Broadening how we understand the political realm is crucial to what a political ethnographer does. (Schatz 2009, p. 306)

How can we conduct parliamentary ethnography to explore everyday performative acts of gender in parliaments? This chapter fleshes out how we might research gender ethnographically in parliaments. Given that gender is a practice, ‘done’ every day in ‘incessant activity’ (Butler 2004, p. 1) and that power is insidious at the micro-level level, I needed to conduct situated observation that paid attention to the ‘processual’ nature of everyday life (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, p. 235). Felski argues, ‘[e]veryday life is above all a temporal term’ (2000, p. 18). To explore the everyday dynamics of gendered power relations in the UK Parliament, we need to get immersed within parliaments and their struggles, rather than reading power relations off as given and universal, from objective structures. To ensure methodological congruence between the purpose of the research, research questions, and its corresponding methodology, I will now restate the research questions. These are:

- How is gender reproduced in the ‘working worlds’ of the UK House of Commons and what ‘work’ does gender do in the workplace? How does parliamentary ethnography help us to understand these processes?

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How do gendered actors respond to the institutional conditions and what are the possibilities for change for differently situated parliamentary actors?
How can we theorise institutions from a feminist discursive institutionalist framework?

3.1 Parliamentary Ethnography as Methodology

Ethnography is ‘the peculiar practice of representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one’s own experience in the world of these others’ (Van Maanen 1988b, p. x). The research design took an ethnographic approach that used three types of research material: ethnography, in-depth (elite) interviews and documentary analysis. The book’s emphasis on the everyday is not one of a distinct level or scale of politics but a way of exploring things—seeking connections, descriptive marks and gestures, ambiguity, agency and subjectivity. The productive tension between Butler and ethnography is discussed in a methodological note in the Appendix, as are the details of the interview participants and observations.

There is a lively discussion between anthropology and political science about the benefits of ethnography (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007; Schatz 2009; Wedeen 2010; Aronoff and Kubik 2012) and this has arrived at the subdiscipline of parliamentary studies about the potential of ethnography to help analysts to understand the ‘inner life’ of parliaments (Crewe 2014; Miller 2020). Indeed, according to Loewenberg, there is a ‘benign state of affairs’ in legislative studies and it has ‘not suffered the methodological controversies that afflicted other subfields of the discipline...there has never been a wholesale rejection of any method of study’ (2011, p. 105). Methodological reflection is of relevance to gender and politics scholars who seek to conduct ethnographic research on parliaments. Rosenthal suggests: ‘[t]hose who do not “experience” the institutions directly often find it easy to reject the argument that gender shapes the processes, procedures and cultures of organisations’ (1999, p. 63), whilst Kenney recommends ‘an eclectic methodology that draws on ethnography’ (1996, p. 463). Ethnographic representation concentrates on the broader (extra)legislative ‘activities’ that political actors perform (Fenno 2003). However, there have been some criticisms of anthropological studies of parliaments ‘[a]nthropologists, cultural historians, sociologists, linguists and linguists tend to “depoliticise” parliament by reducing the actions of its members to everyday human conduct instead of seeing the politically constitutive aspects of acting parliamentarily’ (Palonen 2018, p. 5).
Therefore, it is important to consider the distinctiveness of parliaments as workplaces.

Indeed, ethnographic methodology and methods have been seen as methodological advances in feminist political scientists’ research practices in order to get at everyday informal discursive politics better; to explore gender enacted in a relational manner and to see the effects of how rules are nested in broader institutional environments (Gains 2011; Brown 2014; Mackay and Rhodes 2013; Chappell and Waylen 2013; Galea and Chappell 2017; Rai and Spary 2019). Table 3.1 outlines scholarship that

| European Parliament and EU Institutions | UK Parliamentary Arena | Global Parliamentary Arenas |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| MEPs’ everyday parliamentary workings (Busby 2013) | A Select Committee (Geddes 2019) | Latvian Parliament (Dean 2020) |
| The European Parliament (Abélès 1993) | Shadowing MPs (Orton et al. 2000) | MP in the German Bundestag, Advisors in the German State Land and a working group faction in Austria (Laube et al. 2020; Brinzchin 2019) |
| Trialogue meetings (Rippoll Servent and Panning 2019) | Immersive methods for a report on diversity-sensitive parliaments (Childs 2016) | Women’s Parliament event in the Catalanian Parliament (Verge 2020) |
| EU institutions (Lewicki 2017) | UK House of Commons (Crewe 2015a, b) | The Indian Parliament (Rai and Spary 2019) |
| The European Commission (Shore 2000; Abélès et al. 1993) | UK House of Lords (Crewe 2005) | Shadowing an MP in the Slovakian Parliament (Smrek 2020) |
| Translation services in the Commission (Koskinen 2008) | UK Government Ministries (Bevir and Rhodes 2006a) | The French National Assembly (Chibois 2019) |
| The Political Groups of the European Parliament (Kantola and Miller 2021) | The Welsh Assembly (Schumann 2009) | Women MPs of Serbia and Kosovo (Subotic 2020) |
| | | Congress (Weatherford 1985; Jones 2017). US State legislatures (Brown 2014) |
| | | National parliaments of Indonesia, Asia and Singapore (Adiputri 2019) |
has taken immersive methods into parliaments and the governmental arena.

Different parliamentary ethnographies have different approaches to ethnography. There were three levels that emerged in my study and in a non-linear way. These were (1) discursive institutions—that is, the broad pushes and pulls that structure and frame parliamentary life, (2) Gains and Lowndes’ rules (2014), as set out in Chapter 2, and (3) performances as set out in this chapter—actors’ subjectivities, descriptive marks and gestures and the regulations on their behaviour.

### 3.2 Logistics of the Parliamentary Ethnography in the UK Parliament

I will now discuss the logistics of the parliamentary ethnography. The fieldwork for this book was exploratory, ‘open minded exposure to events in the milieu…produces ideas that would never have occurred to them otherwise’ (Fenno 1978, pp. xiv, 250; Geertz 2000, vii–vi). During the fieldwork, there was a major Cabinet reshuffle—which is of consequence to the everyday in a fused parliamentary system; two by-elections for Select Committee Chairs; the Scottish Independence referendum; an inquiry into the arrangements of the Governance of the House; and a Women in Parliament APPG Inquiry into Improving Parliament for women (2014). The observational work went from holistic to more focused observations which are detailed in a general observation diary in Table 3.11 in an appendix to this chapter.

#### 3.2.1 Entry and Access

In terms of entry and access, there are costs and benefits to each kind of ‘access’ for conducting ethnographic research. A rotational access is where access is placed in different hierarchical levels of an organisation, but securing such access is difficult in elite environments. As Schatz suggests: ‘access is a sliding scale, not a binary’ (2009, p. 307). In the field, I asked the Member if I could accompany her to events and she invited me along to events: access was symbiotic. Whilst I had a parliamentary pass, I did not interpret this as carte blanche access and so sought to be respectful about how I conducted myself and how I have included observations in the final ethnography. Because the parliamentary estate is stratified in access rights, I could not access the Members’ and Officers’ tea room. The
nature of the access needed to engage with capillary, day-to-day performances of gender in the House of Commons, was unstructured soaking. Levels of access differ in different parliaments. Some parliaments are more securitised than others, with the demand to leave all belongings outside such as in the Indian Parliament. Although a pass might be issued by an authority, such as the Speaker, there may be resistance from other actors (Childs and Challender 2019) and it does not provide access to all parliamentary spaces. In sum, a pass can provide mobility, but not omnipresence.

Entry was negotiated through a female backbench MP who was powerfully placed to facilitate my access. Justification can be problematic when negotiating access (Fielding 2008, p. 271) but the MP was both attitudinally and demonstrably feminist, and was sympathetic to the aims of the project. In terms of the practicalities of access, fortuitously I had undertaken work experience in the Member’s parliamentary office as part of a university placement and so we had established a trusting relationship. This was an immense privilege and also shows ‘strategic positionality’—hidden privilege (Reyes 2018). I contacted the member in August 2013 outlining the research and that it had received ethical clearance from the University Ethics Board, and asked if she would facilitate my access, and if there were any permissions that we may need to ask from authorities within parliament. Access was arranged quickly. In the abstraction of the pre-fieldwork stage, or the ‘legwork’ stage (Wilkinson 2013b, p. 136), ethnographers are routinely pressurised to take a ‘proleptic view of their fieldwork encounters, anticipating what will be discovered in the field’ (Geertz 2000, vii–vi; Coleman and Collins 2006, p. 11), when much ethnographic knowledge is achieved through in situ negotiation. The endorsement of my research project by the MP, email introductions by WEN members, and identifying key individuals through public lectures very much helped.

Ethnography is not unproblematic both ethically and politically for feminists when studying elite actors (Stacey 1988; Strathern 1987). I (re)introduced myself as a research student with an academic interest in performances of gender where possible and thus took a research role as ‘participant as observer’ (Denscombe 2014, p. 207). I emailed a senior representative in a staff committee and asked if it was OK if I attended their meeting and what my research was about. If something has been observed or told to me in confidence, then I have either omitted it from the analysis, clustered the finding with other observations, or have found
an open source document where the issue has been addressed publicly. The Member obtained permissions from whoever was in charge of a meeting, such as the chair of a party group, or member in the secretariat of an APPG. In terms of public areas of the estate however, observation does not require consent since accredited journalists were often present and some meetings were televised. Ethnographers are usually ‘at the mercy of the “moment”’ (Becker 1998, p. 210) which makes gaining consent difficult.

I collected a parliamentary pass on my first day of fieldwork. I formally spent over four and a half months—that is, 18 weeks or 71 days in intensive fieldwork as well as undertaking ‘yo-yo fieldwork’ (Wulff 2002, p. 117) to conduct 68 interviews in the field-site and attend events, with a progressive focusing, once in the parliament. This also shows that the ethnographic tropes of ‘entering’ and ‘exiting’ the field-site may be problematic since there is no ‘clean’ entry and exit from the field-site. Whereas ‘small q’ research is more pragmatic and fills gaps, ‘Big Q’ research permits the researcher to generate and revise a series of research questions. Research design in ethnographic research takes a methodologically pragmatist approach. It tends to be reflexive, iterative and emergent, and makes few explicit assumptions (Erlandson et al. 1993; Coleman and Collins 2006, p. 11; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, p. 21; O’Reilly 2012, p. 105; Blommaert and Dong 2010, p. 12; Crewe 2016, pp. 9, 11). Researchers take Malinowski’s ‘foreshadowed problems’ derived through looser theoretically informed ideas instead of hypotheses to the field (O’Reilly 2012, p. 31). Some concerns included women’s agency, whether the House of Commons was still not a conducive place to perform feminine behaviour and whether these performances are still seen as illegitimate, a decade after Childs’ study (2004), and whether parliamentary masculinities were always anti-social and oppressive. Often in ethnographic research, there are ‘surprises’, ‘chance encounters’ and ‘aporias’ that can open fruitful research agendas in the field. As such, research is a social process.

In terms of the period of time needed to conduct ethnography, classical anthropologists maintain a ‘Malinovskian myth’ (Hockey and Forsey 2014, p. 71) of a year as the optimum period in the field-site, however rapid ethnography makes a challenge to this (Galea and Chappell 2017). My prior experience in the field meant that the ‘sunk costs’ of learning practical skills of the field-site (Schatz 2009, p. 309) and gaining trust were reduced. I was familiar with the situated vocabularies of the field-site
such as the Member’s ‘House style’ for press releases and documents. It is important to weigh up ‘how much immersion is necessary appropriate and ethical’ (Schatz 2009, p. 5), and the ‘institutional context of research’ as well as ‘scale, timing and resources’ (Ramazonoglu and Holland 2002, pp. 148–149). I reserved the ‘exit interview’ with the ‘gatekeeper’ until after the formal period of fieldwork, because I felt that this would generate the richest insights and would be the most informed on my part. I could ask her pending questions as a cumulative product of my observations and it might be a more interesting experience for her.

My entry as situated within an MP from a political party’s parliamentary office proved advantageous. The Member had served in parliament for over two terms and had held Ministerial and Shadow Ministerial portfolios. She had served on select committees and a domestic committee. Her institutional and personal capital helped immensely with arranging elite interviews. The ethnographic trope ‘gate-keeper’ did not reflect my interaction with the Member. ‘Gate-keeper’ nominally means an opening and closing of access opportunities but the Member also gave me support in acquiring interviews and volunteered ideas—particularly in stressing the reinvigorated importance of select committees in the ‘everyday’ life of parliament, as well as recommending events on the estate, particularly based upon rules-about-gender to observe and collect notes. As such, ethnographic tropes are ‘texts’ in themselves. Like Ho’s ‘institutional kinship’ that helped her to conduct ethnographic research in the banking sector (2009, p. 13), two previous MA cohorts from two universities also invited me to events. This reflects strategic positionality (Reyes 2018), an invisible privilege. The Member’s researcher introduced me to her networks of contacts who were also very helpful.

The location in an MP’s parliamentary office made me frequently reflect on neutrality and partisanship. In terms of neutrality, partisanship in fieldwork is contested (Hammersley 2000). Fenno emphasised political neutrality (1990, p. 67) and Crewe emphasised not aligning with a particular ‘gang’ (2015b, p. 2; see also Burnham et al. 2008, p. 270). Neutrality is contingent upon the type of access negotiated by ethnographers and the political background of the ethnography. Neutrality in fieldwork is near impossible and could perpetuate an unattainable vision of a disinterested bourgeois scholar—when feminism is an inherently political stance. ‘Key informant’ is a trope that has been problematised (Warren 1988, p. 59) since we cannot know a priori who our key informants are. Innumerable
individuals and offices generously helped me with my research, particularly by making email introductions to recruit further participants. A key informant was a researcher from an opposite party who introduced me to his networks, invited me to numerous events, including an equalities fringe event at a party conference, and who himself had many complex layers to his identity and a consciousness towards equalities. Therefore, we frequently discussed (in)equalities beneath rules—the lack of rules, and performance.

Whilst I introduced myself as a researcher to field members, this also comes with disadvantages. I joined a parliamentary running group because I was training for a half-marathon rather than to collect observations of their ‘jographies’ (Cook 2020) or to recruit participants. Therefore, this shows that introducing oneself as a researcher, whilst ethical in one sense, has its limitations because the runners may have been uncomfortable with me joining them. On the other hand, several scholars have described ethnography as a ‘sensibility’ rather than a method (Pader 2015), and this sensibility becomes part and parcel of everyday, we never turn our minds off from analysing news and insights, and therefore, it is difficult to fully ‘switch off’ from observation mode.

3.2.2 Participation

In terms of participation, there are various typologies (Denscombe 2014, p. 207). In reality, I moved along a continuum throughout the research. Access is not an inalienable right (O’Reilly 2012, p. 11) and issues of burdening the participants and intrusion must be managed carefully. In terms of benefice, I underwent training of normal researcher (Wacquant 2011, p. 81). I undertook bespoke pieces of research for the MP. This included locating quotes from select committee evidence; pulling themes out of an APPG report; drafting a speech, formatting references for a pamphlet; attending events; and briefing the Member about the main issues raised. I also performed ad hoc tasks such as escorting constituents and transporting paperwork. I also accompanied a tour to escort a group with a researcher. Therefore, in terms of parliamentary researcher, often I was Denscombe’s ‘total participant’ (2014, p. 216). Goffman suggests that participation has been treated as:

subjecting yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of
individuals, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their social situation. (1989, p. 125)

I shadowed the Member to bespoke events where her diary permitted as a ‘participant as observer’ (2014, p. 214), such as an APPG launch of a report; an APPG presentation; offsite and onsite events that she was chairing; an interview with a journalist for a trade magazine; a launch of a pamphlet; and women’s parliamentary group meetings. The Member also sent me to events around the estate to take briefing notes for her on key inquiries. I also spent time in the gallery observing debates, including a trip to PMQs, and observing select committees.

There are debates about how far the label ‘ethnographic’ can be applied to fieldwork, or whether ‘field study’ is more appropriate (Wolcott 1994, p. 82). The ‘world’ that I accessed the least was the daily routines of employees of the House Service and so there are empirical limitations to any conclusions about this world. The parliamentary pass occasioned the opportunity to speak informally to members of the House Service, MPs and researchers on the estate about my research. They were more readily agreeable to a more formal interview, since I was expediently embedded on the estate. Proxy access to the everyday and rules with gendered effects was achieved through interview accounts with rank and file participants, and those in mid and high leadership positions. The Governance of the House Inquiry provided a pertinent analytical window into how personnel was organised in this world and I observed the debates in the chamber and the Backbench Business Committee meeting, where floor time was sought to debate this issue.

Like Shore, I attended staff associations that spanned different divisions in order to provide access to different areas (2000, p. 180) but this was for deep contextualisation rather than recruitment. I joined the gym and attended workplace equality network events, fundraisers, public lectures and events held on the parliamentary estate, to gain coverage of a range of actors. The Member sent me to training inductions provided by the House Service that were particularly useful because different representatives from the House Service came and gave talks introducing their departments and the range of issues that were important. Like Shore (2000, p. 8), I found the inductions useful for contextually mapping out the departments of the House. There was no typical day, though I have included a general observation diary in Table 3.11 in the Appendix.
3.2.3 Recording

Ethnographic insights are ‘fleeting in nature’ (Murchinson 2010, p. 70). Three sets of notes were taken: scratch notes, head notes and more fully typed discursive field notes. ‘Head notes’ were recorded in my head and written down wherever possible. ‘Scratch notes’ (Ottenberg 1990, p. 148) were taken in small A6 books in the field that were unobtrusive, and then, more comprehensive field notes were written up in a forced writing period on the train and then translated into an electronic document at home. An ethnographer cautioned: ‘it may be possible to sleep before writing field notes but it would not be sensible to end the day by going to a party!’ (Fielding 2008, p. 273). Notes were helpful especially to document feelings of ambiguity at something that was arresting, not realising the significance or regularity of events until later on in the research. Field notes contained impressions, scenes, sensory notes, plans for future observations and potential informants as well as analytical observations. Another way to record fieldwork is in an observation protocol that can be used with analytical frameworks and may be of benefit to feminist institutionalists.

3.2.4 Interviews

Ethnographers conduct both formal and informal interviews (Hammer-sley and Atkinson 2007, p. 3). Interviews took place in committee corridors, PCH atrium, MPs’ parliamentary and constituency offices, the riverside terrace, Tothill Street and Millbank cafeteria. Recording elite interviews is an issue that is debated (Harvey 2011). Whilst the majority of interviews were taped-recorded, some interviews took a more informal form and I took notes and sent them to the participant for verification. The interviews lasted between twenty minutes and three hours and constituted ‘engaged listening’ in the field. Elite interviews explicitly helped the research aims in a threefold way. Firstly, ‘the personal is institutional’ (Ahmed 2015, p. 10). Therefore, interviews provided a personal insight into institutional gendered subjectivities—how they felt about their own positionings and experiences on the parliamentary estate. Secondly, I informed participants that I had been immersed in the House and would like to discuss some findings in order to see if they resonated with them—the interviews were dialogical and so knowledge was co-produced. Thirdly, visiting institutional spaces to conduct elite interviews
is important for its own analytical value and immersion (Ahmed 2012, p. 9; Puwar 1997).

The interviews were semi-structured since I took a loose interview guide. The more that I learnt about the intricacies of the House of Commons, I adapted emergent topics in the field to a discussion of gendered rules-inform and rules-in-use. I also asked some pragmatic questions to elicit straightforward information. Crewe suggests, rigid questions may be infantilising and she asked ‘focused and open’ questions (2016, p. 10). Focussed interview questions reveal a lot more about what the research is about and so is arguably more collaborative. I researched the backgrounds of each respondent where possible to make their experiences and expertise the centre of the interview.

3.2.5 Documentary Analysis

Documents with FI’s rules-in-form are key rather than ‘ancillary’. They are ‘formally constructed and written down’, and can be studied through ‘the tools of the historian’ (Lowndes and Roberts 2013, pp. 53–54). I collected bounded instructional guides, for example informing MPs how to speak in the chamber and how a Select Committee works. Political documents served other functions such as providing orientation within the field such as the weekly Whip. The House of Commons is self-reporting and provides descriptive data. It conducts internal reviews on staff and services. Where information was not publically available, I also submitted Freedom of Information requests. This was based upon transparency and equality legislation in the UK, for example asking for the results from gender audits of the staff circulation procedure. Understanding can also be thickened through immersing oneself into media such as, podcasts and radio shows, and in-house publications. (Auto)biography and insider accounts, can be used to supplant interviews and explore rules-in-use (Annesley 2015, p. 623). This included ‘considered writing’ (Mackay and Rhodes 2013, p. 5) such as speeches and public lectures such as the Speakers Lecture Series. As mentioned, I had the least participation in the House Service, so documents took on a particular importance. Documents are important because performativity is about bringing (gendered) realities. Butler suggests: ‘it is not simply that a subject performs a speech act; rather, a set of relations and practices are constantly renewed, and agency traverses human and non-human domains’ (2010, p. 150). Whereas, traditionally, ‘all students of
politicians’ (Fenno 1990, p. 113), we can follow a ‘thing’ in fieldwork: ‘a material object of study such as money, a metaphor such as immunity, a plot story or allegory, a life or biography and conflict’ (Marcus 1998, pp. 89–95; Schatz 2009, p. 18). Documents can be examined as texts themselves: ‘[not only] what documents say but what they do: how they circulate and move around’ (Ahmed 2012, p. 6).

Together, these three types of notes, interviews and documents were put into NVivo and coded along with empirical codes that emerged from the data and theoretical codes that came from the framework. I will now map the ‘field’. When analysing the fieldwork, I did not pursue a systematic intersectional analysis, but the ethnographic and interview data do highlight how actors were multiply positioned in terms of gender, race, class and ability, and these examples have been included in the chapters.

3.3 Mapping the ‘Field’: Introducing Three ‘Working Worlds’ of the UK House of Commons

In this section, I will delimit the ‘field’ in terms of its actors who are positioned differently in the UK House of Commons in terms of tasks, roles and contractual status. The opportunity to engage with unexpected and serendipitous interlocutors (Schatz 2009, p. 11) is an unparalleled epistemological benefit of ethnography.

The House of Commons is an inter-professional working environment, yet so far little attention has been paid to the differently situated actors on the estate. Many actors may contribute to a gendered institution. Ackerly and True note:

Feminist-informed researchers...ask gender-sensitive research questions by observing that something is missing from existing accounts of social and political reality...Sometimes the something that is missing is an account of the political activity of less powerful political actors. (emphasis added, 2015, p. 138)

‘[E]nphasis on connections’ is a key to ethnography (Crewe 2014, p. 673). A conception of MPs as elected individuals renders staff ‘other’ which is inherently gendered (Sylvester 1998; de Beauvoir 2010). We rarely see the ‘real’ constitutive outside that provides MPs with the integrity of their identity. Identity is always relational. MPs are situated in an inter-professional environment. This ethnography does not commit to
the holism of earlier ethnographers, because it is impossible to represent a setting in its entirety. It employs a principle of ‘polyphonic contextualisation’ whereby empirical ‘reality’ is multifaceted across a range of actors, locations and activities. This affects my approach to knowledge acquisition. This creates a more relational presentation of the different groups that coexist in the social context and avoids capture by one group (Mackay 2008, p. 126; Burnham et al. 2008, pp. 274–275).

Different gender regimes in workplaces interact, and so speaking with and ‘studying up’ from differently situated bodies from different working worlds are important. Felski suggests that: ‘some groups such as women and the working class are more closely identified with the everyday than others’, and that ‘[w]omen like everyday life, have often been defined by negation’ (2000, pp. 16–17). By omitting these actors and multiple gender regimes at play, we shelter gender inequality in our analyses. Methodologically, Crewe suggested that ‘listening to as many [clerks] as possible is the fastest crash course on Parliament and its cultures’ (2015b, p. 3). Therefore, these actors are essential if we are to take seriously the power exercised in the capillaries and to make conclusions about the operation of gender within the UK House of Commons.

To explore relationships amongst actors, I will present three working worlds and the production of gendered interstices and interfaces. This book is composed of three chapters—one for each world—and explores some focal points inside each gender regime. These three worlds are internally heterogeneous. I will now introduce the three sets of actors. I chose not to make the member the direct subject of my research, because of the level of intrusion upon her and access, although this would have been very interesting. This approach has been taken by other early career researchers (Busby 2013; Malley 2012). I will now set out the three working worlds of analysis.

- Working World 1: MPs’ Working World

The first set of actors is MPs, the only elected actors on the estate. MPs occupy high-profile and reified positions as actors, due to their electoral mandates, first past the post electoral system, and single-member constituencies. MPs are an important group to analyse gender and workplaces since MPs receive approaches from constituents for advice in how to manage gender and bureaucracies and their legislative (non)decisions
effect workplaces. They also provide a linkage to the workplaces that they have previously served in. A number of typologies have been produced about the roles of MPs (Searing 1994; Wright 2010; Flynn 2012). Searing outlines seven roles for MPs: policy advocates, Ministerial aspirants, constituency members, parliament men, PPS, Whip and Minister. However, like Wright and Flynn’s discussions, these roles derive from the MPs themselves, and it may be fruitful to speak with a broader range of actors. It is also pertinent to explore how gender identities affect the everyday performance of these roles.

Despite some affirmative action, methods to improve descriptive representation of women by the political parties have been uneven. The social composition of the Commons at the time of research was 22% women. In the 2019 election, this number had risen to 34%. A third of MPs had been replaced at the time of fieldwork following the parliamentary expenses scandal. Moreover, Table 3.2 shows a motherhood gap in 2013 and 2017 in the House of Commons. This had narrowed, but not disappeared in 2017.

Unlike the other staff on the estate, MPs do not have a job description, which is discussed in Chapter 5, though there have been attempts to make the job more professionalised as shown in the changes to parliamentary hours, listed in Standing Order 9 in Table 3.3.

A Coalition government was in office in the fieldwork period. Opinion polls at the time of the fieldwork period suggested, incorrectly, that there would be a hung parliament in the 2015 General Election.

**Working World 2: The House Service**

Professionalisation of parliaments has meant that more expertise is required for parliamentary administrations—who provide both the ‘hard’

| Table 3.2 | Parents in Parliament (2013) and (2017) |
|-----------|----------------------------------------|
| 2013—MPs with no children | Average Number of Children | Average age of first child | 2017 | Average number of children | Average age of first child 2017 |
| Men | 28% | 1.9 | 12 | 30% | 2.4 | 11 |
| Women | 45% | 1.2 | 16 | 39% | 2.0 | 15 |

*Source Campbell and Childs (2014, 2019)*
Table 3.3
Parliamentary Hours (2020)

| Day            | Hours         |
|----------------|--------------|
| Monday         | 2.30 pm–10.30 pm |
| Tuesday        | 11.30 am–7.30 pm |
| Wednesday      | 11.30 am–7.30 pm |
| Thursday       | 9.30 am–5.30 pm  |
| Friday (If sitting) | 9.30 am–3.00 pm |

and ‘soft’ infrastructure to parliamentarians (Erikson and Joseffson 2020). Parliamentary administration has become a subset of legislative studies in US scholarship (Patterson 1989; Duerst-Laht 1995) and European scholarship (Niemi 2010; Pegan 2015; Egeberg et al.; Högrenauer et al. 2016; Crewe 2005, pp. 70–92; 2017; Evans 2018; Geddes 2019).

Parliaments are not unified institutions and host a range of demographic differences such as gender, class, ethnicity, ability and sexuality, and these include professional, contractual and power differences (Rai and Spary 2019). There have been both theoretical and empirical reasons for academic engagement with parliamentary staff. Studying parliamentary staff works towards the feminist perspective of situated knowledge (Kulawik 2009, p. 263). Feminist discursive institutionalists note how different gender regimes interact and therefore study: ‘interrelations of institutional arrangements, actor constellations and political discourse’ (Kulawik 2009, p. 267). To borrow from Nader’s phrase, it is important to ‘study up’ from differently situated bodies (1972). This requires exploring the gender relations of the actors who have been relegated to the shadows in the process of a preoccupation with public enlightenment ‘individuals’ as the ‘central point of reference’ (Puwar 2004, p. 141).

Parliamentary administration has been treated as a ‘no man’s land’ in academic scholarship due to academic focus on the executive (Egeberg et al. 2014, p. 227). We could also argue that academic scholarship on parliamentary administrations is a ‘no woman’s land’ from a gender perspective. Takayanagi suggests that: ‘[c]uriously, consideration of how ‘woman-friendly’ a workplace parliament is for MPs has never been extended to staff’ (2012, p. 221). Duerst-Lahti suggests that ‘how individual staff members are rewarded [in Congress] reflects masculinist dominance of that environment’ (1995, p. 383). Furthermore, academic feminists have benefited from productive relationships with practitioner feminists in the parliamentary administration (Childs and Challender
Therefore, these are key actors to speak with. This is a distinct gap that this book seeks to fill.

The formal framework for the governance of the House of Commons was established by the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978 which set up the House of Commons Commission. Terms and conditions replicate those of the civil service so that parliament is equipped to scrutinise the government. The House Service are not civil servants because they serve parliament not government. The House of Commons Service provides a politically impartial service to all Members of Parliament to support them in their parliamentary duties. There has been an increase in demand for House Services since Members receive more casework. Because of the principle of self-regulation, Members organise the House’s governance though there have been five reviews (House of Commons Commission 1990; Braithwaite 1999; House of Commons Commission 2007; Jablonowski 2010; House of Commons Governance Committee 2015). The Service employs around 1,700 people across five departments.

The House of Commons is a commission-based parliamentary administration (Verrier 2008), with several ‘parliamentary pillars’, such as the executive board and domestic committees—that is, internal committees of the House that links MPs to the House Service. The House of Commons Commission was set up in 1978 and is responsible for the administration of services in the House of Commons. Unlike almost all other committees of the House, it has no elected members and is chaired by the Speaker. With the appointment of Angela Eagle to Shadow Business Secretary in October 2015, the House of Commons Commission temporarily only had two female members out of a total of eleven members including the Chair and these were both external members, though this composition has since improved. The Commission employs the staff of the House and oversees their terms of employment. Betty Boothroyd described chairing the Commission as ‘a challenging task for which my previous career had given me no useful experience’ (2000, pp. 142–143). The Commission’s aim is to be an ‘exemplary employer’, with an annual budget of around £1.3 million.

Beneath this formal governance, the social composition of the House Service has been targeted for improvement with an increase in recruitment efforts. There have also been notable ‘firsts’ in the House Service such as employing a female, working-class and Muslim, Serjeant at Arms; employing a black female Chaplain; and a female Black Rod. The House Service has Investors of People Status and is bound by the Public Sector
Equality Duty. The House also produces annual Diversity Monitoring Reports. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 outline the sex composition and pay of House Service employees at the time of research. Fuller breakdowns of the diversity data are included in the reports.

As of 31 March 2018, data show that the number of women in SCS was 42%, A 48%, B 47%, C 57%, D 35%, E 56%, catering is 43% and other is 13% (House of Commons Parliamentary and Digital Service 2018). White men are the largest group in the House, at 43% of all staff who have shared their ethnic identity. The next group is white women at 34%. There is roughly even proportion of male and female staff from minority ethnic backgrounds (12 and 11%, respectively).

To reiterate, the House Service was the ‘working world’ that I had the least access to a degree of proxy access had to be achieved. In terms of how subjects are able to intervene in discourses, the evidence submitted to the Governance of the House inquiry by members of the House Service, is, in theory, valuable (Winetrobe 2014). Actors without material bases of power rely on discursive power. The committee consulted staff and sought ‘soft data’ through focus groups, interviews and permitting the submission of anonymous written evidence. This meant that a different genre

Fig. 3.1 Gender split by department of employees in the House Service in July 2014 (House of Commons and PICT Diversity Report, April 2015, p. 11, produced by the Diversity and Inclusion Team and the Information and Administration Team)
of discourse was introduced into the realm of political speech acts, which is key to studying the everyday in parliaments (Wodak 2009). Indeed, looking at this evidence highlights what anthropologist Bellier (2005) calls an ‘alchemy’ of textual production—that is, the different struggles and identities that were constitutive of the output. Illustrative documents analysed for this book are laid out in Table 3.19 in the appendix to this chapter. These included (1) reports from Hansard debates; (2) field notes; (3) interviews; (4) coverage in print media and industry publications; (5) written and oral evidence submitted to the governance of the House Inquiry; and (6) inhouse and external reports; and (7) guides. Whilst the findings from my small non-random sample of interviews (see Tables 3.7–3.10 in the appendix) cannot be extrapolated to all in the House Service, looking inside the gender regime of this world clearly lends insights and contextualisation.

- Working World 3: Members’ Staff’s Working World
A developing literature\(^3\) is exploring actors who provide regular research and administrative assistance to politicians, who are on the estate for longer and who have traditionally constituted the pipeline of future MPs. Parliamentary researchers are key protagonists in my account of gendering the UK House of Commons because I spent the most time with them, accompanying them to trainings, events, sharing meals, drinks; conducting ad hoc research tasks; and learning about their career and life projects. Like Wacquant, I underwent the training to be a researcher. In Congress, the lack of representativeness of personal staff has been openly discussed\(^4\) though few initiatives had reached the UK Parliament, apart from a campaign on unpaid internships and the Speaker’s Parliamentary Placement scheme.

Dale, author of *How to be a Parliamentary Researcher*, maintains: ‘it’s a shame [that] so little is written or spoken about parliamentary researchers, or the ‘unsung heroes of the Westminster Village’ as John Bercow calls them’ (Dale 2015). I argue that there is a double absence—both in research on/with parliamentary researchers, but also from a gender perspective. There are nearly 3,000 Members’ Staff employed on the parliamentary estate (Dale 2015, p. 227) and staffing constitutes 78% of MPs’ office budget and the total staffing budget costs nearly £100 million a year (Dale *Independent*, 10 September 2015). Indeed, the resources allocated to the staff budget became politicised in the response to COVID-19, whereby an allowance was provided to staff members to work from home. The median pay category for those working for an MP is between £22,500 and £25,000. The annual minimum income needed to live in outer London for a single person with no dependents in 2020 is £27,201 (Minimum Income Calculator UK 2020).

There are three job families for MPs staff although most Members’ Staff’s responsibilities move across a spectrum and they tend to be employed as generalists. These include administrative, executive and research categories. These job titles are outlined in Table 3.4.

Most MPs employ between three and five staff. Anecdotal evidence suggests a conflicted picture of how people experience staffing on the parliamentary estate in terms of descriptive representation:

I don’t know if this is just anecdotal, but it feels to me like there are more women who are working with male MPs.\(^5\)

when I first walked into Portcullis House it seemed to me as though it were staffed entirely by young men called Will, Tom or Ben…here weeks
Table 3.4  Job Titles and Pay Grades of Members’ Staff

| JOB FAMILIES | Administrative | Executive | Research |
|--------------|---------------|-----------|----------|
| LOCATION     | LONDON        | OUTSIDE   | LONDON   | OUTSIDE   |
|              | LONDON        | LONDON    | LONDON   | LONDON    | OUTSIDE   | LONDON    | OUTSIDE   |
| PAY RANGES   |               |           |          |           |           |           |           |
| 1            | 19,013–26,250 | 16,478–24,472 | 21,960–31,500 | 19,641–27,876 | 23,750–34,442 | 20,420–31,311 |
| 2            | 24,238–33,822 | 21,951–30,328 | 27,324–37,184 | 23,938–35,465 | 33,000–48,913 | 30,290–43,105 |
| 3            | 30,324–43,698 | 27,815–39,915 |          |           |           |           |
| JOB TITLES   |               |           |          |           |           |           |
| 1            | Secretary Personal Assistant Executive Officer Administrative Officer | Caseworker Communications Officer Constituency Assistant Support Officer Constituency Support Officer | Parliamentary Assistant Researcher Research Officer |
| 2            | Senior Secretary Senior Executive Officer Senior Administrative Officer Administrative Manager | Senior Caseworker Constituency Communications Manager Constituency Support Manager Constituency Support Manager Senior Communications Officer | |
| 3            | Principal Secretary Office Manager Executive Office Manager Chief of staff | | Senior Parliamentary Assistant Senior Researcher Research Manager |

Source (I would like to thank Rebecca McKee for bringing this Freedom of Information request to my attention. The Freedom of Information request is available at: https://www.theipsa.org.uk/publications/freedom-of-information/2017-18/cas-99866/) FOI Request IPSA CAS-99866 Breakdown of Salaries paid to MPs’ Staff
Table 3.5 tests some of these claims. Data from IPSA suggest that both female and male MPs were indeed more likely to employ female staff, though their relative position matters and is broken down further in Table 3.6. For some positions, such as apprenticeships, the use of this post differed by party. For example, of all the 9 apprentices, they were all employed by Conservatives.

From the data, there are more female personal assistants, caseworkers, secretaries and office managers than males. Males are over-represented as communications offices. This data can be broken down further by salary level and remains underexploited. Furthermore, data could be collected to examine the socio-economic background of parliamentary researchers, by asking: (1) parental occupation at age 14; (2) type of school attended at age 11-16; (3) free school meal eligibility; and (4) highest parental qualification (Social Mobility Commission 2020).

### 3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the methodology that this book has taken to look beneath what is provided in traditional political science methods. It has also defined the field-site, borrowing from the language of ‘working worlds’ that was provided *emic*ally by a field member and has set out a numerical picture of the actors that comprise the UK House of Commons. If gender is repeated over time, then immersion amongst gender acts is sought.

To return to the central theme of the book, gender is a social temporality, a relation and something that is practiced and therefore requires studying over time, which is what ethnography can bring. Feminist discursive institutionalism puts actors and gender identity at the very heart of
| Table 3.6 Breakdown of parliamentary staff by position and by the two main political parties |
|--------------------------------------------------|
| **Total in whole of parliament** | **Employer F Con** | **Employer M Con** | **Employer F Lab** | **Employer M Lab** |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Apprentice                       | F 5 (56%)  M 4 (44%) | F 2               | F 3                | 0                  | 0                  |
| Personal Assistant               | F 16 (84%)  M 3 (16%) | F 1               | F 5                | F 4                | F 6                |
| Researcher                       | F 35 (38%)  M 56 (62%) | F 5               | F 13               | F 7                | F 7                |
| Senior Researcher                | F 10 (37%)  M 17 (63%) | F 3               | F 7                | F 1                | F 3                |
| Caseworker                       | F 287 (59%)  M 200 (41%) | F 26              | F 94               | F 69               | F 58               |
| Communications officer           | F 16 (27%)  M 43 (73%) | F 1               | F 10               | F 3                | F 2                |
| Senior Communications officer    | F 15 (45%)  M 18 (55%) | F 1               | F 6                | F 3                | F 1                |
| Paid interns                     | F 39 (46%)  M 45 (54%) | F 7               | F 9                | F 12               | F 7                |
| Chief of staff                   | F 15 (35%)  M 28 (65%) | F 2               | F 8                | F 3                | F 2                |
| Secretary                        | F 46 (74%)  M 16 (26%) | F 6               | F 24               | F 5                | F 11               |
| Office Manager                   | F 219 (69%)  M 98 (31%) | F 20              | F 88               | F 40               | F 54               |
| Senior                           | F 136 (49%)  M 142 (51%) | M 15              | F 78               | F 14               | F 19               |
| Parliamentary Assistant          | F 22 (50%)  M 60 (50%) | M 24              | M 24               | M 35               |

*Source* FOI Request IPSA CAS-99866 Breakdown of Salaries paid to MPs’ Staff

the analysis, within their material settings. Section 2 of the book puts this research strategy into practice. Chapter 4 introduces the empirical research, before exploring the reproduction of gender regimes that three sets of actors: MPs, the House Service and parliamentary researchers work within, in Chapters 5 to 7.
## APPENDIX: METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION, ETHNOGRAPHY

See Tables 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19.

Having outlined the methodology in this chapter 3, this reflective note now outlines: (1) the meta-theoretical position taken, situating Butler and

### Table 3.7 Members’ staff interviewed

|                      | M  | F  | Total |
|----------------------|----|----|-------|
| Government           | 6  | 1  | 7     |
| Main Opposition      | 2  | 3  | 5     |
| Minority Opposition  | 0  | 1  | 1     |
| **Total**            | 13 |    |       |

### Table 3.8 Members of Parliament Interviewed

|                                | M  | F  | Total |
|--------------------------------|----|----|-------|
| Government                     | 6  | 7  | 13    |
| Main Opposition                | 6  | 9  | 15    |
| Minority Opposition            | 1  | 1  | 2     |
| Select Committee Chairs (Included in above) | 2  | 2  | 4     |
| (Former)(Shadow) Ministers/Whips (Included in above) | 6  | 8  | 14    |
| Backbenchers (Included in above) | 2  | 5  | 7     |
| Former MPs (2 cabinet Ministers) | 0  | 2  | 2     |
| **Total**                      | 31 |    |       |

### Table 3.9 Members of the House Service Interviewed

|        | M  | F  | Total |
|--------|----|----|-------|
| DCCS   | 4  | 4  | 8     |
| DIS    | 1  | 2  | 3     |
| TUS    | 1  | 0  | 1     |
| DFF    | 1  | 0  | 1     |
| DHRC   | 0  | 1  | 1     |
| **Total** | 14 |    |       |
### Table 3.10  Extra-commons participants interviewed

|                          | M   | F   | Total |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Journalists              | 1   | 1   | 2     |
| Expert select committee witnesses | 0   | 2   | 2     |
| Peers                    | 0   | 2   | 2     |
| Westminster hotel bar worker | 0   | 1   | 1     |
| Female political commentator | 0   | 1   | 1     |
| Parliamentary artists    | 0   | 2   | 2     |
| Total                    | 10  |     |       |

### Table 3.11  General observation diary

| Activities                             | Macro                                                                 | Meso                                                                 | Micro                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Shadowing the Member through her normal life | Observed Member in chamber performances                             | Attended the launch of an APPG Report and an evidence session        | Observed Member in an interview with a journalist for a trade magazine |
|                                        | Observed Member in Select Committee                                  | Attended an event in Whitehall that the Member was chairing         | Observed everyday office interaction                                  |
|                                        |                                                                       | Attended the launch of a party pamphlet, written by backbench MPs   |                                                                       |
|                                        |                                                                       | Attended three sessions of a party’s Women’s Committee              |                                                                       |
|                                        |                                                                       | Attended a stakeholder event that the Member was hosting on a matter of the constituency |                                                                       |
| Activities the House Service           |                                                                       |                                                                      |                                                                       |
|                                        |                                                                       |                                                                      | Attended an induction to the House Service                              |
|                                        |                                                                       |                                                                      | Attended the Speaker’s lecture series                                  |
|                                        |                                                                       |                                                                      | Observed select committees in public evidence sessions                 |
|                                        |                                                                       |                                                                      | Used spaces of consumption such as the gym and cafeterias              |
|                                        |                                                                       |                                                                      |                                                                       |
|                                        |                                                                       |                                                                      | Attended a WEN event                                                   |

(continued)
parliamentary ethnography; (2) the nuts and bolts of the specific methods outlined in this chapter 3; (3) the processes of analysis; and (4) criteria by which I assessed the quality of the interpretive research.
Table 3.12  List of parliamentary researchers interviewed

| Participant | M/F  | Date            | Format     |
|-------------|------|-----------------|------------|
| 1           | Male | 27 May 2014     | In person  |
| 2           | Male | 28 May 2014     | In person  |
| 3           | Male | 28 May 2014     | In person  |
| 4           | Male | 28 May 2014     | In person  |
| 5           | Female | 29 May 2014   | In person  |
| 6           | Female | 30 July 2014  | In person  |
| 7           | Male | 20 August 2015  | In person  |
| 8           | Male | 23 September 2014 | In person |
| 9           | Male | 12 October 2015 | In person  |
| 10          | Female | 12 October 2015 | In person  |
| 11          | Female  | 11 January 2016 | Skype      |
| 12          | Female  | 11 February 2016 | Skype |
| 13          | Male   | 14 March 2016   | Telephone  |

Butler and Parliaments—Interpretative Parliamentary Ethnography

Parliamentary ethnography has much to share with Butler; however, the decision to couple Butler with ethnography is not uncontentious and this dissonance is addressed here. There are continua of research practices in ethnography. Some ethnographies are situated at the interpretivist end and some towards the more positivist end of social science epistemology. Butler aims at subjectless critique, echoing a similar of Foucault’s critique of humanist anthropology. However, I would also argue that she encourages us to acknowledge those actors who are ‘interminably spectral’ (2004, p. 34)—in this case unelected staff and researchers, in addition to MPs as the ‘presumptive centre’ of power. Ethnography allowed me to observe and partially represent the interactions between different working worlds in the UK House of Commons and the gendering therein and so ethnography was a powerful pairing with Butler.

In addition to the potentials for attending to spectral actors, the anti-foundational ontological position of gender performed every day in acts marries with my epistemological position—which is that a researcher’s vantage point needs to be as closest to ‘knowledge’ as possible, prioritising embeddedness, rather than detachment in order to produce fine-grained analyses. Therefore, ethnography is an important methodology for gender scholars if we accept that gender is iterated over time and that change and agency are identity contingent.
Table 3.13  List of MPs interviewed

| MP | M/F | Date            | Format       |
|----|-----|-----------------|--------------|
| 14 | F   | 22 July 2014    | In person    |
| 15 | M   | 30 June 2014    | In person    |
| 16 | F   | 24 June 2014    | In person    |
| 17 | F   | 16 July 2014    | In person    |
| 18 | F   | 14 July 2014    | In person    |
| 19 | F   | 23 June 2014    | In person    |
| 20 | F   | 18 June 2014    | In person    |
| 21 | F   | 27 January 2015 | In person    |
| 22 | F   | 08 July 2014    | In person    |
| 23 | F   | 22 July 2014    | In person    |
| 24 | M   | 15 July 2014    | In person    |
| 25 | F   | 9 July 2014     | In person    |
| 26 | M   | 15 September 2014 | In person   |
| 27 | M   | 8 July 2014     | In person    |
| 28 | M   | 25 July 2016    | In person    |
| 29 | M   | 7 May 2014      | In person    |
| 30 | F   | 6 January 2014  | In person    |
| 31 | M   | 15 July 2014    | In person    |
| 32 | F   | 14 July 2014    | In person    |
| 33 | M   | 16 July 2014    | In person    |
| 34 | F   | 18 July 2014    | Telephone    |
| 35 | M   | 25 June 2014    | In person    |
| 36 | M   | 7 July 2014     | In person    |
| 37 | F   | 23 July 2014    | In person    |
| 38 | M   | 14 July 2014    | In person    |
| 39 | M   | 9 July 2014     | Over email   |
| 40 | F   | 7 November 2014 | In person    |
| 41 | M   | 4 September 2014 | In person  |
| 42 | F   | 9 September 2014 | In person   |
| 43 | F   | 4 August 2014   | In person *former MP |
| 44 | F   | 24 October 14   | In person *former MP |

Writing up a parliamentary ethnography using Butler presents a clear issue about whether Butler’s verboseness can optimally speak to everyday issues since she ‘projects an aura of esotericism’ (Fraser 1995, p. 67). Indeed, in many respects, ‘subject position’ does not feel very human. I have argued in this book that far from being epiphenomenal or esoteric,
### Table 3.14  House Service participants interviewed

| Participant | M/F | Department | Date Format               |
|-------------|-----|------------|---------------------------|
| 45          | F   | DCCS       | 17 September 2014         |
| 46          | M   | DFF        | 8 May 2014                |
| 47          | F   | DIS        | 16 May 2014               |
| 48          | F   | DIS        | 18 July 2014              |
| 49          | M   | DCCS       | 6 June 2014               |
| 50          | F   | DCCS       | 31 June 2014              |
| 51          | M   | DIS        | 12 September 2014         |
| 52          | M   | DCCS       | 17 July 2014              |
| 53          | F   | DCCS       | 14 May 2014               |
| 54          | M   | DCCS       | 1 May 2014                |
| 55          | F   | DHRC       | 4 June 2014               |
| 56          | M   | DCCS       | 30 June 2014              |
| 57          | F   | DCCS       | 27 July 2016              |
| 58          | M   | Member of Trade Union | 1 May 2014 |

### Table 3.15  Extra-Westminster participants interviewed

| Participant | M/F | Estate user               | Date Format   |
|-------------|-----|---------------------------|---------------|
| 59          | F   | Peer                      | 25 June 2014  |
| 60          | F   | Peer                      | 9 July 2014   |
| 61          | F   | Expert academic witness   | 21 April 2014 |
| 62          | F   | Expert academic witness   | 27 August 2014|
| 63          | F   | Party worker              | 13 May 2014   |
| 64          | M   | Westminster hotel bar worker | 27 June 2014 |
| 65          | M   | Journalist                | 24 July 2014  |
| 66          | F   | Female political commentator | 14 April 2014 |
| 67          | F   | Parliamentary sculptor    | 7 August 2014 |
| 68          | F   | Female Journalist         | 1 May 2014    |
Table 3.16  Illustrative interview questions for parliamentary researchers

| Theme to explore                                      | Opening/ guiding questions to generate knowledge                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Open question                                         | Tell me about your place of work. How far, in your opinion, is the House of Commons a particularly ‘masculine’ environment to work in?                                            |
| Career cycle and job effectiveness                    | What makes for a more/less effective relationship with an MP in the office? How have the techniques of running offices compared for different employers that you have worked for? What do you plan to do after your current job? What are the better and more challenging aspects of being a researcher? How did you distinguish yourself from other applicants? What is your relationship with role models? Have you ever considered becoming a (S)pad yourself? Why/ why not? How do you hone a professional image at parliament? What made you apply for a job at Westminster? How is work allocated in the office? |
| Citizenship                                            | How inclusive is the parliamentary estate? Where do you socialise? What are the dynamics of the place that you socialise?                                                                 |
| Public service, efficacy, support accountability and resolution | If you had a problem, where would they take this? Have you ever experienced/witnessed/ heard of sexism? Have you ever experienced/witnessed/ heard of sexual harassment? What are your thoughts on the new hotline that Speaker Bercow has set up? How are ethical issues dealt with? What’s the most rewarding part of your job? What factors around the parliamentary estate make it conducive to harassment behaviours reported in the press? |

Identity-building practices, reputations and gender performance are actually very important and that naming these and providing a language to describe insidious power relations where there may otherwise not be a language (McNay 2014) frees energy for other productive pursuits. In particular, the logic of iterability and writing the body into parliaments as settings is important.

I assembled the fieldwork materials into a NVivo project. NVivo is a data management package; it allowed me to collate the data in one place, create analytic memos, and make links across documents. I could also run computer-aided searches to navigate terms. This was not a substitute for fine-grained analysis. Researchers often feel obliged to engage in a ‘quasi-industrial process’ of carefully ‘cleaning up’ unwieldy data to meet disciplinary standards when it is often unruly or:

- sprawling, sticky, lumpy, impure and distinctly rough around the edges – not a substance that...[is]...easily handled, let alone neatly decanted into
Table 3.17 Illustrative interview questions for MPs

| Topic | Opening/guiding questions to generate knowledge |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Open question | Tell me about your place of work. How far, in your opinion, is the House of Commons a particularly 'masculine' environment to work in? |
| Career | How is success measured in the House of Commons? What were your thoughts on the cabinet reshuffle in terms of gender? How do you manage conflict on your committee? Why do you always sit in that place on the committee? How do the dynamics of committees differ that you sit on? Do men and women have different ways of asking questions? How consultative is the Chair? Is there a different dynamic between you and witnesses as the only XXXX on the committee? Do men and women have different interactional styles for asking questions? How does the chair achieve unanimous support for reports? What is your experience going before a select committee? What would make your job easier? You sit on X number of committees, how do they differ in their culture and chair styles? How inclusive is XXXX team that you work in and how have your bosses styles differed? What are your thoughts on the Health and Defence Chair elections? Why was XXX put in this portfolio and not XXXX portfolio? |
| Citizenship | How do MPs socialise in the Commons? How inclusive is the tea room/Strangers? How is media allocated in the party? (How) are there any differences between men and women building relationships with press on the estate? You said XXXX in your evidence to the inhouse inquiry on XXXX, are you happy with the outcome? What are your views on the Governance of the House arrangements? |
| Public service, efficacy, support accountability and resolution | If you had a personal problem, where they would take this? How is gender discrimination dealt with, if this is found to be occurring in parliament? Have you been active on gender issues in the House of Commons and if so, what were your experiences and what was the reception inside the House and party? What factors around the parliamentary estate make it conducive to harassment behaviours reported in the press? |

Furthermore, ethnographies of parliaments may aim at some type of political—in this case, feminist change, to bring about social justice. However, Butler’s Foucauldian conception of power has been questioned for its theoreticism and inability to create an actionable programme for change (Lowndes and Roberts 2013, p. 88; Nussbaum 1999; Hennessy 1993; Ebert 1992; Hartsock 1985, p. 38; Lather 1991, p. 8) and that 'she
### Table 3.18 Illustrative interview questions for participants from the House Service

| Category                        | Questions                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Open question**               | Tell me about your place of work. How far is the House of Commons a particularly ‘masculine’ environment to work in?                      |
| **The career cycle**            | A theme that has come up in my research is the notion of working ‘worlds’ at Westminster. Do you recognise this description and if so, how would you classify the different working worlds? What are your views of the Governance of the House arrangements? How is knowledge shared? How developed is the culture of flexible working? What are your views on the appointment of the clerk? How does the circulation process work? |
| **Citizenship**                 | How inclusive is the parliamentary estate? What are the advantages of being in a WEN? What are the greatest challenges that WENs face? What are the advantages of being in a WEN? Please could you tell me about the MPs’ tea-room if you can access it? I am trying to build a mental picture |
| **Expert knowledge**            | Do male and female MPs have a different style of questioning for witnesses? How are witnesses selected? Do men and female witnesses receive the same kinds of questions? Why are only 24.7% of witnesses female? I went to a Select Committee hearing on a gender-sensitive topic and there were no female MPs to question the female witnesses—why is this? How do you characterise the dynamic of this committee compared to others that you have served on? What makes an effective chair? How are inquiries chosen? (How) have approaches to witness selection changed following the report by Democratic Audit? How can attendance be improved? |
| **Public service, efficacy, support accountability and resolution** | What factors around the parliamentary estate make it conducive to harassment behaviours reported in the press? If you had a problem, where would you take this? Are staff always treated with respect and dignity? |

prefers the sexy acts of parodic subversion to any lasting material or *institutional change* (Nussbaum 1999, p. 211, emphasis added). Butler stressed that programmatic assessments belie contingency and context (Butler and Bell 1999, pp. 166–167). However, it would be incorrect to suggest that Butlerian scholars have sought discursive change in and of itself.

Using Butler has consequences for the types of claims that are possible to make from the parliamentary ethnography. Many post-structuralists are critical of a representational politics with faithfulness to an ‘original’. Performativity is seen to be a non-representational theory; rather than the
### Table 3.19  Indicative list of documents consulted

| Document                                                                 | Purpose                                                                 | Link                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Respect Policy                                                          | This document was being revised at the time of fieldwork and looks into accountability | [http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-commission/Respect-Policy.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-commission/Respect-Policy.pdf) |
| **Members Interview Projects:**                                          |                                                                        |                                                                      |
| • Women Members                                                         |                                                                        |                                                                      |
| • Members and Members’ Staff Interview Project                           |                                                                        |                                                                      |
| • Former Members upon leaving the House                                  |                                                                        |                                                                      |
| **(Review of) House of Commons Diversity and Inclusion scheme 2012–2015** | To investigate the new norm of diversity within the House of Commons  | [https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-commission/diversity-and-inclusion-scheme.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-commission/diversity-and-inclusion-scheme.pdf) |
| Governance of the House Inquiry evidence                                 | As an analytical window into change in leadership structures, skills and governance in the House of Commons | [http://www.parliament.uk/business/commons/governance-of-the-house-ofcommons/](http://www.parliament.uk/business/commons/governance-of-the-house-ofcommons/) |
| Fast stream recruitment brochures                                        | This was raised in interviews, to see how members of the House Service were represented in the images | [http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-resources/fast-stream-brochure-2014.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-resources/fast-stream-brochure-2014.pdf) |

(continued)
Table 3.19 (continued)

| Document                                      | Purpose                                                                 | Link                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **FOI Equality analysis of circulation policy and forward plan** | The gender inequality around a *rule-in-form*, the circulation procedure was cited in three interviews | https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzW0w_61YSvZEp2MHE2LTZaeVU/view?usp=sharing https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzW0w_61YSvZkWc2NmYzU2dZ2s/view?usp=sharing |
| **Bounded instructional guides and information leaflets:** | To provide additional information on rules-inform and rules-in-use | Department of Chamber and Committee Services, May 2012 Issued by the Speaker and the Deputy Speakers, July 2013 |
| - Guide for Select Committee Members          |                                                                        |                                                                      |
| - Rules of behaviour and courtesies in the House |                                                                        |                                                                      |
| **House of Commons Standing orders**          | The written orders that regulate the proceedings of each House         | https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmstords/1020/so_1020_180501.pdf |

‘what’, theorists of performativity are interested in the ‘how’. Butler is interested in what is at the limits of representation. Therefore, the book does not seek to provide ‘men’ and ‘women’ or distinct ‘styles’ but to open up some of the ways that gender was spoken about, performed, in relation to gendered/gendering rules. The empirical discussion and framework can be taken up, critiqued and reworked by others.

Linked to this politics of representation, uncovering the informal ‘can present difficulties of access and confidentiality’ (Chappell and Waylen 2013, p. 2) and so I followed observations through interviews to see if people would be willing to discuss them in an interview context, omitted them or found an open source such as the FOI request on the reduced to two posts *rule-in-use*. As mentioned, I guaranteed anonymity to participants. This is because I was vigilant that academic work can become ‘performative’ in terms of its re-citation. Furthermore, when including, I followed Denscombe’s two criteria towards the respectful inclusion of field notes that: (1) participants should not suffer as a consequence of inclusion, and (2) they should not be identifiable (2014, p. 218).

Reflexivity was practised throughout the research. Warren stresses: ‘It is not “any researcher” who produces a particular ethnography, it is you’
(1988, p. 65). Given the exposure to ‘flesh and blood’ elite actors, it would be remiss not to comment on this, given my ‘fleshy’ analytical framework. Whilst over-reflexive accounts may lead to ‘full and uncompromising self-reference’ (Davies 1999, p. 7), Wilkinson suggests ‘the researcher herself becomes a source of data that can contribute additional layers to the thick description that is gradually being developed’ (2013a, p. 132). It is ironic when interpretivist scholars fail to discuss their ‘own beliefs, subjectivities, and subject positions, and how these may impact on the research process’ (Chappell and Waylen 2013, p. 11).

A reflexive attitude was taken to inter-subjective power. Butler suggests that ‘we’re undone by each other. And if we’re not, we’re missing something’ (2004, p. 23). A researcher can undo a participant by asking an insensitive question. My academic identity was recited along a continuum of unthreatening to dangerous identities. I was aware that women can struggle to build authority as researchers:

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A female researcher may not discuss the issue of gender in presenting her fieldwork experience for a variety of reasons...[She] may overlook or even deny difficulties she experienced in the field to avoid having her work appear unsound. (Gurney 1985, p. 44)

In terms of less threatening identities, being young(er), blonde-haired, unmarried, having a small build and pursuing gender research does not appear to be threatening. MPs discussed their daughters’ applications to universities; asked about the courses that I taught on; and asked about my experiences of being a woman in higher education. T’hart’s identity was an ‘egg head’ in the field (2007, p. 55). I was ‘dear’ ed at in the field, even by ‘enlightened’ research participants. Police officers laughed amongst themselves after I missed a diversion: ‘we were going to see how far she got’. I was met with nurturing receptions when conducting interviews in constituency offices: ‘Watch those traffic lights, lov’ One male researcher said ‘Cherry you’re just so nice!’ and another said ‘Little Cherry’ who wouldn’t let me stand my round in the researchers’ bar. This had connotations of being ‘naïve, blonde and bubbly’, a ‘poor student’. When asking one respondent about the presentational styles of MPs, she offered me some ‘gentle’ advice:

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You want to present yourself as calm and capable but you’re doing this [slumps] and you’re doing this [bobs head] and I don’t know how old you are but it makes you look girlish. 9

This demonstrates that fieldwork at time, can be ‘hauntingly personal’ (Van Maanen et al. 1988a, p. 5), and a researcher can also be ‘undone’ positively and negatively by her participants (Butler 2004). I scratched my neck and an older man at a workshop with a press pass suggested ‘[i]n the old days, you would have had a noose around your neck for doing that’. 10 I was also mistaken for a journalist rather than a PhD researcher: a subject position of being dangerous. This might be because by wearing old suits from a clearance store, my own descriptive marks and stylisation of the body were perhaps outside of the cycle of younger high street fashion. Generally, women tended to give more eye contact in interviews and they were more dialogical. One male researcher kept looking out of the window and gave the body signals of looking disinterested. Yet a male MP positioned me as expert as academic kindred-spirit: ‘people here would look very blankly at you if they tried to understand it. I can see you do. You’re the exception’. 11 O’Reilly suggests ‘there is no escaping your own body and this will affect how you are received and how participants interact with you in the field’ (2012, p. 100). This was also notable in Skype interviews where there is no escaping your own body and indeed may be a more frequently used practice in political science interview research. 12 Brewer suggests that gender is the ‘primary identity’ in fieldwork and that female researchers can be treated as ‘gofers, mascots or surrogate granddaughters’ in the field (2000, p. 99). Whilst this is a valid point that women may be treated differently in the field, treating gender as a ‘primary’ identity ignores other aspects of identity such as class, race and sexuality (Butler 2011, p. 122). These positionalities may be affected by the parliament, for example, as a UK researcher in the UK parliament, accent is something that may be a qualitatively different marker than if I was conducting research in another country’s parliament.

The tactic of flattering politicians (Crewe 2015b, p. 3) is possibly fruitful but also has gendered and power implications. This proved calamitous for myself when discussing mentoring schemes with a male MP. The MP questioned his mentoring skills and I replied with: ‘you can mentor me, then’ 13 and I panicked that this sounded sexualised. In interviews, I did, however, adopt active listening techniques to put myself in the
respondent’s shoes, to be respectful of their experiences and to be a fellow traveller alongside their recollection of their experiences.

I was reassured to read that the phrase: ‘that’s interesting in itself’ (Rapport 2014, p. 60) has been used frequently by other ethnographers because it was a phrase that I often used, if a respondent presented a claim counterintuitive to (what they thought) I expected them to respond with and they thought I would be disappointed. Oakley argued for sisterly interviews (1981). However, I found that there were risks of ‘closure to this mutuality’ (Rapport 2014, p. 53). An example of where I could have managed the interview better is with a working-class participant where she discusses her presence on a committee and men speaking behind their hands asking: ‘where is she from?’. I replied:

CM: Where are they from? [both laugh]14

I could have optimised the conversation to ask: ‘why do you think that they asked you that?’ However, on the other hand, empathy, and understanding, revealed that often there is a time-lag to acknowledge sexism.

CM: Have you experienced sexism?
P: Yes… I walk out of the meetings and I retrospectively think: “I should have been more assertive” and it’s difficult to be assured that it is sexism.
CM: This idea of identifying sexism in retrospect is interesting, because…it has a longer timeframe than just the moment. Something similar happened to me yesterday!
P: Exactly because you end up channelling the anger in the wrong direction.15

Despite epistemic risks of over-familiarity when studying parliaments as gendered workplaces, arguably, the researcher’s second response resonates with Wulff’s comments surrounding collaboration in interviews:

the interviewer and the interviewee trigger each other into an exchange of escalating states of creativity beneficial for the interviewer’s research process as well as for the interviewee in the form of potential new personal or professional insights. When it works, this can be seen as a synergy situation, as the two people involved would not have reached these particular insights independently. (Wulff 2014, p. 163)
The weight that we should put on subjugated knowledge is a key concern for feminists. In choosing evidence to discuss within the book, I selected examples that were multifaceted enough to provide both content, but were also generative of new insights using analytical leverage.

Ethnography has been described as ‘arrogant enterprise, taking hit and run’ (Reinharz 1983, p. 80; see also Agar 1980, p. 41; Stacey 1988). Sustaining synergies in the field has to be balanced with an appreciation of field members’ time pressures as a functioning workplace. I set up synergies and provided information on points of contact and pieces of research that had been conducted in the areas of interest to respondents.

So far I have provided an optimistic account of parliamentary ethnography, but I would like to qualify what I have said thus far. All ethnographies are partial. More eyes need to have it, so feminists do not turn a blind eye to intersections, power and those iterabilities that a white graduate female researcher might not capture or access. This is because subjects are multiply positioned. The work for this book was not intersectional, and therefore, a more systematic and in-depth intersectional critique must be enacted of everyday practice. In addition, ethnography needs institutional support such as funding and research leave; an awareness of gendered contingencies in practice; and in the history of ethnography. Conducting an ethnography clearly presents opportunities and challenges and was traditionally the preserve of ‘lone ranger’ male anthropologists (Kuklik in Wedeen 2009, p. 75). One must ‘cut your life down to the bone as much as you can afford to cut it down’ (Goffman 1989, p. 127). It is not surprising then that Park’s oft-cited instruction was to men: ‘[i]n short, gentlemen [sic], go get the seat of your pants dirty in real research’ (in Silverman 2011, p. 19) or that Ottenberg described his field notes as ‘an extension of me – like an extra penis’ (1990, p. 141). Goffman suggested that as well as ‘getting into place’, ethnographers have the imperative of ‘exploiting place’ (1989, p. 129). This has all sorts of ramifications for power relations. Furthermore, conflict methodology is ‘a willingness to utilize any and all situationally available techniques to gather data’ (Lundman and McFarlane 1976, p. 507). This instrumentalism negates personal safety and research ethics. Strategies have been developed for addressing sexual and gender harassment in the field (Warren 1988). Furthermore, elite ethnography has been described as: ‘a young person’s game. It requires a degree of physical stamina and psychological adaptability that, taken together, are optimized in people of their twenties and thirties more than in their forties and fifties (even though people in their
forties do have the advantage of being closest to the average age of House Members’ (Fenno 1978, p. 253). Therefore, ethnography can require a wraparound commitment and research institutions could perhaps support researchers more in both practical and immaterial ways when undertaking fieldwork.

Now that I have reflected on Butler and parliamentary ethnography, I will discuss how generalisable my analysis is. In terms of applicability, the quality of qualitative research is not based upon generalisability (Punch 1998, p. 154). Bevir and Rhodes favour ‘philosophical rigour’ (2006b, p. 81). I have developed an empirical framework of the career cycle, citizenship and public service that can be used in different settings, but parliaments come in different types and stress different functions, so it needs to be combined with qualitative research. I also conducted a degree of purposive sampling across men and women and political parties as well as power and identity.

(2) Participant characteristics

I will now discuss the meta-approach to recruitment to participate in the interviews from the three ‘worlds’ outlined above. Sampling approaches were relevant at different periods of the study. My sampling was theoretically consistent with my epistemological approach: that if we are to attend to power at the capillaries of the House of Commons, then we must attend to differently situated actors. Like Harvey (2011, p. 434), many of my interviewees referred me to contacts and so this precludes a more purposive sample. Requests were made on the basis of five broad areas. These were: (1) gender, (2) party, (3) power and positionality, (4) theory and (5) identity. Firstly, gender is not a synonym for women (Lovenduski 1996, p. 4). Ramazonoglu and Holland (2002, p. 5) study ‘gendered social lives’ rather than ‘women’. I moved back and forth, engaging with both men and women as subjects and beneficiaries of knowledge production by asking about their experiences. Secondly, there was a degree of quota sampling across parties where I spoke with actors in five political parties. Thirdly, I sampled across power and positionality. Moving away from methodological elitism and investigating power at the capillaries would have included staff on lower incomes, such as cleaners, but as an early career researcher, I did not have the profile to have carried this out with trust. I used the evidence submitted to the Governance of
the House report, but acknowledge that many contractors and lower-paid staff may not have felt a sense of ownership or submitted evidence to the inquiry. I spoke to a union member who may have had insights about this group but this can also be problematic for making representative claims. To maximise positionality, if somebody had served on two or three select committees, then this provided positionality to examine the different dynamics. Fourthly, theoretical sampling is most congruent with the type of ethnography that I was conducting, to gain informed comment on aspects of gender identity. In terms of meeting ‘gendered actors working with the rules’ (Gains and Lowndes 2014), I interviewed those who had taken equality initiatives through the Commons—such as being involved in an APPG, taken a Bill through and been a member of a Workplace Equality Network as well as everyday actors. Fifthly, I sampled across identity and included ‘outliers’ by listening for atypical views from participants who I met in situ:

Be sure to include dissidents, cranks, deviants, marginals isolates—people with different points of view from the mainstream, people less committed to tranquillity and equilibrium in the setting. (Miles et al. 2014, p. 298)

Tables Nine to Twelve show the respondents spoken to. In order to protect the anonymity of interviewees, I have not included specific job titles.

The limitations of the sample arose from the serendipitous nature of interactions with participants and the snowball nature of recruitment. Most of my respondents were white and from the UK. There were two respondents from Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, though requests were sent to try to have a more representative group and to analyse superordinate and intra-category intersections (Brown 2018). For MPs, I had a greater number of Opposition members, though this matched Emma Crewe’s sample and equal numbers of requests were sent. For the House Service, I had a larger representation from the DCCS department, which is because my initial explorations were on the select committee as a gendered scene—that had been less explored in academic literature. For parliamentary researchers, I had a large representation of gay, male government researchers, due to the snowball nature of the recruitment. Illustrative questions that were asked to participants are set out in Tables 3.16–3.18 in the appendix to this chapter.


**Observations**

This section discusses more specifically the observations. Participant observers start out fairly non-selective in terms of what they observe (Denscombe 2014, p. 207) and work towards a progressive focussing. Table 3.11 refers to the scope and planning of my research engagements. Macro-observations were large and in-discriminatory to get an ‘overall feel’ for the situation, as a ‘scene-setting’ device. Denscombe calls this ‘holistic observation’ (2014, p. 207). Macro-observation included chamber performances, spending time in the various outlets on the estate, accessing open sources of information, ‘unstructured soaking’ and general unobtrusive methods to map the organisational structure and hierarchy. The meso-level of the diary included pre-planned, more focused observations of parliamentary business announced on the UK Parliament website, Mark D’Arcy’s week ahead and Benedict Brogan’s former Telegraph blog. In terms of micro-level activity, I attended serendipitous events that I was invited to by the member, coffees, events advertised on parliamentary intranet, staff networks, and think tank events that were focussed towards the themes that were emerging in the research. Table 3.11 outlines a general observation diary.

*(Elite) Interviews*

The strategy to sampling was discussed above. Tables 3.12, 3.13, 3.14 and 3.15 provide details on the date and format of the interviews.

Tables 3.16, 3.17 and 3.18 should only be treated as examples of common questions that were asked in the interviews. I took interview guides, having researched the background for each participant, but the interview guide was used as a prompt to initiate dialogue rather than as unvarying. This means that not all interviews are directly comparable or quantifiable. This is because in practice, the ethnographic research was exploratory and followed issues that participants volunteered. I probed participants’ views, even regarding my own observations from the field. The questions were capillary to elicit ‘everyday’ information relevant to the context and background of the interviewee, and what was happening on the estate during the fieldwork.
Table 3.19 outlines the different methodologies in these documents also need to be attended to. The soft methodologies involved in House of Commons interview projects were criticised as a ‘snapshot’ by one respondent, but this response was revealing. Overall, the combined observations, interviews and documents provided a rich set of information. This section has discussed three forms of generation that took place within the field. The next section discusses the quality of the generation of insights and issues of power and (inter) subjectivity.

To conclude, to conduct ethnography in the UK House of Commons was an immense privilege. Butler is interested in what is at the limits of representation. This is only a very partial study and from one set of eyes behind the spectacles. I firmly feel that ethnography is productive for knowledge and ideas to change institutions and would thoroughly recommend this to other scholars and hope that higher education institutions provide the resources to support the time-intensive placement.

Notes

1. This included a conference and summer recess, which I have not counted in my formal fieldwork period but I was still in the field yo-yoing to conduct interview research. It also helped me to appreciate the pace and different rhythms of parliament.
2. Field is a problematic term in anthropology, for at least three reasons: (1) How do you map a field? It should be sensitive to participants’ boundaries that they create of their fieldsites; (2) it objectifies relations and creates the participants as inert ‘objects’; and (3) it is near on impossible for the researcher to extricate themselves from ‘the field’ separate from the researcher’s own current and prior working worlds and the ways that they construct them.
3. Studies have addressed the career dynamics of congressional staff (Romzek and Utter 1997), the roles of the European Parliament’s staff (Busby and Belkacem 2013; Pegan 2017), researchers at Party Head Quarters (Fisher and Webb 2003), the Conservative Research Unit (Fletcher 2011) as well as young party members (Bruter and Harrison 2009). There is only a sprinkling of detail on researchers across MPs’ autobiographies. Betty Boothroyd for example (2001, pp. 33–38) worked for both Barbara Castle and Geoffrey de Freitas as MPs. Evans has discussed the gender disparities in the Liberal Democrats between Parliamentary researchers (2011, pp. 34–37).
4. StaffUpCongress: National Initiative for a More Representational Workforce. https://www.staffupcongress.com, by Nancy Pelosi in order to keep up with new representations. https://www.suttontrust.com/newsarchive/unpaid-internships-paving-the-way-into-politics/. If it is organisational connections that get people into parliament on internships such as Universities, can different organisations rather than universities build institutional connections with parliament? IPSA.

5. Interview 19, Female MP, 26 June 2014.

6. Though this comes at a loss since each legislative and constituency political party had very distinctive issues and is institutions in themselves which is an area for further research.

7. Field note, 2 September 2014.

8. Field note, 15 October 2014.

9. Interview 49, Former Female MP, 24 October 2014.

10 Field note, 23 June 2014.

11. Interview 41, Male MP, 4 September 2014.

12. I particularly felt tired, pale, and puffy when conducting a Skype interview with a younger female researcher.

13. Interview 31, Male MP, 15 July 2014.

14. Interview 18, Female MP, 22 July 2014.

15. Interview 12, Female Parliamentary Researcher, 11 February 2016.

16. BAME is not an uncontroversial term and is used in this book in a strategically essentialist way.

17. Interview 68, Female DCCS Member, 27 July 2016. Black Asian Minority Ethnic.

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