Twenty-First Century Celebrations of the British Armed Forces: The Rise of the Biopolitical Military Professional

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

2017

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Word Count: 76530
**List of Abbreviations**

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<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Brigade</td>
<td>12th Mechanized Brigade</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 PARA</td>
<td>3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment</td>
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<td>AFD</td>
<td>Armed Forces Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAE</td>
<td>BAE Systems plc (formerly British Aerospace plc)</td>
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<td>BAOR</td>
<td>British Army of the Rhine</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBBR</td>
<td>Big Battlefield Bike Ride</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>Body Mass Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>Combined Cadet Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>COIN</td>
<td>Counter Insurgency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRE</td>
<td>Commission for Racial Equality</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Defence Recovery Capability</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECHR</td>
<td>European Convention on Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>H4H</td>
<td>Help for Heroes</td>
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<tr>
<td>IED</td>
<td>Improvised Explosive Device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITV</td>
<td>Independent Television (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoD</td>
<td>UK Ministry of Defence</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOOTW</td>
<td>Military Operations Other Than War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRT</td>
<td>Province Reconstruction Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>RBL</td>
<td>Royal British Legion</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWI</td>
<td>World War One</td>
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ABSTRACT

The University of Manchester

R. William Palmer

21st Century Celebrations of the British Armed Forces: The Rise of the Biopolitical Military Professional

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Over the past decade, the United Kingdom has witnessed a proliferation of civil-military initiatives that have engendered overt and celebratory displays of support for the British Armed Forces. This thesis interrogates two of these initiatives: the annual public relations event Armed Forces Day and the military charity Help for Heroes. Significantly, these initiatives have emerged against a backdrop of morally and politically contentious military violence, notably in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hence, these initiatives raise important questions about the type of politics which underwrite them. In this thesis, I address these questions by critically engaging with a figure who occupies a key position within this UK civil-military landscape: the professional soldier. Adopting a Foucauldian approach, I place this figure within a broader political, social and historical context and show how, since the end of the Second World War, the professional soldier has continually remerged to rewrite the conditions of possibility for liberal war-fighting. Drawing on this insight, I identify a professional soldier, I label the biopolitical military professional, who greatly informs the contours of this contemporary UK civil-military landscape. The biopolitical military professional is an important figure because they are able to co-opt “civilian” political subjects into the service of liberal-warfighting despite a conflict’s political context. This is made possible because the biopolitical military professional is a figure who incorporates their military expertise and professional concerns within a wider set of life-administering knowledges concerned with the health and well-being of the population. Crucially, the most overt expressions of biopolitical military professionalism are produced through these UK civil-military initiatives. I demonstrate this by showing how these initiatives mobilise a whole host of “civilian” proto-professional subjects into the active service of liberal war-fighting through an appeal to both their military “obligations” and their fitness and wellbeing. An effect of this is that participating in one of these initiatives becomes more than an act of military support it also becomes a way of partaking in a healthy and life-enriching activity. For example, a day out at Armed Forces Day is a way to get children to take part in active play and educational activities. Supporting the armed forces through Help for Heroes may involve running a marathon or taking part in a long-distance cycle ride. Consequently, via the presence of the biopolitical military professional these initiatives achieve a certain resonance with a civilian population disinterested in the politics of war but increasingly concerned with their health and wellbeing.
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my daughter Holly whose birth a year ago, brought new challenges and inspiration in equal measure.
INTRODUCTION

Living in the UK, over the past decade, I have watched, with a deep sense of unease as the presence, image and values of the British Armed Forces have come to increasingly permeate everyday spaces. Friends wearing Help for Heroes’ wrist bands, my local town holding a “freedom” parade and David Bowie’s Heroes taking on a whole new meaning. In short, there is a ‘subtle inculcation of support for British Armed Forces’ (Jenkings et al. 2012, 357). Indeed, in recent years, the United Kingdom’s civil-military relationship has undergone some dramatic changes. The most visible are the overt and celebratory displays of military support which are now a routine aspect of British life (Basham 2013, 42). At “official” events, such as Armed Forces Day, members of the public “show their support” by applauding and cheering soldiers as they march past, while at the same event children learn and play among soldiers and their weaponry. In addition, new and popular military charities, notably Help for Heroes, encourage people to express their support for the armed forces by promoting fundraising challenges as a way of raising money for soldiers injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, through these initiatives, engagement with the British Armed Forces is often represented as life-enriching and healthy. For example, a day out at Armed Forces Day is a way to get children to take part in active play and educational activities. Supporting the armed forces through Help for Heroes may involve running a marathon or taking part in a long-distance cycle ride.

Significantly, these practises of active, celebratory and supportive military engagement take place against a backdrop of morally and politically contentious military violence. In 2003, UK Forces invaded Iraq as part of a US-led coalition before being drawn into a bloody “counter-insurgency” campaign in the southern city of Basra. The decision to invade Iraq divided Britain. Opinion polls taken at the time suggest that a majority of the British public supported the invasion (YouGov 2013)¹, but in London around a million people marched against the war (BBC News 2003). As the conflict wore on, political and military scandals further eroded this precarious legitimacy: a claim that Iraq could launch weapons of mass destruction within 45-minutes, a key justification for the invasion, was soon widely discredited and in September 2003 an Iraqi hotel worker was tortured and killed at the hands of soldiers from the Queen's Lancashire Regiment. By 2007, four years after the initial invasion, polling data suggested that only 30% of the British population

¹ Martin Shaw (2005, 95) argues that opinion polls only demonstrate ‘passive political support’ for military organisations and their activities. It is active military support that takes hold in the UK after 2006.
agreed with the original decision to go to war (YouGov 2013). As for the scale of the violence, one estimate places the death toll from the invasion and the consequences of its aftermath at over a quarter of a million (Iraq Body Count 2016). Britain’s mission in Iraq, code-named Operation Telic, officially came to an end in 2009, but there are still over 500 British troops in Iraq today (BBC News 2009; 2016).

As well as Iraq, in 2006 UK forces escalated their involvement in Afghanistan by entering Helmand Province and engaging in some of the most intense fighting they have experienced since the end of the Second World War (Edmunds 2012, 276). A response to the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, the war in Afghanistan was initially perceived as a ‘good war’ (Lawler 2002; Shaw 2002; Dexter 2007). But by late 2006, the move into Helmand had led to a significant escalation in British casualties and, as a consequence, public opinion moved against the conflict (Dixon 2012, 112). Within the British Army itself, a number of senior officers saw Helmand as an opportunity to revitalise the army’s image after its strategic and moral failings in Iraq (Ledwidge 2012, 58; Butler 2015, 57). But by the time the British military was looking to leave Afghanistan, criticism of the mission’s conduct was already widespread among defence intellectuals and practitioners alike (King 2009; Ledwidge 2012; 2013; Ucko and Egnell 2013; Butler 2015). According to one conservative estimate, 3,000 civilians have been killed as a result of Western involvement in Afghanistan and 500 of those were due to the actions of British Forces (Ledwidge 2013, 97). A more recent study concludes that the war and its consequence have been responsible for the deaths of 173,000 people, a figure which includes 31,000 Afghan civilians (Crawford 2016). Britain’s official mission in Afghanistan, Operation Herrick, ended in 2014 (BBC News 2014), but as of July 2016 there were still 450 British troops in the country. Shortly before leaving office, David Cameron announced that this number would be increased to 500 (Mason 2016).

This opening scene presents two images which sit in stark contrast. In the first, a collection of largely celebratory activities take place that involve people engaging with the British Armed Forces in life-enriching and healthy ways; in the second, the same armed forces participate in violent conflict and engage with people in ways that are designed to bring about serious injury and death. That these two images can co-exist raises important

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2 I do not use the terms “army” and “armed forces” interchangeably. In each instance, I use either the term “armed forces” or “military” to refer to all three service branches, or I refer to the relevant service, either army, navy or air force. In this case, it was predominantly within the army that these sentiments were expressed.
questions about the frames which make twenty-first century liberal warfare ‘easier, or more difficult, to wage’ (Butler 2009, 2). How can activities designed to celebrate the British Armed Forces take place at a time when the same armed forces are involved in the conduct of morally and politically ambiguous violence? Why, during a period of unpopular military conflict, do a series of initiatives designed to increase the visibility and support of the UK armed forces resonate with such large sections of the UK population? What type of politics make these initiatives possible? How in the twenty-first century are political subjects recruited into the active service of liberal violence? And finally, what do these new forms of military participation tell us about how liberal warfare is conducted in the twenty-first century?

In this thesis, I interrogate this proliferation of civil-military initiatives, and respond to these questions, by critically engaging with a figure who occupies a key position within this civil-military landscape: the professional soldier. Indeed, within this landscape, the professional soldier appears in numerous forms: in Basra and Helmand they are the war-fighters and military experts but through Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes they the educators, entertainers and a charitable cause. More specifically, the figure of the professional soldier informs this landscape in two key ways. I outline these in the following two sections.

**Support the Troops, Oppose the War**

First, the figure of the military professional underwrites a “support the troops, oppose the war” mentality (Basham 2015, 5) that is woven through this civil-military landscape. According to this mindset, running a marathon for Help for Heroes or cheering a passing Armed Forces Day parade is a guilt-free experience as it only involves providing support to soldiers and not the wars they fight in. An effect of this mentality, therefore, is that regardless of the moral or political foundations of Britain’s wars, soldiers have become elevated in the UK to the status of popular “heroes” (Gribble et al. 2012; Hines et al. 2014). Nevertheless, this “support the troops, oppose the war” mentality depoliticises war and the soldiers that take part in them by separating ‘soldiers from the wars they wage, and society from the wars the state wages on its behalf’ (Basham 2015, 5). Crucially, this depoliticisation is made possible by the figure of the professional soldier.
To explain this, it is worth briefly examining what one section of British military doctrine says about the differences between a ‘conscript’ army and a ‘professional’ army. In a conscript army, the doctrine explains, ‘soldiers serve because they are citizens, so a conscript army’s ethos is based on belief in the state and service to it’. In a professional army, however, such as the British Army, ‘soldiers are professionals who choose to serve because they want to be professionals’ (The British Army 2000, 3-14). This change in emphasis from ‘belief in the state’ to wanting ‘to be professionals’ has important political implications. Even though service in a conscript army is ‘compulsory by law’, the actions of the conscript are also inextricably linked to their ‘beliefs’, whereas in a professional army, the actions of soldiers are only determined by their professionalism. This shift in the soldier’s motivations discursively changes who is responsible for the soldier’s actions. In the conscript army, soldiers are also ‘citizens’ so what they do forms part of a collective endeavour that involves the whole of society – responsibility is shared. In professional army, however, responsibility for the soldiers actions is taken away from the soldier and concentrated into the hands of civilian politicians who decide where and how military force should be deployed (Huntington 1957, 83). To be clear, the shift in responsibility is more representational than anything else, but what is important is that, discursively, the soldier’s political responsibility is stripped away. The only choice the soldier made was to be a military professional in the first place.

It is this separation of responsibilities makes the “support the troops, oppose the war” mentality intelligible. The war is the responsibility of politicians and therefore it can be “opposed”, but soldiers are just doing what they are told to do, professionally. Thus, they are presented as apolitical servants of the state who are just doing a difficult job and so we can “support the troops”. In this environment, therefore, initiatives such as Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes become, in effect, celebrations of the military profession.

Nevertheless, this seemingly neat division between soldiers and war is deeply unstable. For a start, it actually contradicts what British military doctrine itself says about the instrumental relationship between war and society. According to one piece of doctrine,

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3 This line is taken from Soldiering: The Military Covenant, where the term “military covenant” was first used. I examine this in more detail in chapter two.
4 This is what Samuel Huntington calls “objective civilian control”.
5 Conversely, according to Helen McCartney (2011), this view of soldiers of apolitical servants can give them the appearance of being ‘victims’ of government policy. Something which McCartney argues undermines their professional status.
being successful in conflict requires the ‘ability to get its people to operate and to fight’\(^6\). One way this is achieved is by maintaining ‘strong connections with society’ (The British Army 2010, 2-18, 2-28). Supporting soldiers, according to this logic, will contribute to a soldier’s morale and hence their ability to fight in military conflict. In other words, supporting the soldier is a proxy for supporting the war. Furthermore, support for soldiers and support for the aims and objectives of war often become conflated. For example, it is typical to hear at public military events that soldiers are fighting for “our freedoms” or to see Union Jacks being waved as a symbol of support. Hence, support for the soldier becomes inextricably attached to the causes they are fighting for.

Despite this, a number of liberal civil-military scholars present the “support the troops, oppose the war” paradox as unquestionable fact. Indeed, according to some, there is no paradox at all, the popularity of soldiers is just evidence of a ‘subtlety in public thinking and opinion’ (Gribble et al. 2012, 152). Another scholar commends the public for their ability to ‘to dissociate the Army as an institution from the unpopular role it has been required to play in Afghanistan and in Iraq’ (McCartney 2010, 423). The distinction between soldier and war was always there, we are told, but what is different now is that ‘a hitherto apathetic public’ have developed the cognitive ability to separate the soldier from his or her work (Tipping 2008, 12). As a result, public support for the armed forces, which was once ‘latent’, can now be expressed overtly (Ingham 2014, 189).

It is the so-called military covenant that gets much of the credit for granting the public with this moment of civil-military enlightenment (Ingham 2014, 189).\(^7\) Now written into UK legislation, the military covenant is as much an idea or rhetorical device as it is a document or piece of doctrine. The term became frequently used in popular and political discourse after 2006 as a way of evoking the ‘mutual obligations’ that are said to exist between the British Armed Forces and wider society (McCartney 2010; Forster 2011). A 2011 iteration explains these obligations:

> The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and,

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\(^6\) This is the “moral component” of fighting power, which I examine in detail in chapter two.

\(^7\) Sarah Ingham (2014, 189) argues that the military covenant encouraged members of the public to ‘decouple’ soldiers from their missions. I explore the implications of this ‘decoupling’ in more detail in chapter three.
sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty … In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment (Ministry of Defence UK 2011).

The military covenant is clearly an important part of the civil-military landscape. Its central image of a symbiotic relationship between the armed forces and society underpins many of the civil-military initiatives which have emerged over the past decade. Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes have become conduits through which members of the public are able fulfil their covenant obligations. Nevertheless, this dominant civil-military narrative, which focuses on the public’s collective re-education, is short-sighted. This is because in maintaining that the covenant is part of a causal relationship that effects the revelation of a number of self-evident civil-military “truths” – such as those associated with the military professional - it fails to question the processes, behaviours and practises that taken together constitute and produce those “truths” in the first place. What is required instead is an approach that is able to interrogate and disrupt the ways in which these supposed “truths” are produced. This dissertation seeks to do just that.

**THE PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER AS LIBERAL WAR FIGHTER**

Second, the figure of the professional soldier informs this shifting civil-military landscape in a more general sense. This is because professional soldiers are routinely cast as the consummate liberal war fighters. For example, Patrick Mileham (2004, 77) argues that ‘the ultimate purpose of articulating professional military disciplines is to promote peace’. More bluntly, Ralph Peters (1994, 16) argues that the professional soldier is a figure who sits in stark opposition to ‘warriors’ who are ‘erratic primitives of shifting allegiance, habituated to violence, with no stake in civil order’. In this respect, the professional soldier comes to occupy an important place within progressive liberal meta-narratives which posit that the role of violence is steadily decreasing over time. Indeed, the professional soldier comes to embody this very ideal.

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8 I examine how the military covenant normalises the violence of the British Armed Forces in Chapter Three.

9 While it is Ingham (2014) that develops this argument most comprehensively, her work comes from a broader civil-military tradition which also fails to adequately to interrogate the ways in which civil-military relationships are produced.

10 A recent and prominent incarnation of this idea is expressed by Stephen Pinker (2011, 21) in *The Better Angels of Our Nature*. He argues that ‘an intensifying application of knowledge and rationality to human
This story of the liberal military professional begins by stressing the complexities of modern warfare. Old Clausewitzian certainties have been eroded and so the modern battlefield is a complex place. Today’s wars are messy, politically sensitive and entangled amid the workings of globalisation (Kaldor 2006; The British Army 2010, 1-14). In this environment, only highly trained, educated and politically sensitive professionals are capable of being successful (Janowitz 1971; The British Army 2010, 2-16). Moreover, technical advances mean that sheer numbers or “manpower” are no longer as important as they once were (Edgerton 1991, 141). Weapons are now more powerful, more accurate and have longer ranges. Troops on the ground can substantially increase their advantage by calling for help from air force bombs. Thus, armed forces are getting smaller, more specialised and technically competent.

Furthermore, as armed forces get smaller they become increasingly separate from society. Unlike previous generations when everyone knew a soldier or was likely to have served in the armed forces themselves, today “being military” is now something that only a few select professionals do (Holmes 2006, 5). Consequently, the notion of military professionalism implies that the use of lethal force is being placed into the hands of an exclusive few who regard military force ‘as an essential part of modern, progressive, positive science’ (Mann 1988, 171). However, initiatives like Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes tell a different story. Military power is clearly not receding into an ever-smaller professional space.

In fact, a number of scholars, writing from within the tradition of critical military studies, have noted the appearance of more active forms of “civilian” military engagement in the UK and in doing so show how military power is circulating far beyond these professional affairs … can force people to recognize the futility of cycles of violence, to ramp down the privileging of their own interests over others’.

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11 One field manual notes how ‘globalisation, the proliferation of information and information technology, and a myriad of state and non-state actors make the operational environment very complex’ (British Army 2009, 1-14).

12 Another piece of doctrine notes how: ‘education, which is about personal professional development, runs in parallel with training, which improves individual and collective practical performance. Training without education is unlikely to be sophisticated enough to deal with the complexity of conflict and operations’ (The British Army 2010, 02-16).

13 This is a narrative which is reproduced in military sociology. Martin Shaw (1991, 74) argues that ‘military sociologists have … seen the military as an increasingly inward-looking social institution, confined to a narrow role by both its own professionalism and the normative culture of democracy’.
spaces. For example, David Gee (2014, 4) identifies the emergence of the ‘casual militarist’ who is ‘perhaps wary of encouraging their children to join the forces, but happy to wave a flag for our heroes’. Joanna Tidy (2015, 9) notes ‘a form of quasi-military service [that] is brought into the most banal spaces of everyday civilian life’. And Neil Jenkins et al. (2012, 357) speak of an emerging ‘organic social movement’. Consequently, the figure of the military professional needs to be rethought in such a way that allows an interrogation of these everyday civil-military practises and the novel forms of “civilian” military service they engender.

**Research Question**

Is it for these reasons that my thesis responds to the research question: *How does the figure of the professional soldier sustain and normalise the violence of the British Armed Forces?* I place the professional soldier at the centre of my research question because, as I explain above, it is a figure that plays a key role within the contemporary UK civil-military landscape. Consequently, by focusing on the professional soldier I am able to gain important insights into how these celebratory civil-military practises are made possible and, more broadly, the ways in which 21st century liberal wars are fought. Furthermore, as I also explain, the professional soldier is a figure that can obstruct a meaningful critique of the ways in which military power permeates within liberal societies. For example, it can tell you where to direct your anger: the government not the “professional” soldier; it can place the critique of war beyond reach, by limiting enquiry to the professional realm; it can make intelligible the contradictions between what liberals say and what liberals do; and it can reassure you that militaries are getting smaller, more discriminate and more reasonable. Therefore, the principle task of this thesis is to rethink the professional soldier in a way that undermines and disrupts these “obstacles”, and so open up a space for critical enquiry.

Moreover, by asking how the professional soldier sustains violence I am compelled to examine the relationship between the professional soldier and the ways in which liberal violence is organised and made legitimate, not just within military institutions but, through mechanisms and processes that are at work within wider society. In other words, my research question requires me to examine the relationship between the professional

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14 Joseph Burridge and Kevin McSorley (2012) allude to this tension between professionalisation and “civilian” military service. They talk about ‘the practises … through which bodies may be transformed, engendered and incorporated into military “service”, with this more broadly conceived, in the post-conscription age, in terms of wide military support’. 
soldier and notions of militarism. In this thesis, I argue that militarism is a set of practices, discourses and processes that relate to the successful organisation and legitimisation of warfighting, a definition I outline in much more detail in Chapter One. This means that manifestations of militarism can be observed both within the military institution and outside it. For example, a soldier’s basic training is a form of militarism but so too is something like attending an Armed Forces Day celebration, an activity which also enjoys a positive relationship with the organisation and legitimisation of warfighting. Hence, by asking how the professional soldier sustains the violence of the British Armed Forces I am compelled to look beyond the military professional as someone who can concentrate violence into a limited space, and instead think about the ways in which the professional soldier is complicit in the production of violence in both traditionally military and everyday settings.

Finally, my research question asks how the professional soldier normalises the violence of the British Armed Forces. A notable characteristic of the UK’s shifting civil-military landscape are the ways in which militarism is being continually produced in everyday settings. Indeed, ‘the ability of liberal democracies to wage war requires some normalisation in more everyday settings’ (Basham 2015, 1). By asking how the professional soldier normalises the violence of the British Armed Forces, therefore, I am also required to interrogate the relationship between the professional soldier and the ‘everyday practices, techniques, and metaphors … through which war occupies bodies and militarist principles and ideals are inculcated into civilian life’ (Burridge and McSorley 2012, 77). In short, this means examining the role that the professional soldier plays in the production of what Catherine Lutz (2009, 26) calls the ‘the military normal’.

**Methodology**

In order to rethink the professional soldier in this way, I adopt a research methodology that is heavily influenced by the late political philosopher, historian and sociologist Michel Foucault. In adopting Foucault’s approach, I am able to rethink the figure of the military professional in two key ways. First, it allows me to challenge “taken-for-granted” metanarratives and ideologies. Second, it allows me to reveal a necessary and normalising violence at the heart of liberal rule. I provide a more detailed explanation of Foucault’s methodology in Chapter One, but here I briefly introduce these two key insights.

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15 The list goes on, but it is in these guises that Foucault’s approach is most useful for my own research.
Challenging Metanarratives

As I have already explained, the professional soldier reinforces liberal metanarratives by embodying a particular “end state” for liberal violence. In this respect, Foucault’s work is pertinent to my study because he adopts an approach that challenges such narratives. Indeed, throughout his career Foucault sought to undermine ‘triumphalist accounts which advanced progressively upwards across time, from dark ages of superstition, to Enlightenment, to scientific mastery’ (Donnelly 1982, 364). For Foucault (1977, 155-6), such metanarratives involve a ‘grovelling manner’ focused only on ‘the noblest periods, the highest forms, the most abstract ideas, the purest individualities’. Crucially, the key to challenging these metanarratives, according to Foucault, is to rethink the notion of political power. Indeed, it is only when power is understood solely in simple “sovereign” terms, as something that comes directly from the king or the law, that these metanarratives are made intelligible. For example, a liberal metanarrative which sees political subjects becoming increasingly more “free” only makes sense because those subjects are becoming more “free” in relation to specific laws and regulations. What Foucault does to disrupt this is to show how human beings are, in fact, subject to numerous other forms of power, that are often subtler but no less effective than sovereign power. There is a good example of this approach in Foucault’s (1991) *Discipline and Punish*. In that book, Foucault challenges the notion that a decline in capital punishment is a sign that Western societies are becoming more humane. Indeed, he argues that this narrative only makes sense when power is solely understood as something that emanates from a sovereign who has ‘the right to take life’ (Foucault 2003, 241). Foucault challenges this narrative by identifying another form of power he names disciplinary power which moulds, shapes and regulates human bodies not through direct laws, but through routines, architectural design and surveillance. Hence, Foucault shows that what looks like a progressive and more humane move from capital punishment to the prison only actually represents an evolution in the way human beings continue to be subjected to the violent effects of political power, albeit in more sophisticated and subtle ways. Likewise, in this thesis, I disrupt the metanarratives supported by the professional soldier by drawing attention to a proliferation of “civilian” subject types, related to the professional soldier, who all, in some way, contribute to the sustenance of violence of the British Armed Forces. These include the “casual militarist”, the “military fundraiser” and the “militarised child”. This is an approach, therefore, that shows how processes of professionalisation are complicit in how violence is produced in everyday settings.
Interrogating Liberalism and its Violence

Foucault’s work is also relevant to my study because he provides valuable conceptual tools for critically engaging with liberal forms of government. These are useful for two reasons. First, they provide important insights into how within liberal regimes, human beings are typically governed through forms of power that normalise political subjects. Second, by drawing attention to this normalising power, Foucault’s work helps to expose a violence at the heart of liberal rule.

Foucault (2003; 2007; 2008) undertook his most extensive study of liberalism during a number of lecture series given at the Collège de France during the late 1970s. In those lectures, Foucault argues that liberalism is not a set of abstracted ideals but a form of government that operates through three overlapping forms of power. The first two of these are sovereign and disciplinary, which I briefly introduce above. The third is biopolitics. Biopolitics is a form of power that can operate at the scale of whole populations to direct the behaviour and conduct of human subjects. Crucially, it is able to do this ‘at a distance’ (Rose 1993, 285). Through biopolitical mechanisms, subjects are compelled to regulate their own behaviour in relation to the knowledge of experts. This often means that liberal subjects are encouraged to enact behaviours that are designed to change their body or lifestyle in a way that moves it towards an established norm. For example, someone who chooses to go for a run because they want to achieve a “normal” body weight is an example of a biopolitically produced subject. Foucault’s notion of biopolitics is directly relevant to my research question, therefore, because by drawing on it I will be able to gain important insights into the ways in which liberal subjects are compelled into certain behaviours through processes that normalise. In the context of this thesis, this is particularly useful as it will allow me to examine how liberal subjects are recruited into practises that sustain liberal war-fighting and how these practises are rendered normal.

Furthermore, it is by revealing liberalism’s tendency to normalise that a necessary violence is exposed at its core. Indeed, while biopolitics has many positive effects, such as encouraging someone to adopt a healthy lifestyle, it also has a dark side. This is because processes that normalise must also exclude and stigmatise, as the “normal” can only be known in relation to the “abnormal”. An example of something that normalises in this way might be conversation between friends during which “overweight” people are ridiculed or a newspaper article which draws attention to a celebrity’s weight gain. Even through these seemingly every day experiences there is a violence at work. However, this
liberal violence also finds a much more overt and militarised expression through the conduct of liberal wars (Dillon and Reid 2009). A key example of a liberal war is the so-called “War on Terror”, a conflict that has targeted “extreme” ways of life deemed to be a threat to the overall wellbeing of the “normal” population. Indeed, it was under this rubric that the British Armed Forces entered into conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. In this thesis, I draw on these insights to show how Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes are also sites where this biopolitical liberal warfare is being waged.

**The Research**

A large part of the research conducted for this project has been focused on two key UK civil-military initiatives: Armed Forces Day, the annual flagship public relations event of the British Armed Forces, and the UK military charity Help for Heroes. I researched these initiatives by employing a number of different methods. First, I spent time travelling around the UK conducting participant observation fieldwork at several different civil-military events. This has involved attending two Armed Forces Day national events, Stirling in 2014 and Guildford in 2015; attending an event to celebrate the culmination of the Hero Ride in Windsor in 2015, a fundraising cycle ride organised by Help for Heroes; and observing a Tough Mudder event in Skipton, North Yorkshire, an “extreme” military-style obstacle race that raises millions of pounds for Help for Heroes. In addition, I also observed a number of other smaller civil-military events and visited a number of military museums as part of my research. During these events, I wrote field notes and took a large number of photographs and videos. I then used these first-hand accounts to write up auto-ethnographical accounts of my experiences at these events. The best example of this auto-ethnographical research is contained in Chapter Five which examines my first-hand experiences of attending Armed Forces Day events.

In addition to these first-hand accounts, I also conducted research on the large amount of publicity materials produced through these initiatives. This involved analysing Armed Forces Day programmes and other associated publicity. However, the bulk of this documentary research was conducted on the charity Help for Heroes which produces publicity through a number of different formats. This research has included reading annual reports and magazines produced by the charity, as well as analysing the large volumes of online content that have been generated by the charity’s activities. This has primarily included analysing video, blog and website content. My research on these initiatives is also supplemented by drawing on some of the press coverage they generate.
A large part of this research project has been concerned with placing these civil-military initiatives into a broader political, social and historical context. This part of the project involved extensive desk-based research. This have involved reading scholarship on the military profession produced since the Second World War, notably Samuel Huntington’s *The Soldier and The State* and Morris Janowitz’s *Professional Soldier*. It has also involved conducting research on liberalism – a body of research that has focused on lectures given by Michel Foucault to the *Collège de France* in the late 1970s. In addition to this, my research has involved reading government reports, military doctrine and intellectual outputs from members of the Armed Forces and their close academic associates.

**Main Argument**

The primary claim of this thesis is that the professional soldier is a figure that is deeply implicated in the production of “everyday” militarisms that sustain and normalise the violence of the British Armed Forces. In order to demonstrate this, my thesis charts the evolution of a figure, I label the *biopolitical military professional*. Crucially, the figure of biopolitical military professional emerges in response to a problematic relationship between the UK population and its means of violence that is exacerbated by wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The biopolitical military professional, I argue, acts as the focal point for civil-military initiatives such as *Armed Forces Day* and *Help for Heroes*. Through these initiatives, the biopolitical military professional helps to sustain the violence of the British Armed Forces by facilitating novel forms of “civilian” military participation. Furthermore, this violence is also normalised because this military participation comes to form part of a “normal” healthy lifestyle. For example, I show how fundraising for *Help for Heroes* does not just involve raising money for injured soldiers, it also involves taking part in healthy sporting challenges.

The biopolitical military professional is situated at the heart of a particular *biopolitical* rendering of the civil-military relationship. Within this relationship, the biopolitical military professional sits in a symbiotic relationship with other liberal subjects who are co-opted into the active service of liberal violence, and in return these liberal subjects are made fitter, healthier and stronger. This civilian engagement is possible because the biopolitical military professional is a figure whose professional concerns become incorporated into a wider set of expert knowledges related to the biological wellbeing of population. This argument is important because it draws attention to the type of politics that sustains British military violence in the twenty-first century. Crucially, this is a politics
that is less concerned with a military conflict’s intended political outcomes and instead more concerned with the ways in which military engagement can make “us” live longer, happier and healthier lives. Indeed, the biopolitical military professional is an important figure because they able to co-opt “civilian” political subjects into the service of liberal-warfighting despite a conflict’s political context.

Moreover, much of the work of this thesis involves placing this biopolitical military professional figure into a broader, political and social context. By doing this I am able to show how the figure of the professional soldier is not liberal war-fighting's logical “end point” but the product of a series of historical contingencies. In this respect, my thesis provides an example of ‘the accidents … the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that give birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us’ (Foucault 1977, 146). Indeed, throughout this thesis, I observe how the figure of the professional soldier emerges most acutely during periods when liberal war-fighting is marked by crisis. This is important because it strips away the ability of the professional soldier to inscribe violence with a sense of “rational” political meaning. Instead, it highlights how liberal war-fighting is increasingly the product of a preoccupation with professional concerns such as expertise, military effectiveness, and institutional expediency.

In making these arguments, I hope to contribute to three literatures. First, my thesis contributes to and complements a growing critical military studies literature much of which has emerged as a response to the same civil-military changes I look at in this thesis. Unlike, the “mainstream” or liberal civil-military relations scholarship, mentioned above, that essentially attends to the management of the civil-military relationship, ‘critical military studies more readily engages in a sceptical curiosity about how [military power] works’ (Basham et al. 2015, 1).

Second, I contribute to a Foucauldian literature which interrogates the contradictory relationship between liberalism and violence. Since the rise of post-Cold War Western military intervention and the “war on terror”, in particular, a fruitful research agenda has explored these contradictions as manifestations of the ‘liberal way of war’ (Dillon and Reid 2009). Inspired by Foucault’s writing on biopolitics and liberalism, scholars such as Michael Dillon and Julian Reid (2009) have written extensively on how liberalism’s
biopolitical imperative compels it towards violence. My thesis adds to these works by adding empirical depth by looking at how ‘the liberal way of war’ is waged “at home”.

Finally, by rethinking the military professional I provide a critical Foucauldian intervention into what is largely a conservative body of scholarship on military professionalism and civil-military relations. For example, in Chapter One, I examine how key works in this traditional, such as those by Samuel Huntington (1957) and Morris Janowitz (1971), are implicated in producing the conditions of possibility within which liberal violence takes place. I also critically engage with the modern day civil-military relations scholarship I introduce above.

**Thesis Outline**

This dissertation is made up of six chapters. Here I provide a brief outline of each one.

In Chapter One, I introduce Foucault’s radical reading of liberalism and then build upon these insights to develop my own notion of *biopolitical militarism*. The chapter begins with an explanation of how Foucault approaches liberalism as a regime of power, not as a set of abstract ideals. This is an approach which provides an important exemplar of the genealogical method I use throughout the thesis. Liberalism’s general economy of power is comprised of three different modalities of power: sovereign, disciplinary and biopolitical. Each form of power attends to liberalism’s core problematic: the management of a “free” population. Biopolitics, in particular, is a form of power that works through an interplay of expert knowledge and self-governance to shape and *normalise* the behaviour of ostensibly “free” subjects. Crucially, it is this propensity to normalise that produces a necessary violence at the heart of liberal rule. In the second half of the chapter, I examine how liberal violence is often expressed through a form of militarism, I label *biopolitical militarism*. I argue that biopolitical militarism is a regime of power that *organises* violence in the name of the population by *harnessing* the resources of that same population. Significantly, it is this regime of biopolitical militarism that sustains the violence of the British Armed Forces.

In Chapter Two, I perform a genealogy of the professional soldier. This involves an analysis of key post-war texts on the military profession, principally Samuel Huntington’s *The Soldier and The State* and Morris Janowitz’s *The Professional Soldier*. In the first part of the chapter, I draw on Harold Lasswell’s garrison state hypothesis to show how
biopolitical militarism undergoes a profound problematisation in the aftermath of the Second World War. It is through the works of Huntington and Janowitz, however, that the figure of the professional soldier emerges to “rescue” biopolitical militarism. Nevertheless, as a problematic figure who sits in tension with the broader strategies of biopolitical militarism, the professional soldier provides an imperfect solution. An effect of these tensions is that it becomes increasingly difficult to harness the resources that biopolitical militarism needs from the wider population. This leads to the emergence of the biopolitical military professional, a fragile figure who harnesses the resources of the population, biopolitically, by repackaging military support as a healthy and life-enriching activity. In the last part of the chapter, I draw on Abram de Swaan’s (1990, 14) notion of the ‘proto-professional’ to show how this is a biopolitics which relies on the production of a whole host of “civilian” subjects, such as the “casual militarist”, who are motivated into the service of liberal violence as a way of attending to both their defence and health needs.

In Chapter Three, I undertake a genealogical reading of British Army doctrinal debates from the late 1990s. These debates, I argue, represent a key period in the evolution of the British biopolitical military professional. In the post-cold war era, doctrinal writers, military practitioners and commentators focused their attention on to the so-called moral component of fighting power, defined as the ‘will to fight’ (The British Army 2000, 1-8). This genealogy focuses on the power relations that are at work within these debates. I show how through these debates the spectre of the wider population emerges as a threat to the professional soldier. Significantly, I argue that these debates are the product of a disciplinary institution. Because disciplinary power only operates at the level of the institution and the body, the emergence of the wider population, as a threat, creates an unresolved tension. It is only when these professional concerns become incorporated into wider liberal biopolitical regimes, in later chapters, that the threat of the population can be attended to.

In Chapter Four, I examine the relationship between the violence of the British Armed Forces and the UK’s shifting civil-military landscape. In the chapter, I demonstrate how the military professional is perpetually engaged in a ‘struggle for expertise’ (Huntington 1963) that continually exacerbates tensions in the relationship between the means of violence and the population. I show this through an analysis of the British Armed Force’s 2006 deployment into Helmand Province in Southern Afghanistan. In Helmand, soldiers
increasingly identified themselves through their expertise while often remaining ignorant of the conflict’s broader political context. But military expertise does not exist in a vacuum. It is sustained by the wider population’s moral, emotional and financial support. In this situation, I show how this unbalanced “expert” professionalism is counterbalanced by other, often contrived, practises “at home”, such as the so-called military covenant, that is designed to elicit the support needed to sustain the violence of the British Armed Forces.

Chapter Five is the first of two chapters that examine, in more detail, civil-military initiatives which have emerged in the UK over the last decade. In this chapter, I analyse Armed Forces Day, which takes place across the UK in late June each year. Armed Forces Day is now the UK Armed Forces’ primary public relations event. In the first part of the chapter, I examine how members of the public are encouraged to celebrate the expertise of the professional soldier through a series of military parades, displays and exhibition stands. However, my principle concern is the ways in which children are incorporated into Armed Forces Day events. During Armed Forces Day celebrations, children are encouraged to learn, play and develop through active engagement with military personnel and military hardware. In the chapter, I draw on my own experiences of attending Armed Forces Day events. Furthermore, I use these as a window into some of the other ways children are co-opted into the service of liberal violence, such as cadet programmes and official professional soldier toys. These observations of “healthy” childhoods interacting with military power led me to conclude that Armed Forces Day is a key site through which the figure of the biopolitical military professional is produced.

In Chapter Six, I examine the military charity Help for Heroes. The charity launched in 2007 to help raise money for the rehabilitation of soldiers injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even though Help for Heroes is an independent organisation, I argue that how it operates still constitutes an expression of military professionalism. It enjoys closes links with military institutions and has developed a brand that is readily associated with active support for the British Armed Forces. The chapter explores the complex interplay between the rehabilitation of the injured soldier and the fundraisers who aid in that rehabilitation. Examining this relationship allows me to analysis some of the ways in which charities like Help for Heroes produce, regulate and mediate conceptions of the “civil” and the “military”. The chapter examines how, through the charity, a small number of bodies broken by war are manufactured into ‘soldier/athlete’ subjects (Batts and
Andrews 2011). These soldiers become the consummate biopolitical military professionals as they are endowed with the ability to generate broad emotional and financial support for the British Armed Forces. In particular, the body of the rehabilitated soldier acts as an exemplar to a whole host of fundraising bodies who put their bodies to work in the name of the soldier’s rehabilitation. Nevertheless, the rehabilitation of the soldier is not the only outcome. Engaging in an active and exciting fundraising challenge often means that the fundraiser improves their own body and wellbeing. Seen in this way, I argue that Help for Heroes represents one of the most potent manifestations of biopolitical professionalism.
CHAPTER ONE – BIOPOLITICAL MILITARISM AND THE PROBLEM OF LIBERAL VIOLENCE

In this opening chapter, I introduce Michel Foucault’s radical analysis of liberal government and then build upon it to advance my theory of biopolitical militarism. Over the course of two years at the Collège de France, Michel Foucault advanced a theory of liberal government as a regime of power. Foucault’s reading of liberalism is particularly relevant to this thesis, because it is an analysis that informs a deeper understanding of an intrinsic relationship between liberalism and violence. Liberalism and violence are often depicted as antithetical concepts. Even though liberal states regularly conduct violent acts, these acts are usually justified as “necessary evils” undertaken in response to threats from elsewhere. In and of itself, liberalism is typically portrayed as a series of principles that, if properly observed, will negate the need for violent human activity (Pinker 2011, 21). A Foucauldian reading of liberalism turns this perspective on its head. It posits that liberal wars are fought not as a reaction to violence, but that this violence is a necessary effect of imperatives that are contained within the practise of liberal rule itself. In the second half of the chapter, I develop the notion of biopolitical militarism, as a theoretical frame for thinking about the ways in which this liberal violence is expressed in acts of warfare, organised by military institutions and prepared for and supported throughout wider society. This theoretical framework allows me, in the next chapter, to situate the figure of the professional soldier with these broader regimes of liberal rule and biopolitical militarism. Furthermore, this chapter introduces several concepts, such as government, problematisation, genealogy, regime of power, normalisation, discipline, biopolitics and militarism that will be drawn upon throughout this study.

The chapter begins by explaining what it means to study liberalism as an “art of government”. This involves thinking beyond liberalism as a set of ideals and instead

16 Both the United Kingdom's involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan were depicted as wars against threats that came from elsewhere. In the case of Iraq, it was Saddam Hussain and weapons of destruction. In Afghanistan, it was the Taliban as Al Qaeda’s hosts and protectors. Scant attention was paid to the West's role in producing these threats be it through colonialism, arms deals, hefty sanctions, or the activities of multinational corporations.

17 Steven Pinker (2011, 21) argues that ‘an intensifying application of knowledge and rationality to human affairs … can force people to recognize the futility of cycles of violence, to ramp down the privileging of their own interests over others’. Pinker’s argument is one in a long line of liberal works which rehearse a progressive meta-narrative of liberalism contra violence. A hundred years before Pinker’s publication, Norman Angell (1910, 307) wrote in The Great Illusion, in praise of liberal economics, that ‘the capitalist has no country, and he knows … that arms and conquests and jugglery with frontiers serve no ends of his, and may very well defeat them’. Four years later nationalism and mechanised warfare would rip Europe apart.
conceptualising it as a collection of practises and discourses. Liberal government is organised around the principle that too much government is bad government. Crucially, this is a problematisation that brings into play the notion of “population”. It is from within the population that a tension emerges, between its freedom and its security. This leads to an analysis of liberalism’s life administering economy of power. This means, in the first instance, examining how disciplinary mechanisms work at the level of the body to mould, direct and optimise human subjects. I then look at a defining feature of liberal government: its biopolitical imperative. Biopolitical power operates at the level of whole populations, subtly directing the conduct of liberal subjects through statistical techniques, medical advice and an onus on self-governance. Crucially, it is by revealing liberalism’s propensity to administer life that a necessary violence is revealed at its core. Finally, I explain how a predominant outlet for liberal violence are expressions of, what I label, biopolitical militarism. Like liberalism, biopolitical militarism is faced with the problem of harnessing the resources of a “free” population but, this time, for the more specific task of organising a violence that acts in that population’s name. However, the chapter begins by outlining Foucault’s approach to government and power.

THE ART OF GOVERNMENT AND REGIMES OF POWER

Foucault did not analyse liberalism as a collection of abstract ideals, an ideology or a theory. He analysed it as a regime of power – a ‘way of doing things’ (Foucault 2008, 318). More precisely, he analysed it as an ‘art of government’ (Foucault 2008, 20). Foucault first speaks of “government” in his 1977-78 lecture series Security, Territory, Population. For Foucault, this new project signifies both a continuation of his previous work as well as a shift in scale and focus. In the first instance, it foregrounds a series of questions related to how the conduct of human subjects is directed: how are people governed by others? How might someone govern themselves? (Foucault 1982, 789-90; Rose 1999b, 3; Dean 2010, 40). In this respect, for Foucault, the focus on government represents a continuation of the analytic of power that runs throughout his career18.

18 In his later work, the terms government and power become, at times, synonymous. For example, he notes in one of his final texts that ‘power is less a confrontation between two adversaries … than a question of government’ (Foucault 1982, 789). Mitchell Dean (2010, 35,59) points out that this quote signals a move away from Foucault’s (2003, 15) earlier ‘experiment’ with the ways in which power can be rethought in terms of discourses of war and domination, as he does in the lecture series Society Must be Defended where he famously reverses Clausewitz’s aphorism to ‘politics is the continuation of war by other means’.
Foucault’s analytic of power rethinks power in a way that both decentres political analysis and encourages an examination of power’s productive effects. Foucault (2007, 102) was critical of how throughout the history of political thought ‘the exercise of power was thought of as the exercise of sovereignty’. The notion of sovereignty implies that power is something that is “held”, like a commodity, and that it exists in centralised sites, such as an institution or the state. In contrast, Foucault succeeds in decentring the notion of power by showing how it is relational. ‘We need to cut off the king’s head’ he famously declared in one interview (Foucault 1980, 121). ‘Power must … be analysed as something that circulates … it is never localised here or there, it is never in the hands of some … power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power … they are always its relays’ (Foucault 2003, 29). To understand power as relational is to understand it as something that ‘exists only in action’ (Foucault 2003, 14). This means paying attention to the practises, techniques, behaviours and discourses that play out within these relations of power. Power relationships might be direct and involve face-to-face dialogue, the giving of orders or physical coercion. But they are often more complex: the written word can span multiple generations, practices can become codified in laws or formalised in institutions.

Moreover, power relationships are productive. This represents another break between Foucault’s work and power’s traditional conceptualisation. Power, in the work of philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes is typically understood as something that is negative. Understood in this way, power is only ever the power to ‘say no’ (Foucault 1990, 83). It prohibits, it prevents, it represses. In contrast, Foucault argues that power is ‘a productive network which runs through the whole social body’ (1980, 119). What Foucault (Foucault 1991, 27) means by this, in one respect, is that ‘power produces knowledge’. Power ‘determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge’ (Foucault 1991, 27). In simple terms, it is through power relationships that what comes to be known as “true” or “false” is established (Foucault 2003, 24). There is no a priori knowledge in the world – knowledge is an effect of power. In another related respect, when Foucault (1982, 777) says that power is productive he is referring to ‘the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects’. This means asking ‘how we are formed as various types or agents with particular capacities and possibilities of action’ (Dean 2010, 40). For example, someone’s nationality is produced through power relationships with
state institutions, parents and peer groups. Moreover, these relationships are played out against a backdrop of cultural and scientific knowledge.

Foucault (2007, 108) analyses government as a field of power relations he names ‘governmentality’. In Foucault’s work, these fields of power relations are given several different names: “regimes of practises”, “regimes of truth”, “power-knowledge”, or “regimes of power”. None of these terms are synonymous but ‘all formulate the same problem in slightly different terms’ (Dean 2003, 159). For example, the term ‘regime of truth’ places the emphasis on how discursive practises are complicit in the production of knowledge. In this dissertation, I use the more general phrase regime of power because it encapsulates these variations within a broader framework and thus encompasses the full scope of Foucault’s analytic of power. Crucially, ‘what all these formulations have in common, … is the attempt to pose in a general form the question of how discourses organised and systematised by the task of stating the truth exist in relation to organised and institutionalised forms of practice, of how the production of knowledge occurs within discursive, institutional and social practices’ (Dean 2003, 159). Put differently, regimes of power are conceptual assemblages that show how a collection of practises, discourses and knowledges produce multiple human subjectivities be it through institutions or more diffuse practices.

Uncovering a regime of power involves decentring the initial object of analysis. ‘This kind of method’, Foucault (2007, 117) explains, ‘entails going behind the institution and trying to discover in a wider and more overall perspective what can be broadly called a technology of power’. Furthermore, by ‘proceeding from the outside’, the object of analysis can be understood ‘on the basis of something external and general’ and ‘connected up with an absolute global project’ (Foucault 2007, 117). In Discipline and Punish, for example, Foucault is not interested in the institution of the prison, as such, but how the prison is constituted through a regime of power he names disciplinary power. The prison is not the source of power, but an effect of disciplinary power. Foucault develops his notion of governmentality by employing a similar approach. This time he does not decentre the prison, but the state. Again, the state is not the source of power, it is an effect of power – a ‘mythical abstraction’ (Foucault 2007, 109).

The term government implies, therefore, an intimate relationship with the state - a ‘governmentalization of the state’ (Foucault 2007, 109). But, crucially, the state is not
governmentality’s defining characteristic. The state ‘gives concrete expression to, intensifies, and gives density to’ governmental regimes of power (Foucault 2007, 117). However, to analyse institutions from the ‘standpoint of power relations’ means ‘that the fundamental point of anchorage of the relationships, even if they are embodied and crystallized in an institution, is to be found outside the institution’ (Foucault 1982, 791, my emphasis). To uncover the defining characteristics of a regime of power - or its fundamental point of anchorage – requires a genealogical analysis.

A genealogy involves performing a close reading of historical texts so that they can be situated within a broader field of power relations (Foucault 1977, 139). Genealogies focus on how problems arise in these texts. They then look at the practises that emerge in relation to those problems (Dean 2010, 54). These are what Foucault refers to as problematisations. To study problematisations is to study ‘the way an unproblematic field of experience, or a set of practices, which were accepted without question … becomes a problem’ (Foucault 2001, 74). History, according to Foucault, is a series of problematisations, or ‘the history of the way in which things become a problem’ (Foucault and Berten 2007, 141). In one of his final lectures, Foucault explains how he is not a “historian of ideas” but a “historian of thought”. The historian of ideas, he argues, ‘tries to determine when a specific concept appears’ (Foucault 2001, 74). They search for the origins of a concept. But to look for the origins of something is to search in vain for ‘the moment of … greatest perfection’ (Foucault 1977, 79). It is to assume that something called, in this case, the “state” exists in a ‘calm Platonic form’ while ‘avoiding its violent, bloody, and lethal character’ (Foucault 1980, 57). In contrast, Foucault positions himself as a historian of thought. The historian of thought is not concerned with origins but with problems: ‘the history of the way people begin to take care of something, of the way they become anxious about this or that’ (Foucault 2001, 74). This meaning thinking about how something like the state ‘raises discussion and debate, incites new reactions, and induces a crisis in the previously silent behaviour, habits, practices, and institutions’ (Foucault 2001, 74). What is significant about problematisations, then, is that they are accompanied by a proliferation of new knowledges, discourses and practices which, taken together,

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19 Mitchell Dean (2010, 54) explains how the critical ethos of genealogies ‘can be positively described as an incitement to study the form and consequences of universals in particular historical situations and practices grounded in problems raised in the course of particular social and political struggles’.
signal a realignment of the social and political order. In short, they are accompanied by a new regime of power.

A specific regime of power can be defined, therefore, through its relationship to various problematisations. Foucault (2000, 225) explains how regimes of power ‘up to a point, possess their own specific regularities, logic, strategy, self-evidence, and “reason.”’. This means that a regime of power can be analysed by examining how certain practises, discourses and behaviours relate to strategies and logics that emerge in response to specific problematisations. Throughout this dissertation, I identify several “regimes of power”: governmentality, liberalism, militarism and biopolitical militarism. Each one, I argue, can be defined, albeit simplistically, in relation to various problematisations. In other words, regimes of power form around specific problems not institutions. Crucially, none of these regimes of power are “self-contained”. They overlap, inform and exist in tension with one another. Hence, it is possible to talk of liberal governmentality or biopolitical militarism, as I do later in the chapter.

It is this methodological approach that Foucault brings to the problem of “government”. Foucault charts how the problem of government first arises in a series of literatures written in response to Niccolò Machiavelli’s The Prince. Within this literature, the prince is conceived of as a figure solely concerned with his territory and wealth. This anti-Machiavellian literature counters that depiction by offering ‘something different and new: an art of government’ (Foucault 2007, 92). Two things characterise this art of government. First, is the multiplicity of people who govern: ‘the father of a family, the superior in a convent, the teacher, the master in relation to the child or disciple’ (Foucault 2007, 93). Second, ‘all these governments are internal to society itself, or to the state’ (Foucault 2007, 93). The multiplicities of those who govern are situated on a continuum. At the bottom is the governance of oneself, then comes the governance of one’s family, wealth and property, and finally comes the governance of the state (Foucault 2007, 94). Crucially, each part of the continuum relies on the others. For example, someone cannot govern their family successfully if they cannot govern themselves first.

The practices of government are closely related to prevailing knowledges. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the practises of government were organised around the principles of mercantilism. According to mercantilist principles, the state was to be
governed towards three ends: ‘the state must enrich itself through monetary accumulation’; ‘it must strengthen itself by increasing population’; and ‘it must exist and maintain itself in a state of permanent competition with foreign powers’ (Foucault 2008, 5). In other words, the art of government, as a regime of power, first emerges in relation to a problematisation of the state: how to secure, strengthen and enrich it. Moreover, to reach these ends, mercantilist government aspires to take full control of a state’s territory, economy and subjects. Those who govern the state must be ‘as attentive as that of a father’s over his household and goods’ (Foucault 2007, 95). In the next section, I examine how this nascent form of governmentality evolves, in the eighteenth century, in relation to a problematisation of the “population”.

**LIBERAL GOVERNMENT**

In the eighteenth-century, a radically different form of liberal government emerges. Foucault traces the emergence of liberal government through the writings of political economists such as Adam Smith, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Nicolas de Condorcet. Foucault shows how through these texts what is produced is the new subject of *homo economicus*. This emergent subject is the ‘basic element of the new governmental reason’ (Foucault 2008, 271). *Homo economicus’s* interests are dictated by two factors. On the one hand, its interests are caught up in the maelstrom of the world’s accidents ‘about which he (sic) can do nothing and which he cannot foresee’ (Foucault 2008, 277). On the other, the interests of *homo economicus* are ‘linked to a series of positive effects which mean that everything which is to his advantage will turn out to be to the advantage of others’ (Foucault 2008, 277). Despite the unpredictability of events, therefore, if *homo economicus* works towards its own interests then they will also unwittingly contribute towards everyone else’s interests as well. Consequently, to ensure that *homo economicus* works towards its own interest it must remain largely ignorant to the interests of others - ‘the collective good must not be an objective’ (Foucault 2008, 279). It follows, then, that liberal governance at the state level demands as little interference as possible in the affairs of *homo economicus* while at the same time avoiding ‘any form of overarching gaze which would enable the economic process to be totalized’ (Foucault 2008, 280). In contrast to the all-seeing aspirations of mercantilist government, therefore, the key problematic for

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20 There are numerous terms used by Foucault and those he has influenced to refer to liberal government: liberal governmentality, liberal regimes of power, liberal governmental rationalities or regimes, liberal rule, and sometimes just liberalism. While each one places a slightly different emphasis on a different aspect of “government” they are more or less synonymous.
liberal government is ‘how not to govern too much’ (Foucault 2008, 280). Put simply, liberal government is organised around the principle that the strength of a state depends on government being limited (Foucault 2008, 281).

This imperative for limited government means that liberal government requires “freedom”. In fact, in Foucault’s terms, liberalism ‘consumes’ freedom (Foucault 2008, 63). Liberal government consumes freedom because it can only function if certain “freedoms” are in place: ‘freedom of the market, freedom to buy and sell, the free exercise of property rights, freedom of discussion, possible freedom of expression’ (Foucault 2008, 63). However, this produces a new problem: the freedoms that liberalism demands threaten to undermine those very same freedoms. For example, liberal labour markets require that workers are free to pursue their own interests by selling their labour to whomever they choose. But by allowing these freedoms it also means that workers might choose a lifestyle that is incompatible with productive and effective work. They might drink too much or expose themselves to disease. Furthermore, granting workers the freedom of speech and the freedom to pursue an education risks the circulation of new and dangerous ideas that could ignite a social revolution. This problem is ‘at the heart of liberal practise’: the ‘relationship between the production of freedom and that which in the production of freedom risks limiting and destroying it’ (Foucault 2008, 64). So, while liberalism demands freedom it conversely also demands security. It is ‘this interplay of freedom and security’ that sustains liberal government’s ‘economy of power’ (Foucault 2008, 65). In other words, the tension between freedom and security is the central problematisation of liberal government, as a regime of power. Under liberal government, a subject’s field of action must be produced in such a way that satisfies both the demands of freedom and security. This is what Foucault means when he says that liberalism produces freedom. It is not absolute. Freedom is not a ‘universal which is gradually realized over time’ (Foucault 2008, 63). Instead, freedom is something that is managed and organised. The production of freedom is a ‘technical means of securing the ends of government’ – which among other things include securing, strengthening and enriching the state (Dean 2010, 24).

The problem of freedom/security emerges from a specific entity: the “population”. When Foucault talks of population he is not just referring to a group of people who occupy the same territory or state. He is referring to the specific ways in which that group of people

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21 Foucault (Foucault 2008, 281) explains how ‘in the middle of the eighteenth century, political economy denounces the paralogism of political totalization of the economic process’.
become objectified as “population”. The eighteenth century saw the appearance of a form of knowledge, biology, that made the object, “population”, possible (Veyne 1997, 151). Biology changed the way human subjects were understood. No longer were they conceived of as subjects under god, searching for eternal salvation, but as living beings – a species - constituted through numerous and diverse life processes (Foucault 2007, 75). Liberal government needs to harness the productive capabilities of these life processes. It needs to cultivate bodies that are strong, fit and educated so that they can produce goods and consume them. Nevertheless, life processes are diverse, contingent and unpredictable. Populations contain within them dangerous elements that threaten the same population’s overall wellbeing. Without a healthy population, liberal government would be unable to harness the resources it needs to attain its ends. These dangerous aspects of the species need to be secured.

Liberalism demands not just the management of freedom/security, therefore, but the management of life itself. To understand the ways in which liberalism manages life, it is necessary to understand liberalism’s ‘economy of power’ (Foucault 2008, 65). Three forms of power circulate within liberal regimes. The first is sovereign power. This form of power I have already briefly introduced. It is a form of power that represses and negates. It finds its most concrete expression in the law and the directly coercive arms of the state: the police, the judiciary and the army (Foucault 1980, 122). However, over large territories and over entities as diverse and problematic as the population, the direct and negating effects of sovereign power are limited (Foucault 1991, 73). They also undermine the laissez-faire principles of liberal political economy. Moreover, when power is only conceptualised as “sovereign”, terms like “freedom” risk being taken literally because the ways in which liberal government produces and manages freedom are not taken into account. To provide a more accurate picture of liberalism’s economy of power two other forms of power need to be identified: disciplinary power and biopolitics. Disciplinary power refers to the ways in which life is managed at the level of the human body. Biopolitics describes the ways in which life is managed at the level of the population. To be clear, the line between disciplinary power and biopolitics is often blurred. For example, Foucault (2003, 242) explains how biopolitics ‘does dovetail into [disciplinary power], integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself

22 Paul Veyne (1997, 151) explains how ‘while it may appear that we are dealing merely with figures of speech, modifications of the conventions governing word use, in reality, a scientific revolution is taking place in this shift in terminology’. 

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in existing disciplinary techniques’ (Foucault 2003, 242). In *The History of Sexuality: Part One*, Foucault (1990, 139) refers to disciplinary and biopolitics as two poles of a more general ‘power over life’ he calls biopower. However, it remains useful to think about two normalising powers that operate on two distinct levels: the body and the population. In the next section, I introduce these two powers, disciplinary and biopolitics, and examine the ways they attend to the problem of the population through techniques of normalisation.

**DISCIPLINARY POWER: NORMALISING THE BODY**

Disciplinary power operates at the level of the human body and finds its most concrete expression in institutions such as the prison, the school or the barracks. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shows how in the eighteenth century a detailed knowledge of the human body was used to develop ‘a whole technique of human dressage’ capable of moulding the behaviour of human subjects (Foucault and Boncenne 1988, 105). These disciplinary techniques include the architectural design of buildings, the rigorous implementation of routines and different forms of surveillance.

The ‘architectural figure’ of disciplinary power is the panopticon (Foucault 1991, 200). The panopticon was Jeremy Bentham’s design for a prison developed in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The centrepiece of the panopticon is a control tower. This tower is encircled by another building and this ‘peripheric building is divided into cells’ (Foucault 1991, 200). The control tower is where the prison guards are located. In each of the surrounding cells is one prisoner. This layout means that the guards can observe any prisoner they want but that prisoners can only view their own cell and the control tower. While they can see the control tower, prisoners should never see any activity which takes place within it: ‘the slightest noise, a gleam of light, a brightness in a half-opened door would betray the presence of the guardian’ (Foucault 1991, 201). Crucially, the prisoner never knows when they are being observed. In fact, they might never be

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23 When I talk about a form a power that *does* this or surveys that, my intention is not to give that form of power agency. What I am referring to are the effects of that form of power and the defining characteristics that best describe those effects. For example, when I say disciplinary power moulds the human body what I am referring to is a collection of practices, discourses, mechanisms and techniques that taken together effect a moulding of the human body.

24 Foucault’s use of the panopticon provides an excellent example of the genealogical method. In the first instance, it demonstrates the ways in which something becomes a problem, “the criminal” or the “unproductive worker”, and then shows how that problem evokes thought and debate. It also shows how at various points in history certain ways of thinking become possible. In this case, how a certain surveillance techniques become necessary, rational and normal.
observed. What is important is that the prisoner is constantly aware that at any time they could be observed. This induces ‘a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power’ (Foucault 1991, 201). Because the prisoner is consistently aware that they could be observed, they have no choice but to act as if they are being observed.

The image of the panopticon highlights how disciplinary power normalises the behaviour of human subjects. Any abnormal behaviour would draw the attention of the guards. Consequently, it becomes incumbent on the prisoner to act “normally”. Disciplinary power also normalises by implementing training regimes that work at changing habits, behaviours and the constitution of the human body from “abnormal” to “normal” (Foucault 2007, 63).

Within liberal accounts of progress and reform, the emergence of disciplinary institutions such as the prison and the school are key milestones. Through the prism of Foucault’s work on disciplinary power, however, this progressive narrative is disrupted. The image of the panopticon, for example, provides a powerful metaphor for the ways in which liberal government produces and manages freedom. Indeed, it is worth bearing in mind that the panopticon was not designed by an authoritarian but by a liberal. Bentham continues to be revered today as a social reformer. The panopticon is Bentham’s vision of a more humane form of punishment. But what Foucault shows is how one form of subjugation (torture and capital punishment) is replaced by another. It is less brutal and violent, but it continues to dominate, direct and subjugate human conduct.

Disciplinary mechanisms are integral to how liberal regimes manage the population’s freedom and security. Indeed, Foucault (2007, 107) argues that ‘discipline was never more important or more valued than when the attempt was made to manage the population’ because ‘managing the population means managing it in depth, in all its fine points and details’. On one level, disciplinary power targets ‘useless and disturbed populations’ and sets about reforming or neutralising their danger (Foucault 1991, 210). The prison is a good example of how disciplinary power secures the population in this way. However, disciplinary power has more positive effects. It is able to ‘increase the possible utility of

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25 Foucault (2007, 63) elaborates on the relationship between normalisation and disciplinary power in *Security, Territory, Population*: ‘in the disciplines one started from a norm, and it was in relation to the training carried out with reference to the norm that the normal could be distinguished from the abnormal’.
individuals'. In the workplace, for example, it 'tends to increase aptitudes, speeds, output and therefore profits' (Foucault 1991, 210).

Nevertheless, disciplinary power has limits. It works by building institutions, enacting training regimes and surveying the behaviour of subjects. It acts in close proximity to the human body. Subsequently, it requires an intimate knowledge of individual human bodies, specialised infrastructure and active and detailed vigilance. Disciplinary power is only effective, then, in certain situations and in response to specific problems. As populations continue to grow, institutions become less effective. Moreover, the deep levels of intervention required by disciplinary power undermine liberal political economy’s demand for minimal government. The governance of “free” subjects depends upon a more efficient, wider ranging and less direct form of power: biopolitics.

**Biopolitics: Normalising the Population**

Biopolitics is a form of power that manages and regulates life at the level of the population. It does this through three processes. First, it objectifies and visualises the characteristics of a population. Second, it uses this information to sort the good from the bad, the productive from the unproductive, the normal from the abnormal. Third, it aspires to correct and regulate what it identifies as problematic.

Since the eighteenth century, a combination of statistical techniques and biological knowledges have meant that populations have come to be increasingly understood through their life processes: ‘their conditions of existence, of habitation, of nutrition, … their birth and mortality rate, … their pathological phenomena (epidemics, endemic diseases, infant mortality)’ (Foucault et al. 1978, 7). Crucially, what this means is that populations can be observed as a ‘mass’ (Foucault 2007, 145). At-a-glance, the vital statistics of millions of people can be observed and analysed.

In 1835, the French statistician Adolphe Quetelet (1842) published a book entitled *A Treatise of Man*. The book provides a vivid illustration of how, in the early part of the nineteenth century, statistical techniques were informing moral and political debate. Quetelet argues that mathematics and statistics should be used to determine the characteristics of the ‘average man’. He explains how in the ‘medical sciences’ knowing the characteristics of the ‘average man’ is necessary because ‘it is almost impossible to judge the state of an individual without comparing it to that of another imagined person, regarded as being in a normal condition’ (Quetelet 1842, 99). He cites the example of an
ill patient who has a fast pulse. The physician needs to know how their pulse differs from that ‘of an average man, or one in a normal state’ while also being aware of ‘the limits of safety’.

Principally, Quetelet’s work sets out to determine the limits of the “normal”. In his pulse example above, being outside the limits of the norm is not only undesirable but dangerous. In another passage, Quetelet uses the example of height to explain how there are two kinds of limits. The first is ‘ordinary or natural’ and the second is ‘extraordinary or beyond the natural’ (Quetelet 1842, x, his emphasis). Those whose characteristics are within the natural limits ‘deviate more or less from the mean, without attracting attention by excess on one side or the other’. This is the average man or the ‘one in a normal state’ (Quetelet 1842, 99). However, ‘the men who fall, in respect of height, outside of the ordinary limits, are giants or dwarfs’. As for those who are at the extremities, ‘they may be regarded as monstrosities’. Quetelet is describing what towards the end of the nineteenth century would be known as the normal distribution. The typical image of a normal distribution is that of a bell-shaped or Gaussian curve. If the measurement being taken is height, then the peak of the bell-curve shows where the measurements of most people come together. However, the two tail-ends of the curve show the shortest and tallest people who are in a minority. The bell-curve produces an image of what is “normal” (the heights of those in the majority) and what is “abnormal” (the outlying minorities). Nikolas Rose (1999a, 141) explains how the normal distribution ‘was a visual and conceptual fusion of the laws of variability of qualities, the laws of large numbers, and the norms of social expectation. It produced a new mode of social perception of variability, a way of disciplining difference and making it socially usable’. In other words, normal distributions bring order to the chaos and unpredictability of large population masses. They also produce new ways of dividing the “normal” from the “abnormal”. Moreover, they condition the possibilities for a whole host of social and political interventions.

_A Treatise on Man_ is a work that is vast in scope. Quetelet was not only interested in the “normality” of biological characteristics but how these related to moral and political issues. He argues how ‘there is an intimate relation between the physical and the moral man’ (Quetelet 1842, 97). For Quetelet, this means that more statistics should be collected

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26 The term “normal curve” was coined by the eugenicist and statistician Karl Pearson in the last decade of the nineteenth century (Hacking 1991, 183).
in relation to moral issues. He argues, for example, that ‘drunkenness is a vice of which we ought to have exact records’. This is because ‘drunkenness is a common source of many other vices, and also of crimes - tending to demoralise and to deteriorate the species’ (Quetelet 1842, 78, my emphasis). By providing more statistical information on drunkenness, government would ‘favour the researches of learned men, who seek to ascertain the condition of the people, and who try to improve them’. The aspiration of normalcy is not just a medical imperative, therefore, but a moral one.

Once the “normal” is known, the imperative is formed to take those who are “abnormal” and to then make them “normal”. Physical abnormalities are not considered naturally occurring, therefore, but the consequence of deviant moral choices. Biopolitics determines and encourages moral and lifestyle choices that are associated with more favourable biological characteristics. Biopolitics ‘is all about promoting good and bad forms of circulation’ (Pollard and Evans 2014). Today numerous organisations, government departments and medical professionals attempt to encourage people to change their lifestyles in ways that are designed to move them within “normal” limits.

A contemporary example is the prominence of “body mass index”27 (BMI) in dominant health discourses. BMI is a calculation that determines whether your body weight is healthy in relation to your height. BMI provides a particularly interesting example because it highlights the biopolitical interplay between the government of whole populations and the self-governance of individual lifestyles. The United Kingdom’s National Health Service (NHS) features BMI prominently on its website. On the NHS website, users are first encouraged to fill in a simple BMI calculator. It asks for the user’s height, weight, gender and age. If, after clicking “calculate”, the figures entered produce a BMI of between 18.5 and 25 the user is simply informed that they have a “healthy weight”. If, on the other hand, the user inputs a weight that is deemed to be too high then the calculator asks an additional question about daily activity levels. Once this has been done, the user is informed that they are “overweight” or “obese”. This diagnosis is given alongside a recommended daily calorie intake, which is calculated using the information given on activity levels (National Health Service (UK) 2016). These users are then prompted to visit the website Change4Life which is run by the UK’s Department of Health. The website contains a large collection of information on eating well and how to become more active.

27 Before 1960, the body mass index was tellingly called the Quetelet Index after the man first who developed it.
It suggests, for example, that people eat five fruit or vegetables a day or that they should try ‘standing rather than sitting’ on a train because it ‘means that your body is working harder’ (The Department of Health (UK) 2016).

On one level, the NHS’s BMI programme has many positive effects. It provides valuable information that can change people’s lives. Nevertheless, it is important to take note of the type of politics that it facilitates. In the first instant, it identifies the desirability of each individual user’s weight in relation to their height. The BMI value for each individual user is compared with the characteristics of the whole population. A user either has a “normal” healthy weight or is “abnormal” and, therefore, placed in the underweight, overweight or obese category. For those placed outside this range of normalcy an intervention is made. In this case, the user is provided with a collection of information. This intervention is indirect: no coercion is involved, and there is not necessarily a doctor, a nutritionist or personal trainer assigned to each problematic case. Instead, a course of action that requires minimal government intervention is proposed: self-governance. In other words, the user is asked to turn the fine mechanics of disciplinary power onto themselves. Also, the intervention does not take into account other aspects of that person’s life and how that might effect their ability to self-govern (their mental health, work commitments or financial situation). Furthermore, with the onus of responsibility placed on the individual, there is little emphasis placed on the responsibility of food manufacturers. In fact, on the Change4life website, users are encouraged to download an app which tells them the sugar content of food when shopping. The bulk of the responsibility rests on the consumer’s ability to make the “correct” choice. People are encouraged and directed towards a healthy lifestyle but this is done in way that has a negligible effect on the “freedom” of the liberal marketplace. Governing through BMI means producing the “freedom” of the market, while managing the “freedom” of the consumers it relies on.

Biopolitics refers to a collection of life-administering practises that can control, secure and improve the population. Crucially, these only have a negligible impact on the “freedoms” demanded by liberal political economy. In fact, biopolitics is a ‘necessary condition of liberalism’ (Dean 2010, 133). Biopolitics ensures that liberalism can ‘govern at a distance’ (Rose and Miller 1992, 181). It avoids obstructive intervention and instead cajoles and massages the behaviour of human subjects in subtle and indirect ways. Through the lens of biopolitics important insights can be gained into how “free” subjects are persuaded and compelled into adopting certain behaviours over others. While
biopolitics can be exercised through institutions, it is located across ‘a very broad terrain’. It is ‘concerned with the family, with housing, living and working conditions, with what we call 'lifestyle', with public health issues, patterns of migration, levels of economic growth and the standards of living’ (Dean 2010, 119). Moreover, it is by paying attention to liberalism’s biopolitical imperative, and broader life administering characteristics, that its violence is revealed.

**Liberalism’s Necessary Violence**

The emergence of liberal government marks a fundamental shift in the way that power operates. No longer does sovereign power, the power over death, predominate but instead two forms of *life administering* power, disciplinary and biopolitical power, inform the ways in which human beings are made subject. Sovereign power is the right to *take* life or *let live* (Foucault 1990, 138, his emphasis). It is ‘a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself’ (Foucault 1990, 136). It only interferes with life processes to stop them. Otherwise, sovereign power has no way of making sense of or intervening with the processes that make life possible. In contrast, disciplinary and, especially, biopolitical power are forms of power that can *make live and let die* (Foucault 2003, 241, my emphasis). They exert ‘a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations’ (Foucault 1990, 137).

It is in noting this shift, from life *taking* to life *making*, that Foucault (1990, 136-137) highlights a paradox: ‘wars were never as bloody as they have been since the nineteenth century, and all things being equal, never before did regimes visit such holocausts on their own populations’. In other words, while governments were concentrating on processes that made life flourish they were also engaged in some of the bloodiest violence in humanity’s history. When sovereign power predominates, wars are fought ‘in the name of the sovereign who must be defended’ (Foucault 1990, 137). In contrast, when power begins to concentrate on making the human species flourish wars ‘are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone’ (Foucault 1990, 137). The machinery of warfare is reoriented towards the ‘biological existence of a population’ (Foucault 1990, 137). In the same way that populations have become the target of governmental techniques so too have populations become the target, quite literally, of warfare. Whole populations are wiped
out so that the species can flourish - ‘massacres have become vital’ (Foucault 1990, 137).

But how can killing and death be rationalised in the name of making life live? How can activities that are designed to eradicate life be used to promote life? An explanation can be found in a closer examination of liberalism’s propensity to normalise. When the target of power becomes the betterment of the species, then those forms of life that threaten the species become the object of its concern. Biopolitical power identifies these “threats” through normalising techniques. I demonstrate this in the BMI example above. In that example, people with BMIs that deviate from the norm are marked as “unhealthy”, “overweight” or “obese”. In the official government advice given by the NHS, sensitive language is used to direct the user towards advice that might help them improve their health. However, the ways in which the NHS frames obesity can be placed within a broader field of power relations wherein “abnormal” body sizes are more overtly stigmatised. For example, newspapers routinely stigmatise people who are deemed to be overweight as “stupid”, “ugly”, “naïve”, “lazy”, “irresponsible”, “greedy”, “without manners”, and “repugnant” (Sandberg 2007, 462). The obese person is cast as an ‘undesirable outsider’ (Patterson and Hilton 2013, 83). In short, they are made Other. While these stigmatisations are not part of official NHS discourse, they still play an essential role in directing the behaviour of the liberal subject. For example, it might be due to the threat of their own social stigmatisation that someone decides to change their diet or to exercise more frequently. At the heart of the liberal project, then, sits the ‘ideal self-regulating subject’ who is produced through the stigmatisation of ‘certain classes, sexualities, genders and disabilities’ (Legg 2005, 149). Or seen another way, ‘liberalism declares otherness to be the problem to be solved’ (Evans 2011, 749, his emphasis).

The stigmatisation of those deemed to be overweight has been linked with bullying, social isolation, depression and suicide (Puhl and King 2013, 121-3). Even through the seemingly mundane example of BMI, therefore, the presence what Foucault calls ‘killing’ is revealed. When Foucault (2003, 256) talks of killing he does ‘not mean simply murder

28 Foucault’s point of reference, in this instance, are the total wars of the twentieth century: the holocaust, strategic bombing and mechanised warfare. However, Foucault’s analysis points the way towards a broader set of questions related to liberal regimes and their propensity to use violence. I explore the relationship between the Second World War and biopolitical militarism in the next chapter.
as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on. The important point here is that “killing”, in Foucault’s language, is not necessarily an active or explicit process. Killing can simply mean ‘letting die’ (Foucault 2003, 247). The emphasis on self-governance gives the impression that subjects have a “choice” about whether they improve their health or not. An unhealthy subject can only be made to live if they follow medical advice, if they do not then intervention is minimal - they are left to “die”. Crucially, these violences are not unfortunate by-products of a series of benevolent practises. They are an essential and necessary part of how biopolitical mechanisms operate. For example, stigmatisation, however much it might be warned against and problematised by experts, has become an essential part of the way body sizes are policed in liberal societies. As Foucault (1990, 137) puts it ‘one has to be capable of killing to go on living’.

It is not just individuals that are made Other through liberalism’s biopolitical imperative, but whole populations. When this happens, it is called racism. Racism is always violent. Étienne Balibar (1991, 17-18) calls ‘racism a true “total social phenomenon” – [that] inscribes itself in practices (forms of violence, contempt, intolerance, humiliation and exploitation), … which are articulated around stigmata of otherness (name, skin colour, religious practices)’. Foucault describes how, with the emergence of life-administering forms of power, ‘racism is inscribed as the basic mechanism of power’ (Foucault 2003, 254). Racism operates on multiple levels. One of its most common manifestations is the production of white/non-white dichotomies. While liberals often profess a wish for a multiracial society, conversely, the notion of “whiteness” is often associated with desirable lifestyle characteristics. Clarke and Garner (2010, 1) explain how ‘whiteness, as a form of ethnicity, is rarely acknowledged by its bearers, yet it has significant ramifications in terms of the construction of ‘other’ identities; in the creation of community; in processes of exclusion and inclusion; and discourses around ‘race’ and nation’. In biopolitical terms, “whiteness” becomes the norm around which other ethic identities are problematised.

Racism is also a form of exclusion that operates on a cultural level. ‘Cultural fitness has now replaced biological heritage to contour the new lines of political struggle’, Brad Evans (2010, 427) explains. In the United Kingdom, for example, long established immigrant
communities are still routinely called upon to better integrate with so-called “British Values”. In 2016, the UK government commissioned the Casey Review to look at ‘opportunity and integration’. The review notes that ‘segregation, deprivation and social exclusion are combining in a downward spiral with a growth in regressive religious and cultural ideologies’ (Casey 2016, 15, my emphasis). These words evoke Étienne Balibar’s (1991, 25) warning about attempts at cultural integration in France that are ‘barely reworked variants of the idea that the historical cultures of humanity can be divided into two main groups, the one assumed to be universalistic and progressive, the other supposed irremediably particularistic and primitive’. In this example, “British Values” are held up as a hard to specify but powerfully reinforced norm against which Other ways of life are to be evaluated and categorised. While, in this case, the lines of division are not strictly “biological”, processes of normalisation and othering are still at work. This is a good example of how Foucault’s concepts are often metaphorically significant, if not always literal, interpretations of social phenomena.

In this section, I have shown how liberal violence can appear in multiple forms and across multiple locations. It can be contained in the advice of a newspaper column or in a punitive immigration policy. Often it is expressed through the unorganised and diffuse interactions of daily life. However, in its most overt expressions it is organised and made legitimate through specific institutions. In liberal societies, it is militaries that take the lead role in organising and legitimating violence. Military institutions do not stand alone, however, they are produced through the practises and discourses of militarism. In the next section, therefore, I examine the relation between liberalism and militarism.

**Biopolitical Militarism**

In this final part of the chapter, I introduce my notion of biopolitical militarism. I argue that biopolitical militarism is a regime of power through which liberal violence is expressed in acts of warfare, organised in military institutions and supported and prepared for by wider society. The section begins with a general definition of militarism and some of the ways this is can be thought of as biopolitical. I then outline my formulation of biopolitical militarism.

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29 I am aware that this statement will immediately draw comparisons with David Edgerton’s (1991) notion of ‘liberalism militarism’. Edgerton explores the links between militarism and technology, whereas, I explore the link between militarism and liberalism’s biopolitical imperative.
Militarism

I define “militarism”, broadly, as a set of power relations that emerge in relation to the problem: *how can the preparation and application of violence be successfully organised and made legitimate?* In the same way that liberalism is not a set of abstract ideals, neither is militarism simply an ideology or a set of attitudes (McSorley 2016, 3). Militarism is a complex field of power relations. It is a collection of discourses, practises, behaviours and ideas that all, in some way, relate to strategies and logics concerned with the successful organisation and legitimisation of violence. This is an approach which again draws on Foucault’s *decentring* method. One of the most concrete effects of militarism, therefore, is the military institution. Beyond this, however, militarism has much broader and diffuse effects. These include the formation of different subject types, such as the “soldier”, “war-fighter” but also the “civilian”. Furthermore, militarism operates through the propagation of ideas and beliefs such as the notion that ‘armed force is the ultimate resolver of tensions’ or that ‘a state without a military is naïve, scarcely modern, and barely legitimate’ (Enloe 2004, 219) and ‘that soldiers possess certain values and qualities that are desirable in civil society’ (Bernazzoli and Flint 2010, 159). Furthermore, while military institutions might be the most concrete expressions of militarism, they are not necessarily central to it. This means that something that bears no direct relation to the military institution could still be considered as a form of militarism. Take, for example, the wearing of a shirt that borrows its design from the style of a military uniform. The shirt is not made by a military institution but the design and the choice of wearing that shirt do nothing to question the workings of military power. Furthermore, albeit in a small way, the wearing of that shirt contributes to an environment wherein military activity is normalised and thus made more legitimate. Indeed, ‘it is this very banality that makes militarism more than merely an elite ideology’ (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009, 398).

Militarism is a regime of power whose effects can be observed both *within* the military institution and *outside* it. In this respect, my definition of militarism differs from those scholars who only understand militarism as something that takes place within the civilian realm. The political geographer Rachel Woodward (2005, 721), for example, makes the distinction between ‘geographies of military activity’ and ‘geographies of militarism’. Military activity she defines as ‘the patterning of material entities and social relations

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30 Kevin McSorley (2016, 3) warns that ‘there is a potential analytic danger here that militarism as a social and cultural force may become narrowly conceptualised in terms of symbolic manipulations in the head’.
across space shaped by the production and the reproduction of military capabilities’ (Woodward 2005, 721). On the other hand, she defines militarism as ‘the shaping of civilian space and social relations by military objectives, rationales and structures’ (Woodward 2005, 721, my emphasis). As she makes clear, her intention ‘is not to dwell … on distinctions’ (Woodward 2005). However, by making the distinction in the first-place, Woodward’s approach obscures an analysis of how militarism is complicit in the production of a civil-military divide. In other words, it is not just the figure of the “soldier” who is produced through militarism but also the “civilian”. Indeed, by delimiting a distinct military realm, militarism can justify activities and behaviours that are deemed to be unacceptable in liberal society. By understanding militarism as a broad regime of power, therefore, I am able to consider forms of militarism that operate through produced civil-military dichotomies. For example, in Chapter Six I examine the ways in which the civil-military divide is reproduced through the UK military charity Help for Heroes. Moreover, this approach allows me to show how domestic civil-military initiatives, such as Help for Heroes, and liberal wars, such as the UK’s involvement in Afghanistan, are two sides of the same coin. Both are forms of militarism, but through one of them, subjects are made to “live” and through the other, Others are killed and “let die”.

My approach to militarism is heavily influenced by critical military scholars, such as Victoria Basham and Kevin McSorley. Following Foucault (2003, 30), both these scholars analyse militarism through an ‘ascending analysis of power’. This means that they begin with militarism’s ‘infinitesimal mechanisms’ (Foucault 2003, 30) so that a deeper analysis of militarism can take place. A key point they make is that militarism and militarisation are not processes that function only in ‘a linear direction of causality or contamination’ (McSorley 2016, 12). Basham (2016, 11, her emphasis) questions, for example, how the term militarisation often ‘implies something being done to society’. In contrast, she makes it clear that ‘militarism is not imposed’. Drawing on the work of Ole Jacob Sending and Iver Neumann (2006, 652, their emphasis), she explains how forms of governance, in this case militarism, exist in a mutually reinforcing relationship with a civil society that is both

31 In some respects, my definition of “militarism”, as a regime of power, has more in common with some definitions of “militarisation”. For example, Cynthia Enloe (2004, 219) argues that militarisation is ‘a multitracked process by which the roots of militarism are driven deep down into the soil of society’. However, this is a definition that has a linear direction of travel. Another definition of militarisation which has more in common which my own formulation comes from Michael Geyer (1989, 79) who argues that militarisation is ‘the contradictory and tense social process in which civil society organises itself for the production of violence’. I would argue that militarism, as a regime of power, encompasses something more general than these definitions. However, the processes that these scholars describe are certainly part of the way militarism operates.
an ‘object and a subject of government’. Likewise, McSorley (2014, 119) warns against conceptualising militarism as a top-down ideology as it is ‘often through mundane embodied practices and idioms that a broad and subtle form of militarism assumes an implicitness’. This is an approach which encourages questions about the ways in which forms of militarism impact upon broader society, therefore, as well as raising questions about how expressions of militarism are the product of broader “liberal” social and political forces. For example, questions of militarism are concerned with how military activity creates a ‘footprint’ upon physical space, society and politics (Bernazzoli and Flint 2009, 394). However, they are also concerned with how “civilian” activity can become complicit in the organisation of violence. Hence, this ‘emphasizes the importance of considering how war, often regarded a macro geopolitical practice, is made possible by enactments and negotiations of militarism and violence in everyday life’ (Basham 2016, 4). Furthermore, military institutions, and the broader organisation of violence, are the products of the liberal way of life. They are not a “necessary evil” appended to liberal regimes in response to a violence that comes from elsewhere. As my analysis of liberal violence shows, threats to the liberal way of life are often produced through liberal biopolitical mentalities of normalisation. Liberal military institutions are organised in relation to these threats. For example, in 2003, a defence select committee white paper identified a ‘single defence mission’ for the UK Armed Forces:

   To deliver security for the people of the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories by defending them, including against terrorism, and to act as a force for good by strengthening international peace and security (House of Commons Defence Committee 2003, 14).

Hence, institutions such as the British Armed Forces provide an outlet for liberalism’s necessary violence.

Furthermore, both these critical military scholars bring a biopolitical analysis to the study of militarism. Through an ascending analysis, Basham (2013; 2015; 2016) interrogates the relationship between everyday forms of militarism – such as the wearing of the British Legion Poppy, how soldiers negotiate their everyday space, and military activities in schools – and the ways in which military activity is organised on a larger scale. Within this analysis, she shows how, biopolitically, these forms of militarism are ‘interlocked’ with racialised, gendered and heteronormative discourses and practises (Basham and Vaughan-Williams 2013, 511). McSorley, on the other hand, examines military style fitness classes
that are ‘a site of production of a particular biopolitics, of making life live, and of feeling alive, in a very specific way’ (McSorley 2016, 12). These classes are typically led by military veterans. He concludes his analysis by maintaining that these classes are ‘not directly linked to state preparation for war … or the production of citizen-soldiers, nor with explicitly inculcating wider support for warfighting’ (McSorley 2016, 12). Nevertheless, they do involve ‘a particular trusting and valuing of military-related leisure, of the military lifestyle, as a specific paradigm of physical and moral education, as particularly exemplified in the body of the ex-soldier’ (McSorley 2016, 12). This means that while there is no explicit intent to contribute to the organisation or legitimation of violence, these are practices which feed into and draw from broader symbols and embodied regimes that are designed to improve the organisation of violence. For example, by endorsing military fitness as something that is good for you, the status of military institutions as a general force for good is elevated. Hence, these activities contribute to an environment wherein military violence becomes a “normal” way of life. In a similar vein, in Chapters Five and Six, I also show how recent civil-military initiatives in the UK can also be analysed as life-administering sites of biopolitics. Drawing on these insights, in the next section, I identify a more specific regime of power I label biopolitical militarism.

**Defining Biopolitical Militarism**

In this section, I develop the notion of *biopolitical militarism*. Like militarism, in general, biopolitical militarism is a regime of power concerned with the ways in which violence is organised and made legitimate. However, biopolitical militarism emerges around a more specific biopolitical problem: the population. Liberal violence is a form of violence that acts in the name of the population’s betterment. However, when this violence is expressed through military institutions, in the form of wars or other military operations, it also needs to harness the resources of that same population. In this respect, biopolitical militarism is faced with a similar problem to that of liberalism: *how can the resources of the population be harnessed when that population is ostensibly “free”*? Consequently, biopolitical militarism emerges in relation to a very specific problematisation: *how can the resources of a “free” population be harnessed for the successful organisation and legitimation of a violence that acts in the name of that same population?*

Biopolitical militarism is conceptually important because, as I note throughout the thesis, there are times when biopolitical militarism becomes problematised. During these times,
harnessing the resources of the population or legitimating violence in the name of the population becomes particularly difficult. In the next chapter, for example, I show how there was a problematisation of biopolitical militarism after the end of the Second World War. Likewise, in a British context, there is problematisation of biopolitical militarism as the British Armed Forces enter Helmand Province that I explore in Chapter Four. Crucially, it is by paying attention to these moments when the practises, discourses and subjects that emerge to serve or contradiction the broader tactics of biopolitical militarism can most clearly be identified. The object I pay most attention to in this respect is the figure of the professional soldier, who I introduce in the next chapter. This figure is important because it is through a tension produced between the professional soldier and biopolitical militarism that the UK civil-military initiatives *Armed Forces Day* and *Help for Heroes* are made possible.

The most potent expression of militarism is war. In the remainder of this section, therefore, I develop my notion of biopolitical militarism, starting with the relationship between biopolitics and war.

**Biopolitical Militarism and the Waging of War**

In this section, I examine some of the ways biopolitical militarism is expressed through acts of liberal war. War is not a neutral or natural condition, as the likes of Hobbes (1991) would have it. In liberal societies, war and military institutions are the products of complex political, historical and social processes. The institution of war is a key prism through which liberal violence is organised and made legitimate. War is a framing device that gives some violent acts meaning, while erasing the meaning of *Other* violence (Butler 2009, 157). What is important, therefore, is not how war is defined, as such, but how the framing of war is used to legitimate certain acts of violence and what that framing does.

In the section that follows, I begin by examining how liberal war legitimates violence politically. I then analyse how military institutions take on a lead role in organising the means of violence for the preparation and conduct of war. This allows me to examine the ways in which biopolitical militarism both *enacts* its violence and *organises* its violence.

The notion of war inscribes violence with a sense of political meaning - ‘a true political instrument’ as Carl von Clausewitz (1989, 87) wrote. War is often given this political meaning through an association with the nation state. Charles Tilly (1985, 169) infamously called both the state and war ‘quintessential protection rackets with the advantage of legitimacy’. Foucault (2003, 48) explains how during the Middle Ages ‘the state acquired
a monopoly on war’. As this happened, ‘war was expelled to the limits of the nation state’ (Foucault 2003, 49). ‘War was accepted as an inescapable process for the settling of disputes between states in the absence of the higher authority of the state’ (Dillon and Reid 2009, 3). War became ‘the continuation of policy by other means’ (Clausewitz 1989, 87). War also regularly takes place within the borders of the nation state. In the post-Cold War era Mary Kaldor (2006, 80) spoke of ‘new wars’ that were fought around ‘ethnic, racial or religious identity’.

Liberal wars, while often fought in relation to the nation state, are also fought in the name of the population. In short, there is a core biopolitical aspect to liberal warfighting. Michael Dillon and Julian Reid (2009) highlight the relationship between liberalism, biopolitics, normalisation, racism and violence in their *Liberal Way of War* thesis. Dillon and Reid argue that liberal regimes produce what they call the subject of the ‘biohuman’. The ‘biohuman’ is the archetypal liberal subject: democrat, capitalist and pacifist. Following Foucault, they argue that contemporary liberal wars are not fought in the name of the sovereign state, as such, but in the name of the biohuman. The targets of liberal wars, therefore, are those who ‘resist the constitution of the biohuman’ and are ‘hostile and dangerous to it, even if it arises within the species itself’ (Dillon and Reid 2009, 31). In liberal warfare, threats to the biohuman are not just the targets of governmental reform but are also targets of *removal*: ‘enemies of the species must be cast out from the species’ (Dillon and Reid 2009, 32). As Dillon (2004, 90) explains, ‘violent discrimination necessarily follows against population groups that fail to meet the criteria of evolution or development, albeit always in the name of the promotion of life itself’. In other words, forms of life that threaten the overall betterment of the species, defined in relation to the biohuman, are dealt with through violent means.

A contemporary example of a liberal war is the so-called “War on Terror”. Since 2001, the United States and its allies have targeted extreme Islamic ideologies, organisations and states. Within the framework on the “War on Terror”, specific groups – The Taliban, Al-Qaeda, The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) – are singled out as ‘enemies of the species’ that are beyond reform and thus ‘must be cast out from the species’ (Dillon and Reid 2009, 32).

32 As Helen Dexter (2007, 1058) points out, Kaldor’s “new war” framing also serves to legitimise more violence: ‘the new war theory applies a moral framework to the violence witnessed, reinforcing a wider moral order - the foundations of Western neo-interventionism’.

33 The nomenclature “war on terror” is a good example of how the term “war” legitimises violence. In this case, it is juxtaposed with a form of illegitimate violence “terrorism”.
Reid 2009, 32). On the evening of the attacks on the World Trade Center, George W. Bush (2001, my emphasis) declared that ‘our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts’. In a press briefing given by Barack Obama (2016, my emphasis), on the ‘campaign to destroy the terrorist group ISIL’, he claimed that ‘that’s how we’re going to defend our way of life’. Through the words of both these presidents, the use of lethal violence is justified as a way of protecting the characteristics of “our way of life” not just solely a means of ensuring “national security”.

The positioning of a Western “way of life” as something that is under threat produces an image that is infused with racial undertones. Sherene Razack (2004, 130) argues that the “War on Terror” has brought into contemporary political discourse the notion that ‘it is the West’s obligation to defend itself from these values and to assist Muslims into modernity, by force if necessary’. In Foucauldian terms, the war on terror represents an ascendancy of the biopolitical waging of war in relation to the sovereign. It is a war that is waged primarily through the lens of normalisation not nation. Moreover, the targeting of these extremist groups can be situated within a broader set of power relations wherein the whole Islamic religion and its associated ethnicities have become problematised (Razack 2004; Jackson 2007; Basham and Vaughan-Williams 2013). In sum, liberal “war” is an expression of biopolitical militarism that legitimates violence politically through biopolitical logics. Hence, fundamentally, it is a form a violence that acts in the name of the population. In the next section, I explore some of the ways in which biopolitical militarism organises and legitimates violence by drawing on the resources of the population.

**Biopolitical Militarism and the Organisation of Violence**

The notion of war also implies a form of violence that is in some way organised. Shaw (2003, 19) argues, for example, that war is ‘an organized conflict between two or more actors’. Debora Cowen and Emily Gilbert (2008, 1) refer to it as a form of ‘organized human violence’. Significantly, the organisation of resources needed to fight wars is fraught with an unusually high level of difficulty. This, as Shaw (2003, 21) explains, is because war is a social practise that involves socially unacceptable acts, notably killing:
It takes organization and ideas for warriors to overcome pervasive taboos against killing. It takes discipline to make soldiers aggressive against people they don’t know, to inflict force in a way that achieves intended results and to overcome powerful instincts of self-preservation and fear. If all human killing requires social relations and beliefs to make it possible, the kind of mass killing involved in war requires peculiarly developed, conscious social organisation and justification.

Because of this ‘war as a social practise is … highly institutionalized’ (Shaw 2003, 21). It requires military institutions that ‘maintain special bodies of armed men, trained and equipped for war, even when no war is in sight’. Again, Foucault (2003, 48-49) explains how during the Middle Ages war ‘tended to become the technical and professional prerogative of a carefully defined and controlled military apparatus’. In liberal societies, therefore, the focal point for the organisation and legitimisation of warfare are militaries. In the United Kingdom, the core military institutions are collectively referred to as the British Armed Forces and they comprise of three key services: The British Army, The Royal Navy and The Royal Air Force. The three British armed services correspond respectively to the three physical terrains within which modern warfare is practiced: land, sea and air (Freedman 1998, 5).

Crucially, the “proper” functioning of these three services relies heavily on the resources of the population. These are institutions, therefore, that objectify the population as ‘a reserve of manpower and materials on which they can draw’ (Finer 1988, 23). In the case of the British Armed Forces, this means drawing on the population of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland as well as on populations who inhabit old parts of the British Empire, now known as the British Commonwealth. Populations are large entities that comprise of diverse, unpredictable and contingent elements. Through the logics of political economy, liberal regimes attempt to harness these qualities while managing, at a

34 Modern warfare is not only conducted upon physical terrain. Derek Gregory (2011, 245) argues that cyber warfare is an increasingly important site for the conduct of ‘late modern war’. Cyber warfare operates in an ‘ambiguous domain, where virtual space and physical space, online and offline worlds, intermingle, support and transform one another’. However, there is no separate British Armed Forces service dedicated to cyber warfare. These issues are dealt with by parts of the core services such as the British Army’s Intelligence Corps (The British Army 2016c).

35 Fijians in particular are marked out by British Army recruiters as ‘good infantry soldiers’ (Basham 2013, 124).
distance, elements which are considered threatening to the population’s overall wellbeing. Likewise, for the organisation and legitimation of liberal war-fighting the unpredictable and contingent properties of the population also present an array of problems. After all, ‘national militaries hold no monopoly on the “human resources” of war’ (Cowen and Gilbert 2008). Consequently, biopolitical militarism faces a similar problem to broader liberal regimes of power: the population.

Within the military institution itself, disciplinary power plays the most direct role in organising and managing bodies from the population for the purposes of war-fighting. New recruits are drawn from the mass of the population and bring with them an array of diverse and unruly characteristics. Indeed, an issue which increasingly concerns military practitioners and thinkers in the United Kingdom is that new recruits are becoming less suitable for military service because of increased individualism and a lack of respect for authority. Hew Strachan (2003, 43) describes how civilians are routinely perceived by the military profession ‘as venerating individualism over cohesion, as mentally soft and physically feeble’. In contrast, war-fighting requires a collection of bodies that are willing to take orders, who may be required to kill or could be killed. Foucault (1991, 135) addresses this subject in *Discipline and Punish*, where he describes how new military recruits are turned into ‘docile bodies’ through constant marching and drill exercises:

> The soldier has become something that can be made; out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body.

Within the confines of the institution, therefore, disciplinary power takes bodies from the population and shapes them for military service. Nevertheless, military institutions cannot sustain themselves independently, they depend on support from those members of the population who reside outside institutional walls: civilians. It is at this point that the institutional limits of disciplinary power become apparent. Crucially, it is beyond the limits of disciplinary power that questions start to be raised about how the population’s resources are harnessed biopolitically. It is these questions that run throughout this thesis. Here I examine two ways “civilian” populations are co-opted into the organisation and legitimation of liberal war-fighting: economic and moral.
Economic support from the population is largely channelled through the UK’s considerable defence budget. Between 2015 and 2020, the UK government plans to spend over £30billion a year on military defence spending (UK Ministry of Defence et al. 2015). Defence spending contributes to the British Armed Forces ability to organise war in several ways. First, professional soldiers are paid a wage so they can perfect their skills daily. They are after-all part of a “standing” army, not amateur conscripts, who are called upon for specific conflicts, or part-time reservists, who only train on evenings and weekends. Armed forces also depend on having access to the latest technology. The British Army’s website includes a profile of all the weapons carried by their soldiers. Each profile explains how technology helps the British Army to get better at its job. For example, the Javelin anti-tank weapon ‘delivers longer range, greater lethality, significantly more powerful optics and a lighter load for the infantryman’, while in 2013 the MoD spent £9million on new Glock 17 pistols that ‘will give them greater firepower and accuracy on operations’ (The British Army 2016a) (The British Army 2016e). Maintaining these levels of defence spending requires productive liberal subjects who are able to make sufficient tax payments. It also demands a degree of compliance. Tax payers cannot determine precisely how governments will spend “their” money, but spending over 2 per cent of the national GDP on defence does require some tacit acceptance from the wider population. Consequently, a biopolitics that produces a healthy tax-paying subject is essential to the sustenance of the British Armed Forces.

Populations also sustain liberal war-fighting by helping to sustain the morale of militaries. British army doctrine defines morale as ‘an intangible force that sustains people beyond previously perceived limits, making them feel part of something greater than themselves’ (The British Army 2010, 0241). The doctrine goes on to explain how ‘morale is stimulated by being valued, having sufficient resources to do the job, balanced routines and having the opportunity to realise personal potential’ (The British Army 2010, 0241). Wider populations cannot assist with all of these requirements, but they are often called upon to ensure that soldiers feel more “valued”. The military historian Richard Holmes (2006, 14), talking at the time of the British Army’s deployment to Helmand Province, argued that the war in Afghanistan ‘will be won or lost by public resolve, and that resolve will directly influence the way the army thinks and behaves’. Comments such as this one were made frequently during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars when reports began to circulate, within the British media, that soldiers were coming home to find that their friends and family had little understanding of the wars they were fighting. For example, writing in the
aftermath of her husband Olaf’s death in Afghanistan, Cristina Schmid (2012, 296) recalls how ‘I knew that he and the rest of the men and women out there felt under appreciated by the public back home’. Within this context, a number of commentators began to argue that what the armed forces needed from the public was not just support but understanding. Max Hastings (2005, 3), for example, spoke of an ‘ignorance [that] seems deeply dangerous for the welfare of the Armed Forces, not to mention for their recruitment’. Patrick Mileham (2010, 38) wrote how ‘sometimes the population is ambivalent about the wisdom of involvement in policing the world’. And Helen McCartney (2010, 421) bemoaned how among the public there was ‘little incentive to make the effort to understand the nature of the challenges facing the armed forces’. In the last two chapters of this thesis, I examine how through celebrations of Armed Forces Day and support for the military charity Help for Heroes this understanding is generated biopolitically through initiatives that repackage military support as a healthy activity. Biopolitical militarism depends on populations for more than the bodies of those who fight, therefore, it also relies on a whole host of “civilian” subjects to conduct themselves in ways that contribute to both the organisation and legitimation of liberal war-fighting.

CONCLUSION

Liberal government emerges in relation to a problematisation of the population. To be more accurate, it emerges in relation to a problematisation of the population’s freedom. On the one hand, freedom is an essential “commodity” required for the successful operation of liberal government. The freedoms to speak, be educated and own property are crucial components of a strong liberal economy and state. However, on the other hand, these freedoms threaten to undermine the very fabric of liberal government itself. Granting freedom to an entity as diverse and unpredictable as the population threatens social revolution or an unhealthy, unproductive workforce. This means that as well as freedom, liberal government also demands security and ways to conduct the conduct of its subjects. The liberal economy of power emerges in relation to this freedom/security tension. Two forms of power dominate this economy of power: disciplinary and biopolitical. These are two forms of power that are both life administering and normalising. Disciplinary power operates at the level of the human body. Whereas, biopolitical power operates at the level of the population. Crucially, it is by paying attention to the life administering properties of liberalism’s economy of power that its violence is revealed. While liberalism’s propensity to normalisation bestows some bodies with beneficial and life-enhancing
effects, others are cast aside, stigmatised and even killed in the name of the betterment of the species.

In the second half of the chapter, I introduced my formulation of biopolitical militarism as a theoretical frame for investigating the ways in which liberal violence is both organised for and made legitimate through military institutions and other forms of militarism. Like liberalism, I argue that biopolitical militarism is also a regime of power. Also like liberalism, biopolitical militarism emerges in relation to the problem of the population but this time in relation to a more specific problem: how can the resources of a “free” population be harnessed for the successful organisation and legitimisation of a violence that acts in the name of that same population? The most overt expressions of biopolitical militarism are the liberal wars that pit divergent ways of life against each other, the so-called “War on Terror” being the most recent and bloody example. My focus in this thesis, however, are the ways in which biopolitical militarism is expressed and made possible “at home” in more mundane and insidious practices. Biopolitical militarism does not just enact violence in the name of the population it harnesses the resources of that same population. Indeed, by extracting from the population the resources it needs, biopolitical militarism is a regime of power that sustains the violence of the British Armed Forces. In the next chapter, I analyse a problematisation of biopolitical militarism that took place in the aftermath of the Second World War. I then look at how the figure of the professional soldier emerges as its “saviour”. Crucially, it is the tensions inherent in the relationship between the strategies and logics of biopolitical militarism and the function of the professional soldier that produce the emergent figure of the biopolitical military professional.
CHAPTER TWO – A GENEALOGY OF THE PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER: THE EVOLUTION OF THE BIOPOLITICAL MILITARY PROFESSIONAL

‘Power constantly asks questions and questions us; it constantly investigates and records; it institutionalizes the search for the truth, professionalizes it, and rewards it’ (Foucault 2003, 25)

In this chapter, I continue to outline my theoretical framework. I do this by introducing and outlining the figure of the biopolitical military professional and situating this subject with the broader field of power relations, biopolitical militarism. In subsequent chapters, this theoretical framework will inform my analysis of the UK’s shifting civil-military landscape and allow me to explore the links between the professional soldier and the instances of everyday militarism. In this chapter, however, I develop this framework by showing how the biopolitical military professional and biopolitical militarism are both historically constituted. This involves performing a Foucauldian reading or a genealogical analysis of key scholarly texts on the military profession.

Since the end of the Second World War, the study of the military as a profession has been a key area of research for political scientists, sociologists, historians and military strategists. In the post-war period, two texts, in particular, placed the figure of the professional soldier at the forefront of military thinking: Samuel Huntington’s The Soldier and The State (1957) and Morris Janowitz’s (1960) The Professional Soldier. Using these texts as my starting point, the principle aim of this chapter is to chart a ‘history of the present’ by showing how, over the second half of the twentieth century, the figure of the post-war professional soldier has evolved into the biopolitical military professional (Foucault 1991, 31). This analysis reveals the biopolitical military professional to be a subject who sits at the intersection of the population and its means of violence, thus playing a pivotal role in the biopolitical constitution of liberal civil-military relationships.

The chapter is written in two parts. In the first part, I investigate how, in the post-war era, the figure of the professional soldier emerges to form part of liberal violence’s new conditions of possibility. My principle task in this part of the chapter is to situate the figure of the post-war professional within the broader regime of biopolitical militarism. The figure of the professional soldier appears, in the work of Huntington and Janowitz, in relation to a series of problematisations related to the Second World War and its
aftermath. The Second World War represented something of a zenith for biopolitical militarism. During the Second World War, whole population masses were pitted against each other, mobilised and targeted for extinction. But while the Second World War marked a high point for biopolitical militarism it also threatened its potential undoing. The realisation of nuclear weapons technology and the elevated status of military personnel risked severing the link between violence and the population. It is at this point that Huntington and Janowitz intervene by presenting the figure of the professional soldier as the “saviour” of biopolitical militarism and thus liberal violence. Employing Huntington’s schematic outline, I demonstrate how the figure of the professional soldier is drawn around two poles, expertise and responsibility. I show how it is through this dual function that the military professional promises to revive biopolitical militarism in the post-war period. Moreover, through this analysis, I show how the figure of the professional soldier, although key, is not an exclusive or even necessary part of the way biopolitical militarism operates.

In the second part of the chapter, I chart how the figure of the professional soldier has evolved since this post-war period. In liberal societies, “expertise” is an exalted attribute. This leads, over time, to an unbalanced military professional who is more of an expert than someone who is politically responsible. The military professional is perceived to be less in tune with the politics of their actions while at the same time they are seen to be retreating into an increasingly specialised professional space. In contrast, I argue that expertise, in and of itself, is political. This is because experts are crucial to how liberal subjects are governed. Indeed, the biopolitical management of large population masses is made possible through an interplay of expertise and self-government. Finally, I show how these tensions mean that the civilian population becomes increasingly problematised. It is this problematisation that produces the figure of the biopolitical military professional. The biopolitical military professional sits in a symbiotic relationship with the wider population. They can harness the population’s resources by mobilising the support of those liberal subjects who self-govern, attending to both their defence and health needs. Military support is repackaged as a healthy or life-enriching activity while at the same time the “need” to support the military profession is expressed as an obligation. It is how the figure of the biopolitical military professional appears in the United Kingdom that is the subject of the rest of this thesis.
PART ONE: THE POST-WAR PROFESSIONAL

The Second World War: Problematising Liberal War

In this section, I take the first step towards situating the professional soldier within broader regimes of biopolitical militarism. Through the works of Samuel Huntington and Morris Janowitz, the professional soldier emerges in relation to a series of problematisations related to the Second World War and its aftermath. During the Second World War, more people were mobilised, targeted and killed than in any other conflict in history (Shaw 2003, 2)\(^36\). Unsurprisingly, its impact on how liberal democracies organise and enact violence has been considerable. In this section, I analyse this impact. First, I examine the ways in which WWII represented a zenith for liberal violence and biopolitical militarism. Second, I analyse a twofold problematisation of liberal violence and biopolitical militarism that takes hold during WWII and its aftermath.

Biopolitical Militarism During the Second World War

The Second World War marked a high point for liberal violence. The military historian Michael Howard notes how the Second World War ‘was a war to defend and vindicate all the cultural values for which [liberals] had stood since the dawn of … the eighteenth century’ (Howard 1981, 101). From the perspective of the allied powers, this was a Manichaean conflict that pitted the liberal ideals of democracy, free speech, and free trade against autocracy, propaganda and central planning.

It also marked a high point for biopolitical militarism. As I explain in the previous chapter, biopolitical militarism is a regime of power that works to regulate, reinforce and promote the relationship between the population and its means of violence. During the Second World War, there was an extreme proximity between the population and the means of violence. The making and preparing for war consumed whole nations. This was total war and ‘society became militarized, and war socialized, in a new way’ (Shaw 1991, 8), Indeed, there was ‘hardly any feature of society … not affected by war and war-preparation’ (Shaw 1991, 12). Moreover, ‘mass notions of progress and democracy’ were ‘closely associated with, and boosted by mass mobilization warfare’ (Mann 1988, 176). In this environment, militarism was presented as ‘relatively rational … because it served broader, desirable goals’ (Mann 1988, 176). Military institutions and liberals found a common cause.

\(^36\) Shaw (2003, 2) refers to the Second World War as ‘the biggest killing episode of human history to date’.

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US, for example, Huntington (1957, 316) noted how the military became ‘the agents of American liberalism’.

Large population masses were mobilised across the globe and millions of young men were conscripted for military service. In the UK, the 1939 National Service (Armed Forces) Act required that men between the ages of 18 and 41 register for armed service. Only those who were medically unfit, who worked in key industries or went through the difficult process of conscientiously objecting\(^{37}\) could be exempt. By the end of the war, the British Armed Forces had over 4 million soldiers. Furthermore, unmarried women and childless widows between the ages of 20 and 30 and men up to the age of 60 could also be called up for some form of national service (Basham 2013, 24; UK Parliament 2016). Outside of this compulsory military service, citizens were expected to contribute to the moral support of military personnel and the nation as a whole. Jose Harris (1992, 17), notes how this sentiment was embodied in the term ‘Dunkirk Spirit’ which ‘has entered into the English language as a synonym for cheerful communal endeavour against hopeless odds’.

To this day, in the United Kingdom, the term “home front” evokes a grossly idealised but powerful image of British people coming ‘together as a metaphysical entity’ (Harris 1992, 17).

But this mass mobilisation meant that the moral rules of war were also changing. Now that whole societies were involved in the making and preparing of war, they became the targets too (Shaw 1991, 21). Indeed, during much of WWII, ‘Western democracies defined German and Japanese civilian populations as a major part of the enemy’ (Shaw 2003, 24). In 1942, the Royal Air Force’s (RAF) Bomber Command started to work under a new directive. They were instructed that they ‘should now be focused on the morale of the enemy civil population’ (Markusen and Kopf 1995, 156). The two most deadly raids carried out under this directive were on Hamburg and Dresden. On the evening of July 27th 1943, as part of Operation Gomorrah, British and US bombers combined in a raid on the city of Hamburg that cost the lives of 45,000 people (Markusen and Kopf 1995, 158). Two years later, they combined again to commit one of the most controversial acts of WWII, the firebombing of Dresden. In a 14 hour raid, starting on February 13th 1945, it

\(^{37}\) During WWII, there were over 60,000 conscientious objectors (COs) in the United Kingdom. All of those had to face a tribunal and were typically required to work in farming, forestry, hospitals or social services. However, 3,000 COs were sent to prison (Hetherington 2016).
has been estimated that as many as 135,000 people were killed (Markusen and Kopf 1995, 162). During the earlier raid on Hamburg, the US Air Force had taken on a secondary role limiting themselves to ‘daylight raids aimed at precise military-targets’, however, by the time of Dresden, US fighter planes were ‘using machine guns to strafe masses of survivors trying to leave the burning city’ (Markusen and Kopf 1995, 158,162). This shift from a philosophy of precision to one of area bombing reached a devastating conclusion when on the nights of August 6th and August 9th 1945 two nuclear weapons were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively. As many as 210,000 were killed in the immediate aftermath of the bombings and, due to radiation exposure, thousands died in the years that followed (Markusen and Kopf 1995, 182). Whole populations were also targeted in the Nazi Holocaust, an event that was ‘accompanied by the oneiric exaltation of a superior blood’ (Foucault 1990, 150). Jews, the disabled, Romani and homosexuals were among numerous different groups that were marked out for extinction and systematically executed.

The Fear of the Garrison State: Biopolitical Militarism’s Post-War Problematisation

However, while the Second World War marked a high point for biopolitical militarism, on another level, the conflict and its aftermath brought about a profound problematisation. This problematisation of biopolitical militarism is characterised by two interrelated themes. First, the realisation of nuclear weapons technology meant that it could no longer be claimed with any great certainty that the means of liberal violence could be used in the defence of the population. Second, the elevated status and position of military personnel meant that many members of the population now feared that their liberal “freedoms” would be eroded. This problematisation now threatened biopolitical militarism’s undoing as the vital link between the population and its means of violence appeared to be irreparably damaged. Within the context of Huntington and Janowitz’s United States, this problematisation is most clear expressed through Harold Lasswell’s (1941) ‘garrison state’ hypothesis.

In 1941, during the height of World War Two, when German, Japanese and Soviet military dictatorships were in an ascendancy, Lasswell (1941, 455) wrote how ‘we are moving toward a world of ‘garrison states’ - a world in which the specialists on violence are the most powerful group in society’. According to Lasswell, this was because of

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38 In the four months leading up to the dropping of the two atomic bombs, 58 Japanese cities were also destroyed by fire bombing (Markusen and Kopf 1995, 180).
significant advances in weapons technology. The increased use of air power had ‘tended to abolish the distinction between civilian and military functions’ (Lasswell 1941, 459). Crucially, this tide of military domination would not stop at the borders of fascist and communist states. His writing contained an unambiguous warning that liberal democracies, such as his native United States, were not immune from the rise of the garrison state.

When the Second World War ended and as the United States struggled to come to terms with the consequences and significance of its new post-war position, Lasswell’s fear began to dominate American foreign policy circles. A perceived Soviet threat and America’s new role as a global superpower meant that the US could no longer retreat into isolation as it had often done before. As one commentator put it: ‘we ate the lotus until Pearl Harbor; since then we have lived in the real world and … progressively grasped the meaning of our power’ (Hoopes 1954, 220). Consequently, the peace which broke out for the United States at the end of the Second World War brought with it unprecedented challenges. After World War Two, the nature of warfare changed. In 1941, Lasswell had warned of the dangers of conventional aerial bombing but now the technological stakes had been raised again after the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It is at this point that biopolitical militarism becomes problematised. The realisation of nuclear weapons technology meant that industrialised warfare had reached a point where organised violence could no longer be presented as something that existed for the benefit of the population. Shaw (2005, 5) argues that, the targeting of populations, exemplified by Hiroshima and Nagasaki, represented a form of ‘degenerate’ warfare. But during World War Two, ‘it still worked as war since it remained possible to present it as a rational means to defeat the aggression of the Axis powers’ (2005, 5, my emphasis). During its aftermath, however, ‘it became increasingly difficult to claim that it remained rational’ (Shaw 2005, 5). In other words, even though the Second World War represents, on one level, a zenith for biopolitical militarism its aftermath was marked by its impossibility. In fact, the targeting of populations during WWII ‘reveals dramatically the increasing impossibility of providing security to those living in the state’s care’ (De Larrinaga and Doucet 2008, 523-524). ‘No human goals (except combined murder and suicide) would be served by letting off the nuclear arsenals of the super-powers’ and so ‘surely’ as Michael Mann (1988, 177) asks ‘militarism has been rendered obsolete?’.
This was not just a crisis for biopolitical militarism, however, but for liberalism in general. Liberalism is characterised by its faith in the advancement of knowledge. ‘Science, to the liberal mind, represented knowledge contra power’ (Visvanathan 1984, 210). With nuclear weapons, however, one of humankind’s great intellectual achievements had contributed towards a potentially catastrophic future. Robert Jungk (1986, 340-41), a journalist who wrote extensively on the group of scientists who developed the bomb, explains how ‘it was the study of the atomic world that taught the theoretical physicist to recognise a truth long ago proclaimed by religion … that the human capacity for observation and judgement has its limits’. In many respects, the liberal project had reached a high point but it was a high point that conversely threaten to undermine the means of violence that was necessary for its continuation.

This era also represents a problematisation for biopolitical militarism in that there were widespread fears, that in this environment, military values would start to impinge on the “freedoms” of the population. The New York Times journalist, Hanson W. Baldwin (1947, 19) wrote how ‘the atomic age compels us to confront the greatest and most puzzling dilemma in our military, or indeed our political, history’. The dilemma, Baldwin goes on to explain, (1947, 19) is ‘how can we prepare for total war without becoming a “garrison state” and destroying the very qualities and virtues and principles we originally set about to save?’. In other words, in order to counter the perceived threat of Soviet communism, the United States required huge military capabilities. However, an overly powerful military, operating on a permanent war footing, presented a considerable risk to liberal democratic values. Arthur Larson (1974, 58) notes how the 1950s took on characteristics more akin to a nation at war: ‘muted antimilitarism, large armed forces with considerable influence in the society, executive domination of national security affairs, and an emphasis on effectiveness’. Lasswell responded to this new situation by incorporating this dilemma into his garrison state hypothesis suggesting ‘that the bipolar world of the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold-War era represented a constancy of threat that if continued would lead to a loss of freedom and ultimately the evolvement of a garrison state’ (Stanley 1996, 46-47).

Lasswell and Baldwin were not the only commentators fearful of an overly powerful military in the early Cold War era. A popular manifestation came in George Orwell’s novel 1984 which contained ‘a warning of the domestic dangers involved in confronting the Soviet Union’ (Friedberg 2000, 56) and C. Wright Mills (2000, 198) wrote in The Power
Elite how ‘historically, the warlords have been only uneasy, poor relations within the American elite; now they are first cousins; soon they may become elder brothers’. Texts like Alfred Vagt’s (1959, 17) *A History of Militarism* also contained the resonance of Lasswell’s warning describing how militarism ‘covers every system of thinking and valuing and every complex of feelings which rank military institutions and ways above the ways of civilian life’ Arguably, the most notable pronounced of the garrison state hypothesis came in President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s farewell address which was described by *The New Yorker* as ‘the most memorable statement on this melancholy possibility’ (Rovere 1962, 167). Echoing Lasswell’s fears Eisenhower (1961) warned how: ‘only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together’. Lasswell’s notion of the “Garrison State” had become shorthand for liberal fears of a takeover by an all-powerful military as it attempted to deter a communist threat.

What Lasswell’s garrison state hypothesis shows is that, during WWII and its aftermath, the relationship between the population and its means of violence had become strained in two directions. First, due to the existence of nuclear weapons and the trend towards the targeting of whole populations, the claim that liberal violence can act for the betterment of populations becomes severely undermined. The means of liberal violence now threatened populations more than they protected them. Second, in reverse, populations now also threatened the means of violence. Through expressions of fear such as the ‘garrison state’ hypothesis there was a clear demonstration that many members of the population were losing faith in the military. Huntington, in particular, saw liberals such as Lasswell as a threat to what he saw as the necessary scale of military power. Indeed, Huntington (1957, 350) disparages Lasswell’s fear of a garrison state as ‘a passive expression of helplessness in the face of world-wide’ conditions’. According to Huntington, the spectre of the Soviet Union and communism meant that limiting the capabilities of the US military was not an option. Lasswell’s ‘was the voice of despair and hopelessness, the anguished recognition of the extent to which liberal illusions had been shattered by the stubborn grimness of the human situation’ (Huntington 1957, 350). In the post-war era, biopolitical militarism was marked by an acute problematisation and thus needed new conditions of possibility if its strategies and logics were to be sustained.
In part, these conditions were provided by the figure of the professional soldier, who I examine in the next section.

**The Post-War Professional Soldier: The “Saviour” of Biopolitical Militarism**

Despite biopolitical militarism’s problematisation, the end of WWII did not, of course, signal the end for liberal violence. The dropping of two atomic bombs might have momentarily rendered the future for liberal warfare impossible, but it was not long before liberal states were once again engaged in violent activity. Nevertheless, after 1945, liberal warfare needed to be underwritten by new conditions of possibility. For the most part, these new conditions were underwritten by the notion of limited warfare. Of course, the term “limited” is wholly inappropriate when describing an activity which almost inevitably involves death, maiming and destruction. However, it is a term that reveals something important about how warfare was justified after 1945. In an article publish in 1956, Henry Kissinger (1956, 357) argued that unlike a total war ‘there exists no way to define a limited war in purely military terms’. Instead, wars ‘can be limited only by political decisions’ (Kissinger 1956, 357). Limited wars needed to be approached, therefore, with careful thought and consideration. ‘Planning here becomes much more conjectural, much more subtle and much more indeterminate’ (Kissinger 1956, 357). Unlike WWII, therefore, where the violent passions of nation and race knew no limits, those who made war after 1945 would need to approach warfare as a *rational* activity. As Mann (1988, 177) puts it: ‘the possession of nuclear weapons has had a curious opposite effect: to increase the rationality-as-means of militarism, and so to revive the military science of the limited war phase’.

In this post-war world of “rational” limited wars, the professional solider emerged as its guarantor. Indeed, during this time, two books place the figure of the professional soldier at the forefront of military thinking: Samuel Huntington’s *The Soldier and The State* (1957) and Morris Janowitz’s (1960) *The Professional Soldier*. On one level, these are two very different books. Huntington’s study is part political science, part military history. It presents the professional soldier as a Weberian ideal-type who can balance the demands

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39 Since 1945, The United States have been involved in conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, Somali, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. The French have fought in Algeria, Bosnia, Kosovo, Côte d’Ivoire and Mali and as well aiding US-led wars in the Middle East. The British meanwhile spent the decades that followed the end of WWII engaged in conflicts of colonial decline in Palestine, Malay, Kenya and Aden. Between 1969 and 2007, under the code name *Operation Banner*, they also maintained a significant presence in Northern Ireland. After 9/11, they became the led partner in the US-led “War on Terror”.

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of a pacifistic liberal society while protecting that society from the “reality” of its external enemies. Crucially, for Huntington, the professional soldier must work within and cultivate a distinctive realm if this arrangement is going to work. A hard line is drawn between the military ‘man of hobbes’ and the liberal who believes people ‘are rational and … should be able to arrive at peaceable solution of differences’ (Huntington 1957, 151). Janowitz, on the other hand, conducts a sociological study of the military profession. He conducts interviews with military personnel that allow him to construct a nuanced picture of the internal workings of the US military profession. In contrast to the hard lines drawn by Huntington, Janowitz presents a picture of a professional that, while in many ways is distinct, retains strong links and overlaps with the society it is drawn from. Nevertheless, despite their differences, these works are both written within a short time of each other and both present the figure of a pragmatic professional soldier as their central character. To some extent, therefore, they both offer ‘essentially a very similar answer’ (Larson 1974, 60). ‘They [both] argued that military officership is a profession and, as such, possesses certain characteristics which would contribute to effectiveness and responsiveness in the military’ (Larson 1974, 60). Compared to the excesses that had been witnessed in the first half of the century, these pragmatic professionals were portrayed ‘like boxers who shake hands before they come out fighting, and drink with each other after the fight’ (Hobsbawm 1995, 50). It was only the professional soldier who could temper the liberal hubris which had ultimately led to the appearance of nuclear weapons.

Indeed, Huntington makes it clear that nuclear weapons were a liberal problem that had nothing to do with the military profession. Reviewing US civil-military relations over the previous decade, Huntington (1957, 394) cites one example of how, in the second year of Eisenhower’s administration, instead of using ‘large military forces as a means to national security … the technological substitute was emphasized’ which meant that ‘American possession of a variety of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons would justify a reduction in conventional military forces’. As a solution to this liberal hubris and excess, Huntington (1957, 69) offers ‘the professionalism man (sic)’ as ‘a cautious, conservative, restraining voice’. Likewise, through Janowitz, military professionalism emerges as a dialogue between the liberal imperative towards ever great technological achievement and the pragmatism of the military profession or as he puts it ‘a struggle between heroic leaders, who embody traditionalism and glory, and military "managers," who are concerned with
the scientific and rational conduct of war’. While Janowitz has a much more positive view of technological change he still insists, like Huntington, that the ‘heroic leader’ can restrain the excesses of technology. He hints heavily towards a fear of unrestrained technological advancement, arguing that ‘weapons of mass destruction socialize danger to the point of equalizing the risks of warfare between soldier and civilian’. In contrast, he argues that the military profession must become a pragmatic constabulary force, which ‘is continuously prepared to act, committed to the minimum use of force, and seeks viable international relations, rather than victory’ (Janowitz 1971, 418). In the works of Huntington and Janowitz, therefore, the figure of the military professional comes to the rescue of biopolitical militarism with its promise of containing the potentially catastrophic violence that liberalism’s faith in progress and knowledge has led it to. In the next section, I analyse, in more detail, the key characteristics of this military professional subject. This is because it is through an examination the professional soldier’s core functions that I am able situate it within the regime of biopolitical militarism.

**Expertise and Responsibility: The Professional Soldier’s Dual Function**

In this section, I think, in more detail, about how the figure of the professional soldier can be situated within the broader regime of biopolitical militarism. To do this, requires examining the Foucauldian decentring method that I introduced in the previous chapter. For Foucault (2007, 118), one of the key steps in decentring the object of analysis is to interrogate the relationship between the basic functions of that object and the broader strategies and tactics for which those functions exist. Crucially, these strategies and tactics do not depend on any particular function. For example, the prison is not necessarily essential to the broader strategies of disciplinary power. It is just that at specific historical moments the prison is able to provide the necessary apparatus for disciplinary power to attend to its core strategies. In fact, sometimes, disciplinary power will ‘find support in … functional defects’ (Foucault 2007, 118). In other words, this means that for disciplinary power to achieve its desired ends the prison does necessarily have to “work” properly.

The same can be said about the relationship between the figure of the professional soldier and biopolitical militarism. As I will explain in this section, the professional soldier appears in the post-war era because it provides particular functions that support the broader strategies and tactics of biopolitical militarism. However, there is nothing necessarily essential about the role of the professional soldier. The professional soldier is
only necessary for as long they are able to serve the broader strategies and logics of biopolitical militarism. For example, during the Second World War, even though professionals were a vital part of the way biopolitical militarism operated, their role was, symbolically at least, secondary to mass conscription and the targeting of large populations. Furthermore, as I show later in this chapter, even when the professional soldier becomes dysfunctional and problematised, towards the end of the twentieth century, it continues to serve the broader strategies and tactics of biopolitical militarism. However, by this point it has evolved into the biopolitical military professional, a more fragile figure who relies on the formation of other subject types. The key point here is that biopolitical militarism does not operate in a way that serves to protect the professional soldier. Instead, the professional soldier is a political subject who is produced in such a way as to serve the strategies and logics of biopolitical militarism. In Chapter Six, for example, I show how even professional soldiers who have sustained life-changing injuries continue to be co-opted into the service of biopolitical militarism through the charity Help for Heroes.

My task in this section, therefore, is to examine the interplay between the core functions of the post-war military professional and the broader strategies and tactics of biopolitical militarism. A good starting point, in this respect, is the schematic outline that Huntington draws of the professional soldier in the opening chapters of The Soldier and The State. This is because, while simplistic, it is a schema that is frequently reproduced in the ways in which the professional soldier has come to be represented at different times.

According to Huntington (1957, 11-18), the professional soldier is endowed with three core characteristics. First, the professional soldier is an expert in the management of violence. Second, the professional must act with responsibility and use that expertise in a way that benefits society. Finally, they must cultivate a sense of corporateness so that they can be set apart from non-military laypeople. Within the context of biopolitical militarism, the most important of these characteristics are expertise and responsibility. This is because they both tell us something about how the professional soldier is situated in relation to the population. In the rest of this section, I analysis these two core characteristics of the

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40 Of course, corporateness also effects an objectification of the population as laypeople but it is a by product of expertise and responsibility. It is because of their unique expertise and responsibilities that the professional soldier is set apart.
military professional and show how each one requires the population to be objectified in a different way.

The first of Huntington’s professional characteristics is expertise. ‘The professional man’, he explains, ‘is an expert with specialized knowledge and skill in a significant field of human endeavour’ (Huntington 1957, 8). Specifically, professional soldiers are experts in ‘the management of violence’ (Huntington 1957, 11) and, as such, they must become skilled in ‘the direction, operation, and control of a human organisation whose primary function is the application of violence’.

Within liberal societies, experts are routinely cast as neutral and rational subjects who use their knowledge to attend to a variety of human problems. Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller (1992, 187) note, for example, how the ‘personage of the expert, embodying neutrality, authority and skill in a wise figure, operating according to an ethical code 'beyond good and evil' has become so significant in our society’. Indeed, Huntington (1957, 84) argues that professionalising the military renders ‘them politically sterile and neutral’. However, there is a distinctly political aspect to expertise. This is because, within liberal societies, experts take on a central role in the allocation of resources – in ‘who gets what, when, how’ (Lasswell 1936). In post-war Britain, for example, ‘professionals had the confidence of citizens so were accepted as neutral agents for the just allocation of public resources and they had the technical expertise and specialists to allocate and utilize public resources efficiently’ (Alaszewski 2005, 31). In a military context, recent British Army doctrine highlights the importance that resource allocation takes on for the military commander. ‘The requirement to allocate sufficient resources implies a responsibility to sustain the force in terms of personnel, equipment and materiel’ it explains (The British Army 2010, 0663). Crucially, most of these resources are ultimately derived from the population. Indeed, preparing for and applying violence requires considerable manpower, equipment, emotional energies and logistical effort which are all derived in some way from the population. Hence, ‘professional military service’ is ‘sustained by governments and populations’ (Mileham 2010, 38). Moreover, the expert also has a stake in the way resources are allocated and so they ‘attempt to mobilize political resources such as legislation, funding, or organizational capacity for their own ends’ (Rose 1993, 291-2). In other words, the very act of cultivating expertise is dependent on deriving resources from the population. For example, in the case of the British Armed Forces, a soldier’s expertise relies on technology that is paid for by the tax payer. However, cultivating expertise also
relies on moral support. This is because, as I explain in more detail in Chapter Four, military expertise is often only validated on the battlefield and a soldier’s ability on the battlefield often depends on them receiving significant moral support. Taken together, what this means is that when the professional soldier takes on the viewpoint of the military expert they must objectify the population as resource.

Huntington’s second professional characteristic is responsibility. According to Huntington (1957, 9), ‘the professional man (sic) is a practising expert working in a social context, and performing a service … which is essential to the functioning of society’. Moreover, in the context of the military, Huntington (1957, 14) argues, that the professional has ‘a special social responsibility’. This is because the military professional is an expert in the management and organisation of violence and, as such, has at their disposal tools which could ‘wreck the fabric of society’. The military professional avoids this possibility, however, by ensuring that their violence is ‘utilized only for socially approved purposes’. In other words, the responsibility of the military professional ‘is the military security of his (sic) client, society’ (Huntington 1957, 15). The violence of the military profession is not just any violence then, it is violence which is managed and organised towards a higher purpose.

This responsibility aspect ultimately links the professional soldier to a “conventional” understanding of politics. Moreover, it is by stressing this responsibility component that, to a large extent, the military professional is able to be cast as a legitimate political actor. Indeed, even though Huntington maintains that the military professional is apolitical, by outlining the notion of responsibility, he is, in effect, acknowledging a political aspect to the soldier’s role. This is because, according to Huntington, the professional soldier enacts responsibility by protecting the state. But, of course, the state is an entity that is produced through a combination of political, social, historical and cultural forces. It is tied up with ideas of identity and belonging. It provides some people with access to resources, while denying others. It is ‘constituted and reproduced through tremendous expenditure of labor and extreme and coordinated violence’ (Cowen and Gilbert 2008, 2). In short it is a deeply political construct. In Janowitz’s (1971, 12) depiction of the professional soldier this political aspect is made much more explicit. According to Janowitz, the professional soldier is concerned with both internal politics and external politics which included taking an interest in ‘the consequences of military actions on the international balance of power and the behaviour of foreign states’. Hence, while it is albeit via the state, both
Huntington and Janowitz establish another link between the professional soldier and the population. But this time the professional soldier does not objectify the population as a resource but as a referent object.

Significantly, the post-war professional soldier embodies key elements of biopolitical militarism’s Second World War zenith, when whole populations were mobilised against each other. Now through Huntington, the figure of the military professional sits at the intersection of the population and its means of violence, as both an expert and someone who is responsible for its protection. Consequently, this duel function sets up a symbiotic relationship between the professional soldier and the population. The professional soldier manages violence in the name of the population and in return the population provides its resources for the management of violence. Consequently, it is around these two poles of expertise and responsibility that liberal civil-military relationships are produced.

**PART TWO: THE PROBLEMATISATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER**

So far, I have introduced and outlined the figure of the post-war professional soldier. In doing so, I have argued that around the poles of expertise and responsibility the post-war military professional can be situated within the broader regime of biopolitical militarism. In this second part of the chapter, I examine how, over time, the figure of the professional soldier evolves into a more fragile figure, which I name the biopolicial military professional.

My argument proceeds in four sections. In the first section, I situate the figure of the post-war military professional within a broader liberal context. By doing this, I reveal that, within liberal societies, the professional soldier takes on an added significance because of an exalted status. In the second section, I argue that because of this, over time, an “unbalanced” professional is produced who is more concerned with expertise than political responsibility. This imbalance contributes to a problematisation of the wider

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41 Reading Foucault’s history of liberalism alongside Huntington’s history of military professionalism reveals an interesting parallel. Just as Foucault identifies population growth as central to the emergence of liberalism, Huntington too argues that it was a rise in the size of populations that precipitated the emergence of the military profession. Specially, Huntington (1957, 32) locates the emergence of the modern day military professional in Prussia around the ‘eighteen and nineteenth centuries’, a time which corresponds with Foucault’s own periodisation of when the population appeared as the central problem for liberal government. According to Huntington (1957, 32), what is significant about the growth of the population is that ‘war, like everything else, was no longer a simple uncomplicated affair’. This was because ‘armies were larger, and, more important, were composed of increasingly diverse elements’ which meant that ‘armies and navies became complex organisms’. What emerges in response is ‘the specialist in coordinating and directing these diverse parts to their assigned goal’. Military professionalism and liberalism share a central problematic, therefore, the population.

42 My intention here is not to prescribe a normative assessment of what is “good” or “bad” professionalism. When I talk of “unbalanced” professionalism, I do so in reference to Huntington and Janowitz’s original formulation. It is this imbalance that leads to further problematisations.
civilian population that is presented as a widening of the so-called civil-military gap. In the third section, I explain how this problematisation of the population presents a particularly intractable problem for the military profession because it is an entity that resides outside the discipline of the military institution. Finally, I show how, against this backdrop, the figure of the *biopolitical military professional* emerges. The *biopolitical military professional* is a figure who must conflate their expertise with broader biopolitical knowledges related to the betterment of the species. It is by doing this that the biopolitical military professional is able to harness the resources from the population by facilitating forms of military support that are life-enriching and healthy.

**Legitimising the Professional Soldier: The Liberal Status of Expertise**

In this section, I examine how beyond the attribute of “responsibility” the figure of the professional soldier is inscribed with another form of political legitimacy through their “expertise”. One of the principle tasks of both Huntington and Janowitz’s work was to provide reassurances to liberal critics who were concerned about the role of military institutions in the post-war world. As I explain above, they do this, in the first instance, by demonstrating how the figure of the professional soldier has the skill set (expertise) and the political acumen (responsibility) to take a lead role in the ‘management of violence’ (Huntington 1957, 11). The professional soldier is a pragmatic “man” who carefully balances the utility of their expertise with the political “realities” of their day. It is this careful balancing act which allows the professional soldier to negotiate the complexities and high stakes of limited warfare. In the post-war era, it is these qualities that provide liberal violence with new conditions of possibility. They ensure that violence is conducted in a rational, thought through and beneficial way.

Liberal critics were not just worried about how military personnel would negotiate the battlefield in the nuclear age, however, they were also concerned about the existence of large post-war standing armies and whether they would remain subordinate to civilian control. This is the principle concern voiced by Lasswell in his garrison state hypothesis. Huntington (1957, 84) responds to this concern by assuring his critics that professionalising the military will render them ‘politically sterile and neutral’ and as a consequence ‘a highly professional officer corps stands ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group which secures legitimate authority within the state’. In short, if professional soldiers are afforded their own separate space then they will be happy to develop their own area of expertise while keeping out of politics. However, some scholars
find this aspect of Huntington’s argument to be inadequate. This is because he does not sufficiently explain how the attributes of professionalism will lead to subordinate military institutions. Peter Feaver (1996, 160) writes, for example, how at ‘the heart of his concept is the putative link between professionalism and voluntary subordination’. Consequently, ‘for Huntington, this is not so much a relationship of cause and effect as it is a definition’ (Feaver 1996, 160). However, when placed within the broader context of liberal governmentality Huntington’s text takes on added meaning. Indeed, much of the weight of Huntington’s argument rest in what remains implicit43. In writing *The Soldier and The State*, as well as an ideal type, Huntington is offering his critics a symbol: the figure of “the expert”. Significantly, this “expertise” inscribes a different form of political legitimacy upon the figure of the professional soldier than the one that is inscribed through the label “responsibility”. To better understand this requires thinking about the role that “experts” play within regimes of liberal governmentality.

The expertise of the professional can be interpreted in two ways44. In the first instance, as I explain above, the professional-as-expert is someone who has the practical skill set needed to organise and manage the means of violence. They can, depending on their rank, do anything from command a theatre of war to locate, target and kill the enemy. But expertise can be interpreted in a second symbolic sense. This is because the notion of expertise takes on an added significance in liberal societies. Indeed, experts are integral to how liberal governmentality operates and is made legitimate. The work of Nicolas Rose provides important insights into the relationship between expertise and liberalism. Rose (1993, 292) explains how liberalism is characterised by a ‘suspicion of rule’. The question of ‘who can rule?’ cannot be answered ‘transcendentally or in relation to the charismatic

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43 In Janowitz’s formulation this link between expertise and legitimacy is made more explicit. He argues that the military profession ‘is amenable to civilian political control because he recognizes that civilians appreciate and understand the tasks and responsibilities of the constabulary force. He is integrated into civilian society because he shares its common values’ (1971, 440). However, the extent to which Huntington and Janowitz do or do not explain the link between expertise and legitimacy is not necessarily important here. What is important is placing these texts within a broader liberal political context.

44 My duel interpretation of expertise here is similar to Anthony King’s analysis of professionalism and expertise. King (2013, 339) makes the distinction between expertise in terms of ‘practical military skills’ and how professionalism has a moral dimension which ‘generates a solidarity whose distinctness is overlooked’. I do not draw more directly on King’s framework here, however, because he has a tendency to conflate the terms expertise and professionalism. For the purposes of my analytical framework it is important that Huntington’s two aspects of professionalism, expertise and responsibility, remain distinct. The notion of responsibility already implies that there is a moral dimension to professionalism. My point is that the expert component also contains a moral dimension which can only be explained by examining the ways in which notions of expertise are exalted in liberal societies. King’s broader findings are significant for my study, however, and I explore his work in more detail in Chapter Four.
persona of the leader, but through various technical means’ (Rose 1993, 292). Through these technical means two ‘rather durable solutions’ emerge (Rose 1993, 292). The first is democracy; the second is expertise. In the nineteenth century, expertise brought an authority to liberal rule which arose ‘out of a claim to a true and positive knowledge of humans’ (Rose 1993, 284). Then in the early part of the twentieth century ‘political rule would not itself set out the norms of individual conduct, but would install and empower a variety of “professionals”’ and invest them with the ‘authority to act as experts’ (Rose 1993, 285). Finally, over the last 70 years there has emerged an ‘advanced liberalism’ which seeks to govern through the relationship between expertise and ‘the regulated choices of individual citizens’ (Rose 1993, 285). In other words, it is in relation to the knowledge of experts that liberal subjects are encouraged to govern their own behaviour. In the previous chapter, for example, I show how medical, nutritional and scientific expertise combines to direct the lifestyle choices of liberal subjects via knowledge about a “healthy” weight. Because of this, “experts” take on an elevated status within liberal societies. Experts became exalted subjects who are endowed with and are granted the ability to bestow political legitimacy.\footnote{The exaltation of military expertise is one of the key characteristic I observe in UK civil-military relationship later in the thesis. In chapter six, for example, I analysis how during Armed Forces Day celebrations attendees are invited to marvel at and applaud displays of military expertise.}

It is this “expert” legitimacy that is at play in Huntington’s formulation of the professional soldier. Huntington does not pose the question “who can rule?” but instead he asks “who can fight?”. The answer he provides, however, bears remarkable similarities to liberalism’s twofold ‘durable solution’ (Rose 1993). In the first instance, he insists that the answer to the question “who can fight?” is provided, on one level, by politicians who are elected through democratic elections. This is what he calls ‘objective civilian control’ (1957, 189). The actions of the armed forces are ultimately underwritten by the democratic process. But for liberals, such as Lasswell, the presence of a large standing army actually threatens this very same democratic process. It is not enough to simply provide a large group of people with access to the means of violence and then expect them to do exactly what civilian politicians tell them to do. It is in response to this concern that Huntington offers the second component of the liberalism’s durable solution to the problem of legitimacy: expertise. Likewise, Janowitz (1971, 6) also offers ‘men who are recognised for their “expertise” in the means of warfare’. In other words, seen in a broader liberal political context the significance of Huntington and Janowitz’s work is given new meaning. Their
arguments are made intelligible because what they are providing, in response to their liberal critics, is an essentially liberal solution: expertise.

The “Unbalanced” Professional: The Self-Reproduction of Expertise and the Problem of the Population

Expertise takes on a further significant within liberal societies. This is because, as Zygmunt Bauman (1998, 213) writes, ‘expertise creates and enhances the need of itself’. He calls this the ‘self-reproduction of expertise’ (1998, 213). This is because expertise intensifies ‘the creation and a principally unlimited multiplication of new problems which render expertise indispensable’ (Bauman 1998, 213). Or, in keeping with the Foucauldian reading of history, it can be said that expertise begets problems, which beget new problems. In this section, I examine how due to this propensity to self-reproduce an “unbalanced” military professional emerges who is more concerned with their expertise than their political responsibility. In addition, I examine how this “unbalance” leads to a further problematisation of the “civilian” population and, hence, the problematisation of the broader regime of biopolitical militarism.

The self-reproduction of expertise can be observed in the evolution of the military professional subject. Sam Sarkesian (1981, 9) explains how ‘because the profession has a virtual monopoly on a systematic body of knowledge concerning the actual conduct of war, it … is able to dictate the norms of the profession with little community interference’. Having been granted this professional space, the professional soldier is able to cultivate their own expertise. In this military context, this invariably means that military professionals become preoccupied with improving military effectiveness. One piece of British military doctrine explains that because the British Army is a professional army ‘it does not directly reflect national society’ but ‘concentrates rather on military effectiveness’ (The British Army 2000, 3-14). By focusing primarily on military effectiveness, military professionals are placed perpetually in a situation where they are compelled to improve their expertise.

46 Risa Brooks and Elizabeth Stanley (2007, 9) define military effectiveness as ‘the capacity to create military power from a state’s basic resources in wealth, technology, population size, and human capital’, a definition which fits with my earlier observation that the expert-professional soldier objectifies the population as a resource.
Significantly, as the professional soldier becomes increasingly expert, their relationship with the wider population changes. In fact, it changes in two opposing directions. First, as the professional soldier becomes more expert there is a possibility that they may become closer to the society they serve. This is because, becoming expert often involves acquiring a skill set that is also necessary in the “civilian” world (Janowitz 1971, 9). This is what civil-military scholars label convergence. On the other hand, however, by becoming more expert the professional soldier can also become increasingly detached from the wider population. This is what civil-military relations scholars name divergence. Huntington (1963, 787) explains that the reason for this convergence and divergence is because ‘the same trends which require officers to specialize in skills employed in civilian life also require them to specialize in skills which have no counterpart in civilian life’. So, for example, the ubiquity of informational technology in both civilian and military worlds demonstrates a convergence. However, the increased focus on expertise can also lead to a significant divergence. This divergence, as Gwyn Harries-Jenkins and Charles Moskos (1981, 17) explain, is ‘particularly noticeable in combat units’ where ‘the nature of the military role is quite separate from civilian practice’. Crucially, in these instances, when combat units become preoccupied with their expertise, there is a significant danger that the application of military violence will increasingly take place without sufficient political context. This is because, in this environment, the military professional becomes more concerned with improving ‘the quality of military activity, its efficiency, competency, and effectiveness’ than in political outcomes (Mileham 2004, 76). They become preoccupied with what Huntington (1963) calls the ‘struggle for expertise’. The result is a form of “unbalanced” expert-professionalism wherein concern for ever increasing military expertise outweighs concern for responsibility (political context).

This is an issue that is often raised in relation to the Vietnam War. During that conflict, the US military was accused of measuring its success more in terms of the number of people killed than in achieving its political goals. Writing in the aftermath of Vietnam, the civil-military relations scholar Sarkesian (1981, 45) notes this disconnection: ‘the

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47 As Gregory A. Daddis (2012) argues, this is a simplistic understanding of how the US military measured their military effectiveness however, in terms of the way the military professional subject in Vietnam is predominant represented ‘much of the Vietnam historiography maintains that ‘body counts’ served as the US Army’s only indicator of success in Vietnam’. In fact, as Daddis explains in more detail: ‘monthly “Measurement of Progress” reports covered countless aspects of the fighting in Vietnam – force ratios, enemy ‘incident’ rates, tactical air sorties, weapons losses, security of base areas and roads, population control, area control, and hamlet defences’. However, despite this detail, these metrics are still mainly concerned with military effectiveness.
demands of counter-revolutionary war went beyond traditional perspectives, kill ratios, real estate, and battlefield victories appeared to be almost irrelevant to the outcome of the war’. In more recent times, in a US context, James Burk (2002, 29) has argued that ‘at the end of the twentieth century, the Army’s claim to expert knowledge in the management of violence, certified by science, was a foundation for its professional identity’. This “unbalanced” professionalism is also on display within the UK armed forces. Writing at the end of the Cold War, Shaw (1991, 137) observes how ‘recruitment and training in all [the British armed] services have increasingly centred around the requirements of skill and expertise’. This problem has been most recently encountered in relation to Afghanistan where, like the US in Vietnam, the British Armed Forces have been accused of being more concerned with body-counts than the political outcome of the conflict (Farrell 2010, 578; Ledwidge 2013, 36). In Chapter Four, I look at the British experience in Afghanistan in more detail.

At this point, it is important to be clear about what I mean by an “unbalanced” expert-professional. I do not use the term in a normative sense, as a way of implying that there is some form of “balanced” professionalism out there. I use it because it helps to me to explain how the figure of the professional soldier has become increasingly problematised since the end of the Second World War. The military professional is only “unbalanced” relative to how it is formulated in the post-war texts of Huntington and Janowitz, who both prescribe a professional soldier who can balance expertise and responsibility. Hence, what I am arguing here is that the expert “solution”, which emerges in the post-war era, has, in fact, itself become problematised because of the propensity of expertise to self-reproduce. Significantly, in a military context this is a propensity that often leads to an over emphasis on developing combat skills at the expense of political considerations.

Indeed, a number of scholars have noted this problematic imbalance. For example, Sarkesian (1981, 37) writes of a ‘military mind’ that is ‘preoccupied with its status, jealous of its prerogatives, harsh in its response to divergence, and relentless in its pursuit of professional purity’. Significantly, he argues that this is a mind that is ‘cloaked in the barrier of military expertise’ (Sarkesian 1981, 37). Likewise, Andrew J Bacevich (1990, 15-16) identifies a ‘corrupted professionalism’ wherein ‘self-interest competes with - and may ultimately corrupt – [an armed forces] ability to view with detachment war and its political context’. In a British context, Frank Ledwidge (2012, 234) bemoans the lack of ‘real professionalism’ in the British Armed Forces and argues that what has emerged instead
is a “no nonsense” culture that values action over considered thought’. Interestingly, what all these accounts have in common is that they present the professional soldier as something that is no longer “working”. I show later, however, that this very imbalance exacerbates a productive tension through which the figure of the biopolitical military professional emerges.

Significantly, as I have already alluded to, when the professional soldier becomes preoccupied with their expertise at the expense of political responsibility there is a strain in the relationship between that figure and the wider population. In other words, in this situation, there is a widening of the so-called “civil-military gap”. The notion of a civil-military gap refers to division between ‘armed forces and their societies’ (Strachan 2003, 44). However, when scholars perceive this gap to be growing, what they are actually engaging in is a problematisation of the “civilian” population. Certainly, since the Vietnam War, military thinkers and practitioners have become increasingly preoccupied with problems related to the “civilian” population. For example, in the aftermath of Vietnam, Sarkesian (1981, xi) wrote how ‘moral and ethical criteria cannot be derived solely from within the military profession. They must originate from the broader community’. In the context of Vietnam, the accusations were of a military more concerned with their effectiveness than the political context of their military power. However, when this happens (as it does for the British in Afghanistan after 2006) harnessing financial and moral support from the wider population becomes increasingly difficult. For example, Sarkesian (1981, 22) goes on to note how, in the case of Vietnam, a particular problematisation of the population emerged: ‘antimilitary sentiments and anti-war attitude of important segments of the populace have … been viewed by many scholars and military men as a crucial element in the depreciation of the military service in terms of status and prestige’. In a similar vein, this time as the Cold War was coming to an end, Bacevich (1990, 19-20) wrote how “the masses” has become a hallmark of war in our time. He goes on to elaborate on this point:

They may be the medium within which conflict occurs; they may sustain the combatants or double as fighters themselves; or they may constitute a strategic objective whose support determines war’s outcome—but almost without exception in modern wars, the people play an integral part.
Bacevich’s words foreshadow the premise of Rupert Smith’s influential 2005 book *The Utility of Force* in which he coins the term ‘war among the people’. For Smith (2005, 3), there is ‘no secluded battlefield upon which armies engage’ instead ‘all the people, anywhere – are the battlefield’.

The reason for these problematisations is that there is always a tension between the expertise of the military professional and the wider population. This comes about because ultimately, as I explain earlier, expertise depends upon the resources of the population. So, while a more expert military will diverge from a population it is still always dependent on that population. However, when a professional soldier pays scant attention to their political responsibility, then harnessing these financial and moral resources becomes increasingly difficult. People are much less willing to offer moral support when a military conflict bears little relation to their lives or political values. Simply put, if there is support for the mission then the economic and emotional support that is required will follow. For example, in the final years of the Cold War, the UK spent nearly 4 per cent of its GDP on defence – twice what it is today (Page 2015). Unlike the ambiguous politics of recent conflicts, the Cold War with its readily identifiable enemy and clear narrative, helped to justify high spending levels in the UK. For example, the British general Michael Willcocks (1994, 6) recalls how during the Cold War ‘if the Soviets had a piece of kit, we needed one to counter it’. In this instance, the political context helped harness economic support.

In other words, in this situation military professionals were able to display a degree of responsibility. Nevertheless, what happens if militaries and soldiers become increasingly engaged in conflicts that serve their own self-interest, as happens with the British in Helmand which I explore in Chapter Four, is that the lack of responsibility prevents the harnessing of resources that are needed to support the professional’s expertise. Of course, this problem is made worst because Western governments are also increasingly asking militaries to take part in wars that have little public support. Crucially, it is in these situations that the civilian population becomes most intensely problematised.

This means that, when there is a perception that the civil-military gap is widening the “civilian” population becomes problematised, as they effectively become a threat to the constitution of the professional soldier. Hence, the prevalence of the expert professional exacerbates a tension between the “unbalanced” function of the professional soldier and the broader strategies and logics of biopolitical militarism, a regime of power which is ultimately concerned with harnessing the resources of the population. As I explain at the
end of this chapter, however, this is a productive tension through which the figure of the
biopolitical military professional emerges.

The Civilian Population: Beyond Disciplinary Limits

In the previous section, I explained how the emergence of an increasingly “expert” professional engenders a problematisation of the “civilian” population in relation to the constitution of the professional soldier. Significantly, this “civilian” problem presents the military professional with a particularly intractable and unfamiliar problem. This is because military professionals typically work within military institutions, which only gives them a limited scope as to the sort of issues they can deal with. This limited scope can be explained by drawing on Foucault’s analytic of power that I outlined in the previous chapter. As I explained in that chapter, military institutions are disciplinary institutions. For example, in the *Values and Standards of the British Army* it states that ‘to be effective on operations, the Army must act as a disciplined force’ (The British Army 2008, 11). In the context of the military institution, this typically means turning “civilian” members of the population into subjects who are able to organise, prepare for and fight wars, soldiers, via established training routines. I look at this relationship between disciplinary power and the military institution in more detail in Chapters Three and Four.

What is crucial to note here, however, is that because military institutions are disciplinary institutions, they can only influence human subjects that are at a relatively close proximity. In fact, military institutions, and thus military professionals, usually only have control over the bodies that reside within their institutional walls. It is for this reason that the problem of the “civilian” population presents such an intractable problem for the military profession. Because civilians are, by definition, human subjects that reside outside of the military institution48. For instance, the US general, John Galvin (1986, 5) writes that ‘military men … feel uncomfortable with warfare’s societal dimension and tend to ignore its implications’. Significantly, he goes on to add that this is because ‘societies are hard to understand – let alone predict – and difficult to control’ (1986, 5).

To be sure, this discomfort experienced by military professionals when faced with the “civilian” population is nothing novel. Indeed, it is a discomfort that Samuel Huntington expresses himself in the *Soldier and The State*. In the final chapter of that book, Huntington

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48 My intention here is not to draw hard lines between civilian and military worlds. When I refer to “civilians” I do this because this is the way the military professional sees the population that resides outside the military institution.
(1957, 463) argues that the military establishment would be ultimately best served by ‘the emergence of a conservative environment in the United States’. However, he deduces from his own observations that this is not forthcoming. He ends the book, by describing the village of Highland Falls which sits just to the south of the United States Military Academy at West Point. For Huntington (1957, 465), this picture provides a vivid illustration of the civilian world:

The tiresome monotony and the incredible variety and discordancy of small-town commercialism. The buildings form no part of a whole: they are simple a motley, disconnected collection of frames coincidentally adjoining each other, lacking common unity or purpose.

He goes on to compare this to the buildings at West Point where:

There is ordered serenity. The parts do not exist on their own, but accept their subordination to the whole. Beauty and utility are merged in grey stone.

Finally, he asks:

Is it possible to deny … that the disciplined order of West Point has more to offer than the garish individualism of Main Street?

By ending the *Soldier and The State* in this way Huntington provides two important insights. First, he conveys a tacit acknowledgement that his “solution”, the figure of the professional soldier, is already imperfect and problematic. The professional soldier cannot just be imposed and remain separate. As someone who looks to the population to sustain their expertise, harnessing civilian resources will always remain a problem. In other words, there is always a tension between the function of the professional soldier and the broader strategies and logics of *biopolitical militarism*. In fact, what I have explored so far in this chapter is how this tension, already evident in Huntington, becomes exacerbated as the twentieth century progresses. The second insight to be gained from this final chapter is that, like Galvin, in this moment, Huntington is confronted with the limits of disciplinary power. Which, in this instance, Huntington locates at West Point’s periphery. Crucially, it is this image of the military professional coming up against these disciplinary limits that
greatly informs this thesis. This is because, it is at the edge of these limits that the figure of the biopolitical military professional emerges to step beyond these institutional walls.

**The Biopolitical Military Professional and the Proto-Professionals**

In this final section, I outline one of the key conceptual contributions of this thesis, the notion of the biopolitical military professional. It is the biopolitical military professional who, I argue, acts as the focal point for the UK civil-military initiatives, *Armed Forces Day* and *Help for Heroes*, that I analyse later in the thesis. What is significant about these initiatives is that they have both been successful at encouraging people to provide moral, and via charitable fundraising, financial support to members of the British Armed Forces during a time when deeply unpopular wars are being fought. In other words, what is significant about these initiatives, in the context of what I have discussed in this chapter so far, is that they have both emerged as “solutions” to the civilian problem I identify above. This raises important questions: what is it about these initiatives that makes them resonant with so many people? How have these initiatives managed to find success in response to a problem as intractable as the civilian population? Answering these questions requires thinking about how the military professional is able to move beyond the disciplinary limits I identified in the previous section.

In the previous section, I left the military professional confronted with the problem of the “civilian” population. As John Galvin’s quote from that section attests, what makes this “civilian” problem so intractable is that populations are hard to understand, unpredictable and difficult to manage, especially when viewed from within the confines of the military institution. Crucially, as I explain in the previous chapter, this is the very same problem that is confronted by liberal government. To recall, in that chapter, I showed how liberal government is a regime of power that emerges in relation to the population’s “freedom”. The problem for liberalism is how to manage this “free” population in a way that makes that population both productive and politically docile. For liberal government, this problem is attended to through its general economy of power. First, sovereign power operates directly through laws and the coercive arms of the state. Second, disciplinary power operates through institutions such as the prison or the school. And finally, biopolitical power operates at the level of whole populations. Importantly, it is this biopolitical power that makes liberal government possible. This is because biopolitics governs from a distance in subtle ways that do not appear to directly impinge on the freedoms of liberal subjects. In other words, biopolitics is a form of power that is
able to break free from institutional constraints and direct the behaviour of liberal subjects over larger distances.

It is by drawing on these Foucauldian insights that, in this thesis, I develop the notion of the biopolitical military professional. Like the post-war military professional, the biopolitical military professional emerges in relation to a problematisation of biopolitical militarism. In a twenty-first century British context, however, this problematisation is related to the British Armed Forces experience in Iraq and Afghanistan that I examine in Chapter Four. In this respect, the emergence of the biopolitical military professional can ‘be seen as part of a trend of the rehabilitation of the military in the aftermath of the Iraq war, and the legitimisation of the Afghanistan war’ (Jenlings et al. 2012, 361). Unlike the post-war military professional, however, the biopolitical military professional is able to move beyond institutional limits in a way that allows them to generate support from the civilian population despite the politics of the wars they are fighting in. Crucially, this is made possible because, through these civil-military initiatives, the military professional’s concerns become incorporated into these broader biopolitical liberal regimes.

Biopolitics operates principally through an interplay of expertise and self-governance. For example, in the previous chapter, I explained how liberal subjects often self-regulate in relation to the expert knowledge of health professionals. A useful concept for thinking about how this interplay works is Abram de Swaan’s notion of the proto-professional. The proto-professional is a liberal subject whose behaviour is heavily influenced by the expertise of the professional. Crucially, de Swann (1990, 100), argues that what is taking place within this interplay is a process of ‘protoprofessionalization’ wherein ‘laymen adopt the fundamental stances and basic concepts which are circulating within the profession and, in this way, become “protoprofessionals” themselves’. In other words, what is happening in this interplay of expertise and self-governance is the production of two interrelated subject types, the “professional” and the “proto-professional”. Significantly, it is through this production of the proto-professional subject that the biopolitical military professional is able to co-opt members of the civilian population into the active service of liberal war-fighting. This takes place on two levels: one military, one biological.

First, the military professional is an expert in war-fighting who observes the world through a particularly militarised lens. Huntington (1957, 65), for example, argues that the military professional is in possession of a ‘military mind’ which is convinced of ‘the permanency of insecurity and the inevitability of war’. Moreover, as Bacevich (1990, 15)
explains, ‘professional soldiers have a stake in preserving the tradition of war as a gladiatorial contest’. Significantly, as Huntington (1957, 65) again points out, by adopting this mindset, within the military profession, there is always the persistent concern that ‘the problem of military security is never finally solved’.

What takes place via the emergence of the biopolitical military professional, however, is that these expert concerns get taken up by a whole host of other “civilian” liberal subjects. In this context, liberal subjects become compelled to attend to their own military security needs. In effect, therefore, the onus of military security is, to some extent, taken away from the institutions of the state and placed onto individual shoulders. A characteristic of the civil-military initiatives, I examine in this study, is that supporting the armed forces is often encouraged by stressing individual “obligations”. In this respect, the Armed Forces Covenant lists the key obligations that the public are expected to uphold. These are honouring the ‘commitment and sacrifice of the Armed Forces Community’, celebrating ‘the work of those charitable and voluntary bodies which help to support that community’, and striving ‘to keep close the links between the Armed Forces and the society they defend’ (Ministry of Defence UK 2011, 10). These obligations (not laws) encourage particular expressions of individual self-governance through which liberal subjects are able to cultivate their own military defence needs by participating in activities that sustain the violence of the British Armed Forces.

Second, what fundamentally sets the biopolitical military professional apart from the post-war military professional is that “traditional” military expertise becomes conflated with a wider set of expert knowledges that are related to the biological wellbeing of populations. Indeed, in order to elicit the required support from the population, the “traditional” military expertise, I refer to above, is no longer sufficient. After all, the biopolitical military professional emerges because military conflict is increasingly being carried out in a morally and politically ambiguous environment. Consequently, this produces a political void of sorts. Hence, another problem emerges: how can a politics be produced that will harness the population’s resources and thus sustain these experts in violence?

A “solution” to this problem can be observed in initiatives like Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes. A characteristic of these initiatives is that they both facilitate forms of military support that are life-enriching and healthy. For example, Armed Forces Day is marketed as a healthy and educational day out for children and by fundraising for Help for Heroes it is likely you will take part in an exhilarating sporting challenge. These are not just initiatives
that enable you to support the armed forces, therefore, they also facilitate activities that will make you fitter, stronger and healthier. Hence, these are initiatives that serve to refill this political void through the production of a particular form of biopolitics. Crucially, this is a biopolitics that is produced in a power relationship between the figure of the biopolitical military professional and a whole host of proto-professional subjects who through these initiatives are co-opted in various forms of ‘quasi-military service’ (Tidy 2015, 9). Indeed, the biopolitical military professional, in various forms, acts as the focal point for these initiatives. I examine how this takes place in more detail in Chapters Five and Six.

The biopolitical military professional is able to provide a solution to the problem of the outside “civilian” population, therefore, through a conflation of “traditional” military expertise and biological knowledges concerned with the well-being of the population. Hence, the biopolitical military professional is able to achieve a certain resonance with a civilian population that is less interested in the politics of war but increasingly concerned with health and wellbeing. In this respect, Ilona Kickbusch (2006, 561) argues that neoliberal societies are increasingly becoming ‘health societies’ wherein health choices are coming to increasingly inform our everyday experience. She writes, for example, how:

In health we see the expansion of the do-ability of health, the expansion of the territory of health, and the expansion of the reflexivity of health. In everyday language we could say: more health is always possible, health is everywhere and every choice in daily life potentially becomes a choice for or against health (Kickbusch 2006, 561).

Hence, a decision to engage with the biopolitical military professional via Help for Heroes or Armed Forces Day, in these terms, becomes a “choice for health”. Another salient discourse in liberal societies is the notion of ‘wellness’ which is increasingly pervading the workplace as employers look for ways to make their employees more productive (McGillivray 2005, 130). In this environment, therefore, taking part in a life-enriching form of military support is the act of a responsible liberal subject who is in touch with their military and their wellbeing. Indeed, engaging with the biopolitical military professional has become part of a “normal” healthy lifestyle.
In summary, the *biopolitical military professional* exhibits three key characteristics. First, the biopolitical military professional is a subject who problematises the “civilian” population that resides *outside* of the military institution. Second, the biopolitical military professional is able to co-opt, mobilise and conscript bodies (proto-professionals) from outside the military institution into the service of liberal warfighting by acting as the focal point for civil-military initiatives that facilitate life-administering activity. Third, the biopolitical military professional places greater importance on attaining excellence in military expertise than on the political goals of the conflicts they are taking part in. In this thesis, I identify this figure in several different forms. To be sure, in each manifestation of the biopolitical military professional I identify there is typically an emphasis on one particular characteristic. For example, in the next chapter, I examine a group of nascent biopolitical military professionals who come to problematise the civilian population in the late 1990s. In later chapters, however, I examine biopolitical military professionals who come to act as the focal point for life-administering civil-military initiatives. Taken together, however, it is possible to talk about the rise of a biopolitical military professional subject who sits at a pivotal place in the UK’s civil-military landscape in the 21st Century.

In addition to the biopolitical military professional, I also identify a number of other liberal subjects who are mobilised into the active service of liberal war-fighting via an interplay with the biopolitical military professional. These are the proto-professionals who partake in behaviours that serve to sustain liberal war-fighting and, more specifically, the violence of the British Armed Forces. These subjects are the ‘casual militarists’ (Gee 2014, 4) the ‘quasi-military’ servants (Tidy 2015, 9) who, observed collectively, take on the appearance of an ‘organic social movement’ (Jenkins et al. 2012, 357). These are subjects who are motivated into this “civilian” military service both in relation to a particular militarised world view and because partaking in this military service means that they will become fitter, healthier and stronger. It is by identifying these proto-professionals that I am able to show how process of military professionalisation are not reductive but *productive*. Indeed, given these insights it is possible to talk about a process of military *professionalisation* as one of the most prevalent expressions of militarism in the 21st century. Crucially, this has important implications for informing a critical understanding of how civil-military relationships are produced. In particular, it highlights the way supposedly “civilian” and “military” worlds are, in fact, constantly bleeding into one another. Indeed, one of the primary effects of the biopolitical military professional is the appearance of a particular type of *biopolitical* civil-military relationship. This is a civil-
military relationship which is primarily premised on a symbiotic relationship between liberal subjects who give up their free time, financial and emotional resources to support the military professional and in return are able to take part in forms of military support that are life-enriching and healthy.

Finally, what my notion of the biopolitical military professional shows is that military professionals in the twenty-first century are particularly fragile figures. Indeed, they are subjects who have an overt reliance on an unpredictable “civilian” population and that require the formation of other proto-professional subjects for their sustenance. However, seen in the broader context of the strategies and logics of biopolitical militarism this is not necessarily problematic. As Foucault (2007, 118) reminds us, the subjects and institutions that are produced through a particular regime of power do not necessarily have to “work” if they are going to serve the broader strategies and logics of that regime of power. This is certainly the case for the biopolitical military professional whose very fragility has proven to be productive in terms of harnessing the resources of the civilian population. Helen McCartney (2011, 47) argues, for example, that it is this fragility that makes possible the support the troops, oppose the war mentality that has increasingly come to inform the UK’s civil-military landscape:

The British public’s increasing unease with the use of force, and their particular distaste for the deployments first in Iraq and latterly in Afghanistan, make it more palatable to view soldiers as passive victims rather than perpetrators of violence. This, in turn, makes it easier for the British public and its media to show support for their soldiers while simultaneously condemning the job they are required to do.

Likewise, Sarah Ingham (2014, 88), explains how much of the recent tide of public support for the military in the UK has focused on, what she calls, ‘people issues’ related to the ‘welfare of serving personnel, their families and veterans’. It is important to pay attention to this fragility, therefore, as I do in Chapter Six when I analyse the military charity Help for Heroes.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have charted how the figure of the professional soldier has evolved from the post-war military professional to the biopolitical military professional. I do this by situating the figure of the professional soldier within the regime of power, biopolitical militarism. I
then chart this evolution by identifying a series of problematisations. During the Second World War, biopolitical militarism reached a zenith when whole population masses were mobilised and targeted. In its aftermath, however, the appearance of nuclear weapons technology as well as fears of military supremacy brought about a problematisation of biopolitical militarism. The vital link between the population and the means of violence was severed. Through the works of scholars such as Samuel Huntington and Morris Janowitz, the figure of the professional soldier emerges in response to this problematisation. An embodiment of biopolitical militarism’s World War Two zenith, this post-war professional is inscribed with two core characteristics that place it within the regime of biopolitical militarism: expertise and responsibility. It is around these two poles that the production of civil-military relationships form.

Over time, however, this figure of the military professional evolves. This is because in liberal societies expertise is an exalted quality that develops its own momentum. This produces a professional soldier whose political connection to the population becomes, on one level, detached. Hence, in the relation to the professional soldier the “civilian” population is an entity that becomes increasingly problematised. Through these tensions what is produced is the figure of the biopolitical military professional. Crucially, the biopolitical military professional is a figure whose expert knowledge becomes incorporated into a broader set of life-administrating biopolitical knowledges related to the health and welling being of the population. The biopolitical military professional sits in symbiosis with the wider population harnessing their resources through an interplay of expert knowledge and self-governance. In the chapters that follow, I chart how the biopolitical military professional emerges and comes to inform the production of the UK civil-military landscape.
CHAPTER THREE – BRITISH ARMY PROFESSIONALISM IN THE 1990S: 
THE WAR-FIGHTING SOLDIER AND THE THREAT OF THE POPULATION

In this first empirical chapter, I examine an important stage in the evolution of the biopolitical military professional in the UK. To do this, I examine a series of debates that took place in and around the British Army in the late 1990s. Crucially, these debates reveal how the British military professionals were coming to increasingly problematise the “civilian” population during this time.

In the middle of the 1990s, the British Army shifted its intellectual focus towards developing the moral component of fighting power. Army doctrine breaks its central objective ‘fighting power’ into three separate components: physical, conceptual and moral. The physical component it defines as ‘the means to fight’, conceptual as ‘the thought process behind the ability to fight’ and moral as ‘the ability to get people to fight’ (The British Army 1989, 32-35). Broadly speaking, outlined within the moral component are the ethical and moral conditions required to make war-fighting possible. Sarah Ingham (2014, 46) explains how the term moral in this context refers to both ‘the concept of the “good” in terms of ethical conduct and with moral in the sense of moral victory and support’. During the Cold War, the existence of the Warsaw Pact and the prospect of a land war in Europe provided the Army with most of the moral justification it needed.

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, however, these moral foundations were to a large extent removed. William Mott (1998, 268) notes at the time how:

Military professionals emerging from the stark binary logic of the Cold War are facing … fundamental questions "What are we doing?" and "Why are we doing it?" … We need to understand what our nations expect of us before we proceed too far in deciding “How do we do it?”

Added to this, fundamental shifts in the attitudes of the British public provoked a sense of a society increasingly out of touch with its armed forces. Warfighting stood on increasingly unstable ethical foundations and thus so too did the professional space of the British Army (Forster 2006). The intense scrutiny and development that took place around the moral component then was to a large extent an exercise in stabilising these foundations and protecting this professional space. In short, developing the moral
component was an exercise in both morally and ethically rewriting British war-fighting’s conditions of possibility, an opportunity for the British Army to ‘assert its professional autonomy’ (Ingham 2014, 50).

In this first empirical chapter, my focus is on one particular manifestation of the moral component entitled *Soldiering: The Military Covenant*, which was published in February 2000. It is a small piece of doctrine that, at the time, gave expression to ‘the military’s self-perception of modern soldiering’ (Maeder 2004, 207). According to Anthony Forster (2011, 12), the publication of *Soldiering* was an attempt to ‘redefine the expertise, jurisdiction, and legitimacy of the Army profession’. It is a piece of doctrine wherein we encounter an attempt to write back in the soldier-subject, and which in doing so marks out the political, social and moral conditions deemed necessary for both the continued sustenance of the Army, as an institution, and the assured future of soldiering, as a profession. Hence, this doctrine provides a key example of how the figure of the professional soldier emerges at a time when biopolitical militarism is problematised.

Accompanying the development of *Soldiering* is a series of debates that took place during the same time. These include a number of conferences and “study days” that were held by the Army between 1998 and 1999: four study days entitled *The British Army, Manpower and Society: Towards 2000* held at The University of Glasgow, and two conferences, *Ethical Dilemmas of Military Interventions* and *Ethics in the Expeditionary Era*, held at the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Army’s officer training academy at Sandhurst respectively. Much of the output from these *Soldiering* debates, as I refer to them here, either directly addresses the development of *Soldiering* itself or deals with its key issues.

It is text adapted from *Soldiering* that eventually becomes part of what I examine in the next chapter – the popularised military covenant. However, it is important to take a closer look at how these *Soldiering* debates took shape during the 1990s because through them we see, close up, the contours of a process of knowledge formation that informs today’s civil-military landscape – in other words, a history of the present. Sarah Ingham’s (2014) study of the UK military covenant, in particular, explores the links between this period of doctrinal development and the later popularisation of the British Armed Forces, but while Ingham’s study is insightful, particularly with its interviews with key military figures from the time, it is largely limited to evaluating the role that *Soldiering* plays in managing the civil-military relationship. In contrast, in this Foucauldian analysis I contemplate the different modalities of power at play within this discourse, the political aspirations that are...
contained within them and the extent to which, during the time of their production, these debates impacted upon broader liberal rationalities of government.

Above all, these Soldiering debates constitute a body of discourse through which a particular rendering of the professional soldier is produced – in this case as the “war-fighting soldier”. Consequently, this series of debates invite us to consider the ways in which this production of knowledge contributes to the formation of particular subjectivities; how, more specifically, the production of military doctrine relates to the formation of the subjects who are ultimately mobilised, shaped and used in the conduct of warfighting. In this chapter I argue that, within the Soldiering debates the war-fighting professional soldier is drawn on three levels. First, it is drawn as a purified abstraction: the blueprint of a warfighting soldier. Second, this blueprint is etched upon the imperfections of the human body, which produces a tension - but one that is comfortably contained by the disciplinary mechanisms of the military institution. Finally, what we see emerging in the soldier’s shadow is the threat of the population. What is significant here is that the population appears as an entity located beyond the limits of disciplinary power, and thus beyond the reach of the military institution. As a result, when the soldier-subject is written against the canvas of the population we encounter an unresolved tension.

**Soldiering: The Blueprint for a Perfect Soldier?**

In this first section, I examine how the figure of the professional soldier is first drawn in these Soldiering debates as a war-fighting soldier in abstract terms. In their recent study of US and NATO targeting doctrine, Astrid Nordin and Dan Öberg (2015, 11) note how military doctrines ‘not only make a world appear, but also dissolve meaning’. On the one hand, military doctrine ensures that concepts such as “war” and “fighting” remain part of our ontological imaginary but, on the other, doctrine has the propensity to remove the human subjectivities that make war-fighting possible. It is this ability to erase the human subject that Nordin and Öberg draw our attention to in targeting doctrine. Within targeting doctrine ‘the “agent” … is the medium itself’, that is targeting as a model of war, not the human subjects that comprise it. Furthermore, there is a perfectionist imperative contained within targeting doctrine that ‘pulverises subjectivity’ (Nordin and Öberg 2015, 12). In other words, there is a focus on perfecting targeting as a model of war that, in effect, eviscerates the imperfect human subject. This means that subjects such as ‘warfighter’ are reduced ‘into fractal, self-identical molecules which merely mirror functions of the process’ (Nordin and Öberg 2015, 12). Their capacity to form their own
opinion, make their own individual contribution, or even disrupt the activity of war-fighting is taken away.

We encounter this perfectionist imperative in the opening lines of Soldiering: The Military Covenant, which opens by telling us:

The purpose and measure of the British Army is military effectiveness: success in war and on other operations. Ultimately this means that every soldier is a weapon bearer, so all must be prepared personally to make the decision to engage an enemy or to place themselves in harm's way. All British soldiers share the legal right and duty to fight and if necessary, kill, according to their orders, and an unlimited liability to give their lives in doing so. This is the unique nature of soldiering (The British Army 2000, 1-1).

Unlike targeting doctrine, the central character, or the “agent” being produced is not a model of war but the image of a soldier, the outline of a human subject. In this case, a British soldier. Nevertheless, we can still see subjectivity being erased. This is because, in this opening paragraph, the outline of the soldier stands in for an abstract and idealised concept of warfighting, a reversal of what we see taking place in the targeting doctrine - the soldier as ‘weapon bearer’ reduced to a figure that simply reflects back to us ‘the purpose and measure of the British Army’ which we are told, is ‘success in war and on other operations’. When we are first introduced to the British soldier it is as a personification of the British Army’s core function: the blueprint for a soldier that is perfectly suited to the Army’s institutional needs. As I explain later, this aspiration for perfection is short lived but, before moving on, it is important to recognise it here.

At this point, it is worth taking on board Mitchell Dean’s warning about the ways in which we analyse the formation of human subjectivity. According to Dean (2010, 43, his emphasis), ‘the forms of identity promoted and presupposed by various practices and programmes of government should not be confused with a real subject’. Taking this into consideration, what we realise is that the writing of military doctrine is not a practise that produces human subjects, as such, but a practise through which an institutional desire to work towards the production of a particular subject is expressed. This means that in revealing the blueprint of the soldier-subject residing within the Soldiering debates, we are
not revealing the existence of an actual human subject but an aspiration, a desire to ‘elicit, promote, facilitate, foster and attribute various capacities, qualities and statuses to particular agents’ - an aspiration to control, shape and manipulate human bodies (Dean 2010, 44). Drawing on my insights from Chapter One then, what we are interrogating here is the role that these Soldiering debates play in the operation of power and their place within broader rationalities of liberal government. We are revealing their politics.

Foucault’s first lesson in political theory is that power does not exist in abstraction, but that it plays out in the interactions between knowledge production and human bodies, both as individuals and as part of the population. This is why doctrine, a medium full of abstractions, has the propensity to obscure subjects not produce them. Nevertheless, before looking at how this abstract knowledge production comes into contact with both the human body and the population, what we can see now is how essential it is to recognise the existence of this soldier’s blueprint if we want to understand the politics running throughout Soldiering and its accompanying debates. Indeed, while I call this discourse a series of ‘debates’, it is important to point out that politically they are all narrowly underpinned by a similar commitment to seeing the professional utility of the British Army continue well into the twenty-first century. Crucially, it is by understanding the political aspirations of these debates that, later in the chapter, we will be able to notice the satisfactions and ultimate frustrations contained within them.

The Politics of War-Fighting
What our first reading of Soldiering teaches us, therefore, is that understanding the politics of the Soldiering debates means first examining the model of war-fighting we saw reflected back on us through the soldier’s blueprint in the opening paragraph detailed above. A politics that, in the first instance, demands that the possibility, and thus the continued preparation, for a particular conceptualisation of war is maintained. A conception of war that places manpower over technology, excess over restraint and exception over the norm.

During the Cold War, most of the Army’s resources were focused on deterring one threat, the Warsaw Pact. The spectre of Soviet communism and the potential for a sizeable land war in Europe provided the Army with a role that was unambiguous, tangible and easy to articulate. A situation that ‘made it easy to justify the Army’ (Inge 1994, 1). Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the part of the Army responsible for this threat, the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR), comprised 55,000 soldiers (McInnes 1993, 204). When both the
Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact disbanded in 1991, however, the object that had provided this, the largest part of the Army with its central purpose evaporated overnight. The implementation of the Options for Change programme in 1991 saw the overall size of the Armed Forces reduced by 23% but the impact on the BAOR was even greater, its manpower reduced by 60% to 23,000 troops (McInnes 1993, 204). In “real terms” the professional space of the British Army was being diminished.

Nevertheless, at the same time, the end of the Cold War also brought with it a series of opportunities. In a piece on the future of the British Armed Forces written in 1993, Philip Towle (1993, 90-91, 97) explains how ‘the stability and tension of the Cold War years are being replaced by instability and anarchy’. Far from presenting the Armed Forces with a problem, this turn of events would provide it with an opportunity to make a contribution to ‘reducing international disorder’. He describes ‘two great arcs of instability’ that will soon surround Western Europe: ‘weak governments, restless minorities and boundary disputes’ taking place in ‘former communist territories’, while in ‘the Middle East and North Africa’ there will be ‘demographic and religious problems’. Taken together, all these issues would lead to ‘coup s and to civil and inter-state wars’. Presented in these terms, the world of the early 1990s was awash with possibilities for an Army that was facing myriad cuts and questions about its future utility.

As Towle (1993, 97) goes on to argue, however, this new array of threats would require reshaping the armed forces and involve ‘a gradual evolution away from forces equipped primarily to combat the Warsaw Pact towards lighter and more mobiles ones’. What this meant was that disappearing alongside this significant reduction in BAOR troop numbers was the form of warfare these troops had been preparing for: a “conventional” war in mainland Europe that would require the maximum use of available force and during which the very survival of the British state would be threatened. With the ending of the Cold War the prospect of such a war taking place was now unforeseeable, and the Army’s role “reduced” to a series of tasks collectively known as “military operations other than war” (MOOTW): peacekeeping operations and humanitarian interventions. Not only was the Army in “real terms” under threat, therefore, but so too was the idea of war that had been sustaining it. Peter Inge (1994, 1), while Chief of the Defence Staff (Head of the UK Armed Forces) in 1994, explained why for the British military profession keeping this idea of “conventional” war-fighting alive was so important:
If we lose that war fighting capability, I believe the British Army will be on the road to becoming a sort of gendarmerie which can provide a battalion here and a battalion there but frankly has lost its ability to go to war.

Philip Sabin (1993, 281) expands on this point:

If Britain tailors its force structure towards the requirements of peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention and ‘air policing’ … it may face severe embarrassment and ignominious withdrawal if these approaches fail and heavier forces are required to achieve the mission.

Moreover, as the 1990s progressed so too did the fear that warfare in its most extreme form would ever be fought again. Michael Rose (2000, vi-viii, my emphasis) the British commander of the United Nations Protection Force in Bosnia, one of the principal architects of Soldiering, in his contribution to the debates, bemoans NATO’s ‘reluctance to … deploy ground troops in Kosovo in March 1999’. This reluctance, according to Rose, was born of the fact ‘that the alliance lacked sufficient troops capable of fighting in a way that would ensure victory against the Serb’. He goes on to describe how ‘such battles can only be won by hard, aggressive soldiers capable of prolonged fighting with the rifle, bayonet and machine gun’. This event took place less than a year before the publication of Soldiering, compounding a sense that “full-scale” warfare was a thing of the past.

What we see throughout this period then is an attempt to stay in touch with a notion of “conventional” or “full-scale” warfare alongside an ambition to embrace a new set of opportunities that the Army was being presented with. It is a situation that contains within it a central tension. A bizarre paradox in which attempts to keep alive a form of warfare that was never realised comes up against a whole host of “real” wars that, because they are not deemed “proper” wars, threaten the British Army’s fundamental organising principle. Put another way, going into the 1990s, the Army’s theory of war did not fit its empirical reality but it was a theory that many within its senior ranks felt, if it was going to protect its professional space, it needed to remain in touch with.

It was against this backdrop that the British Army underwent a period of professionalism during the 1990s, during which there was an attempt to write war back in through the writing of military doctrine. Soldiering: The Military Covert was published at the end of a
decade during which the British Army is said to have discovered its ‘brain’ (Alderson 2010; Ingham 2014, 43). Before the end of the Cold War, the conduct of military activity had, for many in the British Army, been considered ‘a subliminal activity’ (Mileham 2001a, 61). Intellectualism being dismissed in favour of muddling through or else confined to esoteric ‘ginger’ groups. During the 1990s, however, it developed military doctrine at an accelerated rate, finding its institutional and intellectual voice. In an interview with Ingham (2014, 45), Sebastian Roberts, the author of Soldiering, explained that the Army at the time needed to write doctrine so that it could ‘justify its existence and explain what they did: both to themselves and to outsiders from the public, the press, to our allies’. At the same time, the Army began increasingly to participate in external intellectual debate, opening up a discursive space beyond its walls. A series of conferences and workshops, held throughout the 1990s, saw senior generals and soldier-scholars rub shoulders with politicians, defence analysts, think tanks, and academics as they discussed the future direction of the British military profession while contributing towards the ‘underlying conceptual debate within which doctrinalists think, work, debate and write’ (Maeder 2004, 31). It is from within this milieu that the Soldiering debates emerge and set forth an image of the professional war-fighting soldier.

The War-Fighting Soldier

A key conceptual tool used by these doctrinalists and military thinkers was the notion of a “spectrum of conflict”. In a British context, the idea that there was a “spectrum of conflict” was first laid down in a piece of Army doctrine, entitled Design of Military Operation, published during the final years of the Cold War. ‘The spectrum of conflict’, it explains, ranges from ‘General War’, which it defines as ‘unrestricted conflict fought between power blocs’ down to ‘Low Intensity Conflict’ described as a conflict that ‘embraces forms of violence, often loosely controlled’ (The British Army 1989, 21-28). Put simply, the ‘spectrum of conflict’ is a sliding scale of conflict types with “conventional” war at its most intense extremity. Michael Willcocks (1994, 8) explains this “spectrum of conflict” in more detail:

Conflict at its simplest [is] a situation that exists in the relations between groups, classes or states in which violence is either manifested or threatened. War may then be considered at its most extreme, but far from exclusive, form.
Senior members of the British Army, such as Charles Guthrie (1996, 8), argued that what was required was an army that could provide ‘capability across the spectrum of conflict’. In fact, the term ‘capability based army’ was used frequently to justify the British Army’s professional role in the post-Cold War-era. The uncertainty and complexity of this new security environment, so the argument went, demanded an army that possessed the capability to deal with conflict at any point on the spectrum of conflict:

We are not very sure what [the threat] is or where it is coming from! … it means that the Capability Based Army has to face an array of challenges and one thing that comes out of recent experience is that the unexpected is bound to happen (Inge 1994, 1).

Even if the destiny of the British Army would be perpetual involvement in low intensity conflict, training for high intensity conflict continued to be foregrounded as the best way to prepare for it. Roberts (2000, 193-194, his emphasis) explains that ‘by preparing for war, other operations are made easier’ because ‘it is relatively easier to change gear from training and preparing for warfare to peace-support operations than the other way round’. Writing war back in through the spectrum of conflict, therefore, went some way towards resolving the tension between “conventional” war and MOOTW. It enabled the Army to keep alive the idea of war that had thus far sustained it, while allowing it to take up all the opportunities that were presented to it and also minimising the risk of any further infringement into its professional space.

We have now come full circle and are brought back into contact with the figure of the war-fighting soldier we first encountered in the opening lines of Soldiering. This was an outline that did not comprise a human subject, I argue, but a reflection, a blueprint, of the British Army’s central function, ‘success in war and other operations’ – a direct reference to the spectrum of conflict. The soldier’s blueprint that runs through these debates, therefore, is one that is able to achieve success across the spectrum of conflict. It is a soldier that has both the ability and the motivation to apply and experience violence in its most extreme form, who ‘must be prepared personally to make the decision to engage an enemy or to place themselves in harm’s way’ (The British Army 2000, 1-1). In this first instance, therefore, the professional soldier that appears in these Soldiering debates in a ‘pure’ form: as a fighter, a warrior, as someone who may kill or be killed. ‘Fighting is the soldier’s trade’, maintains Patrick Mileham (1998, 176), one of the
principle architects and commentators during the development of Soldiering. It is how this blueprint of the war-fighting soldier comes into contact with the human body and the population – in other words, the disciplinary and biopolitics of Soldiering – that I will explore in the remainder of the chapter.

**The Human Dimension**

The activity of warfighting ultimately depends upon the co-option and mobilisation of human bodies: as the moral component tells us, ‘the ability to get people to fight’ (The British Army 1989, 32-35). John Hockey explains how ‘the prime objective of the military organization is to engage in conflict and the resources it deploys are essentially human’ (Hockey 2003, 15). Indeed, present within Soldiering is not just the blueprint of a perfect soldier but also the body of the human being. ‘Man is still the first weapon of war’, it makes clear at one point (The British Army 2000, 3-2). This means that within the Soldiering debates the image of the perfect warfighter’s blueprint is abruptly shattered as it encounters the imperfections of the human body. In this section, I examine how in the Soldiering debates this blueprint encounters corporeal imperfections. More specifically, how when the war-fighting soldier is etched back on to the human body, and this blueprint confronts human shortcomings, we see tensions start to emerge as the Army is presented with a collection of unfit bodies that it must turn into war-fighters. Nevertheless, these are tensions that, while undermining the aspiration for the perfect soldier, are comfortably contained by the disciplinary mechanisms of the military institution.

As part of the Soldiering debates, it is in a paper delivered by Alan Hawley that this human dimension is addressed most directly. At the time of writing, Hawley had been the Chief of Staff for the Medical Directorate before becoming, in 2006, the Director General of the Army Medical Services. In Hawley’s paper, *People not Personnel*, it is not the idealised soldier that takes centre stage, but the human body. For Hawley, the body is the raw material of the Army’s fighting power: ‘each individual’s mixture of personal physical strengths and weaknesses, psychological characteristics and philosophical beliefs collectively form the building blocks of military success or failure’ (Hawley 2000, 213). Hawley analyses the body on two levels: both as a biological entity and as a social being that exists among a wider population. I talk about the population in the next section, but through this first lens as biological entity, we experience in Hawley’s paper an encounter between the ideal requirements of the soldier and physical human imperfections. Within
the Army, he explains, ‘there is a clear requirement for the traditional role of closing with the enemy and destroying him in the most personal and demanding manner’ (Hawley 2000, 216). Nevertheless, this extreme requirement comes into conflict with a series of inadequate human bodies, including five-year-olds that ‘have the beginnings of atheroma in their arteries’ as well as ‘the increasing proportion of individuals who are overweight’ (Hawley 2000, 214). For Hawley (2000, 214), this collection of bodies ‘feeds the perception that many of the young spend too much time in front of televisions or video screens and too little time on the sports field’. The aspiration to produce soldiers that can achieve success across the spectrum of conflict comes face to face, as Hawley’s contribution attests, with a series of deficient bodies.

Nevertheless, despite this glaring disconnect between an unfit society and the need for trained killers, Hawley cautions us against overreaction. ‘It is almost a truism to hear that modern youth are not the physical equals of their forefathers’ he explains, before reassuring us that ‘the physical aspect of an individual’s capacity for a military life is unlikely to have changed substantially over the years’ (Hawley 2000, 214). It is not Hawley’s faith in the health of the British population that ultimately reassures us, but his faith in the ability of Army discipline: to turn this collection of disparate bodies into soldiers. As he explains, ‘fundamentally, defects and shortcomings in physical fitness can be remedied by progressive and appropriate training provided that health is good enough’ (Hawley 2000, 216). In other words, irrespective of the disconnect between the perfect blueprint and the imperfections of the human body the disciplinary mechanisms at play within the institution of the British Army are more than capable of moulding the human bodies it is presented with into the soldiers that possess the physical attributes it needs. The differences between perfection and human complexity are, in other words, comfortably managed.

When discussing the complexities of the human body, Hawley writes from a place of confidence. This is because running through his text is the language of the disciplinary institution. As I explained in my opening chapter, disciplinary power is a modality of power that acts directly upon the human body. Moreover, disciplinary power is a form of power that primarily works through institutions such as armies but also prisons and schools, to mould, shape and direct the behaviour of human beings. It is a form of power that operates through enforced routine, training drills and the submission to conformity. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault introduces the notion of docility in order to explain how
subjects, such as the soldier, come to be produced. Docility involves both reducing the
capacity of the body, so that it conforms, and increasing it, in order to make it more useful
(Foucault 1991, 138). Doctrine with its drive towards perfectibility acts, in effect, as a
disciplinary blueprint through which the new recruit, as raw material, is made docile and
then moulded into the soldier. Put differently, *Soldiering* as a piece of doctrine forms part
of a broader set of disciplinary power relations that contribute towards the “real”
subjectification of the war-fighting soldier. Producing this war-fighting soldier requires
more than abstract doctrine, therefore: it requires achieving a level of docility through
training, rules, dress codes and expectations of behaviour, practises that are primarily
elicited through techniques of surveillance.

John Hockey (1986, 12) in *Squaddies*, his ethnographic account of the training of privates
in the British Army, explains how formally, within the Army, ‘control through a
hierarchical chain of command is maintained by the operation of a code of discipline,
which permits superiors, if only as a last resort, to enforce obedience by imposing
e coercive sanctions upon subordinates’. Nevertheless, discipline is not just achieved
through direct orders, in addition ‘through initial organisational socialisation and life in a
tightly knit community, a particular self-image is internalised by privates’ (Hockey 1986,
142). In other words, human bodies are turned into soldiers not just through official
surveillance, but also through surveillance of peers and the self. Furthermore, Hockey’s
detailed account presents a more complicated picture than the one portrayed in Hawley’s
confident depiction of Army discipline. Hockey (1986, 141) concludes his study by
describing how ‘the behaviour of privates departs from, is deviant to [and] can be
contrasted with, the expectations and dictates embodied in the official manuals’. What
this means is that the enactment of Army Discipline is ‘very much a negotiated order’
(Hockey 1986, 141). Negotiation as opposed to direct discipline, he explains, is frequently
required because of the tension between ‘that often intractable material the private
soldier, and the organisational goals’ (Hockey 1986, 141). Principally, what we see through
Hockey’s account, therefore is a depiction of the Army as an institution that is both
hierarchically and culturally saturated with the practices and methods capable of turning
human bodies into subjects that are, if not perfect war-fighters, then subjects that are
deemed to be, in a physical sense, perfectly adequate at fighting wars. While this is an
imperfect process, it is a project that, as a disciplinary institution, the Army exudes
comfort and confidence in successfully undertaking.
The Soldiering debates are a collection of discourses that, despite their external influences, remain wedded to a disciplinary institution: the British Army. In fact, with its emphasis on the production of the soldier-subject, much of the Soldiering debates are communicated through this disciplinary lens. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that within them we encounter such confidence when they are presented with the imperfections of the human body. After all, here is a discourse that enjoys a close association with an institution that, according to its own doctrine, ‘needs to recruit an untrained civilian and turn him into a soldier’ (The British Army 2010, 2-33). To be clear, what I am saying here is that the Army is an institution confident in its ability to physically train soldiers. As I show shortly, there are numerous other factors that, the Army claims, contribute to the constitution of the soldier which, certainly during this time, they were much less confident about controlling. Indeed, while this disciplinary discourse is comfortable managing the human bodies that are situated within its reach, the docile body of the soldier is not the only entity we encounter in Soldiering. Looking beyond the confines of the disciplinary institution, what we encounter is the population: an undisciplined mass of diversity, unpredictability and contingent characteristics.

**Beyond Disciplinary Limits: The Threat of the Population**

Taking another look at Hawley’s paper, this confidence is short lived. This is because, as he explains, to conceptualise the individual soldier solely as biological being, ‘is not the full answer’ (Hawley 2000, 217). In fact, it is only one component that makes up the complete warfighting subject. Although this biological lens may be ‘comforting’, he goes on to explain that it provides only a limited picture, which ‘ignores the fact that man is a social animal’ (Hawley 2000, 217). Crucially, what this means is that it is also necessary ‘to examine the whole social context as well as the physical aspect’. Put differently, as well as etching the blueprint of the warfighting soldier upon the human body, it must also be drawn against the canvas of the population. Unlike the comfort and confidence we came across when faced with the physicality of the human body, however, what we begin to see when the population becomes involved is a much more unsettled picture. Above all, we see the population emerging as a threat to the constitution of the warfighting soldier. The population is objectified as a problem for the organisation and legitimisation of British state violence, and Soldiering’s drive towards perfectibility is undermined at every turn by an unpredictable and undisciplined mass. Specifically, the population emerges in two different forms. First, through its institutions and, second, it is presented to us through its diverse demographics - what I refer to here as the population-as-mass.
Ultimately, what we encounter when observing the emergence of the population in these debates is an unresolved frustration with the population depicted as an unmanageable entity located beyond the disciplinary reach of the institution.

The Population and its Institutions

In the first instance, the population appears in the *Soldiering* debates, as an entity comprised of a collection of institutions: its political system, public bodies and legal system. Furthermore, these civilian institutions are represented as bodies that encroach on the professional space of the British Army and that have little understanding of the moral and ethical conditions needed to fight wars.

For the British Army, the event that brought the problem of the population into sharpest focus was the 1997 election of Britain’s first Labour government for eighteen years. According to Ingham (2014, 48), it was an event ‘emblematic of a Britain that was socially liberal, but correspondingly intolerant of sexism and homophobia’. Roberts reveals in an interview with Ingham that the ‘war-fight ethos was alien’ to this new Labour government. On an institutional level, Labour’s election victory led to the implementation of a number of policy changes that, from the perspective of the Army, threatened to undermine the practice of war-fighting. Notable, in this respect, was the 1998 Human Rights Act, which brought into UK law the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). In January 2000, one month before the publication of *Soldiering*, the convention ruled that banning gay people from joining the Army was illegal. As late as 1996, the Army had insisted that homosexuality posed a threat to ‘the maintenance of an operationally effective and efficient force’ (UK Parliament 1996, 217). It is a view mirrored in Stephen Deakin’s contribution to the *Soldiering* debates, where he argues that ‘it is not clear that an emphasis on individualism, sexual privacy and human rights will lead to a better or a more fully effective British Army’. With the ECHR’s ruling, however, the Army’s hand was being forced and, as Basham (2013, 46) explains, ‘the British Military had to accept that citizens whose sexuality it had deemed offensive to the heterosexual majority were now entitled to serve’. *Soldiering* states in one passage how ‘in recent years the range and scale of employment and social legislation that may be applied to the Army has changed radically’ (The British Army 2000, 2-6). It is a statement that appears to directly address the ECHR’s ruling along with the Army’s sense of disappointment.

In addition to a shifting political landscape, other civilian institutions were singled out as threats that could disrupt war-fighting’s conditions of possibility. In 1996, the
The Commission of Racial Equality (CRE) conducted a report on race relations within the Household Cavalry - a unit that consists of ‘the oldest and most senior regiments in the British Army’ and is responsible for many of the Queen’s ceremonial duties (The British Army 2016b). The report described the Household Cavalry as a ‘purely white force’. According to the Inspector of Recruiting, who spoke to the report, this was due to the fact that ‘recruiters would send ethnic minority recruits to local regiments instead of to the Household Division where they would have a hard time’. At one point in the report it mentions how ‘an ethnic minority applicant was deterred by others telling him not to go into the Guards because “they hate blacks”’ (Commission for Racial Equality 1996). Despite these damning findings, however, in the wake of the report and as part of the academic discussion that accompanies the development of Soldiering, the military historian Anthony Beevor (2000, 72) criticised the Commission as an organisation with ‘little or no knowledge of the Army’ that has an agenda to ‘impose civilian multicultural solutions, which almost by definition, means no culture of any sort, on an organisation with a very strong culture of its own’. Certainly, Beevor’s view is not reinforced unanimously within the debate. Stuart Crawford (2000, 147) notes during the same discussion how ‘there seems little doubt that there were indeed significant problems of racism and racial discrimination in the Army at the time of my work’. What Beevor’s dismissal of the CRE demonstrates, however, is how non-military institutions were routinely thought of, at the time, by those concerned with protecting the Army’s professional autonomy. We see this same portrayal of civilian institutions being put forward by Rose (2000, viii), the general who decried the lack of ‘aggressive soldiers’ capable of a land war in Kosovo. Rose (2000, viii) claimed that the Army was being threatened by ‘the importance attached in modern society to the pursuit of the individual and minority-group interests – even when the consequences of this logic are damaging to the interests of the whole’. In the Soldiering debates, therefore, we see a depiction of civilian institutions guilty of expounding a politics that threatened to compromise the constitution of the warfighting soldier.

The other institutional manifestation of the population present in the Soldiering debates is the increasing evasiveness of international law. Christopher Greenwood (1999, 7) notes how ‘recent years have seen an increased emphasis on what may be termed “front line law”, dealing with the actual conduct of combat operations’. These include, for example, laws that require that ‘the armed forces distinguish at all times between combatants and civilians’ and ‘that they refrain from attacking a military objective when it is likely that to do so would cause collateral civilian loss and damage’ (Greenwood 1999, 7-8). Crucially,
all in all, these laws ‘have a significant impact on the way in which the military conduct operations’, as they will ‘restrict the commander’s freedom of action’ and ‘lead to greater press and public scrutiny of military operations’ (Greenwood 1999, 8, 11). In a separate contribution, Alastair Duncan recalls a series of legal challenges he faced when he was commanding a battalion in Bosnia in 1993. What Duncan (1999, 43) reveals is an environment where there was a high expectation to conform to the laws of war but where there was also ‘no clear legal framework in which … to work’. In one example, he describes being asked to monitor a convoy of ‘Muslim trucks’ and being faced with a moral dilemma: ‘could I intervene if Muslims in the convoy were being killed? It seemed to be morally right that I should, but where was my legal backing?’ (Duncan 1999, 45). Faced with these legal issues, these contributors are not dismissive, like those addressing the more overtly political issues above, but what we do start to see is a sense of frustration and even, at times, bewilderment with the complexity of the situation. As I will demonstrate, this is a sense of frustration that is encountered throughout these debates.

The Population-as-mass

The population, in these debates, is also present in a more fluid form than in the institutional representations outlined above. In this form it appears as a mass of co-existing human bodies, all in possession of different values, constitutions and attributes. This is what Foucault (2007, 145) refers to as the ‘mass of the population, with its volume, its density’ and it is what I refer to here as the population-as-mass. As I explained in chapter one, it is the population-as-mass that provides biopolitics with its conditions of possibility. What we are beginning to see through the development of the moral component, therefore, is a shift from a static ‘institutional’ depiction of the population, and its relationship with war-fighting, towards a more pronounced objectification of the population-as-mass that will make it a site ripe for biopolitical intervention. Indeed, it is the demographics of the population, not its institutions, that are depicted in these debates as the greatest threat to the practice of war-fighting.

While institutional depictions suggest the possibility of some interaction and dialogue that might lead to compromise, this becomes increasingly difficult when these institutions are understood as manifestations of the population-as-mass. Indeed, the interventions of the ECHR on homosexuality and the CRE on race are not just seen as the one-off decisions of elitist institutions but representations of shifting societal attitudes. For instance, Beevor (2000, 73), after dismissing the CRE report, explains how, ‘the British Army …
increasingly runs the danger of being bogged down by attitudes which are utterly inimical to conventional military values'. In this respect, the most threatening characteristic on display within the population-as-mass is its individualism. Indeed, a theme that recurs throughout these debates is one of a relentless confrontation between the individualism of the wider population and the collective ethos of the military. Charles Moskos (1977, 2) describes the military ‘calling’ as ‘a purpose transcending individual self-interest in favour of a presumed higher good’. Likewise, the authors of Soldiering also feared that the appeal of the military ‘calling’ was becoming increasingly anachronistic in Western societies. Soldiering states how ‘soldiers differ from civilian employees because success in military operations, when the price of failure may be death, requires the subordination of the rights of the individual to the needs of the task and the team’ (The British Army 2000, 2-6). Moreover, explaining how ‘the rise of the importance of the individual in society, and the associated stress on the rights rather than responsibilities of the individual has profound implications for the Army’ (The British Army 2000, 2-7). The growth of individualism is presented as a threat to the constitution of the warfighting soldier.

To see how this image of a threatening individualism is produced, Stephen Deakin’s contribution on the issue of homosexuality in the Army provides a good example. For Deakin (2000, 122), what he calls ‘the current homosexual viewpoint in this debate’ is a position that is underpinned by individualism. To show this he begins by outlining the campaign group Stonewall’s case for the inclusion of gay people in the military – a case that, he explains is premised on ‘the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination against homosexuals’, a viewpoint that he places among the broader belief ‘that people should be treated equally and have equal rights’ a belief that is ‘so much a part of contemporary thinking it seems simply a self-evident, unassailable, argument’ (Deakin 2000, 122). Crucially, for Deakin (2000, 123) this is a perspective that ‘emphasises the individual rather than the community’. In this situation, ‘the individual is isolated and the state provides a neutral framework of equal rights, but it is increasingly unable to make traditional moral judgements about right or wrong, and thereby able to discriminate to achieve such a public good’ (Deakin 2000, 123). Applying this to the Army’s sense of community, he implies that this supposed ‘moral neutrality’ would undermine the Army’s ethos of ‘self-sacrifice, courage and unlimited liability to give of one’s life for the greater good of the community’ (Deakin 2000, 123). Deakin’s argument is problematic on a number of levels. On one level, it is an argument that seems to imply that a society wherein people are free to choose the gender of their sexual partners is a society devoid
of morals – it is ‘moral neutral’. While, on another, it reads like an apology for discrimination and prejudice based on an arbitrary notion of the ‘common good’. What he calls a community is a necessarily exclusionary and discriminatory group that must expel those who prevent it from achieving the “moral” good.

While Deakin’s arguments do not stand up to scrutiny, what they do demonstrate is how individualism is portrayed in the Soldiering debates. Hawley notes in a similar tone that ‘this [individualistic] philosophical divergence risks gradually eroding traditional military virtues and weakening the cohesion of the warrior community’ (Hawley 2000, 218). Individualism in the Soldiering debates becomes a byword for an unrestrained population that is diverse and unpredictable. Moreover, a population-as-mass that is portrayed as ‘morally neutral’ comes to be depicted as an entity that cannot be motivated by the ‘common good’. In this respect, there is a sense of hopelessness and frustration within the debates that this unruly mass will never be managed and contained in a way that makes them more supportive of its war-fighters.

In a similar vein, Soldiering also expresses a concern that ‘the proportion of the population with personal experience of the armed forces is falling fast’ (Ministry of Defence UK (Army) 2000, 2-5). Although it does not outline explicitly how this change has led to a change in societal values, this concern is typical of a number of civil-military relations scholars, such as Hew Strachan (2003, 45-46), who argues that ‘the reopening of the civil-military “gap” is the product of the ending of conscription’. Strachan (2003, 45) notes, for example, how ‘by 2000 the legacy of conscription was waning. Even the last of those drafted was now aged over sixty, and was likely to be a grandfather’. For scholars such as Helen McCartney (2010, 422) this portrayal of British society involves ‘invoking an idealized past where relations between the military and wider society were close’. The extent to which the army fears were accurate is, for these purposes at least, of little relevance. What is important is capturing the particular objectification of the population that emerges through the Soldiering debates because through them we see the formation of a particular domain of knowledge that, as I explain in later chapters, increasingly comes to inform broader governmental practices.

The attitudes of the population-as-mass are also seen as a crucial factor in the legal complexity that soldiers were facing. More than the invasiveness of international law within the debates, it is changing societal attitudes to warfighting that are seen as impinging most significantly upon the soldier’s actions on the battlefield. In a
contribution to the Soldiering debates entitled Handcuffing the Military, Michael Ignatieff (Ignatieff 2001, 25) notes how ‘the restraints on the use of military power are getting tougher, getting tighter’. This is because he argues ‘the political consensus behind the use of military force is shallow’ (Ignatieff 2001, 25-26). To make this point, he draws the distinction between when military force is used ‘where national survival is at stake’ and when it is used for ‘the attainment of humanitarian objectives or the defence of human rights’ (Ignatieff 2001, 26). In the former case, ‘the military can count on the democratic support of the populace to an extreme level’, whereas it is ‘shallow’ in the latter, humanitarian, case (Ignatieff 2001, 26). He goes on to argue that while the language of humanitarianism sounds ‘fantastically mobilizing’, it in fact ‘mobilizes very little at all’ (Ignatieff 2001, 26). This means that the popular support behind ‘taking severe military risks’ is limited (Ignatieff 2001, 26).

From this perspective, the population is represented as an entity required to provide the soldier with moral authority. Disciplinary mechanisms can only go so far in teaching a soldier tactics and how to use a weapon. There is another layer and that is the moral authority that comes from the population. A soldier can be trained to kill but without a moral purpose behind their actions it becomes an illegal or misunderstood act that can become impossible to live with. Soldiers need to know when they pull the trigger that there is support for their actions. Marcus Maeder (2004, 309) provides some examples of what this complex moral environment might lead to:

In such an environment, no matter how overwhelming the technology, minor frictions – the inevitable casualties of combat, the one missile gone astray into a residential area, the one soldier mistakenly killing civilians at a checkpoint or the one unfortunate incident of friendly fire – can have a disproportionate impact on the course of action by shaping domestic and international public opinion and influencing political reactions.

Once again, when presented with the population-at-mass, this time as an unreliable source of moral authority, we encounter an unresolvable frustration. Particularly enlightening in this regard is a piece by Mileham (2001a) in which we can sense an almost palpable frustration. Like much of the discourse in the Soldiering debates Mileham’s text is couched in the language of discipline and the population is portrayed as an entity located beyond
the reach of any form of social control or management. However, it is biopolitics not disciplinary power that is capable of managing the population-as-mass. This means that the disciplinary language of the Soldiering debates produces the body of the soldier vis-à-vis the population but not the other way around. In simple terms, the discourse of the Soldiering debates contains within it a whole host of suggestions and maxims for how soldiers should conduct themselves and behave in relation to the population but there is little mention of how the population should be managed in order to better provide the ethical and moral conditions deemed necessary for effective war-fighting. To be sure, a desire for a more amenable population is regularly put forward. Roberts (2000, 200), for example states that ‘true ethical military effectiveness is achieved only by constant vigilance, analysis and diligence throughout the wider community’ - it is just that the means through which this “better population” can be brought about eludes the authors of these texts. We see this same discourse persisting into the early part of the twenty-first century. Max Hastings (2005, 32), for example, dismisses the idea that the population can in anyway be called upon to nullify itself as a threat – ‘it would be foolish to suppose that the civilian community will seek to rectify it’.

Mileham’s (2001a, 63) frustrations are evident in the disciplinary language he uses to describe what he calls the ‘civilized soldier’. This is a soldier, he explains, who has to ‘cope with an endless number of moral variables, internal contradictions and paradoxes’ (Mileham 2001a, 61). Consequently, in a conflict situation soldiers may be confronted at any moment with this moral uncertainty and be required to make an instant decision that ‘may not allow sufficient time to apply any depth of intellectual and moral reasoning’ (Mileham 2001a, 62). Despite the near impossibility of this situation, Mileham persists in trying to outline the conditions that might provide the ‘civilised soldier’ with the ability to deal with such a situation. What is required, he argues, is ‘intuition’, which he describes as an ‘instantaneous faculty including cognitive inference, as distinct from reactive instinct’ (Mileham 2001a, 62). Crucially, this ‘is a human capability that arguably can be educated and developed’ (Mileham 2001a, 62). In short, here is a quality that can be bestowed on the solider using disciplinary mechanisms. Nevertheless, it is at this point we start to sense the frustration contained within Mileham’s text and a limited confidence in the ability of the Army to instil ‘intuition’ into all of its soldiers. He talks, for instance, of the soldier who ‘needs all the psycho-philosophical wisdom of a superman’ and how his own term, ‘civilized soldier’, is ‘an oxymoron of considerable complexity’ (Mileham 2001a, 61, 63). We start to see Mileham’s language straining to the limits of disciplinary
reach – ‘you cannot order someone to have integrity, courage and moral imagination’ (Mileham 2001a, 63). This sense of disciplinary mechanisms being strained is also on display in a commentary by John Thomas (1999, 61) on Mileham’s work:

> We have passed through a stage where self-discipline could be imposed, in a rather Pavlovian way, onto a relatively compliant individual, and we are now at a point where, for moral issues as distinct from mere drills, a relevant, moral framework has to be constructed for the recruit.

Crucially, the source of Mileham’s frustration is the unmanageability of the population. Indeed, he employs language that brings to mind Huntington’s (1957, 465) frustration at the end of *The Soldier and The State* when he bemoans the lack of order on display in a civilian street with its ‘disconnected collection of frames coincidentally adjoining each other, lacking common unity or purpose’. To be sure he does not reference the population directly but he does allude to it in a number of ways. For example, he argues that ‘commitment, self-sacrifice and mutual trust are variables, depended on and reciprocal with other, *external variables*’, while in a much more overt reference he explains how the soldier ‘has to assume he is performing the same acts for the greater good of humanity, as part of a grander scheme of things’. The use of words such as ‘intangible’ further serves to demonstrate the frustration involved in dealing with an entity located beyond the confines of the military institutions. For example, Mileham (2000, 243) describes how ‘a feeling quickly grew at the time that a number of intangible aspects of the Army and other services were under threat’. For Mileham, this intangibility is best described as ‘that spirit which enables soldiers to fight. It relies principally on motivation, which in turn calls for high degrees of commitment, self-sacrifice and mutual trust’. Again, there is a predominance of disciplinary language, but terms such as ‘spirit’ evoke an image of the population – a key, but unsettling, constituent of the warfighting soldier.

**Conclusion**

The *Soldiering* debates are a window into a period of intense professional development for the British Army. Taking place during a time when real cuts were being made to the size of the Army we observe, during this same time, war being continually reproduced through this institutional discourse. Certainly, while much of this debate took place outside institutional walls, the resulting intellectual milieu remains wedded to a central institution, the British Army. What we encounter in the *Soldiering* debates is the professional soldier
being written as a “warfighting soldier”. This is a rendering of the professional soldier, which I argue is presented to us in three forms. First, as the blueprint of a soldier, which reflects back on us a particular model of warfighting: a model of that involves soldiers capable and prepared to kill or be killed alongside a model of war-fighting that the Army was intent on preserving in order to protect its own professional space. Second, the soldier-subject appears inscribed upon the imperfections of the human body - an interaction that produces tensions but, as I explain, these are tensions that are comfortably contained and confidently masked by the methods and practices of the disciplinary institution; the Army is an institution well use to dealing with the disparate collection of bodies that reside within its walls. And finally, and in its most revealing state, the blueprint of the soldier is drawn against the canvas of the population. While the soldier-subject can only be fully constituted by the population, its relationship with this mass of divergent uncertainty is fraught. In this final rendering, a number of themes emerge that, as this dissertation progresses, will come to inform the history of the present. First, a particular objectification of the population emerges - what I call the population-as-mass. This is the population objectified as unruly, contingent and with unpredictable characteristics. Moreover, these debates reveal a real sense of the population-as-mass as an entity that resides outside the confines of the institution - an entity that is represented as increasingly divergent from the Army’s notion of the “common good”, that is quick to judge battlefield actions but that has little understanding of the moral dilemmas the modern soldier must face.

In these debates, therefore, the language is disciplinary but the population-as-mass is an entity located beyond the reach of disciplinary logics – it is unmanageable. Unsurprisingly then the combination of disciplinary language coupled with a threat that exists beyond its purview elicits a sense of frustration that permeates throughout the Soldiering debates. An unresolvable tension between an imperative to produce the disciplined soldier and an undisciplined mass. This is a chapter, therefore, that on one level, explores the limits of disciplinary power. Indeed, what I have analysed in this chapter is a narrow strain of debate and discussion restricted by disciplinary boundaries that, as a result, has only a limited impact upon the broader rationalities of liberal government. Consequently, this is a proliferation of discourse that contains within it the desire for a particular kind of politics and social order but one that lacks the political means of securing it. In other words, it is a discursive formation that is crying out for assimilation into broader liberal biopolitical rationalities of government.
CHAPTER FOUR – HELMAND PROVINCE AND THE MILITARY COVENANT: THE BRITISH ARMY’S STRUGGLE FOR EXPERTISE

In April 2006, the British Army deployed 3,300 troops into Helmand Province in Southern Afghanistan. The initial plan was for British soldiers to work alongside civilians as part of a Province Reconstruction Team (PRT) that would enable development work to take place (BBC News 2006). But what started out amid the rhetoric of humanitarianism soon turned into a conflict characterised by ‘fighting battles of a ferocity and savagery unknown since the Korean War’ (Ledwidge 2013, 35). Before 2006, the British Armed Forces in Afghanistan had been restricted to NATO-led peacekeeping duties that involved securing Kabul and its surrounding areas (Ucko and Egnell 2013, 76). In the three years they undertook those duties, five British soldiers died and only two as a result of “enemy action” (BBC News 2015). In contrast, the year that British forces deployed into Helmand, 39 died. For each of the next six years the figure would exceed that, peaking in 2009 at 108. By October 2014, when British forces officially left their main base in Helmand, the total figure had reached 453 (BBC News 2015). The journalist James Fergusson (2008, 21) recalls encountering in Helmand a ‘hellish vision of a generation of soldiers newly bloodied, a throwback to Dunkirk, to Flanders, to Florence Nightingale and the Crimea’ (Fergusson 2008, 21). Fergusson’s hyperbole is typical of a language that litters the many published accounts of the British military’s time in Helmand. Stuart Tootal (2009), one of the first British officers to command a battalion in Helmand, writes in his account of the ‘raw courage and fighting spirit of soldier’ and the ‘vicious close-quarter fighting’ of an ‘unforgiving campaign’. After over a decade of peace support operations and a largely discredited intervention in Iraq, Helmand was being written as the “warfighters” war par excellence. It was a conflict that demanded all the professional skill of the warfighting soldier.

The year 2006 was also a watershed for UK civil-military relations. As conflict unfolded in Helmand, the United Kingdom’s civil-military landscape was changing considerably. The move into Helmand coincided with the popularisation of the so-called military covenant, which made explicit the obligations that members of the public were expected to have towards the British Armed Forces. Since 2006, new military charities, such as Help for Heroes (2007) which I examine in chapter six, and marquee events, such as Armed Forces Day (2009) which I examine at in chapter five, have given the British public unprecedented and novel opportunities to engage with the UK armed forces. Before I go
on to examine these initiatives in the next two chapters, however, it is necessary to contemplate the relationship between the violence of Helmand and these associated civil-military changes. The fact that the British Armed Forces were experiencing relatively high causality numbers was a considerable factor in mobilising support for Britain’s warfighters. But reducing an explanation of the Helmand-era to a simple correlation between casualty numbers and support fails to take into account the ways in which the broader conditions of possibility for a larger mobilisation of support took place. In this chapter, I argue that the relationship between the violence of Helmand and the civil-military initiatives that accompanied it are best analysed through the prism of military professionalism. A number of scholars have already noted the importance that notions of professionalism took on during the Helmand campaign. Anthony King (2010), in particular, argues that, for many of the soldiers and commanders, Helmand was a conflict wherein professionalism became an end in itself. In this chapter, I build on this insight and argue that what played out in Helmand were a series of “professionalisms” that all shared one central characteristic: a greater concern for military expertise than military responsibility or a conflict’s political legitimacy. Expert-professionalism realigns the problem of the population. The problem of the population is typically attended to through a symbiosis between military expertise and military responsibility. But through expressions of expert-professionalism the link between expertise and responsibility is severed. Crucially, it is through this discursive and material severing of expertise and responsibility that the figure of the biopolitical military professional appears.

In the chapter that follows, I begin by examining the ways in which this expert-professionalism was expressed during the Helmand conflict at a number of different levels and in a number of different ways. In the early years of the campaign a particular variant of expert-professionalism took hold that was embodied by many of the soldiers and commanders that took part in the conflict. What I highlight, in particular, is how the professionalism that emerged “on the ground” in Helmand became requisite on real combat for it to become validated. I then analyse how this early part of the conflict has subsequently been “written-up” into professional texts; how these texts reduce the blood, dying and pain of Helmand into abstract professional terminology.

In the final part of the chapter, I show the impact of this expert-professionalism “at home” in the United Kingdom. Military expertise depends on more than military bodies and institutional arrangements. It must harness the resources of the wider population.
Populations provide the military’s ‘struggle for expertise’ with financial and emotional support. If the politics of a mission and the politics of the people are in line, then mobilising and co-opting this support is a relatively straightforward task. But if, as was the case in Helmand, the mission is undertaken with politically ambitious goals then support must be enlisted in other ways. Consequently, I finish the chapter by examining the popularisation of the military covenant as an example of how expert-professionalism was expressed in the United Kingdom.

**DESTROYING THE ABILITY AND WILL OF THE ENEMY TO FIGHT:**

**PROFESSIONALISM AND THE “STRUGGLE FOR EXPERTISE” IN HELMAND**

‘Not surprisingly, in a profession paid to fight, most have been enjoying the campaign’

Sherard Cowper-Coles, British Ambassador to Afghanistan 2007—2009 (House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee 2011, 85)

In late 2005, the *UK Joint Plan for Helmand* was put together. Even at this early stage, almost six months before British troops deployed, some of the plan’s architects thought that the plan was already deeply flawed. Mark Etherington and Minna Javernpaa, two key figures in the planning team, when interviewed by the BBC in 2011, recalled how they tried to persuade both senior government and military figures that their three-year plan to provide “stability” in Helmand was unachievable. At one point in the interview, Etherington explains how there was a considerable gap between the objectives contained in the plan and the challenges of ‘biblical proportions’ on the ground (Ware 2011). In addition to this, there also were doubts about the clarity of the campaign’s political aims. Ed Butler (2015, 46), the commander of 16 Air Assault, the first brigade to fight in Helmand, explains how ‘campaign success was never defined in the first place’. From the outset the deployment of British troops into Helmand was mired in political ambiguity and confusion.

But despite these misgivings, the momentum behind the move into Helmand was considerable. When senior politicians and generals were told that the plan was ‘not achievable in three years’ the planners were simply told it ‘was not an acceptable conclusion’ (Ware 2011). One of the main problems was that the goal of deploying troops into Helmand had become entangled among too many other political agendas. Tony Blair’s government, for example, were keen to use Helmand as an opportunity to enhance their humanitarian credentials. Blair is said to have favoured Helmand because he ‘liked
the idea of the British visibly taking the lead on the opium problem’ (Ledwidge 2013, 20). In addition, the move into Helmand had also become linked to the issue of NATO’s future (Butler 2015, 49).

The decision to go into Helmand was also tied up with the political agenda of a British Army still reeling from its experience in Iraq. Iraq for the British Army was, from both a military and a public relations perspective, a professional embarrassment. The Iraq campaign had begun with a large-scale invasion designed to remove Saddam Hussain’s Ba’athist government. After the relative ease of the invasion, however, the US-led coalition quickly became bogged down as it fought an “insurgency”. While the initial invasion phase appeared suited to the warfighting competencies of the US military, once more (supposedly) subtle counterinsurgency tactics were required, Iraq soon became an opportunity for the British Army to demonstrate its own professional specialisms. In an article published in 2006, the counterinsurgency expert Robert Egnell (2006, 1060, 1071) contrasted a US culture predicated on ‘the maximum use of force, and the application of high technology to maximize firepower’ with a British culture of ‘political sensitivity and minimum use of force’ which he argued was more appropriate for counterinsurgency.

Senior members of the British Army also shared this favourable view of their own organisation at one point ‘condescendingly’ lecturing ‘American counterparts about operations in Northern Ireland and the innate superiority of the British approach to small wars’ (Wither 2009, 612). The hubris was short-lived. In September 2007, the British Army withdrew with its professional reputation as counterinsurgency experts in tatters. A senior figure close to the US military told a UK newspaper shortly before the withdrawal that ‘it would be okay if [Jonathan Shaw – Britain’s senior officer in Basra] was best in class, but now he’s worst in class. Everybody else’s area is getting better and his is getting worse’ (Shipman 2007). Frank Ledwidge (2012, 25), who worked in Basra and Helmand as a military consultant, provides some details of the British failings in Basra. He explains how the British Army became ‘useful idiots’ as they worked on intelligence that came from ‘commercial, tribal or gang rivalries’. He recalls one mission he took part in himself where ‘an entire battlegroup of 600 men … succeeded in arresting a group of car dealers’. As it turned out, ‘the intelligence upon which the mission was based had been supplied by a rival group of car dealers’.
The professional image of UK Armed Forces had also been significantly damaged by revelations of abuse meted out by British soldiers on Iraqi detainees. The case that drew the most public attention was the death of Baha Mousa. The hotel worker was picked up by a battlegroup from the Queen’s Lancashire Regiment as part of Operation Salerno on 14 September 2003 (Bennett 2014, 211). The next day he was dead, a post-mortem revealing he had sustained 93 injuries (Gage 2011, 1.1). Prior to his death, along with other detainees, Mousa had been subjected to nearly 48 hours of abuse. The death brought to public attention the wider extent of abuses by the British Armed Forces in Iraq. As of March 2016, the UK Ministry of Defence’s Iraq Historic Allegations Team were investigating over 1500 allegations of abuse (UK Ministry of Defence 2016). Not only was the doctrine of military intervention brought into serious question by Iraq, so too were the military effectiveness and ethics of the British Army. In short, the aftermath of Iraq was characterised by a problematisation of the biopolitical militarism that underpins the violence of the British Armed Forces. The chance of a new mission in Helmand was an opportunity to revive the image of the British Armed Forces and provide biopolitical militarism with new conditions of possibility.

The most prominent figure to suggest that Helmand was part of the Army’s own agenda was Sherard Cowper-Cowles, the former British Ambassador to Afghanistan. In written evidence to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, Cowper-Cowles claimed that ‘Afghanistan has … given [British] forces the chance to redeem themselves, in the eyes of the Americans’. Furthermore, he also argued that Afghanistan had given the British Army ‘a raison d’être it … lacked for many years, and new resources on an unprecedented scale’. Cowper-Cowles’s most controversial and often quoted claim is that the head of the Army at the time of the Helmand deployment, Richard Dannatt, had told him that ‘if he didn’t use in Afghanistan the battle groups then starting to come free from Iraq, he would lose them in a future defence review. “It’s use them, or lose them”’ (House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee 2011, 85). The claim that the army encouraged the Helmand deployment as a means of ensuring continued defence spending has been strongly denied by Dannatt (House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee 2011, 89). But another senior general, Butler (2015, 57), concurs with Cowper-Cowles’s allegation maintaining that ‘there is substance to the argument that some senior military commanders believed that unless the armed forces were committed on another campaign post-Iraq, the defence budget would be subject to further cuts’.
Whatever the initial motivations of senior officers, Helmand was for many an opportunity to revive the army’s flagging professional reputation. Frank Ledwidge (2012, 58) a former military advisor and now one of the most vociferous critics of the UK’s involvement in Helmand, admits how ‘no doubt … this was a common view held by many, including, I am ashamed to say, myself’. Indeed, Dannatt himself stated that ‘taking steps to restore this [military] credibility will be pivotal – and Afghanistan provides an opportunity’. While Lieutenant-General Jon Riley (2013, 243) wrote in the early days of the Helmand campaign that ‘if [the campaign in Helmand] is seen to succeed it could correct many of the objections generated by Iraq, and reinforce the belief that we in the West can succeed when we grip such problems’.

There is also evidence to suggest that at the very top of the Armed Forces’ hierarchy, among the so-called “Chiefs of Staff”, there was little resistance to the decision to move into Helmand. John Reid, who was UK Defence Secretary when British troops deployed in Helmand, told the Chilcot Iraq war inquiry that in 2006 he had concerns that, with over 7,000 British troops in Iraq (Rodgers 2009), the army would lack the capabilities it needed to succeed in Helmand. In his Chilcot evidence, Reid revealed a memo from the Chief of the Defence Staff, the head of the UK Armed Forces, which he had received in response to these concerns. It read: ‘[The Chief of Joint Operations] is clear that our plans for Afghanistan are deliverable, even if events slow down our Iraq disengagement’. The British Army may not have made the final decision on the Helmand deployment but their Chiefs of Staff were in a position to advise against it.

According to the principles of liberal civil-military relations, democratically elected governments make the final decision on the use of professional armed forces. This is what Huntington (1957, 83) calls ‘objective civilian control’. But the way in which the decision to go into Helmand played out reveals the considerable political influence the British Army had at the time. Ledwidge (2012, 128) argues that ‘Helmand was the army’s war in the way that Iraq, ultimately, was Blair’s’. In this instance, it appears that the need to satisfy the political demands of the army obscured, and even suppressed, concerns about the broader political context of the military action they were taking part in.

**Expert-Professionalism**

These broader institutional politics are symptomatic of a particular form of military professionalism that takes hold during the Helmand-era and manifests itself in a variety
of different ways and on a number of different levels throughout the period. Anthony King (2013, 425) in his analysis of the Helmand conflict notes how ‘professionalism may have become the latent ideology of the professional soldier’ and that subsequently it has become ‘a central unifying and motivating force in itself’. The army’s focus on restoring its professional reputation in favour of attending to the political context of its mission is an example of this. Nonetheless, what King calls “professionalism” needs to be further clarified and unpacked. Indeed, it is more accurate to say that what took hold during the Helmand-era was a specific form of “unbalanced” expert-professionalism wherein concern for ever increasing military expertise outweighed concern for military responsibility (political context). I introduce this notion of expert-professionalism in Chapter Two, What takes place in Helmand then is best described as a particularly potent manifestation of expert-professionalism.

**Expert-Professionalism in Helmand**

The British deployment in Helmand operated on a six-month rotation system. Every six-months, a new brigade, with a new commander, would take over the operation. In April 2006, the first brigade to deploy there was the 16 Air Assault Brigade led by Ed Butler. According to the UK’s plan, the brigade would adopt an “ink spot” strategy. A secure zone would be established between the towns of Lashkar Gash and Gereshk and Camp Bastion, the main British base in Helmand (Fergusson 2008, 22). This small area would be militarily secured so that civilian agencies could develop the area. Once this had been achieved, the plan dictated that the “ink spot” would spread as military forces and civilian agencies applied the same formula over an ever-increasing area. But within weeks the British Army had ‘departed from the script’ and the plan was derailed (Fergusson 2008, 147). The governor of Helmand, Mohammad Dauod, a close ally of President Karzai, wanted British troops to take a more active role by securing towns, such as Sagin and Now Zad, about 50 miles north of the initial “ink spot”. After considerable pressure, Butler decided to go along with Dauod’s suggestion.

The decision was a pivotal moment in the campaign. In effect, it tore up the *UK Joint Plan for Helmand* and accelerated Helmand’s transition from a humanitarian mission into a bloody conflict that cost thousands of human lives (Ledwidge 2013, 97). Materially unprepared for the escalation in hostilities, British soldiers found themselves “overstretched” and fighting intense battles in isolated “platoon houses”. Infantry troops
that were struggling to gain decisive victories, would turn to air support to compensate for their deficiencies. ‘On regular occasions’, Ledwidge (2012, 78) explains, ‘there would be shoot-outs with Taliban that would, because the soldiers were outnumbered, almost inevitably result in air or artillery support being called in, with attendant civilian casualties’. In 2006, ‘the Royal Air Force alone dropped seventy-one 500lb bombs and launched 1,400 rockets’ (Fergusson 2008, 75). Critically, the way in which this deadly trajectory played out now informs a debate about military professionalism and the British Army.

After the move north and the abandonment of the “ink spot” strategy, the direction of the Helmand mission, already mired in political and strategic ambiguity, was now even less clear. This created a situation where “civilian” political ambitions became almost completely severed from the actions of the armed forces. Ledwidge explains how, in relation to his own experience of the conflict, ‘far from the “comprehensive approach” of full cooperation between civilians and military … this was a campaign unequivocally led and conducted by soldiers’ (Ledwidge 2012, 2). The British Army found themselves in Helmand with very little external advice on how to proceed. This meant that the actions of soldiers were being increasingly informed by a commander’s or a soldier’s own interpretation of the situations they found themselves in.

King (2010, 328) argues that to help them navigate the ambiguity of the situation, soldiers came to increasingly rely upon their own understandings of what it meant to be a military professional. Specifically, King argues that there was something unique about British military professionalism that contributed to the Helmand conflict taking on the characteristics that it did. The armed forces of other nations, he explains, ‘have adopted more cautious approaches’ and so ‘there must be another factor, quite independent of the objective operational realities in theatre, that has given the Helmand campaign the pattern it has taken on’ (King 2010, 322). This leads him to deduce that ‘the professional self-definitions of the British armed forces in general and the officer corps in particular have provided the primary framework within which the campaign has been prosecuted’ (King 2010, 328). Theo Farrell (2010, 573), another scholar who has analysed the Helmand conflict through the prism of professionalism, argues that amid these political complexities each brigade deployed into Helmand invariably turned to their ‘own core competences in combined arms warfare’ to help then navigate their time in Helmand.
Hence, in Helmand severed from political context, ‘professional self-definitions’ were driven by a ‘struggle for expertise’.

The recent intellectual underpinnings of the British Army are dominated by the principles of manoeuvre warfare. Manoeuvre warfare dictates that the primary aim of any armed conflict is to destroy the will and the ability of the enemy to fight. This means that being an “expert” in the context in the modern British Army means attaining the skills and competence needed to achieve this aim. Of course not all soldiers are required ‘to close with the enemy’ (The British Army 2008, 5) only about one in three soldiers are ‘primary combatants’ (Mileham 2001b, 622) but as Basham (2013, 3) explains ‘violence is the very condition for military service; whether located at the “tooth” end in a combat corp or at the “tail” end fixing tanks, frigates or planes, it is the possibility, application and control of violence that makes the combat solider and military mechanic alike a necessity’. During the Helmand campaign, this ‘struggle for expertise’ is expressed through a number of different “professionalisms”.

**Expert-Professionalism and Training to Kill**

16 Air Assault Brigade, the first brigade to deploy in Helmand as part of operation Herrick 4, are a battle group that are organised around the 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment (3 PARA) (The British Army 2015a). Fergusson (2008, 18) describes how ‘the Paras are the attack dogs of the British Army. They are tougher and more rigorously trained by far than the average squaddie, and they join up in the frank anticipation of a fight’. The Parachute Regiment, or the “Paras” as they are colloquially known, are an infantry regiment. At the “tooth” end of the army, the central function of infantry regiments is to directly close with the enemy and kill them. As John Hockey (2003, 15) explains, ‘although other combat arms (armor, and artillery) kill the enemy at long distance, it is the infantry alone than normally destroys the enemy at a much closer range’. Perhaps unsurprisingly then infantry soldiers were six times more likely to die in Afghanistan than other members of the army (Gee and Goodman 2013). The recruitment section of the British Army (2014) website explains this in more attractive terms: ‘an infantry career places you at the heart of the action’, it claims. Furthermore, being an infantry soldier means learning a range of new skills. The recruitment material goes on to explain how ‘you’ll start your career by training to be a rifleman – skilled in modern combat and a dedicated field soldier’, and that ‘you could become anything from a machine gunner, mortarman or anti-tank missile operator
to a driver, combat signaller or sniper’. The first stage towards achieving these skills is training.

The British Army trains all its infantrymen49 at their Infantry Training Centre in Catterick, North Yorkshire. In an army video promoting the 26-week-long training course, infantry training is presented as much tougher than the training given to other, non-infantry, recruits. In the video, one soldier tells the camera how ‘it’s important to train hard because obviously an infantry person’s role is a lot different to other regiments’ while another explains how ‘you have to have that mental strength about you – to think to yourself that you’re going to go and you’re are going to engage with the enemy’ (The British Army 2016d). Ben Griffin (2015), a former member of the parachute regime, and now a member of the anti-war movement Veterans for Peace, describes the ways in which his training as an infantryman changed him. He argues that one of the most important aspects of his training was the ‘removal of the barrier to kill’. After the completion of the training process, Griffin was one of only eight qualified paratroopers out of 35 recruits who started the course. He recalls how after training was complete ‘if you had asked the eight … “why are you in the army?” you would have got one answer: “to go to war and kill the enemy”, that is all we were interested in’. He ends by outlining what can only be described as the extreme variant of expert-professionalism that preoccupied his thoughts at the time:

It wouldn’t have mattered if they said you we were invading France tomorrow … to go to war and kill the enemy was … the highest achievement a human could achieve. It was like going to the World Cup and scoring a hat-trick.

As I explain in Chapter Two, when the military profession attends to its expertise it objectifies the population as resource. In this instance, bodies from the wider population are turned into expert shooters, combatants, snipers and missile operators who all contribute to the army’s combined expertise in destroying the enemy’s ability and will to fight. In the case of the infantry, these bodies usually come from distinct sections of the population. Recruits from poor backgrounds who often have no qualifications are the primary “natural” resource of the infantry’s expertise (Gee and Goodman 2013). Imogen Taylor (2013, 9) writes about the rise of social abjection in the United Kingdom. She

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49 They are all men – women are currently not permitted to join infantry regiments.
argues that accompanying this has been the production of stigmatised ‘abject figures’, including ‘a generation of young people disenfranchised by neoliberal economic and social politics’. She explains how since New Labour ‘the punitive policies deployed to manage these failed citizens were based on limiting financial or material aid in order to make citizens take responsibility for their own welfare (and get a job)’ (Taylor 2013, 161). The military, with a career path that starts at 16 and that, especially for infantry positions, requires ‘no formal qualifications’ (The British Army 2014), provides one of the few exit routes from this poverty and social stigmatisation. This relationship between economic deprivation and military service is of course nothing new. Toby Harnden (2011, 6) in his account of the Welsh Guard’s time in Helmand notes how:

Wales has often lagged behind the rest of Britain economically, and so many Welshmen have joined the Welsh Guards to escape unemployment or dead-end jobs. A desire to avoid working “down the pit” used to be a common reason for joining up. The horrors of war were one thing, but some felt they had experienced worse underground in Wales.

The military can provide financial security and relatively stable career prospects, but one form of precarious life is often swapped for another. Liberal war does not just make precarious maladjusted life “elsewhere”, therefore, but harnesses bodies that threaten the overall betterment of the population “at home”, in this case for the betterment of military expertise and liberalism’s necessary killing.

*Professionalism Validated by Combat*

In Helmand, being “professional” required more than being a trained soldier. The same army recruitment video ends with a newly trained infantryman expressing his hopes for the future: ‘operations is what every infantry soldier is aiming towards … we are all striving towards that one goal and hopefully we all get there – one day’ (The British Army 2016d). Ledwidge (2012, 180) explains how ‘young men join the army for action and, as in any other contentious profession, generally speaking they feel a great desire to test themselves against opponents’. This desire to test professional training in a real conflict situation was a key characteristic of the Helmand campaign. In a mission that lacked adequate political direction Helmand was an opportunity to put professional training to the test. For the Parachute Regime this need to validate their professional credentials in a real combat situation was particularly acute. King (2010, 326) explains how in April 2006,
‘3 PARA were primed to demonstrate their martial powers in Helmand’. It is a claim that is supported by Stuart Tootal, the commanding officer of 3 PARA, in his own account of his time in Helmand. At one point in his memoir, Tootal (2009, 21-22) describes the mood of his soldiers before being deployed into Helmand: ‘all they wanted to do was go on operations and be tested in combat; like all Paras it was what they had joined the Parachute Regiment to do’. Nevertheless, his soldiers were concerned that ‘the impeding deployment to Afghanistan would turn out to be a disappointment’. Iraq for 3 PARA had been a ‘damp squib’ where they ‘saw relative little of the action and felt that their combat talents had been wasted’. Their fears were misplaced.

In Sangin, on 30 June 2016, members of 3 PARA engaged in their first of many firefights with the enemy. In Patrick Bishop’s (2008, 119) retelling of the fight what comes through is how 3 PARA’s superior expertise won out over the enemy’s ‘schoolboy tactics’. He quotes one soldier, Tam McDermott who boasts: ‘I don’t think they knew who the British or the Parachute Regiment were … if they’d looked at history they’d have known that all the troops were up for a fight – itching to do something’. Of course, being “up for a fight” and being an expert-professional are not necessarily the same thing but for the Parachute Regiment the two overlap and become conflated. The moral component of fighting power demands a professional soldier that is both able and willing to fight. While put in much cruder and bellicose terms by these members of 3 PARA, their declarations are still affirmations of the same professional commitment.

As Tootal and his soldier’s comments suggest, professional self-identifications played a central role in dictating the course of the Helmand conflict. Indeed, a number of scholars have argued it was how the 3 PARA expressed their professionalism that contributed to the escalation of violence in Helmand. Ledwidge (2012, 72) argues it is too simplistic to claim that soldiers were “looking for a fight” but he does acknowledge that the 3 PARA’s presence in Helmand did little to calm the situation: ‘[16 Air Assault Brigade] are the shock troops of the army, and of all British military units surely the last soldiers to be placed in an environment that required subtle and measured activity’. King (2010, 326) puts this in stronger terms, insisting that ‘the Herrick 4 campaign was an expression of airborne ethos, rather than a judicious response to the complex political circumstances which confronted 3 PARA’. While former Defence Secretary Reid explains in simpler and more general terms how: ‘the Armed Forces, understandably, wanted to take on tasks
commensurate with their abilities’ (House of Commons Defence Committee 2011). Tootal in his memoirs tries to defend the violent direction the campaign took but still does so with a clear sense of what he feels his profession demands of him:

I reminded myself of the military maxim that no plan survives first contact on the ground … It is what the military does, not least as the battlefield is an inherently chaotic place where nothing goes to plan and everything is down to chance. Success became dependent on making some order out of that chaos … it wasn’t easy, but then combat never is.

So Tootal acknowledges the lack of direction the campaign had and then uses this to justify the ensuing violence as ‘what the military does’. The Helmand campaign was being dictated by an overt variant of expert-professionalism that was placing the validation of expertise over Helmand’s complex politics.

In Helmand, manifestations of expert-professionalism were not just restricted to the Parachute Regiment. In April 2007, the third brigade to deploy into Helmand were 12th Mechanized Brigade (12 Brigade). Farrell (2010, 578) explains how under 12 Brigade ‘there was a further escalation in fighting’. Unlike the Parachute Regiment centred Air Assault Brigade, this was a brigade whose core competency was mechanised warfare. Farrell describes how 12 Brigade ‘sought to secure the ground between Lashkar Gah, Gereshk, and Sangin through a series of major “clearance operations” … these involved pitched battles which the Taliban lost with an ever-rising body count’. The commander of 12 Brigade, John Lorimer, referred to these operations as ‘mowing the lawn’ (Grey 2009, 61). While given an outlet for the brigade’s professional expertise these operations did little to advance the mission’s overarching strategic or political aims (Farrell 2010, 578).

Also part of 12 Brigade were two snipers, Lance Corporals Oliver Ruecker and Dean Bailey. Richard Kemp and Chris Hughes (2009) describe them as ‘not blood thirsty men’ but ‘they had been itching for their first kill’. Crucially, it was their desire to be experts not killers that motivated them:
Although their trade was grim, they were like any other highly skilled professional, keen to see whether skills they had trained in did actually work, and whether they could indeed kill a fast-moving man at long range in the tough conditions of battle in Afghanistan with a single shot. A very different situation to any practice firing ranging … something that couldn’t be replicated in training – a skilful and ruthless enemy was trying to kill them (Kemp and Hughes 2009).

In these conditions, ‘body counts would feature regularly as a measure of success’ (Ledwidge 2013, 36). In other words, one of the principle metrics for measuring professional success was counting the bodies of dead enemy soldiers. The number of “enemy” killed never formed part of any “official” target but how commanders and soldiers enacted their professionalism amounted to something very similar. Tootal’s memoir is littered with reference to the number of enemies his soldiers had killed. He recalls how in the aftermath of one battle:

Our assessment that we had killed about twenty of them during Mutay was confirmed when we received a report that twenty-one Taliban fighters had been buried in a cemetery in the Sangin Valley the next day.

Colonel Richard Kemp speaking to the defence select committee, suggested that it was because the British public did not know the body count “score” that support for the Helmand mission was so low. He obscures and distances his comments from the violence of Helmand by adopting a sporting metaphor to help him make his point:

I like to equate it to a football game. Britain play Germany at football and the Germans score three goals. The Britons then go shopping in Hamburg after the match and boost the local German economy, but they don’t mention how many goals we scored, so they don’t know the true score; they only know that we had a lot of goals scored against us. That is what is happening in Afghanistan (House of Commons Defence Committee 2011).

The term “Taliban” was the catch-all term British soldiers used to refer to their enemy and, as such, the number of “Taliban” killed became a useful metric against which to measure one’s professional expertise. However, many of those being killed by the British
Army were not “Taliban” at all. Ledwidge (2012, 26) describes how British soldiers often became ‘useful idiots in commercial, tribal or gang rivalries’ by just targeting whoever they were told were “Taliban”. The moniker “Taliban” homogenises and dehumanises the enemy, thus reducing the ‘barrier to kill’ (Griffin 2015). The catch-all ‘Taliban’ became an easy shorthand for anybody the British Army were killing at that time, a simplifying lens used to negotiate a complex and chaotic conflict. A senior officer, speaking to Ledwidge (2012, 185), reflecting on why the British Army killed as many people as they did remarked that ‘maybe it is seen to be easier to kill dark-skinned persons’. Like the British infantry regiments that instrumentalise certain members of the population to be fighting soldiers, so too does the military professional effectively rely on the bodies of Others who are made “targets”, “enemies” or even “collateral damage” in the pursuit of military expertise.

**Helmand and “Textbook” Professionalism**

In the decade since the deployments of 16 Air Assault Brigade and 12 Mechanized Brigade, these initial missions have come to be seen as symbols of British military failure. But with a few exceptions aside (King 2010; Ledwidge 2012), they are not held up as symbols of war’s futility. Instead, these bloody experiences are “written-up” in professional texts that feed into the ongoing professional development for the British military. For the next generation of military professionals, the Helmand experience is now distilled and mediated through abstract prose full of “management speak” and dry technical terminology.

In fact, even as heavy fighting was taking place in Helmand, the war there was being interpreted by some as a training exercise that would improve the British Armed Forces overall expertise. In August 2009, David Richards took over from Richard Dannatt as Head of the British Army. Three weeks later he gave the annual defence lecture at Chatham House in Central London. While in the lecture he argues that success in Afghanistan is essential, he also focuses on the impact that Helmand will have on the future expertise of the British Armed Forces. ‘Our fight in Afghanistan’, he declares at one point, ‘is the best possible preparation for any future conflict’ (Richards 2009). He sets his argument up by citing a speech made by the then Foreign Secretary David Miliband in which he states that Afghanistan is ‘the laboratory of so much that we will be doing in the future’. Richards’ central thesis is that the war in Afghanistan offers ‘a signpost to the future’ as it is an exemplar of the type of warfare that the British Armed Forces will be engaged in for the foreseeable future, ‘conflict with non-state or failed state
actors’. But significantly he points out that ‘our armed forces need to become better still at this type of warfare’. Fortunately, from Richards’ perspective, ‘whether one is fighting non-state actors in Afghanistan … or somewhere else, the skills sets and weapon systems required will look usefully similar’. In this context, the war in Helmand becomes a stepping stone towards ever greater military expertise, a place where the skill set of the war-fighting soldier can be honed. An effect of this is that the resulting violence becomes normalised as a by-product of the British military profession’s ‘struggle for expertise’. Indeed, for many, the Helmand conflict (and its violence) was seen as a site of opportunity where the professionalism of the British Armed Forces could be revived. In his 2009 lecture, Richards explains how this is being done.

Scholars also write about Helmand as if it is a “laboratory”. A notable example of this is an article by Theo Farrell (2010) entitled Improving in War. In the article, Farrell turns the violence of Helmand into a narrative that tells of the ongoing professional development of the British Armed Forces. Farrell looks at each of the six-month brigade rotations in turn and argues that each one demonstrates an incremental step towards professional advancement. Helmand, for Farrell (2010, 569), provides a salient example of what he calls ‘military adaption’, which he defines as: ‘change to tactics, techniques or existing technologies to improve operational performance’. While 16 Air Assault Brigade had ‘an appalling time of it’, he notes how ‘the brigades that followed each adapted to the mistakes of the last by exploiting their own core competencies’ (2010, 573). He states that 3 Commando Brigade ‘adopted a highly mobile approach’, while 12 Mechanised Brigade ‘conducted several large clearance operations’ (2010, 589). All in all, according to Farrell, these first three brigades made little headway but eventually, through their mistakes, a new way of war was forged.

The breakthrough came in October 2007 when Andrew Mackay’s 52 Infantry Brigade deployed. MacKay’s brigade is depicted as a stand-out example of how a professional military campaign should be run. In one of his first acts as commander, Mackay circulated a note to his senior officers in which he denounced the practice of measuring success in terms of body counts. He argued that ‘body counts are a particularly corrupt measurement of success’ and that ‘attrition of the enemy is not the prize but his defeat is’ (Grey 2009). What Mackay proposed instead was that 52 Infantry Brigade’s time in Helmand should be focused not solely on the enemy but on Helmand’s wider population. The watchword for the mission would be ‘influence’. If there was less focus on killing, it was thought,
then it would be easier to get the population behind the campaign. In order to achieve this, soldiers were told to employ “courageous restraint”. Unlike his predecessors, MacKay expressed his professionalism through recourse to academic texts and learning, as he explains in his retelling of the mission’s build-up:

Quite aside from the normal preparation that a Commander routinely makes before taking men into battle … in advance of 52 Brigade’s deployment a surprising amount of time had to be devoted to self-study of key texts, not just on the well trodden path of counter insurgency theory – which is relatively well understood within staff colleges – but on the considerably less well known military arena of behavioural psychology, economics and, as this thinking broadened, some philosophy (MacKay and Tatham 2009, 17).

In some respects, then – seen through the prism of military professionalism – what MacKay was doing was a reaction to the extreme variant of expert-professionalism that was expressed by his predecessors. It was an attempt to reintroduce the responsibility component back into the professional approach of the British Army by paying attention to political context. Even so, the Helmand mission still lacked an overall coherent political strategy and narrative. This meant that what MacKay attempted in Helmand was in effect expert-professionalism by other means. It may have been more sophisticated but the ultimate objective of his approach was still to destroy the will and the ability of an (ill-defined) enemy to fight. Moreover, as it played out on the ground, MacKay’s attempt to approach the Helmand campaign in a less violent manner was largely futile. This was for two main reasons. First, despite the attempt to make the mission more ‘influence’ based, soldiers and officers continued to act out their professional identities as war-fighters. Sergio Catignani (2012, 533) conducted a series of interviews with lower to middle ranking officers from 52 Infantry Brigade as well as a number of soldiers from the non-commissioned ranks and found that consistently their professional self-beliefs would override the population-centric ethos of the mission. For instance, he interviewed one sergeant who said that ‘courageous restraint is a very, very difficult one and I’m sorry, but when the shit hits the fan so to speak, all that goes out the window’. Second, as soon as Mackay’s brigade had left Helmand, 16 Air Assault Brigade returned, along with members of the Parachute Regiment, and it was business as usual (Ledwidge 2012, 91). But despite
the reality of war that continued beneath the professional gloss of MacKay’s campaign it is still held up as a beacon of how soldiers can act if they are properly trained and educated. It becomes one of the “lessons learnt” amid nearly ten years of bloody conflict.

Indeed, MacKay’s deployment is held up by a number of scholars as an exemplar of the proper professional approach that was needed in Helmand (Ledwidge 2012, 233) but in Farrell’s work it takes on added significance. The killing of Helmand is normalised by turning it into a necessary pre-requisite for the professional “adaptation” that follows it. To be sure, Farrell’s analysis does not hide killing, in fact, the extent of the killing is presented as a mistake. But as the analysis builds up to MacKay’s break-through tour, the amount of killing is portrayed as the lubricant that was needed to ensure that the British Armed Forces meet their professional standards. Furthermore, the language that Farrell employs distances the reader from the killing of Helmand through his use of abstract language. Terms such as ‘clearance operations’, ‘battlefield indicators’, ‘attrition’, ‘kinetic’ or ‘hard combat power’ fill the pages. In this respect, Farrell’s work is part of a wider scholarly tradition that reduces the visceral experience of warfare to a series of dry abstractions.

In this respect the work of Foley et al. (2011) is worth examining. Whereas Farrell demonstrates how professional development took place within a conflict, Foley et al. analyse some of the ways the British military profession learns in the long term, post-conflict, in particular, through the establishment of the Force Development and Training Command. They explain how, after the establishment of the command, ‘the ability [of the British Army] to learn from frontline experiences was elevated in status and given greater resources’ (Foley et al. 2011, 262). Again, Foley’s article is strewn with abstract terminology. In fact, in comparison with Farrell’s text, another layer of abstraction is added. Unlike Farrell’s article, the Helmand experience is not referred to directly, but British military failure in Iraq and Afghanistan clearly forms the article’s backdrop. Euphemistic references to killing, such as ‘clearance operations’, are reduced even further to ‘battlefield lessons’ (Foley et al. 2011, 262). Joanna Bourke (2014, 30) argues that military language normalises and distances us from violence. Bourke’s research is on the language of weapons scientists but many of the same rhetorical traits are in evidence in the way Farrell and Foley et al.’s use of language abstracts the violence of Helmand. Particularly relevant in this respect is her discussion of the ‘mathematical abstraction’ used by weapons experts. She notes how:
the ability to convert multiple observations in abstract formula brings esteem. Standardized behaviour and activities, as well as knowledge of acronyms, are symbols that give clear proof that a scientist belongs to an elite club … theirs is the language of mathematics and engineering employed in the art of killing (Bourke 2014, 30-32).

While they are not weapons experts, the language that scholars such as Farrell and Foley et al. use brings with it a semblance of quasi-scientific order to the chaos, fear and killing of the battlefield. For example, Foley et al. explains how ‘bottom-up innovation’ – a reference to Farrell’s adaptation – is integrated into systems of ‘knowledge management’ that will ‘act as effective mechanisms for transmitting the most up-to-date knowledge from the front line to wider armies’. These texts, which use the Helmand conflict as their source material, are examples of an expert-professionalism that abstracts, obscures and distances their readers (most likely the next generation of British officers) from the violence, blood, death and suffering of the original conflict.

**Professionalism and the “Struggle for Expertise” in the United Kingdom**

According to the principles of manoeuvre warfare, upon which British military doctrine is based, becoming an expert in the British Army means becoming better at destroying the ability and will of the enemy to fight. As I show above, what this means on the battlefield is interpreted in different ways. It can be expressed through “professional beliefs”, “core competencies” or the accumulation of professional knowledge. But the expertise that is meted out on the battlefield does not exist in a vacuum. Indeed, it depends on more than training, a professional education or warfighting experience. It relies on the co-option of non-military bodies – on the wider population. Just as on the battlefield where the population is instrumentalised in the name of expertise by identifying and shaping bodies as “soldier”, “enemy” and even “collateral damage”, so too is the wider-population “at home” instrumentalised towards improving military expertise. It was the explicit recognition of this “population factor” that preoccupied the doctrine writers and commentators in the *Soldiering* debates that I analysed in the previous chapter.
Indeed, The Soldiering debates\textsuperscript{50}, effectively separate British military expertise into two components. The first component, as I have already explained, corresponds to the traditional focus on destroying the ability and the will of the enemy to fight. The second component is a reversal of this and pertains to giving the British soldier the ability and will to fight. In fact, the British Army describes the moral component of fighting power, of which Soldiering is a part, as ‘the Army’s ability to get its people to operate and to fight’ (The British Army 2010). If a soldier is demotivated and lacking the will to carry out fighting or training they will be unable to improve their military skill set. Of course, the two overlap and are mutually reinforcing: destroying the will of the enemy requires the production of a soldiering body that is willing and able to fight.

As I explained Chapters One and Two, the population is mainly instrumentalised towards improving military expertise in two ways: for its economic support, primarily in the form of taxation and for moral support, by providing the soldier with the moral resources they needed to fight. Broadly speaking, the economic support that is given to the armed forces attends to the first half of this maneuverist equation (destroying the enemy) and emotional support attends to the second half (giving will to the soldier). Of course, this is not an exact correlation and these two types of support are not distinct. As I argue in Chapter Six, providing indirect financial support to the armed forces via charity has come to constitute a form of emotional support as well as helping to create the economic conditions that make the deployment of armed force permissible.

The extent to which the economic and emotional support of a population can be harnessed is dependent upon the political context that an armed forces is operating in. The ideal scenario, from a military perspective, is one in which large sections of the population already support and understand the political objectives associated with military activity. In other words, as I also explain in Chapter Two, the resources needed to the support the expertise of the British Armed Forces and ideally extracted from the population via clear demonstrations of political responsibility. But during the Helmand-era the relationship between expertise and responsibility is severed. I have already shown how this manifests on the battlefield, where an absence of political direction

\textsuperscript{50} This is a term I use in chapter two to describe a series of discussions, publications and books that emerged in the late 1990s and were related to the development of the doctrinal document Soldiering: The Military Covenant.
(responsibility) means that soldiers revert to ‘core competencies’ and ‘professional beliefs’ (expertise) (Farrell 2010; King 2010). Nevertheless, the severing of expertise and responsibility is also expressed in how the conflict was being interpreted by the wider population. For example, Michael Clarke argues that the chaos of the military mission in Helmand was also reflected in the public response to the mission. ‘After so publicly playing catch-up on the ground’, he notes, ‘it is hardly surprising that domestic public support for the campaign has been tepid and sometimes confused’ (Clarke 2011, 9).

Moreover, this got progressively worse as the campaign continued. In 2006, a survey indicated that around 31 per cent of the population supported British military involvement in Afghanistan, while by 2009 the figure stood at a mere 18 per cent (Clarke 2011, 9). But, despite this, support for British troops remained high. In 2012, six years after the deployment into Helmand, a British social attitude survey found that 83 per cent of the British public had a ‘high or very high opinion’ of the British Armed Forces (Gribble et al. 2012, 138). There is of course nothing novel about the “troops not war” sentiment that was expressed by large sections of the British population during the Helmand-era, but its conditions of possibility are still worth exploring, as members of the British public were actively encouraged to sever the link between responsibility and expertise in their approach to the armed forces. Indeed, the notion that the public sever the link between expertise and responsibility became, for many, common sense. In this respect, the civil-military relations scholar Helen McCartney (2010, 423, my emphasis), praised the competence of the British public by stating that they were ‘able to dissociate the Army as an institution from the unpopular role it has been required to play in Afghanistan and in Iraq’. In the United Kingdom, this severing of expertise and responsibility finds its most overt expression in language of the so-called military covenant.

**Expert-Professionalism and The Military Covenant**

Before 2006, *Soldiering: The Military Covenant* was a little read piece of Army doctrine. However, since 2006, the notion of ‘The Military Covenant’ has been thrust into the centre of the defence debate in the United Kingdom and become ‘woven into the political tapestry of the twenty-first century’ (Murrison 2011b). In addition, the language of the military covenant has formed the backdrop for a proliferation of events, practices and organisations that have elevated the status of the British Armed Forces. John Kelly (2013, 728) describes as this phenomenon as ‘a multi-agency campaign of newly created ‘support
the troops’ initiatives’. What unites them is that they all serve to promote a particular ethical relationship with war that promotes the celebration, recognition and understanding of the military profession while asking those participating to reserve moral judgement on the operations that armed forces personnel are involved with. I examine two of these initiatives in the following two chapters: Help for Heroes and Armed Forces Day. The favourite maxim of the military charity Help for Heroes’s founder Bryn Parry is that ‘it’s not about patriotism, it’s about the blokes’ (Barkham 2010) and it is a phrase that is typical of this logic. The moral rights and wrongs of war are left to one side, while the British military profession is presented as an unquestionable moral good. Likewise, Ingham (2014, 92) notes how:

Although the public did not necessarily understand either the unique nature of military service, the service ethos or the challenges military personnel faced in Basra or Helmand, they trusted in the military’s professionalism to do the job well.

From this perspective, members of the armed forces appear to embody an essential goodness, which remains untainted, regardless of the tasks they are asked to do. The same expert-professionalism that characterised the conflict in Helmand itself also dominated the post-2006 civil-military landscape in the UK.

In the summer of 2006, the Helmand conflict intensified and there was a corresponding rise in casualty levels. Against this backdrop, questions started to be asked as to whether the government and the public-at-large were doing enough to support “their” armed forces. With military operations continuing in Iraq, the British government was accused of bringing about a situation of “military overstretch”: under resourcing the armed forces while deploying them across multiple fronts. But, significantly criticism was also being levelled at the public who were charged with possessing an apathetic (and occasionally hostile) attitude towards the armed forces (Tipping 2008, 12). For instance, soldiers increasingly spoke of friends back home who failed to appreciate or comprehend what they had experienced in Iraq or Afghanistan. The term “military covenant” was quickly adopted as a neat ‘media hook’ upon which these concerns could be hung (Forster 2011, 5). The “military covenant”, its proponents argued, described the unspoken agreement between the armed forces and society. In return for risking life and limb, military
personnel and their families could expect to receive adequate provision from the state and a high level of recognition from the public.

One scholar describes the post-2006 covenant as developing ‘a life of its own’ (Mileham 2010, 33), while another writes that ‘a bit like letting a genie out of a bottle, once out the concept Military Covenant was very difficult to control’ (Forster 2011, 5). In her comprehensive study of the military covenant, Sarah Ingham (2014, 3) refers to this process as the ‘migration’ of the covenant ‘from doctrine’ to ‘entrenchment in the civilian sphere’. Before 2006, she explains, among the population there was ‘latent’ support for the armed forces in the UK. Significantly, through this choice of language Ingham is objectifying the population as reservoir of untapped energy that can be harnessed towards ever greater military expertise. The problem, especially during the Iraq war, was that the lack of support for the mission prevented this support from being fully expressed. Ingham (2014, 189) argues that the emergence of the military covenant changed this, and this support was unleashed, because of the covenant’s ability to ‘decouple’ the soldier from the politics of the mission they were fighting in. Crucially, what Ingham is doing here is implicitly reproducing an image of the professional soldier comprised of two functions: expertise and responsibility. Her argument, then, is that these two aspects are distinct and can thus be separated or ‘decoupled’. However, as my analysis shows expertise is always dependent on some form of politics (responsibility). Indeed, in the next two chapters I show how through the emergence of the biopolitical military professional this responsibility is produced through a life-administering biopolitics.

After 2006, the notion of the covenant, became increasingly used to articulate a bilateral relationship between the armed forces and the public. The original wording of the covenant states that the armed forces must be respected at ‘all times’, implying that whatever the prevailing political climate British citizens must support “their” armed forces. After 2006, this idea that the public should disregard the politics of wars that soldiers were fighting and support soldiers unconditionally came to be explicitly associated with the covenant – in effect, granting permission to the British public to support members of the armed forces without being contaminated by the politics of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The most outspoken and prominent comments regarding the covenant came from Richard Dannatt, who had been appointed head of the Army during the summer of 2006.
In 2006, Dannatt took part in a number of interviews where he took direct aim at the government for underfunding the Armed Forces and the public for not providing adequate emotional support, thus ‘raising his head above the political parapet’ (Bowen 2010). His first political intervention came when he implied to The Guardian that the Army was becoming overstretched: ‘we are running hot, certainly running hot’, he told them (Norton-Taylor 2006). A month later, in a widely publicised interview with Sarah Sands (2006) in the conservative Daily Mail, he made his views much more explicit by using the notion of the covenant to frame his argument – at one point, evoking its wording by proclaiming that ‘I don’t want the nation to let the army down’. Significantly, he implored the public to separate the expertise of the military from the political context they were acting in:

Iraq may be an unpopular war now and Afghanistan may be a misunderstood war … but the soldiers, sailors and airmen who are conducting those operations are doing their duty to their best ability. And I hope the British people never forget that our soldiers are doing what the Government requires them to do.

On one level his comments were aimed at the British government and were openly critical of defence spending levels: ‘is £1,150 take-home pay for a month’s fighting in Helmand province sufficient?’ he asked. Then later, in the interview, he juxtaposes the amount the government spends on welfare with how much it spends on defence, stating that ‘twenty-nine per cent of government spending is on social security. Five per cent is on defence. Others can take a view on whether that proportion is right’ (Sands 2006). On another level his comments were directed at the wider population, to whom he appealed for more emotional support. For example, he drew attention to ‘a wounded soldier in Selly Oak Hospital … being abused by an anti-war civilian’. He then evoked a more banal example, explaining how ‘it is important that Paras back on leave can go down to the pub and people will know what they have been doing’. For Ingham, it was the covenant’s ability to frame these ‘people’ issues that led to the large expressions of public support that were seen after 2006. For politically intervening in this way, as Paul Dixon (2012, 125) explains, Dannatt ‘was widely criticised across the political spectrum for breaking the convention that the military do not criticise politicians in public’. However, as Fergusson (Fergusson 2008) explains, Dannatt’s public comments were typical of the private concerns of many
other senior members of the British Armed Forces: ‘there was a suspicion throughout the military that neither the British government nor the public fully appreciated the sacrifices that soldiers were being asked to make in Helmand’. Seen through the prism of military professionalism, Dannatt’s comments can be read as an expression of expert-professionalism: an attempt to harness the resource of the population while suppressing war’s political context.

CONCLUSION

Both “on the ground” in Afghanistan and “at home” in the United Kingdom, the Helmand-era was characterised by an “unbalanced” and depoliticising variant of military professionalism wherein a concern for military expertise outweighed the concern for military responsibility. Expert-professionalism is a potently depoliticising form of military professionalism that focuses on the skills and professional expertise of military personnel while detracting from a conflict’s political context. In Helmand, it is perhaps unsurprising that expert-professionalism takes hold in a context where articulating the political outcomes of the campaign proved to be so difficult. Seen in this way it demonstrates how military professionalism does not just describe some militaristic predilection but also forms part of a broader neo-liberal milieu wherein the need for productivity and efficiency consistently outweighs any concern for an ethical politics.

The expert-professionalism on display in Helmand normalises liberal violence in a number of ways. First, the violence of Helmand becomes intertwined with notions of “professional ambition” and retold in memoirs and exciting journalistic accounts of the conflict. With the lack of political direction or legitimacy, Helmand effectively became a site where British soldiers were able to hone their professional skills and add validation to their professional training. Violence becomes a by-product of soldiering ambition and hyperbolic prose. This chapter also explores a tension between how professionalism is interpreted “on the ground” and the ways in which military professionalism is expressed in a more academic sense, through the publication of professional texts that feed into the ‘struggle for expertise’ in a different way. How, for example, Andrew MacKay’s time in Helmand is now held up as a progressive symbol that shows how, despite the mistakes of the past, the professionalism of the British Army Forces will keep it striving forwards. In this instance, the violence of Helmand is normalised using abstract language to distance the reader from its bloody source material. Then, in the final part of the chapter, I
examined how this expert-professionalism played out in the UK with the military covenant becoming, in effect, a vehicle through which appeals were made to the British public to support soldier’s professionalism irrespective of political context. What links *all* these examples together is that in each of them the population is harnessed as a resource in a way that contributes to the expertise of the British military profession.

Expert-professionalism creates the conditions of possibility for the emergence of the biopolitical military professional because it creates an environment wherein military responsibility requires new outlets. In the next two chapters I show how this takes place through military responsibility’s incorporation into liberal regimes of power – producing a new rendering of the symbiosis between armed force and the population.
Chapter Five – Armed Forces Day and the Biopolitics of Childhood

The first Armed Forces Day (AFD) was held in the United Kingdom on 27 June 2009 and since then it has been held, each year, on the last Saturday in June. With its tagline “Show Your Support”, it provides an opportunity for members of the British public to demonstrate their support for the Armed Forces. In this respect, it provides a key example of how the figure of the military professional is celebrated today in the UK.

Each year a host city is chosen in which the AFD national event takes place. Previous host cities have included Nottingham, Edinburgh and Plymouth. On 28 June 2014 it was Stirling’s turn, a small city in the centre of Scotland. Each year, the national event starts with a parade of current military personal, cadets and veterans who march through the host city. Afterwards, everyone is encouraged to walk to a large events field where Armed Forces exhibitions, entertainments and demonstrations are held. The inclusion of a host city provides a media focus for the event and one single location where senior politicians and members of the Armed Forces can congregate. While Armed Forces Day is a significant media event, it is important not to overstate this. Media coverage is typically limited to a few reports on the national news bulletins and several articles in the national press. Indeed, compared to November’s Remembrance Day commemorations, where events are broadcast live, its coverage is limited.

Alongside the national event, local councils across the United Kingdom are encouraged to hold their own regional AFD events. According to the AFD website, on 28 June itself 121 separate events were held, with numerous other events taking place in either the week leading up to AFD or before it. This means that Armed Forces Day, as an event, can replicate itself across numerous locations around the country. Each one of these events then itself receives a significant level of local media attention. It is at the local level that AFD has, arguably, its most impact.

In this chapter, I argue that Armed Forces Day is a key site where the figure of the biopolitical military professional is produced. In the first part of the chapter, I explain how Armed Forces Day is a site where members of the public are invited to admire the professional soldier’s expertise via military demonstrations and exhibits. This provides a good example of how the biopolitical military professional’s expertise is foregrounded at the expense of political context. The chapter’s principle focus, however, is the role that
children play during Armed Forces Day celebrations. I examine how Armed Forces Day contributes towards a wider array of “youth engagement” strategies employed by the British Armed Forces. Armed Forces Day complements and incorporates existing youth engagement mechanisms such as armed forces cadets, which I explore in some detail. In addition, I analyse some of the ways “play” was mobilised at the event and how this has facilitated engagement between the armed forces and young children. I argue that these “youth engagement” strategies are justified principally through the assumption that children and armed forces exist in a mutually beneficially relationship. This assumption, I argue, serves to “normalise” and thus depoliticise the relationship between child and militarism. Consequently, it is an assumption that means that children take on a normalising presence during Armed Forces Day, rendering it a space of healthy childhood fun.

The Armed Forces Day National Event: Stirling 28 June 2014

In Stirling, Armed Forces Day took place as part of Stirling’s Big Weekend, billed as “a fabulous weekend of fun for all the family” (Stirling Council 2014c). Alongside Armed Forces Day, Stirling’s Big Weekend included two other large events: Pipefest, on the Friday evening, when marching bands paraded through the city, and Bannockburn Live, a re-enactment of the famous battle between the Scots and the English. Unsurprisingly, less than three months before the referendum on Scottish independence was to take place, the decision to hold Armed Forces Day celebrations within such close proximity of the Bannockburn Live, an emblematic event for Scottish Nationalists, was controversial.

In this chapter, however, I want to focus on the events, practices and interactions I witnessed when attending the Stirling national event myself. Don Handelman (1990, 16) writes how public events ‘engage in the ordering of ideas, people, and things’ and thus contained within them are ‘thrusts towards totalization’. With this in mind, Armed Forces Day can be read as a public event designed to bring into being a particular type of civil-military relationship, one where society supports “its” Armed Forces and understands them. In order to achieve this AFD incorporates two central design features: a military parade and an array of military exhibitions and demonstrations on a large events field. What I describe in the remainder of the chapter are my experiences of how these key elements of the AFD event were enacted: the interactions they facilitated, the images they evoked and the ways in which they served to normalise and sustain warfighting.
The Parade

In Stirling, *Armed Forces Day* began with a parade of current service personnel, military bands, veterans and cadets. After starting at the Castle, the parade began its path through Stirling’s streets. The parade brought the uniforms, marches and music of military pageantry into the heart of the small Scottish city. It was this part of the day that provided members of the public with their most tangible opportunity to adhere to the AFD tagline: “Show Your Support”. In the AFD programme, the Chief of the Defence Staff wrote how ‘the national event is your chance to say thank you to the men and women for their unstinting courage and dedication in securing the United Kingdom’ (Stirling Council 2014b). Crowds lined the streets clapping along with martial music and applauding the long line of soldiers, sailors, airmen and women, cadets and veterans as they passed.

The parade brought together a series of civil-military motifs that were evocative of practises that in the United Kingdom, have proven successful at fostering public support and recognition for the Armed Forces. In the formal procession were a long line of marching veterans and military bands, which evoked (relatively) long-standing traditions associated with Remembrance Day and royal ceremonies. Before the formal parade, however, a cavalcade of veterans on motorcycles evoked more recent civil-military practices. In this part of the chapter, I will first talk about the current serving personnel and then the motorcycling veterans.

Serving Personnel

The start of the formal parade began with military personnel currently serving with the British Armed Forces. Marching in ‘Service Order’, each service branch (Navy, Army, and RAF) was represented by around sixty of its members. The Royal Navy, the AFD programme told us, were represented by a group of sailors from across the Navy whose expertise encompassed ‘the broad range of skills required to man and support the ships submarines and aircraft that make up the modern Royal Navy’. Marching on behalf of the Army, on the other hand, were members of a single regiment, *The Highlanders* or the *4 SCOTS*, who were ‘the last Scottish battalion to serve in Afghanistan’. Finally, representing the Royal Air Force were members of *The Queen’s Colour Squadron*, apparently ‘best known for its continuity drill display, which involves a series of precision drill movements executed without a word of command’ (Stirling Council 2014b, 40-41). Adding to the bulk, colour and pageantry of the parade each group was preceded by a military band from its corresponding service. However, as the programme notes
demonstrate, the public were not just invited to marvel at marching, music and military uniforms but to show appreciation for the expertise of the professionals on display.

In particular, this first part of the parade provided members of the public with the opportunity to experience the disciplined and marching bodies of the Armed Forces (and the barked orders of their superiors) in close proximity. AFD is a day on which members of the public are able to experience an embodied Armed Force. It is a day for shaking hands, talking and sharing the same space with military personnel. Nevertheless, military parades typically embody military personnel in a particular way. Those marching that day were a combination of recent recruits, such as those from the Navy who ‘will shortly join their first operational unit’ and those who had recently returned from tour in Afghanistan (Stirling Council 2014b). Presumably, for some marching that day, armed conflict may be an experience still to come or an encounter never to be realised while for others the confusion, fear and pain of battle may be a recent memory. I had no way of knowing this. From simply watching the parade go by these details were impossible to ascertain. Indeed, on display in Stirling was what Terrell Carver describes as the ‘clean uniforms, unmarked bodies (and, so it seems, untroubled minds)’ of the parade (Belkin and Carver 2012, 561). In fact, unlike many of the recent homecoming parades, which have taken place in recent years, no one marching in Stirling was carrying a weapon. But the lack of weaponry was soon to be made up for.

After 2006, homecoming parades of soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan became an increasingly frequent sight in Britain’s town and city centres. AFD was first recommended in a government report entitled the National Recognition of Our Armed Forces which was published in 2008. The report noted that homecoming parades provided ‘unique opportunities for the general public to express some sense of gratitude and recognition to the military’ (Davis et al. 2008, 17). Consequently, the report recommended that ‘a more systematic approach should be adopted towards’ homecoming parades (Davis et al. 2008, 17). To a large extent, then, this part of the Armed Forces Day parade is borrowed and adapted from a practice that had already been deemed successful in increasing support and recognition for the Armed Forces.

Nevertheless, unlike homecoming parades, which can only take place during significant and public military operations, Armed Forces Day parades will be a part of British life for the foreseeable future. It remains to be seen, of course, whether the public will continue to support AFD in quite the same way now that British troops have left Afghanistan.
What is significant, however, is that *Armed Forces Day* represents an attempt to give the success of homecoming parades, a practice that once had a temporary and sporadic existence, a permanent, magnified and formalised existence within Britain’s social calendar. This becomes even more significant, if you bear in mind that on AFD, military parades take place at numerous locations throughout the country.

**Veterans**

Two distinct groups of veterans took part in the parade. At the end of the formal parade, a long line of veterans holding British Legion flags and wearing their medals marched past the assembled crowd. Like the serving personal who marched ahead of them, they too were interspersed with military bands. For those in the crowd, like myself, who had grown up in the United Kingdom, the sight of marching veterans most likely evoked an image of the veterans marching on Remembrance Sunday. In the UK, Remembrance Sunday takes place on the Sunday closest to 11 November (Armistice Day), the anniversary of the official end of the First World War (WWI). While Remembrance Sunday began as a memorial to British and Commonwealth soldiers that died in WWI, as the twentieth century progressed it became a day designated to the memory of British soldiers who had died in all conflicts since WWI. The centre piece of these commemorations is a nationally televised service at The Cenotaph in central London followed by a long line of marching veterans. Included in the AFD parade, therefore, is a reference to one of the UK’s longest standing civil-military practices.

In addition to these more “traditional” practices, another group of veterans passed through the streets of Stirling. Before the formal parade began and as the crowds were still gathering, the murmur of the crowd was punctuated by the roar of engines. Several moments later, dozens of motorcycles passed in a long cavalcade. As well as the leathers, tattoos, beards and insignia on display, many of the bikes carried Union Jacks, and AFD and *Help for Heroes* flags. In fact, it was only after reading the AFD programme later that I realised that this part of the parade had been arranged months in advance. In fact, the bikers were all members of a Scottish Veteran’s Association, *Legion Scotland’s Riders Branch* (Stirling Council 2014b, 35). Unlike the formal parade that took place shortly afterwards, this event had a spontaneous feel. Indeed, it was not part of the disciplined formal parade that would follow. In contrast to the formal parade’s pristine uniforms and regulated marching, the bikers wore numerous styles and rode in sporadic formation. However, like the military bands that followed, the bikers used noise to engage the crowd. Not through
martial music but with the roar of engines and the beeping of horns – and this noticeably stirred the crowd.

Overt displays of military support from groups of bikers are one of the more novel civil-military motifs that have emerged within recent years. Notable, is the so-called Ride of Respect, which started in 2010 as a procession of 15,000 bikers through the English town of Wootton Bassett (BBC News 2012). The Oxfordshire town gained national prominence in the UK when cortèges the bodies of repatriated British soldiers travelled through the town. As a result, it became a focal point for people wishing to publicly express their support, gratitude and grief. Wootton Bassett was subsequently held up by both politicians and the media alike as an exemplar of the ideal civil-military relationship. Consequently, through this evocation of homecoming parades, Remembrance Day marches and Wotton Basset, the AFD parade attempts to amalgamates, formalises and solidify a collection of traditional, emergent and sporadic civil-military practices.

**The Events Field**

In the UK, a number of military commentators and strategists share the concern that the British public are becoming increasingly ignorant of the British Armed Forces. For example, McCartney (2010, 415) notes how ‘public understanding of the kinds of challenge facing the military on the ground is often poor’. Likewise, in a 2006 lecture the influential military historian Richard Holmes (2006, 2-5) claimed there was ‘a gap between the army’s ethos and the mores of society in general’. Holmes chose to demonstrate this by nostalgically contrasting today’s Britain with growing up:

> In a society that knew the difference between a brigadier and a bombardier, a battalion and a brigade, and could put lieutenant colonel, lieutenant commander and flight lieutenant in the right order.

*Armed Forces Day* attempts to rectify this problem by providing members of the public with the opportunity to engage with and learn from members of the Armed Forces.

On *Armed Forces Day*, this problem is most clearly addressed through the events and activities that take place on the large events field. Members of the public are encouraged to visit the events field after the military parade finishes. In Stirling, the events field was
divided up into a series of “villages”: an Army, Navy and RAF village as well as a cadets’ and a veterans’ villages. The use of the term village is interesting in itself, as it conjures up images of both the English rural idyll and the villages at the heart of Britain’s numerous counter insurgency (COIN) campaigns. During AFD, within each village representatives of each service engage with the public in what is effectively an outside exhibition space where members of the public are invited to wander round the various stands. These stands include models of warships, aircraft simulators and various regiments displaying their military hardware. In the centre of the events field the Main Arena provides a focal point for the day. After a religious “Drumhead” service, some of the world’s most expensive military hardware is put to use here for a series of set-piece demonstrations.

During the military parade there was an absence of guns, tanks and planes but the large events field was littered with the paraphernalia of warfare. For instance, attending Armed Forces Day gave you the opportunity to ‘explore the impressive Apache helicopter inside and out’ or ‘climb aboard the versatile Chinook helicopter and explore its capabilities’ (Stirling Council 2014b, 46). Indeed on the events field members of the public experienced the Armed Forces in a very different way from the earlier military parade. Compared to the uniformity of the parade, here was the Armed Forces’ human face. For example, if exploring the Apache wasn’t enough you could ‘talk to the crew who fly and maintain the aircraft’ (Stirling Council 2014b, 47). There was another shift in emphasis after the move to the events field: away from the disciplined bodies of the parade, the professional soldiers at work during the day became the skilled custodians, operators and curators of an array of weapons technology. In this section, I describe some of the interactions, events and practices I witnessed on the AFD events field as a way of thinking through the ways in which these practices serve to sustain and normalise the violence of the British Armed Forces.

The Military Demonstrations
In the main area, located in the centre of the large events field, the showpiece event was a Military Capability Demonstration featuring two Sea King helicopters and the enactment of a ground assault mission, which was described by the organisers as ‘a dynamic and exciting demonstration of air and land expertise’ that ‘will descend on the events field’. We were promised that the demonstration’s scenario would take us ‘to a foreign country emerging from a bloody civil war’, where the UK is helping ‘the newly installed government rebuild
itself” (Stirling Council 2014b, 44). This was the only time during the day I witnessed any “killing”. However, while there were gunshots and explosions, this simulated killing was clean: the soldiers playing the enemy roles dropped to the ground with improbable speed – no screams or mutilated bodies. In this respect, the display bore a greater resemblance to an action film than a realistic depiction of a contemporary battlefield. In the imaginary of the AFD demonstration, weapons become almost humane and capable of ending life in an instant; the time between the bullet’s impact and death was erased from view.

Air power was also on full display throughout the day, including several references to Britain’s military past. At one point, there was a demonstration of what Michael Paris (2000, 224) calls ‘finest hour nostalgia’ when iconic World War Two (WWII) aircraft, Spitfires and a Lancaster Bomber, performed a prolonged flypast. Paris notes how ‘finest hour nostalgia’ is a sanitised retelling of the WWII experience that emerged several years after WWII had finished. Paris (2000, 226) explains that while the aftermath of war was characterised by ‘people simply wishing to forget the years of danger’, from the mid-1950s onwards WWII once again became ‘an acceptable subject for adventure films and stories and the dominant event in the pleasure culture of war’. War films, such as The Dam Busters (1955), that were produced during this period, retold the WWII experience in a particular manner:

Men die cleanly from a single bullet or bayonet thrust. No-one suffers unspeakable agonies after being mutilated by high explosive.

Indeed, during AFD, the apparatus of war – the soldiers, ships, aircraft and weapons – were on display, but the effect these have on minds and bodies remained absent. While the public are granted access to the technology of war, the professional application and the consequences of that technology remain unseen. In other words, during Armed Forces Day the killing, maiming and fear are left to what Samuel Huntington (1957, 18) called the ‘specialists in the application of violence’. Elaine Scarry (1985, 64) argues that ‘the main purpose and outcome of war is injuring’. She goes on to explain, however, that this fact is often omitted from the way war is presented to us. She explains how accounts of war typically proceed:

Without encountering the acknowledgment that the purpose of the event described is to alter (to burn, to blast, to shell, to cut) human
tissue, as well as to alter the surface, shape, and deep entirety of the objects that human beings recognize as extensions of themselves.

Machine guns, tanks, bayonets, attack helicopters, bomber and fighter planes were prominently displayed throughout the events field. However, apart from some simulated shots and explosions in the main arena, this weaponry remained largely unfired. This emphasis on technology at the expense of neglecting war’s mess and suffering is typical of what James Der Derian (2009, xxxi) calls ‘virtuous war’. Der Derian explains how ‘virtuous war cleans up the political discourse as well as the battlefield’, thus promoting ‘a vision of bloodless, humanitarian, hygienic wars’. The military strategist Rupert Smith (2012, 3) argues that, in the post-Cold War environment, ‘all the people, anywhere – can be on the battlefield’. In this battle, however, proximity to violence varies. Expanding upon the ‘theatre of operations’ metaphor, Smith distinguishes between those on the stage, ‘in the actual theatre’ and those ‘comfortably seated’, watching from home. Drawing on Smith’s metaphor, AFD provides one of the most comfortable seats from which to watch British war-fighting.

To be sure, there is nothing novel, about this collection of military exhibitions and demonstrations. Like the military parade earlier, what I witnessed in Stirling were numerous practices that were borrowed from some long-standing UK civil-military practices. For example, air shows and military base open days have long been sites where similar practices have taken place. What is significant, however, is how AFD brings together this collection of civil-military practices that have proved successful in the past. Furthermore, through replication and by placing them on a national stage their effect is embedded and magnified across the country. And finally, by incorporating these events into an annual event these practices are repeated over time.

**Armed Forces Day and Children**

*It starts with a seven-year-old boy seeing a parachutist at an air show and thinking, ‘That looks great.’ From then the army is trying to build interest by drip, drip, drip.*

Colonel David Allfrey (Armstrong 2007)

Spread out across the Army village were a collection of mock-up defensive fighting positions. One I took interest in occupied a space between exhibitions erected by the 4th
Battalion the Parachute Regiment (alongside their invitation to “Join the Elite”) and the Special Forces (Reserve). Sandbags covered in dark-green faux-undergrowth, in an oval five-pointed-star formation, marked out an area on the gravelled surface at the edge of the events field. Within this area, each point of the star provided the space for a piece of artillery. From where I stood, I could see three weapons: a grenade machine gun, a general-purpose machine gun, and a sniper rifle. By each gun, at the other side of the thinly camouflaged perimeter, a training target faced outwards, the stylised image of the enemy with a target covering its chest. Curating this space, and identifiable by either the red or blue hackles on their Tam O’Shanters, were representatives from two battalions of the recently amalgamated Royal Regiment of Scotland. A gap in the sandbags meant that anybody could walk in and assume the position of soldier behind whichever weapon they liked.

Completing the picture are three children. To my right, a girl of about ten stands attentively, hands clasped in concentration; next to her is a L115A3 sniper rifle described by the MoD as ‘a state-of-the-art weapon used to locate and eliminate enemy activity’ (Ministry of Defence 2012). While one soldier keeps the rifle steady on its bipod, the other enthusiastically explains to the girl what she is looking at. To their right, a boy of about six years old, certainly the youngest of the three children, beams with delight, his right hand placed around the grip of a general-purpose machine gun. The gun is placed on a tripod and is positioned as it would be in sustained-fire mode where it typically ‘lays down 750 rounds-per-minute at ranges up to 1800 metres’ (The British Army 2015b). At the same time, a soldier bends down almost to the child’s height and shows him the gun’s sights. Two metres away, a man (presumably the young boy’s father) crouches down and, with a camera phone, takes a picture of the boy, machine gun and soldier. Finally, on my left, an older boy, perhaps eleven or twelve, squats, both hands clasped to a grenade machine gun. A two-handed grip is essential for maintaining accuracy with the recoil generated by firing 340 grenades a minute. While the boy eagerly contemplates the weapon alone, the soldier in charge of it talks to his father. I catch a brief snippet of their conversation. I hear the soldier telling the boy’s father that he has fired this very same weapon in Afghanistan during combat. ‘This actual weapon?’ the father repeats back proudly for verification.

Most people visiting the AFD national event, or so it seemed, possessed one of two things: a military service history, in which case they spent the day socialising and enjoying
themselves with old friends in the veterans village, or a child. The scene that I describe above was one I saw duplicated in various forms throughout the day. Until I had visited AFD myself, I did not realise the extent to which the event was reliant on the presence of children. Most of the national media coverage focused on the military parade and the senior politicians and royals that were in attendance. But, as I found, children provided the event with its social lubricant. Quite frequently a child running to get their hands on a piece of military hardware (and often ignoring the soldier in charge of it) would be the spark that triggered a conversation between a parent and a member of military personnel. Without a child, I felt conspicuous. Walking around the events field alone, I assumed I must have looked like a military enthusiast, still fascinated by warfighting long after the innocence of childhood had left me. While there were no formal restrictions, few adults would have felt comfortable depriving an expectant ten-year-old the opportunity to get their hands on a piece of operational heavy artillery or to climb aboard a tank.

In hindsight, I had no reason to be surprised by the role that children played during AFD. Looking back over the pre-event marketing materials, I found that it was littered with allusions to AFD’s family oriented nature. In the lead up to the national event, Stirling’s Provost, Mike Robbins said ‘we are very much looking forward to welcoming people from all across the UK to enjoy a fantastic, fun, free and family-friendly event’ (Stirling Council 2014a). Across the UK, organisers were keen to promote their AFD event as a free day out for the whole family. Some local events, such as those in Nuneaton and Grimsby, were simply given the title ‘Family Fun Day’ (Ministry of Defence UK 2014). Other organisers made it clear that the activities at their events would be suitable and entertaining for everybody. Leeds City Council, for example, boasted of ‘a range of family-friendly activities’, and Southend’s three-day Armed Forces Weekend promised ‘plenty to enjoy and take part in … with attractions for all the family’ (Echo News (Southend) 2014; Leeds City Council 2014).

Armed Forces Day is just one of a number of recent initiatives that have increased the British Armed Forces’ engagement with children. Against a backdrop of a moral uncertainty for the armed forces attempts to penetrate the spaces of childhood, the school, play and excitement are increasing. In an article in the New Statesman, Stephen Armstrong (2007) explained how shortages in manpower have shifted recruitment strategies ‘away from the school leaver and on to the schoolchild’. David Gee (2007, 2) makes the similar claim that ‘efforts to attract young people to a forces career are
intensifying and diversifying, particularly among those below recruitment age’. In this section, I examine some of the ways the inception of Armed Forces Day has contributed to this trend, which sees Britain’s warfighting institutions employ strategies that seek to embed and sustain their mores at the everyday level.

I argue that the presence and participation of children at Armed Forces Day, contributes to the event’s capacity to normalise the violence of the British Armed Forces. Crucially, I argue that this normalisation relies primarily on the assumption that the British Armed Forces and children exist in a mutually beneficial relationship – a relationship that has become “naturalised” and thus normalised through a myriad of mechanisms that produce an image of an armed forces capable of sustaining and nurturing the life of the child and vice versa. On the one hand, the British Armed Forces are routinely portrayed as an institution able to contribute to the well-being of children in the UK and elsewhere; while on the other, the participation of children and childishness is co-opted and instrumentalised for the betterment of the British Armed Forces as a warfighting institution. Hence, the biopolitical military professional sits at the heart of Armed Forces Day celebrations supported by a whole host of other subjects, often children. It is through the lens of my AFD experience that I attempt to expose some of the apparatuses through which this symbiosis is contrived.

I begin the section by looking at how Armed Forces Day complements the Ministry of Defence’s existing “Youth Engagement Strategy”. I will focus on the presence of military cadets during the event and explain how cadets perform a central role in “naturalising” and normalising the relationship between children and the British Armed Forces. After this example of how the MoD co-opts children at a “formal” level, I will examine some of the less tangible techniques that are used to penetrate children’s lives – some of which were in evidence during Armed Forces Day. In particular, I analyse the roles that “excitement” and “play” took on during AFD and explain how they are mobilised in ways that also aid the production of an apparent symbiotic relationship between children and the professional soldier.

**Armed Forces Day and ‘Youth Engagement’**

Being able to influence and engage with children is perceived by the armed forces as an essential part of what it needs to do in order to sustain itself as an institution. In the
introduction to the MoD’s 2011 *Youth Engagement Review* conducted by Brigadier James Plastow (2011), a picture is painted of a mutually beneficial relationship between the British Armed Forces, young people and children. The relationship benefits the armed forces, the report argues, because it would ‘ensure the continued support of the population’ and the ‘recruitment of the young men and women that are key to future sustainment and successes’ (Plastow 2011, i). According to the report, however, these benefits are reciprocated. This is because the armed forces engagement with young people ‘meets much wider personal and social development needs’ (Plastow 2011, i). While co-opting the participation of children is deemed essential to the continued success of the British Armed Forces, therefore, it is justified on the premise that this interaction is ultimately beneficial to a child’s development. By presenting each group, armed forces and children, as beneficial to the other, the relationship between them is normalised. They are represented as both being part of what makes the other possible. Crucially, Plastow (2011, G-1) argues that military events, such as *Armed Forces Day*, present further opportunities for youth engagement as they ‘can be optimised by ensuring that service authorities responsible for youth engagement are involved in planning events and thinking through messaging and effect’. In this section I examine some of the ways this is done, starting with the involvement of armed forces cadets at the event.

**Armed Forces Day and Cadets**

Alongside currently serving personnel and veterans, the other major group represented during *Armed Forces Day* were cadets. They took part in the military parade that began the day’s proceedings, and on the events field they had their own “cadets’ village”. Cadets have been at the heart of the British Armed Forces engagement with young people since the mid-nineteenth century. Examining them briefly here will give some insights into the ways in which the relationship between children and the Armed Forces are normalised.

In the UK, each service branch of the armed forces has a corresponding cadet youth organisation that they support financially. There is the Army Cadet Force, which children can join at the age of twelve; the Sea Cadets, supported by the Royal Navy, which can be joined at ten years old; the Air Training Corps, sponsored by the RAF, which can be joined at twelve. In addition to these groups is the Combined Cadet Force, which operates in schools. Together these groups have a combined membership of 140,000 young people. Being a cadet means learning about your respective service branch, primarily through
acquiring some of the skills needed in the adult military. For example, in the Army Cadet Force members learn how to look after, load and fire some of the same weapons used by the British Army. They also take part in military training exercises and learn how to do drill. One Army cadet described it as ‘like the Army for Children’ (Young 2014).

Cadets are increasingly being depicted as organisations capable of improving the life chances of disadvantaged children. Traditionally the school-based cadet organisation, the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), has been associated with fee-paying independent schools. However, in 2012, Britain’s coalition government launched a £10.15 million scheme ‘to coincide with Armed Forces Day’. The aim of the scheme was to ‘create 100 new cadet units based in English state funded schools by 2015’ (10 Downing Street 2012). The scheme forms part of the coalition government’s broader promotion of military ethos in schools. Other initiatives have included a Troops for Teachers programme and the funding of military style fitness providers for children of all ages. All these initiatives are aimed primarily at ‘disengaged pupils’ (Department of Education 2012).

The promotion of military ethos, of which the expansion of cadet forces is a central part, is presented as panacea for the problems of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. In launching the cadet expansion scheme, Prime Minister David Cameron explained how ‘Cadet Forces teach our young people vital skills such as teamwork and discipline’ (10 Downing Street 2012). In a video promoting the scheme, Cameron’s special advisor on Youth and Crime, Shaun Bailey (2014), makes the bold claim that the cadets are ‘the best way known to man to systemically put something together to boost that development in a young person’. On the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) website, the list of benefits for young people are listed much more extensively. It is claimed that joining the cadets can:

- Encourage valuable personal attributes, help to build skills and – using military themes based upon the culture and ethos of the single Services – foster confidence, self-reliance, initiative, loyalty and a sense of service to others (Combined Cadet Force 2015).

Furthermore, they argue that, attaining these qualities will improve ‘their educational attendance and attainment, as well as their behaviour and ambition’ (Combined Cadet Force 2015). In other words, it is claimed that through the injection of military ethos, the
life chances of disadvantaged children can be enhanced. From this perspective the cadets are rendered ‘life-enriching’ (Combined Cadet Force 2015). More broadly, therefore, the Armed Forces who support these youth organisations are seen to be playing a crucial role in child development. They involve a particular biopolitical assay of life a particularly militarised solution to bettering that life. In short, they purport to make life flourish.

Alongside being represented as an organisation beneficial for the lives of children, cadets (and thus the children they comprised of) are instrumentalised towards improving the British Armed Forces as a warfighting institution. As Plastow’s youth engagement review made explicit, youth engagement organisations, like the cadets, ‘should meet two clear defence outcomes’ (Plastow 2011, i). First, by engaging with local communities and schools they raise the profile of the armed forces. Their significant presence and participation in AFD is one example of how this is done. They assist in what Richard Dannatt called ‘the hearts and minds battle here at home’ (Bowen 2010). Additionally, they provide the armed forces with a significant recruitment opportunity. Most schools with a CCF stress that the aim of their cadet organisations is not as a recruiting tool for the armed forces, but this platitudinous does little to mask how the CCF, and other cadet organisations, improve the armed forces’ ability to recruit. Newcastle-under-Lyme School in Staffordshire claims, for example, that ‘The CCF is not a recruiting organisation’ (Newcastle-under-Lyme School CCF 2016). However, in the next line it is stated that ‘their membership has encouraged some cadets to join the regular forces’ and that some of their ex-cadets have seen ‘active service in Afghanistan and the Gulf’ (Newcastle-under-Lyme School CCF 2016). Members of all cadet organisations are also routinely given careers talks by recruiting officers. An example of this is included in a VICE documentary *Kids with Guns*. Speaking to a room of over a hundred cadets, the sergeant giving the talk asks the room what the purpose of the British Army is. His response is unambiguous: ‘Kill the enemies of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second — that is our job. We don’t go in nicely-nicely – we go in hard, we go in fast’ (Young 2014). In effect, he is asking a group of children to think about committing a portion of their lives (or possibly more) to aiding the British Army in this deadly task.

As I have already explained, these co-options of childhood by the British Armed Forces are characteristically legitimised through claims made about benefits to child development. There are clearly a lot of young people that benefit from being in the cadets. They appear
to get some of the excitement of warfighting without the consequences. It is fun, exciting and adventurous without the fear, the pain and trauma. However, while some children do greatly enjoy and benefit from their time in the cadets, when looking more closely at the effects this military penetration has on the lives of children and young people, a different picture emerges - especially, when bearing in mind recent attempts to expand cadet forces into schools within disadvantaged communities. Indeed, CCF programmes form part of strategy to promote military ethos in schools which ‘equip children characterized as unsuited to academic learning with skills that would be valuable to the armed forces at a time when the MoD needs to recruit young people, particularly young men, to sustain its warfighting capacity, while making other military personnel redundant through defense spending cuts’ (Basham 2016, 13). In the United Kingdom you can join the armed forces at 16 years old and, as David Gee and Amanda Goodman (2013, 6) explain, ‘these young recruits are also likely to have come from the poorest backgrounds’. Therefore those joining the armed forces from schools taking part in the expansion scheme are much more likely to join the armed forces at 16 than those from the CCF’s traditional base in independent fee-paying schools. Moreover, it is these youngest recruits that are most likely to be adversely affected by their time in the Armed Forces. In the case of the British Army, those joining the army at the age of 16 or 17 are much more likely to join a combat orientated infantry regiment, which in Afghanistan had higher causality rates than the rest of the army (Gee and Goodman 2013, 1). They also argue that exposure to these heightened risks ‘indicates higher odds of incurring non-fatal physical injury and trauma-related mental health problems’ (Gee and Goodman 2013, 5). Many children do enjoy and benefit from their experience in the cadets. Nevertheless, this latest expansion raises important questions about the extent to which UK military organisations are embedding and attempting to sustain the politics of warfighting into the lives of young children. Schemes such as this also obscure some of the deeper causes of child deprivation, namely, coalition austerity measures.

Expanding the scale of cadet organisations, therefore, is one more way in which the values of the British Armed Forces are being embedded into the everyday. Despite not being an official part of the British Armed Forces, cadets play a significant role in sustaining them as a war-fighting institution. They are woven into the fabric of the organisation. In Stirling, they had a prominent role at the heart of the Armed Forces Day parade. Marching before the veterans, whose professional military careers were over, they appeared to be
cementing their place in the life cycle of the armed forces. Alongside being represented as an organisation beneficial to the lives of children, therefore, cadets (and thus the children they comprise) are objectified as part of the armed forces ongoing ‘struggle for expertise’ (Huntington 1963). The image produced it is not just of an armed force sustaining the child, therefore, but of the child sustaining an armed force.

Mobilising Play

Examining the cadets demonstrates one way in which the MoD and the armed forces attempt to portray a symbiotic relationship between children and the military. I now want to examine how this same claim of mutual benefit is replicated in some of the other observations I made during Armed Forces Day. As I discovered, the Armed Forces engagement with young people goes way beyond “official” organisations such as the cadets. In this final part of the chapter, I examine some of the ways that “play” was mobilised during Armed Forces Day.

Play: Kids with Guns, Camo Day and Military Toys

In Stirling, especially in the army village, getting close to the majority of military hardware required an element of playful interaction. It required childlike behaviour. Challenger 2 Tanks and AS-90 self-propelled guns became climbing frames. Supervising soldiers were ready with small hard-hats, the perfect size for young children wanting to clamber over or get into the cockpit of a tank. As I described in the opening part of this section, artillery was placed at a height that would compel most adult operators to sit or lie down, but getting close to weapons was much easier for small children. In the hands of children, deadly weapons became innocent play things and curiosities. One parent, when asked by a journalist about her five-year-old son’s experience described how it was ‘a dream come true for him’, adding that ‘he’s had a go on the vehicles and all the guns’ (Sanderson 2014). This may explain some of my discomfort; I was not the target audience. Without childlike actions, which would have been socially unacceptable for a full-grown man walking alone, I was restricted by how I could engage with the exhibitions around me.

Outside Stirling, Armed Forces Day facilitated other opportunities for playful engagement with the British Armed Forces. As I explained in the previous section, this influence of Armed Forces Day lies in its ability to embed itself across numerous sites. Primarily, this is done by supporting hundreds of “official” local events throughout the country. As well as this, however, the existence of Armed Forces Day inspires and provides the opportunity
for other military related organisations to run their own initiatives. One example is Camo Day, which is organised by SSAFA, a charity that supports the families of military personnel. Described by the charity as a ‘simple dress-down day’, Camo Day is predominantly targeted at primary schools where service families are in attendance. Taking place the day before Armed Forces Day, on Camo Day very young children are encouraged turn up to school in camouflage. This invariably means that children turn up for school in an outfit that closely resembles British Army battle dress for one day of the year. Furthermore, during the day it is common for members of the armed forces from local bases to attend the school in order to provide the children with entertainment and educational talks. These include camouflage face painting and military style assault courses.

Situated just a mile from RAF Odiham, where all three squadrons of the RAF’s support helicopter the Chinook are based, is Buryfields Infant School. With its proximity to the airbase, each Camo Day the school has enjoyed considerable attention from the RAF. In 2012, the infants at the school ‘took part in a Drill Practice parade’ (SSAFA 2012). In a short SSAFA promotional video a girl of about five, wearing camouflage with an RAF aircrew badge sewn on, explains how ‘my favourite part of the day was the shouty man’ before the video cuts to a sergeant major screaming drill orders in the playground (SSAFA 2015). In 2014, as part of their Camo Day celebrations, a Chinook crew from RAF Odiham landed a Chinook in the school field. Then, as the local paper reports, the pupils ‘tried on different uniforms as part of the fun’ (Gregory 2014). Providing opportunities for playful interaction gives children (especially those too young to join the cadets) a way to engage with the British Armed Forces.

These playful interactions are not always left to chance. As well as Armed Forces Day, in recent years, the Ministry of Defence has embarked on other projects that have aided in the merging of play and warfare. In 2009, the same year as the first AFD, the MoD worked closely alongside the toy maker Character Group to produce a set of nine “action man” style toys all modelled on members of British Armed Forces. Included in the collection are toys ‘representing all three branches of the armed forces and wearing the insignia of the Royal Marines, the army and the RAF’, and all were praised by MoD’s head of public relations, Brigadier Mark van der Lande, for their ‘attention to detail’ (Teather 2009). As part of the project, child psychologist Amanda Gummer was employed. According to a press release from the RAF, Gummer was employed in order
to help ensure that ‘the correct ethos of this new brand’ was portrayed. In the first instance this meant that Gummer worked alongside the toy manufacturers to ensure:

important themes such as a child’s sense of team-work, belonging and identity are considered in the development of the range, while modern messages of anti-bullying, boundaries and discipline can also be seen to be reflected in play with the range, not to mention the aspect of physical fitness (Royal Air Force 2009).

Further to these arguments, in a blog post written three years after the launch of the toys, Gummer outlined some even bolder claims about the benefits of playing with military toys. She was keen to point out what she saw as the mental health benefits of playing with military toys. For example, she argues that military play encourages teamwork which ‘will enhance social development and reduce the likelihood of mental health issues such as depression’ (Gummer 2012). Here is the biopolitical military professional in toy form. Elsewhere, she argues that military themes in play can help to combat bullying. This is because, she explains, ‘the military is associated with strength’ and, crucially, play associated with the military provides ‘positive ways of using this strength’, such as ‘peace keeping, standing up for what you believe in, helping those less strong than you’ (Gummer 2012). This will enable a child to compare these applications of “strength” with ‘the miss-use of strength’ such as ‘bullying, intimidation and self-promotion’ (Gummer 2012). Terrell Carver (Belkin and Carver 2012, 559) argues that political power draws discursive boundary lines that erase violence from view:

One line is between good guys and bad guys, the former smiling and wearing clean outfits, and the latter scowling, demonized and ‘wanted’, either dead or on trial.

Gummer’s arguments draw the same lines between legitimate and illegitimate violence, but in this instance it is the “good” child standing up to the bully in the playground, not the “good” solider and the terrorist on the battlefield. It is an example of how knowledges about a ‘good’ war and a ‘good’ childhood can become interwoven.

Just like the arguments pertaining to child development and health that underpinned the legitimation of cadet organisations, so too have the British Armed Forces drawn on child development and health discourses to legitimate the intersections of play and militarism that they regularly facilitate. It is this intersection that renders my opening scene of
children enthralled with guns during AFD as one of a group of children living out a healthy childhood. Thus Armed Forces Day becomes for children harmless yet fruitful extra-curricular citizenship training; they may be introduced to ‘a worthwhile career and a good life’ (Dannatt and Kincaid 2006, 9) or they might have the chance to interact with ‘strong role models for a rising generation’ (Burkard 2008, 18). As Gummer rightly argues, children use play to explore the world around them. If this is done through a militarist lens, however, then this becomes the world around them. In other words, connecting militarism and childhood in this way aids in the “naturalisation” and thus normalisation of this relationship. Nevertheless, as I demonstrate here: ‘the business of play works closely with the military to replicate the tools of state violence; the business of state violence in turn capitalizes on playtime for institutional ends’ (Stahl 2010, 109-10). In other words, “naturalising” this relationship involves the investment of a significant amount of resources: economic, intellectual, and cultural.

**Conclusion**

As professionals in violence become more expert in the conduct of violence so too do they become more expert in ensuring that their institutions penetrate our everyday lives. This chapter on Armed Forces Day has demonstrated some of the ways this is being done by the British Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence. Armed Forces Day elicits overt displays of support for the British Armed Forces, while at the same time, being presented as a site conducive to healthy childhood fun and development. Moreover, the British Armed Forces are intensifying their penetration of childhood spaces in other ways. Indeed, I argue that Armed Forces Day is just one of a number of recent initiatives, in the United Kingdom that have blurred the lines between childhood and militarism. Using the example of armed forces cadets and MoD “action man” toys, I highlighted some the ways in which an image of a mutually beneficial relationship between military professionals and children is contrived. Moreover, I explain how discourses of child development and health are mobilised, aiding the “naturalising” and thus normalisation of this relationship. Armed Forces Day is another example of how during the Helmand-era the responsibility of the military professional becomes expressed in different ways, as the political context required to elicit support for the armed forces becomes biopolitical. This is because Armed Forces Day repackages the violence of the British Armed Forces as something that for children is fun, healthy and life-enriching.
This chapter has also introduced some of the emergent subject types that have come into being in recent years to complement and strengthen the figure of the biopolitical military professional. Figures such as the biking veteran, the militarised child and the parents who introduce these children to a militarised way of learning and playing – all variants of the proto-professional. In the next chapter, I examine how liberal subjects are recruited in the service of liberal violence as charity fundraisers.
CHAPTER SIX – HELP FOR HEROES: HOW SUPPORTING THE MILITARY BECOME GOOD FOR “OUR” HEALTH

In the UK, military charities play a central role in the mediation of the civil-military relationship. In this chapter, I analyse the military charity Help for Heroes, which launched in October 2007. The charity was founded by Brin Parry, a former member of the Royal Green Jackets, and his wife Emma, with the slogan “Support for our Wounded”. The charity started out by offering direct support to injured British military personnel from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Significantly, the charity has played a major role in transforming the ways in which injured soldiers have come to be represented in the UK, while offering members of the public, through a range of fundraising opportunities, novel ways to engage with military professionals.

The charity is frequently commended for the work it does with injured soldiers, but it has also caused some disquiet among writers on the political left. George Chesterton (2011), for example, describes Help for Heroes as an organisation that ‘serves an ideological and financial function for a broke government’. It is not difficult to see the reasoning for this unease. The charity enjoys a close association with military, political, business and media elites; its most fervent supporter and current president is Richard Dannatt, the former head of the British Army; much of the money it raises is directed towards Ministry of Defence projects; and it routinely receives support from the newspapers of Rupert Murdoch and sponsorship from Britain’s largest arms manufacturer, BAE Systems.

Even so, Help for Heroes is an organisation that has received relatively little critical scholarly attention. Perhaps this is because, as Michael Drake (2011, 139) argues, the charity can be located among a collection of ‘strategies and effects’ that ‘wrongfront the anti-war movement, tackling it on its own ground of moralisation and rendering irrelevant all the questions about the political decision to go to war’. One way Help for Heroes wrongfoots the anti-war movement is that, despite the sense of unease it provokes through its nationalist and militaristic overtones, it is hard to deny that for one group of people, who have experienced unimaginable levels of trauma and pain, it has bestowed real benefits. Writing in The Guardian, Charlotte Raven (2012) encapsulates her own feelings about the way it portrays injured soldiers:

When I was growing up in the 1980s, the left were upset that the wounded Falklands veterans were excluded from the victory
parade. I feel just as uncomfortable now about the way the wounded veterans of the "war on terror" are paraded in public as heroic emblems, but this case is much harder to make. Barely a week goes by without Prince Harry being photographed with an amputee.

My own ‘wrongfooting’ came while attending a *Help for Heroes* event, the culmination of the annual *Hero Ride* in Windsor. While observing 100 wounded soldiers who had just completed the ride, I was asked if I would like to hold a Union Jack emblazoned with the logo of *The Sun* newspaper. At an event like *Armed Forces Day* I would quite easily have refused and seen the encounter as a chance to voice my concerns about such a blatantly militarised event. However, my feelings were different watching this event. What if the person handing me the flag was a family member of a wounded soldier? Did I want to spoil the moment when someone with a life-changing injury was making such a public step towards recovery? I was surrounded by symbols of nationalism, neo-liberalism and militarism, yet my attention was being channelled through the broken and remade bodies of these soldiers and their undoubted achievements.

It is by recognising this shift in focus from these symbols of sovereignty, capital and violence towards the body of the soldier that we can begin to understand the significance of an organisation like *Help for Heroes* and its effects. While a charity like the Royal British Legion mediates our understanding of war through the veiled symbolism of the Flanders’ poppy, *Help for Heroes* mediates our experience through war’s corporeal effects. *Help for Heroes*, then, is among a series of initiatives ‘through which bodies may be transformed, engendered and incorporated into military “service”’ (Burridge and McSorley 2012).

The chapter begins by locating *Help for Heroes* within the broader UK military charity landscape. The second part of the chapter, then analyses how through the charity some injured soldiers have become more visible in the UK and are portrayed as symbols of overcoming and progress. It also analyses how the restitution of the injured soldier becomes in effect a project analogous to the broader Helmand-era professional revival of the British Armed Forces. Finally, I argue that the body of the injured soldier serves to co-opt and mobilise other bodies in particular a whole host of *proto-professional* fundraising or ‘charitable bodies’ (Nettleton and Hardey 2006) that are put to work in the name of the soldier’s restitution. I show how these bodies are not just simply mobilised through military logics but through appeals to health and fitness that can be read as biopolitical.
Hence, these injured soldiers, even after active military service, become the consummate biopolitical military professionals.

HELP FOR HEROES, MILITARY CHARITIES AND THE UK CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP

Help for Heroes was launched on 1 October 2007 as a military charity that was specifically dedicated to the rehabilitation and recovery of British military personnel injured in Iraq or Afghanistan. After the deployment of troops into Helmand Province in 2006, British troops were dying and being injured in ever greater numbers. Against this backdrop, Help for Heroes emerged as a seemingly direct link through which members of the general public could raise money and contribute to the rehabilitation and recovery of soldiers with the most immediate needs.

Military charities have a long history in the United Kingdom and play a fundamental role in the mediation and production of the civil-military relationship. Unsurprisingly, many emerge in the midst or the aftermath of major conflicts. For example, The UK’s oldest military charity is SSAFA and started life during the British occupation of Egypt in 1885. The UK’s largest is the Royal British Legion (RBL) and emerged in the years that followed the end of the First World War. The primary function of military charities is to provide welfare for military personnel and their families, but they are also organisations that have a prominent role in communicating and mediating to the wider population the experiences and effects of British war-fighting. In this respect, they are organisations of significant cultural significance that sit at the intersection of military, media, welfare and educational institutions.

The largest UK military charity, the Royal British Legion, runs the annual ‘Poppy Appeal’ during the three-week build up to Armistice Day, the anniversary of the end of the First World War. During these three weeks, members of the public are encouraged to purchase from the charity a red paper poppy. The poppy serves two purposes. First it is used to fund projects that benefit former and serving British military personnel. Second, it plays a prominent cultural role as a symbol of remembrance for Britain’s military war dead. Wearing the poppy becomes a public expression of remembrance. These expressions of remembrance are mediated, however, through the poppies’ inextricable associations with the First World War. Mark Imber and Trudy Fraser (2011, 385) explain how ‘the familiar rituals and iconography of remembrance are nearly all derived from World War I and its immediate aftermath’. For example, the red paper poppy is designed to evoke the poppies
that grew amongst the battlefields of the Western Front. The devastating impact of industrial trench warfare on the landscape of Belgium and Northern France caused the poppies to germinate in large numbers (Iles 2008, 201). In recent years, in part due the impact of Help for Heroes, the RBL has made considerable attempts to modernise. In 2010, a group of British veterans described the lead up to remembrance day as a ‘a month-long drum roll of support for current wars’ (Griffin et al. 2010). Nevertheless, the RBL is an organisation that retains a deep-seated associated with the “total” wars of the twentieth century, especially WWI, and it elicits much of its support by evoking Britain’s military past. In contrast, Help for Heroes is a military charity that was launched during a period of heavy fighting by British troops in Afghanistan. Unlike the RBL, then, it is a product of Britain’s wars on terror. As such, the way it communicates and mediates the effects of warfare retain a link to the characteristics that define these conflicts, especially Britain’s involvement in Afghanistan.

Help for Heroes’ first project involved raising £8.5 million so that a swimming pool and rehabilitation centre could be built at Headley Court, an existing Ministry of Defence (MoD) facility. The campaign was boosted by some influential backers, including the then head of the British Army, Richard Dannatt. Vron Ware (2010) explains how initial support for Help for Heroes came from the military realm and beyond:

In addition to prominent serving and former military personnel, the roll call of celebrity patrons ensured that well-known figures from sport, media, music and other realms of public life were ready to associate themselves with the campaign.

In subsequent years, Help for Heroes has become one of the UK’s primary welfare providers for injured military personnel. Today, large parts of the MoD’s Defence Recovery Capability (DRC) are jointly funded and operated by the RBL and Help for Heroes, and of the seven personal recovery centres that make up the DRC, the RBL run three and Help for Heroes four (UK Ministry of Defence 2012).

In charitable terms, the rise of Help for Heroes is an incredible success story. In his autobiography, Richard Dannatt (2010, 349), now the Help for Heroes president, describes how the launch of the charity ‘stirred up the entire service charity sector’. Founded less

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31 This was confirmed to me in an informal conversation with a senior member of the British Legion. For more on the Poppy Appeal, Victoria Basham (2015) examines its gendered and racial politics.
than a decade ago, it now enjoys a turnover of £30 million a year and, according to one charities expert, ‘they have become the beacon for young charity growth across the UK’ (Cameron 2015). It also currently sits at number three in YouGov’s (2015) UK Charity Brand Index, falling between two giants of the charity world Cancer Research UK and Macmillan Cancer Support. The same charities expert argues, that ‘there isn’t a brand in this country that doesn’t admire and slightly envy what they have managed to achieve’ (Cameron 2015). Nevertheless, its impact goes far beyond charitable success. As a military charity, it sits at the intersection of two important shifts in the mediation of the UK civil-military relationship.

First, Help for Heroes has played a significant role in changing portrayals of military veterans in the UK. Before Help for Heroes, UK military veterans were most readily associated with the First or Second World War. Again, the mediation of the RBL plays a large role in perpetuating this image. Hew Strachan (2011, 282) explains how:

> By linking veterans to Remembrance Sunday and to the public image created by members of the Royal British Legion, Britain associates them with the two world wars.

In contrast, as a product of contemporary wars, Help for Heroes draws attention to injured soldiers that are ravaged by war but not age. Despite their injuries, these soldiers retain bodies that in many respects remain fit, strong and healthy. This is in part due to a combination of advances in medical technology and changes in the types of weapons that have been used against British forces. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are characterised by particular types of injury, notably, amputations caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In a report written for the UK government, the doctor and MP Andrew Murrison (2011a, 3) explains this in more detail:

> Increased use by the Taliban of Improvised Explosive Devices and world class medical care in the field have generated a rise in the number of surviving amputees, often multiple with extensive co-morbidities.

Added to this are advances in prosthetics and adaptive sporting equipment, which mean that even those that are most seriously injured appear, on the surface at least, to be symbols of progress, vitality and resilience.
Second, the emergence of Help for Heroes has altered the ways in which people in the UK engage with military charities. In contrast to the RBL’s three-week-long ‘poppy appeal’, with its associated rituals of sombre and respectful remembrance, fundraising for Help for Heroes typically means taking part in exciting and challenging activities: running 50 miles a day for 50 consecutive days, walking the entire 8,000 mile coastline of mainland Britain, cycling through Northern France along the “Western Front” or taking part in extreme military style obstacle courses. While charitable support for the military has a long tradition in the United Kingdom, the ways in which members of the public are now asked to lend their support through Help for Heroes means the nature of this support has altered radically.

Taken together, these changes suggest a significant realignment in the interface between the ‘civilian’ and the ‘military’ in the UK. In other words, keeping in mind the pivotal role that military charities play in the mediation of the UK civil-military relationship, the emergence of Help for Heroes amounts to a fundamental shift in how the British war-fighting experience is projected into the everyday. Besides, as military charities are typically the products of particular conflicts, Help for Heroes plays a pronounced role in communicating to the wider population experiences, images and narratives from Britain’s wars on terror. But while major deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan have come to an end, Help for Heroes remains. A legacy from those conflicts which continues to mediate, in particular ways, wider understandings of the role of Britain’s war fighting institutions.

**HELP FOR HEROES AND THE INJURED SOLDIER**

*Everything we do is focused on the delivery of the best support to the wounded, injured, sick and their families. Or, as we said on day one, “It’s all about the blokes”.*

*Help for Heroes - Annual Report 2014*

Help for Heroes puts the injured soldier in a privileged space, not only as charitable benefactor but as a witness of UK military operations. Typically, these soldiers have experienced life-changing injuries on the battlefields of Iraq or Afghanistan. Brin Parry, the Help for Heroes founder, calls them “the blokes”, a colloquial term used in the UK for describing men with an uncomplicated, honest, almost ordinary masculinity. It is a term that in one respect, juxtaposes against the motifs of exceptionality and heroism that are inscribed upon many of the bodies that come into contact with the charity. In another
respect, however, it discursively strips away characteristics that could be associated with a complex femininity, for example, a moaning or complaining patient.

*Help for Heroes* has played a significant role in raising the profile of injured soldiers in the UK. Indeed, injured soldiers have not always had such extensive public exposure. This is primarily because they are often seen as symbols of war’s futility. Paul Achter (2010, 47) argues that injured soldiers carry with them ‘unruly bodies’ that are ‘freighted with an excess of symbolicity that threatens to undermine war efforts’. In fact, there have been several attempts by British governments to hide away those who have been injured by war. After the Falkland’s War, injured soldiers were initially asked not to take part in the victory parade until a public outcry led to the inclusion of six wheelchair-bound veterans who had to be ‘chosen by the Ministry of Defence’ and even then they were then only permitted to watch from the side-lines (Hamilton 1982). More recently, in 2006, the year before *Help for Heroes* launched, Andrew Gilligan presented a television documentary, broadcast in the UK, entitled *Battle Fatigue*. The documentary focused on the evasive tactics used by the Ministry of Defence to prevent the wider public from seeing the brutal consequences of two protracted military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. At one point in the documentary, Gilligan complains to his viewers: ‘You’ve seen the dead from Iraq but can you remember the last time you saw someone who was wounded on the news?’ (Bluemel 2006). Only a decade old, Gilligan’s documentary is now a stark reminder of how much the UK civil-military landscape has changed in the ten years since its broadcast. Over the past ten years, there has been a radical rise in the visibility of injured military personnel, particularly from the United Kingdom’s most recent conflicts. The injured soldier’s body has moved away from an ‘unruly’ position into a place of centrality where it now acts as one of the predominant communicators and mediators of Britain’s war-fighting experience. Today, images of bodies scarred through conflict abound at sporting events and in the popular media. At least five members of the British Paralympic Team at London 2012 were there because of serious injuries sustained in either Iraq or Afghanistan (Barford 2012). In 2014, the *Invictus Games*, held in London’s Olympic Park, saw over 400 injured serving and former members of armed forces from 13 countries compete against each other in nine different sports. The event was promoted by its organisers as a place to ‘celebrate their fighting spirit through sporting achievement’ (Invictus Games 2015). It enjoyed sell-out crowds and, in the UK, a national television audience. As well as sporting events, there have also been a number of primetime television documentaries, such as the BBCs *Wounded* (2009) and *Harry’s Arctic Heroes*
(2011) which ensure that images of bodies damaged through British war fighting continue to pervade the everyday experience.

Nevertheless, this rise in visibility is an asymmetrical phenomenon: not all injured soldiers have experienced the same exposure. This is because sporting events like the Paralympic and Invictus Games bring to the fore a particular type of injured body: a body that appears not only to have recovered from injury, but that has, in some way, moved beyond or even been enriched by its battlefield afflictions. The form of rehabilitation that dominate Help for Heroes’ publicity are its sport recovery programmes. One of its flagship programmes is Front Line to Start Line a joint initiative between Help for Heroes, the sporting-goods multinational Adidas, and the British Paralympic Association (Help for Heroes 2013a). It is a talent-spotting programme that brings together the British Paralympic Association and injured soldiers who want to compete at the highest levels of disabled sports. The initiative has made celebrities out of some military personnel who were injured in Iraq and Afghanistan: athletes such as Derek Derenalagi, a double amputee and former army private who competed in the shot put in London and Jon-Allen Butterworth, a former RAF weapons technician who lost his arm in 2007 and won two silver medals in cycling events at the same games. The soldier/athletes who go on to compete in these events represent a tiny minority of service personnel who have been assisted by Help for Heroes but they become symbols of Help for Heroes’ general sports-recovery approach to rehabilitation.

The bodies that programmes such as Front Line to Start Line produce are inscribed with the attributes of what Callie Batts and David Andrews (2011, 255) identify in the United States as the ‘soldier/athlete’ subject: the Paralympian winning medals for Team GB, the amputee walking to the North Pole with Prince Harry or the victim of horrific burns running 126 marathons in seven years. Images of the soldier/athlete are on display throughout the charity’s publication material. Open the most recent Help for Heroes annual report and the first image you are presented with is injured members of the British Armed Forces competing at the Invictus Games and the words ‘Beyond Injury…’ printed beneath them (Help for Heroes 2014a). Further inside, images of a triple-amputee surfing, an injured soldier on a mono-ski and wheelchair basketball fill the pages. While providing a brief glimpse of what some soldiers have experienced since returning from war, they present a limited and distorted picture of the wider human cost of Britain’s military operations. Soldier/athletes form part of what Joanna Tidy (2015, 7) calls ‘a broader
configuration of (in)visibility, in which the damaged bodies of soldiers are made conspicuously visible only once (or if) they have completed their transformatory “becoming”. In other words, while making visible a number of particular injured bodies, the same process simultaneously hides the full extent of the damage that has been caused through two protracted conflicts to hundreds of thousands more bodies. Removed from view are the countless civilians and non-British combatants who have either perished or been maimed by British military activity. Furthermore, images of the soldier/athlete sit in stark contrast to the hundreds of homeless, incarcerated and drug and alcohol-dependent veterans in the UK, who remain relatively unseen.

*Help for Heroes* sits at the intersection of this ‘broader configuration of (in)visibility’ as an organisation that both produces and relies upon the presence of the ‘soldier/athlete’ subject. But whether they are invisible or visible soldiers’ bodies are always enmeshed within a complex of power relations. Foucault teaches us that power is productive. It does not simply negate, repress and deny, it produces human subjects. These are subjects that can be mobilised and co-opted into a myriad of political strategies. The emergence of the soldier/athlete subject provides us with a vivid illustration of this. Batts and Andrews (2011, 555) explain how:

> We must recognize that the body of the emergent soldier/athlete is far from benign and apolitical; rather, as a symbol of both military and sporting constituencies, it is an emotive site upon which contemporary cultural meanings and political demands are inscribed and mobilized.

By producing the bodies of soldier/athlete, *Help for Heroes* makes visible bodies that are inscribed with particular narratives of overcoming, progress and fulfilment after injury. The political symbolism inscribed upon these bodies, in effect, stands in for the lack of political legitimacy of the conflicts they were fighting in.

**Restoring the Injured Soldier**

On its *YouTube* channel, *Help for Heroes* has produced a series of short videos all subtitled *Wounded Hero*. Each video contains the first-hand account of a soldier injured in either Iraq or Afghanistan and each begins in the same way, with the injured soldier describing their own recollection of being injured in a war zone. What strikes you at first is how some of the soldiers make every effort to recall the physical and visual sensations of being
injured: ‘my ears were ringing like I’d been to a concert, and a burning feeling on both my legs but I didn’t realise it was that bad’, says Steve Arnold describing the moment he lost both legs after stepping on an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) (Help for Heroes 2013b). ‘Looking down I could see blood all over me, there was nothing left of my body’, Derek Derenalagi, another double amputee explains (Help for Heroes 2011a). After these horrific opening descriptions, the background music changes tone and the soldier goes on to describe how Help for Heroes helped them to rebuild themselves and their lives. In one video, shown on the ITV’s primetime talent show The X-Factor, Matt Wilson, another soldier who stepped on an IED, tells the audience how ‘without the facilities Help for Heroes have provided I know I wouldn’t have been able to achieve what I’ve achieved in so little time’ (Help for Heroes 2011b). The videos end with accounts of the soldiers’ new lives. Derek Derenalagi tells how he is training for the London Paralympic Games, Steve Arnold how he cycled across the United States and took part in the Big Battlefield Bike Ride and Matt Wilson how he is now working towards his pilot’s licence.

In these videos, the injured soldier’s body is marked out for two forms of intervention: medical intervention and social intervention. In terms of medical intervention, these videos employ a narrative structure that is similar to those used by other charities – especially medical charities. Drawing on the work of Arthur W. Frank (1995), Nettleton and Hardey (2006, 447) argue that medical charities typically employ what Frank calls the ‘restitution’ narrative. Frank (1995, 77) explains how ‘the plot of the restitution has the basic storyline: “yesterday I was healthy, today I’m sick, but tomorrow I’ll be healthy again.”’ Underpinning, these narratives, therefore, is the assumption that health is ‘the normal condition that people ought to have restored’. In other words, the restitution narrative is a loaded framing that carries with it societal expectations of “normal” levels of health and fitness. However, health is not a neutral term, it is produced through specificities such as the salience of particular medical knowledges or the tasks that a “healthy” person is expected to perform. According to Frank (1995, 87), ‘the restitution story usually demands adherence to some regimen, and this medical (or alternative) compliance demands a disciplined body’. Foucault reminds us that a core aspect of biopolitics – a preoccupation with the health of the population – has always been linked to the productivity of the population. It follows, therefore, that different forms of work and consequently different identities require different levels of “health”. The Help for Heroes body is also a military body, a masculine body, a British body. This context brings with it then a particular understanding of what “healthy” is. The biopolitics of the
restitution narrative becomes intertwined with military logics. In a military context, a ‘healthy’ injured soldier has to become capable of feats that require much more fitness, determination and strength than are found in the ‘normal’ population. Restitution in this military setting only reaches completion, therefore, with a presentation of the hypermasculine, the athlete or the overachiever. Consequently, the body of the injured soldier becomes a site where the dichotomies that reinforce a clear civil-military divide are inscribed: unique vs. common place, exceptional vs. normal, strong vs. weak. Following Foucault, we should not ignore the relationship between medical knowledge and political power: how, for instance, these narratives of restitution shift focus from the maiming and killing of the battlefield to the miracles of Western medicine; how permanently scarred bodies become the focal point for celebrations of life, in events such as the Invictus and Paralympic Games, and lose their power to tell of war’s brutality; and how injured bodies move from an ‘unruly’ position of marginality to a position of centrality where they act as key mediators and producers of the UK civil-military relationship. Taken together, the restitution of the injured soldier’s body has become analogous with a broader political project committed to the restitution of the British military profession.

In terms of social intervention, the soldier’s restitution also becomes entangled with the motives of Help for Heroes fundraisers but also with the motives of corporate sponsors, media companies and government departments. Built into the floor at the entrance of the Help for Heroes rehabilitation centre at Headley Court is what it calls the ‘Pathway of Support’:

Each engraved paving stone represents the challenging, creative and downright crazy fundraising efforts of members of the British public. These include ‘Octogenarian David jumped out of a plane’, ‘Terry, 5, cycled in the park without stabilisers’ and ‘Ben swam the channel’ (Help for Heroes 2015d).

In this instance, the role of the fundraiser is literally inscribed into the medical facilities needed to rebuild and remake these bodies. This is typical of a rhetoric and symbolism routinely employed by Help for Heroes that fuses together acts of social engagement with processes of medical restitution and recovery. One effect this has is to exclude other possible solutions to the soldier’s predicament, in particular increases in government help and financing. Indeed, Help for Heroes can be located amongst a broader set of neo-liberal projects which materially and discursively reduce the role of the state in tackling social
problems. In his initial appeal for funds for the Headley Court rehabilitation centre, Brin Parry remarked that ‘obviously the MoD can’t blow its budget on this’, even though its cost represented 0.02% of the total spent by the British government on its war in Afghanistan alone. By 2012, the £70 million that Help for Heroes was putting into personal recovery centres was twice as much as that being contributed by central government (Mumford 2012, 825). While the MoD does take a lead role in co-ordinating and overseeing the rehabilitation of injured soldiers it does so increasingly with the assistance of a whole host of non-governmental institutions. Crucially, this shift from public to private has more than just an economic impact: as the fate of the injured soldier becomes dependent on engaged citizens and private corporations, this social engagement becomes intertwined with numerous political agendas and cultural paradigms. As Nettleton and Hardey conclude in their own analysis of the restitution narrative and the London Marathon: ‘the moral tale of these stories is that anyone who wishes to take part in the marathon can contribute to medical progress and improve people’s lives’ (2006, 450).

HELP FOR HEROES FUNDRAISING

We said to the country, I don’t mind how you do it but get out there and “do your bit” so run a cake sale, run up a mountain, do a marathon, do a bike ride, do things that are challenging for yourself and raise lots of money

Brin Parry - Co-Founder of Help for Heroes

Like most high-profile charities, Help for Heroes derives a large part of its income and publicity from encouraging members of the public to take part in eye-catching fundraising activities. These can include anything from selling cakes to holding a quiz night, but it is the physical sporting challenge that takes on an emblematic status among Help for Heroes fundraisers. Beyond the central figure of the injured soldier, Help for Heroes mobilises other bodies. The fundraisers who run, walk, cycle and put own their bodies to work towards the remaking of battle-scarred bodies. There is certainly nothing novel in this intertwining of philanthropy and physical exertion. In fact, several scholars suggest that it is an interplay that finds increasing resonance in advanced Western societies. Sarah Nettleton and Michael Hardey (2006, 445) speak of ‘charitable bodies’ that effect a ‘communal display of personal achievement, fit bodies, public generosity and apparent social solidarity’, while Ming Lim and Mona Moufahim (2015, 526) argue that it is a trend increasingly amplified through popular culture and that ‘the visceral, spectacular suffering associated with charity fundraising appears to be de rigueur’. In the UK, thousands of
people participate each year in events such as the London Marathon or Cancer Research’s Race for Life and push themselves to their physical limits for a good cause.

In this section, I am going to examine three different forms of Help for Heroes fundraising activity. First are the individual fundraising challenges, which are activities that tend to take on epic proportions. In recent years, these individual challenges have included one man who walked the entire 8,000-mile coastline of mainland Britain and another who ran 50 miles a day for 50 consecutive days. Second, is what Help for Heroes itself refers to as its ‘signature’ challenge, the Big Battlefield Bike Ride (BBBR). This is a 350-mile sponsored cycle ride that promises ‘to tell the story of the Western Front’ (Help for Heroes 2015a), as it passes through ‘the scene of some of the best known battles in history’ (Help for Heroes 2015b). Third is the mass-participation event Tough Mudder. Originating in the United States, Tough Mudder is a 12-mile military-style obstacle course ‘designed to test physical strength and mental grit’ (Tough Mudder 2015). In the UK, Tough Mudder organises several large-scale events each year and Help for Heroes is its official charity partner. While Tough Mudder participants can raise money for any charity, they are given discounts off their entry fees if they raise money for Help for Heroes, and, at various junctures throughout the Tough Mudder experience, participants are asked to make donations to the charity. My research here primarily derives from the large amounts of online content that is generated around these events, such as videos and blog posts, but I also draw on my own observations of attending the culmination of the Big Battlefield Bike Ride in Windsor in June 2015 and a Tough Mudder event in Skipton, North Yorkshire in August 2015.

The impact of these fundraising activities goes way beyond just providing the economic resources required to rehabilitate soldiers. They take on a much broader cultural significance as visible and embodied acts of appreciation for the armed forces. Richard Dannatt (2010, 349) argues that the charity is ‘a brilliant way for the population at large to get behind its servicemen and women, and their families’. In effect, these fundraising activities are physical fulfilments of the obligations contained within the military covenant. One participant in the 2014 Big Battlefield Bike Ride made this link clear: ‘these guys have given a lot so it’s our chance for us to show our appreciation’ he tells the camera (Help for Heroes 2014c). In the language of Help for Heroes this is known as “doing your bit”. The charity’s website invites fundraisers to ‘get involved, do your bit and help us help our heroes’ (Help for Heroes 2015c). It is a discursive association which links
fundraising for the charity with military participation. The phrase “do your bit” was commonly used during the First and Second World Wars in public information campaigns designed to encourage home front behaviours conducive to the war effort and so hints towards a feminised civilian contribution (Watson 1997). An example of what Joanna Tidy (2015, 10) describes as an appeal for ‘nostalgic civil–military engagement … in which forms of quasi-military service are brought into the most banal spaces of everyday civilian life’. But it also finds a contemporary resonance in the language of the military covenant with its implicit contrast between the civilian “bit” and the military “lot”: ‘keep on doing a bit for ‘em – they’ve done enough for us so keep on ploughing some back in’ another BBBR participant explains (Help for Heroes 2015e).

Support for Help for Heroes often becomes conflated with broader expressions of military support. One way that Help for Heroes comes to incorporate broader armed forces support is through its association with other initiatives such as Armed Forces Day, which I examined in the previous chapter, that are designed to generate overt demonstrations of support for the British Armed Forces. In the lead up to Armed Forces Day 2013, using careful language, the Help for Heroes co-founder Bryn Parry (2013) used the occasion to highlight the charity’s backing for the event and its broader aims:

> While our focus at Help for Heroes is on supporting those who have suffered life-changing injuries or illness and their loved ones, we also welcome the opportunity to show our support for the whole Armed Forces community.

When observing Armed Forces Day celebrations myself, I am always struck by the abundance of Help for Heroes merchandise on display. It always reminds me of the way that football fans wear replica shirts so they can demonstrate their devotion to the team. The Help for Heroes hoodie has become the de facto British Armed Forces supporter’s kit and the brand a ubiquitous sight within the post-2006 civil-military landscape.

One effect of these fundraising events is to make visible particular renderings of the injured soldier body. One way this happens is through the incorporation of injured soldiers into the fundraising events themselves. In fact, injured soldiers routinely take part in Help for Heroes fundraising events and when they do they invariably become the focal point. Notable in this regard is the Big Battlefield Bike Ride, which is part of a larger fundraising event, the Hero Ride. The Hero Ride incorporates 100 wounded, injured or sick
(WIS) ex-military personnel. Throughout the event the group is collectively referred to as “the 100” with publicity being generated through the hashtag #backthe100 and organisers promising a ‘ride alongside our heroes’ (Help for Heroes 2015a). When I observed the culmination of the Hero Ride in 2015 it was “the 100” encouraged by an ecstatic crowd waving Union Jacks and dancing to loud dance music, that were invited to enter the arena first.

During the Big Battlefield Bike Ride, various narratives are inscribed upon the bodies of these injured soldiers. The ride’s route incorporates large sections of the Western Front, and so a link is forged between soldiers who died during the First World War and today’s living wounded soldiers. In advance of the first Big Battlefield Bike Ride in 2008, Brin Parry (2007) made his intentions clear:

I am going to recruit and lead 300 volunteers to cross from Portsmouth to Normandy, and then ride through the battlefields of Normandy, Picardy and Somme before finishing in London on Sunday 1st June 2008. It will be a physically challenging but achievable ride, designed to link in the public mind Britain’s historic battlefields with those of today, and to raise awareness of the needs of our wounded. Each rider will become a fundraiser, assured and inspired in the knowledge that every effort expended in meeting the challenge will directly benefit our casualties.

In this brief passage, in one instant the restitution of the injured soldier’s body comes into direct contact with military logics. The bodies of the injured soldiers taking part in the Big Battlefield Bike Ride become part of a rewritten history of British ‘sacrifice’ and ‘liberation’, which has the effect of, by proxy, attaching these values to the war-fighting institutions they, in many ways, continue to represent even though they may have officially left. Even in injury, and post-service, therefore, British soldiers are able to contribute to a moral environment within which armed force can be more easily sustained. In other words, through their participation in events such as the Big Battlefield Bike Ride they put their bodies to work in ways that help sustain the violence of the British Armed Forces. These soldier/athlete bodies become the consummate biopolitical professionals, at the centre of an organisation committed to “making them live”. This is done in ways that enables them to continue contributing to the expertise of the British
military profession by becoming figures that military support is mobilised around. An event like the *Big Battlefield Bike Ride* also provides contemporary liberal violence with a legitimating frame, as it places it amid a narrative that demands sacrifice of each successive generation.

Joining these fundraising injured soldiers are the non-military fundraisers who put their bodies to work in order to “make live” the soldiers they ride with. They too contribute to this military-friendly moral environment, elevating the status of the wounded soldiers they are riding with. Sarah Ingham (2014, 104) argues that at its launch ‘*[Help for Heroes]* supporters were encouraged to think of themselves and armed forces personnel as part of one team, bridging the civil-military gulf’. Nevertheless, while events like the *Big Battlefield Bike Ride* do bring soldiers and civilians together, this can also have the converse effect of reinforcing civil-military divisions. Fundraising achievements are, of course, trivial when placed alongside the superhuman efforts of the rehabilitating soldier.

The bodies of injured soldiers are made visible in other ways. Fundraising bodies put themselves to work in ways that resonate, empathise with and make visible the gruelling rehabilitation efforts being undertaken by the recovering soldier. Indeed, Raven (2012) argues that ‘many of the fundraising efforts undertaken for Help for Heroes are as demanding and harrowing as military operations’. This is most likely the case in some of the individual challenges. These extraordinary physical (and mental) challenges at times require pushing the human body to its limits. Nevertheless, the *Help for Heroes* context invites self-depreciating comments from participants who are keen to stress the insignificance of their own contributions when compared to experiences of injured military personnel. Sam Boatwright, who ran 50 miles per day in 50 consecutive days, states how:

> One thing that has been keeping me going are the messages from wounded service men and women. I think about my 50 days of pain then compare it to what they’ve been going through … It always makes me mad for myself for moaning so I carry on. (Bates 2012).

In fact, in this example there is an added complexity. To speak of a dichotomous relationship between civilian fundraiser and military benefactor is far too simplistic. The bodies mobilised by *Help for Heroes* take on different roles at different times. For instance,
many of those who raise funds for Help for Heroes, such as Boatwright, are ex-military themselves. As a former member of the Navy, therefore, he is not just reproducing the civil-military divide but effectively opening up a new boundary between “ordinary” military personal and the injured soldier. Consequently, the injured soldier is promoted to an even higher state of elevation.

Nevertheless, the relationship between injured soldiers (and by proxy the broader military) and fundraising bodies is not always made so clear. During Tough Mudder events, the body of the injured soldier takes on a less visible presence. In fact, during my own visit to a Tough Mudder event, the injured soldier took on a more spectral presence. For instance, the Help for Heroes logo, a silhouetted and stretchered soldier, was embossed into an obstacle known as the Hero Wall. This is an obstacle that requires participants to scale a 10-foot wall, so that only the strongest and fittest are able to complete the obstacle unaided. This means that the majority of participants are forced to act collectively if they wish to get over the wall. In his ethnography of Tough Mudder events in Canada, Gavin Weedon concludes that what he experienced was ‘a profoundly shared endeavor, one in which a whole host of actors, human and otherwise, make dramatic and subtle contributions’ (2015, 20). Weedon goes on to explain, however, how events such as Tough Mudder appear to harbour a ‘masculine and militaristic character’, an observation that certainly corroborates with my own experience of Tough Mudder in the United Kingdom.

As other forms of collectivity in society dissipate, therefore, Tough Mudder provides an example of how the promise of collective endeavour is increasingly becomes the preserve of the militarised setting. Furthermore, the metaphor of “the obstacle” enables Tough Mudder organisers to compare the difficulty of a soldier’s rehabilitation to the relative triviality of their own event:

We host teams of H4H supporters and injured personnel at every Tough Mudder UK event. They display teamwork, determination and show what it means to overcome ALL obstacles.

The encompassing ‘ALL’ in this instance removes from view the countless other victims of British military operations who have not received support from charities like Help for Heroes or had their life chances dramatically improved by Western medicine. If British injured soldiers have overcome ‘all’ obstacles, then those that must overcome ‘more’ obstacles inhabit an impossible place.
Taken together, these fundraising activities come to embody a certain enactment of the UK civil-military relationship - bringing civilians and soldiers closer together, but in ways that emphasise their differences as much as their common cause. By taking on a painful gruelling challenge, the fundraiser is asked to empathise, in a small way, with the pain experienced on the battlefield and then in rehabilitation. At the same time, however, the fundraiser is being made constantly aware that their efforts are ultimately negligible in comparison. This dynamic between fundraiser and soldier further reinforces the notion of a clear civil-military divide while serving to inform the public of the professional soldier’s unique attributes.

**Help for Heroes is Good for Your Health**

These fundraising activities are not just expressions of military support, however, or simply ways in which a ‘healthy’ body can work towards remaking a ‘damaged’ one. These fundraising bodies are also living the experience of remaking, renewing and bettering their own bodies. Nettleton and Hardey (2006, 447) describe, during the spectacle of the London Marathon, how ‘the care of the self through the cultivation of fitness appears at least symbolically to provide for the care of others’. Fundraising for *Help for Heroes* comes to emulate this but in a military context. The publicity encouraging fundraisers to join the annual *Hero Ride* demands to be quoted at length in this respect:

> The physical benefits alone are impressive and the recommended training and preparation plan we provide will lead to a leaner, happier and healthier you. Add in the psychological benefits of doing something amazing to show your support and gratitude to those who have sacrificed so much for our country —well, simply put, you’re onto a winner. The ‘feel good factor’ that comes from riding with our inspiring Heroes cannot be bought, bottled or manufactured.

In the case of the *Hero Ride*, the physical benefits it bestows on the fundraiser’s body are represented as incidental side-effects as emphasis is still ultimately placed on the restitution of the soldier. However, in other *Help for Heroes* fundraising events, this works the other way around. In events such as *Tough Mudder*, the benefits of a new healthy lifestyle are cast as a primary function and raising money for *Help for Heroes* becomes a secondary benefit. *Tough Mudder* sets out its manifesto in a promotional video: ‘we are training people to live a better life, to live a better value set’. *Tough Mudder* is an event that
centres on the holistic renewal of the participant’s body and that has the restitution of the soldier’s body as a matter of background importance.

While the emphasis placed on the injured soldier varies in both the above examples, what they both highlight is how beyond the mobilising effects of military logics and the restitution narrative there are other logics at work, that are effective at mobilising bodies into everyday forms of military participation. In particular, it is in this instance that we see biopolitical logics at play in and around Help for Heroes.

In Chapter One, I argued that biopolitics is one of the principle modalities of power deployed within liberal governmental frameworks. In short, biopolitical power is one of the central mechanisms through ‘which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed’ (Foucault 1982, 790). One of the ways in which conduct is manipulated, at the level of the population, is through an emphasis on statistics related to ‘optimal’ levels of health. In this environment, certain ‘healthy’ body shapes, lifestyle choices and behaviours are statistically linked to outcomes such as longevity and become desirable while other ‘unhealthy’ behaviours become stigmatised. One outcome of this is that the population effectively comes to manage itself through ‘care of the self’ techniques, as Foucault (1997, 177) elaborates here:

Techniques that permit individuals to effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, their own souls, their own thoughts, their own conduct, and this in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves, and to attain a certain state of perfection, happiness, purity, supernatural power.

What becomes essential in this environment are outlets through which people can help themselves towards societal norms of ‘health’ and ‘fitness’. Help for Heroes provides not only one of those outlets, but also a central motivational figure, in the form of the recovering soldier, who is inscribed with motifs of unassailable levels of determination and strength. Indeed, while many of these fundraising events seek to emulate and thus make visible many of these same qualities, the endeavour is always marked by a sense of impossibility. Understood in this way, the body of the injured soldier becomes less a target for its own renewal and more a motivator for the renewal of other bodies. They have
become what McSorley (2016, 9) describes as ‘embodied exemplars of military fitness’. One Hero Ride participant explains how he was motivated in this way:

But you know what kept me going for those 75 miles?

The veteran on a hand bike who had only 1 limb because the other 3 had been amputated after an IED went off whilst he was out serving. A man who despite all the pain, hand cycled his way from Salisbury to Windsor. That is why the Hero Ride is incredible (Cameron 2015).

Another female participant seems to suggest that the motivation to continue riding comes from the sense of masculinity the injured soldiers instilled in the other participants:

When you ache a little bit you just need to look around and on you go, man up and crack on, grow a pair, as they say (Help for Heroes 2014b).

To be sure, these same motivational power relations exist within other medical charities. For example, the cancer patient’s gruelling treatment programme may provide the motivation needed for a fundraiser to put her body to work for organisations such as Cancer Research. However, in the context of Help for Heroes, another layer of elevation is added. Between the injured soldier and fundraiser there is a feedback loop wherein the unattainability of the injured soldier’s own gruelling rehabilitation and their professional status, provides an infinite source of motivation to the fundraiser. Again, the epic runner Boatwright encapsulates this:

To me, no matter what challenge I take on, it can never be as hard as those faced by some of the ex-servicemen and women Help for Heroes support.

Although many of these fundraising challenges resonate with and make visible the soldier’s rehabilitation effort, therefore, the fundraiser will never achieve the level of effort, motivation and perseverance on display in the body of the injured soldier. In effect, the fundraiser and the injured soldier become locked in a self-perpetuating power relationship, from which the primary effects are a further elevation of the military profession. This turns these fundraising activities into embodied demonstrations of military support; military support that is good for your health.
CONCLUSION

*Help for Heroes* is a charity that co-opts, mobilises, inscribes upon and communicates through a series of human bodies. Most military charities are ultimately concerned with either the physical or mental wellbeing of soldiers’ and veterans’ bodies, but none communicate so extensively through the language of bodily pain, health, wounding and strain like *Help for Heroes*. The body of the injured soldier is enmeshed within a series of power relations which are produced through the intertwining of medical, political and social discourses.

In the United Kingdom, *Help for Heroes* has played a central role in increasingly the visibility of injured military personnel. It is through representations of veteran’s bodies that the effects of warfighting are often mediated. In this respect, images of the brutally injured and broken bodies of veterans have played a key role in communicating the horrors of war and have thus been crucial instruments in the war-resisters toolkit. In recent years, however, bodies of veterans have been increasingly seen ‘in athletic contexts [which] moves them beyond the injury, at times overcompensating for bodily differences by attributing to injured veterans a hyper-athleticism or physical prowess’ (Achter 2010, 64). Veterans are increasingly represented, therefore, as people who have overcome their experience of the battlefield and have even in some way been renewed through their subsequent experience. These representations not only hide from view the full-scale of physical and mental damage suffered by veterans but they turn the “traditionally” resistant image of the injured soldier into one of progress, hope and vitality.

Fundraising for *Help for Heroes* becomes incorporated into liberal regimes of power that work towards the normalisation of bodies: their health, shape and routine activities. But fundraising for *Help for Heroes* also involves engaging with military personnel and demonstrating support for the broader UK armed forces. As Richard Dannatt (2010, 358) acknowledges, *Help for Heroes* was among a number of initiatives which ‘came together to reassure the Army that the people were behind them’. This conflation of military engagement and healthy activity normalises activities which ultimately serves to sustain the violence of the British Armed Forces.

*Help for Heroes* is not just the product of the military professional, therefore, it is also the product of a society increasingly preoccupied by its own health and wellbeing. In this environment, *Help for Heroes* emerges as an organisation that allows participants the
opportunity to reshape and improve their own bodies while engaging in a collective action that is committed to the restitution of soldier’s body.

Consequently, while armed forces have long promoted military service as a healthy lifestyle choice, it now appears that promises of health and wellness are increasingly coming to inform the mobilisation of more everyday forms of military participation. Biopolitical professionalism appears in its clearest form when armed force is repackaged as a health-giving force. Not just for its immediate employees but for the populations they purport to protect. In the UK today, creating the political conditions for armed force to thrive requires more than just a simple promise to kill “others” while letting their protectorates live; the central promise contained within Huntington’s “cold war” articulation of military professionalism. A new promise has emerged surrounding the increasingly uncertain claims of moral authority made by and for the military profession. A biopolitical promise that if “making die”, in the name of the sovereign, is allowed to continue unabated, then “made to live” will be those who participate in armed force’s moral restitution. This emergent biopolitical professionalism finds one of its clearest expressions through the bodies that are worked on, mobilised, and made visible by Help for Heroes.
CONCLUSION

My research contributes to an already growing critical military studies literature which posits that ‘our very conceptions of military power, militarism, and militarization are themselves open to critique and reimagining’ (Basham et al. 2015, 1). In this thesis, I make this contribution by addressing the research question: how does the figure of the professional soldier sustain and normalise the violence of the British Armed Forces? My response has been to chart the rise of a figure, I name the biopolitical military professional. I have shown how the biopolitical military professional comes to act as the focal point for a number of civil-military initiatives which sustain the violence of the British Armed Forces by facilitating novel forms of military participation. These initiatives also normalise the violence of the British Armed Forces by encouraging forms of military participation that are compatible with “normal” healthy lifestyles. Hence, the biopolitical military professional is a Janus-faced figure who, on the one hand, engages in a “struggle for expertise”, sometimes testing it in the most violent circumstances, but who, on the other, encourage forms of military participation that are life-enriching. Consequently, the biopolitical military professional sits at the heart of a symbiotic biopolitical civil-military relationship in which members of the wider population sustain the violence of the British Armed Forces by providing economic and moral resources, and in return are made fitter, stronger and healthier. This has important implications, as it means that military violence can increasingly take place without a credible political context. This is because the biopolitical military professional is able to find a certain resonance with a civilian population disinterested in the politics of war but increasingly concerned with their health and wellbeing.

Moreover, my thesis places this figure of the biopolitical military professional into a broader political, social and historical context. By doing this I was able to demonstrate that the military professional is not the product of liberal war-fighting’s inevitable rationalisation but that is it is the product of a series of historical contingencies and problematisations. This is important because it disrupts the ability of the professional soldier to inscribe its violence with meaning. In this first instance, I interrogated this

52 Christopher Dandeker (2000, 173) notes that armed forces are ‘Janus-faced’ organisations who, on the one hand, are always looking to improve their military effectiveness and, on the other, are always trying to remain in touch with the society they serve. The biopolitical military professional represents a particular variation on that theme.
context by developing the notion of *biopolitical militarism*. Biopolitical militarism is a regime of power that provides an outlet for a necessary violence which sits at the heart of liberal government. According to Michel Foucault, what sets liberalism apart, from other forms of government, is its biopolitical imperative. Biopolitics is a form of power that operates at the level of whole populations by normalising the behaviour of “free” human subjects through an interplay of expert knowledge and self-governance. Biopolitics typically finds expression in public health programmes which seek to improve the living conditions of the population. However, to operate successfully, biopolitics depends upon different forms of violence such as exclusion and stigmatisation. This violence finds a number of different outlets, but the most organised and overt are expressions of militarism. This is what I label biopolitical militarism: a regime of power that produces a violence that acts in the name of the population by harnessing the resources of that same population. These resources come from the bodies of new recruits who are shaped into soldiers, but they are also extracted from “civilians” who facilitate the business of liberal war-fighting by providing financial and moral support. Crucially, it is biopolitical militarism that sustains the violence of the British Armed Forces.

My next conceptual move was to situate the figure of the professional soldier within this regime of biopolitical militarism. To do this, I began by examining the Second World War, a high-point for biopolitical militarism as this was a time when whole populations were being mobilised against each other. After the Second World War, however, the strategies and logics of biopolitical militarism underwent a profound problematisation. In particular, the appearance of nuclear weapons meant that liberal states found it increasingly difficult to claim that their violence could still act in the name of the population. Against this backdrop, the figure of the professional soldier emerges: a pragmatic expert who can negotiate the high-stakes of the nuclear age. The professional soldier facilitates the strategies and logics of biopolitical militarism by acting as both an expert, who harnesses the resources of the population, and someone who is responsible, who works in the name of that population. However, the professional soldier is already a problematic figure - an imperfect “solution” – as the professional soldier sits apart from the population from which it draws its resources. Consequently, a tension arises between the strategies and logics of biopolitical militarism and the function of the professional soldier. This tension is further exacerbated because expertise is an attribute that is nurtured and exalted in liberal societies. Thus, an “unbalanced” military professional emerges who puts the pursuit of expertise ahead of the political context of their actions.
This imbalance further problematises biopolitical militarism. This is because the “expert” military professional serves to strip conflict of its political context which makes it increasingly difficult to harness civilian support. It is in response to this problematisation that the figure of the biopolitical military professional emerges, a fragile figure who is sustained by novel forms of “civilian” military participation. Significantly, much of this military participation can be understood as a form of proto-professionalism wherein liberal subjects are compelled to live their lives in relation to the knowledge and expertise of the biopolitical military professional. Crucially, this knowledge comprises a “traditional” military expertise that is incorporated into a wider set of expert knowledges related to the biological wellbeing of population.

In the second half of the thesis, I used this theoretical framework to investigate how the figure of the biopolitical military professional emerges in a British context. This began with a study of doctrinal debates that took place in and around the British Army in the late 1990s. During this period, the figure of the military professional emerges in response to a problematisation of biopolitical militarism that relates to the end of the Cold War. In fact, it emerges in two forms. First, the professional soldier appears as the soldier-scholar: the writer of doctrine who readily engages with civilian academic institutions. Second, the figure of the professional soldier emerges through the debates and doctrine that are written by these soldier-scholars. My research shows how, within these debates, the professional soldier subject is written as the “war-fighting soldier”. Moreover, by performing a genealogical analysis of these texts, I demonstrate how this war-fighting subject can be analysed on three levels: as an abstract ideal, through an institutional lens and then finally against the backdrop of the population. What my analysis shows is that during this period the civilian population was becoming an increasingly problematised entity. Crucially, I also demonstrate how these debates were written through the lens of the disciplinary institution and how, as a result, the problem of the population is left unresolved. It is this tension that foreshadows the emergence of the biopolitical military professional in the UK.

My thesis then jumps forward to analysing the period after 2006 when the British Armed Forces entered into a bloody conflict in Helmand Province, southern Afghanistan. What materialised in Helmand, I argued, was a form of expert-professionalism wherein soldiers became much more concerned with testing their professional skill-set than in attending to the political context of the conflict. I analysed this expert-professionalism on three
levels. First, I examined how the British Army, as an institution, saw Helmand as an opportunity to atone for the professional embarrassment of Iraq. Second, I explained how, on an individual level, soldiers were defining their experience in relation to their own expertise. Finally, I built on these insights, to argue that a product of the Helmand War has been a form of “textbook” professionalism through which the experiences of conflict are written up into professional texts. Crucially, it is these texts that will inform the British Armed Forces’ “struggle for expertise” for years to come. I then demonstrated how this expert professionalism took place at a time when “at home” members of the British public were also being asked to dissociate the expertise of the professional soldier from the political context of the wars they were fighting in. The most notably manifestation of this request comes in the form of the so-called military covenant. The military covenant is a rhetorical device which, in effect, asks people to separate the expertise of the soldier from the responsibility of the soldier – or to Support the Troops, Oppose the War. It is this severing of expertise and responsibility that makes the figure of biopolitical military professional possible.

In the final part of the thesis, I examined two of the most prominent civil-military initiatives that have appeared in the UK since 2006: Armed Forces Day and the military charity Help for Heroes. Through an analysis of these examples, I showed how each of them promotes and depends upon a different type of biopolitical military professional figure. During Armed Forces Day celebrations, the biopolitical military professional exhibits their professional skill set through a series of spectacular displays and public encounters. Crucially, the opportunity to engage with the military professional is packaged through Armed Forces Day as something that is fun and educational for children. Furthermore, I used my first-hand experiences of attending Armed Forces Day celebrations, to help me analyse some of the other ways children are co-opted into forms of military service. For example, I investigated how the figure of the biopolitical military professional is reproduced in toy form, and sold as something that can help with a child’s developmental needs. Armed Forces Day is an example, therefore, of the ways in which the behaviour of liberal subjects is directed in relation to the expertise of the biopolitical military professional.

I also demonstrated how the figure of the biopolitical military professional is produced through the charity Help for Heroes. Through the charity, a small proportion of severely injured soldiers can retain their military professionalism through the charity’s
rehabilitation programmes as well as its associated publicity and sporting opportunities. Indeed, a few high-profile figures, after their “official” military service has ended, have undertaken successful careers as consummate biopolitical military professionals. These soldier/athlete figures can generate financial and moral support for the British Armed Forces by acting as examples to a whole host of “fundraising” subjects who put their own energy towards the rehabilitation of injured soldiers while also contributing to the metaphorical rehabilitation of the British Armed Forces. Moreover, by fundraising for Help for Heroes, through what are often gruelling physical challenges, these fundraisers are also improving their own bodies. Thus, Help for Heroes is a charity through which a particular biopolitics is enacted wherein military support is being generated through the actions of self-governing liberal subjects attending to both the sustenance of their own military defence and health needs. Help for Heroes facilitates an interplay between the body of the biopolitical military professional and the fundraising subject that serves to both sustain and normalise the violence of the British Armed Forces.

**Contributions**

My thesis makes two primary contributions. My first primary contribution is to show how processes of military professionalisation are intimately connected to expressions of everyday militarism. The story of the Western military profession is one that sees military power being placed into the hands of an ever-smaller group of people who are always becoming more expert and knowledgeable in the conduct of violence. In contrast, in recent years, a number of critical military scholars have observed how incidences of everyday militarism have proliferated in the UK (Jenkings et al. 2012; Gee 2014; Basham 2015; Tidy 2015; McSorley 2016). This thesis has interrogated the relationship between these two apparently opposing trends.

To do this, I adopted a Foucauldian methodology that enabled me to examine the ways in which processes of professionalisation produce and propagate military power. Hence, my work can be situated within a Foucauldian tradition that seeks to disrupt progressive liberal metanarratives. Throughout his career, Foucault challenged claims that societies were becoming more rational, humane and free. Likewise, this thesis challenges the liberal narrative that Western society is becoming increasingly peaceable by highlighting some of the ways violent military activity is being continually made possible in everyday settings. I demonstrate this by investigating the relationship between the figure of the military professional and the production of other “militarised” subject types. Foucault was able
to counter progressive meta-narratives by identifying and analysing the different modalities of power through which human beings are made into political subjects (Foucault 1982, 790). In a similar vein, I identify a regime of power, biopolitical militarism, as a way of identifying the different subject types that contribute to the organisation and legitimisation of liberal war-fighting. Crucially, I have shown how, within this regime of power, the professional soldier is key. For example, after the Second World War, the professional soldier emerges as a rational and reassuring figure who will ensure that liberal war-fighting can continue to take place in the name of the population. In this respect, therefore, my thesis also contributes by making a critical intervention into a largely conservative body of literature on the military professional (Huntington 1957; Janowitz 1971).

However, the relationship between the professional soldier and biopolitical militarism is not static, there is a productive tension between them. Indeed, for biopolitical militarism, the professional soldier is always a problematic figure who sits apart from society. Significantly, it is by observing this tension that I have been able to reveal how a whole host of other subject types are produced within the space that opens up between them. For example, I show how, after 2006, a deep schism appears between biopolitical militarism’s need to harness the population’s resources and the biopolitical military professional subject who is primarily concerned with improving their military expertise. In this instance, via the implementation of contrived civil-military initiatives, a whole host of other “militarised” subject types appear.

In other words, the production of other subject types becomes necessary because the figure of the professional soldier is, in fact, “not working”. However, it is this very fragility that reinforces the biopolitical military professional’s ability to produce other subject types. For example, events like Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes both depend upon the production of a fragile biopolitical military professional to act as their focal point. During Armed Forces Day celebrations, members of the public are encouraged to show their support to a group of professionals who we are told are underappreciated. Through charities such as Help for Heroes, the broken and wounded soldier provides the raw materials for practises that generate military support. The professional soldier has never looked so vulnerable but this only enhances its ability to extract the resources that biopolitical militarism needs from the wider population.
Furthermore, by investigating the interplay between the professional soldier and other militarised subjects, my thesis sheds conceptual light on the ways in which civil-military relationships are produced. Significantly, it does this in a way that contributes to a critical military studies literature which problematises ‘the idea that a neat boundary can be delineated between what is “military” and what is “civilian” or otherwise’ (Basham et al. 2015, 1). I do this by showing how both “military” and “civilian” subject types are both produced through the same regime of power, biopolitical militarism. Indeed, I argue that these civilian “militarised” subjects are, in fact, types of ‘proto-professionals’ whose behaviour and conduct are directed by the knowledge and expertise of the biopolitical military professional (de Swaan 1990, 14). This might be knowledge about a particular geopolitics, related to the inevitability of violence, but it could also be knowledge about the ways in which engagement with military values and institutions can facilitate individual self-improvement. Crucially, it is by adopting this approach that I have been able to show how anyone can become complicit in the sustenance of military violence, whether they are a military professional or not.

My second primary contribution is to develop a theoretical framework which emphasises the importance of bringing a biopolitical analysis to the study of militarism. In this respect, I follow in the tradition of critical military scholars, such as Victoria Basham (2013) and Kevin McSorley (2016) whose work already demonstrates how fruitful a biopolitical analysis of militarism can be. My own project contributes to this research agenda by developing a theoretical framework which places the biopolitics of militarism into a historical, political and social context. One way it does this is by continually observing the limits of studying military power through a purely disciplinary lens. Disciplinary power works at a relatively local level, through institutions and by directly accessing the body. However, by bringing a Foucauldian analytic of power to the study of militarism, I have been able to show how, beyond discipline, different modalities of power contribute to the organisation of liberal violence, notably biopolitics.

Since the end of the Second World War, liberal war-fighting has been increasingly conducted within an environment of increased moral ambiguity. This has meant that military professionals have become increasingly preoccupied with the characteristics of “civilian” populations that reside outside the military institution and the ways in which they are either able to support or compromise their profession. In relation to this, on a number of occasions, throughout the thesis, I highlight instances where scholars
addressing this problem have become effectively “trapped” from within their own disciplinary approach. For example, Samuel Huntington ends The Soldier and The State on a frustrated note bemoaning the lack of discipline from within civilian society. His work address the military response to the problem of civil-military relations (professionalisation) but leaves the reader with the unresolved problem of an unruly civilian population. Similarly, I note the disciplinary limitations of British military doctrine and its surrounding debates in the late 1990s. In this case, the problem of an uncooperative civilian population is addressed in great detail. Nevertheless, the only responses that are given are disciplinary and, hence, are only concerned with how soldiers might be trained in relation to the problem. Significantly, there is scant attention given to the ways in which the civilian population might be governed so they can better contribute to the organisation and legitimisation of liberal war-fighting.

Crucially, it is these observations which allow me to underline the significance the post-2006 civil-military initiatives. Indeed, what is significant about civil-military initiatives, such as Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes, is that they all, on some level, address the problem of the civilian population biopolitically. Unlike the localised focus of disciplinary power, biopolitics is a form of power that is able to operate on the scale of whole populations. My analysis is crucial, therefore, for understanding how seemingly contrived initiatives have become so successful against the backdrop of unpopular wars. It helps to explain why these events have found such resonance with members of wider society. For example, I have shown how Armed Forces Day is not simply a way for people to “show their support”, it is a way for them to expose their children to the educational and physical benefits of engaging with a military institution. Likewise, Help for Heroes not just a way for people to contribution towards the rehabilitation of injured soldiers, it is charity which encourages behaviour that is conducive to fundraisers own physical betterment.

Furthermore, by analysing these civil-military practises biopolitically I contribute to a research agenda that is concerned with the biopolitics of liberal war-fighting. Indeed, both initiatives, like Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes, and the violent actions of soldiers are integral to the way liberal wars are conducted. Liberal wars are carried out so that specific populations can flourish (Foucault 1990; Dillon and Reid 2009). The violence of liberal wars seeks to remove elements that threaten that population. With the emergence of the biopolitical military professional, however, the betterment of the population also takes place on another front, as members of the referent population are encouraged and
motivated to make themselves fitter and stronger, and to do so in a way that sustains a violence that acts in their name.

However, my thesis has also shown how there is a discontinuity between the two faces of the biopolitical military professional. On a number of levels, the initiatives that I have researched bear little relation to the violence they sustain. They are contrived appendages to wars that are stripped of political context. I most clearly observed this during events like *Armed Forces Day* where an activity like applauding and cheering members of the armed forces on a high street in Stirling is far removed from the experience of the Afghan battlefield, but even a charity like *Help for Heroes* that puts some of the effects of war on display, directs its fundraisers and supporters away from the political context of those effects.

**STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK**

When I first began work on this thesis, I set out to explore the relationship between the formation of scholarly knowledge, on the one hand, and manifestations of “real life” or “everyday” militaristic practises, on the other. I was intrigued by books like Samuel Huntington’s (1957) *The Soldier and The State* because I believed they could tell us something about the way liberal societies produce, organise and legitimise their violence. After all, these were books that read like manifestos for liberal war-fighting’s post-war conditions of possibility. The challenge was to investigate the links between what someone like Huntington was writing about in the USA in 1957, and the actions of a person running a marathon for *Help for Heroes* in the UK in the 2015.

What has allowed me to draw these links is the development of a theoretical framework that has singled out one key character: the professional soldier. This figure became increasingly important to my research, because as it progressed, I kept noticing how, during particular periods, the professional soldier kept reappearing within scholarly literature but also in “real life” settings. In Huntington, the emergence of the professional soldier is explicitly laid out in his prose, but through *Help for Heroes* the charity becomes a site through which a particular rendering of the professional soldier is produced. What these two distinct appearances of the professional soldier have in common is that they both emerge in relation to a problematisation in the relationship between the means of violence and the wider population. In other words, in both instances, the figure of the professional soldier appears to “rescue” biopolitical militarism. From a theoretical perspective, therefore, a key strength of this study has been its ability to draw attention
to the professional soldier as a figure in need of careful critical attention. Indeed, I have shown throughout this thesis how the professional soldier continually reappears to rewrite the conditions of possibility for current and future liberal wars. Consequently, future work might take note of the way the professional soldier continues to evolve during a period when the legacy of military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya make it hard to see how the UK would ever be able to conduct another “major” war again. Of course, as this study has shown, making predictions is unwise, the course of history does not follow a linear or progressive path. One thing this study has shown, however, is that these conflicts have left a deep civil-military legacy. Indeed, initiatives like Armed Forces Day and Help for Heroes are legacies of Britain’s “war on terror” that are likely to redefine the UK civil-military landscape for another generation. Future work would chart how these initiatives evolve in an era when there is no “headline” conflict to speak of, but in which British military power is still being projected around the globe.

Finally, I chose to look at the ways in which these initiatives were presented on their own terms. For example, I looked at the way these initiatives were presented to the visitor, the participant or the reader of online material. This analysis is important because, besides a few exceptions, these initiatives have so far received little scholarly attention. However, a future research project could build on these insights by including interviews with those who attended Armed Forces Day celebrations and Help for Heroes fundraisers.

**Concluding Notes**

Above all, this thesis has highlighted the tragedy and futility that underwrites liberal violence in the 21st century: wars that continued unabated, despite limited political and societal support; the emergence of grand civil-military initiatives that normalise the violence they propagate; and the exacerbation of even deeper inequalities between one group of people who get fitter, stronger and healthier in their everyday engagement with armed force and another group of people whose everyday experience is filled by the fear of air force bombs, firefights and becoming yet another collateral damage statistic.

I have drawn attention to this tragedy and futility by charting the evolution of the biopolitical military professional, a figure who is not the product of decades of liberal progress – Patrick Mileham’s (2004) ‘civilised soldier’ or Ralph Peter’s (1994, 20) Western soldier ‘vaccinated with moral and behavioural codes’ – but a contingent figure who has been born of countless problematisations and historical accidents. Hence, there is nothing “natural” or “common sensical” about the existence of the professional soldier. Indeed, it is not a
desire for civility or a more “humane” form of warfare that drives the professionalisation of Western armed forces but a ‘struggle for expertise’ (Huntington 1963) or what Foucault (1977, 163) would call ‘the will to knowledge’\textsuperscript{53}. Moreover, as Western military power strives to be more rational and more effective, what this demands above all else is a constant supply of human capital. In the context of the British Armed Forces, this capital comes in the form of the professional soldiers who I have shown to be able to sustain liberal war-fighting as both abled bodied war-fighters but also as broken and partly restored soldier/athletes. However, it is also provided by the bodies of those who are targeted by the British Armed Forces, as well as those who find themselves caught in the line of fire. Often these bodies are erased from view and come to merely haunt the pages of professional texts that exist to reassure us that the next war will be more “successful” than the last. Finally, these processes of professionalisation demand that bodies are conscripted “at home”. These bodies escape the violence of the battlefield and perversely get stronger and fitter as they sustain the violent consumption of human life upon which the continued existence of the military professional depends.

\textsuperscript{53} Foucault (1977, 163) notes the will to knowledge is ‘not tied to the constitution and of a free subject; rather, it creates a progressive enslavement to its instinctive violence’
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