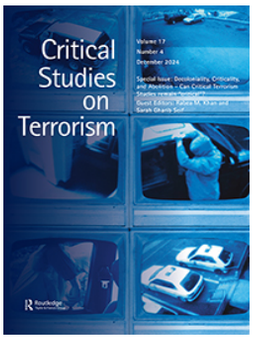

Critical Studies on Terrorism

ISSN: 1753-9153 (Print) 1753-9161 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rter20

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To cite this article: Laura Sjoberg (2024) Violences of/in critical terrorism studies, Critical Studies on Terrorism, 17:4, 878-902, DOI: 10.1080/17539153.2024.2384148

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2024.2384148

Published online: 09 Aug 2024.

CRITICAL STUDIES ON TERRORISM
2024, VOL. 17, NO. 4, 878–902
https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2024.2384148

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Violences of/in critical terrorism studies

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ABSTRACT

This article makes a case that CTS scholarship is always, necessarily, and specifically paradigmatically violent, even if one adopts CTS' critiques of "mainstream" terrorism studies and understands CTS scholars to be normatively well-intended. In making that case, this article goes over different violences of CTS scholarship which have important impacts in the field and in the "real world" from which the field often distinguishes itself: the (often unreflected) reification of "terrorism" discourses, the (often uncritical) engagement with P/CVE initiatives, the construction and perpetuation of gendered and racialised ideas of agency in "terrorism" and "counterterrorism," and the complex publication and citations practices in the field. The article then argues that the effects of these violences are made more intense by the violences involved with research reflexivity in the field, and even in this article. It concludes by discussing possible futures for a CTS, which acknowledges its own violences and looks to understand and even possibly redirect them.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 10 January 2024
Accepted 17 July 2024

KEYWORDS
Critical terrorism studies; reflexivity; ethics; epistemic violence

Critical Terrorism Studies (like other scholarship) contains inevitable and variable epistemic (and material) violences, and (as all scholars ought) scholars who self-identify with CTS should recognise, acknowledge, admit, and bear the weight of those violences. This approach, distinguished from an argument about reflexivity, does not look to centre the researcher-positionality but instead researcher-accountability.[1] The argument in this article is couched in general terms about the field of CTS as such as if that is a singular and coherent field where membership is clear (it is not) and as if its author had the time and space to cover a reasonable and representative subset of research in the field (I did not). It is not meant to be encompassing or comprehensive. Instead, it is meant to make an initial plausibility case for a larger argument. As such, many of the examples in this article come from research I authored or co-authored, alongside examples from the field of CTS more broadly, as the article simultaneously looks to make its argument (that [CTS] scholarship is necessarily violent, that the field has a number of dimensions of violence, and that scholars ought to take responsibility for that) while exploring what it would be like to perform some accountability it suggests.

In 2009, I wrote a short article presenting "a collage of feminist perspectives on terrorism" for a special issue of *International Relations* about the state of "terrorism

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studies" as such (Sjoberg 2009). In that text, I suggested feminist concerns about the field include but are not limited to looking for women; understanding gendered portrayals of actors understood as terrorists and/or counterterrorists; looking at different voices and different knowledges; critiquing traditional definitions of terrorism; looking at the similarities between terrorism and sexual violence; paying attention to gender roles; and bringing feminist work to bear on questions of why people commit acts of "terror". The short overview piece notes that there is "not one feminist perspective but many" on "terrorism" and "terrorism studies" (Sjoberg 2009, 69). The piece expressed interest in making "terrorism studies" less gender-violent. It has been cited positively for its critiques of mainstream "terrorism studies" and critiqued for not going far enough in its criticisms. Here, I am less interested in what was "right" and "wrong" about that piece than I am in the violences that it contains. Within those few thousand words, I committed a number of violences in what is said and what I left unsaid, including but not limited to entrenched sex/gender dichotomies, reification and securitisation of discourses of "terrorism", essentialist implications about femininities, repetition of the male/female dichotomy, gendered and racialised citation practices, and Americentrism. Many of those violences are replicated in the texts of other things I have written, including, inevitably, this text; and other things that I have written that do not include those violences in them certainly have others. How do I (and other scholars) recognise, acknowledge, and come to terms with these violences?

It is not only my work that contains violences – I argue that it is a constitutive feature of research generally and CTS research specifically. One difficult example is the quite timely research question "when (and where) can right-wing terrorists be charged with terrorism?" (Norris 2020). The value claims that are in this journal article are generally understood to be critical and progressive, where Norris agrees with "widespread concern" about the neglect of "right-wing terrorism" because "authorities have remained overwhelmingly focused on potential terrorism offences by Muslims" despite contrary evidence (Norris 2020, 519). As someone concerned with the racism and Islamophobia of efforts to "counter" "terrorism", I am immediately sold on the importance of the problem. The article argues that those looking to enhance national security need to pay more attention to "right-wing terrorism" which is "a growing international phenomenon that poses significant public safety risks in many countries" (521). Looking to correct that "due to stereotypes associating terrorism with Muslims, many fail to perceive ideological violence by non-Muslims as terrorism," Norris argues for consistency of the use of the term, extending to the right-wing (523, 538). As this article is critical of some common epistemic violences like Islamophobia that are heavily featured in traditional "terrorism studies" and acknowledges the potential "inherent dangers" in and "inflammatory nature of" the term "terrorism", it is a prime example of a piece of research that would generally be considered as *deconstructing* violences (538). Yet it also contains continued violences. Some examples of the continued violences in the piece are the uncritical use of the word "terrorism" throughout, the continued assumption of the empirical and normative good of "national" security, and the idea that policymaking (around "terrorism") can and should be rescued from the "distortion" that uncritical approaches to the study of terrorism impose on it (Norris 2020).

This is the argument in this article: that scholarship (self-)identified as "critical terrorism studies" (CTS) inevitably contains the (continuous) commission of violences, including

harm, silencing, smothering, coercion, domination, and oppression (Brunner 2021). This is the case even starting (as this article will do) with two assumptions which may or may not be true: 1. that work in CTS is "right" in its critiques of mainstream "terrorism studies" and that 2. its critiques are normatively well-intended. Building on previous work that argues that (critique in) research always and necessarily fails and involves epistemic violences (Sjoberg 2019, 2020), this article makes a case that CTS scholarship is always, necessarily, and specifically paradigmatically violent. In making that case, this article goes over different violences of CTS scholarship which have important impacts in the field and in the "real world" from which the field often distinguishes itself: the (often unreflected) reification of "terrorism" discourses, the (often uncritical) engagement with P/CVE initiatives, the construction and perpetuation of gendered and racialised ideas of agency in "terrorism" and "counterterrorism," and the complex publication and citations practices in the field. The article then argues that the effects of these violences are made more intense by the violences involved with research reflexivity in the field, and even in this article. It concludes by discussing possible futures for a CTS, which acknowledges its own violences and looks to understand and even possibly redirect them.

Necessary violences in (CTS) research

The argument that (CTS) research necessarily contains violence is based on a broader argument that there is no such thing as non-violence, but instead violences lie along a continuum. While it is easy to rely on inherited dichotomies like war/peace, violence/non-violence, and even terrorism and its constitutive others, feminist scholarship has demonstrated that these dichotomies are not representative of real-world experiences. Building on Reardon's (1985, 5) argument that militarism, sexism, and violence "are two interdependent manifestations of the same problem: social violence." Using the phrase "war system," Reardon (1985, 10, emphasis in the original) looks to replace the war/peace dichotomy, where, across global politics, "*war system* refers to our competitive social order, which . . . assumes unequal value among and between human beings, and is held in place by coercive force." Like Reardon, other feminist scholars have described socio-political life as a continuum of violence (Cockburn 2010; Cuomo 1996; Moser and Clark 2001). Acts that fall on the continuum of violence engage in coercion or domination, operate by force, start or perpetuate oppression, and/or do harm. This article makes the argument that violence is always present in human interactions, including in the production and publication of research.

A continuum approach to violence argues that violence is not something that occurs only in "event" form with easily delineated starting and ending points (Cuomo 1996; Pain 2015; Wibben 2011, 2020). Even "traditional" war studies scholars have acknowledged that war lasts longer than its traditional timelines (Ghobarah, Huth, and Russett 2004). Going further than that, feminist scholars have shown the many ways that war and violence are present in everyday life (Cuomo 1996; Kostovicova, Bojicic-Dzelilovic, and Henry 2020). Rather than being an "act" or an "event" that starts, happens, and ends, violence is a continuum, across time, space, and place.

Seeing violence as a continuum does not mean seeing all violence as the same. Instead, there are different levels of violence, different types of violence, and different epistemic, moral, and material consequences, even across like logics and roots. Feminist work on

everyday terrorism (Gentry 2015, 2020) and intimate warfare (Brickell 2015; Pain 2015) does not equate international conflict and household violence, but it does argue that the two have important commonalities: practices of gender subordination (Reardon 1985); logics of control and coercion (Muro-Ruiz 2002); and uses of (psychological, physical, and epistemic) force (Moreton-Robinson 2011). The links between practices of gender subordination and violence have been discussed as sexism (Reardon 1985), patriarchy (Enloe 1983, 1989), misogyny (DeCook and Kelly 2022; Gentry 2022), and masculinism (Tickner 1992, 2001). Here, I see all of those as interlinked, and see "gender subordination" as the (often violent) privileging of ideas, things, and people associated with masculinities over those associated with femininities (Cockburn 2010; Peterson 2010). As such, "the normalisation of misogyny and gender-based violence in our cultures and societies extends to every venue of life – from intimate relations to law enforcement and governments" (DeCook and Kelly 2022, 716). In this context, violent logics come in many forms and degrees, from the threat or use of weapons of mass destruction to microaggressions in a workplace or a classroom. The differences among these are very real – in type and severity, including but not limited to "physical violences, emotional and/or psychological violences, discursive violences, epistemic violences, violences of exclusion, violences of poverty, violences of hunger, violences of inclusion – too many types of violence to elaborate here (or anywhere)" (Sjoberg 2020). Any comparisons across violences are, of course, fraught, with value-based claims about morality, harm, severity, benefit, and other consequential and deontological aspects. Rather than comparing violences, this article is interested in understanding the implications of seeing violences as part of a continuum rather than separable or discrete, and of looking for accountability for one's own violences.

Particularly, this article is interested in one implication: the futility of the idea of non-violence, generally and in research. If violence is a continuum instead of an event or set of events, then the dichotomy of "violent" and "non-violent" ceases to resonate. Non-violence would *in theory* mean acts that did not include coercion, domination, oppression, or harm, though I suggest that we do not presume the possibility of such an act, and instead treat all acts as along the continuum of violence. Straightforwardly, the words "non-violence" and "peace" become empty signifiers, where there is more violence or less violence but no such thing as no violence.

Rather losing all meaning, however, non-violence is a constituted category which makes possible contemporary discourses that link evil with particular ideas of violence in contemporary characterisations of criminality, "terrorism," and war. For example, just war discourses commonly identify peace with justice as the goal of a war that is just, such that aspiring to peace justifies the (good) violence of "the good guys" to counter the (bad) violence of "the bad guys" (e.g. Williams and Caldwell 2006). Other researchers and practitioners interested in war ethics often talk about extending the "negative peace" of physical non-violence to "positive peace" which is not only non-violent but also fair and just (e.g. Galtung 1969). Though the field of Peace Studies does important work, theoretically, empirically, and normatively, my suggestion is that a continuum approach to violence betrays that neither positive or negative peace are possible, and that using the terminology of "non-violence" and "peace" as approximations obscures the impossibility of the ideals to which they aspire. More specifically, characterising some actions as "peaceful" or "non-violent" hides the violences within those actions. Even when those

violences are less severe than the violences they "counter", denying their violent content is an epistemically and politically significant move. This has knock-on implications for epistemology and the construction of knowledge.

I am interested, then, in exploring the complicit or explicit epistemic violence in the claims, practices, and performances of research understood as CTS. CTS has itself made the case that there are important violences in choices of wording and ideology, both in media outlets and among scholars (Downing, Gerwens, and Dron 2022; Ford 2019; Politzer and Olmos Alcaraz 2023; e.g. recently; Price 2022; Swinhoe 2020). As Swinhoe (2020, 160) notes, "discourse should be understood as having an ideological or strategic intent," and academic discourses are no different. The epistemic perpetuation of certain values can produce systemic violences (Black 2019, 232), and no choice of labelling, categorisation, or analysis is value-neutral (Martini 2018, 464) or violence-neutral. Violences in academic discourses are "real" and can have impacts in the "real world" that academics so often try to separate themselves from (see, for example, discussion in O'Farrell 2022, 897). At the same time, many scholars of CTS have positioned the field itself as a position to *correct* violences that are being committed outside of CTS – as an alternative to violence (e.g. Jackson 2007, 2017). For example, Jackson (2017, 357, 358) recently praised CTS' "impressive body of scholarship which exposes and deconstructs the violence, negative effects, and disturbing consequences of great many aspects of counter-terrorism," and encouraged the field to explore "reasons for rejecting the use of all forms of direct physical violence (along with other forms of epistemic, cultural, and structural violence) in counterterrorism." I argue that CTS research not only can, but necessarily does, commit violences while critiquing violence, and that this is important to recognise in the context of CTS' project(s).

There are, of course, (violent) normative impacts to arguing that claims to non-violence remain violent and/or perpetuate violences which also cannot be ignored, including the fact that this article will inevitably be read as a critique of the violences of CTS (and therefore anti-CTS), and taken as a critique of the field, no matter how many caveats are made in it regarding my lack of interest in those stakes.[2] Additionally, there is certainly a (different, but perhaps even more serious) matrix of violences in an imaginary alternate world in which CTS is not an assembled subfield aiming to call out the harms of traditional terrorism studies. Given these complexities, I continue to look for the (often-obscured) violences in (my and others') CTS research with four key goals: 1) locating who benefits from claims to critique, decrease, or eliminate violence (e.g. Sjoberg and Gentry 2007; Strange 1994); 2) looking at who is harmed by any given framing of ideas and events (e.g. Shafer 1994); 3) critiquing the victim/perpetrator dichotomy (e.g. Gentry and Sjoberg 2015; Moser and Clark 2001); and 4) disaggregating righteous claims to non-violence or peace which themselves contain violence (Cahill 2006; e.g.; Miller 1986). In doing this work, I am primarily interested with what a research praxis which accounted for and engaged its own violences would look like, and how (myself and other) researchers might rethink work in CTS.

The 'non-violent' violences of CTS

The field of CTS has, across disagreements, often remained committed to a number of the commitments that Jackson (2007) listed early in its development: being critical of the

problem-solving orientation, methodological narrowness, and state-centrism of traditional "terrorism studies", inspired by progressive normative goals, commitments to reflexive scholarship, understanding of the ontological instability of the category "terrorism," and noting the political constitution of knowledge and discourses about "terrorism". These "core commitments" (Jackson 2007) position CTS as a field purposed to call out and correct the violences in (orthodox) "terrorism studies" (TS) and constitute it as the non-violent alternative to violent orthodoxies.

According to Jarvis (2009), there are two primary components to such an alternative: epistemic broadening and methodological interpretivism. Epistemic broadening helps to see the biases in the application of talk about "terrorism", and methodological interpretivism helps to understand power in meaning-making about what it is and means to be "terrorist." Heath-Kelly (2019) sees this insight into meaning-making as particularly important, where she sees a key contribution of CTS as understanding truth about the term "terrorism" as produced by power, and therefore recognising the significant violence that lies in the co-constitution of "terrorism" and the state as such. In addition to looking at relationships between meaning and power, Caron Gentry (2020, 3) recognises CTS' potential to highlight "why terror is drawn along lines of long-standing, cultural biases" as "racism, misogyny, heteronormativity, religious bias, geopolitical structuring, and state centrism . . . harm the way that we see, locate, construct, and therefore combat terrorism." Meier (2022, 84, 96) critiques CTS' "peripheral engagement with racism as constitutive of the entire enterprise of counterterrorism," but still suggests that CTS can and should be the set of tools to analyse "the innate racialisation of the concept of terrorism in the West." Across a wide variety of scholarship, CTS has identified important failures of, omissions of, and violences of orthodox approaches to the study of "terrorism" as such. In these ways, as discussed above, CTS is often set up implicitly or explicitly as a non-violent alternative to TS.

Certainly, there are controversies both about and within CTS – some scholars critique the existence of the subfield itself from different perspectives (Schotten et al. 2024; Khan 2024; Weinberg and Eubank 2008), while others debate its directions (e.g. Qureshi 2020; Stump and Dixit 2012) or look to push its critiques further (Clement 2021; Meier 2022; Rothermel and Shepherd 2022). As I noted in the introduction to this article, I am not particularly interested here in either the "value" of CTS or in resolving debates among CTS scholars. Instead, I assume that CTS' critiques of orthodox "terrorism studies" are overall "right" and normatively well-intended to allow this article to focus on identifying, analysing, and dealing with what particular violences are in CTS scholarship and what they mean.

This is especially intricate to do given one of the implications that CTS critiques are "right" or justified is that their identification and calling out of the violences of orthodox TS is itself a normative contribution, and its absence would be a normative lack. It is the next step that this article interrogates: pairing the claim of normative contribution to understanding CTS scholarship as itself non-violent or as a step on a path to non-violence in its deconstruction of violent "terrorism studies" research. I argue that neither characterisation is necessarily appropriate. If the argument that non-violence is an impossible ideal earlier in this article is correct, then CTS cannot be non-violent, aside from any particular violences in the field generally or in any particular piece of research specifically. The second claim is harder to deal with, however. If non-violence is not a thing, then it is

also not a thing that can be progressed towards. Still, in theory, it is possible to be less violent along and within the continuum of violence. But it is not appropriate to assume that a critique of violence is necessary "progress" towards less violence – it may be and may even be likely to be less violent. Nonetheless, assuming that CTS is *necessarily* less violent, or that the remaining violence is normatively unproblematic, leaves stones unturned in investigations of violence in CTS scholarship. As such, for now, my goal is not to compare the violences in this CTS with the violences it rejects and critiques – it is simply to note that there is violence in the critical and "less violent" claims as well as in the claims that they critique. In my view, the violences that CTS finds in "terrorism studies" are clear, and violences in CTS are clear, but that does not mean that the two have any clear relationship much less a co-varying one. It therefore becomes a legitimate and important question to ask: what are some violences of CTS as a research programme?

Even these narrow questions are, of course, too broad to answer in the scope of this one article. Still, this article looks to make initial explorations of some of the violences in and within CTS in order to explore their implications and build some suggestions for handling the violences in CTS' scholarship. The remainder of this section explores four types of violence that can be found in CTS scholarship: 1. reification of "terrorism" discourses, 2. engagement with P/CVE initiatives, 3. construction and perpetuation of gendered and racialised ideas of agency in "terrorism" and "counterterrorism", and 4. complex publication and citation practices of the field.

Using 'terror talk'

First, the regular use of the terminology of "terrorism" (inside and outside of scare quotes) reifies what researchers have identified as "terror talk" – where the use of "terrorism"-speak has significant violent implications (Baxi 2009). I have published the word "terrorism" more times than I can count, including in a book title.[3] This is the case across CTS, which even uses the word "terrorism" as a self-referential description as relates to "orthodox" "terrorism studies." It is not that CTS scholars have not thought about this – in fact, many CTS scholars have explicitly reflected on the field's uneasy relationship with the idea of "terrorism." As Ford (2019, 694 citing; Jackson 2007) explains, "critical scholars have for some time now explored the problematic ways in which terrorism knowledge is produced, and the political implications of the way terrorism is spoken of in academic, political, and popular discourse." Accordingly, in CTS, "research has been undertaken to unsettle and challenge the problematic ways in which terrorism is known and understood" (Ford 2019, 695). Still, comparatively little research has been undertaken to unsettle and challenge the problematic ways in which terrorism is known and understood *among CTS scholars themselves*, and the research that has done so has generally taken the approach of looking to critique and improve CTS scholarship rather than call out its violences.

One of the key problematic ways that "terrorism" is known in CTS is as "terrorism" itself. As Martini (2018, 464) explains, "the process of labelling may be considered an act of epistemic violence because it ascribes specific subject positions to the ones that are categorized." CTS scholars have pointed out problems with expanding the terminology of "terrorism" beyond its original uses (e.g. Livesey 2021, 476). Still, while CTS scholarship has been consistent in critiquing the violence-inciting (Gentry 2020; Jackson 2017), Islamophobic (Politzer and Olmos Alcaraz 2023; Welten and Abbas 2021), anti-Black

(Meier 2022), and gendered (Clement 2021; e.g.; Gentry 2022; Mesok 2022), it has not been as quick to fully dissociate with the term "terrorism." In fact, the majority of articles published in *Critical Studies on Terrorism* over the last five years discuss "prevention of terrorism" as a moral good, even "central to emancipation" (e.g. O'Farrell 2022, 913).[4]

It may be that labelling something as "terrorism" can contribute to preventing it or building a taboo against it, but each deployment of the word also echoes the violent implications discussed above, even when that deployment is critical. Certainly, there are questions to be asked about the balance of violence: is more helped or harmed when the word "terrorism" is used (da Silva et al. 2022)? That said, it is not that balance that this article is interested in – it is the existence of the violence done by the use of "terrorism" lingo that is of interest here, combined with the regularity with which that language is used in CTS research. Instead, even if (critically) using the word "terrorism" were on-balance good, it would be because the violences of that use outweigh the violences of an alternative.

This is not how the field generally frames the usage, however. Instead, it often does not acknowledge the violences of (critical) uses of "terrorism" talk. Even scholars who critique the problematic knowledge production around "terrorism" use the word as a descriptor and as a noun to refer to a perceived-stable set of actions and events (e.g. Ford 2019). Even scholars who see terrorism as necessarily racialised engage discourses of "terrorism" and "counterterrorism" (Meier 2022), and even scholars who critique the securitisation of "terrorism" use the word as if it can be desecuritized (Wahlstrom 2022). The word "terrorism" does not lose all of its implications when it is used critically, and many articles in *Critical Studies on Terrorism* use the word uncritically.[5] In addition to the (epistemic) violences that come from and with the uses of "terror talk," Black's (2019, 229) Zizekian analysis of media coverage of "terrorism" outlines the possibilities of compounding problematic implications. Particularly, Black suggests that focusing on brutal and violent acts (as per terrorism discourses) obscures "symbolic violence and systemic violence" including violences of language, and of "Western economic practices and political systems globally" (Black 2019, 230, 231, 232). The deployment of the term itself has significant assertive power, and constitutes what Gentry (2020, 33) calls "injurious speech." On some level, even critically interrogating the label "terrorist" as in this article reifies it and those to whom it is applied (Gentry 2020, 199). While using the terminology critically or in scare quotes can be disaggregated from non-critical use, it does not reach the level of unproblematic or non-violent. It is beyond the scope of this article to count the research that engages in this entrenchment or provide exemplars that do not – instead, my goal here is to point out that CTS contains research that reifies "terror talk" from the very nomenclature of the field to a significant amount of the research in it.

Uncritical treatment of 'counterterrorism'

The violences of "terror talk" in CTS are related to the violences of uncritical treatment of "counterterrorism" and P/CVE (preventing/countering violent extremism) and the normalisation of "counterterrorism" discourses. In previous work, I have criticised the securitisation of everyday violence *because of* the inevitable relationship that labelling domestic violence "terrorism" brings with (everyday) counterterrorism (Sjoberg 2015). This is problematic because "the 'counterterrorist', seeking inviolability, licences himself to constitute, identify, and combat the 'terrorist'" (Sjoberg 2015, 6). In this way, "terrorism" is

constituted by "counterterrorism" as much as vice versa (Zenn 2023, 63). In this co-constitutive relationship, "the counterterrorist is *presumed good*," and the "terrorist" is presumed evil – therefore any violences committed by the counterterrorist are assumed to need correction and be correctable rather than endemic to assemblages of 'counter-terrorism" (Sjoberg 2015, 7). While it may indeed be that the violences in/of "counter-terrorism" could be/are less severe than the violences in acts constellated as "terrorism", it remains that there are violences in engaging in and reifying "counterterrorism" as there are in engaging and reifying "terrorism."[6] Some scholars have also argued that "counter-terrorist" measures implicate coloniality (e.g. Mogbolu 2024; Abu Bakare 2024; Meier 2024; Wright 2024; Khan 2024) and other gendered, raced, and orientalised violences (e.g. Gentry 2020), suggesting that the "counterterrorism" may not be the moral superior of "terrorism" – but that is neither here nor there.

Despite the violences in implicit or explicit endorsement of "counterterrorism" as such, CTS work has normalised some "counterterrorism" discourses, including "Prevent duty" (e.g. James 2022; Lakhani 2020) and criminalisation (e.g. da Silva et al. 2022), while not always opposing counterterrorism in principle (e.g. Zenn 2023). Sometimes this comes in the form of endorsing some P/CVE work, and sometimes it comes in the form of proposing alternatives to P/CVE to fill similar functions. Either way, frequently (though not always) "counterterrorism" discourses are reified in CTS scholarship. At the very most basic level, no one wants to be seen as endorsing "terrorism" - one must be against it. Often, being against it means that one uses some language of counterterrorism – sometimes even unironically. Two violences are inherent in the use of "counterterrorism" discourses: the re-reified implication of "terror talk" and the implicit justification of existing "counterterrorist" practices whether or not they are to be justified. Beyond that, as Cohn (1987) illustrated in her engagement with nuclear weapon discourses, the seductive power of the regularised use of violent terminology can distance a scholar from the moral implications of the subjects being discussed. It is this seductive power that makes possible the appearance of terms like "erroneous referrals" to Prevent in *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, when the idea that there could be a non-erroneous referral to Prevent should be *prima facie* questioned.[7]

Oppression in CTS scholarship

It is not only "terror talk" and "counterterror talk" and their implications in CTS that contains violences. If, as Black (2019) notes, CTS is indirectly implicated in systemic violence through deployment of the languages of "terrorism", it is also directly implicated in systemic violences through the construction and reification of gendered and racialised ideas of "agency" in "terrorism" and "counterterrorism". Gentry (2020, 26, 42, 45, 48) describes "terrorism" as being framed as the disordered violence of those constituted as "other", which is gendered, racialised, and heteronormative in its constitution. These biases exist by omission and commission. Rothermel and Shepherd (2022, 523), for example, argue that "gendered power relations are one of the most potentially significant, yet still largely under-recognized, aspects of terrorism and political violence." In parallel, Meier (2022, 84, 85) characterises CTS as "choosing not to talk about anti-blackness" and as a field which "largely lacks nuanced conversations about race and racialisation."

That said, implied and explicit racisms, sexisms, and heterosexisms, from subtle to straightforward, exist in a number of places in CTS. From the casual use of a Trump metaphor (e.g. Gkoutzioulis 2020) to the uncritical characterisation of women who engage in extra-legal violence as "used" by (presumably male) organisations (e.g. La and Pickett 2019), there are a number of small reminders across CTS work that it often valorises masculinities, states, and the West (Gentry 2020, 166). Further, the field often reifies some of these violences while critiquing others. Even CTS' most critical scholarship will omit, or neglect, some aspect of critical analysis or critique, and those omissions themselves are meaningful. As such, sometimes the "reminders" of the biases in the field are in its silences. Feminist work has shown that silences are as politically significant as words (Charlesworth 1999; e.g.; D'Costa 2021; Parpart and Parashar 2019). As critiques in critical work are always and necessarily incomplete (Sjoberg 2019), the question is not *if* critical work has omissions, but what those omissions are, who they help, and who they harm. For example, critiques of Islamophobia in "terrorism studies" might deploy traditional gender categories; critiques of the gendered natures of "terrorism studies" might replicate racial or religious discriminations; even feminist, anti-racist, and decolonial critiques of "terrorism studies" might retain statist or nationalist discourses, academic privilege, or any other set of harmful assumptions and/or discursive violence.

For example, the article that I wrote about the risks of "everyday counterterrorism" gives a full article-length treatment of the dangers of "counterterrorism" and the problems with the "terrorist/counterterrorist" dichotomy without any mention of the racisms, neo-Orientalisms, and Islamophobias inherent in "counterterrorist" practices (Sjoberg 2015). This silence is itself a violence, where the civilisation/barbarism dichotomy is casually invoked, 9/11 is used as a marking point for changing views of "terrorism"/'counterterrorism', and "the bedroom" is treated with a (cishetero)normative, Western approach (Sjoberg 2015). These violences in the article are ones I need to confront and own, whatever the overall substantive value or contribution of the article is.

It is not only in my work that these prejudices manifest – instead, other CTS scholarship shows similar tendencies if in different ways. As Clement (2021, citing; Gentry 2020) summarises, "the gendered representation of terrorism intersects with other forms of oppression, most evidently perhaps with race and religion." Scholars have critiqued race, racialisation, and racism, as well as the reproduction of Islamophobia in CTS work (e.g. Groothuis 2020; Khan 2021). Other scholars have highlighted significant heteronormativity in CTS work as well, which has a number of harmful implications for and beyond LGBTQ+ persons (e.g. Puar 2007; Schotten et al. 2024). Still others have pointed out intersectional genderings, like the "epistemic whiteness of governance feminism" in some critical approaches to "counterterrorism" (Rothermel and Shepherd 2022, 528).

Gendered, racialised, and cisheterosexist violences which vary across CTS work can also be found in CTS discussions of agency. Early in our research in the field, Caron Gentry and I characterised women who engage in extra-legal violence as distanced from agency in their violence by gendered discourses invested in linking (normal/normative) femininity and non-violence (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007). Soon after, Auchter (2012) both problematised the (gendered) notion of agency used in our work, and we looked to acknowledge the gendered nature of the agent/victim dichotomy in our further work (Gentry and Sjoberg 2015). Still, troubled understandings of agency can be found in different places in CTS. For example, Mesok (2022, 617) looks at "racialised and gendered construct of liberal

agency that governs both calls for women's empowerment in P/CVE policy and antiques of instrumentalization made by feminist scholars and activists." Mesok (2022, 617) is arguing the idea that (particularly Muslim) women are treated both by policymakers and by their CTS critics as instruments that can be manipulated by "actors" in the "terrorism"/'counterterrorism' landscape with predictable results. This is just one example of the ways in which genderings, racialisations, and neo-Orientalisms are not only in the "orthodox" "terrorism studies" that CTS critiques, but also in a significant amount of CTS scholarship.

CTS' publication and citation practices

The fourth area of violence within and endemic to CTS is in CTS' constitution as a field, particularly related to its publication and citation practices. A significant amount of work in CTS (mine not excluded) relies on a narrow citational field, overrepresenting white, Western men (e.g. Downing, Gerwens, and Dron 2022; Jackson 2007, 2017; Jarvis 2009; Sjoberg 2018). Relying almost exclusively on work published in English in journals based largely in the United States, Western Europe, and Australia, CTS as a subfield becomes a bit of an echo chamber among those who publish in particular outlets, attend particular conferences, and discuss CTS-relevant issues in similar parlances and the same language (e.g. Bogain et al. 2024). One can also see particular predispositions in CTS in its over-emphasis of certain aspects of its critical analysis or empirical examination, when the combination of a search for nuance and susceptibility to sensationalism means that CTS' narrow citational field combined with the work that attracts attention can skew what work is produced, read, and cited. Further, CTS' narrow citational field reifies and is reified by the usage of concepts that have gender and race biases, as can be seen in the discussion of the use of the idea of agency above.

Another concept that frequently recurs in CTS scholarship which I see as a product of the field's tilt towards white, Western, masculine thinking is the concept of emancipation (see also Abu Bakare 2024; Chukwuma 2024). The use of this concept in CTS work is a product of the interchange between "Critical IR" and CTS as such, coming from work in "Critical IR" of the Habermasian persuasion (e.g. Booth 1991, 2007). In outlining the core commitments of CTS, Jackson (2007, 246) notes that "in the tradition of Critical Theory," "CTS openly adheres to the values and priorities of universal human and societal security" which entails a "core commitment of CTS to a broad conception of emancipation." Jackson (2007, 247) goes on to explain that this "emancipation" is "understood as the realisation of greater human freedom and human potential in individual and social actualisation." McDonald (2009, 124) builds on this argument, to justify it to some who would "support a move away from traditional/orthodox approaches to the study of terror but stop short of defining their research in emancipatory terms" – positioning a commitment to emancipation as the at the limit of the field's imagined "left". Inspired by the "Welsh School" of Critical Security, McDonald (2009, 130) champions a "radically cosmopolitan" "conception of emancipation" with focus "on the process through which marginalized voices can be empowered and heard, and the material conditions of their marginalisation redressed." Along these lines, Toros (2016, 71) argues that "the concept of emancipation is key to a critical theory-based engagement with terrorism," particularly looking for "emancipation from terrorist violence, but also, in a broadening move,

emancipation from counterterrorist violence." Additionally, O'Farrell (2022, 910, 912, 913) has framed emancipation as an alternative to the racisms and Islamophobias of "orthodox" "terrorism studies" which allows for the continued pursuit of counterterrorism, given the importance of emancipation and the "fact" that it cannot be achieved while "terrorist" violence continues to exist.

So, what is wrong with a little emancipation? After all, it certainly sounds good to be more free? And for everyone to be more free? This is, of course, the echo chamber I was referring to – the idea of emancipation settled in a particular (settler-colonial) white, Western discourse *appeals* to those who would read and repeat it, even without a clear understanding of some of its inherent problems. One problem, as Mesok (2022) noted when referring women's positionalities vis-à-vis P/CVE efforts, is the idea that emancipation is something labelled desirable for and then bestowed on the (constituted) "other" rather than something which that other chooses, desires, seeks, or obtains themselves, setting up raced, gendered, and classed dynamics to relationships between the "emancipators" and the "emancipated". Another problem which I have discussed in several other places stems from this: at the centre of big-C Critical Theory's calls for emancipation is a necessary universalism which suggests that emancipation is needed by all and the same for all, regardless of any context or difference for those who might be its subjects.[8] That said, the violences of the necessitated universality of emancipation do not stop at its (not necessarily desirable) evangelism. Instead, as Mbembe (2019) argues, the ideas of emancipation, freedom, and democracy for an imagined "us" relies on the existence of an (enemy) constituted other "outside" from whom "we" must be distinguished and from whom "we" must be "freed" (here, the image of the "terrorist" as such). Mbembe (2019) addresses this specifically as the Western, liberal state and its constituents react to "terrorism" – where targeting of the "internal other" is presented as a condition of the freedom that "we" have fought so hard to earn and must protect – in other words, to be emancipated, "we" must oppress "them". There is violence to be suffered as a result of being part of the "them" – as "they" become killable to save the emancipated "us". But there is also violence to be suffered as a result of compulsory membership in the emancipated "us" – including normalisation, disciplining, and even death (e.g. W. W. Brown 1995; Haritaworn, Kuntsman, and Posocco 2014). Though this article is too short to explore these arguments fully, I want to suggest some CTS scholars' commitments to the "value" of "emancipation" is another example of the results of a narrow citation field with a particular set of (white, Western, cisheteronormative) dominant commitments.

The 'Real world' implications of CTS' epistemic violences

A number of scholars have argued that academics' epistemic violences have "real world" implications (e.g. Brunner 2018, 2021; Teo 2010, 2011). Epistemic violence itself has material implications, including resource distribution, delineation, silencing, smothering, bordering, and bodily injury (Brunner 2018, 2021; Tolia-Kelly 2016). Brunner (2018, 2021) categorises the implications of academic epistemic violence as first-order and second-order, where first-order implications are the commissions of violences themselves and second-order implications are tangible results. Scholars often tend to separate out the "academic" consequences of their actions and research production from any

(minimised) potential "real world" consequences, except when those real-world "consequences" can be framed in a professionally useful positive way as "impact".[9] Here, I argue that CTS has first-order violences that impact the shape of the field, the loci of power in the field (see, e.g. Chukwuma 2024), and the substances of the field. In this section. I focus on a sketch of the second-order violences in the (inseparable) "real world" that can come from CTS' first-order violences. I discuss three briefly: reactions from the "policy world," from the media, and from students.

First, the "policy world" and the "research world" are not separable, even when the researcher would like to ignore the existence of said "policy world." For example, my understanding of the purpose of the book *Mothers, Monsters, Whores* was to talk to other academics about gendered media framings of women who commit extra-legal violent acts as a way to show continuing limits on those people understood as women even in the twenty-first-century milieu of "gender equality" and "women, peace, and security" (and perhaps even because of them) (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007).[10] I had no intent to influence any policy of any government or organisation when writing the book. That intent, however, has not stopped a wide variety of policy organisations from paying some heed to the book, positively or negatively, and taking from it "lessons" that were not necessarily intended (Sutalan et al. 2019, among others; e.g.; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2022; United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate 2019). The "policy world" can selectively mimic CTS research, or it can trumpet the righteous causes of "critical" work (like calls for gender equality, for example) to their own (sometimes violent) ends, like looking to make counterterrorism more effective by having a more nuanced understanding of women's roles.

In these situations, what looks like progress – for example, as Rothermel and Shepherd (2022, 524) note, "research has also translated into a growing awareness by policymakers that gender matters for understanding the dynamics of terrorism and violent extremism" – might be both progress and regress, awareness and instrumentalization (see, e.g. Shepherd and Kirby 2024), critiquing violence and committing it. The violences discussed above in CTS work neither disappear or become susceptible to control or editing when work is adopted by policymakers or in policy-making, whether or not researchers are involved. My limited experience getting involved with the "translation" of research to policy included, as it must have, was one of the things that first made me think about how to come to terms with the (chosen and unanticipated) violences in one's own research.[11]

Concerns about the second-order violences of CTS research might be exacerbated by taking seriously some researchers' claims about inherent problems with policy-making surrounding issues covered in the field. For example, Anna Meier (2022, 96) expresses the concern that "the innate racialisation of the concept of terrorism in the West means that counterterrorism spaces will always produce racist policies and behaviors – something which scholars of terrorism, critical or otherwise, should take seriously." If this is the case, each (intentional or passive) engagement with "counterterrorism" policy as such produces and reproduces racist violences, which one is and must be complicit in as a CTS researcher doing that engagement, and must take into account when weighing such an engagement. Another inherent problem is that policy participants often do not make choices that would be expected by theory or desired by the normative politics of CTS. Mesok (2022, 627) expected those people with whom she conversed to desire to disaggregate P/CVE and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, given gender, race, and security implications

of entangling the two, but instead the people that she talked to were invested in the entanglement. A CTS scholar, then, interacts with research "subjects" in policy practices whose values and aspirations differ significantly from those held by the scholar, even when CTS research is being discussed, used, or even conducted with and among those practitioners. This means that the potential for second- and even third-order violences from reproduction of CTS scholarship are possible and need to be accounted for.

Second, media can adapt or quote CTS research, replicating and reifying its violences. CTS scholars have discussed the importance of media framing to the perception of "terrorism" in global politics. For example, Politzer and Olmos Alcaraz (2023, 356) note that "decisions that journalists make – what words to include or exclude in a headline, what facts they choose to emphasize as most important – can have a significant impact on a reader's interpretation of the events presented, and on a macro-level, on the social construction of reality." In other words, they are arguing that media are responsible for meaning-making when it comes to the word "terrorism" in the "real world". If this is the case, CTS scholars are a part of the production of that meaning, as journalists can and do draw from CTS scholarship. This can be the case when CTS scholars talk in, engage in, and even produce (social and traditional media). For example, CTS scholar Lee Jarvis is on record supporting the labelling of Russian mercenary group Wagner as "terrorist" and discussing the potential policy benefits that might be obtained from that label (Carbonaro 2023).[12] As we have discussed above, there is first-order violence in the utterance of the language of "terrorisms" here, as well as in replicating that language's inherent assumptions about gender and race, among other things. There are also second-order violences with media engagement – both as it reverberates in policy (discussed above) and as it shapes the ways that media audiences think not only about Wagner but about who and what a "terrorist" is and how the label is and should be deployed. Whether or not Wagner is a "terrorist" group matters to understanding the direction, normative value, and level of violence in the claim, certainly – but either way, the claim itself and its echoes as journalists amplify it contains violences that are important to identify and recognise.

Third, CTS scholars and CTS research have influence among and therefore implications related to students. Students can use CTS research either as a reflection of how "the world" functions or as an analytical framework. For example, Ford (2019) writes about the normative portrayal of "terrorism" and distinctions between good and bad violence in British school textbooks. Ford (2019, 700) is interested in the role of textbooks in shaping student perceptions, and the role of the normative framing of "terrorism" in those textbooks. Particularly, Ford (2019, 695) details how these textbooks often contain "a normative teaching of terrorism, which sanitizes state violence, rendering the voice of both the 'terrorist' and civilians in other regions of the world as voiceless, and their lives less valuable." While CTS scholars often critique these tendencies in "terrorism studies" teaching and writing, they also often quote, cite, teach, and reproduce these images. Also, as we discussed above, even violence-critical CTS texts are not without their violences, which would have reverberations with and for students as well.

It might be argued that, though they function uniquely in CTS, none of these implications are particularly unique to CTS. That is fine – my argument is not that CTS is uniquely violent – it is that it is not, and cannot be, uniquely non-violent. In other words, CTS cannot be held separate from or above the violences of the research that it critiques, even as it does the important service of pointing out and critiquing those violences. In addition

to making the argument that CTS scholarship is not uniquely non-violent, as discussed above, I am interested in thinking about possibilities for locating, identifying, and taking responsibility for CTS' violences, even assuming it is less violent and violence-critical. Given the gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, class, and nationality discrimination and even oppression in "terrorism policies" "out there" and "terrorism studies" in academia, attention to CTS' (remaining) violences is important. The next section discusses briefly ways that those violences might be understood, addressed, and owned by scholars who self-identify as part of the CTS tradition(s).

Addressing violences of reflexivity (reflexively?)

Addressing the violences of CTS from within or without is important, politically and methodologically. I suggest three important parts of a potential coping strategy: exploring the violences of one's own scholarship, building on principles of empathy and dialogue to begin to understand those violences, and moving from denial to responsibility in discussing those violences. These moves could lead individually to a more modest approach to CTS scholarship, and collectively to make significant changes to the way that the field accounts for itself and its impacts on scholars and those understood to be "research subjects".

First, it is essential to ask questions about violence in one's own scholarship and one's collective scholarly efforts. Starting at questions about positionality and research ethics matters, but that can obscure deeper questions about the ways that research is conducted and its (violent) implications for self and others. As Smith (2013, 18) explains, that basic research reflexivity in critical scholarship can also be a source of violence, as "researchers talk about the ethical space of meeting research participants as if that somehow excuses us morally and culturally from further obligations" when those further obligations are likely to be more important than the ethical context of a particular meeting or set of meetings. Noting that "from the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism" (Smith 2012, 1). Attention to positionality in research encounters can distract from larger implications, around the overall colonialisms, racisms, and genderings in the performance, production, and dissemination of research (see, e.g. Gani and Khan 2024). While an accountability approach to the violences of one's own research will not redress those concerns, it may be a more comprehensive start than rehearsed notions of reflexivity.

The accountability approach I imagine would make it normal to ask questions about the levels, types, and directions of violences in a research project as it is being put together, as well as the implications of those violences. Similar work has been undertaken about research on global politics generally (Brunner 2021; e.g.; Collyer et al. 2007; Galtung 1969; Marshall 1992) and in war ethics specifically (Cuomo 1996; e.g.; Sarkees and Schafer 2000). In all of this work, reflexivity and reflexivity about reflexivity happen within the limits of an understanding of violence that is untenable, seeing it as possible to do non-violent research or seeing doing critical research as absolving one's responsibility for the violence in one's own research. If I am right that violence in research cannot be avoided, I also suggest that one cannot be divorced from accountability for considering and taking responsibility for the violence in one's own research. In this view, critiquing violence in

others' research is an important step, as is trying to make one's own scholarship include as little violence as possible – but they are not enough. Even when non-violence is impossible (and maybe even impossible to approximate), it remains a responsibility to try to understand the violences in one's research, including their type, direction, and impacts.

Important questions might include: Who benefits from this research? Who is harmed by it? Who is included in this research? Who is excluded from it? Who do those who benefit from this research harm? To whom does the framing of the concepts in the research do harm? To whom does the production of this research do harm? As mentioned above, these questions can never be answered by the null set – it is never that research does no violence and no harm. Instead, asking these questions can be a start on a path towards comprehending, taking responsibility for, shaping, and minimising violences in one's own research (and even in one's other social, political, and economic choices).

Second, it is possible to deploy feminist principles of empathy and dialogue to think about how to "do" (CTS) research. Christine Sylvester's (1994) approach to empathetic cooperation might help CTS researchers understand and see the faultlines in moral frameworks even of those who might be "our" opposites, and use that information to understand a wider variety of potential epistemic violences that might be in one's research. Pairing that with understanding multi-cited positionalities (Ackerly 2000) to see the ways in which those violences might overlap and compound and/or listening guide methodology (Gilligan 1982) to hear nuances in different perspectives or needs might strengthen a scholar's ability to read the impacts of their scholarship. Work deconstructing the discursive relationships between gender, race, and security might help identify violences in inherited discourses and common usages (e.g. Shepherd 2008, 2022). Feminist narrative frameworks might be a tool for taking account of a variety of experiences to think about ethical practices for research and their various (violent) impacts (Wibben 2011, 2016). Frameworks for considering enumerating violences, which are discussion-based and inclusive of a variety of viewpoints enhance the potential leverage of research approaches.

Third, I think that it is important to start thinking about what it means to move from what I think is a current place of denial about the violences in and with CTS research to a place of taking responsibility. Noting that there are stakes in the use of terminology (Wahlstrom 2022, 888), and that "terrorism" discourses can be counterproductive and harmful (da Silva et al. 2022, 116), CTS scholars have considered the possibility that there is harm in the scholarship of the field generally, and even in one's own scholarship specifically. That said, looking at the context of organisations claiming (or denying) responsibility for acts of violence, Hearty (2022, 315) notes that there are different methods of denial, where "denial is more complex than simply contesting whether or not a certain thing happened. Where acts of violence are concerned, it can relate to the existence, nature, and significance of the act." In this context, Hearty suggests that outright denial is not the only way that responsibility is denied – people and organisations also engage in reclassification, or admission with justification (Cohen 1993; Hearty 2022 citing). This framework might also be useful for thinking about violences within CTS – when they are not outright denied, they can be either reclassified, justified, or set aside in some way – usually either by reflexivity or attempts to minimise the violences in one's own research. In my view, reflection and/or looking to minimise violences in one's research, then, might be closer to denial than it is to reconciliation, and is (therefore)

insufficient to fulfil a responsibility to be accountable for those violences. Such auto/critique could (need to) be quite extensive.

Conclusion

It is impossible to imagine a CTS without violence. My visions for the field as such are more modest. First, I envision a norm for CTS scholarship of acknowledgement of and taking responsibility for the violences in its research, ideally starting from those whose work receives the most attention in the field. Since citational power dynamics play out in every academic field, and are in CTS as in other fields directly related to the potential second-order (violent) impacts of research, those most influential in the field taking responsibility will not only have the most impact but could also serve to redefine the parameters of a field they have defined.

It is important to note that this call is distinct from calling for a "war" of calling out the violences in others' research while holding out one's own work as without the problems one sees in others' – in fact, it can be seen as clearly at odds with that approach. Rather than a system of compounding critique where each critique is more morally righteous than another and scholars are positioned as adversaries, I am looking for a combination of acknowledging the violences (and normative shortcomings) of one's own work and personal engagement and responsibility (looking to feel, understand, and live those violences and shortcomings). Rather than looking for the shortcomings in others' work, I urge scholars to start at looking for the violences and shortcomings in their own, both as a first step to personal responsibility and as a way to encourage accountability generally.

At the same time, it is important that taking accountability for violences in one's own research not become tokenistic, reduced to virtue-signalling or a bureaucratic mention, or worse, finger-pointing. I imagine it as a more comprehensive (self-)reckoning, whether in print or not, with what the normative implications of the amount and direction of violence in (our own) CTS research are.[13] That starts with the end of this article, which is itself not without violences, and demands the taking of responsibility. Looking to one's own work or at one's field, critique of critique can be itself violent, where the legitimacy or voice of a particular critique or set of critiques is downplayed by those who discuss the incompleteness or inadequacy of those critiques. This article does both, and therefore does violences to the CTS research tradition generally, to particular scholars' work in that tradition specifically, and even to my own work. These violences may be good or may be bad, either generally or as weighed against other violences in the field and outside of it.

Violences in this text that I find normatively problematic include citational injustice, the reification of academic privilege, cisheterosexist and colonial concept analysis and discussions, linguistic imperialism, among others. When looking to recognise, acknowledge, admit, and account for these violences, for me, the first questions are the level and direction of the violences, who benefits, who is harmed, and how harms and benefits are distributed. These questions can be addressed in part initially – thinking about commissions of violence in the text and their potential first- and second-order implications. Some violences can only be fully understood with the text out "in the world" as such, though, so whatever evaluation is done now needs to be reconsidered regularly. While I do not have a clear roadmap to what more is required, I see it as including seeing, admitting,

acknowledging, and bearing the weight of the effects of those violences at the very least.

Notes

1. See, e.g. the argument in Gani and Khan (2024) which is persuasive to me and feels cognisant with the priorities herein
2. All things equal, I would go with Khan (2024) in abandoning CTS as such. Still, by assuming that CTS critiques are "right" and normatively well-intended, this piece is positioned as necessarily agnostic on those abolitionist arguments. I hope that makes it useful both to those who would continue CTS and those who would abandon it to think about what sort of inquiry comes next, either for the field or outside of it.
3. See, for example, in my work (Gentry and Sjoberg 2016; Sjoberg 2009, 2015; Sjoberg and Gentry 2008, 2011). This, of course, is not unique to my work, but it is important to me here to note I am not criticising others' work to the exclusion of mine.
4. This is not to argue that the field is encapsulated by the journal, only to give an example in one of the field's most visible journals. Also, note O'Farrell's desire to prevent terrorism is critical of, rather than complicit in, contemporary counterterrorism, but nonetheless interested in preventing terrorism as such. Other "critical" approaches also look to improve, rather than eliminate, counterterrorism – looking for different improvements from efficiency (Papale 2021) to gender-inclusivity (White 2022).
5. See, for example, Mensah's review of counterterrorism practices (Mensah 2023); Sanders' discussion of decapitation in Northern Ireland (Sanders 2022); Berger's (2024) discussion of terror in Egypt; Walsh's (2024) or Schlesinger's (2024) treatment of terrorism as a material reality; Millington's (2024) suggestion that a historical approach to terrorism would be beneficial;
6. I would generally add "and no demonstrable benefit to the use of either term or grouping" – but that seems beyond the scope of this argument and better argued by others (e.g. Schotten et al. 2024).
7. This phraseology is in Lakhani (2020, 675), but is one example among many possible ones.
8. For distinction between big-C and little-c "Critical Theory", see C. C. Brown (1994). For my previous writing on this, see, e.g. Sjoberg (2013) and Barkin and Sjoberg (2019).
9. There is a whole other conversation to be had here, but for now make it sufficient to say that "impact" claims in the UK Research Excellence Framework do not require positivity explicitly (in theory, if one's research destroyed something, one would also meet the criterion), but it is near-universally understood that the idea of professional impact *requirements* for academics is to affect the "real world" as such positively.
10. I am intentionally not speaking for my co-author, Caron Gentry, here – only speaking of my intent.
11. For a brief product of that collaboration, see Sjoberg and Wood (2015). There are those who found this collaboration progressive and productive (e.g. Cook 2020). Here, weighing the ultimate worth of the contribution comparted to the violences is beyond the scope of this article – I mean to start by recognising that violences were a meaningful and often ignored part of this collaboration (and, I argue, many others).
12. Note that the same article quotes CTS scholar Anna Meier extensively disagreeing – that is also not a non-violent position, of course. While the example of either scholar would make the point, throughout the article I touch on citation practices and field-shaping, and Jarvis is often understood to be one of CTS' "founding father" sorts. Since this politics matters (see, e.g. Chukwuma 2024; Khan 2024), I focus on Jarvis' engagement here.
13. Gani and Khan (2024) provide some possible ways to think about what this would look like in scholarly practice, I think.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

The work was supported by the British Academy.

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