Securitisation and Diego Garcia

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Abstract. To advance the on-going debate on Securitisation Theory (ST), we argue that the important questions of audience and attention can be addressed through careful historical study. In an analysis of the securitising moves concerning the American military base on Diego Garcia, we are able to demonstrate that the Copenhagen and Paris Schools are not methodologically incompatible, and empirically that public attention for security issues has a tendency to dissipate without continual discursive investment.

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Introduction

Diego Garcia is a tiny atoll in the middle of the Indian Ocean with a disproportionate geopolitical effect on the balance of power in the Middle East and Eastern Africa, possessed by the United Kingdom as part of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).[1] As the hub for regional American military activity, the base on Diego Garcia has played an essential role in every American military operation in the region since its construction in 1971. The island is off-limits, to casual tourists, the media, and strikingly its inhabitants. How did access to this tropical island become a matter of national security? This article focuses on a series of securitising moves, when an actor attempts to define an issue or sector as a security issue, over the use of and access to Diego Garcia. Each securitising move requires a securitising agent, a securitised object, and an audience. In terms of the successive acts of securitisation covered in this article, the securitising actors have primarily been consecutive British and American governments. The issue of access to and use of the island has been framed as an essential factor contributing to US and UK national security interests

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in the Near East. What makes Diego Garcia an important case study for Securitisation Theory (ST) is not simply the significance of the island as a valued object for American and British geostrategic calculations, but also the recent history of Diego Garcia that involves multiple securitising moves. The Diego Garcia case shows not only the particularity of securitising moves, but also the heterogeneous character of multiple processes, and helps explain why some securitising moves are successful, others fail, and others are never made public. The three chief arguments of this article are: Diego Garcia is a good case for a series of formal securitising moves; methodologically, Copenhagen and Paris schools tools must both be used to understand the processes of securitisation, and finally, ST is effected by the second law of thermodynamics, in other words, in a discursive system, over time, differences in threat level particularly the sense of 'emergency' will equilibrate.[2] In this article we also illustrate the under-theorised role of the media in ST.[3]

In this article, we focus in the discourses, networks, and processes – securitising moves[4] – that create and sustain the lease of the American base on the British island, and ban on particular non-military populations (private contractors and scientists are welcome, journalists, tourists, the Chagossians are prohibited). A joint US/UK military base on Diego Garcia has been steadily growing since the early 1970s. The UK presence is limited to a handful of officers, while the US presence has increased substantially: Diego Garcia houses one of the main ground stations for the global positioning system (GPS) network; it was used for the launch of the attempted release of the American hostages in Iran, the First Gulf War, the Second Gulf War, and the invasion of Afghanistan. This article maps out various actors and techniques used in these securitising moves: How did this remote island become an American base described as a lynchpin for the region? What were the dispositions of law and sovereignty that allowed the expulsion of the Chagos islanders and their continued exile, particularly in light of the recent House of Lords ruling acknowledging their right of return?[5] What were the actual processes of securitisation of that implemented exceptional measures to restrict access to Diego Garcia?

The evolution of the public discussion of Diego Garcia's security status demonstrates that the media plays an important and under-theorised role in processes of securitisation, both as an actor and as an audience. As suggested by Fred Vultee, 'securitization works as both an independent variable – an effect *in* media – as well as a dependent variable, or an effect *of* media'.[6] A careful history demonstrates that, in fact, the securitisation of access and use of Diego Garcia had been contested a number of times in public and amongst decision-makers – and this contestation gives

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[2] Andrew Neal, 'Normalisation and Legislative Exceptionalism: Counterterrorist Lawmaking and the Changing Times of Security Emergencies', *International Political Sociology*, 6:3 (2012), pp. 260–76. Independently, Neal also uses the notion of entropy in his own analysis.

[3] Fred Vultee, 'Securitization as a media frame: What happens when the media "speaks security"', in Thierry Balzacq (ed.), *Securitization Theory; How security problems emerge and dissolve* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp 77–93.

[4] We want to highlight a distinction between security measures and security moves. While measures refer to particular practices, a security move is the attempt to name an issue area a security issue that cannot be debated. Our thanks to a reviewer for this precision.

[5] For a detailed narrative of the Chagos Islanders, see Laura Jeffrey, 'How a plantation became paradise: changing representations of the homeland among displaced Chagos Islanders', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13:4 (2007), pp. 951–68.

[6] Vultee, 'Securitization as a Media Frame', p. 78.

excellent purchase to illustrate two necessary supplements to securitisation theory. Building on the work of Stritzel, Balzacq, and Salter regarding the need for a more processual understanding of the securitising moves, there is a consensus that a richer model of the audience-speaker dynamic must be elaborated.[7] As such, the role of the media and the public sphere has been under-theorised in current ST, and we offer a preliminary reading of the media's role as a unique and important frame in the securitisation scene both as an actor and as representative of the audience.[8] We also demonstrate that public, political, and bureaucratic attention is subject to a political second law of thermodynamics: *the tendency for security 'emergencies' to normalise*. Studies in political communication point to an empirical increase in issue volatility over the past fifty years.[9] Public attention wanders. Agenda setting is essentially understood in political communications theory as a zero-sum game, where there is a persistent carrying capacity of the public agenda, and the arrival of a new issue must mean the displacement of another.[10] Issues arise, become saturated, and then dissipate.[11] In the case of Diego Garcia, public attention arises because of catalytic events, such as reports by investigative journalists, the US Congressional budget process, or by the work of activists, but then attention dissipates as other issues come to take over the limited public agenda. Issues may fade from the public agenda due a successful securitising move, as ST predicts, or they may dissipate, or be pushed out of the public agenda. Similarly, in issues pertaining to security, public attention naturally gravitates towards major issues. To give an example, in the case of Diego Garcia, displacement of the island's indigenous population undoubtedly has a harder time finding a place in the public agenda when a related actor has managed to successfully relate the access to the island to a larger security issue such as climate change or the War on Terror (WoT).

This helps us to the confirmation bias identified as endemic to ST research.[12] From this perspective, we can also operationalise public attention as occupying space on the public agenda. After a brief summary of securitisation theory, we elaborate our three contributions, and then set out the Diego Garcia case to demonstrate the utility of these new tools.

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[7] Holger Stritzel, 'Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond', *European Journal of International Relations*, 13:3 (2007), pp. 357–83; Thierry Balzacq, 'The Policy Tools of Securitization: Information Exchange, EU Foreign and Interior Policies', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 46:1 (2008), pp. 75–100; Thierry Balzacq, 'The three faces of securitization: political agency, audience and context', *European Journal of International Relations*, 11:2 (2005), pp. 171–201; Mark B. Salter, 'Securitization and Desecuritization: Dramaturgical Analysis and the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 11:4 (2008), pp. 321–49.

[8] We do not offer in this article a detailed reading of each decision in the media sector, for example why some stories are spiked and others promoted. This is an extremely interesting avenue for future research, but outside the scope of the current article.

[9] Maxwell McCombs and Jhian-Hua Zhu, 'Capacity, Diversity, and Volatility of the Public Agenda: Trends from 1954–1994', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 59:4 (1995), pp. 495–523.

[10] Jhian-Hua Zhu, 'Issue Competition and Attention Distraction: A Zero-Sum Theory of Agenda-Setting', *Journalism Quarterly*, 69:4 (1992), pp. 825–36.

[11] Gary T. Henry and Craig S. Gordon, 'Tracking Issue Attention: Specificying the Dynamics of the Public Agenda', *Pubilc Opinion Quarterly*, 65:2 (2001), pp. 157–77.

[12] Thierry Balzacq, 'Enquiries into methods: A new framework for securitization analysis', in Thierry Balzacq (ed.), *Securitization Theory; How security problems emerge and dissolve* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 34.

Securitisation Theory

ST has grown in complexity and nuance since its earlier articulation in International Relations (IR) by Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde.[13] As part of a reinvigorated security studies, ST argued that the definition of particular issues as security issues was a perlocutive act, like the naming of a ship, making a promise, or pronouncing a marriage. Buzan et al. argued that if an audience accepts the securitising move, that a particular sector or issue is an existential threat that must be countered by exceptional measures, then further public debate on the issue is foreclosed and the state may use exceptional or extraordinary measures. In additions to the critiques raised by Stritzel and Balzacq above, there exists a second generation of ST that is engaging the questions of process and audience.[14] There is a strong Orientalist critique: ST only works within a Western or European context.[15] Though our case study is located in the Indian Ocean, our focus is the securitisation battles within Western capitals: thus, while we are sympathetic to this critique we leave it to others.[16] There are two ways in which first-generation ST over-simplified time: it views the securitising move as a single event, rather than a recursive process or more particularly a series of competing processes; and the empirical examples focused on the present.

Rather than re-present all of the manifold and various critiques of ten years of the Copenhagen School, we want to articulate our version of ST, and argue that even its strongest strain has two fundamental gaps: the lack of an articulation of the discursive space in which the speech act/audience acceptance process occurs; and an accounting of history within that model.[17] The core of ST is the *process* of securitisation, by which an issue is defined as a security issue: a move that is accepted or rejected by an audience. The initial conditions for success were the salience of the issue, the social capital of the enunciator, and acceptance of the audience.[18] A more robust (albeit less parsimonious) version would include words, images, and silences as 'moves';[19] contextualised and historicised discourse of the threat and the move itself;[20] and a more carefully parsed audience reaction.[21] This gives us a more nuanced sense of the discursive space in which the securitising move takes place.

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[13] Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: a new framework for analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998); Ulrik Pram Gad and Karen Lund Petersen, 'Concepts of Politics in Securitization Studies', *Security Dialogue*, 11:4–5 (2011), pp. 315–28.

[14] Thierry Balzacq (ed.), *Securitization Theory: How security problems emerge and dissolve* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[15] Monika Barthwal-Datta, 'Securitising Threats without the State: A case study of misgovernance as a security threat in Bangladesh', *Review of International Security*, 35:2 (2009), pp. 277–300; Claire Wilkinson, 'The Copenhagen School on Tour in Kyrgyzstan: Is Securitization Theory Useable Outside Europe?', *Security Dialogue*, 38:1 (2007), pp. 5–25.

[16] The majority of legal challenges by the Chagos Islanders has occurred in Western capitals, Washington DC, and London, rather than the grassroots movements in Mauritius (Vine 2009).

[17] Matt McDonald, 'Securitization and the Construction of Security', *European Journal of International Relations*, 14:4 (2008), pp. 563–87.

[18] Buzan, *Security*, p. 23.

[19] Lene Hansen, 'The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School', *Millennium*, 29:2 (2000), pp. 289–306; Michael C. Williams, 'Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics', *International Studies Quarterly*, 47:4 (2003), pp. 511–31.

[20] Balzacq, 'Three faces of securitization'; Stritzel, 'Towards a Theory of Securitization'.

[21] Salter, 'Securitization and Desecuritization'; Balzacq, 'The Policy Tools of Securitization'; Sarah Léonard and Christian Kaunert, 'Reconceptualizing the audience in securitization theory', in Thierry Balzacq (ed.), *Securitization Theory; How security problems emerge and dissolve* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 57–77.

There are two broad trends in second-generation ST: discursive analysis more faithful to the Copenhagen's initial model and a Bourdieusian-inspired international political sociology approach. Hansen and Huysmans, for example, examine particular discourses for securitising moves and evidence of audience acceptance.[22] Hansen's admirable chapter on research design sets out one way in which 'discourse analysis can be "put to work"'.[23] These discursive positions can account for the role of the media as the medium of securitising moves, and indeed as independent actors that aim to securitise or desecuritise particular issues.[24] These discursive approaches, however, cannot account for attention or inattention because their very object of inquiry. In other words, the discursive approach cannot analyse silence or absence of discourse. Others take a more sociological approach by examining how particular security practices are authorised, legitimated, or put into play by actors. Bigo and Guild set out the micropolitics of EU border and visa policies, Balzacq describes the evolution of EU information exchange policies, Bonditti maps the networks involved in the roll-out of biometrics in the War on Terror, Jeandesboz examines the creation and use of a particular bureaucratic label (the European Neighbourhood), Neal analyses the creation of a security regime, and Salter analyses one particular security authority.[25] Each of these authors, and others who are associated with the Paris School, draw inspiration from the Bourdieusian notion of 'field'.[26] Bourdieu introduces field as a social universe, a microcosm that bring together agents and institutions engaged in the production of certain product: in our case, security practices and discourses. The notion of field offers a relational understanding of practice and language; it helps us to extricate from the reductionist, essentialist, and individualist ontology dominating major portion of the literature on security and media studies, and adopt a more holist and relational approach. Fields have their own irreducible 'fundamental laws' that are often tautologies; for instance, business is business.[27] In the field of security professionals, we see similar tautologies: national security is in our national interest; our national interest is to protect our national security. The unquestionability of 'security' as an absolute good undergirds this field. By identifying the role of agents in the development of practices, and discourse, we can plot the bureaucratic, popular, and media struggles for the ability to define particular issues – and, in particular, make an argument about the tendency for public attention to particular issues to dissipate. Discourse analysis alone cannot explain why an issue

[22] Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London: Routledge, 2006); Jef Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, migration and asylum in the EU* (London: Routledge, 2006).

[23] Hansen, *Security as Practice*, p. 73.

[24] Barthwal-Datta, 'Securitising Threats without the State'; Watson, Scott, '"Framing" the Copenhagen School: Integrating the literature on threat construction', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 40:2 (2011), pp. 279–301.

[25] Bogo Didier and Elspeth Guild, *Controlling Frontiers: Free Movement into and within Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Balzacq, 'Policy Tools of Securitization'; Philippe Bonditti, 'From Territorial Space to Networks: A Foucaldian Approach to the Implementation of Biometry', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 29:4 (2004), pp. 465–85; Julien Jeandesboz, 'Labelling the "neighbourhood": towards a genesis of the European neighbourhood policy', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 10:4 (2007), pp. 387–416; Andrew Neal, 'Securitization and Risk Management at the EU Border: The origins of FRONTEX', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 47:2 (2009), pp. 333–56; Salter, 'Securitization and Desecuritization'.

[26] Didier Bigo, 'Security and Immigration: Towards a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease', *Alternatives*, 27 (2002), pp. 63–92; Mark B. Salter, 'The Practice Turn', in Mark B. Salter and Can E. Mutlu (eds), *Research Methods in Critical Security Studies* (NY: Routledge, 2012), pp. 200–5.

[27] Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo academicus*, trans. P. Collier (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), pp. 83–4.

lapses from the public or elite imagination, or why some discourses are more compelling to the technocratic or bureaucratic audience. We conclude that discursive approaches can account for the role of the media in the securitisation process, but that discursive approaches alone cannot account for the role of attention.

The empirical focus of this article is a precise, historical example of securitisation. Our method, consequently, is to trace the evolution of the connections between the site of Diego Garcia and security. Diego Garcia is a critical case, selected because of its contemporary relevance and its history – having been involved in several securitising moves over the past fifty years and the subject of recent political controversy. Two major works on Diego Garcia have emerged in the past three years, which provide important anthropological and legal archival work, to which we have added our own political and historical research.[28] Our article charts how ST must take into account discourse and practices and also the tendency of the public attention to dissipate.

Securitisation of access to Diego Garcia

Diego Garcia has been the subject of three distinct securitising moves, which attempt to connect access to and use of this island with the national security interests of both the UK and the US. The threat conditions vary across time (decolonisation and the loss of American access to the Indian Ocean; Soviet threat; access to the Middle East and South Asia) but the result is the same, because of these various threats, use of and access to Diego Garcia, in particular by the native inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago, are deemed a threat to the 'unparalleled security' of the island, which in return is a threat to the national security interests of the US and UK in the Middle and Near East.[29] Today, with pre-positioned supply ships, a runway that is long enough to accommodate the space shuttle, satellite tracking facilities as well as one of the five control bases for the GPS, Diego Garcia is a significant asset in the American military network. Located in the middle of the Indian Ocean, this military hub has been used in every major US military operation in the Near East since the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, including Operation Eagle Claw (the attempt to rescue the US Embassy hostages in Tehran), both invasions of Iraq, and recent operations in Afghanistan. The American military base was established in 1971, following a 1966 agreement with the United Kingdom; the current lease expires in 2016, although that could be extended until 2036.[30] The currency used is American dollars, but the official governors of the island are a commissioner and an administrator, both based in London, and are represented by the officer in charge of British troops on the Island.[31] While Royal Overseas Police Officers (military personnel sworn in as civilian police) are responsible for public order on the island, it is the British representative

[28] Peter H. Sand, *United States and Britain in Diego Garcia: The Future of a Controversial Base* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); David Vine, *Island of Shame: The Secret History of the US Military Base on Diego Garcia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[29] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 177.

[30] Timothy P. Lynch, 'Diego Garcia: Competing Claims to a Strategic Isle', *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 16:1 (1984), p. 102.

[31] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Country Information* (14 January 2010), Country Profile: British Indian Ocean Territory, available at: {http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/country-profile/asia-oceania/british-indian-ocean-territory?profile=all} accessed 2 July 2010.

who is in command of the forty UK personnel on the island, including customs officials.[32] The legal environment on the island is not dissimilar from other American bases abroad, governed by status of forces agreements.[33] These agreements exempt US military personnel from local prosecution: '[i]n effect, the United States transplants its criminal justice system to foreign soil.'[34] The US Navy is very clear, however, on the limits of British law: '[o]ur British hosts and those Americans who have come before you have made every effort to maintain the ecological integrity of Diego Garcia. As a result – other than swimming fish – all life forms, including live shell fish, are protected by British law.'[35]

Two issues stand out in the modern history of Diego Garcia: the construction of the American military base on British territory, and the expulsion of the inhabitants, Chagos Islanders. Historical analysis of the interactions between different fields over the competing discourses on Diego Garcia presents a fertile testing ground for the role of public attention in successful and failed securitisation moves. We identify three securitisations moves that specifically involve the media, and the interaction between the political elite as security promoters and the media as assemblers: two successful and one failure. Between each of these episodes (1964, 1975, 2009), the issue is absent from public or political debate. The political elite was able to convince the *Economist* and *Washington Post* to spike articles in 1964 detailing the initial agreement to house a US base on Diego Garcia. The *Washington Post*, however, did break the story of the exiled Chagos islanders in 1975, despite pressure from the political elite. Most recently, the UK's political elite was able to block Chagos islanders' right to return to Diego Garcia in 2009 by claiming security grounds. In each of these cases, the media is the scene or the setting of securitising move, engaging the public's in/attention. The next section covers four stages of Diego Garcia's recent history: (1) the colonial back-story; (2) political field's role in the spiking of media coverage on Diego Garcia leading up to the lease of the island to the US by the UK in 1960s; (3) eventual media coverage of the human cost of the American base and consequent cover-up by the American administration; and finally (4) the most recent media exposure of Diego Garcia since the War on Terror.

The formal case for the securitisation of access to and use of Diego Garcia is clear: in the early 1960s, US and UK political elites promoted the securitisation of the access to the island as a strategic site, necessitating the removal of the Chagos Islanders and the break with customary international law of decolonisation, in the name of maintaining capacity to act upon national security interests in the Near and Middle East. The specific threats to national security used as justification for this securitising move have changed over time: from balancing Soviet assets in the region, to emplacement of the GPS ground-station, to the need for a forward operating base in the Near East, to the global WoT. In two of the securitising moves we

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[32] Representative, British Indian Ocean Territory, *Headquarters British Forces BIOT statement* (24 October 2003), Tropical Times, available at: {http://www.zianet.com/tedmorris/dg/TropicTimes031024.pdf} accessed 2 July 2010.

[33] Robert E. Harkavy, *Bases Abroad: The Global Foreign Military Presence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Sand, *United States and United Kingdom in Diego Garcia*.

[34] Mark L. Gillem, *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2007), p. 23.

[35] United States Navy, *General Information: CNIC Navy Support Facility Diego Garcia*, available at: {https://www.cnic.navy.mil/DiegoGarcia/AboutCNIC/GeneralInformation/WelcomeAboard/GeneralInformation/index.htm}.

highlight, the media is directly involved: the political elite directly tried to securitise the issue with the media – as a direct audience – to prevent the media from bringing this issue to the public's attention. The securitising move is successful if the media accepts that the limited access to Diego Garcia is a necessity to maintain national security interests. Here, as in *The Hounds of the Baskervilles*, it is the dog that does not bark which tells us as much about the event as the dog that barks. Discourse analysis alone is insufficient for this historical period: there is no way to analyse an issue that was securitised privately and not publicly.

While the next three moves look at specifics of different securitisation processes, it is important for now to map the different fields contributing to the – often silenced – discourses surrounding this strange case of Diego Garcia. In general, the *status quo* on the island is sustained by the interaction of four separate fields: the political field, the field of experts, the journalistic field, and the public. The political field consists of the American and British governments as well as the legal structures of these countries. A field of military and security experts have recently been influenced by inputs from experts with backgrounds social sciences and law. The journalistic field has been limited to covering the effects and uses of Diego Garcia rather than the actual day-to-day activities, as the media and general public have been banned from the island for the past thirty years. The public has paid attention to Diego Garcia sporadically and unevenly. Building on this, the next section focuses on the interaction between three fields – political, experts, and media – in shaping the first successful securitisation move over Diego Garcia. This specific case, also of contemporary political importance, demonstrates our key theoretical findings: the media is an active participant in the securitising process, and can act as both an agent and an audience in itself; when the media is the audience, successful securitisation means that the public is not informed of the security issues, leading to an 'audience-less' securitisation (slightly different from Balzacq's example.) Elsewhere in communication studies, this issue of the independent role of the media is addressed through discussions of framing role of the media.[36] Similarly, as Vultee suggests in order to understand the independent role of the media, we need to pay particular attention to the internal media dynamics *vis-à-vis* securitising discourses.[37] In other words, it is important keep the internal politics of media organisations in analysis of the role of media in securitisation processes.

First move: creation of the British Indian Ocean Territory (1961–5)

The isolation of Diego Garcia from the rest of the world made the island perfect for US Navy experts looking for a suitable location to establish a remote base in the Indian Ocean after decolonisation, the rise of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the expansion of the Cold War.[38] Under the 'Strategic Island Concept', remote islands such as the Azores, Ascension island, and Diego Garcia were all selected as potential sites for American bases due to their geographical location, relative seclusion, and

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36 Scheufele A. Dietram, 'Framing as a Theory of Media Effects', *Journal of Communication*, 49:1 (1991), pp. 103–22.
37 Fred Vultee, 'Securitization: A New Approach to the framing of the "war on terror"', *Journalism Practice*, 4:1 (2010), pp. 33–47.
38 Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 41.

limited population. While Diego Garcia seemed strategically ideal to American planners, they assumed that the local population could be removed and that the island itself could be 'secured' by Britain. The UK-US negotiations that led to the recolonisation and depopulation of the island began in 1963. The separation of the Chagos archipelago and Diego Garcia from Mauritius, the colony it had been a part of, directly violated the precepts of decolonisation, set out by the United Nations Trusteeship Council, that former colonial territories not be split up. Here we see a primary violation of that rule – done on the basis of the over-riding security claim by Britain and the United States. Diego Garcia should have remained part of Mauritius, and granted independence as part of decolonisation (but the issue was specifically excluded in the constitutional conferences held in 1961 and 1965). The UK-Mauritius settlement for the excision of the Chagos archipelago was conducted 'at a constitutional conference designed to prepare the colony for independence'.[39] Based on the demand of American diplomats to secure Diego Garcia, British officials successfully securitised Diego Garcia with the Mauritius precolonial government during the negotiations for independence. Consequently, the British claim that the negotiation was in good faith, and demonstrated by their financial support, the Mauritians claim that the settlement was reached under duress. Sand explains how the 'excision' of Diego Garcia and the entire Chagos archipelago were blatant violations of UN Resolution 1514/XV – not only because the excision had been made a precondition for Mauritanian independence, but also because it clearly disrupted the territorial integrity of two soon-to-be independent countries (Mauritius and Seychelles), and hence infringed on the general international legal rule of *uti possidetis*.[40] Following Balzacq's analysis of securitisations without a public audience, this largely occurs backstage, and there is no public attention of this first move. As a move towards recolonising the island, the UK established the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) 'in 1965 using the Queen's archaic power of "royal decree", separating the island from colonial Mauritius to help enable the expulsion [of the Chagossians]'.[41] The excision of the Chagos archipelago from Mauritius was facilitated by a British £3 million payment (US $8.5 million) to the colony for the resettlement costs of the expelled islanders; and the British received in turn consideration of $14 million from the US government, laundered in secret through a 'secret trust fund in the 1963 POLARIS Sales Contract'.[42]

The excision of Diego Garcia and the Chagos archipelago into the new BIOT fulfils the formal requirements of a securitising move. British officials argued at the 1961 and 1965 constitutional conferences that legal decolonisation norms could not be followed because of exceptional circumstances: the alignment of British and American national interests in the Indian Ocean. Because this move was not publicised, it supports Balzacq's model of securitisation without a wide audience. We would argue that there is always an audience, and that in this case the audience was the diplomats and politicians at the constitutional conferences that had to accept the British argument of necessity. This example should demonstrate the importance of conducting field analysis, since the question of Diego Garcia was not publicised

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[39] Lynch, 'Diego Garcia', p. 105.
[40] Sand, *United States, United Kingdom and Diego Garcia*, p. 4.
[41] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 7.
[42] Sand, *United States, United Kingdom and Diego Garcia*, pp. 3–5.

and so this securitising move could not be detected if scholars relied only on public media.

Second move: forced depopulation and construction of an American base on Diego Garcia (1964–70)

The second securitising move also occurred out-of-view of the public: American and British officials were able to convince members of the media not to run legitimate stories about Diego Garcia by invoking national security.

US-UK negotiations for the cleansing of Diego Garcia and the construction of the American base were conducted in secret and the officials involved hoped to keep it that way. However, despite the secrecy, both the *Washington Post* and the *Economist* were ready to break the story by June 1964. 'Fearing that the story might derail their plans [of building an American base on Diego Garcia], Jeffery Kitchen [Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs] and Assistant Secretary of State Jeff Greenfield went to meet with the managing editor of the *Post*, Alfred Friendly, to ask him to hold the story.'[43] This meets all the criteria of a securitising move: the issue (publication of the details of the negotiation) was defined in terms of national security, emergency, and exception, which was accepted by the audience (the editors of the *Post* and *Economist*). In this case, the success of the securitising move is measured by the spiking of the story of the bilateral negotiations. *The Economist* did not publish any part of the story. Under intense pressure from the US government, the *Washington Post* published a pared-down version of the story at the end of August 1964, which completely omitted mention of the excision of the islands from Mauritius and the Seychelles. The article follows the American narrative about the Chagos islanders: 'ideally any bases built would be situated on uninhabited islands ... [Diego Garcia] had a population in 1962 of 619, mostly transient laborers from Mauritius. Most of these are understood to have left'.[44] The follow-up article published in October 1964 on the evaluation of the initial military survey made absolutely no mention of the indigenous islanders, and reported international reaction as 'minimal'.[45] The final report in November repeated the government tropes: 'several of the islands are virtually uninhabited ... wherever possible, any indigenous population would be moved out with full compensation'.[46] Similarly, Diego Garcia is described as being 'under British sovereignty', with no sense of the colonial complications. Consequently 'the story gained little attention and was soon forgotten'.[47] While this was a case of successful securitisation, it is important to note that the move itself – generated from within the political/expert inter-field – only involved the media, political, and expert fields and denied access to the public. Moreover, this successful move by the American administration invoked the idea of 'national security' – understood as the Soviet threat – and found a limited, non-public audience in the media field. This point on backstage audience contributes to the existing

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[43] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 80.
[44] Robert H. Estabrook, 'U.S., Britain Consider Indian Ocean Bases', *The Washington Post* (29 August 1964), pp. A1, A6.
[45] Foreign Service, 'U.S., British Study Asia Base', *The Washington Post* (11 October 1964), p. A19.
[46] Robert H. Estabrook, 'Labor Expected to Push Indian Ocean Base Plan', *The Washington Post* (7 November 1964), p. A9.
[47] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 82.

debate within the ST as it supports Balzacq's claim about securitisation without a public audience.[48] But, as Salter suggests, there is always some kind of audience that is subjected to the securitising discourse: securitising moves are always for someone and for something for example, the media editors in this case.[49]

The Anglo-American alliance that enables the everyday functioning of this base is grounded in the legal framework established by a secret US-UK agreement on the *Availability for Defence Purposes of the British Indian Ocean Territory*. Signed on 30 December 1966, the fifty year lease permitted the military use of Diego Garcia. The clear understanding of both British and American governments was that the American base required a depopulated, 'empty' island. In other words, the access to the island had to be strictly limited. 'The United States wanted the Chagossians gone. Or as other documents would later, more directly put it, they wanted the islands ''swept'' and ''sanitized'''.[50] The constitutional structure of the BIOT allows the commissioner to pass ordinances with no parliamentary or other oversight. Shortly after the 1966 agreement, *BIOT Ordinance No. 1 of 1967* was passed allowing the commissioner to 'expropriate or buy out all land for public purposes',[51] and the colony was 'wound-down' by closing the remaining plantations, hence the only source of work dried up. By the time that the Americans were ready to start construction in 1971, there were only 800 Chagossians left on the island, and the BIOT commissioner issued the Immigration Ordinance that required official permits for entry into the territory, and that those without official permits could be removed.[52] 'On April 16 [1971], the United Kingdom issued *BIOT Immigration Ordinance #1* making it a criminal offense for anyone except authorized military personnel to be on the islands without a permit.'[53] The remaining Islanders were evacuated and deported to Mauritius as the US Navy construction crews arrived. Within the domestic legal context, these ordinances were lawful (if we exclude any consideration of the rights of the inhabitants).

Clearly, the constitutional structure of the BIOT and complete lack of oversight or publicity helped with this purposeful absence of Diego Garcia from the public imagination. When read in relation with the successful securitisation move of 1964, the *Ordinance #1 of 1967* concretised the absence of attention to Diego Garcia and its inhabitants. Firstly, it physically removed the Chagossians from the island; creating a '*tabula rasa*' for the American military to conduct their everyday activities without worrying about the local population. Secondly, the ordinance removed Diego Garcia and its former residents from public discourse by denying access to the island to all except military personnel. In the end, this interaction between the political (diplomatic/strategic) and media fields resulted in two outcomes: Firstly, the move succeeded in silencing the media over the issue, as the articles were not specific or widely read (or indeed in the British case published at all). This was a chiefly executive branch of government action, however, the legislative branches such as the Senate or the House of Commons were left in the dark until the 1970s, when the questions of budget brought the issue to the American Congress. Secondly, the US administration, with the support from the UK government, successfully securitised the access to Diego Garcia by forcibly removing the inhabitants from Diego

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[48] Balzacq, 'The Policy Tools of Securitization'.
[49] Salter, 'Securitization and Desecuritization'.
[50] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 78.
[51] Sand, *United States, United Kingdom and Diego Garcia*, p. 18.
[52] Ibid., p. 23.
[53] Vince, *Island of Shame*, p. 112.

Garcia and revoking their right to live on the island. The US-UK alliance managed to do so by treating the Chagossians as an exceptional case of temporary workers brought to the island to work in coconut plantations and not as residents with legal and political rights even though they have been living on the island for almost three centuries.[54] This reclassification of inhabitants with settled historical legal claims to temporary workers also gives suggests another form of securitisation, through classification.[55]

Within the public, the issue of Diego Garcia then disappears for nearly five years. The primary chief investigative journalist at the *Washington Post* that pursued this story in 1964, Estabrook, wrote a further article in May 1965 in which he acknowledges the delicate situation of Mauritian independence and the ceding of authority to the British for the Chagos archipelago, but reaffirms that the removal of population is an issue of concern for neither Americans nor British.[56] There is no mention of Diego Garcia in the *Post* between 1965 and 1970.[57] It disappears from the public attention, as reflected in *The Washington Post*. There is a similar lack of attention in *The New York Times* after 1965.[58] Baldwin repeats the US-UK line that 'to fill in some of the vaccum in the Indian Ocean, the British Government last year established a new colony with few, if any colonists'.[59] A story is published in 1967 regarding the fate of the tortoises on the island, with no mention of the human inhabitants.[60] With discourse analysis alone, this silence cannot be analysed.

Third move: budget debates, further militarisation, and Cold War geopolitics (1970–5)

While questions surrounding the use of Diego Garcia were dealt through executive channels between the US and UK, the means to further expand the base on Diego Garcia required the issue to be incorporated into the US budget. Traditionally, in the US the budget has to be debated in and approved by both houses of the US Congress before being signed by the President. The budget for the construction of a base at Diego Garcia was first included in the 1970 budget. This appropriation was uncontroversial, because there was no Congressional or public awareness of indigenous peoples that had to be moved.[61] For the first time, the concession of $14 million of US support to the UK for the use of the base is made – if not public – then at

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[54] Ibid., pp. 19–24.

[55] Trine Villumsen Berling, 'Science and Securitization: Objectivation, the authority of the speaker and the mobilization of scientific facts', *Security Dialogue*, 42:4–5 (2011), pp. 385–97.

[56] Robert H. Estabrook, 'England, U.S. Plan Bases in Indian Ocean', *The Washington Post* (9 May 1965), p. A26.

[57] J. G. Norris, 'Joint Bases to Rise in Indian Ocean', *The Washington Post* (11 November 1965), p. A10; S. S. Rosenfeld, 'The Way an Ocean Becomes Strategic', *The Washington Post* (11 December 1970), p. A30.

[58] A. Lewis, 'Indian Ocean Coral Isle Will Be U.S.-British Base', *New York Times* (11 November 1965), p. 8;

[59] H. W. Baldwin, 'Region East of Suez Presents a Difficult Problem in Allied Defense', *New York Times* (5 July 1966), p. 7.

[60] L. M. Simons, 'Life is "Austere" for Sailors on Strategic Diego Garcia', *The Washington Post* (7 April 1977), p. A14.

[61] D. A. Schmidt, 'Plan for Base in Indian Ocean Being Reviewed by U.S.', *New York Times* (28 November 1970), p. 2; S. S. Rosenfeld, 'U.S. Policy at Sea in the Indian Ocean', *Washington Post* (24 December 1971), p. A10.

least visible to the House Appropriations Committee.[62] In the US, as reported by the media, there was a visible debate about the Diego Garcia base.[63] Again, demonstrating that public attention diminishes, the *Post* is silent between January 1972 and January 1974 on Diego Garcia.

Diego Garcia resurfaced in the legislative debates during the discussions on 1975 budget causing 'a minor political battle between the Ford administration and Democratic Senators'.[64] President Ford was forced to declare 'the construction of the Diego Garcia base "essential to the interest of the United States"',[65] in part because of the American dependence on oil from the Persian Gulf. Consequently, hearings were held, but military officials told House committee members '[n]o inhabitants.'[66] It is important to note that the outcome of these discussions framed the 'need' to construct a larger base within the discourses of contingency and prevention, approaching the issue from a geo-strategic logic. The presentation of photographic evidence of a Soviet missile site in Somalia, close to the Persian Gulf shipping lanes, was seen as clear proof by the Armed Services Committee that their objections over military expansion in the Indian Ocean, and perhaps an inadvertent arms race, were already 'over-taken by events'.[67] On 29 July 1975, the Senate approved the expansion of the Diego Garcia base to expand the runway to 12,000 feet and support facilities for a carrier fleet, which was described as a major foreign policy victory for the Ford administration against the legislature.[68]

Weeks after the passage of the budget in Congress, the *Washington Post* broke a story on Diego Garcia and the fate of the Chagossians on 9 September 1975 – 11 years after the first securitising move against the *Post* in 1964; four years after the initial construction of the base on Diego Garcia in 1971, and two years after the first military use of the base during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. A front page headline reads 'Islanders Were Evicted for U.S. Base' and here we see the media acting as a *politicising* agent: it is Ottaway and the *Washington Post* that make the argument that the expulsion of the Chagossians, their conditions in Mauritius, and the contested sovereignty over Diego Garcia is in fact important and worthy of discussion, and that the treatment of the islanders goes against core American values.[69] By politicisation we refer to the process of making 'an issue appear to be open, a matter of choice, something that is decided upon and there therefore entails responsibility'.[70] Within this context, politicisation refers to paying attention to due process through the parliamentary proceedings and maintaining a space for disagreement for all parties involved. Politicisation, as such, is different than desecuritisation. As Neal demonstrates, parliamentary hearings and due process can also be instruments of securitisation moves.[71] The connection made by Ottaway and subsequently legislators

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[62] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 104.
[63] Rosenfeld, 'U.S. Policy at Sea in the Indian Ocean'; M. Gotler,'Navy Extends Operations in Indian Ocean', *The Washington Post* (7 January 1972), p. A1; anon., 'What's Our Game in the Indian Ocean', *The Washington Post* (9 January 1972), p. C6.
[64] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 121.
[65] Anonymous, 'Congressional Reports.', *The Washington Post* (20 May 1975), p. A2.
[66] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 122.
[67] R. Kessler, ' Missiles Facility Confirmed', *The Washington Post* (7 July 1975), p. A5.
[68] S. Rich, 'Hill Approves U.S. Base on Diego Garcia', *The Washington Post* (29 July 1975), p. A2.
[69] David B. Ottaway, 'Islanders Were Evicted for U.S. Base', *The Washington Post* (9 September 1975), p. A1.
[70] Buzan, *Security*, p. 29.
[71] Neal, 'Normalisation and Legislative Exceptionalism'.

is that the military base is *not* exceptional, there is no geostrategic emergency, and in fact the expulsion of the islanders constitutes a threat to America's identity as a progressive super-power.[72] Senators demand 'the Ford administration explain the circumstances surrounding the role of U.S. Government in the removals'.[73] The revelation of secret exchange of funds – up to $14 million – between the US and UK in an attempt to cover the costs associated with the forced removal of Diego Garcia's native residents allowed the existing opposition to radically change the nature of the discussion and apply delay tactics to create a public debate.[74] The narrative of responsibility then shifts: the American officials, who had previously denied to the House that there were any inhabitants on the islands, say that the responsibility is the British; the British say that their responsibility was discharged by their payment to the Mauritians and the government of the Mauritius. The thin line of authority and responsibility stretches from superpower to minority group. The attention paid in Congress and in the media through the *Washington Post* and other outlets, allowed Democrats to delay construction on the Diego Garcia base.

The second securitisation scene in fact consisted of two opposing moves over the military use of Diego Garcia. On the one hand, political opposition to the sprawl of military bases tried to politicise the securitised discourses over the use of Diego Garcia by connecting the 'human' costs of Diego Garcia (expulsion of the Chagossians) for dubious national benefit, that is, the national interest. This politicising move was made initially by the journalist Ottaway, but then carried forward by the political elite and promulgated in the media. Thus, the media was both agent and medium. On the other hand, the administration and military experts countered this opposition by a similarly contextualised argument by portraying the build-up of Soviet bases in Somalia as a direct threat to America's source of Persian Gulf oil. Building on this connection, the American administration presented Diego Garcia as an essential foothold on the Indian Ocean with geo-strategic significance for the security of the Suez Canal and their Middle Eastern allies. While for a brief period of time in 1975, the opposition has succeeded in creating intense media and congressional attention over the issue, giving some representatives of Islanders ability to engage in the media field, the prevalent national security discourses of the Cold War era have succeeded in suppressing this move. In 1976, the budget was approved and further construction on Diego Garcia progressed.

While this was the third major securitising move concerning Diego Garcia, it was the first move to involve all fields as agents. Given the intense media and congressional attention, public on both sides of the Atlantic gave attention to Diego Garcia, and the connections to national interest: the fate of the islanders, geo-strategic value of the island, demilitarisation of the Indian Ocean basin. Carter and Reagan administrations further developed the base to accommodate carrier battle groups, Marine rapid reaction forces, larger planes (B-52s and then subsequent platforms, B-1s, B-2s, etc.), and during the Bush and Obama administrations recently submarines and drones. While the second move allowed the Chagossians to successfully engage in the media field, they were not able to match the American administration's narrative in their appeal to the public attention. In the next two decades, given the restrictions

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[72] Anon., 'The Diego Garcians', *The Washington Post* (11 September 1975), p. A22.
[73] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 122.
[74] Anonymous, 'Diego Garcia Fund Disclosed in Report', *The Washington Post* (25 January 1976), p. A8.

over media access to the island (except for one brief visit in 1977),[75] the end of the Cold War and the consequent decline in public attention, Diego Garcia, once again, fades from the public radar. Diego Garcia appears indirectly as a bilateral issue for the US,[76] as part of Carter's proposal for a demilitarisation and then freezing of military expansion in the Indian Ocean,[77] or as part of the wider strategic environment in relation to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan or the Persian Gulf War between Iraq and Iran.[78] It was not until recently that Diego Garcia made it back to the headlines, this time for a completely different reason.

Fourth move: War on Terror, rendition flights, and the rights of Chagossians (2000–10)

Since 9/11, due to its geographical proximity to Iraq and Afghanistan, Diego Garcia has proven to be an essential geopolitical asset for the American military. Here we see a specific instance of the wider debate about emergency and exception, which became so prevalent during the so-called Global War on Terror. The Chagossians tried, during this time to repoliticise the American base on Diego Garcia.[79] Early in the WoT, as questions about extraordinary rendition were asked, there were speculations that the United States started using the island for other purposes. Again it is *The Washington Post* that breaks the story.[80] In other words, there was a sense that Diego Garcia was another Guantánamo Bay, used for torture and rendition. Based on these reports and other accounts, 'long off-limits to reporters, the Red Cross, and all other international observers and far more secretive than Guantanamo Bay, many have identified the island [Diego Garcia] as a clandestine CIA "black site" for high profile detainees'.[81] Kellogg, Brown & Root, the notorious Halliburton subsidiary, contracted for building GITMO, also constructed a prison on Diego Garcia, but one that was intended strictly for the American service personnel on the island.[82] However, reports began to surface that Diego Garcia was a stop in the carceral archipelago of the 'extraordinary rendition' process.[83] This created a political problem for the United Kingdom, since Diego Garcia is sovereign British territory, and so its treaty commitments and human rights obligations should apply to the space of Diego Garcia. It is not a legal exception, like Guantanamo Bay, British laws adhere

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[75] Simons, 'Life is "Austere" for Sailors on Strategic Diego Garcia'; G. M. Neely, 'The U.S. and Diego Garcia', *The Washington Post* (27 January 1978), p. A22.

[76] J. Mathews, 'Sri Lanka Blasts U.S. Buildup Plan for Diego Garcia', *The Washington Post* (17 August 1976), p. A4.

[77] V. Zorza, 'Carter's Indian Ocean Overture', *The Washington Post* (18 May 1977), p. A15; M. Marder, 'U.S. Downgrades Goal in Indian Ocean', *The Washington Post* (23 June 1977), p. A17.

[78] G. C. Wilson, 'Carter's Military Plans face Tough Logistical Problems', *The Washington Post* (24 January 1980), p. A14.

[79] N. Tucker, 'Islanders Sue U.S. Over Relocation', *The Washington Post* (21 December 2001), p. A5.

[80] D. Priest and B. Gellman, 'U.S. Decries Abuse but Defends Interrogations; "Stress and Duress" Tactics Used on Terrorism Suspects Held in Secret Overseas Facilities', *The Washington Post* (26 December 2002), p. A1; K. Sullivan, 'U.S. Fueled "Rendition" Flights on British Soil; London Discloses Two Landings on Indian Ocean Atoll', *The Washington Post* (22 February 2008), p. A16.

[81] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 9.

[82] Sand, *United States, United Kingdom and Diego Garcia*, pp. 46–7.

[83] D. Campbell and R. Norton-Taylor, 'US accused of holding terror suspects on prison', *The Guardian* (2 June 2008), available at:{http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jun/02/usa.humanrights/print} accessed 2 July 2010.

in Diego Garcia. Thus, as the story about extraordinary rendition flights and the incarceration of prisoners on Diego Garcia started to emerge in 2003, concretise by 2004, and become widely accepted in 2006, British officials were eager to assert that the British Indian Ocean Territory was not a 'black site'. The Parliamentary Under-secretary for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office replied in 2003 to questions from the House of Lords: '[t]he United States Government would need to ask our permission to bring suspects to Diego Garcia, and they have not done so. No suspected terrorists are being held on Diego Garcia and, under current BIOT law, there would be no authority for the detention of Al' Qaeda suspects in the territory.'[84] These questions and denials continued through to 2008, when it was admitted by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other US Government officials that, in fact, several extraordinary rendition flights had 'refuelled' on Diego Garcia.[85] The CIA was quick to deny that there was a particular holding facility, or the Diego Garcia was a destination for high-value targets, or that torture was conducted on those being rendered.[86] With no journalists allowed, what happens in Diego Garcia stays in Diego Garcia. The day-to-day operations on the island remain secretive with no immediate civilian oversight or media access. Following reports by the Council of Europe and the European Parliament a more detailed map of this network became publicly available.[87] Alongside the 'usual suspects' such as the Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan, Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Guantánamo Bay, Diego Garcia also appears in this list of 'black sites'.[88] While currently no prisoners are held on the island, prisoners had been held and questioned on the island and also on a prison ship moored three miles away from shore – as opposed to the normal 12 mile limit usually asserted in international law.[89] With this acknowledgement the floodgates were opened. Issues surrounding the use of Diego Garcia as a landing site for rendition flights as well as the use of the territorial waters of the island as an anchorage site for 'prison hulks' opened questions about practices of sovereignty up for public debate. We can point to a number of politicising moves by *Time* magazine and by the non-governmental legal advocacy group, Reprieve, that are pushing specifically for discussion and freedom of information.[90] The connection of Diego Garcia to American values reappears in the public imagination – just as it did in the mid-1970s. Independent journalist John Pilger starts writing a number of articles in 2004 that connect Diego Garcia with the Chagossians in the British imagination; a film

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84 Sand, *United States, United Kingdom and Diego Garcia*, p. 47. For a complete list of Parliamentary questions and answers, see Appendix III. Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, *Diego Garcia: Footprint of Freedom?* (2003).

85 Anonymous, 'UK apology over rendition flights', *BBC News* (21 February 2008), available at: {http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7256587.stm} accessed 2 July 2010; Sullivan, 'U.S. Fueled "Rendition" Flights on British Soil'.

86 M. Hayden, 'CIA statement on renditions', *BBC News* (21 February 2008), available at: {http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7257524.stm} accessed 4 July 2010.

87 Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Council of Europe, *Secret detentions and illegal transfers of detainees involving Council of Europe member states* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007).

88 Stephen Grey, *Ghost Plane: The true story of the CIA rendition and torture program* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006); Trevor Paglen, *Blank Spots: The Dark Geography of the Pentagon's Secret World* (New York: Dutton, 2009).

89 A. Zagorin, 'US Used UK Isle for Interrogations', *Time* (31 July 2008), available at: {http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1828469,00.html} accessed 1 July 2010.

90 Reprieve, *Ghost Detention on Diego Garcia* (London: Reprieve, 2009); David Vine, 'Island of Injustice: The U.S. Has a Moral Duty to the People of Diego Garcia', *The Washington Post* (2 January 2007), p. A17.

was shown on British television and garnered several awards including the best documentary of 2004–5.[91]

The islanders themselves also engaged in judicial challenges, to assert their British citizenship and contest their expulsion from Diego Garcia and the Chagos archipelago.[92] In 2000, the expulsion of the islanders was deemed illegal in British Court, but the creation of the military base and subsequent exclusion from Diego Garcia itself was deemed legal. The government reacted by suggesting that the Chagossians could relocate to other islands in the Chagos archipelago, but not to Diego Garcia.[93] In 2002 they won full UK citizenship, different from the colonial BIOT citizenship that they had claimed in the 1980s, which afforded them the right to reside neither in Britain nor in the actual BIOT. In 2003, a separate legal action was launched, demanding compensation and resettlement, which was rejected by the High Court. Echoing the original creation of the BIOT, a royal decree was made in June 2004 through an Order in Council 'barring any Chagossian from returning to Chagos'.[94] Poole examines the decision of the Law Lords, who upheld the royal prerogative to make such a decision, bringing in some very interesting questions about Schmitt and the power to decide that are beyond the scope of this article. He also notes that:

> The government defended its new policy, in part, through the deployment of arguments relating to national security and counterterrorism considerations. In a statement to Parliament on the policy shift, the responsible minister said that 'developments in the international security climate' that had occurred since Bancourt (No. 1) were central to the government's reassessment of the situation. The judgments also reveal that the government's change of mind on repatriation owed at least something to U.S. security concerns.[95]

One can see an extension of this kind of executive power in the latest action on this issue. The British government named the area around Diego Garcia as a Marine Protected Area, which prohibits fishing and construction.[96] A US diplomatic cable publicised by Wikileaks supported the claim that the intention of the creation of the Marine Protected Area was in part to render it 'difficult, if not impossible [for the former islanders] to pursue the claim for resettlement on the Islands'.[97] And so, in addition to the 2004 Order in Council prohibits any residency, any economic activity that might sustain the return of the islanders has been made illegal through other means. The sideways attempt to exclude the Chagossians through administrative means could be to preempt a possible judgment by the European Court of Human Rights, who are considering the islanders right to return. In its case in Strasbourg, the UK government relied on a report it commissioned that made the case that resettlement of the Chagossians would be costly and difficult. One of the expert authors of the report, however, is contesting that version. Philp and Kennedy report that

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[91] John Pilger, 'Paradise cleansed: Our deportation of the people of Diego Garcia is a crime that cannot stand', *The Guardian* (2 October 2004); John Pilger and C. Martin, (Directors), *Stealing a Nation* [Motion Picture] (Granada, 2007).

[92] Tucker, 'Islanders Sue U.S. Over Relocation'; M. Jordan, 'Court Rules for Islanders Evicted in U.S. Base Deal', *The Washington Post* (15 May 2007), p. A15.

[93] T. Poole, 'United Kingdom: The Royal Prerogative', *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 8:1 (2010), pp. 146–55.

[94] Vine, *Island of Shame*, p. 174.

[95] Poole, 'United Kingdom', p. 154.

[96] C. Philp, 'Chagossians fight for a home in paradise', *The Times* (6 March 2010).

[97] 'US Embassy Cables: Foreign Office does not regret evicting Chagos Islanders', *Guardian* (2 December 2010), available at: {http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/207149} accessed 15 January 2012.

[O]ne of those independent experts, Stephen Akester, said his conclusions that the islands could be resettled were erased from the study amid political pressure ... [the expert] sketched out three scenarios by which Chagossians could resettle outer atolls nearly 200 miles (322km) from Diego Garcia without damaging ecosystems or compromising the operations of the military base. His conclusions chime closely with those of the 2000 preliminary feasibility study, which concluded that 'there is no obvious physical reason why one or both of the two [outer] atolls should not be repopulated'.[98]

The Times, in this case, is acting as the desecuritising actor, as well as the medium for the expert's desecuritising move. Indeed, this demonstrates that the media is a crucial medium for securitising moves: how can this expert contest the securitisation of the Islands and its people without access to the media? While it is Philp and Kennedy's investigation that have moved this forward, it is the expert's testimony that gives the critique an epistemological grounding that is at the core of the political-legal debate.[99]

    In sum, in the most recent securitisation scene, we have complex securitising moves and counter-moves. The UK has attempted to securitise the Island itself, in reference to its own national interest and the need for a close security partnership with the US, and has reacted to legal challenges by the Chagossians in a declarative, exceptional manner by its Orders in Council and through quotidian, governmental ways through the creation of a marine protected area. The islanders themselves have attempted to desecuritise their status and the space of Diego Garcia through legal challenges and public advocacy, supported by human rights groups that criticise the extraordinary rendition process. At the same time, it is clear that the islanders have not been successful in convincing the Law Lords that the invocation of security is problematic. Poole describes this as a two-step: 'Step one, the refusal to allow the operation of a legal black hole. Here, the assertion of ordinary legal principles over prerogative lawmaking. Step two, the accommodation of government security and diplomatic interests, leading to equivocation and uncertainty in the application of those ordinary principles. This second step occurred in this case even though there was skepticism (among the majority as well as the minority) about the credibility of the security claims proffered by the government.'[100] The visibility granted to this issue through the actions of the reporters of *The Washington Post* and *The Times* indicate that the media itself is a crucial actor in this dynamic, as well as being the medium through which securitising and desecuritising moves are made and public opinion is translated. We also have the beginnings of another intervention by experts, or rather the overt intervention of experts. As the UK government use a 'independent' report to make the case that resettlement of the Chagossians is unfeasible and costly, the actual expert is using the media to contest the invocation of his knowledge.

Conclusion

The case of Diego Garcia demonstrates clearly that ST must analyse both public discourses and the non-public securitising moves that are illuminated through field analysis. Our case shows both the specificity of securitising moves, and also the

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[98] C. Philp and D. Kennedy, 'Paradise dossier was doctored to keep deported families from their homes; Political pressure erased expert's view that islands could be repopulated', *The Time* (22 April 2010).
[99] Berling, 'Science and Securitization'.
[100] Poole, 'United Kingdom', p. 155.

heterogeneous character of multiple processes, and helps explain why some securitising moves are successful, others fail, others are never made public, and others fade from view. We have shown that the public attention for Diego Garcia waxes and wanes, and that the media can play a pivotal role in putting an issue onto the political agenda. This case study of Diego Garcia demonstrates the need and the utility of conducting historical research into securitisation. In particular, we confirm that securitisation is a process, rather than a single act. And, in fact, the long history of the status of Diego Garcia demonstrates also that security officials must keep making deposits into their narrative account to maintain the sense of threat and crisis. It is less clear how one takes advantage of that entropy, although the interventions by investigative journalists may be some answer to this.[101] In our case, several instances of investigative journalism were able to make or to question the connections between particular security issues and the societal values (security, freedom, due process, and efficiency) that were defined as vital to the national interest. Incidental to this main point, it is clear as others have noted that securitisation does not simply emanate from the state, and in particular that many non-governmental groups have a stake in the politicisation or desecuritisation process (such as the Chagossians, human rights organisations, or media outlets themselves). We have shown also the need for a methodological reconciliation between the Paris and Copenhagen variants of ST, or rather than research can be conducted using both discursive analysis and field analysis. Discursive analysis alone would render the first securitising move hard to analyse: the 1964 effort to spike *The Washington Post* story would be lost because it does not appear in analysable speech. It is only through a field analysis of the actual interactions that this case becomes visible. However, the role of language linking the description of the Soviet threat, for example, to American security is plainly discursive and easy to plot.

A further line of argument that could be pursed is the connection between sovereignty, exception, and decision, made first so powerfully by Williams.[102] While in general ST appears to reify the Schmittian logic of sovereign decisionism, the Diego Garcia case seems to add layers of empirical proof to the idea that the declaration of exception and emergency solidifies sovereign power and retains the ultimate ability to render citizens into bare life.[103] However, the use of governmental tactics, such as the creation of a marine protected area in order to render economic activity impossible, gives further weight to Butler's argument that governmental and sovereign tactics are often co-present.[104] The relationship between colonial law and this kind of sovereign-governmental exceptionalism is important, and understudied.[105]

Future research is clearly called for on the role of these different actors in the securitisation scene. In this article, we have focused on traditional media, but we must ask next to what extent do new media change the ability of the public to

[101] Thrift suggests a kind of 'social science fiction' that merges journalistic and social science writings. Nigel Thrift, 'Lifeworld Inc – and what to do about it', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29:1 (2011), pp. 5–26.
[102] Williams, 'Words, Images, Enemies'.
[103] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*, trans. D. Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
[104] Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004).
[105] Prem K. Rajaram, 'Dystopic geographies of empire', in S. Biswas and S. Nair (eds), *International Relations and States of Exception: Margins, Peripheries and Excluded Bodies* (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 71–94.

reframe issues? Does the social capital of the media source affect the reception of the message? This is an open question: while blogging and citizen-reporting clearly has the potential to democratise news assemblers, to what extent do citizen-journalists have the independent ability to engage in long-term investigative assignments, as was so crucial for Ottaway, Estabrook, Pilger or Philp? We must look also at the failures and successes of securitising moves and desecuritising moves. If we do not wish to subscribe to a bleak, legalist version of sovereignty in which the power to decide is entirely dominant, and allow room for resistance, then – at least tactically – we must understand how particular moves fail or succeed. The Chagossians could make convincing legal claims, which were over-ridden, sidestepped, or ignored by the British government. Some journalistic stories, some non-governmental reports, some expert testimony were more effective. Is this a case of timing, of the public attention, of the rhetoric of the message? What makes securitising moves sticky? Moreover, now that ST has a robust second generation of scholars, and over 15 years of serious study behind it, we must start to extend its scope and engage with more historical analysis and more theoretically sophisticated tools.