Two:

Using Force to Protect Civilians[6]

If asked to define colonialism and its ongoing legacy, a common critical response might be to see it as a historic process, rooted in racism and the economic exploitation of the Global South. Viewing colonialism as an ongoing and deeply racist, gendered and sexualised process (Lugones, 2018; Rifkin, 2011; Vernon, 2022), this thesis views humanitarian intervention as colonial violence, and argues that accounts of it are incomplete without incorporating postcolonial, feminist and queer thought. Aiming to offer a framework within which these three co-constitutive dimensions of humanitarian intervention can be coherently understood, it proposes the adoption of a queer approach. Setting the groundwork for this, this chapter outlines existing contributions to the study of humanitarian intervention. It begins by providing a brief history of humanitarian intervention, exploring logics of using force with the stated aim of protecting civilians from their inception to the present day. It then maps the contributions of constructivist scholarship, the bulk of which studies shifting norms of humanitarian intervention (e.g. see Bellamy, 2011; Chandler, 2015; Deitelhoff, 2019). Noting that this scholarship has tended to absent discussions of colonialism, the chapter goes on to outline postcolonial scholarship which has viewed humanitarian intervention as an act of colonial violence (e.g. see Hindawi, 2012; Pourmokhtari, 2013). After highlighting the centrality of sexual and gender normativities to the colonial project, and the relative absence of this consideration from the aforementioned postcolonial scholarship, it finishes by exploring feminist contributions to the study of humanitarian intervention.

[6] A significant proportion of this chapter and chapter three has been published as a standalone article, entitled 'Sexuality, Gender and the Colonial Violence of Humanitarian Intervention' in *International Studies Review* (Vernon, 2022).

A Brief History of Humanitarian Intervention

Humanitarian intervention has only recently been firmly established in the norms of international relations and it has a long history of contestation surrounding it. Humanitarian intervention refers to the protection of citizens "from flagrant violations of their fundamental human rights usually by agents of the state", with these rights thought to be universal to all of humanity as opposed to particular to certain citizens (Ayoob, 2002, p.81). Reflecting on the origins of the doctrine, Chesterman notes that prior to the Twentieth Century there was a lack of international agreement on the principles of conducting warfare, resulting in a lack of consensus on human rights (2001, p.8). That being said, the classical origins of what has come to be known as humanitarian intervention are rooted in the Middle Age doctrine of the just war (Chesterman. 2001, p.9). Specifically, Protestant scholar Hugo Grotius is often attributed with the first utterance of a right to humanitarian intervention. In Grotius' book *De jure belli ac pacis libri tres* (1925 [1625]), he noted that war may be waged against the immoral in order to redress an injury to the sovereign (Grotius, 1925 [1625], xx), or, crucially, on behalf of others (Grotius, 1925 [1625], xxv). In this case, 'others' refers to citizens of another state who have been harmed by their sovereign but are incapable of defending themselves. Whilst the idea of humanitarian intervention emerged in political discourse in the Middle Ages, it failed to take hold as a guiding principle of international relations. In an effort to prevent the conflict that had previously marred the European continent, the Treaty of Westphalia (Avalon Project, 2008) went a long way to establishing the international norms of unconditional sovereignty and non-intervention as guiding principles for IR in 1648. These norms generally governed international relations in Europe until the Second World War, although it is important to note that sovereignty was not considered to apply to perceived 'savage' parts of the world, including

Africa, South America, the Middle East and Asia, which suffered brutal colonial occupation and oppression during this period.

In the wake of the massive loss of human life in the Second World War, the international community, led by the U.S. and its allies, established the United Nations. A central part of the U.N.'s charter was an attempt to establish some fundamental and inalienable rights for citizens globally. Specifically, the U.N. charter proclaimed a commitment to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", "to reaffirm fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person" and "to promote social progress and better standards of life" (1945). Separately, the Charter established, for the first time, a set of legal conditions for legitimate military intervention against a sovereign state. Under Chapter VII, the Charter authorised the U.N. Security Council to place sanctions on states and to take military action in order to uphold international peace (1945). Whilst establishing a normative shift in relation to human rights and a legal shift in relation to state sovereignty, the Charter failed to connect the former to the latter. This, combined with Cold War bipolarity in the post-1945 period, resulted in the practice of humanitarian intervention being relatively non-existent. Where interventions did occur, the response of the international community was far from standardised. For example, Wheeler notes that Vietnam's overthrow of the brutal Khmer Rouge dictatorship in Cambodia was met with widespread criticism due to Vietnam being communist (2002, p.79), whilst Tanzania's overthrow of the Ugandan Government of Idi Amin was greeted with tacit approval (2002, p.112). As such, between 1945 and the 1990s there were no common standards for humanitarian intervention and the principle of non-intervention remained dominant.

The end of the Cold War marked a seismic shift in IR and it provided an opportunity for an international security agenda defined by more by human rights and less by state sovereignty (U.N. Development Programme, 1994). In this new international context, the U.N.

Security Council passed twice as many resolutions between 1990 and 1994 as it had since 1945 and its role in dealing with international humanitarian crises took shape (Weiss, 2004, p.136). One such crisis was the First Gulf War, in which the U.N. Security Council authorised military action in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, partially on the basis of humanitarian arguments (United Nations Security Council, 1990). What is arguably most memorable about human rights in the 1990s, however, is the international community's complete failure to take action in response to the Rwandan Genocide, and its partial failure to take action in response to genocidal violence in the Balkans. In the Rwandan Genocide, between 800,000 and 1 million people were killed and between 250,000 and 500,000 people were raped in just one hundred days (SURF, 2021). Whilst France did eventually intervene with U.N. Security Council approval (U.N. Security Council, 1994), this was three months after the commencement of genocidal violence and was too late to make a difference. Asking why it was that the international community failed to respond in a timely manner as they had done in aid of Kuwait, Mackintosh notes that Rwanda is a landlocked country that is considered to be materially unimportant, unlike Kuwait which has vast oil reserves (1997, p.465). As such, the Rwandan Genocide became a key turning point for humanitarian intervention, demonstrating the consequences of a failure to act.

Another defining moment for IR in the 1990s was the Balkans Conflict, characterised by multiple ethnic conflicts and wars of independence after the break-up of the Yugoslav Federation in 1992. In this context, the problems of an ad-hoc approach to humanitarian intervention were laid bare once more. Whilst the U.N. Security Council did authorise limited NATO airstrikes in protection of safe areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993 (U.N. Security Council, 1993), intervention in Kosovo proved to be much more controversial. In response to the Račack massacre in 1999, where 45 Kosovar Albanian farmers were led up a hill and executed, NATO took the decision to launch airstrikes without U.N. Security Council

authorisation. Given the absence of such authorisation, the U.S. and the U.K. did a significant amount of discursive work to frame the intervention as legitimate and necessary. Typifying these arguments, 'The Blair Doctrine' outlined the logics behind NATO intervention in Kosovo and situated these within a wider discourse of liberal internationalism, in which democracies have a moral imperative to take action in defence of values such as liberty, the rule of law and human rights (1999). Reflecting on the doctrine, Moses argues that "Blair and Bush sought to establish themselves… as representatives of a global humanity", juxtaposed against the 'others' of failed states, tyrants and barbarians (2009, p.32). With airstrikes in Kosovo largely a failure due to them resulting in an intensification of ethnic cleansing and a huge increase in the number of deaths (Wheeler, 2002, p.269), by the turn of the century it became clear that the status quo on humanitarian intervention was untenable.

Reflecting on the lack of international consensus on humanitarian intervention and the problems it was causing, in 2000 the Canadian Government established the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS). In its 2001 report, *The Responsibility to Protect* (2001), the ICISS promoted the notion of sovereignty as a responsibility to protect civilians (R2P), as opposed to being an unconditional right to non-intervention (2001, p.11). This responsibility was articulated in dual terms, referring to the responsibility of the state to uphold its own citizens' human rights and the responsibility to uphold human rights internationally, where other states fail to uphold them (ibid). Moreover, the ICISS report articulated three different stages of responsibility; i) the responsibility to prevent atrocities from occurring through early warning, root cause prevention and direct prevention efforts (2001, pp.19-23, ii) to react to atrocity crimes using appropriate and just measures up to and including military action (2001, pp.29-35), and iii) to rebuild post-intervention, setting out responsibilities of interveners, administrations under U.N. authority and limits to the occupation (2001, pp.39-44). Discussing military intervention, the report

further proposed the use of just war criteria (2001, p.xii-xiii) to dictate the international community's obligation to take action under U.N. Security Council authority in response to atrocity crimes. This report was massively influential and the norm of the responsibility to protect was formally brought into existence at the 2005 U.N. world summit. Here, over 170 states agreed to the three pillars of R2P, referring to i) the responsibility of states to protect its population from atrocity crimes, ii) the responsibility of the international community to "encourage and assist individual states in meeting that responsibility" and iii) the responsibility of the international community to take collective action, up to and including military action, if atrocity crimes continue to occur (U.N. General Assembly, 2005, p.30).

The third pillar of R2P has only been invoked once, against the Libyan Gaddafi regime in 2011, when the U.N. Security Council authorised airstrikes in order to protect civilians in Benghazi (2011, p.3). This intervention was widely criticised for going beyond the mandate of protecting civilians, and for its lack of provision for post-conflict reconstruction, with the Gaddafi regime being replaced largely by predatory militias (Hobson, 2016, p.449). However, Bellamy notes that R2P has also had wider normative influence in setting international standards of behaviour, having been mentioned in UN Security Council resolutions in relation to at least eleven different crises post-2011, including Syria, Iraq (IS), Sudan and Somalia (Bellamy, 2015, p.28). Furthermore, Tourinho et. al (2015) note that the Security Council has authorised U.N. peacekeeping missions to use force in order to protect civilians on multiple occasions post-2011. These papers give an indication of the existing mainstream literature in relation to British norms of humanitarian intervention, which evaluated these operations within normative ideals and legal definitions of humanitarian intervention (e.g. see Daddow, 2009; Davies and Johns, 2017; Peltner, 2017). This contrasts with the focus in this chapter and throughout the thesis more broadly, which unpacks the gendered/racial/sexual stereotypes that are produced *through* humanitarian intervention, which is understood as colonial violence

which actively constructs 'the international' (Shepherd, 2007, p.249). By adopting a deconstructive queer approach, this thesis explores how seemingly neutral and even benevolent norms can facilitate violence that is deeply racialised, gendered and sexualised.

In relation to third-party military operations which aim to protect civilians, it is important to note that R2P is not where humanitarian intervention begins and ends. Whilst UNSCR 1973 (2011) formally invoked pillar III of R2P, Western powers would have taken action against the Syrian regime in 2013 without U.N. Security Council authorisation, had the U.K. received parliamentary approval (BBC News, 2013). Moreover, airstrikes against the Syrian regime by the US in 2017 and France, the UK and US in 2018 did not receive U.N. Security Council authorisation. The latter of these has been interpreted as setting precedence in international law, as the UK Government cited an international norm of humanitarian intervention external to R2P as the legal basis for a military response to the use of chemical weapons (Scharf, 2019; Watkin, 2020). It is also important to note that despite widespread accusations of human rights violations, Saudi Arabia has used language associated with R2P in an attempt to legitimise its military intervention in Yemen (Buys and Gowers, 2018), and that Russia's invasion of Ukraine cites the protection of Russian speakers who live in Ukraine.

This range of military actions which have proclaimed an intention of protecting civilians, but which have not formally invoked R2P, indicates that there is a qualitative difference between the discourses and practices of using force to protect civilians from human rights violations and the R2P framework. Furthermore, a focus on R2P does not sufficiently interrogate the logics which underpin decisions not to deploy military force in response to certain atrocities, such as the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar (Human Rights Council, 2018) and possible genocidal violence against Uyghur Muslims in China (Graham-Harrison and Garside, 2019). This thesis' analysis focuses on discourses and practices of humanitarian intervention, interpreted broadly, in order to fully capture the international zeitgeist of our

times, in which protectionist logics are routinely invoked to legitimise military force. Looking at how norms of interventionism are established, contested and reformed is social constructivist scholarship.

Shifting Norms of Humanitarian Intervention

The bulk of scholarship on humanitarian intervention in recent years has focused on the shifting norms surrounding interventionism. A strong focus within mainstream scholarship has been the R2P framework[7], designed as a global mechanism to govern humanitarian intervention through the UN Security Council. These debates cover the establishment, contestation and end of the norm, as this section explores. Whilst this scholarship has been hugely beneficial in unpacking complex and ever-shifting norms surrounding violence that is perceived as legitimate, it does feature some key oversights. Namely, most scholarship on norms of humanitarian intervention does not historicise these norms, and is largely inattentive to gender, sexuality and race. There are, of course, some key exceptions to this, which I explore later. In the meantime, this section maps some common themes in discussions of humanitarian intervention.

Looking at the airstrikes against the Gaddafi regime in Libya under UNSCR 1973 (United Nations Security Council, 2011), Bellamy argues that this was crucial to establishing R2P as a norm for responding to atrocities in IR, due to this being the first time the U.N. Security Council has authorised force for humanitarian purposes against the wishes of a

[7] The responsibility to protect, also known as R2P, was coined by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty in 2001. Articulating sovereignty as a responsibility to protect civilian populations from atrocity crimes, it was formally brought into existence as a global norm at the UN World Summit in 2005, where over 170 states agreed to the three pillars of R2P. These refer to i) the responsibility of states to protect its population from atrocity crimes, ii) the responsibility of the international community to "encourage and assist individual states in meeting that responsibility" and iii) the responsibility of the international community to take collective action, up to and including military action, if atrocity crimes continue to occur (UN General Assembly, 2005, p.30). The third arm of R2P was most prominently used in Libya, where the international community's failure to plan for post-conflict reconstruction led to widespread criticism.

functioning state (2011, p.263). This, he argues, firmly supplanted R2P as a norm due to its shifting intersubjective understandings of sovereignty's conditionality. Whilst Bellamy notes that Libya was an exception due to the clarity of the threat of mass atrocities (2011, p.265), the short timeframe to respond (2011, p.266), and the exceptional support and involvement of regional organisations such as the League of Arab States (ibid), it played a crucial role in norm formation nonetheless. Similarly, Vaughn and Dunne (2015) and Bellamy and Drummond (2011) look at the implementation of the R2P norm in IR, but this time by explaining how the norm was localised in the US and South-East Asia respectively. Adopting a more historical perspective, Finnemore (1996) and Glanville (2007) look at how norms of military humanitarian intervention have shifted over time, from the nineteenth century to the 1990s, and in the post-Cold War period, respectively. Whilst Finnemore does acknowledge colonial power politics as historically informing instances where force was used to prevent civilians from being harmed (1996, p.11), Glanville's (2007) focus on the post-Cold War period does not allow for this. Both texts forward an implicit assumption that colonialism is something which occurred in the past, and discuss humanitarian intervention in abstract terms of norm contestation as opposed to understanding the sexual, racial and gendered dimensions of these norms of violence; norms which render them a contemporary expression of coloniality.

Possibly the liveliest area of debate in constructivist discussions of humanitarian intervention in recent years is on the contestation of the R2P norm. Whilst some have argued that R2P is "sound and fury signifying nothing", referring to a "slogan…shorn of any real meaning or utility" (Hehir, 2010, pp.218-219), on the whole scholars have tended to argue it is an established norm which has been contested in several ways. Welsh, for example, draws attention to R2P as an example of norm institutionalisation due to it being adopted by the U.N. in the 2005 World Summit (2013, p.367). She argues that this institutionalisation entailed a process of significant negotiation, due to both procedural contestation over whether the

Security Council or the General Assembly should discuss the norm (2013, p.382) and substantive contestation through hierarchical readings of R2P's three pillars, in which "national protection responsibilities are paramount and possibilities for international intervention are constrained" (2013, pp.384-385).[8]

Similarly, a significant amount of scholarship asks whether R2P is dead as a norm. Reflecting on Roland Paris's analyses of humanitarian intervention, which highlight systemic tensions in using force to protect civilians (2004; 2014), Chandler notes that Western intervention in Libya separated military intervention from the non-military preventative measures and the post-conflict reconstruction aspects of the R2P framework (2015, p.2). Whilst Western powers were "humbled and often humiliated" by the lack of a strong legal and normative basis to intervene in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Kosovo, R2P provided a strong international basis which did not place the responsibility for post-conflict reconstruction squarely at the feet of the interveners (Chandler, 2015, p.4). As such, Chandler argues that the 'success' of R2P, i.e. it authorising military force for the first time in Libya, paradoxically marked its demise. This is because the responsibilities of international preventative action and post-conflict reconstruction, essential to "sweeten the pill of Western military intervention in the 1990s and 2000s", were no longer necessary to garner legitimacy (ibid). Challenging this perspective, Glanville (2015), Bellamy (2015), Evans (2016, p.9) and Deitelhoff (2019) all conclude that whilst Libya (especially) was a significant challenge, the R2P continues to exert normative influence on state behaviour through U.N. institutions and resolutions.

All of the above scholarship clearly makes incisive and crucial interventions into the study of norms surrounding humanitarian intervention. In particular, it helps to make sense of the extent to which the R2P remains a dominant global framework in the wake of widespread

[8] See also Melling (2018); Shawki (2011); Tourinho et. al (2015); Zähringer (2013) for further examples of scholarship on the contestation of the R2P norm.

perceived failures in Libya. What the majority of scholarship on norms of humanitarian intervention fails to do, however, is to relate humanitarian intervention to the ongoing legacy of colonialism, and by extension the gendered, sexual or racialised norms that constitute the colonial project. In the next section of this chapter, I map some of the ways that scholars have directly related contemporary practices of humanitarian intervention to colonialism.

Postcolonial Readings of Humanitarian Intervention

Interrogating the nexus between colonialism and humanitarian intervention, postcolonial scholars have made a number of crucial observations in recent years. Whilst still emergent, postcolonial approaches to IR are becoming increasingly established within the discipline. Deconstructing the organisation of violence in world politics, amongst other themes, these approaches argue that contemporary Western epistemologies and foreign policies perpetuate historic patterns, legacies and identities of colonial domination of the Global South (Sabaratnam, 2020; Shilliam, 2021; Wilkens, 2017). A key theme within this burgeoning literature is the analysis of humanitarian intervention as a contemporary expression of colonial violence.

Writing within the postcolonial tradition, Darby (2009) critiques the Western liberal peacekeeping project as a continuation of colonial power relations, with action determined from "above and outside" of the target site, in line with first world knowledge frameworks (2009, p.701). Darby further critiques the idea of "security" as being the language of the Western-centric international order, feeding on a dichotomous representation of us vs. them, reifying the colonial state as the lynch-pin of the social order (2009, p.704). Indeed, this idea that security and the wider IR discipline are epistemic frameworks that underpin Western dominance and White supremacy is one of increasing prominence (e.g. see: Anievas et. al, 2015; Sabaratnam, 2020). Arguing that the norm of Western interventionism has uniformly

been accompanied with social engineering programmes which aim to build democracy, civil society and a market economy (2009, p.707), Darby makes a case for self-organising strategies rooted in the collective identity politics in the Global South (2009, p.710). Focusing on similar themes, Whyte notes that R2P's understanding of sovereignty as responsibility depends upon international standards of democracy and human rights, leading to criticism that it perpetuates racist colonial standards of civilisation (2017, p.316), historically used by Western powers to judge those societies incapable of self-government.

Criticising the understandings of sovereignty that enable humanitarian intervention, Pourmokhtari (2013) argues that sovereignty is a distinctly Western concept and challenges Orientalist East-West dichotomies, such as civilised-uncivilised, which result in sovereignty being seen as conditional for countries in the Global South. The extent to which humanitarian intervention exists within a Western-centric understanding of 'the international' is further supported by Gozzi and Valente (2021), who argue that R2P/humanitarian intervention are hegemonic techniques that use purportedly universal concepts to advance unilateral interests, and Hindawi (2021), who argues R2P is a neo-colonial product which assumes instability in the Global South and paves the way for liberal interventionism.

Cumulatively, these approaches[9] make a clear link between the historic exploitation of the Global South by the Global North West and contemporary practices of humanitarian intervention, challenging understandings of interventionism as an act of care/altruism. This is a hugely beneficial set of interventions, especially given the persistence of racism and white supremacy in IR thought (Sabaratnam, 2020). Where they remain silent, however, is over the gendered and sexual dimensions of colonialism, and by extension, humanitarian intervention. This results in an incomplete understanding of both of these hugely important phenomena.

[9] See also Mamdani (2010), Quinton-Brown (2020) and Ypi (2013) for further discussions of the relationship between colonialism and the project of humanitarian intervention.

One important exception to this is the excellent work of Rahul Rao, whose book *Third World Protest: Between Home and the World (2010)* links contemporary discussions of the just character of humanitarian intervention with normative controversies attached to British imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In particular, Rao notes an intertextuality between colonialists who saw the spreading of Christianity as an act of diminishing cruelty on behalf of all humanity, and discourses supporting the Iraq War which enabled "self-interested exercises of power to masquerade as fantasies of rescue" (2010, pp.57-58). Throughout the book, Rao (2010) critiques both cosmopolitan and communitarian views of world politics, seeing them both as inadequately facilitating subaltern agency. A key dimension of this in the present moment, Rao notes, is sexual politics. Within this frame, Rao problematises both racist "gay rescue" narratives that are central to cosmopolitan LGBTQ+ rights-based politics, whilst also highlighting the deep-rooted homophobia in many communitarian Third World states (2010, p.176). In response, Rao advocates for the need to separate global queer solidarity from imperialist activism, acknowledging diversity in the approaches, ideas and identities of Third World queer activists (2010, p.177). This text provides an excellent account of the ways in which sexual politics is a key site of contestation between cosmopolitan and communitarian views, and the problems with both. Whilst sexual politics is insightfully considered within the historical legacy of colonialism (of which humanitarian intervention is a key part), the sexual dimensions of humanitarian intervention itself are not considered explicitly. This is a gap in the existing scholarship that this thesis fills, and is a theme I return to later on in the chapter. First, I dedicate some space to exploring the centrality of normative sexualities to the colonial project.

As illustrated by queer interrogations of colonialism and indigeneity, heteronormativity has always been foundational to the colonial project. Prior to colonialism, there was huge diversity in expressions of gender and sexuality in Indigenous societies, with these expressions

far predating contemporary LGBTQ+ rights-based identity politics. Roscoe, for example, mapped third and fourth genders in Indigenous communities in North America, finding over one hundred and fifty expressions of alternative genders (1998, p.13), with many of these labels associated with spiritual meanings/powers.[10] Whilst pre-colonial sexual diversity included patriarchal societies alongside matrifocal and inclusive ones, the routine elimination of gender and sexual diversity and replacement of it with a universal Western heteropatriarchy formed (and arguably continues to form) a key constituent of the colonial project, with Lugones (2018) arguing that contemporary sexual di-morphism (i.e. the belief that there are only two distinct sexes) is a direct product of male bourgeois colonialism. This occurred as the process of colonisation imposed European sexual and gender norms on Indigenous populations, resulting in the de-recognition of folks who defy gender binaries and the replacement of gynecratic spiritual and political systems with patriarchal ones (Lugones, 2018, p.18). Within this frame, non-heteronormative practices were met with brutal oppression, with an early expression of this being Spanish perceptions of Inka non-binary sexualities as being akin to sodomy, thus legitimising their extermination (Picq, 2019. p.7).

The erasure of Indigenous sexual practices and populations formed a central lynchpin of the establishment of colonialism. In South Africa, institutions such as marriage formed a key basis on which civilising claims could be made about perceived 'improper' native practices such as polygamy (Tallie, 2020). Similarly, in North America, Rifkin labels the importation of norms such as monogamy and compulsory heterosexuality as "hetero-homemaking", arguing that it made it impossible for any other sexuality, gender or family organising to exist (2011, p.9). Whilst such processes are often read as historical case-studies and of little use in contemporary IR, they remain deeply relevant in understanding the sexualised construction of

[10] See also Babayan and Najmabadi (2008) and Murray and Roscoe (1997) for further discussions of pre-colonial sexual and gender diversity.

the international (Peterson, 2014; Weber, 2016) and to settler colonial societies, where processes of Indigenous elimination are still ongoing (Morgensen, 2012, p.10).

More contemporary scholarship, such as Jasbir Puar's (2007; 2013) extremely well-known work on homonationalism, explores the way in which LGBTQ+ rights-based politics fits into colonial violence in the present day. Homonationalism refers to the way in which the extension of rights to certain white, consumerist LGBTQ+ subjects (Duggan, 2003) has been accompanied by the rolling back of rights for Muslims both domestically (with Puar focusing on the U.S.), and globally. In the global context, it is often experienced as "the use of 'acceptance' and 'tolerance' for gay and lesbian subjects as the barometer by which the legitimacy of, and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated" (2013, p.24), with such arguments frequently deployed to legitimise colonial violence during the War on Terror. Furthermore, such arguments have fed into what Momin Rahman (2014) calls homocolonialism; the framing of LGBTQ+ rights as only being attainable in the West, used to evidence Western exceptionalism and the underdevelopment of Muslim countries. This represents one of the most recent iterations of an Orientalist (Said, 1978) worldview in which the Occident/Orient binary is rendered intelligible by depictions of sexual and civilisational otherness.[11]

As such, by briefly looking at these discrete examples, it becomes clear that sexual and gender norms form a central element of the colonial project, which would otherwise collapse (Finley, 2011, p.34). Furthermore, they are of deep relevance to the study of humanitarian intervention, which is a practice rooted in colonial power relations, as postcolonial scholars have illustrated (Darby, 2009; Pourmokhtari, 2013). What is often overlooked, however, is the centrality of sexual and gender norms to the construction of racial difference and the specific

[11] See also Delatolla (2020), Puar and Rai (2002), Rao (2020) and Richter-Montpetit (2017) for further excellent analyses of the intimate relationship between sexual politics and colonialism.

form of colonialism that is enacted through Western-led humanitarian intervention. Going some way to bridging this gap are feminist studies of humanitarian intervention.

Feminist Interrogations of Humanitarian Intervention

Feminist IR scholarship has made some crucial interjections into the study of humanitarian intervention in recent years. A significant amount of this scholarship focuses on the R2P framework, either advocating for the inclusion of women and their experiences,[12] or unpacking gendered logics and meanings in the framework (e.g. see Charlesworth, 2010; Hall and Shepherd, 2013). Beyond this, some scholarship has gone some way towards looking at the ways in which gender norms inform the practice of humanitarian intervention (e.g. see Carpenter, 2006; Kinsella, 2011; Kolmasova and Krulisova, 2018). It is the latter of these approaches that I outline here, considering them to go part of the way to uncovering the sexualised character of humanitarian intervention.

The clearest example of an approach which looks at gender norms in relation to the violence of humanitarian intervention is the study of the male protector/woman (and children) civilian dichotomy (Kinsella, 2011, p.9) that organises contemporary interventionism. Looking at the Balkans conflict amongst others, Carpenter (2006) notes that gender norms result in women, children and the elderly being interpreted as vulnerable populations in need of protection and evacuation. This is despite men and boys being at particular risk of violence and forced conscription due to gendered stereotypes which depict them as potential combatants (Carpenter, 2006, pp.90-91). This, Carpenter notes, was particularly lethal in the case of the mass killing of males by the Bosnian Serb Army in the 1995 Srebrenica Massacre (Carpenter, 2003, p.673).

[12] e.g. see Axworthy and Rock (2009); Bond and Sherret (2006); Davies et. al (2014).

This tendency to kill men first reflects the organisation of genocidal violence globally, with Adam Jones observing that men are often primary targets for lethal violence, and women and children are either spared (2015, p.147) or subjected to subsequent sexual or structural violence[13] in a "root and branch" model (2015, p.157). Reflecting on the funding of civilian protection agencies such as the U.N. Human Rights Council, Carpenter notes that these agencies are more able to secure money from donor governments if they are seen to be protecting populations who are stereotypically viewed as vulnerable (2003, p.674). This incentivises the rescue of women, children and the elderly over men who are at greater risk of harm. As such, Carpenter (2003, 2006) provides an excellent analysis of how gender norms inform both conflict-based violence and humanitarian responses to violence, which in turn amounts to structural violence due to them neglecting the particular vulnerabilities of 'battle-age' males.

Kolmasova and Krulisova (2018) have also looked at conflict-based violence through the lens of gender norms, noting that protecting women from sexual violence is often used as a reason to intervene. Using the example of the 2011 Libyan intervention, authorised under the R2P framework, they note that few meaningful attempts have been made to prevent sexual violence (2018, p.147). Furthermore, they reject simplified neo-colonial narratives of civilised protectors vs. aggressive savages that use preventing "rape as a weapon of war" to legitimise controversial interventions (ibid).

In summary, scholars such as Carpenter (2006), Kinsella (2011) and Kolmasova and Krulisova (2018) provide much-needed insight into the way in which socially constructed gender norms inform humanitarian intervention,[14] with Kolmasova and Krulisova doing so in

[13] Structural violence is a term that was coined by Johan Galtung to refer to instances in which a social structure/institution harms people by denying them of their basic needs (i.e. food, water, healthcare etc.) (1969, pp.170-173).

[14] E.g. see Kirby (2012) and True (2012) for further examples of this kind of feminist scholarship, looking at how gendered norms inform the character of violence in IR.

explicit reference to R2P. Whilst these approaches illustrate how gendered norms inform the character of humanitarian intervention, they generally stop short of looking at humanitarian intervention as an act of gendered violence that actively constitutes the international (Shepherd, 2006, p.249). Given that humanitarian intervention informs and is informed by the gendered, racialised *and* sexualised identities of the subjects involved (Butler, 1993a, p.2; Vernon, 2021), this is an epistemic gap that needs to be bridged. One school which I see as doing an effective job of incorporating these three dimensions of international politics is queer IR. In the next chapter, I map this diverse body of scholarship according to the key themes which lay the epistemological foundations for this thesis' study of humanitarian intervention.

Chapter Three:

Queering Humanitarian Intervention as Colonial Violence

Queer theory uniquely provides the possibility of understanding humanitarian intervention as a racial, gendered and sexual act of colonial violence (Vernon, 2022). Given this, this chapter argues that it is imperative we now study humanitarian intervention with a queer lens. In order to set about this task, it first provides a brief historical context to queer thought before outlining key queer texts which have viewed international politics through the lens of heteronormativity (e.g. see: Cohn, 1987; Peterson, 1999). It then maps and unpacks what I label as 'the homonormative turn' in queer IR (e.g. see: Puar, 2007; Delatolla, 2020; Rahman, 2014), and queer analyses of violence which are particularly beneficial for the study of humanitarian intervention in the present moment. In particular, it defines these as studies that see heteronormativity as a colonial, sexual and racist episteme (e.g. see Puar and Rai, 2002; Puar, 2005; Weber, 2016) which enacts violence on queer, racialised and queered bodies globally. It is by drawing upon such an approach that this thesis provides a unique insight into the colonial character of both British foreign policy-making and the practice of humanitarian intervention.

Introducing Queer Theory

Queer theory initially emerged in the context of the gay and lesbian politics of the 1970s and 1980s, which was rooted in the idea of a collective struggle to improve the lived experiences of gay men and lesbians (Richardson and Seidman, 2004, pp.2-3). This was perceived to be an inadequately radical approach to politics by activist groups such as ACT UP, who saw rights-based politics as capitulating to the state and failing to bring about change quickly enough in the context of the HIV/AIDs crisis. In this context, and relatedly offering a radically different

approach to sexual politics, queer theory aimed to destabilise rather than reify identities such as 'the homosexual', challenging processes of categorisation such as male/female and straight/gay, seeing these binary logics as temporally and socially specific. It is this "subjectless critique" which has come to be understood as a central lynchpin of queer thought due to it rejecting the idea of a fixed object of study or political referent (Eng et. al, 2005, p.3). This stands queer theory in sharp contrast to not only the gay and lesbian politics of the 1970s/80s and the LGBTQ+ rights-based identity politics of the present day.

Crucial to exposing sexuality as something with a history, and which shifts according to social and temporal contexts, is Michel Foucault. Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1976) is arguably the seminal piece in the body of work which has since become known as queer theory. Viewing sexuality as a field of power/knowledge, Foucault challenged the idea that sexuality is something which is inherent, personal and has become oppressed due to conservative social values, labelling this 'the repressive hypothesis' (1976, p.3). Rather than believing in the conservative entrapment of former sexual freedom, Foucault argued that sexuality is now discussed more than ever due to the medicalisation of sexuality and the construction of entire disciplines interested in the study of human sexuality (1976, p.65). Produced by this shift, Foucault argued, was "the medicalisation of the sexually peculiar" (1976, p.44), epitomised by the construction of "the homosexual" (1976, p.43) who represented perverse and non-reproductive sexuality. As such, Foucault demonstrated that discourses appealing to naturalness and perversion were not timeless, and that the very subject-position upon which gay and lesbian politics was/is based is the product of relatively recent psycho-medical discourses.

Also looking at the systems of logic which produce our contemporary understanding of sexuality is Judith Butler; another key figure in the emergence of contemporary queer theory. Opening the gateway for theorising about heterosexuality as an episteme, Butler coined the

notion of the heterosexual matrix. This refers to the dominant epistemic model "that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined." (1990, p.151). In describing the heterosexual matrix, Butler centrally drew attention to heterosexuality's dependence on binary understandings of sex, which are naturalised through the construction of gendered characteristics in which masculinity is valued over femininity (1993b, p.318). Whilst the heterosexual matrix has been criticised as "a curiously aspatial (and atemporal) concept" (Vrushali, 2018, p.2), it is nonetheless a notion of great importance for the development of queer theory and for understanding the logics that underpin heterosexuality as a dominant global episteme.

The notion of queerness itself is evidently another key topic of importance for queer theory. Gloria Anzaldua was one of the first writers to use the term queer, in describing the inhabitants of the borderlands straddling the US-Mexico border as "the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato… in short, those who cross over… the confines of the "normal." (1987, p.3). This understanding of queerness is not only ground breaking in being one of the first utterances of the term, but also in the truly intersectional manner in which it articulated. In her understanding of queerness, Anzaldua is not only referring to non-heterosexual subjects, but also racialised subjects and all others who are not the idealised white, American subject, and are subsequently subjected to discursive violence. This incorporation of race and racism into understandings of queerness is something that has become increasingly prevalent in queer IR theory, as I will explore, and strongly informs my theoretical position. More commonly used by queer theorists is Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's understanding of queer as;

> the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically (1993, p.8).

This understanding of queerness is flexible and allows for the incorporation of all those who resist processes of categorisation in relation to gender and sexuality, but does not contain any explicit reference to race or racism. As such, the understanding of queerness I use synthesizes Sedgwick and Anzaldua's understandings, interested in exploring and resisting the logics of sexuality, race, ability, gender, citizenship or class that categorise, other or dehumanise particular subjects within dominant governmentalities.

Queering Colonial Violence

Incorporating analyses of gender, sexuality and increasingly race, queer studies of violence in IR have gained a huge amount of attention in recent years. These studies, alongside the broader queer studies canon, "investigate how queer subjectivities and practices… are disciplined, normalized, or capitalized upon by and for states, NGOs, and international corporations" (Weber, 2014, p.597). In this chapter, I suggest that the application of some of the key ideas associated with queer IR could enable new and hugely beneficial insights into the colonial character of humanitarian intervention. In particular, I group the existing scholarship into studies which viewed world politics through the lens of heteronormativity, studies which introduced the concept of homonormativity alongside an awareness of racism and colonial practices, and those studies which see heteronormativity as a racialised and colonial episteme. In doing so, I discuss the potential tension between the latter two groups of scholarship, explaining their unique contributions and how I deploy them concurrently.

In very general terms, queer IR refers to a field of research which is more than twenty years old, focusing on how normativities and/or non-normativities of sex, gender and sexuality

"sustain and contest international formations of power" (Richter-Montpetit and Weber, 2017, p.2). This research incorporates a wide range of themes and topics including war, peace, nation formation, securitisation, torture, terrorism, LGBTQ+ activism, immigration, protest and temporalities, amongst many others (ibid). As Melanie Richter-Montpetit notes, queer scholarship has produced some of the most widely cited concepts, theories and practices in IR, but it is only in the last few years that major journals have begun to publish queer IR theory (2017, p.222).

Despite gaining limited acknowledgement in recent years, queer scholarship continues to fail to meet many of the demands for methodological rigour that are established by Disciplinary IR (Weber, 2014, p.42). Failure, however, can be embraced as an act which destabilises hegemonic epistemic assemblages within the frame of queer thought. Failure is central, for example, to Judith Butler's notion of performativity, with failed or parodic performances exposing gender to be "a politically tenuous construction" (1990, p.208). More specifically within the context of IR scholarship, failure can represent a challenge to the systems of exclusion and marginalisation that delegitimise theories which challenge the (capitalist, colonial, heteronormative) status quo (Weber, 2014, pp.38-39). Whilst Weber ultimately rejects Halberstam's endorsement of queer failure[15] on the basis that it could reify the exclusion and devaluation of queer theorising from and within disciplinary IR (Weber, 2014, p.40), it is important to recognise that notions of success and failure are perpetually contested within queer thought.

Another key concept in queer studies of world politics is that of heteronormativity (Berlant and Warner, 1998), and it was by drawing upon this concept (or similar understandings of

[15] Halberstam understands queer failure as acts which destabilise heterosexual reproduction and capitalist wealth accumulation (2011, p.92), seeing this as centrally bound to queer lifestyles (2011, p.3).

compulsory heterosexuality and/or gender binarism) that a number of queer interventions were made into IR. I outline some of these here, before exploring departures from and developments to the concept of heteronormativity, through particular reference to the concept of homonormativity (Duggan, 2003).

Heteronormativity refers to "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent… but also privileged" (Berlant and Warner, 1998, p.548). Heteronormativity, then, is distinct from heterosexuality, instead referring to the broader sense of "rightness" that is associated with heterosexual relations and is built into the foundations of society (ibid). One scholar whose work predates contemporary understandings of heteronormativity, but whose analysis draws upon some similar themes, is Carol Cohn. Cohn's *Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals* (1987) is a radical piece of poststructuralist feminist scholarship which did well to illustrate how technocratic national security language is often sexualised. This paper highlighted the bizarre world of defence intellectuals, in which they discuss nuclear weapons and war in un-emotive terms, devoid of any sense of moral outrage (1987, p.690), and by using quick and snappy words which roll off the tongue (1987, p.704). Furthermore, it drew attention to the deeply sexualised imagery which is often built into this language, for example in discussions of vertical erector launchers, deep penetrations and nuclear attacks as "releasing 70 to 80 percent of our megatonnage in one orgasmic whump" (1987, p.693). Cumulatively, Cohn drew attention to and problematised what she called "the militarisation of the mind", in which discussions of war obscure the lived realities of warfare (1987, pp.714-715). This provided a firm base from which queer discussions of national security discourses could develop, highlighting the hyper-sexualised masculinity that underpins dominant (neo)realist readings and practices of IR.

Queering national identity, Spike Peterson (1999) reworked Anthias and Yuval-Davis' (1989) five categories of gender and nationalism to expose how heterosexism underpins the existence of the national collective. Firstly, Peterson highlighted that the social contract, signifying a transition from the state of nature to contractual relations associated with culture, is tied to the heterosexual contract, which naturalises gender identities and heterosexism (1999, p.42). Given the historically contingent character of state-making, Peterson subsequently went on to unpack the heterosexist function that women play in the construction of nationalism, for example acting as biological reproducers of group members (1999, p.44), as social reproducers of group members and culture (1999, p.45), and as signifiers of (heterosexist) group identities and differences (1999, p.48). Whilst focusing on the social role played by women, Peterson did an excellent job of illustrating the heterosexist character of gender identities and the centrality of these identities to the nation.

Also breaking ground by looking at the relationship between heterosexuality and national identity, in their text *Faking It*, Cynthia Weber (1999) looked at U.S.-Caribbean relations after the Cuban Revolution as an example of a state deploying queer performativities in its foreign policy. Summarily, Cohn (1988), Peterson (1999) and Weber (1999) are hugely important queer scholars in IR, who illustrate how nationalism and/or security could be analysed through norms associated with heterosexuality, and the reproduction of asymmetrical, heteronormative power relations through the deployment of seemingly neutral language. It is these texts which established the discursive terrain within which queer IR now operates, making the leap from poststructural feminist analysis to one attentive to sexual normativities.

Looking at similar themes to the aforementioned texts, an emergent but hugely important area of study for queer IR relates to border security practices, which are used to violently police the physical boundaries of the community in line with dominant heteronormative understandings of sexuality and gender (Frowd, 2014). Taking aim at established IR theory

through reference to trans folks' experiences at national borders, Lauren Wilcox (2017) argues that the stereotypes of the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990, p.208) are used to judge risk at these locations, with non-conformity perceived as untrustworthiness. Doing so, she highlights the IR practice turn's sole focus on successful practices, problematising this through reference to those who fail to perform binary understandings of gender (2017, p.794). Studying the experiences of these individuals, Wilcox argues, offers a much greater ontological contribution than a sole focus on success.[16]

Focusing more broadly on international security regimes, Jamie Hagen (2016) and Paul Amar (2013) illustrate the operation of heteronormative stereotypes at the global level, whilst other scholars queer dominant conceptions of security itself (e.g. see; Sjoberg, 2014; Wilkinson, 2017; Daniel and Berwick, 2020). Cumulatively these approaches do well to illustrate the intimate relationship between heteronormativity and the organisation of world politics. In particular, they do well to illustrate how the domestic/international binary is violently constructed, reiterated and policed through gendered and sexual stereotypes rooted in heteronormativity. This has undoubtedly informed my approach to humanitarian intervention as a sexualised act of violence.

Whilst some of these approaches are attendant to processes of racism, racialisation and colonisation, this is not always a central theme of this work. This is partially to be expected, given that earlier scholarship was first and foremost making the case for sexuality to be included in the study of IR; a mammoth task in itself. Furthermore, it is not to say that these scholars aren't mindful of these colonial processes, but simply that the scholarship addressed here primarily provides good examples of the sexual and gender norms of heteronormativity (Berlant and Warner, 1998) feeding into notions and practices of security and violence in IR. Having established the distinct contributions of key queer texts, I now look at scholarship

[16] See also Sjoberg and Shepherd (2012) for an excellent theory of cisprivilege in security theory and practice.

which has studied racism, coloniality and the positioning of the LGBTQ+ subject in world politics.

'The Homonormative Turn' in Queer IR

Moving beyond the notion of heteronormativity, queer thinking within IR has undergone somewhat of a homonormative turn in recent years, animated by the visibility and positioning of LGBTQ+ subjects in world politics. This 'turn' has largely developed from Jasbir Puar's reading of homonationalism (2007), and has seen a number of scholars adapt or build upon this concept. I outline these here, before collectively discussing their utility and some potential drawbacks.

Noting that the concept of heteronormativity failed to fully account for the inclusion of (certain) queer subjects into neoliberal understandings of U.S. citizenship at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Lisa Duggan coined the term homonormativity (2003). She used this to refer to a gay politics that does not challenge heteronormative assumptions, instead offering "a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption" (Duggan, 2003, pp. 50-51). What I mean by the phrase 'homonormative turn' is that recent queer theorising about the international has been particularly focused on the positioning of LGBTQ+ subjects within international politics, destabilising and interrogating the positioning of LGBTQ+ subjects in the Global North (racialised as White) as liberated, and those in the Global South (in Islamic countries in particular) as being oppressed, and in need of saving. Of course, this is an over-simplification of a wide range of theses, but this is a central principle that underpins much of this work, with different scholars offering different focuses within this frame. This scholarship has been absolutely vital to queer analyses of global power relations, and of racialised, homonormative (Duggan, 2003) and homonationalist (Puar, 2007) violence within this, but can miss the bigger

picture of heteronormativity as a (post)colonial episteme which governs much broader notions of normality and perversion in the constitution and organisation of world politics.

Ground-breaking in her study of the role homonormative subjects play in the expansion of U.S. hegemony is Jasbir Puar (2007; 2013). As we have previously touched upon, Puar argues that the War on Terror entailed the construction of a U.S. homonormative nationalism, termed "homonationalism", which incorporated certain U.S. queers as part of a broader anti-terrorist project. Drawing upon a biopolitical framework, Puar deconstructs U.S. foreign policy and national identity as depending upon "sexual exceptionalism…and the ascendancy of whiteness" (2007, p.2). Central to this project, as also previously discussed, is the establishment a binary between the Western and Islamic world (2013, p.25), epitomised by representations of the progressive LGBTQ+ citizen juxtaposed against the Muslim terrorist. It is specifically this intersection of sexual politics, civilisationism and the interventionist practices that I seek to uncover in this project, and which render the notion of homonationalism one of the most important concepts in queer IR. Given that Puar's work is situated in (Global) Queer Studies rather than queer IR, per se, the theory of homonationalism also represented a crucial turning point in the broader tendency for queer theory to grapple with global issues such as race, transnationalism, immigration, national belonging and necropolitics (Eng et al., 2005, p.2). It is this turn which has produced a queer IR that is much more mindful of race, as well as gender and sexuality.[17]

Arguing that Puar's homonationalism was specifically useful for looking at the positioning of LGBTQ+ rights and subjects in Western countries, Rahul Rao coined the term homocapitalism (2015; 2020) to analyse the intersection between economics and sexual politics in countries (in the Global South, in particular) which do not have equitable LGBTQ+

[17] See Pratt (2007) and Wilkinson (2014) for excellent discussions of the ways in which LGBTQ+ rights have been folded into national security agendas that respond to Western homonationalism.

rights frameworks.[18] Highlighting the activist stance that IFIs such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have taken in relation to LGBTQ+ rights, homocapitalism refers to the provision of economic incentives for the extension of rights and disincentives for homophobic policies (Rao, 2015). Rao describes this as the deployment of an economic cost and benefit common-sense mind-set, in which homophobia can be dis-incentivised "through the deployment of economic carrots (the promise of growth) and sticks (the withdrawal of capital)" (2015, p.38). Illustrating that sexuality is not "merely cultural" (Butler, 1998), the adoption of an activist stance by global economic institutions allows them to frame themselves as progressive, "precisely at the historical moment in which austerity and capitalist crisis threaten to bring them into ever greater disrepute" (Rao, 2015, p.38). Rao thus exposes how IFIs use their structural economic position to offer queers in the global South the possibility of future freedom via the market, and how this uses sexual politics to perpetuate the existence of a fundamentally exploitative capitalist system (2020, p.25).[19] This analysis is extremely important, speaking to contemporary patterns of neo-colonialism, and the concurrent economic and sexual dimensions of this. Whilst limited in terms of the empirical applications of this framework, this theory nonetheless provides a strong adaptation to Puar's work on homonationalism (2007), reorienting it towards a focus on the Global South.

Focusing explicitly on the way in which LGBTQ+ rights have been deployed to construct the West as the apex of civilisation is Momin Rahman (2014). Situated firmly within the homonormative turn, Rahman coined the term "homocolonialism" to refer to the way in which homonormativity (Duggan, 2003) and homonationalism (Puar, 2007) work in tandem to create "a dialectic of respectability/otherness in a classic colonializing mode", casting Muslim cultures as homophobic "others" who need to be civilised, whilst also constructing new "home"

[18] See also Rao (2010; 2014) for analysis of the use of LGBTQ+ rights to establish the Global South as less developed than the West, in line with modernity's progress narrative.

[19] See also Agathangelou (2013) and Agathangelou, Bassichis and Spira (2008) for further examples of analysis which looks at the homonormative and racialised dimensions of neoliberal economic globalisation.

Western normative queer identities (2014, p.279). In this sense, homophobia and Islamophobia are understood as being part of the same assemblage, with Islamophobia interpellated through sexual identity politics (ibid). As such, by coining the term homocolonialism and exploring the complex dialectics which underpin it, Rahman makes a crucial contribution to the study of global sexual politics and its potential to support colonial practices and identities. I return to this analysis later on in the thesis, as a lynchpin of my methodological framework.

Also recognising the massive significance of homocolonialism (Rahman, 2014) as a concept for the study of global sexual politics, but arguing that it hasn't yet been located in a historical context is Andrew Delatolla (2020). Delatolla notes that homonormative (Duggan, 2003) discourses are a contemporary iteration of heteronormative discourses, historically used to render the Global South queer and exogenous to the standards of development achieved by the West (2020, p.155). Providing evidence of this, Delatolla notes the implementation of laws against homosexuality, sodomy and sexual deviance by colonisers on the Global South, producing a hetero-colonial system of governance (2020, p.156). In order to remain civilised, the colonies were therefore forced to adhere to European standards of heteronormativity (ibid). This study has two key outcomes of significance. Firstly, it demonstrates that contemporary homocolonialism (Rahman, 2014) is a pernicious flipping of these standards of civilisation, entrapping the former colonies with a standard of civilisation they cannot feasibly achieve due to the sexual norms imposed by colonialism. Secondly, it illustrates that global governance is, and has always been, deeply sexualised and racialised in the post-colonial era, with Whiteness and more recently Islamophobia dictating those countries that are subjected to the hetero/homocolonialist test of civility (Delatolla, 2020, 2021; Rahman, 2014).

Undoubtedly the biggest contribution of Delatolla's work is to historicise recent scholarship on homonormativity/nationalism/capitalism/colonialism within the "imperial sexual politics of modernity", which has governed world politics from early colonialism to the

present day (Delatolla, 2021). Analysing the current state of world politics, Delatolla explicitly states that he is not concerned with the prevailing discourse of LGBTQ+ rights as human rights, but is instead concerned with a broader Western homonormativity that encapsulates these rights (2020, p.156). These, he argues, construct a "divided world", split between states and regions seen as civilised, and those seen as uncivilised due to them being "unable or unwilling to participate in a (homo)normative and (homo)national engagement" (2020, p.157). I am deeply sympathetic to this stance and draw upon it heavily in my own understanding of contemporary sexual politics.

Delatolla acknowledges that colonial institutions have historically used heteronormativity as a measure of civilisation, and that it is only recently that homonormativity has emerged as a new standard (2020, p.156). In this sense, along with all other scholarship I have discussed in relation to the homonormative turn, it does an excellent job of illustrating the symbiotic relationship between racism, sexual politics and colonialism. It also performs much needed-work in updating theories of IR to incorporate the insights that have been generated from the study of homonormativity in the last two decades.

Whilst being mindful of homonormativity is a necessity in contemporary studies of global politics, I argue that a primary focus on this concept invariably results in discussions of sexual politics being universally rooted in the referent object of the Western LGBTQ+ subject, whether this be in relation to discussions of terrorism (Puar, 2007; 2013), global capitalism (Rao, 2015; 2020), or colonialism (Rahman, 2014), for example. This focus was undoubtedly a necessary next step in queer IR at the beginning of the twenty first century, in the context of rapidly shifting social attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people in Western countries and the lack of acknowledgement of this in accounts of world politics. Now, however, we must once again broaden our understanding. Just as Delatolla is interested in the Western homonormativity which encapsulates contemporary LGBTQ+ rights (2020, p.156), I am interested in the

endurance of heteronormativity as an episteme which continues to encapsulate and establish boundaries to contemporary homonormative acceptability. This does not try and re-establish a focus on the heterosexual/homosexual binary and its ongoing relevance in world politics, but rather notes that homonormative acceptability is that which does not contest heteronormativity or White supremacy, and that placing particular sexual subjects front and centre in queer IR analysis narrows the parameters of study, obscuring broader global governmentalities of colonial violence. Focusing overly narrowly on the Western LGBTQ+ subject can obscure our analysis of the global phenomena which produce insecurity, scarcity or violence for both queer and non-queer individuals alike. Illustrative of this is the way in which certain figures, such as the Islamic terrorist, are rendered queer and perverse through concurrent racial and sexual discourses, despite them being non-LGBTQ+ figures, with this having direct implications for Muslim populations who are designated as 'potential terrorists' globally.

Clearly, Puar (2007; 2013) does an outstanding job of unpacking the figure of the terrorist within a homonationalist frame, but my point is that analyses of global systems of violence, economics and climate change, for example, would yield more fruitful results if they could study racial-sexual logics of perversion and (ab)normality beyond the LGBTQ+ subject, reinvigorating the queer subject-less critique (Eng et. al, 2005, p.3) in IR, in a way that is attendant to racism and colonialism. This approach is absolutely necessary in order to study humanitarian intervention effectively, as this is a practice which operates on the basis of a heteronormative and racist colonial script. Whilst LGBTQ+ subjects are mentioned in some of the House of Commons discourses that I study in this thesis, the vast majority do not explicitly discuss LGBTQ+ subjects. To pursue an approach that is primarily attentive to homonormativity over heteronormativity could therefore result in the deeply sexualised (and gendered, and racialised) logics of humanitarian intervention going unstudied. In this thesis, I seek to highlight the systems of normality and/or perversion that are not necessarily tied to

particular sexual bodies or subjects (e.g. homosexuals or LGBTQ+ rights-holding subjects), but that invoke the same colonial temporal logics of (im)proper development in the othering of subjects that destabilise the heteronormative and White-supremacist status quo. In the UK, this includes trans people, migrants and Muslims, who have been othered to varying degrees of intensity over recent years using similar discursive strategies in both the media and politics. Whilst homocolonialism (Rahman, 2014) does well to explain Islamophobia and homophobia as distinct parts of the same assemblage, this thesis shows that Islamophobia and homophobia often operate through *the same* dehumanising temporal strategies.

It is for this reason that I suggest a reorientation of queer IR back towards the analysis of heteronormativity as a broad social phenomenon, within which homonormative expressions of queerness (which don't challenge heteronormativity or its attendant institutions) are situated. Examplifying this approach, in this thesis I draw upon Puar (2007; 2013), Rahman (2014) and Delatolla's (2020; 2021) de-colonial approaches, which are explicit in identifying and historicising the racist trends in contemporary LGBTQ+ rights-based politics. I also draw explicitly upon this scholarship in discussing instances where the framing or positioning of LGBTQ+ subjects has been deployed in making a case for or against intervention. Crucially, however, I pay close attention to broader notions of normality and/or perversion, rooted in notions of (im)proper development which go far beyond the LGBTQ+ right-bearing subject to articulate notions of selfhood and/or otherness in world politics. This, in turn, uses queer scholarship in a way that prevents it from being seen as a niche school of thought, perceived by disciplinary IR to be concerned only with the study of queer people in the context of global problems and phenomena.

Instead, by having a primary focus on heteronormativity as an episteme that has endured since early colonialism (e.g. see Delatolla, 2020; Lugones, 2018; Rifkin, 2011), queer analysis can unpack the discursive mechanisms which are used to render *both* LGBTQ+ and

non-LGBTQ+ subjects perverse. It is in this vein that this thesis progresses, next outlining some examples of excellent scholarship which focus on heteronormativity as a globally-dominant episteme, rooted in and (re)productive of capitalism, heterosexuality, cisnormativity, racism and colonialism; the global systems of logic which underpin the othering of racialised, queer, trans and differently abled bodies. It is by making links between the discursive processes of degradation, othering and de-humanisation of various minoritised communities that this thesis aims to expand the focus of queer IR from the referent object of the homonormative LGBTQ+ subject.

Heteronormativity and Racism in World Politics

Whilst there has been a relative absence of queer IR theory which looks at heteronormativity, colonialism and racism without a primary focus on homonormativity in recent years, there are nonetheless a number of pieces of stand-out scholarship. Pieces that I have found particularly convincing have tended to have been written in response to the politics of Western exceptionalism and empire that accompanied the War on Terror. One key exception to this, which offers a broader analysis of heteronormativity and racism in the constitution of world politics more broadly, is Cynthia Weber's *Queer International Relations: Sovereignty, Sexuality and the Will to Knowledge (2016).* Here, I outline these texts in turn and end by reflecting on the insights I can draw from them in the study of humanitarian intervention. It is important to note at this point that some of the theorists discussed here feature in the last section, within what I term 'The Homonormative Turn'. The pieces of work discussed in this section do not foreground the rights-holding LGBTQ+ subject as a central focus of their analysis. Whilst Weber does include this subject, they also discuss various other figures of normality and/or perversion that constitute the domestic/international binary, offering a broader empirical focus.

Focusing specifically on Orientalist representations of 'the terrorist' in the War on Terror, Puar and Rai (2002) draw attention to the subject-position of "monster-terrorist-fag" in Western anti-terrorist discourses. Within this frame, the association of terrorists with monstrosity allows them to be framed as an absolute evil which must be destroyed (2002, p.118), with the monster-terrorist subsequently psychologised through reference to failed heterosexuality (2002, p.124). Cumulatively, Puar and Rai argue that these models function to reduce histories of struggle and intervention to Western psychic models rooted in the bourgeois heterosexual family, to systematically exclude issues of political economy and cultural translation, and to attempt to control the uncertainties of violent political dissent through reference to taxonomy (ibid). Although this scholarship is now almost twenty years old, it continues to speak to the ways in which states strategically invoke the meaning-laden label of 'the terrorist' to legitimise violent foreign policies.

Later looking at the War on Terror as a collection of assemblages and as a queer assemblage in itself, Puar (2005) draws attention to discourses pertaining to Muslim sexuality in the service of US exceptionalism, and attempts to rearticulate a terrorist body (suicide bomber) as a queer assemblage due to it being a living weapon with spatial, temporal and corporeal convergences. As such, Puar not only links discourses of sexuality to the War on Terror, but also uses a broad understanding of queerness to destabilise ontological characterisations of terrorists in a ground-breaking way. This is a good illustration of the approach that I use in this thesis, looking at the systems of normalisation which are used to frame cultural figures as either normal and/or racially and/or sexually perverse (Weber, 2016).

Studying the racialised character of torture which is used by the U.S. in response to the apparent 'terrorist threat', Richter-Montpetit (2014) makes the case that carceral security practices used against Muslimified people produce the Black body as a site of enslavability. Doing so, she highlights the essential role that violence has historically played in the

construction of 'Blackness' through slavery, with punitive corporeal practices such as whipping, branding and forced nudity used to spectacularly and sexually subjugate those marked Black (2014, p.52). Given that the entire U.S. body politic was produced through a binary between 'Whiteness' and 'Blackness',[20] it is unsurprising that when slavery ended, sexualised terror mobs emerged, centred on the mutilation of the genitals of Black men and boys, and the rape of Black women and girls (2014, p.53). Linking this to the sexualised torture practices used in Abu Grahib, such as sodomising prisoners and forcing them to perform sexual acts on one another (2014, p.56), Richter-Montpetit argues that these are rooted in the same epistemologies as slavery. These logics organise the settler colony according to the binary of Whiteness vs. Blackness, using systematic sexual violence to do so (ibid). Elsewhere, Richter-Montpetit (2007) argues that the micro-level violences shown in Abu Grahib follow a heterosexualised, gendered and racialised script of the War on Terror more broadly, which replicates colonial narratives in its aim to save civilisation as a whole. Richter-Montpetit therefore undertakes crucial work in connecting micro-level violences to global epistemes of heteronormativity and anti-Black racism (2007; 2014). Collectively, by studying the simultaneously sexualised, gendered and racialised dimensions of the War on Terror, Puar (2007), Puar and Rai (2002) and Richter-Montpetit (2007; 2014) are able to look at the ways in which specific racially-darkened (Leigh and Weber, 2018) figures are rendered perverse, threatening and anarchic in relation to the Western sovereign state. This is a crucial insight that I draw heavily upon in my analysis.

Offering an incisive analysis of heteronormativity and its racialised dimensions is Cynthia Weber (2016). Weber's field-defining text *Queer International Relations: Sovereignty, Sexuality and the Will to Knowledge* (2016) has centrally tackled the dichotomies

[20] Whilst it is not a central focus of this particular article (Richter-Montpetit, 2014), it is also important to remember that the binary between White/Native has also been central to the construction of the US body-politic, and dehumanised figures excluded from it.

that construct sovereignty, for example domestic/international, sovereign/anarchic and secure/insecure, linking these to sexualised figurations of IR. This is due to the sovereign man of the state (Ashley, 1989) always being produced as knowable in relation to other normal and perverse gendered/sexualised/racialised figures (Weber, 2016, p.5). Unpacking how this works, Weber looks at different cultural figurations of normality and/or perversion in IR, highlighting the (White, Western) LGBTQ+ rights-holder as a normal homosexual, in line with homonationalist logics (2016, p.9), the perverse underdeveloped immigrant (2016, p.48) and undevelopable terrorist (2016, p.52) as contemporary figurations of 'the perverse homosexual', and Conchita Wurst, the bearded drag queen winner of Eurovision (2016, pp.156-159) as a figuration of the simultaneously normal and/or perverse homosexual. Weber's reading of perversion as underdevelopment has been of crucial importance to my thinking, and their methodology of looking at representations of security/insecurity as either normal or perverse, or normal and/or perverse is central to my methodological approach, which I outline in the next chapter.

Looking more closely at the discursive mechanisms and temporal frameworks that Weber unpacks, it becomes clear that where figurations of 'the homosexual' are labelled perverse, this is done so through recourse to the same logics that initially constructed 'the homosexual' as a subject position associated with perversion (Foucault, 1976), citing incomplete sexual development (Weber, 2016, p.73). Furthermore, Weber argues that the great dichotomy of heteronormative sexuality, that of heterosexuality vs homosexuality, underpins the great dichotomy of civilisation, "to figure the proper places of the 'underdeveloped' and the 'undevelopable' in (neo)imperial Western/global Northern developmental discourses spatially, temporally, and in relation to their desires" (Weber, 2016, p.87). Within this frame, the analysis of development discourses takes on a vital importance for queer theorists interested in the role that sexuality plays in the ongoing politics of colonialism. It is this focus that allows

Weber to incorporate the notion of homonormativity (Duggan, 2003) into their analysis, whilst also looking at the heteronormative character of IR more broadly, positioning various figurations of 'the homosexual' against the referent object of the sovereign state as a heterosexual male, to which a small degree of homonormative (Duggan, 2003, pp.50-51) divergence is accepted. This, in turn, enables Weber to look at various racialised non-LGBTQ+ figures through the lens of civilisational *and* sexual perversion, and to look at figures that destabilise the normal/perverse binary.

Exploring how these logics of development manifest themselves in figurations of the homosexual, Weber first looks at the subject-position of the underdeveloped immigrant, arguing that he embodies disorderly movement as the as-yet underdeveloped citizen of the Global South who moves to the developed West, bypassing the normal process of development (2016, p.87). It is thus the unwanted im/migrant's misplaced desire for civilised development which renders him a queer figuration of the homosexual. Going one step further, the Al Qaeda terrorist figures as the opposite to the sovereign man of the state, unable to be pinned down, hailed as foreign even if belonging to a state (Weber, 2016, pp.90-94). Furthermore, he is also rendered perverse due to Orientalist depictions of the Islamic civilisational home as a site of primitive male heterosexual promiscuity which, in-part, reflects male homosexual promiscuity (2016, pp.95-97), and due to his earthly activities being in the pursuit of the non-reproductive afterlife (Weber, 2016, p.99). Cumulatively, these perversions of Western heteronormative reproductive norms render the Al Qaeda terrorist an undevelopable evil which must be kept outside of Western civilisation, contained in facilities like Guantanamo Bay, or destroyed (Weber, 2016, p.101). Weber also studies Conchita Wurst, the bearded drag queen winner of Eurovision, as a simultaneously normal and/or perverse homosexual (2016, p.44). I return to this argument later on, as it forms a central part of my methodological framework.

Summarily, Cynthia Weber's work (2016) does well to relate sexual perversion to civilisational perversion and broader notions of temporality as progress. This in turn allows them to analyse both LGBTQ+ figures, who have traditionally been framed as sexually perverse, and contemporary racialised figures, such as the terrorist and the immigrant, who are excluded from the Western state due to the ascension of homonationalist logics of citizenship in recent years (Puar, 2007). This is a contribution of huge importance that I draw upon extensively in this thesis, seeing notions of civilisational progress as sexual progress and vice versa, and using this temporal framework to analyse depictions of normality and/or perversion throughout my analysis. Where I do differ with Cynthia Weber's approach is in the language that is used to describe figures of normality and/or perversion.

Throughout Weber's analysis, they frame the Western state as being akin to a heterosexual male (Weber, 2016, p.5), the LGBTQ+ subject as a normal homosexual (Weber, 2016, p.9), immigrants and terrorists as perverse homosexuals to be othered (Weber, 2016, p.27), and Conchita Wurst as a normal and/or perverse homosexual (Weber, 2016, p.44). Maintaining this focus on the figure of 'the homosexual' throughout represents an implicit essentialism, however, in which perversion always has direct recourse to the White gay man, via the psycho-medical discourses which constructed the homosexual as an object of perversion in the nineteenth century (Foucault, 1976, p.43). Whilst Weber does acknowledge that the discourse of 'the perverse homosexual' likened those ascribed this label to non-White savages (Weber, 2016, p.54), rooting perversion in a particular sexual subject closes down debate and obscures our exploration of various figurations of perversion, some of which are not well served through recourse to labels associated with relatively recent and specific Western understandings of sexual perversion. Normality and perversion are perpetually contested concepts, which have elements including sex, gender, ability, race, class, location and employment. In this sense, whilst the framework of 'the homosexual' does well to make the

point that IR is deeply sexualised, I find the attachment of perversion to this subject too rigid and do not deploy it in my analysis. This objection to Weber's framing of 'the homosexual' echoes my previously discussed concern with the homonormative turn in IR. It is also a concern that I further explain in my methodological approach, where I also spend more time discussing the Barthesian principle of the and/or (Weber, 2016, p.44).

Conclusion

Proposing a new approach to the study of humanitarian intervention, in this chapter I have highlighted queer IR as a school of thought with the potential to analyse humanitarian intervention as a simultaneously gendered, sexual and racist act of colonial violence. Noting that some queer IR studies are particularly useful for making this case, I then explored a number of texts which explore heteronormativity as a racialised and colonial episteme (Puar and Rai, 2002; Puar, 2005; Richter-Montpetit, 2007, 2014; Weber, 2016). These, I argue, lay the ground for my queer study which goes beyond looking at violence which involves the positioning of LGBTQ+ individuals to looking at the queering and racist logics that infuse acts of violence in world politics more broadly. As I will demonstrate through the case study of humanitarian intervention, processes of othering and dehumanisation frequently invoke similar logics of perverted development against marginalised figures, regardless of the criteria for this marginalisation (e.g. sexuality, gender or race). I render this hyper-visible in this thesis by studying extreme cultural figures of selfhood and/or otherness in relation to the British state. First, however, I must outline the theoretical and methodological approach that I use to pursue this project.

Chapter Four:

A Queer (and Racist) Time to be Alive

Time is often seen as an innocuous and inevitable way of organising social life, but it is deeply political, designed to marginalise racialised (Bhabha, 1994; Barrett, 1999; Chakrabarty, 2007) and queer(ed) subjects (Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005). Setting out how I understand temporality in order to apply it to my analysis of UK Government discourses on humanitarian intervention, this section first outlines the specific theoretical elements of queer and postcolonial theory that have led me to this point. It initially outlines Foucault's understanding of power (1976), and focuses on his concepts of biopower and governmentality (2003), directly linking these to the study of humanitarian intervention. It then outlines postcolonial critiques of Foucault and the concept of biopower in particular, focusing especially on Achille Mbembe's work on *Necropolitics* (2003), which argues that the exceptional power to kill remains inherent to Western sovereignty. Recognising humanitarian intervention as a state of exception, it then outlines the study of humanitarian intervention as a key object of study for those interested in the violent performance of sovereignty by the Western state. Beyond this, the chapter unpacks queer and postcolonial readings of temporality as progress, outlining how 'common sense' understandings of time are in fact rooted in colonial epistemologies which seek to reproduce inequality and violence.

Biopolitics and Necropolitics

The work of Michel Foucault has been absolutely central to my thinking about the management of life by Western states and the violent limits of this management (2003). Furthermore, his understanding of power as a system of logic (1976, pp.94-96) and incisive study of particular

subjects as objects of carceral and medical intervention (1961, 1975, 1976) provides a loose framework through which this thesis can begin to look at cultural figures of military (non)intervention in debates on humanitarian intervention. It is for this reason that I begin here with the epistemologically ground-breaking work of Foucault before discussing alterations to and critiques of Foucault's work, helping me to adapt it for the purposes of this study. In particular, I engage with and incorporate postcolonial critiques of Foucault, which criticise his Eurocentrism (e.g. see: Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2018; Mbembe, 2003; Stoler, 1995).

Foucault understands power as a discursive system of logic which constructs our common-sense understandings of the world around us (1976, pp.94-95). Furthermore, he argues that there is an inherent and symbiotic relationship between power and resistance, with power referring to established understandings and resistance being localised acts/discourses which challenge these understandings (1976, pp.95-96). Rather than being possessed, as traditionally conceived in political science, Foucault sees power as "relational" and "imminent" (1976, p.94), coming from processes of normalisation as opposed to sovereign laws (1994, p.44). Whilst Foucault recognised that in classical understandings, sovereignty referred to the sovereign's right to let subjects live or make them die (2003, p.240), he recognised that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a new form of power emerged (2003, p.242).

This new form of power was called disciplinary power, and it referred to a number of techniques of power which were centred on the body in order to generate the maximum productivity of the subject (ibid). Concurrent with the rise of capitalism, this referred to the organisation of individuals into cells, places and ranks in order to "guarantee the obedience of individuals, but also a better economy of time and gesture" (1975, p.148). Epitomised by the imposition of strict controls on time and space in places such as the school in order to maximise productivity in line with the dominant logics of capitalist accumulation (1975, p.146), Foucault's reading of disciplinary power exposed time to be constructed and deeply political.

It is this critical reading of temporality which initially opened my mind to the possibility of reading time through a queer lens.

Seeing disciplinary power as the first pole of biopower, operating at the level of the individual body, Foucault argues that a second pole of biopower emerged at a later date, operating at the level of the species-body (1976, p.139). Whilst both of these forms of power can be understood as biopolitical, it is the latter pole that is more commonly understood as biopower, referring to "the power to make live and let die." (Foucault, 2003, p.241). Emerging in the eighteenth century, this new form of power was concerned with "the mastery it would be able to exercise… at the level of life itself" (1976, p.143). Providing examples of how biopower works to optimise life, Foucault cites the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, and the fertility and longevity of the population as key areas of biopolitical control (2003, p.243). Included within the biopolitical project, it must be remembered, were also violent carceral and medical interventions against those deemed mad or sexually perverted on the basis of managing the health of the body-politic. These violent processes, in turn, constructed cultural figures of pathology and perversion, such as 'the madman' (1961, p.73) and 'the homosexual' (Foucault, 1976, p.43) within medical and public discourse.

Closely related to biopower, Foucault's work on government is concerned with the "triple domain of government", incorporating individual self-government, the government of others and the government of the state (Rutherford, 1999, p.46). A key technology of modern government is the establishment of dominant political rationalities which inform how individuals self-govern. Called governmentality, this refers to "the conduct of conduct" (Foucault, 1994, p.237) due to the internalisation of governing norms within the subject. A key expression of governmentality in neoliberal societies is the rendering of individual subjects (and collectives such as families and associations) responsible for their own health and welfare, shifting social issues such as illness, unemployment and poverty into the individual domain of

"self-care" (Lemke, 2001, p.201). In summary, the Foucauldian notions of biopower and governmentality are of crucial relevance to the way in which power operates in modern liberal societies, characterised by high-levels of self-government. This subsequently creates the perception of minimal direct state intervention into the lives of individual subjects.

Due to biopower referring to a power over life, death is often interpreted as the limit or the end of power, with power only having a grip on death in general, overall or statistical terms (Foucault, 2003, p.248). Despite the central aim of contemporary biopower being the regulation of life, Foucault exposed the fact that violence is not aberrational or exceptional to liberal government, but rather is endemic to it (2003). Describing this, Foucault argues that wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign, but are waged on behalf of everyone, and in the name of life itself, rendering massacres vital to liberal government, and rendering wars more frequent and lethal (1980, p.137). This violent character of liberalism is of deep relevance to the study of humanitarian intervention, which entails exceptional and often spectacular violence against 'others' who are perceived to be parasitic to humanity due to their use of violence against civilians. Furthermore, Foucault notes that under biopower, those who are cast as 'others' are framed as enemies to the health, wealth and wellbeing of the population, resulting in their death or neglect[21] being seen as beneficial for the reproduction of the body-politic (2003, p.256). In this sense, Foucault defines racism as "the precondition that makes killing acceptable" in a normalising society (Foucault, 2003, p.255-256). Whilst Foucault discussed racism narrowly (and problematically) in relation to Nazi Germany, this is another point of significance for the study of humanitarian intervention. This is because it allows us to explore how biopower is imbricated in instances of atrocity crimes where the modern liberal state hasn't seen it fit to intervene militarily, and as such has left targeted populations to choose

[21] An example of neglect is the exclusion of certain subjects from bio-political management projects, such as healthcare, which aim to optimise life.

between genocidal violence or forced displacement. A prime example of this is the Rohingya Genocide in Myanmar, which has seen the entire Rohingya population forced from their homes in Rakhine State and into cramped refugee camps in Bangladesh. Given this, I draw upon Foucault's analysis of racism as the limit of biopower (2003, p.256) in my analysis of the UK's decision not to take military action in relation to this genocide (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018).

Foucault's understanding of modern liberal biopower, war-making and security has been picked up and reproduced by Foucauldian security studies,[22] which destabilises the association between peace and liberalism. Postcolonial scholars, however, have argued that Foucault's theory of biopower is completely ignorant of the role that colonial violence played in establishing the conditions for biopower to emerge (Wynter, 2003; Da Silva, 2015; Mignolo, 2015). Relatedly, Stoler argues that Foucault fails to acknowledge the historic impact of colonialism on the construction of the modern political subject (1995, pp.4-5). Building upon these themes in their critique of Foucauldian security studies, Howell and Richter-Montpetit (2018) argue that this literature has failed to engage with Black feminist, Indigenous, postcolonial and critical race scholarship. This results in two key issues with Foucauldian understandings of security. Firstly, they state that life is not securable and that everybody is (potentially) dangerous, which fails to recognise the ways in which racial difference has been articulated throughout modernity (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2018, p.7). Secondly, they fail to reflect on the way in which Blackness has been historically positioned as outside the scope of humanity (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2018, p.8). Cumulatively, Foucault's reading of the modern liberal state, and contemporary iterations of this thought in Foucauldian security studies, fail to acknowledge the plural and insidious ways in which colonial discourses have attached dangerousness and openness to gratuitous violence to Black and Indigenous

[22] See Jabri (2006; 2007), Michael and Reid (2009), Brad (2011) and Colleen (2011).

subjects (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2018, p.8). Nonetheless, his notion of biopower does well to explore the intimate (and seemingly incompatible) relationship between liberalism and violence, as well as the notion of letting racialised populations die under biopower. These insights inform this thesis's analysis, alongside insights from postcolonial scholars.

Responding to the Eurocentrism of Foucault's theory of biopower (2003) and adapting it to the study of violence in the Middle East is Achille Mbembe (2003), whose theory of necropolitics also directly informs my study of humanitarian intervention. In particular, Mbembe reorientates Foucault's understanding of power back towards the principle of sovereignty, arguing that sovereign power continues to be violently exercised against racialised populations through military force.

Coining the term necropolitics, Mbembe understands contemporary sovereignty's right to kill as operating through the state of exception and the state of siege, articulated through reference to an emergency situation and a fictionalised enemy (2003, p.16). Relating his understanding of necropolitics to historic colonial practices, Mbembe explores the slavery plantation and the colonies as exceptional spaces, sealed off from the 'civilised' world through reference to the idea that all European states are equal and the colonies exist in a permanent state of nature, making peace with and within them impossible (2003, p.23). Studying a contemporary example of necropolitics, Mbembe then looks at Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, noting the characteristics of territorial fragmentation, through which a de-facto apartheid state is established (2003, p.27), vertical sovereignty, in which the colonial occupation operates through surveillance and the threat of violence from the air and high ground (2003, p.28), and splintering occupation, in which Israeli and Palestinian people and traffic occupy the same space but are permanently separated by networks of overpasses, bridges and tunnels (ibid). Cumulatively, these technologies of surveillance, speed, overwhelming

violence, disciplinary power and biopower form contemporary necropolitics (Mbembe, 2003, p.40), in which populations are forced to live in a state of militarised siege. Unpacking how necropolitics entails the coercive control of populations from the emergence of colonialism to the present day, Mbembe highlights that in our contemporary era, death worlds still exist in which "vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead" (2003, p.40).

Mbembe's (2003) idea of sovereignty as a state of exception/siege, drawing upon the work of Giorgio Agamben (2003), is again of deep relevance for the study of humanitarian intervention. This is because it corrects Foucault's understanding of biopower to incorporate an understanding of colonialism and racism, rendering it useful for understanding Western interventionism in the Global South. Moreover, it is of great use in empirically exploring the ways in which the construction of a state of emergency and a fictionalised enemy are central to the contemporary use of violence by the liberal state. This is because humanitarian intervention entails exactly this kind of exceptional circumstance, often entailing the saviour of vulnerable subjects such as women and children (Carpenter, 2006), Brown women (Spivak, 1988) or gays (Rao, 2014). Finally, humanitarian intervention often relies upon the rapid deployment of overwhelming airpower, and now rarely entails the deployment of ground troops. In this sense, the military/material tools of humanitarian intervention are those which underpin contemporary necropolitics (Mbembe, 2003). This notion of necropolitics therefore broadly informs my analysis of throughout this thesis, unpacking the ways in which humanitarian intervention is routinely framed as an exceptional use of violence and the extent to which this depends on the use of meaning-laden (racist and heteronormative) tropes of otherness.

Despite its clear theoretical and empirical utility for my study of humanitarian intervention, a challenge to Mbembe's notion of necropolitics comes from Lauren Berlant's

notion of slow death (2007). Berlant suggests slow death as a correction to Mbembe's necropolitics, on the basis that the latter relies upon an outdated view of sovereignty which places an insufficient focus on normativity and governmentalities in the wearing down of populations under capitalism (2007, pp.754-755). Providing the example of the obesity epidemic in the USA, Berlant argues that the general emphasis of 'slow death' is on the trend towards "mass physical attenuation under global/national regimes of capitalist structural subordination and governmentality" (2007, p.754). Whilst Berlant's notion of slow death is admittedly more relevant to advanced capitalist economies, Berlant's characterisation of Mbembe's view of sovereignty as melodramatic (2007, p.755) is flawed. This is because necropolitics looks specifically at postcolonial contexts where sovereignty is still violently performed, often by liberal states through states of exception. Whilst it is possible that Mbembe should have framed the concept of necropolitics in more particular terms, the idea is undoubtedly of great relevance to the study of humanitarian intervention and the function that it plays in the (re)production of the modern liberal state's identity and the Global North/South divide. Given that humanitarian intervention is premised upon the protection of civilians from mass violence and human rights violations, Berlant's understanding of slow death under capitalism is of limited use in this context.

In summary, then, Foucault's conception of racism as governing populations that are allowed to die under biopower (1976, p.139, 2003, pp.255-256) is useful in looking at instances where Western states have not attempted to intervene militarily in response to atrocity crimes. Mbembe's necropolitics (2003), on the other hand, is of use in analysing the character of violence in instances in which intervention has occurred, and discourses which resist hegemonic narratives on intervention by drawing attention to lived experiences. Both of these strands of analysis have informed my thinking in selecting my choice of case studies, and in my analysis of these case studies throughout the thesis.

Queering Time

Also underpinning my approach to the study of humanitarian intervention are queer (e.g. see Edelman, 2004; Halberstam, 2005) and postcolonial (e.g. see Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007) readings of temporality. Temporality has been a key area of focus for both queer and postcolonial thinkers, who destabilise and problematise notions of time as progress, associated with modernity, heterosexuality and capitalism. Here, I outline these readings of temporality in turn, reflecting on how they inform my approach to analysing House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention.

Destabilising common-sense understandings of temporality and demonstrating them to be subjective has been a key topic of concern for queer theorists. Indeed, even Foucault, who is often retroactively labelled as the first queer theorist, engaged with the theme of temporality via his theory of heterotopia (1986), which studied spaces in which human subjects have an encounter with otherness (e.g. cemeteries, bars, prisons, ships) through the disruption of standardised time. Further explaining this through reference to the cemetery, Foucault notes that the cemetery is premised upon an alternative heterochrony, typified by the loss of life, facing the individual with a quasi-eternal perspective in which their "permanent lot is dissolution and disappearance" (1986, p.6).

More recently, a central theme in the anti-social turn in queer theory[23] has been the destabilisation of heteronormative understandings of time. Central to the emergence of the anti-social turn was Lee Edelman's book *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive (2004).* In this text, Edelman uses a Foucauldian reverse discourse to argue for the alignment of queer subjects with death over life. Explaining this perspective, Edelman notes that the entirety of

[23] See Halberstam (2008) for more information on the anti-social turn in queer theory.

political life exists within a logic of tending to the figural image of 'the child', with 'responsible politics' always framed within narrow parameters (2004, p.2). Labelling this ideological limit on political discourse as reproductive futurism, Edelman argues that it absolutely privileges heteronormativity and renders queer resistance to this system unthinkable (ibid). As such, Edelman argues for an understanding of queerness which names the side of not fighting for the children of tomorrow; a space which figures outside and beyond politics (2004, p.3). Summarising his argument, Edelman argues for a form of queerness that is self-destructive, understanding politics as the social elaboration of reality and the self as the vessel for the figural child (2004, p.30). Whilst deliberately controversial in its focus on the death drive, Edelman's work is absolutely crucial in unpacking the ontological tendency that encapsulates mainstream politics' orientation towards the future, through ideas such as social continuity and progress.

One critique of Edelman's work, which is important to engage with, is the idea that he reproduces monolithic images of 'the Child' as White and straight, by default excluding racialised and queer kids from notions of futurity (Muñoz, 2009, p.95). Whilst the absence of an explicit discussion of race or racism from Edelman's work is undoubtedly problematic, I would argue that Western progress narratives undoubtedly do place exclude racialised and queer kids from notions of futurity. As this chapter explores, time is deeply political and serves to represent the White male subject as the ultimate figure of futurity in line with Enlightenment discourses (e.g. see Phipps, 2021; Wynter, 2003). In this sense, whilst highlighting a blind-spot in Edelman's analysis, Muñoz's observation substantiates the themes that this project is based upon. In light of this, the theme of reproductive futurism is central to my analysis of House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention, in particular in relation to notions of progress and backwardness within the frame of protecting/saving the children of tomorrow through the advancement of freedom and democracy.

Also adopting an anti-social perspective, Jack Halberstam sees the concepts of queer time and space as frameworks which exist in opposition to the family, heterosexuality and reproduction. In particular, Halberstam argues that they "develop according to other logics of location, movement and identification", entailing eccentric economic practices, strange temporalities and imaginative life schedules (2005, p.12). Queer temporality and spatiality, Halberstam argues, are not governed by notions of the biological clock or strict bourgeois rules of scheduling and respectability (2005, p.5), offering a radical challenge to the social worlds that are attached to heteronormativity. Understanding queerness in terms of its life rhythms as opposed to sexual practices aligns Halberstam closely with Foucault's (1997) understanding of homosexuality as a radical way of life that is rooted in friendship as opposed to reproduction (Halberstam, 2005, p.12).

Unpacking the origins of queer time and space, Halberstam notes that this emerged most spectacularly at the end of the twentieth century from communities "whose horizons of possibility have been severely diminished by the AIDS epidemic" (2005, p.13), with Edelman's *No Future* (2004) being an example of scholarship that rethought the conventional emphasis on longevity as a marker of a life well lived (2005, p.14). Critically engaging with, but building in part on such perspectives, Halberstam unpacks how notions of respectability and normality are rooted in a "middle-class logic of reproductive temporality", in which modes of living that show little or no concern for longevity are pathologised (2005, p.17). This understanding of time goes beyond individual families and underpins ideas of the nation and national stability through a generational understanding of time in which wealth, goods and morals are passed down through family ties (2005, p.18). Furthermore, "queer space" refers to the places in which queer subjects including ravers, drug users, homeless people, sex workers and the unemployed construct alternative temporal modalities (2005, p.20). Cumulatively, Halberstam does an excellent job of finding value in queer lived experiences, in contravention

of reproductive temporal logics. Halberstam also informs this project through the way in which they explore how reproductive temporal logics underpin the very idea of the nation and the continuity of its existence (2005, p.18). Drawing upon this theme, this project looks at manifestations of this binary between good reproductive subjects and queer destructive subjects in dominant logics of humanitarian intervention.

Also linking the material and the temporal in an unequivocal way, Elizabeth Freeman uses the phrase "time binds" to refer to the ways in which flesh is rendered socially meaningful through temporal regulation (2011, p.3). More specifically, Freeman argues that individual bodies are manipulated into maximum productivity through a process called chronormativity (ibid). Applied to the entire population through chronobiopolitics, the state and other social institutions narrate strategies for living including marriage, the accumulation of health/wealth for the future, reproduction, childrearing and death as normal and natural (2011, p.4). Furthermore, those who disrupt this linear understanding of time are framed as perverts, with the interpretation of gay men and lesbians as either "perverts" or "a sublimely futuristic release from nature", indicative of how the productivity imperative operates (2011, p.7).[24] From this, similarly to Edelman (2004), Freeman calls on queers (and the working class) to reject futurity (2011, p.19) and also argues that temporal and sexual dissidence are interlinked, offering erotohistoriography as a method for reading history (2011, p.95). As such, Freeman offers crucial insights into how temporality works to instantiate hidden life rhythms through our most fundamental understandings of time including our schedules, calendars, time zones and watches (2011, p.3). Furthermore, Freeman does an excellent job of unpacking how market, sexual and temporal logics work together to marginalise certain subjects whilst celebrating others. Building upon Freeman, I see sexual and temporal dissidence as deeply linked. It is this

[24] See also Love H.K.'s work (2007) on the ways in which queer subjects have historically challenged, and continue to challenge, modernity's progress narrative.

critical perspective which uncovers the insidiousness of seemingly neutral temporal logics that I replicate in my approach to discourse analysis in this thesis.

Summarily, Edelman (2004), Halberstam (2005) and Freeman (2015) provide an excellent range of different approaches to queering temporality that broadly inform my approach to discourse analysis in this thesis. In particular, they destabilise common-sense notions of time as progress as being the product of capitalism and heterosexual reproduction, and highlight the plural ways in which queer subjects contest these frameworks. Solely drawing upon these approaches is insufficient for an analysis of the narratives underpinning humanitarian intervention, however. Most prominently, this is due to the absence of a central focus on processes of racism and racialisation as also informing common-sense notions of temporality in these works. Alongside hetero/homonormative understandings of time, racism and racialisation are simultaneously deployed by (neo)colonialism and capitalism to locate particular subjects in the past through notions of cultural/racial barbarism and backwardness. It is for this reason that it is also necessary to incorporate a central focus on postcolonial readings of time, and why this thesis utilises a synthesised postcolonial *and* queer reading of temporality.

Decolonising Time

The destabilisation of established understandings of time has been a key topic of concern for postcolonial theorists as well as queer theorists. In particular, postcolonial theorists have read temporality as a particular mode of historical emergence, measuring the ways in which 'the postcolonial' has been understood as an 'other' whose logic is "incommensurable with the normative temporality of clock and calendar associated with Western modernity" (Ganguly, 2004, p.162). Looking the role that time played in the establishment of colonialism, Ogle unpacks how John Locke's Second Treatise of Government (1690) locked people in the 'New

World' outside the Christian faith and its history by implying that the Non-Western world existed in a state of nature, establishing a moral imperative for colonialism and its civilising mission (2015). This indicates that the narration of history has been an essential part of the colonial project from its very beginning.

One of the most eminent scholars to be thinking on the relevance of temporality to colonialism is Chakrabarty (2007), who explores historicism as a technology of colonial control. Historicism, Chakrabarty argues, enabled modernity and capitalism to not simply look global, but as something that became global over time, with the gap between the development of Europe and the colonies legitimising the idea of civilisation (2007, p.22). This temporal trap had real implications on material practices of colonialism, with J.S. Mill legitimising the denial of self-government to the colonies on the basis that they were "not yet" ready for self-government, consigning "Indians, Africans and other "rude" nations to an imaginary waiting room of history" (ibid). Such understandings of historicism continue to underpin development thought today, which posits the capitalist economies of Europe and North America as the zenith of development and frames the expansion of the market as the route through which countries in the Global South catch up and can achieve similar wealth.

Seeing such discourses of history as foundational to the exploitation of the postcolonial world, Chakrabarty advocates alternative academic theories of history which emerge from the Global South, as at present all understandings can be conceived as "the history of Europe", with the Global South always framed as being in a position of subalternity (2007, p.36). In a "reverse discourse" (Foucault, 1976, p.101), Chakrabarty therefore proposes that non-Western understandings of history return the gaze and develop theories which place Europe in a position of otherness (2007, p.37). This reading of history[25] is of crucial importance to understanding

[25] See also Wolf (1982), Hindess (2007) and Shilliam (2012) for more examples of how the narration of history has been a central part of the projects of modernity and colonialism.

how colonialism and the underdevelopment of the postcolonial world operate through the same temporal logics. This clearly illustrates the huge importance of narratives to processes of material exploitation and violence, challenging the binary between the ideational and the material. This is a key point of significance for this thesis, which explores how contemporary military interventions depend upon temporal narratives associated with Western exceptionalism.

Also key to exposing common-sense understandings of time as a mechanism of colonial control is Homi Bhabha. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha unpacks the splitting of the native subject into good and bad camps, including good vs. bad Muslims and locations of hope vs. locations of phobia. Aiming to transcend the oppression of colonised groups, Bhabha advocates the act of "going beyond" chronological understandings of temporality, in which the present is bound to the past and the future (1994, p.1). Key to this idea of being in the 'beyond' is existing in the here and now, rather than locating oneself within modernist narratives (1994, p.10). This allows for the challenging of race and racism, which Bhabha argues is rooted in temporal logics that are often overlooked in spatial traditions of post-modern theory (1994, p.342). Furthermore, Bhabha argues that the marginalisation of the Third World is rooted in the same othering logics as the marginalisation of women, foreigners and homosexuals (1994, p.345).[26] This relates to the overarching aim of this thesis, which aims to interrogate how heteronormative and racist worldviews operate through the same temporal logics of development, progress and modernity.

Explaining how the narrative of modernity oppresses the Third World, Bhabha posits the existence of a time lag in colonial/postcolonial experiences (1994, p.341), with the Third World always framed as catching up with the progress of the West. This time-lag, Bhabha

[26] The terms "foreigner" and "homosexual" are used by the original author, and do not reflect my personal beliefs.

argues, is central to modernity's origin story, which interpreted those areas that hadn't yet adopted rationalist socio-political structures as wasteland, or "terra nulla" (1994, p.352), allowing for the progress that modernity depends upon to be established. In response, Bhabha argues that this very time lag that can and should be exploited through the expression of postcolonial agency that disrupts the idea that the postcolonial world is simply following in the footsteps of the West (1994, p.344). Consequently, Homi Bhabha's work plays an absolutely vital role in illustrating how notions of time as progress construct the postcolonial world as an 'other' defined by backwardness, how these are the same temporal narratives that are used to marginalise women and queers, and how the disruptive act of going 'beyond' modernity through the exertion of postcolonial agency offers possibility for change.[27] This directly informs the theoretical approach of this thesis, which aims to problematise the narratives associated with humanitarian intervention, seeing humanitarian intervention as a simultaneously material and discursive practice which enacts the idea of a time lag between the West and the global South. This is because humanitarian intervention is centrally rooted in the idea that the West has achieved successful liberal democratic government and the global South needs military intervention to keep it on the path to democracy, as I will explore in my analysis.

Temporality and Humanitarian Intervention

Neatly summarising how liberal modernity has used particular spatial and temporal figurations to construct a view of human subjectivity based exclusively upon European man, Lisa Lowe argues that the preservation of liberal society depends upon placing different groups of people at various distances from liberal humanity – "Indian", "Black", "Negro", "Chinese" etc. (2015,

[27] See also Barrett (1999) for further reading on the ways in which Western philosophy underpins capitalism by associating blackness with idleness/perversion/lack of self-awareness and whiteness with diligence/the normal/self-awareness.

p.8). In this sense, ongoing processes of colonial governance are not rooted in a binary between colonised/decolonised, but rather through a series of spatialised and temporalised processes of differentiation and connection (ibid). It is these processes that I seek to trace in the contemporary discourses of British foreign policy making, which relies on multi-layered and multi-faceted narratives of identity, differentiation and belonging.

It must be noted, however, that this thesis is far from the first example of queer IR research to synthesise postcolonial and queer readings of temporality, with Weber (2016) and Rao (2020), in particular, both problematising dominant understandings of time and highlighting the way in which queers and the global south are marginalised by modernity's progress narratives. Both do so in different ways, with Weber looking at the construction of racialised figurations of 'the homosexual'as representing various levels of (under)development in international relations (2016). Rao, on the other hand, looks at how time matters in the postcolony, studying the particular aftereffects of British colonialism in Uganda, India and Britain, and how this informs understandings of the past and future in relation to LGBTQ+ rights campaigns in these contexts (2020). Where this thesis makes an interjection is in the queering of these temporal narratives in relation to practices of humanitarian intervention. This analysis illustrates how these racist/heteronormative temporal logics are violently enacted through humanitarian intervention, within the context of the sexual politics of modernity (Delatolla, 2020).

It is absolutely vital that both queer and postcolonial insights are incorporated into this analysis, due to colonial mechanisms of othering operating simultaneously through racist and hetero/homonormative logics of normality and/or perversion (Weber, 2016). The line between subjects who are framed as belonging in the past due to dominant logics of sexuality (Freeman, 2015; Love, 2007), and those located in the past due to dominant logics of racism (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007), is more blurred now than ever. This is due to the ascension of

homonationalist logics in world politics (Puar, 2007) which frame certain (white, neoliberal) LGBTQ+ subjects as normal, and Muslims as universally homophobic, potential terrorists. Terrorists are, in turn, not only rendered intelligible as a threat to the body-politic through racism, but also through notions of failed heterosexuality (Puar and Rai, 2002; Weber, 2016). This use of racialised sexual politics to frame Muslims as backward, and to construct the figure of the terrorist as a dangerous 'other' illustrates the central importance of reading temporality through critical queer and postcolonial analysis, and the need to apply this to the study of House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention.

Cumulatively, this chapter has outlined the core ideas that animate and underpin this study and its understanding of the relationship between colonialism and temporality, providing the critical basis for the analysis which is to follow. It began by reflecting on the utility of Foucault's notion of biopower (2003) and Mbembe's notion of necropolitics (2003) for analysing humanitarian intervention in the contemporary moment. Beyond this, it focused on queer and postcolonial readings of temporality, highlighting the ways in which both feature a similar understanding of time as progress. Unpacking the ways in which these temporal frameworks are used to other groups or cultural figures as perverse and backwards, the chapter set out this focus on temporality as an area in which queer and postcolonial ideas can be applied in tandem. This, in turn, generally informed my choice of debates, research questions and approach to discourse analysis. This forms the content of the next chapter.

Chapter Five:

Studying the British Case

As scholars of world history will know, the UK is one of the most aggressive and pro-interventionist states to ever have existed. It is partly due to the violent tendencies attached to its long colonial past and its recent history of decline that I have chosen to study UK debates on humanitarian intervention. There are, however, some more specific methodological reasons for doing so, rooted in developments in world politics in recent years. In this chapter, I outline and justify my choice of a one country case study, my selection of particular *Hansard* debates, my approach to analysing these debates in a way that is consistent with my theoretical framework, the key questions that this study asks, and some critical reflections on the project.

The British Body-Politic

The first stage in establishing the discourses for my analysis was deciding on the number of states that I was going to focus on. Doing so, I decided to focus on the UK, as opposed to the US or France, which are the other two states that have generally pursued a liberal humanitarian intervention agenda post-2011. This was due to the US being somewhat aberrational in its foreign policy during this period, adopting a more isolationist stance during the Trump administration. With France and the UK remaining, the UK was the obvious choice given my pre-established knowledge of it, and the UK's decision to invoke the doctrine of humanitarian intervention to legitimise intervention in Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018). This decision to invoke a doctrine of humanitarian intervention in the place of UN Security Council authorisation actively shifted international legal norms (Scharf, 2019; Watkin, 2020) and was

the particular act that piqued my interest in studying humanitarian intervention as an important discourse and practice beyond the R2P framework (UN General Assembly, 2005).

Focusing on one state allowed me to explore, in depth, the way in which humanitarian intervention informs the construction of national identity, how particular discourses interact with the materiality of military violence, and key points of resistance towards hegemonic narratives on intervention. This is particularly important in studying the ongoing colonial character of the British state, which maintains an often unstudied and unseen White supremacy and racism (Trafford, 2020; El-Enany, 2021) that continues to inform British worldviews and foreign policy-making. Whilst protests such as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement have gone some way to challenging this, the widespread vilification of migrants in the British media and political system, for example (e.g. see Afzal, 2016; McShane, 2022), highlights the deep-rooted endurance of a colonial mind-set which sees people from the Global South as less than human (Wynter, 2003). Even more unstudied is the role that discourses of sexuality play in these processes of dehumanisation, with sexuality and gender having always been central to the colonial project from early colonisation (e.g. see Rifkin, 2011; Tallie, 2020) to the present day (Duggan, 2003; Puar, 2007). Filling in this gap, my focus on the UK responds to the relative absence of thinking about present-day foreign policy as an extension of empire. More indirectly, it reflects on the role of humanitarian intervention as a violent tool of colonial global governance, through which influence is exerted by Western states in the Global South. Whilst the colonial character of the UK and of humanitarian intervention as a practice has already been established, this thesis studies the specific stereotypes, temporal frameworks, prejudices and assemblages of gender/sexuality/racism that legitimise and are enacted through humanitarian intervention.

The second key stage of my case selection was identifying the specific texts I wanted to focus on. In this endeavour, I decided to focus on House of Commons debates on

humanitarian intervention between 2011 and 2018. These *Hansard* records represent a publically available and reliably minuted set of texts incorporating views from right across the political spectrum. This, in turn, allowed me to identify dominant discourses and those which resist this discourse from across the political spectrum. Of course, this is still limited to sitting MPs, which is far from representative of the public at large, but it does give me an insight into the mind-sets of those governing the country, including those who don't agree with the government's official position. In particular, I selected the following debates for analysis:

- Hansard (2011) *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973,* HC Deb. Vol. 525, Cols. 700-802, 21st March 2011.
- Hansard (2013) *Syria and the Use of Chemical Weapons,* HC Deb. Vol. 566, Cols. 1426-1547, 29th August 2013.
- Hansard (2014) *Iraq: Coalition Against ISIL,* HC Deb Vol. 585, Cols. 1256-1366, 26th September 2014.
- Hansard (2015) *ISIL in Syria,* HC Deb Vol. 603, Cols. 323-500, 2nd December 2015
- Hansard (2018) *Burma,* HC Deb Vol. 637, Cols. 1030-1045, 15th March 2018.
- Hansard (2018) *Syria,* HC Deb Vol. 639, Cols. 39-93, 16th April 2018.

These specific debates were selected due to them reflecting changing norms of humanitarian intervention in recent years, and here I outline the specific reasons for choosing each one. It is also important to remember, however, that UK interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan in the 2000s undoubtedly provide an important pre-text to these debates, especially due to arguments which appealed to the protection of *womenandchildren* (Enloe, 1990) in legitimising these highly controversial interventions. This is reflected in the 2011 debate, in particular (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), in which those opposing intervention highlighted previous failings in Iraq.

I selected the 2011 debate on intervention in Libya (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), as this was the last (and only) instance of pillar III of R2P being activated, with airstrikes authorised by the UN Security Council in UNSCR 1973 (UN Security Council, 2011). The

2013 Syria debate (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013), contrastingly, represents an instance of failure. In this debate, the UK Government failed to secure support for airstrikes from both the UN Security Council and from the House of Commons, largely due to the failure of post-conflict reconstruction in Libya. Given the centrality of failure to queer and feminist accounts of IR (Weber, 2014; Wilcox, 2017), and this debate restricting the range of future military options open to the UK Government, this debate is of vital importance. Representing a successful process of securitisation (Waever, 1995), resulting in military action being authorised, the 2014 debate regarding airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and the 2015 debate regarding airstrikes against ISIL in Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015) are also significant. These invoked humanitarian aims and goals in their reasoning, but did not receive chapter VII authorisation from the UN Security Council, and signalled a pivoting of UK humanitarian intervention policy towards a more ad-hoc approach. This reflects international norms at the time and to the present day, with a stalemate existing between the permanent members of the Security Council in relation to the authorisation of force by third parties.

Also representing a different instance of humanitarian intervention is the 2018 debate on airstrikes against the Syrian regime (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018). Here, the government retrospectively approached the House of Commons to explain its decision to launch airstrikes against the Assad regime under the doctrine of humanitarian intervention. This, in particular, represented a turning point in international law, explicitly invoking the notion of humanitarian intervention outside of the R2P framework (Scharf, 2019; Watkin, 2020). Speaking to the violence that is also associated with inaction, I analysed the 2018 Myanmar/Burma (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018) debate, which discusses the UK's limited, non-military response to the Rohingya Genocide. Whilst there have been other debates in relation to Myanmar, the debate I selected was called by the government to outline its

response to accusations of atrocity crimes by the Burmese Government, and most closely relates to the empirical focus of this thesis. These debates cumulatively give me an insight into a) the extent to which colonial (racist and heteronormative) logics inform British foreign policy making, b) how the UK uses humanitarian logics in its use or non-use of violence, and c) a partial insight into the broader global discourse and practice of humanitarian intervention post-Libya. These debates all occurred within the space of two Conservative administrations in the UK, led by David Cameron and Theresa May.

Whilst this study could be criticised for being too narrow in its focus, limited in its empirical focus on Conservative party foreign policy rather than British identity and humanitarian intervention more broadly, I would reject such criticisms. This is because the arguments deployed throughout the debates reflect a long history of colonial worldviews imbuing the identity of the British state, and due to the developments in these discrete debates broadly reflecting trends within Western foreign policy in relation to atrocity crimes during the period in question (2011-2018). Most significantly, these debates were central to the (non)authorisation of military force by the UK Government, rendering them unequivocally important in interrogating the ongoing coloniality of British foreign policy-making. Whilst a longer study and/or one focused on other states is absolutely an avenue for future research, this thesis restricts its focus in order to ensure sufficient depth of analysis.

Queering Culture, Queering Violence

The methodological approach that I use in this thesis is a queer and postcolonial theory informed approach to discourse analysis, drawing heavily upon scholars such as Roxanne Doty (1993), Momin Rahman (2014) and Cynthia Weber (2016). This dynamic approach allows me to draw upon the ideas and approaches of different theorists in order to capture different themes of coloniality throughout the debates in question.

Discourse analysis is an extremely broad approach to research incorporating scholars as diverse as Laclau and Mouffe, Foucault, Derrida and Fairclough. Uniting these approaches, however, is a general belief that discourse establishes the conditions within which possibilities for action are established. Drawing upon the French poststructuralist tradition, Laclau and Mouffe reject the distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices, arguing that every object is constituted as an object of discourse and that no object exists externally to the social production of meaning (2001, p.107). This idea is absolutely fundamental to my study of humanitarian intervention, which has emerged partly in response to critiques of queer and poststructuralist research that claim this scholarship neglects the material for the cultural/discursive (Jessop, 1990; Bieler and Morton, 2008; Eng and Puar, 2020, p.6). By using discourse analysis to illustrate how various speech-acts establish a reality through which military action is made un/intelligible, depending on the subject-positions deployed, this thesis responds to such critiques of queer/poststructuralist approaches. Building upon approaches to discourse analysis from postcolonial feminist and poststructuralist feminist scholars such as Doty (1993), Hansen (2006) and Shepherd (2008), this thesis aims to (re)establish the absolute necessity of viewing the 'hard issues' of security, sovereignty and violence through and within culture.

Two key concepts of importance within discourse analysis are articulation and interpellation. The first refers to the temporary fixing of meaning by connecting terms, symbols and meanings, ideologically using these to underpin institutions and social relations (Laffey and Weldes, 2004, p.28). Furthermore, interpellation refers to the construction of specific identities through representations of the world, and the subsequent process through which individuals come to identify with these subject-positions, naturalising them (ibid). Consequently, articulation and interpellation are two central pillars for understanding how discourse creates webs of meaning that ultimately establish the world within which we live.

Alongside using these two concepts to inform my methodological approach, I also use Roxanne Doty's (1993) radical approach to analysing discursive practices. With Doty's work rooted firmly in radical anti-racist and decolonial politics, it provides an ideal approach for identifying and mapping colonial meanings in the texts that I study, especially when paired with the distinctly queer approach to each of my sub-questions, as I will outline. A discursive practices approach destabilises the relationship between signifiers (e.g. words and images) and signified meanings (e.g. individual consciousness or social collective), instead insisting that signifiers only refer to other signifiers, resulting in the notion of intertextuality (Doty, 1993, p.302). This produces a dispersed and capillary understanding of power in which resistance is individualised, hence this thesis' adoption of a Foucauldian understanding of power (1976, pp.94-95).

Unpacking how discourse constructs spaces (e.g. categories, concepts, models, metaphors etc.) that form a "grid of intelligibility" in which certain modes of action are possible, Doty outlines the concepts of pre-supposition, predication and subject positioning (1993, p.306). Pre-supposition refers to the textual mechanism that creates background knowledge and the kind of world in which things can be recognised as true (ibid). An example of this would be the phrase "has the genocide ended?", which presupposes an understanding of what genocide is, that one has taken place, and that the questioner has an interest in it coming to an end. Furthermore, predication refers to the attribution of certain qualities to certain subjects or objects through the addition of labels, crucial to the establishment of identities and understandings of what particular subjects can do (ibid). An example of this would be common understandings of democracies as attached to values such as freedom, progress and social pluralism. Finally, subject-positioning refers to the ways in which texts create a "reality" by linking subjects and objects to one another (ibid), often through degrees of similarity and/or difference. An example of this would be frequent depictions of a post-Brexit U.K. breaking

free from the red tape and regulative shackles of E.U. membership (e.g. Falvey, 2021; Telegraph View, 2021) with this framing the U.K. as a defiant nation that has re-found its independence, juxtaposed against the E.U. as a bureaucratic and restrictive conglomerate that attempts to restrict the sovereignty of member states. Cumulatively, by looking at how presuppositions, predication and subject positioning work in tandem, it is possible to understand how a world with different positions and possibilities for different subjects is constructed (Doty, 1993, pp.306-307). It is these concepts that centrally inform my analysis of House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention, unpacking how the UK is constructed in relation to other subjects such as the West, civilisation as a whole, the Global South, dictators, terrorists and *womenandchildren* (Enloe, 1990), to name a few, and the characteristics and presuppositions that make such depictions possible.

Research Questions and Analytical Approach

RQ: In what ways do House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention (re)produce colonial worldviews?

SQ1: To what extent do House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention operate through racist and heteronormative logics?

SQ2: How are dominant narratives in these debates resisted?

SQ3: What worldviews are articulated in and enacted by debates on humanitarian intervention?

My research question and sub-questions were designed to situate my discrete empirical study within global regimes of heteronormativity, racism and colonialism. In this task, I follow in the

footsteps of Nicola J. Smith, who studies the particular sexual history of British capitalism, using this case as a springboard for reflections about capitalism and IPE more broadly, whilst being careful not to reinforce the Eurocentric assumptions that pervade the discipline (2020, p.8). I similarly use the British case to reflect particularly on the practice of humanitarian intervention and the character of the British body-politic, whilst reflecting more broadly on the state of IR as a discipline and globalised logics of colonisation and capitalism, with Britain having been at the fore of these projects since their inception. Furthermore, my approach to analysing the House of Commons debates is distinctly queer. Rather than following established social scientific frameworks of inductive, deductive or abductive research, I pursued a process of constantly going back and forth from the theory to the empirical analysis, using each to inform the other. Aware that the inherent messiness associated with radical queer thinking must also be integrated into my methodological approach, I turned to Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash's *Queer Methods and Methodologies,* taking inspiration from their reflection on the tension between social science methods and queer epistemological paradigms (2016, p.2). Feeling that the pseudo-scientific language that I had learned on my PhD training modules was actively obstructing the queer insights that I was seeking to gain, I forged my own approach to 'coding' the data, drawing in particular on the theoretical and methodological frameworks of Momin Rahman (2014) and Cynthia Weber (2016). I outline the specific ways in which I did this below.

For sub-question one I selected Richard Ashley's reading of 'statecraft as mancraft' (1989) as my theoretical lens, drawing upon Cynthia Weber's insightful reading of this approach in *Queer International Relations: Sovereignty, Sexuality and the Will to Knowledge* (2016). This understanding of statecraft sees sovereignty as being the attempts to construct an agent that the political community can govern on behalf of by investing him with political authority (Ashley, 1989). Reflecting on the modern history of statecraft, Weber notes that there

is a common theme of attempting to present the state as a "presumed-to-be-factual 'sovereign man'—as if it were the singular, pre-existing, ahistorical ground that authorizes all sovereign decisions in its political community." (2016, pp.3-4). Unpacking how this discourse operates, Ashley notes that the 'modern man' represents the logos (source from which meanings flow) of IR in the contemporary era, providing the epistemological foundations of modernity and the sovereign nation-state (Ashley, 1989, p.261). Further explaining how this organises international relations, Ashley notes that this understanding of statecraft as mancraft establishes the binary hierarchies that construct IR, including civilized/barbaric, security/danger, peace/war, domestic/international and order/anarchy, with the former in each pair equating to the logos and the latter equating to the threat which the logos must be protected from (Ashley, 1989, p.284). Weber builds upon this and argues that with the former figuring as the modern man, the latter in each binary figures as the perverse homosexual, with the very existence of the Victorian sovereign man premised upon fears of the racially darkened, dangerous and unruly sexualized savage "as his colonial (perverse homosexual) subject" to justify colonial rule (2016, p.35). As such, Weber illustrates how the binary opposites of IR are rooted in understandings of *either* normality *or* perversion, with understandings of perversion rooted in heteronormative and racist colonial ideas. Building upon this, in my first round of data analysis I initially noted the binary opposites that were apparent, assessing the extent to which they depended upon colonial understandings of the developed 'self' and the perverse and underdeveloped/undevelopable 'other'.

Although Weber's (2016) analysis did this through the framework of the sovereign man of the state and the normal homosexual versus perverse homosexuals, I did not restrict my analysis to the framework of straight men and homosexuals. Whilst Weber is clearly attempting to historicise their work within recent histories of perversion in the eyes of the Western state, this analysis also has its limitations. Most notably, it draws upon a relatively recent and

culturally (Western) specific understanding of perversion, stemming from the field of sexology and the discursive construction of the homosexual as an object of medical intervention in the nineteenth century (Foucault, 1976, p.43). Despite Weber (2016) doing an excellent job of explaining how it is that 'non-queer' and racialised subjects (i.e. the Al Qaeda terrorist) are rendered queer, I still sense an implicit essentialism in this analysis, whereby all discussions of perversion are persistently routed through the Western 'homosexual' subject. This in turn limits the possibilities for considering perversion outside, before, after and beyond this specific subject, especially when we are considering the framing of racialised, gender non-conforming or trans people, groups or figures. In this sense, my analysis of the binary representation of normality/perversion returns to the queer subject-less critique in a way that is mindful of insights provided by trans studies[28] and the queer of colour critique,[29] acutely aware that racialisation, cisnormativity, racial capitalism and colonialism operate through the terrains of desire that establish normality and perversion as important concepts in IR.

For sub-question two, which looks at queer possibilities for resisting hegemonic UK Government narratives on intervention, I used Cynthia Weber's queer logics of statecraft (2016). This challenges statecraft as mancraft (Ashley, 1989), which attempts to establish an authoritative reading of normality or perversion, through the introduction of plural logoi (Weber, 2016, p.39). Deploying Roland Barthes's (1976) rule of the and/or, Weber suggests that dominant understandings of the sovereign man can be destabilised through simultaneous figurations of normality and/or perversion (Weber, 2016, p.40). Providing an example of this, Weber explores the idea of a subject being simultaneously a girl and/or a boy, which means that they can be either or both, and that 'boy' and 'girl' cannot be reduced to traditionally dichotomous codes of sex, gender or sexuality (ibid). This destabilisation of the stark either/or

[28] E.g. see Namaste (2007); Preciado (2008); Stone (1992); Stryker (1994)
[29] See Ferguson (2004; 2018), Manlansan (2018)

divide allows space for multiple simultaneous meanings, in accordance with Sedgwick's understanding of queerness (1993, p.8). Building upon the and/or approach, Weber's queer logics of statecraft act as an antinormative approach that destabilise established institutions that rely on either/or logics, including heteronormativities (Berlant and Warner, 1998) and homonormativities (Duggan, 2003). As such, this framework provided me with an opportune mechanism for studying discourses that challenge self/other, normal/perverse and North/South binaries in the debates in question.

Finally, for sub-question three, which looks at how the logics of humanitarian intervention construct the identity of the UK in relation to the Global South, I used Momin Rahman's queer approach to triangulation (2014) to guide my initial coding. This was in order to unpack the specific characteristics/properties that are framed as belonging solely to the UK/West and not to the objects[30] of intervention. In Rahman's approach to triangulation, he interrogates the way in which gay rights are positioned between East and West, defining an accelerated modernity within the West that is symptomatic of social modernisation, rather than an inherent property of Western civilisation (Rahman, 2014, p.279). With Eastern cultures (and Islamic cultures in particular) framed as against modernity, this confirms that queer identities and rights are only possible in the West, with queer rights positioned as the apex of civilization (ibid). However, as Rahman does well to highlight, these perceptions are not completely baseless due to the existence of homophobia in Muslim countries and cultures (2014, pp.276-277). What Rahman's approach demonstrates is that this homophobia is intensified by Islamophobic discourses of cultural backwardness and barbarism, and vice versa.

Unpacking the consequences of this process of triangulation, Rahman understands it within the frame of homocolonialism, seeing sexual diversity "as the shell for Western

[30] I use the word object as opposed to subject here, as discourses on humanitarian intervention speak about atrocity crimes and the subjects associated with these crimes, as opposed to them. This frames them as objects upon which decisions on humanitarian intervention can be acted out, rather than agents with their own voice and perspective.

exceptionalism", reaffirming Western civilizational supremacy through the presence of homonormative versions of homosexuality that are contrasted with their absence in Eastern multicultural and Muslim communities worldwide (Rahman, 2014, pp.279-280). Building upon this approach, in my initial reading of the discrete debates I specifically identified the characteristics which were framed as belonging to the UK, but that did not yet, or could never belong to the Global South. As opposed to solely discussing LGBTQ+ rights in the context of civilisationist worldviews, I had a more expansive understanding of this, identifying attributes such as development, good governance or freedom to be colonial (heteronormative and racist) constructs that were deployed to create a distinction between the UK and the country in question. In particular, I explored the ways in which seemingly neutral concepts such as 'freedom' were articulated in various ways through reference to identities and stereotypes, for example through the equation of Muslim countries with economic, sexual and civilisational backwardness, featuring poverty, restricted rights for women and LGBTQ+ people, and represented as striving to be as developed as the UK. As well as looking at how these representations constructed the identities of both parties, I also considered how this legitimised the incursion of the former into the latter in line with historic logics of the civilising mission.

The structure of my discourse analysis largely took the form of a two-stage process, with my sub-questions looking for self/other discourses, queer possibilities for resisting these binary representations, and the construction of British identity, in turn. Once I had unpacked these themes within the different debates, I was then able to make the leap from analysing the debates discretely to analysing the more abstract cultural figures that were articulated and resisted across the debates, with this directly informing the structure of my analysis. Within the study of each cultural figure identified, I looked at self/other representations as well as the ways in which these are resisted, answering SQ1 and SQ2. I then considered the cumulative worldview that is collectively forged through the construction of these figures, answering SQ3,

before answering my overarching research question in the conclusion. It is this process that has directly informed the structure of my analysis, to follow, with a chapter dedicated to each of the cultural figures of 'The Brutal Dictator', 'The ISIL Terrorist' and 'The British Self', alongside a chapter dedicated to 'The Path to Democracy', referring to the global temporal framework encapsulating all of these figures. Before progressing with this analysis, I briefly want to reflect on some limitations of my methodological approach.

Power, Norms and Queer Vulnerabilities

Of course, a research project has a limited scope in terms of its focus, resources and time. Here I briefly reflect on some of the major issues that I have grappled with in designing this study and the ways in which I have dealt with them. The first of these is the potential criticism that my methodological approach places too much focus on hegemonic discourses and it gives too little attention to queer or subaltern voices which try to resist these discourses. In this sense, my focus on resistance within House of Commons debates could be interpreted as a shallow form of resistance, in that it largely excludes the voices and opinions of the people directly impacted by decisions on humanitarian intervention. In response to this criticism, I think it is important to be clear about the parameters of this project. Whilst situated within the Foucauldian paradigm of power/resistance (1976, p.95), in the knowledge that the two cannot be separated, this project particularly focuses on the constitution of British identity and self/other representations that constitute this. Within this frame, *Hansard* provides a good set of texts which highlight the dominant governing logics of British foreign policy, whilst also featuring dissenting voices that highlight some of the ways in which these dominant logics are contested. This is adequate for the purposes of this project, in studying the ongoing colonial character of the British state and of humanitarian intervention as a broader discourse and

practice. That being said, in future projects I will endeavour to place more focus on the voices of civilians directly impacted by the violence associated with humanitarian intervention.

A second ethical criticism of the project could be that it runs the risk of removing the threat of violence associated with the perpetration of atrocity crimes, due to it criticising dominant Western narratives on intervention. Indeed, some may argue that we have already reached a situation in which Western governments have received so much criticism for recent military interventions that the vast majority of atrocity crimes now go unpunished, with governments fearful of jeopardising their political capital in responding to atrocity crimes where their material interests are not at stake. In response, I would argue that I am not forwarding a normative argument that is pro or anti-interventionism. Instead, I am unpacking the logics which mean that interventionism is desirable in certain situations over others. Using this notion of desire as a central theme and interrogating how desire is articulated in various situations is therefore a contribution of this thesis. In particular, it builds upon established queer theorising about the international, which draws attention to sexuality as regimes of desire, danger and "attachments that are not *a priori* reducible to orientations and identity" (Wilcox, 2014, p.615). Anchoring my study in heteronormative and racist regimes of temporality, and aiming to uncover the logics of desire that are enmeshed in these, allows me to study humanitarian intervention in a way that is not reducible to particular orientations or identities. This is of benefit in the analysis of decisions to intervene, not to intervene and failed attempts to intervene, as opposed to offering normative arguments in staunch support for or against intervention in each instance.

A final ethical criticism of this project, thoughtfully highlighted by Aine Bennett at the *2022 BISA Conference,* and which has been a point of conversation between Lily Nellans and myself in a recent co-authored paper, is that my research does not foreground the experiences of queer people. By focusing on heteronormativity as a global episteme, it can be argued that

my research upholds a silence surrounding the lived experiences of queer people, who remain subject to discrimination and violence, up to and including genocidal violence (Waites, 2018; Nellans, 2020), in many parts of the world. I absolutely agree that a focus on queer lives and experiences is absolutely vital, and seek to engage with and incorporate these experiences into my research. That being said, I also recognise that labels such as 'LGBTQ+' are often presented as timeless and universal, and that global governmentalities are temporally specific. In the present moment, I have the distinct sense that a) there is an insufficient focus on the global processes of (ab)normalisation which render both mass violence and militarised responses to it possible, and b) that the focus on 'the LGBTQ+ subject' as a central point of discussion within queer IR is problematic, as previously discussed. Presenting the singular Western 'LGBTQ+ subject' as being incorporated into the body-politic ignores the ways in which trans people, especially, are excluded from this tolerance of sexual diversity, and the ways in which racialised people, and especially Muslims, are excluded from the Western state, often using the same discursive mechanisms that have historically excluded queer people. Whilst aspects of these arguments have been highlighted by Puar (2007) and Weber (2016), in particular, the nuances of this have not yet been fully explored. Fully unpacking the sexual state of world politics must be met by a shift in the character of queer IR, analysing global assemblages of sexual and racial violence free from a central focus on 'The LGBTQ+ subject', which has now become folded into the processes of colonial violence that queer IR seeks to resist (Puar, 2007). By looking at extreme cultural figures of normality and/or perversion in this thesis, I hope to clearly expose the patterns of othering, dehumanisation and violence that have historically been, and continue to be, levelled at womxn, queer people, disabled people, racialised people, and all others who are framed as beyond exclusive understandings of 'the human' which underpin colonial governance (Phipps, 2021; Wynter, 2003).

In summary, this chapter has outlined the methodological framework that underpins this study. It has justified my choice of case study, my selection of discourses for analysis, and my reflexive approach to discourse analysis. In particular, I have focused on the ways in which this project draws upon the queer and feminist focus on failure (Weber, 2014; Wilcox, 2017) and absence (Hansen, 2000) as being significant elements of speech, constituting a vital area of study in debates on humanitarian intervention. Seeing my research question and sub-questions as the scaffolding which set out the key insights I want to gain, I then explained how I used Momin Rahman (2014) and Cynthia Weber's (2016) queer methodologies to initially code the debates discretely, before then using these to inform my second stage of coding, focusing on cultural figures that appear across the debates in question. Finally, I briefly reflected on some anticipated ethical criticisms of the project, namely its understanding of resistance, the normative outcomes associated with it and its utility in addressing violence against LGBTQ+ people. Cumulatively, this methodological approach equips me with the framework to critically study the continued construction of British identity, and world politics more broadly, through colonial violence in House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention.

Chapter Six: The Brutal Dictator

Targeting Families, Forming Evil Alliances

The UK Government's responses to atrocity crimes are rooted in and (re)productive of colonial logics of racial and sexual otherness. In the remaining chapters of this thesis, the specific logics that have been deployed in the House of Commons by MPs, in considering the UK's responses to atrocity crimes, are explored. This includes instances in which the UK Government has successfully securitised atrocity crimes and secured support for intervention (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011; Hansard HC; Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), an instance in which the UK Government has failed to securitise atrocity crimes and has not intervened (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013), an instance in which the securitisation process was retrospective (Hansard HC Deb, 6th April 2018), and an instance in which there has been no attempt to securitise an atrocity crime (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018), instead preferring a response that remains in the realm of normal politics (Waever, 1995). It is by exploring this range of approaches that we are able to understand the specific and central role that humanitarian intervention plays in the reproduction of colonial logics and identity in British foreign policy, and how these logics have failed and been resisted in multiple instances. These failures and acts of resistance are explored as being of equal importance to successfully securitised atrocity crimes, as they expose the ways in which performances are never complete due to them being rooted in discursively constructed identities and characteristics (Butler, 1990; Wilcox, 2017).

Taking the existence of humanitarian intervention as an act of colonial violence as its starting point, the remainder of this thesis explores the colonial (heteronormative and racist) logics which imbue House of Commons debates on intervention. It does this by outlining a number of key cultural figures of selfhood and/or otherness which are articulated throughout

the debates in order to make the case for or against intervention. The first of these is the figure of 'The Brutal Dictator', which features a number of sexual *and* racial tropes and stereotypes of otherness, as this chapter explores. More specifically, it studies how the subject-position of 'The Brutal Dictator' was made intelligible through graphic and emotive descriptions of violence against perceived vulnerable subjects, through discourses of pathology/perversion, and through the establishment of an intertextuality between 'The Brutal Dictator' and dangerous others, namely other dictators, terrorists and those seeking to use chemical weapons. This subject-position was most frequently invoked in the 2011 Libyan intervention against Gaddafi (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), the failed attempt to intervene against Assad in 2013 (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013), and the 2018 intervention against the Assad regime (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018). That being said, it was also invoked to a lesser extent in making the case for airstrikes against ISIS in 2014 (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and 2015 (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), in an attempt to apportion blame for the political conditions in which ISIS emerged, and in order to frame military intervention in terms of a battle between good/evil. Alongside the hegemonic discourse which constructs 'The Brutal Dictator' in stark and evil terms, there are also clear acts of resistance throughout the debates, which question the UK's moral standing, the authority of the government and the selectivity of British interventionism, for example.

Graphic and Heteronormative Discourses of Violence

A huge amount of discursive labour, notably invoking heteronormative and racist colonial logics, went into the construction of 'The Brutal Dictator' as a subject position throughout the debates in question. The first key way in which the meanings associated with 'The Brutal Dictator' were established throughout the debates was through graphic descriptions of violence. These descriptions, initially set out by the government and replicated by many MPs,

elicit a strong emotional response due to the specific terms such as 'slaughter' and 'butcher' that are used, as will be discussed. In conjunction with the use of these graphic and emotive terms to describe mass violence, this violence is often framed in heteronormative terms as directly threatening the institution of the traditional nuclear family (TNF). This enables the UK's proposed response to be framed in patriarchal terms that replicate age-old colonial logics of interventionism.

Throughout the House of Commons debates that consider atrocity crimes, the graphic way in which mass violence is described is immediately clear. In Libya, there are multiple descriptions of Gaddafi and his men engaging in the mass slaughter of civilians. For example, in setting out why he authorised airstrikes, David Cameron stated that:

> Civilians were being killed in significant numbers and exodus from the town had begun, so there was an urgent need to take action to stop the slaughter (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 707).

In this instance, he explains why he authorised airstrikes along with the US and France, in particular, in order to protect civilians in Benghazi from attack, in line with UNSCR 1973 (United Nations Security Council, 2011). Making a case for further action, Cameron argued that on balance, it is better to take military action over the consequences of not acting, "which would be the slaughter of civilians and this dictator completely flouting the United Nations and its will" (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 711). In this statement, Cameron sets out a case for further action under the auspices of the UN Security Council Resolution, juxtaposing the brutally violent and rogue Gaddafi regime against the will of the international community, and framing the slaughter of civilians as the direct consequence of a failure to take further action. These same arguments are reproduced by back-benchers and some opposition MPs, who support the government's sentiment in stressing the necessity of continued military action.[31] Also accompanying descriptions of Gaddafi as slaughtering civilians are descriptions

[31] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 716, col. 727, col. 733, col. 778

of Gaddafi as a butcher and the killing of civilians as butchery which must be put to an end through the use of military force.[32]

Violence against civilians by the Assad regime in 2013[33] and 2018[34] is also described in similar terms to violence committed by the Gaddafi regime, discussed in terms of the slaughtering of civilians en masse, although this is not always in support of the motion. Supporting the motion, Malcolm Rifkind described Assad's slaughter of 100,000 of his own civilians as evidence that he wouldn't hesitate to use chemical weapons (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1449). Furthermore, in the debates about military action against ISIL in Iraq (Hansard HC Deb, 26th Sep 2014, col. 1258, col. 1277) and Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 336), Assad was described as a butcher with responsibility for the rise of ISIL. Clearly, the language of slaughter and butchery depicts a sub-human condition, in which people are killed in large numbers in a manner that is akin to the mass killing of animals. This is indicative of the government's attempt to construct a moral imperative to use force in order to prevent further suffering. What is possibly more intriguing, however, is the way in which the killing of civilians is framed in heteronormative terms as a direct threat to the traditional nuclear family.

Associated with descriptions of violence against civilians due to the orders of Assad and Gaddafi is the framing of such violence as targeting the heteronormative family unit. In particular, references to the death of (innocent) men, women and (especially) children are commonplace[35], with these figures cumulatively representing a traditional nuclear family within dominant understandings. Whilst these statements are too innumerable to list individually, Priti Patel's description of it being Britain's role to stand up for what is right when

[32] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 714, col. 730, col. 781, col. 788.
[33] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1426, col. 1449, col. 1504, col. 1530, col. 1539.
[34] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 80, col. 90.
[35] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 764, col. 786; HC Deb 29th August 2013, col. 1426, col. 1431, col. 1441, col. 1450; Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 39, col. 54, col. 57, col. 61, col. 64, col. 72, col. 81., col. 84.

cruel weapons are used to kill "innocent children and families" (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 55) is indicative of the character of these statements. Furthermore, these discussions of violence are often accompanied with a graphic description of the manner in which families were targeted and/or killed. For example, in explaining why she had authorised airstrikes against the Syrian regime in 2018, Theresa May described the chemical weapons attack used by the Assad regime in stark terms;

> The images of this suffering are utterly haunting: innocent families seeking shelter in underground bunkers found dead with foam in their mouths, burns to their eyes and their bodies surrounded by a chlorine-like odour, and children gasping for life as chemicals choked their lungs (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 39).

Discussing the chemical weapons attack in terms of targeting children frames Assad and his regime as antithetical to life itself, due to his attempts to destroy innocent children, who figure as embodying the future in line with the heteronormative logics of reproductive futurism (Edelman, 2004).[36] This reiterative use of the word 'innocent' is also deeply significant, as it conjures up images of blameless infants in need of protection. This, in turn, works to queer the brutal dictator, who is understood as a monstrous figure that is sexually and civilisationally other (Puar and Rai, 2002; Weber, 2016) to British paternalistic values, charged with the protection of life itself. This has been the case since the early civilising mission, tasked with dragging the "rude" people of Asia, Africa and America into the European conception of 'humanity' (Chakrabarty, 2007, p.22). This extreme otherness, in turn, legitimises the use of violence over dialogue, with violence being legitimate where it is used in order to protect life under liberal biopolitical norms (Foucault, 2003, p.255). This authorises paternal violence in the protection of these subjects, again reinforcing the binary between peaceful *womenandchildren* (Enloe, 1990) and men who perform violence, split between evil dictators

[36] Reproductive futurism refers to an ontological tendency that encapsulates mainstream politics, whereby the entire political agenda is rooted in the perpetual attempt to construct a 'better future' for the children of tomorrow (Edelman, 2004, p.2).

and responsible, paternal democrats. Within this frame, the latter must defeat the former in the preservation of peace and the conditions of life.

By framing the UK as the reluctant defender of innocent children, those supporting action attempt to further construct a binary between 'The Brutal Dictator' and the benevolent democracy, whose ethical campaign for freedom transcends the national territory and extends to children around the world. This position was well summarised by Richard Harrington in the debate on intervention in Syria in 2013 when he stated that he felt it was his moral duty to vote in line with a position that "may" prevent a ruthless dictator from gassing innocent children (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1508). By presenting intervention in terms of a binary choice between letting a brutal dictator continue to gas children to death, and taking a chance that the intervention may not succeed as planned, those arguing for intervention in the debate were able to frame military intervention as the clear lesser of two evils. This narrative is clearly rooted in both civilisational (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007) and sexual (Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011) notions of progress, with civilisational progress and reluctantly 'doing what is right' framed as the products of intervention.

Alongside framing the intervention as being on behalf of children, and therefore life itself, the repetitive citing of the victimhood of *womenandchildren* (Enloe, 1990) has a strong intertextuality with colonial iterations of 'The Woman Question', in which the process of colonisation was morally justified through reference to the idea of protecting Brown women from Brown men (Spivak, 1988, p.83). Sara Farris' work on *femonationalism* is also of relevance here, looking at more contemporary examples of xenophobic or anti-Islam politics co-opting feminist ideals, citing the protection of Muslim and migrant women from dangerous Muslim males (2017).[37] Such depictions of victimhood are commonplace in legitimising contemporary interventionism, as feminist security scholars have noted (e.g. see Shepherd,

[37] See also Razack (2008).

2008, p.390; Pruitt, 2020), highlighting the continued colonial and heteronormative character of Western interventionism. This strategic framing of intervention as protecting the heteronormative family unit is testament to the way in which logics traditionally associated with the private sphere inform global political processes, highlighting that the boundary between the intimate and the international is discursively constructed (Enloe, 1990; Weber, 2016).

Cumulatively, by framing the attempting to justify interventions in Libya (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011) and Syria in 2013 (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013) through emotive and graphic descriptions of violence against innocent civilians, a moral case for immediate action to prevent further suffering was made. Furthermore, by highlighting the way in which violence specifically targeted families, men, women and children, pro-intervention arguments in all of these House of Commons debates (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011; Hansard HC Deb, 29th Aug 2013; Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018) construct intervention as being on behalf of all humanity. Rather than being solely in the pursuit of the UK's national interest, in line with realpolitik logics of international relations, military intervention is framed as being in defence of life and the future itself. This is because the brutal dictator's actions can be understood as directly targeting the traditional nuclear family; the institution through which humanity is reproduced in line with dominant heteronormative logics. As such, those making the case for military intervention cumulatively present their argument as being an altruistic act on behalf of humanity as a whole. Violence, in this sense, constitutes a performative act (Shepherd, 2007, p.249; Vernon, 2021) which constructs the binary between self/other, democrat/dictator, good/evil and life/death, epitomised by the protection of *womenandchildren* (Enloe, 1990) from an abusive patriarch. As well as constructing 'The Brutal Dictator' as an abusive patriarch, he is also framed as a perverse object of intervention throughout the debates in question.

Discourses of Pathology and Perversion

Through the use of discourses associated with pathology and perversion, those supporting military intervention added further meaning to the subject position of 'The Brutal Dictator' as a queer and monstrous/sub-human figure who has to be dealt with through incisive intervention. Such discourses are similar to those historically used to construct 'the homosexual' as a psycho-medical object of perversion (Foucault, 1976), and figures such as murderers, and in particular women who kill (Downing, 2013; Sjoberg and Gentry, 2015), who defy societal norms of acceptable violence. All of these subjects have warranted extraordinary and often violent state intervention, in the interests of protecting others in society. The same principle can be applied to 'The Brutal Dictator', who is sexualised as a sadist and racialised as infantile. Collectively, these depictions frame 'The Brutal Dictator' as a threat to international security by pro-interventionist discourses in the House of Commons. This produces the paradoxical situation in which 'The Brutal Dictator' is simultaneously constructed as a threat to *womenandchildren* (Enloe, 1990) and as infantile himself, representing an intertextuality with discourses of infantilism historically deployed against queers, women, and people of colour, as I will explore.

The clearest way in which the perversion of the dictator is set out is through the attribution to Gaddafi/Assad of a flawed psyche. For example, in making the case for intervention in Syria in 2013, Cameron stated "in the end we cannot know the mind of this brutal dictator; all we can do is make a judgment about whether it is better to act or not to act" (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1433). Also alluding to a mental deficiency that prevents 'The Brutal Dictator' from doing the right thing, there are frequent references to Assad and his regime as evil throughout the 2013[38] Syria debate, with this label often supplanting a

[38] See Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1468, col. 1469, col. 1524, col. 1531.

more rigorous analysis of the reasons informing Assad's use of chemical weapons. Whilst some of these statements do not support intervention, they do indicate a common belief within the chamber that Assad and his followers suffer from mental perversion. Similarly, in discussing Gaddafi, Natascha Engel attributed him with mental health issues (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 743) and Barry Gardiner attributed him with "psychopathic wickedness" (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 743). As with Assad, there are also plural references to Gaddafi as evil,[39] implying the existence of a perverted psyche. Additionally, there are multiple references to the Burkean sentiment that "…for evil to flourish, all that is necessary is for good men to do nothing" (Hansard HC Deb 21st March 2011, col. 739, col. 758), indicating a binary depiction of the civilised and morally righteous UK, juxtaposed against the depraved Gaddafi regime.

Alongside the attribution to Gaddafi of psychological problems, some discourses also feature a culturally racialised dimension that reflects Orientalist attitudes more broadly (Said, 1978), with Dai Havard stating "Gaddafi is an Arab and an African—he does not think as I think. He will do all sorts of things; we know that and we need to respond." (Hansard, HC Deb 21st March 2011, col. 736). Whilst this perspective is limited and was not explicitly reproduced by the government, the existence of such a biologically essentialist discourse is indicative of the broader character of these debates, in which the UK is often positioned as a rational, competent and ultimately civilised actor with a global capacity for care. Rogue regimes in the Global South, on the other hand, are positioned as irrational, emotional, incapable of good governance, selfish and uncivilised, with these factors informing an even more reductive binary between good/evil. This is reflective of the distinctly modern idea that cultural 'outsiders' (e.g. 'the pervert' and 'the sadist') have an inherently flawed nature, with this lying at the root of their exceptionality and degeneracy (Downing, 2013, p.8).

[39] See Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 718, col. 732, col. 785.

Clearly, Gaddafi and Assad are responsible for overwhelming violence against their citizens that deserves condemnation, but the attribution to these individuals of a perverted psyche replicates racist and heteronormative tropes that have long been used to construct particular subjects as objects of violent intervention in Western discourse. Looking at the discursive construction of the subject of "the homosexual" in the nineteenth century, Foucault argues that medical discourses at this time constructed him as a specific type of life form with a mysterious physiology, with his entire composition affected by his sexuality (1976, p.43). This trend, attributable to the emergence of sexology as a discipline, was part of a broader assemblage of nineteenth century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature which constructed various objects of perversion including pederasty and "psychic hermaphrodism" (1976, p.44), establishing a discursive terrain through which modes of normative and deviant sexuality could be constructed. In a more contemporary context, women who kill are frequently understood in monstrous terms, due to violence being incompatible with their discursively constructed gender identity (Downing, 2018; Sjoberg and Gentry, 2015), and murderers more widely are framed as exceptional subjects defined, in part, by degeneracy and sexual perversion (Downing, 2013, pp.16-17). This indicates that gendered and sexualised normativities are central to the way in which violence is (de)legitimised throughout social life.

This is especially important to consider when looking at social meanings attached to the subject-position of 'The Dictator' in Western discourse, clearly epitomised by posthumous media coverage of Gaddafi, which included accusations of him supplying soldiers with Viagra in order to commit mass rape, despite there being a lack of evidence in support of this claim (MacAskill, 2011), and reports of him being addicted to Viagra and having sex with his female bodyguards multiple times a day (Mackenzie, 2011). Such claims are constitutive of a broader script of sexual perversion associated with subjects that are rendered the targets of medical and/or military intervention in Western discourse. Due to the apparent inexplicability of 'The

Dictator's' desire to kill innocent men, women and children, he is rendered mentally flawed, depoliticising the impossibility of negotiation or diplomacy. Instead, violent state intervention becomes the only feasible option, just as this was framed as the only possibility for dealing with sexual perverts in the nineteenth century, with gay men the objects of extensive British state intervention, including chemical castration and imprisonment, until the mid-twentieth century.

Depictions of Assad and Gaddafi as *non-compos mentis* are not only sexualised but are deeply racialised. Given that these arguments are being deployed in order to directly legitimise intervention in the Middle East, there is a strong intertextuality with historic discourses that made a link between Blackness and infantilism in order to justify colonial occupation. Nina Studer, for example, highlights that French doctors and psychiatrists travelling through colonial Mahgreb in the nineteenth and twentieth century frequently reported that the colonised reminded them of children in their publications (2020, p.135). Whilst in Europe "mental infantilism" was an individual pathology, in relation to the colonies this phrase was used to designate entire populations as inferior and in need of intervention (Studer, 2020, p.137). It was this perceived infantilism of colonised subjects that underpinned European paternalism, with the colonised depicted as the childhood of Europe itself, whom civilised Europeans had a duty to raise to adulthood (Massad, 2007, p.55). Going beyond this, racialised understandings of intantilism were often used to inform the specific style of colonial rule, with the style of strong British rule in Africa during the second half of the nineteenth century informed by widespread notions of the population's infantilism, dangerousness and incompetence (Finn and McEwan, 2013, p.116). This is strikingly similar to contemporary cases for Western state violence that are framed as legitimate through the framework of humanitarian intervention.

It is specifically the racist associations between infantilism and Blackness that trapped the colonies in what Chakrabarty called "the imagined waiting room of history" (2007, p.22),

and which continue to locate countries in the Global South within the sphere of responsibility of former colonial powers such as the UK, with this responsibility enshrined in the UN Security Council's penholder system.[40] Clearly, the general labelling of people in the Global South as being infantile would be understood as racist in contemporary debates in the House of Commons. However, the (re)deployment of almost identical medicalised discourses of pathology in the construction of 'The Brutal Dictator' as a cultural figure indicates the endurance of a core of colonial racism in British national identity. Rather than engaging in a debate over the practical outcomes of a military response to atrocity crimes, the debate operates through Orientalist self/other representations (Said, 1978) that establish a link between racist stereotypes and international insecurity. Whilst the brazen deployment of these colonial discourses tends to be reserved for figures of hatred, such as 'The Brutal Dictator', the recourse to them in instances where the UK Government seeks to use force overseas indicates that less has shifted in the colonial constitution of British identity than we might like to believe.

Whilst less directly relevant, it is also noteworthy that women have historically been framed as mentally less capable than men, and more infantile in their understanding of the world. Such representations were undoubtedly clear in early twentieth century debates on female suffrage, with those opposing it arguing that the increase in England's imperial responsibilities necessitated the "labour and special knowledge of men…unhampered by the political inexperience of women" (History Extra, 2018). With the public sphere established as the domain of men, and the private sphere considered to be the domain of women and children, the origins of rational/emotional and adult/child gendered binaries is clear. Such binaries remain of deep relevance to the organisation of world politics today, with the connections between femininity and infantilism helping to explain the endurance of *womenandchildren*

[40] The UN Security Council's penholder system refers to the attribution of council-level responsibility for different countries' files to one of the P3 (The UK, the US and France), with this responsibility often held by the former colonial power.

(Enloe, 1990) as a perceived vulnerable group in need of masculine protection during wartime (Carpenter, 2006).

Cumulatively, then, it becomes clear that within hetero-patriarchal colonial regimes, logics of mental pathology and perversion have historically been applied to queer, racialised and gendered subjects in order to legitimise their subordination to masculine/paternalistic governance structures. This subordination is fundamentally rooted in notions of improper/incomplete/impossible development, hence this thesis' critique of mainstream understandings of temporality as its central theoretical framework, and its discovery that these same logics remain present in the debates in question. When taken alongside descriptions of dictatorial violence that specifically targets *womenandchildren* (Enloe, 1990), it becomes clear that the UK Government's case for violence rests upon a discursive move which simultaneously racialises 'The Brutal Dictator' as an infantile figure, incapable of governing a country, whilst simultaneously being a threat to actual infants, and infantilised women, which in turn authorises the UK's use of paternal violence. This paradox is indicative of the deep-rooted logics of the colonial civilising mission in contemporary discussions of humanitarian intervention, which orientate more around self/other identity constructions than the practical discussion of operational considerations in line with least-harm principles.

The Dictator's Evil Alliances

Situating the actions of 'The Brutal Dictator' within a global context, the UK Government and MPs that supported its position frequently established an intertextuality between the actions of the dictator in question and those of deviant others, namely other dictators, terrorists and those seeking to use chemical weapons. In particular, they linked terrorists with dictators by attributing responsibility for the existence of terrorism to dictators, and Assad in particular. Furthermore, they reiteratively deployed the argument that if the atrocity in question went

unpunished, this would act as a watershed moment in world politics, after which the proliferation of mass violence and/or the use of chemical weapons would become commonplace. Such arguments establish a binary between the UK/West and deviant others that once again replicates the adulthood/childhood binary. With the UK framing itself as knowing what is best for the population in question, and seeking to use airstrikes as a short, sharp shock to deter future bad behaviour, the UK places itself in a parental role and infantilises those it seeks to use violence against. By establishing a link between the infantilism of 'The Brutal Dictator' and the infantilism of his evil alliances and the Global South more broadly, pro-interventionist MPs attempt to (re)establish the UK's position as a *global patriarch* with global jurisdiction.

One way in which those arguing for airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015) established a link between terrorism and the dictator was by attributing responsibility for the existence of ISIL to Syria's Bashar al-Assad. In particular, Cameron argued that ISIL makes millions by selling oil to the Assad regime (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1256, col. 1267) and that poor governance in Iraq and the mass slaughter of civilians in Syria drove recruitment for the extremists (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1257). Furthermore, in both debates on airstrikes against ISIS, both the Assad regime and ISIS are reiteratively described as being brutal due to their use of violence against civilians.[41] In this context, non-intervention is framed as producing the conditions in which both "the butcher Assad" and ISIL will become stronger (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 336). Thus, a key way in which links were drawn between Assad and ISIL was by attributing responsibility for the emergence of ISIL to Assad and by highlighting their simultaneous brutality.

[41] See Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1259, col. 1291, col. 1292, col. 1293, col. 1305, col. col. 1336, col. 1358; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 333, col. 350, col. 385, col. 392, col. col. 422, col. 438, col. 456, col. 457, col. 477, col. 484, col. 489.

Another important way in which an intertextuality was established between 'The Brutal Dictator' and deviant others was through the framing of airstrikes as sending a clear message to the dictator in question *and* rogue/dangerous others who might be thinking of committing similar atrocities. For example, in making the cases for intervention in Libya in 2011[42] and Syria in 2013,[43] Cameron and other MPs who supported the government's position argued that military action would send a message to dictators the world over not to use similar weapons or tactics. Similarly, and to an even greater extent given that Russia has been accused of using chemical weapons in Salisbury, U.K., Theresa May stressed that airstrikes against the Assad regime "send a clear message to anyone who believes they can use chemical weapons with impunity" (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 43). This was used as a key logic for legitimising intervention, with this position reproduced by MPs supportive of the government's position. Damian Green, for example, stated "if she and our allies had not taken military action, we would have sent the message that using chemical weapons was no big deal, thus encouraging their further use on innocent civilians around the world" (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 59).[44]

In framing airstrikes as a deterrent to those seeking to use mass violence/chemical weapons globally, the UK positions itself as mature, developed and as holding the authority to decide whether or not to punish rogue/deviant others. Simultaneously, those it is seeking to 'send a message to' are framed as only understanding the use of force, establishing a dichotomy between mind/body and ultimately adult/child, with children perceived as not yet having achieved rationality and requiring the guidance, and often punishment, of adults in order to ensure their successful development. This relates to Mills and LeFrançois's argument argue that adult-child, sane-mad and Western-majority world relations are situated within pejorative

[42] See Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 714, col. 737, col. 745.
[43] See Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1437, col. 1528, col. 1546.
[44] See also Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 55, col. 59, col. 60, col. 67, col. 69, col. 70, col. 77, col. 79, col. 80, col. 84, col. 85, col. 86, col. 87, col. 88, col. 92.

understandings of what it means to be childlike, reproducing systems of oppression in which those deemed to be childlike can be governed on the grounds of their "best interests" (2018).

These arguments are not new within Western foreign policy and share a strong intertextuality with George Bush's axis of evil argument, in particular. This argument, most prominently voiced in the 2002 State of the Union Address, constructed a binary between the US and its allies, framed as "the civilised world", and the axis of evil, incorporating rogue states such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea, as well as the terrorists who perpetrated 9/11 (Washington Post, 2002). Framed as an immoral axis of colluding villains who hate democratic governance, the War on Terror was presented by Bush as a fight for freedom, associated with the signifiers of US servicemen, American teachers, the free market and the American dream (ibid). As queer scholars of world politics have noted, accompanying the War on Terror was an identity-based script of racial *and* sexual otherness between the West and Muslim countries (e.g. see Puar, 2005, 2007; Richter-Montpetit, 2007, 2014; Weber, 2016); a focus which this thesis draws on heavily. Consequently, it becomes clear that depictions of a civilisational battle between freedom and evil are not new to Western worldviews (e.g. see Huntingdon, 1996), and that depictions of such a battle in the House of Commons debates studied in this thesis are unlikely to be the last.

Within these depictions of world politics, a particular event (e.g. 9/11 or the atrocities in question in House of Commons debates) is framed as being a tipping point in world politics more broadly. This tends to feature a stark binary between good/evil, democrats/tyrants and normality/perversion (Weber, 2016), which serves as a call to arms for those belonging to the good, normal and democratic camp to defend civilisation from those who seek to bring it down. This discourse is implicitly racialised by using a description of the state of nature to legitimise violence, reflecting logics initially used to justify colonialism (Mbembe, 2003, p.23; Ogle, 2015). Furthermore, it is more explicitly racialised through these binary opposites mapping

onto the Global North/South divide, with those framed as evil, tyrannical and perverse universally framed as belonging to the Global South in the debates in question. This indicates that *the global colour line,* initially identified as a shadow of European colonialism that culturally and racially divided the Global North from the Global South (Du Bois, 1925, p.423), endures today as it did over a century ago. Whilst explicit references to the Global South are absent from discussions of the dictator's evil alliances above, it is noteworthy that all debates in question in this thesis concern countries in the Global South. It is this absenting of violence in the Global North from the humanitarian intervention/R2P agenda that has resulted in it being commonly interpreted as a coercive tool of Western influence (Adebajo, 2016; Ziegler, 2016).

Once again related to the notion of infantilism, the way in which the UK discusses its paternal responsibility for the government of the entire world expands the notion of infantilism from the discrete subject-position of 'The Brutal Dictator' to all those who are perceived to be irresponsible or dangerous within aforementioned racialised binary worldviews. Whilst the general application of these logics to the Global South by countries in the Global North is clearly racialised, these notions of adult responsibilities for the best interests of children can also be traced more to the heteropatriarchal family unit, also known as the traditional nuclear family.

An important insight of queer approaches to IR is that the heteropatriarchal family unit performs a key function in international relations due to the role it plays in the socialisation of agents and the capacity it has to reinforce social divisions of gender, sexuality, class and race/ethnicity (Peterson, 2014, p.605). In addition to families being key social units within states, states themselves are heteronormative in character due to the way in which they naturalise and reinforce gender binarism, patriarchal households and heterosexual reproduction (Peterson, 2013). Furthermore, it is well established in studies of colonialism that logics associated with the heteropatriarchal family unit are used to legitimise the process of

colonisation. In particular, it was through Indigenous people's non-conformity to Western heteronormative stereotypes that the colonial construction of race was made intelligible (Lugones, 2018, p.7; Seth, 2010, p.38). The existence of third genders (Horswell, 2005), sodomy (Carvajal, 2003; Hawkins, 2012) and polygamy[45] (Tallie, 2020), for example, were deployed as empirical evidence of the distinction between 'us' and 'them', framing Indigenous people as perverse, infantile and 'other', and in drastic need of civilising. In this sense, the line between race/sexuality and civilisational/sexual perversion (Weber, 2016) becomes blurred, with each articulated through the other. This undoubtedly informs the aforementioned binary between the civilised and uncivilised world.

Speaking from a position of paternalistic authority, pro-interventionist MPs argue that it is only through the rapid and punitive use of force that long-term goals such as the complete eradication of chemical weapons and the prevention of mass violence can be achieved. This is well summarised by Mbembe when he states that "modern warfare is a hit and run affair" as opposed to featuring conquest, acquisitions and the takeover of territory (2003, p.31). Ironically, it was European colonialism that gave rise to many systemic issues in the Middle East, and the contemporary exertion of military force in the Middle East is arguably a streamlined version of colonial control (Mbembe, 2003), hence why Western interventionism is often ineffective and highly criticised. Nonetheless, the UK Government and those who support its pro-interventionist approach present limited, strategic airstrikes as the ideal mechanism for teaching the dictator and his undesirable allies a lesson, in relation to the deployment of mass violence and/or chemical weapons. Situated in the historical context of the

[45] Sodomy and polygamy are terms that were coined by European colonisers rather than being ones that were/are necessarily embraced by Indigenous folk.

last century of decolonisation, it is difficult to read such arguments as anything but the performance of a long gone colonial identity.

Resisting Self/Other Dichotomies

Challenging the position of the government and those who supported it, there was a sizable number of MPs in all of the key debates on intervention against the Gaddafi and Assad regimes, and in particular in the debate on intervention in Syria in 2013, who used a number of successful strategies of resistance. These discursive strategies progressively restricted the options available to the UK Government in using military force in response to alleged atrocity crimes, to the point in 2018 where the UK Government did not approach Parliament for approval ahead of air strikes, instead holding a retrospective debate after the conclusion of the operation. Furthermore, throughout this debate, Theresa May and those supporting her approach to intervention reiteratively invoked the imagery of protecting innocent children in a clear attempt to render the use of military force politically benign. This is indicative of the extremely limited range of discursive strategies that were available to her due to the success of discourses of resistance in the 2011 Libya and 2013 Syria debates, driven by a broader context of public hostility to interventionism. In particular, I focus here on arguments which exposed the UK Government's narrative on intervention to be incoherent, for example by destabilising good/bad binary depictions. A number of these focus on the identity of 'the self' and the incoherence of the democrat/dictator binary.

Whilst the 2011 motion on UNSCR 1973 passed comfortably, due in large part to the existence of a clear and preventable threat to civilians and unequivocal Security Council authorisation to use force under the responsibility to protect (R2P), those who opposed or were unsure of the motion still used a number of strategies that were successful in interrogating the government's position. For example, throughout the debate there are frequent mentions to Iraq

and the associated failures of the UK in relation to that intervention. Whilst this is not a quantitative study, it is nonetheless telling that the word Iraq comes up eighty times in this debate, which is indicative of the extent to which the Blair Government's fabrication of weapons of mass destruction and the subsequent ground invasion damaged the UK's reputation. Responding to Martin Horwood's call to internationalise the military mission in order to secure widespread support (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 709), Cameron spelled out a number of differences with Iraq, namely that this action is supported by the UN Security Council, that the resolution sets the limits of the operation, and that the "Arab World" has asked for the action to take place (ibid). This attempt to spell out differences between Iraq and the Libya intervention occurs repeatedly throughout the entire debate.[46] Calling for the Prime Minister to clarify how the operation was different from the recent instance in which the UK was effectively found to be a military aggressor was therefore a successful discursive strategy in limiting the scope and means of the operation.

Alongside calling attention to recent failures in Iraq, another way in which the government's position was criticised in the 2011 debate was by drawing attention to the selectivity of British interventionism and by noting the UK's arms sales to Gaddafi and other rogue regimes. These strategies were used to highlight the continued moral wrongdoing of the UK. David Winnick, for example, accepted the government's case that Gaddafi is a murderous tyrant, but also acknowledged that there are various regimes around the world who can be classified as such, and suggested that anti-Western-ness, as opposed to purely the use of mass violence, motivates the UK Government to use force (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 720). Caroline Lucas also drew attention to the government's lack of interest in human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Libya until recently (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011,

[46] See Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 706, col. 708, col. 709, col. 710, col. 724, col. 726, col. 728, col. 742, col. 744, col. 746, col. 758, col. 764, col. 771, col. 773.

col. 776),[47] before going on to highlight that the UK has sold a huge amount of weapons to the aforementioned regimes (ibid). Similarly, Jeremy Corbyn highlighted the selectivity of UK interventionism and its arms sales to oppressive regimes (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 717).[48] This discourse explicitly highlights the contingent character of 'the brutal/murderous dictator', which is a subject-position that is constructed by Western governments when they wish to securitise a regime and legitimise military intervention against it. Furthermore, it clearly highlights that it is solely in certain situations, i.e. when international opinion shifts, that the UK places ethics over economic gain by stopping the sale of weapons to regimes that routinely use force against their own citizens. This, along with the legacy of Iraq, challenges the hegemonic narrative by positioning the UK as a direct causal factor in conflicts in the Middle East.

The key debate in which discourses that opposed the government's position were successful in preventing military action was the debate on airstrikes against the Syrian regime in 2013. In this debate, MPs from all sides of the house responded to public reluctance towards military intervention and used three key discursive strategies in order to oppose the government. Firstly, they framed the government as warmongering and called its intentions and ethics into question. Secondly, they used empirical evidence drawn from the Libyan intervention to highlight that the government had recently overstepped its mandate, meaning it should not be trusted with another intervention. Finally, they noted the absence of absolute proof that the regime was responsible for the attacks, and the absence of a UN Security Council Resolution authorising the use of force, with these two conditions central to the opposition's amendment.

[47] See also Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 720, col. 733, col. 748, col. 753, col. 762, col. 775, col. 779-780 for further reflections on the selectivity of Western/British interventionism.
[48] See also Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 747 and 763 for further reflections on the impact of British arms sales to repressive regimes.

Questioning the government's ethics and intentions was the first, and arguably most successful, way in which MPs opposing the government's motion were able to challenge it. Joan Ruddock, for example, argued that the government was likely to use this vote in order to legitimise military action, despite the government's motion stating that a further vote will occur before any military action takes place (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1428). Questioning whether military action would have the intended outcome of preventing the future use of chemical weapons, George Howarth (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1508), Jack Straw (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1541) and many other MPs[49] argued that the government had not successfully proven that military action would secure this result, preferable over political and diplomatic efforts. Alongside questioning the government's intentions and the effectiveness of military action, arguably the most powerful argument against intervention is that it would break international law. Making this point, Caroline Lucas stated:

> To intervene without the due resolution would send a message to everyone else that international law can be ignored when it is inconvenient. As the law of the jungle takes hold, it will be increasingly difficult to condemn similar actions by others (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1480).

This statement represents a kind of Foucauldian "reverse discourse" (1976, p.101), in that it directly inverts the government's case that intervention is necessary in order to send a message to dictators and evil others around the world, instead arguing that the intervention itself would directly contribute towards the denigration of international norms and law. Despite the problematic use of the phrase "law of the jungle" (ibid), which has colonial connotations and invokes binaries between culture/nature, Lucas and other MPs who argued that the intervention will/may break international law[50] convincingly called the government's moral standing into question.

[49] See also Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1475, col. 1479, col. 1489, col. 1505, col. 1530, col 1532.
[50] See also Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1427, col. 1454, col. 1458, col. 1479, col. 1500, col. 1524-1525, col. 1540.

Supporting the case that the government is not to be trusted in conducting a military operation for humanitarian purposes, a number of MPs cited the government's recent intervention in Libya. In particular, they focused on the legacy of Libya within the UN Security Council, which has rendered securing support for interventionism very difficult (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1468, col. 1495, col. 1505). This intervention, due to it going beyond the parameters of the resolution and featuring a lack of post-conflict reconstruction, galvanised resistance towards humanitarian intervention in both the House of Commons and the UN Security Council. With this event still fresh in the minds of MPs and the British public more broadly, the empirical case against intervention was strong. This was especially the case given that intervention, or even the regime's use of chemical weapons, had not been agreed by the UN Security Council, and that the government could not prove with absolute certainty that the regime was responsible for the use of chemical weapons. Both of these factors directly informed the opposition amendment, which was much stronger than the government's motion in requiring absolute proof of the regime's involvement in the attacks and in requiring a vote to take place at the UN Security Council (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1440). Whilst the amendment was not supported by the House, it undoubtedly highlighted the illegitimacy of the government motion.

With the House voting against taking another step towards military intervention in 2013 on the basis of a lack of a UN Security Council resolution, amongst the other aforementioned factors, this acted as an indicator of the conditions that the government would have to meet in order to secure support for military intervention in the future. With Theresa May's government failing to hold a majority in the House in 2018, it was clear that she would not be able to secure the support of the House for airstrikes against the Syrian regime, in response to its alleged use of chemical weapons. In this context, May authorised airstrikes without parliamentary approval, citing the government's right to act with speed where this was in the national interest

and in protection of national security (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 42). This decision to retrospectively securitise the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons after the conclusion of the operation is very significant indeed, as it indicates that May's possible courses of action were extremely limited in the wake of the 2013 vote on Syria. This is clear evidence of the success of discourses of resistance in previous debates on military intervention, which were able to establish a set number of conventions for the House to approve of military intervention, and were able to cast doubt on the UK Government's intentions and capacity. Furthermore, it is also telling that the UK's contribution to the airstrikes were by far the smallest in comparison to the US and France, with the UK firing only eight of over one hundred missiles launched in the joint operation (BBC News, 2018). Whilst this figure is far from the only factor worth considering in evaluating the UK's contributions, it is indicative of the tentative commitment of a Prime Minister who knows that military action will be hugely controversial.

In addition to approaching Parliament after the conclusion of the operation, the specific reasoning that May gave for authorising the strikes is also significant. As previously discussed, the 2018 debate on intervention in Syria can be characterised by a repetitive citing of the moral duty that the UK had to protect children, who were being brutally killed by the regime.[51] This represented a clear attempt to depoliticise the intervention, given that the entire agenda of contemporary politics is encapsulated by reproductive futurism, characterised by the imperative to protect the children of tomorrow (Edelman, 2004). This repetitive citing of the protection of children, to a much greater extent than in the 2011 (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011) and 2013 (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013) debates on intervention is indicative of the desperation of the May administration to appear legitimate in a context in which she had possibly broken international law, according to Jeremy Corbyn (Hansard HC Deb 16th April

[51] Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 39, col. 54, col. 55, col. 57, col. 61, col. 64, col. 72, col. 81., col. 84.

2018, col. 44), by authorising the use of force for humanitarian purposes without a UN Security Council resolution. Whilst May did emphasise the legality of the intervention, based upon UK military operations in the 1990s (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 46), this is a dubious case which seemingly violates the UN Charter's assertion that states may only use violence in self-defence, or where authorised by the UN Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter (1945). Having to rely on such a weak argument for intervention indicates the extent to which MPs had successfully called pro-interventionist narratives into question between 2011 and 2018.

Conclusion

As demonstrated by this chapter, in making the case for intervention the Cameron and May Governments, and those supporting them, drew upon descriptions of violence that invoked the heteronormative family unit as a specific site of vulnerability in need of protection. Furthermore, they used discourses of pathology and perversion in order to render the subject-position of the 'Brutal Dictator' intelligible as an object deserving of coercive intervention. As I illustrated, this often came in the form of discourses of psychic underdevelopment, historically used to justify coercive intervention and/or the restriction of rights to queer people, women and people of colour, situating these debates firmly within heteronormative and racist colonial logics. The specific way in which 'The Brutal Dictator' is simultaneously framed as a threat to *womenandchildren* (Enloe, 1990) and is framed as child-like in his capacity for reason additionally represents a deeply paradoxical double move which is more concerned with reinforcing British colonial identity than dealing effectively with the atrocity crime in question. In particular, this depiction operationalises racist (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015) and heteronormative (Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005) temporalities through the construction of a figure of sexual and civilisational backwardness, who needs to

be violently dragged through the process of modernisation for the sake of feminised and innocent subjects, who embody the future itself through the figural image of the child (Edelman, 2004, p.2). Following this logic, 'The Brutal Dictator' is a civilisationally and sexually underdeveloped figure, akin to Weber's understanding of the illegal and on-the-move im/migrant (Weber, 2016, p.87). Both of these figures belong to a state but have, in their own ways, lost their way on the path to democracy. For the im/migrant, he has attempted to jump the queue by moving to the Global North. For 'The Brutal Dictator', he has concentrated power for himself at the expense of the vulnerable. Both figures therefore become the objects of violent and corrective interventions to correct their development. Whilst the intervention against Gaddafi was designed to destroy him and his government, the UK Government remains willing to work with dictators where this aligns with its interests. This is made clear by the UK's continued willingness to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia. Humanitarian intervention, in this sense, allows the UK to perform the role of responsible global leader, detracting attention from the violence that its own alliances with other dictators perpetuates. This is unlike the figure of 'The ISIL Terrorist', who, as we will explore in the next chapter, figures as the fundamental antithesis of the British state and way of life and is not permitted to survive.

Finally, those making the case for intervention created an intertextuality between the dictator and evil others, namely terrorists, other dictators and those seeking to use chemical weapons against civilians. This had the effect of framing the proposed military operations as a parental duty to the international community, representing a watershed moment in world politics. Such arguments expanded the infantilism associated with 'The Brutal Dictator' to the Global South more broadly, attempting to (re)establish the position of the UK as a global imperial patriarch. In response, those resisting the government's case for intervention were able to progressively establish a counter-narrative throughout the 2011 (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), 2013 (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013) and 2018 (Hansard HC Deb, 16th

April 2018) debates that eventually replaced the hegemonic narrative by creating a political context in which it is extremely difficult for the UK government to authorise the use of military force without a Security Council Resolution or in self-defence. Of particular significance for this thesis is the way in which MPs challenged the authority of the UK government to construct a binary between the benevolent self/evil dictator, calling the ethical purity of the self and the pure evil of the other into question. In particular, this occurred by highlighting the selectivity of Western interventionism, the UK's arms sales to repressive regimes, and the way in which using force without UN Security Council approval violates international law, rendering the UK a rogue actor comparable to the dictators, terrorists and others that the UK Government seeks to portray as threats to international law and security.

Chapter Seven: The ISIL Terrorist

Islamophobia and the Battle for Survival

A key discourse in the 2014 debate on airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and the 2015 debate on airstrikes against ISIL in Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015) was the framing of 'The ISIL Terrorist' as an existential threat to the UK. This discourse depended, in part, upon similar logics to that of 'The Brutal Dictator', already discussed, but also contained additional logics that frame the terrorist as a unique physical and ontological threat to the Western liberal state. This unique threat comes from the absolute barbarism of 'The ISIL Terrorist', who lacks any of the legitimacy that comes from residing within a state. Due to his lack of statehood, the 'ISIL Terrorist' is difficult to pin down spatially, launching attacks on the streets of the homeland with little to no warning. This, combined with his extreme use of violence, and the historic context of the West's identity being dialectically opposed to Islam (Kumar, 2021) renders 'The ISIL Terrorist' the ultimate figure of sexual and civilisational perversion.

In this chapter, I first outline how queer, feminist and postcolonial scholars have made the case that Western identity is juxtaposed against Islam broadly, and the 'Muslim terrorist' more specifically, due to longstanding assemblages of anti-Muslim racism and heteronormativity. Drawing in part upon these analyses, I then demonstrate how the articulation of 'the terrorist threat' occurs along similar sexualised and racialised lines as 'The Brutal Dictator', with terrorists framed as a threat to women, families, and increasingly, gay people. Beyond this, I draw specifically upon Puar and Rai (2002), Puar (2007) and Weber's work (2016) to look at the existence of 'The ISIL Terrorist' as the ultimate figure of perversion in IR, framed as uniquely threatening due to his undevelopability. I then explore the way in which this perceived undevelopability creates a discursive space that is filled with hyperbolic

discourses of imminent threat, rendering 'The ISIL Terrorist' the antithesis of Western civilisation. I contrast this with 'The LGBTQ+ Rights Holder' who figures as a "normal homosexual" worthy of protection, in line with dominant neoliberal logics (Duggan, 2003; Weber, 2016, p.110). After explaining how the UK Government and those supporting its position constructed a masculinist saviour narrative, I unpack the ways in which MPs who resisted the dominant narrative on intervention exposed the arguments made by Cameron and his supporters to be performative, creating space for future acts of resistance. In particular, this chapter focuses on arguments led by the Cameron administration, due to it being in power for the relevant debates in question.

'The Islamic Terrorist' vs. 'The West'

The perceived threat posed to Western societies by terrorism has been hard not to notice in the post-9/11 era, with the language of counter-terrorism permeating every aspect of British daily life. As opposed to this being terrorism in general, generally understood as the use of violence to coerce governments or societies in the pursuit of political/religious/ideological/racial aims, the branch of terrorism that is specifically marked as threatening to the fabric of our societies is Islamic terrorism. Much has been said about the way in which attacks perpetrated by White people are often viewed as lone wolf incidents, or as a result of mental illness, whilst attacks perpetrated by people of colour and Muslims are invariably, and almost universally, seen as terrorist attacks (Ahmed, 2016). This is reflective of a deeply entrenched Islamophobia in the UK, which has intensified after 9/11 (e.g. see Awan and Zempi, 2020; Gilks, 2020; Khan, 2021; Poynting and Mason, 2007; Scanlan, 2010) and has produced Islam as an existential threat to Britishness. It is this narrative that has positioned the 'Islamic Terrorist' as the folk devil of our times, to borrow from Cohen's lexicon (1972), also deployed and popularised by Stuart Hall (1978).

A ‘folk devil’ is a figure that is depicted as epitomising a moral panic by those in power; typically government spokespeople and those in the media. It was most prominently deployed by Hall et. al in their description of the ‘mugger’, referring to young, poor, urban black men who use violence to steal, in the context of a moral panic over mugging in 1970’s Britain (Hall et. al, 1978, p.6). I use this term as a basis for my discussion of ‘The ISIL Terrorist’, which is a recent iteration of the figure of ‘the Muslim terrorist’. I also briefly explore histories of Islamophobia and the extent to which the figure of ‘the Muslim terrorist’ has impacted upon public policy in the UK, before progressing with my analysis of the House of Commons debates in question.

It is not coincidental that it is specifically Islamic terrorism that has come to be positioned so starkly against the existence and ideals of the Western state, which has historically been exclusive to Muslims. Analysing such exclusions, Lisa Lowe notes that an “economy of affirmation and forgetting” (2015, p.3) was central to the establishment of liberalism as the ideology of nineteenth-century British imperial expansion, designating Europe and North America as the domains of man, and others as spaces defined by incivility and backwardness (ibid). Furthermore, Muslims were one of those groups that were relegated to the pre-civilisational state of nature, described by Chakrabarty as “an imaginary waiting room of history” that was used to legitimise colonial rule in Africa and India (2007, p.22).[52] Focusing on the case of the United States, Deepa Kumar sees empire as lying at the root of contemporary Islamophobia and traces the “matrix of anti-Muslim racism”, incorporating institutions such as the media, think tanks, foreign policy establishments and the legal sphere, from the sixteenth century to the present day (2021). In summary, it is clear that the constitution of Western societies and subjectivity is deeply imbricated with anti-Muslim racism.

[52] See also Bhabha (1994), Lowe (2015); Mbembe (2003), Ogle (2015).

Whilst it is telling that the foundations of Western societies are rooted in these logics, it is even more significant that these colonial logics of White-supremacy and anti-Muslim racism have continued to directly inform contemporary government policies. Mohanty (2006), for example, notes that legislation akin to the USA's infamous Patriot Act, which introduced a suite of enhanced surveillance powers, was introduced to postcolonial and advanced societies around the world after 9/11. This resulted in the militarisation and masculinisation of everyday life, and the use of race, gender, sexuality and class as tools for disciplining the population (2006, p.10).[53] Supporting this idea of identities being used to discipline particular groups, Patel (2017) argues that race and racism are still used to organise societies globally, despite claims that we now inhabit a 'post-race' age. In particular, racism now often operates through cultural stereotypes rather than being rooted in perceived scientific racial differences (see Barker, 1981). Anti-Muslim racism is an expression of this new form of racism, established through notions of irreconcilable cultural differences. Folded into this are also gendered and sexualised notions of Muslim cultures mistreating women (Spivak, 1988) or gay people (Rao, 2014), again highlighting this thesis' core argument regarding the need to pay attention to racism, sexuality and gender to fully understand colonial expressions of violence. Focusing on the case study of anti-Muslim sentiment in counter-terrorism discourse and policy in the UK, he argues that they cumulatively form a civilising discourse that marks Muslims as a "suspect" community, resulting in their likely criminalisation at a much younger age (2017, p.4).

This contemporary tendency to view Muslims with suspicion is a direct outcome of the doctrine of muscular liberalism, coined by David Cameron, which argues that 'belonging' in the UK is conditional upon believing in democracy, the rule of law, and racial, sexual and gender equality, for example (Cameron, 2011). It is this version of liberalism that Khan argues

[53] See also Coleman (2007) and Mohanty (2011) for further scholarship on racialised, class-based and gendered exclusions and violence in state security policies.

results in a tacit threat towards those who don't abide by 'British values', resulting in the securitisation of Muslim communities through frameworks such as Prevent, and the constitution of White, liberal 'Britishness' through reference to racialised Muslim illiberality (2021, p.138). Consequently, it is clear that the figure of 'the Muslim terrorist' as folk devil (Hall et. al, 1978) is the product of a long history of anti-Muslim racism that has informed the constitution of Western-ness. It is this history that I seek to highlight in my analysis of the figure of 'The ISIL Terrorist' throughout the House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention.

The first key theme that is apparent throughout the 2014 debate on intervention against ISIL in Iraq (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and the 2015 debate on intervention against ISIL in Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015) is the existence of clear othering logics. Within this frame, intervention is framed as necessary because ISIL jeopardises 'us' (the British body-politic, depicted as racially and culturally homogenous), going about our daily lives on the streets of Britain. This reflects well-established logics of securitisation theory (Waever, 1995, pp.56-57), in which the safety of 'our' citizens and the survival of the state trumps all other ethical concerns, legitimising extraordinary action. This ranks British lives as more important than Arab ones, which don't register as being worthy of intervention without the addition of other factors, such as the protection of women, children and gay people, as I will explore throughout this chapter.[54] Beyond this, in discussing where responsibility lies for resolving the ISIL terrorist threat, it is often framed as belonging, at least in part, to Muslims and Arab countries. This attribution of responsibility is arguably racist, as it implies that the sharing of a religion, skin colour or culture with a terrorist group confers responsibility for that group's

[54] See Howell (2014) and Howell and Richter-Montpetit (2020) for excellent, queer and/or postcolonial critiques of securitisation theory.

actions. This is a moral standard that is not applied to white people and/or Westerners when they kill, and is used in this instance to obscure the UK's colonial culpability for the rise of ISIL. In the remainder of the chapter I explain these key themes in turn.

Securitising the Terrorist Threat

The importance that is granted to the national interest, interpreted as the protection of British lives, is made immediately clear in the opening statement of the 2014 Iraq debate, with Cameron citing the killing of two British hostages and an ISIL-inspired attack on a Jewish Museum in Brussels as clear evidence of a present and immediate threat to the British homeland (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1256). Similarly, in opening the 2015 debate, Cameron argued that ISIL's Paris attacks demonstrate the group's capacity to send people back from Syria to Europe, arguing that "This was the head of the snake in Raqqa in action", resulting in the heads of the Joint Intelligence Committee and of MI6 believing a similar attack is likely in the UK (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 328). This argument presents the threat to Britain as an immediate one, using a combination of empirical evidence and expert knowledge to make a convincing case.

This reasoning on the necessity of intervention in the name of the national interest was replicated by backbench MPs throughout the 2014 Iraq debate, who interpreted the threat posed by ISIL as stark and immediate. Sir Gerald Howarth, for example, cited the slaughter of Britons and Americans as clear evidence of ISIL posing a national security threat to the UK, which legitimises the deployment of military force (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1315). Similarly, Margot James argued that the history of fundamentalism shows us that ISIL will turn its sights on Western targets, meaning it poses a direct threat to the UK, legitimising the use of military force (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1294).[55] These arguments

[55] E.g. see also Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1273, col. 1293, col. 1312 col. 1357.

were also reproduced by MPs throughout the debate on airstrikes against ISIL in Syria, with Mary Creagh justifying military intervention on the basis that ISIL posed a clear threat to the UK, and that "Paris could have happened in London", although Creagh also framed intervention as part of a broader moral duty to create a better world and to alleviate the suffering of refugees from Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 445). Believing that the latter is not a sufficient reason to go to war, Helen Whatley argued that intervention is purely justified on national security grounds, due to the multiple threats posed to British citizens by ISIL (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 446).[56]

Also present in the Prime Minister's opening statement in the 2014 Iraq debate was the idea of ISIL occupying territory that is larger than the size of Britain (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1256), articulating the terrorist threat in spatial terms that also jeopardises the UK's capacity for sovereignty in relation to ISIL, which it follows must be returned to its status of illegitimate terrorist group rather than pseudo-state, in order to restore equilibrium in the self-other relationship. The associations of ISIL with statehood also compromise the very notion of national security, as it implies that they can also engage in (de)securitisation (Waever, 1995), destabilising the modern liberal state's monopoly over the legitimate use of violence (Weber, 1972). Responding to the thick meanings associated with the naming of a terrorist group, David Cameron implored MPs to refer to ISIL/ISIS as Daesh (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 328), on the basis that these labels confer legitimacy associated with statehood, whilst 'Daesh' is a derogatory term, with it being used more frequently than the labels 'ISIS/ISIL' throughout the 2015 debate (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015).

Cumulatively, it is clear that the dominant logic for airstrikes being justified against ISIL was that of British national security. This in itself is not all that surprising, again following the premises of securitisation theory, whereby the existence of an existential threat to the self

[56] E.g. see also Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 367, col. 378, col. 419, col. 478, col. 486, col. 489.

allows for extraordinary action beyond the realm of politics as normal (Waever, 1995, pp.56-57). That being said, even this notion of 'normal politics' versus the realm of extraordinary action entails deeply problematic colonial ideas. This framework, as Howell and Richter-Montpetit point out (2020), depends upon logics of anti-Black racism that frame European politics as a realm of civilised de-securitisation, whilst other racially-darkened areas of the world exist in a perpetual state of 'primal anarchy' (2020, p.10).[57] Such a perspective frames the Middle East as a primordial wasteland akin to the pre-colonial state of nature (Mbembe, 2003, p.23; Ogle, 2015), meaning that intervention is only seen as profitable if it is directly in the UK's national interest. This in turn ranks Western lives as being of more importance than Arab and African ones (Phipps, 2021; Wynter, 2003), with the latter perceived to exist in a permanent state of war, hence Helen Whatley's aforementioned argument that it is only national security, rather than altruism, that can justify the material cost of deploying British troops in the Middle East (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 446). This in turn limits the UK's responsibilities for post-conflict reconstruction, as the stated aim of intervention is primarily the protection of British citizens, as opposed to broader conflict-resolution aims which normally come with a ground invasion. Whilst this use of a limited mandate may stem from previous failures in Iraq, the fact that it reproduces colonial logics rooted in anti-Black racism, whilst limiting the UK's material obligations, is deeply significant in analysing the ongoing colonial character of the British state.

Apportioning Responsibility to 'The Muslim World'

Alongside the use of national security as the dominant logic of intervention against ISIL, frequent attempts were made to apportion responsibility to Muslims and Arab countries, in

[57] Whilst Howell and Richter-Montpetit (2020) argue that scholars should not use the securitisation framework on the basis that it is racist, I do so in this thesis in the explicit understanding that the UK's understanding of the state of nature is racialised, gendered and heteronormative. This calls attention to the way in which logics of safety/threat operate through a colonial script that invokes the spatial imaginary of the state of nature.

particular, for dealing with ISIL. These arguments imply that sharing a similar skin colour, religion or culture with terrorists means that they have responsibility for suppressing them through us/them logics. This underpins arguments in these debates which frame dealing with ISIL as the responsibility of the Arab or Muslim world, as this implies that it is their shared heritage which has produced ISIL's violent tendencies. This is a set of moral standards that are rarely, if ever, applied to White people, and which obscures the role of British colonialism in establishing the conditions for ISIL's emergence.

The clearest way in which David Cameron apportioned responsibility to Muslims for the existence of ISIL was by stating that "We need Muslims to reclaim their religion from these extremists. That is happening in our country and around the world", before noting that President Obama singled out and praised British Muslims who have done so (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1257). This logic is directly reproduced by Cameron later on in the 2014 Iraq debate and the 2015 Syria debate, in which he framed the UK's contribution to the conflict against ISIL as supporting our Muslim friends as they "reclaim their religion" (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1268; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2013, col. 337). This discourse implies that all Muslims around the world, and the religion of Islam itself, is implicated by ISIL's acts of violence. Furthermore, it indicates the existence of a belief that Muslims are assumed to tacitly consent to ISIL's acts of violence, unless they condemn it, in which case they can be (tentatively, with a certain amount of remaining suspicion) perceived as 'one of us', rather than a terrorist sympathiser. This is a moral standard that is rarely, if ever, applied to white people, who are assumed to be diverse, with their own individual beliefs and identities, in contrast to Muslims, who are 'othered' and assumed to be homogenous due to Islamophobic logics (Skenderovic and Spati, 2019, p.136)

Also conferring responsibility to Islam as a whole, multiple Conservative MPs, but also some other members from across the house, discuss the proposed interventions in civilisationist

terms. Most notably, this arises through references to 'The Muslim World',[58] as if all countries with majority Muslim populations form a homogenous bloc that is dialectically opposed to The West. The subtle, or sometimes not so subtle, implication in these arguments is that the West is more civilised/developed than the Muslim world, and that it is this temporal disparity in levels of development (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007) that is generative of conflict. This perspective was most clearly epitomised by Bernard Jenkin, the MP for Harwich and North Essex, when he stated;

> The west is omnipresent in the Muslim world. We are beamed in by satellite. The people there are challenging their own outdated religious power structures. Women want equality. Young people aspire to be educated at western universities. That is challenging the whole structure of the Muslim world, and the extremes of the Muslim world are striking back at us. They are not going to leave us alone if we disengage, so we have to engage with the problem. We might go on getting it wrong and making mistakes, but that is the nature of warfare (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 464).

This statement begins by framing the West as a dominant cultural force that uses the global media to illuminate the path towards development for the rest of the world, including the Muslim world. Within this worldview, young people and women are on 'our side', striving for the rights and privileges, such as education, that are afforded to them through the adoption of a Western lifestyle. Conflict, however, stems from the fact that these cultural ideals are structurally incompatible with the Muslim world as a whole. The symptom of this is the emergence of terrorism. The solution, by extension, is warfare, which is framed as the imperfect but only way of dealing with the structural incompatibilities of West versus Islam.

These arguments directly replicate those that are present in Samuel Huntingdon's influential, but much criticised,[59] clash of civilisations thesis (1996). Inspired by Lewis' paper on the "roots of Muslim rage" (1990), Huntingdon's thesis (1996) sees the world as composed

[58] See Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1272, col. 1316, col. 1318, col. 1336; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 414

[59] E.g. see Bottici and Challand (2006), Henderson and Tucker (2001) and Todorov (2010) for different criticisms of Huntingdon's thesis (1996).

of distinct cultural blocs, with conflict most likely to arise between the West and Islam due to the rise of Islam as a powerful transnational force and its incompatibility with democracy. Whilst more subtle, such a worldview undoubtedly informs Cameron's aforementioned calls for Muslims to reclaim their religion from extremists, and even the repeated emphasis throughout both debates that most Muslims in the UK and around the world are peaceful and moderate,[60] as this responds to the assumption that their innocence is in question. In particular, Margot James' discussion of British Muslims is indicative of this mind-set, with her arguing that we must get behind moderate Muslims, at home and abroad, to help them in their efforts to educate younger, more hot-headed members of their communities, who may seek to use violence (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1294). This infantilising statement confers responsibility on 'mature' Muslims to prevent 'immature' Muslims from using violence, assuming that the use of violence, where committed by Muslims, is the result of being uneducated, rather than being in response to structural violence, inequality and foreign occupations of the Middle East, for example. This again speaks to postcolonial readings of modernity's temporal narrative (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007), which uses notions of civilisational progress to mask previous and ongoing colonial violence.

As Scanlan (2010) notes, public rhetoric post-9/11 has equated Islam with terror, with this equation resulting in Islam as a whole being perceived as threatening. Alongside being equated with terror, dominant Islamophobic discourses have also securitised Islam through reference to its perceived universal misogyny (Farris, 2017; Razack, 2008) and homophobia (Rahman, 2014), for example, with these arguments used to inform both domestic policy and the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan in the War on Terror. The way in which the arguments underpinning Huntingdon's clash of civilisations thesis (1996) have been reproduced by UK

[60] See Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1257, col. 1318, col. 1338, col. 1359; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 336.

legislators in legitimising military action is indicative of a worldview in which Islam is presented as an existential threat to the developed and civilised West. With this atmosphere of public hostility towards Islam and civilisationist worldviews informing UK military intervention, it is clear that colonial logics rooted in racial/cultural otherness (Du Bois, 1925; Said, 1978) and racism (Fanon, 1952; Anievas et. al, 2015) continue to inform the fundamental character of the British state.

Paradoxically, through the deployment of these colonial and homogenising logics, MPs were able to attach responsibility to Islam as a globalised incubator for the emergence of terrorism. This diverts attention away from the fact that it is the historical existence of colonialism that generated many of the contemporary conflicts we are now seeing in the Middle East, with the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement responsible for creating the state of Iraq by combining the provinces of Baghdad, Basra and Mosul, which had little to no shared history or culture (Masoom, 2016). This combination of deep cultural differences within Iraq, and the legacy of the Iraq War, which became a protracted conflict that has been criticised for its failure to leave behind a functioning state, provide two key reasons for the rise of ISIL. In this context, the attribution of responsibility to Muslims around the world is a clear depoliticising tactic that detracts from the UK's culpability and draws upon logics of anti-Muslim racism in the wake of the War on Terror. It also depoliticises the UK's new attempt to intervene in the Middle East, on the basis that the UK is simply stepping up to do what 'The Muslim World' should be doing. Whilst various politicians directly refute the idea that this is a war against Islam (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1295; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 399, col. 468), the fact that dominant narratives apportion at least some responsibility to Islam and Muslim-majority countries, whilst failing to mention the legacy of colonialism, indicates the endurance of a colonial mind-set which denies culpability for previous wrongdoings.

Saving Women, Children and Gays

Alongside the dominant logic of national security being used to legitimise intervention against ISIL in Iraq and Syria, appeals to saving Iraqi/Syrian women, children, and sometimes men, appeared frequently. This represents a clear intertextuality with the discursive construction of 'The Brutal Dictator', who was similarly accused of using brutal methods of violence against innocent men, women and children, cumulatively representing the traditional nuclear family (TNF). In conjunction with targeting the TNF, in the 2015 debate on airstrikes against ISIL (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), the discussion of violence against gay people also occurs, adding an extra impetus to take action. In this debate, the descriptions of violence perpetrated by ISIL are arguably even more graphic than violence perpetrated by 'The Brutal Dictator', rendering the threat to the TNF, and gay people, even more immediate. By framing intervention in these terms, the UK Government and those supporting its position violently enact (Shepherd, 2007, p.249) the binary between liberalism, life and inclusivity on the one hand, and barbarism, death and social inequality on the other. With the UK acting on behalf of the former camp, the destruction of 'The ISIL Terrorist', who figures as representing the second, becomes absolutely necessary, virtuous and on behalf of life itself (Foucault, 2003, p.256). Framing the UK as acting on behalf of vulnerable, and as such feminised, subjects of colour, produces a White saviour narrative (Rao, 2014; Spivak, 1988). In this, the UK performs a form of hegemonic masculinity[61] that reflects early colonial narratives in which conquest was legitimised through reference to the protection of Brown women from Brown men (Spivak, 1988, p.63).

[61] Hegemonic masculinity refers to the dominant normative form of masculinity in a particular social and temporal context (Connell, 2005, p.78). In the UK, it is associated with notions of professionalism, responsibility and productivity, for example.

Descriptions of violence against men, women, girls and boys are frequent throughout the 2014 debate on airstrikes in Iraq,[62] with Ed Miliband, the Leader of the Opposition, clearly invoking subject-positions associated with the traditional family unit in his opening statement. Here, he provided an account of a then recent event;

> On the morning of Friday 15 August, ISIL fighters assembled the residents of Kocho village in northern Iraq at the secondary school, where they separated men and boys from women and younger children. The men were then driven away to different nearby locations, where they were shot and killed. The women and children of the village were abducted and continue to be held by ISIL (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1269).

This describes a common model of *gendercidal* violence[63], in which men and boys who are assumed to be potential combatants are killed, whilst women are either spared (Jones, 2015, p.147) or are subsequently killed in a "root and branch" model that targets all members of the community, (Jones, 2000, p.193). In the latter instance, women are often killed after a protracted period of rape and sexual servitude, which is framed as the "price" of their survival (Jones, 2002, p.79).

Building upon this focus on the family unit, the necessity of taking action in order to protect innocent men, women and children was often framed as a moral dilemma that defines who 'we' are. For example, Alison McGovern argued;

> Our country is internationalist in outlook and, to us, all people matter, just as our neighbours and our families matter. People in Iraq matter. The conflict has innocent victims who have been scared out of their homes: women, men and children who take no part in violence but who will lose the most (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1285).

This statement frames the importance of the family unit as central to the identity of the UK, and draws parallels between the relationships 'we' have in 'our' families and the relationships that Iraqis have with theirs. Furthermore, references to ISIL using rape as a weapon of war,

[62] See Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1299, col. 1300, col. 1310, col. 1311, col. 1314, col. 1322, col. 1336, col. 1348, col. 1350, col. 1354, col. 1357, col. 1366.
[63] Gendercide is a term that was initially coined by Mary Anne Warren (1985) to make the case that sex-selective killing (e.g. female infanticide, witch hunts) should be framed within the language of genocide, having outcomes analogous to racial or ethnicity-based violence.

and this being used to justify intervention, were made in the 2014 debate (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1256, col. 1310, col. 1317), although to a lesser extent than the 2015 debate, the reasons for which I will explore. Clearly, wartime rape is an abhorrent and genocidal act which warrants significant attention, activism and care. That being said, listing rape as a factor in a list of atrocities which justify the use of violence is problematic. Such arguments draw upon the norms of monogamy that are embedded within the TNF (Butler, 1990, p.208), justifying intervention as an act of restoring heteronormative sexual relations without the deep care and reflection that is required when discussing such atrocities.

In looking at depictions of the TNF being under threat in making the case for violence, it should be remembered that the societies under discussion do not always conform to Western heteronormative standards, with large kinship groups often taking primacy over the nuclear family as the most important social unit of analysis in Middle Eastern societies. Nonetheless, the routine invocation of heteronormative logics throughout these debates are perhaps unsurprising, as *we* live in a society that is defined by binary gender stereotypes, the adult/child binary, and the existence of the TNF as *the* central unit of analysis throughout society. Underpinning this are heteronormative temporalities (Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005), which establish heterosexual reproduction and relationships as normal and 'correct'.

As with 'The Brutal Dictator', constructing 'The ISIL Terrorist' as jeopardising the traditional nuclear family encourages the (assumed straight) audience to conceive of mass violence as jeopardising their partners and children, rendering the approval of extraordinary military action more likely. This is not necessarily indicative of a hidden agenda in which MPs strategically deploy the imagery of the TNF to garner support, but it *is* indicative of the centrality of the TNF to the ways in which UK foreign policy makers understand violence through the social units that we commonly use to organise our own lives in British society.

This is testament to Cynthia Enloe's argument that the personal is international and the international is personal (1990), with international processes rooted in and reproductive of private sphere relations.

Whilst it is clear that the TNF is central to debates over the legitimate use of violence, disciplinary IR continues to fail (Weber, 2014) to recognise the role that heteronormative social relations play in governing globally-significant decisions on whether or not to go to war (Foster, 2011). These decisions are absolutely fundamental to the existence of the state and to the organisation of the world politics, but they remain obscured due to the persistence of discursive divisions which locate gender, sexuality and the family within the private sphere, politics within the public sphere, and the norms of warfare and security within the international sphere (Peterson, 2014). Each of these spheres is assumed to have its own *modus operandi*, and this is why decisions to use military force that invoke heteronormative logics are so significant, as this illustrates that issues of international reputation are deeply rooted in intimate relations. The continued silence over the interconnections between these spheres leaves IR ill-equipped to analyse decisions on whether to go to war, and global decision-making processes more broadly. Of course, the argument that "the international is personal" (Enloe, 1990) is not a new one and this case has been made in various forms by feminists and queer theorists over the last thirty years or so (e.g. see Sylvester, 1994; Tickner, 1997; Peterson, 2014). That being said, it is a case that must still be made due to the persistent marginalisation of queer theory and feminism within IR and political science (Smith and Lee, 2015).

Alongside the protection of the traditional nuclear family, the debate on airstrikes against ISIL in Syria also featured specific and repeated mentions of the killing of gay people. The particular focus on the treatment of gay people in the 2015 debate (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), I argue, stems from homonationalist logics (Puar, 2007) which construct a binary between queer Muslim (potential terrorist) subjects and (certain White, neoliberal)

Western LGBTQ+ subjects, who are incorporated into the nation. Alongside the framing of Syrian women, children, gays and families as culturally oppressed groups in need of saving, attempts throughout the 2015 debate to weave violence against these groups, and gays in particular, into a broader narrative of (queer) terrorist monstrosity (Stryker, 1994; Puar and Rai, 2002) are deeply significant. This is because these narratives contain logics of perversion that simultaneously label terrorists as undevelopable due to their barbaric violence against women and gays, and due to their own sexual and civilisational perversion. Just as 'The Brutal Dictator' was framed as infantile *and* a threat to *womenandchildren* (Enloe, 1990), 'The ISIL Terrorist' is rendered a threat to 'normal' gay people (Duggan, 2003; Weber, 2016, p.104) whilst simultaneously being constructed as a queer 'other'. Although I do not see this perversion as being restricted to the specific history associated with the subject-position of 'the perverse homosexual' (Weber, 2016, p.9), I do draw heavily upon this analysis, in which homonationalism (Puar, 2007) becomes the new register of normality or perversion (Delatolla, 2020; 2021).

In the context of the UK Government attempting to legitimise the expansion of airstrikes into Syria just over two years since Parliament had rejected airstrikes against Assad (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013), the addition of gay subjects as being under particular threat created additional impetus to take action. Whilst it could be argued that these MPs were simply reacting to changing conditions on the ground, in which gay people were subject to increased violence, the way in which the killing of gay people was often listed as part of a shopping list of atrocities indicates the appropriation of queer people's experiences to make the case for intervention.

In making the case for the use of military force alongside reconstruction and humanitarian efforts, David Cameron highlighted the way in which ISIL is throwing gay people off buildings

due to their sexuality (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 338). This same example of gay people being thrown off roofs was replicated by a number of MPs supporting the government's position on intervention, reflecting contemporary tendencies for gay rights to be folded into civilisationist worldviews (Rahman. 2014; Delatolla, 2020). Providing examples of this, James Gray rhetorically asked whether responding to such atrocities with the use of force is too timid (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 408), whilst Ben Howlett (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 482) and Hillary Benn (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 484) also cited the same example of extreme violence against gay people. Rather than ISIL's violence against gay people being considered substantively and in depth, it instead appeared amongst a shopping list of atrocities and national security threats to the UK, including a professor's headless body being hung from a traffic light and the mass killing of women considered to be too old for sex (ibid). Clearly, members have limited time to speak and make their case either for or against intervention, but the way in which extreme violence is described in such a manner indicates the existence of a specific attempt to construct ISIL as deeply threatening to 'our' (civilised, normal) way of life, in order to justify intervention in the 2015 debate.

Explaining the discursive context in which violence against gay people is read in contemporary Western foreign policy, Jasbir Puar's work on homonationalism is absolutely crucial (2007; 2013). In particular, it explains how the inclusion of LGBTQ+ subjects into the Western state entails the casting out of Muslims domestically, and the denial of sovereignty to Muslim countries globally, on the basis that they are hostile to rights for LGBTQ+ people. This is defined succinctly by Puar as "the use of 'acceptance' and 'tolerance' for gay and lesbian subjects as the barometer by which the legitimacy of, and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated" (2013, p.24). Reflecting Puar's argument, the expansion of airstrikes into Syria is indicative of the way in which queer questions now play a central role in world politics. Rather

than just being the latest iteration of 'the woman question', queer questions vary across time and space (Rao, 2014), but the aforementioned readings of violence against gay people in the 2014 (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and 2015 (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015) debates help to illustrate how Muslim countries' perceived capacity for sovereignty is linked to LGBTQ+ rights (Puar, 2007). Whilst it was ISIL rather than the Syrian regime who was committing violence against gay people, incursion into Syria's sovereignty was nonetheless legitimised by the regime's failure to protect gay people, and other vulnerable groups, from violence.

In conjunction with descriptions of violence against gay people, notions of perversion are also used to construct the terrorist as a queer figure of monstrosity in order to justify intervention. In making the case for the expansion of airstrikes across the border from Iraq to Syria, David Cameron juxtaposed peaceful British Muslims against ISIL, who are framed as "women raping, Muslim-murdering, medieval monsters" that are hijacking the religion of Islam (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 336). Clearly, this statement reproduces aforementioned arguments in which the UK Government speaks on behalf of British Muslims and characterises them and their religion, using these arguments to attempt to legitimise intervention. What is also telling here is that the rape of women is positioned alongside the idea of killing one's own people and the idea of being a medieval monster, indicating that it is part of a broader script of civilisational *and* sexual backwardness and barbarism (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Weber, 2016). This method of describing ISIL as violent and draconian sexual savages is replicated throughout the 2015 debate to a much greater extent than the 2014 debate, which did frame the heteronormative family as under threat, but with less hyperbole and frequency. Providing further examples of such discourses, Mark Pritchard described ISIL as "a brutal, murderous and genocidal enemy that are killing men, women, children and peacemakers—probably at this very hour, as we speak" (Hansard

HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 385), drawing a clear link between atrocities being committed against families and peacemakers, and our need to take immediate action. Similarly, Dr Andrew Murrison's description of ISIL as "a murderous, barbaric and medieval ideology that crucifies people, cuts off their heads and subjugates women" (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 398) is indicative of the extent to which the 2015 debate featured clear attempts to depict ISIL as monsters who belong to a different age.

In analysing the figure of the terrorist, Puar notes that the existence of the terrorist as "a queer, non-national, perversely racialised other has become a part of the normative script of the U.S. war on terror", citing the proliferation of homophobic-racist images post-9/11, with these reactivated from the 1991 Gulf War, the Israel-Palestine conflict and colonial Orientalist histories (2007, p.37). In particular, Puar notes that Osama bin Laden was portrayed as monstrous by association with sexual/bodily perversity, for example through cartoons of him being sodomised to death with weapons or through implications that he is a homosexual in popular culture (2007, p.38). This is indicative of the way in which contemporary understandings of terrorism are informed by age-old Orientalist narratives, and are deeply infused with logics of abnormal and perverted sexuality. The way in which ISIL terrorists are depicted in the 2015 debate (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), in particular, is akin to the construction of 'The Brutal Dictator' by those arguing for intervention against the Gaddafi (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011) and Assad regimes (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013). Within these debates, 'The Brutal Dictator' is rendered a convincing object of hate through logics of pathology, perversion and the destruction of life, which suggest improper psycho-sexual development, as I have previously discussed. Depictions of ISIL in the 2015 debate take such arguments one step further through the addition of intensified logics of temporal perversion.

Also looking at 'The ISIL Terrorist' amongst other figures, Cynthia Weber (2016) argues that the figure of 'the homosexual' is central to the construction and organisation of world politics. Within this frame, the state is understood as a (assumed heterosexual) rational sovereign man (2016, pp.4-5), whilst there are plural figurations of 'the homosexual', who are either included and/or excluded from 'the nation'. The perverse figurations of the homosexual, Weber argues, are those who have obstructed, perverted, by-passed or challenged chrononormative processes of development. The most extreme figuration of 'the perverse homosexual', Weber argues, is the Al-Qaeda terrorist, who in supplanting his desire for development with the fanatical aim to achieve jihad through the use indiscriminate violence against non-believers, is conceived as defying the norms of modernity (2016, p.92). By pursuing jihad, the terrorist eschews the progressive temporal register of development, treating earthly life as merely a fleeting episode in the pursuit of eternal reward in the afterlife (ibid). In conjunction with representing temporal perversion, the Al-Qaeda terrorist perverts the spatiality of the nation state by operating akin to a multinational corporation, setting up operations around the world where 'conditions on the ground' are favourable and closing down where they are not, acting like "a free-flowing dot.com company" (2016, p.94).

In conjunction with representing perverted temporal and spatial logics, the Al Qaeda Terrorist represents sexual barbarism due to him originating from the 'Islamic civilisational home', defined by male sexual desire for multiple sexual partners, in contrast to the White Western bourgeois nuclear family home, defined by reproductive and cis-gendered heterosexuality (2016, p.98). Cumulatively, then, the terrorist perverts the norms of Western civilisation by defying its temporal norms of development and its spatial home, bounded to the nation state. According to Weber, this combination of abnormality, being an un-civilisable threat to Western civilisation, and non-reproductiveness, is testament to Puar and Rai's (2002) well-established reading of the terrorist as representing a "monster-terrorist-fag" in Western

cultural discourse. Cumulatively, Puar's and Weber's reading of the Al-Qaeda terrorist illustrates how the figure of 'the terrorist' is understood as being monstrous in Western cultural discourse. Such themes are undoubtedly present in the arguments of those making the case for intervention against ISIL in Syria, in particular, which explicitly invoke notions of undevelopability and sexual and civilisational barbarism, in particular through graphic descriptions of violence against women, children and gay people.

Standing in sharp contrast to the queer figure of the Al Qaeda terrorist, the LGBTQ+ rights holder is considered to be a "normal homosexual" in IR (Weber, 2016), worthy of protection due to their inclusion into homonormative understandings of the nation (Duggan, 2003). Explaining how homonormative inclusion operates, Weber notes that the axis of perversion is shifted from same-sex sexual desires for neoliberal desires for domesticity and consumption (Duggan, 2003), and that within this frame, the "normal homosexual" is no more perverse than the straight subject (Weber, 2016, p.110). Unwanted im/migrants, who have by-passed natural processes of economic, sexual and civilisational development by moving to the Global North (Weber, 2016, p.87), and terrorists, who are antithetical to Western civilisation (Weber, 2016, p.101) are the new perverse homosexuals in IR. Furthermore, it is these racially darkened subjects that are perceived as jeopardising the development achieved by Western neoliberal subjects, including "normal homosexuals". Applying this perspective to House of Commons debates on intervention, the gay people being thrown off buildings in Syria are understood as being potential LGBTQ+ rights holders in the future. This is because a common way in which IFIs and MNCs challenge homophobia in the Global South is through the stick of capital withdrawal, and the carrot of economic growth, promised by the business case for LGBT rights (Rao, 2020, p.163). Within this frame, the UK's protection of vulnerable gay people serves to (re)produce the UK as representing the apex of civilisational development (Rahman, 2014). Simultaneously, it provides a script that IFIs/MNCs can draw upon in the

future in order to invest in and liberalise the Syrian marketplace, in both social and economic terms. In this sense, the expansion of gay rights in the Middle East is intimately bound to the future expansion of neoliberalism, which is testament to Weber's argument that civilisational and sexual development are intimately linked (2016, pp.60-61).

Possibly most indicative of the worldview of those making the case for intervention against ISIL in the 2015 debate is the following statement made by Pat McFadden, in which he rejected arguments that the rise of ISIL is a response to the West's previous actions;

> The world is not, in foreign policy terms, split up into adults and children…No one forces anyone to sell women into sexual slavery. No one forces anyone to behead innocent aid workers. No one forces anyone to bomb the London underground or kill innocent Parisians at a pop concert… Our society is not perfect, but we strive for a society in which women and men are equal, and where we have freedom of association, freedom of religion, democracy and diversity, and those things are worth defending (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 400).

Within this worldview, it is not only the vulnerability of the victims of ISIL that are discussed, but the possible infantilism of those who have been recruited too. In rejecting the UK's colonial culpability for the rise of ISIL, McFadden identifies the UK with the women who are being raped and aid workers who are being beheaded, linking the integrity of 'our' free and democratic society with the protection of these vulnerable subjects. On the other hand, ISIL are framed as belonging to the medieval era in which early colonialism arose, in essence identifying them with colonial atrocities over the UK. This statement clearly articulates the UK's role in terms of a masculinist saviour narrative, in which 'we' are responsible for exporting 'our' civilised Western values to the Middle East in the campaign to defeat ISIL. Part of this civilising agenda is the protection of gay people and women, who are understood as feminised subjects in need of our assistance.

The paradoxical flip side of this agenda is the construction of 'The ISIL Terrorist' as a queer figure who behaves as if they were in medieval times due to their sexual and civilisational perversion. Working in tandem, the existence of these logics of either proper or perverse

development (Weber, 2016, p.195) in House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention indicates the central importance of the binary between women, children and 'normal' gay subjects, on the one hand, who are feminised as being in need of assistance, and of radically queer terrorists, whose undevelopability jeopardises the very foundations of our developed, Western society, embodied by the freedom of the aforementioned vulnerable subjects. This is indicative of the continued importance of sexual logics of colonialism, traceable initially to 'the woman question' (Spivak, 1988, p.63), in which the protection of Brown women from Brown men was used to legitimise colonial conquest. It is also indicative of humanitarian intervention being a deeply sexual act, that in commissioning violence re-instantiates the boundary between normal, White, neoliberal gays (Duggan, 2003; Puar, 2007; Weber, 2016) and radically perverse Islamic queers, such as 'The ISIL Terrorist'.

Resisting the Use of Force and the Category of 'Terrorist'

Contesting dominant pro-intervention narratives throughout the two House of Commons debates (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), MPs challenged the case made by the UK Government through the deployment of a number of discursive strategies. Most evidently, they challenged the dominance of realpolitik/ masculinist protector narratives, which frame the use of force as the best way of responding to violence against women, children and gay people. Furthermore, throughout the 2015 debate, opposition MPs persistently challenged David Cameron's previous characterisation of those opposing intervention as 'terrorist sympathisers' and repeatedly asked for him to apologise. Whilst such interventions were ultimately unsuccessful in preventing the UK's participation in coalition airstrikes, they worked to highlight the deeply subjective character of the category 'terrorist', which is routinely invoked by states to delegitimise particular groups. By associating this label with MPs who oppose interventionism, Cameron called his own authority into question and

failed to effectively perform the role of responsible (masculine) leader. I explore these themes in greater detail here.

The first key way in which MPs opposed the government motion in the 2014 and 2015 debates on airstrikes against ISIL was by challenging the idea that the use of force was a necessary response to violence against civilians. As previously discussed, these civilians were often framed in terms of vulnerable and feminised subject-positions, including women, children and gays, allowing for the operation of a masculinist saviour narrative. Throughout the 2014 and the 2015 debates, there were repeated references to the necessity of a humanitarian or diplomatic solution to deal with ISIL, with this being preferable to military action, which carries significant risks. Caroline Lucas, for example, argued that killing extremists does not kill their ideas, and cited expert knowledge from the former head of MI6, who suggested political and diplomatic solutions rather than military ones in dealing effectively with extremism in the Middle East (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1262). Also pointing towards the futility of military action in comparison to the good that could be done with humanitarian efforts, Graham Allen compares the impact that six Tornado aircraft will have in northern Iraq in contrast to sixty fully laden cargo aircraft carrying food, water and medical supplies (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, cols. 1279-1280). The implication here is clear; that humanitarian assistance is much more effective and useful than military means, and that they can be deployed in a much more cost-effective manner. Most passionately articulating the case against military action in 2015, Jeremy Corbyn, the Leader of the Opposition argues that more bombing will inevitably lead to more civilian deaths (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 344), and that a negotiated political and diplomatic agreement is a much more sensible way to achieve an end to conflict than bombing, which can have unintended effects (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 348). This argument is deployed by numerous MPs throughout both debates, citing the greater effectiveness of

humanitarian, diplomatic and political methods over military ones,[64] destabilising the link between ISIL's use of violence against civilians and the necessity of the UK to respond with violence.

Alongside discussions of the benefits of non-military means to secure an end to conflict, in the 2015 Syria debate, a number of MPs explicitly mentioned the women, children, families and gay people that the UK Government cited the need to protect with force. Rather than accepting this, these MPs argued that airstrikes would actively endanger these individuals, as opposed to protecting them. Providing a prime example of such a statement, Kirsty Blackman argued;

> Airstrikes, by their nature, are intended to inflict death, pain and suffering on people and families, some of whom will be innocent. Will someone please tell me how this action will stop new people becoming radicalised, how it will stop new terrorists, and how it will improve the human rights situation on the ground? (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 431).

Rather than accepting Cameron's argument that the UK had a moral responsibility to protect feminised victims of ISIL, Blackman frames the UK's proposed action as a reckless act that is likely to kill or maim families. Rather than accepting the UK's responsibility to protect women, children and families, due to its masculine protector status, this statement frames the keenness to deploy force as a symptom of hyper-masculinity.[65] By framing the UK as being over-zealous in its keenness to deploy force, with the likely impact being the deaths of innocent families, Blackman and other MPs pursuing this argument effectively destabilise the ontological premises of 'the woman question' (Spivak, 1988, p.63), which depends upon white hetero-patriarchal understandings of responsibility.

Applying similar logics to 'queer questions' (Rao, 2014), MPs opposing military intervention reject the idea that the UK is protecting LGBTQ+ people. John Nicolson, for

[64] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 356, col. 404, col. 414, col. 452

[65] Hyper-masculinity refers to a gender ideology of exaggerated masculinity, consisting of toughness as emotional self-control, violence as manly, danger as exciting, and calloused attitudes toward women and sex (Vokey, Tefft and Tysiaczny, 2013).

example, states that he is a gay man who is sickened by violence against homosexuals in Syria, but he acknowledges that military intervention is likely to worsen the conflict and therefore opposes it (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, cols. 440-441). Making a similar case, but arguably in more direct terms, Hannah Bardell calls attention towards the situation of LGBTI people in Syria and argues that bombing will invariably worsen their lived experiences rather than improving them (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 425). This reflects Jasbir Puar's argument that material violence against entire populations of which LGBTQ+ people are a part, is just as much, if not more of a 'queer issue' than LGBTQ+ identity politics (2013). Whilst Puar discusses the settler-colonial context of Palestine, where pinkwashing is used to legitimise Israeli occupation, a similar perspective can be applied to airstrikes against Syria. 'Queer issues' are not only "merely cultural" (Butler, 1998), but are also material, entailing economic inequality, violence and the patterns of daily life (Mohanty, 2011) that govern all of our existences. By highlighting the actual lived experiences of violence suffered by LGBTQ+ people resulting from airstrikes, those opposing intervention deconstruct the binary between the masculine protector (Hooper, 2001; Carver, 2014) and the vulnerable gay subject (Rao, 2014). This is because they highlight that queer people are not exceptional and suffer the same consequences of violence as all other human beings.

The invocation of "protecting gays" in order to legitimise airstrikes is undoubtedly an example of British pinkwashing, defined as;

> the practice of covering over or distracting from a nation's policies of discrimination of some populations through a noisy touting of its gay rights for a limited few. (Puar, 2013, p.32).

The UK has still got a huge way to go when it comes to queer rights and safety, with hate crimes against queer people on the rise (Galop, 2021), and trans people in particular suffering widespread violence and discrimination throughout society, including in access to healthcare, employment and housing (Bachmann and Gooch, 2018). Given this, it is notable that the

arguments for intervention discuss protecting gay people,[66] as opposed to trans people, non-binary people or by using the more inclusive acronym 'LGBTQ+', for example. This reflects homonormative logics in which it is only queers who do not destabilise neoliberalism and its attendant institutions that are accepted into 'the nation', (Puar, 2007; Weber, 2016, p.9) and as evidenced by this debate, are worthy of protection overseas.

Challenging David Cameron's ability to speak with authority on the morals associated with airstrikes was another way in which MPs in the 2015 debate were able to challenge the narrative presented by the government. Noting that Cameron had called MPs who opposed the government "terrorist sympathisers" (Watt, 2015), a wide range of MPs demanded an apology from him. This had two important effects; firstly, it showed the deeply irresponsible character of the discourse surrounding interventionism, with Cameron clearly willing to use whatever language that was necessary to persuade his backbench MPs to support him. Secondly, and possibly more importantly, it shows the deeply contingent character of the label 'terrorist', given that many MPs who opposed the government were clearly not sympathisers with ISIL, as their comments in the debates showed. In this sense, by invoking the label terrorist in a context where it was clearly inapplicable, Cameron completely destabilised the binary between state/terrorist, with the authority of the former denigrated and the deployment of the latter exposed to be deeply political.

Drawing attention to Cameron's hypocrisy in his discussion of using appropriate terminology, Emily Thornberry noted that Cameron imploring MPs to use the phrase Daesh rather than ISIL, on the basis that the former is an insult, stands in sharp contrast to him calling those who don't vote with him "a bunch of terrorist sympathisers" (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 328). This, she argued, is dangerous and she urged him to apologise (ibid). Similarly, Alex Salmond asked for an apology on the basis that this slur is untrue (Hansard HC

[66] See Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 338, col. 408, col. 482, col. 484

Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 325), as does Jeremy Corbyn, who argued that using such language demeans the office of the Prime Minister and the seriousness of the debate (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 340). Such arguments are repeated over a dozen times throughout the debate by those insulted by Cameron's characterisation,[67] indicating widespread anger at Cameron's divisive and defamatory rhetoric. At first glance, this may be interpreted as a series of minor disruptions to the debate, which Cameron attempted to gloss over, and which didn't eventually have an impact on the division at the end of the debate. What it did do, however, was destabilise the dialectical subject-positions that the UK Government's argument was rooted in, opening up future possibilities for greater resistance.

Looking at the warrior/protector form of masculinity, Terrell Carver argues that it is not only constitutive of global politics (i.e. hegemonic), but that it is exemplar, with many other forms of masculinity derivative from it (e.g. international sports) (2014, p.123). Given this, Carver argues that it is absolutely essential to apply a gender lens to international politics, with hierarchies of masculinity played out through war, weapons and wealth (ibid). As previously discussed, a central function of the state is the protection of vulnerable and feminised subjects, such as women, children and gay people, from those who seek to harm them (e.g. dictators or terrorists). By accusing opposition MPs who were concerned about intervention, for legitimate reasons, of being terrorists, Cameron labelled people who were clearly horrified by ISIL to be 'on their side'. This was patently a strategic move and it deeply de-stabilised the government's ability to make a moral case for intervention. This, in turn, could explain why violence was framed in much more civilisational and hyperbolic terms by Cameron in the 2015 debate, as he had to do a significant amount more discursive work to make the intervention seem legitimate.

[67] See Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 329, col. 335, col. 338, col. 340, col. 351, col. 373, col. 384, col. 395, col. 435, col. 442, col. 459, col. 483.

In conjunction with denigrating the moral standing and responsibility associated with the state as warrior/protector, Cameron's slur against opposition MPs exposed the label of 'terrorist' to be one that is deployed strategically in line with powerful actors' attempts to legitimise the use of violence, rather than being an objective description of an individual or group (Toomey and Singleton, 2014). In this sense, Cameron's careless deployment of the term constituted a failed performance of the state's ability to use violence through the sole deployment of the label 'terrorist', meaning that he and MPs supporting him had to cast ISIL as existential and civilisational threat in order to garner support for intervention. These arguments therefore went a significant way to destabilising the binary between self/other and normality or perversion (Weber, 2016).

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, it is clear that the construction of the subject-position of 'The ISIL Terrorist' has been crucial to the UK's deployment of force under the auspices of humanitarian intervention in recent years. This has occurred in the historical context of Islam being framed as oppositional to British culture (Awan and Zempi, 2020; Gilks, 2020; Lowe, 2015; Poynting and Mason, 2007), with recent iterations of cultural Islamophobia manifesting in anti-terrorist frameworks such as Prevent (Khan, 2021, p.138). In the specific context of House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention, the construction of the subject-position of 'The ISIL Terrorist' occurred through a number of key moves.

Firstly, it occurred through the securitisation of the terrorist threat, framing ISIL as an immediate and impending risk to people on the streets of Britain. Whilst unsurprising that this was a key logic in the debates, it reproduces the racist worldviews associated with securitisation theory (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020), and in this sense, a colonial worldview in which the Global North is ranked as superior to the Global South. Operating in a much more obviously

racist way, there were also repeated attempts throughout the 2014 (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and 2015 (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015) debates to frame the emergence of ISIL as the responsibility of 'The Muslim World', framing Muslim-majority countries as constituting a homogenous bloc that is defined by cultural underdevelopment in an attempt to depoliticise the UK's engagement in the Middle East, and its historic legacy of colonialism.

Building upon logics established in the construction of 'The Brutal Dictator', 'The ISIL Terrorist' was framed as also committing violence against men, women and children, jeopardising the existence of the traditional nuclear family. In conjunction with jeopardising the TNF, ISIL's violence against gay people was highlighted in the 2015 debate, with this accompanied by even more graphic descriptions of violence than the 2014 debate. Such descriptions of violence are indicative of the pinkwashing of the intervention against ISIL in Syria, using the protection of gay people as a key reason for the use of violence, without substantively engaging with the lived experiences of queer people on the ground. Furthermore, descriptions of violence in the 2015 debate (Hansard HD Deb, 2nd December 2015) were often extremely hyperbolic, and relied heavily upon temporal logics that framed ISIL as barbarous monsters belonging to medieval times. Such descriptions are testament to Puar (2002; 2007) and Weber's (2016, p.101) argument that 'the terrorist' is a subject defined by perverted sexual and civilisational development. This stands in sharp contrast to the gay people that the UK was framed as protecting, who are interpreted as good/normal LGBTQ+ subjects in line with homonormative logics of inclusion (Weber, 2016, p.110).

Paradoxically, both 'The Brutal Dictator' and 'The ISIL Terrorist' are simultaneously framed as a threat to gendered or LGBTQ+ subjects, who are interpreted as vulnerable and in need of protection, whilst also being framed as themselves queer, mentally perverse or infantile. Invoking logics historically deployed against gay people (Foucault, 1976, p.43), this

incoherence highlights the way in which these othering processes work, rooted more in identarian notions of selfhood and otherness than a material consideration of an atrocity crime's severity. The difference between these two, however, is that 'The Brutal Dictator' belongs to a state and is therefore seen as perverting natural (sexual and civilisational) processes of development, whilst 'The ISIL Terrorist' is antithetical to them due to his statelessness (Weber, 2016). This helps to explain the intensified hyperbole in the debates discussed in this chapter, with the UK Government ideologically committed to the eradication of *all* Muslim terrorists, but only *some* dictators, where this aligns with the UK's identity, understanding of development and subsequent interests.

Challenging the hegemonic narrative presented by the UK Government and those supporting its position, MPs who opposed airstrikes against ISIL highlighted alternative responses to the use of force in responding to ISIL. Doing so, they presented humanitarian, political and diplomatic solutions as being preferable and highlighted the violence associated with airstrikes, which inevitably kills women, children and LGBTQ+ people alongside killing those designated 'terrorists'. Furthermore, by demanding an apology from Cameron for calling them 'a bunch of terrorist sympathisers', those opposing airstrikes challenged his authority as a responsible (masculine) leader and drew attention to the deeply strategic and political character of the label "terrorist." Whilst those opposing intervention were not successful in this instance, they undoubtedly opened up possibilities for future resistance and have cultivated an environment in which Prime Ministers cannot legitimise the use of force by simply invoking the signifier of terrorism. In this sense, they went a significant way to exposing the Barthesian principle of the and/or, destabilising the binary between normality and perversion (Weber, 2016, p.40) in relation to even the most extreme figure of otherness in relation to the body-politic. Unlike the figures of otherness that this chapter and the previous chapter have discussed, the next chapter discusses the construction of 'The British Self'.

Chapter Eight: The British Self

Colonial Masculinity and the (Non)Use of Force

Feminist scholars have gone to great lengths to illustrate the deeply problematic ways in which masculinity shapes the conduct of IR, creating spatial demarcations that frame warfare as something which belongs 'out there' in another sphere of existence, divorced from the everyday (Enloe, 1990; Hooper, 2001; Parpart and Zalewski, 1998). Drawing in part upon these analyses, this chapter reflects upon the form of masculinity that was performed by the UK Government and those who supported its position in House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention (Cohn, 1987; Connell, 2005; Bilgiç, 2018).

Throughout these debates, a tendency exists to frame atrocity crimes in an un-emotive and cost/benefit manner. This specifically reflects the ambivalent and neo-colonial form masculinity that governs European sovereignty (Bilgiç, 2018). Drawing upon such a perspective, this chapter argues that it is this form of sovereignty that is dominant throughout the debates in question, resulting in a conception of 'The British Self' rooted in imperial racism and heteronormativity (Berlant and Warner, 1998). In this chapter, I argue that there are three key arguments which render 'The British Self' intelligible as a subject-position from which legislators are speaking. These are the notions of British values, the deployment of masculinist logics of IR, and the use of humanitarian and diplomatic efforts to frame military action as an act of care, de-securitising military *in*action. Whilst attempting to construct the UK as civilised and benevolent, inconsistencies in the UK's responses to atrocity crimes and the arguments of MPs opposing intervention expose the UK to be a simultaneous figuration of normality and/or perversion (Weber, 2016), destabilising the colonial binary between civilised/uncivilised.

In this chapter, I first draw attention to persistent references to British values, which were articulated as a patriarchal responsibility to uphold the good governance of the parts of

the world that are too immature to self-govern (Chakrabarty, 2007; Weber, 2016), reiterating themes explored in earlier chapters. I then note the way in which the case for military action was made through reference to masculinist logics associated with militarism. The first of these was realpolitik logics, which assume the existence of an international balance of power in which the UK's use of force acts as a performance of virility (Ashworth and Swatuk, 1998; Hooper, 2001). The second was through the use of techno-speak (Cohn, 1987), in which the discussion of weapons and bombing campaigns occurs through specialised terminology that is divorced from lived experience. In instances where the traditional tools of British values and militarised language were insufficient to make the case for military intervention, I then highlight the ways in which a holistic approach which encompasses diplomatic efforts and humanitarian aid is presented. In debates where military action is proposed, I argue that notions of diplomacy and humanitarianism are used to present military action as an act of care, akin to the care received by people who are incapable of looking after themselves, such as children or mentally unwell people. In instances where military action was not proposed, I argue that diplomacy and humanitarian aid are used to de-securitise the UK's response (Waever, 1995), relegating it to a non-military realm of politics as normal.

Finally, looking at the ways in which narratives of resistance operate throughout the debates in question, I then analyse the discursive strategies deployed by MPs opposing intervention. These included highlighting the UK's inconsistent morality in relation to oppressive regimes, the absence of sufficient proof to make the case for the use of force, and the possibility of unintended consequences resulting from deploying force. Cumulatively, these narratives of resistance appeared to be effective in instances where the UK is lacking in international support for action, or empirical evidence of the causes of atrocity crimes. Situating these narratives of resistance within a broader context, I draw upon Bilgiç's (2018) analysis of European sovereignty and apply this to the selectivity of British interventionism,

and the violence that is imbricated in saviourism. This, in turn, helps me to destabilise the normal/perverse and self/other binary (Weber, 2016; Said, 1978) that runs throughout House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention. Outlining these themes in order, this chapter explores how 'The Self' is articulated in UK debates on humanitarian intervention, and the way in which this results in an incoherent figuration of normality and/or perversion (Weber, 2016).

British Values and the Fight for Freedom

When British politicians make a major foreign policy speech, from World War Two to the Falklands War, the Iraq War, and more recent humanitarian interventions, there is a tendency to invoke a similar script. Within this script, Britain is depicted as bravely standing up for freedom, and reluctant but unafraid to use violence in the defence of freedom, democracy and civilisation. Juxtaposed against 'The British Self' is often an evil tyrant who must be defeated, or else the British way of life will be jeopardised. Tracing specifically how this narrative runs through the debates in question, here I explore how British values are articulated by the UK Government and MPs who support its position.

A key argument for humanitarian intervention, entailing the use of violence, is that of upholding British values. Within this frame, the UK's responsibility to act stems from its mature masculine (Ashley, 1989; Hooper, 2001; Weber, 2016; Parpart and Zalewski, 1998) and race-less/White (Henderson, 2013; Howell and Montpetit, 2020; Sabaratnam, 2020) identity, and the perceived immaturity and irresponsibility of racially darkened and infantilised others (Chakrabarty, 2007; Weber, 2016). This is particularly apparent in the 2011 debate on Libya (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), and to a lesser extent in all other debates which discuss the possibility of military action (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013; Hansard HC Deb 26th September 2014, Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015; Hansard HC Deb, 16th April

2018). Dominant arguments throughout these debates make the case for intervention on the basis of Orientalist accounts of identity, as opposed to considering the practical chances of success 'on the ground'. They also frame international rules and norms as universally benevolent, overlooking the ways in which they uphold global economic and political inequality between "the West" and "the Rest" (Tully, 2008).

In the debate on UNSCR 1973 (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), the U.N. Security Council Resolution which authorised the use of force against the Gaddafi regime, frequent references are made to the notion of British values as a key justification for humanitarian intervention. For example, in responding to accusations that there is no British interest in getting involved in Libya, Jim Dowd argued that the British people are "not the kind of people who pass by on the other side of the road" and concludes that, on the balance of risk, taking action is preferable over not acting (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, cols. 729-730). This statement recognises the significant risks associated with the deployment of force and uses British national pride to convince other members to support him, rather than exploring, in depth, the technical risks and chances of success associated with the commissioning of violence. This statement also implies that the British state is exceptional in its capacity to not only self-govern, but to govern on behalf of humanity. This framing of humanitarian intervention as an act of care and responsibility, supporting the health and wellbeing of populations in the Global South, again reflects the colonial logics of the civilising mission (Schlag, 2011; Quinton-Brown, 2020), a theme which runs through all of the debates in question.

Also associating the intervention with British values, in closing his remarks Philip Lee used an anecdote about a student in Syria who attends the British Council, and views it as a "bubble of oxygen" due to it providing space for self-expression (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 748). It is specifically this conversation, Lee argues, which encouraged him to

support the motion on humanitarian grounds (ibid). This implies that it is the importation of British culture, and the perceived freedom that this provides, that fundamentally legitimises the operation, rather than the very specific mandate of protecting civilians in Benghazi listed in the U.N. resolution. Furthermore, the fact that Lee uses anecdotal evidence from Syria rather than Libya, as well as discussing the Middle East in general terms throughout his statement (ibid), is indicative of an Orientalist (Said, 1978) mind-set which sees the Middle East as a homogenous and unstable region, and considers British engagement in the Middle East in identarian rather than practical terms. This is a perspective that is reproduced throughout the debates in question, which feature extensive references to the link between military action and British national pride.[68] This is reflective of a long history of jingoism and racism in the constitution of Britishness (El-Enany, 2020; Khan, 2021; Trafford 2020), which has endured long after the UK has had the financial or military means to underpin this identity. It is also this idea which underpins frequent references to Britain "punching above its weight" in government discussions of British foreign policy, with this idea increasingly coming under fire in the media in the wake of perceived foreign policy failures, such as Brexit and the Western withdrawal from Afghanistan (Powell, 2017; Toynbee, 2021).

In conjunction with discussing intervention as being a product of the kind of country Britain is, it is also discussed as being the best route to ensuring an international system with checks and balances. For example, in making the case for military action against ISIL in Iraq, Ed Miliband cited Robin Cook's resignation speech in which he called for a world order governed by rules and multilateral agreements, rather than unilateral action (Hansard Personal Statement, 17th March 2003, col. 726). As opposed to making an argument for restraint, as Cook did, Miliband argued that intervention against ISIL meets these criteria and is the best

[68] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 708, col. 739, col. 782; Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1430, col. 1434, col. 1441, col. 1459; Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1261, col. 1268, col. 1276, col. 1346; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 383, col. 405-406, col. 418, col. 429.

way of ensuring a world order governed by rules (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1274). In this sense, he frames Cook's normative view of world politics as a benchmark that should be achieved for military action to occur. Similarly, David Cameron and Theresa May argued throughout the 2013 and 2018 debates, respectively, that the national interest lies precisely in standing up for the global rules and standards that keep us safe (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013; Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018).

Such a perspective sees international rules, checks and balances as a universally benevolent and useful system which ensures civil behaviour between states, and frames the UK as performing the role of a charitable/benevolent patriarch in upholding global order, without which a state of nature (e.g. see Locke (1997), Hobbes (1651)) in which the weak (including womenandchildren (Enloe, 1990)), would struggle to survive. In particular, in line with the tropes discussed thus far in the thesis, they could be threatened by rogue actors such as brutal dictators and terrorists, who seek to roll back the liberal progress that has been achieved in world politics through the establishment of rules, norms, checks and balances by states that are perceived as responsible, such as the UK. This is fundamentally challenged by Tully (2008), who argues that it represents an "informal and interactive" postcolonial form of imperialism. With the end of formal colonialism, Tully argues, came the emergence of "nominally sovereign, yet dependent Indigenous governments in a global network of free trade imperialism", dominated by hegemonic great powers and their transnational corporations (2008, p.196). This reflects, to an extent, the perspective forwarded in dependency theory (Dos Santos, 1970) and world systems theory (Wallerstein, 1974), which argue that the international system is fundamentally defined by the economic exploitation of "the rest" by "the West".[69] This reflects a form of rational masculinity, defined by homoeconomicus cost/benefit

[69] See also Escobar (1995); Quijano (2007), Quijano and Ennis (2002), Mignolo (2002; 2009) for further analyses of the ongoing coloniality of IPE.

principles and rooted in Sylvia Wynter's (Western bourgeois) ethnoclass conception of the human (2003, p.260).

Whilst the norms in discussion, in relation to humanitarian intervention, are generally not economic, the depiction of a worldview in which international rules and norms are seen as universally benevolent is indicative of the UK's position as an architect of what Tully (2008) terms postcolonial imperialism. Whilst some of the rules and norms that constitute IR are undoubtedly beneficial, such as the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, there are nuances within this system that are not sufficiently explored by those who use the protection of these norms to make the case for intervention. These global norms include the economic inequality that is built into the foundations of the IMF and its historic use of SAPs, which were introduced to facilitate the cheap export of raw materials and labour from the Global South, whilst creating dependency on the Global North for manufactured goods (Cox, 1987; Dos Santos, 1970; Wallerstein, 1974). It is also inherent to the structure of the UN Security Council, which gives a hugely disproportionate amount of power to the Global North, whilst neglecting the permanent representation of Africa, South America or Oceania.

Those advocating the protection of global norms such as the prohibition of chemical weapons also fail to acknowledge the hypocrisy of the UK in performing the role of a responsible and benevolent global actor. Such a role is inconsistent with the UK's possession of nuclear weapons and moves to increase the stockpile of these WMDs, ending decades of disarmament policy (Kristensen and Korda, 2021). In this context, to frame the UK as a benevolent defender of norms, which are cast as universally good, perpetuates international systems of Western domination that were established in the wake of the Second World War. It is also evidence of the way in which Orientalist stereotypes regarding (in)capacity for self-government construct reality in line with UK foreign policy interests, as opposed to being a neutral communication of an external reality. Such stereotypes continue to bring race into

existence, depicting racially-darkened populations (Weber and Leigh, 2018) as immature, incapable of functioning as a proper state, and as such feminised in relation to the mature, masculine and white (assumed to be race-less) self. As I have illustrated in my earlier chapters, such understandings are made intelligible through the construction of queer and racialised cultural figures, such as 'The Brutal Dictator' and 'The ISIL Terrorist', with the binary between perverse others and the normality of the 'British Self' (Weber, 2016) enacted through violence (Shepherd, 2006; Vernon, 2021). This in turn enables for the occurrence of economic exploitation, humanitarian intervention, and for Orientalist stereotypes (Said, 1978) to appear as though they are true. In this sense, arguments which use British values to make the case for humanitarian intervention continue the task that was started by the architects of IR; to create a world politics governed by the principles of White supremacy (Anievas et. al, 2014; Sabaratnam, 2020).

Masculinist Logics of IR

Drawing upon military logics is possibly the most explicit way in which MPs (re)produced logics of hyper-masculinity in their arguments for humanitarian intervention. Firstly, this came in the form of arguments relating to the UK's military capacity, which saw military action as an obligation due to the UK's possession of military hardware and expertise, and which located the use of violence within the abstract context of the balance of power, as opposed to lived experiences of violence on the ground. Secondly, masculine logics emerged in discussions of the equipment that was used in strikes, with these discussions akin to groundbreaking feminist IR scholar Carol Cohn's (1987) observations about the pervasive character of technospeak in the discourses of defence intellectuals. Cumulatively, these methods of discussing humanitarian intervention draw deeply upon realist understandings of international relations,

generating a worldview defined by suspicion and an increased likelihood of violence (e.g. see Hooper, 2001; Zalewski and Parpart, 1998).

The extent to which the dominant logics of international relations (re)produce masculine logics has long been a core focus of feminist IR scholars, who seek to challenge (neo)realist understandings of world politics (e.g. see Waltz, 1990), which fundamentally depend upon the principle of upholding national security. Writing within this feminist tradition, J.A. Tickner traces (neo)realist readings of war and national security from the level of the individual, to the level of the state, and to the level of the international system (1992). The individual, within this frame, has historically been understood as male, in part due to men's fighting roles during wartime (1992, p.28), and contemporary understandings of the state as a unitary, ahistorical and abstract actor are rooted "privilege characteristics associated with the Western construction of masculinity" (1992, p.31). The international system, then, is one in which wars are waged against an exterior other, with the persistent drive towards conflict often presented in gendered terms "such as the necessity of standing up to aggression rather than being pushed around or appearing to be a sissy or a wimp" (1992, p.33). All of these factors reproduce a situation in which war is inevitable, and it is by building upon these theoretical insights that this section of the chapter interrogates the nexus between national security, militarism and masculinity.

Advocating a quick and effective international response to violence by the Gaddafi regime, David Cameron argued that it was solely the Western powers of the US, UK and France that could provide this, providing an explanation for the absence of planes from Arabic countries in the creation and enforcement of a no-fly zone over Libya (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 702, col. 706). Repeating much of the same argument in the debate on airstrikes against the Syrian regime (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013), when asked why responsibility

fell to Britain as opposed to Syria's Arab neighbours, Cameron argued that it was the unique military capabilities of the UK that meant it had an obligation to take part (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1430). Such arguments[70] imply that it is the possession of weapons that justifies the use of violence, rather than the merits and drawbacks of violence being considered in their own right. This is a deeply problematic discourse that is likely to result in repeated uses of violence given that the UK has, at the time of writing, the fourth-largest defence budget in the world and maintains a high level of combat readiness, including a permanent forward operating base at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, specifically designated for strategic operations in the Middle East (Royal Air Force, 2021).

Alongside using the UK's military capabilities to justify the use of violence, frequent references are made in the 2015 Syria debate to the UK's international reputation, and the denigration of this reputation that is likely to result from its failure to commission violence. For example, in making the case for the expansion of airstrikes against ISIL from Iraq into Syria, David Cameron explicitly argued the UK's reputation is on the line. He stated;

> There was a recent incident in which Syrian opposition forces needed urgent support in their fight against Daesh. British Tornadoes were eight minutes away, just over the border in Iraq—no one else was close—but Britain could not help, so the Syrian opposition forces had to wait 40 minutes in a perilous situation while other coalition forces were scrambled. That sort of delay endangers the lives of those fighting Daesh on the ground, and does nothing for our reputation with our vital allies (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 330).[71]

Given that various MPs highlighted the oversupply of coalition fighter jets in relation to the small number of targets on the ground (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 366, col. 342, col. 394), this incident appears to be an isolated one, used to make the case for the expansion of air strikes. It therefore hinges significantly on the idea of the UK possibly looking bad to the US and France as a reason for legitimising violence. This argument un-

[70] See also Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1298, col. 1354; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 329, col. 406.
[71] See also Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 405-406 for a further argument for legitimising violence on the basis of the UK's reputation.

problematically reproduces a realist view of IR that is defined by the balance of power,[72] in which a country's military capabilities and willingness to defend itself or its allies are of paramount importance. The logic follows that if the UK fails to step up to the calls of its allies, whether or not the material situation on the ground depends on it, the UK will be deemed to be a feminised second-rate power, perceived as constrained in its ability to project military force outside of its own borders. Within this frame, masculinist posturing is everything (e.g. see Enloe, 2007; Hooper, 2001; Shepherd, 2009; Zalewski and Parpart, 1998).

A similar variation of this argument comes from Steve Double, who argued that "Our people have already been killed on the beach in Tunisia, and British people were caught up in the attacks in Paris—and it will not end there. This is our fight, and I believe that we should stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies." (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 412). Articulating the fight against ISIL in terms of standing with our allies in the wake of the Paris attacks reflects neoliberal institutionalist understandings of collective security (Emerson and Ordeshook, 1991), in which an attack on one ally constitutes an attack on all allies. Accepting the neorealist premise of structural uncertainty in the context of the international balance of power, neoliberal institutionalists advocate the implementation of a range of measures that aim to reduce the likelihood of conflict. This notably includes international institutions, such as the UN and the IMF, which are seen as facilitating cooperation, economic interdependence, and a greater understanding of the intentions of other states (Keohane, 2005). Whilst undoubtedly an improvement on neorealist hawkism, such mechanisms still accept the existence of anarchy as a foundational principle in IR, as well as perpetuating the underdevelopment of the Global South through IFIs (Cox, 1987; Dos Santos, 1970; Wallerstein, 1974), as previously discussed. Furthermore, they have actively contributed towards the proliferation of warfare in practice, most prominently in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which formed the two key offensive

[72] E.g. see Morgenthau (1963), Mearsheimer (1990; 2001), Waltz (1964; 1979; 1990).

campaigns of the War on Terror. These were both lengthy conflicts based upon flawed evidence and an abstract notion of freedom, rooted in Islamophobia and the notion of civilisational conflict, as articulated by the United States (Puar, 2007; Rahman, 2014; Richter-Montpetit, 2007; Weber, 2016). This resulted in NATO supporting the invasion of Afghanistan due to the US invoking article five, in which an attack on one member constitutes an attack on all, and the UK supporting the US-led invasion of Iraq on the basis of faulty evidence about the existence of weapons of mass destruction.

As well as being inattentive to lived experiences of violence, dominant understandings of IR which are rooted in the balance of power reproduce an Anglo-American form of hegemonic masculinity which exists in a "glamorous international arena that is symbolically separated off from the rest of society as an all-male sphere" (Hooper, 2001, p.219). As previously discussed, it is by constructing 'the international' as an abstract and obscure realm of violence and militarism that the discipline and practice of IR continues to reproduce masculinist views of world politics. Within this sphere, it is comparing the size and virility of your military to another states that takes precedence. Furthermore, it is specifically by drawing upon these perspectives that pro-interventionist MPs make the case for the British state's use of violence in the debates in question.

A second key way in which pro-interventionist MPs articulated the logics that supported their case for intervention was through the use of highly specialised and technical military language. Reflecting the technospeak that Carol Cohn identified in her seminal piece *Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals* (1987), this language constructs its own sexy and exciting reality that is divorced from the lived experiences of warfare.

In opening the debate on intervention in Libya, Cameron gave an overview of the action that he had sanctioned;

> On Saturday, British forces went into action over Libya. The first British cruise missiles were fired from HMS Triumph at 7 pm. Subsequently, RAF Tornados were deployed in several missions. This marked the beginning of our involvement in an international operation, working with the US and others at the request of Arab nations to enforce the will of the United Nations. In line with UN resolution 1973, there were two aims to these strikes. The first was to suppress the Libyan air defences and make possible the safe enforcement of a no-fly zone. The second was to protect civilians from attack by the Gaddafi regime. Good progress has been made on both fronts. I can announce to the House today that coalition forces have largely neutralised Libyan air defences and that, as a result, a no-fly zone has effectively been put in place over Libya. It is also clear that coalition forces have helped to avert what could have been a bloody massacre in Benghazi. In my view, they did so just in the nick of time. Today, I can confirm that RAF Typhoon jets have been deployed to a military base in southern Italy within 25 minutes flying time of the Libyan coast, and two Typhoons will be helping to patrol the no-fly zone this afternoon (Hansard HC Deb, Monday 21st March 2011, col. 700).

This statement uses technical language to describe military hardware (e.g. HMS Triumph, RAF Tornados and RAF Typhoons), uses verbs such as fired and neutralised, and lists objectives such as enacting UN resolution 1973, suppressing Libyan air defences, putting a no-fly zone in place and supporting an international coalition, notably including the US. This set of discourses is testament to one of Cohn's most insightful but controversial statements; that discussing nuclear weapons is fun. In discussing the depersonalised language of nuclear weapons, Cohn notes that the terminology associated with them is racy, sexy and snappy, giving a sense of control that infuses one's relation to the material and of mastering the fear associated with nuclear war (1987, p.704). This observation can certainly be applied to the intervention in Libya, which uses technical language to frame the UK as a sleek, decisive and virile actor, willing to use its wide range of military hardware in order to uphold its national interest. This narrative is destabilised by looking at alternative narratives that have been written in the wake of the intervention.

One alternative narrative of the Libya intervention is the following, which is from the Belfer Centre at Harvard University;

> The biggest misconception about NATO's intervention is that it saved lives and benefited Libya and its neighbors. In reality, when NATO intervened in mid-March 2011, Qaddafi already had regained control of most of Libya, while the rebels were retreating rapidly toward Egypt. Thus, the conflict was about to end, barely six weeks

> after it started, at a toll of about 1,000 dead, including soldiers, rebels, and civilians caught in the crossfire. By intervening, NATO enabled the rebels to resume their attack, which prolonged the war for another seven months and caused at least 7,000 more deaths (Kuperman, 2019).

This statement highlights the conditions on the ground, as opposed to using abstract military language. Furthermore, it explicitly highlights the impact of the NATO intervention in terms of the prolongation of conflict and thousands more deaths, including civilians. Whilst it could be argued that hindsight provides all manner of insights that are not possible prior to action, the focus on deaths that occurred is qualitatively different from Cameron's aforementioned statement. That being said, even this account still uses a grand total of deaths to quantify the impact of the intervention.

Focusing explicitly on lived experiences of conflict is an extract from the 2018 UN Human Rights Council Report on Myanmar. Describing the commencement of clearing operations against the Rohingya in Rakhine State, it states; "That day felt like the last day of this world, as if the whole world was collapsing. I thought judgment day had arrived" (2018, p.8). Rather than using abstract militaristic language, or a quantitative tally of deaths, as the previous two did respectively, this statement is a direct account of the lived experience of violence, articulating this in deeply emotional and personal terms. This in turn enables the reader to empathise with the speaker, and to attempt to imagine how they would feel in the same situation. Of course, a victim of violence's viewpoint is always going to be different to that of the actor responsible for the commissioning of violence, with the former likely highlighting the impact of this violence, and the latter often trying to justify it ethically. That being said, the language of the two statements here do not even exist within the same lexicon. This highlights the difference between the language that is used to describe violence in an everyday sense, and the language that states use when this violence is conducted within 'the international', perceived as a realm of strategic decision making. Consider the difference, for example, between a victim and and perpetrator's accounts of violence in a court case. Whilst

they are likely to disagree, at least their accounts will clearly be about the same event. In the conduct of international relations, state accounts are completely divorced from the realities of violence in order to sanitise and legitimise this violence. As such, the contrast between these three statements illustrates how depersonalised language, military technospeak (Cohn, 1987) or quantification can obscure the deeply damaging lived experiences of violence, regardless of the intentions of this violence.

Also discussing military action that had taken place prior to the House being convened, Theresa May outlined the measures that she had sanctioned against the Assad regime in 2018. In this statement, she described the action as "a limited, targeted and effective strike that would degrade Syrian chemical weapons capabilities and deter their future use, and with clear boundaries that expressly sought to avoid escalation" (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 41). Such arguments reflected those used by David Cameron in 2013, which stressed the discrete aim of action in deterring the use of chemical weapons (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1425), but failed to convince MPs to support the government, which helps to explain why Theresa May did not approach the house for a vote ahead of military action.

In the context of widespread opposition to military action, May's statement framed action as restrained and responsible, using the minimum amount of force possible. This set of technical discourses almost identically reflects the professional discourses that Cohn notes were used by US defence intellectuals in the 1980s, in which they discussed nuclear warfare in terms of "first strikes", "limited nuclear war" and "minimum deterrent posture" (Cohn, 1987, p.690). Such language is of course familiar to UK Government officials, most prominently in justifying the existence of the hugely controversial trident missile system as a minimum nuclear deterrent, in order to prevent rogue states and terrorist organisations from attacking the UK (Hansard HC Deb, 18th July 2016, col. 559). The deployment of these same militarised logics to justify the bombing of the Assad regime in 2018 conveys a familiar image of reluctant

patriarchal responsibility. Upon closer inspection, the intertextuality between this discourse and those that support the existence of trident exposes it to be a cynical attempt to frame military aggression as necessary in the context of an anarchic international system.

Cumulatively, realist logics which justify force by appealing to the balance of power, and those which discuss action in terms of military technospeak (Cohn, 1987) perpetuate masculinist, state-centric and conflictual understandings of world politics (Enloe, 2007; Hooper, 2001; Shepherd, 2009; Weber, 2016). This is because they depict the international as an anarchic realm in which the use of force is an unfortunate but necessary way to achieve the common good and the UK's national interest, which are presented as being unitary and identical. Obscuring the lived experiences of violence, this abstract language allows the UK to continue to use force in order to maintain its colonial identity and influence in relation to the Middle East, whilst maintaining the veil of legitimacy.

Humanitarian and Diplomatic Aims

The final, and arguably most crucial area in which the UK Government and those supporting it reproduced neo-colonial logics of masculinity, defined by the simultaneous deployment of narratives of violence and/or saviour (Bilgiç, 2018; Weber, 2016), was in the strategic use of humanitarian[73] and diplomatic aims. After the intervention in Libya was highly criticised for failing to provide post-conflict reconstruction, the airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria were presented as an act of care through reference to the broader humanitarian and diplomatic aims that the UK was pursuing. Furthermore, as previously discussed in the case of airstrikes against the Syrian regime in 2018, these were described as being tactically limited to the prevention of the use of chemical weapons, meaning that the UK did not have to commit to a broader

[73] Humanitarian aims here refers to the practice of giving aid, such as food, water, vaccines and shelter. This is distinct from the term humanitarian intervention, which is used to refer to the use of force to protect civilian populations from mass violence and atrocity crimes.

transformation of society, entailing humanitarian efforts. This argument built upon those previously established by David Cameron in 2013, in particular, which cited a doctrine of humanitarian intervention that paradoxically attempted to depoliticise the UK's responsibility for post-conflict reconstruction. In the case of Myanmar (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018), however, diplomatic and humanitarian efforts were used to de-securitise military *in*action (Waever, 1995). This is reflective of a colonial understanding of subjectivity which excludes populations in the Global South (Wynter, 2003), enabling decisions about responding to mass violence to be reduced to economic cost/benefit analysis (Lemke, 2001).

The 2011 debate on intervention in Libya featured little mention of humanitarian efforts in addition to the use of military force. When asked by Geoffrey Clinton-Brown about the focus the UK Government was placing on post-conflict reconstruction (Hansard, HC Deb 21st March 2011, col. 710), David Cameron argued that "because we are saying that there will not be an invasion and that there will not be an occupation, we must have a different sort of plan—a much more international plan with a greater role for the UN, the EU and aid agencies, all of which we will support" (ibid). This statement attempts to shift responsibility for post-conflict reconstruction away from the British State and towards the international community, on the basis that military action is now occurring under the authority of the UN Security Council. This reflects Foster et. al's understanding of depoliticisation, which extends Burnham's largely economistic understanding (2001) to the placing of blame, responsibility or decision-making "at one remove" (2014, p.230). By placing responsibility, authority and accountability for the intervention beyond the government and with external organisations, any fallout becomes their problem primarily, with the UK Government placing itself in a secondary and supportive role. This is testament to Chandler's analysis of Libya as marking the demise of the R2P mechanism, as the responsibilities of international preventative action and post-conflict reconstruction, essential to "sweeten the pill of Western military intervention in the 1990s and 2000s", were

no longer necessary to garner legitimacy (2015, p.4). Of course, regardless of who you see as responsible for the failure of post-conflict reconstruction, and whether you term the intervention an invasion or not, the de facto failure of the Libyan State after the commissioning of violence by the US, UK and France reflects poorly on both the R2P mechanism and the states who led the intervention. Most evidently, it leaves them open to accusations of reproducing historic patterns of colonial violence in the Middle East (Bilgiç, 2018; Mbembe, 2003; Mohanty, 2011).

It is for this reason that the case for subsequent interventions often drew heavily upon themes of diplomacy and humanitarian aid, presenting military action as part of a broad suite of measures designed to rehabilitate the society in question. Reflecting Connell's understanding of hegemonic masculinity within Western societies, the more brutish and violent aspects of hyper-masculinity are replaced with notions of responsibility and duty in debates where the use of violence was more politically unpopular (2005, p.78). This had the intention presenting the UK's use of force as an act of care, akin to tough love that is given to a child, or care that is given to mentally unwell people. In making the case for airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq, for example, the motion frames intervention as being supportive of the Government of Iraq and being part of a broad international coalition (Hansard HC Deb, 24th September 2014, col. 1255), using the language of diplomacy and care to soften the hard blow of military action. Furthermore, David Cameron argued that he is leading the way in trying to find diplomatic solutions to the crisis, highlighting that he is the first British Prime Minister in 35 years to have met the President of Iran (Hansard HC Deb, 24th September 2014, col. 1262). In making the case for airstrikes against ISIL in Syria, in defiance of the sovereignty of the Syrian regime, Cameron is even more explicit in stating that military action is part of a "comprehensive strategy that also includes political, diplomatic and humanitarian action" (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 324).

Such arguments are reminiscent of decisions taken against the will of a child, on the basis that adults know what is best for them, and that they require coercive, but ultimately benevolent control to 'get them back on the right track'; an understanding of temporality that is organised by linear discourses of heteronormative development (Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005). Similarly, it is akin to pathologising discourses that are applied to mentally unwell people. Deconstructing social discourses that are applied to disabled people, Solvang notes that they are often read through normal/deviant and us/them binaries (2000). Such binaries, in turn, underpin the character and form of care received by disabled people, especially when they are mentally unwell. Discussing the historic (and arguably colonial) institution of the asylum, Michel Foucault notes the way in which it was designed to attribute responsibility for the self-management of 'the madman's' mental illness to him, giving him limited freedom within the confines of the asylum, that is *conditionally* attached to his ability to control behaviours that disturb morality or society (1961, p.246). This institutes a sense of moral responsibility and guilt for deviating from the Enlightenment model of citizens as rational actors (ibid), which we should remember is exclusive of queers and people of colour (Foucault, 1976; Weber, 2016; Phipps, 2021; Wynter, 2003). It is possibly this exclusive understanding of what constitutes 'the human' which continues to hamper the lived experiences of people of colour, with Black people more than four times more likely to be detained under the mental health act than White people in the UK (Mental Health Foundation, 2021).

Such understandings of reinstating 'reasonable behaviour' seem to also be at play in discourses of humanitarian intervention, which hinge upon the idea of deploying a brief use of force to steer the country in question back on track to being a 'good international citizen', in line with co-constitutive racialised (Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015) and heteronormative (Edelman, 2004; Halberstam, 2005) notions of civilisational and sexual progress (Weber, 2016), through discourses of upholding freedom (Foucault, 1980, p.137). This, again, relates

to the argument made in chapter five that the UK assumes the subject-position of a civilised adult, whilst treating countries in the Global South as uncivilised, backwards and infant-like in their capacity for self-government (e.g. see Chakrabarty, 2007; Finn and McEwan, 2013; Studer, 2020), in need of a coercive intervention under the guise of 'care'. Nonetheless, with the motions on airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria being adopted with a significant majority, it is clear that in 2014 and 2015, arguments that stressed the role of diplomatic and humanitarian measures were successful in legitimising the controversial deployment of British forces in the Middle East.

As previously mentioned, the UK Government's position in debates on airstrikes against the Syrian regime in 2013 (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013) and 2018 (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018) attempted to frame the intervention as a limited strike with the specific purpose of preventing the future use of chemical weapons. As such, there was a lack of commitment to the broader transformation of society. In the 2018 debate on the Rohingya Genocide in Myanmar (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018), however, humanitarian aid and diplomatic efforts played a key role in the debate.

The Rohingya Genocide is one of the worst outbreaks of mass violence this century, with over six thousand Rohingya killed in the first month of violence and over seven hundred thousand displaced to neighbouring Bangladesh (BBC News, 2020). Clearly de-securitising the Rohingya Genocide and framing it as a civil conflict in need of a domestic response (Waever, 1995), the UK Government attempted to shift the Rohingya Genocide into the realm of normal politics. This is evidenced, for example, by Mark Field, the minister responsible, praising Bangladesh's generosity in accepting so many Rohingya refugees, and listing the UK's monetary aid donations and diplomatic efforts to influence the Burmese government in a shopping list like manner at the beginning of the debate (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018,

col. 1030-1032). It is also significant that Field did not explicitly label violence against the Rohingya as a genocide, instead stating that "the only path to prosecution for genocide or crimes against humanity is via the International Criminal Court" and highlighting immediate obstacles to this process (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018, col. 1032). Whilst Field did suggest that evidence should be collected for an *eventual* prosecution (ibid), it is politically significant that Field does not unequivocally invoke the term genocide, whilst diverting energy away from processes which can result in its existence being confirmed.

This contrasts with the response we have seen in other debates on atrocity crimes, which all featured a proposed military response. As previously discussed, securitisation is a deeply gendered, racialised and sexualised process, as it is through the deployment of stereotypes of improper racial/sexual/civilisational development that a group are securitised as an existential threat to 'The Self' (Howell, 2014; Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020). Furthermore, militarism is routinely interpreted as a realm of masculine high politics (e.g. see Parpart and Zalewski, 1998; Hooper, 2001), whilst development spending and diplomatic efforts are interpreted as feminised due to their focus on the peaceful resolution of conflict (Towns, 2020). The UK Government's slow response, in holding a front bench-led debate nearly six months after the escalation of genocidal violence in August 2017, the absence of a senior cabinet member leading the debate, and the fact that it didn't end with a vote (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018), all indicate an attempt to frame the genocide as a failure of governance that could be resolved through supportive measures, rather than an atrocity crime in need of a firm international response.

The incoherence of the UK Government's position is clear, given that less lethal outbreaks of violence in the Middle East were framed as an existential crisis in need of significant military action. This incompatibility between the level of violence and the material response proposed by the UK Government is of clear need of further interrogation.

By looking at information on the genocide, such as the UN report that the House of Commons debate in question discussed (UN Human Rights Council, 2018), it can be judged as materially just as violent as other events that have elicited a violent response from the UK. Furthermore, the UK's position as pen-holder for Myanmar in the UN Security Council indicates an enhanced responsibility to take decisive action. Whilst the UK did undoubtedly use its influence to help secure a UN investigation and a UN Security Council presidential statement (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018, col. 1030), these measures are qualitatively different to the UK's response to other atrocity crimes, which entailed a swift military response, either with explicit (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), or implied (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) UN Security Council support, or the by-passing of the UN Security Council where support for military action couldn't be secured (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018). It could even be argued that the commissioning of a report in relation to the Rohingya Genocide, which necessarily entails a delay whilst the investigation occurs, and falls short of a legally-binding UN Security Council resolution, are an international extension of domestic attempts to de-securitise the genocide (Waever, 1995), encouraging the international community to also respond with solely humanitarian aid and diplomacy. This is probably overly-cynical, given the routine difficulty of securing UN Security Council resolutions in the context of difficult relations between Western countries, Russia and China. That being said, it is undoubtedly part of a broader script of international apathy towards genocidal violence against the Rohingya people.

It could be argued that the target population being Muslim, and in turn being assisted by Bangladesh, a Muslim state, meant that the UK did not feel the need to take action. It could also be argued that the lack of action stemmed from the perceived lack of transnational threat. I reject the former position, on the basis that the UK has routinely used force with the stated aim of protecting Muslim populations in the Middle East over the last two decades. The latter

argument, however, does carry weight and relates to the centrality of cost/benefit logics to UK foreign policy. In line with previously discussed (neo)realist masculinist logics of national security (e.g. see Hooper, 2001; Tickner, 1992), it is not ethical concerns that dictate whether or not the state takes military action, but the potential military/material risks and gains of action. An outbreak of mass violence which threatens transnational security is, in turn, likely to be perceived as worthy of action within this framework of analysis.

The clear attempt to desecuritise the genocide through the use of diplomatic and humanitarian discourses therefore indicates that the UK makes decisions on intervention through the deployment of homoeconomicus logics of cost/benefit. This reflects a broader mode of human subjectivity which is globally dominant in the twenty-first century, in which complex ethical/political decisions are often made through reference to cost/benefit logics; a key component of neoliberal governmentality (Lemke, 2001). This notion of neoliberal governmentality can be understood as a product of colonialism due to what Sylvia Wynter terms the (Western bourgeois) ethnoclass conception of the human (2003, p.260), referring to an understanding of human subjectivity rooted in the present techno-industrial and capitalist mode of production (2003, p.317), defined by rationality and homoeconomicus principles. This form of subjectivity, as Quijano and Ennis identify in the "Racism/Ethnicism Complex" (2000), claims to encapsulate all of those who are deemed to be human, but in actuality stems from a very narrow form of subjectivity emerging from the construction of race in the fifteenth/sixteenth century (Wynter, 2003, p.260). This enabled a normative and exclusionary understanding of the "True Christian Self" (Wynter, 2003, p.265), which has shifted over time but continues to exclude poor and racialised populations in the Global South. It is this exclusive view of human subjectivity as belonging to European man that is central to modern liberalism's understanding of the citizen, rendering racism a fundamentally constitutive element of the Western state (Lowe, 2015, p.6). This contests dominant narratives which see racist and fascist

movements, such as the rise of the Nazis in 1930s Germany and the more contemporary election of Donald Trump in the United States, as exceptional to Western civilisation.

More specifically, it is this exclusive view of subjectivity that continues to hold huge sway in contemporary Western culture wars debates, which often emerge as historically marginalised populations attempt to challenge systemic oppression, as occurred in the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. In addition to subjectivity being racialised in order to establish who can and cannot speak, it is also deeply gendered, as evidenced by the arguments made by those who follow anti-gender activists[74] and "gender critical feminists", who base their conception of womanhood on what are perceived as immutable biological differences (Butler, 2021). This argument is often used, in Britain in particular, to frame trans and non-cisgender women as men with nefarious intentions in an effort to exclude them from womanhood, from debates on who counts as a woman, and from (essentialist understandings of) feminism as a movement (Faye, 2021, pp.224-230). The way in which this strategy of framing different groups as being outside of the scope of humanity has been applied over time is indicative of how colonialism operates, attempting to limit one's ethical obligations to groups who challenge the heteronormative and White-supremacist status quo, as well as constraining their ability to speak out and challenge their social exclusion and marginalisation.

Denying racialised populations full subjectivity subsequently enables the application of cost/benefit analysis to decisions on whether to use political or economic resources to respond to mass violence in the Global South. With populations here framed as different to, and inferior to the British body-politic, a region's location, GDP and natural resources become more important than the forms of mass violence occurring there. It is arguably this focus on resources over humanity which informs a desire to intervene in the resource rich and strategically

[74] The Anti-Gender Movement is a loose term which is used to describe international right-wing coalitions that oppose teaching, theorising or learning about gender.

significant Middle East, whilst allowing thousands of people to die in Southeast Asia, deemed to be of less strategic/material value. This is reflective of a broader selectivity in British interventionism, with the UK Government frequently overlooking human rights abuses in countries that it sells arms to, including Saudi Arabia, which uses these against Yemeni civilians (Wearing, 2018). Whilst more indirect than British military action, selling and maintaining arms to Saudi Arabia is indicative of a foreign policy that places greater value in natural resources and material wealth than human life. Whilst this may not come as a surprise to keen observers of British foreign policy, what is surprising is the extent to which this is reflective of a colonial mind-set which actively constructs entire populations as inhumane in order to facilitate this violent process.

The result of this economistic decision-making, in the context of the Rohingya Genocide, is something akin to what Francine Rossone de Paula (2021) terms necrochronopolitics, referring to the act of denying Indigenous populations the ability to reproduce in the future. Whilst Rossone de Paula focuses on mundane or non-exceptional forms of violence, such as the exclusion of certain populations from cultural depictions of the future, genocidal violence prevents targeted communities from reproducing in the future in a more direct way. This is because genocidal violence often draws upon heteronormative stereotypes to render violence meaningful and to prevent the community from reproducing, for example by desecrating the link between sexual intercourse and intimacy through genocidal rape (Vernon, 2021, p.274). In the context of the Rohingya Genocide representing exactly this kind of violence, the UK's failure to commit significant political or financial capital, whether military or non-military, to dealing with the Rohingya Genocide represents neglect on a massive scale. This is akin to Foucault's conception of racism as governing the populations that are allowed to die under biopower (Foucault, 2003, pp. 255–56), with the Rohingya's lives deemed to be unworthy of a securitised response from the highest levels of the UK

Government. Of course, I am not suggesting here that a militarised response is unproblematic, but rather that there is a clear disconnect between the severity of mass violence and the response that it elicits from UK legislators.

Cumulatively, then, it seems as though decisions on humanitarian intervention are governed by the perceived strategic and economic value of the region in which the atrocity crime is occurring, hence extensive interventionism occurring in the Middle East. In the debates on airstrikes against ISIL in the Middle East (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), humanitarian and diplomatic aims are woven into a broader narrative about a comprehensive approach which claims to rehabilitate states and societies that have fallen below the benchmark of civility. In the 2011 debate on UNSCR 1973 (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), and the debates on airstrikes against the Assad regime (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013; Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018), however, the UK Government was able to avoid relying too heavily on narratives of humanitarianism/diplomacy; narratives which entail significant economic and political expenditure. In the former, due to the intervention being multilateral and UN sanctioned, little focus was placed on post-conflict reconstruction due to no particular state accepting responsibility (Chandler, 2015). After the failure of post-conflict reconstruction here, a new imperative to focus on humanitarianism and diplomacy alongside militarism in the Middle East emerged. In instances where these themes were focused on and there was strong international support, the UK Government was able to secure support for the use of military force. In instances where the UK did not have such strong support and argued for a targeted/limited use of force without recourse to a broader transformation of the society in question, however, military force was either rejected by the House of Commons (Hansard HC Deb, 19th August 2013), or the House of Commons was by-passed (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018).

The debate on the Rohingya Genocide (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018), which responded to the UN Human Right's Council's report (2018), contrastingly forwarded a desecuritised response (Waever, 1995), characterised by a playing down of the severity of mass violence, an absence of hyperbolic discourses of sexual and civilisational threat (Howell, 2014; Howell and Montpetit, 2020; Weber, 2016), and a focus on (smaller scale) humanitarian and diplomatic contributions. Alongside measures such as responding to the genocide in a delayed manner and allowing the debate to be led by a junior minister, the use of humanitarian and diplomatic aims here offered logics of normal political engagement. This contrasts with the military response proposed to what was framed as an existential threat, using Orientalist/racist/heteronormative stereotypes, as occurred in all debates on mass violence in the Middle East. Facilitated by the endurance of a White, bourgeois and masculine conception of human subjectivity (Wynter, 2003), this illustrates the selectivity of interventionism according to the neoliberal imperative of cost/benefit analysis and capital accumulation (Lemke, 2001; Lloyd and Wolfe, 2015).

Resisting Depictions of British Benevolence

Whilst dominant narratives throughout the debates in question did frame the UK as a benevolent patriarch, this perspective was far from universally reproduced, and was resisted fiercely by a number of MPs. Testament to this is the way in which MPs from all parties highlighted the selectivity of British interventionism. In conjunction with highlighting this selectivity, those opposing the government narrative argued that the government had insufficient proof to legitimise the commissioning of violence, and that the use of violence was a futile exercise. These discourses of resistance challenge the government's attempts to frame the UK as a responsible, patriarchal actor.

The first key area in which MPs destabilised the government's representation of the UK as a responsible and caring actor was by highlighting the selectivity of British interventionism[75] and British arms sales[76] to regimes with poor human rights records. This was especially apparent in the 2011 Libya debate, with discourses of resistance in subsequent debates often drawing upon specific failures in the intervention that had come before it. Given that this has already been covered in the chapter on 'The Brutal Dictator', in looking at how MPs challenged the stark binary between the pure self/evil other representation here, I will focus on the other key discourses of resistance in this section.

The argument that the government had insufficient proof to legitimise the use of violence was particularly apparent in the 2013 debate on airstrikes against the Syrian regime (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013). Jack Straw, for example, argued that whilst it is likely that the Assad regime was responsible for the use of chemical weapons, that proof was far from unequivocal and that the government risked reproducing the same mistakes as occurred in Iraq (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1451). Straw then went on to note that the proposed British involvement was small, and argued that the government was risking breaching international law just so it can have its hand "on the dagger of international action" (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1489). This argument, calling attention to the keenness of the UK Government for violence, even in situations where the legal basis is unclear, is once again testament to the dominance of an Anglo-American form of hegemonic masculinity in UK foreign policy making (Hooper, 2001, p.219). Furthermore, the fact that Theresa May used Cameron's exact argument about the ability of the UK Government to use force where the national interest is at stake or there is risk of a humanitarian catastrophe, and explain to the

[75] See Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 720, col. 733, col. 748, col. 753, col. 762, col. 775, col. 779-780; Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1468, col. 1475.
[76] See Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 717, col. 747 and 763.

House of Commons after (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 68), is testament to the endurance of this mind-set.

In the 2018 airstrikes in Syria, it is also noteworthy that the UK performed the exact role described by Straw, with the UK deploying solely eight storm shadow missiles as part of a broader US-UK-French operation, lending moral rather than practical support to the operation and the broader doctrine of humanitarian intervention (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 41). This represented a turning point in international law, setting precedent for the use of force for humanitarian reasons outside of the R2P framework (Scharf, 2019; Watkin, 2020). Highlighting an inconsistency between the doctrine of humanitarian intervention, and the government's stated aim of using a limited strike to send a message without trying to end the broader conflict (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 41), Jeremy Corbyn argued that the government fails even the tests it sets for itself (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 44). This again called attention to the inconsistency of the UK's responses to mass violence, and indicates the extreme difficulty now encountered by the UK Government when attempting to launch military action without unequivocal proof and UN Security Council authorisation.

Building upon the argument that there was insufficient evidence to authorise airstrikes, extensive references were made to the unintended consequences that would likely result from airstrikes. This was clear in the 2013 Syria debate which blocked military action in particular (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013), but also to a lesser extent in the 2015 and 2018 debates on intervention in Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015; Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018).

In discussing the possibility of military intervention in Syria, John McDonnell argued that no matter how "surgical" the proposed strike is, it will inevitably result in unintended losses of life (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col 1461). In this sense, McDonnell directly challenges militaristic technospeak (Cohn, 1987) by exposing it to be a discursive means of

obscuring the lived experiences of military action. He then goes on to argue that interventionism invariably prevents peace talks from succeeding, due to it creating an atmosphere of hostility, and denigrating the credibility of the international organisations that are responsible for ensuring global peace (ibid). Here, we can assume that McDonnell is talking about the UN, which Cameron proposed could be bypassed if it failed to support action (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1426), with Russia expected to wield its veto power. Similarly, and somewhat defiantly, then Conservative MP Douglas Carswell argued that British intervention in the febrile environment of Syria could result in retaliatory action, and highlighted links between the Syria conflict and the beginning of World War One (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1492), which stemmed from the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and escalated rapidly. Carswell's implication here is that even a small act of violence can result in rapid escalation, and that the government should prepare for this.

More predictably, Labour MP David Lammy also opposed the government motion, making an emotive case for resisting the urges of liberal interventionism due to the ways in which it can fail if not properly conceived (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1497). Whilst accepting the successes of this project in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, and Libya, he argued that Syria does not reflect any of these situations due to the lack of a clear plan, criteria for judging success, and roadmap for exiting the conflict (ibid). Applying similar arguments to the 2015 debate, Jeremy Corbyn argued that bombing could result in an increased threat of terror attacks on the UK (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015. In this sense, Lammy, Corbyn, and various other MPs[77] implicitly framed military action as the careless dropping of bombs, with little to no appreciation of the implications that such action can have. Furthermore, these arguments were sometimes made alongside the case that British weapons are unlikely to make

[77] See also Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1510; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 388, col. 413.

a significant practical difference to any proposed operation (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 388-399; Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 45). They therefore directly contradict the image of reluctant but competent patriarchal responsibility (Ashley, 1989; Weber, 2016) that the government attempts to convey in its arguments for intervention.

Whilst succeeding in 2013 in defeating the government's proposed roadmap towards intervention and calling attention to hypocrisies and inconsistencies in the government position, arguments which contradicted the government's narrative were unsuccessful in 2014 and 2015. In 2018 (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018), in the context of the house already voting against airstrikes to prevent the use of chemical weapons in 2013, Theresa May authorised a strike on the basis of national security and humanitarian intervention, and approached the house to explain after. This proved hugely controversial, and can possibly explain the UK's extremely limited material contribution to the strikes. In this sense, whilst those resisting intervention were not universally able to win the vote in the House of Commons, they were able to create a terrain of criticism around humanitarian intervention that challenged depictions of the UK as benevolent and fundamentally good.

In addition to the arguments of MPs who resisted interventionism, I contend that the most significant way in which we can learn a significant amount about the identity of the UK is by looking at instances where the UK Government did not attempt to respond to atrocity crimes with the use of force (Hansen, 2000). The lack of action in the case of the Rohingya Genocide, in particular, points towards a selective approach to interventionism more broadly, rooted in neoliberal logics of cost/benefit analysis and capital accumulation (Lemke, 2001; Lloyd and Wolfe, 2015). In particular, the absence of racialised and sexualised depictions of threat in the debate on the situation in Myanmar, despite the material violence committed by the Burmese military being just as severe as that committed in other instances, is indicative of the extent to which 'The ISIL Terrorist' and 'The Brutal Dictator' are discursively constructed

figures. This, in turn, destabilises the binary between normality/perversion, indicating that both 'the self' and 'the other' are simultaneously normal and/or perverse (Weber, 2016), especially when considering the UK government's inconsistent ethics on the use of violence, highlighted by opposing MPs.

Providing some crucial insights into the way in which subjects can figure as simultaneously normal and/or perverse in practice is Bilgiç's (2018) analysis of EU border policies and practice in the Mediterranean, which she argues (re)produce ambivalent neo-colonial masculinity. Drawing, in part, upon Cynthia Weber's reading of the state as a sovereign (heterosexual) man, defined by the inside/outside and order/anarchy binary (2016, p.36), Bilgiç conceives of European sovereignty in terms of masculine ambivalence, rooted in a neo-colonial mindset. This ambivalence, Bilgiç argues, is evidenced by acts of simultaneously killing and saving irregular migrants who are attempting to cross the Mediterranean, as part of the same broader border policy (2018, p.550). These apparent contradictions are the result of European border policy being a biopolitical practice that aims to maximise freedom for White, European travellers, whilst producing racialised migrants as fearsome, disgusting and helpless, in a continuation of colonial logics (ibid). Cumulatively, ambivalence within the EU's border strategy allows it "to reproduce its identity both as the welcoming, loving, hospitable sovereign and as the proactive, aggressive, strong sovereign that secures the hygienic body by producing spatial borders at the sea and detention centers" (Bilgiç, 2018, p.558).[78]

This idea of committing violence through acts of saviourism is also applicable to the analysis of the UK's approach to humanitarian intervention, which varies from context to context, but is routinely rooted in neoliberal logics of capital accumulation (Lloyd and Wolfe, 2015), and the discursive construction of race (Anievas et. al, 2014; Du Bois, 1925; Fanon,

[78] See also Agamben (1995) for further relevant reading on the policing of life and the body-politic.

1987; Sabaratnam, 2020). The violences imbricated in these act of saviourism therefore destabilise the binary between normality/perversion, and indicate that the UK is far from the total embodiment of the former, and that 'The Brutal Dictator' and 'The ISIL Terrorist' are unlikely to be the complete embodiment of the latter.

Clearly, The UK, ISIL and Gaddafi are qualitatively different figures economically, politically and culturally. That being said, analysis of dominant narratives on humanitarian intervention throughout these debates exposes the discursive work that goes into constructing the cultural figures of 'the self' and 'the other' (Said, 1978) as the extreme poles of normality or perversion, ironing out complexities that destabilise this representation. Furthermore, the absence of racialised and sexualised attempts to construct the Tatmadaw (Burmese military) as extremely perverse indicates the selectivity of this process.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that throughout the debates in question, the UK Government and those supporting its position attempted to frame the UK as a benevolent defender of international norms and human rights. This chapter first illustrated this by highlighting the framing humanitarian intervention as being a product of British values, drawing upon Orientalist stereotypes regarding the Global South's capacity for self-governance and a cynical depiction of international norms as being universally beneficial. Beyond this, it noted that discussions of proposed interventions reproduced hyper-masculine understandings of IR (Enloe, 2007; Hooper, 2001; Parpart and Zalewski, 1998), drawing heavily upon the realist notion of the balance of power and militarised technospeak (Cohn, 1987) to separate discussions of violence from the lived experiences of violence. In instances where the UK Government could be criticised as being egoistic in its use or non-use of violence, it observed that the UK's humanitarian aid and diplomatic efforts were often stressed. This presented violence as being

part of a broad suite of measures designed to rehabilitate the society in question, with this resembling discourses coercive care for those incapable of self-care, such as infants and mentally unwell people. Where military action did not occur (i.e. in Myanmar), humanitarian and diplomatic efforts were used to desecuritise the genocide (Waever, 1995), with this indicative of a broader process through which populations in the Global South are understood as outside of the scope of humanity, allowing for the application of neoliberal cost-benefit analysis (Lemke, 2001) to the UK's responses to atrocity crimes. The notable exceptions to this, I argued, were the 2013 and 2018 airstrikes against the Syrian regime, which were specifically focused on the prevention of chemical weapons and used the language of targeted strikes and minimum force to avoid criticism. Beyond this, I highlighted the ways in which opposing MPs contested the idea that the UK is a universally benevolent actor, using these arguments as empirical evidence to destabilise the normal/perverse binary (Weber, 2016). I then explored the notion of violence through saviourism through Bilgic's analysis of European sovereignty (2018), explaining how this relates to the empirical focus of this thesis.

Atrocity crimes often occur in the context of systemic factors stemming from historic colonial exploitation (Dos Santos, 1970; Mbembe, 2003; Wallerstein, 1974), including massive economic inequality, and inter-group social conflict. Furthermore, the UK's responses are, at least in part, governed by racist (Howell and Montpetit, 2020; Sabaratnam, 2020, Wynter, 2003) and economistic logics (Lemke, 2001) that reflect a contemporary iteration of the colonial civilising mission. In this sense, prevailing attempts by the UK Government, and those who support it, to frame the UK as benevolent and altruistic perpetuate a racialised and sexualised worldview in which the UK and the West are framed as the apex of civilisation (Rahman, 2014), whilst rogue actors from the Global South are framed as backwards (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007) and perverse (Puar, 2007; Rao, 2020; Weber, 2016). It is this worldview, and the academic and political silence that continues to surround it (Bhambra,

2017; Smith and Lee, 2015), that evidences the endurance of colonialism in the social fabric of the UK, and in the constitution of IR as a discipline (Anievas et. al, 2014; Howell and Montpetit, 2020; Sabaratnam, 2020), in the supposedly post-colonial twenty-first century. Looking at the broad epistemic framework within which all of the subject-positions discussed thus far are located, the next chapter discusses 'the path to democracy'.

Chapter Nine:

The Universal Path to Democracy

Recognising that the subject-positions, tropes and meanings discussed within the House of Commons debates reflect a broader worldview which enables certain material actions and practices (Doty, 1993; Weber, 2016), this chapter situates the subject-positions discussed thus far within a broad temporal framework that I term 'the path to democracy'. This framework centrally depends upon an understanding of time as progress, rooted in notions of (im)proper civilisational (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015) and sexual (Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005) development, stemming back to early colonialism (Rifkin, 2011; Tallie, 2020). This temporal framework encapsulates the House of Commons debates on humanitarian intervention in question, and I would argue informs a broader worldview that constitutes dominant understandings of Britishness.

Within this framework, Britain and the Global North West are understood as the telos of civilisation (Rahman, 2014), whilst the Global South lags behind, or in some instances is understood as undevelopable (Weber, 2016, p.8). In this sense, 'The ISIL Terrorist', 'The Brutal Dictator' and 'The Self' are personified representations of a British worldview defined by racial hierarchies, hetero/homonormativity (Berlant and Warner, 1998; Duggan, 2003) and the concurrent operation of colonialism and neoliberal capitalism. This worldview is well conceptualised through James Trafford's (2020) understanding of Britishness as a machine fundamentally rooted in White supremacy, which sees itself as having the task of steering the whole of humanity towards civilisation, defined by market economics and liberal democracy. As I have illustrated, viewing Britain as the telos of civilisation is completely incoherent given

historic and ongoing acts of colonial violence in the constitution of Britishness (El-Enany, 2020; Khan, 2021; Trafford 2020), and when violence committed by 'others' in the Middle East is situated within centuries of colonial exploitation and violence. It is for this reason that the UK Government continues to deploy racist and heteronormative stereotypes in foreign policy debates, as to abandon these stereotypes would be to abandon any claim of civilisational and sexual supremacy. I explore how these stereotypes are rendered intelligible through particular temporal and spatial configurations throughout this chapter. Placing more of an emphasis on conceptual frameworks than empirical data, it 'zooms out' from the close reading of *Hansard* that previous chapters have offered and offers a dominant worldview which ties them together.

In making my case, I first look at arguments throughout the debates which frame democracy as the telos of civilisational/sexual development, highlighting the widespread character of this argument, before problematising it through reference to the work of queer and postcolonial scholars. Beyond this, I look at arguments which draw upon the idea of there being a right and a wrong side of history, using this hegemonic articulation of futurity (Rao, 2020) to make the case for intervention. I then highlight the absence of such discourses in the 2018 Myanmar debate, and histories of British colonial violence in order to destabilise hegemonic temporal representations.

Related to these temporal representations, I then turn my attention to spatial representations, which serve as imaginary depictions of civilisational/sexual progress or backwardness. In particular, I focus on the notion of red lines in early debates on humanitarian intervention, the notion of the Arab Street as a site of primitive aspiration for democracy versus the British Street, which is framed as a site of safety that is under threat from dangerous (racialised and sexualised) 'others' (e.g. 'The Brutal Dictator' and 'The ISIL Terrorist').

Looking at the perceived anarchic wasteland from which dictators and terrorists stem, I then analyse representations of Libya as a pariah state in the 2011 debate on UNSCR 1973 (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011) and representations of ISIL-occupied territory as a terrorist caliphate (HC Deb 26th September 2014, Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015). These are akin to understandings of the state of nature that underpinned the initial colonisation of the Global South (Chakrabarty, 2007; Mbembe, 2003, p.23; Ogle, 2015), indicating that spatial representations have always been used to legitimise colonial violence. Such depictions are also significant given that the debates on Libya (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), ISIL in Iraq (HC Deb 26th September 2014) and ISIL in Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015) are those which propose a change in the form of government in the areas in question.

Cumulatively, my analysis throughout this chapter sets out the worldview that underpins dominant understandings of Britishness and Britain's role in the world, characterised by a view of democracy as the only correct system of government, with the West lying at the zenith of human development whilst the rest of humanity lags behind. This closely represents Rostow's modernisation theory, which established the orthodoxy of development theory and practice after World War Two and framed high mass consumerist capitalist economies as the universal end goal for development (1960, pp.4-10). This temporal view of development still very much governs dominant understandings of Global North/South inequalities, and undoubtedly informs decision-making processes on humanitarian intervention.

In this vein, throughout the chapter I look at the way in which a common understanding of temporality and global civilisational/sexual progress encapsulates the entire discourse surrounding humanitarian intervention. Rather than looking at MPs who oppose the government's argument in a section on resistance at the end of the chapter, I look at arguments which support and oppose the government's position throughout, highlighting common understandings of Britain as the telos of civilisation in both of these positions. In this chapter I

am more interested in dominant narratives running through the debates in question, but I do highlight instances in which a significant number of MPs contest this narrative and how this shifts the terrain on which the debate is being conducted. This is especially apparent in relation to notions of right and wrong sides of history and the notion of red lines in relation to the use of chemical weapons. Concluding the chapter, I argue that it is precisely through dominant views of time as progress, which encapsulate all of the debates in question, that the ongoing legacy of colonialism operates.

Democracy as the Telos of Civilisation

The clearest way in which 'the path to democracy' is articulated throughout the debates in question is through the framing of democracy as the telos of civilisational development. Within this frame, the UK is depicted as the vanguard of civilisation, with a moral duty to export democracy to less civilised parts of the world (Bhabha, 1994; Ogle, 2015). Such depictions are clearly incoherent, given the impossibility of achieving the kind of democracy seen in Britain for areas of the Global South that have been subject to colonial exploitation and violence. As well as being based upon racist premises, such understandings of civilisational inequality are also deeply sexualised, with homonationalist logics forming a key element of Western supremacist arguments in the present configuration of world politics (Puar, 2007; Rahman, 2014).

The theme of democracy being the natural end goal of a society's development is most apparent in the 2011 debate on UNSCR (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011). Whilst this debate discussed the authorisation of force to uphold the UN Security Council mandate, the character of the debate frequently went beyond simply upholding the mandate and onto the topic of promoting democracy in Libya. Whilst this is partially explicable due to the intervention being sparked in defence of pro-democracy protestors, and the broader context of the Arab Spring, it

was later argued that the UK, France and the US went beyond the parameters of the mandate to force regime change (Terry, 2015). This helps to explain why there is such a persistent focus on democracy promotion throughout this debate.

Early on in the debate, David Cameron made a direct reference to the idea that the Libyan opposition are striving for the kind of society we have in the UK, defined by "freedom, justice and democracy—the things we take for granted" (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 712). Echoing this sentiment in a more civilising tone, Ben Wallace asked "What role can we play as a broad coalition to ensure that they (the Libyan opposition/rebels) follow the path of liberal democracy and tolerance?" (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 731). This assumes that it is specifically the Western style of democracy, rooted in individualism and a rights-based framework, that the UK needs to ensure its intervention promotes. This statement is problematic in two key ways; firstly, it promotes a style of democracy that has developed from, and reflects, Western civil society and frames it as a one size fits all solution to dictatorships in the Middle East. Secondly, it clearly indicates that it is the criteria of democracy promotion, rather than the sole protection of civilians from atrocity crimes, that is informing decision making.

Almost making a direct reference to the mind-set that I have framed as 'the path to democracy', Jack Straw compared the struggle for democracy in the Middle East to the collapse of the Berlin Wall, arguing it will be more difficult for two key reasons. These, he argued, are the existence of autocrats, such as Gaddafi and Saddam Hussain, and those who seek to use Islam to establish "backward-looking autocracies" (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 733). In this sense, the struggle for democracy is framed in explicitly temporal terms, with dictators and extremists framed as the primitive degenerates that democracy loving citizens and the UK are battling against.

This perspective, which frames Western-style democracy as the universal telos of civilisation (Rahman, 2014), and the end-goal of intervention in Libya, was also reproduced by MPs who do not support intervention throughout the debate. Graham Allen, for example, opposed interventionism on the basis that the Libyan regime was unknown, and therefore risky, given the UK's lack of pre-existing relationship with them. This was articulated in implicitly racialised terms; "It will not be Nick and Dave who take over, but unknown people…we should be careful what we wish for." (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 762). This framed Nick Clegg and David Cameron as a relatively safe pair of hands, despite Allen being in opposition against them, and Libya as a risky, dangerous and unstable part of the world. Part of this danger, it seems implied, stemmed from the foreign-ness of the Libyan opposition, who ostensibly had foreign names and intentions. Similar arguments, which framed liberal democracy as the inevitable end-goal of development and Libya as lagging behind/unable to achieve this goal (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Rao, 2020; Weber, 2016), were reproduced on both sides of the debate,[79] evidencing deep and shared temporal logics.

The 2013 and 2018 debates on airstrikes against the Syrian regime feature far fewer references to the democratic end-goal (or the impossibility of this end goal) for Syrian society. Whilst there were a few brief mentions of the desirability of Western democracy in Syria (e.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1493, col. 1506), the action proposed by the government in these debates was framed as strategic and targeted, rather than aiming for the wholesale transformation of society.

The debates on airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria, however, featured frequent references to the UK's legitimate role in promoting democracy in the region. Given that the former debate responded to a request for assistance from the Iraqi government, and that the latter had broad international support, intervention is frequently framed in distinctly binary

[79] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 705, col. 743, col. 782.

terms. This is typified by Hillary Benn's famous closing statement in the 2015 debate, in which he went against then Leader of the Opposition Jeremy Corbyn's position in supporting airstrikes in Syria. Here, he stated;

> We never have and we never should walk by on the other side of the road. We are faced by fascists—not just their calculated brutality, but their belief that they are superior to every single one of us in this Chamber tonight and all the people we represent. They hold us in contempt. They hold our values in contempt. They hold our belief in tolerance and decency in contempt. They hold our democracy—the means by which we will make our decision tonight—in contempt (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 486).

Like statements from other MPs who supported intervention throughout the debates on ISIL,[80] the battle here is framed as a civilisational one for the lifeblood of British democracy, which will be under threat for as long as ISIL continue to govern territory in the Middle East. This again indicates that the path to democracy is a hegemonic one, with the defence of democracy being a universalist project that is routinely invoked to frame interventionism as just and morally virtuous, in those instances where the UK is engaging in a wholesale transformation of the society in question.

Whilst the battle for democracy promotion may seem to be a benevolent one at first glance, it must clearly be placed in the historical context of European colonial interventionism and contestation in the Middle East, and the Global South more broadly. As Mackert, Turner and Wolf note, liberal democratic theory rests upon ideological concepts of freedom, equality, peacefulness and tolerance, but whilst these concepts may hold true for some citizens of Western liberal capitalist societies, they do not translate to colonial, postcolonial or settler colonial contexts (2022). This is due to these societies being subjected to hundreds of years of colonial oppression, resulting in the cumulative death of hundreds of millions of human beings through the initial process of colonisation, the establishment of Empires of trade, settler colonialism, and today's politics of regime change (ibid). These conditions expose the

[80] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1211, col. 1291; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 400, col. 401, col. 457, col. 462, col. 466.

ideological concepts attached to democratic governance to be a mirage, with liberalism just as violent as the forms of government that preceded it (e.g. see Foucault, 1980, 2003; Mbembe, 2003; Lowe, 2015).

Supporting the idea that hegemonic democratic ideals in IR are mythological, Halperin (2006) provides an account of the traditional story that is used to explain the rise of Europe. In particular, she notes the way in which Europe's origin story depends upon notions of exceptionalism and dynamism; the rapid growth of agricultural productivity, of trade between European towns and cities, and of historical revolutions in science, technology, political/social institutions and intellectual thought (2006, p.45). What is obscured in such accounts is the brutal military expansion that accompanied this series of revolutions, beginning with the Western European military conquest of the continent of Europe, which later expanded to the establishment of overseas colonies (2006, p.46). Central to the legitimisation of such brutality was narratives about the pre-settler barbarism and underdevelopment of these societies (ibid), which is testament to the idea that temporal narratives are, and have always been, central to the colonial project (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015). This is indicative of the deep tensions that lie at the root of development narratives which frame democracy as the telos of civilisation.

Another key tension with narratives that frame democracy as the end goal for societies in the Middle East is the sheer impossibility of achieving a democracy after hundreds of years of colonial interventionism. Even after formal colonialism ended, many post-colonial countries continued to be exploited by the Global North through the extraction of raw materials (Wallerstein, 1974) and economically liberalising structural adjustment policies (SAPs), implemented by international financial institutions such as the IMF (Dos Santos, 1970). It is specifically in response to this economic exploitation that the Dependency School promoted the idea of import substitution industrialisation; the idea that former colonies could establish

barriers to free trade and manufacturing goods that are imported from the Global North (Baer, 1972, pp.95-96). Such policies aimed to, and where implemented in Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan, actually achieved rapid economic development and the concurrent conditions for prolonged democratic governance of various forms. Such economic and political solutions are impossible for the various countries discussed in the debates on humanitarian intervention, which are often characterised by high levels of poverty, conflict and unstable governance. Furthermore, to suggest that Western democracy is the natural goal for these societies is deeply cynical, given that it is the exploitation of the Middle East by these so-called Western democracies that renders democratic governance impossible (Escobar, 1995; Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2009).

Whilst narratives that frame the Middle East as underdeveloped often reflect (either implicitly or explicitly) racialised narratives relating to the society in question not yet being ready for self-governance (Chakrabarty, 2007, p.22), it is important to note that these narratives are often sexual as well. Firstly, this is due to understandings of time as progress being rooted in heteronormative ideals, oriented around the normalisation of heterosexual reproduction and ways of living that are compatible with capitalism (e.g. see Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005; Love, 2007). Moreover, in both early (e.g. see Rifkin, 2011; Tallie, 2020) and ongoing colonialism (e.g. see Puar, 2007; Rahman, 2014), sexual stereotypes were/are deployed in order to bring racial differences into existence. The framing of Muslim cultures as homophobic, in particular, represents a double bind for the countries in question, in that they can either move towards implementing LGBTQ+ rights, and are perceived as following in the footsteps of Western democratic ideals, or they can choose not to implement such rights, often as a protest to Western interventionism (e.g. see Pratt, 2007), and are framed as uncivilised. Cumulatively, then, it is clear that arguments that attempt to legitimise intervention on the basis

of promoting democracy rely upon a colonial temporal script, in which the West is cynically presented as representing unproblematic democratic possibilities for the society in question.

In conjunction with looking at instances in which military intervention was presented as a viable option, it is also telling to look at the debate on Myanmar (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018), in which non-military responses were proposed to the Rohingya Genocide. In his opening statement, government minister Mark Field presented the journey towards an open, democratic society as one that Burma is undertaking, and which the UK has a moral duty to support (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018, col. 1033). In this sense, the same temporal logics of 'the path to democracy' are still present, but the UK is framed as supporting the natural development of Myanmar, rather than intervening to effect democratic change. Also interesting in this debate, and stemming largely from the assumption of a natural progression towards democracy, is the surprise that various members express at the failure of democracy to develop and the emergence of genocidal violence in Myanmar (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018, col. 1034, col. 1038). Such reflections clearly fail to recognise the role of British colonialism in setting the conditions for genocide, for example in establishing rigid ethnic boundaries between different groups within the Burmese body-politic (Charney, 2009, p.8); divisions that were later weaponised by the Tatmadaw[81] and used to secure their place as protectors of society. This is, once again, indicative of the inconsistencies between being a formerly colonised country and the narrative of Western-style democracy being the natural end point for the development of all countries around the world.

Running throughout the debates in question is a temporal script in which the UK represents maximum social and political development, whilst the Global South lags behind. It is in the attempt to civilise these parts of the world that action (whether military or non-military)

[81] The Tatmadaw are the Burmese military junta, who have always held a significant amount of power in the country's constitution, but have formed an increasingly totalitarian government in recent years. This trend has most recently featured a military coup and the detention of the country's elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi.

is taken, reproducing the idea that the UK (and the West more broadly) have a paternalistic responsibility to lead the whole of humanity towards good governance. This narrative, as I have set out, is deeply racialised *and* sexualised (Weber, 2016). It also obscures the UK's violent exploitation of its former colonies, with this violence producing the material conditions in which it is difficult, if not impossible, for democracy to develop.

The 'Right' Side of History

Linked, in part, to the idea that all of humanity is at various stages on the universal path to democracy is the idea that there is a right and a wrong side of history. With the 'right' side of history often dictated by those in the Global North West, at least in the current configuration of world politics, this is indicative of the continued existence of colonialism. It is specifically for this reason that countries such as the UK can frame themselves as civilised and benevolent, despite hundreds of years of colonial exploitation, slavery and violence that has resulted in the death and disappearance of hundreds of millions of Indigenous people (Mackert, Turner and Wolf, 2022). Drawing in particular upon the work of Rahul Rao (2014; 2020) and Cynthia Weber (2016), here I unpack the ways in which framing an intervention as being on 'the right side of history' represents a hegemonic articulation of futurity that obscures histories of colonial violence.

Throughout the debates in question, there are frequent references to historical legacies as a key justification for taking action. In his statement to the House as Leader of the Opposition, Ed Miliband cited the duty, history and values that Britain has, meaning that it must act against Colonel Gaddafi (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 718). This sentiment was supported by Stephen Gilbert, when he stated that we must "put our shoulder to history and stand with those who want the most basic rights" (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col.

765). These statements clearly frame Britain as the defender of Middle Eastern populations in their struggle for democratic rights.

A slightly different iteration of this story comes in the 2013 and 2018 debates on airstrikes against the Syrian regime, in which the government argued that Britain must act to uphold the ban on the use of chemical weapons. Making this case, David Cameron argued;

> It is about a treaty the whole world agreed to almost 100 years ago, after the horrors of the first world war. The question before us is this: is Britain a country that wants to uphold that international taboo against the use of chemical weapons? My argument is that yes, it should be that sort of country. (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1430)

As we have seen with the logics of the civilising mission that run throughout the debates in question, Britain is framed as being on the 'good' side of international rules and norms that ensure civil and proper behaviour. Brutal dictatorships such as the Assad regime, then, are framed as belonging to the pre-civilisational wasteland that we would descend back into if it weren't for rules and norms such as the international ban on the use of chemical weapons.

Similarly, in the 2018 debate during which Theresa May retrospectively explained airstrikes against the Syrian regime, May echoed the sentiment expressed by Cameron in 2013. Here, she stated that it is in Britain's national interest to uphold the global norms which prevent the use of these weapons, linking their use in Syria to a global context in which the use of these weapons becomes normalised, and the novichok attack in Salisbury in 2018 (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 42).[82] Again, this statement frames Britain as a civilising force, holding back the tide of reckless behaviour by rogue actors. Whilst the use of chemical weapons is clearly something that should be prevented, what is problematic about narratives surrounding their use is their overly-identarian character. Rather than plainly weighing up the potential loss of life and strategic benefits of an air strike, these details are censored in the name of national

[82] See also Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 71 and col. 74 for further links between the use of chemical weapons in Salisbury and elsewhere.

security, and the public debate becomes one about the country that Britain was, is and should be; a discursive terrain that is far removed from the lived experiences of warfare.

In the debates on air strikes against ISIL in Iraq (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), temporal logics that invoke the notion of Britain's history being a key reason for intervention are especially apparent. As previously discussed, ISIL are interpreted as the ultimate figure of sexual and civilisational barbarism due to their methods of violence, their religion and their lack of statehood. Within this frame, the fight between (what are depicted as) Britain's historic values of freedom, tolerance and democracy and ISIL is one to the death. Making this case in response to the Iraqi Government's request for assistance, Nigel Dodds asked "with our history of fighting for freedom, democracy, justice and human rights, how can we as a nation turn our backs and reject such a plea?" (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1291). Similarly, Byron Davies argued that there is an imminent need to destroy Daesh, quoting Eisenhower on the necessity of taking action, rather than lying down "on the tracks of history waiting for the train of the future to run over him [you]" (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 474). This quote is significant in that it frames military action as a brave exercise of agency, framing inaction as equitable to suicide for a state that wishes to be remembered as righteous in the history books. Most explicit, however, was Jim Shannon's statement that;

> Today this great country—this great democracy, this beacon of liberty through this House—the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will vote on whether to join the coalition of the civilised. Let us not be on the wrong side of history. Let us put Daesh out of business. (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 478)

This represents an explicit articulation of a worldview in which Britain's long-established trajectory towards civilisational supremacy is clear, with the battle framed as one between liberty and tyranny. Like some of the more extreme quotes discussed thus far throughout the debates, this statement clearly reflects a mind-set akin to Huntingdon's Clash of Civilisations Thesis (1996). Whilst there are many more quotes of this character throughout the two debates

on airstrikes against ISIL,[83] those highlighted give an indication of the way in which notions of British history as civilised, democratic, free and tolerant, are routinely deployed to construct a right and wrong side of history.

This notion of a right and wrong side of history is something that runs through liberal thought (Hindess, 2007; Ogle, 2015; Wolf, 1982), and has been increasingly problematised by queer IR scholars in recent years. Analysing Hillary Clinton's famous 2011 speech in which she affirmed gay rights as human rights, Rahul Rao (2014) notes that it features a hegemonic articulation of futurity, based on a right and a wrong side. This discursive strategy, Rao argues, depends upon a temporal telescoping in which "the speaker's clairvoyance in being able to see all the way to the end of history" is proclaimed, and the rest of the world is expected to catch up with the process of modernisation (2014, p.211). Similarly, Cynthia Weber's (2016) sexualised understanding of IR depends upon a worldview defined by figures at varying stages of civilisational and sexual development, including the (straight and white) sovereign man of the state, the (normal and white) LGBTQ+ rights holder, the (underdeveloped and racially darkened) immigrant, and the (undevelopable and racially darkened) terrorist. This reflects a Freudian view of development in which intimate, European/North American and order/anarchy relations are first sexualised and then temporalised to form an international order (Weber, 2016, pp.61-62). As noted by Rao in his most recent book, *Out of Time,* the process of exporting the Western LGBTQ+ rights framework to the post-colonies as part of the march towards civilisation is a messy one that inevitably excludes and casts out various groups (2020, p.2). It within this frame of problematising the universal 'path to democracy' that this chapter is situated, calling attention to groups that have been excluded from this project and the ways in which the UK fails to live up to its claims to sexual/civilisational supremacy.

[83] E.g. see also Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1294, col. 1345-1346; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 382, col. 403, col. 454, col. 462.

Indeed, it is in contesting progressive views of Britain's role in the world and its history of military interventionism that government arguments are most clearly resisted throughout the debates in question. These arguments tended to allude to the complications of recent histories of interventionism in the Middle East, urging caution in engaging in future interventions (E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 731, col. 761).[84] Furthermore, some drew attention to Britain's imperial legacy (e.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 714, col. 777), although these were much fewer in number. It is in this relative silence over Britain's long imperial legacy that even those contesting the arguments for intervention can reproduce a worldview in which Britain remains benevolent and civilised. This is because recent military interventions take on much greater meaning when situated in the context of hundreds of years of colonial violence.

Rather than being a universal force for good and a civilisational beacon of hope for less developed countries around the world, Britain has been the architect of some of the most brutal forms of weaponry ever to have existed. This is evidenced by its long history of chattel slavery, it being one of the first major powers to use concentration camps in the Second Boer War, its extensive use of chemical weapons during World War One and it being one of the first countries to possess nuclear weapons, to name a few notable achievements. In the present day, this dubious legacy continues, with Britain responsible for arms sales to Saudi Arabia that have been used against Yemeni civilians, and Britain arguably breaking the nuclear non-proliferation treaty with its plan to increase its stockpile of nuclear warheads from one hundred and ninety to two hundred and sixty by 2030. Some may argue that certain expressions of violence were excusable given the prevailing values of the day (e.g. the use of chemical weapons in World War One). That being said, it is clear that this long legacy of violence stands

[84] See also Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 772, col. 776, col. 777, col; Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1479; 26th September 2014 col. 1286, col. 1304, col. 1329, col. 1342, col; 2nd December 2015, col. 362, col. 413.

in stark contrast to the arguments of MPs who frame Britain as a universally civilising force, guiding the international system away from violence and towards peace and prosperity. This reflects a broader tendency for IR's origin stories to hold a colonial/racial form of amnesia, which forgets that the emergence of the territorially sovereign state system depended upon the genocide and enslavement of Indigenous populations globally (Krishna, 2001, p.401). It is through the normalisation of this amnesia that former colonial powers can continue to speak with authority on matters of violence in world politics. Whilst this is persistently resisted by certain MPs, such as Caroline Lucas (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 777) and Diane Abbott (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014 deb, col. 1342), these MPs tend to represent a small choir of voices that frequently oppose any moves towards military intervention or to glorify Britain's history of interventionism.

Spatial Representations of Colonial Time

Rendering 'the path to democracy' intelligible are various spatial representations throughout the debates, operating through spatial demarcations that map onto aforementioned notions of there being a right and wrong side of history. These imaginary landscapes, including the notion of red lines, the British street vs the Arab street, and discussions of ISIL's 'terrorist caliphate', construct a binary image between the sexual and civilisational progress of the self, vs the primitiveness of the other (Said, 1978; Weber, 2016), in order to persuade MPs to support the government. Whilst the UK Government and those supporting its position would likely disagree with my characterisation of their understandings as imaginary, the absurdly sexualised, racialised and gendered character of these representations, forming a key part of the securitisation process (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020), means that they are difficult to understand as anything else. Again, these depictions tend to be more present in debates where the government is making a case for intervention. Furthermore, they are intensified where the

government is participating in a broad transformation of the society in question, as I will explore.

The idea that spatial representations are intimately linked to understandings of proper or improper development is not a new one, as I explored in chapter three (see Chakrabarty, 2007; Bhabha, 1994; Ganguly, 2004; Ogle, 2015). Building upon these stereotypes, the colonial construction of the Oriental 'other' (Said, 1978) occurred through a process of stereotyping Indigenous people as lacking in rationality, whilst simultaneously engaging in the genocidal destruction of these populations and their culture (Barkawi and Laffey, 2006, p.347). This illustrates the way in which colonial violence has always been a simultaneously material and discursive process, incorporating imaginary spatial geographies, from early colonialism to the present day.

One key way in which spatial representations were deployed to make a case for action in the 2011 Libya debate (Hansard HC Deb, 2011) and 2013 Syria debate (Hansard HC Deb, 2013), in particular, was the notion of 'red lines'. In these debates, the idea of 'The Brutal Dictator' crossing a red line of completely unacceptable behaviour was routinely used, especially in relation to the use of chemical weapons in Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2013). Such representations are used to signify a transition from unpleasant, albeit implicitly expected behaviour, from countries perceived to be less civilised than the UK, to behaviour that challenges British values. These depictions constitute an imagined spatial geography, with the realm of civilisation belonging on the UK's side of a red line, and the realm of barbarism and backwardness lying on the other (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020; Waever, 1995). Within this frame, not to challenge such behaviour would place the UK on 'the wrong side of history' (Rao, 2014), with the spatial representation of red lines rendering this temporal logic intelligible.

In the 2011 Libya debate, David Cameron declared that "the time for red lines, threats and last chances is over", before stating that the time for tough action has come (Hansard HC Deb, 2011, col. 714). Ben Wallace supported this sentiment, arguing that "with the winds of change blowing through the Middle East, we are very clear about what our red lines are and what we stand for. If we are not, we may be open to the charge of giving false hope to other countries, or to charges of hypocrisy" (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 730). Here, by invoking Harold Macmillan's famous wind of change speech, which formally acknowledged the era of decolonisation in Africa (1960), Wallace argued that Britain needs to be decisive in order to be on the right side of history. Whereas Macmillan was proposing that the UK withdraw from Africa, Wallace proposed that the UK takes part in military action in support of the Arab Spring, but that its commitments to other countries in the region are set out. As such, whilst references to red lines were few and far between in this debate, where they were deployed it is clear that they were used to render a historic decision understandable and justifiable. In Cameron's case, red lines were framed as belonging to the past, with the time for military action having already come. In the case of Wallace, they were used to articulate the instances where the limits of the UK's national interest lie.

The debate in which the notion of red lines appeared most frequently was the 2013 debate on the use of chemical weapons in Syria. In this debate, the use of chemical weapons is framed as a red line that has been crossed, and that must be met with a military response. This was most clearly articulated by David Cameron when he stated;

> The President of the United States, Barack Obama, is a man who opposed the action in Iraq. No one could in any way describe him as a President who wants to involve America in more wars in the middle east, but he profoundly believes that an important red line has been crossed in an appalling way, and that is why he supports action in this case. (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1428)

In this statement, the use of violence is framed as a reluctant necessity in upholding global norms on the use of chemical weapons. Again, as I have already explored, such norms are

framed as constituting a core principle in the universal path to democracy, with this adding a huge amount of gravity to the case for action. This case is articulated in explicit terms in places, for example when Richard Ottaway highlighted that Syria is a signatory of the 1925 Geneva protocol, drawn up to prevent the future use of chemical weapons in the immediate aftermath of World War One (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1459). He then stated unequivocally that "With everything in life there is a red line—a straw that breaks the camel's back—and, to me, this is it" (ibid). In this line of argument, the Syrian regime is framed as taking humanity back almost a hundred years in its progress towards civilisation, human rights and democracy, and it falls upon the (responsible/patriarchal) UK to take action. Whilst the discourse of the 'red line' came to an abrupt ending after the government was voted down in the 2013 Syria vote, it represents an important logic that was deployed by the Cameron administration in its early attempts at humanitarian intervention.

This argument rests upon the implied assumption that a certain level of 'bad behaviour' is permitted by those countries less civilised than the UK, but that there comes a point at which our history, values and the progress of humanity towards democracy is jeopardised. It is at this point that the UK government seeks to use military action to steer humanity back on to the path towards democracy. The use of the entirety of humanity and temporal logics of historic norms being breached adds huge gravitas to the arguments of the speaker. This is, of course, until they are unsuccessful, at which point the speaker's authority as an adjudicator of red lines is quashed. This is what occurred in 2013, with those opposing intervention explicitly highlighting the performative character of the depiction of the 'red line' as a final line that must not be crossed. For example, Paul Flynn argued that the notion of a red line itself can produce the conditions for conflict, noting that it forces President Obama to either have to attack or face

humiliation (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1463). Clearly, such arguments[85] were effective, with the government defeated in this particular vote and the notion of 'red lines' thereafter associated with the failure of British authority and interventionism in the Middle East. Whilst the initial deployment of red lines was undoubtedly premised upon a belief in Western supremacy, it is a less gendered, racialised and sexualised spatial geography than some of the other discursive strategies deployed throughout the debates on humanitarian intervention. It is these strategies that I explore in the remainder of the chapter.

The British Street vs. The Arab Street

A spatial logic that appears repeatedly throughout debates where a case for intervention is made is the juxtaposition of the British street against the Arab street. The former is framed as a site of safety and order whilst the latter is framed as anarchic and dangerous, although aspiring for democracy, reproducing dichotomous views of IR. Such depictions often discuss the Middle East in generic and homogenous terms, reproducing long-standing racist and imperial tendencies to ignore cultural specificities in the Global South (Lowe, 2015; Mohanty, 1991; Said, 1978). Once again, these representations are linked to temporal understandings of 'the path to democracy', with the UK framed as having achieved full development, whilst the Global South lags behind (Bhabha, 1994, p.341). In particular, this is often made understandable through references to the figures of 'The Brutal Dictator' and 'The ISIL Terrorist', who are embodied perceptions of this sexual/civilisational development gap. The portrayed risk is that without decisive military action, 'they' are likely to come from 'over there' (The Middle East) to 'here' (The British homeland), with terrorist attacks in Europe and the Salisbury poisonings invoked as empirical evidence of this. Also interesting in the 2013

[85] See also Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013, col. 1468, col. 1490, col. 1522, col. 1537 for further criticisms of the notion of a 'red line' in relation to the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Syria debate (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013), in particular, is the way in which MPs opposing intervention reproduce the discourse which frames the British street as being under attack from dangerous others.

Throughout the 2011 Libya debate (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), the Arab street is framed as a primitive site of protest, whose inhabitants are seeking an escape from despotic governance and are aspiring towards Western-style democracy. Supporting this idea, Ben Wallace argued that authority in the Middle East has shifted away from the Arab ministers we are used to dealing with, and towards the Arab street, which "is becoming more emboldened throughout the region" (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 730). This statement clearly homogenises those engaged in civil protests and shows apathy towards demonstrators by portraying engaging with them as a political necessity rather than a normative goal. This explicitly reproduces masculinist realpolitik logics that see IR as a zero-sum game with no role for ethical concerns or emotionality (Åhäll, 2018; Hooper, 2001; Zalewski and Parpart, 1998). Forwarding a similar argument, Dai Havard advocated diplomatic engagement with the Arab street on the basis that power in the Middle East is shifting. He summarised this simply and in explicitly racialised terms; "men in black with beards are doing wonderful things, and they will need some more support" (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 736). In this sentence, protesters in the region are not only reduced to the homogenising label of the Arab street; they are also framed as a caricature of an Arab man, without any discussion of key individuals or groups that need to be engaged, their aims, or cultural specificities across the region (and in Libya specifically).[86] This reflects the way in which anti-black racism operates, by reducing black people to their skin and portraying them as being 'all the same' (Fanon, 1987, pp.10-11). White men, in contrast, are often considered individually in terms of their mental attributes, personality and professional achievements, in contrast to the perceived physical threat of Black

[86] See also Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 748, col. 753 for further references to 'the Arab street.'

men's violence (Connell, 2005, p.75). Due to heteronormative stereotypes of femininity (Butler, 1990, p.151), White women are also often reduced to their appearance, but they are granted an individuality that is not afforded to racialised populations, who are interpreted and stereotyped as a mass group (Phipps, 2021; Wynter, 2003).

Juxtaposed against 'the Arab street' as a site of unruly protest and disorder, discussions of 'the British street' framed this as a site of order and safety that needs to be protected from anarchic 'others', namely dictators and terrorists. What is telling about these representations is that they are also deployed by a number of MPs who oppose intervention. This is indicative of the entire debate occurring within a narrow agenda that does not contest ontological assumptions about the UK being a site of civility/order and the Middle East being a site of incivility/disorder.

An argument that was routinely deployed in the 2013 Syria debate (Hansard HC Deb, 19th August 2013) to oppose intervention was the idea that military action is likely to provoke more terrorist attacks on British streets. This perspective was well summarised by Kate Hoey, who stated that whatever the outcome of airstrikes, the UK will be blamed "and we will see the repercussions on our streets in the form of increased extremism" (Hansard HC Deb, 19th August 2013, col. 1501) (see also 1461, 1510 and more).[87] This argument frames the British street as a place of civility, with extremism coming from outside/elsewhere. It also contests the argument for intervention on the basis of upholding global norms from a communitarian perspective that prioritises the safety of British citizens over other concerns. This is reflective of the communitarian/cosmopolitan dichotomy which Rao frames as characterising IR, and which fails to facilitate subaltern agency (2010). As occurs throughout the debates in question, the pros and cons of intervention are considered from the perspective of 'The British Self', and the Middle East is often considered as a strategic area in which politics is played out, rather

[87] E.g. see also Hansard HC Deb, 19th August 2013, col. 1461, col. 1510.

than a set of political actors with their own interests. This is further evidenced by the 2014 and 2015 debates on airstrikes against ISIL, which discussed intervention as either being on behalf of all of humanity[88] or protecting British streets from extremism.[89]

Such arguments are unsurprising; the UK is, after all, considering its contribution to the fight against ISIL, and within the frame of (neo)realist IR this is a self-interested exercise. Whilst mentions are made of military support that is being given to fighters on the ground,[90] there is little consideration given to the wishes of these groups, and the broader civilian population, for the shaping of Iraqi/Syrian society. Instead, these debates either consider a) the extent to which the intervention will nudge the societies in question back onto the universal path to democracy or b) the UK's national interest. This indicates the ongoing relevance of Rao's (2010) reading of the communitarian/cosmopolitan dichotomy as a mechanism of colonial power.

A more specific and complex iteration of the 'British street' argument comes in the 2018 debate on airstrikes against the Syrian regime. In this debate, the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal by Russian agents is used as evidence of a growing international tendency to disregard global norms prohibiting the use of chemical weapons. Within this frame, the UK's military action in Syria is framed as being in defence of the people of Salisbury, who benefit from the UK upholding international norms on the prohibition of chemical weapons. This is evidence of the way in which spatial representations of home/abroad and safety/danger, rooted in masculine binaries (Enloe, 1990; Peterson, 2014; Weber, 2016), can be mobilised to legitimise military action, even where this action is unrelated to the referent object of security

[88] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1269, col. 1295, col. 1348; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 357, col. 386, col. 398, col. 401, col. 456.
[89] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1262, col. 1296, col. 1345; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 324, col. 332, col. 345, col. 365, col. 411, col. 413, col. 430.
[90] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1255, col. 1311, col. 1345, col. 1365.

that is being invoked. In this case, the referent object is the people of Salisbury, who should be free to go about their daily business without the threat of chemical weapons.

In the context of real-time developing information about the Salisbury attack, and the government's certainty about the Assad regime being behind attacks in Syria, Syria is framed as a field in which the UK can perform retaliatory violence on behalf of the people of Salisbury. This was made absolutely clear by Theresa May's opening statement to the House;

> Last Thursday's report from the OPCW has confirmed our findings that it was indeed a Novichok [attack] in Salisbury. I have placed a copy of that report's executive summary in the House of Commons Library. While of a much lower order of magnitude, the use of a nerve agent on the streets of Salisbury is part of a pattern of disregard for the global norms that prohibit the use of chemical weapons. So while the action was taken to alleviate humanitarian suffering in Syria by degrading the regime's chemical weapons capability and deterring its use of these weapons, it will also send a clear message to anyone who believes they can use chemical weapons with impunity. We cannot go back to a world where the use of chemical weapons becomes normalized. (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 43)

The way in which military action in Syria was, at least in part, a performance of sovereignty against the Russian state is indicative of the Global North West's tendency to use the Global South to play out great power politics. The Scramble for Africa, the Long Peace, World War One, World War Two, the Cold War and humanitarian/military interventions since the 1990s have all used the Global South as an arena for performances of violence in the context of colonial competition. This is possibly best encapsulated by the United States' bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, frequently understood as a demonstration of the nuclear bomb to the Soviet Union as well as a strategic decision in the war against Japan. The presence of similar logics in the Syria debate (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018) reflects the endurance of the mindset that was used to justify colonialism in the first place; a belief that the Global South constitutes "*terra ingognita* or the *terra nulla,* the empty or wasted land whose history has to be begun, whose archives must be filled out; whose future progress must be secured…" (Bhabha, 1997, p.177).

The perverse logic through which the UK Government attempts to legitimise action in Syria through reference to the Salisbury attacks indicates the endurance of a colonial mindset, in which military intervention in Syria is framed as a) a threat to the Russians and b) securing the UK's national security, which lies indirectly in upholding global norms. Within this frame, airstrikes become less about protecting the Syrian people and more about the UK's national security interests, defined at least in part by deterring Russian aggression in the context of the balance of power. This is also a tension highlighted by Jeremy Corbyn, who noted the inconsistency of invoking the principle of humanitarian intervention, whilst simultaneously stressing the strategic/limited character of airstrikes (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018, col. 44). This speaks to the way in which humanitarian intervention is now a principle that is invoked to serve a multitude of military aims.

Of course, those who advocate military action on behalf of upholding norms would argue that these norms benefit all of humanity and that they are not an act of colonial violence. In response, however, it is important to consider the way in which racialised and sexualised stereotypes continue to frame populations in the Middle East as being outside of humanity; a concept often used to refer to White men of privilege in the metropole (Fanon, 1987, p.180; Phipps, 2021; Wynter, 2003). In this sense, it is important to remember that the arguments that are used to legitimise airstrikes on behalf of the entirety of humanity refers to a specific, Western-centric understanding of humanity. The extent to which populations from Syria continue to be seen as sub-human by the UK Government is evidenced by the appalling treatment of asylum-seekers fleeing Syria to live in the UK. These people are often at risk of abuses such as detention, rape, torture and death, but the UK Government continues to make the asylum-seeking process extremely difficult, obstacle-laden and cumbersome (Amnesty International, 2021). This is often framed by politicians as a method for putting people off seeking asylum in the UK, separating 'real' claimants from 'fake' ones (May, 2013). This is

reflective of an enduring racism that defines the British body-politic in relation to the Middle East (Said, 1979), using various spatial representations of the British street to do this.

Whilst references to the British street and/or the Arab street are common throughout debates where the UK Government is making a case for action, such references (i.e. the British street vs. the Burmese/Asian street) were absent from the debate on Myanmar in 2018. Given that these spatial constructs translate heteronormative and racist stereotypes into the understandings of threat that authorise military violence (Howell, 2014; Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020; Weber, 2016), this absence is significant. This is because it elicits a response in the realm of politics as normal rather than the realm of national security (Waever, 1995), in which force is framed as a necessity in the face of civilisational conflict that jeopardises British values, interpreted as being an inherent attachment to freedom and democracy. This is, once again, indicative of the selectiveness in deciding which atrocity crimes are worthy of the discursive and material labour of securitisation and humanitarian intervention. In instances of atrocity crimes in the Middle East, it is routinely the case that military action is seen as profitable (Lemke, 2001), whilst this is not the case for Myanmar,

The way in which decisions on military action depend upon this discursive process of constructing spatial geographies containing perverse subjects who need to be rooted out speaks to the way in which contemporary British foreign policy remains rooted in colonial worldviews. In this sense, the Arab street and its perverse inhabitants (‘The Brutal Dictator’/’The ISIL Terrorist’), who jeopardise broader Arabic society’s desire for democracy, are reflective of a broader spatial representation often used to understand the Global South through colonial discourses. This representation is the state of nature, as articulated by social contract theorists such as Locke (1997), Rousseau (1947) and Hobbes (1651) to justify the existence of the state. Such representations are invariably racialised and are still deployed in foreign policy debates in the present day, as I will explore in the next section.

The State of Nature

As discussed, spatial representations of the British/Arab street are common throughout all debates where the UK Government is making a case for humanitarian intervention. These render temporal logics of development/progress intelligible, rooted in notions of proper or improper sexual or civilisational development. Where this is even further intensified, however, is in instances where the UK Government is pushing for a change in government, or a perceived restoration of the good governance of a country. In particular, these are the 2011 debate on Libya (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), the 2014 debate on airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq (Hansard HC Deb (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and the 2015 debate on airstrikes against ISIL in Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015). In these debates, proposals by the government speak about a broad transformation of the society in question, on the back of military action. This contrasts with the 2013 (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013) and 2018 (Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018) debates on airstrikes in response to the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons, which discuss technical/strategic/focused strikes (Cohn, 1987), aimed at deterring the discrete act of using chemical weapons. In debates that propose a broad transformation of the society in question, the possibility of the emergence of a condition akin to the state of nature is commonplace. Such representations are explicitly racialised, gendered and sexualised, historically deployed to refer to a pre-colonial site of civilisational barbarism (Lugones, 2018, p.18; Picq, 2019, p.7). In this sense, they lie at the opposite end of the path to democracy to the UK, which is perceived as having achieved the full expression of humanity's civilisational possibilities.

In the 2011 debate on Libya, David Cameron discusses the threat of Libyan society entering a downward spiral into barbarism if decisive military action is not taken. In particular, he stated;

> If Gaddafi's attacks on his own people succeed, Libya will become once again a pariah state, festering on Europe's border, and a source of instability exporting terror beyond its borders. It will be a state from which literally hundreds of thousands of citizens could try to escape, putting huge pressure on us in Europe. We should also remember that Gaddafi is a dictator who has a track record of violence and support for terrorism against our country. The people of Lockerbie, for instance, know what that man is capable of. I am therefore clear that taking action in Libya with our partners is in our national interest (Hansard, 2011, col. 708).

In the first instance, this statement frames the potential threat of Libyan civil war in cataclysmic terms, with the Libyan state depicted as becoming a potential parasite that feeds off the European body-politic, draining its resources. The use of the word festering is particularly significant here, as it implies an organism existing at the non-sentient, bacterial level, rather than the level of human intelligence. This reflects, once again, discourses that frame the Global South as being sub-human (Phipps, 2021; Wynter, 2003).

More broadly, the way in which Cameron renders the state of nature intelligible as a threat to the UK's national security is also significant. Here, he uses the subject-positions of 'The Brutal Dictator' and 'The Terrorist' to construct an existential threat to the British way of life. This is made even more threatening by the spatial proximity of Libya to Europe's borders and the potential of uncontrolled immigration stemming from a Libyan civil war. Cumulatively, this statement clearly illustrates how spatial representations play a key role in rendering temporal narratives of development understandable, and in folding humanitarian intervention into a broad narrative of civilisational conflict. This tendency to view Libya as potentially descending into a state of nature is reproduced by MPs throughout the debate,[91]

[91] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011, col. 711, col. 745, col. 785, col. 800.

This is, again, indicative of the political debate being located within a colonial worldview hinging upon the Global South as a potential site for the downfall of civilisation.

Another equally meaningful, but different representation of the state of nature, comes from representations of ISIL's newly acquired territory in the Middle East. The possession of this territory, various MPs infer, represents the complete perversion of the project of civilisation, defined by the accession of Enlightenment principles such as rationalism, secularism and modernity. Instead, the form of government instituted by ISIL is rooted in religion, doesn't have the legitimacy of a sovereign state, and is dominated by terrorists. This possibility of an alternative form of government to the Western liberal state is uniquely threatening, hence the extensive use of hyperbolic language that frames airstrikes against ISIL as a fight to the death between modernity and barbarism.

As is often the case in motions forwarded by David Cameron, his opening statement captures the spirit of the debate that is to follow. In this, he noted that ISIL has now occupied an area larger than Britain and that "left unchecked, we will face a terrorist caliphate on the shores of the Mediterranean and bordering a NATO member, with a declared and proven determination to attack our country and our people" (Hansard 2013, col. 1256). As I have already established earlier in the thesis, 'The Terrorist' is the ultimate figure of civilisational/sexual perversion in relation to the West (Puar and Rai, 2002, p.118; Weber, 2016, p.99) and the West has historically been dialectically opposed to Islam (Kumar, 2021). In this context, the notion of a terrorist caliphate directly challenges the existence of the liberal state and its associated principles such as limited government, human rights and secularism. Of course, the UK is somewhat of an anomaly in the Global North West due to it possessing an organic constitution and a monarchy; institutions that pre-date Enlightenment thinking. Nonetheless, Britain is strongly identified with the European Enlightenment project and the defence of Europe from perceived barbarians such as 'The ISIL Terrorist', as is evidenced

throughout this debate. In this context, the spatial proximity of ISIL to Europe, perceived as the home of civilised nations in line with racial/colonial discourses (Ogle, 2015; Chakrabarty, 2007; Said, 1978) becomes deeply significant. Furthermore, Cameron's observation in relation to ISIL occupying a larger territory than Britain could be read as anxiety over the emasculation of the UK, which must subsequently prevail against ISIL through the use of military force; the dominant, established logic of realist IR. The extent to which UK legislators are troubled by the challenge ISIL poses to the Western state is evidenced by Cameron urging MPs to use 'Daesh', which is a slur, and by Douglas Alexander calling them an "un-Islamic non-state" (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1355).

This sentiment is reproduced by MPs from across the political spectrum, with Ed Miliband noting that ISIL is not only murderous, but that it has the goal of establishing a state in the Middle East, ruled by its perverse norms and values (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1270). Supporting this argument, the phrase caliphate appears routinely throughout both debates on ISIL,[92] constructing an image of an alien system of government defined by barbaric violence and religious government belonging to another, long-passed era. I must once again stress here that I am in no way legitimising ISIL's tactics, governance-strategies or violence. Instead, I am locating readings of ISIL within the historical context of colonialism, and the spatial and temporal imaginaries that accompany colonial governance.

Arguably the most important element of these spatial/temporal imaginaries are the use of racially-darkened logics of threat (Weber, 2016, p.30). Throughout the 2015 Syria debate in particular, extensive mentions are made of the idea that ISIL is not respecting the Iraq-Syria border and that the UK must also ignore this border if it is to defeat ISIL. This is evidenced by Cameron's reflection on a conversation with the President of France, in which he states that

[92] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1256, col. 1270, col. 1278, col. 1336, col. 1355; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 325, col. 329, col. 331, col. 332, col. 334, col. 335, col. 374, col. 438, col. 439, col. 443.

"when our planes reach the Syrian border—a border that ISIL itself does not recognise—we can no longer act to defend either his country or ours, even though ISIL's headquarters are in Raqqa in Syria" (col. 325).[93] This idea of permeability, then, becomes a key element of the threat that is posed by ISIL. Just as water can move through a cell membrane through osmosis, ISIL are framed as being able to seamlessly move through the Iraq-Syria border. Weber's reading of the Al Qaeda terrorist cell as operating akin to a "free-flowing dot.com company" is again of relevance here (2016, p.94). This not only poses a practical barrier to the success of military options, it also destabilises the existence of the state as a sovereign territory and as the sole legitimate actor in the realm of IR. In this sense, the UK's transgression of Syria's sovereignty is in defence of the state as a social unit. Whilst UK legislators are not propping up the Assad regime, they are rejecting the idea that a non-state actor should be able to move freely across borders in a way that states, who respect the principle of sovereignty, cannot.

This unit, we must remember, is also constitutive of the Enlightenment project, having been established in the Treaty of Westphalia (Avalon Project, 1648) in exclusive reference to European countries, whilst genocidal violence against racialised populations in Africa, Asia and South America continued on the basis that these countries were too barbarous for self-government. Whilst arguing for the use of violence to uphold the state as a social unit, there is also the implication throughout the 2015 debate on airstrikes against ISIL (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015) that states in the Middle East are somehow less sovereign than those in the Global North West. This is evidenced by repeated references to the Iraq-Syria border as a line in the sand that need not be respected as a sovereign border. For example, James Gray stated; "We are going across an invisible line in the desert sand—the Sykes-Picot line invented by the French at some stage in the past, a line that means nothing at all. If we are committed to

[93] See also Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 330, col. 357, col. 396 for further references to the permeability/non-existence of the Syria-Iraq border.

destroying Daesh, we must do so whether it is in Syria or Iraq" (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 408). In this statement, Gray implicitly acknowledges the UK's role in constructing nonsensical borders in the Middle East, by signing the Sykes-Picot Agreement with France. Rather than this being a basis for reparations, however, Gray places the entire blame on France and uses historic failures in drawing up state borders that make sense to legitimise contemporary state violence that spans across these borders. The description of the border as a line in the desert sand, repeated throughout the debate in various forms,[94] is also a racialised depiction of the border. Akin to depictions of the pre-colonial state of nature, it implies that this is a space devoid of culture (Ogle, 2015; Mbembe, 2003, p.23), in which the Enlightenment goal of a sovereign state cannot exist. The argument follows that with local savages (i.e. ISIL) running riot and crossing the border at will, the UK must acknowledge the reality that sovereignty is an impossibility in this deserted part of the world. This, once again, highlights the intertextuality of racialised logics of threat (Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020) between early colonialism and the present day. Logics of threat that, we must remember, have used heteronormative (e.g. see Rifkin, 2011; Tallie, 2020) and later homonormative (e.g. see Puar, 2007; Rahman, 2014) stereotypes to construct racial self/other divides and an imperative for intervention.

A deeply related way in which these logics of threat operate is through the endurance of dark skin as a signifier of improper civilisational/sexual development. This is made especially apparent in Cynthia Weber's reading of the unwanted im/migrant and the terrorist, as explored earlier in the thesis (2016, pp.47-104). Whilst the former is perceived as underdeveloped, the latter is undevelopable due to him representing the binary opposite of Western civilisation. Both, however, are perceived as threatening due to them being racially darkened (Weber and Leigh, 2018), which in turn renders unequal development temporalities

[94] See also Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 408, col. 476, col. 357, col. 382.

intelligible (Weber, 2016, p.30). This is central to White supremacist logics of security, in which White knights protect innocent White victims from racialised threats (Pears, 2022, p.3). Given that it is the racialised character of 'others' that is primarily used to designate them as threatening, this allows for conceptual slippage between the immigrant/terrorist, with the former being threatening in part due to the possibility of them also being the latter, and the latter being threatening in part due to their ability to flow through borders and proselytise globally. In this sense, the permeability of the Iraq-Syria border is reflective of a broader Western concern with the mobility of racially-darkened subjects globally.

The parallel slippage between inside/outside the state and the subject-positions of the immigrant/the terrorist is clear in places throughout both of these debates on humanitarian intervention, and in broader British political phenomena. In these debates, MPs generally are not suggesting that refugees are potential ISIL members who should be treated with suspicion. What some do, however, is discuss the terrorist threat from ISIL and the refugee crisis as both being a part of the same security dilemma, with far-reaching impacts on Europe and the UK.[95] In practical terms this makes sense, given that it is the expansion of ISIL that displaced hundreds of thousands of people in the region. That being said, the repeated discussion of refugees and terrorists alongside each other, in the context of a national security dilemma, leads to conceptual slippage between these two groups. This is illustrated by Caroline Lucas' statement that "those refugee camps are becoming absolutely desperate…and we can be sure that ISIS will be recruiting in those refugee camps too" (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 405). Despite making a case against intervention, Lucas frames refugees as possible future terrorists in the context of appalling conditions in refugee camps. This indicates that throughout the debate, there is always the possibility of slippage between the subject-positions of the

[95] E.g. see Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014, col. 1275, col. 1276, col. 1295; Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015, col. 372, col. 373, col. 382, col. 434, col. 446.

refugee and ISIL terrorist. This stems from the consideration of intervention from the perspective of possible benefits and threats to the UK, as opposed to individual human needs, for example. This reflects the statist, self-help mind-set of realist IR that is necessarily deployed when making a case for or against national military action. What I am trying to highlight here, however, is the inadequacy of such a perspective when dealing with the gross suffering of populations such as refugees, who can be stereotyped as dangerous when considered within the frame of national security.

It is this mindset of seeing refugees as posing a threat to British security and stability that could help to explain the extremely low number of refugees accepted by the UK Government from Syria (Wintour, 2015), and the ongoing existence of the hostile environment policy in the UK. Furthermore, it was explicitly in arguing that Middle Eastern criminals are likely to flood into the UK with continued EU membership, due to the possibility of Turkey joining the EU, that Leave campaigners made the case for leaving the EU in the Brexit referendum (Boffey and Helm, 2016) This was one of the most controversial claims of the referendum, but the eventual success of the Leave campaign speaks to the endurance of White supremacist logics of security in the British popular imaginary (Pear, 2022, p.3). This mind-set sees the borders between inside/outside the state and between the unwanted immigrant/terrorist (Weber, 2016) as permeable due to the endurance of racialised logics of threat.

Conclusion

Outlining the worldview which encapsulates UK policymaking on humanitarian intervention, this chapter has unpacked the ways in which temporal and spatial representations were deployed throughout the House of Commons debates in question, in what I term 'the path to democracy.' It first made this case by calling attention to the way in which democracy was

framed as the universal telos of civilisation throughout the debates in question, with the UK at the vanguard of this project. It then illustrated the hypocrisy of such a worldview, given the mythological character of stories which attribute civility to liberalism (Foucault, 1980, 2003; Halperin, 2006; Mbembe, 2003; Lowe, 2015), and the conditions for democracy to emerge having been made impossible by hundreds of years of colonial interventions in the Middle East (Escobar, 1995; Quijano, 2007; Mignolo, 2009). This, I argued, exposes this temporal framework to be rooted in racist (Bhabha, 1993; Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015) and heteronormative (Edelman, 2004; Halberstam, 2005; Freeman, 2011) understandings of development. Beyond this, I looked at arguments that there is a right and wrong side of history (Rao, 2014, 2020; Weber, 2016, pp.61-62), with the UK's omniscient knowledge of the right side being used to make the case for supporting the government's stance on intervention. Such arguments are deeply problematic and inconsistent with the UK's role in pioneering some of the most violent processes and machines ever known. Read together, these temporal frameworks constitute the universal 'path to democracy'.

Whilst the 'path to democracy' is of great significance on its own, it also needs to be read alongside the imaginative spatial geographies which construct the Middle East, in particular, as a place of civilisational backwardness which can be assisted through the use of military force. Significant to the 2011 Libya debate (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011) and the 2013 Syria debate (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013) was the notion of red lines. These, I noted, were used to establish a binary between acceptable behaviour and unacceptable behaviour, rooting these in notions of humanity's collective progress. Such discourses ended abruptly, however, with the 2013 vote on airstrikes against Syria failing to receive the support of the House of Commons. This called the UK Government's position as a referee of humanity's red lines into question, resulting in subsequent debates featuring a lack of references to red lines.

The other spatial representations that I explored throughout this chapter have been more explicitly racialised, gendered and sexualised than the red lines discourse. Firstly, I noted that the juxtaposition of the British street against the Arab street had the effect of reaffirming the order/anarchy binary through the deployment of deeply problematic stereotypes. In particular, I highlighted that there were multiple representations of the British street/streets of Salisbury as domestic spheres of freedom, democracy and comfort under threat from dangerous 'others' (i.e. dictators and terrorists). This, I noted, contrasts with depictions of 'the Arab street', understood in generic terms as a site of backwardness and primitive protest, which the UK should only support selectively in its strive for democracy due to the dangers and costs associated with this. These dangers and costs of this, I then argued, are framed as stemming from perverse figures, namely 'The Terrorist' and 'The Brutal Dictator', understood as racialised and sexually perverse subjects that obstruct the Middle East's path to development and attack the UK for any assistance it attempts to provide in the achievement of this goal.

Going one step further, I argued that spatial representations rooted in colonial stereotypes are at their most intense in instances where the UK Government is pushing for a change in the governance of a country. This contrasts with acts that occur under the label of humanitarian intervention but aim to deter a specific act (i.e. the use of chemical weapons). In the cases of Libya (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011), Iraq (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), I observed that spatial representations akin to those historically depicting the pre-colonial state of nature were deployed. These served to frame the possible outcomes of non-intervention in cataclysmic terms, generally defined by a completely destabilised Middle East characterised by atrocity crimes, societal collapse, mass-migration and terrorism. This, in turn, can be understood as a perversion of Enlightenment principles of liberal and limited government, as well as jeopardising the good governance of Europe, due to the Middle East's spatial proximity. Resultantly, the analysis of these House of

Commons debates clearly illustrates the centrality of colonial spatial representations to contemporary debates on humanitarian intervention.

Whilst these spatial representations are meaningful in their own right, this chapter's main contribution is in its observation that they are articulations of 'the path to democracy' that underpins the worldview of the majority of British legislators. This worldview sees democracy as the telos of civilisation, with Britain having reached this and holding a responsibility to help the rest of humanity in the task of catching up (Bhabha, 1993; Chakrabarty, 2007). It also features an inherent right and wrong side of history, with Britain lying on the 'right side' of democracy, freedom and peacefulness (Rao, 2014, p.211). This understanding depends upon a colonial amnesia (Krishna, 2001, p.401) that ignores centuries of violence against racialised populations in the Global South, ongoing in the present day. Nonetheless, spatial representations are used to great effect throughout the House of Commons debates to make a case for humanitarian intervention, just as they were in the early days of the civilising mission. These imaginary spatial landscapes render notions of unequal civilisational/sexual development understandable, locating Britain (and the West) at the zenith of civilisation and other societies as either catching up, or inherently incapable of being civilised. It is these temporal and spatial representations, deeply rooted in White-supremacist and hetero/homonormative colonial worldviews, that define the parameters of the debates on humanitarian intervention.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

Humanitarian intervention is a gendered, racist and sexualised act of colonial violence, deployed by Western states such as the UK in order to maintain their status and colonial identity. As this thesis has demonstrated, this is apparent throughout the House of Commons debates in question, which continue to operate on the basis of a colonial script that reproduces the racist (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1987) and heteronormative (Weber, 2016) stereotypes which uphold the Global North/South divide. In the specific case of the UK, this occurs in the local context of national decline, and the global context of an international system that continues to be organised by the racist (e.g. see Anievas et. al, 2015; Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020; Sabaratnam, 2020) and sexual legacies of colonialism (e.g. see Delatolla, 2020; Rao, 2020; Rahman, 2014; Puar, 2005, 2007; Weber, 2016), through which the identity of 'The British Self' is maintained through violent processes (El-Enany, 2020; Trafford, 2020) of othering and dehumanisation (Phipps, 2021; Wynter, 2003). Such processes uphold civilised/uncivilised binaries, and are central to humanitarian intervention; a colonial process (Darby, 2009; Hindawi, 2021; Pourmokhtari, 2013) that this thesis has studied, for the first time, using a queer lens.

Studying humanitarian intervention through queer (Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005) and postcolonial (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015) readings of temporality, this thesis has drawn inspiration from the work of Rahul Rao (2020), Momin Rahman (2014), Andrew Delatolla (2020) and Cynthia Weber (2016), in particular. Doing so, it builds upon queer IR scholarship which historicises contemporary norms of violence within the sexual politics of colonialism; a politics which has historically deployed heteronormative stereotypes against Indigenous people to legitimise colonial conquest (e.g. see Rifkin, 2011; Tallie, 2020) and more recently has deployed homonormative (Duggan, 2003) and

homonationalist (Puar, 2007) stereotypes against countries which continue to impose colonial laws that criminalise heterosexuality (Rahman, 2014; Delatolla, 2020).

Whilst acknowledging the ground-breaking contributions of recent queer IR scholarship, it notes that a significant proportion of this analysis seems to implicitly miss, or overlook, the ongoing significance of heteronormativity as an episteme which continues to undergird the foundations of world politics. The recent focus on homonormative (Duggan, 2003) and homonationalist (Puar, 2007) dimensions of colonialism, and world politics more broadly, has done an excellent job of looking at how LGBTQ+ subjects are positioned in ways that reinforce notions of Western cultural supremacy, legitimising violence against Muslims, non-White populations, and queers who are racialised/ politicised and/or challenge gender norms or capitalism. This focus, however, under-stresses the more expansive role that heteronormative stereotypes play in organising notions of normality and perversion in world politics, which map onto the order/anarchy binary (Weber, 2016). Alongside queers who defy homonormative/homonationalist logics of inclusion (Duggan, 2003; Puar, 2007), this also concerns non-LGBTQ+ subjects who are rendered queer through the deployment of heteronormative and racist stereotypes. Of course, this is a central point in Weber's *Queer IR* (2016), but it has not yet been applied to humanitarian intervention, which constitutes a key mechanism through which Western states exercise and legitimise military violence; a point that I have made throughout this thesis. Furthermore, even Weber's analysis discusses perversion in terms of different figurations of 'the perverse homosexual' (2016), indicating an implicit essentialism that is rooted in a specific (Western) history of the homosexual subject (Foucault, 1976, p.43). This thesis' analysis has contrastingly looked at notions of normality and/or perversion, ascribed through racism and/or heteronormativity, without restricting these to any particular sexual subjects. By noting the existence of a 'homonormative turn' in queer IR and critically engaging with it, this thesis makes a unique contribution to the existing literature.

It is in the adoption of a more expansive analysis of figures which have been rendered perverse, through the deployment of racist and/or heteronormative stereotypes, that this thesis' analysis has been rooted. In this sense, by adopting a new empirical focus on humanitarian intervention, and suggesting a slight shift away from Duggan's theory of homonormativity (2003), this thesis reinvigorates the queer subject-less critique in a way that is attentive to racism, racialisation and colonialism. Furthermore, it is in looking at extreme figures of selfhood and/or otherness that this thesis' analysis has aimed to make absolutely clear the discourses and stereotypes which are routinely deployed against those who are dehumanised, othered to and excluded from the British body-politic at any particular time. The dehumanising mechanisms which are deployed against racialised people and queer people who don't conform to homonormativity (Duggan, 2003) are often similar, as this thesis has illustrated through the adoption of a simultaneously queer and postcolonial approach. This why it no longer makes sense to anchor queer IR in a reiterative discussion of the 'normal/homonormative Western LGBTQ+ subject' as a central point of call,[96] as this inadequately captures the violence that is perpetrated, most notably, against trans and gender non-conforming people (and transwomen in particular), the violence that is perpetrated against racialised people (and Muslims in particular), and the co-constitutive character of discourses of racism and perversion that are used to legitimise violence against these people, especially in the British context.

In looking at humanitarian intervention, this thesis unpacks a central mechanism for the organisation of violence in world politics in our current, apocalyptic moment. Doing so, it highlights the way in which colonialism operates through discourses and practices of humanitarian intervention. Whilst this builds upon arguments made by postcolonial scholars (e.g. Hindawi, 2021; Gozzi and Valente, 2021; Pourmokhtari, 2013), this research also illustrates the simultaneously gendered, racist and sexual dimensions of colonial violence

[96] See Delatolla (2020), Puar (2007; 2013), Rahman (2014), Rao (2014; 2020), Weber (2016).

which occurs under the guise of saving civilians. It has done this through the analysis of key House of Commons Debates on humanitarian intervention, from 2011 to 2018. Included in this set of discourses is the 2013 debate on Syria (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013), in which the government failed to secure a majority, and the 2018 debate on Burma (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018), in which a non-military response, lying in the realm of politics as normal (Waever, 1995), occurred. This is a key feature and contribution of this thesis, which analyses failure (Halberstam, 2005; Weber, 2014; Wilcox, 2017) and absence (Hansen, 2000) as key speech-acts which are as significant to assemblages of colonial violence as instances in which a case for direct military violence is successfully made.

Brutal Britannia: The Ongoing Coloniality of the British State

Looking at the British state, in particular, the thesis has demonstrated the tangible ways in which contemporary British foreign policy continues to operate on the basis of a colonial script, which activates a deep reservoir of colonial (heteronormative and racist) stereotypes to other and dehumanise groups it seeks to use violence against. As I have previously argued, by noting these discursive mechanisms, I am not arguing that members of ISIL or Gaddafi are blameless innocents, but rather that we can learn a significant amount about the ongoing colonial character of British identity, and those excluded from this, through the language that is used to render these figures objects of intervention. This is especially apparent when we draw parallels between the way in which race was initially constructed through discourses of sexual perversion in the period of early colonisation (Carvajal, 2003; Hawkins, 2012; Lugones, 2018), and the logics for humanitarian intervention in the present day. Within this frame, discussions of violence rarely appeal to practical outcomes, and often take on an identarian character, in which the targets of violence are racialised *and* queered. Given that wars are now fought with the stated aim of protecting life within the liberal paradigm (Foucault, 1980, p.137), the study

of humanitarian intervention takes on great significance for the study of norms of violence in world politics more broadly.

Seeing the study of resistance to arguments for intervention as being of central importance to the study of power (Foucault, 1976; Weber, 2016), this thesis has maintained a core focus on this throughout. In particular, it has mapped the key ways in which hegemonic narratives on intervention have been resisted throughout the debates in question, and the consequences of these discursive strategies, namely in progressively restricting the political options available to the UK Government in attempting to legitimise airstrikes. As previously discussed, arguments against the government position in the House of Commons are far from incorporating all forms of resistance towards humanitarian intervention and expanding this focus is an aim of my future research. That being said, by highlighting arguments which were successful in restricting the options available to the UK Government in future cases, I have mapped the shifting terrain of the debate from 2011-2018. Situated within this thesis' queer and postcolonial approach, this has exposed the dominant heteronormative and racist governing rationalities which inform UK debates on humanitarian intervention.

The thesis' focus on the absence of an intervention (Hansen, 2000) has highlighted exclusive views of human subjectivity in the debates in question, and the focus on failure (Halberstam, 2005; Weber, 2014; Wilcox, 2017) has highlighted the possibilities for MPs establishing conditions of intervention which the government is unable to meet. Speaking to the temporal narrative that encapsulated the debates in question, the thesis highlighted that this came in the form of a worldview that I have termed 'the path to democracy.' Drawing upon my empirical analysis of the debates, I have argued that this is a worldview which positions the UK (and the West more broadly) as the vanguard of humanity (Rahman, 2014), depending on a view of time organised by notions of sexual and civilisational underdevelopment (Weber, 2016) and the idea of a right and wrong side of history (Rao, 2014; 2020). This situates

contemporary iterations of humanitarian intervention firmly within the temporal and spatial imaginaries of European colonialism.

Cultural Figures of Normality and/or Perversion (Weber, 2016)

Through my analysis of the debates in question, I identified a number of cultural figures that were (re)constructed and appealed to, either in order to make a case for violence, or to legitimise violence that had already occurred. The first of these was 'The Brutal Dictator'; a figure of perverted sexual/civilisational development that has been under-analysed in the academic literature, but has played a significant role in legitimising Western military violence in the Middle East in recent years. Focusing mainly on the Libya debate (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011) and the debates on airstrikes against the Assad regime (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013; Hansard HC Deb, 16th April 2018), I argued that this subject-position was rendered intelligible as a threat to the UK through graphic and emotive descriptions of violence, which framed the heteronormative family unit as being under attack. I further argued that 'The Brutal Dictator' was constructed as an object of pathology and perversion by appealing to historic logics which have been deployed against gay people, women and Black people in order to marginalise them, or legitimise violence against them. Examining the discursive context in which 'The Brutal Dictator' is situated in these debates, I then looked at attempts to establish clear intertextualities between dictators and dangerous others, namely other dictators, terrorists and those seeking to use chemical weapons, locating them within a global adult/child binary. Destabilising the construction of 'The Brutal Dictator' by the government and those who supported its position, I then highlighted arguments which drew attention to the UK's recent military failures, the selectivity of interventionism and the possible illegality of UK military action. Most significantly, however, I highlighted the failure of the UK Government to secure a majority for airstrikes against the Assad Regime in 2013, with this debate highlighting a lack

of trust in the government's integrity and intentions. This established a much higher bench-mark for the proof required to intervene against a sovereign state, and is testament to the queer argument that failure is a significant object of study in IR (Weber, 2014; Wilcox, 2017).

The second cultural figure that I argue was central to UK arguments for intervention was that of 'The ISIL Terrorist', drawing heavily upon scholars such as Puar and Rai (2002), Puar (2007) and Weber (2016), who have previously undertaken a queer analysis of 'The Al Qaeda Terrorist'. This analysis focused mainly on the 2014 debate (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and 2015 (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015) debate on airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq and Syria respectively. This analysis depended, in part, upon similar racial, gendered and sexual stereotypes that were used to construct 'The Brutal Dictator' as a perverse subject, but also focused on the non-statehood of this subject, rendering him a unique physical and ontological threat to the Western liberal state.

In my analysis of 'The ISIL Terrorist', I first dedicated a significant amount of space to exploring the way in which Islam has been historically juxtaposed against the West (Lowe, 2015; Kumar, 2021), the notion of the British national interest, and the designation of Islam as an incubator for terrorism, with this framed as helping to explain why Islamic terrorism figures as the ultimate threat to Western societies. Beyond this, I looked at the specific ways in which 'The ISIL Terrorist' was constructed in the debates in question. This, I argued, came from framing this figure as a threat to women, children, families and gay people, adding homonationalist logics of threat (Puar, 2007) to those which established 'The Brutal Dictator' as a threat to women, children and (traditional nuclear) families. I then highlighted the paradox through which ISIL terrorists are framed as a queer subject, due to their civilisational and sexual barbarism, which includes the targeting of homonormative LGBTQ+ subjects (Duggan, 2003). The un-developability of 'The ISIL Terrorist' subsequently creates a discursive space of unintelligibility, filled by hyperbolic discourses of imminent threat, rendering him the

antithesis of Western civilisation, both spatially and temporally. This representation, I argued, was challenged by MPs who contest British masculine protector narratives and those who called attention to Cameron's branding of his opponents as 'terrorist sympathisers', with the unwarranted invocation of this label also highlighting the label of 'terrorist' to be subjective and politically charged.

Discussing 'The British Self', which is defined through relations with external others (Said, 1979), this is presented as the zenith of human sexual and civilisational development. Throughout this chapter, I explored the ways in which the British body-politic is framed as a patriarchal and masculine subject, rooted in imperial racism and heteronormativity (Berlant and Warner, 1998). The first key way in which this case was made was through reference to British values, which are articulated as a patriarchal responsibility to govern the parts of the world that are too immature to self-govern. Beyond this, I unpacked the application of masculine logics that associate force with virility (Ashworth and Swatuk, 1998; Hooper, 2001) and the use of militarised techno-speak (Cohn, 1987), which divorces violence from lived experience. Finally, I studied instances in which traditional military logics were insufficient to legitimise the use of violence, necessitating the depiction of violence as being part of a broad suite of measures to rehabilitate the society in question. Here, I noted that such discourses resemble logics of paternalistic care, used to justify coercive measures on the basis of knowing what is best for infantilised subjects, such as addicts or people who are mentally unwell.

Investigating the coherence of these representations, I then explored how this differed with the UK Government's response to the Rohingya Genocide, which was firmly within the realm of normal politics (Waever, 1995), entailing limited material obligations in comparison to the securitised responses to atrocity crimes in the Middle East. This, I argued, is reflective of a colonial understanding of subjectivity which excludes populations in the Global South (Wynter, 2003; Phipps, 2021), enabling decisions about responding to mass violence to be

reduced to economic cost/benefit analysis (i.e. the material wealth of the country in which the atrocity crime is occurring). I also argued that central to this process is the non-deployment of colonial (heteronormative and racist) stereotypes (Howell, 2014; Howell and Richter-Montpetit, 2020), once again illustrating the importance of speech-acts of silence (Hansen, 2000) in queer and feminist readings of the international.

Looking at acts of resistance to such depictions, I analysed the ways in which MPs contested the notion of the UK being completely civilised, for example by highlighting the UK's inconsistent morality in relation to oppressive regimes and the possibility of unintended consequences stemming from the use of force. Such acts of resistance then enabled me to situate UK humanitarian intervention within Bilgiç's analysis of European sovereignty, which highlights the colonial violence that is imbricated in Western saviourism (2018). Cumulatively, my analysis of 'The British Self' therefore sketches out articulations of sexual and civilisational supremacy and the ways in which these articulations can be contested, destabilising the binary between good/evil and self/other that underpins these debates.

Drawing the subject-positions articulated throughout the debates together, in chapter nine I analysed 'the path to democracy'. This, I argued, is the temporal framework which underpins the debates in question, positioning the UK as a fully developed society, with responsibility for assisting those parts of the world that lag behind. One aspect of this time-lag (Bhabha, 1994), it is implied, is poor governance and/or civilisational barbarism, resulting in the emergence of atrocity crimes. This is made apparent in the temporal themes that I have identified throughout the debates, the first of which is the general idea of democracy being the height of human development, which I then destabilised through reference to the work of queer (e.g. Edelman, 2004; Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005) and postcolonial scholars (e.g. Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007; Ogle, 2015), alongside arguments which expose democracy to be an impossibility in the Middle East due to colonial interventions. Beyond this, I then

looked at arguments which depended upon the idea of there being a right and wrong side of history, using this hegemonic articulation of futurity (Rao, 2020) to make the case for intervention, before highlighting the absence of such temporal logics in the 2018 Myanmar debate (Hansard HC Deb, 15th March 2018). Relatedly, I then analysed spatial representations which rendered temporal notions of civilisational/sexual progress intelligible. In particular, I focused on the existence of red lines in early debates on humanitarian intervention, the existence of the Arab Street as a site of primitive aspiration for democracy vs. the British Street as the democratic homeland, and representations of Libya (Hansard HC Deb, 21st March 2011) and ISIL-occupied territory (HC Deb 26th September 2014, Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015) as being akin to understandings of the precolonial state of nature that underpinned the civilising mission (Chakrabarty, 2007; Mbembe, 2003, p.23; Ogle, 2015).

The highlighting of certain atrocity crimes and ignorance of others throughout the debates in question, including those committed by the UK, highlights the deeply contingent character of the securitisation process (Waever, 1995). This process depends on the deployment of stereotypes of perverted development and corrective action, as opposed to being a neutral communication of a security dilemma. As Melanie Richter-Montpetit and Alison Howell have illustrated, securitisation is a racist theory and process, rooted in an understanding of politics as normal that is premised upon European polities, and an understanding of the realm of security threats and military action as non-Western societies, reflecting depictions of the pre-colonial state of nature (2020). Separately, Alison Howell has critiqued securitisation theory as facilitating the colonial policing of normal and abnormal bodies through reference to the global politics of medicine (2014). Howell and Richter-Montpetit argue that once securitisation theory has been stripped of its racist meanings, there is little left except for the word 'securitisation', and they therefore argue against recuperating the term (2020, p.17). Whilst this thesis does use securitisation as a term and framework, it does so explicitly in the service of

illustrating how military action depends solely upon the construction of a state of anarchic exception through racist and heteronormative logics akin to the state of nature. In this sense, my analysis contributes towards the work of Howell (2014) and Howell and Richter-Montpetit (2020) in denigrating this theoretical approach.

In the particular case of these debates, the figures of 'The Brutal Dictator', 'The ISIL Terrorist' and 'The British Self' can be read as figures relevant to the legitimisation of violence by drawing upon Cynthia Weber's reading of sexualised orders of IR (2016). Within the frame of Weber's reading of Ashley's (1989) statecraft as mancraft, the self refers to the sovereign (heterosexual) man of the state, against which security threats are positioned (2016, p.4). These security threats can be interpreted as various figurations of the perverse homosexual (2016). In the case of 'The Brutal Dictator', this can be read as a figuration of the underdeveloped homosexual, standing alongside Weber's reading of the unwanted/on the move immigrant (2016, p.8). Whilst the unwanted immigrant attempts to bypass the natural process of national/sexual development by emigrating from the periphery to the metropole, the 'Brutal Dictator' attempts to impede a society's natural progress towards democracy through the use of violence. Framing 'The Brutal Dictator' as a figure against which violence must be deployed are a range of simultaneously racist and heteronormative stereotypes, drawing upon age-old colonial logics of saviourism. Thus, whilst the unwanted immigrant must be kept out so they do not bypass the natural process of development, the dictator must be deposed in order to create space for this process to occur. This is, however, specific to instances where it is not politically possible or desirable for the UK to work or trade with the dictatorship in question, as I discussed in chapter six.

Standing diametrically opposite to the Western state and representing a figure of absolute civilisational and sexual perversion, then, is 'The ISIL Terrorist'. This subject-position is effectively an updated version of Weber's analysis of 'The Al Qaeda Terrorist'

(Weber, 2016, p.9), and I have drawn extensively upon Weber's work in describing the ways in which this figure is articulated. As with 'The Brutal Dictator', 'The ISIL Terrorist' is understood as a security threat through simultaneously racist and sexualised stereotypes, such as the positioning of Islam as the antithesis of Western democracy and discourses of sexual monstrosity, including the targeting of heteronormative families and homonormative LGBTQ+ subjects, as well as polyamory and the belief in indiscriminate killing to secure a desirable afterlife. Cumulatively, then, my reading of 'The (Civilised) Self', 'The Brutal Dictator' and 'The ISIL Terrorist' in these debates draws loosely upon Weber's reading of perverse homosexuals (2016), and the heterosexual male who has responsibility for protecting women, children, families and homonormative (normal) LGBTQ+ subjects from these perverse (and racially-darkened) subjects.

That being said, and as previously discussed, I do not restrict my reading of perversion in the debates in question to figurations of 'the perverse homosexual', as this implies that contemporary queer subjects are rendered queer through the same discursive mechanisms that were deployed against 'homosexuals' in Western societies, in the nineteenth and twentieth century (Foucault, 1976, p.43). This is plainly not the case, given the distinctly racialised manner in which contemporary figures of perversion are constructed in IR, and the deployment of sexual stereotypes in the initial construction of race during early colonialism (Carvajal, 2003; Smith, 2010; Finley, 2011). These factors indicate that a focus on the homosexual, or indeed any particular subjects within the 'LGBTQ' framework as wholly constituting the construction of anarchy (Weber, 2016, p.5) inadequately captures the complex sexual politics of colonialism. Furthermore, framing contemporary queer subjects as 'perverse homosexuals' runs the risk of reproducing a restricted focus on homonormativity, and by extension lesbian, gay or bisexual subjects, rather than trans or gender non-conforming folk, who are increasingly under attack. It also obstructs a broader analysis and understanding of globalised

heteronormativity, which governs the understandings of normality and/or perversion applied to both queer and non-queer subjects. Finally, it conceives of normality/perversion in deeply anthropocentric terms, failing to acknowledge technological advancements and subsequent shifts in human subjectivity (Braidotti, 2022). In this sense, whilst Weber makes an excellent point about the historical roots of contemporary discourses of perversion, I do not feel as though it serves my analysis well, and have chosen to draw loosely upon Weber's ideas, whilst choosing not to explicitly use the language of 'the perverse homosexual' to describe the subject-positions I have identified in the debates in question.

Illustrating how arguments which frame IR in binary terms in line with this racist/heteronormative framework can be resisted, I have drawn upon Weber's queer logics of statecraft (2016, p.18) throughout. In particular, I have adopted their use of the Barthesian and/or principle (Weber, 2016, p.39) to destabilise binary representations which cast the UK as civilised and the Global South as lagging behind or akin to the state of nature. Throughout this thesis, I have focused solely on the contributions of MPs which have effectively and progressively narrowed the discursive terrain available to the UK Government in making its cases for humanitarian intervention. This is due to the limited space available to me, but I had also hoped to also be able to focus on the work of activists in the proposed area of (non)intervention which contest the narrative presented by the UK Government. Nonetheless, the acts of resistance that I have focused on have, in various ways, highlighted historic colonial wrongdoings, incompetencies that have ultimately cost many lives, and inconsistencies in the arguments deployed by the government and those who support its decision.

After the failure of post-conflict reconstruction in Libya, it became effectively impossible for the government to make a case for wide-scale humanitarian intervention against a state, with proposed airstrikes against Syria framed in the technical and sanitised (Cohn, 1987) language of limited, strategic strikes, and even these arguments being rejected by the

house in 2013 due to the absence of clear proof or a UNSC Resolution (Hansard HC Deb, 29th August 2013). Whilst the government was able to successfully make the case for airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq (Hansard HC Deb, 26th September 2014) and Syria (Hansard HD Deb, 2nd December 2015), by drawing upon deep-rooted racist and sexualised stereotypes that were widely deployed throughout the War on Terror, even these debates featured a closing-down of discursive space for the government. In the 2015 debate (Hansard HC Deb, 2nd December 2015), in particular, opposition MPs highlighted the deeply political and contentious deployment of the label 'terrorist sympathisers' by Cameron, and by extension challenged the objectivity of the label 'terrorists', which the government's argument against ISIL depended heavily upon.

Despite these dissenting voices, as I explored in chapter nine in particular, underpinning the debates in question is a general disposition to seeing the UK as the telos of civilisation and the rest of the world as lagging behind. It is this which I see as the fundamental issue with Western-centric approaches to world politics, building explicitly on the work of various excellent queer IR scholars who see the destabilisation of common-sense notions of temporality as an issue of fundamental importance (e.g. Rahman, 2014; Weber, 2016; Rao, 2020).

Closing Reflections

Humanitarian intervention is a practice through which colonial violence continues to occur, in which discourses of protecting life are paradoxically used to legitimise violence (Foucault, 1980, p.137), and perpetuate the material and ideational control of the Global South by countries in the Global North West. Whilst it can be argued that the West's power is waning, especially in the face of the rise of China and Russian interventionism in Ukraine, former colonial powers continue to occupy a position of material and ideological supremacy in global politics. This is evidenced by the continual dominance of Western states in international

institutions such as the UN Security Council, the existence of the English language as lingua franca, the global expansion of Anglo-American neoliberal capitalism (and the associated economic exploitation of the Global South by the Global North), and the endurance of anti-Black racism and White supremacy as defining features of world politics (Sabaratnam, 2020; Shilliam, 2012; Anievas, Manchanda and Shilliam, 2015), to note a few key dimensions. Central to this dominance, as a number of scholars have noted, is the notion that the Global North West has achieved full development, whilst other perceived less-civilised countries and peoples lag behind (Bhabha, 1994; Chakrabarty, 2007, p.22). This worldview is not only racist, but is deeply heteronormative, rooted in an understanding of time defined by capitalism and heterosexual reproduction, and the pathologisation of subjects who are out-of-sync with this (Freeman, 2011; Halberstam, 2005; Love, 2007). Furthermore, this colonial view of time as progress has created hugely unsustainable ways of living on this planet, replacing Indigenous ways of sustainable living (Mazzocchi, 2020; Braidotti, 2022) with anthropocentric worldviews which only see agency as belonging to humans, conceived as White and male (Wynter, 2003; Phipps, 2021), and see animals and the natural world as resources ripe for exploitation. It is the convergence of colonialism, capitalism and planetary destruction through the sexual politics of modernity (Delatolla, 2020) that this thesis speaks to. More particularly, by studying humanitarian intervention, it hopes to have provided a snapshot of the way in which liberal norms of violence organise global politics at the beginning of the twenty first century.

In sketching some possible avenues for future research, I tentatively suggest that scholars might benefit from drawing upon this thesis's methodological framework, or a similar one, and applying it to the foreign policy debates in different states. Of particular interest may be the study of cultural figures of selfhood and/or otherness, with IR and political science still largely hostile to the study of culture beyond critical approaches such as feminism, queer theory

and postcolonial theory. Beyond this, much greater attention must be paid to violent processes of occupation in settler colonial societies such as the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, where the colonial process is still very much ongoing, at the expense of First Nations citizens. Relatedly, Indigenous understandings of ontology (Rose, 2004; Tallbear, 2015) provide an excellent counter-balance to the anthropocentric, individualistic Enlightenment thought that informs humanitarian intervention and the current configuration of world politics more broadly. As such, the process of resisting the ongoing colonialism of world politics, of which humanitarian intervention represents the hard edge, could be articulated by presenting alternative responses to atrocity crimes that are rooted in Indigenous ways of thinking.

Whilst this thesis has not drawn extensively upon such modes of thinking, it has forwarded an understanding of humanitarian intervention as colonial violence which is rooted in assemblages of gender, sexuality and race. These vectors cannot be separated and it is specifically through thinking through all of these vectors at the same time that my contribution lies. This builds explicitly upon Spike Peterson's call to cast aside pseudo-scientific measures of objectivity and methodological rigour in the face of our current planetary crisis (2021), highlighting the tendency for mainstream IR to deploy such criticisms to approaches that challenge systemic power relations, in order to render them marginal.

Throughout this project, I have attempted to be innovative and reflexive in my theoretical and methodological approach, incorporating a range of critical perspectives. Nonetheless, the focus of this project has admittedly been anthropocentric, and I believe that the addition of Indigenous and post-human thought[97] would be valuable for any future project. It is specifically through understandings of agency and subjectivity exclusive to 'the human' that we have reached this moment of planetary crisis, and as social scientists we must all be much more attentive to the agency, interconnectedness and importance of the natural world.

[97] e.g. see Braidotti (2022); Haraway (1985); Tallbear (2015); Hird (2015).

Possibly most interestingly, the notion of Indigenous futurism (Fricke, 2019) articulates the incomplete character of the colonial project whilst indigenous futures and alternatives to capitalism and colonialism exist. Whilst this project has focused more on the colonial mechanisms of power through which western foreign policy and state violence operates, I see the articulation of such futures to be a much-needed contribution in the discipline of IR, and to future research into humanitarian intervention.[98]

Whilst this thesis focuses narrowly on the case of British humanitarian intervention, I hope that it captures the zeitgeist of Western policy-making, which continues to operate on the basis of a colonial script. By unpacking the way in which even policies designed to save civilians actively reproduce anti-Black racism and heteronormative violence through the (re)construction of a world politics in which the White male still reigns supreme (Wynter, 2003; Phipps, 2021), I highlight the need for a radical alternative to our current political agenda. This agenda presents us with no alternative to culture wars, massive economic inequality, conflicts rooted in competition for scarce resources, poorer nations being swamped (literally and metaphorically) by issues associated with climate change, and increasingly erratic political, economic and societal fluctuations as anxieties increase and technological innovation increases connectivity (Braidotti, 2022; Haraway, 1985). Once again, I must stress that this thesis is far from providing many of the answers to these huge questions, but I feel it is important to acknowledge that I am writing within, and in response to our present condition of existential anxiety, in which planetary problems seem too insurmountable to tackle. By focusing explicitly on humanitarian intervention as a snapshot of this moment, I hope that this thesis makes a positive contribution to the destabilisation of modes of thinking which marginalise people of colour, women, Indigenous people and LGBTQ+ people globally. It is these folks who have

[98] One piece of scholarship which has done an excellent job of incorporating a post-human perspective into the analysis of security is Weber and Leigh's (2018) 'Gendered and Sexualised Figurations of Security'. This discusses contested figurations of a creek as a figuration of security, in relation to Indigenous people, the Australian Government, and a mining company.

drawn upon their experiences of oppression and marginalisation to critique and destabilise ideational and material systems of exploitation. It is their voices that need to be amplified in creating a new world politics beyond the colonial spectres of capitalism, anthropocentrism, White supremacy and heteronormativity, which continue to haunt us all.

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