The Island Race: geopolitics and identity in British foreign policy discourse since 1949

Nicholas Whittaker

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Supervisors: Doctor Stefanie Ortmann and Doctor Fabio Petito

I hereby declare that this thesis has not and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Nicholas Whittaker

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abstract of thesis

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This thesis examines Britain's foreign policy identity by analysing the use of geopolitical tropes in discursive practices of ontological security-seeking in the British House of Commons since 1949, a period of great change for Britain as it lost its empire and joined NATO and the EC. The Empire was narrated according to a series of geopolitical tropes that I call Island Race identity: insularity from Europe and a universal aspect on world affairs, maintenance of Lines of Communication, antipathy towards Land Powers and the Greater Britain metacommunity. The aim of this thesis is to genealogically historicise and contextualise these tropes through interpretivist analysis of Commons debates concerning a series of events and issues from the establishment of NATO to the current parliament. By conceptualising parliamentary discourse as a social practice involving the fixing of ontologically secure subject positions, it presents a new reading of modern British foreign policy that addresses the traditional neglect of geopolitics and identity in approaches depicting a materially declining state engaging in the pragmatic pursuit of realist national interests.

The analysis shows how Britain's foreign policy identity continues to be reliant on the geopolitical constitutions of islandness that discursively defined the empire. This is not indicative of imperial nostalgia so much as it is evidence of how discursive practices of ontological security-seeking in a political environment with a shared debating culture tend to mobilise established identity tropes that have retained relevance even without their imperial underpinnings. Narrations of the Cold War and NATO, relations with the rest of Europe and globalisation are shown to be reliant on Island Race tropes that, through contextual interactions, fix Britain in subject positions of relevance according to how British values, forged by insular geography, are of universal relevance to a world in which Britain is in a pivotal geopolitical position.

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chapter 1

Introduction to the Island Race: geopolitics and identity in British foreign policy

> Our story concerns an island
>
> *Winston Churchill (1956), A History of the English-Speaking Peoples, Volume I, p. viii.*

> We are an island race
>
> *Edward Heath, Speech to the Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool, 13 October 1973.*

> It's true that our geography has shaped our psychology. We have the character of an island nation
>
> *David Cameron, Speech, London, 23 March 2013.*

1. Introduction: Rethinking British foreign policy

In this thesis, I will resituate modern British foreign policy in terms of identity, ontological security-seeking and geopolitics by analysing discourse from a series of British parliamentary debates from the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 to the present day. I will show that, in spite of the hugely changed contexts of international politics and Britain's own situation in this period, the geopolitical identity tropes of the British Empire have remained at the locus of a continuing struggle to seek British ontological security, or 'security as being'.[1] This claim is based upon my reading of the discursive social construction of British imperial geopolitical identity, the tropes of which I collectively call the Island Race: a quintessential liberal sea power, insular from the rest of Europe and with privileged access to the world's oceans, the highway on which it established and maintained the largest empire the world has ever known in opposition to Land Powers.[2] Roxanne Doty argues that 'Great Britain *was* the British Empire' and decolonisation 'shook that identity to the core.'[3] But did it? What *has* happened to the Island Race since the 1940s when Clement Attlee's government began to reduce the Empire and

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[1] For the theory of ontological security see particularly Guzzini (2012a) (especially Guzzini (2012b & d); Manners (2002); McSweeney (1999), pp. 1-12; Mitzen (2006a & b); Shapiro (1997); Steele (2005).

[2] Crucial texts in this regard include Charles Dilke's *Greater Britain* and *Problems of Greater Britain*, James Froude's *Oceana*, Halford Mackinder's 'Geographical Pivot of History' address and *Britain and the British Seas* and John Seeley's *The Expansion of England* (Dilke (1869); (1890); Froude (1886); Mackinder (1904b); (1907); Seeley (1883)).

[3] Doty (1996), p. 130.

committed Britain to a subordinate position in NATO?[4] If Britain *was* its empire, if there was a constitutive process in which the spatial (amongst other) tropes of imperialism were thoroughly adopted by the metropole, have these simply atrophied along with the empire itself? The tendency of geopolitical studies to concentrate on the most materially powerful and the fashion for depicting post-imperial British foreign policy as the pragmatic pursuit of national interests, uninformed by any particular geopolitical identity, have left these questions underexplored.

By conducting a genealogy of British foreign policy discourse from the Hansard record of parliamentary proceedings I will be able to show the continuity of Island Race tropes such as partial insularity from Europe, a belief in Britain's universality or global reach, the maintenance of Lines of Communication, antipathy towards Land Powers and membership of a liberal, Western metacommunity.[5] In so doing, I will be able to demonstrate that, in varied contexts, in response to a multitude of issues across time, the Island Race traditions of foreign policy thought have remained the representations of British identity most commonly mobilised in order to seek ontological security. This is not because of imperial nostalgia or revanchism, but rather social-discursive imperatives in parliamentary debate to fix Britain in subject positions that are secure according to established notions of Self, and the continued fecundity of a thoroughly malleable and flexible account of Britain's island geopolitics co-constituted with its rendering of an exceptional history: 'the coming together of […] past history, present situation, and future possibilities.'[6] What becomes evident is change within continuity as international events are interpreted, represented and responded to in ways which best ontologically 'fit' Island Race identity, discursively ensuring relevance for Britain in a multitude of situations.[7]

David Cameron's Conservative Party, which now governs alone after leading a coalition from 2010 to 2015, has gone further even than Margaret Thatcher's in asserting Britain's independence from the rest of Europe and matched Tony Blair's government in its insistence on Britain having a global role. Cameron has led this while asserting the importance of Britain's 'island story'; a narrative that, while not 'un-European', emphasises Britain's 'connections to the rest of the world', to wit his desire to 'never […] pull up the drawbridge', in spite of the Conservatives' promise to hold an 'in/out' referendum on membership of the EU by 2017.[8]

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[4] See, for example, Peter Taylor, who conceptualised 1945 as a 'geopolitical transition' for Britain (Taylor (1990)).

[5] <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/> (1803-2005); <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/> (1988-); on genealogy in International Relations see especially Der Derian (1987); Shapiro (1992); (1997); Campbell (1993); (1998); Hansen (2006); Vucetic (2011a & b).

[6] Fay (1996), pp. 191-2.

[7] Guzzini (2004), p. 45; Vucetic (2011a), pp. 10-5; see also Barnett (1999), p. 9; Jackson (2011), p. 392.

[8] Cameron (2013); <https://www.conservatives.com/SecuringABetterFuture/StrongerCountry.aspx>

Meanwhile his first Foreign Secretary, William Hague, embarked upon a reinvigoration of Britain's 'diplomatic network' that would commit the country to 'an international, global role.'[9] These references to Britain's spatial identity have not been taken seriously enough by International Relations (IR) scholars and historians who view geopolitics as an unworthy prism through which to analyse the foreign policy of a 'second-rate power' like Britain and take for granted the designation of British foreign policy-makers as rational, pragmatic pursuers of the national interest. The tropes hinted at in this introduction to the policies of Cameron and Hague are the latest episodes in British attempts to seek ontological security through the recrudescence of a particular set of geopolitical identity narratives, forged in its imperial heyday. Yet the story of the Island Race remains unfinished, mothballed at the terminus of empire, leaving the subsequent analyses of British foreign policy to the mercy of the realists (when they bother with it at all) and narrative historians.

If the 'present arrangements' that we need to 'loosen[…] the hold of'—as Michael Shapiro would have it—comprise the stolid reproduction of pragmatic Britain being stubborn in its relations with the rest of Europe or else 'not doing' strategy at all, what is to be done?[10] By taking an interpretivist approach in which one acknowledges that one is studying a world already interpreted by British foreign policy-makers and pursuing the idea that their interpretations of the world and their identity exist in a constitutive relationship or have, following Ian Hacking, a 'looping effect' on one another, I will be able to present an original reading of modern British foreign policy.[11] This is a genealogical analysis as described by Lene Hansen and Shapiro, in that it 'traces the evolution of discourse and identity over a series of closely knit moments', 'provide[s] detailed insights into the structures of present national and civilizational identities' and reveals 'the process by which humans invest the world with value as part of the process through which meanings are produced.'[12] By viewing 'the present as peculiar', recognising the enduring need for national identity to be discursively reiterated and understanding the historical foundations of attempts to seek ontological security, new light can be shed on persistent issues in British foreign policy.[13] Rather than, for example, simply accepting an unquestioned and underexplored 'Self/Other' dynamic between Britain and the rest of Europe, my approach is concerned with *how and why* this construction is possible by examining the historical constitution of Britain's Island Race identity. These theoretical and methodological considerations will be explored in further detail in the following chapter. In the

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[9] Hague (2013).

[10] Shapiro (1992), p. 11.

[11] Guzzini (2004), pp. 46-7; Hacking (1999), p. 34. On various analytical strategies touching on interpretivism, see Åkerstrøm Andersen (2003); for this in practice see, for example, Campbell (1993); (1998); Hansen (2006); Hansen & Wæver (2002); Shapiro (1981); (1988); (1997).

[12] Hansen (2006), pp. 79, 79; Shapiro (1992), p. 11.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

meantime I will outline what is meant by the Island Race by presenting a short history of imperial British geopolitical identity. I will then discuss and problematise the privileged status of pragmatism and rational actor models in analysis of British foreign policy, addressing questions of British identity and strategy, before arguing that the Island Race represents an enduring concept of exceptional national history combined with a particularist and universal geopolitical vision that has a continued explanatory appeal.

1.1. The Island becomes her: a short pre-history of the imperial Island Race

The spatial identity of imperial Britain has been well documented: a world island and quintessential sea power, insular from Europe and the carrier of an exceptional history of liberal benevolence, parliamentary democracy and 'fair play' across the oceans which were, for them, highways without distance.[14] There has been an array of approaches to seeking the roots of this construction: from the romantic, primordial evocations of Arthur Bryant, and Carl Schmitt's Elizabethan setting of England's 'elemental metamorphosis' into the 'big fish, the leviathan', which could 'set itself in motion in search of other oceans' to Linda Colley's contention that British identity was forged in war with Catholic France in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[15] Disregarding Bryant, Schmitt and Colley identify two significant historical nodes. Firstly there were the 'West Country men', a group of fêted adventurers associated with geographer Richard Hakluyt, such as Walter Raleigh and Francis Drake who successfully lobbied the Elizabethan court for North American colonies in the wake of the recent experiences of 'taming' Ireland.[16] The subjugation of Ireland, with which Gearóid Ó Tuathail opens *Critical Geopolitics*, represented the geographical disciplining of a 'wild' country, an imperial encounter which reified English geography and history.[17] This was the start of what Winston Churchill called 'the First British Empire'.[18] Mark one was tempered by American independence but the second empire, predicated along a similar juxtaposition, this time with Catholic France, was not long in coming. Both moments allowed British geopolitics to be ordered, glorified and rarefied as against an Other. But the importance of this brief, pre-history of the Island Race is in the establishment of the foundations of a long-standing set of geopolitical/geohistorical tropes, not just in recognising the antagonistic roots of identity. In other words, by the time of the Scramble for Africa, the Channel Tunnel Crisis and the Naval Race with Germany, these

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[14] On the seas as strategic and cultural highways in imperial thought see, for example: Castlereagh (1822); Hughes (1870); Mahan (1890); Curzon (1898); Mackinder (1907); Baldwin (1925); Richmond (1923); (1928). And in more modern analysis: Fleure & Davies (1970); McInnes (1998); Fernández-Armesto (2004); Law (2005).

[15] Bryant (1984); (1986); Schmitt (1942), pp. 28, 52, 52; Colley (1992).

[16] Taylor (2001), especially pp. 117-37. For general overviews of Tudor geographical thought see Hakluyt (1582); (1589); K. R. Andrews (1984); Cormack (1994); (1998); Mancall (2007); Scott (2012); Taylor (1930).

[17] Ó Tuathail (1996), pp. 3-6.

[18] Churchill (1957), pp. 67-152.

conceptions had become sedimented to the point of representing that shibboleth of common sense and pragmatism: the national interest.[19] Furthermore, in the geographic, social and political eclecticism of these early encounters, we see how the Island Race was primed for mobilisation in a great variety of geographical, social and political situations. From its inception, it was a universalised phenomenon whose referent objects were *Britain and the world*.

In the century between Waterloo and the First World War, the British Empire expanded greatly. The loss of the American colonies was offset by huge gains, particularly in Africa and Asia; and victory over France in 1815 left British naval and merchant shipping virtually unchallenged on the oceans. What developed concomitantly was the whole way in which Britain imagined itself as an international actor and, indeed, the environment in which it acted. The constitution of British geopolitical identity at this time can best be understood via five, interlinked tropes which form the bases of what I call the Island Race, recovered through background reading of contemporary British imperial texts. They can be introduced separately but must be understood in sum.

1.2. The five tropes of Island Race identity
Island Race I: insularity from Europe

The first is the idea of insularity from Europe. Epitomised by Lord Salisbury's dictum of splendid isolation in a world in which Britain had no permanent friends or foes, only permanent interests, this was, in many ways, a fantastic conceit and revealed to be so by the First World War.[20] But the British interest in maintaining a lofty detachment from European events while ensuring a balance of power on the continent (what Churchill called 'the wonderful unconscious tradition of British Foreign Policy' and Alec Douglas-Home an 'automatic muscular reaction'), was an influential and enduring part of Island Race identity and crucially must be understood in the context of the second trope: universalism.[21]

Island Race II: the universal island

Universalism is the idea that Britain could and ought to project its power anywhere, at any time, when British interests were seen to be threatened; it is intimately and constitutively linked with insularity. In some ways this is a natural trapping of imperial power, but it ought also to be seen

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[19] Aron (1967), p. 192.
[20] See David Steele's political biography of Salisbury and Michael Howard's overview of the British 'continental commitment' in the early twentieth century (Steele (2001) especially pp. 243-73; Howard (1967)).
[21] Churchill (1948), p. 163; Home (1976), p. 144.

as a consequence of British conceptions of the world oceanic space as a place of distanceless flows in which one was effectively as close to Calcutta as Calais.[22]

Island Race III: Lines of Communication

The third aspect of Island Race identity is an extension of the second and it refers to the strategic management of this maritime empire. In order to safeguard British hegemony in the far flung and non-contiguous colonies and coaling stations and ensure transport and trade between them, Lines of Communication were necessary.[23] This entailed the constitution of a mental superstructure girdling the globe but mainly enacting British links between its North European home and the East.[24] Certain geographic nodes were invested with supreme importance as the crucial loci upon which this edifice depended: Gibraltar, Malta, Cape Town, the Falklands, Suez, Aden, the Malacca Straits, Singapore. And the greatest threat, before German naval expansion, was Russian Land Power which promised not just the severing of these arteries by meddling with the Ottoman Empire, but the establishment of rival, continental trade routes and the menacing of the imperial jewel itself, India.

Island Race IV: Sea Power versus Land Power

Through the constitution of these Lines of Communication was established the heir to the role of Napoléonic France as the antithesis to British maritime benevolence.[25] The Russian Empire was everything that the British was not: a large, contiguous bloc, autocratic and seeking expansion in every direction. As the fourth trope, it served a doubly constitutive role as both the physical expression of potential disruptor to Lines of Communication as well as the dichotomous, existential marker of what was Great about Britain.[26]

Island Race V: Greater Britain

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[22] Demangeon (1925), pp. 100-1. See also Schmitt (1942); (1950), pp. 172-84.

[23] On British maritime trade and strategy see Mahan (1900); Corbett (1911); Kennedy (1976); McInnes (1998); for realist theory of sea power or 'offshore balancing' see Mearsheimer (2001), especially pp. 234-66 (and pp. 83-137), and, for a critical geopolitical perspective on Lines of Communication, Ó Tuathail (1992).

[24] Halford Mackinder wrote in 1904: 'To visualize is the very essence of geographical power, which should be cultivated until it becomes possible to think of the whole World's surface at one in all its complexities, with its girdles of all kinds, telegraphic, railway, steamer, girdles of power, girdles of thought, for every touch of the helm of government, either at Westminster or in the City, produces a ripple which goes right round the World, like the wave in the air emitted from Krakatoa meeting obstacles and producing varied results. Nothing happens without producing results in every part' (Mackinder (1904a), pp. 192-3).

[25] Mahan (1907), p. 304.

[26] For contemporaneous accounts of this, see Curzon (1889) (for an anthology of Curzon's speeches, see Raleigh (1906)); Dilke (1890); Mackinder (1904b); Mahan (1900).

The final trope of imperial Island Race identity is the notion of Greater Britain.[27] This concept was based upon the idea that wherever Britain had colonised (but especially the white settler communities) was effectively a part of Britain. This was not meant in the French sense whereby, for example, Algeria was considered a political, economic and institutional extension of metropolitan France; rather Greater Britain was about the spread and consolidation of British, or Anglo-Saxon, values. So by the end of the nineteenth century, the United States, despite its great, independent wealth and strident foreign policy, could nonetheless be considered as one more carrier of the exceptional history and values that Britain had bequeathed on the world. This, in turn, co-constitutively relied upon the other tropes of Island Race identity: insularity had allowed sufficient separation for the forging of unique values; universality and the Lines of Communication permitted their transmission around the world; and antipathy towards Land Power marked them out as superior against degenerate continental values.

These aspects of British imperial identity hinged upon Britain being an island. The assortment of geographers, strategists and politicians who narrated the empire at its peak in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was instrumental in this construction. The likes of Halford Mackinder, Alfred Mahan, James Froude, John Seeley, Charles Dilke and Albert Demangeon all argued that British imperialism was the natural result of Britain being an island with an exceptional history in an advantageous location that allowed it to (partially) distance itself from Europe and utilise its naval strength for world-wide colonisation and trade.[28] The geopolitics of Mackinder—pioneer of the study of Geography at Oxford University and, later, Conservative MP—was based on the assumption that Britain's dominance through sea power would soon come to an end because of the preponderance of rail and air travel. If Britain failed to adjust to these new geopolitical realities, its power would be surpassed by rivals, in particular from the Heartland of Eurasia.[29] Mackinder foregrounded Britain's status as an island, not least in his *Britain and the British Seas* in which he argued that Britain's island location afforded it the complementary qualities of insularity and universality.[30]

Prone to a greater degree of romanticism than the sober Mackinder, historian Froude's magnum opus was inspired by a seventeenth century utopian tract by James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*.[31] Froude's own *Oceana or England and her Colonies* is an often

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[27] See Seeley (1883); Dilke (1869); (1890); and, for contemporary analysis of Greater Britain and Seeley, Bell (2005); (2007).

[28] See also E.A. Freeman's 'Alter Orbis', a polemic against the proposed late-Victorian channel tunnel in which he argues for the insular distinctiveness of a Britain apart from the European continent (Freeman (1882)).

[29] Mackinder (1904b).

[30] Mackinder (1907), p. 11.

[31] Harrington (1656).

florid account of the glory of the British Empire in which, like Mackinder, he seeks to naturalise British imperialism through reference to Britain's geography and its oneness with the oceans. 'After their own island,' Froude wrote, 'the sea is the natural home of Englishmen; the Norse blood is in us, and we rove over the waters, for business or pleasure, as eagerly as our ancestors.'[32]

According to Cambridge professor John Seeley's *Expansion of England*, Britain's islandness came into its own through the vanquishing of France in the eighteenth century, allowing Britain to be free from entanglements in Europe and pursue its universalist destiny.[33] Similar in tone was *Greater Britain*, in which Britain was becoming a 'world island', with distance effectively crushed by the export of British language, culture, institutions and trade.[34] Its author, Charles Dilke, who remarked that '[t]hrough America, England is speaking to the world', was a Liberal MP and virulent Russophobe who epitomised the contemporary rendering of Muscovite imperialism as the antithesis to Britain; if Mackinder provided the strategic rationale for paranoia regarding Russia, Dilke's contribution was cultural.[35]

This brief survey has introduced how these Island Race tropes were incorporated into British identity through the constitution of island geography in a global, imperial context. These thinkers were some of the enthusiasts of empire, but there were critical voices too. For all the John Ruskins, whose quasi-sacred imperialism was the great patriotic duty of the day, there were those (although admittedly fewer in number) like John Hobson, whose *Imperialism: A Study* argued not only that empire was wasteful and immoral as regards both Britons and the subject peoples but also that it was less a result of British geopolitics than British capitalism.[36] His views were not anathema to some British foreign policy-makers, amongst whom the rapacity of territorial acquisition which particularly marked the 'scramble for Africa' in the last decades of the nineteenth century did not have unanimous support. Dilke's imperial

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[32] Froude (1886), p. 18.

[33] Seeley (1883), p. 144. For contemporary analysis of Seeley's thesis see Schwarz (1996); Deudney (2001); Bell (2005).

[34] Dilke (1869), especially pp. 70-1, 346-8. See Bell (2007) for a comprehensive study of the idea of Greater Britain.

[35] Dilke (1869), pp. viii, 230. Although well-travelled, Dilke never visited the country for which he reserved such obloquy. By way of counterpoint, see *Russia in Central Asia in 1889 and the Anglo-Russian Question* by George Curzon, soon to become Viceroy of India and, later, Foreign Secretary as the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (Curzon (1889), p. 12). For further, contemporaneous accounts of the superiority of British sea power see Corbett (1890); (1911); Demangeon (1925); Herbertson & Howarth (1914); Mahan (1890); Richmond (1928); (1946); (1953).

[36] See Ruskin's inaugural lecture at Oxford University in 1870 quoted in Said (1993), pp. 123-5; Hobson (1902). See also Kearns (1993). For their explanation of how 'gentlemanly capitalism' drove the British Empire, see Cain & Hopkins (1993) and Dummett (1999a & b). Unlike Hobson, imperial administrator Frederick Lugard argued that, particularly in Africa, the British Empire had a 'dual mandate' (which it was fulfilling) towards both British commerce and the native populations (Lugard (1922)).

enthusiasm, for example, markedly cooled in direct correlation with the expansion of the empire. His remarks in the otherwise supportive *Greater Britain* that 'England in the East is not the England that we know' and how 'Flousy Britannia, with her anchor and ship, becomes a mysterious Oriental despotism' hinted at the greater pessimism to be found in his later *Problems of Greater Britain* and recalled Edmund Burke's suggestion that Warren Hastings' mishandling of India was evidence of an invidious 'geographical morality' in which 'actions in Asia do not bear the same moral qualities, which the same actions would bear in Europe.'[37] Crucially, neither Burke nor Dilke disavowed British imperialism itself and scarcely questioned the practice of dominion over far-flung lands: the Island Race was predisposed towards hegemony, what mattered was the conduct of its rule.

The imperial critiques advanced by William Gladstone, Dilke's Liberal Party leader, were more explicitly spatial. He problematized an empire of territories 'severed greatly from one another, and uniformly from us, by thousands upon thousands of miles of dissociating ocean' fearing that the huge effort required to defend it would be to the detriment of domestic interests.[38] Yet it was during Gladstone's second premiership in 1882 that the Anglo-Egyptian War was launched which culminated in the British occupation of the country. He bemoaned how Britain laid 'a virtual claim to a veto upon all the political arrangements of all the countries and seas which can possibly constitute any one of the routes between England and the East', yet he annexed Egypt to protect British financial and strategic interests there.[39]

1.3. Conclusion: a project for all times and places

What we can see is that the Island Race was a holistic conception of not just Britain and its place in the world but also an exhaustive account of the international environment itself. Through the geopolitics of maritime empire, the Island Race was a fulsome expression that transcended simple statements of space to form an economic, political and cultural *mise en scène* of global proportions. This is hardly surprising in the sense that the British Empire was and remains the largest that the world has ever known. But in its scope and complexity there was also an inbuilt malleability which can perhaps be imbricated in the stubbornly famous notion of Britain's foreign policy pragmatism. What I mean by this is that the discourse of British imperialism was so wide-ranging as to be able to ontologically 'cope' with almost any situation that occurred. This is not to say that Island Race identity was autonomous of British foreign policy-makers but that, such was the scope of the empire that it co-constitutively represented, *any situation was able to be negotiated according to its own spatial-historical reasoning*.

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[37] Dilke (1869), p. 550; (1890); Burke (1788), p. 55.
[38] Bennett (1953a), p. 269.
[39] Thornton (1959), p. 357.

There is nothing inherently unique about this imperative to explain the world and the discursive practices which comprise it; these are basic and enduring acts of 'statecraft' and necessarily rely upon praxes that are, in some measure, geo-historical. Yet the tautology and physical scope of British imperialism meant that the *entire* world was Britain's concern; in other words, Britain's subject position as an imperial power was secured by its global nature. Even as the Empire waned into insignificance, British foreign policy-makers continued to script the world and Britain's place in it in global terms.[40] Furthermore, the British imperial project was always cast in the language of providential teleology whereby Britain was the carrier of a unique and exceptional history.[41] Even with the open acknowledgment of unspecified but definite termini in the African empire and Middle Eastern mandates, British imperialism was never represented as a temporary phenomenon. The Empire in all of its guises was the bearer of its own set of historical values that would continue beyond the ephemera of any particular period. The utilitarian strategic points guarding the Lines of Communication would ensure future liberal trade between Europe and North America and the East; the infantile colonies of Africa would, under British tutelage, be developed and civilised for the benefit of future generations; and the ancestry and heritage of the white settler colonies, whether fully independent or Dominions, would carry forth the Anglo-Saxon values bequeathed them by British settlement. In sum, the British Empire was a project *for all times*.[42]

That these tropes might have endured beyond the Empire to continue to fix Britain's identity as a foreign policy actor has been scarcely explored even though much subsequent scholarship has noted the importance of islandness to the imperial identity. We have already mentioned Bryant, Schmitt and Colley; more recently we see a slew of British history books in which islandness is foregrounded, such as Norman Davies' *The Isles: A History*, Brian Lavery's *The Island Nation: A History of Britain and the Sea*, Christopher Lee's *This Sceptred Isle: The Making of the British* and Paul Monod's *Imperial Island: A History of Britain and its Empire, 1660-1837*.[43] These, and popular phenomena such as the BBC television programme *Coast* (broadcast so far for ten series), show how Britain as an island remains an enduringly popular source of social, political and natural history. Yet, for all of the continued visibility of islandness in the British history corpus, it remains underexplored as the site of modern British foreign policy identity in the sense that long-standing foreign policy issues like the partial stance towards Europe and affection for the 'special' transatlantic relationship are simply accepted as further manifestations

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[40] Kearns (1993), p. 9; Aldrich (1992b), p. 21.
[41] See Ferguson (2003), pp. 113-62.
[42] Armitage (2007), p. 5.
[43] Davies (1999); Lavery (2005); Lee (1997); Monod (2009).

of pragmatism and rationality.[44]   By contrast, what is needed is an analysis of *how and why* Europe and the US, for example, continue to be constructed in the fashions that they are through recrudescences of Island Race identity.

2. Trends in the study of British foreign policy

In the ensuing sections I will review and problematise some of the key studies on post-imperial/Second World War British foreign policy and identify and question the general lack of geopolitical discourse, identity and ontological security-seeking. In particular I will analyse the continued privileged status of rational actor models and the claim that British foreign policy is pragmatic, and the influence of 'declinism' in the broad sense of offering a reading of British history that renders the post-imperial period as inert and directionless compared to the imperial heyday. Subsequently I will explore the strengths and weaknesses of some of the most recent scholarship on British foreign policy and identity. What will be borne in mind throughout are the practices which fail to admit social processes such as identity construction into analyses of British foreign policy. Even though the studies in the initial section especially do not have this kind of analysis in mind and so have not 'failed' on their own terms, it is nonetheless necessary and enlightening to highlight some of the drawbacks and limitations that their methods are productive of and the kinds of dominant representations of British history that need to be unsettled.

2.1. Pragmatism, rationalism and the national interest

Many accounts of British foreign policy since 1945 sidestep questions of how socially constructed, geopolitical discourse might play an enduring, constitutive role in representations of issues and events and policy responses. In their stead, most reviews of the period (and some even of the imperial era) tend to pursue rational actor models in which British foreign policy-makers are engaged in a sustained, reactive pursuit of national interests according to calculations of risk, limitations and maximum possible gains as defined against limited objectives.[45] Few remarks epitomise this better than Henry Kissinger's on the foreign policy of the third Viscount Palmerston that it 'required no formal strategy because its leaders understood the British interest so well and so viscerally that they could act spontaneously on each situation as it arose, confident that their public would follow.'[46] This chimes with the endlessly asserted self-ascription of many in the high seats of British politics that they are, in the final analysis,

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[44] See, for example, John Dumbrell's *A Special Relationship* (Dumbrell (2006)).

[45] For the theory of rational actor models in IR see for example: Bueno de Mesquita (1981); Zagare (1990); Russett (1995).

[46] Kissinger (1994), p. 96. Palmerston was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on three occasions (1830-4, 1835-41, 1846-51) and Prime Minister twice (1855-8, 1859-65).

'pragmatic'.[47] Like Bernard Porter's 'absent-minded imperialists' they simply react to events in the 'pointillist' fashion that drew praise for Thatcher's foreign policy from one of her advisors.[48] This 'Whiggish' narrative tradition of British history has been much derided by the likes of Neil Ascherson, David Marquand and Raphael Samuel but its influence is undeniable, not least on ways it constitutes the self-images of some British politicians and thus touches the culture of debates in the Commons.[49] This has been taken for granted in a number of studies of British foreign policy, from which several examples will now be discussed.

London School of Economics Professor F.S. Northedge remarked in a 1971 lecture: 'In any close examination I have ever made of the major issues of British foreign policy [...] it has seemed to me *almost* true to say that, when all things are taken into account, the responsible Ministers could hardly have acted otherwise than as they did.'[50] C.J. Bartlett reached similar conclusions, deciding that, such had been the 'strange' 'twists' of twentieth century history, 'more intelligent long-term planning might have served the British no better than their own pragmatic approach.'[51] They are not isolated. Separated by several decades, Joseph Frankel and Peter Mangold, for example, both evaluated the success of British foreign policy in the twentieth century; both concluded that pragmatism had generally been advantageous (although not without inherent vice) and Frankel concluded his study with the 'confident' expectation that 'pragmatism will remain the major characteristic of British politics'.[52] Frankel was always

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[47] There are numerous examples of this to be found in the speeches and autobiographies of British foreign policy-makers. In particular, see the memoirs of Alec Douglas-Home, Margaret Thatcher, John Major and Tony Blair (Home (1976); Thatcher (1993); (1995); Major (1999); Blair (2010)).

[48] Porter (2004); Cradock (1997), p. 36. Porter's title was drawn from Seeley's sardonic remark that the Empire had been gathered up in a 'fit of absence of mind' (Seeley (1883), p. 10). Ronald Robinson and colleagues in their *Africa and the Victorians* were critical of the idea that British imperialists would ever 'plant the flag in the middle of the African bush in a fit of absence of mind' (Robinson *et al* (1961), p. 163). Yet Evelyn Baring, the Earl of Cromer, who, as Controller-General and then Consul-General, effectively ruled Egypt for a time in the late nineteenth century, remarked: 'It has indeed become a commonplace of English political thought that for centuries past, from the days of Raleigh to those of Rhodes, the position of England in the world has been due more to the exertions, the resources, and occasionally, perhaps, to the absence of scruple found in the individual Anglo-Saxon, than to any encouragement or help derived from British government' (Kwarteng (2011), p. 232). Conservative MP Kwasi Kwarteng emphasises this in his recent survey of the British Empire (Kwarteng (2011)).

[49] 'Until recently, English historiography resembled the work of a landscape gardener in a stately home; vistas of Saxon lawn and Norman shrubbery led up past Tudor and Hanoverian flowerbeds to the terrace of the present, where the proprietor sat contentedly surveying his estate. Other countries are restless, grubbing up old interpretations in each generation' (Ascherson (2002), p. vii). See Marquand's reflections on British identity 'after Whig imperialism'; Samuel returned to this theme often in his work on British patriotism, history and national identity (Marquand (1995); Samuel (1989a-c); (1994); (1998)).

[50] Northedge (1972), p. 3.

[51] Bartlett (1989), p. 124.

[52] Frankel (1975); Mangold (2001); Frankel (1975), p. 315.

likely to reach such a conclusion, given the lack of enquiry with which his study was approached: nothing more (or less) than an 'analytical description of reality'.[53]

More recent accounts by David Sanders, Robert Self and John W. Young also explicitly attempt to elide theoretical underpinnings, as if fearful that such might taint what ought to be the simple narrative of a series of British reactions to external events.[54] As in Mangold's and Northedge's analyses the conclusions are foregone. Furthermore, these accounts are written in the grip of the seemingly permanent situation of British 'declinism', a state of affairs that Thatcher claimed to have terminated but which, according to Enoch Powell, had been fantasy anyway, given the 'qualities' and 'insular character' of the British people and institutions.[55] Although many of these studies point out, perhaps justifiably, that post-imperial Britain has had largely more propitious circumstances than before in terms of many economic and social indicators, the sense of comparative failure and inertia in the light of having once ruled a huge empire looms large.[56]

The effect of this, combined with the incurious nature of some scholarship which takes pragmatism for granted, is that a number of them seek only to catalogue the material 'reality' of Britain's decline from imperial prominence. Accordingly, Robert Holland's *In Pursuit of Greatness* terminates in 1970 because the Sterling Crisis of 1967 'finally delivered the *coup de grâce* to those ideas and ideals' which Britain had pursued even as its empire dwindled.[57] Frankel argued that the process of imperial decline had begun long before the Second World War and that British foreign policy-makers had been slowly adjusting to this new reality before enacting the final process of withdrawal between 1945 and 1973.[58] The only question being: how well did Britain adapt to its defenestration? As has already been noted, the inherent pragmatism of British foreign policy-makers apparently insulated Britain from the worst shocks

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[53] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[54] Sanders (1990); Self (2010); Young (1997).
[55] Thatcher (1982); (1995), p. 91; Powell (1987), p. 43. British declinism encompasses a wide range of different explanations into the apparent decline taking hold of Britain, beginning in the late 1950s. Early economic accounts were provided by Michael Shanks and Andrew Shonfield who criticised, respectively, the conservative attitudes of the *élite* and poor economic performance fostered by global overstretch (Shanks (1972); Shonfield (1958)). Arthur Koestler pursued a more varied selection in his *Suicide of a Nation?* while C. P. Snow's lectures problematized the governmental and social exclusion of scientists at the expense of literary intellectuals (Koestler (1964); Snow (1959)). Figures centred on the *New Left* journal, such as Perry Anderson and Tom Nairn, also contributed Marxist critiques of Britain's plight with the Scottish nationalist Nairn updating and expanding his arguments in *The Break-up of Britain* (Anderson (1964); Nairn (1977)). Finally there are Samuel's and Patrick Wright's attacks on the debilitating effects of the phenomenon of British heritage and perhaps most famous of all is Corelli Barnett's *The Collapse of British Power* (Samuel (1989a-c); (1994); (1998); Wright (1985); Barnett (1972)). See also: Marquand (1995); English & Kenny (2000)).
[56] See, for example, David Dilks' and David Reynolds' surveys of waning British power in the twentieth century (Dilks (1981a & b); Reynolds (1991)).
[57] Holland (1991), p. 9.
[58] Frankel (1975), pp. 1-11.

of a rapidly changing world. The 'puzzle', as even Robert Self admits, is how constant British foreign policy apparently appears to be, in spite of the fact that it is inherently reactive and the world has changed so much: *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.[59] It is no wonder that so many of these studies favour structural, rational actor models in which the pragmatic, 'official mind' of British foreign policy-makers navigating a sensible course through a changing international environment serves as a proxy for enquiry into questions of the discursive, social processes which constitute affectations of national interest pursuance. In these accounts, British foreign policy-makers are men untainted by these processes, above the European or Third World fashion for national identities, free to pursue their *ancien* interests while engaging in a dignified (or otherwise) withdrawal. It should be noted, if only in passing, that the man who, if anyone, most fervently stoked the 'declinist' fire in 1972 with his *The Collapse of British Power*, Corelli Barnett, decried the *absence* of pragmatism in modern British foreign policy-makers.[60]

2.2. Whither Britishness? The (geo)politics of modern British identity

Quite apart from the risks of essentialising what most agree is a complex web of contingency and multiplicity, Britishness itself is said to be imperilled; assailed from multiple sites: globalisation, European integration, Scottish nationalism, immigration. For some, like Doty and Marquand, it was only the Empire that had provided the British glue to what was, in any case, hegemonic English nationalism asserting itself over the Celtic fringe.[61] In any case, neither the burial of Britain in a United States of Europe nor its breaking up into constituent parts—prophesied by Tom Nairn in 1977—have yet to be formalised, although the foreign policy (and other) implications of a 'yes' vote in the Scottish independence referendum of 2014 were much explored prior to the poll.[62] Similarly Samuel noted the prospect of Britain 'unravelling' and both Colley and Peter Ward found Britishness to be, respectively, contingent and unstable.[63]

Such questions, combined with declinism and the continued emphasis on the supposed pragmatism of British foreign policy—or 'muddling through' as Peter Hennessy put it—have led to persistent suggestions that Britain's foreign policy (and its identity) is in the throes of a

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[59] Self (2010), pp. 5-6, 288-301.

[60] Barnett (1972), pp. 36-7, 42-3. In characteristic Gibbonian prose, Barnett undertook that Britain's increasingly effete nineteenth century *élite* adopted an evangelical, ethical model of empire which allowed it to be gradually eclipsed by more ruthless rivals (Gibbon (1952)). Attlee, according to Gibbon scholar Charles A. Robinson Jr., re-read *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in the summer of 1949 (Robinson Jr. (1952), p. ix). See also Anthony Sampson's *Anatomy of Britain*, in many ways a harbinger of some of Barnett's arguments and published ten years prior (Sampson (1962)).

[61] Doty (1996), pp. 124-5; Marquand (1995), pp. 183-4. See also Krishan Kumar's and Amelia Hadfield-Amkhan's analyses of British identity formation (Kumar (2003); Hadfield-Amkhan (2010)).

[62] Nairn (1977). See, for example, Andrew Dorman's analysis of potential defence and security implications of a vote for independence in 2014 (Dorman (2014)).

[63] Samuel (1998); (1989a-c); Colley (1992); Ward (2004).

long-running 'crisis'.[64] Increasingly unable to manage the fragile balance of Scottish, Welsh and other fringe nationalisms and the encroachment of radical Muslims and Brussels bureaucrats, this crisis of national Self extends to Britain's international affairs. The main well-spring tends to be an historic and unresolved elision of the choice between European integration and the 'special' transatlantic relationship. William Wallace has been particularly vocal in this regard, noting in 1991 the 'tension between American pressure for greater British commitment to European integration […] and British desires to use the Anglo-American relationship precisely to resist further entanglement, to escape from Europe to the open sea.'[65] The 'British national myth' had been adapted and expanded to cope with the gradual 'loss of national autonomy' since 1945 but, even fifteen years later he was hardly more sanguine in announcing the 'the collapse of British foreign policy' as represented by Blair's bridge across the Atlantic.[66] Britain was, he argued, stuck between Europe and the Anglosphere although, as Justin Gibbins notes, it is more often than not Europe, rather than the US, that is cast in the role of Other and Atlanticism reified as 'the means by which Britain's past survives into the present.'[67] For Hugo Young, it was the attachment to the 'blessed plot' of Britain itself—the 'struggle[…] to reconcile the past she could not forget with the future she could not avoid'—that vexed the question of whether Britain could 'truly accept that her modern destiny was to be a European country'.[68] Other major studies have cast Britain as the 'awkward partner' or 'on the sidelines' when it comes to Europe; explanatory foci which tend to depict a Britain, suspicious of the European Other, seeking to maximise its dwindling power by bandwagoning with the US.[69]

The commitment of David Cameron's government to hold a referendum on Britain's EU membership by 2017 has, once again, brought questions of British foreign policy and identity into sharp focus. A case in point is the recent, special issue of the *Journal of Common Market Studies* entitled 'Interpreting British European Policy' whose 'agent-centred, but not agent-only interpretivist perspective' produces a number of insightful studies.[70] Piers Ludlow examines a key 1971 parliamentary debate on European accession and touches on issues concerning the negotiation of the Island Race tropes of insularity and universality; as do Cary Fontana and Craig Parsons in discussing the Thatcherite 'contradiction' between neoliberal, global trade and strong, nationalist sovereignty, although they fail to conceptualise these tendencies as being

[64] Hennessy (1996).
[65] Wallace (1991), p. 71. Andrew Gamble, Robin Niblett and William Wallace and Christopher Phillips have all also rendered a similar dichotomy (Gamble (2003); Niblett (2007); Wallace & Phillips (2009)).
[66] Wallace (1991), p. 70; Wallace (2005a); Blair (2000), p. 239; (2003a), p. 237.
[67] Wallace (2005b); Gibbins (2014), p. 65.
[68] Young (1998), p. 1.
[69] See Stephen George's *An Awkward Partner: Britain in the European Community* and David Gowland and colleagues' *Britain and European Integration Since 1945: On the sidelines* (George (1998); Gowland *et al* (2010)).
[70] Bevir *et al* (2015), p. 3.

constitutive of one another in British identity.[71] Oliver Daddow rightly highlights the 'outsider tendency' of some British foreign policy-makers as part of the tradition of insularity and this is complemented by Ben Wellings and Helen Baxendale's insights into what they call the 'dilemma' of Europe or a reconstituted Anglosphere.[72] This issue points to some pertinent, recent examinations of identity in British foreign policy which move beyond the traditional focus of pragmatism and the national interest. These are particularly welcome in the light of Daddow's observation that representations of historic British Euroscepticism have eclipsed those of Euroenthusiasm to the point where the latter has become a 'lost history'.[73] In spite of these gains, there has been a failure, on the whole, to note and explore the continued constitutive relationship between foreign policy and imperial-era, spatial identity tropes in the context of ontological security-seeking in a dynamic environment.

A notable recent attempt to do this is Amelia Hadfield-Amkhan's *British Foreign Policy, National Identity and Neoclassical Realism*. She explores several case studies of particular identity crises facing British foreign policy from the 1882 'Channel Tunnel Crisis' to the 2003 debate over the Euro currency. Her insights are a timely recrudescence of identity in the study of British foreign policy, especially her admittance of ontological security-seeking, the role of discourse and her theorising of English and British nationalisms, yet this is occasionally undermined by her use of a neoclassical realist framework which leads to unresolved tension between claims of causal *and* constitutive links in conceptualising foreign policy and identity.[74] Nevertheless, she hints at the continued relevance of discursive spatial identity to post-1945 British foreign policy-makers, as does Jamie Gaskarth who also discusses Britain's temporal and ethical identities.[75] In the main, Gaskarth pursues the argument—like Wallace—that Britain is in danger of 'strategic drift' because of a lack of reflection on its foreign policy identity.[76] Bernard Jenkin MP and George Grant made a congruent point, contending in 2011 that British strategy was at a 'tipping point' due to lack of a focussed, strategic identity and unwillingness to decide on the extent of its global reach.[77] In discussing New Labour, Gaskarth laments how, in spite of the 'plethora of strategy documents since 1997, none sought to consider […] British identity […] in any depth'; a point explored by retired diplomat John Coles who

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[71] Ludlow (2015); Fontana & Parsons (2015).
[72] Daddow (2015b); Wellings & Baxendale (2015).
[73] Daddow (2004), pp. 9-18.
[74] Hadfield-Amkhan (2010), pp. 23-42.
[75] Gaskarth (2013), pp. 59-80.
[76] Gaskarth (2014), p. 559. This was part of a special 2014 issue of the *International Affairs* journal which explored questions of British strategy but offered little in the way of novel approaches. Perhaps most provocative is Timothy Edmunds' assertion that the recent trend for adaptivity in British strategic reviews represents a neoteric and uniquely British innovation (Edmunds (2014), pp. 532-8; HM Government (2010)).
[77] Jenkin & Grant (2011).

argues that the long-standing failure to elucidate 'a certain idea of Britain' is 'not for want of trying', given the quantity of official strategic papers published since 1945, but is hampered by a culture of pragmatism at the Foreign Office and the cost-driven nature of many of these exercises.[78]

All of which prompted Patrick Porter to explore 'Why Britain doesn't do Grand Strategy' through seven main arguments: the lack of an obvious, major enemy; reluctance to study strategic issues in British universities; the absence of fertile conditions, i.e. European stability and the paucity of *élite* and mass demand for strategic studies; that Britain has 'abandoned geography' in favour of globalism; Britain's subordinate part in American grand strategy; the triumph of presentation over strategy, exemplified by New Labour; and the general point of Britain's identity being unsettled.[79] Two main points can be raised to problematise Porter's arguments: firstly, there is a conflict between his insistence that Britain has chosen globalism but has been unable or not impelled to elucidate a grand strategy because of the stability of its own European region; secondly—and this relates to many of the studies mentioned—the apparent incoherence of things like strategic reviews does not equate to the absence of foreign policy identity for the latter is better conceived in terms of the reiterated, often anodyne phrases and statements which punctuate speeches, reports and debates.[80] Porter suggests: being more selective in relations with the US; adopting 'smaller and more bounded concepts of the national interest to rebalance ends and means'; and 'abandon the creation of declaratory documents to please opinion, an exercise that creates the surface impression of strategy rather than the requisite substance.'[81]

In his *Free World*, Timothy Garton Ash identifies the Janus-like predicament of facing both Europe and the US, not to mention the former empire, and suggests that Britain has been torn between four different foci: regaining its independence; choosing the US; choosing Europe; or making the best of its good relations with both. He is correct both in noting that the latter option—'both Island and World'—has been little favoured by many between Churchill and Blair (although perhaps more ought to be made of Macmillan and even Thatcher) and how intertwined these 'four faces of Janus Britain' are.[82] His solution: 'we must have a national strategy that engages fully, on all fronts, with the world'.[83] More nuanced is Tarak Barkawi and

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[78] Gaskarth (2011), p. 84; Coles (2000), p. 178, 59-82. See also Evans (2014).
[79] Porter (2010), pp. 7-10. For other recent examinations of British strategy, see Betz & Cormack (2009); Newton *et al* (2010).
[80] Although he does argue in *The Global Village Myth* that globalism is not the same as grand strategy (Porter (2015), especially pp. 18-58).
[81] Porter (2010), p. 10.
[82] Garton Ash (2004), p. 34.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

Shane Brighton's suggestion that Britain privilege its imperial past (although not in the sense of apologism) because it is that which 'gives global significance to British identity.'[84] Although they draw attention to what they call 'the moribund national narrative of the island story', their study is suggestive of the ways in which island identity is imbricated in the nexus between parochialism and globalism and, as I will demonstrate, has been constitutive of far more than just insipid nostalgia and insularity.[85]

What this review shows is a small but significant re-ignition of interest in British foreign policy identity and there is clearly much to recommend it, especially the 'agent-centred, but not agent-only interpretivist perspective' of the *Journal of Common Market Studies* issue.[86] To build on this work, more needs to be done to highlight the continued, historical constitutions of identity over a longer period of time, to recognise the importance of geopolitics as an ontologically secure framing device in the context of British political debate and its enduring constitutive effects in terms of British foreign policy.

3. The argument: when geopolitics meets an exceptional history

Informed by and building on the preceding review as well as the theoretical foci outlined in the ensuing chapter, I wish to argue that what the Island Race represents is an enduring concept of exceptional national history combined with a particularist and universal geopolitical vision. The traces of this idea exist in multiple and diverse sources in the corpora of the likes of Mackinder, Schmitt, Samuel, Colley, Paul Kennedy and Niall Ferguson.[87] Some have sought to proscribe, some to problematise, some to analyse and contextualise and in more recent scholarship too we find evidence of an understanding of the discursive pre-histories and histories of what we might recognise as Island Race identity. Alex Law, for example, urges the conceptualisation of the British imperial island in terms of routes and roots and navies and navels, linking the desire to annihilate the distance of sea space with an island sanctuary that is both besieged and an

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[84] Barkawi & Brighton (2013), p. 1110. Contrasts can be drawn here with both Kwarteng's survey, *Ghosts of Empire: Britain's Legacies in the Modern World*, in which he argues that the arbitrary, individualistic and brutal nature of British imperial rule has been productive of much post-colonial chaos in places like Iraq, Burma and Nigeria; and Niall Ferguson's *Empire* which casts British imperialism in the role of benevolent inspiration for American hegemony (Kwarteng (2011), pp. 3-8; Ferguson (2003), pp. 1-52). See also Catherine Baker's article in which she discusses whether Danny Boyle's opening ceremony of the London Olympic Games in 2012 (entitled 'Isles of Wonder') represented an attempt to move 'beyond the island story' towards a popular 'mosaic history' of Britain and Richard Evans' attack on Conservative Education Secretary Michael Gove's privileging of Britain's 'island story' in the History curriculum (Baker (2014), p. 412; Evans (2011); Gove (2010)).

[85] Barkawi & Brighton (2013), p. 1123.

[86] Bevir *et al* (2015), p. 3.

[87] Mackinder (1904b); (1907); Schmitt (1942); (1950) especially pp. 172-84; Samuel (1998) especially pp. 3-20, pp. 41-73; Colley (1992) especially pp. 56-70; Kennedy (1976) especially pp. 13-36; Ferguson (2003), pp. 113-62.

exemplar of universal civilisation.[88] Paul Readman and Robert Shannan Peckham make similar points: Readman discussing the dual imperatives of British nationalism as both universal (empire) and insular (particular) and Peckham noting the nineteenth century discursive consecration of islands as carriers of exceptional politics.[89] Both fail to conceptualise how this might endure, even without empire itself. In particular, Law suggests that what survived in Britain was only a 'shallow nostalgia' that will 'continue to shrivel' as both the roots and routes of island identity grow more distant.[90] This is a puzzling assertion, especially given his focus on the mythic elements of islandness which surely always possess an inbuilt potential for, if not longevity, then resurrection, even in spite of so-called material factors or the passage of time. Indeed, within a decade of Law's argument Cameron made a speech (see chapter 6) in the run-up to the Scottish Independence Referendum in which he declared his fondness for Henrietta Marshall's *Our Island Story* and anointed Britain, whose values were 'of value to the world', 'the most extraordinary country in history' and 'the winning team in world history'.[91]

If Cameron's remarks represent a significant, contemporary configuration of British identity then it needs to be contextualised within a broader history that seeks to answer the question: how is this present possible? As I have acknowledged, the presence of islandness in British identity has already been noted, but I wish to take these conceptualisations further. To begin to do this I will draw again on one of Wallace's arguments. In a 1991 critique of British identity and foreign policy, he contended that 'the close links between the concept of the British state, the centrality of the Westminster parliament, the distinctive traditions of English common law and the myth of English exceptionalism—a free country confronting an unfree European continent—have made it peculiarly difficult for the political elite to come to terms with the redefinition of national identity needed to cope with international economic and social interdependence and with Britain's altered international position.'[92] Wallace correctly identifies the totems of Britain's supposed exceptionalism and is right to point out their mythic qualities.[93] Yet our point of divergence originates from his suggestion that these have stopped British foreign policy-makers from coping with changes to the international environment. I would argue that Island Race identity, *in its own terms and because of its privileged ontological status*, has proved remarkably adaptable to the vicissitudes of the middle and late twentieth century and beyond. By constitutively shaping British perceptions of international events and issues, there has been a 'looping effect' which has simultaneously dignified the tropes of Island Race identity

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[88] Law (2005).
[89] Readman (2014); Peckham (2003).
[90] Law (2005), p. 275.
[91] Cameron (2014); Marshall (1905); Hough (2010).
[92] Wallace (1991), p. 69.
[93] See, for example, Billie Melman's 'Claiming the Nation's Past' for an analysis of the construction of an Anglo-Saxon 'tradition' (Melman (1991)).

as enduringly 'relevant' across time and context.[94] This is not to say it has been instrumentally or materially successful (or otherwise)—that would be a value-judgement too far for this thesis—but, on its own terms and because of British discursive culture and the long-term effects of ontological security-seeking, Island Race identity has legitimised foreign policies by allowing the perception amongst foreign policy-makers that their 'national interests' are obtainable and realistic within their own established geo-historical framework.

In one sense then it might be said that I have come full circle and agree with Wallace and the others who suggest that British foreign policy-makers have not redefined British national identity. But I would qualify this by arguing that it is flawed to assume that national identity can be adequately crystallised in a document, even a series of regularly updated, strategic documents, like those to which British governments are now committed every five years.[95] Identity, better conceived, is the emergent, enduring culminations of collectively debated readings of shared history and it at least appears to change slowly and tectonically as foreign policy-makers seek to 'discipline' multiple conceptions of events and issues by enframing them within established tropes of selfhood.[96] Writing about strategic culture, a phenomenon—as Ken Booth showed—thoroughly bound up with identity, Colin Gray remarked: if it 'is held to be significantly reshapable on a year-by-year, or even on a decade-by-decade, basis, then 'culture' is probably unduly dignified, even pretentious, a term to characterize the phenomena at issue.'[97]

This argument relies on theories of discursive practice and ontological security-seeking which will be expanded upon in the following chapter. So utilised in this thesis, we have a novel reading of British foreign policy identity in which the particular contours of islandness remain as a bedrock of ontological security-seeking. That they were most thoroughly and politically inscribed in the imperial period is merely a coincidence, although a highly significant one, for the imperial island without the imperialism is still the island. The discursive constitutions of the geopolitics of the British Empire were so reliant on the spatial ontologies of the island that they became fused and inseparable, such that, even among and since the fitful and incremental atrophying of the empire, the space of the island remained fecund with these meanings.

Furthermore, as I argued earlier, there was the all-encompassing nature of this identity, with few areas of the world outside the purview of British imperialism. From Alaska to Antarctica and Beijing to Beirut, the Island Race was relevant as an explanatory framework. Gradually without

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[94] Hacking (1999), p. 34.
[95] HM Government (2010), p. 9.
[96] Kleuters (2009), p. 520; Campbell (1998), p. 81. See also Lapid (2001).
[97] Booth (1979); Gray (1999), p. 132.

the empire (but with some of the trappings of a Great Power) the world still needed explaining according to the demands of a pluralist, democratic parliament with time set aside precisely to debate international issues and comprising Members ever more aware of them. To explain what was and is happening in the world requires—indeed is co-constitutive with—reference (explicit and implicit) to a set of co-ordinates forged in tandem with references to a collective Self that, of course, is a part of that world. This Self had been irrevocably and comprehensively global in nature. So it is not just that—as Patrick Porter says of globalism—that a 'world so fragile that it must be superintended by a benevolent liberal hegemon' was and is imagined, but that a *world* is imagined at all; because this practice of imagining in itself was what secured (and still secures) British *relevance* in a multitude of situations and locales.[98] The primary referent object of its ontological security-seeking is thus Britain as a relevant actor in international politics, a discursive practice that has relied upon constitutions of its historic geopolitical identity as the Island Race. Put this way, my argument becomes rather anodyne: that British foreign policy-makers try to make Britain seem relevant when they talk about the world. However, the consequences of this are significant because of the particularities of the Island Race identity that is a crux of their discursive practice.

For a government of the day to take the appeals of the likes of Porter, Garton Ash and Gaskarth at their word and attempt wholesale to reassess or reorient British foreign policy identity would actually require a reorientation of what British islandness means, not necessarily Britishness itself. Rather than proscribing how British foreign policy-makers might better conceive their national identity and so practice more effective foreign policy, this thesis aims at decentring the narratives of the Island Race precisely by exposing them as the discursive geo-historical constitutions that they are and demonstrating that they do not rely on any eternal geographical truths but emergent discursive cultures of ontological security-seeking that have been marginalised in many studies.

4. Chapter summaries

In the following chapter I will outline the theoretical framework and methodological focus of this thesis. This will entail discussions, firstly, of critical geopolitics and ontological security in which I will conceptualise the ways in which foreign policy-makers mobilise spatial themes and frames of reference in order to elucidate familiar renderings of the world and the state's place in it. Then I will outline how discourse is fundamental to this by arguing that it ought to be theorised as a social practice. Following that, I will explain my interpretivist, genealogical approach which impels a study of historic constitutions of identity and how they are mobilised in order to seek the afore mentioned ontological security. Finally I will present some

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[98] Porter (2015), p. 4.

considerations related to my choices of primary material—debates in the British House of Commons—and how they will be 'put to work' in the thesis and test my hypothesis.

The empirical chapters are structured according to several key 'moments' in British foreign policy since the Second World War. There are individual reasons for the choosing of each, which are expanded upon in general terms in the following chapter and in more detail in the chapters themselves. What they have in common is how Island Race identity tropes were particularly activated in the ways the events and issues were narrated in the Commons. Chapter 3 focusses on several debates surrounding the signing of the North Atlantic Pact in 1949 and the Suez Crisis of 1956 and argues firstly that the inauguration of NATO co-constitutively mobilised the reiteration of the Greater Britain trope of Island Race identity as MPs linked the two through references to the democratic heritage of the North Atlantic region and the importance of the civilised (Anglo-Saxon) values which emanated from it and differentiated them from the 'typical Land Power' of the Soviet Union. Taken together, we will see how aspects of Island Race identity were mobilised to represent NATO as an opportunity for and proof of Britain's continued relevance, rather than American usurpation of British global hegemony. The relative consensus around NATO can then be compared and contrasted with the debates surrounding the Suez Crisis. Nonetheless, we will be able to see how the deeply polarised arguments of both Eden's Conservative government and Gaitskell's Labour opposition drew upon Island Race identity tropes in order to seek ontological security in an unfamiliar context by narrating the importance of Lines of Communication and Britain's relevance as a global arbiter of moral values.

Chapter 4 presents several debates concerning Britain's attempts to join the European Economic Community (EEC) in the 1960s, from the tentative 1960 suggestion that Britain 'take notice' of greater unity on the continent and the announcement the following year that accession negotiations were to open, to the French rebuff in 1963. Examination of these debates will demonstrate several important things about Island Race identity and ontological security-seeking: firstly, the importance of Mackinder's ascription of British geopolitics as being at once both insular and universal in character; secondly, how the two concepts essentially constituted one another, with British foreign policy-makers still finding it discursively difficult to reckon with the idea of being strongly engaged with Europe *and* having a world-wide role; and thirdly, the extent to which NATO and Suez had been assimilated into the Island Race narrative, i.e. inability to completely rely on the US; the continued importance of the Soviet threat and the place of Western Europe as a further bulwark against Russian expansionism; the place of Britain amongst a proximal group of democratic, civilised countries. These were difficult debates for the Island Race, involving thorough negotiations of what the concepts of insularity and

universality really meant. For example, Euro-enthusiasts argued that British universalism could be ensured by being part of the EC; sceptics regarded Britain's involvement with Europe as constituting insularity. Nevertheless, this further demonstrates the importance of the two tropes as central pillars of Island Race identity in their enduring mobilisations to fix ontologically secure subject positions for Britain in novel contexts. The enthusiasm with which insularity and universality were linked with one another and with the ontologically secure notion of British global relevance once British membership of the EEC had been vetoed, only confirms this.

Chapter 5 examines British foreign policy identity in the early years of Margaret Thatcher's time as Prime Minister. The focus is on debates surrounding two events: the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the Falklands Conflict of the spring of 1982. I will argue that the discourse of the government constituted an historical erasure of the period since Suez by seeking ontological security through a rendering of Island Race identity tropes from the period prior to 1956. This is evidenced by the ways in which the Soviet invasion was greeted in the Commons with a large-scale critique of British and Western global strategy. The importance of this for Island Race identity and ontological security was: a reassertion of Britain's part in a democratic metacommunity that knew no bounds to its potential area of influence; confirmation of the importance of Lines of Communication in upholding benevolent patterns of free trade; and the juxtaposition, again, of Britain and its allies with rapacious Soviet land power. The discourse of the Falklands Conflict was constituted similarly: through emphasis on the common island heritage and democratic credentials of the Falklanders as opposed to fascist Argentina and the Soviet Union; and the valorisation of the journey of the British Naval Task Force across the vast distance separating Portsmouth and the Falklands confirming the importance of Britain maintaining a global reach. Furthermore, the Conflict was historicized by Thatcher as being part of the episodic chronicle of Britain that finally lay to rest the ghosts of Suez. What all of this shows is how these 'crises' co-constitutively mobilised Island Race identity tropes, securing Britain's contextual relevance.

Bringing my genealogy up to date, chapter 6 examines constitutions of Island Race identity since the Labour Party came to office in 1997. Taking a more general approach that focusses on wide-ranging foreign policy debates rather than specific issues, this chapter places the parliamentary discourse from both the Labour governments of 1997-2010 and the Conservative administrations since side by side. This demonstrates an overarching narration of the post-Cold War, geopolitical environment as one that co-constitutively reifies Island Race identity tropes through emphases on cultures of global threats and opportunities and mutable distances. Furthermore, the promise of an 'in/out' referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union brings to the fore questions of the nexus between insularity and universality that I have

drawn in this chapter. In chapter 6 we see how the two main Westminster parties drew on these notions as they articulated political positions on the issue of Britain and Europe. Taken in sum with what Prime Minister David Cameron has called 'our island story' and his first Foreign Secretary, William Hague's policy of a reinvigorated global diplomatic network, we can see the contours of an exemplary posture of parochialism and globalism in which the insular Britain island has forged unique values that are of relevance to a world badly in need of their superintendence.

The conclusion will restate my argument and findings, considering in sum how the tropes of Island Race identity have endured in British parliamentary discourse and reflecting on their future configurations. I will explore the theoretical and practical implications of these findings, questioning constructivism's tendency to highlight continuity over change and arguing that a more nuanced view of *change within continuity* is made possible by a genealogical approach which highlights the domestic imperatives of foreign policy practice such as parliamentary debates and the inter- and intra-party struggles to define national identity according to the mediation of established tropes. This will lead into considerations of potential future avenues of research opened up by my thesis.

chapter 2

Theoretical framework and methodology: critical geopolitics, ontological security, discourse and genealogy

1. Introduction

This chapter will outline in more depth the theoretical and methodological approaches opened up by my introduction in chapter 1 and discuss how they will be applied to the central research question concerning British foreign policy discourse and Island Race identity. Firstly I will introduce two theoretical approaches which are of particular importance to my thesis and argue for their compatibility. The first, critical geopolitics, proposes that the geographical assumptions of foreign policy-makers are socially constructed (not to mention state-centric, chauvinistic and imperialistic), rather than deriving from eternal, spatial truths. The second, ontological security, conceptualises how state *élites* seek 'security as being' through mobilisations of particular narratives that familiarise the world.[1] I will argue that, by taking a critical geopolitical approach, the socially constructed tropes I identified in chapter 1 can be taken as fundamental to practices of ontological security-seeking because of the ways in which they mobilise certain, established subject positions in novel contexts; this further strengthens my conceptualisation of British foreign policy identity as an emergent social practice that is dynamic and contingent rather than immutable.[2] Following this I will outline the importance of discursive approaches to the study of foreign policy and identity by arguing, following Lene Hansen, that discourse is a 'practice' existing in a co-constitutive rather than causal relationship with national identities.[3] This will lead into an explanation of why I am pursuing genealogical methods informed by an interpretivist perspective in which one is concerned with how—as David Campbell (after Michel Foucault) put it—'rituals of power arose, took shape, gained importance, and effected politics' by asking 'how certain terms and concepts have historically functioned within discourse.'[4] Finally I will discuss the specifics of the study related to its focus on debates in the British House of Commons by introducing the cultural and discursive practices which predominate there and, in reference to the preceding framework, begin to elucidate how they will be 'put to work' through my choices of primary material.

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[1] For the theory of ontological security in IR see especially Manners (2002); McSweeney (1999), pp. 1-12; Mitzen (2006a & b); Steele (2005).

[2] Ó Tuathail (2002), pp. 617-22.

[3] Hansen (2006), pp. 15-36.

[4] Campbell (1998), p. 6; Foucault (1979), p. 31. See also, for example, Åkerstrøm Andersen (2003), pp. 17-23; Der Derian (2008).

2. Critical geopolitics: in search of space

Island Race identity is primarily understood in this thesis as a discursive spatial phenomenon, in the sense that British foreign policy-makers tend to articulate geographical assumptions based on the discursive tropes outlined in chapter 1. As such, it is necessary to firstly explore some of the implications of what it means to claim that Island Race identity is geopolitical. The purpose of this section is to introduce the approaches of critical geopolitics, with the aim of suggesting how they might be brought to bear on the study of British identity and problematise why they have not generally been employed thus far.

The critical approaches to studying geopolitics pioneered by the likes of Gearóid Ó Tuathail, Simon Dalby, John Agnew, Klaus Dodds *et al* not only reveal the implicit and explicit spatialisations of foreign policy discourse, but also problematize them within broader themes of power relations and post-colonial politics. This is an important component of this thesis. Of greatest importance is the following argument: in spite of the truism that it is a 'non-discursive phenomenon' and therefore 'separate from the social, political and ideological dimensions of international politics', geography is socially constructed.[5] When a British foreign policy-maker invokes geography in a speech or text, what they are talking about is not a realm of neutral facts and time-honoured truths but a multitude of contested spaces that are never finalised and always subject to 'radical indeterminacy'.[6] The discourse itself is often—in some ways, ideally— mundane and whose repetition gives it the sense of being 'everyday' and commonsensical. To accept this discourse as coming from a 'real world' of geographical facts is to normalise an approach in which geography has triumphed over history; as Agnew pointed out: 'social science has been *too* geographical and not sufficiently historical, in the sense that geographical assumptions have trapped consideration of social and political-economic processes in geographical structures and containers that defy historical change'.[7]

Rather than accepting this way of viewing the world, critical geopoliticians argue that 'territory must be conceived as a historically and geographically specific form of political organisation and political thought.'[8] What the critic is 'up against' is what Dodds describes as the 'establish[ed …] narrative with sequentially ordered plot, a cast of characters, identifiable and attributable forces in order to make sense of the unknown.'[9] Of course, foreign policy-makers will need to 'generalise about certain parts of the world' but 'what is absolutely critical is that the labels that are used […] are always *contested*' for, as Edward Said put it, the 'struggle over

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[5] Ó Tuathail & Agnew (1992), p. 192.
[6] Krause & Renwick (1996), p. xi.
[7] Agnew (1995), p. 379.
[8] Elden (2010), pp. 757-8.
[9] Dodds (1993), p. 72.

geography […] is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings.'[10] Cognizance of this is critical in order to challenge what Dalby and Ó Tuathail describe as 'the mundane repetition of particular geopolitical tropes which constrain the political imaginary.'[11] It is these repetitions and their constitutive relationship with Island Race identity in British foreign policy discourse which are crucial to this thesis.

Yet critical geopolitics has displayed an occasional reluctance to excavate 'traditions of geopolitics […] by dividing geopolitics into certain national traditions' with Andrew Crampton and Ó Tuathail warning that '[s]uch descriptions have a general utility but they tend to homogenize the heterogeneous mix of geopolitical perspectives and approaches that characterize any particular configuration of world order.'[12] The most common indulgences of this practice have tended to be cases studies of the US and Nazi Germany, it being apparently acceptable to fall prey to Agnew's 'territorial trap' given the spectacular (and, we are told, abhorrent) nature, scale and violence of those particular geopolitics, but one ought not to make a habit of it.[13] This is more understandable when one considers how the establishment of geopolitics as a method of analysing the international environment was so intimately bound up with the imperialisms of so-called Great Powers.[14] Halford Mackinder, Friedrich Ratzel and Alfred Mahan were not only seeking to explain the interaction of geography and politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they also outlined explicit proscriptions of how the foreign policy-makers of their countries (Britain, Germany and the United States) might utilise geographic factors in maximising their power.[15] Britain has come to be seen as a 'classic' case in this regard: a physically small polity which took advantage of both its insular position to (partially) free itself from messy European entanglements and its early industrialisation to pursue naval imperialism, gaining pre-eminence on the oceans to which it had privileged access.[16]

The geopolitics of states which are not Great Powers have presented scholars with a series of problems which bring to mind Foucault's plea for one to consider not only 'the great strategies

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[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 72-3, 73; Said (1993), p. 6.
[11] Dalby & Ó Tuathail (1996), p. 452.
[12] Crampton & Ó Tuathail (1996), pp. 533-4.
[13] Ó Tuathail, for example, compares and contrasts both geopolitical traditions (Ó Tuathail (1996), pp. 111-40). Agnew (1994).
[14] Grygiel (2006), pp. 21-39.
[15] For Mackinder, see, for example: Mackinder (1904b); (1907); (1919); Blouet (2005); Kearns (2009). Ratzel: Ratzel (1898); Hunter (1983). Mahan: Mahan (1890); (1907); Hattendorf & Jordan (1989); Sumida (1999). See the following for contemporaneous Japanese thought: Inagaki (1890); Patalano (2011); (2012).
[16] Kennedy (1976), pp. 97-122.

of geopolitics' but also 'the little tactics of the habitat.'[17] While very few British foreign policy-makers themselves have claimed Great Power status for Britain in the period under question (certainly not since 1956), even fewer would argue that the fate of Britain without empire according to the fears of one Victorian MP—'Guernsey a little magnified'—has been realised.[18] Either way, according to the structural realist logic of many geopoliticians Britain is no longer a Great Power and thus its foreign policy has been largely precluded from geopolitical analysis.[19] Although the likes of Mackinder, Ratzel and Mahan were indisputably writing about power ('geo-power', Ó Tuathail calls it), their—especially Mackinder's—sometimes forensic analyses of geographical factors hinted at the possibility that foreign policy-makers from *all* polities might, in some sense, reiterate certain geopolitical narratives that are fundamental to identity (re)formation and the fixing of ontologically secure subject positions in emergent contexts.[20] However, the renaissance of geopolitics in the Cold War and since has privileged the material 'facts' of power more than ever. Geopolitics *à la* Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Colin Gray and Geoffrey Sloan has become even more thoroughly imbricated with questions of grand strategy, leading many towards studying the most 'materially' powerful according to their own logic; the US, China or Russia being the only contemporary actors mighty enough to 'enact' grand, geopolitical strategy.[21] The geopolitics of a state like Britain is thus voided because of its post-imperial limitations, hence Brzezinski's remark that it is an 'increasingly irrelevant', 'retired geostrategic player'.[22]

If Brzezinski is right and there is any enduring truth in what Blair called Dean Acheson's 1962 'barb' that Britain had 'lost an empire and not yet found a role', why bother studying the geopolitical identity of Britain?[23] Furthermore, if geopolitics only theorises the behaviour of Great Powers, what use is it in the case of post-imperial Britain? Several points need to be made here. In the first place and as I outlined in chapter 1, although British foreign policy has been and continues to be extensively studied, most tend to favour the sort of rational actor models which privilege the self-professed pragmatism of British foreign policy-makers. The results of many of these studies are inadequate, foregone conclusions about how well Britain's decline has been managed and the efficacy or appropriateness of Britain's prioritisation of national interests. On the second point, since the emergence of critical geopolitics as a field of

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[17] Foucault (1977), p. 189; see also Crampton & Elden (2007). See the following attempts at examining national geopolitics not necessarily from the most powerful sites: Aalto (2000); Dijkink (1996); Dodds & Atkinson (2000); Flint (2011); Guzzini (2012a); van der Wusten & Dijkink (2002).

[18] Dilke (1869), p. 398. By way of counterpoint see, for example, Hobsbawm (1977).

[19] For two paradigmatic examples of realist IR thought, see Waltz (1979); Morgenthau (1985).

[20] Ó Tuathail (1996), pp. 1-20.

[21] See Kissinger (1951); (1979); (1994); (2014); Brzezinski (1978); (1997); (2004); Gray (1977); (1988); (1999); Sloan (1988); Gray & Sloan (1999).

[22] Brzezinski (1997), pp. 42, 43.

[23] Wickham-Jones (2000), p. 19; Brinkley (1990).

analysis in IR, it seems possible and indeed worthy to explore the spatial identities of so-called 'second-rank' powers such as Britain, given that geopolitical discourse can rightly be seen as contingent, subjective, frequently mundane and therefore a common practice of *all* foreign policy-makers: 'Simply to describe a foreign policy problem is to engage in geopolitics for one is implicitly and tacitly normalizing a particular world.'[24]

Bearing the work of critical geopolitics in mind, one can therefore make the claim that geopolitics is about more (or, indeed, less) than just the strategies of aggrandisement pursued by Great Powers and that each polity enacts its own spatial narratives, something emphasised by Gertjan Dijkink and Stefano Guzzini.[25] This leads us towards the next theoretical claim of the thesis, put particularly well by Michael Shapiro when he argued that geography 'is a primary part of the ontology of a collective'; 'it constitutes a fantasy structure implicated in how territorially elaborated collectivities locate themselves in the world and thus how they practice the meanings of self and Other that provide the conditions of possibility for regarding others as threats or antagonists.'[26]

3. Ontological security: locating foreign policy in collectively understood identity

This idea of collective ontologies builds on the notion that politicians do not simply engage in explaining what 'we' are going to *do*; it falls to them also to explain what 'we' *are*. Indeed, one can go further and assert that the two—action/policy and self—are mutually constitutive; in Hansen's words:

> 'Policies require identities, but identities do not exist as objective accounts of what people and places 'really are,' but as continuously restated, negotiated, and reshaped subjects and objects. […] identity and policy are constituted through a process of narrative adjustment […] they stand, in social science terminology, in a constitutive, rather than causal, relationship.'[27]

In order for pronouncements of foreign policy to 'make sense' they rely on the presence of sets of shared understandings of the world and their state's place in it.[28] These understandings, or

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[24] Ó Tuathail & Agnew (1992), p. 193. On critical geopolitics see, for example, Agnew (1994); Agnew & Corbridge (1995); Dalby (2008); (2010); Dodds (1993); Dodds & Atkinson (2000); Elden (2005); (2010); Elden & Bialasiewicz (2006); Jones & Sage (2010); Kelly (2006); Müller & Reuber (2008); Murphy (2010); Ó Tuathail (1986); (1996); Ó Tuathail & Agnew (1992); Squire (2015).

[25] Dijkink (1996), pp. 1-16; Guzzini (2012d), pp. 49-55.

[26] Shapiro (1997), p. xi.

[27] Hansen (2006), p. xvi.

[28] Dodds (1993), p. 72; Guzzini (2012e), p. 220; Ó Tuathail (2002), p. 603; Taylor (1993b), p. 37; Weldes (1999).

traditions, are not—in contrast to Alexander Wendt's argument—pre-given but evolve with and are dependent upon interpretations and representations of contexts.[29] This is what is meant by ontological security in IR: how those who speak for states elucidate secure accounts of what their polity means in a given situation by seeking 'security as being'.[30]

The practice of establishing a 'subject-position' relative to any event or issue can thus be theorised as how received traditions of national Self are mobilised in relation to a particular context, representations of which become contingent on the established narratives of and create a 'window' into self-identity.[31] This is important for foreign policy-makers in securing legitimation for policy: to speak *for* a state requires an adequate presentation and assumed understanding of what that state *is*. In other words, policy and identity are 'ontologically interlinked' given that states have 'no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality.'[32] Therefore foreign policy cannot be taken for just a series of isolated pronouncements bereft of meaningful socio-historical context. Accordingly Jennifer Mitzen argues:

> 'actors value their sense of agency, the ability to make choices and pursue favourable outcomes. That ability rests on knowing one's own preferences and interests. In other words it rests on an identity, which means that actors need stable identities to be 'actors' or 'agents' at all.'[33]

Consequently, what one finds in foreign policy is what Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper call 'situated subjectivity'.[34] This means that the subject—in this case, Britain—is not pre-given but reproduced through how it is situated in subject *positions*, a social-discursive process Jennifer Milliken defines in terms of how it is 'assigned capacities for modes of acting and interacting.'[35] While there may be a shared understanding that Britain is an island, this is not automatically productive of any one particular meaning or policy.[36] Instead, islandness (and, therefore, Britishness) is always contextually situated and subject positions are elucidated for Britain that mobilise and are mobilised by established identity tropes 'that *already* make

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[29] Wendt (1999), p. 225. By way of counterpoint see, for example, Campbell (1998), pp. 219-21.
[30] See especially Guzzini (2012d); Manners (2002); McSweeney (1999), pp. 1-12; Mitzen (2006a & b); Shapiro (1997), pp. ix-xiii; Steele (2005). This corpus has built on an original notion of ontological security conceptualised by Anthony Giddens: 'confidence and trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be, including the basic existential parameters of self and social identity' (Giddens (1984), p. 375; (1990), pp. 92-8; (1991), pp. 184-5).
[31] Guzzini (2012d), pp. 52-3; Steele (2005), p. 525.
[32] Hansen (2006), p. 21; Butler (1990), p. 141.
[33] Mitzen (2006a), p. 271.
[34] Brubaker & Cooper (2000), p. 17.
[35] Milliken (1999), p. 232.
[36] See Jackie Abell and colleagues' survey of different, public interpretations of islandness in contemporary England and Scotland (Abell *et al* (2006)).

sense.'[37] In this constitutive circuit, it is the ways that secure identities are actuated in varying contexts that we can see practices of ontological security-seeking taking place.

Ontological security-seeking thus goes some way towards accounting for the persistence of national identity tropes in a dynamic and unsettling environment, such as Britain has experienced since 1949. Yet this 'routinisation' identified by Mitzen opens up the theory to several problems that need to be addressed: firstly, that national identity is being essentialised; secondly, that it contributes to the anthropomorphisation of states; and thirdly, Mark Laffey's charges of self-fulfilling prophecies concealed by poststructuralist claims of indeterminacy in times of profound changes.[38] The critique of supposed essentialism is understandable given the expediential use of the word 'identity', and it is therefore with greater urgency that those studying the subject must echo Robin Cohen's assertion that there can be no ''essential' national character because this inconceivably assumes a single genetic blueprint radically different to that of other nations, or a set of traumatic historical experiences that affected the whole nation uniformly.'[39] Instead, states such as Britain are correctly viewed as constellations of multiple identities that are mediated and disciplined through social discursive practices that fix essential subject positions relative to emergent contexts.[40]

To anthropomorphise and treat states, theoretically, as if they are people is seductive if misleading yet, as Lowell Dittmer and Samuel Kim point out, to claim the obverse—that collective units *do not* possess distinct identities, however constituted—'entails assuming that every decision is made fresh, on "facts," without consideration for enduring interests (for the very concept of "interests" presupposes an identifiable entity to which they can be attributed).'[41] Finally, Laffey's problematization—levelled primarily at Judith Butler and David Campbell— that poststructuralist methodology leads to the persistent emphasis of continuity over change in state identities can itself be unsettled by emphasising again, as Campbell does, the tendency for statespersons to seek to 'discipline' the ambiguities inherent in multiple identities through the telling and retelling of traditional narratives as a fundamental part of foreign policy praxis.[42] This is highly relevant for a thesis such as this in which large numbers of actors are being analysed over a long period of time in multiple contexts. Continuity is thus, in a sense, easily located but the more salient point is how, as Mitzen points out, the fixing of ontologically secure subject positions is a 'basic need' of state *élites*; as such, the purpose of positing it 'is not

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[37] Weldes (1999), p. 15.
[38] Mitzen (2006a), p. 271; Laffey (2000).
[39] Cohen (1994), p. 192.
[40] Krause & Renwick (1996), p. xii.
[41] Wendt (2004) and see Peter Lomas' response (Lomas (2005)); Dittmer & Kim (1993), p. 5.
[42] Campbell (1998), p. 81. See also Lapid (2001).

to explain behavioral variation, but rather to help uncover processes by which continuity is *produced*.'[43]   Thus, even though there is no essential British identity, foreign policy-makers speak and act as if there were by drawing on traditions of foreign policy thought that fix ontologically secure subject positions, especially in a dynamic environment.

A further point to be emphasised here is how these traditions do not equate to a neat set of shared opinions. Guzzini puts it well when he argues: 'What characterises a foreign policy tradition is not a ready-made ideational toolkit, making debates unnecessary; on the contrary, the existence of such a tradition is what allows political debates to happen in the first place, since it defines the stakes, draws the boundaries of relevant/competent debate, and ensures that people speak the same language when they dispute each other's points.'[44]   Collectively and socially, dominant representations of events and issues are constitutively mediated through their interactions with ontologically secure renderings of identity and resultant policies themselves.[45] Thus, 'traditions' in foreign policy thought are not inflexible—'the world does not issue a summons to speak in a particular way'—but negotiable within limits and malleable to contexts, with which they exist co-constitutively.[46]   It is this that leads Hansen to characterise foreign policy as 'practice', the collective (re)construction of national norms which legitimise certain actions.[47]

When theorising identity or national Self as something that can be ontologised it is important to clarify on what bases they can be secured.[48] A relational understanding of identity posits that it is constructed on the basis of representations of interactions with one or more international Others. These might be friendly or antagonistic or any shade in between, the salient point being that it is through the relationships that a state has with others that identity is secured.[49] According to Hansen, this is generally achieved through discursive practices of 'linking' and 'differentiation' in which commonality or enmity is defined.[50] The emphasis on the possibility of sameness is a useful complement to Campbell's threatening Others and Der Derian's 'estrangement' and takes one beyond Said's binary oppositionism.[51] Ole Wæver suggests that ontological security might be sought against a perceived view of one's own past, as in the case of modern European discourse whose primary Other is constructed as its own history of disunity

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[43] Mitzen (2006b), p. 343. Emphasis added.
[44] Guzzini (2012d), p. 53.
[45] See, for example, Gustafsson (2014).
[46] Shapiro (1988), p. 123.
[47] Hansen (2006), pp. 211-2.
[48] Guzzini (2012b), pp. 2-6.
[49] Mitzen (2006b), p. 342.
[50] Hansen (2006), pp. 41-6.
[51] Campbell (1998); Der Derian (1987); Said (1978). Richard Ashley and Rob Walker also made significant contributions to this field (Ashley (1987); (1989); Walker (1988)).

and warfare.[52] A further useful insight is Jef Huysmans' argument that ontological security-seeking is a practice directed towards 'guarantee[ing] the principle of determinability itself, that is, the possibility of creating an acceptable degree of certainty.'[53] This apparent desire for the 'mediation of chaos and order' posits the ontologically secure subject as the subject that itself requires secure ontologising; in other words, just as important as relations or threats is the very ability to connote 'meaning' and 'intelligibility' upon these interactions: 'the possibility of the activity of ordering itself.'[54]

4. Geopolitics as ontological security: the spatiality of identity (re)formation

This is where geopolitics comes into the framework once more as we begin to see its importance regarding ontological security-seeking because of my argument that British foreign policy tends to hinge on particular, geopolitical identity tropes mobilised across time to secure Britain's subject position relative to varying issues and events. When discussing geopolitics in this sense, it is important to recognise that adherents of classical and critical geopolitics both emphasise the utility of it in national identity construction. Classical geopoliticians, for whom geopolitics materially *exists*, argue that statespersons ought to at least—in Mackinder's words—possess a 'horse-sense' of what Gray calls the 'truly permanent geographical reality', that is: where is the state and what are the natural resources of the state relative to others in both local and global perspective.[55] At the heart of critical geopolitical perspectives is the socially constructed nature of these geographies and their use (and abuse) in practices of statecraft.[56] Of particular note here might be Peter Taylor's notion—expanded upon by Ó Tuathail—of 'practical geopolitical reasoning'.[57] Guzzini points out that the distinction is in whether geopolitics is thought to be a first-order or second-order phenomenon.[58] This thesis takes it to be second-order, a fundamental part of discursive, ordering strategies utilised by foreign policy-makers in the construction and reconstruction of national identity.

The importance of geopolitics in discursive constructions of ontologically secure subject positions that mobilise established national identities can be conceptualised in several ways. Firstly there is the contention, hinted at already in chapter 1, that modern statehood is

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[52] Wæver (1996), pp. 121-5, 128; see also Bialasiewicz (2012).

[53] Huysmans (1998), p. 240.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 229, 241, 241, 241.

[55] Mackinder (1919), p. 22n; Gray (2005), p. 29. Peter Slowe, Saul Cohen and Bernard Loo are just three other examples of those who make similar claims (Slowe (1990), p. 187; Cohen (2003); Loo (2003), pp. 170-1).

[56] The phrase 'uses and abuses of geopolitics' is Øyvind Østerud's (Østerud (1988)).

[57] Taylor (1990), p. 10; Ó Tuathail (2002).

[58] Guzzini (2012c), p. 13.

thoroughly intertwined with geopolitics because of the manifold ways in which the primary practice of states is the inking of sovereignty and disciplining of space.[59] This is both a generalised assertion building on the work of the likes of Richard Ashley, Rob Walker and Roxanne Doty but also has specific relevance in the British case, as I argued in chapter 1 when I sketched out the history of Island Race identity. Secondly, geopolitical discourse has been theorised as possessing a number of attributes that make it thoroughly attractive for practitioners of statecraft. By drawing on the supposed neutrality of geography, spatial discourse is especially appealing to foreign policy-makers because of the connotations of rationalism, eternal truths and simple, explanatory power.[60] Agnew and Ó Tuathail have both referred to geopolitics' 'view from nowhere' in which this highly social practice is leant the quality of 'antiseptic and chloroform' and '[s]tate actions begin to take on all the unglamorous stability of natural self-explanatory facts.'[61] Both of these assertions locate geopolitics as—in Shapiro's words—'a primary part of the ontology of a collective'.[62]

The implications of this are that the subject for critical investigation ought to be the specific national sites of ontological security themselves, whose discursive histories reify and perpetuate geopolitical narratives. Rather than seeking to side-step the 'territorial trap' by refusing to dignify the bounded, national sovereignties upheld by statist, geopolitical discourse, one ought to look deeper into the trap, to investigate not only 'how it constrains our thinking, and hamstrings our potential for critique' but *also* 'how it is produced'.[63] Such a move is made in the case of Britain in the belief that what will be found is a history of the endurance of its own imperial Island Race identity through its repeated mobilisation for the purposes of fixing ontologically secure subject positions. For British foreign policy-makers, it has arguably been especially vital for these subject positions to be secured according to established tropes, given the novelty of the situations they have faced since 1949 (NATO, the Cold War (and its ending), European integration, decolonisation) relative to Britain's imperial past. What this impels is a conception of identity in foreign policy as being subject to ongoing processes of construction and, rather than being completely arbitrary, in Doty's words, '[i]t stands to reason that there must be certain focal points of meaning around which various dimensions converge to form national identity.'[64] The next task of this chapter is to identify where these constitutions of British identity can be found.

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[59] Doty (1996), p. 142; Moisio & Paasi (2013), p. 256; Lakoff & Johnson (1980), p. 29.

[60] Ó Tuathail (1999), p. 107; (2002), pp. 621-2; Hepple (1992), pp. 140-2.

[61] Agnew (2003), pp. 11, 15-16, 27; Ó Tuathail (1999), p. 108; B. Andrews (1984), p. 323.

[62] Shapiro (1997), p. xi.

[63] Agnew (1994); Elden (2010), p. 757. See also Elden's problematisation of discourses of (de)territorialisation in the context of globalisation (Elden (2005)).

[64] Doty (1996), p. 127.

5. Conceptualising discourse as social practice

If, as Mitzen contends, '[s]tates not only seek to secure their territory and governance structure; they also seek to secure their identity as a particular kind of actor', how might one gain access to these attempts at ontological security?[65] Since it is language that humans use to construct the social world—not least the *spatial*, social world—the analysis of foreign policy discourse must be fundamental to the framework of this thesis.[66] Written and spoken forms of communication allow humans to argue, persuade, reason and explain action.[67] Individual instances of communication are texts, understandable by other humans who 'acquire 'thoughts' because they are able to converse publicly using a shared ensemble of interpretative resources called a 'language.''[68] But the limited level on which one might 'understand' a simple, isolated statement from a complete stranger is not what is being conceived of here; greater understanding is mobilised if that statement forms part of a larger discourse, a set of texts concerning a similar subject. At once we begin to see the constitutive nature of text and discourse and how they comprise and define one another: a discourse cannot exist without the set of texts which comprise it; and a text is only a text as part of a discourse, creating 'no sense in itself but only in connection with knowledge of the world and of the text.'[69] As the sum of their textual parts, discourses must be recognised as contingent, dynamic and socio-historical. This is to take seriously and build upon Julia Kristeva's assertion of 'intertextuality', according to which 'any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.'[70] The implications of this are significant. If each text is only understandable as part of a larger whole (and vice versa), there is an object of study at hand that is clearly of importance for the ways in which issues such as foreign policy and identity are co-constituted.

In this way the accumulations of texts—foreign policy discourses—can rightly be seen as sets of historical 'capabilities'.[71] In sum, and also on an individuated basis, they represent the totality of meaning for a foreign policy actor in the world (which is not to exclude material actions themselves, but to recognise that they are given meaning by the discourse which proscribes and articulates them). Discourses are dependent on subject positions, the elucidation of ontologically secure stances concerning an issue or event. The intertextuality of such a claim inevitably implies a relationship with what has been articulated before, or the trace of its own

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[65] Mitzen (2006a), p. 272.
[66] Shapiro (1992), p. 5. See also Bonura Jr. (1998).
[67] See, for example, Epstein (2011).
[68] Ó Tuathail (2002), p. 607.
[69] Titscher *et al* (1998), p. 23. See also Derrida (1967).
[70] Kristeva (1980), p. 66. See also de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981).
[71] Milliken (1999), p. 236.

discursive history. Foreign policy-makers are not mere automatons or 'cultural dupes'; discourses are both constraining *and* enabling and, in a study such as this, the agency of actors ought not to be excluded.[72] This point brings us back to an argument from earlier in this chapter: that national identities are not monolithic but that the practice of seeking ontological security means that foreign policy-makers tend to speak as if they were. In this regard, the importance of an appreciation of the workings of discourse means that identity articulation and ontological security-seeking are social practices requiring the mediation and negotiation of established historical and contemporary discourses.[73] Politics, at least in a pluralist, parliamentary democracy like Britain, is itself constituted by the debates on which its practice is based, making Guzzini's point about how foreign policy traditions and debates are co-constitutive of one another all the more relevant.[74]

This brings us further towards crystallising the methodological focus of the thesis, an explanation of how exactly the discourse is to be 'put to work' in the analysis. Rather than pursuing 'a history of mere words', the way discourse has been theorised in tandem with ontological security-seeking and geopolitics means that what is to be studied is the sustained constitution of discourse as *a constitutive social practice mobilising particular ways of conceiving the world*.[75] As Merje Kuus puts it, the object of analysis is 'not what is said', but 'the set of assumptions that enable specific statements and make them legible and legitimate.'[76] This provokes inquiry based on 'how' rather than 'what' questions: 'how is this statement possible?' rather than 'what does this statement mean?'[77] The intent is not to reveal the inner thoughts of foreign policy-makers but to seek to understand the enduring discursive practices which mobilise particular geopolitical ontologies.

6. Genealogy and interpretivism: the historic ordering of discourse as methodology

To order this discourse over the period of time under question herein requires a specific method of 'mapping' that places the object of study—British foreign policy identity—under a kind of scrutiny that differs from more traditional methods of historiography. The principles of genealogy, pioneered by Friedrich Nietzsche and advanced by Foucault, are concerned with 'loosen[ing] the hold of present arrangements by finding their points of emergence as practices'

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[72] Barnett (1999), p. 7; Butler (1992), pp. 12-3; Milliken (1999), p. 229; Ó Tuathail & Agnew (1992), pp. 192-3; Ó Tuathail (2002), p. 606.
[73] Fairclough (1995), p. 7.
[74] Guzzini (2012d), p. 53.
[75] Åkerstrøm Andersen (2003), p. 36.
[76] Kuus (2012), p. 177.
[77] Åkerstrøm Andersen (2003), pp. 10-1.

that have created the 'sedimentation of current representations'.[78] In other words, the present constructions of geopolitical identity, rather than simply being accepted as 'normal', are viewed as 'peculiar' and the products of (continuing) historical struggles among and within competing discourses; in the words of Henri Lefebvre: 'If space is produced, if there is a productive process, then we are dealing with *history*'.[79] It is therefore the task of the scholar to identify points at which these constructions took shape and trace their historical evolution in order to unsettle the apparent stability of the present discursive order.

This approach has been built upon in recent decades by the likes of Der Derian, Shapiro, Campbell, Hansen and Srdjan Vucetic.[80] As Vucetic and Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen point out, it has become a personalised phenomenon, with different writers appropriating their own genealogical methods; the difference between genealogical and traditional history is now perhaps one of degree rather than type.[81] Hansen's approach, to which my own is broadly aligned, posits the importance of 'basic discourses' that 'point to the main points of contestation within a debate' and thus 'provide a lens through which a multitude of different representations and policies can be seen as systematically connected'.[82] The recovery of these discourses and their intertextuality and co-constitutive relationship with emergent events and issues aims at decentring the finality of present, apparently fixed notions of politics in which there are always 'historical and logical foundation[s] for the status quo'.[83] Genealogy instead offers a reading of how politics is contextually and historically dependent: 'events never just happen to political actors so much as they are discursively "fitted"'.[84] As a 'history of the present', a genealogy is not only a history of *this* present but a history of *multiple* presents; how representations of the political world are always contingent upon established tropes of identity, contemporary configurations of power and their discursive interactions with emergent contexts.[85]

In order to successfully enact a study of this nature, it is necessary to take an interpretivist stance; the primary reason being that what is being studied herein is the world that has already been interpreted by British foreign policy-makers, rather than the world itself. Following Åkerstrøm Andersen, this 'second-order strategy for the observation of how "the social" emerges in observation' means that, instead of attempting to dig beneath the discourse of British foreign policy-makers to find out what the real world is really like, this thesis is engaged with

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[78] Nietzche (1886); (1887); Foucault (1971); (1976); (1979); Shapiro (1992), p. 11; Hansen (2006), p. 83.
[79] Shapiro (1992), p. 3; Lefebvre (1974), p. 46.
[80] Der Derian (1987); Shapiro (1992); (1997); Campbell (1993); (1998); Hansen (2006); Vucetic (2011a).
[81] Vucetic (2011b), pp. 1295-8; Åkerstrøm Andersen (2003), pp. 21-4.
[82] Hansen (2006), p. 52.
[83] Der Derian (1987), p. 69.
[84] Vucetic (2011a), p. 14.
[85] Der Derian (1987), p. 76.

examining the world that has been and is being constructed by their 'indirect' perceptions of the world, their discourse and the 'unremarkable assumptions underpinning' this.[86] This is of critical importance to any attempt to understand the (re)formation of foreign policy identities since what is being dealt with is a set of thoroughly social activities in which—as Helge Jordheim and Iver Neumann would have it—'semantic struggles' are waged to fix meanings.[87] Island Race identity is not something concrete that can be seen or touched as such; it is an always emergent social construction articulated through its performance in (among other places) foreign policy discourse and which thus defines and is defined by its own spatial implications of what and where Britain *is*. One cannot approach this with an overt concern for materiality for, such as there is, has already been interpreted by British foreign policy-makers and in order to elucidate the identity that is being formed as result, one must focus on the ways in which they interpret it.

This, however, becomes a highly 'real world' concern since it is through reiterations of Island Race identity that British foreign policy is communicated and rendered understandable and acceptable to recipients. Hansen points out that studies concerned with discourse and social construction are often 'chastised for being removed from the study of the real world' yet, for her and this author,

> 'policies are dependent upon representations of the threat, country,
> security problem, or crisis that they seek to address. Foreign policies
> need to ascribe meaning to the situation and to construct the objects
> within it, and in doing so they articulate and draw upon specific
> identities of other states, regions, peoples, and institutions as well as
> on the identity of a national, regional, or institutional Self.'[88]

It is precisely this dependency that is at stake in this thesis. Seen in such a light, British foreign policy discourse becomes dependent for its meaning upon the Island Race identity and its political implications. In adopting an interpretivist approach to the study of IR, one is not claiming 'that materiality does not matter' but rather to make the point that any attempt to define, say, a security threat that is objectively 'real' and transcends discursive construction is likely, according to Barry Buzan and colleagues, to be '"right" on its own terms' anyway.[89]

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[86] Åkerstrøm Andersen (2003), p. vi; Henrikson (1980), pp. 495-6; Kuus (2012), p. 177.
[87] Jordheim & Neumann (2011), p. 181.
[88] Hansen (2006), pp. 5-6. Fraser MacDonald, for example, remains concerned with how classical geopolitics is still seen as being more relevant to the 'real world' than critical geopolitics which 'risks becoming an academic fad' (MacDonald (2010), p. 318).
[89] Hansen (2006), p. 22; Buzan *et al* (1998), p. 31.

In sum, 'the point is not to disregard material facts but to study how these are produced and prioritized.'[90] This is what is allowed by an interpretivist perspective and genealogical methods: an appreciation of the peculiarity of sedimented discourses of disciplined identity through the resurrection of their contingent histories. And rather than returning theories of identity to their former subaltern position within the 'dominant ontology and epistemology of stability and continuity', one can show *how* this semblance of constancy is maintained as well as the subtle changes within.[91]

7. Locating the Island Race: Discursive practice in the House of Commons

Taking all of the above into account, what is being looked for in the British discourse under question is the ways in which Island Race identity is mobilised in a series of debates concerning a range of issues and events. The focus is on debates in the House of Commons, the lower, legislative chamber of British politics which currently comprises 650 Members of Parliament (MPs), elected to represent territorially-bounded constituencies, usually on a party basis.[92] MPs are the 'privileged storytellers […] to whom narrative authority […] is granted' in British politics; theirs is the primary seat of debate in which national identity is negotiated.[93] The focus on them and their debates reflects the previously theorised notions that foreign policy-makers seek, through practices of discourse and 'social signification', ontological security.[94] The constitutive or social epistemology which informs this thesis means the possibility of infinite 'conceptual regress' inherent in causal analyses in which 'anything goes' in an environment of manifold identities is avoided through the very conceptualisation of foreign policy 'experts' and the shared, social identity of their particular milieu.[95] Given the relatively consensual nature of British foreign policy I have taken foreign policy-makers—in the context of House of Commons debates—to mean any and all Members who speak. These debates are not called in order to thrash out a piece of statutory legislation with the regularity that, say, Home Affairs might be; often they are general discussions capable of ranging widely around an event, such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. As such I will also, in chapter 6, be analysing several debates that were called purely to discuss Britain's general approach to international affairs as well as those (the joining of NATO and the EEC) in which MPs were gathered to vote on motions.

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[90] Hansen (2006), p. 22.
[91] Lapid (2001), p. 7. On continuity and change in identity see, for example, Chacko (2014); Jackson (2011); Kleuters (2009).
[92] In the first parliament of this period of study (1945-50) there were 640 MPs. Since then, due to constituency boundary changes, the number has fluctuated between 625 and 659.
[93] Campbell (1993), p. 7.
[94] Milliken (1999), p. 233.
[95] Guzzini (2012d), p. 50.

Any Member can table a question in advance of these debates; often, with large numbers wishing to speak, they must 'catch the eye' of the Speaker of the House, a Member who chairs these sittings.[96] The Speaker will tend to invite speeches in alternating sequence between the two main political parties represented in the House, proportionally allocating time to minor parties as appropriate and sometimes imposing time-limits on speeches. If the government is proposing a motion for the House to vote on, an amendment can be tabled, usually in opposition to the government's position which will first be introduced by a Minister.[97] In these situations, the Members are usually instructed to vote along party lines, in a process called 'whipping'; however, this does not preclude Members making speeches which contradict the official view of their party and they frequently do so.

The online Hansard records of parliamentary proceedings represent a vast body, with near complete coverage from 1803 to the present.[98] To filter this large resource I searched within the titles of House of Commons debates for those concerned with foreign policy, foreign affairs and international affairs and, realising the limitations of this approach (debates are often titled 'Middle Eastern Affairs', 'European Affairs' or according to a specific event), then searched within lists of debates that Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries took part in. In the material I was left with I looked for instances of MPs expressing what an issue or event meant for Britain's international identity, recovering these inductively according to the conceptions of imperial-era Island Race identity that I had previously identified from historical texts while nonetheless remaining sensitive to contingency. I catalogued these instances of identity constitution and the fixing of particular subject positions, roughly categorised them according to Island Race tropes and then looked for high frequency clusters. This presented me with particular issues and events which seemed especially to mobilise constitutions of identity; accordingly I honed in on several key debates relating to them and carried out deeper analyses. The abandonment of bases East of Suez under Harold Wilson's governments of the 1960s is just one example of an issue that might have been included herein but considerations of space precluded it as much as the desire to include a plurality of issues that took in European relations as much as decolonisation specifically.

I chose to study a series of debates in each chapter, in order to enlarge the time-frame of each case and thus the scope of research. For example, when considering Britain joining the EEC in chapter 4, there were several crucial 'moments' which I felt needed to be taken into account,

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[96] *Some Traditions and Customs of the House* (2010), p. 3.
[97] See *Erskine May* for an exhaustive, constitutional account of British Parliamentary practice (May (2011)).
[98] <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/> (1803-2005);
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/> (1988-).

from the 1960 announcement that Britain was beginning negotiations, through to the reaction to de Gaulle's 1963 rebuff. This allowed me to look for constitutions of Island Race identity across time, related to a specific issue but in thoroughly different contexts. In other cases, I looked at different issues in a restricted period, for example the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Falklands Conflict in chapter 5, to see how Island Race identity was constituted in differing contexts within a shorter period of time. In the chapter on Island Race identity since 1997 I took a more general approach, looking for constitutions of identity and discursive ontological security-seeking across a range of issues, contexts and events.[99] These are not necessarily conceptualised as being identity 'crises' in the way that Guzzini and Hadfield-Amkhan do since identities are, in a sense, *permanently* in crisis, hence the need for their recrudescence.[100] A crisis is only a crisis if so conceived by foreign policy-makers. Indeed, in placing the two events of chapter 3 alongside one another, for example, one can see the same constitutions of identity even though one (the 1949 signing of the North Atlantic Treaty) was largely greeted as a positive development for Britain and the other (the 1956 Suez Crisis) was hugely divisive and unambiguously represented as a political, material and existential crisis both at the time and *post facto*.

Several things of particular importance need to be borne in mind when dealing with Commons discourse. Firstly, that there is a tradition in British parliamentary debate that speeches, to some degree, refer to those preceding them; secondly, and in spite of the 'formal and adversarial' style of the Commons, foreign policy is a *relatively* consensual realm in British politics.[101] The convention of broadly referring to what has come before, of being 'not discontinuous', distinguishes Commons debates from Harvey Sacks and colleagues' definition of conversation.[102] Furthermore, it gives the lie to the notion that politicians (at least in the Commons and away from Ministerial level) are robotically parroting official, pre-prepared party dictates. Indeed reading a speech (although not the use of notes) is expressly forbidden, in order to 'maintain the spontaneity of debate'.[103] The consequences for this thesis are important. That Members are responding to each other as well as the multiple external stimuli and private prejudices to which they are all subject means that parliamentary debates on foreign policy are truly social activities and present one with excellent opportunities to analyse negotiations and constitutions of identity.[104] Moreover, this means that, although mediated by the external, Commons debates become *relatively* self-contained entities in which certain points are

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[99] See Hansen (2006), pp. 74-87.

[100] Guzzini (2012d), pp. 49-57; Hadfield-Amkhan (2010), pp. 43-66.

[101] Shaw (2000), p. 401.

[102] *Ibid.*, p. 404; Sacks *et al* (1974), p. 696.

[103] *Some Traditions and Customs of the House* (2010), p. 4.

[104] Hansen (2006), pp. 213-5.

repeatedly referred to, discussed, dismissed or supported. In this way, even ideas of Britain's identity which are unpopular in the House become part of the negotiated discourse on that day (and beyond) because, in order to be discursively dismissed according to the conventions of debate, they must be argued against.[105] Concepts such as insularity, frequently invoked in the debates under question, attain an ontological status through their repetition, even if this is often done in order to denigrate them. Beyond individual debates, Members often speak on the same subject several or many times (as in the EEC/EC debates of the 1960s), referencing themselves and others in the process, sometimes over a period of decades.[106] The weight of Westminster history, the longevity of some Members' tenure and the unreflective ways in which the genius (or the obverse) of certain predecessors and their policies—Churchill, Attlee, Bevin, Eden, Heath, Thatcher, Blair *et al*—are summoned as inspiration or lesson, all combine with the highly social nature of the Commons in which certain terminology, turns of phrase and passages of logic proliferate and reproduce (not least in terms of party political culture), to become a discursive superstructure in itself. Discourse, so conceived, is 'dynamic, rather than inert' and has to be 'constructed and re-enacted in order to live on.'[107]

The consensual nature of British foreign policy is fictive to the extent that individual members may have wildly divergent views on particular issues but, in the main, the policy aims of the major parties do not significantly differ and are usually couched in vague terms relating to the national interest and Britain having an important role in the world.[108] With the Suez Crisis as a notable exception, hugely divisive issues such as entry into the EEC/EC were nonetheless marked by relative consensus between the front benches.[109] Even the highly charged, contemporary debates over British membership of the EU see the leadership of both Labour and the Conservatives committed to membership, although only the latter promised a referendum after the 2015 General Election.[110] Many British foreign policy-makers have noted the importance of some degree of continuity in matters of foreign policy, as if there is a broad, national interest which transcends party politics.[111] These misty notions of continuity and

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[105] Guzzini (2012d), p. 53.

[106] Edward Heath, for example, (Prime Minister 1970-4) was an MP for over fifty years (1950-2001) and spoke frequently on foreign affairs. His views on issues such as European integration were familiar to all in the House.

[107] Driver (2001), p. 201.

[108] Steve Smith and Michael Smith, for example, provide an overview of how British foreign policy is characterised by apparent consensus on national interest (Smith & Smith (1988)).

[109] Labour under Wilson vacillated several times over Europe in the 1960s and 70s, but provided support for Conservative governments in several crucial votes.

[110] Conservative Party (2015); Labour Party (2015).

[111] Former Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Rosebery, told his audience in 1896: 'one government should, so far as it is practicable without sacrifice of principle, endeavour to interweave its foreign policy with that of the preceding government, so as to preserve a consistent attitude abroad and prevent foreign Powers from building on our party differences and dissensions at

national interest hide the more profound 'historically developed practices', the 'process[es] of articulation' which give events and issues 'particular meanings on which action is then based.'[112] This is how identity is constituted and reconstituted and means that the apparent paucity of change becomes, in some measure, precisely the point of the study because of how mundane discursive practices discipline the inherent ambiguities of multiple and collective identities into something that appears unremarkable and relatively constant.

8. Conclusion

In chapter 1 I outlined the inadequacies of present approaches to the study of recent British foreign policy and explained the need for its conceptualisation in terms of five, interlinked, geopolitical identity tropes related to the British Empire. This chapter has shown how I hope to accomplish this. In the first place, the critical geopolitics corpus draws attention to how space is socially constructed by those who speak for states. Cognizance of this *and* the literature on ontological security locates these spatial constructions as attempts to elucidate secure subject positions which co-constitutively mobilise established identity tropes in changing international environments. These are to be honed in on by taking a discursive approach that conceptualises context and identity as existing in a co-constitutive, rather than causal, relationship with one another so that representations of a given situation and constructions of identity are dependent upon one another. To see the large-scale dynamics at work here, recognise the historical nature of these shared conceptions of identity and avoid privileging and leaving unquestioned the present formulations, interpretivist genealogical methods are necessary, as well as sensitivity to the particular cultures of the place from which this discourse is drawn.

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home' (Rosebery (1896)). Two later Foreign Secretaries made similar arguments which illustrate the point: Ernest Bevin told the Commons that 'the whole course a country is taking in foreign policy cannot suddenly be altered by a General Election. Geography remains the same; the facts remain the same, stubborn as they are'; and Lord Carrington the Lords that 'the broad continuity of policy which flows from government to government is reassuring to our friends and allies, and discourages those who do not wish us well from trying to exploit our domestic differences. It is a source of real strength and stability' (House of Commons (HC) Debate 28 March 1950, volume 473, column 318-9; House of Lords (HL) Deb 22 May 1979, vol. 400, col. 235).

[112] Shapiro (1988), p. 7; Weldes (1999), p. 285, 285.

chapter 3

A North Atlantic heritage and a Middle Eastern Crisis: the Island Race from the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty to the Suez Crisis

1. Introduction

In the previous two chapters I have argued that collective identity formation can be studied by pursuing genealogical methods to analyse discourse and that this will allow a new reading of British foreign policy as the search for ontological security mediated through historical, geopolitical, identity tropes that I call the Island Race. The focus of this chapter is two important events in British foreign policy from the middle of the twentieth century: the joining of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949 and the Suez Crisis of 1956. The aim is to explore how established traditions of Island Race identity were mobilised to seek ontological security in the contexts of the two issues. Genealogically, this is important on two, co-constitutive fronts: it allows NATO and the Suez Crisis to be properly understood as having distinct contemporary contexts *including recent and historic constitutions of socially mediated identity*; and it permits the ensuing and current situations of Island Race identity to be understood as part of a genuine discursive history in which British parliamentary debating culture and the battle to fix ontologically secure meanings shaped the evolution of Island Race identity tropes. To the existing corpus this will add an understanding of the specific, national-cultural roots of NATO in British discourse, sensitive to the fact that international bodies such as NATO are not simply perpetuated at a supra-national, institutional level, they also exist by sufferance of their representations by individual state *élites*; and rather than seeing Suez as a rupture, in an analytical discursive history, it becomes part of the always emergent story of how mobilisations of particular identity tropes discipline ambiguous novel events by establishing ontologically secure renditions amongst mediated contexts.

The discursive context of this period was very much one of sustained and open questioning of the nature and scope of British power in the world. In spite of Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin's flirtation with constituting Britain as a 'third force' in the world, it was widely recognised that the United States and the Soviet Union were globally predominant and that Britain's position, for the first time in centuries and in spite of the development of their own atomic weapons (first tested by Britain in 1952), was inferior to other Powers.[1] Furthermore, it wasn't simply a matter

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[1] James (1998), p. 521.

of being eclipsed by the rise of others: the British Empire itself was shrinking, the first defenestration (since Irish Home Rule in the 1920s and the Japanese takeover of Singapore in World War Two) coming in the Indian subcontinent in 1947.

These changes in the international environment were profound for Britain, whose imperial foreign policy identity—as I argued in chapter 1—was constituted by its own worldview as a superior Power. Yet these identity tropes hinged as much upon island as imperial geopolitics. As Britain became 'post-imperial', what happened to Island Race identity? Articulations of identity do not take place in a vacuum and cannot be separated from definitions of the 'real world', the discourse comprising which constitutes how subject positions are fixed according to established notions of the state as a foreign policy actor. Therefore, the interactions of these identity concepts and concomitant contextual representations are the objects of study insofar as they represent how foreign policy-makers seek to fix ontologically-secure subject positions for Britain and its established identity around events and issues by utilising geopolitical tropes. What will become evident is how the Island Race tropes I identified in chapter 1 remained crucial in the parliamentary practice of the late 1940s and 50s. With no one moment signifying its end, British imperial identity could not, in any case, be jettisoned overnight. However, the persistence of Island Race tropes in British discourse demonstrates not so much stubborn nostalgia as it does the persistent, social force of their original configurations in discursive attempts to fix meaning and identity around one another in changing circumstances.

The two events have been chosen primarily because of their continued importance in the annals of British history. NATO has remained a cornerstone of British security policy, regardless of the governmental hue of the day.[2] Even in times of prominent anti-American rhetoric in society and parliament itself (such as the Iraq War (2003-11)) NATO itself has remained largely non-controversial, suggesting a decoupling of sentiment towards its most powerful member and the organisation itself.[3] The Suez Crisis—although many consider the post-1945 empire to be, at best, an illusion of power—has come to signify a rupture in British history perhaps more than

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[2] An exception in several other regards, not even Labour's 1983 general election manifesto contested British membership of NATO (Labour Party (1983)). The party's leader from September 2015, Jeremy Corbyn, has questioned the country's part in NATO but it remains to be seen whether this will become official policy (see 'Arguing for a radically different international policy'). See the latest *Strategic Defence and Security Review* for evidence of NATO's continued importance to Britain (HM Government (2010)).

[3] Michael John Williams argues that NATO has existed in a 'perpetual state of crisis' since its very inception but British membership has scarcely been questioned (Williams (2013), p. 362). Margaret Thatcher, for example, one of NATO's greatest enthusiasts in British politics, identified a threat to NATO in the post-Maastricht era but only that of Europe's trying to forge a distinct defence identity rather than any existential crisis in the organisation itself. The problem came from NATO being undermined and British membership was not debated; on the contrary, this was just further proof of its importance (Thatcher (1995), p. 471).

any other twentieth century event.[4]   This is complemented by popular and social histories in which Suez and relatively contemporaneous phenomena such as Rock and Roll music and nascent youth culture are coupled to render 1956 as the Year Zero of British modernity.[5]   Thus the Crisis is both an end and a beginning, with subsequent British foreign policy-makers rendering its significance as purgative, epitomised by Suez 'rebel' Anthony Nutting's account, *No End of a Lesson*.[6]   Harold Wilson (Labour Prime Minister: 1964-70, 1974-6), for example, said he had learnt to avoid 'unilateral, go-it-alone, do-it-yourself, military adventures' and based his policy on 'the rejection, equally, of Suez imperialism and the delusion of the so-called independent deterrent.'[7]   Edward Heath and Margaret Thatcher (Conservative Prime Ministers: 1970-4, 1979-1990 respectively) both noted how it forced the establishment to confront the reality of the waning empire, with the latter mourning how the 'peaceful and necessary transfer of power from Britain to America as the ultimate upholder of Western interests and the liberal international economic system' mutated into what she called the 'Suez syndrome', in which the British political class 'went from believing that Britain could do anything to an almost neurotic belief that Britain could do nothing.'[8]   It was only, she claimed, her actions over the Falklands that reversed this 'long retreat.'[9]

In these ways, both NATO and Suez play critical roles in subsequent historiography of British foreign policy by acting as markers for the security of the British international Self: NATO the silent arbiter of British defence and Suez the event (like appeasement) to be avoided if British policy is to be 'successful'.   They have become part of the socially signified geo-history of the Island Race (as we will see in subsequent chapters), hence the importance of studying the roots of their conceptualisations within a discursive genealogy of Island Race identity.

1.1. Island Race identity tropes in the context of NATO and Suez

What can be seen in my analysis of a series of parliamentary debates around the joining of NATO and the Suez Crisis is the interaction of the established tropes of Island Race identity and the contemporary contexts and how the discourse of MPs reveal the seeking of ontological security through the mobilisation of geopolitical tropes.   The two events were represented and responded to in ways congruent with established, socially mediated norms of British foreign policy identity; by the same token, the identity tropes themselves had to be sensitive to these new and distinct contexts.   Thus, what we will see are co-constitutive processes in which both

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[4] See, for example, Robert Holland's and Wm. Roger Louis' accounts in which they argue that Britain's power was diminishing long before Suez (Holland (1991), p. 9; Louis (2006), pp. 1-34).

[5] See, for example, MacDonald (1997); Sandbrook (2005).

[6] Nutting (1967). As an example of this historiography in scholarship, see Scott Lucas' *Britain and Suez: The Lion's Last Roar*, especially chapter 12, 'Anatomy of a failure' (Lucas (1996), pp. 89-101).

[7] Wilson (1968).

[8] Heath (1998), pp. 177-8; Thatcher (1995), pp. 90, 91, 91.

[9] Thatcher (1993), p. 173.

identity and issue were shaped via the discursive negotiations of British parliamentary practice and ontological security-seeking. Prior to the analysis itself, in this section I will briefly sketch out some of the contextual details of both events and how they relate to the established tropes of Island Race identity.

The proposed signing of the North Atlantic Treaty represented something both novel and familiar to MPs. On one hand, it would commit Britain to a new kind of peacetime alliance with a relatively large number of states (including Britain, twelve) in which an attack on one was considered an attack on all; on the other, this was, largely, a formalisation of the alliance system of the Second World War.[10] The position of Britain in NATO, especially relative to the US, is similarly ambiguous: few in British politics were in doubt about the strategic and material decisiveness of the US intervention in the Second World War; yet the discourse of Britain as the island standing alone against Nazi Europe was already something of a truism, even though Winston Churchill (Conservative Prime Minister: 1940-5, 1951-5) had infamously synthesised the two elements (British insularity and the English-speaking alliance) in his 'Fulton' address of 1946.[11] There was little doubt about how British power had been superceded; from its lofty position of pre-eminence, sculpted over centuries, how would British foreign policy-makers respond to their country joining an alliance in which they would occupy a position of subordination or at least parity?[12]

The Suez Crisis too had elements both familiar and unfamiliar. Britain's involvement in the Middle East had been extensive since at least the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the post-World War I mandates; in Egypt, Britain had been a significant presence since the previous century. The status of the Middle East had been a crucial salient in the making of the Second British Empire in terms of both Orientalism and its positioning relative to the non-contiguous colonies of the East, especially India.[13] Thus the strategic imperatives of resolving what unfolded at Suez in the summer of 1956 were of a piece with more vintage, imperial situations, usually revolving around preserving maritime Lines of Communication. Within these historic discourses of threats to the Middle East, tsarist Russia had been represented as the foremost threat to British interests and their communist descendants were believed to be playing a sinister hand in 1950s Egypt. These evident historical familiarities were offset by the circumscribed nature of actual British power in the region.

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[10] *The North Atlantic Treaty* (1949), p. 1; Risse-Kappen (1995), p. 217.

[11] Churchill (1946a). See also Attlee (Labour Prime Minister: 1945-51): HC Deb 22 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 670; Churchill (1949), pp. 92, 198, 555; Vucetic (2011a), p. 3.

[12] See, for example, Churchill: HC Deb 16 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 83-4.

[13] Said (1978), pp. 255-84. See the contributions to Michael Bonine and colleagues' volume *Is There a Middle East?* for analysis of how the Middle East developed as a geopolitical concept (Bonine *et al* (2012)).

Nonetheless, Britain continued to perceive its *interests* in the Middle East to be considerable in size and scope even with the loss of India.[14] What was novel about the scenario, especially in the context of World War II and the joining of NATO, was the intransigence of the US. These tensions had to be mediated by British foreign policy-makers when they debated the Crisis. What did the old, imperial Lines of Communication mean by 1956? Whither the English-speaking alliance without US support in censuring Egypt?

The discourse of Members reveals how ontological security was sought in these novel contexts through the mobilisation of established geopolitical tropes. As I argued in the preceding chapters, these are more than just neutral expressions of rational gain-maximising; they are enduring conceptions of national identity. The traditional concepts of Island Race identity would serve as the main well-spring of experiential and discursive knowledge informing the responses to these issues. Even though the Empire was mutating beyond familiar recognition, they still made up the corpus of understanding of Britain and Britain in the world. What follows is an analysis of several debates around the signing of NATO and the Suez Crisis, in which I explore *how* Island Race identity concepts were deployed in the interpretation of these events and framed policy responses. The events tended to mobilise and be constituted by three of the Island Race tropes in particular: Firstly, the idea, exemplified by notions of Greater Britain, that Britain was part of a primarily English-speaking metacommunity of values. Countries like the US and Canada (and Australia and New Zealand) were the natural allies of Britain because of their language, history, institutions and values. Moreover, they were the carriers of this unique heritage, meaning that the particularist vision of British history and politics was carried into the future by the very presence of what Dilke called 'the greater Saxondom'.[15] Secondly, Britain as an exemplary Sea Power implied that it acted in the world in accordance with the democratic values which it had bestowed upon Greater Britain, politically opposed to Land Powers such as Napoléonic France, Tsarist Russia and Wilhelmine and Nazi Germany. The third facet of Island Race identity discursively 'fitted' to the contexts of NATO and Suez was Britain's role as guardian of the Lines of Communication which allowed the free flow of trade between it and the Far East.

2. The signing of NATO, 1949

2.1. NATO as carrier of Island Race values
The language with which the North Atlantic Treaty was introduced to and then debated within the Commons in 1949 unambiguously cast it as an extension of Island Race values. The pre-

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[14] See, for example, Aldrich & Zametica (1992).
[15] Dilke (1869), p. 398.

amble of the Treaty itself, which the Labour Foreign Secretary Bevin quoted, reflected this cultural aspect:

> 'The Parties to this Treaty […] are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area.'[16]

NATO has come to be seen as primarily a security-oriented organisation but in its initial reception in the Commons was cast as a totem of Western liberal-democratic values through terms such as 'civilisation' and 'heritage' and the linking of these concepts to a shared 'common' history. In so doing, this projected British values into the past (heritage) while also situating them temporally in the present (civilisation) and geographically in Britain's immediate area (the Atlantic Ocean). Yet what Bevin called 'a wider roof of security […] which stretches over the Atlantic Ocean' was a novel arrangement for Britain.[17] Such had been the network of interests coterminous with its expansive range of colonies, dependencies and dominions, the imperial Island Race had, in essence, conceptualised security in global, even systemic, terms based on its Lines of Communication.[18] Scions of empire like Churchill disliked the idea of formal spheres of influence with their power to limit influence elsewhere; the only sphere that the British Empire needed, in Carl Schmitt's characterisation, was a global maritime one.[19] Indeed Bevin sought to clarify: 'I want to make it clear, however, that [NATO] must not be taken as weakening or limiting in any way our obligations towards other States which are not included in that geographical area.'[20]

This unfamiliar strategic arrangement was rendered ontologically secure according to Island Race identity (and vice versa) through the discourse of shared values, language, culture and heritage familiar from the narratives of Greater Britain in the nineteenth century.[21] This had been a fundamental part of the British identity as a Power able to project influence over large areas of the globe, particularly those which were either definitively no longer under its control (USA) or gradually slipping away (Australia; Canada; New Zealand) but also as a more general concept which geopolitically legitimised the disparate, non-contiguous nature of the Empire. In this way it was a fundamental component of maritime imperialism. Thus the expediency of this aspect of Island Race identity was in its connotations of ownership of a NATO project based on

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[16] HC Deb 18 March 1949, vol. 462, col. 2534; *The North Atlantic Treaty* (1949), p. 1.
[17] HC Deb 18 March 1949, vol. 462, col. 2534.
[18] Darwin (1991), p. 4.
[19] Churchill (1954), pp. 65, 203; Schmitt (1950), p. 173.
[20] HC Deb 18 March 1949, vol. 462, col. 2534.
[21] Dilke's *Greater Britain* and *Problems of Greater Britain* and Seeley's *Expansion of England* are the most crucial texts for an understanding of the concept of Greater Britain (Dilke (1869); (1890); Seeley (1883)).

the values that Britain had bestowed upon the world (particularly North America). Bevin highlighted this when he drew a link between the 'common origin in the people living round the Atlantic Ocean, common moral and ethical standards and institutions derived from common origins and traditions' and 'the traditional British conception' of security: 'that the ocean is a link and not a barrier.'[22] The association was 'a natural one', a 'community of interest' that had 'always existed' of 'co-operation with like-minded peoples'.[23] The Foreign Secretary's representations cast NATO not as a novel phenomenon either culturally or strategically. It was a descendent of the concepts of Greater Britain that had so dignified the British legacy in North America and drew on the time-honoured strategic identity motif of the ocean as indivisible. The meanings condensed in the concept of Greater Britain represented ontologically secure notions of Britain's identity as a Power of global relevance whose values were present in the former white settler colonies. Conferred upon NATO, the concept retained relevance as the context was familiarised according to traditions of British foreign policy thought. The discursive force of this linking of an established identity concept to a new context is evident in the mobilisation of particular geopolitical tropes congruent with Island Race identity: the ocean as a link; the permanence of British values; Britain's propitious location.

Other examples from the May 12th debate epitomise this further. Now Leader of the Opposition, Churchill was still in the throes of Anglophilia, having had to delay completion of his *History of the English-Speaking Peoples* because of the Second World War.[24] As against the oppositional discourse—advanced by Willie Gallacher and other Leftist Members—that NATO represented subservience to the US, Churchill celebrated 'the fraternal association of the English-speaking world' which, in tandem with 'the union of Europe', would ensure that 'the peace and progress of mankind can be maintained.'[25] Clement Davies, the leader of the Liberal Party, anticipated the approval of 'the free peoples not only of this country but of the Commonwealth' and the whole world, 'on behalf of democracy and democratic institutions.'[26] It was, he said, 'the beginning of a new commonwealth' which would 'safeguard our freedom, our common heritage, and our own form of civilisation, founded, as they are, upon principles of

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[22] HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2016. Conservative Sir Charles Mott-Radclyffe echoed this later: 'The Atlantic Ocean is no longer a barrier between the New World and the Old; the Atlantic Ocean now is the link by which the New World and the Old are united in their determination to remain free' (*ibid.*, col. 2084).

[23] *Ibid.*, col. 2019; *ibid.*, col. 2019; *ibid.*, col. 2019; *ibid.*, col. 2022.

[24] Churchill (1956-8).

[25] HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2024. Gallacher, along with Phil Piratin, represented the Communist Party of Great Britain. Their pungent remarks throughout the debate were broadly supported by Labour Members such as Sydney Silverman, William Warbey and Konni Zilliacus. Churchill collectively branded them 'that small band of Communists, crypto-Communists and fellow-travellers' and correctly prophesied that they would be the only voices raised in opposition to the Treaty (*ibid.*, col. 2025).

[26] *Ibid.*, col. 2031.

democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law.'[27]   For Davies, as others, the Treaty represented not just 'collective security' but the atavistic reification and preservation of the 'heritage' and 'way of life' of an exclusive group of 'free peoples'.[28]   To Independent Conservative Member, Daniel Lipson, it was nothing less than 'a new family of nations' which reminded him 'very much of the British Commonwealth' and in his summing up Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Philip Noel-Baker, concluded that 'democracy is no longer a series of isolated units but a cohesive organism.'[29]

These represent one prong of the attempt to provide ontological security by anchoring the meaning of NATO in associations with Island Race identity tropes. Through social discursive processes of 'linking', NATO was condensed with the meanings of established geopolitical identity tropes (and vice versa) and incorporated into the unfolding narrative of British history.[30] Rather than being a threat to British pre-eminence, NATO was the vessel of the continued importance of British values which, as established by Greater Britain, were coterminous with British power and influence and its unique island geopolitics. As I argued earlier, most accounts of British foreign policy in the twentieth century have tended to emphasise either the pragmatism of officials in bandwagoning with the US to pursue the national interest of maintaining power while the Empire waned, the structural and geo-strategic imperatives of the early Cold War or else have favoured the idea that Britain at this time was, to use Hennessy's phrase, simply 'muddling through'.[31]   What has not been conceptualised is how things like membership of NATO were fitted to established concepts of British identity and how,

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[27] *Ibid.*, col. 2033; *ibid.*, col. 2032-3.

[28] *Ibid.*, col. 2035.

[29] *Ibid.*, col. 2107; *ibid.*, col. 2128. Warbey and Piratin were scathing about NATO's democratic credentials, in particular decrying the presence of Salazar's Portugal. Warbey said: 'The inclusion of Portugal makes complete nonsense of the preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty, which speaks of the signatories being determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. Democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law do not exist in Portugal' (*ibid.*, col. 2038). Both men warned that the next step would be the admission to NATO of Spain which, under Franco, remained a pariah for the British Left, partly because the likes of Churchill favoured its ascension to the Pact. Piratin also drew attention to the lack of liberty experienced by blacks at the hands of lynch mobs in the Southern States of the US (*ibid.*, col. 2101).

[30] Hansen (2006), pp. 41-6. See Bevin: HC Deb 18 March 1949, vol. 462, col. 2534-6; HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2016; Rab Butler (Conservative): HC Deb 18 March 1949, vol. 462, col. 2536; HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2116; Robert Boothby (Conservative): HC Deb 18 March 1949, vol. 462, col. 2539; Churchill: HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2024; Clement Davies: *ibid.*, col. 2031-5; Thomas Reid (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 2060; Rhys Davies (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 2069; Nutting: *ibid.*, col. 2070; Mott-Radclyffe: *ibid.*, col. 2084; Morgan Price (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 2090-1; Lord John Hope (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 2098; Lipson: *ibid.*, col. 2107; Noel-Baker: *ibid.*, col. 2127.

[31] Hennessy (1996). John Darwin, for example, has explored these issues (Darwin (1988), pp. 126-66; (1991), pp. 1-9, 56-84). See also John Baylis for a typical account of the pragmatism of British officials and Kevin Ruane who contextualises NATO's formation with the failure of European defence initiatives in the face of Soviet advancement (Baylis (1993); Ruane (2000)).

genealogically, the organisation was able to become part of the narrative of British history through social discursive practices whereby it was linked to the eternal geopolitical tropes of the Island Race.

2.2. Beyond Cold War politics: the Soviet Union as threat to the Island Race

Complementing the 'linking' of British identity and NATO was the 'differentiation' drawn between them and the Soviet Union.[32] This discursively drew on established notions of the Island Race as a typical Sea Power ranged against various Land Powers. As I argued in chapter 1, the oppositional qualities assigned to each during Britain's historical conflicts with France, Russia and Germany constructed binary struggles between a liberal, benevolent Power with non-contiguous, paternalistically ruled colonies that sought to ensure the smooth flows of global trade and a despotic, rapacious Power with contiguous, subjugated colonies that threatened to disrupt global trade by interfering with Lines of Communication. This fundamental aspect of Island Race identity relied upon the constitution of Land Power to epitomise and dignify its own qualities in alterity.

By 1949, it was becoming obvious (in spite of Gallacher *et al*) that the Soviet Union would play this role.[33] And the converse qualities of democratic benevolence were assigned, as we saw in the previous section, to the NATO alliance as a whole. In terms of Island Race identity, this made discursive logic in several ways: firstly, the antipathy towards the Soviet Union confirmed the ontological security of several geopolitical aspects of Island Race identity (guardianship of global Lines of Communication in particular); secondly, it offered further confirmation of the good sense of joining NATO by casting the alliance partners as actors with similar interests and values to Britain. In this way we can see how interlinked and co-constitutive the discursive processes of linking and differentiation are, for the designation of the Soviet Union as antithesis relied upon and secured commonality with Britain's NATO partners. George Kennan's 'Sources of Soviet Conduct' article demonstrates how this Othering of the Soviet Union was hardly peculiar to Island Race discourse and must be viewed in the context of the burgeoning Cold War.[34] However, one must also be cognizant of the presence of the deeper roots of identity concepts when conducting a genealogical study and how easily this emergent context dovetailed with the existing tropes. Rather than accepting and privileging the sudden influence of Cold War rhetoric, there is the question of the enduring influence of Island Race identity

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[32] Hansen (2006), pp. 41-6.

[33] For Britain and the early Cold War, see, for example: contributions to Richard Aldrich and Anne Deighton's edited volumes (Aldrich (1992a); Deighton (1990)); and general overviews from Victor Rothwell , Sean Greenwood, John Young and Ritchie Ovendale (Rothwell (1982); Greenwood (2000); Young (1996); Ovendale (1985)); also Hennessy (2010), pp. 1-45.

[34] X (1947). See also Sean Greenwood's analysis of 'the other long telegram', a *communiqué* sent from the British embassy in Moscow (in 1946) by diplomat Frank Roberts that only belatedly received the scholarly attention of Kennan's (Greenwood (1990)).

itself and how new contexts can nourish old orders and constitute the perpetuation of established narratives in ontologically secure fashions.

Bevin had it that Moscow was disrupting the desired post-War peace and, while Britain and others negotiated the formation of the United Nations, 'country after country' was 'made absolutely subservient to Soviet Russia.'[35] Churchill, whose record of ambivalence towards Russia is catalogued in epic form over the six volumes of his World War Two memoirs, epitomised the Othering of the Soviet Union in declaring that 'there can be no assurance of permanent peace in Europe while Asia is on the Elbe'.[36] In the argot of the times, Russia was Asiatic, a source of what the critiques of Orientalism describe as Eastern inscrutability.[37] Indeed, Churchill argued that

> 'we are dealing with absolutely incalculable factors in dealing with the
>
> present rulers of Russia. No one knows what action they will take'.[38]

Yet the strategy of Land Powers was also familiar and predictable: 'we are confronted with a mighty oligarchy disposing not only of vast armies and important armaments by sea and in the air, but which has a theme, almost a religion, in the Communist doctrine and propaganda which claims its devotees in so many countries and makes them, over a large portion of the globe, the enemies of the lands of their birth.'[39] Labour's Morgan Price contended that Moscow was in the grip of a 'fanatical religious belief in the decline of the West and in the inevitable spread of Communism throughout the world' and Conservative Sir Charles Mott-Radclyffe vividly described how what he called 'the slave world' was assaulting the free world with a 'global strategy' that was not 'very difficult to understand':

> 'The left claw rests upon China, with the almost unlimited manpower
>
> of the Far East. Were these two—the industrial potential and military
>
> ingenuity of Germany, on the one hand, and the unlimited manpower
>
> of the Far East, on the other—ever to be harnessed, one to the other,
>
> then the outlook would indeed be bleak.'[40]

Furthermore, this new and familiar geo-strategic context of an apparently aggressive and rapacious Soviet Union can be implicated co-constitutively in the mobilisation and ontological security of the Island Race identity concept of what Mackinder called 'universality' and, more recently, Patrick Porter 'globalism': the idea of a 'world so fragile that it must be superintended

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[35] HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2011.
[36] Churchill (1948-54); HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2029.
[37] Said (1978), pp. 31-49.
[38] HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2025.
[39] *Ibid.*, col. 2029-30.
[40] *Ibid.*, col. 2090; *ibid.*, col. 2086; *ibid.*, col. 2086; *ibid.*, col. 2086.; *ibid.*, col. 2086-7.

by a benevolent liberal hegemon.'[41] Thus, in debating joining NATO, the social construction of the threat from Moscow hinged upon and constituted the recrudescence of the idea that Britain's interests were worldwide. Although, as I suggested in chapter 1, this was part of the trappings of imperial power, in its mobilisation for the services of empire, this universality or globalism had been rendered in terms peculiar to the island geopolitics of Britain comprising global balances of power and oceanic space without distance. The arguments advanced by a number of Members on May 12 will demonstrate the social practices of discourse which constituted the collective performance of global Island Race interests in the face of a limitless Soviet threat.

In spite of Labour Member and noted pacifist Rhys Davies' suggestion that 'nothing can prevent a foul idea from spreading but the putting of a better idea in its place', the Conservative Nutting warned that, 'so far, the main achievement of this North Atlantic Pact has been on the moral and political rather than on the military plane.'[42] Given that the Soviet threat—'the powers of aggression and darkness'—existed 'over a large portion of the globe' and on 'a world-wide scale', what were called for, in Conservative Rab Butler's words, were 'wider and broader arrangements' than just the North Atlantic Pact.[43] Butler pointed out that the Treaty had 'achieved security only in the Western sector or, if you like to call it so, the Atlantic sector'.[44] He and others, like Mott-Radclyffe, Nutting and fellow Conservative Brigadier Anthony Head, urged the government to consider the Treaty's neglect of the Eastern Mediterranean. Butler wanted the pact to 'buttress the critical position in Greece' and 'support the gallant determination of Turkey to stand up against any attack that may come her way'; Mott-Radclyffe argued: 'I do not see how we can defend Western Europe while the Eastern Mediterranean remains insecure'; and Head was

> 'convinced that the Mediterranean, especially the Eastern Mediterranean, forms an intimate part of the defence of Western Europe. If our position in the Eastern Mediterranean deteriorates or is neglected, the whole of the most elaborate and efficient defence structure in Western Europe will be stultified and will expose itself to being ripped and torn up from Mediterranean bases.'[45]

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[41] Mackinder (1907), p. 11; Porter (2015), p. 4.

[42] HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2069; *ibid.*, col. 2071-2.

[43] Clement Davies: *ibid.*, col. 2034; Churchill: *ibid.*, col. 2030; Mott-Radclyffe: *ibid.*, col. 2086; Butler: *ibid.*, col. 2117.

[44] *Ibid.*, col. 2117.

[45] *Ibid.*, col. 2117; *ibid.*, col. 2086; *ibid.*, col. 2051.

Nutting went even further and advocated extending 'our system of alliances […] to cover the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean'.[46] He told the House that he had recently travelled to Australia 'and many of the vital areas and territories that lie between that country and this', an experience which—in spite of the loss of India—only confirmed the importance of the strategic 'life line of the British Empire' and 'the need to bring the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Mediterranean into a similar arrangement to the North Atlantic Pact.'[47] Mott-Radclyffe, who argued that 'provisions similar to those contained in the Atlantic Pact must be negotiated with all haste to cover both the Mediterranean and the Far East', also asserted the importance of Britain's already extant architecture: 'I do not believe the Atlantic Pact will ever become a really effective organisation against aggression unless it is aligned to and coordinated with the resources of the British Commonwealth.'[48] This orgiastic frenzy of designating different areas as strategic frontiers reflects what Labour's Kenneth Younger called a 'White Knight' mentality:

> 'accustomed for generations to the idea that she should have permanent footholds at reasonable intervals all over the world from which to promote her endlessly varied interests […], any gap arouses apprehensions, even where it is not obviously related to any identifiable threat.'[49]

It was at once both imperial recidivism and something more than that. If a novel strategic arrangement like NATO was to be comprehensively fitted with established Island Race identity concepts (not to mention the new Cold War imperative towards 'global thinking') then its plenitude was perhaps bound to be questioned by British foreign policy-makers who still retained a sizable empire and Commonwealth whose conceptual foundations were predicated on the idea of distanceless oceanic space which was both threat and opportunity.[50] Apart from that from the far Left, this was the only real questioning of the organisation: whether it was truly global enough to suit the universal Island Race, for whom the whole world had been 'their strategically relevant region'.[51]

2.3. Conclusion

The joining of NATO, which was supported by a vast majority of Members, was discursively represented in terms that cemented British ontological security through mobilisations of Island

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[46] *Ibid.*, col. 2071.
[47] *Ibid.*, col. 2073.
[48] *Ibid.*, col. 2087.
[49] Younger (1964), p. 63.
[50] Bell (2007), p. 84; Gray (1994), p. 13; Hardt & Negri (2000), pp. xii-xiii; Kern (1983), pp. 131-80, 211-40; Schmitt (1942), p. 48.
[51] Walton (2007), p. 33.

Race identity tropes. The emergent context of waning British power and the advent of a more assertive US was defined according to the foundational identity concept of Greater Britain in which Britain's cultural legacy, especially in North America, effectively perpetuated its own power and influence. Britain claimed geo-historical ownership of the 'western values' at the heart of NATO and, as such, the alliance became an extension of a nebulous, British cultural sphere. This was ranged against its supposed obverse as the traditional global dichotomy of Sea Power versus Land Power was given a new context, establishing the Soviet Union as the antithesis of Island Race geopolitics. Furthermore, the Soviet threat which had prompted the inception of NATO was immediately conceptualised in parliament as being global in scale. Thusly the established Island Race concept of Britain needing to have global reach was discursively linked to a worldwide threat emanating from Moscow. The imperial Lines of Communication also retained their contemporary utility as this new context was mediated via the traditional identity concepts that had originally given them importance; a *fait accompli* whose fruit would be borne in spectacular fashion in Egypt seven years later.

Britain still possessed a large empire at this time—Harold Macmillan's (Conservative Prime Minister: 1957-63) 'wind of change' speech was ten years away—so one might say that such discourse was inevitable from politicians representing a Great Power, albeit one being rapidly overtaken by the US and the Soviet Union.[52] Yet there was almost no explicit mention of the Empire during the course of the debate on joining NATO. Of course the Empire and Britain had arguably, by this point, been so conceptually conflated that the mention of one would constitute the other anyway, but what we can see is that this debate was not about the Empire *per se*, it was about the continuing search for British ontological security through the negotiation of the multiple meanings of the Island Race.[53] It was about the co-constitutive fitting of Island Race identity concepts with contemporaneous contexts and hints at the ways in which Island Race identity, although forged during empire, constituted more (or less) than just an imperial identity. This is the strength of a genealogical approach, especially in the situation that Britain was (and, to some degree still is) in: *becoming* post-imperial. It allows a conceptualisation of identity that won't halt and make a *volte face* at an arbitrary junction of history. In this way we can begin to see how Island Race identity lived on, even increasingly without the empire because of social discursive practices and its concomitant status as bearer of ontological security in unsettling times.

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[52] See Butler (1993) for a contextualisation of Macmillan's speech.
[53] Doty (1996), p. 130.

3. The Suez Crisis, 1956

3.1. The Suez Crisis and the Island Race: party (geo)politics and ontological security

The main debates on how to respond to the events in Egypt in the summer of 1956 (2 August; 12 and 13 September) can be conceptualised as comprising the negotiation of British foreign policy identity in a new and unexpected context. Unlike in the NATO debate from the previous section, the Suez Crisis was immediately established as being threatening to Britain; when, at the end of July, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal, which had previously been in private hands and guaranteed by the British, Conservative Prime Minister Anthony Eden and the House unambiguously condemned his actions.[54] The affair dragged on throughout the late summer and autumn with Britain and France eventually invading on the pretext of restraining Israel, with whom the Europeans had been covertly colluding. Without American support, Eden signed a unilateral ceasefire in November and resigned as Prime Minister and MP the following year.[55]

Furthermore, there was an added layer to the debates over the representations of the Crisis in its earliest days and the potential British remedial policy: party politics. The two major parties in Westminster, Conservative and Labour, embodied subtly yet distinctly different conceptualisations of Britain's international identity.[56] Issues such as NATO (and many others, especially related explicitly to the Cold War) revealed broad consensus on plenty of international questions, opposition to which was usually confined to the far Left of British politics and the major figures from both parties of the first post-War decade—including Churchill, Bevin, Eden, Butler, Clement Attlee, Herbert Morrison, Sir Stafford Cripps and Hugh Dalton—had all worked together, usually harmoniously, in the wartime coalition government fighting an enemy repugnant to all. Notwithstanding the continued reverence for Churchill, Bevin was and remains a uniquely popular Foreign Secretary (and Minister of Labour) in Conservative as much as Labour circles.[57] Yet the post-appeasement consensus around the Second World War, NATO and the very early Cold War masked the differences in Conservative and Labour conceptions of Britain's international identity. Broadly, the Conservatives were the party of empire and, even with the loss of India and the increasingly anti-colonial atmosphere of the UN, often openly so. Although it was Bevin who echoed Churchill's infamous 'I have not

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[54] HC Deb 02 August 1956, vol. 557, col. 1602-43.

[55] See Keith Kyle's 'definitive' account of the Crisis (Kyle (1991)).

[56] The once powerful Liberal Party was by now of marginal significance having returned only six MPs in the 1955 General Election, a poll in which it received less than three per cent of the national vote.

[57] On Churchill see, for example, Johnson (2014). For three examples across a large timescale of the enduring Conservative affection for Bevin, see Eden's remarks in the Commons in November 1953, Alec Douglas-Home's in his memoir about Bevin's instrumental role in the formation of NATO and arch-Thatcherite Norman Tebbit's comments in a 2013 BBC interview (HC Deb 05 November 1953, vol. 520, col. 309; Home (1976), p. 145; *Reflections with Peter Hennessy* (2013)).

become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire' remark, the Labour Party was steeped in anti-colonial prejudice, its very formation touched by ideas of international socialism and the emancipation of oppressed peoples the world over.[58] The consequences of this were profound for the divisive debates over the Suez Crisis and reveal, in contrast to the previous section, how partisan politics and differences in interpretations of Island Race identity could be foregrounded in debating an issue such as Suez.

At the most basic level, Labour Members argued that Eden's government remained in the thrall of an outdated imperial worldview when the greatness of Britain could be ensured via the international norms of the UN; Conservatives accused Labour of weakness and of falling prey to (their own, historic) crime of appeasement. Crucially, what will be seen is how both parties mobilised established Island Race identity tropes in making their opposing arguments about how to respond to the Egyptian occupation and nationalisation of the Canal Zone. Divisive party politics and the ruinous consequences for the duplicitous Eden—a scion of British foreign policy and politics in general for three decades—have obscured the significance of these debates for the unfolding history of British foreign policy at a crucial moment in its development.

The section is divided into two parts. First I will analyse discourse concerning Britain's role in the Crisis and the proposed response, highlighting how ontological security-seeking mobilised Island Race identity tropes. As I have already hinted, many Conservative Members (with Eden, at this stage, circumspect) argued for an unrestrained British riposte to the occupation and, in the process, actuated the Island Race trope of Britain being a Power of international significance that needed to be capable of global reach.   This was complemented by a thorough internationalisation of the Crisis in which it was argued that the occupation of the Canal would have profoundest effects on global patterns of liberal trade, thereby conflating British interests and values with global ones. Labour Members upheld the significance of the Crisis in much the same terms but argued that Britain's normative position was as an upholder of international legality and that the response should be led by the UN. Secondly, I will focus on the discursive construction of a scripting of world politics that was ontologically secure for British foreign policy-makers because of the co-constitutive mobilisation of established Island Race identity tropes. This hinged upon the reification of the Western metacommunity as signified by NATO (in spite of American intransigence), the significance of the old, imperial Lines of Communication as existential markers for this construct and the concomitant narrative of Soviet attempts to expand its disruptive, Land-based empire into the Middle East.

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[58] Churchill (1942); HC Deb 21 February 1946, vol. 419, col. 1365.

3.2. Empire or universalism? Lines of Communication and the internationalisation of the Suez Crisis

Imperialism had been internationally discredited since at least President Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' speech at the close of World War One and the UN Charter, which British officials had been influential in drafting, sounded a further death knell for the concept.[59] Yet when Eden succeeded the ailing Churchill as Prime Minister in 1955, Britain was still heavily involved in the Middle East. Egypt's status within the late-British Empire was ambiguous as it processed through the usual succession of fashionable nomenclatures from 'protectorate' to 'independent republic guaranteed by defence treaty'. By the mid-1950s, imperialism scarcely spoke its name in the Commons like it once had and British troops withdrew from the Suez Canal Zone, their only remaining base in Egypt, on 13 June 1956. Within six weeks, the Canal had been nationalised and occupied by Egyptian troops.

The threat of disruption to Canal transit was immediately prioritised as the most significantly threatening aspect of Nasser's actions. As I argued in chapter 1, the route between Britain and India and the Far East via strategic points such as Gibraltar, Suez, Aden and the Malacca Straits was invested with supreme importance in the constitution of imperial Island Race concepts. As will be shown below, within the new context of an independent India, the imperial Lines of Communication nonetheless retained their conceptual importance for British MPs. They were more than simply functional transit routes; they were the symbolic edifice on which the maritime empire of a small, insular country could maintain its global power and influence over disparate, non-contiguous colonies. Furthermore, they were vital in geopolitical ontological security terms in the ways that they scripted a world in which Britain's maritime narrative of global politics was suggestive of successful foreign policy action. Their importance connoted how Britain's oceanic empire was not only relevant but materially and structurally vital for the smooth running of international trade. Yet the contemporary status of imperialism as both conceptually *passé* and materially and territorially waning for Britain impelled the recasting of the Lines of Communication and Island Race claims to universality if they were to retain contextual meaning in terms of British ontological security.[60]

To this end Eden internationalised the Crisis, depicting it as the concern of any state in the world which prioritised patterns of liberal trade; as he warned US President Eisenhower by telegram on July 27, it was a threat to the entire 'free world'.[61] The importance of this must be understood beyond simply the understandable desperation to enlist American support for any response to Nasser. This was of course regarded as crucial and the arguments of Labour

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[59] Wilson (1918); *Charter of the United Nations* (1945).
[60] Ó Tuathail (1992); (1996), p. 231.
[61] Eden (1960), p. 427.

Members went further and urged a truly international response; but one must also consider the important (and neglected) place of Island Race ontological security-seeking and the genealogy of the Island Race identity tropes of universality and Lines of Communication in the emergent and discursive context of the Suez Crisis itself.

Eden described how Nasser's actions affected 'the rights and interests of many nations'; an 'international problem' that was causing 'anger and alarm', 'not only here but among the governments and peoples of the democratic world'.[62]   At stake was 'the industrial life of Western Europe', as well as 'Australia, India, Ceylon and a large part of South East Asia', whose prosperity 'literally depends upon the continuing free navigation of the Canal as one of the great international waterways of the world.'[63]   Later, he commented: 'the operation, the maintenance and the freedom of navigation through the Canal touch the lives and the prosperity of everyone in these islands' and added that this was true also 'in Western Europe as a whole, and in many eastern lands.'[64]   The consequences of inaction would, he argued, be 'that the standard of life in Western Europe and many lands in Asia would be at Colonel Nasser's mercy.'[65]   The Egyptian President had taken away the 'international character from the most important waterway in the world', 'on which the livelihood of so many nations depends'.[66]   Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd echoed this sentiment:

> 'This is a world interest. It is not a case just of the United Kingdom
> and France against Egypt, or of Europe against Asia. It is a truly
> international problem.'[67]

A nexus was thus established between these geopolitical renderings of the threat to a world scripted according to familiar British narratives and the desired policy of the Conservatives which relied upon ontologically secure readings of Island Race identity: Britain as a Power with global reach.

Accordingly, the Conservative discourse comprised imperatives to act through the construction of the Canal's global importance and reiterations of Island Race universal geopolitical identity. The former were typified by the above remarks of Eden and Lloyd and those of backbenchers like Mott-Radclyffe: 'If the Suez Canal is not a vital international waterway, it is not anything at all […] it is in fact the lifeline of our country, of a large part of Europe and also of much of

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[62] HC Deb 27 July 1956, vol. 557, col. 777; HC Deb 02 August 1956, vol. 557, col. 1602.

[63] *Ibid.*, col. 1602; *ibid.*, col. 1603; *ibid.*, col. 1602.

[64] HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 3.

[65] *Ibid.*, col. 15.

[66] *Ibid.*, col. 5-6; *ibid.*, col. 6.

[67] HC Deb 13 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 162.

Asia.'[68]   The latter took the form of often explicit appeals for Britain not to abandon its traditional wide-ranging, geographical reach. Sir James Hutchison, for example, recounted his own experiences in defending the Canal in the First World War from Turkey and others' in the Second World War from Germany. He concluded: 'Having fought in two wars to stop the Canal from falling into unfriendly hands, I am not going to stand by and see just that thing happen today.'[69] Kenneth Pickthorn was similarly incredulous:

> 'Those whom I knew, in the last generation or two, would have hardly believed that the British House of Commons would speak as though Britain's frontiers were only Britain's shores. They would say that the British House of Commons must be aware that arbitrary interference with international highways puts us into a state of self-defence. They would not believe it possible that any other view could be held. The frontiers of our country, which can feed only half its people, are not only the three-mile limit.'[70]

That there was an imperative to act to free the Canal from Nasser was largely undisputed by the Labour benches. Party Leader Hugh Gaitskell described Suez as 'an international waterway of immense importance to the whole of the rest of the world', whose seizure was 'bound to be a matter of international concern'.[71] Yet, as Brent Steele argues, ontological security concerns 'knowing both what one is doing and *why* one is doing it' and the Labour interpretation of Island Race identity in practical and contextual terms was singularly different from that of the government with Gaitskell pointing out that Suez was 'not our affair alone' and arguing that 'it would be ridiculous to treat ourselves as though we were the only Power involved.'[72] By the September 12/13 debates, many Labour Members were accusing Eden and Lloyd of imperialism by another name and the Conservatives who urged unilateralism as being parochial irredentists. At the more benign end was Tony Benn's depiction of the Conservatives as 'empire-builders'; more flavoursome were 'old Blimps', 'dinosaurs and Teddy Boys', 'warmed-up Neo-Disraelian imperial grandeur', 'a dirty little colonial war', 'the attitude of the Light Brigade' and William Warbey's memorable epithet: 'the taint of the carrion of Imperialism and of the dead meat of the dinosaur.'[73] This was more than just teasing. Through their depictions of Conservative policies

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[68] *Ibid.*, col. 199-200.
[69] HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 82-3.
[70] HC Deb 13 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 218.
[71] HC Deb 02 August 1956, vol. 557, col. 1610.
[72] Steele (2005), p. 526; HC Deb 02 August 1956, vol. 557, col. 1614.
[73] HC Deb 13 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 220; Warbey: HC Deb 02 August 1956, vol. 557, col. 1642; Denis Healey: *ibid.*, col. 1626; Zilliacus: HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 127; *ibid.*, col. 128; *ibid.*, col. 128; HC Deb 02 August 1956, vol. 557, col. 1643.

'from the wrong century'—as Konni Zilliacus put it—the Labour benches were seeking discursive ownership of British identity concepts *in the present*.[74]

Crucial to this was Labour Members' advancement of the importance of Britain's taking a lead in the (preferably UN-brokered) resolution of the Crisis. In so doing, they were discursively fitting the established identity tropes of British pivotal exceptionalism and leadership with the new context of waning actual power and the popularity of the UN with the British Left. By condensing the meanings of the UN with these ontological secure notions of Island Race identity Labour's favoured policy was routinized in the unfolding narrative of British foreign policy history. Zilliacus was exemplary in this regard as he explicitly linked the two ideas, arguing that Britain 'could be the leaders of all mankind if the political genius of the British people, which has shown itself in the Mother of Parliaments and in the free Commonwealth, would also show itself through the United Nations in working for the development of the United Nations into a system of world government based on the equal rights of all nations.'[75] His Leader, Gaitskell, had it that, although 'the United Nations is imperfect and not yet the world authority which [the Labour Party] would like to see it become', Britain had the power and ability 'to create that world authority' and 'set an example to the world.'[76] As Benn put it, Labour believed in 'internationalisation'.[77]

Waged by the two groups of MPs, this was a discursive battle over the constitution of Island Race identity in the context of the Suez Crisis in which both sides sought to elucidate the most ontologically secure rendering of the events and the proposed response by co-constitutively fitting them around established, British geopolitical tropes. Crucially, in spite of the differences and the mutual antagonism, the posture of the Conservatives who wanted an unrestrained British response in Egypt and Labour Members who favoured an international solution *both* reified the traditional identity concept of the Island Race as an exceptional actor in world history. In either sense, Britain was a leader with a secure identity based around the geopolitical concepts associated with, but not exclusive to, its imperial era. This, in turn, was a crucial aspect of Island Race identity in which the remarkable little island that had spawned a great and benevolent empire had a natural gift for leadership because of its benevolent, maritime values and advantageous geopolitical poise.

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[74] HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 127.
[75] *Ibid.*, col. 131.
[76] *Ibid.*, col. 32.
[77] HC Deb 13 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 221.

3.3. Constructing a threat to the Western metacommunity: the Island Race, NATO and the Suez Crisis

As I have already argued, the Suez Crisis was spatially depicted as threatening Lines of Communication, the maintenance of which had been an important component of the geopolitical identity of the imperial Island Race. Although the Far East colonies (Hong Kong, Malaya, Singapore) remained, the overwhelming strategic justification for the Lines of Communication, especially the Suez route, had always been India, independent now for the best part of a decade. This imperilled their utility in the discourse around Suez. What can be seen, however, is the ways in which the relevance of the Lines of Communication was 'updated' so that they were rendered as strategically important for the Western world as a whole, fixing Island Race identity as coterminous with the new contextual environment. Furthermore we see how, genealogically, this was a continuation of the practice detailed in the first half of this chapter in which British identity was cast as culturally and strategically congruent with a Western community centred on the Atlantic through discursive processes linking British values and interests with NATO. In the Suez debates, this conflation continued. Although many Members—not least Eden himself—explicitly warned of the threat to British livelihoods, in the main the prospect of disrupted Suez traffic was placed squarely alongside the threat to the prosperity of the West as whole.[78] Thus Island Race Lines of Communication were linked to the contemporary concept of shared Western interests which, as we saw earlier, had already been linked to Island Race identity during the NATO debates. Indeed, at the close of Eden's address on September 13, he described the nationalisation as 'an assault on the Western Powers, on their economy, on their position in the world', echoing Younger's characterisation of 'an act of calculated hostility towards the West' from the previous day.[79]

Moreover, this threat to the West constructed in the Suez debates also hinged upon American intransigence over the defence of the Middle East. The American role in the Crisis has come to be afforded great importance as it was they who put forth the UN cease-fire Resolution in November which caused Eden's humiliating reversal; at this stage, prior to Britain's military involvement in Egypt, the lack of support from Washington was cast (although not by the front benches) as threatening Western solidarity. The discursive constitution of this was complex and ambiguous. In the first place, the apparent lack of interest in the region affirmed supposed British expertise on the Middle East (Anthony Verrier commented that foreign policy expert Eden saw it as '*his* Middle East').[80] Head, for example, had remarked in the debate on NATO

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[78] See, for example, Eden: HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 4; Sir Robert Boothby: *ibid.*, col. 148; Albert Cooper (Conservative): HC Deb 13 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 274; Maurice Edelman (Labour): HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 108.

[79] HC Deb 13 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 299; HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 132.

[80] Verrier (1983), p. 113. Emphasis added.

that 'the Americans must find it very hard to believe that as far as defence is concerned, modern strategy, aircraft and weapons make the Middle West and the Middle East part of the same defensive system.'[81] Yet, even seven years later, Labour's Denis Healey was wont to reflect that events leading up to the Suez Crisis provided 'the first opportunity we had had for a long time to interest the United States in the problems of the Middle East'.[82] Conservative Major Patrick Wall, who was 'very pro-American', nonetheless pronounced that 'American policy in the Middle East since the end of the war has been wrong in almost everything it has done'.[83]

Yet the fact Britain couldn't count on the US in this instance was mobilised as proof of the importance of NATO and Western solidarity.[84] This decoupling of the US from sentiment towards NATO that I hinted at early on this chapter shows how the alliance, so often confused with 'the special relationship', constitutively relied on more than just Britain's pursuance of a strong relationship with America. Indeed, genealogically this ought to be seen in the light of the opening to this chapter in which NATO was constituted as the bearer of Island Race values and interests. That it was placed under threat by British representations of events in Egypt only led to more urgent mobilisations of it as a discursive marker of ontological security particularly in the discourse of Conservatives who sought to uphold the Island Race concept of universalism without seeming nakedly imperialist. In other words: if the threat was conceived as towards something more than just Britain, the proposed response (implicitly involving the rest of this metacommunity) could not be the unilateral imperial act of which Labour accused them of favouring; Britain would be acting in the interests of a greater cause.

Typically, this was also linked to a Soviet threat that, in the light of the previous arguments of this chapter on NATO, was, by now, thoroughly embedded in British conceptions of geopolitical ontological security. A warning from Labour's Frederick Bellenger demonstrates this point:

> 'the pillars of Western Union, Western defence, Western understanding and the democratic way of life will be endangered.

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[81] HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2051.
[82] HC Deb 02 August 1956, vol. 557, col. 1625.
[83] HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 50. See also Stanley Evans (Lab): HC Deb 02 August 1956, vol. 557, col. 1635; Clement Davies: HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 32; Major Tufton Beamish (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 71; Manny Shinwell (Labour): HC Deb 13 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 192.
[84] Boothby: HC Deb 02 August 1956, vol. 557, col. 1625; HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 142; *ibid.*, col. 148; Evans: HC Deb 02 August 1956, vol. 557, col. 1633; *ibid.* col. 1635-6; Edelman: HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 110-1; Frederick Bellenger (Labour): HC Deb 13 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 212.

> That will do only the Communists good, and certainly not
> ourselves.'[85]

The hidden hand of Moscow served as the *deus ex machina* of these debates, demonstrating how thoroughly British identity had incorporated the Western discourse of the Cold War. Yet also in evidence are the traces of Island Race identity and its specific mobilisation of Land Powers as the constitutive threat to a benevolent, liberal and maritime order:

> 'Nasser has been supported all along by Russia, and Russia's policy
> today is no different from her policy under the Tsars. The imperial
> policy of the Tsars is today reproduced in the Communist Kremlin.
> […] In the Middle East it is to deny Britain a waterway to the
> remainder of the Southern Hemisphere and to deny Britain access to
> the oil deposits in those countries on which we so much depend for
> our industrial and military potential.'[86]

Inaction would, many agreed, merely recreate another malevolent Land Power in the Middle East. Thus Members assigned to Nasser's hypothetical future empire the familiar, antithetical qualities used to describe the Soviet Union and its antecedents.[87] Wall, for example, described a bloc ripe for 'Communist domination', 'stretch[ing] from Casablanca to the Caspian' which 'might well attract India'.[88] His colleague, Sir Victor Raikes urged the government to 'prevent a situation which, in a few years' time, may mean that a triumphant Egypt, having got away with this, having increased her power with Russian aid throughout the Arab world, with Russian weapons and Russian prestige backing her, will sweep Israel to the sea, as Egypt has sworn to do, and cast out, perhaps to death, another million Europeans.'[89]

These characterisations of the Soviet Union and Nasser's caliphate-in-waiting as rapacious, contiguous land empires provided ontological security for the Members in their depictions of a geopolitical space that fixed Britain in a subject-position of relevance as the singular eternal opponent embodying antithetical qualities. Even those who labelled the Conservatives as

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[85] *Ibid.*, col. 212.

[86] Bellenger: *ibid.*, col. 210.

[87] Eden pointed out that the Soviet Union was 'alone among the 18 nations' convened at the London Conference on Suez to have 'in the years since the war enormously extended its territorial boundaries and increased the number of its subject peoples.' Hansard records Labour Member Stephen Davies calling the Prime Minister's remark 'nonsense' (HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 7). The apparent complaisance towards Soviet rapacity was a source of abiding bitterness for Eden, who recorded in his memoirs: 'Soviet Russia can take in her Moloch jaws the free Baltic countries and much else besides. Nobody, it seems, considers that act colonial grab. Soviet Russia may stretch forth into central Asia, into lands which have never known communism or Soviet rule before. So long as the whole is part of some great land mass, nobody considers that colonialism. Soviet Russia has by far the greatest colonial possessions on earth' (Eden (1960), p. 392).

[88] HC Deb 12 September 1956, vol. 558, col. 49; *ibid.*; *ibid.*, col. 50.

[89] *Ibid.*, col. 40.

empire-builders or worse cast Britain as the real or potential antithesis to Moscow/Cairo: freedom-loving, maritime and, although exceptional, part of a democratic metacommunity whose values were thoroughly British. As Hadfield-Amkhan puts it: 'moments of crisis involving war, allies, threats and opportunities cannot be decided solely by referring to a generic national interest or material balance sheet, but are more likely to be informed by the national narrative, in which national selfness is determined neither by strategy nor tactics but draws on culturally derived, existential themes in which the very definition of the state and its ultimate purpose is constituted.'[90] Just as in the much rehearsed Self/Other constitution, we see something like a threat/opportunity nexus when analysing the debates around the Suez Crisis in which the threat and the opportunity for the reiteration of national identity concepts exist in a co-constitutive relationship. This takes us further than Booth's 'strategy and ethnocentrism' thesis in which '[n]ations see themselves as the centre of the universe' and 'tend to worry about all manner of threats because they implicitly or explicitly see behaviour elsewhere being directed towards themselves.'[91] While this national egotism must be admitted—especially in the case of Britain and its self-professed exceptional history—a premium must also be placed upon the constitution of concepts of identity and their reiteration in novel contexts to seek ontological security.

4. Conclusion: the enduring Island Race

This chapter has focussed on two moments in British foreign policy from the middle of the twentieth century: the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty and the Suez Crisis. In their different ways, these two events epitomised the changing status of Britain at the time, from preeminent imperial power to something else. Yet, as I have shown, the ways in which they were debated in parliament co-constituted the established Island Race concepts of identity that the empire had been discursively based on. This is not to say that the MPs at the time were necessarily and only subject to a vapid revanchism; rather that the contexts of the two issues were mediated through established Island Race tropes and vice versa. More specifically, we saw how NATO was represented as a continuation of Greater Britain in which Britain was the implicit leader of a group of like-minded states driven by values which originated in Britain itself. The Suez debates were more complex and partisan yet constituted similar reifications of Island Race universality and exceptionalism in the battles over who held the key to resolving the Crisis and therefore understood the true nature of ontologically secure British identity. In both cases, the Soviet Union was cast as the antithesis of liberal, maritime trade-loving Britain and its Western, 'free' allies, thus confirming the relevance of Island Race identity in its new Cold War context.

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[90] Hadfield-Amkhan (2010), p. 57.
[91] Booth (1979), p. 34.

NATO, as I argued earlier, has become a barely questioned part of British security architecture. With the end of the Cold War, a debate has proliferated amongst IR scholars about the endurance of the organisation; with some rightfully arguing that its continued existence proves the paucity of realist characterisations. Instead, the likes of Thomas Risse-Kappen, Michael John Williams and Michael C. Williams and Iver Neumann suggest that NATO properly viewed is a 'security community' of values whose perpetuation (and, indeed, expansion) is the cumulation of a shared history of liberal democratic norms.[92] Useful and welcome as they are, these accounts tend to focus on NATO at the institutional level; what this study demonstrates is the efficacy of locating the protraction of the alliance at the level of one its constituent national parts in which it is condensed with ontologically secure meanings gleaned from a particularist set of identity tropes. Genealogically we can also see how NATO was co-constitutively incorporated into the ever-emergent Island Race identity so that it was not simply one moment in British history but that it *became* part of that history, given relevance in a historical light through the same Island Race tropes that mediated the present circumstances of the Cold War.

The typical characterisations of Suez as beginning, end and lesson temporalise it in specific ways that tend to brook an elision of considerations of continuities in an evolving national identity. Considered another way, Eden's duplicitous collusion with France and Israel and the subsequent, nationwide depression that Thatcher described, mark out Suez as an event to be somehow foreclosed. This sense is only heightened by the memoirs of those involved—including Lloyd's, in which he memorably tells the reader that he accepts 'no blame for Mediterranean geography'—whose self-justificatory tones render a cadaverous Suez as something whose meaning is to be fought over posthumously as a singular, rapturous event.[93] The tendency to personalise crises such as these (the same can be said, for example, of the so-called 'Blair wars') and focus on the spleens of the participants or Westminster decision-making processes can obscure the larger histories of identity discourse.[94] By taking the genealogical,

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[92] Risse-Kappen (1995), pp. 4, 12-41, 194-226; Williams (2013), p. 362; Williams & Neumann (2000), p. 358. See also Ruggie (1998), pp. 229-39; Thies (2009), pp. 287-308; Waterman *et al* (2001); and, by way of a critique, Sjursen (2004), especially pp. 693-7.

[93] Lloyd (1978), p. 260. See also Eden (1960), pp. 522-7; Nutting (1967); and the diaries of diplomat Evelyn Shuckburgh who captures the stresses and strains of the time in recording how he pleaded with his superior to be 'relieved' from having 'to *think* about the Middle East for another year. I can hardly bear to think of it, and lie awake at night worrying about the headlong descent of our fortunes' (Shuckburgh (1986), p. 350).

[94] David Coates and colleagues and John Kampfner, for example, entitled their studies *Blair's War* and *Blair's Wars* respectively (Coates *et al* (2004); Kampfner (2003)). On Suez, see D.R. Thorpe's biography of Eden, Jonathan Pearson's account of Eden's participation in events, Saul Kelly and Anthony Gorst's edited volume analysing Whitehall's role and Bertjan Verbeek's examination of the governmental decision-making processes at the time of the Crisis (Thorpe (2004), pp. 550-600; Pearson (2003); Kelly & Gorst (2000); Verbeek (2003)).

discursive analytical approach advanced by this thesis, we can elide the tendency to restrictively view the Suez Crisis as either end or beginning and begin to understand the continuities at work in the history of Island Race identity and also the emergent changes as it co-constitutively met, interacted with and mediated novel, unexpected contexts.

Even when studying the tortuous Commons debates of late summer 1956, one might be tempted to say that traditional notions of Britain's international identity had been shattered by Suez. Yet, when pursuing a genealogical approach and by taking seriously the persistence of sedimented geopolitical tropes and the particular role of parliamentary debate in upholding these notions, we can see how Britain's Island Race identity survived the Crisis. Both Labour and Conservative Members, while advocating wildly different policies internationalised the issue, cast Nasser and the Soviet Union as implacable enemies and reiterated Britain's exceptional geo-history. Britain's pivotal, geopolitical commission as defender of Lines of Communication for the benefit of the Western world should be seen in the context of older, historic Island Race tropes as well as the recent constitutive absorption of NATO. Thus, when viewed alongside one another, the signing of the North Atlantic Pact and the Suez Crisis are shown to be decisive moments in the genealogy of the Island Race but not because they precipitated any great re-think of Britain's identity. Indeed, this is the fundamental ambiguity that characterises ontological security-seeking for its social-discursive practices discipline any 'crisis' into a mediated performance of a situated world that is understood by foreign policy-makers. In the process of narrating and debating both the positive development of NATO and the negative of Suez Island Race identity tropes remained fixed as co-ordinates of British foreign policy even as they were co-constitutively adapted to the new contexts.

chapter 4

The insularity/universality conundrum: the Island Race negotiates European integration, 1960-3

1. Introduction

The analytical focus of this chapter is how Island Race identity tropes were mobilised in the context of British MPs debating whether to seek entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) in the early 1960s. Of particular concern will be two of the identity tropes that I outlined in chapter 1: insularity and universality. My conceptualisation of them has them in a co-constitutive relationship; that is, the discursive relevance of one is reliant on that of the other and *vice versa*. Put in very simple terms, imperial Island Race identity was predicated upon Britain having global reach and an active presence around the world, a position allowed by its partial relationship with continental Europe. Yet the shrinking of the empire had taken on a new impetus in the late 1950s with the granting of independence to Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (1956), Malaya and the Gold Coast (both 1957). Contemporaneously, six western European states signed the Treaty of Rome creating the EEC.

How the co-constitutive identity tropes of insularity and universality were reconciled in these novel contexts is important for a genealogy of British identity and foreign policy, not least because of the ways in which Britain's stance towards Europe continues to be characterised by highly charged political debates. By examining the first discursive encounters between Britain and a converging Europe and how British foreign policy-makers sought ontological security, new light can be shed on the current constitution of 'Europe' as an issue in British politics. After introducing the topic and the background I will then analyse several debates from 1960 and 1961 in which Members discussed whether to apply or not to join the EEC. I will focus on the discursive fixing of subject positions reliant on Island Race identity tropes and then do the same concerning a debate in 1963 after France had blocked British entry, showing how established identity concepts were mobilised as Members sought ontological security in two contrasting and unsettling contexts. What will be brought out in particular is the manifold and often conflictual meanings of insularity and universality and how they failed to necessarily offer clear policy proscriptions yet continued to be relied upon because of how they connoted ontological security on Britain in this novel context.

1.1 Britain and a uniting Europe: discursive encounters and Island Race identity

Such has been the enduring force of the idea that insularity from Europe and universality can only exist in symbiosis with one another and Britain cannot be both at the centre of Europe *and* maintain global links that Tony Blair's 1998 assertion of the falsity of having to make a choice between Europe and the US was not only regarded as novel but an elision.[1] John Major, presiding over a party tearing itself up over Europe (out of which Blair, incidentally, was making great political capital), told the Conservative conference in 1996:

> 'We have links and influence on every continent. We have given birth
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> to a whole family of nations. I never forget that as I contemplate our
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> future role in Europe.'[2]

And Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan recorded in his diaries contemporaneously to the debates of this chapter his anguish at the 'grim choice' of being 'caught between a hostile (or at least less and less friendly) America and a boastful, powerful 'Empire of Charlemagne'— now under French but later bound to come under German control' or 'abandoning a) the [European Free Trade Association (EFTA)] Seven b) British agriculture c) the Commonwealth.'[3]

Europe in British discourse was, and remains, a multifaceted construction, loaded with the weight of its historical renderings and subject to extremes of view and many shades in between. I have argued that the concepts of Island Race identity were based upon a specific scripting of Europe and Britain's relationship to it within which British engagement with the rest of the world was possible only through disengagement with its proximal continent, thus allowing a poise of insularity from Europe and a global outlook. Therefore, Europe is crucial to the discursive structure of Island Race identity, as a site of *partial* British involvement. The endlessly warring European system was represented as a maw into which Britain could be sucked, compromising its involvements farther afield. This, in turn, constructed it as a space that needed strategic management; hence the partial British involvement in Europe that took the form of maintaining a continental Balance of Power through selected alliances and limited engagements in order to ensure that no one Power or group of Powers could threaten British sovereignty and prevent it from realising its global ambitions. This necessitated a sustained process of Othering in which British geo-history was dignified against a supposed Continental

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[1] Blair speech to the Associated Press Luncheon, London, 15 December 1998, reproduced in Deighton (2001), p. 310; Riddell (2003), p. vii. For examples on this theme: Andrew Gamble and Robin Niblett emphasise the enduring British dilemma of Europe or the US; William Wallace frames it as one between Europe or the Anglosphere; and Stephen George, David Gowland and colleagues, Oliver Daddow and Cary Fontana and Craig Parsons examine a British 'outsider' tradition *vis-à-vis* Europe (Gamble (2003); Niblett (2007); Wallace (2005b); George (1998); Gowland *et al* (2010); Daddow (2015b); Fontana & Parsons (2015)).

[2] Major (1996).

[3] Macmillan (2011), p. 313.

rival. Rather than just xenophobic posturing, this was and is about the fixing of Britain in a subject position as an island, with all the established connotations condensed in Island Race identity and, furthermore, should not obscure the evident pro-European sentiment that was rife at the time of these debates.[4]

Developments in Europe and elsewhere in the 1950s problematised the plenitude of the insularity/universality nexus of Island Race geopolitical identity and, as will be seen, affected the ways in which ontological security was sought by British foreign policy-makers when faced with the prospect of integration with the rest of Europe. In a sense, the nominal defence of Belgium and Poland and the checking of German continental domination in the World Wars were all of a piece with historic Balance of Power reasoning. But the Second World War and atomic weapons, let alone air power, had arguably raised the stakes of war in Europe and the British continental commitment was far larger and more ruinous than anything before; as Kennedy put it 'the 'wooden walls' of the island nation had at last been breached.'[5] Could Britain even contemplate insularity from the rest of Europe in this new environment? Certainly Attlee had thought not, as he explained to the Commons in 1946:

> 'We are now part of the Continent. We can be reached by attack from
> the Continent. While in the past we always had a long breathing space
> on which we could depend, that breathing space is most unlikely to be
> available should any war arise in the future.'[6]

Similarly, Bevin argued several years later that Britain could not 'preserve peace' by 'stand[ing] outside Europe and regard[ing] her problems as quite separate from those of her European neighbours.'[7]

Furthermore, the American commitment during and after World War Two was on an unprecedented level and nakedly geopolitically ambitious *vis-à-vis* Communism in Europe. These factors, along with Britain's waning empire, its subsumption into the NATO defence system (although Macmillan retained, to a degree, British nuclear independence) and the American snubbing over Suez, all combined with the sentimental wartime rhetoric of the likes of Churchill and Eden regarding Europe (especially France) to constitute a discursive context

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[4] On resurrecting the British pro-European tradition see Daddow (2004), pp. 9-18. Also, Martin Marcussen and colleagues contextualise Britain's European identity with those of France and Germany; and Justin Gibbins presents a genealogy of the same thing in relation to events such as the 1975 referendum and the Lisbon and Maastricht Treaties (Marcussen *et al* (1999); Gibbins (2014)).
[5] Kennedy (1976), p. 283.
[6] HC Deb 12 November 1946, vol. 430, col. 40.
[7] HC Deb 22 January 1948, vol. 446, col. 397.

that thoroughly problematised the symbiotic Island Race identity tropes of insularity and universality.[8]

From the earliest sessions of parliament after VE Day in 1945, Members from all sides of the House exclaimed the need for unity in Europe. However, British reactions to the Schuman Declaration of 1950 and the inception of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) the following year were typically ambivalent and reflected the historic co-constitution of insularity from Europe and universality. Churchill exemplified this and, upon the announcement of the Schuman Declaration (at which time he was Leader of the Opposition), he told the House that he was 'deeply moved' by this 'historic event' and 'regretted' the Attlee government's decision not to attend the discussions, for 'the absence of Britain deranges the balance of Europe.'[9] Yet he declared: 'I cannot conceive that Britain would be an ordinary member of a Federal Union *limited to Europe* in any period which can at present be foreseen.'[10] This was at the height of his influential 'three circles' phase, upon which he expounded to the House: 'First, there is the Empire and Commonwealth; secondly, the fraternal association of the English-speaking world; and thirdly, not in rank or status but in order, the revival of united Europe as a vast factor in the preserving of what is left of the civilisation and culture of the free world.'[11]

European unity, it was agreed by virtually all Members, was a thoroughly good thing but British involvement threatened to imperil the worldwide interests of the Island Race by nulling the dual-concept of insularity and universality. In spite of the partisanship over things like Britain's non-involvement in the post-Schuman discussions, there was agreement between the front benches on this issue; Attlee's and Bevin's proclamations of the glory of a united Europe and the realities of interdependence were almost immediately appended with an explanation that Britain had to consider the balance of European forces and had concerns that went far wider than its nearest continent.[12] Having spurned the Schuman discussions and then the Treaty of

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[8] See Margaret Gowing and Hennessy for accounts of Britain's attempts to retain nuclear independence, the latter of which focusses on Macmillan (Gowing (1974), pp. 273-348; Hennessy (2010), pp. 61-74). Churchill had proposed a full Franco-British Union during the War and Eden announced in an address to the French people in 1942 that the 'full restoration of France as a Great Power is not only a declared war aim and the fulfilment of a pledge made to a sister nation, but also a practical necessity, if post-war reconstruction is to be undertaken within the framework of that traditional civilization which is our common heritage' (Churchill (1949), pp. 180-9; Eden (1965), p. 347).
[9] HC Deb 27 June 1950, vol. 476, col. 2154; *ibid.*, col. 2154; *ibid.*, col. 2153; *ibid.*, col. 2153.
[10] *Ibid.*, col. 2157. Emphasis added.
[11] *Ibid.*, col. 2155.
[12] Bevin said in 1948: 'No one disputes the idea of European unity. That is not the issue. The issue is whether European unity cannot be achieved without the domination and control of one Great Power' (HC Deb 22 January 1948, vol. 446, col. 388). See also, for example, Attlee: HC Deb 23 January 1948, vol. 446, col. 615; HC Deb 05 May 1948, vol. 450, col. 1315; Bevin: HC Deb 15 September 1948, vol. 456, col. 106.

Rome in 1957, Britain founded EFTA in early 1960 with Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland, forming a customs union which—unlike the EEC—wouldn't trade in agricultural goods and lacked an external tariff, crucially allowing Britain preferential trade deals with its Commonwealth partners. In this sense, EFTA could be seen as being more complementary with Island Race identity concepts in the way that it did not compromise the notion of universal, global trading, as represented by the Commonwealth.

In sum, discourse on Europe, European integration and Britain's relationship with Europe was heavily loaded with historic, sometimes contradictory concepts by the time the Conservative Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd hinted to the House on July 25 1960 that Macmillan's government might seek to open accession talks with the EEC and then asked for its approval the following year. This had profound effects on the ways in which Island Race identity tropes were mobilised by British MPs seeking ontological security in debating this issue.

2. The 1960/1 debates on joining the EEC

The debates focussed on in this section can be conceptualised as attempts to reconcile the Island Race identity tropes of insularity and universality with a uniting Europe. Not marked by the partisan divisions over Suez, the remarks in the Commons were more individualistic, reflecting the concerns of the Members themselves which were sometimes parochial (particularly around British agriculture) and at other times on a grand scale. From amongst these I have identified three main ways in which Members discursively linked Island Race identity to the emergent context of European integration with or without Britain. Firstly, there is Balance of Power reasoning which preserved both (partial) insularity from Europe and a universal aspect; secondly, some Members suggested that Britain might lead Europe from within, a posture which compromised both insularity and universality yet was in keeping with the general Island Race identity concept of Britain's unique geo-history impelling a leadership role; thirdly, the idea of Britain as a bridge between Europe and, variously, the Commonwealth, the US, the Eastern Bloc, Africa and/or Asia.

All three positions (with the exception, generally, of the second) tended to be characterised by a lack of consensus around whether they could best be achieved from within or without the EEC. So nebulous were they that they were essentially devoid of meaning in collective policy terms and Members with divergent views could discursively link British insularity and/or universality to a given policy only for an opponent to cite the very same trope in support of the opposing policy. Similarly notable is how, after French President Charles de Gaulle had vetoed Britain's membership in 1963, a greater degree of unity prevailed, with Members more unified in their mobilisations of Island Race identity; this will be demonstrated in the second section of this

chapter. What this begins to demonstrate is the discursive ontological force of the co-constitutive Island Race identity concepts of insularity and universality regarding Europe. Even though Britain would not succeed in joining what was by then the European Communities (EC) for another decade or so, these particular Island Race identity tropes remained resistant as markers of British ontological security, the eventual accession having, once again, to be negotiated in the Commons according to their discursive practices.

The full consequences of this, over the ensuing five decades, are too great to be chronicled in this thesis but, by examining the first interactions of Island Race identity discourse and European integration, we can perhaps gain a greater understanding of the often difficult relationship between Britain and the rest of Europe. Furthermore, we can better problematize some of the unsatisfactory truisms which suggest that Britain's difficulties with the EU can be explained away by reductionist and over-simplistic theories such as an obsession with the transatlantic 'special relationship', xenophobia, or the jealous guarding of island sovereignty. Perhaps all these notions have their place, but that is within long-term discursive processes of ontological security-seeking through successive mobilisations of Island Race geopolitical identity.

2.1. Balancing Europe: retaining insularity and universality

The concept of Britain as a balancer of Europe relied on the construction of both an unbalanced Europe and a Britain that possessed certain attributes that would allow it to create equilibrium. The first prerequisite of disequilibrium was rendered in the 1960/1 debates in several ways: the eternal Franco-German rivalry and the threat from the Soviet Union.[13] The British ability to achieve a European balance was discursively linked to Britain's proximal but insular position— thereby also presenting a *fait accompli*—and Britain's particular, historical genius for achieving such a balance. These two constitutions are intimately linked, for it is through the historical processes of Othering *and* involvement that—in the manner of Chinua Achebe's colonialist-native relationship—British foreign policy-makers could 'know' their European counterparts intimately enough to influence them.[14] In other words: the insularity of the Island Race provided the perfect distance from which to observe, understand and manage the rest of Europe.

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[13] Lloyd: HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1109; Harold Wilson: *ibid.*, col. 1119; *ibid.*, col. 1123; *ibid.*, col. 1126-7; Sir Anthony Hurd (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1128; HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1736; Bellenger: HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1136-7; Ronald Russell (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1145; Robin Turton (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1155; Richard Winterbottom (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 1183; Macmillan: HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1482-3; *ibid.*, col. 1492; Sir Derek Walker-Smith (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1507-8; Sir Lynn Ungoed-Thomas (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 1577.
[14] Achebe (1975), p. 5.

However, this was complicated by the constant articulations of the desirability of a united Europe and that Britain was a part of Europe. To reiterate: the insular discursive posture as balancer of European forces allowed Britain as the Island Race to construct a world in which it naturally sought interests further afield (universality). The lack of one compromised the other according to the geopolitical logic of Island Race discourse. Yet Britain's *intimacy* with Europe had been reified into a truism since the Second World War and the traces of solidarity with the continent had proved resistant to erasure, particularly on the front benches. Lloyd, for example, was unequivocal as he announced:

> 'I want to make certain points absolutely clear: we in Britain regard ourselves as part of Europe. By history, by tradition, by civilisation, by sentiment, by geography, we are part of Europe. [… T]he fact that the English Channel had not been crossed successfully in war as often as had some other physical barriers in Europe did not disqualify us from European status. The fact that our Queen is Head of the Commonwealth and that we are a member of that association does not disqualify us from European status. […I]f Britain were to be regarded as outside Europe we could not fulfil our complete role in the world. Nor do I believe that Europe would be complete without us.'[15]

This was disputed several times in the 1960 debate, causing Lloyd on one occasion to intervene and reiterate his point.[16] Labour's Denis Healey pointed to a 'fundamental difference in mental habits' between Britons and Europeans and Conservative John Farr distinguished between Europeans and the 'kith and kin' of the Commonwealth, the latter of which ought always to be favoured.[17] For Labour Member Sir Lynn Ungoed-Thomas, joining the EEC was a proposal 'alien to the mind of this country', 'a departure from the course which this country has followed in the past' and represented, 'in the long run, the giving up of the independence and identity of this country in order to merge it with Europe.'[18]

On one hand, Lloyd was linking the aspiration of Britain retaining an important role in the world with the facts of Britain's proximity with Europe; Healey *et al*, by contrast, sought to draw a clear distinction between Britain and the continent. Macmillan in 1961 attempted to

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[15] HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1099. See also Gilbert Longden (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1186; Reginald Maudling (Conservative, President of the Board of Trade): *ibid.*, col. 1207-8; Manny Shinwell (Labour): HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1733.

[16] During a speech by Bellenger, he said: 'I must get this clear. […] I was speaking of the suggestion that we in this country, the United Kingdom, were not part of Europe at all. […] I was talking of the idea that this island—because it is an island off the coast of Europe—should not be regarded as part of Europe' (HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1133).

[17] *Ibid.*, col. 1203; HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1594-5.

[18] *Ibid.*, col. 1579; *ibid.*, col. 1571; *ibid.*, col. 1571.

mediate between these positions by drawing on the classic balance of power poise: 'there is a long tradition of isolation' in Britain yet 'in every period when the world has been in danger of tyrants or aggression, Britain has abandoned isolationism.'[19] That a European balance was desirable was undisputed, as was the idea that Britain was crucial in achieving it. What was debatable was whether Britain would be best placed to enact its balancing role inside or outside the EEC. In either case it was, as Macmillan put it, 'a duty' of Britain (as it was all European countries) 'to seek some means of resolving the causes of potential division' on the continent.[20] However, for Britain to actually join the EEC would, in Shadow Chancellor Harold Wilson's words, 'destroy the whole balance' of the Treaty of Rome even though an end to a 'thousand years of Franco-German bloodshed' was to be welcomed.[21] Conservative Sir Anthony Hurd referred to how Britain's 'special contribution […] to world affairs' had been achieved by 'standing on the touchline of the Continent of Europe rather than being right in the centre of political entity in Europe itself.'[22] And in a speech which Maurice Macmillan said brought to mind 'Burke or Disraeli' and was much referred to in the ensuing debate and in future discussions on Europe, Sir Derek Walker-Smith outlined

> 'our history and institutions and […] that special and separate position which time and the toil of our forefathers have built up for us. To refer to our special and separate position is not to take a narrow or parochial view. It is from that special and separate position that Britain has served the interests of Europe and of the world over the centuries and has contributed mightily to their well-being. It is on the basis of that special and separate position that our greatness has rested.'[23]

Thus, for some Members who opposed *and* some who supported accession, the crucial arbiter of ontological security was the Island Race concept of a Britain insular from Europe maintaining the balance of power. The fact that it discursively retained both insularity and universality explains its appeal but, unlike the linking of NATO with the concepts of Greater Britain, it failed to offer a consensual policy direction in terms of the EEC.

2.2. Between Europe and the world: the Island Race as a bridge

The discursive battle over British identity and ontological security in the context of the EEC concerned not simply the posture of Britain towards the rest of the continent. As we have seen,

[19] *Ibid.*, col. 1482.
[20] *Ibid.*, col. 1482.
[21] HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1120; *ibid.*, col. 1123.
[22] *Ibid.*, col. 1128.
[23] HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1719; HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1512.

insularity had as its referent object continental Europe exclusively and was co-constitutive with the concept of universality towards the rest of the world. Therefore, in the 1960/1 debates, Britain's potential membership of the EEC was weighed against the possible implications for Britain as a global actor. Where previously there had been an easy 'fit' between notions of universality and the empire itself, excepting the Commonwealth it was far from clear how Britain could remain a global actor and the proliferation of different schemes in these debates for Britain to 'bridge' with various parts of the world demonstrates this. This idea of Britain as a bridge is genealogically significant because of the novel ways in which Island Race geopolitical tropes were mobilised to seek ontological security in this new context. The proposition rendered Britain as a unique actor in world politics in a geopolitical situation that was pivotal in allowing it privileged influence with many other states and areas. The fact that it was proffered in such variegated forms and without consistent links to policy proscription hints at the entropy inherent in the reaction to the EEC and shows how the tropes of Island Race identity, although shared and widely used in elucidating ontological security, do not always and necessarily actuate particular foreign policy roles.

To give a flavour of this, Hurd argued that Britain could be a bridge between the EEC and the Commonwealth but was unconcerned about whether accession was actually achieved as a result of Macmillan's negotiations; his colleague Robin Turton made the same point about Britain bridging Europe and the Commonwealth but argued this would best be achieved *outside* the EEC.[24] A *bon mot* of particularly Labour Members was Britain as a 'bridge between East and West'; alternatively (or in tandem), Britain could bridge Europe with the Commonwealth, Asia, Africa, the US, the West or any combination of the above.[25] Typically, there was scant agreement about whether bridging could be most effective within or without the EEC. Deputy Leader of the Labour Party George Brown and Wilson both favoured Britain bridging the West and Eastern Europe; the former arguing that Britain could best achieve this from within the EEC, the latter unsure.[26]

Where there was greater consensus was over Britain as a pivotal part of a Western metacommunity, although this too offered little by way of a clear policy direction. Wilson asserted Britain's 'very important role […] in easing tension between East and West' and Hurd, Labour's Frederick Bellenger and Conservative Ronald Russell immediately followed him with

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[24] HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1741; HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1159.

[25] See, for example, William Blyton (Labour): HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1533; George Brown (Deputy Leader of the Labour Party): HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1757; Viscount Hinchingbrooke (Conservative): HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1543; Russell: HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1145; Turton: *ibid.*, col. 1159; Wilson: *ibid.*, col. 1118; *ibid.*, col. 1126.

[26] HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1757; HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1118-9.

similar points.[27]   Later, and the following year, this was an important aspect in the speeches of particularly Harold Macmillan, Labour's Richard Winterbottom, Walker-Smith, Healey, and Conservatives Reginald Maudling and Peter Smithers.[28]

2.3. Leading Europe: traditions of leadership and exceptional British geo-history

The third position evident in the speeches of Members in 1960/1 is related to both balancing and bridging and is also significant for the ensuing and ongoing debates concerning Britain in Europe.   That Britain might be a leader of Europe had been suggested in much rhetoric on Britain as the saviour of the continent in World War Two, a rendering intimately associated with islandness.[29]   Rab Butler, for example, who would later serve as Foreign Secretary, described Britain's 'age-long tradition of leadership' in the late 1940s, reflecting the established Island Race identity trope of an exceptional Power that naturally leads other states.[30]   The importance of a geopolitically imperialist mindset is manifestly obvious in remarks such as this but Europeans, by and large, had not been part of the British Empire and yet, as I argued earlier, this European Othering cannot be conceived as a complete disengagement (discursive or otherwise); fundamental to drawing differentiation is always an inherent 'knowing'.[31]   Thus the discourse of prospective British leadership in Europe was loaded with Britain's 'knowledge' of the continent (related to which, Churchill's infamous part in dividing up the continent with Stalin was exemplary), it's proximal, insular position and the 'tradition' of leadership more generally; all important Island Race identity concepts that conveyed ontological security.[32]

Britain's exceptionalism with regards Europe (either as a European country or something else) was reiterated on a number of occasions during the debates.   Two particular ontologically secure subject positions were fixed in elucidating this notion: firstly, that of Europe being 'incomplete' without some British involvement; secondly, British intellectual ownership of the idea of European union.   Both of these were important components in the contemporary debate insofar as they allowed speakers to contextualise European union within the exceptional and ontologically secure geo-history of the Island Race.   Typically, Members making congruent points on these matters didn't necessarily agree on whether Britain ought to seek accession or not.

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[27] Wilson: *ibid.*, col. 1118; Hurd: *ibid.*, col. 1127; Bellenger: *ibid.*, col. 1136; Russell*: ibid.*, col. 1145.
[28] Macmillan: HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1482-3; *ibid.*, col. 1492; Winterbottom: HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1182-3; Walker-Smith: HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1507-8; Healey: HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1206; Maudling: *ibid.*, col. 1207-8; Smithers: HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1559.
[29] See, for example: HC Deb 30 October 1945, vol. 415, col. 249-66.
[30] HC Deb 04 May 1948, vol. 450, col. 1133.
[31] Hansen (2006), pp. 41-6.
[32] Churchill (1954), pp. 198-204.

Even EEC-enthusiasts like Lloyd made the point that Britain was no normal European country. Having argued that Britain was European 'by history, by tradition, by civilisation, by sentiment, by geography', he went on to explain that a united Europe would not 'be complete without us.'[33] Wilson simply argued that 'Europe is looking to Britain for a lead' and his colleague, Fred Mulley, bullishly suggested that Britain needed to 'throw a brick through the window of the glasshouse' of the EEC and was 'the only member country' of EFTA capable of doing so.[34] Although making opposing points, several other Labour Members drew on Britain's roles in the World Wars, exemplifying the presence and glorification of recent Island Race history in British European discourse. Winterbottom, who urged the government to speed up and deepen their engagement with the EEC, recalled Britain's paternal undertaking defending Belgium and Poland and suggested that 'we should grasp the principle that we fought for in those days and apply it to economic and political affairs today as we assess the priorities which should apply for Britain and our relationships with Europe.'[35] Ungoed-Thomas contended that the EEC had been formed 'by countries defeated in the last war, countries disappointed in their own state, countries finding themselves inadequate for their own protection and for their purpose, and, therefore, having to form a new union in order to provide themselves with a sense of security and confidence that they lack.' He continued:

> 'We ourselves have not had that experience; we ourselves have not had that need. We are not now, perhaps, the great political Power that we once were, but I believe us to be a tremendously important political Power. And our political power is not just the power of this country standing on its own; it is the political power of this country, and the influence that this country has by reason of being the founder and a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.'[36]

Both men placed Britain in an exceptional subject-position regarding Europe, drawing on the discourse of recent historical experience to mark out the difference between the Island Race and the continent, seeking ontological security through the linkage of British geo-history with the contemporary context.

For Labour's Harry Hynd, this glorified position of Britain amongst the states of Europe meant that EFTA was not sufficient: 'we should not be satisfied with being a team in the second division of the European league; we should aim to be in the first division of the European league

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[33] HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1099.
[34] *Ibid.*, col. 1112; *ibid.*, col. 1152.
[35] *Ibid.*, col. 1183.
[36] HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1575.

and to do all we can to get full membership of the Common Market.'[37] His colleague, Charles Pannell, although warning that 'we are not naturally the overlords of the world', recounted a glorious reading of Island Race history, from the 'colonial aberration' of the period between the Elizabeths (nevertheless 'a period in which we grew up, we spawned our kind over all the five continents, and fertilised the world with money') to 'the English century, the nineteenth century' when Britain 'gave the world the picture of the first great industrial revolution'.[38] Having 'allowed our Commonwealth to come to adult status as a body of self-governing nations' Britain would, he said, go 'back to where we started: in Europe.'[39] Joining the EEC would be

> 'the next great step in our island history. It is not a matter of presiding
> over the break-up of the Commonwealth; it is the ushering in of a new
> sense of national greatness.'[40]

Maurice Macmillan, also supportive of accession (although more cautiously than Pannell), agreed that Britain had 'a great deal to offer Europe' and *vice versa* and also suggested that 'we should look at history'. His reading marked out a clear difference between Britain and the rest of the continent: 'we have not gained from Europe our legal system, our constitution, our monarchy, our common law, our Parliamentary democracy'. What Britain had gained— specifically the colonies gleaned from France and Germany after, respectively, the Treaty of Utrecht and World War I—were, Macmillan argued, the results of British *leadership* in Europe.[41]

Britain as the natural leader of the continent was, it must be said, not a universally held conception.[42] This is hardly surprising, given the historical constitution of Britain as a place apart from the rest of Europe. Yet we also see how, even when criticising the government's apparently ambivalent and arrogant stance on EEC accession, Members still marked out Britain as having a unique role to play regarding the continent. Avid pro-European Roy Jenkins, for example, who would go on to serve as the President of the European Commission, attacked the 'pharisaical' tendencies of the House and described an attitude of 'new imperialism' marked by 'illusions of grandeur' and a 'belief that nations all over the world are waiting to be led by us' but still contended that other countries wanted 'to obtain as much help from us as possible.'[43]

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[37] *Ibid.*, col. 1560.

[38] HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1716; *ibid.*, col. 1717; *ibid.*, col. 1717; *ibid.*, col. 1717.

[39] *Ibid.*, col. 1716.

[40] *Ibid.*, col. 1717.

[41] *Ibid.*, col. 1723.

[42] See, for example, John Hynd (Labour): HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1161; Austen Albu (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 1194.

[43] HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1589; *ibid.*, col. 1589; *ibid.*, col. 1590; *ibid.*, col. 1589; *ibid.*, col. 1589.

And when Wilson mocked the President of the Board of Trade, Maudling, rendering him as 'a seedy sandwich-board man outside a Paris restaurant failing to see that the shutters have been put up and standing there while the whole of Europe passes him by', he was criticising perceived inaction on the government's part rather than offering an alternative interpretation of Britain's foreign policy identity. Indeed it was in the very same passage of speech that he argued 'Europe is looking to Britain for a lead', a point, as we have seen, on which many Members agreed.[44] The fixing of Britain in a subject position in which it was exceptional and particular relative to the rest of Europe drew on established Island Race identity and transcended the individual and party politics of individual Members as a discursive instrument of ontological security-seeking.

The summoning of exceptional figures from British history and their attitudes to Europe also played an important part in these debates, adding respected and authorial voices to the discourse. Invocations of the likes of Churchill and Bevin (with regards to the former, Garton Ash remarked: 'All British foreign policy since 1940 is footnotes' to him) glorified and dignified historical British geopolitics and contributed to discursive ownership of the European project from amongst Members across the spectrum of enthusiasm towards the EEC.[45] In his opening remarks in the 1961 debate, Macmillan reminded the House that Europe had been a part of Churchill's 'three circles' scheme. 'Of course', the Prime Minister said, 'he was right in his analysis, but ever since then we have been, in one way or another, trying to find a practical solution to the problem of their interconnection.'[46] Like Pannell's suggestion that accession would be 'the next great step in our island history', Macmillan was rendering a benign, sequential geo-history *in progress* where Members had the opportunity to carry on the work of great predecessors.[47]

Labour's Arthur Woodburn went further than the Prime Minister and asserted that it was Britain under Churchill that had 'inspired the move towards the Common Market' and went on to establish an agonistic struggle between competing Churchillian and Gaullist visions of Europe, presaging the reaction of many Members to the French veto eighteen months later.[48] Woodburn continued by paraphrasing, as did Major forty years later in the comparable context of the Maastricht debates, Bevin's characterisation of his European policy as 'to be able to take a ticket at Victoria station and go anywhere I damn well please'.[49] He drew further historical

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[44] HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1112.
[45] Garton Ash (2010).
[46] HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1480-1.
[47] HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1717.
[48] HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1517; *ibid.*, col. 1519-20.
[49] *Ibid.*, col. 1524; HC Deb 20 May 1992, vol. 208, col. 270; Williams (1951), p. 6.

inspiration from the uniting of the English and Scottish crowns, using the United Kingdom as a paradigm against which to measure Europe unity.[50] In his eventful speech, Pannell also quoted the former Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary, Aneurin "Nye" Bevan, a revered figure within and beyond Labour circles for his role in the genesis of the National Health Service; and Mulley referred to the Battle of Britain which, like the NHS, was already coming to be central to the British national myth.[51] Finally, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations Duncan Sandys and fellow Conservative John Harvey drew on Churchill's 1946 speech at the University of Zürich in which he had called for a 'United States of Europe'.[52] Sandys argued that, 'from that moment, European unity ceased to be just a dream and was accepted by practical men as a realisable objective'; Harvey pointed out that Churchill had 'time and time again sought to enunciate that there need be no conflict between our interests in Europe and our interests in the Commonwealth.'[53]

The presence of these august voices in the debates conveyed authority on the speakers and the geopolitical tropes they advanced were leant ontologically security as a result. Furthermore, they are all associated with a dignified rendering of British history, punctuated by the acts of exceptional men. The continuities these provide contribute to the furtherance of Island Race concepts by fixing Britain as a unique actor in global politics, a fundamental facet of the original and enduring conception of the importance of Britain's islandness. A majority of over a hundred MPs voted on August 3rd to begin negotiations with the EEC but within two years the process was aborted. In the following section we will see how Members discussed this news and framed Britain's relations with the rest of Europe in a very different context.

3. After the flood: de Gaulle's veto and the eternal Island Race

At the end of January 1963, the discussions over British accession to the EEC were halted when French President Charles de Gaulle invoked his country's veto and denied Britain's membership. De Gaulle would tell a press conference, several days after the debates herein discussed, that

> 'England is, in effect, insular, maritime, linked through its trade,
> markets and food supply to very diverse and often very distant
> countries. Its activities are essentially industrial and commercial, and
> only slightly agricultural. It has, throughout its work, very marked
> and original customs and traditions. In short, the nature, structure and

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[50] HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1522; *ibid.*, col. 1524-5.
[51] HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1716; HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1151.
[52] Churchill (1946).
[53] HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1776-7; HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1581.

economic context of England differ profoundly from those of the other

States of the Continent.'[54]

This turn of events had been prophesied by several Members in 1960 and 1961. Labour's John Hynd and Austen Albu, for example, warned the government that Britain needed Europe more than the obverse and that it ought not to approach negotiations trying to take a lead on the continent.[55] Wilson said that some in Europe regarded Britain as a 'Trojan Horse' bent on the destruction of the Community 'from within', Woodburn noted de Gaulle's scepticism about British membership and Labour's Fred Blackburn remarked in 1963 that 'the warning was fully given.'[56]

In spite of the persistent entreaties to Britain and Europe being indivisible, there was, as we have seen, a skein of Europe's Otherness inflecting the discourse of 1960/1 and the parliamentary reaction in 1963 hinged on a recrudescence of this established dichotomy, particularly regarding France.[57] Crucially, as I argued earlier, this was thoroughly reliant not simply on a habit of xenophobia but on time-honoured notions of Britain's islandness relative to its continental neighbours. Furthermore, Britain's proposed entry had been discussed in terms very much congruent with Island Race identity, nowhere more so than when Macmillan had voiced his doubts about the presence of 'little Europeans' 'among the leading men or the Governments of Europe' who believed in the 'Medieval dreams' of isolating Europe from the world and looking 'inwards only upon itself'. He asked the Commons: 'is it not the duty of this country, with its world-wide ties, to lend its weight to the majority of Europeans who see the true prospective of events?'[58] The very prospect of British accession had been discursively linked to the same Island Race identity tropes that de Gaulle explicitly rejected.

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[54] Reproduced in Younger (1964), p. 107. The author, a former Labour MP and, by this time, a director at Chatham House, suggested that many people in Britain would have agreed with de Gaulle's analysis (*ibid.*). Macmillan's record of his private conversations with de Gaulle several years previously is revealing about the geopolitical dissonance between the two men and indicative of the sorts of motifs which would recur in the Commons. The Prime Minister apparently told the President that they were at a 'turning point in history' with ancient 'European civilisation' threatened from all sides. If agreement could not be reached 'over a few thousand tons of wheat, people would think that the real cause of failure was that the United Kingdom was not wanted in Europe. Her Majesty's Government would then be forced to set out on another course, which meant turning away from Europe' (Horne (1989), pp. 317-8).

[55] HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1161; *ibid.*, col. 1194.

[56] *Ibid.*, col. 1120; HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1519; HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 999.

[57] Maurice Macmillan, for example, told the House that de Gaulle had a 'mounting resemblance' to Napoléon (HC Deb 03 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1719). See also, for example, Mulley: HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1147; Healey: *ibid.*, col. 1202-3; Walker-Smith: HC Deb 02 August 1961, vol. 645, col. 1512-3; Jennie Lee (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 1546.

[58] *Ibid.*, col. 1483. See also: *ibid.*, col. 1489.

On the 11th and 12th of February, MPs debated the repercussions of the breakdown of the negotiations. The context was dramatically different from 1960/1: then Britain's accession had been a prospect (desirable to some, not to others); by 1963 it was out of the question. The tropes of Island Race identity that had been debated, with little consensus in terms of policy implications, were in evidence perhaps in even greater force in 1963 as an often angry House reacted to de Gaulle's veto. What the 1963 debate shows above all and especially when viewed in the context of its 1960 and 1961 counterparts is the resilience of Island Race identity as a set of, albeit nebulous, organising concepts for British foreign policy discourse. Having staked so much on accession to the EEC, British MPs sought ontological security in familiar Island Race themes, often the very same ones that had been invoked in arguing for membership in the first place. This was done in order to elucidate a secure place in the world after a policy failure. We will see how de Gaulle's veto was represented as a French misreading of the purpose of European integration as Members outlined the pre-eminence of the Island Race vision of the continent as a liberal, trading, outward-looking bridgehead of NATO and bulwark against Communism. Members also, as they had in 1960/1, repeated their enthusiasm for the Commonwealth and reiterated the importance of the solidarity of the Western World, something that French actions were now said to be threatening. Furthermore, we will see how the social discursive practice of ontological security-seeking can render an apparent 'crisis' as an opportunity.

3.1. Othering France: French geopolitics versus the Island Race

The contrast between the discourse concerning Britain's relationship with the rest of Europe in 1960/1 and eighteen months later is striking. Where there had been ambiguity over how the identity tropes of Island Race identity fitted (if at all) with European integration, by 1963 there was a more general consensus around the new context. British geopolitics, it was agreed by virtually all the speakers, was the antithesis of that of a French-led EEC. The remarks that Conservative Viscount Hinchingbrooke had made to great approval in the 1961 debate—that he preferred the 'small, quick-moving, resilient, resourceful, trading' '"small ship" philosophy […] that defeated Napoléon and defeated the King of Spain' to the 'vast industrial machines' of the US, the Soviet Union and, potentially, the EEC—came to epitomise the discursive reaction to de Gaulle's veto.[59] There had 'always been', Macmillan said in introducing the 1963 debate, 'two ways of looking at European unity': there were those on the continent who took 'the narrow view' of 'a united Europe as a restricted or autarchic community' and there was Britain with its 'tradition of outward-looking development'.[60] 'If the French Government object to us as an

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[59] *Ibid.*, col. 1544. Hansard records that these remarks drew cheers from Members.
[60] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 957; *ibid.*, col. 957; *ibid.*, col. 957; *ibid.*, col. 958.

island, it is also as an island that we bring this rich heritage to the world.'[61] The Labour shadow cabinet was typically critical of the government's handling of the negotiations but upheld precisely the same dichotomy as the Prime Minister. Wilson, their leader-in-waiting following Gaitskell's death in January, juxtaposed 'restrictive and protectionist and inward-looking' continental practices with Britain's predilection for 'constantly looking outward to wider horizons'; and Liberal Jeremy Thorpe decried the French vision for Europe as 'the very antithesis of the spirit and philosophy of the Community' and the beginnings of 'Franco-German domination'.[62] Even Francophile Conservative Sir Hamilton Kerr, chair of the all-party Anglo-French Committee, concurred that Britons tended to view de Gaulle's vision for Europe as 'too small.'[63]

This was not simply a xenophobic British *élite* Othering its historic French rival. In political terms, this was about fixing Britain in an ontologically secure subject position relative to Europe in the micro-level context of a policy setback and, at the macro-level, of a general waning of previously understood British power. It is precisely in situations such as these that established identity concepts can come to the fore. In this case, in the remarks above and elsewhere, we see a recrudescence of classic Island Race identity tropes in which maritime Britain is discursively pitted against lumpen, continental Europe which, so said Labour's Richard Marsh, had 'fundamental attitudes' which Britain had 'no possibility' of ever changing.[64] Furthermore and according to Robert Mathew—a strong supporter of Macmillan and accession—Britons were 'the better Europeans', favouring 'a gradual step-by-step move forward towards a genuine liberal European unity' in contrast to de Gaulle who 'believes in a Europe which belongs to a

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[61] *Ibid.*, col. 958.

[62] Wilson: *ibid.*, col. 971; Thorpe: *ibid.*, col. 1039; *ibid.*, col. 1035. Labour's Patrick Gordon Walker, for one, disagreed with any menace coming from a Franco-German bloc. For him, the apparent peace between the two countries was to be celebrated (*ibid.*, col. 1061). The differences in the two men's positions problematise balance of power thinking in that they prompt the question: what is more terrifying for Britain, France and Germany fighting, or colluding? See also Harvey: *ibid.*, col. 1053; Sandys: *ibid.*, col. 1063-4; John Stonehouse (Labour Co-operative): HC Deb 12 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1187.

[63] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1002. Labour's Desmond Donnelly disagreed that the French President's plans were small. He suggested that de Gaulle was inspired by Napoléonic revanchism and the constitution—with 'Anglo-Saxons, of course, being excluded'—'of Europe from the Channel to the Urals', a scheme which, he said, 'has never been and never will be a geopolitical unit' (*ibid.*, col. 1008-9). Michael Foot, the next Labour Member to speak after Donnelly, told the House that 'it would be foolish to dismiss General de Gaulle as a megalomaniac, an awkward anachronism or a Napoléon the Little' and suggested that he had 'more knowledge of history, certainly of geography' than many of the Conservatives who had so far spoken (*ibid.*, col. 1018-20; *ibid.*, col. 1022-3). His point was that de Gaulle feared a greater American involvement in Europe, something that, he felt, British membership would have contributed to. Indeed, Macmillan privately recorded de Gaulle telling him in November 1961 that 'Europe would have been drowned in the Atlantic' if Britain was admitted to the EEC (Horne (1989), p. 318).

[64] HC Deb 12 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1208.

past age, which is narrow, nationalistic, and nineteenth century.'[65] Rather than a complete disengagement from Europe, the comments of Mathew and others show how Island Race identity required a continued discursive encounter with its traditional Other, allowing its concepts to interact and be sustained and dignified by the new context of de Gaulle, France and French geopolitics (interchangeable in much of the discourse).[66] In the process, the negated policy was represented not as a setback if it only confirmed the fortitude of the pre-existing identity.

Genealogically, we saw in the previous chapter how the discourse of British power and prosperity had begun to be geopolitically expanded to comprise an enlarged area of security and interests coterminous with the 'Western world' into which had been discursively condensed established tropes of Island Race identity.[67] The importance of this *vis-à-vis* Communism in Europe was a constant concern of Macmillan's government, what with the seemingly permanent condition of crisis in Berlin and the Prime Minister's closeness with President Kennedy. The global, existential nature of the Cold War, as well as Britain's own proclivity for universalism meant that de Gaulle's rejection could be represented as threatening the Western alliance and also the peace of the world. Both Macmillan and Wilson devoted significant energy to this in their addresses. The Prime Minister argued that 'on the strength and unity of the Western Alliance depends the peace of the world'; 'anything that threatens the Western Alliance, and particularly its organisation in NATO, must be a source of deep alarm'.[68] Contemporaneously to these debates, de Gaulle was in the throes of strengthening France's independent nuclear deterrent. Unhappy with what he perceived as the US-UK dominance of NATO, he withdrew France's Mediterranean fleet from its control, the first serious rupture for the organisation. Macmillan suggested that these French vacillations had 'left a serious gap' in the defences of the West and Thorpe worried that an EEC without Britain in this context would constitute a dangerous 'third force' in the world.[69] Wilson agreed, urging that the Western Alliance not be 'further endangered' and that 'we must base our stand fairly and squarely on NATO'; and Maudling, now Chancellor, contended: 'the whole logic of history means that we must see developing in the long run a united Europe within an Atlantic Community, and as science

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[65] *Ibid.*, col. 1226.
[66] Hansen (2006), pp. 76-7.
[67] Wæver (1996), p. 111.
[68] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 961. On 30 January, Macmillan broadcast to the nation explaining the French veto. He explained: 'What has happened has revealed a division. France and her Government are looking backwards. They seem to think that one nation can dominate Europe and, equally wrong, that Europe can or ought to stand alone. Europe cannot stand alone. She must co-operate with the rest of the Free World, with the Commonwealth, with the United States in an equal and honourable partnership. That is why we in Britain need to stand by the Atlantic Alliance' (Horne (1989), p. 448).
[69] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 960; *ibid.*, col. 1036.

compresses our globe more and more, and as the Chinese millions storm across the Eastern world, more and more the world will see the folly of Europe being disunited.'[70]

This was co-constitutive with a subtle alteration in the geopolitical composition of the West in the discourse of MPs. When the North Atlantic Treaty was signed, as we saw in chapter 3, there was little apparent compunction in the Commons with the admittance of European nations into its construct. Even though much of the discourse hinged upon the elucidation of supposedly Anglo-Saxon values, this 'common heritage' also admitted 'like-minded' (democratic and/or civilised) nations like France, and the Benelux and Scandinavian states. Greater Britain, the ancestor of NATO and the West in British discourse, had been an exclusive, racio-cultural construction based on the English language, Anglo-Saxondom and British values.[71] Its discourse had never admitted the possibility of these values *fully* being taken up by people who were not British or the descendants of Britons. Even those such as high-ranking Indian civil servants who had been thoroughly Anglicised were still seen as the recipients of British values rather than actually possessing them in the way that British rajas were. The values that the idea of Greater Britain supposedly imputed to the rest of the world were transmitted to Others in a patrimonial sense.

While Macmillan, Wilson and Maudling were more circumspect as frontbench politicians, some backbenchers thus aimed to distinguish France from an Anglo-Saxon West, discursively linking de Gaulle's veto with British insularity from Europe (in a positive sense) and co-constitutively dignifying the Atlantic community as an ontologically secure site for Britain. Conservative Sir Cyril Osborne, for example, said he would prefer Britain as 'a poor relation of America' than existing 'on sufferance at the pleasure of General de Gaulle, for I believe there can be neither prosperity nor peace for the free world if the English-speaking peoples are permanently divided.'[72] Although Kerr felt himself 'a citizen of the Atlantic Community' given that the US 'derive their system of Government from the French political philosophers of the eighteenth century' and 'her civilisation from Europe', in general there was a discursive decoupling of France and the supposed Gaullist vision of the continent from the West and NATO.[73] This more exclusive West was prioritised over relations with the rest of Europe and the Atlantic Community was linked to those Island Race qualities at which de Gaulle had apparently baulked. Labour's Patrick Gordon Walker, for example, told the House to 'raise our eyes from Europe' and seek 'to create an Atlantic community *within which* we can get an association with

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[70] *Ibid.*, col. 969; *ibid.*, col. 970; HC Deb 12 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1244.
[71] Bell (2007), pp. 113-9, 181-7; Vucetic (2011a), pp. 1-21.
[72] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 994.
[73] *Ibid.*, col. 1004.

Europe, and then […] find the closest possible relationships with the Community and the rest of Europe.'[74] For it was the Atlantic community that was 'outward-looking' and therefore a better 'fit' with Island Race identity.[75] As Sandys put it, 'the cornerstone of our European policy' was not Europe itself but NATO, presaging a persistent refrain of Thatcher in which there was an emergent discursive ordering prioritising NATO over Europe in terms of British security.[76]

In the immediate aftermath of de Gaulle's veto, British MPs prioritised both this exclusive Western world and their own Commonwealth over relations with the rest of Europe. This stance retained the classic poise of insularity from Europe, universality and presence within a metacommunity of Anglo-Saxon values. In 1960/1 Members had agonised over the implications of EC membership for the Commonwealth, whose preferential trading agreements would have been threatened by the European common market. Rejected by Europe, the Commonwealth assumed a position of importance in this new discursive configuration as a unique body which, like the Western world, preserved universality and the vague, historical ideas of a community of values. A downbeat Macmillan (who tended to favour Atlanticism) was pessimistic about the Commonwealth as a proxy for what might have been achieved in the EEC.[77] Yet others were far more sanguine about the association, condensing it with ontologically secure renderings of Island Race identity. Labour's John Dugdale, for instance, typified this as he catalogued the advantages of the Commonwealth. His Greater Britain *redux* had scalar advantages which, he said, dwarfed even the Soviet Union; a 'tremendous amount of good will'; the 'priceless gift of having the same language'; a 'great similarity in law'; and a 'general liking for democracy'.[78] His colleague Blackburn described an 'association of free peoples, unique in the history of the world, […] one of the greatest forces for peace in the world, and I should hate anything to happen which would reduce the effectiveness of the Commonwealth.'[79] Strategically, Gordon Walker spoke of the 'unique bridges between the continents' inherent in the Commonwealth.[80] Even the vehemently anti-empire Michael Foot announced that EEC accession would have been 'greatly injurious to the Commonwealth', depriving Britain of influence and independence in foreign policy; he ended his speech by

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[74] *Ibid.*, col. 1061; *ibid.*, col. 1057. Emphasis added. See also Healey's remarks from 1960: HC Deb 25 July 1960, vol. 627, col. 1205.

[75] Gordon Walker: HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1055.

[76] *Ibid.*, col. 1069. See, for example, Thatcher: HC Deb 28 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 943; HC Deb 20 November 1980, vol. 994, col. 21; HC Deb 09 November 1982, vol. 31, col. 426; HC Deb 22 June 1983, vol. 44, col. 60; HC Deb 15 April 1986, vol. 95, col. 731; HC Deb 04 March 1988, vol. 128, col. 1281; HC Deb 01 May 1990, vol. 171, col. 913.

[77] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 946. See also Albu: HC Deb 12 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1163.

[78] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 989-91.

[79] *Ibid.*, col. 998.

[80] *Ibid.*, col. 1061.

suggesting that the House 'thank President de Gaulle for doing for us what the British Government had not the courage and energy to do for themselves.'[81] In the characterisations of these Members an ontologically secure subject position for Britain was fixed in membership of the Commonwealth as it was discursively linked to Island Race identity and juxtaposed against a hostile Europe. Several years later the demands of increasingly confident Commonwealth leaders that Britain deal more robustly with Rhodesian minority rule would prove to be a thorn in Prime Minister Wilson's side; for now, the organisation was part of a satisfactory, discursive solution to the problematic situation with Europe, allowing an elucidation of an influential, beneficent, outward-looking polity in keeping with established Island Race tropes.

3.2. Exceptional history and a glorious future outside Europe

As I argued in chapter 1, Island Race identity is predicated on glorious readings of its own exceptional geo-history. Accordingly, in the 1963 debates, Britain's eternal geopolitics was fixed in an ontologically secure subject position in which it would carry the country forward to a prosperous future in spite of the recent setback. These renderings situated Britain's past as a continuing, paternal influence on current and future foreign policy success. Wilson, for example, recalled how membership of the EEC had been represented during the discussions: 'if we did not achieve such an expansion the only choice was between being a backwater inside Europe or a backwater outside Europe'. But, he continued, 'our future lies now clearly in our own hands, on our sense of purpose, of dynamism, of self-discipline'; Britain just had to reassert 'our national strength and our national independence' and recover its 'lost dynamic'.[82] Five years later when announcing, as Prime Minister, the withdrawal of British troops from East of Suez, he was wont to make a similar point in a speech at the Guildhall: 'Britain has also achieved her independence.'[83] Similarly, Walker-Smith recalled his provocative 1961 speech and reminded Members that Britain's position as a small island with a 'special position' and a predilection for and natural advantages in pursuing competitive, liberal trade remained unchanged.[84] He concluded by explaining:

> 'The mission of the British people is not ended in the second half of
> the twentieth century. Britain still stands at the heart and centre of the
> Commonwealth, with all its healthy diversity and unconscripted unity.
> There is a mission still, to give leadership without dictation and
> guidance without coercion.'[85]

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[81] *Ibid.*, col. 1024; *ibid.*, col. 1025. See also Sandys: *ibid.*, col. 1064; Stonehouse: HC Deb 12 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1188-9.
[82] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 979.
[83] 11 November 1968. Reproduced in Wilson (1971), p. 582.
[84] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 982; *ibid.*, col. 983.
[85] *Ibid.*, col. 987-8.

Ranged against a supposedly hostile Europe, the established Island Race identity concept of Britain as an exceptional island standing alone (Mathew urged Britain to recapture the spirit of 1940) was perhaps bound to come to the fore once more.[86] Britain, as Blackburn reminded the House, had 'either liberated or defeated' most of the countries now in the EEC in World War Two and the process of 'going with a begging bowl' to them had been humiliating.[87] 'The world is our oyster', he continued, discursively linking Britain's past as the geopolitical saviour of Europe to a future of universalism.[88] Turton too epitomised this in arguing how Britain's interdependence was 'not across the Channel, not across the Atlantic Ocean, but throughout the world' where it had a decisive contribution to make 'towards the peace of the world.'[89] The discursive contours which in many ways Macmillan had established in his opening remarks ('if the French Government object to us as an island, it is also as an island that we bring this rich heritage to the world') became thoroughly infused with this coupling of Britain's islandness with its universal heritage (which would endure) and its particular genius.[90] Conservative John Scott, Earl of Dalkeith told the House: 'the people of our tiny island have made a tremendous impact on the world solely because of their enormous strength of character, and it is on that character that our ability to thrive in the future depends'; and even Labour critics such as Shadow Chancellor James Callaghan would argue that Britain had 'a great future as a nation'.[91]

The poise was maintained in which insularity from Europe was balanced with a universal aspect on the rest of the world. The prospects for integration with the rest of the continent looked bleak at least, as Kerr pointed, as long as de Gaulle lived, yet the established tropes of Island Race identity were in rude health and, moreover, had been thoroughly discursively linked to this rebuff by Europe.[92] Far from precipitating a crisis in British foreign policy identity in which the very *raison d'état* of Britain was called into question and re-examined, in the Commons at least, the full panoply of the exceptional Island Race was paraded in regalia in a discursive snub to the French President. In a country so conscious of its own history, with a parliament so self-referential and in the habit of revering its own pageant of legendary figures, the peculiar force of episodes like this were bound to resonate forwards, giving further discursive force to the Island

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[86] HC Deb 12 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1225.
[87] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 999.
[88] *Ibid.*, col. 1002.
[89] HC Deb 12 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1186.
[90] HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 958.
[91] HC Deb 12 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1215; *ibid.*, col. 1138. Kerr described his 'great[…] belief in this little country of ours' and, summoning two legendary figures in British political and imperial history, quoted from Lord Rosebery's biography of Pitt the Elder: 'He loved England with an intense and personal love. He believed in her power and her glory and her public virtue till England came to believe in herself' (HC Deb 11 February 1963, vol. 671, col. 1004; *ibid.*, col. 1005).
[92] *Ibid.*, col. 1003.

Race identity tropes which informed and ontologically securitised ensuing and current debates on Britain and Europe.[93]

4. Conclusion

In spite of the jeremiads and the felicitations prophesying, respectively, the end of Britain's engagement with Europe and the continuation of the Island Race as a global player freed from continental entanglements, negotiations over Britain's accession to what was soon to become the European Communities (EC) were re-opened in 1967.[94] On the 8th of May Labour Prime Minister Wilson asked the Commons for approval, Shadow Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home urged the Conservative Party to support the government and the motion was carried. The addresses of both men mobilised themes which, by now, were familiar in debates about Britain and Europe.[95] The outward-looking Island Race would ensure that Europe turned its face to the world; Britain in Europe would further cement the solidarity of the West against Communism; by joining the EC Britain would be able to ensure that the Balance of Power was maintained. To detractors, the obverse arguments were true: the EC would constitute a new insularity, sundering Britain's Commonwealth ties; Britain would move further away from the US, dividing the English-speaking world when it should have been uniting against Moscow; ensuring the continental Balance of Power was best achieved by maintaining an 'offshore' poise. Britain, it was clear, would be joining Europe as the Island Race. That it did so in 1973 was by no means the end of the matter and the debate continues, as it will after the imminent referendum, no matter what the result.

The significance of the period analysed in this chapter is not just how it demonstrates that the sometimes tortuous contemporary relations between Britain and the rest of the Europe have a history of at least five decades. What the three debates of 1960-3 show are *how and why* the continued wrangling over Britain's European stance is historically possible. The discursive geopolitical tropes which constitute the Island Race are so sedimented that it is hard for debates, even fifty five years after Lloyd's announcement, to escape them; and such are the social-discursive practices of ontological security-seeking within a framework of malleable identity concepts that those with opposing views on Britain's membership of the EU can invoke the very same Island Race tropes to fix Britain in subject positions that apparently reflect its national interest. The point is: the continued debates about Britain and Europe are not debates *about* Britain's identity—for the Island Race has, as we are seeing, long been of particular importance—they are the prolonged, emergent social practices of Members engaging in

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[93] Ovchinnikov (1981), p. 210.

[94] The so-called 'Merger Treaty' which united the EEC, the ECSC and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) had been signed in 1965 but would not come into force until July 1967.

[95] Wilson: HC Deb 08 May 1967, vol. 746, col. 1061-97; Douglas-Home: *ibid.*, col. 1097-1108.

ontological security-seeking by reiterating and adapting already established identity concepts in novel contexts which themselves are mediated through the particular ways of framing the world and its political narratives via the identity tropes themselves. Island Race identity tropes were co-constitutively fitted to both of the contexts examined in this chapter and offered little clear policy direction in 1960/1 and only appeared to do so in 1963 when the EEC had been closed off to Britain. The particularities of the insularity/universality nexus might have been forged in imperial times but they came to constitute the existential geopolitics of British itself and all debates about Europe tend to revolve around the resolution of this conundrum of how Britain can play a part in European affairs and retain a global posture, if at all.

chapter 5

From the Heartlands of Eurasia to the South Atlantic: Thatcher and the reinvigoration of the Island Race

1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the ways in which Island Race identity was mobilised in parliamentary debates around two events in the early years of Margaret Thatcher's time as Conservative Prime Minister: the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and Argentina's of the Falkland Islands in April 1982. It will be argued that the discourse around these occurrences constituted specific renderings of British history which dignified established Island Race identity tropes and fixed Britain in ontologically secure subject positions relative to these events. The two events themselves involved Britain in quite distinct ways, yet the same tropes of Island Race identity were mobilised in enframing them.

The chapter begins by contextualising the early years of Thatcher's premiership and its foreign policy, presents the particular renditions of twentieth century history advanced by her government and how they co-constituted ontologically secure subject positions for Britain in terms of its established Island Race identity. I then employ these conceptualisations to analyse the parliamentary reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, paying particular attention to how the event was fixed around Island Race identity tropes and renascent Cold War political discourse via the co-constitutive linking of the two. It will be shown how the context of the Cold War and antipathy towards the Soviet Union 'fitted' with these tropes in a fashion more secure than any mediative approaches. The Argentine invasion of the Falklands will then be subject to the same scrutiny, demonstrating how the parliamentary debates about Britain's response reified the 'traditions' of Island Race identity, particularly insularity, universality and the global importance of British values. Rather than simply imperial revanchism or nostalgia, the reaction in parliament will be shown to be an instance of social discursive practice in which a novel and unexpected event was narrated according to established identity tropes, thereby fixing Britain in a familiar subject position that rendered the government's favoured response a *fait accompli*.

1.1. Historical erasure and national identity: contextualising the Conservative government of 1979

With the issue of Britain in the EC 'settled' by the affirmative result of the 1975 membership referendum and the British Empire all but jettisoned, it might be said that Britain's role had

shrunk to that of a middle-sized, regional Power by 1979.[1] While it would be misleading to claim that Thatcher's Conservatives wished to reconstitute Britain as an imperial Great Power, analysis of the debates demonstrates how a particular rendering of history, thoroughly reliant on the mobilisation of imperial-era Island Race identity tropes, constituted the narrations of the two events.

This history broadly dignified the Second British Empire (that is, after American independence) up to the Suez Crisis. The subsequent period was characterised by Thatcher in a 1979 speech to the Foreign Policy Association in New York as one of 'introspection' and 'paralysis'; 'not […] a happy period for the western democracies domestically or internationally.'[2] It was the apogee of what she later termed the 'Suez syndrome', in the thrall of which her predecessors 'went from believing that Britain could do anything to an almost neurotic belief that Britain could do nothing.'[3] The 'recovery of our country' to which the Conservatives committed themselves in their 1979 general election manifesto was predicated on—in the manner of Wæver's argument about the EU looking to escape its own past—the seeking of ontological security as against this period since 1956 through the mobilisation of Island Race identity tropes.[4] While the governments of that time (especially from the latter half of Wilson's sixties premiership and through the seventies administrations of Heath, Wilson and Callaghan) all, to some degree, situated Britain's global relevance in terms of its membership of the EC, the Thatcherite 'revival' was based upon something different. Although she presided over a party more at ease with itself over Europe than Labour was at the time and had not yet slipped into the febrile relationship with Brussels that characterised her latter days in office, Thatcher's renderings of British identity in the past, present and future relied more upon specifically Island Race identity tropes than her predecessors.[5] Brought to the fore by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and Argentina's of the Falkland Islands in 1982, these narratives were co-constituted by the discursive interactions of the contexts themselves, a reading of British historical greatness terminated in 1956 and the reification of the Island Race tropes of insularity, universality, the importance of NATO as the bedrock of a 'special' relationship with particularly the US and the concomitant global relevance of British values.

Thatcher was explicit that her vision of Britain's national rejuvenation was a return to the *status quo ante*, remarking in the New York speech:

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[1] See, for example, Callaghan: HC Deb 28 June 1973, vol. 858, col. 1743; HC Deb 25 July 1979, vol. 971, col. 631; Douglas-Home: HC Deb 19 March 1974, vol. 870, col. 885; Lord Carrington (Conservative, Foreign Secretary: 1979-82): HL Deb 22 May 1979, vol. 400, col. 235; Thatcher (1995), p. 91.
[2] Thatcher (1979).
[3] Thatcher (1995), p. 91.
[4] Conservative Party (1979); Wæver (1996), pp. 121-5, 128.
[5] Fay (1996), pp. 191-2.

'The cynics among you will say that none of this is new. Quite right.

It isn't.'[6]

Born in 1925, she identified herself as someone of the Second World War generation, with a special expertise from having lived through Britain's 'finest hour' and its last years of imperial greatness.[7] Indeed when describing her meeting with an ageing Sir Robert Menzies, former Prime Minister of Australia, she explained: 'I was reminded not for the last time that the political generation that had come to maturity when the British Empire was still a world power retained a global perspective that its more parochial successors lacked.'[8] Yet for all this, Thatcher and the foreign policy of the time represent something of a conundrum. Her description of her own 'global perspective', her enthusiasm for the unbounded Second Cold War and her later declamations of the EC as representing a new 'insularity' must be weighed against the characterisations of others that she 'knew little and cared less' for international affairs and pursued policy 'shaped less by longer-term aims than by a series of day-to-day decisions taken with little reference to a larger framework.'[9]

What many agree on, however, is the centrality of the British 'national myth' to Thatcher's politics.[10] Bearing this in mind, what will be established in this chapter is the importance of Island Race identity to this myth by analysing the representations of and responses to two foreign policy events in her first government. Thatcher's charismatic and authoritarian style, her popularity within her party (although this was by no means unanimous), the perceived weakness of Labour under Callaghan (-1980) and then Michael Foot (1980-3) and the comfortable-to-large parliamentary majorities she commanded have all contributed to her place at the centre of studies of foreign policy at the time; yet attention needs to be paid also to the discursive practice of the parliaments in which she sat.[11] Before broadening the analysis to take in the Commons debates on the invasions, in the ensuing section I will introduce and contextualize some of Thatcher's early rhetoric concerning the Soviet Union, taking it to be in some ways indicative of British (or at least Conservative) foreign policy thought rather than

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[6] Thatcher (1979).

[7] Gowland *et al* (2010), p. 105.

[8] Thatcher (1995), p. 388.

[9] Sharp (1997), p. 28; Cradock (1997), p. 36.

[10] See, for example, Jeremy Seabrook and Kevin Blackwell's contemporaneous piece in *the Guardian*, Patrick Wright's, Kevin Foster's and Anthony Barnett's emphases on 'mythical history' in Thatcher's governments (the latter two of which focus on the Falklands Conflict) and Oliver Daddow's interpretivist contextualisation of Thatcher as part of a British 'outsider tradition' regarding Europe which draws on national, mythic elements (Seabrook & Blackwell (1982); Wright (1985), pp. 1-27, 176; Foster (1997), pp. 235-8; Barnett (2012); Daddow (2015b), pp. 78-84). Also: Young (1989), pp. 168-9; Sharp (1997), pp. 171-2; Hadfield-Amkhan (2010), pp. 135-64.

[11] Anthony King and Helen Baxendale, for example, both focus on Thatcher's personality in their studies (King (2002); Baxendale (2015)).

casting her as a completely singular figure. This places Thatcher's and the general contemporary political discourse in a constitutive relationship with one another.

2. The Island Race and the British parliamentary response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

2.1. The last Cold Warrior: Thatcher and the Soviet Union

Thatcher was openly and strongly anti-communist. She had been leader of the Conservative Party for less than a year when she addressed Kensington Town Hall in 1976 to point out the dangers of the 'patient, far-sighted men' of the Politburo who were 'rapidly making their country the foremost naval and military power in the world':

> 'A huge, largely land-locked country like Russia does not need to
> build the most powerful navy in the world just to guard its own
> frontiers. No. The Russians are bent on world dominance, and they
> are rapidly acquiring the means to become the most powerful imperial
> nation the world has seen.'[12]

Typical though this rendering of the Soviet threat is it must be seen in its immediate context: the long period of *détente* in which the First and Second Worlds had agreed to arms limitation and a general easing of tensions. Contemporaneous to this, David Owen's time as Labour's last Foreign Secretary under Callaghan was marked by his entreaties that the world's problems (especially in the Third World) not be seen purely through the lens of East-West relations and dealt with only according to that basis.[13] Thatcher, as we will see, was dubious about *détente*, envisioning a permanent threat from and insurmountable differences with Russia, regardless of the latest treaty or summit. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, occurring early in her premiership, confirmed her views of Moscow and the paramount struggles of international politics. In contrast to some of the rather benign remarks of her first Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, Thatcher had already characterised the 1980s as 'the dangerous decade' and, judging from their reactions, many MPs seemed to have similar views.[14] Ostensibly mounted to

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[12] Thatcher (1995), pp. 361, 361, 361-2.

[13] See, for example, Owen: HC Deb 18 January 1978, vol. 942, col. 455-6; ibid., col. 459; HC Deb 02 February 1978, vol. 943, col. 713; HC Deb 22 March 1978, vol. 946, col. 1492; HC Deb 07 June 1978, vol. 951, col. 217; HC Deb 28 June 1978, vol. 952, col. 1375; Callaghan: HC Deb 06 June 1978, vol. 951, col. 24.

[14] Thatcher (1979). In his first address to the Lords as Foreign Secretary, Carrington explained: 'The foreign policy of a medium-sized industrial country like Britain has a simple enough objective. It is to influence the international environment so that our people can prosper in peace and security. The scope for pursuing this objective is limited by the constraints of geography, by economic circumstances, by the state of military technology, by our national traditions, by our social and political system and, indeed, by the objectives and ambitions of others. These constraints may vary slowly with the passing of time. It is very rare that they can rapidly be altered. The scope for fundamental choice is limited, and it is hardly surprising that successive British Governments have, broadly speaking, pursued similar

prop up a weak puppet in Kabul, the invasion itself was nonetheless unexpected in terms of the recent context; however, in longer terms it was discursively familiar for British foreign policy-makers weaned on Cold War politics as well as the inherited, geopolitical traditions of Island Race identity concepts which pitted the Russian 'bear' as the implacable enemy of maritime Britain.

Afghanistan had been constituted in British imperial discourse as a site of great significance. This was due in no small part to the 'Great Game' in Central Asia, the nineteenth century geopolitical rivalry between Britain and the Russian Empire.[15] This apparent struggle for the soft, northern underbelly of India was productive of as much existential, strategic paranoia as the Cold War would be and, moreover, profoundly influenced Mackinder's renderings of the global antipathy between Land and Sea power.[16] India was the landward extension of Britain's maritime empire in Asia; Afghanistan the buffer between it and the rapacious Tsarist realm. The country, as part of the Heartland of Eurasia, was a cockpit of global imperium, for 'he who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island: who rules the World-Island commands the World.'[17] Therefore, Afghanistan was not just strategically significant in and of itself; it stood as a marker of potential Russian (and land-based) dominance whose very status and situation was measured according to actual, potential or imagined Russian gains. Furthermore it should be noted how Mackinder's theories were updated for a specifically American audience in the 1940s by Nicholas Spykman whose work also highlighted the significance of Afghanistan and its region and became influential in the containment theories of the early Cold War.[18]

Given how thoroughly intertwined established Island Race tropes and Cold War politics were when it came to Central Asia it is not surprising that, in debating the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a specific set of discourses co-constituted both. In the first place, the Soviet Union was represented as acting in the manner of a typical Land Power. These trans-historical renderings hinged not on repudiations of Marxism (of which Thatcher and many Members were, nonetheless, scornful) but longer-established concepts which cast maritime Britain and land-based Russia as geopolitically antithetical to one another. Secondly, the strategic siting of Afghanistan itself co-constituted similar existential geopolitics to those advanced during the Suez Crisis in which an illiberal Power was advancing on the lifelines of British and Western prosperity, poised to sever the arteries through which Middle Eastern oil flowed. The spatiality

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policies abroad' (HL Deb 22 May 1979, vol. 400, col. 235). He resigned several days after the Argentine invasion of the Falklands in 1982.

[15] For general overviews of the Great Game, see Hopkirk (1990); Meyer & Brysac (1999).

[16] Mackinder (1904b).

[17] Mackinder (1919), p. 155.

[18] Spykman (1942); (1944). For a comprehensive overview of American Cold War containment, see Gaddis (2005).

of this was typical Island Race, based on Lines of Communication and the actual and desired reach of British and Western power. Important corollaries to this were inherent in the depictions of a general decline in Western strategy and the collective sense of British expertise on the greater Middle East. Thus in the debate MPs were experts in the geopolitics of the region and Soviet intentions and a threat was ranged against the Western community as a whole but based upon Island Race scripting of a world of maritime flows potentially at the mercy of Land Power. The affirmative force of these constitutions reified the Island Race and ensured an ontologically-secure relevance for Britain in the scenario of the invasion.

The British response has received relatively little scholarly attention, understandable perhaps given that it was confined to diplomacy, economics and—Thatcher's favoured riposte—the eventually scuppered boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics.[19] Although worrying for Western Powers, it hardly provoked trauma on the scale of the Cuban Crisis of 1962, for example. In any case, analyses of Thatcher's foreign policy tend to be eclipsed by her later dealings with Argentina and Brussels. While domestic problems blunted full British participation in the financial penalties that the US wanted to impose on the Soviet Union, Thatcher was vigorous in instituting diplomatic efforts, especially in recruiting the other EC countries to condemn the invasion.[20] Hence scholars tend to be divided between those, like John Baylis, who view the British response as 'strong' and, like Michael Smith, 'distinctly muted'.[21] Most accounts place the invasion in the larger context of the nascent 'Second Cold War'.[22] Apart from Daniel Lahey's reflections on how Thatcher saw the invasion as a crisis of Western identity and the depictions of the Prime Minister as a Cold Warrior *par excellence* there has been little sustained attention given to its place in a larger scale, discursive genealogy of British identity.[23]

2.2. Beyond the Cold War: Land and Sea, the eternal struggle

The discursive condemnation of the invasion of Afghanistan in the Commons on 24 and 28 January 1980 was predicated upon depictions of the Soviet Union as a typical Land Power. The reiterations of this particular Island Race vintage have already been established in previous chapters, particularly that concerning the signing of NATO and the Suez Crisis. These renderings are significant for the constitution of Island Race tropes because, through the process

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[19] Gabriella Grasselli's is the most comprehensive overview (Grasselli (1996)).

[20] Dimitrakis (2012), p. 520; Grasselli (1996), pp. 6, 190, 195; Lahey (2013), p.25; Thatcher (1993), p. 88.

[21] Baylis (1984), p. 181; Smith (1988), p. 15. Sir Ian Gilmour perhaps typified the reserved British attitude which could lead to the 'muted' characterisation when he announced the invasion to the Commons on 24 January 1980. He described it as 'a great cataclysmic, or almost cataclysmic, event' (HC Deb 24 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 667).

[22] See, for example, Carrington's memoirs (Carington (1988), pp. 327-47). For overviews of the Second Cold War, see Dalby's critical geopolitical account and Fred Halliday's contemporary history (Dalby (1990); Halliday (1986)).

[23] Lahey (2013), p. 26.

of differentiation, the identity of Britain in alterity is assured and, moreover, given contextual relevance.[24] Furthermore, the predication of this Othering of the Soviet Union on an apparent struggle between Land and Sea Powers fixes Britain in an ontologically secure subject position specifically congruent with its established Island Race identity and connotes geopolitical relevance in the context.

The process of Othering didn't draw primarily on references to the ideological differences between Britain (or the West) and the Soviet Union; the defeat of Marxism was, in any case, 'inevitable' according to Thatcher and, as Heath put it, 'we are dealing with the Soviet Union not because it is a Marxist country'.[25] Instead the Soviet actions were depicted according to the time-honoured classifications distinguishing Land Powers from Sea Powers. Firstly this involved representations of the Soviet Union as a rapacious land-grabber, in contrast to the Western Powers with their respect for non-aligned countries. Sir Ian Gilmour, chief Commons spokesperson for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with Carrington in the Lords, described it as 'the Soviet drive to gain wider influence wherever possible, by propaganda, by subversion, and, where necessary, by force.'[26] Callaghan said the invasion had 'demonstrated to the world that the Soviet Union will move swiftly, ruthlessly and powerfully when it makes up its mind that its interests require it.'[27] A number of Members unambiguously termed this colonialism or imperialism, no doubt cognizant of the historical reiterations from Moscow that its mission was the emancipation of oppressed peoples from the Western capitalist yoke.[28] Eden, who had passed away three years previously, would have been heartened by these characterisations.[29]

The typical Land Power strategy according to Island Race identity—and what made it a particular locus of fear—was the limitless, tentacular spread of its expansion. 'One is bound to ask oneself where the Russian drive is to stop', Gilmour said and, throughout the debates, Members busied themselves with prophesying where the next Soviet advancement would take place.[30] Heath, for example, worried about everywhere from China and Japan to Singapore and Indonesia, the Indian Ocean, Yugoslavia and the Mediterranean; and Conservative Kenneth Warren even contended that

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[24] Butler (1992), p. 12.

[25] HC Deb 28 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 945; *ibid.*, col. 960. See also Thatcher (1979).

[26] HC Deb 24 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 655.

[27] HC Deb 28 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 945.

[28] Callaghan: *ibid.*, col. 945; *ibid.*, col. 947-8; Heffer: *ibid.*, col. 996; Julian Amery (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1009; *ibid.*, col. 1011; *ibid.*, col. 1013; John Biggs-Davison (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1038; *ibid.*, col. 1040; David Ginsburg (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 1051; Viscount Cranborne (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1053-5.

[29] Eden (1960), p. 392.

[30] HC Deb 24 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 655.

> 'Russia could capture the prize of Western Europe—this country—by
>
> swift attack overnight. That is no longer a theory; it is a possibility.'[31]

The point was—and this was repeated throughout the debates—that Moscow was pursuing 'a global strategy', as Labour's Eric Heffer argued.[32]   The Commons collectively knew this because of the relevance with which Afghanistan had long been invested in Island Race discourse. It was, as Gilmour—and Carrington in the Lords—put it, the 'strategic salient into the region'.[33]   Thatcher said simply that 'the implications of their presence in Afghanistan are clear.'[34]   References were made in the debates to the Soviet Union acting 'as a continental Power in the traditional way'; 'doing what they have always done in that part of the world'; its 'designs on a warm water port'; and 'her geopolitical situation, partly in Europe and partly in Asia, [which] leads her into policies which can scarcely be described as defensive.'[35]   This classic geopolitical reasoning secured Britain's Island Race identity through its differentiation with Russian spatial politics and co-constitutively secured its relevance in the Cold War context.

2.3. The expertise of the Island Race: Western strategy and British identity

That the Soviet threat was narrated as global was by now, of course, an established part of Cold War politics but the invasion invited a sustained Commons critique of Western strategy in the face of what Heath described as the Soviet Union's 'well-defined strategy'.[36]   However, if the West as a whole had failed to anticipate aggressive Russian geopolitics, this was *in spite* of British expertise, a view epitomised by Conservative John Biggs-Davison when he said that the Soviets

> 'could be forgiven for having supposed that the West had conceded
>
> what for a century Britain in India had denied to Russia in Asia. Then
>
> [US] President Carter found Kabul and Kandahar on the map and
>
> began to say what had long been said about Soviet imperialism by
>
> […] the Prime Minister.'[37]

Afghanistan was, as Conservative Julian Amery pithily put it, the 'Clapham Junction […] of Southern Asia': 'very few people go to Clapham for fun, but every day thousands go there on their way to better places'. In other words, it was 'the gateway to the subcontinent of India and

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[31] Heath: HC Deb 28 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 959-62; Warren: *ibid.*, col. 1024; See also Thatcher: *ibid.*, col. 944; Callaghan: *ibid.*, col. 946; Giles Radice (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 1064.

[32] *Ibid.*, col. 996. See also, Callaghan: *ibid.*, col. 954; John Browne (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1047.

[33] HC Deb 24 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 655; HL Deb 24 January 1980, vol. 404, col. 530.

[34] HC Deb 28 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 938.

[35] Callaghan: *ibid.*, col. 954; Heffer: *ibid.*, col. 996; Radice: *ibid.*, col. 1064 (see also Warren: *ibid.*, col. 1024); Ginsburg: *ibid.*, col. 1051.

[36] *Ibid.*, col. 959. Russell Johnston (Leader of the Scottish Liberal Party): 'The crux of the East-West problem is simply that the East knows what it wants and the West does not' (*ibid.*, col. 1042). See also Browne: *ibid.*, col. 1046-7.

[37] *Ibid.*, col. 1038.

the Persian Gulf", something, Amery pointed out, 'we should know, as we fought three wars to prevent the Russians getting control of it.'[38]

The invasion, as Suez had been, was represented as a chance to finally get the US as well as NATO and European allies interested in regions which only Britain had previously recognised as strategically vital. Thusly a discursive subject position was constructed for Britain in which, with its vast knowledge from its comprehensive and benevolent imperium, it understood the global strategy that the West was lacking, not least in the Indian Ocean which was now apparently threatened and only, according to Heath, truly recognised by maritime Britain.[39] For a number of Members (mostly, it must be said, Conservatives) this expertise was embodied in Thatcher herself who 'alone of all the Western leaders has been consistent in her analysis of the Russian threat.'[40] Moreover, the inherited links of the cosmopolitan, outward-looking Island Race allowed it to have not only knowledge of the Greater Middle East but also sited Britain— redolent of the 1960-3 Europe debates—as a pivotal, geopolitical bridge whose Island Race status connoted utility in the resolution of the situation.

Illustrative of this, Callaghan spoke of using Britain's experiences with India and Pakistan ('longer and richer than that of anyone else; many people from the sub-continent who live in Britain today have a warmth and feeling for this country and the country of their origin') and how the government might take a lead in promoting growth in the Third World generally; Heath contrasted British (and his own) knowledge of the Muslim world with a general Western ignorance; Conservative Peter Tapsell and Labour's Giles Radice did the same regarding Afghanistan and the Soviet Union; Frank Hooley of Labour argued for utilising the unique British links with Europe and the Commonwealth; and Amery suggested that Britain— historically 'the architect of the alliances that maintained some freedom in Europe'—now needed to 'mobilise the United States, Europe, China, Japan and as many countries of the Third world as will join us.'[41]

British foreign policy-makers, according to their own articulations of expertise and global linkages, *knew* the significance of the invasion. Gilmour argued that it was 'an event of the widest significance' and Thatcher 'a symbol and a warning.'[42] Their colleague Patrick Cormack

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[38] *Ibid.*, col. 1009.

[39] *Ibid.*, col. 969. See also Amery: *ibid.*, col. 1011; Warren: *ibid.*, col. 1024-5; Peter Shore (Labour, Shadow Foreign Secretary): *ibid.*, col. 1071.

[40] Cranborne: *ibid.*, col. 1055. See also Amery: *ibid.*, col. 1014; Michael Brotherton (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1033; Patrick Cormack (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1059.

[41] Callaghan: *ibid.*, col. 951; *ibid.*, col. 957; Heath: *ibid.*, col. 966; Tapsell: *ibid.*, col. 1000; Radice: *ibid.*, col. 1063; Hooley*: ibid.*, col. 1059; Amery: *ibid.*, col. 1014.

[42] HC Deb 24 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 655; HC Deb 28 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 935.

warned of 'a policy designed to command the strategic routes of the world and to leave the Soviet Union poised to command the great producers of raw materials.'[43]   The Lines of Communication which had so preoccupied imperial foreign policy-makers were now flowing with oil, an arrangement that contributed to their continued strategic relevance in the discourse of these debates. Thatcher explained that oil was

> 'the life blood of Western industrial societies. The Straits of Hormuz
> are the artery through which it flows. If that flow were abruptly
> stopped in the years immediately ahead there would be real doubt
> whether our societies could survive in their present form.'[44]

Redolent of the Suez Crisis in chapter 3, the Middle East retained its position of critical importance as the arbiter of the exclusive Western way of life which had gradually become incorporated into British identity and was thus narrated according to its ontologically secure importance.

2.4. British history and national identity: imperial past, Island Race present

The historical erasure which comprised the Thatcherite revolution is directly relevant for this genealogy of British identity in foreign policy. Explicitly and implicitly, all governments select which segments of national history will discursively live on and which will be subject to erasure or serve as warnings for current practice; in this sense Thatcher's were not unique.[45] But, as I have already argued, compared with the governments of the 1970s in particular, Thatcher's represent a rupture. Explicitly committed to restoring national greatness, the identity of Britain in this 'dangerous' period was discursively linked to its past as a Power of great import in order to secure its relevance.

To reiterate: this representation of history began with the Second British Empire and ended around the time of the Suez Crisis and the subsequent decolonisations; the period up to May 1979 characterised by inertia. In this historical rendering and its aspired future projection, greatness and relevance would not be assured only by such narrow foci as the EC but the recrudescence of the Cold War tropes which complemented and dignified Island Race identity. Britain in Cold War politics was shoulder-to-shoulder with its Anglo-Saxon kith and kin (and suitable, 'civilised' European nations), a pivotal power with great historical expertise on crucial *global* issues beyond Europe: Africa, the Middle East and strategic Lines of Communication. Indeed Labour's Greville Janner remarked: 'I cannot help feeling that some […] from the Government Benches seemed rather glad that the Cold War was back' and Gilmour argued: 'it may well be that the West now needs a new strategy of the sort that Mr. George Kennan

[43] *Ibid.*, col. 1062.
[44] *Ibid.*, col. 938.
[45] Barnett (1999), p. 14.

evolved some 30 years ago.'[46]   Hence *détente* was, to Thatcher and others, a regrettable error and the analogies drawn in the House in January 1980 were with the appeasement of the 1930s—shifted in these narratives from a temporary error into something that Britain (under Churchill's wise statesmanship) had utilised as a salutary lesson for national triumph and renewal—and expertise gleaned from the Great Game.[47]

These constituted the main historical references which partly comprised Conservative discourse in particular.[48]   Their dominance is illustrated by an exchange between Labour's Clive Soley and the Conservative Warren. Soley described the 'constant fear of Russia' that Britain had had through much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as 'irrational' and the allusions to appeasement as inappropriate.[49] Warren spoke next and described how he had been 'frightened' by the Labour Member's speech. The Opposition benches, he said, were 'so capable of seeing every side of the argument that I fear they will still be in the House debating when the Russians are at the gates of Westminster.[50] He went on to outline the strategic importance of Afghanistan and the enduring Russian search for warm water ports with reference to a secret Trotsky memorandum of 1919.[51]

2.5. Labour opposition and dominant discourses

Although Labour leader Callaghan's views were largely congruent with the Prime Minister's, there was a persistent tone to the counter-arguments from his benches.[52] In general, they tended to depict the renderings of Russia's eternal geopolitical malevolence as hysterical and inaccurate and hinged not on Britain's imperial past but highlighted Western hypocrisy in standing up for Afghans while simultaneously ignoring a multitude of other oppressed peoples from Cyprus and Chile to Cambodia and Vietnam.[53] Heffer was illustrative of this. Although more robust in his condemnation of the invasion and less equivocal in calling for a response than some others from Labour, he intervened during Heath's speech to ask whether the British outcry was based on human rights or strategic interests.[54] The former Prime Minister failed to deal directly with the

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[46] HC Deb 28 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 1035; *ibid.*, col. 1080; X (1947).

[47] For Thatcher's scathing account of the apparent Soviet exploitation of *détente*, see: HC Deb 28 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 934; *ibid.*, col. 943-5. See also Callaghan: *ibid.*, col. 955; Brotherton: *ibid.*, col. 1030; Raymond Whitney (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1066-7.

[48] Thatcher: *ibid.*, col. 933-6; *ibid.*, col. 940-1; Callaghan: *ibid.*, col. 948; Heffer: *ibid.*, col. 994; Tapsell: *ibid.*, col. 999; Amery: *ibid.*, col. 1008-9; *ibid.*, col. 1013-4; Brotherton: *ibid.*, col. 1030-2; Ginsburg: *ibid.*, col. 1051; Gilmour: *ibid.*, col. 1081-2.

[49] *Ibid.*, col. 1016; *ibid.*, col. 1018. See also Enoch Powell's (Ulster Unionist Party) typically contrary remarks (*ibid.*, col. 972-7).

[50] *Ibid.*, col. 1022.

[51] *Ibid.*, col. 1022-7. Brotherton also referred to Soley's views with derision (*ibid.*, col. 1030-2).

[52] *Ibid.*, col. 945-59.

[53] Bob Cryer: HC Deb 24 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 665; James Lamond: HC Deb 28 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 982-4; Ernie Ross: *ibid.*, col. 1002-5; Soley: *ibid.*, col. 1021-2; Hooley: *ibid.*, col. 1056-8.

[54] *Ibid.*, col. 965-6.

point but the paramountcy of strategy was made clear throughout his address. While Ernie Ross decried Thatcher's creation of 'an emotional atmosphere akin to a war-time psychology' and James Lamond remarked that he did not believe Britain had any 'strategic interest' in Afghanistan, the dominant representations of British international interests and co-constitutive identity were ranged against them.[55] Stanchioned by established Island Race concepts and the Cold War context (which had come to partly constitute the identity itself), the vitality of the Greater Middle East for the Western world—which, it must be said, Labour also firmly positioned Britain in—was thoroughly sedimented as part of ontologically secure British identity. It provided the dreaded telos of the debate: Island Race reasoning cast the Soviet Union as a typical Land Power that would seek to expand in every direction and whose global strategy fixed it upon severing the Lines of Communication of the 'free world' (that existed in the image of Britain's maritime empire); thus it would be led inexorably towards the oil fields of the Middle East from where it would place the Western/British way of life in mortal danger.

Redolent of the Suez Crisis debates, it was said that hostile control of the Persian Gulf would directly affect British livelihoods and mobilised vivid renderings of the region, such as 'our heart of oil' and 'the vital treasury on which the industry of Western Europe, the United States and Japan depends; if it were denied to us, we would practically be driven to surrender'.[56] Furthermore, Thatcher and her supporters unambiguously represented Britain as part of the democratic Western community; a depiction that was certainly undisputed by at least the Labour Front Bench, as Callaghan's and Shadow Foreign Secretary Peter Shore's remarks reveal.[57] To this end, the invasion was 'an affront' to and 'an assault on the vital interests of the West as a whole'.[58] It was 'absolutely necessary and vital that the unity of the West is retained' and that 'NATO and Europe [not] become divided into two parts.'[59] Although never predicated exclusively on Marxism contra democracy, the discourse was nonetheless underlined by this essential opposition, with the reification and ontological security of British (and Western) democracy partially depending upon linkages between the invasion and Soviet autocracy, especially the recent treatment of dissident Professor Andrei Sakharov.[60] The resulting co-constitution confirmed the solidarity of the Western world—itself constituted in the image of Anglo-Saxon, Atlantic, Island Race Britain (see chapter 3)—its fundamental opposition to the Soviet Union and an ontologically secure and contextually relevant British identity. The British

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[55] *Ibid.*, col. 1002; *ibid.*, col. 982.

[56] Browne: *ibid.*, col. 1049; Amery: *ibid.*, col. 1010. Callaghan also remarked: 'Our lighting, heating, fuel, energy for our machinery, transport and levels of employment are all dependent upon the continuing and uninterrupted supply of oil' (*ibid.*, col. 947).

[57] See, for example, Shore: *ibid.*, col. 1070; *ibid.*, col. 1077.

[58] Thatcher: *ibid.*, col. 939; Callaghan: *ibid.*, col. 947.

[59] Thatcher: *ibid.*, col. 944; Heath: *ibid.*, col. 962.

[60] See, especially, Johnston: *ibid.*, col. 1043-5.

subject positions fixed by the Conservatives—not least Thatcher, who drew explicitly on this geopolitical reasoning—were simply more established than those of Labour.[61]   This was a political configuration that would be repeated when the House debated the Argentinian invasion of the Falklands, to which we will now turn.

3. An Island Race like us: the Falklands and British identity

3.1. The Falklands Conflict, British history, identity and role-playing

Several years further into Thatcher's 'dangerous decade', Argentinian forces invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands, a small, isolated British dependency in the South Atlantic, thus making good their claim of sovereignty over what they call the Malvinas.[62]   Immediately condemned by parliament and in the media, a naval taskforce was despatched to retake the islands, which it did, nearly ten weeks after the Argentine invasion of April 2 1982.   The sustained Commons debates over the invasion itself and the response constituted a further and significant renascence of Island Race identity tropes.   In general terms, the novel context of the Argentine invasion and occupation and the journey of the taskforce were co-constitutive with a significant recrudescence of established Island Race identity concepts, particularly insularity and the universality of British values.   In contrast to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Britain was to be the primary—possibly the sole—actor responding to Argentina and what was at stake was a parcel of British territory inhabited by people who saw themselves as British. Nevertheless, there were a number of similarities in the discourse of the two debates, demonstrating how distinct contexts can both be narrated in terms which fix an ontologically secure subject position for Britain reliant on Island Race identity tropes.

A cottage industry in and of itself, the Falklands Conflict has been fetishised in British history as a singular event representing a backlash against apparent national decline and used as an exemplar from which to approach the study of Thatcher's leadership.[63]   When placed into historical context it is usually situated as a Thatcherite reassertion of national greatness.[64]   With her reflections on how 'a form of discursive construction took place that knitted ideas of the English and British self to the actionable narrative of foreign policy' Hadfield-Amkhan's study is one of relatively few to conceptualise the place of identity in this.[65]   In a similar vein, David McCourt's focus on Britain's ontological security-seeking is welcome, based as it is on the idea

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[61] *Ibid.*, col. 933-45.
[62] See Lawrence Freedman's 'official account' of the conflict and Anthony Gooch's longer historical view which contextualises it within the relationship between the Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon worlds (Freedman (2007a & b); Gooch (1990a & b).
[63] See, for example, Baxendale (2015).
[64] See especially Barnett's *Iron Britannia* and, for other critical accounts, James Aulich's and Dodds' analyses of satirical visual representations of the conflict (Barnett (2012); Aulich (1992); Dodds (1996)).
[65] Hadfield-Amkhan (2010), p. 159.

that '[t]he decision to reinvade [the Falklands] had no economic or geopolitical rationale: Britain's principled sense of Self was at stake, not its strategic position; its ontological security was threatened, not its direct physical security nor its economic interests.'[66] Perhaps rightly preoccupied with over-throwing the tendency towards Thatcher-centrism and electoral politics in much scholarship on the Falklands, he focusses on Britain's international role-playing as a *status quo* Power at the expense of endogenous considerations by arguing that '[i]dentity-based action requires the prior existence of social roles to render both the action itself and the underlying identity socially meaningful.'[67] This rather typical post-Wendtian constructivist move over-simplifies what ought to be seen as a co-constitutive process in which identity and perceived international role constitute *one another*.[68] So the reiterations, for example, of Britain upholding international norms—of which there were many—are reliant not simply on the existence and cognition of an 'international society' but also the elucidation of a secure subject position reliant on the established conceptions of identity themselves.[69] In any case, this separation of identity and international role is not so easy: what was the British Empire, identity, role or both?

3.2. Island Race history: the Empire Strikes Back?

I argued earlier that the Thatcherite reading of history tended to dignify the period from the Second British Empire to the Suez Crisis and characterised the ensuing era as one of torpor and decline. This, as we saw, relied on specific mobilisations of Island Race historical identity. The national renewal of which the new Conservative government was the vanguard was to be achieved not by neoteric foreign policy but a return to the *status quo ante*, a move which had only been leant further grist by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. As she later recalled in her memoirs:

> 'From now on, the whole tone of international affairs began to change,
> and for the better. Hard-headed realism and strong defence became
> the order of the day.'[70]

Indeed 'realism' was invoked several times during the Falklands debates by Defence Secretary John Nott, Carrington's successor at the Foreign Office, Francis Pym, and various backbenchers as well as serving as a counter-concept for some Labour Members who described the recovery

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[66] McCourt (2011), pp. 1599-600.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 1600.
[68] Wendt (1992); (1999). The debate on Wendt and constructivism in IR is represented in an extremely large and diverse corpus. In contrast to much of the literature so far presented here, see the following 'thinner' Wendtian constructivism which seeks to draw a distinction between it and the apparently postmodernist-tainted arguments of Campbell, Shapiro *et al*: Adler (1997); (2013); Hynek & Teti (2010); Marsh (2009); Zehfuss (2001).
[69] Hadfield-Amkhan (2010), p. 88.
[70] Thatcher (1993), p. 88.

of the islands as 'unrealistic'.[71] As Liberal Russell Johnston put it regarding the debates around the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, there was 'a lot of *realpolitik* flying about'.[72] This 'return to realism' relied on specific renderings of what exactly was being returned to; in other words, how the (selective) history of Island Race foreign policy provided an adequate guide to the present situation by fixing an ontologically secure subject position for Britain in both historical and contemporary terms.

For all the accusations of 'blimpishness' or 'jingoism' hurled at the Government and its supporters—and there was plenty—the history invoked in the Falklands debates rarely constituted explicit glorifications of empire.[73] More subtle than that, it fitted the reified, ontologically secure tropes of Island Race identity both to the present situation as well as to past experiences which could then serve as salutary and relevant guidance, impelling a discursive congruence between the current required policy and the established tropes. The two main historical events summoned in the debates were World War Two and the Suez Crisis. The former of these functioned as a reminder of a supposed international role for Britain that relied upon its exceptional island geopolitics: standing alone against a rising tide of continental barbarism, it was the heroic, insular character of Britain that had saved freedom from Nazism.[74] This was discursively linked with appeasement which, instead of being a stain on Britain's honour, became in its eventual reversal a symbol of its wisdom (embodied in the figure of Churchill) and provided MPs with apparent expertise in dealing with 'fascist' Argentina. Britain, a number of speakers reminded the House, would stand alone again if necessary. The position of Suez was more ambiguous—Eden and his supporters had, after all, been explicitly trying to avoid the appeasement of the thirties—but its main constitution in the Falklands debates was as signalling the terminus of a prior era in which the geopolitics of Island Race identity had predominated.[75] What these historical renderings constituted was an ontologically

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[71] Nott: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1051-2; Pym: *ibid.*, col. 959; Whitney: HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 653-4; Sir Hugh Fraser (Conservative): HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 983; Bob Mellish (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 984; Sir Anthony Kershaw (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 989; Betty Boothroyd (Labour): HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1171; Alex Lyon (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 1179; Ray Powell (Labour): HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 1021; Sydney Bidwell (Labour): HC Deb 15 June 1982, vol. 25, col. 738.

[72] HC Deb 28 January 1980, vol. 977, col. 1044.

[73] Callaghan: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 976; David Ennals (Labour): HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1028; Peter Hardy (Labour): HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1176; Daffyd Wigley (President of Plaid Cymru): HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1189; Ray Powell (Labour): HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 1020-1.

[74] Dodds (1996), p. 576.

[75] For those drawing a distinction between the Falklands and Suez see Edward du Cann (Conservative): HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 643; Healey (Shadow Foreign Secretary and Deputy Labour Leader): HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 965; Patrick Duffy (Labour): HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1165; Owen: HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 1001; Robert Rhodes James (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1002; Michael Colvin (Conservative): HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 998. David Winnick (Labour): *ibid.*, col.

secure subject position that impelled the favoured policy of sending a naval taskforce to retake the Falklands by locating Britain as an exemplar of global freedoms forged in its insular island home and with the means and outlook to enact their universal defence. The ensuing section will further demonstrate this.

3.3. Global freedoms, insularity, universality: Island Race values and the retaking of the Falklands

The process of Othering Argentina was predicated relatively simply on the representation of the country as fascist, thereby linking it with the European dictatorships of the 1930s. Aside from foreclosing the possibility of successful negotiations—'we are dealing here not with a democratic country'; 'the present-day Government of Argentina cannot be trusted to behave in a civilised way'—it triggered narratives of how Britain had 'taken on' Hitler and Mussolini in the name of freedom.[76] Britain, it was reiterated throughout the debates, was 'a democracy that is unequalled in the world' and didn't appease dictators.[77] This is highly relevant because of the ways in which the British 'stand' against the Axis has come to be symbolised by its very islandness: the physical separation of the archipelago from Europe; the heroism of an insular and exceptional people; and the salvation provided by the Anglo-Saxon brotherhood of Greater Britain. The equivalence of Argentina and Hitler's and Mussolini's regimes thus drew a simultaneous correlation between the retaking of the Falklands and Island Race identity tropes. Britain would have to stand alone once more if necessary. To this end, Conservative Winston Churchill, grandson of the former Prime Minister, reminded the House of the UN's (and the League of Nations') poor record of 'bringing to heel fascist dictators', in contrast with Britain's own expertise.[78] In any case, as Enoch Powell pointed out, 'the right of self-defence […] existed before the United Nations was dreamt of' and the higher authority under which Britain acted was 'inherent in *us*'.[79] This condensed the uniqueness of the exceptional Island Race into the debate about Britain's response and broadly sanctified the period up to the Suez Crisis as a *belle époque* of British foreign policy; hence Conservative Alan Clark's remark: 'I believe that this is the last chance, the very last chance, for us to redeem much of our history over the past

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1014. By way of counterpoint, see Benn: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 993; Michael Mates (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1001.

[76] Sir Bernard Braine (Conservative): HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 659; Kershaw: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 989.

[77] David Stoddart (Labour): HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 992. On Britain not appeasing dictators see Foot: HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 641; Douglas Jay (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 658; Fraser: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 983; Kershaw: *ibid.*, col. 990; Antony Buck (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1012; Winston Churchill (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1020; Eric Ogden (Social Democratic Party): *ibid., col. 1033;* Alan Glyn (Conservative): HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1182; Lord James Douglas-Hamilton (Conservative): HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 1036; Maurice Macmillan: HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23*,* col. 984; Arthur Palmer (Labour Co-operative): *ibid.*, col. 990; Stoddart: *ibid.*, col. 994.

[78] HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1020.

[79] HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 1003. Emphasis added.

twenty-five years, of which we may be ashamed, and from which we may have averted our gaze.'[80]

Throughout the debates there was sustained linkage between the Falklands themselves, the upholding of an international principle and Britain's special expertise and duty in fulfilling this role. On this, at least, the front benches could agree, as the opening address of Opposition Leader Foot on 3 April attests: 'we are determined to ensure that we [...] uphold the rights of our country throughout the world, and the claim of our country to be a defender of people's freedom throughout the world, particularly those who look to us for special protection, as do the people in the Falkland Islands.'[81] From the many other remarks, several are indicative:

> 'there is the longer-term interest to ensure that foul and brutal aggression does not succeed in our world. If it does, there will be a danger not merely to the Falkland Islands, but to people all over this dangerous planet'; 'We are defending civilisation against barbarians as our ancestors did centuries ago elsewhere. That is what we are doing. That is what I hope we shall continue to do for the sake of the world'; and 'we are upholding not some minor issue 7,000 miles away from our shores but a fundamental issue'.[82]

More specifically, Conservative Geoffrey Rippon drew on the World Wars as evidence for Britain's moral strength, describing the country as 'the twice defender of the freedom of the world in this century'.[83]

The potential and then emergent retaking of the Falklands was represented as both the parochial concern of Britain in recovering a lost part of its indivisible territory *and* a universalised

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[80] HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1038. See also the contemporaneous remarks in his diaries, including the following entry from April 2: 'We've lost the Falklands [...] It's all over. We're a Third World country, no good for anything. [...] I have a terrible feeling that this is a step change, down, for England. Humiliation for sure and, not impossible, military defeat. An apparition that must have been stalking us, since we were so dreadfully weakened at Passchendaele I suppose, for the last sixty-five years' (Clark (2000), pp. 310-1).

[81] HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 639.

[82] Foot: *ibid.*, col. 641; Michael English (Labour): HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1025; Owen: HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1156. See also Pym: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 961; *ibid.*, col. 963; HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1204-6; HC Deb 19 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 24; HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 1052; *ibid.*, col. 1054; Healey: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 965-6; David Crouch (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1036; Nott: *ibid.*, col. 1050; Foot: HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1151; *ibid.*, col. 1154; Michael McNair-Wilson (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1169; Hardy: *ibid.*, col. 1176; Ian Lloyd (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1188-9; Jay: *ibid.*, col. 1196-7; Browne: *ibid.*, col. 1198; Thatcher: HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 981; Rhodes James: *ibid.*, col. 1001; Nicholas Winterton (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1012; Stan Newens (Labour Co-operative): *ibid.*, col. 1028-31; Palmer: HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 989; Bill Benyon (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 990-1; Stoddart: *ibid.*, col. 994; James Hill (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1003.

[83] HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 997.

phenomenon of which the world should pay attention. This epitomised the insularity/universality nexus which is a foundation of Island Race identity. On one hand, the Falklanders were not just—as Thatcher memorably put it—'like the people of the United Kingdom, […] an island race'; they were British citizens and the islands were British territory.[84] On the other, Britain was upholding an international principle by defending the islands. The resulting discourse was thusly co-constitutive with Britain's Island Race identity concepts of insularity *and* universality; 'looking after our interests wherever they were' as Heath argued.[85] What I mean by this is that the linkages of the historic (the reversal of World War II appeasement) and the contemporary (fascist Argentina taking British territory by force and the potential of British reach in enacting the response) condensed the discourse with ontologically secure renderings of Island Race identity and fixed Britain in a subject position conterminous with global norms and values.

3.4. The emergent Soviet threat and the co-constitution of Cold War and Island Race narratives

The appeals to the global defence of freedom implicitly fed into the Cold War narrative which itself had been condensed into medium- to long-term conceptions of Island Race identity. Redolent of the debates around the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, this was constitutive of a general questioning of Western strategy and the supposed importance of the Falklands in global schemes of democratic capitalism. Once again, it was the British vision of the crucial nature of the islands that was valorised, as against a general Western (and, it must be said, Foreign Office) neglect. Hence the gradual intrusion of the Soviet Union into the debates as the naval taskforce made its way to its destination.[86] This reflected general patterns in the development of Island Race identity in which the Falklands were represented as strategically significant and therefore inevitably subject to the covetous designs of Moscow.

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[84] HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 638. Although the early debates were characterised by a degree of sentimental argumentation suggesting that Britain's response was about 'people not territory' and the freeing of British citizens from the fascist boot heel, in the immediate aftermath of the conflict Thatcher tended to respond rather pointedly to questions of the islands' future by arguing that the only issue was territorial sovereignty (HC Deb 15 June 1982, vol. 25, col. 738). For arguments that Britain was defending people not territory see du Cann: HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 642; Sir Peter Emery (Conservative): *ibid*, col. 658; David Steel (Liberal): HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 977-8; Richard Luce (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 978-9; George Cunningham (Independent Labour): *ibid.*, col. 1000; Buck: *ibid.*, col. 1011-2. By way of counterpoint, see Enoch Powell: HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1158-9.

[85] HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 967.

[86] See, for example, Keith Best (Conservative): HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1016; HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 1012; Thatcher: HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1148; Hal Miller (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1175; John Stokes (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1178; Wigley: *ibid.*, col. 1189-90; Browne: *ibid.*, col. 1199; Healey: *ibid.*, col. 1203; HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 960; Winterton: HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 1013-4; Pym: *ibid.*, col. 1056; Sir Patrick Wall (Conservative): HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 973; *ibid.*, col. 975-6; Owen: *ibid.*, col. 986-7; Colvin: *ibid.*, col. 998-9.

The Soviet threat was rendered in two distinct fashions in the Falklands debates: first as an explicit menace to the islands themselves (the risk of 'pushing Argentina into the arms of the Soviet Union') and of its potential to exploit divisions in and break the Western alliance ('we are confronted by an enormous challenge not only to Britain but to our so-called allies; they are on test as much as us').[87] The twofold discursive constitution of this was in the linkage of the maritime strategy of Island Race identity with the defence of the Western world (the Falklands could not be conceived of as strategically relevant in anything other than a maritime sense) and the enduring and renascent Soviet threat with the present issue. In spite of representations of Britain's ability to stand alone against fascism, the primary importance of NATO was simultaneously reified in the debates while being linked with Britain's international identity. The Falklands were Britain's concern but also—symbolically and geopolitically—highly relevant for NATO/the West; hence the discussions which emerged about the possible formation of SATO, a South Atlantic equivalent of NATO.[88]

In order to ensure Britain's territorial integrity, defend Western freedom and uphold international norms, the emergent policy was for the islands to be retaken; if necessary by force, unilaterally and at great cost over vast distances. The Island Race constituted in the debates possessed the attributes which would allow it to do this. Apart from its expertise in standing up to dictators, the physical separation of Britain and the Falklands was nulled by Britain's national will and the Island Race concept of oceanic space without distance. Against what Conservative John Peyton called 'the plain fact of geography', was ranged Britain's possession of the third most powerful navy in the world and Enoch Powell's characteristic rendition of British conceptions of maritime spatiality:

> 'the ocean is one, and the ability to command the ocean is one. The
>
> interests and the power of a maritime nation are wherever the sea is.'[89]

Distance was thus at once relevant and irrelevant ('it matters not whether the invasion took place 80 or 8,000 miles away') insofar as it represented something that could be conquered by ontologically-secure Island Race geopolitics with its enduring reach and global importance.[90] In this sense it was not simply patriotic tub-thumping when, to cries of 'hear, hear', Conservative Edward du Cann announced:

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[87] Healey: *ibid.*, col. 960; Mellish: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 984.

[88] See, for example, Keith Speed (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1016; Browne: HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1199; Amery: HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 1018; Colvin: HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 998-9; Hill: *ibid.*, col. 1003; Stephen Hastings (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 1018.

[89] Peyton: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 969; Powell: HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 1004. The following all pointed out Britain's enduring naval power: Amery: HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 647; Nott: *ibid.*, col. 666-7; Churchill: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1022; Glyn: HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1182; Enoch Powell: HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 1004.

[90] Luce: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 979.

> 'let us hear no more about logistics; how difficult it is to travel long distances. I do not remember the Duke of Wellington whining about Torres Vedras.'[91]

He was drawing on and dignifying a supposed heroic British history of conquering distances and condensing the meanings of the current situation with established Island Race tropes. As the taskforce closed in on the South Atlantic, this valiant narrative of national will overcoming great distances was reiterated; as Pym and colleague Sir Bernard Braine, for example, put it: 'our naval task force is on its way to the South Atlantic; it is a formidable demonstration of our strength and of our strength of will' and 'the time for weasel words has ended'.[92] Furthermore, the swift mobilisation itself was an act which further proved the uniqueness of Britain and the utility of being able to respond quickly to situations anywhere in the world, something that would become axiomatic in later strategic reviews.[93]

3.5. Competing subject positions: opposition discourse and ontological security

The arguments of some (mainly) Labour Members who urged that a conflict would be disproportionately bloody and ultimately pointless if British governments continued to negotiate over the islands' future anyway were largely overwhelmed by the numerical force of those supporting the government. Furthermore, their remarks tended to be dismissed perfunctorily or critiqued by the ensuing speakers who would instead refer to speeches supporting the government and repeat the truism that the House and the country ought to be united in times of conflict; they became aberrations in an otherwise unified discourse. The appeals of Foot and Shadow Foreign Secretary and Deputy Labour Leader Healey to trust in the jurisdiction of the UN did not 'fit' with the dominant representations of the invasion as an affront to British pride and sovereignty—advanced by Foot and Healey as much as anyone—and the renderings of Britain as superior to the UN (and its predecessor) in taking on dictators.[94]

The specific Island Race scripting of Thatcher's government and its supporters was pre-eminent because of the way that its representations of British identity—past, present and aspirational— 'fitted' with the advanced policy in a more ontologically-secure fashion than Labour's position. In announcing the surrender of Argentine forces on June 15 1982, Thatcher argued that she

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[91] HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 643. The Lines of Torres Vedras was a lengthy series of forts whose building Wellington ordered to protect Lisbon during the Peninsular phase of the Napoléonic Wars.

[92] HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 962; HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 660.

[93] See, for example, 'the adaptable posture' in HM Government (2010), pp. 9-10. For encomium on Britain's response to the Falklands, see Nott: HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 666-8; Churchill: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1022; Duffy: HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1167; Glyn: *ibid.*, col. 1182; Wall: HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 973; Emery: HC Deb 15 June 1982, vol. 25, col. 739; Thatcher: *ibid.*, col. 739-40; Winterton: *ibid.*, col. 740.

[94] Foot: HC Deb 03 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 638-9; HC Deb 14 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 1151; *ibid.*, col. 1154; HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 985-6; *ibid.*, col. 990; Healey: HC Deb 07 April 1982, vol. 21, col. 965; HC Deb 29 April 1982, vol. 22, col. 1052; HC Deb 13 May 1982, vol. 23, col. 960.

couldn't agree with Foot that British servicemen had 'risked their lives in any way to have a United Nations trusteeship; they risked their lives to defend British sovereign territory, the British way of life and the rights of British people to determine their own future.'[95] As in the debates about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the British subject positions fixed by Conservative Members were more ontologically secure in terms of the familiar renderings of Island Race identity because of the ways in which they mobilised established tropes relying on a unique history that was at once insular and productive of universal values.

4. Conclusion

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Argentina's of the Falklands were narrated by MPs in ways that fixed ontologically secure subject positions for Britain based upon its established Island Race identity tropes. To the scholarship that has noted Thatcher's commitment to the British 'national myth', this chapter has added a conceptualisation of the discourse of her and the parliaments in which she sat as forming part of the enduring social practice which reifies particular geopolitical identity tropes forged in Britain's past as leader of a maritime empire. The contemporary foreign policy discourse was constitutive of a recrudescence of Island Race identity tropes because of the ways that they ontologically 'fitted' with the events, provided clear policy aims and accorded with the (largely Conservative) rendering of British geo-history.

The invasions of Afghanistan and the Falklands occurred prior to the iterations of British identity in the Commons but they did not, as it were, bring them to life: these identity tropes already existed and, prompted by the events, they *co-constituted* their discursive representations according to traditions in British foreign policy thought.[96] To take one example from the chapter: the renderings of the Soviet Union as a typical Land Power were reliant on traditional Island Race taxonomies of Tsarist Russia (and others) *as well as* more recent formulations, in this case the Cold War. The discursive co-constitution lay in the securing of Britain in alterity as the Island Race and also the relevance of its foreign policy in the contemporary context. Thus it is important to acknowledge the hegemony of Cold War politics but also recognise its contingency and the longer-term traditions of established Island Race identity concepts.[97]

This is not to say that the Members who spoke in these debates were, as Michael Barnett put it, 'cultural dupes' but to acknowledge how they were engaging in discursive social practices which place a premium on the elucidation of an ontologically secure, national Self.[98] By placing this into the larger context of this thesis, what are also revealed are *changes within*

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[95] HC Deb 15 June 1982, vol. 25, col. 732.
[96] Doty (1996), p. 127; Ó Tuathail (2002), p. 606.
[97] Jackson (2011), p. 400.
[98] Barnett (1999), p. 7.

continuity and how Island Race identity is 'put to work' in emergent and novel contexts which, in themselves, constitute evolutions as new and old historical 'experiences' are absorbed or discarded. In this sense what has just been discussed is exemplary, for the dominant renderings of British history dignified a particular temporal narrative at the expense of an intervening period and centralised certain policy courses and representations of events. The classic scholarship on British foreign policy, that it is an eternal, pragmatic pursuit of national interests, is shown to be lacking because of the requirement for an 'identifiable entity to which they can be attributed.'[99] Its continued attraction as an argument, however, is perhaps understandable because of the frequency and *relative* constancy of Britain's identity, as well as the holistic nature of its geopolitics which contributes to it not resembling geopolitics at all.[100] Once again, this hints at the value of pursuing a genealogical approach which is sensitive to both historic and contemporary factors within given discursive occasions. British identity in the early 1980s was clearly secured through continued mobilisations of Island Race tropes with their inherent malleability and geopolitical holism but, as we have seen, they were absorptive of emergent contexts which, in themselves, became co-constitutive with and reified the identity concepts, adding to their status as arbiters of ontological security.

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[99] Dittmer & Kim (1993), p. 5.
[100] Guzzini (2012b), p. 3.

chapter 6

International Communities and Island Stories: geopolitics, globalisation and ontological security 1997-2015

1. Introduction

This chapter comprises analysis of four debates from the twenty-first century, presented in order to make the argument that the post-Cold War environment is discursively constructed by British foreign policy-makers in particular fashions that co-constitutively fix ontologically secure subject positions for Britain according to its established Island Race identity. This has a profound effect on the ways that the manifold international issues that come before parliament, not least relations with the EU, are discussed by Members. Of uppermost importance to this argument is how MPs narrate the post-Cold War condition of globalisation by mobilising established British geopolitics, thus enframing contemporary issues in terms that reify the utility of Island Race identity.

After introducing the empirical material I will present an analysis of how globalisation is narrated co-constitutively with established Island Race geopolitical conceptions in the context of the issues and events discussed in the debates under question. This will lead into my argument that fundamental to this discursive practice is how the globalised environment is constituted as being one in which Britain can thrive because of its geopolitical attributes, especially its collection of unique, insular values whose universalism ensures that Britain retains reach and relevance in emergent contexts. The following section concerns Britain's relationship with the rest of Europe and hinges on how the balance between insularity and universality continues to be discursively played out in parliamentary debates. The two main Westminster parties articulate competing subject positions for Britain related to the continent, both of which mobilise established Island Race identity tropes. I conclude the chapter by reflecting on the implications of the discursive constitutions of a globalised world and the place of Britain's relationship with Europe in it and draw on two recent speeches by Prime Minister David Cameron to argue that they and the analysis of this chapter represent the apotheosis of Britain's particular geopolitical identity in which the parochial, insular Island Race is simultaneously invested with universal importance through discursive practices of ontological security-seeking in which traditional identity tropes establish certain subject positions which reify the global relevance of Britain as an island.

Examining discourse from the Labour governments of 1997-2010 alongside those from the successor Conservative administrations will present the former as part of a larger scale genealogical study rather than treating it as a singular, neoteric occurrence driven by Tony Blair's messianic pursuit of the War on Terror. Furthermore, the latest developments in Conservative foreign policy thinking can be also be properly contextualised within enduring cultures of social practice in the Commons. As part of this thesis it will bring the genealogy up to date but in no way conclude it; for ontological security continues to be sought through discursive practices of fixing subject positions reliant on established identity tropes *and* relative to emergent contexts.

1.1. Four 'Debates on the Address'

Unlike in the previous chapters, the four debates on which this analysis is based were not called to announce, discuss or vote on particular issues. Each year, as parliament is 'opened' for a new session, the government prepares a speech—'Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech' or the 'Gracious Address'—for the monarch to read in the House of Lords that announces the legislative agenda for the coming year. Over subsequent days, this is debated in the Commons and the four primary sources of this chapter comprise the 'Debates on the Address' of 2000, 2003, 2012 and 2015. This allows analysis of discourse in a less structured environment in which debate is more wide-ranging than when Members are called to discuss a particular issue or event. Inevitably there are contemporary issues that receive greater focus from MPs and, given the debating cultures of the Commons, the Foreign Secretary who opens these sessions establishes, to some degree, what is discussed, but Members are not formally encouraged by the Speaker to stick to any particular subject, even those prioritised by the government. This freedom within discursive constraints means that these debates are useful indicators of contemporary British discourse.

The choices of debates were subject to certain methodological considerations. Firstly, I wanted to place foreign policy discourse of the Labour governments of 1997 to 2010 and the subsequent Conservative administrations side-by-side rather than treating them discretely.[1] Because foreign policy is not, in the main, a legislative arena of British politics like Health or Education, the distinctiveness of a 'new' foreign policy regime will likely be secured through the articulation of a change of priorities or, as we will see in this chapter, a general 're-engagement' with the world or a specific area. Nevertheless, there is the seemingly permanent British habit of representing it as a continuation of the tradition of pragmatic pursuance of national interests. In

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[1] From 2010 to 2015 the Conservatives were in a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats but, as Oliver Daddow points out, exerted domination over foreign policy matters; the concessions and influence allowed to their partners mainly coming in the domestic sphere (Daddow (2015a), pp. 305, 312).

the different emphases of new governments and oppositions, it is hypothesised that Island Race tropes will be upheld because of the ways in which the post-Cold War environment is narrated according to how ontologically secure subject positions are fixed, reliant on established British geopolitical tropes.

When considering the Labour governments of the period, I chose one debate that preceded September 11 2001 and one that occurred after the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in order to decentre the 'Iraq-centrism' that has inflected much scholarship on Blair's governments.[2] Also considered was Blair's assertion of 'the Doctrine of International Community'; hence my choice of the first debate from Labour's time in office to postdate that.[3] In a more general sense that also influenced my choices from the ensuing Conservative administrations, I wanted to choose debates that had given the governments time to elucidate a distinctive discourse of foreign policy. Even though some governments come to be defined by their foreign policy (one thinks of Eden's, Thatcher's and Blair's) it is rare that they arrive in office having campaigned on such issues and, in any case, one must bear in mind the reactive nature of foreign policy and its co-constitutive relationship with contextual events and issues. Blair, for example, 'gave little attention to foreign policy' when in opposition.[4] The debates from the Conservative period in office since 2010 were chosen according to this criteria: the government's first Foreign Secretary William Hague announced his 'global diplomatic network' over a series of speeches in 2011 and 2012. Given the importance of this to the foreign policy agenda of his government, I wanted to choose one debate that took place when this policy had 'bedded in' and one led by his successor, Philip Hammond.

With the Conservatives in office for more than a term, continuities in foreign policy with their Labour and other predecessors have begun to be noted by scholars. In particular, Oliver Daddow has traced the development of 'liberal conservatism' under Cameron and emphasised its pragmatism and 'traditional' elements, while noting its retention of Labour's ethical considerations.[5] By considering a British tradition of 'bounded liberalism' that privileges the nation-state, global trade and interventionism, he and Pauline Schnapper suggest that this represents an attempt by Blair, Gordon Brown (Labour Prime Minister: 2007-10) and Cameron to reconcile older principles of realism with an appreciation of asset-maximising in the modern world.[6] Surrounded, as Dodds and Elden note, by neo-conservatives like Michael Gove and leading a party that had fully supported the now toxic Iraq War (if not its aftermath), Cameron

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[2] Daddow (2013), p. 110.
[3] Blair (1999).
[4] Wickam-Jones (2000), p. 8.
[5] Daddow (2015a), p. 304.
[6] Daddow & Schnapper (2013), p. 333.

has been particularly anxious to emphasise a more liberal and what he sees as a traditionally British approach to foreign affairs, referring in 2011 to neo-conservative views as 'rather naïve'.[7]   Taking these accounts and going further in acknowledging and exploring the discursive-spatial roots of the traditions and novel agendas pursued by recent governments will contextualise them with one another and the broader scheme of this genealogy. To begin doing so, I will introduce several underlying discourses from the four debates.

1.2. Underlying discourses: 'strategic shrinkage' and 'outward-facing' Britain

Running through these debates and their contexts—prominent issues included relations with the EU and NATO, the War on Terror, the Arab Spring, and Russia and Ukraine—are two particular underlying discourses. Firstly and especially, although not exclusively, important to 2012 and 2015, there was a reiterated truism that Britain was undergoing a process of 'strategic shrinkage'.   This was articulated differently by Members from the ruling party and the Opposition and had its own set of political complexities, i.e. Cameron's government argued that it was reversing Labour's shrinkage; Labour asserted the obverse.[8]   Impelled by the recent publication of the *Strategic Defence and Security Review* (SDSR) and reaction to it from the media and the Defence Committee, a number of Members in 2012 and 2015 quoted from newspaper articles and interviews with American officials apparently concerned with Britain's 'retreat' from the world.[9]   In the earlier debates, Conservative MPs characterised Labour's foreign policy (especially in 2000) as a strategic void, particularly drawing on the *Strategic Defence Review* from 1998 and accusing the document of a lack of direction.[10]   The idea of strategic shrinkage is of particular relevance to a discursive genealogy of Island Race identity because of the ways in which global relevance has persistently been constituted as an ontologically secure marker of Selfhood in British foreign policy discourse.

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[7] Dodds & Elden (2008), pp. 351, 355-7; regarding Gove, see, for example, his 2004 piece 'The very British roots of neoconservatism and its lessons for British Conservatives' (Gove (2004); HC Deb 28 February 2011, vol. 524, col. 38.

[8] Hague: HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 415; *ibid.*, col. 429; Douglas Alexander (Labour, Shadow Foreign Secretary): *ibid.*, col. 431; Steve Gilbert (Liberal Democrat): *ibid.*, col. 442; James Morris (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 467; Andrew Murrison (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 472; Hammond: HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 317-20; Sir Alan Duncan (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 337; Madeleine Moon (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 359; Nadhim Zahawi (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 380; Albert Owen (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 393; Jonathan Ashworth (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 415.

[9] HM Government (2010); House of Commons Defence Committee (2011); Alexander: HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 430; Denis MacShane (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 471; Mike Gapes (Labour Co-operative): HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col 317; Hilary Benn (Labour, Shadow Foreign Secretary): *ibid.*, col 327; Sir Gerald Howarth (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 347; Jeremy Corbyn (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 353. For the obverse in 2000 see Francis Maude (Shadow Foreign Secretary): HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 393.

[10] HM Government (1998). Maude: HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 390; Michael Ancram (Shadow Foreign Secretary): HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 156-7.

This is linked to the second underlying discourse: how Members from all sides reiterated the aphorism that Britain was, by nature, 'outward-facing' or 'outward-looking'.[11] Thus we can see how an 'external' discourse of Britain undergoing 'strategic shrinkage' permeated these debates and impelled the response that Britain was outward-facing which, in itself, drew on the established and fundamental Island Race identity trope of universality. Crucial too in this regard was how the global environment was narrated by British foreign policy-makers in the debates, scripting it as a place in which modern states were required to be outward-facing in order to both take advantage of and mitigate the opportunities and risks inherent in their own depictions of globalisation.

2. Globalisation and the British: spatializing the post-Cold War world

British foreign policy-makers have narrated the post-Cold War world first and foremost as subject to the forces of globalisation which are themselves scripted in specific fashions co-constitutive with historic Island Race identity tropes. One of globalisation's most noted scions, Thomas Friedman, described it as 'the one big thing' that ought to be focussed on in order to 'understand the post-Cold War world'.[12] Its depiction of political, economic and social interdependence in a shrinking global environment has been thoroughly adopted by British governments as the primary narrative of modern politics. Like the Cold War, it is presented (not just by the British) as 'an unavoidable and irreversible process, which is rolling over us like some major natural phenomenon'.[13] Yet while Thomas Barnett argues that it is not 'a national choice but a global condition' others like Luke Martell and Paul Hirst and Graeme Thompson suggest precisely that British governments (especially since 1997) have explicitly made globalisation a central *policy*.[14] Whether globalisation is fictive or real is hardly the point though for—as Angus Cameron and Ronen Palan put it—if 'believed by sufficient numbers of people […] then any myth, however outrageous or outlandish, to some extent becomes a 'reality'.'[15]

The commitment to globalisation narratives across successive governments since the end of the Cold War is highly relevant to this thesis. The genealogical nature of the study of identity

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[11] Robin Cook (Foreign Secretary): HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 378; Nicholas Soames (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 418; Hugh Robertson (Conservative): HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 209; Morris: HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 466; James Lefroy (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 488; Hammond: HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col 317; Benn: *ibid.*, col 327; *ibid.*, col 335; Gapes: *ibid.*, col. 370; Zahawi: *ibid.*, col. 380; Phil Wilson (Labour): *ibid.*, col. 412; Jonathan Reynolds (Labour Co-operative): *ibid.*, col. 413; Justine Greening (Secretary of State for International Development): *ibid.*, col. 425.
[12] Friedman (1999), p. xxi.
[13] Went (2000), p. 5.
[14] Barnett (2009), p. 4; Martell (2008), p. 253; Hirst & Thompson (2000), p. 336.
[15] Cameron & Palan (2004), p. 3.

means that it must pay attention to the contextual factors which come to exist co-constitutively with it. The scripts of globalisation thus underpin this chapter in the way that Cold War geopolitics frequently did in the previous ones: identities are not (re)constructed in a vacuum; they interact with, shape and are shaped by extant discourses as foreign policy-makers seek ontological security by discursively fitting one to the other in ways that are established and familiar.[16] The way globalisation has been historicised also means that it has a particular relevance to British foreign policy, geopolitics and identity.

A range of authors have come to conceptualise 'modern' globalisation (usually, but not exclusively, theorised as being unleashed by the demise of the Soviet Union) as being either a descendent of or at least strongly resembling what Friedman called 'the first era of globalisation': the age of European imperialisms.[17] The British Empire especially has been cast as exemplary in this regard; Martell contending that it was 'as close as it was possible to get to globalization in its period.'[18] The language itself of globalisation, despite claims of 'radical novelty', 'often simply replicates the ways in which the late Victorians interpreted the dynamics of global politics.'[19] Most obviously we have Mackinder's reflections on a 'closed political system […] of world-wide scope' in which '[e]very explosion of social forces, instead of being dissipated in a surrounding circuit of unknown space and barbaric chaos, will be sharply re-echoed from the far side of the globe'.[20] The scripting of oceanic space without distance that I introduced in chapter 1 also hints at the ways in which discourses of islandness are imbricated in both British imperialism and globalisation: how Britain's ambiguous position in a limitless maritime environment is an 'elastic geography' in which distant locales are opportunities and proximal threats can be 'balanced' from a distance.[21] The same compressions of space and time that could bring the Russian or Germanic hordes to the Low Countries and threaten the island sanctuary also offered Britain exotic imperium in India and the Far East.[22]

Such discursive spatialisations have been evident in British foreign policy since well before 'globalisation' specifically spoke its name. The earliest post-War foreign policy-makers frequently spoke of how the world was smaller than it had ever been before; pro-Europeans in the early 1960s argued that interdependence made it senseless to reject a unifying Europe; their

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[16] Vucetic (2011a), p. 14.
[17] Friedman (1999), pp. xvii-ix. He later recast this periodisation into globalisation 1.0 (1492-1800), 2.0 (1800-2000) and 3.0 (2000-) (Friedman (2006), pp. 9-10). See also Thrift (1995), p. 22; Fernández-Armesto (2004), pp. 22, 30.
[18] Martell (2008), p. 453. See also Elden (2005), pp. 15-6.
[19] Bell (2007), p. 84.
[20] Mackinder (1904b), p. 27.
[21] Nicolson (2002), p. 141. See also Swyngedouw (1997), pp. 139-41; Armitage (2007), p. 9.
[22] Kern (1983), pp. 10-35, 131-80, 211-40.

opponents at the time and since made the opposite case: that a shrinking world meant Britain had to reach out beyond Europe; and Wilson's government in the late 1960s used it to justify its jettisoning of British military bases east of Suez.[23] Although no administration has been identified more with globalisation than the Labour governments of 1997-2010, we might first consider some remarks from Malcolm Rifkind, the last Conservative Foreign Secretary before Labour's victory, in order to make the point that Blair and colleagues' narratives were not entirely novel and introduce some discursive themes of importance to this chapter.

In several Commons addresses in the autumn of 1996 Rifkind explained his 'four pillars of British foreign policy' in a globalised age. Hardly unique in themselves (the EU as a partnership of nations; the transatlantic relationship; the Commonwealth and English-speaking world; global free trade), what is significant is the ways in which these classic tropes of British foreign policy were linked with a world now subject to globalisation.[24] They gave Britain 'a unique role in the world' and allowed it to seek three particular national interests: 'peace throughout the world', 'prosperity' and 'global respect for personal liberty and for the rule of law'.[25] These interests, he said, 'coincide with the interests of the world community as a whole' and, being a 'merchant nation', 'Atlantic as well as […] European', meant Britain was 'better placed than any other […] to champion free trade and open markets on a global scale.'[26] Rifkind's characterisations fixed Britain in a subject position geopolitically suited for a world of globalisation. He did so by fusing classic Island Race identity tropes—the partial stance *vis-à-vis* Europe, the Transatlantic relationship, the global links of a trading nation and bearing a set of values that were at once unique (rule of law and personal liberty had, he explained, 'existed and flourished in this country probably for longer than in any other country') and cosmopolitan and universal—with his narration of the 'development of global politics'.[27]

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[23] See, for example, Eden (1939), pp. xii-xiii; Eden: HC Deb 22 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 673; HC Deb 22 November 1945, vol. 416, col. 612; Attlee: HC Deb 22 August 1945, vol. 413, col. 670; Bevin: HC Deb 07 November 1945, vol. 415, col. 1336; HC Deb 25 July 1946, vol. 426, col. 327; HC Deb 05 May 1948, vol. 450, col. 1274; HC Deb 12 May 1949, vol. 464, col. 2017; Lloyd: HC Deb 30 October 1958, vol. 594, col. 320; HC Deb 04 December 1958, vol. 596, col. 1379; Macmillan: HC Deb 27 October 1959, vol. 612, col. 75; Michael Stewart (Labour, Foreign Secretary: 1965-6; 1968-70): HC Deb 17 November 1966, vol. 736, col. 677; Heath (1972); Callaghan: HC Deb 29 June 1976, vol. 914, col. 198; HC Deb 24 November 1976, vol. 921, col. 36; Owen: HC Deb 01 March 1977, vol. 927, col. 197-8; Pym: HC Deb 04 November 1982, vol. 31, col. 130.

[24] HC Deb 24 October 1996, vol. 284, col. 139-40; *ibid.*, col. 142-3.

[25] *Ibid.*, col. 143.

[26] *Ibid.*, col. 143; HC Deb 11 November 1996, vol. 285, col. 22; *ibid.*, col. 22; *ibid.*, col. 21-2.

[27] HC Deb 24 October 1996, vol. 284, col. 143; *ibid.*, col. 130.

Globalisation under the successor Labour governments was represented as inevitable.[28] Blair and his first Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, respectively remarked: 'even if I resented it, I would have to accept it as a fact, possibly, *the* fact, of modern politics';

> 'If you asked me whether I am in favour of globalisation, I would give broadly the same answer as Tom Friedman. My attitude to globalisation is much the same as my attitude to the dawn. On balance, I think it is a good thing that the sun rises every day. But I also know there is nothing I can do to stop it even if I wanted to.'[29]

Moreover it was, as the likes of Attlee, Bevin and Eden had earlier recognised concerning interdependence, a double-edge sword bringing both threat and opportunity to Britain. The debit side of this had been characterised by Douglas Hurd (Conservative Foreign Secretary: 1989-95) as the condition of 'new world disorder' in which there would be multiple threats to the global order following the demise of the stable, Cold War situation; on the credit side, Rifkind outlined the 'major new opportunities' for political and economic gains in the former Soviet sphere and beyond.[30] Similarly Cook described 'new opportunities and new threats' and Blair how the 'international has become domestic and the domestic international' meaning that if 'one part of the world has a problem, the rest of the world has too.'[31]

2.1. Fixing Island Race identity around globalisation narratives

The globalisation discourse given such great prominence by the Labour government of the late 1990s drew on established notions of Island Race identity; since 2010 Members continue to seek ontological security in broadly the same fashion because of the ways globalisation has come to co-constitutively 'fit' with established Island Race tropes. Moreover, as we will see in the ensuing sections, these spatialisations discursively mobilise certain ideas of Britain's enduring relevance in the world. Firstly, and building on the introduction above, I will present the contours of the specific global environment which was depicted in the four debates.

The first characteristic evident in the debates is high levels of interdependence. Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, Labour's Mary Creagh, explained how 'the global village' was becoming 'smaller and more connected'.[32] Foreign Secretary Jack Straw described 'the interlinked nature of today's world' and Labour Co-operative Member Mark Hendrick an emergent future in which communications 'bind together disparate and diverse cultures, languages and traditions' and 'the boundaries that have existed for centuries will be

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[28] Fairclough (2000), p. viii.
[29] Blair (2010), p. 224; Cook (2000), p. 259.
[30] Hurd: HC Deb 29 April 1993, vol. 223, col. 1175-6; HC Deb 25 April 1994, vol. 242, col. 26; Rifkind: HC Deb 11 November 1996, vol. 285, col. 21.
[31] Cook (2001), p. vii; Blair (2002), p. 120; (2006), p. 30.
[32] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 419.

swept away, because the economic, social and political forces that are developing will make them irrelevant.'[33] In what Hammond called a 'rapidly globalising world', Hague's Shadow Douglas Alexander contended that problems were increasingly found to 'transcend borders'.[34] Hammond's Shadow, Hilary Benn, depicted 'our increasingly interdependent and interconnected world' where 'events across the globe are seen and reported as they happen'.[35]

Secondly, power was said to be shifting away from the West. In the earlier debates, Members depicted a 'rapidly changing' or 'fast-moving world', an 'unpredictable' environment of 'global change' that was either, as Cook had it, 'multipolar' or, according to Conservative Hugh Robertson, dominated by the sole, American 'hyperpower'.[36] Preoccupied with European defence and, in 2003, al Qaeda, the specifics of these alterations were ill-defined; by 2012 and 2015 there was consensus around the idea of shifting global power, what Alexander called 'dramatic events' that were shaking 'the foundations of the global order'.[37] In 2012 Hague emphasised this point repeatedly by drawing attention to the importance of 'new and emerging powers' and 'the growing economies of Asia, Africa and Latin America'.[38] Alexander described—an assertion echoed by Benn in 2015 in very similar language—'an ever-accelerating movement of wealth and power from north to south, from west to east', a 'profound reordering of geoeconomics and, potentially, geopolitics', and Conservative James Morris a 'grand transition in international affairs, with the axis of global power shifting from the west to the east.'[39] Dan Jarvis of Labour pointed to the importance of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), and Conservative Robert Jenrick to 'the great new powers and the exploding consumer markets of Asia, Africa and Latin America'.[40]

Typical of globalisation rhetoric but also impelled by the open-ended nature of the debates, this environment was rendered as productive of both threats and opportunities. In 2000 Conservative Nicholas Soames identified 'an arc of danger'; in 2003 Straw characterised a world 'less certain and more dangerous today than it has been for decades' in which 'awareness of global insecurity is probably greater than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis in the

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[33] HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 152; HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 415.
[34] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col 324; HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 441.
[35] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col 335; *ibid.*, col 326.
[36] Donald Anderson (Labour): HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 165; Richard Ottaway (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 195; Soames (Shadow Defence Secretary): *ibid.*, col. 216; Straw: *ibid.*, col. 152; Cook: HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 383; Robertson: HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 209.
[37] HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 430.
[38] *Ibid.*, col. 413; *ibid.*, col. 418. See also Christopher Pincher (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 483.
[39] Alexander: *ibid.*, col. 430; Benn: HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 326; Morris: HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 466.
[40] *Ibid.*, col. 495; HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 412.

early 1960s' and his colleague Donald Anderson talked of 'manifold threats'; in 2012 Conservative Richard Benyon described 'a more dangerous world than has existed at any time in my lifetime'; and in 2015 Crispin Blunt, also of the Conservatives, said 'we are facing the most challenging foreign policy environment since the end of the Second World War.'[41] Other Members emphasised the social, political, cultural and economic opportunities inherent in this scenario.[42]

The particular international environment constructed comprised interdependence, an ongoing process of global reconfiguration that, by the later debates, was articulated as power shifting away from the West, and a multitude of threats and opportunities. As I have argued, this was very much in keeping with contemporary globalisation rhetoric and shows that such discourse was to be found beyond just that of Blair; it was shared by many Members. In the ways in which the world was constituted spatially, we see continued mobilisations of Island Race identity. I am now going to build on this argument by analysing how specific renderings of British attributes formed part of this discourse and fixed ontologically secure subject positions for Britain in this environment.

2.2. An ideal environment: British geopolitical relevance in a globalised world

The collectively constructed world I have just presented was an environment in which Britain could thrive because of the established notions of Island Race identity that co-constituted it. This argument hinges on two main points: through representations of Britain as a 'trading nation' that recall its Sea Power past, Britain is given a special stake in the maintenance of international order that, like its old Lines of Communication, require superintendence; and the main policy frameworks of the period (Blair's 'liberal interventionism' and Hague's 'global diplomatic network') are co-constitutive of both the apparent contemporary globalised environment and established Island Race identity tropes of universality and global reach.

Britain as a 'trading nation' has often served as a designator since the Second World War. In chapter 3 we saw its importance in the narration of the Suez Crisis as maintenance of British imperial Lines of Communication were yoked to ideas of global prosperity and Western stability. Heath, Michael Stewart and George Brown (Foreign Secretaries in Wilson's 1960s

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[41] Soames: HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 418; Straw: HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 142; Anderson: *ibid.*, col. 166; Benyon: HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 363; Blunt: *ibid.*, col. 359.
[42] Maude: HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 395; Hendrick: *ibid.*, col. 415; Straw: HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 152; Hague: HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 429; Jarvis: *ibid.*, col. 495; Hammond: HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 314; Benn: *ibid.*, col 335; Stephen Doughty (Labour Co-operative): *ibid.*, col. 399; James Heappey (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 402; Reynolds: *ibid.*, col. 413; Greening: *ibid.*, col. 420.

governments) were particularly prone to using it.[43]   This self-ascription has particular geopolitical connotations exemplified by Owen in his first Commons address as Foreign Secretary in 1977. 'We are an island race, part of Europe, but with the Atlantic breaking against our coast', he explained. This meant that Britain had traded and invested all over the world and could not now 'restrict our horizons and […] think and act as if in a continental cocoon'; 'the scale of our international interests is not such that we could withdraw from them even if we wished to do so.'[44]   Thatcher and her Foreign Secretaries also utilised this theme and, in the newly 'globalised' world after the end of the Cold War, Hurd, Major and Rifkind all drew on it.[45]   There is obvious nostalgia in this designation but, more importantly, 'trading nation' establishes Britain in a subject position as a state with particular investment in the smooth running of an interdependent world, whose interests become congruent with Britain's. As Heath put it in 1970:

> 'our interests as a nation coincide closely not only with those of our friends and allies but with those of the international community as a whole. We share with the rest of the world the desire to promote peace and to further development, and as a trading nation we probably have greater interests at stake than any other country in this respect.'[46]

Although Labour Co-operative Member Mike Gapes described a 'narrow mercantilist government' and his colleague Meg Munn urged 'surely our diplomatic efforts should be about more than just trade', this designation of Britain as a trading nation has been an important theme in recent Conservative discourse.[47]   Richard Ottaway was typical as he linked 'the defence and security of this country', 'our trading interests' and reducing 'global tension'.[48]   Hammond expanded upon this as he argued that maintaining a 'significant role in world affairs' was 'very much in our national interest'. He cast Britain as 'one of the most open economies in the world, a nation that earns its living through trade in goods and services across the global commons' and, as such, it had 'a greater stake than most in securing […] a rules-based international order that is in Britain's interest but is also in the interest of building stability, security and prosperity

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[43] Heath: HC Deb 02 July 1970, vol. 803, col. 79-80; HC Deb 29 October 1974, vol. 880, col. 70; Stewart: HC Deb 17 November 1966, vol. 736, col. 677; HC Deb 31 October 1968, vol. 772, col. 183-4; HC Deb 30 October 1969, vol. 790, col. 365-6; Brown: HC Deb 16 November 1966, vol. 736, col. 457; HC Deb 06 December 1966, vol. 737, col. 1165-6; HC Deb 24 January 1968, vol. 757, col. 429.
[44] HC Deb 01 March 1977, vol. 927, col. 195.
[45] Thatcher: HC Deb 04 November 1981, vol. 12, col. 27; Pym: HC Deb 04 November 1982, vol. 31, col. 120; Geoffrey Howe (Foreign Secretary: 1983-9): HC Deb 21 July 1987, vol. 120, col. 216; Hurd: HC Deb 23 February 1993, vol. 219, col. 783; Major: HC Deb 01 March 1995, vol. 255, col. 1061; Rifkind: HC Deb 24 October 1996, vol. 284, col. 139-40. See also Cook: HC Deb 17 November 1994, vol. 250, col. 155.
[46] HC Deb 02 July 1970, vol. 803, col. 79.
[47] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 370; HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 489.
[48] HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 195.

for the world's population as a whole.'[49] The 'three key immediate challenges' that he said Britain faced—Russia/Ukraine, Islamic extremism and resolution of the relationship with the EU (he also highlighted Chinese actions in the South China Sea)—were constituted as threats to this stable order in which, he had made clear, Britain had a great stake.[50] He was supported by Sir Gerald Howarth who conflated 'threats to our kingdom', 'broader interests around the world' and the need for 'international stability' to safeguard trade.[51] In 2012 their colleague, Christopher Pincher, said he was inspired by an Asa, now Baron, Briggs book (probably *The Age of Improvement* or *A Social History of England*) from which he drew the characterisation of the British as 'buccaneers on the high seas of trade'.[52] Bearing this in mind in the twenty-first century would be 'good for our prosperity, good for our security and good for our trading partners.'[53] Similarly Jenrick urged the conception of 'Britain as a trading nation sending out ships to emerging markets' and Nadhim Zahawi described 'a tradecraft honed over many centuries of global engagement.'[54]

Cameron would also designate Britain as a 'trading nation' on a number of occasions but his first Foreign Secretary, Hague, placed trade within a larger framework that he labelled a 'reinvigoration' of Britain's 'global diplomatic network' 'to make it ready for the twenty first century' and its 'networked, highly connected world'.[55] Britain, he explained, already had a 'unique network of partnerships' but by opening, re-opening or enlarging embassies and consuls around the world, Hague would be 'spreading British diplomacy to places that have not felt it in decades' and 'significantly strengthening our presence in many other locations.'[56] As Morris pointed out, it emphasised Britain's ability to reach anywhere in the world and the national interests which would be fulfilled through enacting this poise.[57] Furthermore this globalised world of trading opportunities and multi-vectored diplomacy required a set of norms or rules for its superintendence. Indeed Hammond's main quarrel with Russia's 'annexation' of Crimea was how it threatened 'the rules-based international system'.[58] Britain, Gapes noted, had 'defined international standards in 1948 and […] so we should be at the forefront of trying to

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[49] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 313.
[50] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 313-5.
[51] *Ibid.*, col. 345.
[52] Briggs (1959); (1983); HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 485.
[53] *Ibid.*, col. 485.
[54] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 413; *ibid.*, col. 381. See also Blunt: HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 202.
[55] Cameron: HC Deb 22 October 2012, vol. 551, col. 714; HC Deb 26 November 2012, vol. 554, col. 44; HC Deb 09 September 2013, vol. 567, col. 698; Hague: HC Deb 11 May 2011, vol. 527, col. 1166; *ibid.*, col. 1167; *ibid.*, col. 1166; Hague (2013).
[56] HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 420; Hague (2013); *ibid.*
[57] HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 468.
[58] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 323.

defend and strengthen those today.'[59] The previous year, at the height of the tensions in Ukraine, Cameron had staked Britain's claim in the matter by explaining that 'Britain's own future depends on a world where countries obey the rules' and 'we are an international country: a country that relies on the world's markets being open, and on countries obeying norms and standards of behaviour.'[60]

The different rhetorical emphasis of the preceding Labour governments nonetheless mobilised the same set of spatialisations which fixed Britain in a subject position of global relevance. In 2003 Straw drew on Blair's notion of the 'international community' when speaking about Iraq and global terrorism. Tackling terror and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction were, he said, 'vital to protecting our security' but Britain also needed to

> 'pursue longer-term goals that will create a more stable world and tackle state breakdown and the conditions in which violence and extremism can thrive. The world today is too interlinked and interdependent for us to be indifferent to insecurity in any region, however remote it may appear to be.'[61]

British participation in the intervention in Iraq—making it 'free, prosperous and stable'—was thus concerned with restoring the country's 'normal relationship with the international community'.[62] While Conservatives emphasised the trading aspects, Straw linked his thinking to the 'internationalist' strand of Labour's identity. 'We are all internationalists now', Blair had written the previous year; in the 2003 debate Straw reflected, 'whether or not internationalism was ever an idealist luxury, today it is an essential part of pursuing our national interests.'[63] By the later debates, the concept had positive connotations across the House; Secretary of State for International Development Justine Greening, for example, explained how Britain had 'taken on global problems and made them our own.'[64]

Crucially, and as Blair always maintained, the globalised, modern world implicitly and explicitly superintended by an exclusive 'international community' relied on rules, norms and

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[59] *Ibid.*, col. 370.

[60] HC Deb 10 March 2014, vol. 577, col. 27; *ibid.*, col. 34. See also Hague: *ibid.*, col. 650.

[61] HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 144.

[62] *Ibid.*, col. 145; *ibid.*, col. 144.

[63] Blair (2002), p. 120; HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 152. In this debate Menzies Campbell, Foreign Affairs Spokesperson for the Liberal Democrats, emphasised how internationalism was a traditional principle of his party too (HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 172). See also Cook's speech in 2000 at Chatham House for his definitions of the principles of British foreign policy for 'the internationalist century' (Cook (2000), pp. 259-60).

[64] Greening: HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 425. See also Benyon: *ibid.*, col. 362; Gapes: *ibid.*, col. 370; Bob Blackman (Conservative): *ibid.*, col. 406; Gavin Shuker (Labour Co-operative): *ibid.*, col. 406; *ibid.*, col. 409-10.

standards of behavior although, like Cook's 'ethical foreign policy' (Conservative Mike Trend said that use of the 'once golden phrase' had given 'a foolish hostage to fortune'), it rapidly became discursively *passé*.[65] The evergreen 'internationalism', however, was still narrated in the same fashion, as evidenced by the remarks of Hendrick in the 2000 debate: 'to be successful, internationalism needs rules, laws and order'.[66] Clearly in Blair's thinking, the writ of these rules ran beyond previously sacrosanct territorial boundaries and, even without 'boots on the ground', Cameron's participation in the ousting of Libya's Gaddafi and airstrikes in Iraq and Syria suggest that Daddow and Schnapper are right to point to the influence of 'liberal interventionism' on both.[67]

2.3. Ensuring reach in a globalised world: Greater Britain *redux* and the projection of values

The globalised space constructed in the Commons discourse of these debates was the natural environment for Britain to thrive in because of its designation as a leading member of an exclusive international community and/or a trading nation at the centre of a global diplomatic network. Underpinning this was, as I have already hinted, the historically constituted attributes of Britain and its ability to project its values around the world. What made Britain 'unique'—a common designation in these debates and beyond—was the clutch of organisations of which it is a member but also the particular set of values which the country is said to embody.[68] Whether conceptualised as the Doctrine of International Community or the Global Diplomatic Network, British foreign policy in the period under question has been underpinned by this idea of projection of values. A hauntology of Greater Britain and imperialism in general, the projection of values is intimately (but not exclusively) linked to globalisation narratives as well as the spectre of strategic shrinkage. This fixes a subject position for Britain of relevance within an international environment that has been rendered as a space suitable for, and requiring British values. So conceived it is a *fait accompli* as international context and national attributes are elucidated around and amongst one another in ways that reify an ontologically secure Self.

Cultures of imperial Island Race identity, as I argued in chapter 1, similarly co-constituted a world in which universal British values were of great import. In competition with the degenerate values of imperial rivals like France and Russia, they would civilise the native

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[65] Blair (1999); Cook (1997); Trend: HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 431.

[66] *Ibid.*, col. 415. For evidence of the continued influence of the ideas of the international community doctrine in senior Labour circles (prior, at least, to Corbyn's election as leader), see Ed Miliband's Chatham House speech of April 2015 (Miliband (2015)).

[67] Daddow (2013), p. 110; Daddow & Schnapper (2013), p. 333. See also Elden's critical geopolitical situating of Blair as a neo-conservative interventionist (Elden (2009)).

[68] On Britain's uniqueness see, for example, Cook: HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 382; *ibid.*, col. 384; Soames: *ibid.*, col. 416; Hague: HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 420; Zahawi: HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 380-1.

populations of Africa, Asia and the Pacific and be carried forth and perpetuated by the white settler colonies. This situation was not terminated during decolonisation as the West sought—however ham-fistedly—to ensure continued 'development' and, more importantly, protect the infant, independent nations from Soviet influence. This was implicit in chapter 3 as we saw how the inception of NATO constituted the importance of British values in the new post-War order. In many ways, this reached its apex in the era of globalisation, mobilised by a multitude of phenomena. The demolition of global communism signalled the triumph of Western values yet, in an environment of dissolving boundaries in which there would be no more state-on-state conflict, failed and rogue states and amorphous terrorist organisations seemed only to confirm the need for their proselytising power and reach. Consequently Blair argued:

> 'the distinction between a foreign policy driven by values and one driven by interests, is wrong. Globalisation begets interdependence. Interdependence begets the necessity of a common value system to make it work. Idealism becomes realpolitik.'[69]

These values are often vaguely defined but nevertheless sharply identified in their presence or absence, as in Barnett's distinction between a 'Functioning Core' and a 'Non-Integrating Gap' and Robert Cooper's 'postmodern world' and the 'zone of chaos' or 'pre-modern world'.[70] Thus globalisation, like the Cold War, becomes a profoundly normative project. Just as the late-Victorian oceanic imperium was both an entirely natural expression of British geopolitics *and* something that required urgent and constant vigilance; so the Anglo-American 'agents' of globalisation are the embodiment of the values required to superintend it.[71]

The discourse of the importance of British values was instrumentalised across the multiple scenarios of the four debates, ensuring British relevance and allowing reach in a time (especially since 2010) of spending cuts; indeed in Cameron and his Liberal Democrat Deputy Nick Clegg's foreword to the SDSR, they described Britain's 'proud history of standing up for the values we believe in'.[72] Cook defined these as 'freedom, decency and justice'; Straw as 'justice and democracy'; and Hague spoke of what Britain 'stands for in the world': 'human rights, development and freedom'.[73] 'Projecting' these values was, Hammond explained, 'at the heart

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[69] Blair (2006), p. 34.

[70] Barnett (2004), p. 25; Cooper (2000), p. 16. For critical analyses of the ways that modern territoriality is rendered conditional in recent British military interventions, see Williams & Roach (2006); Jeffrey (2009), especially pp. 43-5, 61-2.

[71] Fairclough (2000), p. viii; Gamble (2003), p. 104; Burman (2006), p. 21, 25; Faucher-King & Le Galès (2007), p. 5.

[72] HM Government (2010); Cameron & Clegg (2010), p. 3.

[73] Cook: HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 386; Straw: HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 153; Hague: HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 429.

of our strategy.'[74] The coupling of these Foreign Affairs debates with Defence in 2000 and 2003 and International Development in 2012 and 2015 meant that matters pertaining to both 'hard' (although the divisive issue of Trident renewal was largely absent) and 'soft' power were discussed. While laudations for the British military abounded, it was generally assumed that Britain's soft capabilities were just as vital for the projection of its values; as Conservative James Heappey put it: 'British culture and values reach far further and carry more influence than even the largest military ever could.'[75]

This also served to draw a line between Labour's adventurism and the succeeding Conservative governments which had supported the Iraq invasion in opposition. Although many Conservative Members in 2012 and 2015 emphasised the importance of military power Zahawi, for instance, argued that 'the nation-building approach of the 2000s was not realistic.'[76] Britain, he said, needed 'a new approach to foreign policy: one that recognises that, although we cannot design the world in our own image, we are not powerless to influence events'; and 'although we cannot act alone, we occupy a unique position in international diplomacy, with disproportionate soft power as the closest ally of the world's only superpower and with the finest diplomatic service in the world'.[77] Similarly, in linking Blair's interventionism to the new environment of globalisation, Patrick Grady, International Development Spokesperson for the Scottish National Party, explained that 'our global economy and our environment are too fragile and too precarious to take the shocks that come from military adventurism and old-school projection of power.'[78]

Britain was constituted as being particularly well-endowed with regard to soft power; 'we have a lot going for us', remarked Zahawi.[79] Hague exemplified this in a 2013 speech in California in which he said 'I sometimes urge British diplomats to imagine that we had just woken up today to find our country had been planted in the world overnight'. He catalogued Britain's assets—the English language, the UNSC seat, EU, NATO and Commonwealth membership, the diplomatic network, the nuclear deterrent, the British Army, the development programme and 'all the ingenuity, creativity and resilience that is such an ingrained part of our national character'—and declared: 'we would rejoice in our good fortune'.[80] In the 2012 debate he announced that his reinvigorated diplomatic network would equip Britain to pursue 'two principal aims: […] respond to urgent challenges and crises in ways that promote Britain's

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[74] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col 325.
[75] *Ibid.*, col. 402.
[76] *Ibid.*, col. 380.
[77] *Ibid.*, col. 380; *ibid.*, col. 380-1.
[78] *Ibid.*, col. 396.
[79] *Ibid.*, col. 380.
[80] Hague (2013).

national interest and our democratic values, including human rights, poverty reduction and conflict prevention, and […] equip our country to be a safe, prosperous and influential nation for the long term.'[81] Straw in 2003 referred to 'a widely respected and growing aid programme; the network available to us through the Commonwealth and the English language; and our strong relationships across the world' and noted how Britain was a member of 'more international organisations than any other country except France'.[82] The emphasis was often different between Conservative and Labour Members but both upheld the fundamental notion that the world needed British values and that Britain had the capability to project them; a poise whose ontological security relied upon established, geopolitical designations of Britain in the world. So while Hammond privileged the security aspects of value projection (especially relating to ISIL and the Middle East and Russia/Ukraine), Labour Co-operative MP Gavin Shuker argued that 'from the Mediterranean to the Yellow Sea, freedoms that we take for granted are under threat: freedom of religion and belief, freedom to love, and freedom of speech; those freedoms require not our tacit acceptance but shoring up.'[83]

These values were both parochial and universal; their methods of transmission particular and unique to Britain but of global significance. Away from the Commons, Cook had contended in 2000 that 'the global community needs universal values' and, after the Iraq invasion that had caused Cook to depart from the Cabinet, Blair told the US Congress that 'ours are not Western values, they are the universal values of the human spirit.'[84] These, according to Labour's Alex Cunningham in the 2012 debate, gave Britain 'the power to bring about change in the world'.[85] Hammond had it that Britain was 'one of only a small number of countries with both the aspiration and the means' to do this.[86] Even those such as Benyon who warned the House to treat phrases such as 'projecting power' and 'punching above our weight' (a favourite of Cameron) with caution, still asserted that Britain should play 'a leading role in the world.'[87] Benn argued that 'Britain retains influence and reach in global affairs' because of the typical array of assets and that they brooked a 'particular responsibility to use Britain's place in the world'.[88] We can see in all this a self-fulfilling prophecy that is symptomatic of geopolitical culture and discursive practices of fixing ontologically secure subject positions. The global environment and Britain's place within it were co-constitutive of one another and narrated

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[81] HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 413.

[82] HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 149; *ibid.*, col. 148.

[83] Hammond: HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col 325-6; Shuker: *ibid.*, col. 410.

[84] Cook (2000), p. 260; Blair (2003b).

[85] HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 505.

[86] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 313.

[87] Benyon: *ibid.*, col. 362-3 (see also Zahawi: *ibid.*, col. 380); Cameron: Cameron (2007); HC Deb 19 October 2010, vol. 516, col. 797; HC Deb 09 September 2013, vol. 567, col. 698.

[88] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col 327.

according to each other's terms so that British values were not only given importance but their projection positively impelled. Spatially, this was possible because of the geopolitics of globalisation and the characteristics of the Island Race; politically, it was desirable because of the universal appeal and origin of the values in Britain's particular island forge.

3. Europe and the Island Race in the twenty-first century

3.1. Introduction: Britain and Europe from Thatcher to New Labour

Since the events of chapter 4 in which Britain began negotiations with the EEC before being rebuffed by France, Britain's relationship with the rest of Europe has been more or less controversial in Commons discourse; in 2015 Blunt called it 'a sore that has run through British politics'.[89] This section comprises an analysis of discourse on Britain-EU relations from the four debates. It explores how the two main Westminster parties articulate competing subject positions for Britain that mobilise Island Race identity tropes. In a foreign policy realm that is frequently consensual, discourse on Europe remains highly partisan but, as I will show, that of both Labour and the Conservatives rely on the established tropes of Island Race identity in order to elucidate their often competing visions for Britain and the rest of the continent.

The electorate voted to remain in what was by then the EC in 1975 but Thatcher's views on Europe became increasingly hostile and, after her political demise, Major presided over Britain's ejection from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism and endured years of hostility from his own Party over it and his participation in the so-called 'Maastricht Treaty'. The Conservative schisms epitomised the discursive conundrum of Island Race identity: Major wanted Britain to be at the 'heart of Europe' yet, as Thatcher recorded in her memoirs, this was

> 'a plain impossibility in more than merely the geographical sense,
> since our traditions and interests diverged sharply in many areas from
> those of our Continental neighbours. [… I]n trade generally, and in
> agricultural trade in particular, Britain is both more open and more
> dependent on countries outside Europe than are our European
> partners.'[90]

She pointedly told the Lords in 1993 that she 'could never have signed' Maastricht.[91] Perhaps cognizant of his predecessor's scathing views of former Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe (who precipitated her downfall when he resigned from the government, ostensibly over Europe) and his 'misty', 'romantic longing' for a Europe that was 'a touchstone of highmindedness and

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[89] *Ibid.*, col. 360.
[90] Major (1992); Thatcher (1995), p. 475.
[91] HL Deb 07 June 1993, vol. 546, col. 565. See, for example, Fontana and Parson's recent account of Thatcher's role in British political Euroscepticism (Fontana & Parsons (2015)).

civilized values', Major (as Blair would) characterised his own enthusiasm for continental ties as 'a cold, clear-eyed calculation of the British national interest'.[92] Europe was cast as the pragmatic choice over his infamous, Baldwinesque panegyric to a disappearing Albion of 'long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers'.[93]

Blair's opposition taunted Major over the apparent divisions in his party. The Prime Minister, Blair said, was caught 'in the middle', between two hostile camps, 'never making up his mind' whether to fully commit Britain to the European project or not and Shadow Foreign Secretary Cook characterised the government as 'retreating into the rhetoric and mind-set of an 18th-century nation state' when Britain 'could not be isolated from the world'.[94] In this discursive battle over the balance between insularity and universality, Labour, ensconced with globalisation narratives which impelled Britain to be engaged on *all* fronts wherever possible, accused the government of overly emphasising insularity.[95] Major responded by casting Blair as a crypto-federalist, obsessed with 'handing powers' to the EU in spite of Britain's 'very deep attachment to the nation state'.[96] The continued presence of the Maastricht 'rebels', not to mention their supporters in Major's cabinet (he was infamously overheard in 1993 calling them 'bastards'), furthered the perception of a divided Conservative government increasingly existing at the whim and sufferance of the Eurosceptics.[97] Yet what is striking about particularly Rifkind's time as Major's last Foreign Secretary is how much his rhetoric resembled that of the contemporaneous Labour Party as he described how British 'geography and history' meant it had 'an Atlantic and a European identity' and that choosing between the two was not 'appropriate or relevant'.[98] Six months later, debating his first Gracious Address as Prime Minister, Blair said: 'there will be no false choices between the Atlantic and Europe.'[99]

This was more than just party politics, for the ways in which the Labour attacks on the government were constituted reveal much about practices of ontological security-seeking and British geopolitical identity (re)formation. As each side tries to elucidate a vision of the British Self regarding Europe, they mobilise established tropes to fix an ontologically secure subject position for Britain. In the ensuing section we will see how this played out in the four debates.

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[92] Major (1992). See also HC Deb 14 December 1992, vol. 216, col. 25; HC Deb 01 March 1995, vol. 255, col. 1061.

[93] Major (1993). See, for example, Baldwin's patriotic speech to the Royal Society of St. George in 1924 (Baldwin (1924)).

[94] Blair: HC Deb 19 January 1995, vol. 252, col. 844; Cook: HC Deb 21 June 1995, vol. 262, col. 373.

[95] Blair (2006), p. 23.

[96] HC Deb 19 January 1995, vol. 252, col. 845; HC Deb 07 February 1995, vol. 254, col. 138.

[97] Major (1999), p. 342-86. See also Blair: HC Deb 21 November 1996, vol. 285, col. 1099; Alexander: HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 436.

[98] HC Deb 16 November 1995, vol. 267, col. 137. See also HC Deb 11 November 1996, vol. 285, col. 22.

[99] HC Deb 14 May 1997, vol. 294, col. 68.

3.2. Competing subject positions: the EU and NATO

In 2000 and 2003 the Labour government accused the Conservatives of wanting to isolate Britain (a misreading of insularity); the Conservative opposition tarred Labour with embedding Britain in a federal superstate, thus compromising universality as well as the treasured Atlantic security pact which had embodied the values of Greater Britain (see chapter 3). In 2010 and 2015 the Conservatives suggested that an unreformed EU risked irrelevance in a globalised world in which Britain ought to thrive; typically Labour accused the government of an international retreat and failing to grasp the imperative to engage simultaneously on all fronts, thus deranging the balance between insularity and universality.

Throughout the 2000 and 2003 debates, the Conservative opposition discursively established a subject-position in which Britain was being led towards a European defence scheme which would compromise the primacy of NATO. We have already seen across the chapters, but especially in 3 and 5, the importance of NATO to British conceptions of security and also how it was originally constituted as a recrudescence of ideas of Greater Britain: an organisation embodying British cultural values which would ensure its superiority as against the forces of Sovietism. In the debates in question here, the Conservative accusations against Blair's government were constituted by several discursive themes. Broadly, Britain was cast as being reliant on NATO first and foremost for its security because of its Atlantic identity. Negative characterisations of the EU exploited established Island Race characterisations of the Continent and were ranged against NATO through the constitution of threats that could only be mitigated by the sort of asset inherent in NATO rather than the EU.

NATO, it was agreed by all who spoke in the debates, was vital for the security of Britain. For Conservatives this was becoming imperilled by EU defence schemes. The ways in which this was characterised signifies the continued importance of Island Race tropes in constitutions of identity in British foreign policy discourse. NATO was proof of Britain's ties with and relevance to a larger region than just Europe. The Shadow Foreign Secretary in 2000, Francis Maude, warned that a 'separate European army' would risk relegating NATO to 'a relic of the past'.[100] It would, Soames said, 'split NATO asunder' and, while he acknowledged Blair's 'Atlanticist credentials', his colleague Michael Howard decried the Prime Minister's 'notorious weakness for trying to appear to be all things to all men.'[101] Redolent of discourse responding to de Gaulle's rebuff of Macmillan's EEC application (see chapter 4), both men rendered the scenario as one in which Britain was being hoodwinked by the duplicitous French. Howard

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[100] HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 393.

[101] Soames: *ibid.*, col. 416; *ibid.*, col. 417; Howard: *ibid.*, col. 412. See Thatcher's memoirs for her account of how European defence schemes would spawn an 'Orwellian future of […] three mercantilist world empires on increasingly hostile terms' (Thatcher (1995), p. 471; Orwell (1949), pp. 191-226).

described them as 'opportunist', yet exhibiting behaviour that was entirely 'consistent' given how, as Soames described while reminding the House of de Gaulle's veto, they had 'worked for years to undermine and dilute the American influence in Europe.'[102] This, the latter said, was France's 'greatest ambition'.[103] Shadow Defence Secretary Iain Duncan Smith also saw French influence behind the scenes and suspected that the schemes would 'dilute NATO and eventually decouple the United States from the defence and the alliance of Western Europe'.[104]

Michael Ancram, Shadow Foreign Secretary in 2003, noted how the French wanted to 'corrode' NATO: in contrast to them and the Labour government, 'we believe that the wholehearted commitment of the United States to NATO is vital, and we deprecate the tacit anti-Americanism that motivates some European leaders to seek a separate European military capability.'[105] Alongside the historically established Othering of France, the more pertinent discursive point was how the positively represented quality of Atlanticism was—as with insularity and universality—a delicate balancing operation. Therefore this aspect of Commons discourse was hardly a series of splenetic anti-European rants but rather attempts at suggesting how the government had misunderstood or deranged the balance between the European and American postures. In other words: ontological security was sought by elucidating how Britain ought to retain partial but definite ties with the rest of Europe without compromising NATO or the 'special relationship'; an 'island nation', as Hague told Conference in 2007, 'that is never insular'.[106] The aim was—as Thatcher had hoped and Blair would emphasise—to be something like a bridge between the two: in both camps but retaining a privileged position as a pivotal balancer achieving both partial insularity from Europe and a universal aspect on world affairs; not, as Blunt described, a 'poodle'.[107] Robertson exemplified the conceptual, Island Race roots of this poise when he argued that there was 'a huge cultural difference between NATO and the EU, because as an organisation the EU tends to concentrate on inward matters.'[108]

The stance towards Europe was not one of complete rejection; Soames, for example, was 'fed up with my party being characterised as anti-European.'[109] His colleague Bowen Wells was also broadly pro-Europe but drew on Eurosceptic former Labour Member Peter (now Baron)

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[102] Howard: HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 411; Soames: *ibid.*, col. 417.
[103] *Ibid.*, col. 417.
[104] *Ibid.*, col. 444.
[105] HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 160.
[106] Hague (2007).
[107] HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 201.
[108] *Ibid.*, col. 209.
[109] HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 418.

Shore's recent book, *Separate Ways: Britain and Europe*.[110] 'The people of Britain', Wells explained, 'do not want a European identity, but identify more readily with the English-speaking world and the Commonwealth.'[111] In this we see the crux of the Conservatives' discursive practices of ontological security-seeking: the drawing of a distinction between a weak European identity and a stronger 'Anglosphere' one that privileged established Island Race identity tropes of insularity, universality and Greater Britain.[112] Complete identification with both was represented as impossible, hence Ancram's remark concerning Blair that one cannot be 'pro-American one day and pro-European the next.'[113]

3.3. Insularity and universality: the EU in a globalised world

In office and having promised a referendum on EU membership preceded by negotiations to reform Britain's terms, the Conservative discourse of the 2012 and 2015 debates articulated a different conception of European relations. Amongst the contextual landscape of now deeply embedded notions of globalisation and the more recent argots of apparent strategic shrinkage in a world of multiple and complex threats, some questioned the EU's suitability and relevance. This mobilised established Island Race identity tropes to fix Britain in a subject position of global relevance while avoiding too many European entanglements.

Of the two Foreign Secretaries, Hague's 2012 speech was dominated by his diplomatic network rather than Europe; Hammond grouped the relationship with the EU along with threats like Russia/Ukraine and ISIL as something that needed 'resolving'.[114] 'In a rapidly globalising world,' he explained, 'the European Union has demonstrated fundamental weaknesses that have to be addressed.'[115] In keeping with globalisation narratives and what was by now an established Conservative assertion that the EU—in Cameron's words—needed to 'act with the speed and flexibility of a network, not the cumbersome rigidity of a bloc', Hammond contended that the EU 'has to change course' to become 'more outward looking' and 'competitive'.[116] As Ancram had in 2003, Jenrick warned that the EU 'risks being hopelessly outmoded in a world

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[110] Shore (2000). Shore was Shadow Minister for Europe (1971-2) and Shadow Foreign Secretary (1979-80) among other ministerial and opposition posts.

[111] HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 427.

[112] On the Anglosphere see Churchill's *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* and, for modern counterpoint, Vucetic's genealogy of the concept and James Bennett's study which situates it in the internet era (Churchill (1956-8); Vucetic (2011a); Bennett (2004)). Wallace and Ben Wellings and Helen Baxendale reflect the idea of an unresolved dilemma between Europe and the Anglosphere in British politics (Wallace (2005b); Wellings & Baxendale (2015)).

[113] HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 160.

[114] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col 315.

[115] *Ibid.*, col 324.

[116] Cameron (2013); HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col 324.

that demands flexibility, decentralisation and, above all, openness to the markets beyond'.[117] The size of the EU as a market—something Labour had persistently reiterated as a boon—was irrelevant to Mike Wood if Europeans 'barricade themselves off from the rest of the world.'[118] Morris noted the 'grand transition in international affairs' towards a 'complex, uncertain and often chaotic' environment which called into question the 'policy consensus' on Britain's membership of the EU if it was deemed not sufficiently 'outward facing'.[119] In dealing with such challenges—including countering 'Sun Kings, emperors, Führers or Russian bears'—Richard Graham wondered whether current 'global structures' were 'fit for purpose […] in this age […] in which governments feel more fragile, less in control of our future and less sure about the value of our different unions'.[120] Of these organisations, it was the Commonwealth that was preferred by Eurosceptic Labour MP Kate Hoey; Hague suggested that the EU needed to act more like the Commonwealth and 'use its collective weight in the world'.[121] While acknowledging the importance of the EU, Pincher emphasised its many troubles and how they further impelled Britain 'to raise our sights above and beyond Europe, as we always have done'.[122] The two Conservative positions of arguing that the EU was compromising NATO and becoming less relevant in a globalised world are co-constitutive of Island Race identity tropes insofar as they privilege relations beyond Europe and discursively enact the poise of insularity from Europe *and* universality.

Labour's persistent retort during this period also mobilised these tropes by articulating a subject-position for Britain in which it did not have to choose between Europe and the rest of the world because of its 'outward facing' identity. They accused the Conservatives of overly privileging insularity through its partial stance towards the rest of Europe. In 2000 Cook mocked the parochial Conservative reaction to the proposed Treaty of Nice that he had just been negotiating, telling the House that it would 'not bring the white cliffs of Dover crumbling down.'[123] In targeting a recent international policy statement of the Opposition he said it was 'the first time in history that a party has tried to produce a foreign policy while solving the

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[117] HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 160; HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 412; Robertson argued in 2003: 'the current international threat requires outward-looking solutions and an outward-reaching focus, but I wonder whether the EU in this day and age is capable of delivering that' (HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 209).

[118] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 406. On Labour enthusiasm for the scale of the EU see, for example, Cook: HC Deb 23 November 2000, vol. 357, col. 462; Blair: HC Deb 28 October 2002, vol. 391, col. 541; HC Deb 21 June 2004, vol. 422, col. 1080; Straw: HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 150; HC Deb 10 December 2003, vol. 415, col. 1106; Margaret Beckett (Foreign Secretary: 2006-7): HC Deb 22 November 2006, vol. 453, col. 557; HC Deb 06 December 2006, vol. 454, col. 337.

[119] HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 466.

[120] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 377-8.

[121] HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 497-8; *ibid.*, col. 420.

[122] *Ibid.*, col. 483.

[123] HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 375.

problem of not having to work with foreigners.'[124] The Conservatives, he said, had a 'vision of Britain in the world' as 'a timid, frightened little thing staying at home with the door locked, […] a Britain with no leadership to offer the international community'. By contrast, the Labour Party believed 'in a nation that deserves leadership, not isolation, in the world'.[125] His colleague Anderson talked of the Conservatives' 'pygmy views' on Europe; and he and Straw contended that, with a Conservative government, Britain would be 'isolated' and 'marginalised'.[126] Hendrick drew on Churchill's 1946 speech in Zürich—'if Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance, there would be no limit to the happiness, to the prosperity and glory'—and contrasted it with the 'Tory recipe for the isolation of Britain in an era of globalisation'.[127] Hence any 'choice' between Europe, the US and the wider world was, as Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon and Straw put it respectively, 'dangerous' and 'false' and unnecessary given Britain's 'important assets'.[128] These assets meant, in classic Labour parlance, that Britain could act as a 'bridge'.[129]

In Opposition after 2010 Labour members continued to accuse the Conservatives of overt insularity. Alexander characterised the government as pursuing 'isolation', lack of 'relevance', 'self-congratulation, *schadenfreude* and a hint of imperial delusion' 'at a time when Britain's influence in the world has rarely been more needed'.[130] 'Impotence, not splendour, is the consequence of isolation in today's world.'[131] Denis MacShane ridiculed Hague's diplomatic network as 'portakabin foreign policy' and argued that it could be 'summed up in two words: unsplendid isolation'; Cunningham remarked that, under the Conservatives, Britain was 'shirking our responsibilities'.[132] Ivan Lewis, the Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, used the same terms as Anderson and Straw had earlier and warned of 'isolation' and 'marginalisation'.[133] Phil Wilson declared that he did not believe in 'a little Britain' and

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[124] *Ibid.*, col. 385.

[125] *Ibid.*, col. 386.

[126] Anderson: *ibid.*, col. 407 (Howard later charged Labour with being pygmies (*ibid.*, col. 413)); *ibid.*, col. 408; *ibid.*, col. 408; Straw: HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 149.

[127] Churchill (1946b); HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 415. Probably fairly, Conservative Boris Johnson commented in 2015 that, on Europe, Churchill was 'biblical': 'we can find a text to justify almost any proposition about our relations with Europe that we choose' (HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 381).

[128] Hoon: HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 226; Straw: *ibid.*, col. 149; *ibid.*, col. 148.

[129] Harry Cohen: HC Deb 11 December 2000, vol. 359, col. 426; Anderson: HC Deb 27 November 2003, vol. 415, col. 165.

[130] HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 437; *ibid.*, col. 430; *ibid.*, col. 430; *ibid.*, col. 430.

[131] *Ibid.*, col. 442.

[132] MacShane: *ibid.*, col. 469; *ibid.*, col. 468 (Murrison took issue with Alexander's accusation of imperial delusion and MacShane's of isolationism: 'one can either be an isolationist or an imperialist; it is very difficult to be both at the same time' (*ibid.*, col. 472)); Cunningham: *ibid.*, col. 505. See also Gapes: HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 370.

[133] HC Deb 15 May 2012, vol. 545, col. 516.

Labour Co-operative Member Jonathan Reynolds pithily observed that 'a sizeable number of Conservative Back Benchers would not be happy even if our European neighbours agreed to change the name of Europe to "Greater Britain".'[134]

These differences in emphasis and tone reflected mobilisations of the established identities of both parties. Yet, in spite of the contrasts, both sets of Members were primarily drawing on broader, Island Race identity tropes. The politics is located in the contest to elucidate the most ontologically secure rendering of Britain in the world, a social discursive practice which mobilises, first and foremost, Island Race identity tropes. This impels a conception of debates *over*, not *about*, Britain's established identity. What I mean by this is that the essential subject-position of Britain as a globally relevant actor with ties to Europe, the US and the wider world is secure; MPs discursively compete to elucidate the most appropriate rendering of this. In doing so, they each draw on the most established, geopolitical identity tropes.

4. Conclusion 'plus': Our island story

In concluding this final empirical chapter I want to highlight two extra-parliamentary speeches that Cameron made in the 2010s because of the further light that they shed on constitutions of Island Race tropes in recent times and how they fix ontologically secure subject positions for Britain. To lead into the concluding chapter, I will begin to reflect on the implications of this for the future of British foreign policy identity.

In January 2013 the Prime Minister signalled the beginning of his attempts to negotiate a new relationship for Britain with the EU, an issue that he promised to hold a referendum on, in a speech in London. It exemplified the continued relevance of insularity and universality to attempts to elucidate subject positions congruent with established notions of British international identity. Britain, said Cameron, approaches the EU 'with a frame of mind that is more practical than emotional' and views it as 'a means to an end—prosperity, stability, the anchor of freedom and democracy both within Europe and beyond her shores—not an end in itself.' But Britain had 'always been a European Power' and 'always will be', making a 'unique contribution' to the continent. Leaving the EU would no more change these ties to 'our geographical neighbourhood' than it would erase the stellar continental contribution that he said Britain had made: 'from Caesar's legions […] to the defeat of Nazism, we have helped to write European history and Europe has helped write ours.' This Anglo-centric European history fixed Britain in a subject position of great importance, fundamental to what he called Britain's 'island story':

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[134] HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 412; *ibid.*, col. 414.

'our geography has shaped our psychology; we have the character of an island nation: independent, forthright, passionate in defence of our sovereignty. We can no more change this than we can drain the English Channel.'[135]

That Britain was 'characterised by its openness' and had 'always been a country that reaches out, that turns its face to the world' would constitute a major thrust of his Lee Valley speech the following year, a major intervention in the lead up to the Scottish independence referendum that would take place six months hence.[136] Britain, under threat from Scottish nationalism, was 'the winning team in world history' and 'the most extraordinary country in history', embodied in the Prime Minister's affection for Henrietta Marshall's *Our Island Story*, an illustrated young person's history book first published in 1905 that Cameron said he wanted 'to give […] to my three children, and I want to be able to teach my youngest, when she's old enough to understand, that she is part of this great, world-beating story.'[137] Britain was 'the soft power superpower' from which emanated admired culture and values that represented 'a source of hope for the world':

'Our values are of value to the world. In the darkest times in human history there has been, in the North Sea, a light that never goes out; and if this family of nations broke up, something very powerful and very precious the world over would go out forever.'

Remarkable, insular Britain was an inspiration to the world but also 'earns its living through its international ties'.[138] When considered in sum with Hague's contemporaneous 'global diplomatic network' we see a quintessence of the co-constitutive notions of parochialism and universalism that is at the heart of Island Race identity.

These speeches need to be conceptualised differently to the House of Commons debates largely relied upon in the previous chapters. They did not form part of the debating culture of parliament and the Prime Minister would not be responded to immediately by either colleagues

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[135] Cameron (2013). See also Blair's speech in Warsaw in 2000 in which he described Britons as 'a proud and independent-minded island race (though with much European blood flowing in our veins)' (Blair (2000)). Garton Ash remarked: 'Arthur Bryant, thou shouldst be living at this hour!' (Garton Ash (2001), p. 6).

[136] Cameron (2013).

[137] Cameron (2014); Marshall (1905). The irony of the subtitle of Marshall's book—*A Child's History of England* or, in other editions, *A History of* England *for Boys and Girls*—indicates the continued relevance of the arguments of Doty, Hadfield-Amkhan, Marquand, Krishan Kumar and Wendy Webster that these sorts of expressions of British identity are really just evidence of the hegemony of specifically English nationalism (Doty (1996), p. 124; Hadfield-Amkham (2010), p. 203; Marquand (1995), pp. 188-9; Kumar (2003), pp. 1-17, 121-74; Webster (2005), pp. 1-18).

[138] Cameron (2014).

or opponents. As the speeches were provoked and driven by two particular issues, they nevertheless formed part of larger, ongoing debates that penetrated well beyond Westminster. The same, of course, can and ought to be said of the Commons debates themselves: Westminster, although frequently characterised as a 'bubble', is not a 'black box' and the debates that take place there cut across broader, societal ones found in traditional and social media, academic discourse and those undertaken verbally by British people every day. Cameron's two speeches also directly reached a larger and less rarefied audience than Commons addresses.

However conceptualised, these latest manifestations attest to the continued fecundity of Island Race identity in fixing Britain in ontologically secure subject positions relative to novel contexts. The fact that the 2014 speech concerned a 'domestic' issue (however complex and loaded that expression is in this particular scenario) signals how these tropes are mobilised beyond 'foreign policy'. Indeed, Cameron's first Education Secretary, Gove, told the Conservative Conference in 2010 that the country's History teaching ought to reflect Britain's 'island story' and altered the GCSE English Literature curriculum to prioritise books by British authors.[139] The question is provoked: are we witnessing a substantial renascence of Island Race identity under Conservative governments since 2010? More pertinently, one might ask: how is it historically possible for these discursive themes to be mobilised by Cameron *et al*? The first question would require a greater quantity and plurality of source material and a quantitative approach at odds with the methodology of this thesis but we have gone some way towards answering the second. The part that this chapter has played in this regard has been to conceptualise how, under both Labour and Conservative governments, the 'new' environment of post-Cold War globalisation has been narrated in such a way that fixes Britain in ontologically secure, geopolitical subject positions in which its established Island Race identity ensures continued relevance. Certainly Cameron's 'island story' represents some of the most explicit and sustained renditions of islandness probably since Thatcher's post-Falklands rhetoric, yet the discourse of Labour Members under Blair and since has similarly reified Island Race identity tropes and, important though the grandstanding of Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries are, what this chapter and the thesis as a whole have done is to situate them within broader, discursive cultures that are properly conceived of as forms of social practice.[140]

In the ensuing and concluding chapter, I will be able to reflect more fully on the chapters in summation, taking into account my original intention to decentre the 'present' by examining

[139] Gove (2010). See Richard Evans' critique of Gove's changes to the History curriculum (Evans (2011)).
[140] The most striking example of Thatcher's in this case is probably her speech to a rally in Cheltenham several months after the Falklands campaign (Thatcher (1982)).

constitutions of discourse and identity (re)formation over an historical period. This chapter has added to this study by showing the endurance of the insularity/universality nexus that is vital in understanding the attempts of foreign policy-makers to fix Britain in ontologically secure subject positions regarding Europe and the rest of the world. Furthermore it has demonstrated that, in a scenario persistently depicted as 'new' by MPs—the post-Cold War world—Island Race identity tropes have remained discursively important because of the ways in which this novel context is narrated according to the established spatialisations of Britain's geopolitical identity which render its unique values as internationally essential.

chapter 7

Conclusion

1. Introduction

This thesis was set out to offer a new reading of British foreign policy since 1949 by foregrounding discursive constitutions of an established geopolitical identity that I call the Island Race. I made the claim that five, interlinked tropes of Island Race identity had been crucial in the narration of the British Empire, especially from the late-Victorian era, and hypothesised that they had not simply disappeared with the gradual ending of British imperialism but remained crucial to how British identity has been secured since. In order to test this hypothesis and trace the recrudescence of these identity tropes over the period in question I employed an interpretivist, genealogical approach that highlighted how they were mobilised across a multitude of scenarios as British MPs sought ontological security in their parliamentary debates. This was provoked by the neglect of geopolitics and identity in studies of modern British foreign policy that are so often preoccupied with charting post-imperial decline, assessing the effectiveness of the pursuit of national interests or else articulating an under-explored Self/Other dynamic to explain relations with the rest of Europe.

By conceptualising foreign policy in terms of geopolitics and identity and political debate as the co-constitutive fixing of ontologically secure subject positions around long-standing and emergent contexts, I have found that Island Race identity has remained significant across time and in a multitude of scenarios because of the ways in which they are narrated according to established British geopolitical precepts. So thoroughly was Britain conceptualised as the Island Race during its imperial moment that, even without the Empire, British MPs have continued to mobilise these spatial identity tropes as they navigate new events in the period under question. In this chapter I will synthesise the empirical findings that have led me to this conclusion and then reflect on the future of British foreign policy, identity and geopolitics, and potential avenues for research that have been opened up by my study.

2. The five tropes of Island Race identity: a genealogical overview

I began this thesis by positing the importance of five, interlinked discursive tropes of Island Race identity and their enduring importance in how ontologically secure notions of Britain are sought in the House of Commons. Each chapter focused on parliamentary debates concerned with several events as I traced how these tropes were mobilised around these contexts. Taking the chapters as a whole, I will now present an overview of the development of Island Race

identity tropes in British foreign policy discourse since 1949. As I suggested in chapter 1, the tropes were not just interlinked but thoroughly constitutive of one another and should be considered in totality.

The posture of partial insularity from the rest of Europe was at its most explicit in chapter 4 concerning the Macmillan government's eventually scuppered negotiations to join the EEC in the early 1960s. As Members debated this in 1960 and 1961, ontological security was sought through the fixing of Britain in a variety of subject positions relying on the insularity trope of Island Race identity. Britain, it was said by many, had a great deal of affinity with the rest of Europe but was culturally and historically apart and had a vital role in balancing the continent so that it would not be dominated by a single Power. Chapter 6 demonstrated the continued relevance of this notion, as Members accused the Labour governments from 1997 of subsuming Britain in a federal Europe that was alien to the country's separate and distinct instincts. This, as has so often been characterised, has drawn upon practices of Othering Europe; but it is more than simply xenophobia. The reification and continued relevance of Island Race identity in the context of European integration relies, to some degree, on the constitution of Europe's separateness as the brute proof of Britain's islandness itself. Thus Othering of Europe comprises part of the praxis of fixing an ontologically secure subject position for Britain that depends upon the established notions of proximal separateness. In other words, marking a distinction between Britain and the rest of Europe is not an end in itself but merely part of the means of establishing a secure identity. By articulating antithetical qualities, Britain is not necessarily fixed as anti-European or Eurosceptic but as a particular, differentiated subject defined according to established Island identity tropes. Furthermore, by chapter 6, insularity had become an execration. Clearly Britain's insular past, in the discourse of the time, had been productive of a unique set of values, but to remain insular in the modern world (and one could be insular by either remaining in an unreformed EU or leaving it) conflicted with the universality trope of Island Race identity that was being emphasised in the narration of globalisation.

Yet, as I argued in chapter 1, the concern here must not only be with Europe and this thesis has demonstrated the co-constitutive nature of insularity and universality insofar as the marrying of parochialism with globalism relies on both partial insularity from the rest of the continent *and* a universal aspect on world affairs. Hence its great significance in the debates of 1960 and 1961 when potential membership of the EEC was weighed alongside Britain's global ties and interests. In 1963, Members discursively reacted to de Gaulle's veto precisely by emphasising this; the Othering of France that took place—of which there was a great deal—relied also upon

distinguishing between narrow continental practices and the open outlook of Britain. It was not just a matter of Britain being different from Europe but *how* it was represented as such.

Insularity and universality also partly constituted the debate on the inking of NATO in chapter 3 with some Members pointing out how the limited area covered by the treaty might compromise the latter and represent contracting British horizons when global reach had been an important and ontologically secure part of Britain's identity. The attraction of a defence pact with the US ultimately trumped these concerns and, with North America in some ways a signifier for at least part of 'the rest of the world', NATO was represented as striking the right balance, notwithstanding the anti-Americanism of some Leftist MPs. The Suez Crisis too was significant in the discursive negotiation of these interlinked tropes as the scope of British universality and reach was called into question by the apparent impotence of Britain in the face of Nasser's affront; both Eden's and Gaitskell's supporters sought to fix Britain in ontologically secure subject positions dependent on established British identity tropes. The narration of the Falklands Conflict in chapter 5 further showed the importance of insularity and universality with Members elucidating secure subject positions for Britain in which it was able and impelled to reach the South Atlantic against the odds.

The debates on NATO, Suez and the Falklands also demonstrate how insularity and universality function in a co-constitutive fashion with the Greater Britain trope in the sense that it is the projection of British values—uniquely forged because of insularity—that is most often represented as ensuring universality in situations where threats to established, British conceptions of international order are constituted. The discursive recrudescence of a metacommunity of British values such as democracy, rule of law and individual freedoms (sometimes also the English language), was embodied immediately in NATO and has remained more or less significant as Britain's actual or military power has waned. This shouldn't, however, be seen as just a proxy for declining power: at the height of Britain's imperial naval supremacy, the projection of values was still an important, constitutive part of the discourse of empire. This intertwining of the parochial and the global that we have seen throughout the thesis means that this trope should properly be seen in sum with insularity and universality in the sense that the separation from Europe and the unique and sheltered development that this is said to have fostered allowed the nascence of a unique set of values that were of universal importance. This was clearly important in an unsettling period by articulating ontological security for Britain through the fixing of its particular values as having global reach and relevance.

In chapter 3 Eden's narration of the Suez Crisis concerned not only the physicality of the Lines of Communication but also how Nasser's actions threatened the projection of British values; Gaitskell's constituted the threat in the very prospect of a unilateral British response denigrating its role as an arbiter of the rule of law and scion and beacon of democratic, internationalist values. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Falklands Conflict in chapter 5 were both said to threaten the supremacy of this unique cache of British values, the importance of which was reified in the act of constituting them as being under threat. As we saw in chapter 6, the most recent constitutions of British foreign policy fix a similar subject position in which the globalised world requires unbounded, universal (Western) values, with Britain the vanguard of this normative project by virtue of its outward-facing instincts. In the manner of Suez, Afghanistan, the Falklands, Bosnia, Crimea and all manner of other issues, the War on Terror had only confirmed this. Blair might have described how, after September 11, 'the clarity was plain, vivid and defining' but this simply reinforced what he had explained to the Lord Mayor's Banquet in 1999 about not only Britain's values but its central, geopolitical position in their global projection: 'We have a new role […] not as a superpower but as a pivotal power, as a power that is at the crux of the alliances and international politics which shape the world and its future.'[1] It was, in other words, unremarkable because the reiterated idea that Britain had, as Mike Gapes MP put it, 'defined' modern 'international standards' in the late 1940s, meant that even what Cameron called a 'generational struggle' against Islamic extremism was, in fact, the latest recrudescence of how ontological security is sought through the fixing of Britain in a subject position relying on historical constitutions of the Island Race trope of Greater Britain according to which British values have global significance.[2]

The conception of the Lines of Communication facet of Island Race identity invited in this thesis retains relevance precisely because of the above. In imperial terms, they were symbolic of a British geopolitical order of oceanic supremacy and unfettered reach across the globe that was never narrated purely militarily. In chapter 3 we saw how they were represented as threatened by the Suez Crisis, as Nasser's Egypt and the Soviet Union severed the most accessible link between Western Europe and the Persian Gulf and Far East. Without imperial India—the focal point of the Lines of Communication—Eden universalised the significance of the Crisis, consecrating the spatial *nomos* of the British Empire as being beneficent for the entire world.[3] In the highly partisan debates of the time, Opposition leader Gaitskell's warnings about the Prime Minister's favoured violent, unmediated response did not dispute the designation of Suez as a globally significant locale; amongst the party politics, both sides of the

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[1] Blair (2010), p. 343; Wickam-Jones (2000), p. 19. See Ingram & Dodds (2009b), p. 7.
[2] Gapes: HC Deb 01 June 2015, vol. 596, col. 370; Cameron: HC Deb 21 January 2013, vol. 557, col. 27.
[3] Schmitt (1950), pp. 172-3, 178.

House upheld the importance of the Lines of Communication for global order. Although Britain was less directly involved, the ways in which the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was debated in chapter 5 show how this spatial, ordering trope retained significance for British ontological security in the ensuing period.

In the British representations of the post-Cold War situation in chapter 6 we can see further and significant echoes of this. The new globalised order, with its 'space of flows' is not simply redolent of the old Lines of Communication, it replicates both its language and the ways in which Britain (and its allies) is held to be of importance as arbiter and guardian of a benevolent, global system superintended by values.[4] The transcendent globalisation of New Labour, and the ways in which the already mutable distances inherent in Island Race identity were stretched even further, is shown to be reliant on normative conceptions of particular values and their utility in the world. In these particular spatialisations it is the British conception of globalisation—narrated according to its own historic oceanic tendencies—that impels the need for a values-driven order and thus connotes ontological security by reifying both its own discourse of imagined, geopolitical space and Britain's pivotal place within it. Here too is the co-constitutive significance of Cameron's 'island story' and Hague's 'global diplomatic network': its consecration of a global order superintended by unique, exceptional British values.

For much of the period analysed in this thesis, the Soviet Union played the role of geopolitical antithesis in discursive constitutions of Britain that mobilised established Island Race tropes. It was important in the ways in which the formation of NATO and the Suez Crisis were narrated in chapter 3 and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Falklands Conflict in chapter 5. The Soviet Union functioned as the Other against which ontologically secure British qualities as a Sea Power could be defined: benevolent, democratic, freedom-loving, favouring non-contiguous, sovereign communities of values over autocratic and expansionist land blocs. The Soviet 'presence' in these episodes meant that ontological security could be fixed by its summoning as a threat to the established British identity tropes, thereby confirming their existence and importance. Yet, as in the case of France in chapter 4 and, indeed, the EU in chapter 6, what is important is not just that Soviet Russia was an Other, but the particular fashions in which it was designated thusly. Communism was only the latest manifestation of the traditional rapacity of Russian Land Power that has its antecedents in the rule of the Tsars. Narrated according to established Island Race tropes the Cold War was, in British discourse, a developing context that confirmed and reified British identity in various, ontologically secure subject positions reliant upon island geopolitics.

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[4] Thrift (1995), pp. 18-9; van der Wusten & Dijkink (2002), p. 34; Burman (2008), p. 70.

Island Race identity so conceived in this thesis represents a comprehensive set of framing devices for British foreign policy-makers when securing meanings of the state in manifold international contexts. It comprises a geopolitical totality in which the island geography of universality is the *deus ex machina* in a multitude of situations, giving British foreign policy a particular, transcendent relevance according to its own logic. In this way it is not dissimilar to French 'exceptionalism' or the US as 'the exemplary nation'.[5] Too often conceptualised as simply imperial nostalgia, this thesis has shown how dependent British foreign policy is on discursive practices of ontological security-seeking which rely on the tropes of islandness that narrated the Empire.[6] Furthermore, what is opened up is how the discursive habits which make up the reiterations of Island Race identity have become sedimented practice in the Commons, perhaps now another one of the august traditions of the Lower House in British politics. Like all traditions, it is more dynamic than it might at first appear: responding and adapting to neoteric arrangements like NATO, the Cold War, European integration and globalisation by narrating them as fitting with established identity tropes, fixing ontologically secure definitions of Britain while maintaining contextual relevance.

3. The future of Island Race identity

It would be easy to say that, given my arguments, we cannot expect any serious changes to this pattern of recrudescing Island Race tropes in fixing Britain's identity. It would also, in some senses, be true. But that would be to oversimplify what has been presented in this thesis. While it is far from a *fait accompli* that British foreign policy-makers always take recourse to these established notions of identity, they are nonetheless constrained by them. Yet, as I have shown, ambivalent subject positions need to be secured in a dynamic environment, hence there are changes *within* the continuity of Island Race identity.[7] This thesis has shown how these identity tropes are mutable and sensitive to the influence of 'external' events which themselves are narrated according to formulations of identity and co-constitutively 'become' one another. In this sense, identity discourse *must* be conceived as dynamic.[8] There are alterations of emphasis, exclusions and silences and unexpected moments in which figures come to prominence with their own renditions of Britishness and there are singular events which require hasty mediation and representation. When several of these combine, the smooth narrative of a national identity can become derailed, sometimes permanently altering its course, sometimes to be redirected

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[5] Treacher (2003), p. 5; Burman (2006), p. 19.
[6] Northedge (1972), p. 23; Cox (1981), p. 140; Thornton (1984), p. vii; Wallace (1991), p. 70; Law (2005), p. 275.
[7] Campbell (1998), pp. 5-6, 12.
[8] Adler (1997), pp. 322-3.

later.[9] At the risk of engaging in counterfactuals, who could say that if Thatcher hadn't emerged or triumphed in 1979, Callaghan, Owen, Healey, Foot, or Heath or Howe would have embraced the Second Cold War as enthusiastically or narrated the Falklands Conflict in the same fashion? The hypothetical erasure of a particular figure at a particular moment can be tempting if intellectually questionable. But the point is, and this is the richness and value of a genealogy, to note how certain discourses are historically possible by analysing not just the 'roots' or the present but the multitude of contexts *in between*, how the discursive constitutions of national identity were altered and shaped through time and what that implies for what came after.

For the first time since the 1980s there is an Opposition Leader in Jeremy Corbyn who threatens to radically realign British foreign policy should he ever hold office. Indeed, it is precisely his stance on fundamentals like the nuclear deterrent, NATO and—far more ambiguously—the EU that inform those, including some from his own party, who say he is unelectable. The Scottish National Party is similarly revisionist and, with fifty five MPs, has transcended the 'celtic fringe' and gained the potential to not only play kingmaker in a future election but also to influence the parameters of Commons debate.[10] But this represents a complex politics because of their aspirations for an independent Scottish state. The issue of which, should another referendum return an affirmative result, is potentially of either great or marginal import for British foreign policy identity if, as some have argued, what we see projected on to the international stage is primarily an *English* identity.[11]

At the time of writing, campaigning on the referendum on EU membership is beginning to emerge; it is reasonable to expect further mobilisations of the long-standing Island Race conundrum of insularity and universality, as it was in the original negotiations for membership of the EEC in 1960-3. Relations with the rest of Europe have consistently been narrated as the search for an ontologically secure balance between insularity and universality with even 'outliers' articulating a British subject position that is at once eternally European and yet reliant also on worldwide ties. Cameron is undoubtedly pro-European by instinct, as is most of the current British political *élite* (although Corbyn and some of his Shadow Cabinet might be characterised as pro-Europe but, on anti-capitalist grounds, EU-sceptic), and the recent European Migrant Crisis has precipitated reiterations of at least one existing facet of Britain's partial European poise: non-involvement in the Schengen Agreement on open borders. The fact

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[9] Legro (2005), pp. 21, 24-48; Kleuters (2009), pp. 520, 523; Chacko (2014), pp. 435-7.

[10] Showalter (2010), p. 146.

[11] Doty (1996), p. 124; Hadfield-Amkham (2010), p. 203; Marquand (1995), pp. 188-9; Kumar (2003), pp. 1-17, 121-74; Webster (2005), pp. 1-18.

that Cameron welcomed Chinese and Indian leaders to Britain at the height of the crisis is suggestive of a prioritising of global ties at a time of European uncertainty.

The ongoing civil war in Syria, the territorial gains made by ISIS there and in Iraq and the Paris attacks of November 2015—all discursively intertwined with the Migrant Crisis—are set to constitute further debate on the nature of Britain's universality in the twenty-first century, with Cameron securing parliamentary approval for the bombing of targets in Syria, having been voted down in August 2013. Discourse on post-Soviet Russia that was, as we saw in chapter 6, beginning to be constituted again by the established Land Power/Sea Power dichotomy might be realigned in the light of perceived common interests in the Middle East. Additionally, MPs will soon vote on whether to renew the Trident system of submarine-based nuclear weapons and the debates will likely constitute the articulation of British subject-positions according to the universality trope of Island Race identity and just how far, fast and deep Britain is and ought to be able to reach into global affairs. With a majority of MPs seemingly favouring renewal, its scrapping appears at the time of writing to be relatively unlikely; yet chapter 4 showed how the failure of a policy supported by a majority of MPs can nonetheless be narrated in terms which aggrandise Island Race identity tropes. In other words: in the hypothetical scenario of the abandonment of Britain's independent nuclear deterrent one can conceive of how Members would constitute Britain in a subject position in which it remained able to reach out and influence global politics, probably through the projection of its values. Regardless of Trident, the issues of foreign policy never cease and hence MPs are nearly constantly invited to reflect on what is in Britain's interest to be involved in or not. The recent scripting of globalisation narratives are but the latest manifestation of a spatial politics in the thrall of which British foreign policy-makers tend to discursively articulate the need for global involvement and relevance.

The presence of values and international norms seems to be more prominent than ever in British parliamentary discourse, mobilising the Greater Britain Island Race identity trope to narrate a multitude of international issues. Perhaps above all, this thesis has shown this, alongside insularity and universality, to be of singular importance to constitutions of identity in British foreign policy discourse with the successive elucidation of the parochial alongside the global frequently mobilised to fix Britain in ontologically secure subject positions across time and context. The above suggestions of future issues which the Commons will be debating would seem to impel the further sedimentation of constitutions of the global importance of British values. The Syrian civil war and its many related issues have already brought this to bear, as did the Scottish independence referendum, as, no doubt, will the EU referendum.

4. Theory and its implications

The theoretical approaches pursued in this thesis have demonstrated their utility in gaining a richer understanding of British foreign policy since the middle of the twentieth century. Taking a critical geopolitical approach has allowed a general questioning of the established spatial tropes of British foreign policy by revealing them to be the non-neutral and dynamic products of history as much as any geographic 'reality'. That critical geopolitics has largely been absent from larger-scale analyses of British history (and vice versa) reveals the paucity of many of these accounts in that they take for granted repeated spatialisations without probing and problematizing their history and contingent geographies.

The combination put to work in this thesis of critical geopolitics with the insights of those who have theorised about ontological security-seeking has proved worthwhile by suggesting the appeal of spatial narratives in the articulations of Selfhood that are a constant preoccupation of foreign policy-makers as they attempt to elucidate secure notions of 'Britain'. By conceptualising ontological security-seeking as part of discursive practice relying on geopolitical (among other) tropes, this thesis has been able to open up the possibilities of identity (re)formation beyond only the much rehearsed Self/Other dynamic. The positing of broader identity tropes in this case has shown the complexities of geopolitics and identity and how ontological security can be sought through multiple and contested subject positions that do not necessarily rely on an Other.

Through employing an interpretivist approach that is ordered by genealogical methods it has been possible to demonstrate the social practices of identity in a co-constitutive rather than causal fashion over an extended period by allowing interplay with multiple contexts and agents. Constructivist scholarship continues to be haunted by the accusation of unduly prioritising continuity over change in such matters yet this thesis has shown how multiple and contingent identities are disciplined into a shared collectivity and how change is mediated within this through adaption to new circumstances and historical erasures that themselves mobilise established identity tropes to fix the state in particular subject positions.

Finally, my choice of primary material has shown the utility of honing in on one area of discourse from a national polity. It allowed a focus on the specific discursive practices from a single site that more plural approaches might lack. This is important not just because it has been strangely neglected in studies of British foreign policy but also because the Commons is clearly a prime locus of debate on international issues.

This thesis suggests it and other national assemblies as possible sites for future research perhaps in tandem with systematic studies of media discourse or extra-parliamentary speeches in order to show how they might co-constitute one another around specific events or over a period of time. Issues of the geopolitical foreign policy identities of the Westminster parties also invite further studies. I have hinted at this often in the preceding chapters, impelled by certain issues such as the Suez Crisis in chapter 3 and EU relations in chapter 6 in which distinct party positions were articulated. There are genealogical histories to be written, perhaps comparatively, about the specific foreign policy identities of both the Conservative and Labour Parties.

The nature of national identity construction itself invites more work. What I have posited in this thesis is not a new theoretical framework with which to approach future studies but it has thrown up certain issues which suggest avenues of reflection. The nature of conducting interpretivist studies means that the possibilities are wide-ranging to say the least, but, instead of the geopolitical focus taken herein, one might consider constitutions of particular temporal, racial or gender identities in British foreign policy or even the ebb and flow of a number of different types of identity and if and when they come to particular prominence in varied contexts. Furthering the study of the British geopolitical identity might provoke a comparison with other island states like Japan to gain further insights into whether British islandness is unique or whether there is a shared set of geopolitical understandings amongst *élites* of island states.[12]

Finally, this has been a largely state-centric thesis as, in many ways, it has had to be for what has been analysed is the subject position of Britain, expressed in terms of the state as a foreign policy actor. This pays deference to interpretivism in the sense that British foreign policy-makers, even as they narrate an increasingly borderless world, still implicitly and explicitly normalise a situation in which sovereign states are the most important, global actors. I have also regularly gone beyond this Westphalian scripting in analysing the constitution of the Greater Britain Island Race trope and conceptualising a Western metacommunity of values based, in British discourse, on historic values. But perhaps this could be taken further and the 'Western' identities of other countries examined conterminously to see if there is really a shared, discursive core or whether it tends, as I have conceptualised regarding Britain, to be mobilised as the extension of particular conceptions of national values.

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[12] See the Alessio Patalano edited volume of essays comparing the maritime strategies of Japan and Britain (Patalano (2012)).

5. Concluding remarks

Any study of foreign policy history encompassing nearly three quarters of a century necessarily entails not just dealing with a huge body of empirical material but also with the many extant studies. J.G.A. Pocock described how 'studying the history of a people who have diligently studied it themselves' means traversing a corpus 'already thickly populated with paradigms' and, nevertheless, how its attraction 'usually proves irresistible.'[13] In this case, the already existing paradigms were indeed part of the attraction, insofar as many of them seemed singularly unsatisfactory. By placing geopolitics, identity and ontological security-seeking at the heart of this thesis, I have been able to present a new reading of this history that can help in gaining a richer understanding of the period and the present that it produces and is produced by. Identities are fundamental to foreign policy and yet the famous British predilection for pragmatism and stolid notions of national interest pursuance has, it seems, concealed the (re)formation of a thoroughly geopolitical identity that is embedded in the social discursive practices of the House of Commons.

It may well be that the British have never 'got over' their Empire or, as Wallace has it, remain 'fixed on nostalgia' and thus face obstacles 'to the pursuit of altered objectives in changed circumstances', but the evidence of this thesis suggests something more complex.[14] It is through the very narration of these changed circumstances that British foreign policy-makers have co-constitutively mobilised the established tropes of identity from their imperial period. This is the nature of the ways in which discursive identity is both continuous and dynamic and explains why the tropes of the Island Race appear at once to be so mutable and yet so constant.

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[13] Pocock (2005), p. 36.
[14] Wallace (1991), p. 70.

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